

NEW CENTURY'S EVE WITH THE CREATIVE PARAGONS:  
CULTURAL FIREWORKS AT THE PARISIAN SALON OF  
ERNESTA STERN ON A 31/12/1899 REVEILLON – A PLAY

BY JACQUES CORY ALIAS JACQUE COROT

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In order of appearance

Ernesta Stern, 45, French, Salonniere, Author – Host

Jacque Corot, 80, French, Witness – (Greek) Chorus

Émile Zola, 59, French, Author and Journalist

Lev Tolstoy, 71, Russian, Author

Henrik Ibsen, 71, Norwegian, Playwright

Georges Clemenceau, 58, French, Statesman and Journalist

Oscar Wilde, 45, Irish/British, Playwright

\* Oscar Wilde recites from his poem The Ballad of Reading Gaol

George Bernard Shaw, 43, Irish/British, Playwright and Polemicist

Claude Monet, 59, French, Painter

\* Monet's paintings are screened, while Claude Debussy plays on the piano his Arabesques

Claude Debussy, 37, French, Composer

Giacomo Puccini, 41, Italian, Composer

Enrico Caruso, 26, Italian, Operatic Tenor

\* Enrico Caruso sings 12 opera arias by Puccini, Verdi, Donizetti, Leoncavallo, Gounod, Bizet

Edmond Rostand, 31, French, Playwright

Sarah Bernhardt, 55, French, Stage Actress

\* Sarah Bernhardt plays Duke Reichstadt's monologues from Edmond Rostand's L'Aiglon

Louis Lumière, 35, French, Engineer, Industrialist, Inventor of the Cinematograph

\* 10 short films by Lumiere are screened accompanied by Scott Joplin's ragtime piano music played by Arthur Rubinstein, who continues with a recital by Chopin, Brahms, Mendelssohn

Theodor Herzl, 39, Austrian Jewish Journalist, Playwright, Writer, Father of Political Zionism

José Echegaray, 67, Spanish, Civil Engineer, Mathematician, Statesman, Playwright

Gustave Eiffel, 67, French, Civil Engineer

Jules Chéret, 63, French, Painter and Lithographer

\* Photos & films of Paris around 1899 are screened, as well as Jules Chéret's posters, with a performance of a Moulin Rouge can-can show and scenes from famous French operettes

Marcel Proust, 28, French, Author

Marie Curie, 32, Polish/French, Physicist and Chemist

Ragnar Sohlman, 29, Swedish, Chemical Engineer, Manager, Creator of Nobel Foundation

Wilhelm Röntgen, 54, German, Mechanical Engineer, Physicist

Sigmund Freud, 43, Austrian, Neurologist and Founder of Psychoanalysis

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), 64, American, Author and Humorist

Yvette Guilbert, 34, French, Cabaret Singer and Actress

\* Yvette Guilbert sings 10 French Belle Epoque's songs, as well as traditional songs

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 35, French, Painter, Printmaker and Caricaturist

W.S. (William Schwenck) Gilbert, 63, English, Dramatist, Librettist, collaborated with composer Arthur Sullivan

\* 4 actors play famous scenes from The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, H.M.S. Pinafore...

Jules Verne, 71, French, Author and Futurist

Isadora Duncan, 22, American, Dancer, Mother of Modern Dance

\* Isadora Duncan dances, accompanied by the piano music of Reynaldo Hahn

Eça de Queirós, 54, Portuguese, Author and Diplomat

Richard Strauss, 35, German, Composer and Conductor

Camille Saint-Saens, 64, French, Composer, Conductor, Organist, Pianist, Writer, Critic

\* Armand Silvestre recites his poem Les fils de Promethee, accompanied alternately by piano extracts from Le feu celeste by Camille Saint-Saens, performed by him & Arthur Rubinstein

Joseph Joachim, 68, Hungarian, Violinist, Conductor, Composer and Teacher.

\* Joseph Joachim & Edvard Grieg play a recital of piano and violin compositions by Chopin, Saint-Saens, Grieg, Fauré, Brahms, Liszt, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann & Mendelssohn

Georges Feydeau, 37, French, Playwright

\* Potpourri of 1899 Georges Melies films, including a film on the Dreyfus Affair. Accompanied by Bronislaw Huberman on the violin in a classical, sacred and popular recital

Auguste Rodin, 59, French, Sculptor

Dmitri Mendeleev, 65, Russian, Chemist

Emile Durkheim, 41, French, Sociologist

Ernesta Stern

\* Jeanne Hugo recites a poem from *La Legende des Siecles* by Victor Hugo, her grandfather

\* Jose-Maria de Heredia recites poems by the Spanish poet Pedro Antonio de Alarcon

\* Olga Knipper plays Tatiana writing to Eugene Onegin by Pushkin and Tchaikovsky's opera

\* A concert of compositions by composers who died recently, with Orchestre Lamoureux ensemble and soloists Pablo Casals, Bronislaw Huberman, Lionel Tertis and Maurice Ravel

\* Arias & ballets with Garnier Opera group and Adelina Patti, Antonio Paoli, Karl Mantzius, Luisa Tetrazzini, Leon Rothir, Edyth Walker, Francesco Tamagno, Clara Butt

\* Isaac Albeniz, Francisco Tarrega and Pablo de Sarasate give a recital of their compositions

\* Standing ovation to Giuseppe Verdi, while singing a cappella *Va Pensiero* from *Nabucco*. The opera singers sing arias from Verdi's operas, ending with *Triumphal March* from *Aida*

\* The actors, musicians and guests sing and play the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, while the Parisian New Century fireworks outside the windows are seen & heard

Jacque Corot

\* Screening of the 1900 Paris World Exposition's new buildings/monuments, John Philip Sousa enters with his March Band performing American, English & French military marches

Others - Guests, actors, musicians, et al: Gabriele d'Annunzio, Anton Chekhov, Konstantin Stanislavski, Olga Knipper, Arthur Schnitzler, Henry James, Machado de Assis, Arturo Toscanini, Constant Coquelin, Rosemonde Gerard, Arthur Rubinstein, John Philip Sousa, Charles Lecocq, Robert Planquette, Andre Messager, Ludovic Halevy, Aristide Bruant, Reynaldo Hahn, Armand Silvestre, Max Bruch, Edvard Grieg, Georges Méliès, Bronislaw Huberman, Jeanne Hugo, Jean-Baptiste Charcot, Isaac Albeniz, Pablo de Sarasate, Francisco Tarrega, Jane Avril, Camille Pissarro, Gustave Kahn, Alfred Jarry, Willy, Colette, Marguerite Durand, Gustav Mahler, Alexander Glazunov, Antonin Dvorak, Tomas Masaryk, Marcellus Emants, Ion Luca Caragiale, Tevfik Fikret, Ahmed Shawqi, Khalil Mutran, Giuseppe Verdi, Sholem Aleikhem, Hayim Nahman Bialik, Elia Carmona, Jacob Chemla, Kostis Palamas, Pierre de Coubertin, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Selma Lagerlof, Georg Brandes, Johan Jacob Ahrenberg, Pablo Casals, Camille Chevillard, Lionel Tertis, Maurice Ravel, Adelina Patti, Antonio Paoli, Karl Mantzius, Luisa Tetrazzini, Edmond de Rothschild, Maurice de Rothschild, Zoe de Rothschild, Leon Lambert, Fernand Halphen, Sophie Croizette, Manuel de Falla, Carl Spitteler, Janko Veselinovic, Rabindranath Tagore, Lie Kim Hok, Koda Rohan, Maurice Maeterlinck, Antun Gustav Matos, Anna de Noailles, Leon Bonnat, Carolus-Duran, Paul Adam, Camille Flammarion, Jose-Maria de Heredia, Joseph Reinach, Jean Richepin, Henri de Regnier, Marie de Regnier, Pierre Louys, Ferdinand von Zeppelin, Camille Jenatzy, et al; Moulin Rouge can-can show, 4 actors of the Gilbert show, ensemble of musicians from the Lamoureux Orchestra, ensemble of singers and dancers from the Garnier Opera in Paris.

New Year's eve, 31/12/1899 at Ernesta Stern's Parisian Salon, located at 68, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honore, Paris. On the tables foie gras, champagne, oysters, wines. Through the open windows of the hotel particulier one can see and hear fireworks to celebrate the new year, the new century, the new era, at the height of Parisian Belle Epoque. Ernesta Stern's Salon is the most exclusive in Paris, where the cultural crème de la crème has gathered: authors, playwrights, actors, scientists, inventors, politicians, composers, painters, sculptors, dancers... When the name of a protagonist is mentioned we see projected on a screen photos and events.

Jacque Corot sees and hears everything but cannot be seen by the other protagonists, he likes all the celebrities, understands them, envy or pity them, with hindsight of what might or will happen. A feeling of insouciance is in the air, we are on top of the world, living in the cultural world's capital, where every important event occurs, and this Belle Epoque will last forever.

*To my beloved wife Ruthy Cory, my inspiration, every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own: in pain and sickness it would still be dear, fogata de amor y guía, razon de vivir mi vida, der du von dem Himmel bist, alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest, yet I see you, like the sun, even without looking, come Dante ti dico - l'amor che move: i sole e l'altre stelle, car vois-tu, chaque jour je t'aime davantage, aujourd'hui plus qu'hier et bien moins que demain.*

When the guns roar and the missiles fly over our heads, when buildings collapse and the dead pile up on all sides, when a pandemic rages and slays millions all over the world, paralyzes the economy, culture and life, when society disintegrates and the regime is in existential crisis, when incited rioters rave freely in our towns, reminding me of childhood traumas, of the vandals setting fire to entire neighborhoods, butchering and wounding without mercy, almost burning me alive, while I was reading Alice in the Wonderland, about the Queen of Hearts screaming COUPEZ LUI LA TETE – Off with his head; I find myself balm, bibliotherapy, writing catharsis, immersing in culture at its best, as the muses are not silent but speak or rather whisper to my deaf ears: get up, shake off, sail on the wings of the imagination, on the wings of time, to another reality in another place, to the most creative century in culture, innovation, spiritual life, literature, arts, music, theater, cinema, inventions, science, democracy & human rights, write about it, about the cultural paragons, the premieres of the best plays, operas and exhibitions, the fascinating and interesting salons, in order to heal my ailing soul, to cure the physical and mental pain of my beloved readers. 13/5/2021



[Ernesta Stern](#) – Chers amis, dear friends, thank you for coming tonight to celebrate the new century that will be even better than the former one. We'll spend together the whole night, with speeches by the best cultural figures of the fin du siècle, with a sumptuous dinner of course, with opera arias, chansons, scenes from plays, with famous dancers, recitals, paintings, photos & posters exhibitions, with films. We'll end well after midnight with a ball.

We are all friends here, we probably don't agree on everything but on the key issues we share the same opinions, of humanism and justice, of culture and education, we oppose any form of racism and anti-Semitism, and we are dedicated [Dreyfusards](#). That is why I first of all would like to welcome here our dear friend Emile Zola, the conscience of our nation, who has returned to Paris from his London exile on June 4 and has published since then his new masterpiece *Fecondite* at Fasquelle. Cher Emile, vous nous avez manqué, we missed you so much, and we are happy to have you here with, this time forever I hope. I propose that at his solemn moment, at the dawn of a new century, each one will share with us his thoughts and wishes for the next 50, 100, 120 years... Anyhow, we'll not live to see if you were right.

Jacque Corot (aside) – And I'll share with you, dear audience, in aside remarks, my insights on the dramatis personae, as if I was the Greek Chorus, but I don't sing and am all by myself.

[Emile Zola](#) – Thank you my dear Ernesta, you are a true friend, it is indeed the first evening that I allow myself to celebrate because the tides are at last on our favor, not personally as I know that I'll never be elected to the [Academie Francaise](#) after 25 times that I tried, but at the national level, with the fulfillment of my wishes and of many others in France, as the Dreyfus Affair was only a symptom of the ailments of our nation, of Europe, of the world, the lack of justice, equality, freedom, fraternity, all the ideals of our centennial revolution, that are far from being achieved. What I mean is that on 9/9/99, a really historic date, the court rendered its verdict that Alfred [Dreyfus](#) had extenuating circumstances for his alleged treason and after our dear friend Alfred filed an appeal for a retrial he was released 12 days later. We are continuing to fight for an acquittal but in the meantime France needs civil peace and harmony, on the eve of the [Universal Exhibition of 1900](#), don't forget that the whole world is looking at us and we cannot afford to be divided. We'll continue to fight for what we really aspire for – freedom of association and secularism, justice and equality. If you shut up truth and bury it under the ground, it will but grow, and gather to itself such explosive power that the day it bursts through it will blow up everything in its way. We've proved in the last few years that la verite est en marche, we've started our journey towards truth and freedom, and we shall overcome some day, if not today, in 100, 120 years from now. I believe in a better future, because when there is no hope in the future, the present appears atrociously bitter. I have but one passion: to enlighten those who have been kept in the dark, in the name of humanity which has suffered so much and is entitled to happiness. My fiery protest is simply the cry of my very soul. Actually, those are the subjects of my next novels and what I intend to write in the next 30 years will eclipse what I have achieved in the previous 30 years, the *Rougon-Macquart*, *les trois villes*, my essays. I am not even 60 and I have so much to do!

Jacque Corot (aside) – L'homme propose et Dieu dispose, Mann tracht und Gott lacht, my dear Emile... not 30, not 20, not 10, not even 5, you'll be assassinated because of your beliefs within a couple of years and it will be such a loss for humanity, for culture, for France!

Ernesta Stern – As you all know, our Salon is cosmopolitan and we try to gather here, if they live in Paris or visit it, prominent authors, artists and composers from all over Europe. I am honored to have with us here one of the best authors in the world - Lev Tolstoy. He loves us so much that half of his novel *War and Peace* is written in French, but his other novels are no

less brilliant Anna Karenina, the Death of Ivan Ilyich, Childhood, Boyhood and Youth. He is an author, a philosopher, a historian, but most of all he is the personification of humanity.

Lev Tolstoy – I wanted to tell you about my last book Resurrection published recently which exposes the injustice of man-made laws and the hypocrisy of the institutionalized church, but as far as I have heard I'll be preaching to the choir. That is why I want to travel into the past. I traveled many times to Europe but the trip which influenced me most was in 1860-1861 when I met Victor Hugo, his novel Les Miserables was a revelation to me, my meeting with Proudhon contributed much to my vision on education, and following this visit I returned to Yasnaya Polyana and founded 13 schools for the Children of Russia's peasants who had just been emancipated from serfdom in 1861. You mentioned War and Peace as a novel but it is not at all a novel, it is a historical canvas where hundreds of characters are being depicted, many historical and others fictional. France is not only like a mother tongue, when I wrote this book I really thought like a Frenchman and Russian as I understand both people perfectly well and I have empathy for both of them, although we were allegedly enemies. I believe that Napoleon and Alexander I were completely insignificant as compared to the historic perspective. I write my books primarily for the examination of social and political issues, because everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself, and that is what matters after all. And if I have influenced thousands of people to start changing the world by reading my books I have accomplished my task on earth. Don't try to be perfect, because otherwise you'll never be content. I think that most of you here are freethinkers because you are willing to use your minds without prejudice and without fearing to understand things that clash with your own customs, privileges, or beliefs. Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority shares in it in France, in England, in Italy, in Germany and especially in Russia. You Zola, Shaw and Wilde, each in his own way, are individuals who think differently from the majority, and this does not mean that you are wrong, on the contrary it may prove that you are right, as a very wise man present here, Henrik Ibsen, said in An enemy of the people. And so Zola was right when he wrote his article J'accuse. And I think that I am right too, although I have much more influence and adherence outside Russia than in my own country, but Hugo had to go on exile, and so Proudhon, Wilde, Ibsen & Zola. You asked me to try and forecast what will be the fate of humanity, that I don't know, but what I do know is that the sole meaning of life is to serve humanity. Without knowing what you are and why you are on earth life is impossible, and finally, the changes in your life must come from the impossibility to live otherwise than according to the demands of your conscience.

Jacque Corot (aside) – You are so wise Tolstoy that you stand above all of us, you know it all, and you have achieved in your life more than whole nations did. It is however a pity that such Russian giants as you, Chekhov and Dostoevsky have not managed to influence your own people, as much as Ibsen has influenced Norwegians or Zola has influenced his compatriots.

Ernesta Stern – You mentioned Ibsen dear Tolstoy and indeed we have tonight a miraculous mixture of giants, older and wise men as Tolstoy, Ibsen, Clemenceau, Jose Echegaray, Monet and Zola, with young and brilliant people as Rostand, Wilde, Shaw, Puccini, Caruso, Debussy and Herzl. Henrik Ibsen is one of us, he spent 27 years most of his adult life in Italy and Germany far away from his Norway. He wrote there his masterpieces A doll's house, An enemy of the people, The pillars of society, Ghosts, The Wild Duck, Hedda Gabler. He returned triumphantly to Kristiania in Norway in 1891, where he has written additional masterpieces, the latest was published recently – When we dead awaken. His plays are staged all over Europe, the festivities of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday a year ago were endless. It is a cliché if I would say that Henrik Ibsen is the conscience of Europe, so I would confine myself into saying that he is the conscience of the family, of society, of us women whom he knows best.

Henrik Ibsen – It is amazing how great minds think alike. You called your new book, dear Tolstoy, Resurrection, and this is exactly the name of my last play The Resurrection Day which finally I called “When we dead awaken”. And indeed I fully agree that although we are thinking on resurrection being old as we are, a miracle has happened and we met here and elsewhere young and talented authors who resurrect us, and who will be more pioneering than us. I was always perceived to be controversial because I tackled the most important dilemmas of family and society, which are today revolutionary but in 50 or 100 years will become the consensus. What we think today that they are social questions will be perceived tomorrow psychological issues, as has explained to me the young Sigmund Freud tonight. Women liberation or Nora’s identity dilemmas will be no more an issue 100 years from now, as it will be selbstverständlich that women are entitled to their own career and care of the children and the house has to be divided equally between men and women. We Scandinavians will start with it but all Europe will rally and maybe even Asia and Africa as well if they will set free from fundamentalism. Not that I am a great believer in democracy, as I believe that at present the stupid people are in absolute majority all over the world, the majority is never right until it does right. I have arrived to all these insights being in exile, but mostly being alone, as the strongest men are those who stand alone. All the pioneers, the social reformers will continue to be perceived as enemies of the people even in 120 years from now and they will pay the price, as you should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth. I am more optimistic about women liberation than about democracy and social justice. The world will no more be able to overlook the fact that women have duties to themselves, not only to their husbands and children. It took 20 years before the authorities allowed Ghosts to be performed in Norway and each new play that I wrote had an explosive effect on intellectual circles. That is why my plays were promptly translated into German, French and English, during the decade following the initial publication. The topics that I raise in my plays are so relevant and explosive that they became the centre of every conversation at every social gathering in Kristiania, and the hostess begged her guests not to mention Ibsen’s new play.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Ibsen is probably the best playwright ever, he sounds modern in 1900 as in 2000, but so do Shakespeare and Moliere. He proves that you don’t need to come from one of the leading cultures in order to become immortal, even a small country as Norway can contribute to world culture as large countries like Russia, England and France. However, this is true only in a few exceptions as small countries may contribute giants like Ibsen, Strindberg, Andersen, Munch, Grieg, or Kafka, but those will be rare cases for each of the countries as compared to the hundreds of prominent authors and artists in the larger countries.

Ernesta Stern – Emile Zola mentioned before that we share so much in common, that it will be a waste to remain divided. Actually, this is the motto of our dear President Emile Loubet and our beloved Prime Minister Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, who settled at last the Dreyfus Affair. I have invited both of them to our reveillon but Pierre and Marie, his sculptor wife that you all know, as well as Emile and his wife Marie-Louise, preferred to celebrate in private, they are so modest these two couples, completely the opposite of our late president Felix Faure, to whom you addressed your famous article J’accuse in L’Aurore, dear Emile. No need to remind you in what circumstances our Felix died, we all know that he was with his mistress Meg – Marguerite Steinheil, both of them were with us last year, they came for just a few moments, because as you know le palais de l’Elysee is just en face. Anyhow, tonight we have another friend, who retired from politics in 1893 but I am convinced that when he’ll return it will be as prime minister, but in the meanwhile he contributes immensely to France with his newspaper L’Aurore, taking an active & courageous part as a supporter of Dreyfus, Zola and the Dreyfusards, an opponent to the anti-Semitic and nationalist campaigns, in hundreds of articles, at the detriment of his political career but at the benefit of the conscience of France.

Georges Clemenceau – I mourn as you do our dear friend Felix Faure who was with us last year but unlike you I think that he had the best of deaths, probably shouting “Heaven, I’m in Heaven” until God, in whom I don’t believe being a mecreant as you all know, complied to his wishes, taking him to Heaven. The only obituary that I can think of is: «Il se voulait César, mais ne fut que Pompée », but I don’t want to corrupt young Edmond Rostand.

Oscar Wilde – Don’t you worry Edmond, I can explain it to you later if you wish so.

Georges Clemenceau – Personally I believe that by entering nothingness, he must have felt at home. However, dear Ernesta, to answer your question, I do believe that within a few years church will be separated from the state, we’ll recover Alsace and Lorraine, and France will have a brilliant future, but for that you have to be strong, to stand firm on your principles, implement social reforms and passing a law on 8-hour-day work to all workers. Because, whether we like it or not, whether it pleases us or shocks us, the French Revolution is a bloc from which nothing can be separated, because historical truth does not permit it. The Revolution is not finished, it is still continuing, we are actors in it, the same men are still in conflict with the same enemies. The struggle will go on, until the final day of victory, and until that day we will not allow anyone to throw mud at the Revolution. I believe in revolution, in a secular republic, in patriotism not nationalism. I’m not like the jury of the tribunal that accused you, my dear Emile, as I told them: “Your verdict will be less upon us than upon yourselves. We appear before you, you appear before history!” and indeed history has proved who was right and who was wrong. It’ll be a catastrophe to leave to those military officers the fate of France, as we might lose the war against the Germans when it will occur and it will occur. We are the true patriots, they are just a caricature that will crumble in front of the enemy, they are “courageous” towards Dreyfus, towards the weak, but cowards towards the strong enemy! Finally, we have to find the middle way between pacifism and militarism.

Jacque Corot (aside) – A day will come that you’ll be remembered as the best prime minister of France’s third republic, you’ll be called The Tiger, win the war, quite the opposite of the weaklings in France’s late thirties, you’ll become also the role model of Churchill.

Ernesta Stern – As Wilde intervened, I’ll present you to those guests who don’t know you yet if it’s at all possible. So, Oscar Wilde thanks for coming from Saint-Germain to our Faubourg, as you have chosen to live in France, even writing your fantastic play Salome in French, which was produced only in Paris, I wonder if it is because of the dance of the seven veils.

Oscar Wilde – Thank you dear Ernesta, as a matter of fact, I had quite a dilemma choosing between the reveillon dinner at our Hotel d’Alsace and yours, but ultimately I’ve decided to come because of the excellent guests that you have invited - so many artists and composers, Caruso, Puccini, and even my compatriots Shaw and one which I have invited, Henry James, the famous American/English author, a good friend of Zola, who recently published one of the novels I like most, The Turn of the Screw. He is here with his young friend the Norwegian/American sculptor who lives in Rome Hendrik Christian Andersen, don’t confuse him with the Danish Andersen. It is no secret why I have left forever England and the hypocrite Victorian society, only in France one can feel truly free and I enjoy every moment of my stay, although my health is quite precarious after the long years in jail which I have described in The Ballad of Reading Gaol, which only recently was attributed to me. If you ask me what do I wish for the next 120 years it is that in 2020 people will disclose overtly their sexual orientations and still succeed as prime ministers, authors, actresses, musicians, kings...

But seeking justice for homosexuals does not turn me into a ferocious fighter for social justice or for justice to Dreyfus. Very few of the human rights campaigners stood by me at the time



of my conviction. As a matter of fact Zola, a strict moralist, had refused to sign a petition on my behalf when I was sentenced to jail. And I reciprocated by refusing to co-operate with him against Esterhazi. You might wonder how come that I associate with such dubious people as Esterhazi, but since my release from Reading Gaol, I am attracted to thieves, liars and assassins, as I find them more interesting than honest men, something to do with the seduction of sin and the kingdom of the wicked. Esterhazi confessed to me at a dinner one night that he had been selling secret military intelligence to the Germans. I have nothing against this Esterhazi, whom I find unkempt and a crook, but he admired my witticisms, and very few do so lately. You may be shocked that I feel largely indifferent to the poor Dreyfus and to anti-Semitism in general and I care very little for the Dreyfusards. I don't agree with Marx that all those who are wronged by the bourgeois society should unite, on the contrary let each one seek to achieve his own justice. So I was unperturbed by Esterhazi's confession, he was drunk anyhow, but not so Chris Healy who was with me and contacted Zola. Zola contacted journalists and events at last were set in train that would expose and destroy the whole rotten edifice that had been built in the case of Captain Dreyfus. La morale de cette histoire is, dear Ernesta, that ultimately I was pivotal in obtaining justice for Dreyfus, reluctantly, without my cooperation, but nevertheless my dinner with Esterhazi changed the face of history.

This is what I believe, not obtaining justice or equality, as you do, Emile and Georges, because it is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious, there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all. Yet, I am a dreamer. For a dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world. Otherwise I am not too optimistic about the fate of humanity, as I know that a good friend will always stab you in the front and hearts are made to be broken. But if I don't believe in the future, what is left for us if not death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no tomorrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. But cheer up, a new century is born!

Ernesta asked me to read for you the last stanzas of my poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* qui fait fureur and was sold in thousands of copies. I told her it was too gloomy but she insisted.

(We watch on the screen photos of poverty, jails & violence in Victorian England & Ireland, photos of imperialistic wars, while we hear Wilde reading from *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*)

Oscar Wilde -

In Reading gaol by Reading town  
 There is a pit of shame,  
 And in it lies a wretched man  
 Eaten by teeth of flame,  
 In a burning winding-sheet he lies,  
 And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,  
 In silence let him lie:  
 No need to waste the foolish tear,  
 Or heave the windy sigh:  
 The man had killed the thing he loved,  
 And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,

By all let this be heard,  
 Some do it with a bitter look,  
 Some with a flattering word,  
 The coward does it with a kiss,  
 The brave man with a sword.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Yes, dear Oscar, you were right, it took more than 50, more than 100 years, until the prime ministers of Iceland and Serbia were lesbians, of Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland were gays. Even gay and lesbian marriages are allowed in many important countries, and yet they have to fight for recognition in most countries of the world.

Ernesta Stern – As we have tonight tens of guests I present each one of you and we hold our conversation in French, that all of you know perfectly well, and some of you are really polyglots speaking most of the cultural languages of Europe, as we cannot truly understand the subtleties of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, dear Oscar, if we don't master English, as you need also to understand Italian in order to fully appreciate Gabriele d'Annunzio's *La città morta*, although the premiere of your play, *Gabriele*, was only in Paris last year at the Theatre de la Renaissance, with you Sarah Bernhardt. It was a brilliant idea to write a play following the public interest on archeology, after the successful excavations of Troy and Mycenae by the German Heinrich Schliemann. The flavor of the original is lost as can tell you here our Spanish friend Jose Echegaray with his play *El Gran Galeoto*, translated into English for the Shaftesbury production a decade ago. Dear Anton Chekhov, I read in Russian your most recent play *Дядя Ваня*, *Dyádyá Ványá*, *Uncle Vanya*, which was premiered last month at the Moscow Art Theater and received favorably. I think it is a masterpiece and you'll have much success in France and over the world, but of course nothing can compare to the sadness and melancholy in the Russian original. You were so kind to bring with you here the director and actor Konstantin Stanislavski and the brilliant actress Olga Knipper. My Austrian friend Arthur Schnitzler let me read yesterday his new play *Reigen* in German, it is not even printed and of course was not published or staged. *La Ronde* or *Reigen* is a round dance, portrayed in the English rhyme *Ring a Ring o'Roses*, as you can tell us dear Oscar. This sensational play scrutinizes the sexual morality and class ideology of our times through successive encounters between pairs of characters before or after sexual encounters. By choosing characters across all levels of society, the play offers social commentary on how sexual contact transgresses class boundaries. Believe me, the play will be sensational and I foresee for it a tremendous success provided that brave theaters will have the courage to stage it, if not today maybe in 20 years from now, although the German acerbic sense of humor might be lost in the translation. And the same reservations apply to Henrik Ibsen's *En Folkefiende*, whom you heard before. Believe me, it is worthwhile to learn Norwegian or Danish just to understand better this extraordinary and revolutionary play, and you should explain to me dear Henrik what is the difference between written Danish and Norwegian if there is any at all. And how can you appreciate *Cyrano* if you don't master French? You have mentioned your compatriots, dear Oscar, and I am so pleased to have here at our dinner George Bernard Shaw, whose play *Arms and the Man* is my favorite, and also has to be read and seen in English. He befriended Zola in his London exile, as they share similar social values. Shaw was delighted to come to Paris and meet so many friends in the legion of social fighters – Zola, Ibsen, Clemenceau...

George Bernard Shaw – I don't share with Emile only political and social views, we denounce together as well Victorien Sardou's plays, although he is extremely popular in your country, especially after the tremendous success of *Madame Sans-Gené*. He exalts the mechanics of playmaking at the expense of honest characterization and serious content, which I call "Sardoodledom". He writes well-made plays, creates an illusion of life, exactly the opposite

of the realistic elements of Zola's novels and my plays. Yet Sardou was elected to the Academie Francaise and Emile was not, what an aberration. When shall we understand that without art, true art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable, as you use a glass mirror to see your face; but you use works of art to see your soul. Literature's purpose is to improve our lives, not only to entertain us, we have a social mission on earth, to denounce hypocrisy, bigotry, injustice, poverty, racism, tyranny. But I am not a blind supporter of democracy, as democracy is just a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve. And the people may elect presidents who will rule even worse than absolute kings. We shall arrive to the conclusion what is the best form of government by trial and error, as a life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing. Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time. And if I have a wish it is that within 50 years, if I am still alive, England and France will achieve the welfare of their population, but not only them - the whole of Europe!

Jacque Corot (aside)– Yes George, you managed to live as wished until 1950 and at the age of 94 you could witness European welfare state, based on Leon Blum's reforms, and Clement Attlee's aim to maintain full employment, a mixed economy and a greatly enlarged system of social services provided by the state. You were a prophet and changed the attitude of society.

Ernesta Stern – We have here another guest from London – it is our friend Claude Monet, who spends most of his time in London with his son nowadays but agreed to come just for the holidays to Paris. Well, actually, to tell the truth he divides his time between his lovely house and garden at Giverny, which I visited. Maybe Claude you can tell us what are you painting?

Claude Monet – First of all, as a fervent Dreyfusard, I want to congratulate all of you on your successes, and especially you dear Emile who have returned from exile. A few months ago I began painting in Giverny the water lilies, you can ask what is the purpose of painting over and over water lilies, but I see there an extraordinary opportunity to paint their alternating light and mirror-like reflections and it quite concurs with what I am painting now in London where I paint Charing Cross Bridge, with the same concept of light and impressions, as with the Rouen Cathedral, the Poplars and the water lilies. Color is my day-long obsession, joy and torment. I would like to paint the way a bird sings. It's on the strength of observation and reflection that one finds a way. So we must dig and delve unceasingly. Every day I discover more and more beautiful things. It's enough to drive one mad. I have such a desire to do everything, my head is bursting with it. The essence of the motif is the mirror of water, whose appearance alters at every moment. Nevertheless, my work is quite different from Matisse's works, Cezanne's or Gauguin's. I think that I am the modernist, but I may be mistaken. And who knows, if I started to decompose light tomorrow a young painter would decompose a nude, maybe he has even started working, here in Paris, and will expose his works tomorrow.

Jacque Corot (aside) – You were so right Claude. Pablo Picasso, who is only 19 will come within a few months to Paris and in 1907 will expose his famous Les demoiselles d'Avignon, which revolutionized modern art. But the friendship between the two Dreyfusards – Monet and Clemenceau resulted in building one of the most exhilarating museums, the Orangerie, to host Monet's Water Lilies, as Monet is also a precursor of Modern Art, no less than Picasso.

Ernesta Stern – I have brought here at our Salon some of Claude's latest masterpieces that you can watch. He is the painter that I love most and is the accomplished artist and humanist. While you watch Monet's paintings, Debussy will play for us on the piano his Arabesques.

(We can watch Monet's paintings on the screen, while we hear Debussy's piano Arabesques)

Ernesta Stern – Many of you are over 50, except Sarah Bernhardt who is forever young, but we have also some young artists, as our dear Claude Debussy, another Claude. I like so much his music, which is quite the opposite of Wagner's cacophony whom I abhor, not only because he was such an anti-Semite. Debussy is impressionism in music, poetry. He revolutionized music with *Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune*, and he played now *Arabesques*.

Claude Debussy – I agree with what you said Monet, that there is much in common between us, as there is nothing more musical than a sunset. Music is the arithmetic of sounds as optics is the geometry of light, music is the silence between the notes, music is the expression of the movement of the waters, the play of curves described by changing breezes, I wish to sing of my interior visions with the naive candour of a child. I love music passionately. And because I love it I try to free it from barren traditions that stifle it. Some people wish above all to conform to the rules, I wish only to render what I can hear. There is no theory. You have only to listen. Pleasure is the law. Extreme complication is contrary to art. Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art. Composers aren't daring enough. They're afraid of that sacred idol called 'common sense', which is the most dreadful thing I know - after all, it's no more than a religion founded to excuse the ubiquity of imbeciles! Beauty must appeal to the senses, must provide us with immediate enjoyment, must impress us or insinuate itself into us without any effort on our part. Some people call me a revolutionary, but if we look at the works of Bach ... on each page we discover things which we thought were born only yesterday, from delightful arabesques to an overflowing of religious feeling greater than anything we have since discovered. How much has to be explored and discarded before reaching the naked flesh of feeling. The sound of the sea, the curve of a horizon, wind in leaves, the cry of a bird leave manifold impression in us. And suddenly, without our wishing it at all, one of these memories spills from us and finds expression in musical language... I want to sing my interior landscape with the simple artlessness of a child. So what we do common, dear Monet, is to collect impressions and we are not in a hurry to write them down.

Jacque Corot (aside) – I am speechless from the dissertation of Debussy, which is a verbatim account of what he has said in his lifetime, word by word. The two Claudes – Monet and Debussy – have sung and painted an ode to minimalism, condensing the essence of expression in art, as opposed to the huge canvases of Gericault and endless operas of Wagner.

Ernesta Stern – Allow me, dear friends, to present now a flamboyant composer, Giacomo Puccini, we all thought that he reached the peak of art with his *La Boheme*, with *Manon Lescaut*, all based on French themes and authors, as Giacomo you may be Italian by birth, but you are one of us, more French than the Frenchmen. And this time he told me that his new opera *Tosca* is on an Italian theme, but is based on a work by a French author. We all were at Victorien Sardou's premiere of his play *La Tosca*, 12 years ago at the Theatre de la Porte Saint-Martin with the one and only Sarah Bernhardt who is with us tonight. I enjoyed it despite negative reviews from the Paris critics, and we just heard by Shaw why he and Zola don't like too much Sardou. It was a most successful play and Sarah toured with it throughout the world for a few years, but she has another surprise for us that she'll disclose later on. Nevertheless, I managed to convince our dear Puccini who is now rehearsing his new opera at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, to come to Paris for a couple of days, because cultural Paris is the place to be at the dawn of the new century, the last one of the second millennium. Actually, he still didn't want to come, so I told him that as we are compatriots, being born in Trieste in December, I'll not tell you how many years ago, this would be my birthday present!

Giacomo Puccini – My dear friends, it is indeed such a pleasure to be here at your Salon, I invite you all to the premiere that shall be held within a few days in Rome. Don't pay

attention to the warnings of an anarchist bombing of the theatre, the premiere will be attended by Queen Margherita, Luigi Pelloux our prime minister, and even my rivals as Mascagni and Cilea will come. This time I am attempting a foray into verismo, with a realistic depiction of many facets, including violence. I wanted very much to adapt Sardou's play since I saw it a decade ago. I felt that it was the opera I needed, with no overblown proportions, no elaborate spectacle, no excessive amount of music. I do assure you, dear Ernesta, that as you abhor Wagner, I was not influenced by him in my new opera, and if I employ musical signatures for the opera's characters and emotions, it does not mean that I have adopted his leitmotifs, this opera is a pure Puccini opera, no more no less. I only have two regrets, that I couldn't take Arturo Toscanini to conduct my opera, being fully engaged at La Scala in Milan and that the young Enrico Caruso whom I wanted to create the role of Cavaradossi in my opera was passed over in favor of a more experienced singer, but I have brought them with me, and Caruso will sing for you some of the most beloved arias. I'll say just one word of warning – when Caruso auditioned for me in 1897, I exclaimed: “Who sent you to me? God himself?”

Enrico Caruso – Nobody expects to hear my insights at such a young age, but I was asked what the secret of my singing is. I had always sung, as far back as I can remember, for the pure love of it. My voice was contralto, and I sang in a church in Naples from fourteen till I was eighteen. To become a singer requires work, work, and again, work! I know that I am a singer and an actor, yet in order to give the public the impression that I am neither one nor the other, but the real man conceived by the author, I have to feel and to think as the man the author had in mind. I never step upon a stage without asking myself whether I will succeed in finishing the opera. The fact is that a conscientious singer is never sure of himself or of anything. He is ever in the hands of Destiny. And, finally, I know that I have to save my voice in order to sing a few more times in my career. But when I go before the audience, when I hear the music and begin to sing, I cannot hold back. I give the best there is in me. I give all!

I'll sing for you tonight first of all, and it is a surprise for you caro Puccini, E lucevan le stele from Tosca, so at least here I'll be Cavaradossi, then I'll sing from La Boheme as Rodolfo Che gelida manina and O Soave fanciulla with a young and talented Mimi, and finally from Puccini's repertoire – Donna non vidi mai, as Chevalier from Manon Lescaut. Then, I'll sing some arias from my Verdi's repertoire – La donna e mobile as the Duke from Rigoletto of course, Libiamo ne lieti calici/Brindisi as Alfredo with another talented Violetta, from La Traviata, and Celeste Aida as Radames from Aida. To finish my Italian repertoire I'll sing Una furtive lagrima as Nemorino in Donizetti's L'Elisir d'amore, and from Paglacci Ridi Pagliaccio as Canio. You probably met Ruggiero Leoncavallo from the years he lived in Paris and he has of course also a French wife Berthe Rambaud. And this brings me to the final part of my performance, unless there is time also for Italian songs, the French arias – from Bizet's Carmen – as Jose – La fleur que tu m'avais jetee, Nadir's aria je crois entendre encore in Les pecheurs de perles, and from Gounod's Faust, as Faust, the aria Salut demeure chaste et pure.

(We see and hear the original Caruso on the screen, then we hear 12 opera arias by the actor)

Jacque Corot (aside) – What a treat! Caruso and Puccini, Monet and Debussy, what a fine artistic taste has this beloved Ernesta, I just need to hear Sarah Bernhardt as Rostand's L'Aiglon, and it might become the most exhilarating cultural night of my first 80 years.

Ernesta Stern – I promised you a surprise, I'll let our young friend Edmond Rostand, whom you all know after the unforgettable premiere of Cyrano, to tell you about it de vive voix.

Edmond Rostand – I have a problem! A couple of years ago, when I was only 29, most of you here were present at one of the most astounding successes in French Theater, the premiere of

my *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Constant Coquelin, here with us. It came as a total surprise for me as well as for everybody. It took me 18 days to write the play, the rehearsals were chaotic, yet the audience at the Theatre de la Porte Saint-Martin was exhilarated and a full hour after the curtain fell, they still applauded. Since then it was played all over the world for hundreds of times, in Paris only for 300 consecutive nights. Dear Sarah Bernhardt who was playing on the night of the premiere in another play came only for the last act. She made me promise that she'll have a leading role on my next play. We started to collaborate in 1895 when she created the role of Melisandre in my *La princesse lointaine* at the Theatre de la Renaissance. When she performed it in London later the same year it received a bad review by you George Bernard Shaw, but we forgive you as you are biased only for realistic plays. Sarah, undeterred asked me to write another play for her. She created the role of Photine in *La Samaritaine* in April 1897 at the same theater, and I fell satisfied that I had proven to the public that I am more than a writer of comedies. And of course right after that came *Cyrano*. So I had two challenges – to prove that I can surpass myself in my next play and even more important – to write a play where our dear Sarah will have the role of her life. And all of you know how difficult it is, especially after Sarah triumphed recently as Hamlet. But that gave me an idea, why not create for her a role of a young man, as in Hamlet but a Frenchman, and who is more French than the son of Napoleon – L'Aiglon, the young eagle, the Duke of Reichstadt. This would be the ideal role for Sarah Bernhardt. She was enthusiastic and I started to write the play in six acts – 4 hours long that will premiere within a few weeks and that we are rehearsing at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, the new name of the Theatre Lyrique, but she'll tell you all about it in a few moments and, surprise, she will play some monologues of our new play. What can I add? That I hope that my new play will be better and more successful than *Cyrano*, if not for my humble talent at least for the formidable performance of Bernhardt.

As for the future, I just hope that when I am aged 50 my plays will still be performed, and that L'Aiglon in 1950 will be performed successfully from Paris to Cairo, from London to New York, *Cyrano* in 2000 will be performed from Moscow to Palestine, from Buenos Aires to Tokyo, maybe also as an opera, a ballet, or even a film in this new media. What might happen in 2020, as you asked dear Ernesta? I hope that by then the world will not be ruined by world wars, as it almost happened last year because of the Fashoda Incident, or a war with Germany, Turkey, Russia, or even a pandemic, a flu of some sort, that can kill me and millions others, but these may happen in 1920, in 1940, or 1914, or 1918. I am not so optimistic as Zola here who wants to live and create until 90, I'll be happy if I can create until I reach your age Emile of 60. I noticed that I spoke too much, but what can I do if I'm used to write 6-acts plays?

Jacque Corot (aside) – It is true that you write 4 hours-long plays and in verse on top of that, but unlike Sardou's plays your plays are immortal and *Cyrano* is probably the most popular play in the world because of his eternal themes. Every time that I see *Cyrano* or L'Aiglon I am thrilled as in the first time, and last but not least – *Cyrano* died at the age of 36, L'Aiglon died at the age of 21, and you, dear Edmond, will die at the age of 50 from the Spanish Flu.

Sarah Bernhardt - What can I say? If I was ten years younger, at the age of Edmond Rostand, I would seduce him, but I am too old for him, he loves too much his young wife Rosemonde Gerard. And how can I compete with a poetess as talented as you dear Rosemonde who wrote at the age of 18 the immortal lines: "For, you see, each day I love you more, Today more than yesterday and less than tomorrow." Immediately after that he married you. I plan to make a record of this poem *Les Vieux*, whenever I find the time to do it, imagine, a 18 youngster writes a poem on lovers who grow older together. Maybe you don't know but we once played together as Rosemonde was Roxane and I was *Cyrano*. But seriously, Edmond and I are a winning couple at least on the theater and together we'll surpass Rostand's success

of *Cyrano* with our new play *L'Aiglon*. What could be more successful than this play to be performed during the Exposition Universelle in Paris, a patriotic subject about Napoleon, and I can tell you a story or two about that, as I was intimately involved with Napoleon's family as you all know, although not with Napoleon himself, as those who maintain that I am old are joking about. Anyhow, Edmond didn't want me to work too hard and he distributed the roles evenly with many other actors. I hope that this role will become one of my signature roles, maybe my magnum opus, and not just a gimmick of an old lady playing a 21 years-old man.

This year I opened my own theater with a revival of Sardou's *La Tosca* (yes Puccini, what a small world!), as well as revivals of my major successes – *Phedre*, *Theodora*, *Gismonda*, *La Dame aux Camélias*, *Dalila*, and Rostand's *La Samaritaine*. I had an unprecedented success with *Hamlet*, in a prose adaptation which I had commissioned from Eugene Morand and Marcel Schwob. I didn't play *Hamlet* as most of the other players, but in a direct, natural and very feminine way, as *Hamlet's* question To be or not to be, may well be To be or not to be a man or a woman. And as usual the British critics were not pleased with my interpretation of their hero, but unlike you my dear George that I cannot be cross with you, as all the women succumb to your charm, I told this despicable Max Beerbohm what I truly think of him.

Oscar Wilde – All these long speeches make me dizzy, I am too weak to suffer them, can I at least smoke? And by the way, are you sure, dear Sarah, about *Hamlet's* sexual identity?

Sarah Bernhardt – I don't mind if you smoke and I don't care if you burn, and don't interfere anymore when I speak! I could volunteer to Max and George even more acerbic critics, as "Bernhardt is too prone to exaggerate her powers; she wants to play *Hamlet* when her appearance is more suitable to *King Lear*." Or "Bernhardt is so fond of playing male parts, as it is not male parts but male brains that she prefers". Anyhow, I need someone here to teach me the walk and posture of young cavalry officers to impersonate the young Duke. I have a problem as Marie-Louise is allegedly younger than me, although I am ageless, and how can I play her son? But I promise you that by the premiere the critics will say that I died (in the play not in real life, as I intend to outlive all of you) so I died as dying angels would die if they were allowed to. And the play will be so successful during the Exposition and after that it will run for years, and a standing-room place will cost as much as 600 gold francs. The play will inspire the creation of Bernhardt souvenirs, statuettes, medallions, fans, perfumes, postcards, pastries, cakes. As for the forecasts in 1950, 2000, 2020, I don't have to make any forecasts, as I intend to live until 2020 and experience personally what will happen to humanity!

Jacque Corot (aside) – Mark Twain said: "There are five kinds of actresses: bad actresses, fair actresses, good actresses, great actresses— and then there is Sarah Bernhardt". Rostand called her "the queen of the pose and the princess of the gesture", while Hugo praised her "golden voice". She made theatrical tours around the world, was one of the first prominent actresses to make sound recordings and to act in motion pictures. This summarizes quite well who Sarah Bernhardt was, as she personified (and lived) perfectly our century in all its aspects.

Ernesta Stern – Sarah has agreed to play in avant-premiere parts of her role in *L'Aiglon*. Coquelin, come here and be useful, you'll just have to say the replica "Vive l'Empereur!" Our dear Coquelin is forever linked to Bergerac, as he now plays in *Plus que reine* by Emile Bergerat and he is scheduled to tour in America with Sarah Bernhardt at Broadway's Garden Theatre in a production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Bernhardt playing Roxane. The Americans are planning to film with him the duel scene from *Cyrano* with sound recording on phonograph cylinder and it will have both color and sound, imagine! On their return to France both will continue to appear in *L'Aiglon* at Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. What a busy schedule!

(We watch Sarah Bernhardt in films, hear her voice from records, then the actress starts to recite Duke Reichstadt's monologues from Edmond Rostand's avant-premiere play L'Aiglon)

LE DUC Eh bien ! moi, sans pouvoir, sans titre, sans royaume, Moi qui ne suis qu'un souvenir dans un fantôme ! Moi, ce duc de Reichstadt qui, triste, ne peut rien Qu'errer sous les tilleuls de ce parc autrichien En gravant sur leurs troncs des N dans la mousse, Passant qu'on ne regarde un peu que lorsqu'il tousse ! Moi qui n'ai même plus le plus petit morceau De la moire rouge, hélas ! dans mon berceau ! Moi dont ils ont en vain constellé l'infortune ! (Il montre les deux plaques de sa poitrine.) Moi qui ne porte plus que deux croix au lieu d'Une ! Moi malade, exilé, prisonnier je ne peux Galoper sur le front des régiments pompeux En jetant aux héros des astres ! Mais j'espère, J'imagine... il me semble enfin que, fils d'un père Auquel un firmament a passé par les mains, Je dois, malgré tant d'ombre et tant de lendemains, Avoir au bout des doigts un peu d'étoile encore... Jean-Pierre-Séraphin Flambeau, je te décoire !

LE DUC Régner !... Régner ! — C'est dans ton vent, dont le parfum de gloire Commence à me rapatrier Qu'au moment de partir je devais venir boire Wagram, le coup de l'étrier ! Régner ! Qu'on va pouvoir servir de grandes causes Et se dévouer à présent ! Reconstruire, apaiser, faire de belles choses ! Ah ! Prokesch, que c'est amusant ! Prokesch, tous ces vieux rois dont les âmes sont sourdes, Oh ! comme ils doivent s'ennuyer ! J'ai les larmes aux yeux. Je me sens les mains lourdes Des grâces que je vais signer ! Peuple qui de ton sang écrivis la Légende, Voici le fils de l'Empereur ! Oh ! toute cette gloire, il faut qu'il te la rende. Et qu'il te la rende en bonheur ! Peuple, on m'a trop menti pour que je sache feindre ! J'ai trop souffert pour t'oublier ! Liberté, Liberté, tu n'auras rien à craindre D'un prince qui fut prisonnier ! La guerre, désormais, ce n'est plus la conquête, Mais c'est le droit que l'on défend ! (Ah ! Je, vois une mère, au-dessus de sa tête Élever vers moi son enfant !) D'autres noms, désormais, je veux qu'on s'émerveille Que Wagram et que Rovigo Mon père aurait voulu faire prince Corneille Je ferai duc Victor Hugo ! Je ferai... je ferai... je veux faire... je rêve... (Il va et vient, s'enivrant, s'enfiévrant ; on s'écarte avec respect.) Ah ! je vais régner ! J'ai vingt ans ! Une aile de jeunesse et d'amour me soulève ! Ma Capitale, tu m'attends ! Soleil sur les drapeaux ! multitudes grisées ! Ô retour, retour triomphal ! Parfum des marronniers de ces Champs-Élysées Que je vais descendre à cheval ! Il m'acclamera donc, ce grand Paris farouche ! Tous les fusils seront fleuris ! On doit croire embrasser la France sur la bouche Lorsqu'on est aimé de Paris ! Paris ! j'entends déjà tes cloches !

LE DUC Et tous ces bras ! tous ces bras que je vois ! Tous ces poignets sans mains, toutes ces mains sans doigts ! Monstrueuse moisson qu'un large vent qui passe Semble coucher vers moi pour me maudire !... (Et défaillant, jetant en avant des mains suppliantes.) Grâce ! Grâce, vieux cuirassier qui tends en gémissant D'atroces gants crispins aux manchettes de sang ! Grâce, pauvre petit voltigeur de la Garde Qui lèves lentement cette face hagarde ! — Ne me regardez pas avec ces yeux ! — Pourquoi Rampez-vous, tout d'un coup, en silence, vers moi ? Dieu ! vous voulez crier quelque chose, il me semble !... Pourquoi reprenez-vous haleine tous ensemble ? Pourquoi vous ouvrez-vous, bouches pleines d'horreur ? (Et courbé par l'épouvante, voulant fuir, ne pas entendre :) Quoi ? Qu'allez-vous crier ? Quoi ?

TOUTES LES VOIX Vive l'Empereur !

LE DUC, tombant à genoux. Ah ! oui ! c'est le pardon à cause de la gloire ! (Il dit doucement et tristement à la Plaine :) Merci. (Et se relevant :) Mais j'ai compris. Je suis expiatoire. Tout n'était pas payé. Je complète le prix. Oui, je devais venir dans ce champ. J'ai compris. Il fallait qu'au-dessus de ces morts je devinsse Cette longue blancheur, toujours,



toujours plus mince, Qui, renonçant, priant, demandant à souffrir, S'allonge pour se tendre, et mincit pour s'offrir ! Et lorsque entre le ciel et le champ de bataille, Là, de toute mon âme et de toute ma taille, Je me dresse, — je sens que je monte, je sens Qu'exhalant ses brouillards comme un énorme encens, Toute la plaine monte afin de mieux me tendre Au grand ciel apaisé qui commence à descendre, Et je sens qu'il est juste et providentiel Que le champ de bataille ainsi me tende au ciel, Et m'offre, pour pouvoir, après cet Offertoire, Porter plus purement son titre de victoire ! (Il se dresse en haut du tertre, tout petit dans l'immense plaine, et se détachant les bras en croix, sur le ciel.) Prends-moi ! prends-moi, Wagram ! et, rançon de jadis, Fils qui s'offre en échange, hélas, de tant de fils, Au-dessus de la brume effrayante où tu bouges, Élève-moi, tout blanc, Wagram, dans tes mains Il le faut, je le sais, je le sens, je le veux, rouges ! Puisqu'un souffle a passé ce soir dans mes cheveux, Puisque par des frissons mon âme est avertie, Et puisque mon costume est blanc comme une hostie ! (Il murmure comme si quelqu'un seulement devait l'entendre.) Père ! à tant de malheur que peut-on reprocher ? Chut !... J'ajoute tout bas Schoenbrunn à ton rocher ! (Il reste un moment les yeux fermés, et dit :) C'est fait !... (L'aube commence à poindre... Il reprend d'une voix forte :) Mais à l'instant où l'aiglon se résigne À la mort innocente et ployante d'un cygne, Comme cloué dans l'ombre à quelque haut portail, Il devient le sublime et doux épouvantail Qui chasse les corbeaux et ramène les aigles ! Vous n'avez plus le droit de crier, champs de seigles ! Plus d'affreux rampements sous ces bas arbrisseaux : J'ai nettoyé le vent et lavé les ruisseaux ! Il ne doit plus rester, plaine, dans tes rafales, Que les bruits de la Gloire et les voix triomphales ! (Tout se dore. Le vent chante.) Oui ! j'ai bien mérité d'entendre maintenant Ce qui fut gémissant devenir claironnant !... (De vagues trompettes sonnent. Une rumeur fière s'élève. Les Voix, qui gémissaient tout à l'heure, lancent maintenant des appels, des ordres ardents.) De voir ce qui traînait de triste au ras des chaumes S'enlever tout d'un coup en galops de fantômes ! (Des brumes qui s'envolent semblent galoper. On entend un bruit de chevauchée.) LES VOIX, au loin. En avant !

LE DUC Le berceau dont Paris m'a fait don ! Mon splendide berceau, dessiné par Prudhon ! J'ai dormi dans sa barque aux balustres de nacre, Bébé dont le baptême eut la pompe d'un sacre ! — Approchez ce berceau du petit lit de camp Où mon père a dormi dans cette chambre, quand La Victoire éventait son sommeil de ses ailes ! (Le berceau est maintenant contre le petit lit.) Plus près, — faites frôler le drap par les dentelles ! Oh ! comme mon berceau touche mon lit de mort ! (Il met la main entre le berceau et le lit en murmurant.) Ma vie est là, dans la ruelle...

Ernesta Stern – Sarah wanted to recite some pages from my books as well – Au fil des pensees, Autour du Coeur, Quinze jours a Londres, but I've spared you this ordeal and I'll just hand you some copies of my books before you leave our modest home. In sharp contrast to L'Aiglon, I invite my friend Louis Lumiere to speak about his invention - cinematography.

Louis Lumiere – Well, dear Ernesta, this is a cultural evening and I am flattered that you agreed to speak to this distinguished audience about the curiosity of the Cinematographe. We didn't invent it of course, my brother Auguste and me, we just perfected an apparatus that took, printed and projected film here in Paris, at Salon Indien du Grand Café, exactly 5 years ago. We are pioneers only as we were the first to present projected, moving, photographic pictures to paying audience, 10 very short films, that you'll see in a moment and I hope that you'll enjoy them. There was quite a riot, as 2000 people wanted to watch the films and only 33 people were allowed to the premiere, one of them was you, dear Ernesta, who saw the tremendous potential of the industry. In the last few years movie theaters were open all over in France, in Italy, in Brussels and even in London. A lot of progress was done also in the United States, were Thomas Edison showed his improved Vitascope projector in 1896, the

first commercially successful projector in the US. I really don't know what will become from our invention, will it remain a curiosity, will it grow to be an art, what will happen in 10, 20, 50 years from now – will we watch films of two or four hours as your plays and operas with plays written especially for this media, of course films will need to be talking not silent as they are now, maybe also in colour, possibly with music, imagine what are the possibilities that culture will be spread all over the world, not just entertainment, that we'll watch Rostand's *Cyrano* in Bombay & Rio de Janeiro, Zola's *L'Argent* in New York, hear Puccini's *La Boheme* in Capetown & Peking, with translations into the local languages as well...

Jacque Corot (aside) – Not even in their wildest dreams the people gathered in Ernesta Stern's salon could imagine that within just a few years cinema will become the most popular entertainment all over the world, and will raise to be an art within one or two decades, eclipsing theater and opera, becoming the most important vehicle of culture to the masses.

Ernesta Stern – To accompany Lumiere's films which are silent of course we need modern music, but not classical music, something completely different. And I received recently from an American friend ragtime music, a completely bizarre music, composed by a young American named [Scott Joplin](#), whose father was a slave, and I am told that it is based on rhythms coming from African music with a modification of the march style popularized by [John Philip Sousa](#), with us tonight and who will be with us at the World Exposition in Paris. We'll hear two piano medleys, *qui font fureur aux Etats Unis*, they are called *Original Rags* and *Maple Leaf Rag*. But this is not the end of surprises. I have asked our dear Joseph Joachim, who'll be playing later on in a unique recital with [Edvard Grieg](#), who could play for us this music and he suggested that his protégé, the young Polish [Arthur Rubinstein](#) could do it. This young pianist, he is not even 13, is a prodigy with a photographic memory. I was sure that the child would be thrilled by the exposure to French Society, but he said that he is a serious classic performer, and not a cabaret pianist. His reputation was at stake, as he'll make his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in a few months, you understand, he has a reputation to maintain at the age of 12. Finally, after tough negotiations we compromised that he'll play the two medleys with the short films and after that he'll give us a short recital of piano compositions by Chopin, Brahms, and Mendelssohn. I heard him yesterday and I can assure you that he is unique. I invited this precocious teenager to move to Paris, I'm sure that he'll interact with the cream of our cultural society, composers, painters, authors and salonnières.

(While we watch the 10 short films by Lumiere, we hear Scott Joplin's ragtime piano music played by Arthur Rubinstein, 12, who continues with a short classical recital)

Ernesta Stern – I would like to introduce to you a dear friend who was completely anonymous until a few years ago, although he lived with us in Paris from 1892 to 1895, before he became the King of the Jews, and no need to say what happened to the last King of the Jews – Jesus. We met about five years ago in the courtyard of the Ecole Militaire in the Invalides, where our dear Alfred Dreyfus was formally degraded by having the rank insignia, buttons and braid cut from his uniform, his sword was broken, his heart was broken too, all that before silent ranks of soldiers, while a large crowd of onlookers around us shouted *Mort aux juifs!* Dreyfus cried out "I swear that I am innocent. I remain worthy of serving in the Army. Long live France! Long live the Army!" As a matter of fact no one knew if Dreyfus was really a traitor or not, but the incident proved how deep was anti-Semitism rooted in France. To me it was a personal shock as I was convinced that we the Jews were completely assimilated in France, but millions of Frenchmen didn't think so, and on the first occasion proved to us that we were Frenchmen as long that none of us is accused of a crime, conditional Frenchmen, *avec sursis*. Theodor Herzl was a correspondent of the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* and followed the

Dreyfus Affair. He was standing near me, and we were probably the only Jews who dared to come, I noticed how he was flabbergasted, il a ete completement bouleverse, it shattered all his beliefs. We kept in touch in the following years, but he'll tell you better than me about that.

Theodor Herzl – As a matter of fact I met many French Jews when I lived in Paris, most of them did not admit that they were Jews, some of them converted to Catholicism, and you were Ernesta one of the few who were proud of your origins. But you were right it shattered by belief that an assimilation of Jews in Europe was possible and in February 1896 I published my book *Der Judenstaat* to immediate acclaim and controversy. The book argued that the Jewish people should leave Europe for Palestine, their historic homeland. Only through a Jewish State could they avoid anti-Semitism, express their culture freely and practice their religion. I met important people and received a warm support from the Kaiser's family and presented my proposal to the Turkish Grand Vizier. The Turks even granted me a medal - the Commander's Cross of the Order of the Medjidie. Among the Jews the Eastern Jews were mostly enthusiastic by my ideas and the Zionist movement grew rapidly. In 1897 I founded the First Zionist Congress of Basel and was elected president of the Congress, and I am still president after three stormy Congresses. So, this is the story in a nutshell and to tell you the truth I am not sure what will be the outcome of my endeavors. I hope to live for at least 50 more years, as I am not even 40, to witness the establishment of a Jewish state, as I am convinced that great dangers lie ahead of Jews and only in Israel we would be free & safe!

Ernesta Stern – Amen, dear Theodor, and I volunteer my house to be the seat of the Jewish embassy in Paris. Anyhow, I have a feeling that it will reside not far from here, maybe at rue Rabelais, a deux pas d'ici. Imagine what a cultural center your country could be with so many gifted authors, artists and musicians. The Jews who gave the world the Bible would found a state that will become a cultural magnet, a moral compass, a scientific and economic miracle!

Jacque Corot (aside) – Hold your horses Ernesta, Herzl's vision materialized within 50 years as he has forecasted but not in his lifetime as he died four years later in 1904. Israel has many merits, but is far from being a moral compass and a cultural magnet, as Europe has remained the leader of ethics, culture, welfare and prosperity - Scandinavia, Netherlands, Switzerland. But to tell the truth Israel did indeed fulfill most of Herzl's vision and is a formidable success.

Ernesta Stern – Jose Echegaray is a polymath, a Spanish civil engineer, mathematician, statesman and one of the leading Spanish dramatists. He became a member of the Society of Political Economy, helped to found the magazine *La Revista* and took a prominent part in propagating free trade doctrines in the press. If it was not enough, he was appointed Spanish Minister of Education, of Public Works and Finance Minister successively between 1867 and 1874. From that date on he became a playwright in a career which eclipsed all his other achievements. But I prefer that Jose would tell you more about his plays which thrill us.

Jose Echegaray – Theater has always been my love although I truly became a dramatist only in 1874 after I retired from politics. In my plays I try to convey above all a sense of duty and morality, which were the driving force of my whole life. Some critics maintain that I replicated the achievements of my predecessors of the Spanish Golden Age, but I would say that I am only a prolific playwright, writing about two plays each year. And I am still young, at least I feel at my advanced age which is more than twice as much as Edmond Rostand's age, and know that I'm too young to die, since I need at least 40 more years. You see, dear Zola, I am not so modest as you who requests additional 30 years. My most famous play *El Gran Galeoto*, written 18 years ago, deals also as many of your works, dear friends, on the poisonous effect that unfounded gossip has on our happiness. But I personally prefer my last plays – *Mariana*, *El estigma*, and *La duda*. While my early works were Romantic, I turned to

thesis drama, mainly under your influence my dear Ibsen. I show that honesty is condemned as madness by society, much like your *An Enemy of the people*, however it never achieved the same amount of success, as I lack the formidable dramatic force that you possess Henrik. But at least my friend here George Bernard Shaw admires my work and for me it is worth more than the triumphs of my plays in London, Paris, Berlin, Stockholm and Madrid.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Who ever heard of Echegaray in 2016, a hundred years after his death? Yet, he obtained the Nobel Prize in 1904, 5 years after our reveillon, as well as George Bernard Shaw, much later. But Zola didn't receive the Nobel Prize, which was awarded in its first year, 1901, to a compatriot Sully Prudhomme, Sully who? as he is completely forgotten...

Ernesta Stern – We are all thrilled by the Exposition Universelle of 1900, to be opened within a few months, and we have with us here a famous civil engineer, Gustave Eiffel, who built for another Exposition a decade ago a Tour, which was ridiculed by all the bien pensants, and today has become the emblem of Paris, with millions of tourists coming from all over the world to admire it. Gustave will tell us about his Tour, modern buildings, and the Exposition.

[Gustave Eiffel](#) – During my whole life I tried to explore new grounds and not to be confined to the conservative thinking of the epoch. This progressive spirit unifies most of us here, Zola, Clemenceau, Shaw, Tolstoy, Ibsen. But I had to fight preconceived ideas, as my tower had been a subject of controversy, attracting criticism both from those who did not believe it feasible and from those who objected on artistic grounds. Just as work began at the Champ de Mars, a dozen years ago, the Committee of the 300 (one member for each meter of the tower's height) was formed, with distinguished members as Charles Garnier, Adolphe Bouguereau, Guy de Maupassant, Charles Gounod and Jules Massenet. A petition was sent to Alphand, the Minister of Works, and was published by *Le Temps*. A kind of J'accuse but on the opposite grounds. They maintained that my "ridiculous tower" dominating Paris will crush under its barbaric bulk Notre Dame, Tour Saint-Jacques, the Louvre, the Dome of Les Invalides and the Arc de Triomphe. Well, dear friends, where are they now all those who signed this ridiculous petition, but the Tour Eiffel will exist forever, as well as my metal framework of the Statue of Liberty. They have become the symbol of the spirit of change, of liberty, of modernism, of the industrial, cultural and social revolution. La dame de fer was constructed in a record time from 1887 to 1889, is the cultural icon of France, one of the most recognizable structures in the world, as well as the tallest building, raising to 324 meters, based on a square measuring 125 meters on each side. But progress has not ceased with my tower, as the new Paris exposition of 1900 has brought new constructions that I was not involved in their construction – the Grand Palais, the Petit Palais, Pont Alexandre III, the Gare d'Orsay, new entrances to Metro stations, and plenty of palaces and pavilions – of electricity, of optics, of motion pictures, of industry, of agriculture, with 40 national pavilions, theaters and music halls, while the Grand & Petit Palais in an art nouveau style exhibit art, paintings, sculptures. Our dear Lumiere brothers present their films on a colossal screen in the Gallery of Machines. We will even hear and see motion pictures, with the image on the screen synchronized to the sound from phonographs. On the Cineorama of Raoul Grimoin Sanson we'll watch a simulated voyage in a balloon projected on a screen of 93 meters in circumference by ten synchronized projectors. And at the Mareorama we'll watch a simulated voyage by ship to Constantinople, with the viewers watching images of the cities and seascapes en route. The illusion will be aided by machinery that rocks the ship and fans which blows gusts of wind. Well, dear friends, this is the image that we present to the millions of tourists and tens of millions of visitors. It will give a tremendous boost to the economy, to the industry and to the culture of France, Paris, Europe and the world. This will epitomize the progress that we have achieved in the last decades and will be a magnificent entrance to the new 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Well spoken, my dear Eiffel, especially in view of the fact that nobody present mentioned the Panama scandal, where you were involved. In 1893 you were found guilty on the charge of misuse of funds, fined and sentenced to two years in prison, although you were acquitted on appeal. You resigned from the Board of Directors of the Compagnie des Etablissements Eiffel and abstained from any participation in any manufacturing business in the future. But that it was quite common in Parisian bourgeois society, even if it is progressive and Dreyfusard, as in the Salon of Ernesta Stern, it is not bon ton, es passt nicht, it is impolite to say the least. Because after all, as Zola has beautifully described in *L'Argent*, everyone is involved in one scandal or another, and if not – at least he has an extramarital affair, as Zola had with a mistress who bore him two children. Only Alfred Dreyfus has not transgressed any law or any moral code, he was completely innocent and honest, had an impeccable family life, and that is why he was sent to the end of the world to Devil's Island...

Ernesta Stern – Jules Cheret is a good friend, all of us admire his works, as he became the master of poster art. In 1890 the French government awarded him the Legion of Honour, citing his creation of an art form that advanced printing and served the needs of commerce.

Jules Cheret – I am a Parisian, all my life I live in Paris, except for seven years in my youth when I was trained in lithography in London. Yet, my work is influenced by the scenes of frivolity depicted in the works of Rococo artists. I expanded my business to providing advertisements for the plays of touring troupes, municipal festivals, and then for beverages and liquors, perfumes, soaps, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products. But I am particularly proud of my large posters displaying modestly free-spirited females and I am often called the "father of the women's liberation." The women in my posters are joyous, elegant and lively—'Cherettes', as they are popularly called, heralded a noticeably more open atmosphere in Paris, where women are able to engage in formerly taboo activities, such as wearing low-cut bodices and smoking in public. As I own my firm, it allows me to maintain artistic control and to establish an innovative design approach, a simple dynamic approach in which compositions are dominated by large central figures, prominent hand-lettered titles, simplified backgrounds and large areas of glowing colour and gestural textures. This is a combination of Watteau, Fragonard, Tiepolo, with the flat colour and stylized linear contours of Japanese prints.

Jacque Corot (aside) – What a fantastic combination of excellence in those times in Paris – painting, literature, music, inventions, architecture, engineering, theater, films, even posters.

Ernesta Stern – We have with us tonight the dancers and singers of the Moulin Rouge, with [Jane Avril](#), that may be known as *L'etrange* and *Jane la folle*, but unlike her nicknames she is very serious and considers playing in your play *Peer Gynt* dear Ibsen. They'll perform for you their can-can show, which was very successful in London, as well as scenes from famous operettes, while you watch the exposition of Cheret's famous posters, photos of our Parisian monuments, buildings and bridges, photos of the plans and constructions of our forthcoming Exposition Universelle. We have invited the composer of *La fille de Madame Angot* [Charles Lecocq](#), the composer of *Les cloches de Corneville* [Robert Planquette](#), the composer of *Veronique* and *Les p'tites Michus* [Andre Messager](#), and the librettist [Ludovic Halevy](#) of [Jacques Offenbach](#)'s opera bouffes *Orphee aux enfers*, *Ba-ta-clan*, *Le pont des soupirs*, *Pomme d'api*, the librettist [Jules Barbier](#), a fellow Dreyfusard, who wrote the libretti of Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffman* and of Victor Masse's – *Les noces de Jeannette*. You'll watch scenes from those operettes and others, with a lot of French can-can and *bonne humeur*.

(Photos and films of Paris around 1899, with sights of the monuments and expositions, and with Cheret's famous posters, are projected on the screen, and performance of a Moulin Rouge can-can show, and scenes from famous operettes by the best composers present there)

Ernesta Stern – And now I want to introduce a new friend, well, new if you think that 5 years is new, as Marcel Proust is an habitu  of my Salon since 1894. He is young, only 28, takes notes all the time, but not only in my Salon, as he goes to most of the other Salons in Paris. I don't know where he takes time to write, but he published 3 years ago *Les plaisirs et les jours*, with a foreword by Anatole France and drawings by Mme Lemaire, a competitor Salonniere.

Marcel Proust – What you didn't mention my dear Ernesta is that I am a fervent Dreyfusard. But I don't only attend Salons, yours, Mme Straus, Madeleine Lemaire, Mme Arman de Caillavet, many others, where I take notes, as I plan to write a monumental novel, a kind of search of lost time, with the enigma of memory, the necessity of reflection, as leitmotifs. But I lack discipline to work on my novel and it may take ten or twenty more years until I finish it. My father whom you know Adrien Proust is a prominent pathologist and epidemiologist, studying cholera in Europe and Asia, he wrote numerous articles and books on medicine and hygiene and he hoped that I'll follow his path. To appease him, since he insisted that I pursue a career, any career, I obtained a volunteer position at Bibliotheque Mazarine in the summer of 1896, but I obtained a sick leave which is indefinite and I still live in my parents' apartment, what can I say I am an enfant gat , blas  at the age of 28, what a loss for humanity.

I have abandoned a novel that I was working on, but I can share with you some insights that despite my young age or because of it I have arrived to. I believe that the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were. Happiness is beneficial for the body, but it is grief that develops the powers of the mind, and not being so healthy deepens my sense of observation. But I have a problem, like many intellectuals, I am incapable of saying a simple thing in a simple way. Ultimately, I am a neurotic, everything great in the world is done by neurotics; they alone founded our religions and created our masterpieces. The only true voyage, the only bath in the Fountain of Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them sees, that each of them is, in your Salon my dear and in the other ones; and this we do, we do really fly from star to star.

Jacque Corot (aside) – You are not a total loss, dear Marcel, you are only a late bloomer, as you are about to write *A la recherche du temps perdu*, begun at last in 1909 and published from 1913 to 1927, 5 years after your death in 1922, at the age of 51, as Proust died from illness before he could edit the final parts of his work. Many of the ideas, motifs, in *In Search of Lost Time*, were anticipated in his unfinished novel *Jean Santeuil*, written in 1896 to 1899.

Ernesta Stern – You have probably noticed that there are very few women who contribute actively to culture in our times. We have of course the one and only Sarah Bernhardt, but so few female authors, painters and musicians. Well, at least we have today a young scientist, Marie Curie, a Polish and naturalized-French physicist and chemist, who conducts pioneering research, on what exactly I don't know and don't understand, as it is too complicated for me.

Marie Curie – I was born in Poland but moved to France in 1891. I immediately entered Sorbonne University in Paris where I read physics and mathematics – I had naturally discovered a love of the subjects through an insatiable appetite for learning. It was in Paris, in 1894, that I met Pierre Curie – a scientist working in the city – and we were married a year later. We became research workers at the School of Chemistry and Physics in Paris and there we began our pioneering work into invisible rays given off by uranium – a new phenomenon which had recently been discovered by Professor Henri Becquerel. In July 1898, my husband and I published a joint paper announcing the existence of an element we named "polonium",

and in December 1898, we announced the existence of a second element, which we named "radium", from the Latin word for "ray". But I am afraid that I am boring you already.

I would better tell you how I fell in love with Pierre my husband. He came to see me and showed a simple and sincere sympathy with my student life. Soon he caught the habit of speaking to me of his dream of an existence consecrated entirely to scientific research, and he asked me to share that life. During the year 1894, Pierre Curie wrote me letters that seemed to me admirable in their form. No one of them was very long, for he had the habit of concise expression, but all were written in a spirit of sincerity, with an evident anxiety to make the one he desired as a companion know him as he was. So, I fell in love, we married and we have now a daughter. I am afraid that you asked me on purpose to speak right after Marcel Proust, as you could not meet two more different people than the two of us, because I believe that we should be less curious about people and more curious about ideas, about nature.

We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained. Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less. You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for our own improvement. And I was taught that the way of progress was neither swift nor easy. I am afraid that I sound like an old lady although I am only 32, but I have reached the conclusion that one never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done. A scientist in his laboratory is not a mere technician: he is also a child confronting natural phenomena that impress him as though they were fairy tales, as the new sights of Nature make me rejoice like a child. We must believe that we are gifted for something, that this thing must be attained. Finally, I do believe that science has great beauty.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Dear Marie, so young and so wise, no wonder that you have become the role model for millions, especially women, in your quite way, you revolutionized the world of science, invented radioactivity, contributed so much to our health and medicine, but your inventions could also bring such havoc on humanity. Exactly, like Alfred Nobel, who died a few years before, and bequeathed his fortune to encourage scientists and authors, to promote peace, as his inventions were also multi faceted, as most of inventions are after all. Anyhow, Marie Curie was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and the first person to win two Nobel Prizes, and the Nobel Prizes are largely associated with Marie Curie in history.

Ernesta Stern – How many of you have ever heard of the Nobel Prizes? But all of you have heard of Alfred Nobel, the famous Swedish chemist, engineer, inventor, businessman and philanthropist, who died 3 years ago. Nobel's will expressed a request that his money be used for prizes in physics, chemistry, peace, physiology or medicine and literature. As executors of his testamentary dispositions he appointed Ragnar Sohlman, here with us tonight, and Rudolf Lilljequist. Sohlman who is very young, not even 30, was occupied for several years with the task of establishing the Nobel Prizes, the regulations regarding selection of laureates and overcoming the problems with Nobel's relatives. Finally, he has managed to institute the Nobel Foundation that will be founded in a few months and manage the finances and administration of the Nobel Prizes, which will be the most prestigious prizes in the world and that will be distributed from 1901 onwards, and who knows, maybe you Zola, you Shaw, you Tolstoy and you Echegaray will be among the first to receive the Nobel Prize of Literature, and probably our dear Marie Curie will receive one of the first prizes on physics. It is a pity that prizes of arts and music will not be awarded otherwise you Monet and you Puccini would be receiving it, and maybe you Clemenceau will be awarded the Prize of Peace... after war.

Ragnar Sohlman – Indeed what a tremendous task has our dear Nobel bestowed on my humble and young shoulders. I am only a chemical engineer and all of a sudden I have to create the Nobel Foundation. But I was Nobel's assistant and he probably had enough confidence in me that I will carry on this arduous task successfully and Nobel's memory will be vivid also in 100 or 120 years from now. What Ernesta has not mentioned is the huge amount of each of the prizes – 150,000 Crowns, that will make each recipient a wealthy man. Let me emphasize just one facet of Nobel's will – he specifically mentioned that the Peace Prize will be awarded to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity among nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses. He also emphasized that no consideration shall be given to the nationality of the candidates, so that the most worthy shall receive the prize, whether he be Scandinavian or not. Therefore, the prizes are not Scandinavians, they are for scientists and authors from all over the world, but if Nobel would have attended your gathering tonight, he would have decided possibly to award several prizes in each category, and in many more categories as well, as he would have l'embarras du choix with such distinguished celebrities.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Nobel Prizes will become the model for international recognition and will engender many more prizes in all the categories of culture. The award of the prizes on December 10 every year, date of death of Nobel, has become the climax of cultural events.

Ernesta Stern – Dear Sohlman, we have here another candidate for your new Nobel Prize – our friend Wilhelm Röntgen, a physicist who has discovered the X-rays, or Rontgen rays in many languages, over his great objection, as he is very modest, having renounced to receive patents for his discoveries. I have no doubt that even if he receives your Nobel Prize he'll donate it to the University of Wurzburg where he teaches. We are very curious to hear from you, our dear Rontgen, how indeed you discovered your famous rays, because our century is the century of innovation, pioneering in all fields – literature, arts, music, theater and science.

Wilhelm Röntgen – Our dear Marie Curie has not emphasized most on how she discovered polonium and radium, so I am afraid to bother you with my scientific terminology. As a matter of fact, unlike Descartes who said cogito ergo sum, I don't think – I experiment. Four years ago, I was working with a Crookes tube covered by a shield of black cardboard. A piece of barium platino-cyanide paper lay on the bench there. I had been passing a current through the tube, and I noticed a peculiar black line across the paper. ... The effect was one which could only be produced, in ordinary parlance, by the passage of light. No light could come from the tube, because the shield which covered it was impervious to any light known, even that of the electric arc. ... I did not think; I investigated. I assumed that the effect must have come from the tube, since its character indicated that it could come from nowhere else. I tested it. In a few minutes there was no doubt about it. Rays were coming from the tube which had a luminescent effect upon the paper. I tried it successfully at greater and greater distances, even at two metres. It seemed at first a new kind of invisible light. It was clearly something new, something unrecorded. Having discovered the existence of a new kind of rays, I of course began to investigate what they would do. It soon appeared from tests that the rays had penetrative power to a degree hitherto unknown. They penetrated paper, wood, and cloth with ease; and the thickness of the substance made no perceptible difference, within reasonable limits. The rays passed through all the metals tested, with a facility varying, roughly speaking, with the density of the metal. These phenomena I have discussed carefully in my report to the Würzburg society, and you will find all the technical results therein stated. I am not a prophet, and I am opposed to prophesying. I am pursuing my investigations, and as fast as my results are verified I shall make them public. We shall see what we shall see. We have the start now; the developments will follow in time. A few weeks after my discovery I took a



picture, a radiograph, using X-rays of my wife Anna Bertha's hand. When she saw her skeleton she exclaimed: "I have seen my death!" I published 3 papers on X-rays between 1895 and 1897, and the scientific community was thrilled at the possibilities of my invention, diagnostic radiology, the medical specialty which uses imaging to diagnose disease.

Jacque Corot (aside) – X-rays have become standard procedure in medicine, to identify pneumonia, lung cancer, intestinal obstruction, kidney stones, bone fractures, dental cavities. In airport security, border control, in World War I over a million wounded soldiers were treated with Marie Curie's X-ray units. The German Rontgen has contributed to humanity hugely, as well as the French Louis Pasteur, who died a few years before, and so many others.

Ernesta Stern – And who has made kind of X-rays to our brains, analyzing our subconscious, our dreams, if not our dear Sigmund Freud, who is with us tonight. A few months ago he published *The Interpretation of Dreams* in which, following a critical review of existing theory, Freud gives detailed interpretations of his own and his patients' dreams in terms of wish-fulfillments made subject to the repression and censorship of the "dream work". But before I mess up his revolutionary theories on human mind I prefer that he'll explain them.

Sigmund Freud – Actually, it is not so complicated. I just set out the theoretical model of mental structure (the unconscious, pre-conscious and conscious) on which this account is based. The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind. Dreams are often most profound when they seem the most crazy. I seized the opportunity to come to Paris, as after Vienna it is my favorite city, since October 1885, when I lived in Paris on a three-month fellowship to study with Jean-Martin Charcot, a renowned neurologist who was conducting scientific research into hypnosis. This was a catalytic experience, as it turned me toward the practice of medical psychopathology. You all know how Charcot specialized in the study of hysteria and susceptibility to hypnosis, which he frequently demonstrated with patients on stage in front of an audience. It assisted me to develop my clinical method and set out my theory of the psychogenetic origins of hysteria, demonstrated in a number of case histories, in my *Studies on Hysteria* published in 1895.

But, eventually I abandoned hypnosis, and you'll not witness a séance tonight, having concluded that more consistent and effective symptom relief could be achieved by encouraging patients to talk freely, without censorship or inhibition, about whatever ideas or memories occurred to them. In conjunction with this procedure, which I called "free association", I found that patients' dreams could be fruitfully analyzed to reveal the complex structuring of unconscious material and to demonstrate the psychic action of repression which, I had concluded, underlay symptom formation. I use now the term "psychoanalysis" to refer to my new clinical method and the theories on which it is based. I even made "self-analysis" of my own dreams and memories of childhood. My explorations of my feelings of hostility to my father and rivalrous jealousy over my mother's affections led me to fundamentally revise his theory of the origin of the neuroses. But I have not invented anything new, as after reading in English Shakespeare throughout my whole life, I found how much he excelled in understanding human psychology. And if I even go further, my Jewish secular origins had a significant influence in the formation of my intellectual and moral outlook, especially with respect to my intellectual non-conformism, and to the substantial effect on the content of psychoanalytic ideas. But, enough of that, let me simplify my point.

The result of my research is that: Men are strong so long as they represent a strong idea they become powerless when they oppose it. That is the strong of my strength. Unlike the common belief, the ego is not master in its own house, we think we are, but from error to error one discovers the entire truth. I found that the mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of

its bulk above water. So, one has to be honest with himself and not be afraid to talk about his problems, as it is a good exercise. You talked a lot about freedom, but most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility. In what I do concur with your ideas is that civilization began the first time an angry person cast a word instead of a rock. The first requisite of civilization is that of justice, in the Dreyfus Affair and anywhere else. Psychoanalysis helps us to acknowledge the fact that neurosis is the inability to tolerate ambiguity. A man should not strive to eliminate his complexes but to get into accord with them: they are legitimately what directs his conduct. Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways. So, you have to express your emotions as you heard me do about my childhood experience. Men are more moral than they think and far more immoral than they can imagine. My life has been until now a long series of struggles and I am afraid that in the future it will continue to be so. But, remember that one day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful. Finally, I am a European, completely so, even that America is the most grandiose experiment the world has seen, but, I am afraid, it is not going to be a success.

Jacque Corot (aside) – What is your secret, you revolutionary innovators, Freud, Tolstoy, Shaw, Zola, Ibsen, Curie, Eiffel, Monet, from what sources do you find the strength to develop your theories, your art? You are from different nationalities, different backgrounds, yet all of you are not conservative, nor religious, maybe the secret is in your childhood, in your dreams, maybe Freud has to psychoanalyze all of you in order to find your secret?

Ernesta Stern – You heard what our dear friend Freud said about America, so what do you answer Mark Twain, who are so American, although you are living now mostly in London.

Mark Twain – Actually, dear Ernesta, when I saw such a distinguished audience gathered here I was very glad because I hoped that you'll overlook me. It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt. It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. I have not prepared a speech and now you'll know for sure that I am a fool. People might gather the wrong impression that there is an animosity between Freud and me. But it is quite the contrary, we are good friends and we share much in common, Freud attended one of my public readings in Vienna in February 1898. I also spoke a couple of years ago to the Concordia Press Club in Vienna and delivered a speech "Die Schrecken der Deutschen Sprache" on the horrors of German to the great amusement of the audience. Actually, during my stay in Germany in 1878 I had a dream, that maybe you can analyze my dear Sigmund, that all bad foreigners went to German heaven, couldn't talk and wished they had gone to hell. I have another dream, deeply rooted in the American dream that one day our nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed – that all men are created equal. And then the most grandiose experiment that world has seen, dear Sigmund, America is really going to be a success and that the twentieth century will be the century of America. I am an anti-imperialist in the context of the schrecklich Philippine-American War, an adamant supporter of the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of slaves, a staunch supporter of women's rights and an active campaigner for women's suffrage. I am in favor of labor unions, support labor movement and am critical of organized religion. If Christ were here now there is one thing he would not be – a Christian. So, if America will adhere to its ideals, as I wish, the new century will indeed be American.

I would say even more, that probably within a decade or two America will prevail and the empires of Germany, Austria, Turkey and Russia will cease to exist. I quite doubt the future of Palestine dear Herzl that I visited in 1867, I found it dotted with nasty villages of miserable huts and the usual assemblage of squalid humanity, disfigured wretches fringed with filthy

rags and infested vermin, naked and sore-eyed children in all stages of mutilation and decay. But maybe when your pioneers, dear Herzl, will emigrate there the situation will improve.

I don't understand anything in psychology as Freud, but I have made some observations on human nature that I am willing to share with you instead of making a speech. I see here many aged people as I am, who might worry about old age. I can tell you that - Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of eighty and gradually approach eighteen. And to you dear Ibsen I have an insight to Thomas Stockman - Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. I hear Ernesta that the schooling system in France is excellent, as far as I experienced - I have never let my schooling interfere with my education. And to you dear Tolstoy I would say that the two most important days in a man's life are the day he is born and the day he finds out why. Dear Zola, who is always in search of the truth, I have found that if you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything. Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let us economize it. When in doubt tell the truth. Don't worry that you were not chosen to the Academie - It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them. I admire the inventiveness of Marie Curie and Rontgen but the greatest of all inventors in humanity is still – Accident. To you, Clemenceau I say that in America as in France, we have the best government that money can buy. You all love to travel and that is why you are so open-minded, as travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness. Finally, do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest. Don't expect too much from men - Man was made at the end of the week's work, when God was tired. Men's ideal life consists of good friends, good books and a sleepy conscience. When they argue – they get their facts first then they distort them as needed. When they die they can choose between Heaven for the climate and hell for the company. I found out that there are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The majority belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, but all of you belong to the 1<sup>st</sup>!

Jacque Corot (aside) – It is so refreshing to find a rare combination between wisdom, integrity and a vivid sense of humor. In too many cases ethicists and conscientious men and women take themselves so seriously, sometimes in a fundamentalism of extreme pacifism, human rights at all costs, equality equaling communism, being no less fanatic than bigots, neoliberals, racists and nationalists. One has to find the right proportion between the ideals, the middle way, and above all – doing it in humility, with a sense of humor, and empathy.

Ernesta Stern – I invite now the famous singer and actress Yvette Guilbert to sing some of her hits, we haven't seen her lately and I am glad that she seized the opportunity of the turn of the century to come and visit us. She is befriended to many of you, my dear guests, so welcome!

Yvette Guilbert – Thank you my dear Ernesta for inviting me. It is not a secret that since 1896 I am seriously ill and I am considering putting an end to my career shortly. But not only I am ill, France is also ill because of the Dreyfus Affair that divides families, friends and the whole French society in two between Dreyfusards and Antidreyfusards. We all know of your affinities dear Ernesta, and most of your friends and guests are Dreyfusards – Zola, Clemenceau, Monet, Sarah Bernhardt, Marcel Proust, Herzl, Freud... I personally was Antidreyfusarde as I truly believed in Dreyfus' guilt. And I was in good company too, with most of the politicians, the government, the army, the press and public opinion, with prominent people as Paul Valery, Edgar Degas, Auguste Rodin, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec. You would say, yes, but the fiercest opponent to Dreyfus was Edouard Drumont the anti-Semite, whom I abhor. Not all of us are Drumonts, how can I be called an anti-Semite by believing that Dreyfus is guilty, while my husband whom I married in 1897 and cherishes

most Max Schiller is Jewish. He is an impresario and has suffered much because of the anti-Semitism that was acerbated after the Dreyfus Affair. All of you here present maintain that you are open-minded, liberals, that you love France, yet many of you have broken their relations with people like me just because of our divergence of opinions a propos Dreyfus. You stigmatize us as anti-Semites, and this is racism, exactly as stigmatizing all the Jews as God-murderers because one of them Judas Iscariot denounced Jesus to the Romans, as stigmatizing all the Jews as traitors because one of them Dreyfus was proven guilty by our tribunals. So, please don't accuse me and the majority of Frenchmen of anti-Semitism just because Drumont and many others of us are anti-Semites. Give us the credit of our beliefs, even if we are wrong, which we probably are according to the latest developments, but this was not done mischievously by most of us, and if truth was distorted by some people in the army or the government they should be punished. At the dawn of the new century, Frenchmen should reunite, France should recover again its position as humanity's conscience, and old friends should hug each other in a spirit of forgiveness, empathy, containment and tolerance.

(Yvette and Ernesta hug and kiss with tears in their eyes as guests applaud with enthusiasm)

Jacque Corot (aside) – Life is short, except mine of course, as I live now for 80, 120 years or maybe forever, being a virtual protagonist anyhow. All this evening, anyhow, existed or not, I don't know, or I made it up in my feverish mind. Anyhow, I fully concur with Yvette's insight that people should reconcile, not be fanatic, live in harmony, in fraternity, peacefully.

Yvette Guilbert reappears, she is dressed in bright yellow with long black gloves and stands perfectly still, gesturing with her long arms as she sings. She accompanies her songs with monologues, being called a "disease", her lyrics are raunchy, their subjects are tragedy, lost love and the Parisian poverty from which she had come. And the audiences love her, at Ernesta Stern's Salon, as well as in Paris, the French Riviera, in England, Germany, the US.

Yvette Guilbert – I am pleased to see here so many friends. Sigmund Freud who attended many of my performances, corresponds with me despite our divergence of opinions on the Affair, and has my signed photo on his desk. The first time we met was in August 1889 when he came to see me at the Eldorado, at the recommendation of Mme Charcot. Toulouse-Lautrec who made so many of my portraits and caricatures, even a whole book, and I forgave him on presenting me in a distorted and distasteful manner. George Bernard Shaw who wrote a favorable review highlighting what he perceived my novelty. I am surprised that you didn't invite the Prince of Wales to whom I performed also in a private party. But my dear friend Sarah Bernhardt is here and so is Marcel Proust, who wrote about me his first article in *Le Mensuel*. I met all of you at the Moulin Rouge, Le Chat Noir, at private Salons. I do my utmost to revive also traditional French folk songs, besides my original chansons, with their sharp anti-bourgeois and anti-establishment tone, you see, dear friends, I am not always a supporter of the establishment. I'll sing for you a repertoire of 10 songs – 5 original and 5 folk songs: *Nini peau d'chien* by Aristide Bruant, *Je suis pocharde* by Louis Byrec, *Le fiacre* by Leon Xanrof, *Fleur de berge* by Jean Lorrain, *D'elle a lui* by Paul Marinier. And from the classics – *Le temps des cerises*, *Plaisir d'amour*, *Fanfan la Tulipe*, *Au pres de ma blonde* and finally *Vive la rose*. I hope that you'll enjoy those songs, with the spirit of Paris and France.

(We see and hear Yvette Guilbert from old records and films on the screen, then the actress sings 10 French Belle Epoque songs from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and traditional songs)

Ernesta Stern – No need to introduce to you Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, a painter, printmaker, draughtsman, caricaturist and illustrator, whose immersion in the colorful, theatrical and

cabaret life of Paris in this fin-du-siecle, produced a collection of enticing, elegant and provocative images of the modern, sometimes decadent, affairs of Paris and our times.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec – In the spirit of what our dear Yvette has just said, what I admire in you dear Ernesta is that you are not a fanatic, you are befriended with the pillars of social justice as Zola, Tolstoy, Shaw, Ibsen and Clemenceau, but you allow in your salon more frivolous and less moral libertines as my dear friend Oscar Wilde and me. As you know I am an anglophile and while in London I met and befriended Wilde. When he faced imprisonment in Britain I was among the few who became a very vocal supporter of him and I made a portrait of Wilde during his trial. You've probably heard that my father is a Count, we are descendants of the counts of Toulouse, but my tastes are far more popular, in women and in alcohol, and I am not ashamed of it. I won't plead that the reason for my lousy conduct is because I am mocked for my short stature and physical appearance. I hope, dear Ernesta, that within 50 or 100 years, handicapped people like me would be treated more fairly and not as curiosities fit for the circus. I am proud that I have achieved on my own quite a career, since I started in 1885 to exhibit my work at the cabaret Mirliton of [Aristide Bruant](#) here present. By the way, Bruant was last year a candidate for the workers' district of Belleville and received only 525 votes... I made several portraits of Suzanne Valadon and supported her ambition as an artist and you know how difficult it is for women to be painters and even writers. As I am a gentleman, so-called, I won't disclose what the nature of our relationship was, I would just say that I had a great admiration for her as an artist. Anyhow, I painted for Moulin Rouge and other cabarets not only depictions of our Yvette Guilbert, but of the dancer Louise Weber, better known as La Goulue who created the can-can, and of the dancer Jane Avril as well. After achieving recognition I took part from 1889 to 1894 in the Salons des Independants with landscapes of Montmartre. It was an honor for me to expose with Cezanne and Gauguin.

Still, my talent is nothing in comparison to the talent of Van Gogh, with whom I exhibited in Paris. I have much in common with your Cyrano, dear Rostand, not because both of us are so handsome, with my nose and his legs one could draw the ideal man, but because in 1890 during the banquet of the XX exhibition in Brussels, I challenged to a duel the artist Henri de Groux who criticized Van Gogh works and refused to have his works displayed in the same gallery as Van Gogh. You all know that de Groux apologized and the duel never took place because he was afraid of La Botte de Toulouse which is even more fatal than Paul Feval's La Botte de Nevers, especially taking into consideration the size of mes bottes or my boots. And as Feval's Le Bossu was not really a Hunchback, I am not really a midget, and at a duel I recover my true nature, just as Le Bossu and Cyrano. In a decade, who will ever know a de Groux existed while Van Gogh will be acknowledged as one of the greatest painters in history. What you don't know probably is that this de Groux moved to Paris, befriended Emile Zola, and during the social unrest resulting from the Dreyfus Affair, he acted as one of Zola's bodyguards. Which is a pity because if Zola had asked me I could act as his bodyguard and nobody would dare touch him. But, treve de plaisanteries, I am pleased that you returned to Paris, dear Zola, and that you are free again and your life is not in danger anymore.

Despite my collapse from exhaustion I recovered at the sanatorium and I returned to work at my studio. I work quietly in my corner, as I don't belong to any school, I paint things as they are, I don't comment, I record, even if things are ugly, as ugliness has its beautiful aspects, it is thrilling to discover them where nobody else has noticed them. I am just trying to do what is true and not ideal. For me only the human figure exists, landscape should be no more than an accessory. I don't try to do something because it is new, novelty is not a quality per se, it is seldom the essential, my purpose is only to make a subject better from its intrinsic value. I hope to live for many more years to come, as I have plenty to say, and to paint, to experience.

But if the Angel of Death will arrive sooner than I choose so, I'll duel with him (raises his cane, fencing with an invisible enemy), borrowing the lines from your *Cyrano*, dear Edmond:

Prince, demande a Dieu pardon!  
 Je quarte du pied, j'escarmouche,  
 Je coupe, je feinte... He ! la, donc !  
 A la fin de l'envoi, je touche.

Jacque Corot (aside) – What a tragedy, what a waste, such a talent, and to die so young at the age of 36, after a life of debauchery, you and Van Gogh have become much famous, 50 and 120 years later, with your paintings sold at astronomical sums. You'll live forever, even if both of you had such a miserable life. A year after your death Zola was murdered after all, probably because you were not there to guard him with your famous talent as *escrimeur*. But the attitude towards handicapped will change drastically within 50 and 100 years from your death. They'll become an integral part of society, respected and encouraged to study, to pursue a career, ceasing to be ridiculed, and even at the *Comedie Francaise*, deaf people will be seated in stage boxes at half a price with acoustic devices and captions in front of them.

Ernesta Stern – The night is young, this would be a night to remember. We have with us many guests from all over Europe and I am extremely pleased to invite for a speech a dear guest, William Schwenck Gilbert, the English dramatist, librettist, poet and illustrator, best known for his collaboration with composer Arthur Sullivan, which produced fourteen comic operas.

W. S. Gilbert – If you expect me to contribute something new or witty or important to your guests dear Ernesta you are probably mistaken. Furthermore, if they hear me they will probably confirm the general opinion that I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer, I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer. Each little fault of temper and each social defect in my erring fellow creatures I endeavor to correct. Life is a joke that's just begun. Darwinian man, though well-behaved, at best is only a monkey shaved. You have no idea what a poor opinion I have of myself and how little I deserve it. Anyhow, dear Zola, Clemenceau, Ibsen and Tolstoy, I'm really very sorry for you all, but it's an unjust world, and virtue is triumphant only in theatrical performances. We live in a world where everyone is somebody, but actually no one's anybody. I think therefore, that it is my duty to live up to my reputation. Those are my impressions on the world that I conveyed in my 14 comic operas composed by Arthur Sullivan, and that you have probably seen most of them – *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Princess Ida*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and *The Mikado*. I really cannot understand why distinguished playwrights as Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw who are with us tonight maintain that I have inspired them, maybe to write quite the opposite of what I've written, as their works are by far superior to mine, I'm joking of course, I have just lyrical facility and a modest mastery of metre, and this probably has contributed to the poetical quality of comic opera to a position it have never reached before, which was low.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas are still as popular as in their premieres all over the world, even at schools. Gilbert's sense of humor is so subtle, so modern, so relevant, that we can hear his operas time and again and always enjoy them as in the first time. He understands human nature as well as Moliere, Aristophanes, Wilde & Shaw.

Ernesta Stern – Gilbert brought with him 4 actors who will perform some of his comic operas most famous scenes, from *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and more.

(We see on the screen settings of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, while we hear the 4 actors who perform famous scenes from *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*...)

Ernesta Stern – I love Jules Verne, I think that he is one of the best authors in France and in the world, and I know that I'll receive because of that a lot of criticism by Feinschmeckers. But Vox populi vox Dei, as his novels are best sellers, he is the most translated French novelist, and he is perceived by serious scientists as a futurist whose forecasts are realistic.

[Jules Verne](#) – Thank you dear Ernesta, I am not going to tell you anything new about my books *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *Michel Strogoff*, *L'île mystérieuse*, *Cinq semaines en ballon*, *De la terre à la lune*, *Les enfants du capitaine Grant*, my plays, my essays, my poems. But to answer your question about our forecasts for the next 50 or 100 years, I'll tell you and your guests about a book that I've written in 1863 but my publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel refused to publish because he thought it was too unbelievable. I'll let you and posterity judge who were right.

The book is called "Paris in the Twentieth Century", I would call it a science fiction novel. It presents Paris in August 1960, where society places value only on business and technology. I know dear Ernesta and Marie Curie how much you value culture and literature, although you belong to the business and scientific elites, but this will gradually vanish in the next decades and society will become extremely materialistic. Anyhow, 36 years have elapsed since I wrote the book and in many cases I notice that my forecasts were true, but probably your grandsons in 1960 or great grandsons in 2020 will judge me. Who knows, maybe if in 2000 my book will finally be published it will become a best seller, better than *A voyage to the moon*, which might happen by 1960. My main character, Michel searches in the library classic literature from the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Hugo and Balzac, but he finds there only books about technology.

And what kind of technology we'll have by then – cars powered by internal combustion engines, gas stations, paved asphalt roads, elevated and underground passenger train systems, high-speed trains powered by magnetism and compressed air, skyscrapers, electric lights that illuminate entire cities at night (remember that I wrote it in 1863), fax machines that I call picture-telegraphs, elevators, primitive computers which can send messages to each other as part of a network sending information across vast distances, the utilization of wind power, automated security system, the electric chair, and remotely-controlled weapon systems, as well as weapons destructive enough to make war unthinkable, maybe following your new invention of radioactivity, dear Marie Curie. My book predicts the growth of suburbs, of mass-produced higher education, department stores, maybe as you described so well, my dear Emile Zola, massive hotels, electronic music, a new musical instrument similar to a synthesizer, and the replacement of classical music performances with a recorded music industry, which will leave you, dear Joseph Joachim unemployed, unless you record your music. The entertainment industry would be dominated by lewd stage plays, often involving nudity and sexually explicit scenes. But on the other hand, feminism shall prevail in the new society, with women moving into the workplace, but with a rise in illegitimate births. I know that all those inventions are far-fetched, but so were my inventions in *Around the World in 80 days*, submarines, flights, and who knows trips to the moon and to the center of the earth.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Dear spectators of the play, I admit that I have given myself poetic license and described in modern terms what Verne said in different terms, but all the inventions are there in his book, and the book indeed became a best seller when it was discovered and published in 1994. Verne was a true futurist and he had a scientific vision unprecedented in literature. He was belittled by Zola and by most "serious" authors, but he was loved by the French public, and is still loved by the world, in books, films and plays.

Ernesta Stern – I am pleased to introduce to you a young dancer, Isadora Duncan, she is only 22 but she reinvented dance in a modern technique that is completely revolutionary. She

moved to London last year from her native California, she divides her time between London and Paris, but I believe that she'll settle finally here, as the French society is breaking convention. She performs in the Salons of the Parisian society and returns to the Greek roots of classic dance as can be seen in Greek vases and bas-reliefs in the British Museum and the Louvre. She'll be accompanied with his piano music, by our dear [Reynaldo Hahn](#), who with Marcel Proust, comes regularly to my Salon. He was born in Venezuela 25 years ago, but lives in Paris and is a composer. He is known for his beautiful songs and admires Isadora Duncan. In fact he said about her: "In those moments where beauty and emotion fuse and climax, something of the immortal floats about the dancer; she wanders in a divine ray, in a mist where all works of art circle in unison with her." Isadora dear, the floor is yours.

[Isadora Duncan](#) – I'll just say a few words about my conception of dancing. I imagine that I have traced dance to its roots as a sacred art. I developed from this notion a style of free and natural movements inspired by the classical Greek arts, folk dances, social dances, nature and natural forces as well as an approach to the new American athleticism which included skipping, running, jumping, leaping and tossing. Let the dancers come forth with great strides, leaps and bounds, with lifted forehead and far-spread arms, to dance. Let us focus on natural movement emphasized steps, such as skipping, outside of codified ballet technique. I think that each movement was born from the one that preceded it, that each movement gave rise to the next, and so on in organic succession. I believe that this philosophy will create modern dance, not rigid as ballet, but natural, restoring dance to a high art form instead of merely entertainment, as I strive to connect emotions and movement: I spent long days and nights in the studio seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movement. I believe dance is meant to encircle all that life has to offer—joy and sadness. This is exemplified in my costume of a white Greek tunic and bare feet. Inspired by Greek forms, my tunics also allow me a freedom of movement that corseted ballet costumes and pointe shoes does not. In a word – we were once wild, don't let them tame us. It has taken me years of struggle, hard work, and research to learn to make one simple gesture, and I know enough about the art of writing to realize that it would take as many years of concentrated effort to write one simple, beautiful sentence. I dance before you but I don't tell you what it means, because otherwise there would be no point in dancing it.

Movements are as eloquent as words. The dancer's body is simply the luminous manifestation of the soul. The wind? I am the wind. The sea and the moon? I am the sea and the moon. Tears, pain, love, bird-flights? I am all of them. I dance what I am. Sin, prayer, flight, the light that never was on land or sea? I dance what I am. To awaken human emotion is the highest level of art. People don't live nowadays: they get about ten percent out of life. I hope to prove you that a dancer, if she is great, can give to the people something that they can carry with them forever. They can never forget it, and it has changed them, though they may never know it. My motto is "sans limites", in dancing and in life, as you'll see in a few moments.

(We see on the screen Isadora Duncan dancing, as well as photos of her on stage, then we watch the dancing actress who dances, accompanied by the piano music of Reynaldo Hahn)

Jacque Corot (aside) – Isadora Duncan has become a legend in her life time, as she has reinvented dancing, she is perceived as the "Mother of Dance". Duncan also had a relationship with the poet and playwright Mercedes de Acosta, as documented in numerous revealing letters they wrote to each other. In one, Duncan wrote, "Mercedes, lead me with your little strong hands and I will follow you – to the top of a mountain. To the end of the world."

Ernesta – Dear friend, I want to welcome our Portuguese friend, the author and diplomat Eça de Queirós, one of ours as he lives in Paris since 1888 and before he lived in England for a



similar period, he lived a couple of years in Havana, Cuba, visited Egypt, the United States, central America, Canada, all over the world. But he is mostly known by his naturalist novels, which are among the best, and Zola his friend maintained to me that he is better than Flaubert. But Eca de Queiros is one of us, a Dreyfusard, he knows the French society better than most.

[Eça de Queirós](#) – If I would have to sum up my career as a diplomat in one sentence, I would say: Politicians and diapers have one thing in common. They should both be changed regularly, and for the same reason, as human nature is the same all over the world. Except Englishmen, of course, a strange people, for whom it is out of the question that anyone can be moral without reading the Bible, and strong without playing cricket, and a gentleman without being English! That is why I asked to be appointed consul-general in Paris, the best position in the world. Unfortunately the cultural world has not read my novels *O crime do Padre Amaro*, *O primo Basilio*, or *A reliquia*, and it is a pity because the Portuguese Almeida Garrett and Julio Dinis, the Brazilian [Machado de Assis](#), author of *Dom Casmurro* who is with us tonight, and Jose de Alencar, have much to offer to the world cultural patrimony.

Maybe I am less known because I don't possess absolute beliefs on social justice, as Zola, Ibsen or Tolstoy. I believe that - Human effort may manage at its best to transform a starving proletariat into a well-fed bourgeoisie; but then a worse proletariat emerges from the bowels of society. Jesus was right, there will always be the poor among us. Which proves that this humanity is the greatest error that God ever committed. Perhaps one day, when socialism is the State religion, there will be niches in the temples, with a little lamp in front, and inside, images of the Fathers of the Revolution: Proudhon complete with glasses, Bacunin looking like a bear under his Russian pelts, Karl Marx leaning on his staff – symbolic of the shepherd of souls. Superior forms of thought have a fatal tendency of later becoming revealed law: and all philosophy ends, in its last stages, by becoming religion. And a religion needs not be Christian or Moslem, it can be socialist, capitalist, or nihilist as well. So, if I have to convey a message to future generations it is to be moderate, don't be a fanatic, don't believe too much in what you read in the press, as the publications are either news or politics, and you described it so well in your fantastic book *L'argent*, dear Zola. But I speak too much, nothing is more difficult than being clear and brief, it takes a genius, and what a pity, genius I am not,

Jacque Corot (aside) – The house of literature masterpieces is so crowded that you have to make a selection. By language as you prefer to read literature in the languages that you master, by quality as you prefer to read all the Zola's 20 books of *Rougon-Macquart* than read another naturalist author, and by diversity as you don't want to read only naturalist literature, but also romantic and modern literatures. So, in those selections you might overlook excellent authors as Eca de Queiroz. Actually, I discovered him only after I have learned Portuguese and I wanted to read the best authors in this language, but how many intellectuals study Portuguese unless it is their mother tongue? You tend to read first of all literature in the six more significant European cultures: in French, English, German, Spanish, Russian & Italian. And Portuguese literature comes in at a lower place, with Dutch, Norwegian or Czech literatures. Unless of course you are a giant as Ibsen, Strindberg, Andersen, Homer or Plautus.

Ernesta Stern – I am pleased to have with us tonight one of the most promising composers and conductors, the German Richard Strauss, who has given us in recent years some extraordinary masterpieces, such as *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, *Don Quixote*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Ein Heldenleben*. He is principal conductor of the *Staatskapelle Berlin* at the Berlin State Opera. Many critics describe him as the successor of Wagner and Liszt.

[Richard Strauss](#) – Well, I am proud to be compared to another Richard – Wagner, and to another Strauss – Johann, but unfortunately I am not famous like the first and popular like the

second. Actually, if there is a comparison to be drawn, it is between Gustav Mahler and me, as both of us represent the late flowering of German Romanticism, while pioneering subtleties of orchestration combined with a modern harmonic style. I would like to further elaborate on the origins of a composer's muse - The melodic idea which suddenly falls upon me out of the blue appears in the imagination immediately, unconsciously, uninfluenced by reason. It is the greatest gift of the divinity and cannot be compared with anything else. It is better to conduct with the ear instead of with the arm: the rest follows automatically. But even greater composers – like in Mozart's melodies, Beethoven's symphonies, Schubert's songs and acts two and three of Wagner's *Tristan* are symbols in which are revealed the most profound spiritual truths. They are not "invented", but are "given in their dreams" to those privileged to receive them. In my opinion, Gustav Mahler's work is one of the most important and interesting products in the history of modern creative arts. Ultimately, my wife, my child, my music, Nature and the sun; they are my happiness. I fully concur with the beliefs of most of you and it is clear to me that the German nation will achieve new creative energy only by liberating itself from Christianity. But I abstain to speak publicly as declarations about war and politics are not fitting for an artist, who must give his attention to his creations and works.

Jacque Corot – Mann tracht und God lacht, dear Richard, as you cannot abstain to take a position about politics. Zola and Hugo did it and paid the price, while you tried to abstain from being involved with the Nazis, but when your Jewish daughter-in-law Alice Strauss was placed under house arrest in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1938, you used your connections in Berlin, including opera-house General Intendant Heinz Tietjen, to secure her safety. And you were accused of collaboration with the Nazis because in 1933, you replaced Arturo Toscanini, tonight with us, as director of the Bayreuth Festival after Toscanini had resigned in protest to the Nazi regime. The Nazis banned Debussy and Mahler, who are also with us, and most of the guests tonight, but you tried to overlook those bans, without much success. Toscanini said about you: "To Strauss the composer I take off my hat; to Strauss the man I put it back on again". But at least a cooperation came out of our evening, or so I prefer to believe, following your meeting with Oscar Wilde, you composed one of the best operas *Salome*, based on Wilde's play. The combination of the Christian biblical theme, the erotic and the murderous, which so attracted Wilde to the tale, shocked opera audiences from its first appearance.

Ernesta Stern – Camille Saint-Saens is undoubtedly a polymath, as not one in our century masters so many proficiencies as he does. He is not only one of the best composers, conductors, organists and pianists of our era, he is a writer as prolific in prose as in music, he is a poet, a philosopher, a playwright, a travel writer, an animal rights activist (what about women?), a critic, and has published a few months ago a masterpiece "Portraits et Souvenirs", with critic portraits of Berlioz, Liszt, Gounod, Bizet, a brilliant essay on Wagner's music. He is called the French Beethoven, and we love and admire him for his brilliant Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, the Second Piano Concerto, the First Cello Concerto, *Danse macabre*, his opera *Samson and Delilah*, his Third Violin Concerto, Third Organ Symphony, and finally for his world-wide masterpiece *The Carnival of the Animals*. Camille has also a surprise for us.

[Camille Saint-Saens](#) – You mentioned, dear Ernesta, my personal reflections regarding the Wagner Illusion. Personally, I believe that so long as commentators confine themselves to describing the beauties of Wagner's opera, I have no quarrel with them. But as soon as they get down to details, trying to explain how this differs from opera, lyric drama, why music drama must deal in symbols and legends, one no longer understands anything about the subject at all. I travel a lot, all over the world, and I even compose when I am abroad, when my popular Fifth Piano Concerto was composed in Louxor in Egypt, and that's why it is called *L'Egyptien*. You forgot to mention many more occupations, acoustic expert and astronomy

among others, and I published an article in the journal of the French Societe Astronomique. You all remember also how last year we premiered at the new arena of Beziers Dejanire, a performance of Louis Gallet's epic verse-drama Dejanire, with my score of accompanying symphonic music, choruses and ballet. Some of you were among the 12,000 spectators and witnessed the ecstatic reception of the choir of hundreds, massed military bands, and an orchestra with 18 harps and 25 trumpets. But my most exhilarating experience was a concert that I gave at Cambridge in June 1893, when Bruch, Tchaikovsky a few months before he died, and me performed at an event marking the award of honorary degrees to all three of us. I was not active as most of you during the Dreyfus Affair, but I gave money for the Dreyfus defense, and because of that I was surnamed Kahn. But don't expect me, dear friends, to talk about music, as nothing is more difficult, the strongest and subtlest minds go astray. I'll just say that I produce music as an apple tree produces apples and that I like good company but I like hard work better. Yet, tonight I made an exception, as it combines business with pleasure.

And this is the surprise – I was commissioned by the managing committee of the Exposition Universelle to write a work for the opening of the concerts that will perform there in a few months. The work is not finished but in avant-premiere I give you extracts from my cantata *Le Feu Celeste*, written to celebrate the glories of electricity. It is a work for soprano soloist, narrator, chorus, orchestra and organ, a kind of metaphorical music on the new fairy electricity, based on the famous poem by [Armand Silvestre](#) “Les fils de Promethee”, from his recueil “Le pays des roses”. Ernesta guaranteed Armand immunity to recite his poem, because as you all know, he is a member of the Ligue de la patrie francaise, founded this year, which however moderate is anti-Dreyfusarde. But some of the crème de la crème of French cultural pillars are also members, such as [José-Maria de Heredia](#), [François Coppée](#), [Jules Lemaître](#), [Maurice Barrès](#), [Juliette Adam](#), [Paul Bourget](#), [Léon Daudet](#), [Edgar Degas](#), [Vincent d'Indy](#), [Pierre Louÿs](#), [Charles Maurras](#), [Frédéric Mistral](#), [Albert Sorel](#), [Suzanne Valadon](#), [Jules Verne](#). But we are tonight in a spirit of friendship and reconciliation by art, let bygones be bygones.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Camille Saint-Saens had 3 faults: he was too good, too frank and too modest. He was the perfect cultural person of the Belle Epoque, a polymath, a traveler, a composer, a writer, who died at the age of 86 after a rewarding career, after giving us some of the best musical works ever composed – cello, piano and violin concerti, symphonies, operas, chamber music, piano and organ music, choral music, sacred vocal music, songs, incidental. Yet, he had a problem, because of his combative nature, unafraid of controversy, his love of polemics fueled debates, on top of that he had a reputation of being peu mondain, not a socialite, and so he did not befriend people in official positions of power. Actually, he was in a category of his own, not appreciated as much as he deserved, but he was one of the best.

Camille Saint-Saens - I'll accompany Silvestre in a special adaptation for piano four hands, and I'll be accompanied, with my rusty hands, by the young Arthur Rubinstein, not yet 13.

(Armand Silvestre recites his poem “Les fils de Promethee”, accompanied alternately by a special adaptation for piano four hands, at the avant-premiere of extracts from *Le feu celeste* by Camille Saint-Saens, performed by the composer and Arthur Rubinstein on the piano).

Armand Silvestre –

[Armand Silvestre](#)/ Les Fils de Prométhée

Eripuit cælo fulmen.

I

Devant les splendeurs d'un autre-âge,  
 Les siècles longtemps prosternés  
 Tendaient vainement leur courage  
 Vers la gloire de leurs aînés.  
 Les spectres de Rome et d'Athènes  
 Voilaient, de leurs ailes lointaines,  
 La route à la postérité  
 Et l'avenir demeuré sombre,  
 Cheminaut, sans sortir de l'ombre  
 De l'héroïque antiquité !

Soudain, comme un souffle s'élève  
 Des bords pourprés de l'horizon,  
 Ou comme luit l'éclair d'un glaive  
 Sorti du fourreau, sa prison,  
 Plus farouche qu'une épopée  
 Et plus lumineux qu'une épée,  
 L'esprit moderne a resplendi,  
 Du bout de son aile sonore  
 Secouant des clartés d'aurore  
 Au front du vieux monde engourdi !

Quel réveil ! La science humaine,  
 Levant son flambeau rajeuni,  
 Par des chemins nouveaux ramène  
 L'âme au chemin de l'infini :  
 Tout navire emporte son hôte ;  
 La toison d'or de l'Argonaute  
 Se déchire aux mains des vainqueurs.  
 L'homme fouille jusqu'en son être,  
 Et la sainte ardeur de connaître  
 Brûle en même temps tous les coeurs !

Tout est conquis dans la nature :  
 Au ciel, restait à conquérir  
 Sa flamme redoutable et pure,  
 Le feu qui fait vivre et mourir !  
 Aigle s'envolant de son aire,  
 Volta lui ravit le tonnerre  
 Et l'apporte à l'humanité.  
 A servir l'homme condamnée,  
 Par lui la foudre est enchaînée  
 Et s'appelle Électricité !

Depuis ce jour que de merveilles  
 Évoque ce nom triomphant !  
 Quels trésors ont payé tes veilles,

Rival des dieux, humble savant !  
 Cette flamme à l'azur volée  
 Et, sous mille formes voilée,  
 A tous nos vœux obéissant,  
 Esclave douce et sans colère,  
 Aux flancs du Monde qu'elle éclaire  
 Circule comme un nouveau sang.

Par mille veines répandue  
 A travers l'éther et le sol,  
 Elle emporte dans l'étendue  
 Votre âme attachée à son vol.  
 Aux cordes d'une lyre immense,  
 Par elle, sans fin recommence  
 Le chant commencé dans nos cœurs :  
 Temps et distance, tout est leurre !  
 Devant elle, l'Espace et l'Heure  
 Semblent fuir sur les fils vainqueurs.

## II

De Phaéton brûlé magnifique folie !  
 D'Icare aux flots tombant espoir audacieux !  
 O rêves des vaincus ! Votre ère est accomplie :  
 L'homme impie a tenté la profondeur des cieux !  
 O grand voleur de feu, sublime Prométhée,  
 Sous l'outrage des Temps relève enfin ton front !  
 La race de tes fils, aux vents précipitée,  
 Renaît dans l'air vengeur et lave ton affront !

Elle a, du firmament déchirant le mystère,  
 Labouré l'infini de flamboyants sillons  
 Et, de l'azur vaincu, fait pleuvoir sur la Terre  
 L'or vibrant et poudreux des constellations !  
 Grâce au germe éternel que son labeur féconde,  
 D'une moisson de feu couvrant le sol dompté,  
 Emprisonnant la foudre aux flancs meurtris du Monde  
 Pour les envelopper d'un réseau de clarté,  
 Tant d'éclairs jailliront de l'espace où nous sommes,  
 Dans l'immensité morne où leur éclat s'enfuit,  
 Que les Jours inquiets se diront que les hommes  
 Ont volé leur clarté pour en parer la Nuit !

Et les astres jaloux, voyant dans l'étendue,  
 Notre globe rouler dans ce nimbe vermeil,  
 Croiront, qu'ayant repris leur puissance perdue,  
 Les dieux ressuscités font un nouveau Soleil !

Ernesta Stern – We'll stay with classical music and welcome an old friend, one of the best musicians in the world, the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim. He was a close collaborator

of Johannes Brahms, and premiered his violin concerto, 20 years ago. But he started his career at the age of Arthur Rubinstein, not quite 13, with the London Philharmonic with Mendelssohn conducting, Joachim playing solo in Beethoven's Violin Concerto. Joachim studied with Mendelssohn himself his violin concerto. He was a friend of Liszt, Schuman and his wife Clara, and appeared with his own quartet as well as with Clara, Zerbini and Piatti. Our dear Shaw wrote that his popular concerts helped greatly to spread musical taste in England. So, when we say classical music in our century we mean the one and only Joachim.

[Joseph Joachim](#) – The tragic story of my career is that all the great composers that I was associated with are dead, except [Max Bruch](#), who is with us tonight. I still remember the first performance of his revised first violin concerto, which I helped him to complete, and performed in Bremen in 1868. It achieved a remarkable success and I thank him of dedicating to me his third violin concerto, after persuading him to expand a single movement into a full violin concerto. The Germans have four violin concertos and I have played them all. The greatest, most uncompromising is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's. But, the richest, the most seductive, was written by you my dear Max Bruch. Lesser known are of course my own compositions, as the Hebrew Melodies for viola and piano, and the Overture that I composed for the birthday of the Kaiser of Germany and that I performed 3 years ago. And of course, my three violin concerti, one of them performed on the opening day of the Karlsruhe Music Festival, with Franz Liszt conducting. I am a man of few words, so I'll just tell you that after [Edvard Grieg](#) has cancelled his concerts in France a few months ago in protest of the Dreyfus Affair, he said that he hoped France might soon return to the spirit of 1789 defending basic human rights, and he is not worried by the much French hate mail that he received. But after Dreyfus returned from the Devil's Island and you, dear Zola, returned from exile, Grieg has agreed to make with me a recital tonight of piano and violin compositions by him, Fauré, Saint-Saens, Chopin, Brahms, Liszt, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Better and better, now I'm convinced that tonight will be the most memorable cultural event of any Parisian salon ever. What a fine taste has this excellent Ernesta Stern, unless all this evening has never happened, because it is improbable to gather together so many celebrities under one roof, and it happens only in my old mind. But who cares, I enjoy it, the theater audience likes it, at least those who stayed for so many hours, the actors like it, it epitomizes the cultural environment of the Parisian Belle Epoque, that is what matters. I'd say therefore, *se non è vero, è ben trovato*, even if it is not true, it is a good story.

(Joseph Joachim & Edvard Grieg make a recital of piano and violin compositions by Chopin, Saint-Saens, Grieg, Fauré, Brahms, Liszt, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann & Mendelssohn)

Ernesta Stern - Back to Paris. When we say Paris and Comedy, we can only mean Georges Feydeau. We laughed at the premiere of *L'Hotel du libre echange*, 5 years ago, but it was nothing in comparison to the hilarious receipt of *La Dame de chez Maxim's* a few months ago. The plays of Feydeau are marked by characters with whom the audiences can identify, plunged into fast-moving comic plots of mistaken identity attempted adultery, split-second timing and a precariously happy ending, *car tout est bien qui finit bien*, except in real life...

[Georges Feydeau](#) - Dear friends, I want you to love me, so I'll just say to the women here that when a woman speaks, it is to say nothing, so when she does not say anything, she is talking. And to the men who are laughing let me say that if my jokes come in your ear and come out immediately by the other, it's because, between the two, there is nothing to hold them. I see here among you many friends whose name I don't know, but I've known you for too long to

ask you. Some of us in your salon dear Ernesta are happily married because marriage is the art for two people to live together as happy as they would have lived on their own. But for the others who have lovers, let me ask: is it not more moral, the free union of two lovers who love each other, than the legitimate union of two beings without love? In praise of older women, let me say that if we could see how women would look twenty years later, we would not marry them twenty years before. And to those who want to succeed in a career let me say that if you are lazy and stubborn, you will certainly achieve something. I bought recently a painting by Alfred Sisley *La neige a Louveciennes* and I like it, but paintings are not bought because people like them, on the contrary, people like paintings because they've bought them.

Mais, *treve de plaisanteries*, I consider myself very lucky not only because of my lovely wife and children, but because I grew up in a literary and artistic environment, as my father was a friend of Gustave Flaubert, Theophile Gautier and Alexandre Dumas fils, and my mother was a very close friend of the Emperor Napoleon III and the Duc de Morny. When I was taken to the theater at the age of six I was so enthusiastic that I started to write a play of my own and since then I have not stopped. When Meilhac read one of my early plays he told me that it was stupid but I'll be a man of the theater, and since my first performed play *Tailleur pour dames* was premiered in 1886 the critics find my plays insubstantial, not even a comedy, but the audiences liked my imbroglis, good humor, gaiety, fun, madness, and that it what matters. Even the management of Theatre du Palais-Royal turned down Champignol *malgre lui*, as too unbelievable for the audiences to accept, but when the vaudeville opened ultimately in 1892 it achieved an extraordinary success, and never has one heard such laughter at a Paris theatre. And it ran for 434 performances, which is indeed unbelievable, as the success of its production in London, Berlin and New York. I hope that *La Dame de chez Maxim* will outrun the previous successes, because I need money to buy new paintings, even from Monet here.

Jacque Corot (aside) – I personally believe that there is no high culture or low culture. Victor Hugo is good culture, but so is Feydeau. Theater is divine, but film is also cultural. Opera is exhilarating and chansons are excellent too. Emile Zola is one of the best authors, but he is not better than Jules Verne. What matters is the quality of culture, comedy should be good, opera should not be boring, tragedy should not be ridiculous, philosophy should not be trivial.

Georges Feydeau – I cannot show you unfortunately scenes from my comedies because they are funny only in the context of the whole play. But I had an illumination, before films will be talking and one would see my plays, to show you silent films, funny and not funny, made by a personal friend, the film director [Georges Méliès](#), present here, who made for us a potpourri of the films that he has directed this year – it starts with the funeral of Felix Faure, the funeral not how he died, the robbing of Cleopatra's tomb, Cinderella, The bridegroom's dilemma, An up-to-date conjurer, The devil in a convent, The pillar of fire, The clown and motor-car, A mysterious portrait, Summoning the Spirits, The human pyramid, The mysterious knight, The snow man, and finally the plat de resistance that this audience will enjoy tremendously – [The Dreyfus Affair](#): Arrest of Dreyfus, Degradation of Dreyfus, Devil's Island, Suicide of Colonel Henri, Landing of Dreyfus at Quiberon, Dreyfus meets his wife, The court martial, etc. As you know I am a fervent Dreyfusard and it has been for me a pleasure to direct this film. Because the films are silent of course, I have asked the young Polish [Bronislaw Huberman](#), who will take part in a concert later this evening, to play on his violin whatever he likes from the classic and popular repertoire, from Rossini to Bizet, Jewish and Christian sacred music, Egyptian themes for Cleopatra, for Cinderella *Cendrillon* by Jules Massenet, and so on. You'll see – he is brilliant, only 17, a former pupil of Joachim, a good friend of Rubinstein. He is extremely expressive and flexible, in 1896 he performed the violin concerto of Johannes Brahms in the presence of the composer, who was stunned by his playing quality.

(We watch a potpourri of 1899 Georges Melies films prepared by him for the party, including Cinderella, Cleopatra, comedies and mysteries, finally the first film on the Dreyfus Affair. Accompanied by Bronislaw Huberman on the violin in a classical, sacred and popular recital)

Ernesta Stern – We have with us tonight the pillars of culture, French and international, we heard famous novelists, playwrights, poets, painters, engineers, scientists, composers, musicians, singers, actors, inventors, directors, managers, futurists, journalists, and prophets. But we still have not heard the best living sculptor Auguste Rodin, known for his masterpieces – The Thinker, The Kiss, The Burghers of Calais, Monument to Balzac, The Gates of Hell. His works departed from traditional themes of mythology and allegory, while modeling the human body with naturalism, his sculptures celebrate individual character and physicality. At the beginning he was criticized but today he has become consensus, his works favored by the government and the artistic community. He is invited to the best Parisian salons, yet he preferred to be with us tonight, displaying his loquaciousness and temperament for which he is better known. Oscar Wilde here is his follower, as well as Rilke and Mirbeau.

[Auguste Rodin](#) – Dear friends, I would like to clarify some misconceptions that were associated with my work over the years. I was called innovator, inventor, pioneer, but I invent nothing – I rediscover. At my age I have learned that patience is also a form of action, nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely. Ultimately, art is contemplation, it is the pleasure of the mind, which searches into nature and which there divines the spirit of which nature herself is animated. The artist must create a spark before he can make a fire, and before art is born, the artist must be ready to be consumed by the fire of his own creation. True artists are almost the only men who do their work for pleasure. To the artist there is never anything ugly in nature, which has no ideal bodies. But you have to be simple, the more simple we are, the more complete we become. I grant you that the artist does not see Nature as she appears to the vulgar, because his emotion reveals to him the hidden truths beneath appearances. I do not correct nature, I incorporate myself into it, it directs me. And if this concept is in contradiction to the spirit of the age, I know very well that one must fight for his principles.

I really cannot understand those who maintain that art can be immoral. In art, immorality cannot exist, art is always sacred. There is no morality in nature. The human body is first and foremost a mirror to the soul and its greatest beauty comes from that. The nude alone is well dressed. Man's naked form belongs to no particular moment in history, it is eternal, and can be looked upon with joy by the people of all ages. I have unbounded admiration for the nude, I worship it like a god. In front of the model I work with the same will to reproduce truth as if I were making a portrait. I can only work with a model, the sight of human forms nourishes and comforts me. The dazzling splendor revealed to the artist by the model that divests herself of her clothes has the effect of the sun piercing the clouds. Venus, Eve, these are feeble terms to express the beauty of women. I see here also very young people, let me tell you that genius only comes to those who know how to use their eyes and their intelligence. Some people maintain that photography can also be an art, but it is the artist who is truthful, while the photographer is mendacious for in reality time never stops cold. He who is discouraged after a failure is not a real artist. The main thing is to be moved, to love, to tremble, to live, be a man before being an artist! And this applies to all forms of arts – visual arts, music and literature.

Jacque Corot (aside) – What a giant! Not only his sculptures are gigantic, he is himself a giant, like Michelangelo, but I prefer him to the Italian sculptor, as I think that Rodin is more humane, more natural, more modern. And since Rodin no sculptor has ever surpassed him.

Ernesta Stern – I would like to welcome a dear guest from Russia, the chemist Dmitri Mendeleev. I believe that culture is holistic, encompassing literature, arts, music, science and



innovations, theater, philosophy, geography, history, political and economic sciences, possibly also films, sports, fashion. One should not be at the expense of the other, and there should be equilibrium between all of them – less Latin and Greek with more chemistry and physics, if we want to have a brave, new world. Not only holistic, cosmopolite as well, encompassing all nations. Russia's culture is wrongly perceived as literature only, in the last decades also music, maybe in the next century it will be sciences and the Russians will be the first ones to send a rocket to space. In the meanwhile, our friend Mendeleev has reinvented the laws that govern chemistry, and made a vital, pioneering contribution to world's science. But maybe dear Dmitri you can explain to ordinary people as we are what is it all about.

[Dmitri Mendeleev](#) – I had a dream and in this dream I have envisioned the complete arrangements of the elements, they fell into place as required, and this gives you another facet to the interpretation of dreams, dear Freud. Following this dream I formulated the Periodic Law and created a farsighted version of the periodic table of elements. This corrected not only the accepted properties of known elements, such as the atomic weight of uranium, but also to predict the properties of new elements that are yet to be discovered, as Marie Curie has explained to you. I was a teacher and wanted only to prepare a textbook for my course, with a classification of the elements according to their chemical properties. I saw the forest, while many other scientists see only the trees. But I didn't confine myself only to chemistry, I explored also physics, chemical industry, hydrodynamics, meteorology, geology, explosives, petroleum, fuels, fertilizers, even economy, protectionist trade and agriculture, demography...

I see that I bore you as you don't expect to hear a scientific lecture on a reveillon evening. I prefer to give you some of the insights that I have found, which are far more valuable than my scientific discoveries, as there is nothing in this world that I fear to say and I have achieved an inner freedom, obtained by a lot of work, peaceful and calm work. Pleasures flit by - they are only for yourself; work leaves a mark of long-lasting joy, work is for others. It is the function of science to discover the existence of a general reign of order in nature and to find the causes governing this order. And this refers in equal measure to the relations of man - social and political - and to the entire universe as a whole. The establishment of a law, moreover, does not take place when the first thought of it takes form, or even when its significance is recognized, but only when it has been confirmed by the results of the experiment. There exists everywhere a medium in things, determined by equilibrium, and we should try to reach it.

We could live at the present day without a Plato, but a double number of Newtons is required to discover the secrets of nature, and to bring life into harmony with the laws of nature. In that pure enjoyment experienced on approaching to the ideal, in that eagerness to draw aside the veil from the hidden truth, we ought to see surest pledges of further scientific success. Science thus advances, discovering new truths, and at the same time obtaining practical results. Elaborating on your line of thought, dear Ernesta, I would say that knowing how contented, free and joyful is life in the realms of science, one fervently wishes that many would enter their portals. The edifice of science not only requires material, but also a plan. Without the material, the plan alone is but a castle in the air, a mere possibility, whilst the material without a plan is but useless matter. And, you asked us to make forecasts for the new century, let me say this: Why do the Americans quarrel, why do they hate Negroes, Indians, even Germans, why do they not have science and poetry commensurate with themselves, why are there so many frauds and so much nonsense? I cannot soon give a solution to these questions... It was clear that in the United States there was a development not of the best, but of the middle and worst sides of European civilization, the notorious general voting, the tendency to politics... all the same as in Europe. A new dawn is not to be seen on this side of the ocean.

Jacque Corot (aside) – It is quite funny to discover how in retrospective great men as Mendeleev who have revolutionized the basics of chemistry were totally wrong when they forecasted the future. To say that the twentieth century will not be the American century, was maybe reasonable to say in 1899, but without any vision of the future. In many aspects the United States has developed for the best many sides of European civilization – in literature, in sciences, definitely in films and inventions, some would say also in arts and music, in theater and political thought. But Mendeleev was also correct in some of his US forecasts – the obsessive tendency to politics, the discontents on their democratic system, too many frauds – the worst scams in world economy, so much nonsense – the excessive aspects of advertising, consumerism, reality programs, culture to the lowest standards in society, hate to black people, native Americans, xenophobia... But also civil rights, New Deal, ethical thought...

Ernesta Stern – Our last speaker for tonight, don't hide your smiles and sighs of relief, will be one of us, a Frenchman, a true revolutionary, who invented a new social science – Sociology – Emile Durkheim. Why have I kept him for the end? Because culture is to no avail if it will remain in the exclusive domain of the elites, of our salons, of the privileged 1% of the population. I don't want to comment on the revolutionary vision of communism of Marx and Engels, there is a limit to my liberal thought, I and many other rich people in France do not want to lose all our properties to the proletariat and live in a dictatorship. But I am in favor, and I hope that many of you will agree, that social justice should be achieved in our lifetime, liberte, egalite, fraternite, but not to the extreme – not anarchy, not communism, not loving others as oneself. Find the middle way – liberty but with law and order, equality based on meritocracy, fraternity without doing to others what you wouldn't want to be done to you. So, culture should be in the public domain, accessible to everybody, with tickets to the Comedie Francaise and the Opera Garnier costing as much as a cinema ticket, with libraries open to the general public, free education from kindergarten to university at the best schools and universities. This new order will be based on science and inventions that will make food, transportation, housing accessible to all, maybe not a hotel particulier but a decent flat in the suburbs for everybody, it will be based on huge government budgets for welfare, education, health, culture. We have to reinvent our social sciences – political, economical, and sociology.

[Emile Durkheim](#) – Well... I can go home now, as you have said much better than I can ever say what has to be done in the next century in social sciences. You all know that I am a Dreyfusard, because of my convictions but possibly also because my wife Louise Dreyfus comes from this illustrious family, although there is no direct connection to Alfred. I am not the only one to have founded sociology, although many call me the principal architect of modern social sciences, let posterity decide about that. You referred, dear Ernesta, to Liberty. Liberty is the daughter of authority properly understood. For to be free is not to do what one pleases; it is to be the master of oneself, it is to know how to act within reason and to do one's duty. Groups, when interacting, create their own culture and attach powerful emotions to it. I differ from Kant by maintaining that moral duties originate in society and are not be found in some universal moral concept such as the categorical imperative. The individual believes that by adhering to morality, they are serving the common Good, and for this reason, the individual submits voluntarily to the moral commandment. However, in order to accomplish its aims, morality must be legitimate in the eyes of those to whom it speaks. In general, men aspire to education only to the extent that they are freed from the yoke of tradition; for as long as she is mistress of intelligences, she is sufficient for everything and does not easily tolerate rival power. I am concerned with how societies could maintain their integrity and coherence in modernity, in an era in which traditional social and religious ties are no longer assumed. The tools that could be surveyed in sociology are polls, surveys, statistics. All these are observations that I made in my books published in the last few years – The Division of

Labour in Society and The Rules of Sociological method. Last year I established the journal *L'Annee Sociologique*. My main goal is the acceptance of sociology as a legitimate science.

I advocate beliefs that might be unacceptable to many nationalistic, traditional and religious groups. I am secular, republican, with a sympathy towards socialism, and of course Dreyfusard. Frankly, when mores are sufficient, laws are unnecessary; when mores are insufficient, laws are unenforceable. It is society which, fashioning us in its image, fills us with religious, political and moral beliefs that control our actions. Each new generation is reared by its predecessor; the latter must therefore improve in order to improve its successor. The movement is circular. Socialism is not a science, a sociology in miniature: it is a cry of pain. Our whole social environment seems to us to be filled with forces which really exist only in our own minds. When man discovered the mirror, he began to lose his soul. From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned.

Man is only a moral being because he lives in society, since morality consists in solidarity with the group, and varies according to that solidarity. If you cause all social life to vanish, and moral life would vanish at the same time, having no object to cling to. Science cannot describe individuals, but only types. If human societies cannot be classified, they must remain inaccessible to scientific description. The roles of art, morality, religion, political faith, science itself are not to repair organic exhaustion nor to provide sound functioning of the organs. All this supraphysical life is built and expanded not because of the demands of the cosmic environment but because of the demands of the social environment. Being secular, I am a strong believer in science, it is science, and not religion, which has taught men that things are complex and difficult to understand. Solidarity can grow only in inverse ratio to personality. Every society is a moral society. In certain respects, this character is even more pronounced in organized societies. As the individual is not sufficient unto himself, it is from society that he receives everything necessary to him, as it is for society that he works. Society is not a mere sum of individuals. Rather, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics... The group thinks, feels, and acts quite differently from the way in which its members would were they isolated. If, then, we begin with the individual, we shall be able to understand nothing of what takes place in the group.

Jacque Corot (aside) – Wow! Chers amis, I promised you giants and I am a man of my word. Emile Durkheim was indeed one of the gigantic figures of his era, comparable only to other giants as Tolstoy, Zola, Ibsen, Monet, Rodin. So, in case that you were not too bored by his dissertation, let's recreate with a musical interlude, but I interfere with the role of our hostess.

Ernesta Stern – Since our great Victor Hugo died in 1885, we have lost many of the cultural paragons of Europe. I'll just mention their names in order for us to remember them and their contributions to our society, to our culture, to our souls, among them many regulars of our salon: Victor Hugo, Louis Pasteur, Vincent Van Gogh, Rosa Bonheur, Alfred Sisley, John Everett Milais, Berthe Morisot, Lewis Carroll, Stephane Mallarme, Theodor Fontane, Henri Meilhac, Alphonse Daudet, Paul Verlaine, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Carlo Collodi, Edmond de Goncourt, Alfred Nobel, Friedrich Engels, Alexandre Dumas fils, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jose Zorrilla, Guy de Maupassant, Walt Whitman, Pedro Antonio de Alarcon, Herman Melville, Arthur Rimbaud, Emile Augier, Emily Dickinson, Jules Valles, Friedrich Engels, Georges-Pierre Seurat, Johan Strauss II, Amilcare Ponchielli, Alexander Borodin, Leo Delibes, Anton Rubinstein, Edouard Lalo, Emmanuel Chabrier, Ernest Chausson, Anton Bruckner, Johannes Brahms, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Charles Gounod and Franz Liszt.

I thought which text by one of them has any forecasts on the twentieth century and suddenly I had a revelation – Victor Hugo has written *La Legende des Siecles*, and one of its chapters was called *Le Vingtieme Siecle*. I am grateful that Hugo's granddaughter Jeanne Hugo has accepted to read from this poem, which fits exactly into the spirit of our evening. Hugo was a prophet, the most important cultural person of the century, he fought for freedom and was exiled like you my dear Zola. [Jeanne Hugo](#), who is well-known in Parisian society, has come with her husband the scientist and explorer [Jean-Baptiste Charcot](#). Then, we'll hear the Cuban/French poet Jose-Maria de Heredia reciting poetry by the late Spanish writer Pedro Antonio de Alarcon. We'll hear also the Russian actress Olga Knipper playing Tatiana writing a letter to Eugene Onegin by Alexander Pushkin, adapted to Tchaikovsky's famous opera.

Following that, we'll hear a concert of works by the late composers who have died recently and that we have not heard works by them tonight – Johan Strauss II, Anton Bruckner, Charles Gounod, Amilcare Ponchielli, Alexander Borodin, Leo Delibes, Anton Rubinstein, Edouard Lalo, Emmanuel Chabrier, Ernest Chausson and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. And of course operas that the late Henri Meilhac who died a couple of years ago wrote for them the libretto: by Offenbach – *Le bresilien*, *La belle Helene*, *Barbe-bleue*, *La vie Parisienne*, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein*, *La Perichole*, and by Bizet – the most famous *Carmen*.

The concert will be performed by an ensemble of Orchestre Lamoureux conducted by [Camille Chevillard](#), with soloists [Pablo Casals](#) – cello, [Bronislaw Huberman](#) – violin, [Lionel Tertis](#) – viola, [Maurice Ravel](#) – piano. They'll perform chamber music, sonatas and orchestral music, as well as opera, vocal and ballet music with an ensemble of opera singers and dancers from the Garnier Opera, and the soloists [Adelina Patti](#) – soprano, [Antonio Paoli](#) – tenor, [Karl Mantzius](#) – baritone, [Luisa Tetrazzini](#) – soprano, [Leon Rothier](#) – bass, [Edyth Walker](#) – mezzo-soprano, [Francesco Tamagno](#) – tenor, [Clara Butt](#) – contralto. So, be ready to hear music from operas, ballets and instrumental music, such as - *Faust*, *Mireille*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Ave Maria*, songs, waltzes, *La Gioconda*, *Prince Igor*, *In the steps of Central Asia*, *Lakme*, *Sylvia*, *Coppelia*, lieder, sonatas, extracts from trios and quartets, concerti and symphonies as *Symphonie Espagnole* and Bruckner and Tchaikovsky's symphonies, rhapsodies as *Espana*, *Die Maccabaer*, *Poeme de l'amour et de la mer*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Der Zigeunerbaron*, *Wiener Blut*, polkas, quadrilles and waltzes as *Emperor Waltz*, *Voices of Spring*, *Viennese Blood*, *Wine Women and Song*, *The Blue Danube*, and from operas written by Meilhac arias of – Offenbach's *Le Bresilien*, *La belle Helene*, *Barbe-bleue*, *La vie Parisienne*, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein*, *La Perichole*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and of course by Tchaikovsky the ballets *Le lac des cygnes*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, and *The Queen of Spades*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Capriccio Italien*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Francesca da Rimini*.

(Jeanne Hugo recites a poem from *La Legende des Siecles* by Victor Hugo, her grandfather)

(Jose-Maria de Heredia recites poems by the Spanish poet Pedro Antonio de Alarcon)

(Olga Knipper plays Tatiana writing to Eugene Onegin by Pushkin and Tchaikovsky's opera)

(Then, a concert in memoriam of the late composers, with an ensemble of Orchestre Lamoureux conducted by [Camille Chevillard](#), with soloists [Pablo Casals](#) – cello, [Bronislaw Huberman](#) – violin, [Lionel Tertis](#) – viola, [Maurice Ravel](#) – piano. They'll perform chamber music, sonatas and orchestral music, as well as opera, vocal & ballet music with an ensemble of opera singers & dancers from the Garnier Opera, soloists [Adelina Patti](#) – soprano, [Antonio Paoli](#) – tenor, [Karl Mantzius](#) – baritone, [Luisa Tetrazzini](#) – soprano, [Leon Rothier](#) – bass, [Edyth Walker](#) – mezzo-soprano, [Francesco Tamagno](#) – tenor, [Clara Butt](#) – contralto.)

Jeanne Hugo -

Victor Hugo – La Legende des Siecles – Vingtieme Siecle – Pleine Mer

L'ancien monde, l'ensemble étrange et surprenant  
 De faits sociaux, morts et pourris maintenant,  
 D'où sortit ce navire aujourd'hui sous l'écume,  
 L'ancien monde aussi, lui, plongé dans l'amertume,  
 Avait tous les fléaux pour vents et pour typhons.  
 Construction d'airain aux étages profonds,  
 Sur qui le mal, flot vil, crachait sa bave infâme,  
 Plein de fumée, et mû par une hydre de flamme,  
 La Haine, il ressemblait à ce sombre vaisseau.  
 Le mal l'avait marqué de son funèbre sceau.  
 Ce monde, enveloppé d'une brume éternelle,  
 Était fatal: l'Espoir avait plié son aile;  
 Pas d'unité, divorce et joug; diversité  
 De langue, de raison, de code, de cité;  
 Nul lien; nul faisceau; le progrès solitaire,  
 Comme un serpent coupé, se tordait sur la terre,  
 Sans pouvoir réunir les tronçons de l'effort;  
 L'esclavage, parquant les peuples pour la mort,  
 Les enfermait au fond d'un cirque de frontières  
 Où les gardaient la Guerre et la Nuit, bestiaires;  
 L'Adam slave luttait contre l'Adam germain;  
 Un genre humain en France; un autre genre humain  
 En Amérique, un autre à Londres, un autre à Rome;  
 L'homme au delà d'un pont ne connaissait plus l'homme;  
 Les vivants, d'ignorance et de vices chargés,  
 Se traînaient; en travers de tout, les préjugés,  
 Les superstitions étaient d'âpres enceintes  
 Terribles d'autant plus qu'elles étaient plus saintes;  
 Quel créneau soupçonneux et noir qu'un alcoran!  
 Un texte avait le glaive au poing comme un tyran;  
 La loi d'un peuple était chez l'autre peuple un crime;  
 Lire était un fossé, croire était un abîme;  
 Les rois étaient des tours; les dieux étaient des murs;  
 Nul moyen de franchir tant d'obstacles obscurs;  
 Sitôt qu'on voulait croître, on rencontrait la barre  
 D'une mode sauvage ou d'un dogme barbare;  
 Et, quant à l'avenir, défense d'aller là.  
 Le vent de l'infini sur ce monde souffla.  
 Il a sombré. Du fond des cieux inaccessibles,  
 Les vivants de l'éther, les êtres invisibles  
 Confusément épars sous l'obscur firmament  
 A cette heure, pensifs, regardent fixement  
 Sa disparition dans la nuit redoutable.  
 Qu'est-ce que le simoun a fait du grain de sable?  
 Cela fut. C'est passé. Cela n'est plus ici.  
 Ce monde est mort. Mais quoi! l'homme est-il mort aussi?

Cette forme de lui disparaissant, l'a-t-elle  
 Lui-même remporté dans l'énigme éternelle?  
 L'océan est désert. Pas une voile au loin.  
 Ce n'est plus que du flot que le flot est témoin.  
 Pas un esquif vivant sur l'onde où la mouette  
 Voit du Léviathan rôder la silhouette.  
 Est-ce que l'homme, ainsi qu'un feuillage jauni,  
 S'en est allé dans l'ombre? Est-ce que c'est fini?  
 Seul, le flux et reflux va, vient, passe et repasse.  
 Et l'oeil, pour retrouver l'homme absent de l'espace,  
 Regarde en vain là-bas. Rien.  
 Regardez là-haut.

Jose-Maria de Heredia – poetry in Spanish by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón

### Fuego y nieve

### Fire and Snow

Duro es tu corazón como el granito;  
 mi corazón como la cera tierno:  
 verano ardiente soy; tú helado invierno;  
 tú nieve eterna; fuego yo infinito.

Your heart is hard like granite ;  
 my heart is tender like wax:  
 I am hot summer; you are frozen winter;  
 you are eternal snow ; I am endless fire.

Yo me acerco a tu nieve, y no tiritó;  
 antes crece la furia de este infierno;  
 y hiélate a ti más mi fuego eterno,  
 y ni me apagas ¡ay! ni te derrito.

I approach your snow, & I do not shiver ;  
 the fury of this hell grows before;  
 and you cool more my eternal fire,  
 and you don't even turn me off! Oh! Nor do I melt you.

¿Cómo encuentro calor donde no hay llama?  
 ¿Cómo no da calor la llama mía?  
 ¿Cómo mi incendio tu esquivéz no inflama?

How do I find heat where there is no flame?  
 How doesn't my flame give heat?  
 How doesn't my fire ignite your elusiveness?

¿Cómo tu hielo mi pasión no enfría?  
 ¡Oh! ¿por qué no nos hizo el hado alevé,  
 o de fuego a los dos, o a ambos de nieve?

How doesn't your ice cool my passion?  
 Oh! Why didn't fate make us  
 Or both fire, or both snow?

### SEGUIDILLA MANCHEGA PARA GUITARRA

Ayer te he visto en cuerpo:  
 ¡qué cuerpo tienes!  
 Ayer te vi en el baile...  
 ¡cómo te mueves!-  
 ¡Es una burla  
 que haya en cuerpo tan pícaro  
 alma tan pura!

Yesterday I have seen you in body :  
 What body do you have!  
 I saw you at the dance yesterday...  
 How do you move ! -  
 It is a jest  
 That in such a mischievous body  
 There is such a pure soul!

Ernesta Stern – I want to welcome guests who have just arrived: the Swiss poet [Carl Spitteler](#), the Serbian writer [Janko Veselinovic](#), the Indian polymath [Rabindranath Tagore](#), the Chinese writer [Lie Kim Hok](#), the Japanese author [Koda Rohan](#), the Croatian poet [Antun Gustav Matos](#), and the Belgian playwright [Maurice Maeterlinck](#), the author of *Pelleas & Melisande*.

Olga Knipper - (acting tenderly, lovingly, passionately, childishly, womanly, determined, with despair, hope, in agony)

Tatyana's Letter (from Eugene Onegin by Alexander Pushkin & Tchaikovsky's opera)

*Tatyana's letter to Onegin.*

*Письмо Татьяны к Онегину*

Я к вам пишу - чего же боле?  
 Что я могу еще сказать?  
 Теперь, я знаю, в вашей воле  
 Меня презреньем наказать.  
 Но вы, к моей несчастной доле  
 Хоть каплю жалости храня,  
 Вы не оставите меня.  
 Сначала я молчать хотела;  
 Поверьте: моего стыда  
 Вы не узнали б никогда,  
 Когда б надежду я имела  
 Хоть редко, хоть в неделю раз  
 В деревне нашей видеть вас,  
 Чтоб только слышать ваши  
 речи,  
 Вам слово молвить, и потом  
 Все думать, думать об одном  
 И день и ночь до новой встречи.

Но говорят, вы нелюдим;  
 В глуши, в деревне всё вам  
 скучно,  
 А мы... ничем мы не блесним,  
 Хоть вам и рады простодушно.

Зачем вы посетили нас?  
 В глуши забытого селенья  
 Я никогда не знала б вас,  
 Не знала б горького мученья.  
 Души неопытной волненья  
 Смирив со временем (как  
 знать?),  
 По сердцу я нашла бы друга,  
 Была бы верная супруга  
 И добродетельная мать.

I write this to you - what more can be  
 said?  
 What more can I add to that one fact?  
 For now I know it is in your power  
 To punish me contemptuously for this  
 act.  
 But you, keeping for my unhappy lot  
 Even one drop of sympathy  
 Will not entirely abandon me.  
 At first I wished to remain silent;  
 Believe me, my shame, my agony,  
 You never ever would have heard.  
 As long as hope remained preserved

That rarely, even once a week,  
 I'd see you in our country house,  
 To hear your voice, to hear you speak,  
 To say a few words, and then, and then  
 To think, and think, and think again  
 All day, all night, until the next  
 meeting.

But it is said you are unsociable,  
 And in this backwater all is tedious to  
 you,  
 While we... well here we shine at  
 nothing,  
 Although we're glad to welcome you.

Why did you come to visit us?  
 In this forgotten rural home  
 Your face I never would have known  
 Nor known this bitter suffering.  
 The fever of inexperience  
 In time (who can tell?) would have  
 died down,  
 And I'd have found another lover,  
 Dear to my heart, to whom I'd be true,  
 And a loving wife, and virtuous  
 mother.

Другой!.. Нет, никому на свете  
 Не отдала бы сердца я!  
 То в вышнем суждено совете...  
 То воля неба: я твоя;  
 Вся жизнь моя была залогом  
 Свиданья верного с тобой;  
 Я знаю, ты мне послан богом,  
 До гроба ты хранитель мой...  
 Ты в сновиденьях мне являлся,  
 Незримый, ты мне был уж мил,  
 Твой чудный взгляд меня  
 томил,  
 В душе твой голос раздавался  
 Давно... нет, это был не сон!  
 Ты чуть вошел, я вмиг узнала,  
 Вся обомлела, запылала  
 И в мыслях молвила: вот он!  
 Не правда ль? я тебя слыхала:  
 Ты говорил со мной в тиши,  
 Когда я бедным помогала  
 Или молитвой улаждала  
 Тоску волнуемой души?  
 И в это самое мгновенье  
 Не ты ли, милое виденье,  
 В прозрачной темноте  
 мелькнул,  
 Приникнул тихо к изголовью?  
 Не ты ль, с отрадой и любовью,  
 Слова надежды мне шепнул?

Кто ты, мой ангел ли  
 хранитель,  
 Или коварный искуситель:  
 Мои сомненья разреши.  
 Быть может, это всё пустое,  
 Обман неопытной души!  
 И суждено совсем иное...  
 Но так и быть! Судьбу мою  
 Отныне я тебе вручаю,  
 Перед тобою слезы лью,  
 Твоей защиты умоляю...  
 Вообрази: я здесь одна,  
 Никто меня не понимает,  
 Рассудок мой изнемогает,

Another!... No, no one on this earth  
 Is there to whom I'd give my heart!  
 That is ordained by highest fate...  
 That is heaven's will - that I am yours;  
 My life till now was but a pledge,  
 Of meeting with you, a forward image;  
 You were sent by heaven of that I'm  
 sure,  
 To the grave itself you are my  
 saviour...  
 In dreams you have appeared to me,  
 Though yet unseen, I held you dear,  
 Your glance and strangeness tortured  
 me,  
 To my soul your voice was loud and  
 clear  
 From long ago... It was not a dream!  
 You came, and I knew that very  
 instant,  
 I was struck dumb, my heart flared up,  
 And in my thoughts said "He is the  
 one!"  
 Is it not true? I heard you often:  
 In the silence did you not speak to me,  
 Both when I helped the poor, and  
 when  
 With prayer I sought to ease and soften  
 The pain inside my anguished head?  
 And at this very moment, is it not you,  
 Oh sweetest, lovely vision who  
 In the night's transparency flits by  
 And quietly nestles by the bed's head?  
 And you, who with love and  
 rapturously  
 Whispered a word of hope to me?  
 Who are you, my guardian angel?  
 Or a wily devil, a tempter fatal?  
 Disperse these doubts, this agony.  
 Perhaps all this is nothingness,  
 A foolish mind's self-aberration,  
 And something other is fate's decree...  
 So be it! Whatever my destiny,  
 To you I give it from this day,  
 Before you the tears roll down my  
 cheek,  
 And your protection I beseech...  
 For consider: here I am alone,  
 No one understands what I say,  
 My reason tortures me every day,



И молча гибнуть я должна.  
Я жду тебя: единым взором  
Надежды сердца оживи,  
Иль сон тяжелый перерви,  
Увы, заслуженным укором!

Кончаю! Страшно перечесть...  
Стыдом и страхом замираю...  
Но мне порукой ваша честь,  
И смело ей себя вверяю...

And silently I am doomed to perish.  
You I await: With a single glance  
Revive the hope that's in my heart,  
Cut short this heavy dream I cherish,  
Deserving, I know, reproach and  
scorn.

I finish - I tremble to read it through,  
With shame and terror my heart sinks  
low,  
But your honour is my guarantee  
And to that I entrust my destiny.

Ernesta Stern (with great emotion, tears in her eyes) - As you all know my dear husband Louis, who is by my side, is very ill and we pray hard for his convalescence. When I decided to organize this evening in his honor all the participants - guests and artists - enthusiastically accepted to honor him with their presence. But I hope that this evening is not a farewell party but the dawn of a new century and that, cher Louis, you will recover from your illness. Louis, personally chose the program for this evening, the artists, the guests, and he warmly thanks you for coming. You all know of Louis' banking activities, being associated with the Stern Bank since 1865, but he has also a very refined taste in art. Our art collection was collected mainly by his choices and he is an assiduous member of the Cercle du Palais Royal. We thank members from all our family, first of all our dear son, [Jean Stern](#), one of the best fencers.

In case that you are confused about our connections with the Rothschild family, who are here our dear guests, it is very simple. Betty von Rothschild was the granddaughter of Mayer Amschel, founder of the Rothschild Dynasty, and the daughter of Salomon Mayer von Rothschild and Caroline Stern. Salomon Mayer was the brother of James Mayer de Rothschild, who was the founder of the Rothschild Bank in France and the father of Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild. Caroline Stern was the aunt of Antoine Jacob Stern, who founded the Stern Bank in Paris in 1832 and was the father of my husband Louis. If this is not complicated enough our dear Betty also married her uncle James Mayer. So, all of us are cousins, as we are also cousins to the other bankers' families. We welcome tonight [Edmond de Rothschild](#) and his son [Maurice](#). Edmond is not only active in banking but he pursues artistic and philanthropic interests. Furthermore, he is a leading proponent of the Zionist movement and financed the first site at Rishon LeZion, as part of his goal to establish a Jewish homeland, industrialization, agriculture and economic development. You see, dear Herzl, great minds think alike, and I am sure that you'll find the way to cooperate closely. We have here also the painter [Zoe de Rothschild](#), niece of Edmond, and wife of the Belgian banker [Leon Lambert](#), with their lovely daughter Claude. Dear Zoe, I think that as two typical Jewish mothers we should arrange a wedding between my son Jean and your daughter Claude. Don't blush Claude nothing will be achieved without your consent. We have with us tonight also Henriette Stern, sister of my husband Louis, with her husband Georges Halphen and their son the composer [Fernand Halphen](#). Finally, we have here the other brother of my husband Louis – Jacques Stern, founder of the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, and husband of [Sophie Croizette](#), the former actress from the Comedie Francaise, who played with Sarah Bernhardt in the play Le marriage de Figaro by Beaumarchais. Sophie had a hotel particulier at 7, rond-point des Champs-Elysees, not far from here, before she married, where she was holding a very fine salon, and Edmond has a hotel particulier at 41, rue du Faubourg Saint-

Honore, just opposite our residence, and that is how he could come to us, as he has also a reveillon at his sumptuous house. So, we are not only cousins, we are also neighbors!

My husband Louis asked our Spanish friends, who are almost Parisians, to give a concert of their compositions, so I am delighted to invite the Spanish composer and pianist [Isaac Albeniz](#) accompanied by the young [Manuel de Falla](#), the Spanish composer and guitarist [Francisco Tarrega](#) accompanied by [Alfred Cottin](#), and the Spanish composer & violinist [Pablo de Sarasate](#) accompanied by [Berthe Marx](#), who'll play their own compositions, and by other's.

(Isaac Albeniz, Francisco Tarrega an Pablo de Sarasate give a recital of their compositions)

Jacque Corot (aside) – My heart is broken when I see how you, dear Ernesta, are trying to appease your overflowing emotions, your grief and despair filling your soul, in order to gratify your husband and guests, knowing that his end is near. Louis is about to die within a few weeks from a pneumonia that he contracted days before his death, but he was extremely sick even before. You are bigger than life, women in your times succeeded only in the fields that society intended for them – in running salons, like very intellectual women, in acting, like Sarah Bernhardt who was extremely talented, in painting, like Berthe Morisot who was the granddaughter of Fragonard, in literature, like Colette who was also married to a famous writer, in science, like Marie Curie whose career received a boost after marrying her colleague Pierre Curie, in journalism, like Marguerite Durand, who was married to a member of the Assemblée Nationale and had a child from one of the directors of Figaro, where she worked. It was very difficult for women to succeed, unless they were extremely talented, very rich or married the right men. They were also ridiculed for attempting to succeed like men. I feel endless empathy for you, dear Ernesta, because you are what is best in the human race, because of your moderate way, your good temper, your love for all, your activity for culture and implementing the values of humanism. De Profundis, you have grown to be one of the greatest women of the Belle Epoque, with the best cultural salon and your success as a writer.

Ernesta Stern - I take this opportunity to welcome, on top of our guests from all the nationalities who spoke to us until now, the regulars of my salon, the famous painter [Leon Bonnat](#), who was the teacher of John Singer Sargent, Gustave Caillebotte and the Norwegian Edvard Munch who is almost a Parisian and whose painting The Scream makes me scream, the painter [Carolus-Duran](#), who married the painter [Pauline Croizette](#), the sister of Sophie my sister-in-law, the novelist [Paul Adam](#), who published a few months ago an excellent historical novel La Force, the astronomer and author [Camille Flammarion](#), who wrote the scaring La fin du monde, the poet, translator from Spanish [Jose-Maria de Heredia](#), born in Cuba but he is the most Parisian poet, the writer and politician [Joseph Reinach](#) who is the champion of Alfred Dreyfus from the beginning, he poet, novelist and playwright [Jean Richepin](#), once a lover who exchanged stormy love letters with Sarah Bernhardt, but both have remained very good friends over the years, the poet [Henri de Regnier](#), married to Heredia's daughter the author [Marie de Regnier](#), they are good friends with the poet and writer [Pierre Louys](#) who is married to another daughter of Heredia – [Louise](#), all four of them are here with us tonight and they are inseparable. Louys is friend with Oscar Wilde, and dedicatee of Wilde's Salome in French.

I would like to welcome also my dear friend the French painter [Camille Pissarro](#), who is not only one of the founders of Impressionism but also a strong believer in anarchism in arts, the poet [Gustave Kahn](#), who also plays a role in debates on anarchism, feminism, socialism and Zionism, the young author of Ubu Roi [Alfred Jarry](#), we were among the few who were not shocked by his play, and the couple a la mode, the author [Willy](#) and his charming wife [Colette](#), who it is rumored are working on a novel Claudine a l'ecole, based on Colette's experiences, [Anna de Noailles](#), who was born in Paris as a Romanian Princess and has

married a son of the Duke de Noailles, the French feminist and a dear friend [Marguerite Durand](#), who founded recently a feminist daily newspaper La Fronde, run exclusively by women, advocating women's rights, admission to the Bar Association and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and what an horror, to be even allowed to be named to the Legion of Honor. The Austrian composer [Gustav Mahler](#), is taking his Vienna Philharmonic to play concerts at the Exposition Universelle, so bienvenue a Paris dear Gustav. The Russian composer [Alexander Glazunov](#) was recently appointed as professor at the Saint-Petersburg Conservatory but came to us for the Christmas vacations, the Czech composer [Antonin Dvorak](#), received a few months ago a gold medal for Litteris et Artibus from the Emperor Franz Joseph himself. My good friend, the Czech philosopher, humanist and ethicist [Tomas Masaryk](#), contested recently the Jewish blood libel in the Hilsner Trial, imagine in 1899 a blood libel in the center of Europe, and we complain that the poor French Army is accusing Dreyfus, at least he was not accused of any blood rites. Thank you, dear Tomas, for being a friend to the Jewish community and such a humanist. And I want to mention here that my husband Louis Stern has no connection to another anti-Semitic scandal l'affaire Stern in Bad Kissingen in 1895.

We have tonight with us the Dutch naturalist author [Marcellus Emants](#), who has two mentors Emile Zola and Hippolyte Taine and wrote Een nagelaten bekentenis, the Romanian writer [Ion Luca Caragiale](#), is mostly critical of literary experiments and Modernism, but here in liberal Paris we welcome all opinions including your conservatism. The Turkish writer [Tevfik Fikret](#) told me that he is an advocate for free speech and constitutional government and is openly critical of Abdul Hamid II. The Egyptian poet [Ahmed Shawqi](#), studied here at Paris University, and the young writer [Khalil Mutran](#), is a true cosmopolitan Arabic – he was born in Ottoman Syria in Baalbek from a well-known Palestinian family, studied in Beirut, wanted to live in Chile but came to Paris instead, and now he lives in Egypt. We have here tonight also the Ukrainian Yiddish author and playwright [Sholem Aleikhem](#) who wrote Tevye der milkhiker (Dairyman), another Ukrainian the young Hebrew poet [Hayim Nahman Bialik](#), who wrote the long poem Hamatmid (Studious), the young author in Ladino Judeo-Spanish [Elia Carmona](#), is encountering problems with the Ottoman censorship imposing restrictions on the publication of some of his books, dealing with topics of love, romance and crime. Those of you who want to read Dumas' Count of Monte Cristo in Judeo-Arabic are invited to read the translation by the Tunisian author and journalist [Jacob Chemla](#), welcome. Another guest is the Greek poet [Kostis Palamas](#), who wrote the words to the Olympic Hymn. And we are happy to have with us tonight also the Father of the modern Olympic Games [Pierre de Coubertin](#).

We all know that after the first Olympics in Athens in 1896, we'll hold the next Olympics here in Paris, in the summer as part of the Exposition Universelle, so we'll have in our Exposition not only technology and culture but also sports. In the spirit of innovation, I have invited the young Belgian race car driver [Camille Jenatzy](#), who broke recently the speed record of 100 km/h, with his electric car La jamais contente, dear Camille we are content with your record and take care of yourself. You may wonder how we have among our guests a former German general, ca pourrait mettre la puce a l'oreille a nos amis anti-Dreyfusards, it could be construed as a proof of the treason of the Dreyfusards. But, actually the mother of Graf [Ferdinand Adolf Heinrich August von Zeppelin](#) was French, he was an observer in the American Civil War and made his first balloon ascent in 1863. Since 1891, after resigning from the army, he devoted his full attention to airships. Last year he formed a stock company to finance the construction of the first rigid airship the Zeppelin LZ1, which is about to be completed within a few weeks. If everything goes as scheduled the airship will be flown soon.

We have with us here tonight also the Polish famous author of Quo Vadis and Rodzina Polanieckich [Henryk Sienkiewicz](#), the young Swedish author [Selma Lagerlof](#), the author of

Gosta Berlings saga, I hope dear Ragnar Sohlman that in your new Nobel Prizes you'll take into consideration female talents, and who knows two of the women who are with us tonight Selma and Marie Curie will be among the first to be awarded the prestigious prizes within a decade. Dear Ibsen, you were probably thrilled a few months ago to read the monograph that the Danish [Georg Brandes](#) wrote about you. Brandes is with us, as well as the Finnish writer, artist and architect [Johan Jacob Ahrenberg](#), so we have quite a strong Scandinavian presence. Last but not least we have tonight friends from many more pillars of culture in Europe, Africa, Asia & America. Finally, I am most grateful that you came, dear [Giuseppe Verdi](#), and allowed me to tell that at the age of 86 you still create and publish, to our great admiration.

(All the guests rise spontaneously for a standing ovation to greet Giuseppe Verdi, while singing a cappella the chorus Va Pensiero from Nabucco, led by the tenor Enrico Caruso)

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate;  
va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli,  
ove olezzano tepide e molli  
l'aure dolci del suolo natal!

Fly, my thoughts, on wings of gold;  
go settle upon the slopes and the hills,  
where, soft and mild, the sweet airs  
of my native land smell fragrant!

Del Giordano le rive saluta,  
di Sionne le torri atterrate.  
O, mia patria, sì bella e perduta!  
O, membranza, sì cara e fatal!

Greet the banks of the Jordan  
and Zion's toppled towers.  
Oh, my homeland, so lovely and so lost!  
Oh memory, so dear and so dead!

Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,  
perché muta dal salice pendi?  
Le memorie nel petto raccendi,  
ci favella del tempo che fu!

Golden harp of the prophets of old,  
why do you now hang silent upon the willow?  
Rekindle the memories in our hearts,  
and speak of times gone by!

O simile di Sòlima ai fati  
traggi un suono di crudo lamento,  
o t'ispiri il Signore un concerto  
che ne infonda al patire virtù!

Mindful of the fate of Solomon's temple,  
Let me cry out with sad lamentation,  
or else may the Lord strengthen me  
to bear these sufferings!

(The opera singers sing arias from Verdi's operas, ending with Triumphal March from Aida)

Jacque Corot (aside) – Verdi has remained unequalled. Upon his death, a year later, along his funeral's cortege in Milan, bystanders started singing "Va, pensiero". When he was reinterred at the Casa di Riposo, Arturo Toscanini conducted a choir of 800 in the famous hymn. I have so much more to tell about the guests of Ernesta, Mahler will marry Alma Schindler, who'll become one of the most interesting persons of the century, Colette who'll publish some of the best novels of French literature, Masarik who will become the first president of the state of Czechoslovakia for 17 years before resigning and dying just before the shameful Munich agreement, about Jean Stern who will eventually marry Claude Lambert in 1904, and Maurice de Rothschild who'll marry Noemie Halphen, granddaughter of Emile Pereire, in 1909 and was mother of the philanthropist Edmond de Rothschild; but I'm just a chorus, not a prophet.

Ernesta Stern – Chers amis, it is almost midnight. In a few moments a new century will be born. We listened to your forecasts for the new century and we hope that it will be the best century in the history of mankind. Every indication favors that, the last 50 to 80 years were the best ever in culture, literature, arts, music, inventions, sciences, architecture, theater, civil rights, literacy, health, welfare. From now on, the situation can only improve, democracy will prevail, nations will be liberated, no more racism, no more pandemics, no more wars, equal

rights to all citizens, to women, to all races, culture will spread over the world, free secular education to all from kindergarten to university, people will live until 120. So, let us count the last seconds of this century – ten, neuf, ocho, sette, sechs, pyat, fire, drie, dois, ahat, Happy New Year, Prosperous New Century, Peace, Health, Liberty, and a Long Life to All!

Dear Friends, while we hear and see the fireworks all over Paris, after having heard and seen the cultural fireworks of the Cultural and Creative Paragons of Europe, let us sing the Ode to Joy from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. It expresses our hope for Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite, for joy and peace, and who knows maybe during the new century that we have just started a European Union will be founded, with no boundaries between nations, and this hymn will become the anthem of the unified Europe, from Ireland to Romania, from Sweden to Greece, from Portugal to Lithuania, a Union that will be founded by the former enemies and new friends – France and Germany. So, actors, musicians, guests, let us play and sing the Ode!

(The actors, musicians and guests sing and play the Ode to Joy from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, while the Parisian New Century fireworks outside the windows are seen & heard. The protagonists, actors, musicians... enter with flags of the nations of Ernesta Stern's guests, France, UK, USA, Italy, Spain, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, Ottomans, Zionists, Portugal, etc., and finally we see only Jacque Corot holding the flag of the European Union)

### An die Freude

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium,  
Wir betreten feuertrunken,  
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!  
Deine Zauber binden wieder  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Wem der große Wurf gelungen  
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein;  
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen  
Mische seinen Jubel ein!  
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele  
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!  
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle  
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Freude trinken alle Wesen  
An den Brüsten der Natur;  
Alle Guten, alle Bösen  
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.  
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,  
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;  
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben  
und der Cherub steht vor Gott.

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen

### Ode to Joy

Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity [or: of gods],  
Daughter of [Elysium](#),  
We enter, drunk with fire,  
Heavenly one, thy sanctuary!  
Thy magic binds again  
What custom strictly divided;  
All people become brothers,  
Where thy gentle wing abides.

Whoever has succeeded in the great attempt,  
To be a friend's friend,  
Whoever has won a lovely woman,  
Add his to the jubilation!  
Yes, and also whoever has just one soul  
To call his own in this world!  
And he who never managed it should slink  
Weeping from this union!

All creatures drink of joy  
At nature's breasts.  
All the Just, all the Evil  
Follow her trail of roses.  
Kisses she gave us and grapevines,  
A friend, proven in death.  
Salaciousness was given to the worm  
And the cherub stands before God.

Gladly, as His suns fly

Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan	through the heavens' grand plan
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,	Go on, brothers, your way,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.	Joyful, like a hero to victory.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!	Be embraced, Millions!
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!	This kiss to all the world!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt	Brothers, above the starry canopy
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.	There must dwell a loving Father.
Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?	Are you collapsing, millions?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?	Do you sense the creator, world?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!	Seek him above the starry canopy!
Über Sternen muß er wohnen.	Above stars must He dwell.

Jacque Corot (to the guests and the theater audience) – I wonder who wrote the immortal lines: “All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.” Anyhow, it is not probably in our century, as most of the guests of Ernesta Stern's Salon were convinced that they have reached the end of history, the age of justice, in fair round belly with good capon lined, with eyes severe and beard of formal cut, full of wise saws and modern instances. But they soon found out, that tens of millions would die in World War I and the Spanish Flu, and after the worst cataclysm of human history – World War II and the Holocaust. that they remained sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything, And after the terrible war, they started all over again the seven ages, the mewling infant, the whining schoolboy, the sighing lover, the quick in quarrel soldier, and then the justice again in fair round belly. And they thought towards the end of the twentieth century once again that the end of history has arrived, tout va pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes, all is for the best as in Voltaire's *Candide*, quite the opposite from Jaques' monologue in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. By the way, another Jacque as me, and as in this play, we are more of an observer than an actor, placing himself outside the group of happy characters who populate both plays. Because I am not only 80 as in Ernesta's *reveillon*, nor am I living 120 years until 1939, being eternal or virtual, living beyond 2020. I have lost my optimism while traveling the world, and I constantly remind the protagonists and the audience that in the real world time is not suspended, and grief, sorrow and death provide a counterpoint to all human joys.

I have seen it all, after the end of history, so-called, came the stock exchange collapse, 9/11, the Great Recession, Covid-19 pandemics, wars, terrorism, materialism, lack of ethics and a superficial culture, as foreseen by Jules Verne. We witnessed the most spectacular cultural fireworks in the years 1820 to 1939, which have not been surpassed since then. But even if all the world is just a stage and we are merely players, even if we are dancing in a round dance as in Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen*, *La Ronde*, *Ring a Ring o'Roses*, even if history never ends but goes in circles, life is worth living, experiencing the seven ages once and again, as luckily, men and women live only one cycle, unlike Jacque Corot or Shakespeare's *Jaque*, or *Man and Woman in Reigen*, or even *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, as in Pirandello's play, and in our play 36 characters. Why don't we learn from history? Why don't we read Zola's books, learn from Schopenhauer, watch Shaw's plays, in order not to make again and again the same mistakes? I don't know! But I have tried in my humble play to bring together all the protagonists, the best creative paragons ever, to give you the proper insights for your life!

(While watching on the screen the new buildings and monuments of the 1900 Paris World Exposition – Grand Palais, Petit Palais, Pont Alexandre III, Gare d'Orsay, etc., John Philip Sousa enters with his March Band performing American, English & French military marches)