



## Decadent Aesthetics in Cyril Scott's Translations and Song Settings\*

Jane Desmarais

Goldsmiths, University of London (<j.desmarais@gold.ac.uk>)

**Citation:** J. Desmarais (2024) Decadent Aesthetics in Cyril Scott's Translations and Song Settings. Serie speciale "Quaderni di *Lea* – Scrittori e scritture d'Oriente e d'Occidente" 6: pp. 81-99. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36253/lea-1824-484x-15115>.

**Copyright:** © 2024 J. Desmarais. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-lea>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**Data Availability Statement:** All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

**Competing Interests:** The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

### Abstract

Of the early twentieth-century composers inspired by decadent and symbolist verse, Cyril Scott (1879-1970) produced the greatest number of literary translations and musical adaptations. This essay considers Scott's literary translations of Charles Baudelaire and Stefan George alongside his song settings of Ernest Dowson's poems within the context of the cosmopolitan aesthetic circles in which he moved. The essay argues that a productive reading of his work takes into account a "nineties" decadent aesthetics that emphasizes sensuality, mood, and interstitiality and can be read across both his literary translations and song settings.

*Keywords:* Charles Baudelaire, Cyril Scott, Decadence, Song Setting, Stefan George

In the years leading up to the First World War there was a flurry of interest in translations of decadent literature among a number of small British publishers and booksellers, including Elkin Mathews who notably devoted himself to nurturing and publishing the work of a wide range of poets, translators, and poet-translators. This did not make him much money, but it marked "the birth of an interest [...] among the proponents of that esoteric movement which was reaching beyond the rather superficial occult explorations of the Decadent circle" (Clark and Sykes 1997, xxxiii). In the spring of 1900, Mathews commissioned a series of poetry translations and launched the *Vigo Cabinet* series, or as one advertisement proclaimed, "the longest series of original contemporary verse in existence" (quoted in Nelson 1989, 55). This was a typically personal and small-scale venture that

\* Thank you to Stephen Banfield, Peter Coles, Matthew Creasy, Stefano Evangelista, Katharina Herold-Zanker, Andreas Kramer, Richard Scott, and anonymous readers for their insights, suggestions, and help with translation from German, and my deep gratitude to Richard Bolley, who has illuminated the workings of Cyril Scott's song settings and who has provided the technical musical analysis in the third section of the essay.

reflected Mathews's own tastes in literature celebrating what he saw as "something of a real awakening of the popular interest in current verse" (63).<sup>2</sup>

By 1912, the Vigo Cabinet series had reached 100 numbers, among which was a series of translations of French and German decadent poetry, which though rarely mentioned today represents a modest but significant shift in British publishing. As James G. Nelson comments, the Vigo Cabinet series of translations, "[r]effect[ed] the movement away from the insularity of the Victorians toward a more cosmopolitan outlook and range of interests on the part of the Edwardians" (62). This series

rang[ed] from the extant verse of Sappho (no. 65) and the quatrains of Omar Khayyam (no. 53) to the lyrics of the Ruthenian poet Tarás Schvchéncko (no. 86). Among the more interesting as well as significant examples were *Poems in Prose from Baudelaire* (no. 29), selected and translated from *Les Petits Poèmes en Prose* by Arthur Symons, and *Baudelaire: The Flowers of Evil* (no. 66), selected and translated by Cyril Scott. The work of two contemporary German poets, Stefan George and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, was represented in *German Lyrists of To-Day* (no. 58), translated by Daisy Broicher, who was responsible for the later *German Lyrics and Ballads* (no. 3). (*Ibidem*)

The Vigo Cabinet community was relatively small, and while it is difficult to gauge the extent to which individual translators knew each other and shared their work, there are some intriguing connections between the three listed by Nelson. Arthur Symons and Cyril Scott knew each other. Scott admired Symons and Symons was very encouraging to Scott, although apart from scattered references here and there, mainly in Scott's autobiographical writings, there is little published record of their relationship, which may have been one-sided. Scott dedicated his 1909 translation of Baudelaire's poems to Symons and he composed a projected overture and incidental music to Symons's adaptation of *Elektra* (that manuscript is now lost) over which there was a testy correspondence about the terms of engagement.<sup>3</sup> About Daisy Broicher, the first to translate George's verse into English, there is very little information available, only newspaper reviews (mainly in Canada and North America) of the works she translated,<sup>4</sup> but although there is no evidence to suggest that she and Scott exchanged notes (their approaches are very different),<sup>5</sup> their Vigo Cabinet translations were published very close together; Broicher's edition of *German Lyrists of To-Day* was published in 1909, Scott's *Stefan George: Selection from his Works* a year later.

Of the early twentieth-century composers inspired by decadent and symbolist verse, Scott produced the greatest number of literary translations and musical adaptations. He was passionate about poetry and admired Algernon C. Swinburne, Dante G. Rossetti, and Francis Thompson. As a young man he was particularly drawn to the work of the Romantics and decadents and he was himself a prolific poet and translator. Between 1905 and 1915, he published five volumes of

<sup>2</sup> "Mathews' final distinction, [...] may be thought to rest on his nurture of poetic talent through some of the most insipid years in the history of English poetry, those between 1900 and 1908. In those years, Mathews published much of the best that was available: Masfield, Monro, Flecker, Gibson, Plarr, Binyon, Symons, Joyce, Pound. It is a roll of honour" (Fletcher 1967, n.p.).

<sup>3</sup> See Scott 1924, in which he suggests that despite a difference between him and Symons about terms, he had at least finished the overture (referenced in Scott, Foreman, and De'Ath 2018, 438).

<sup>4</sup> Reviews of Broicher's translations include *Toronto Saturday Night*, 25 September 1909; *America Register*, 18 September 1909; the *Globe*, 26 May 1909; *The Queen*, *The Lady's Newspaper*, 29 June 1912.

<sup>5</sup> Broicher's are freer and more musical while Scott's are more faithful to the original. This might have been because, unlike Broicher, he knew George well (their friendship was homoerotically intense) and he might not have wanted to take liberties with the original decadent/symbolist aesthetic of the poems.

his own poetry<sup>6</sup> and two volumes of translations. Given his admiration of Symons, his translations of Baudelaire and George, his likely familiarity with Broicher's translations of George, and the role that he played in furthering Mathews's endeavours to expand the literary horizons of Edwardian readers, it is somewhat surprising to see Scott omitted from anthologies and critical studies of translations of Baudelaire and George into English. To some extent, this is because he is better known as a pianist and composer, but it might also be because of his enthrallment with an 1890s aesthetic and an enmeshment in occult circles which put him somewhat out of step with other translators of the time.<sup>7</sup> If we compare Scott's translations of Baudelaire with those of F.P. Sturm's in 1906 and J.C. Squire's in 1909, for example, Scott's appear outmoded, quaint even, more in keeping with a late Romantic 1890s' aesthetic. Unlike Squire's "commendably direct and undecorated versions which draw on a wide range of Baudelaire's subjects" (Clements 1985, 222), Scott reverts to a Swinburnian emphasis on what T.S. Eliot described as the "nice sounding phrase" (Eliot 1927, 429). Eliot was referring to Symons's translation of Baudelaire's *Prose and Poetry*, but the point he makes about Symons "turn[ing] Baudelaire into a contemporary of Symons" (424), might well apply to Scott whose translations of the French poet, it could be argued, are cognate with a decadent aesthetics. Scott's preoccupations are with the senses, feeling, mood, and threshold states.<sup>8</sup>

This essay argues that a productive reading of Scott's translations takes into account their decadent aesthetics, making them, as Eliot said of Symons, "explicatory of the 'nineties, rather than as a current interpretation of Baudelaire" (425). Although Scott never directly acknowledged his debt to decadence (or to symbolism), decadent aesthetics can be traced across to his song settings of Dowson's poems, which he undertook between 1904 and 1915, around the same time that he was translating Baudelaire and George. Unlike his literary translations, however, the song settings are stylistically more cuspish, "occupying", as Sarah Collins has described, "an unusual in-between space" (2013, xiv). It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyse Scott's song settings in detail, but it explores some thought-provoking correspondences between his early literary translations and musical adaptations, recovering his reputation as a significant Vigo Cabinet series translator and drawing him into the broader discussions currently taking place about the English tradition of translating decadence (initiated in 1985 by Patricia Clements in her book, *Baudelaire and the English Tradition*). We begin by considering Scott's life and work and his involvement in various cosmopolitan literary and musical circles at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by a comparison of a small selection of his translations of Baudelaire with those of his contemporaries, Sturm and Squire, with a focus on "La Vie Antérieure", "Correspondances", and "Causerie". In these translations, Scott deploys a late-Victorian diction, emphasizing rhyme and the sound of individual words and phrases. Given that he "embodied

<sup>6</sup> Cyril Scott: *The Shadows of Silence and the Songs of Yesterday* (1905); *The Grave of Eros and the Book of Mournful Melodies, with Dreams from the East* (1907); *The Voice of the Ancient* (1910); *The Vales of Unity* (1912); and *The Celestial Aftermath, A Springtide of the Heart, and Far-away Songs* (1915).

<sup>7</sup> In Carol Clark and Robert Sykes' edition of *Baudelaire in English*, Scott's translations stand out for their non-appearance; indeed, the editors draw attention to this in their introduction where he is listed alongside other esoteric translators: "Aleister Crowley, Cyril Scott (not represented here) and Yeats's friend Thomas Sturge Moore" (1997, xxxiii).

<sup>8</sup> He describes his approach in the "Foreword" to his selection of George's works, where he claims that "[a] part from this depth and beauty, [George] has created a new form, endowed verse with new colour and sound, and greatly extended the possibilities of expression in the German language. Through his personality; his pathos and ethology he has furthermore engendered a new ideal; a synthesis of Christian and Pagan feeling which in this form has not existed before. That the English-speaking public may gain at any rate some faint idea of his genius, it has been my joyous task to translate the following small selection of his works" (Scott 1910, 5).

an aesthetic of an earlier time” (Collins 2013, 224), this emphasis is perhaps unsurprising, but in his song settings of Dowson’s poems (“Pierrot and the Moon Maiden”; “A Valediction”; “Let Silence Speak”; “Sorrow”; “Meditation”), the music expresses interstitiality and uncertainty. As the third and final part of the essay suggests, Scott’s settings respond to the sense of interstitiality in Dowson’s poems, interpreting language and its absence (silence) in fluid and proliferative ways to create modern soundscapes that evoke a twilight “nineties” mood.

### 1. *Scott’s Cosmopolitan Circles*

Cyril Scott was born in 1879 in Oxton, a southern suburb of Birkenhead, near Liverpool. He was the youngest of three children, his mother an amateur pianist, his father a scholar of Greek and a businessman in shipping. Scott was a nervous child and a musical prodigy. He showed a precocious talent for the piano, picking out tunes almost before talking, and in 1891, at the age of twelve, he made the first of many trips to Germany to study piano there. He was enrolled in Dr Hoch’s Konservatorium in Frankfurt am Main, where he learned from fellow student Thomas Holland-Smith the “notion of perpetuity through originality [...] so important in the development of his aesthetic thinking” (Collins 2013, 34). On returning to England two years later, he was placed with a tutor in Liverpool, not far from where he was born in Oxton, and was discovered by the Swiss corn broker, Hans Lüthy, who took him into his home and promoted his musical development. It was Lüthy’s influence that prompted Scott’s transition to agnosticism, later described by Scott as a formative step in his embrace of eastern spiritual traditions.

In 1895 – at the age of sixteen and a half – Scott returned to Frankfurt to study composition, harmony, and counterpoint with Iwan Knorr, and there met Henry Balfour Gardiner, Percy Grainger, Norman O’Neill, Roger Quilter, and Frederick Septimus Kelly. They collectively came to be known as the “Frankfurt Group”. This second period in Frankfurt made a huge impression on him. In 1896 Scott met the symbolist poet George who impressed upon him a passion for poetry and who he described in the dedication to *The Grave of Eros* (a collection of his own poems Scott published in 1907) as “The Awakener within me of all Poetry”. Through George, Scott became interested in arcana and Pre-Raphaelite otherworldliness, and he easily integrated with George’s cosmopolitan dandified style and anti-bourgeois sentiments. In his autobiography, *Bone of Contention*, Scott claims that

besides being a remarkable poet he looked like one to a superlative degree, with [a] pale and somewhat Dantesque face, very deep-set, rather melancholy eyes and his imposing head of long black hair... . He both loved and radiated power. (1969, 102)

Scott was very attracted to this charismatic figure. George had attended Mallarmé’s famous “mardis” and instilled in the young English musician “disinterestedness, a pure fervor and obedience to the cult of beauty” (Norton 2002, 47). Scott self-consciously fashioned for himself a Romantic spiritual persona, wearing expensive suits and watch chains, playing chess intensely, and reading books on reincarnation and oriental occultism. Like Joris-Karl Huysmans’s fictional neurotic Des Esseintes, and indeed George and his artist friend Melchior Lechter, who furnished their apartments with medieval minichapels, Scott created an “ecclesiastical atmosphere” in his own home, building his own gothic furniture, replacing his windows with church stained glass and burning incense (Scott and Eaglefield Hull 1917, 29).

Scott moved often between Liverpool and Frankfurt and although throughout his lifetime, as Richard Price attests, “he was probably better known and certainly more highly esteemed,

abroad, particularly in France and Germany, than in his own country" (2018, 39), Scott was also part of avant-garde social networks in London. He moved mainly in music circles. Gardiner's house in Kensington was a regular meeting place, and Scott attended along with Frederic Austin, Arnold Bax, Benjamin Dale, and Gustav Holst, among others. It was via a series of literary and social connections made in London by his friends the composer Percy Grainger, the socialite Lilith Lowrey, and the painter Jacques-Émile Blanche, that he was introduced to Symons, but there is no record on Symons's side about this encounter. In the heyday of his fame, between 1905 and 1925, a period associated with the publication of many of the songs, Scott was the most internationally renowned British composer, "st[anding] apart in outlook and education from the mainstream of the conservative British musical establishment at the turn of the century" (Lloyd 2018, 3). While his reputation as a composer and pianist is well known, his contribution to literature and to the early twentieth-century revival of interest in decadence, is not so well known. However, his fascination with the aesthetic ideas of decadents and symbolists and his involvement in aesthetic and decadent artistic circles informed his later interests, and, as Collins has argued, "provided him with a pathway into a spiritual conception of his life and work" (2013, xiv).

Scott's early friendships generated an enthusiasm for all forms of art. As Leslie De'Ath notes, his youthful circles of acquaintance "gave him a sense of being a direct, active participant at the cutting edge of modernity, with its concomitant air of superiority" (2018, 135). When in 1898 Scott left Frankfurt to return to Liverpool, described by the critic P.H. Muir as "a distant outpost of the Aesthetic Movement" (1952, 32),<sup>9</sup> he moved in with Charles Bonnier, a professor of French literature at the university, well read in nineteenth-century English literature.<sup>10</sup> Bonnier was an ardent Wagnerite and a lifelong committed socialist, and he consolidated Scott's deepening love of poetry, especially the French decadents and symbolists (like George, Bonnier had known Mallarmé). For the next few years Scott lived a life of radical politics and aesthetics in equal measure, surrounded by figures prominently involved in the Fabian Society, women's suffrage, and pacifism, and infused with the aesthetic principles of Edward Burne-Jones, Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, William Morris, and Dante G. Rossetti. Bonnier was hugely influential in Scott's formative years. He taught him versification and persuaded him to translate Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* into English.

## 2. Baudelaire: Sensuality and Mood

Eschewing those poems in *Les Fleurs du mal* that deal with the shock and thrill of modern urban life (there is no explicit mention of Paris, the text is largely depoliticized, dehistoricized), Scott selects poems that are sensual and romantic, focused on nature's beauty and transcendence. He ranges across the first and third editions of *Les Fleurs du mal*, taking the majority of his selection of poems from the "Spleen et Idéal" section, and then he selects more randomly. From "Le Couvercle" onwards, the last 11 poems are randomly picked from the final sections

<sup>9</sup>A reference by P.H. Muir to various 1890s' figures and their connection with Liverpool, including Richard Le Gallienne's connection with The Bodley Head. Le Gallienne was a clerk in Liverpool when he became its first author. At the same time, Holbrook Jackson was working in Liverpool as a linen-draper. For more detail, see Muir 1952, 32.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Bonnier wrote a series of short essays on English authors, including Emily Brontë, Henry James, George Gissing, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Walter Pater, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and Robert Louis Stevenson, collected together as *Milieux D'Art* and privately printed by Donald Fraser. The collection also contains an essay rarely cited in Dowson scholarship: "E. Dowson" dedicated to Cyril Scott (Bonnier n.d., 15-17).

of Baudelaire's volume – "Tableaux Parisiens", "Le Vin", "Fleurs du mal", and "La Mort" – concluding his selection with the poem "La Mort des pauvres". On the whole, Scott's translations adhere closely to the original text and tend to be faithful to the semantics and sonic structures. Here, for example, are Baudelaire's "La Vie Antérieure" (from "Spleen et Idéal") and Scott's version in full:

"La Vie Antérieure"

J'ai longtemps habité sous les vastes portiques  
 Que les soleils marins teignaient de mille feux,  
 Et que leurs grands piliers, droits et majestueux,  
 Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.

Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,  
 Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique  
 Les tout-puissants accords de leur riche musique  
 Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux.

C'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes,  
 Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs  
 Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs.

Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,  
 Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir  
 Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir. (Baudelaire 2008, 30-31)

"Interior Life"

A long while I dwelt beneath vast porticos,  
 Which the ocean-suns bathed with a thousand fires,  
 And which with their great and majestic spires,  
 At eventide looked like basaltic grottoes.

The billows, in rolling depicted the skies,  
 And mingled, in solemn and mystical strain,  
 The all-mighteous chords of their luscious refrain  
 With the sun-set's colours reflexed in mine eyes.

It is there that I lived in exalted calm,  
 In the midst of the azure, the splendours, the waves,  
 While pregnant with perfumes, naked slaves

Refreshed my forehead with branches of palm,  
 Whose gentle and only care was to know  
 The secret that caused me to languish so. (Scott 1909, 16)



The most striking feature of Scott's translation, aside from the surprising misconception of the word "antérieure" for "interior" in the title (the correct English translation of the title would be "A Former Life" or "A Past Life"), is the use of a late-Victorian diction which evokes the sense of a bygone time ("eventide", "all-mighteous", "in mine eyes", "to languish so") and the emphasis on the synaesthetic experience of the speaker in the reflection of whose eyes we appreciate the spectacle of a sunset sky. The billowing clouds are an orchestration of mystical grandeur ("The all-mighteous chords of their luscious refrain") and the speaker receives all this in a state of "exalted calm". Scott changes the word order only in the third stanza to retain the original rhyme scheme, effecting a rhyme between "waves" and "slaves". Throughout his selection of Baudelaire translations, sense is subordinated to sound. In "Parfum exotique", for example, he changes words to force the same rhyme structure of the sonnet (ABBA, ABBA, AAB, ABA). In the first line, Baudelaire's reference to the "soir chaud d'automne" (warm autumn evening) becomes "hot afternoon" to half-rhyme with "sun" in the last line of the stanza, and he repeats this in the second stanza, exchanging the French word "vigoureux" for "astute" so that it rhymes with "fruit" in the line above. We find the same preoccupation with sound in his translation of Baudelaire's well known sonnet "Correspondances":

"Correspondances"

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laisser parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
— Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants.

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens. (Baudelaire 1975, 11)

And here is Scott's rendering:

"Echoes"

In Nature's temple, living columns rise,  
Which oftentimes give tongue to words subdued,  
And Man traverses this symbolic wood,  
Which looks at him with half familiar eyes

Like lingering echoes, which afar confound  
 Themselves in deep and sombre unity,  
 As vast as Night, and like transplendency,  
 The scents and colours to each other respond.

And scents there are, like infant's flesh, as chaste,  
 As sweet as oboes, and as meadows fair,  
 And others, proud, corrupted, rich and vast,

Which have the expansion of infinity,  
 Like amber, musk and frankincense and myrrh,  
 That sing the soul's and senses' ecstasy. (1909, 10)

The original is a suggestive and expansive poem about the mysterious and mystical relationship between the senses and the soul, and it is easy to see why it appealed to the Romantic side of Scott. He re-titles the poem "Echoes", picking up Baudelaire's reference to "longs *échos*" in the first line of the second stanza, but in doing so he slightly reframes the poem as being about reflection (back) rather than the idea of the puzzling and strange correspondences between physical and metaphysical realms. The key phrase in the first stanza is "confuses paroles", translated by James McGowan for the Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Flowers of Evil* as "confusing speech" (Baudelaire 2008, 19). In Scott's translation, the idea of speech not easily comprehended is misinterpreted as "tongue to words subdued", which serves as a half-rhyme with "wood" in the third line but interferes with Baudelaire's intention to open the poem with the figure of Nature whose "vivants piliers / Laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles". In Baudelaire's poem, the "vivants piliers" speak confusingly; in Scott's translation, they "oftentimes" (rather than "parfois" / "sometimes") "give tongue to words subdued". Looking back at his translations of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* in his unpublished memoir, *Near the End of Life*, he admits that his early translations were over-ambitious: "I became too preoccupied with sound and insufficiently with sense, and employed words in a grandiloquent manner without appreciating their precise meaning and manner of use" (quoted in Scott 2018, 315).

Sturm's translation, by contrast, published three years before Scott's, translates Baudelaire's title directly and is less concerned with sound and style than the theme of man's place in the vast sensorially interconnected universe, which he describes in unadorned, plain language ("wander", "friendly", "far-off", "brilliant", "speak", "things"). Sturm was the first to "attempt to render into English any sizable [sic] portion of *The Flowers of Evil*" (1969, 18). His efforts were acknowledged as being among the finest translations of the period, not least for their avoidance of "old-fashioned diction" (Baudelaire 1955, viii). Here is Sturm's version in full, with differences between Scott's version underlined:

"Correspondences"

In Nature's temple, living pillars rise,  
And words are murmured none have understood,  
 And man must wander through a tangled wood,  
 Of symbols watching him with friendly eyes



As long-drawn echoes heard far-off and dim  
Mingle to one deep sound and fade away;  
Vast as the night and brilliant as the day,  
 Colour and sound and perfume speak to him.

Some perfumes are as fragrant as a child,  
 Sweet as the sound of hautboys, meadow-green;  
Others, corrupted, rich, exultant, wild,

Have all the expansion of things infinite:  
As amber, incense, musk, and benzoin,  
Which sing the sense's and the soul's delight. (1969, 244)

Neither “La Vie antérieure” nor “Correspondances” appear in J.C. Squire’s slim volume of translations. He concentrates on 38 poems from the “Spleen et Idéal” section of Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du mal* – only about half of which correspond to Scott’s selection – and appends them to a selection of 21 of his own poems with the sub-title “And Baudelaire Flowers”. The translations are gathered together under the heading “Blossoms of Evil”. Unlike Scott’s ruminative approach and archaic language, Squire demystifies and disambiguates the meanings in Baudelaire’s verse, reverting to the 10-syllable line of the traditional sonnet form and infusing his translations with simple, plain language. His “Blossoms of Evil” are fairly uniform in their bitter-sweet tone and they correspond well to his own selections of verse which are a combination of erotic and valedictory love poems (“The Surviving Sense”, “Consummation”, “Fin-De-Siècle”), pastoral and mood poems (“Pastoral”, “Lassitude”, “On the Road”), and poems about war and death (“Two Triumphs”, “To the Continental Socialists”). Although *Poems: And Baudelaire Flowers* was published in the same year as Scott’s translations of Baudelaire their approaches to the French poet are very different. Here, for example, are Scott’s and Squire’s versions of Baudelaire’s “Causerie”:

“Causerie”

Vous êtes un beau ciel d’automne, clair et rose!  
 Mais la tristesse en moi monte comme la mer,  
 Et laisse, en reflux, sur ma lèvre morose  
 Le souvenir cuisant de son limon amer.

— Ta main se glisse en vain sur mon sein qui se pâme;  
 Ce qu’elle cherche, amie, est un lieu saccagé  
 Par la griffe et la dent féroce de la femme.  
 Ne cherchez plus mon cœur; les bêtes l’ont mangé.

Mon cœur est un palais flétri par la cohue;  
 On s’y soûle, on s’y tue, on s’y prend aux cheveux!  
 — Un parfum nage autour de votre gorge nue!...

Ô Beauté, dur fléau des âmes, tu le veux!  
 Avec tes yeux de feu, brillants comme des fêtes,  
 Calcine ces lambeaux qu’ont épargnés les bêtes! (Baudelaire 2008, 114-115)

## “Causerie”

You are a roseate Autumn-sky, that glows!  
 Yet sadness rises in me like the flood,  
 And leaves in ebbing on my lips morose,  
 The poignant memory of its bitter mud.

In vain your hands my swooning<sup>11</sup> breast embrace;  
 Oh friend! Alone remains the plundered spot,  
 Where woman's biting grip has left its trace:  
 My heart, the beasts devoured—seek it not!

My heart is a palace pillaged by the herd;  
 They kill and take each other by the throat!  
 A perfume glides around your bosom bared—

O loveliness thou scourge of souls—devote  
 Thine eyes of fire—luminous like feasts,  
 To burn these rags—rejected by the beasts! (Scott 1909, 37)

## “Causerie”

You are an autumn sky, suffused with rose....  
 Yet sadness rises in me like the sea,  
 And on my sombre lip, when it outflows,  
 Leaves its salt burning slime for memory.

Over my swooning breast your fingers stray;  
 In vain, alas! My breast is a void pit  
 Sacked by the tooth and claw of woman. Nay,  
 Seek not my heart; the beasts have eaten it!

My heart is as a palace plundered  
 By the wolves, wherein they gorge and rend and kill,  
 A perfume round thy naked throat is shed.... (Squire 1909, 60)

Beauty, strong scourge of souls, O work thy will!  
 Scorch with thy fiery eyes which shine like feasts  
 These shreds of flesh rejected by the beasts! (Squire 1909, 60)

Squire's version is more prosaic. While Scott retains the elemental imagery in the first stanza, invoking skies, floods, and mud (very Baudelairean!), Squire keeps the human body in close view. Scott's “flood” that “leaves in ebbing on my lips morose” becomes for Squire a sensation that

<sup>11</sup> I have corrected the printer's typo “swooming” here to “swooning”.

equates to bodily fluids: “salt burning slime”. The imagery in Squire’s translation is primeval, raw, and savage, but it also suggests the fall of Rome. The breast is a “void pit / Sacked by the tooth and claw of woman” and the wolves “gorge and rend and kill”. Scott also invokes “beasts” to rhyme with “feasts” (another allusion to Roman excess), but in his version, the beasts turn upon themselves, giving the impression that the reader is watching at some distance, slightly preserved perhaps from the worst of the devastation. Squire’s translation affords the reader no comfort. The language is plain and confrontational and the reader is made to feel intimately acquainted with the ravaged heart of the speaker.

Scott’s and Squire’s translations of Baudelaire were published early in their careers (in 1909 Scott was 30, Squire 25), and as Patricia Clements notes of Squire, their “shifting responses” to their early translations as they grew older “tidily demonstrate [...] [the] line of development of attitudes towards Baudelaire” in the twentieth century: “In 1920, art for art’s sake and the decorations of decadence were out of style” (1985, 221-22). They both continued to write poetry, but while Scott followed a musical and occultist path, Squire became an influential journalist, essayist, and parodist, establishing the *London Mercury* in 1919 (for which he wrote under the name “Solomon Eagle”). Later on, he was literary editor of the *New Statesman* and chief literary critic of the *Observer*. Squire was not a member of the avant-garde; he was lambasted in the 1920s and 1930s for his establishment views by the Sitwells and the Bloomsbury Group and for being the leader of “the Squirearchy”. Squire’s unembellished style (“Seek not my heart; the beasts have eaten it!”) contrasts with Scott’s quaint diction (“the plundered spot, [...] My heart, the beasts devoured - seek it not!”). Scott’s emphasis is on the evocation of being between two temporalities (antiquity and modernity), two elements (sky and sea), and two physical and emotional states (swooning adoration and a savage plunder). This dynamic interstitiality is a noteworthy feature of Scott’s settings of Dowson’s poems.

### 3. Dowson: Interstitial States

While Scott’s literary translations tend to be focused on replicating patterns of sound and rhyme, Scott’s settings of poetry into song show a degree of freedom and flair. There is a tension in his work at times between creative fluency (imagine his hands improvising at the keyboard) and lack of self-critical reflection, and this becomes particularly evident when we consider his many settings into music of the poetry of Dowson, one of his most favoured poets in the early years of the century. The affinity between the two, as discussed elsewhere (see Desmarais 2021), is widely acknowledged. Scott’s “Victorian sensibilities accorded well with Dowson’s and in that vein”, his son Desmond avers, “he loved to indulge in pleasurable feelings of sadness, though he was, in reality, the least melancholy of men” (Scott 2018, 314).

Scott discovered Dowson’s poetry through his continental travels in a roundabout way. He was introduced to the work of the English poet by George who in turn discovered the poetry through German translations made by his close friend, the Dutch poet, Albert Verwey.<sup>12</sup> Verwey’s translations of Dowson in the late 1890s set in motion a wave of interlingual and intermedial translation activity that is remarkable for its intensity and linguistic range. Verwey was a mystical and pantheistic poet, whose first book of poems, *Persephone*, was published in 1883. He published an essay and some translations of his poems in the September 1897 issue of

<sup>12</sup> “The poet Verwey, the painter Jan Toorop, and the architect Berlage were George’s Dutch friends” (see George 1944, 12).

his bi-monthly magazine, *Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift*. George read Verwey's essay and translations and was impressed: "Your essay on Dowson brings many new things and the translations give a good picture. I am certain you will be good enough to lend me one of Dowson's books. Perhaps I might try my luck and show some of that to the Germans".<sup>13</sup>

George was inspired to translate Dowson's poems and he recommended the English poet to Scott who in turn responded by translating almost the entire spectrum of George's poems and setting Dowson's poems to music. According to the editors of the three-volume *Stefan George und sein Kreis*, Scott's translations of George specially consider *Der Siebente Ring* (1907), *Der Stern des Bundes* (1913), and *Das Jahr der Seele* (1897), focusing on poems that convey less "Weltanschauung" and more "musical" texts (thereby intensifying their euphony). In contrast to Broicher's translations of George's poems into English (Broicher 1909), where the semantics are handled liberally and the abundance of rhyme, assonance, and alliteration enhance the textual musicality, Scott's translations are more faithful to the original. For example, Scott's translation of "Komm in den totgesagten park und schau" uses two pairs of rhyme - "shimmer; / "glimmer" in the first stanza and "twining" / "combining" in the final stanza, which correspond neatly with the "female" (i.e., polysyllabic) rhymes in the original.

While Scott's rationale for translating Dowson's poems into music is the evocation of different moods, they also all have in common the theme of what Jessica Gosling has termed "betwixtness" or "thresholdness" (2017; 2019). They each evoke in different ways an interstitial state of being (being in love/not being in love; being vocal/silent; being alive and warm/cold and dead). Their palette is bled, the language is plain and monosyllabic for the most part, and the mood valedictory. The transitional period between late summer and autumn prevails across a few of the poems ("A Valediction" with imagery of sowing, reaping, crops, harvesting). Some lines are repeated, most often at the beginning and end of the poem, and the words that recur are "heart", "love", "kiss", "silent" / "silence", "kiss", "forgot" / "forgotten", "weep", "sleep", "dream". The poems speak to what Dowson in "Beyond" calls "The twilight of poor love" (l. 9) (2003, 173). The thematic similarities are strongest in the poems written between 1904 and 1911 where "silence" articulates a state of suspension or heightening of emotion and is called upon paradoxically to say more than words can ever express.

Dowson's use of silence – using line-breaks, caesura, and punctuation – is a striking feature noted by many critics (see Kuduk Weiner 2006; Desmarais 2019). In a volume of short essays by Bonnier entitled *Milieux D'Art*, Bonnier identifies silence as a key feature of Dowson's poems. Dowson, he maintains, is "un poète de la soi-disante décadence latine, un psalmodieur de proses ecclésiastiques, dont l'écho retentit sous les voûtes des cloîtres" (Bonnier n.d., 15). He elaborates on the various kinds of silence encountered in Dowson's poems:

Le silence: c'est l'atmosphère de sa poésie; il isole le chant, dont les ondes le traversent; il donne à sa musique—et ce fut un des poètes les plus musicaux—une signification, comme d'une note attendue longtemps, un soupir étouffé dans une église au crépuscule, un frôlement d'ombre par de longs corridors. Lorsque le son s'éteint, le silence reprend, accru, semble-t-il, par cette voix qui l'a exprimé. (16)

We know that Scott's interest in Dowson was fired by George in Frankfurt, but it may also have been stimulated or reinforced by his friendship with Bonnier. Bonnier's essay is dedicated

<sup>13</sup> George was not uncritical of Dowson. Before he possessed a copy of his own, he maintained that although Dowson's poems were "unsurpassed in detail", they lacked "the Great Idea". See Oelmann 2012, 642, translation by Andreas Kramer.

to Scott, with the epigraph "(A Gift of Silence)" taken from the opening line of Dowson's poem "Amor Umbratilis" (15), and although it is undated, Bonnier clearly recognises Scott's love of Dowson's poetry and his attunement to the poet's use of silence as a form of expression. Both Dowson and Scott were familiar with the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine, for whom poetry was evocative and intersensory like music. "We now hear undeniable rays of light", Mallarmé claimed in his essay "Crise de vers" (1897, "Crisis in Poetry"), "It is not *description* which can unveil the efficacy and beauty of monuments, or the human face in all their maturity and native state, but rather evocation, *allusion, suggestion*" (Mallarmé 1956, 40).

"Pierrot and the Moon Maiden" is a convenient doorway to Scott's settings of Dowson. He excerpts a pair of exchanges between the two characters in Dowson's "The Pierrot of the Minute" (1897). The key is E major with, often, an added sixth (a Scott compositional fingerprint), and although Scott chooses duple metre (two crotchets to a bar – a frequent choice in his songs), he disrupts our expectations slightly by opening with three bars of suspended quintuplets in the right hand of the piano alone. When the left hand enters, with a held "diminished" chord, tonal ambiguity is confirmed. Both these elements suggest the musically interstitial, a zone neither dark nor light, and one which Scott's Dowson settings frequently inhabit. Odd and disquieting, especially when contrasted with the folk-like simplicity emulated by the voice, such features enhance the uncertainty of a delicate, questing mood.

The voice enters echoing the first three notes of the piano with "What is love?" and there are further metric changes here – perhaps to underline the unsettling question – until the music subsides into an occasionally disrupted three-in-a-bar metre. We should note here that changes of metre are very frequent in some of Scott's piano music, and one characteristic which led to him being considered something of a maverick modernist. They do occur, sometimes rather unpredictably, in his Dowson settings, but Scott may well have decided to pare back this modernistic element with the more conservative taste of his likely song audience in mind, and also the frequently reflective atmosphere.

The twilight mood of Scott's song settings is characteristic of Dowson's poetry after 1889, the year when he met and fell in love with Adelaide Foltinowicz, the eleven-year-old daughter of the owner of the "Poland" restaurant in SoHo, London. In the twenty-one "Poésie Schub-lade Notebook" poems inspired by Adelaide, he expresses a mixture of piety and sinfulness. As Gosling comments, "while the figure of the little girl on the cusp of maturity featured in Dowson's poetry before he met her, afterwards there is a clear intensification of his use of the *jeune fille* motif" (2019, 103). In "A Valediction", a poem written after Adelaide rejected Dowson's marriage proposal in April 1893, he puts words into the mouth of his mute young muse, idealising their parting ("Then let it be like this", l. 2), deferring the "anguish" of their separation by entreating her to say "*Until to-morrow or some other day, / If we must part*" (Dowson 2003, 173, italics in original). Paradoxically, given that this is a situation where "Words are so weak", "silence" is given a strong poetic voice in the second stanza to articulate the unresolvable tension between living, loving, and loss of love:

*Life is a little while, and love is long;  
A time to sow and reap,  
And after harvest a long time to sleep,  
But words are weak.* (112)

The ventriloquial technique in "A Valediction" creates a sense of distance between the speaker and his feelings. The frustration in the first stanza at the "useless anguish of a kiss" as a parting gesture concedes to resignation. The speaker passes the microphone, as it were, to a

personified silence to utter the closing words. The poem concludes with a sense of declining energy (“a long time to sleep, / But words are weak”).

Scott begins his setting, like “Pierrrot” and many others, in duple metre, with a languorous two-bar phrase over an oscillating pedal, suggesting the reluctance of the poet to part. This piano phrase appears identically before each of the two verses, the conflicting inclinations of the lovers perhaps being suggested by a pulsing alternation of two chords just a semitone apart. In setting strophic poems, Scott is often content to repeat similar music in each verse. This is less the case here, suggesting an element of hopefulness as the text unfolds in verse 2. Verse 1 imagines that a further meeting may be possible, but in the event the second falters into sleep.

On account of Dowson’s distinctive rhyme scheme (ABABCCA, with the last line changing to a repeat of “C” in verse 2) particular words and resonances claim attention. “Part” on its first appearance (l. 1) emerges from a repeat of the piano’s opening phrase but with the final chord adjusted semitonally, thus marking already a departure from the opening mood. When the word recurs in line 7, the piano reverts via a perfect cadence to the harmony of the opening couplet, as if acquiescing to the opening question. “Heart on heart” (l. 3) is set to amply harmonized chords in the piano, exemplifying the richness of feeling where two people are involved. “Anguish” (l. 4, in mid-verse) comes at the apex of a rising/falling vocal curve and an apparently cadential formation in the piano which does not arrive where one expects. This technique of suspending or eclipsing a sense of arrival on the keynote is particularly characteristic of Scott’s modernist instrumental works, there leading to a sense of restless searching; here there is a moodier uncertainty. It would be fruitful to compare and contrast the energetic peregrinations of those works with the exploration of atonality in the pre-serial works of Arnold Schoenberg, contemporaneous with much of Scott’s song output. Harmonically speaking, Scott’s eschewal of “points of arrival” is closely linked to his ideas about musical flow, which he outlined in a lecture to the Fabian Society in 1913: “[N]othing can be more aggravating than a continual coming to an end and a continual restarting. The decree of incessant flux [...] is one which pervades the universe...” (quoted in Collins 2013, 186-87).

In “Let silence speak” (which might perhaps be a motto for the meeting of Dowson and Scott’s decadent aesthetics),<sup>14</sup> the word “speak” is enunciated on a rise in the voice without emphasis in the piano, just a richly sustained harmony, so that the singer speaks as it were to the air. Then, with characteristic liberty, Scott repeats the phrase with the voice curving downwards and the piano progressing through another unresolved cadence. “Sleep” (akin to silence?) is repeated at the end of the last two lines of the poem and Scott allows the singer to arrive at the home key for these, but not on the keynote (again a sense of suspension), and the last is enunciated low in the vocal register and against the reverberating (and slowing) pulsations of the opening piano motif.

The melancholy mood of “A Valediction” is maintained in Dowson’s “O Mors! quam amara est memoria tua homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis”, the title of which is taken from *Ecclesiasticus*: “O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions” (41:1). The poem was first published in the first book of the *Rhymers’*

<sup>14</sup> The capacity for both music and silence to go where words could not was, of course, amongst the tropes of the epoch. On silence, Maurice Maeterlinck in *Le Trésor des humbles*, is characteristic: “Le silence est l’élément dans lequel se forment les grandes choses, [...] La parole est trop souvent [...] l’art de cacher la pensée, mais l’art d’étouffer et de suspendre la pensée, en sorte qu’il n’en reste plus à cacher. [...] La parole est du temps, le silence de l’éternité” (1896, 7-9). The rich repertoire of allusions to music – as symbol, as acceptable reservoir of deep feeling for bourgeois consumers, and as a “revelatory influence on personal identity” – in the poetry of Dowson itself is explored by Sutton 2005.



*Club* (1892) and then in *Verses* (1896), and Scott sets the poem as a song in 1904, retitling it simply "Sorrow". In Dowson's poem, the repetition of words across the poem and the return of phrases in the first and last lines of each stanza, "exceeding sorrow"; "give over playing"; "forget to-morrow" (2003, 89), create a feeling of engulfing sadness as the speaker entreats his unnamed mute love object to give up the music she is playing and lay her head his way, to focus on "this one day" rather than the to-morrow, which we presume may never come. Rather like Symons's "La Mélinite: Moulin Rouge", "O Mors!..." is a poem that circles on itself, but instead of imitating the circular, revolving action of dance, Dowson invokes the silent inward turnings of pure thought, emphasising negation and minimal effort. The speaker directs the love object to cast her viol away "Merely laying / Thine head my way" and goes on to instruct her to "Weep *nothing*" (*ibidem*, my emphasis).

Scott's setting (as "Sorrow") evokes the ambivalence of intimacy before parting, by selecting a home key in the major, but beginning in and allowing frequent colouration by the relative minor key. He also employs brief, sighing phrases, particularly in the piano part, again cast in his preferred duple metre. As earlier observed, the vocal line avoids chromaticism, setting the words syllabically – sometimes almost breathlessly – for the most part, whereas greater richness through added notes and passing harmonies can and does characterize the piano part, as if this is carrying the emotional weight of the mood setting.

The intimate spaces of "A Valediction" and "O Mors!..." deny the reader any view of a world outside the poem.<sup>15</sup> Instead they generate a focus on sounds and imagery that evoke a certain mood, in this case, sorrow. They contrast with Dowson's poem "Beata Solitudo", where Silence is situated in a beautiful, isolated valley landscape:

Where pale stars shine  
On apple-blossom  
And dew-drenched vine. (Dowson 2003, 96)

The poem evokes a state of innocence and youth. At the end of the first stanza, the speaker asks tentatively whether the land "Is yours or mine?" but goes on to evoke a space where the lovers can rest, forget, and hide away from "the world forsaken / And out of mind", be in tune with nature ("We shall not find / The stars unkind"), with "vistas / Of gods asleep, / With dreams as deep". The last stanza repeats the first stanza with one variation: the question-mark is now a confirmatory and decisive exclamation mark: "A land of Silence, [...] Be yours and mine!" (96-97).

"Vita summa brevis..." made a particular impression on Scott. It inspired him to both write a poem ("To the Memory of Ernest Dowson") which he set to music and called "Afterday" (scored for voice and piano) (Mathews 1906) and set as a song ("Meditation"). In common with several other settings discussed Scott not only repeats key words here ("the gate") but also elects to repeat Dowson's first verse as a third, thus changing not only the structure but the emphasis of the original. Whereas Dowson progresses with at least some sense of opening out ("our path emerges for a while") (2003, 63), Scott creates more turning back, withdrawal, thus emphasizing our "passing the gate" (our dying fall).

<sup>15</sup> Kuduk Weiner describes this as Dowson's attempt "to create a 'pure' and purely aesthetic poetry whose imagery and sounds would be comparable in their autonomy and anti-representational potential to paint or notes of music" (2006, 483), and goes on to say that Dowson's techniques of substraction responded to "[...] calls to 'obliterate' mimetic subject matter and reveal a pure song at the heart of poetic expression" (485).

To this end, the minor adjustments Scott makes to the vocal melody in each verse stand out. In his verse 2 the melody is identical until we reach the word “roses” which he moves up just a semitone in comparison with the comparable “laughter” in verse 1. The line “Our path emerges...” has fresh melody, to convey hopefulness, then “within a dream” is hypnotically repeated and echoes at lower pitch the sighing intonation given to the keyword within “Out of a misty dream” just before. In turn, exactly those pitches return when “the gate” repeats at the very end of the setting. In other respects the melodic setting of Scott’s verse 3 is identical to verse 1. There is here a dance between lulling hypnosis and subtle variation.

The piano introduction is typical of Scott in its slightly disrupted serenity. There is a rocking, barcarolle-like interplay between the anchoring fifths in the left hand and the oscillating added-note chords in the right, but he interjects a change of metre already in bar 2 (four in the bar to an unusual five). Why does he do this? To suggest some unease already present within the calm? Also characteristic is the static ambiguous harmony which persists right up to the fourth bar before minor disruptions and returns to the focal opening chord. This interplay between an ambiguous harmonic stasis and progressions of uncertain direction seems characteristic of the piano writing in Scott’s Dowson settings overall, in the wandering between points of uncertain fixity.

Scott uses triplets, chains of quavers, and even an off-beat pause in the voice to attempt to accommodate and pace the text, not always allowing the singer a smooth progress.<sup>16</sup> There is also an odd hiatus on the word “after” (end of line 3) and a lingering piano pause before “We pass the gate”. Then the piano intervenes, with a sequence of descending sighing chords emerging from the harmonies of the opening but not related to them, recalling the interlude we noted in “The Valley of Silence”. These and other aspects of the piano writing described above suggest a composer working at speed, and probably at the keyboard, perhaps being mindful of his publisher expecting another delivery of songs.

### Conclusion

The translations of Baudelaire’s and George’s poems published as part of the Vigo Cabinet series between 1905 and 1910 spurred on other translators, and while Mathews’s endeavours to expand the literary horizons of the Edwardians may have had limited impact in relation to George’s reception among English-speaking readers (George’s work was known in France and Holland but wasn’t translated into English again for more than thirty years),<sup>17</sup> they had an impact on English readers’ perceptions of Baudelaire. Scott cut his translating teeth on Baudelaire, just as George had done ten years earlier. His translations of Baudelaire’s poems from *Les Fleurs du mal* tend to substitute Baudelaire’s subtle meanings with a sentimental lyricism and youthful fascination with melancholy and death. The autumnal reverie of Scott’s slim volume

<sup>16</sup> Taxing for a singer could be the contrast between the expectation of a predominantly smooth melodic contour and relatively unprepared leaps for “laughter” (bar 3), “hate” (bar 4), “after” (bar 8), and “roses” (bar 15), for instance.

<sup>17</sup> Scott and Broicher were the first to translate George into English. There is not much information available about Broicher, but in her “Introduction” to *German Lyrists of To-Day*, she references the French and Dutch translations of a group of German poets, tentatively suggesting that it is time for the English reading public to know their work. She writes: “Now that the names and works of this group [Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Karl Gustav Vollmoeller, Karl Wolfskehl, Ernst Hardt, Leopold Zu Andrian-Werburg, Richard Perls, Friedrich Gundolf, Georg Edward] have already been some years introduced into France and Holland, it may perchance be of interest for the English public also, to become acquainted with them by way of translation” (1909, 8-9). The next English translation to appear was George 1944, followed by George 1949, which was based on the final edition of George’s poems (1927-34).

is in striking contrast to Baudelaire's provocative and cynical tones and whereas Baudelaire immediately confronts the hypocrisy and vanity of the reader, Scott focuses on decorative diction and the sound of words over sense. Taken as a whole, Scott selects poems that are meditative and geographically non-specific and his translations are entrenched in the style of 1890s' verse. This approach, as his son Desmond Scott notes, "harks back to the Victorian era in which he grew up" (2018, 311) and stands in stark contrast to his otherwise experimental and iconoclastic music-making, particularly as a virtuoso pianist.

Scott never directly referred to the influence of decadence on his work. As with the symbolist tradition "it remained as a silent partner in Scott's philosophical development" (Collins 2013, 230), and yet, as this essay has attempted to show, his early literary translations and song settings of Dowson's poems resonate with decadent themes and imagery. Scott first encounters Dowson's poetry via the translations made by Verwey which are then circulated and recommended by George. Coming upon Dowson circuitously in this way may have focused Scott's attention to the soundscapes of the poems, the emphasis on patterns of words and phrases, and their affective and associative qualities.

Their delicate decadent lyricism had enormous appeal to musicians, singers, and composers in the early twentieth century (see Desmarais 2019). Dowson "had the pure lyric gift, unweighted or unballasted by any other quality of mind or emotion", Symons commented in *Studies in Prose and Verse*, "a song, for him, was music first, and then whatever you please afterwards, so long as it suggested, never told, some delicate sentiment, a sigh or a caress" (1904, 274-75). The lack of freightedness that Symons identifies as being peculiar to Dowson is a quality that we also find in Scott. It permitted him likewise to move across and between physical and artistic boundaries with "an intense self-consciousness [...] an over-subtilizing refinement upon refinement" (Symons 1893, 858), and create music that works a passage between quasi-medieval, romantic/decadent and modernist tendencies, often requiring significant accomplishment on the part of his performers to convey the distinctive moods.

#### References

- Baudelaire, Charles. 1909. *The Flowers of Evil*, translated into English verse by Cyril Scott. London: Elkin Mathews.
- . 1955. *The Flowers of Evil*, edited by Marthiel and Jackson Mathews. New York: New Direction Books.
- . 1975. *Oeuvres complètes*, établi, présenté et annoté par Claude Pichois. Paris: Gallimard.
- . 2008. *The Flowers of Evil*, translated by James McGowan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bonnier, Charles. n.d. *Milieux D'Art*. Liverpool: Privately printed by Donald Fraser.
- Broicher, Daisy. 1909. *German Lyrists of To-Day. A Selection of Lyrics from Contemporary German Poetry*, done into English Verse by Daisy Broicher. London: Elkin Mathews.
- Clark, Carol, and Robert Sykes (eds). 1997. *Baudelaire in English*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Clements, Patricia. 1985. *Baudelaire and the English Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Collins, Sarah. 2013. *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott*. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- De'Ath, Leslie. 2018. " 'Years of Indiscretion': The Early Piano Works, 1898 to 1909". In *The Cyril Scott Companion. Unity in Diversity*, edited by Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath, 127-42. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Desmarais, Jane. 2019. " 'The Quintessence of a Quintessence': Music and Musicality in Ernest Dowson's Verse". In *In Cynara's Shadow. Collected Essays on Ernest Dowson*, edited by Alice Condé and Jessica Gossling, 253-80. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- . 2021. "Late-Victorian Decadent Song-literature". *Victorian Literature and Culture* vol. 49, no. 4: 689-710.
- Dowson, Ernest C. 2003. *Ernest Dowson Collected Poems*, edited by R.K.R. Thornton and Caroline Dowson. Birmingham: Birmingham University Press.

- Eliot, Thomas S. 1927. " 'Poet and Saint...'. A Review of *Baudelaire: Prose and Poetry*". *The Dial* vol. 82, no. 5: 424-31.
- Fletcher, Ian. 1967. "A Note on the Reputation of Elkin Mathews". In *Elkin Mathews: Poets' Publisher (1851-1921)*. Exhibition held in the Library of The University of Reading during the Month of May, 1967. Reading: Univeristy of Reading Library, n.p.
- George, Stefan. 1910. *Selection from his Works*, translated into English by Cyril Scott. London: Elkin Mathews.
- . 1944. *Poems*. Introduction and English versions by Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz. London: Kegan Paul.
- . 1949. *The Works of Stefan George*, rendered into English by Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Gossling, Jessica. 2017. "Decadent Threshold Poetics: A Comparative Study of Threshold Space in Charles Baudelaire, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Ernest Dowson, and Arthur Symons". PhD Dissertation. London: Goldsmiths, University of London.
- . 2019. "From the Drawer to the Cloister: Ernest Dowson's 'Poésie Schublade' ". In *In Cynara's Shadow: Collected Essays on Ernest Dowson*, edited by Alice Condé and Jessica Gossling, 93-116. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Kuduk Weiner, Stephanie. 2006. "Sight and Sound in the Poetic World of Ernest Dowson". *Nineteenth-Century Literature* vol. 60, no. 4: 481-509.
- Lloyd, Stephen. 2018. "From Frankfurt with Love: Friendships Observed Through Correspondence and Reminiscence". In *The Cyril Scott Companion. Unity in Diversity*, edited by Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath, 3-38. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Maeterlinck, Maurice. 1896. *Le Trésor des humbles*. Paris: Mercure de France.
- . 1897. *The Treasure of the Humble*, translated by Alfred Sutro. London: George Allen.
- Mallarmé, Stéphane. 1956. "Crisis in Poetry". In *Mallarmé: Selected Prose Poems, Essays, & Letters*, edited and translated by Bradford Cook. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Mathews, Jackson, and Marthiel Mathews. 1955. "A Note to this Edition". In Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil*, edited by Jackson Mathews and Marthiel Mathews, vii-ix. New York: New Directions Book.
- Muir, Percy H. 1952. "Elkin Mathews in the 'Nineties". *The Book Collector* vol. 1, no. 1: 28-40.
- Nelson, James G. 1989. *Elkin Mathews. Publisher to Yeats, Joyce, Pound*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Norton, Robert E. 2002. *Secret Germany. Stefan George and his Circle*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Oelmann, Ute. 2012. "Rezeption der skandinavischen, englischen und niederländischen Literatur". In *Stefan George und sein Kreis*, herausgegeben von Achim Aurnhammer, Wolfgang Braungart, Stefan Breuer et al., 637-46. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Price, Richard. 2018. "Cyril Scott, Debussy and Stravinsky". In *The Cyril Scott Companion. Unity in Diversity*, edited by Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath, 39-48. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Scott, Cyril (ed.). 1909. *Baudelaire: The Flowers of Evil*. London: Elkin Mathews. (Baudelaire, Charles. 1897. *Les Fleurs du mal*. Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise).
- Scott, Cyril (ed.). 1910. *Stefan George: Selection from his Works*, translated into English by Cyril Scott. London: Elkin Mathews.
- Scott, Cyril. 1905. *The Shadows of Silence and the Songs of Yesterday*. Liverpool: Donald Fraser.
- . 1907. *The Grave of Eros and the Book of Mournful Melodies, with Dreams from the East*. London: Lyceum Press.
- . 1910. *The Voice of the Ancient*. London: J. M. Watkins.
- . 1912. *The Vales of Unity*. London: David Nutt.
- . 1915. *The Celestial Aftermath, A Springtide of the Heart, and Far-away Songs*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- . 1924. *My Years of Indiscretion*. London: Mills and Boon.
- . 1969. *Bone of Contention. Life Story and Confession*. New York: Arco Publishing Company.

- Scott, Cyril, and Arthur Eaglefield Hull. 1917. *The Philosophy of Modernism: Its Connection with Music. Cyril Scott: The Man and his Work*. London: Waverley Book Company.
- Scott, Desmond. 2018. "The Poetry". In *The Cyril Scott Companion. Unity in Diversity*, edited by Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath, 311-22. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Scott, Desmond, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath (eds). 2018. *The Cyril Scott Companion. Unity in Diversity*. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Sturm, Frank P. 1969. *Frank Pearce Sturm: His Life, Letters, and Collected Work*, edited and with an introduction essay by Richard Taylor. Urbana-Chicago-London: University of Illinois Press.
- Squire, John C. 1909. *Poems and Baudelaire Flowers*. London: New Age Press.
- Sutton, Emma. 2005. "The Music Spoke to Us". In *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century Poetry*, edited by Phyllis Weliver, 213-29. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Symons, Arthur. 1893. "The Decadent Movement in Literature". *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* vol. 87: 858-69.
- . 1904. *Studies in Prose and Verse*. London: J.M. Dent.