

“Printemps qui commence,” (Springtime that’s returning), SAMSON ET DALILA, Act I; music by Camille Saint-Saëns; libretto by Ferdinand Lemaire; 1877.

SYNOPSIS: Set in Biblical times, the plot depicts Samson, hero and leader of the Hebrews, as possessing super-human strength. When he kills the leader of the Philistines, who hold the Hebrews captive, Dalila is commanded by the Philistine High Priest to seduce Samson and learn the secret of his strength. After a suggestive dance, Dalila invokes the start of Spring and their former relationship to lure Samson to her nearby abode.

DALILA

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| Printemps qui commence. portant l'espérance aux coeurs amoureux, Ton souffle qui passe de la terre efface des jours malheureux. Tout brûle en notre âme, et ta douce flamme vient sécher nos pleurs. Tu rends à la terre, par un doux mystère, les fruits et les fleurs. En vain je suis belle! Mon coeur plein d'amour, pleurant l'infidèle, attend son retour! Vivant d'espérance, mon coeur désolé garde souvenance du bonheur passé! A la nuit tombante j'irai, triste amante, m'asseoir au torrent, l'attendre en pleurant chassant ma tristesse, S'il revient un jour, à lui ma tendresse et la douce ivresse, qu'un brûlant amour garde à son retour! | Springtime that’s returning, with you comes new yearning, to hearts full of love. Your soft breeze that passes from earth soon effaces our unhappy days. Our soul, filled with burning, your sweet flame discerning, soon drives our tears away. You bring to the land, through your magical hand the fruit and the flowers. In vain am I fair! My heart filled with love, cries out for the heathen, awaits his return. Surviving on hope, my desolate heart holds fast to the mem’ry of happiness past. When nightfall arrives, I’ll go, pining lover, to sit on the bank, await him in tears, and chase off my sadness. If he comes back one day, he’ll feel my caress and the sweet drunken joy that a burning love keeps for his return! |
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