

CHANDOS



REYNALDO HAHN
PIANO QUINTET · SONGS · PIANO QUARTET



KALEIDOSCOPE CHAMBER COLLECTIVE

Featuring **KARIM SULAYMAN** tenor



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Reynaldo Hahn, 1915

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)

*première recording in this arrangement**

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | À Chloris (1913)*
No. 14 from <i>Vingt Mélodies, Second Recueil</i>
Arranged for Tenor and String Quartet by Tom Poster
Très lent – [] – Tempo I | 3:22 |
| 2 | Quand je fus pris au pavillon (1899)*
No. 8 from <i>Douze Rondels</i>
<i>À fugère</i>
(To escape)
À Louis Landry
Arranged for Tenor and String Quartet by Tom Poster
Vite, très légèrement | 1:14 |

	Quintet (1920 – 21)	28:43
	in F sharp minor • in fis-Moll • en fa dièse mineur	
	for String Quartet and Piano	
	À Monsieur Édouard Hermann	
3	I Molto agitato e con fuoco – Calme – Calmando – Più tranquillo – Sans lenteur – Tempo I – Calmando molto – Tranquillo – Più animato – Calmando – Tempo I	12:13
4	II Andante (non troppo lento) – Sans ralentir – Très calme – Toujours très calme – Très calme – Calme – Più animato – Calmato – Tempo I – Très calme – Calme – Tempo I	9:22
5	III Allegretto grazioso – Poco più animato – Stringendo – Più animato (Allegro) – Calmando poco a poco – Tempo I – [] – Tempo I – [] – Tempo I	7:07

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 6 | Le Rossignol des lilas (1913)*
No. 15 from <i>Vingt Mélodies, Second Recueil</i>
Arranged for Tenor and String Quartet by Tom Poster
Modéré, mais sans lenteur et avec élan – À peine retardé | 2:24 |
| 7 | Chanson d'automne (1887–90)*
No. 1 from <i>Sept Chansons grises</i>
Arranged for Tenor and String Quartet by Tom Poster
Lent et triste – Retenez | 1:44 |
| 8 | L'Énamourée (1891)*
No. 5 from <i>Vingt Mélodies, Premier Recueil</i>
À Miss Sibyl Sanderson
Arranged for Tenor and Piano Quintet by Tom Poster
Assez lent – Retenez – Retenez encore | 3:46 |

	Quartet (1946)[†]	24:53
	in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur	
	for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano	
	(<i>Troisième Quatuor</i> / Third Quartet)	
	À Madame Zerline Rochar	
9	I Allegretto moderato – Plus calme – Tempo – Plus calme – Calmez – Tempo – Calmez – Tempo – Poco animando – Molto tranquillo	7:54
10	II [Sérénade.] Allegro assai	2:20
11	III Andante – Très calme – En animant – Calmez – Moins lent que le premier mouvement – Agitato – Calmez – Presque le double plus lent – À peu près le double plus vite – Poco agitato – Calme – Tempo – Un peu retenu – À peine retenu – Tempo – Un peu retenu – Tempo	9:16
12	IV Allegro assai	5:21

18

La Barcheta (1901)*

3:43

No. 2 from *Venezia, Six Chansons en dialecte vénitien*

Arranged for Tenor and Piano Quintet by Tom Poster

Andantino con moto, ma languido – Stesso tempo

TT 69:52

Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective

Karim Sulayman tenor*

Elena Urioste violin[†]

Savitri Grier violin[†]

Rosalind Ventris viola

Laura van der Heijden cello

Tom Poster piano



Jon Wes

Karim Sulayman

Hahn: Piano Quintet / Piano Quartet / Songs

Introduction

Reynaldo Hahn (1874 – 1947) was born in Venezuela, but he moved to France at the age of four and remained in Paris for the rest of his life. Like most prominent French musicians he studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where his most influential teacher in composition was Massenet. He fitted perfectly into the decadent, *avant-garde* culture of the capital, and he mixed freely with writers, poets, artists, and of course musicians in a period when the arts enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the wealthy and the powerful. The French have always needed a lively artistic culture to argue about over their long magnificent dinners.

Hahn was particularly at ease in the salons of society ladies, who entertained their guests by engaging prominent singers. He was not an opera singer, but his light agreeable voice was perfect for this milieu, and his repertoire ranged from Schubert to Massenet and included many songs of his own. Recordings which he made, singing his own songs and accompanying himself, remind us how welcome he must have been in the salons of that era. But he was more than a composer and a salon singer, for he

was an active presence in almost all aspects of French musical life for half a century, from the 1890s until his death. Like his much older friend Saint-Saëns, he possessed a versatility which kept him busy as composer, singer, critic, conductor, teacher, and, finally, in the last years of his life, administrator. In the Great War he fought bravely and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. He was a lover and long-time friend of Marcel Proust.

As a composer he was immensely productive. He wrote operas, operettas, ballets, songs, orchestral music, and chamber music in abundance, leaving only choral and sacred music virtually untouched. He was providing incidental music for Parisian theatres nearly all his life, all of it now vanished from the repertoire and virtually impossible to revive.

He was also a writer. He published four books of criticism and memoirs, which display a warm appreciation of composers he knew. He greatly admired Saint-Saëns and Fauré, although he was clearly less comfortable with the music of Debussy than with that of less adventurous composers. His own style belongs to the *fin de siècle*, a style

which was derided in the jazz age and rejected by modernists but which can now be heard, without the taint of polemics, as a source of great beauty. Such fluency and taste could never produce ugly or bizarre music, with the result that the rediscovery of Hahn's music in our time can give nothing but pleasure.

Piano Quintet in F sharp minor

Hahn's chamber music provides perfect examples of how to compose music that flows in a natural stream, rich in colour and invention. The Violin Sonata and two string quartets are exquisitely fashioned gems, along with the Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet recorded here. Anyone coming to the Quintet for the first time will be struck by the gorgeous sonority of a combination that other, more famous composers have made to sound thick and heavy. The textures are perfectly judged, the piano, at least in the first movement, providing delicate, active accompaniment to the strings' shapely lines. Keys shift frequently, but the modulations are always smooth. Chromaticism that sounds natural and mellifluous was second nature to Hahn.

He asks for the first movement to be played *con fuoco*, but it has a notably calmer passage in the middle, and the tone is never aggressive. The slow movement is more sombre, reminiscent of Fauré at times, its

opening melody rising from the depths. The first violin is not required to enter until the middle section, with a new melody and a tolling bell in the bass.

The finale is tuneful and direct, joyous in character, involving few of the chromatics that pervade the first movement. With the inevitable speeding up towards the end it leaves a memory of relaxed enjoyment. If there was ever unhappiness in his life, Hahn did not portray it here.

Piano Quartet in G major

The Piano Quartet is a late work, written between the end of the 1939 – 45 war (during which he took refuge, as a Jew, in Monaco) and his death, in January 1947. In that short period Hahn was also acting as director of the Opéra, a post that came with heavy administrative duties. The Quartet has four movements, including a brisk second movement and a much longer, slower third. There is plenty of contrast, but no angst and no drama in this music. The tone is fluent and relaxed, the work written with the same skill as that which Hahn had displayed all his life, and the same positive attitude to the world.

Hahn and song

Hahn left an interesting account of his experience as a singer in a series of lectures

which he delivered in 1913 on the art of singing.

While still a student of piano and harmony at the Conservatoire, I happened to attend a course on singing. It struck me that the professors at that time paid exclusive attention to technique and to the purely vocal side of singing, and that they neglected and systematically avoided all discussion of the psychological and pictorial side of the art. In a spirit of reaction and rebellion, all the greater for my youth, not to say for my childishness, I devoted all my attention to the other side of singing, to expression and meaning. And I began to sing in a manner that was perhaps not entirely without interest, but which was unarguably anti-vocal.¹

Later, he tells us, after the passing of a few years,

¹ À peine adolescent et élève de piano et d'harmonie au Conservatoire, il m'arrivait d'assister par hasard à un cours de chant. Il me semblait alors que les professeurs insistaient trop exclusivement sur la technique, sur le côté purement vocal du chant, qu'ils négligeaient, délaissaient systématiquement ce qui constitue l'intérêt psychologique, pittoresque de cet art. Il arriva que par réaction, par révolte, avec l'exagération extrême de la jeunesse, – je devrais dire de l'enfance, – je reportai toute mon attention sur l'autre partie du chant, sur celle qui ne comporte que l'expression, la signification; et je me mis à chanter d'une façon qui, peut-être, n'était pas absolument sans intérêt, mais qui, incontestablement, était antivocale.

I ended up regarding singing not so much as palpable but rather as adaptable, where sound and words have equal importance and complement each other, both aesthetically and mechanically, and support each other in a constantly shared effort.²

His songs reflect the profound understanding of the art of song which Hahn possessed, as performer, teacher, and composer.

Six songs

The six songs by Hahn that accompany these two chamber works have been arranged by Tom Poster who has transferred the piano part to a string quartet in four songs, adding a piano, to make a piano quintet, in the remaining two: *L'Énamourée* and *La Barcheta*. Hahn set mostly French poetry, but he wrote songs also to German, English, and Italian words. The earliest poem in this group is *Quand je fus pris au pavillon*, by Charles, Duke of Orleans, a prolific fifteenth-century poet at the French court. Over light *pizzicati* from the cello, the charming melody is mainly in the first violin, the voice nearer to a speech-melody. Moving

² J'ai fini par considérer le chant, je ne dirai pas comme une matière palpable, mais plastique, où les sons et les mots ont une importance égale, se complétant l'un l'autre, à la fois esthétique et mécanique, se prêtant une aide perpétuelle et collaborant à une action commune.

forward two centuries, *À Chloris* was written by Théophile de Viau, a libertine poet from the reign of Louis XIII. The first violin maintains a stately tune while the singer confesses his love in a secondary line. Hahn's word-setting is exemplary here. A middle section gives the accompaniment only to the viola. This beautiful song has deservedly always been popular.

La Barcheta is a poem in Venetian dialect from around 1800 by Pietro Buratti. Hahn's instruction, *languido*, is appropriate for the lazy mood, the voice accompanied by plucked strings. The refrain on 'Ah!' perfectly evokes the romantic murmur of the lagoon. In the second strophe the strings strum like a quiet mandolin band, and in the third strophe the piano is left to provide the accompaniment alone, while the refrain has plucked strings only.

The remaining three songs draw on French poems of the nineteenth century, a rich source for all the great French melodists of Hahn's time. Verlaine's *Chanson d'automne* is one of Hahn's earliest songs. It is desolate and sad, with a deeply expressive melodic phrase suggested by the 'long sighs of autumn violins'.³ In another early song, *L'Énamourée*, on a poem by Théodore de

³ Les sanglots longs / Des violons / De l'automne

Banville, Hahn makes no attempt to disguise the regularity of the poem's eight-syllable lines, and even reinforces them with a brief aspiring phrase, repeated many times. There is an orchestral feel to this song, which is reflected in this arrangement for piano quintet.

Hahn's setting of *Le Rossignol des lilas*, by Léopold Dauphin, on the other hand, might have been written with a string quartet in mind, since four sustained voices support the singer throughout. The purity of Hahn's style in this song is reflected in the almost complete lack of modulation from the home key.

Hahn would never have considered himself a composer on the same level as Fauré, Massenet, or Saint-Saëns, the three men whom he most revered, but he would have been happy to know that his prodigal gifts were still being appreciated and that his songs were still being sung a century after they were composed.

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A note by the performers

Kaleidoscope has championed many unjustly neglected composers, but in the case of Reynaldo Hahn the neglect seems particularly puzzling to us. His music is

immediately approachable, soaringly beautiful, and speaks directly to the heart; audiences, on the rare occasions that they get to hear it, seem to adore it. His life story is fascinating too: born in Caracas, to a Jewish German father and a Catholic Venezuelan mother of Spanish / Basque origin, the handsome and urbane Hahn charmed high-society Paris, enjoying great success as composer, conductor, singer, writer-lecturer, and music critic. He also had a passionate romance and lifelong friendship with Marcel Proust, who later said: 'Everything I have ever done has always been thanks to Reynaldo.'

It is true that among singers and fans of vocal music, songs by Hahn are relatively well known and loved, but we have been continually surprised at how few of our instrumental colleagues are even aware of his name, let alone his music. The Piano Quintet had been on our programming wish list for some time: it was lauded as Hahn's greatest work at its 1922 première, and the powerful intensity of its first two movements in particular acts as a firm rejoinder to those who criticised Hahn as a lightweight salon composer. By the time he finished his Piano Quartet, in 1946, Hahn was a man out of place in the world; this is music which bears no trace of modernism, instead looking back nostalgically to Hahn's heyday in *la belle*

époque. In the Piano Quartet, Hahn also looks back quite literally: it was only after recording this piece that we made the discovery that its haunting slow movement is a chamber transcription of a much earlier solo piano piece, 'Douloureuse rêverie dans un bois de sapins', published in 1912 as part of the collection *Le Rossignol éperdu*.

It was not, however, these glorious and undervalued chamber works which first convinced us that we needed to record Hahn's music. A number of years ago, our dear friend Karim Sulayman joined Tom in several performances of a set of Hahn songs, and a shared love for the music led to a discussion about how beautifully some of the piano parts could work in chamber arrangements. Karim had first discovered Hahn through the touching recordings on which the composer simultaneously sings and plays his own songs; and we, in turn, have always been deeply touched by the direct channel which Karim seems to have to Hahn's heartfelt expressive world. For all of us, it has been a profound joy to put these new song arrangements down on disc for the first time.

Our sincere thanks, as ever, to Ralph Couzens, Jonathan Cooper, and the Chandos team for giving us the opportunity to share this exquisite music more widely. We

would like to dedicate this album to Helen and Richard Sheldon, not only to express gratitude for their wonderful friendship and generosity to Kaleidoscope, but also because the first cousin of Helen's great-grandmother was none other than Reynaldo Hahn!

© 2025 Tom Poster and Elena Urioste

Praised by the magazine *BBC Music* for his 'lucid, velvety tenor and pop-star charisma', the Lebanese-American tenor **Karim Sulayman** has garnered international attention as a sophisticated and versatile artist. He earns widespread acclaim for his innovative programming and recording projects while performing opera, appearing in concert and recital halls, and joining chamber ensembles in the world's most prestigious venues. Thus, in recent seasons he has enjoyed engagements at Carnegie Hall and Park Avenue Armory, New York, Opera Philadelphia, Houston Grand Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Ravinia Festival, The Royal Opera Covent Garden and Wigmore Hall, London, Aldeburgh Festival, Drottningholms Slottsteater, in Stockholm, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, as well as with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, Pittsburgh

Symphony Orchestra, and Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Karim Sulayman won the 2019 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album for his debut solo disc, *Songs of Orpheus*. His second album, *Where Only Stars Can Hear Us*, with the fortepianist Yi-heng Yang, debuted at no. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical Album Chart and was included on the list of Best Classical Music of 2020 in *The New York Times*. His third solo album, *Broken Branches*, with the guitarist Sean Shibe, debuted at no. 1 on the UK Classical Chart, was nominated for the 2024 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, and named one of the Best Classical Albums of 2023 by *The New York Times*. www.karimsulayman.com

Hailed by *The Times* for its 'exhilarating performances', the **Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective** was dreamed up in 2017 by Tom Poster and Elena Urioste, who met through the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme. The Collective operates with a flexible roster which features many of today's most inspirational musicians, both instrumentalists and singers, and its creative programming is marked by an ardent commitment to celebrating diversity of all forms and a desire to unearth lesser-known gems of the repertoire. In

2020, it was appointed Associate Ensemble at Wigmore Hall, where the group makes multiple appearances each season and, in May 2021, was invited to give the Hall's 120th anniversary concert. It broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has recently been ensemble-in-residence at the Aldeburgh Festival, Kettle's Yard, Ischia Music Festival, and Cheltenham Festival where the group gave several world premières and collaborated with Sir Simon Russell Beale and the cast of *The Lehman Trilogy*. Its previous recordings for Chandos Records have been named Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*, shortlisted for *BBC Music Magazine* and

Gramophone awards, and appeared in the list of '10 best classical records of 2022' in *The Times*. Passionate about inspiring the next generation of musicians, the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective has featured in the Learning Festival of Wigmore Hall, directed courses for the Benedetti Foundation, and held a visiting professorship at the Royal Academy of Music. Recent performance highlights include collaborations with Hilary Hahn, a début at the BBC Proms, and a tour of the USA. For more information, please see www.kaleidoscopecc.com, where you can also find links to the websites of the individual musicians.



Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective recording Hahn's Piano Quintet



The musicians during the recording sessions

1 À Chloris

S'il est vrai, Chloris, que tu m'aimes,
(Mais j'entends, que tu m'aimes bien,)
Je ne crois pas que les rois mêmes
Aient un bonheur pareil au mien.

Que la mort serait importune
À venir changer ma fortune
Pour la félicité des cieux!

Tout ce qu'on dit de l'ambrosie
Ne touche point ma fantaisie
Au prix des grâces de tes yeux!

Théophile de Viau (1590 – 1626)

2 Quand je fus pris au pavillon

Quand je fus pris au pavillon
De ma dame, très gente et belle,
Je me brûlai à la chandelle
Ainsi que fait le papillon.
Je rougis comme vermillon,
À la clarté d'une étincelle,
Quand je fus pris au pavillon
De ma dame, très gente et belle.
Si j'eusse été esmerillon
Ou que j'eusse eu aussi bonne aile,
Je me fusse gardé de celle
Qui me bailla de l'aiguillon
Quand je fus pris au pavillon!

"Rondeau XLVI" (c. 1460)
Charles, duc d'Orléans (1394 – 1465)

To Chloris

If it be true, Chloris, that you love me,
(And I'm told you love me dearly),
I do not believe that even kings
Can match the happiness I know.

Even death would be powerless
To alter my fortune
With the promise of heavenly bliss!

All that they say of ambrosia
Does not stir my imagination
As much as the favour of your eyes!

When in her pavilion I lost my heart

When in her pavilion I lost my heart
To my most beautiful and noble lady,
I burnt myself in the candle's flame,
As the moth does.
I flushed vermillion
In the brightness of a spark,
When in her pavilion I lost my heart
To my most beautiful and noble lady.
If I had been a merlin
Or had wings as strong,
I should have shielded myself
From her who stung me,
When in her pavilion I lost my heart!

6 Le Rossignol des lilas

Ô premier rossignol qui viens
Dans les lilas, sous ma fenêtre,
Ta voix m'est douce a reconnaître!
Nul accent n'est semblable au tien!

Fidèle aux amoureux liens,
Trille encor, divin petit être!
Ô premier rossignol qui viens
Dans les lilas, sous ma fenêtre!

Nocturne ou matinal, combien
Ton hymne à l'amour me pénètre!
Tant d'ardeur fait en moi renaître
L'écho de mes avrils anciens,
Ô premier rossignol qui viens!

Léopold Dauphin (1847–1925)

The Nightingale among the Lilac

O first nightingale to appear
Among the lilac beneath my window,
How sweet to recognise your voice!
There is no song like yours!

Faithful to the bonds of love,
Trill away, divine little being!
O first nightingale to appear
Among the lilac beneath my window!

Night or morning – O how
Your love-song strikes to my heart!
Such ardour re-awakens in me
Echoes of April days long past,
O first nightingale to appear!

7 Chanson d'automne

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens,
Et je pleure...

Autumn Song

Long sighs
Of autumn
Violins
Wound my heart
With languorous
Monotony.

All choking
And pale, when
The hour sounds,
I remember
Departed days
And I weep...

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
De çà, de là,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte...

from "Paysages tristes",
in *Poèmes saturniens*
(1866)

Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896)

8 L'Énamourée

Ils se disent, ma colombe,
Que tu rêves, morte encore,
Sous la pierre d'une tombe:
Mais pour l'âme qui t'adore,
Tu t'éveilles ranimée,
Ô pensive bien-aimée!

Par les blanches nuits d'étoiles,
Dans la brise qui murmure,
Je caresse tes longs voiles,
Ta mouvante chevelure,
Et tes ailes demi-closes
Qui voltigent sur les roses.

Ô délices! je respire
Tes divines tresses blondes;
Ta voix pure, cette lyre,
Suit la vague sur les ondes,

And I go
Where ill winds blow,
Buffeted
To and fro,
Like a
Dead leaf...

The Loved One

They say, my dove,
That you dream, even though dead,
Beneath the headstone of a grave:
But for the soul that adores you,
You waken, restored to life,
O meditative beloved!

During sleepless, starlit nights,
In the murmuring breeze,
I caress your long veils,
Your billowing hair,
And your half-folded wings
That flutter over roses.

Oh delight! I inhale
Your divine blonde tresses;
Your pure voice, this lyre,
Follows the waves across the water,

Et, suave, les effleure,
Comme un cygne qui se pleure!

1859

from *Les Exilés* (1867)

Théodore Faullin de Banville (1823 – 1891)

And softly brushes them,
Like a lamenting swan!

13 La Barcheta

La note è bela,
Fa presto, o Nineta,
Andemo in barcheta
I freschi a ciapar!
A Toni g'ho dito
Ch'el felze el ne cava
Per goder sta bava
Che supia dal mar...
Ah!

Che gusto contarsela
Soleti in laguna,
E al chiaro de luna
Sentirse a vogar!
Ti pol de la ventola
Far senza, o mia cara,
Chè zefiri a gara
Te vol sventolar.
Ah!

Se gh'è tra de lori
Chi tropo indiscreto
Volesses dal pèto
El velo strapar,

The Little Boat

The night is beautiful,
Make haste, Nineta,
Let us set sail in our boat
And enjoy the evening breeze!
I have asked Toni
To remove the canopy
So that we can feel the breeze
Blowing in from the sea...
Ah!

What bliss to exchange sweet nothings
Alone on the lagoon,
And by moonlight
To be borne along in our boat!
Your fan you can
Lay aside, my dear,
For the breezes will vie with one another
To refresh you.
Ah!

If one of them
Should be indiscreet enough
To lift from your breast
The shielding veil,

No bada a ste frotole,
Soleti za semo,
E Toni el so' remo,
Lè a tento a menar.
Mm!

Pietro Buratti (1772 - 1832)

Do not heed its frivolity,
For we are alone
And Toni is much too busy
Plying his oar.
Mm!

Translation © Richard Stokes,
author of *A French Song Companion*
(Oxford, 2000)

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Steinway Model D Concert Grand Piano (serial no. 592 087) courtesy of Potton Hall
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Page turner: Peter Willsher

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Sound engineer Jonathan Cooper
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REYNALDO HAHN (1874–1947)

première recording in this arrangement *

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| 7 | Chanson d'automne (1887–90)*
No. 1 from <i>Sept Chansons grises</i> | 1:44 |
| 8 | L'Énamourée (1891)*
No. 5 from <i>Vingt Mélodies, Premier Recueil</i> | 3:46 |
| 9-12 | Quartet (1946)†
in G major · in G-Dur · en sol majeur
for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano | 24:53 |
| 13 | La Barcheta (1901)*
No. 2 from <i>Venezia, Six Chansons en dialecte vénitien</i> | 3:43 |

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KALEIDOSCOPE CHAMBER
COLLECTIVE

Karim Sulayman tenor*
Elena Urioste violin
Savitri Grier violin†
Rosalind Ventris viola
Laura van der Heijden cello
Tom Poster piano

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