

# Dis-moi que je suis belle

## from the opera "Thais"

*Scene: Thebes on the Nile—4th Century*

Athanael, a zealous young monk, has come to Thebes with the hope of turning the beautiful courtesan, Thais, away from her immoral life. When he confronts her with the shameful of her existence, her first reactions of scorn gradually give way to hesitation. However, the cries of her reveling companions distract her before she is completely convinced. Act II finds Thais in the throes of a conflict, and newly-conscious of the futility of her life. In this aria, as she stands before her mirror Thais tries to throw off her pensiveness in a flash of bravado, but her musing only leads her again to the realization that her beauty will, alas, eventually fade.

Ah! Je suis fatiguée à mourir!  
Tous ces hommes ne sont qu'indifférence et  
que brutalité.  
Les femmes sont méchantes . . . et les heures  
pesantes . . .  
J'ai l'âme vide . . . où trouver le repos?  
Et comment fixer le bonheur?  
Ô mon miroir fidèle, rassure-moi!  
Dis-moi que je suis belle  
Et que je serai belle éternellement!  
Éternellement! Que rien ne flétrira les roses  
de mes lèvres,  
Que rien ne ternira l'or pur de mes cheveux!  
Dis-le-moi! Dis-le-moi!  
Ah! tais-toi, voix impitoyable, voix que me dis:

Thais, tu vieilliras . . .  
Un jour, ainsi, Thais ne serait plus Thais  
Non, non! faut-il y croire  
Et s'il n'est pas pour garder la beauté de secrets  
souverains,  
De pratiques magiques?  
Vénus, réponds-moi—de son éternité!  
Vénus, invisible et présente!  
Vénus, enchantement de l'ombre!  
Vénus, réponds-moi—de son éternité!

Ah! I am so deadly tired!  
All these men represent nothing but indifference  
and brutality.  
The women are mean . . . and the hours weigh  
heavily . . .  
My soul is empty . . . where to find rest?  
And how to make happiness secure?  
Oh, my trustworthy mirror, reassure me!  
Tell me that I am beautiful  
And that I will be beautiful—forever!  
Forever! That the rose colour of my lips will  
not fade,  
That the pure gold of my hair will not tarnish  
Tell it to me! Tell it to me!  
Oh, be silent, merciless voice, voice that tells  
me:  
"Thais, you will grow old . . .  
Someday then, Thais will be no more Thais!"  
No, no! Should one believe it,  
That beauty will not be preserved through  
sovereign secrets,  
And magical practices?  
Venus, give me an answer from your eternity!  
Venus, invisible yet present!  
Venus, the enchantment of the shadow!  
Venus, answer me! Answer me!

English translation by WALDO LYMAN



Libretto by LOUIS GALLET

(after the novel by ANATOLE FRANCE)

**Allergretto moderato assai**

**JULES MASSENET**  
(1842-1912)