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Classe de/Class of: Prof. Dominique Labelle

Program Notes

These program notes are written by the student performing and are presented by the student in partial fulfilment of the requirements of their course.

Ces notes de programme sont écrites par l-étudiant-interprète et sont présentées en tant que réalisation partielle des critères de leur cours.

Lully: *Enfin, il est en ma puissance*

This aria is taken from the second act of Lully's opera *Armide* and is sung by the title character who is a "warrior princess and a sorceress."¹ The opera is set during the first crusade in the 11th century. The role of Armide fits into the category of *rôles de baguette* or "stick roles."² This is in reference to the prop these characters would hold on stage; a queen would wield a scepter, an elderly woman would carry a cane, and a sorceress would brandish a magic wand.³ Intimidatingly, musicologist Benoît Dratwicki writes that "these dramatic roles can only be entrusted to charismatic actresses, noble and aloof, tall, impressive in their slightest gestures, and endowed with a dramatic voice, full-bodied, somber yet capable of *éclats de voix* (powerful vocal outbursts) in both low and high registers."⁴

During the first act, Armide has been attempting to put an end to the crusade by taking the crusaders captive. She did not succeed, however, in capturing the virtuous knight, Renaud, and he valiantly sets the captives free. During this aria, Armide stands over the sleeping Renaud, with a dagger in her hand, preparing to kill him in her fury. She is then overcome with love for him and is unable to kill him. In this aria, she expresses her internal conflict between feelings of revenge and love.⁵

Eccles: *See the forsaken fair with streaming eyes and I burn, my brain consumes to ashes*

John Eccles was best known for the music he wrote for the English theatre. He wrote numerous songs for solo voice, including these two dramatic and expressive pieces.

¹ Lois Rosow, "Armide: Lully's ultimate triumph," liner notes for Jean-Baptiste Lully, *The Tragedy of Armide*, Stephanie Houtzeel, Robert Getchell, Opera Lafayette, cond. Ryan Brown, recorded February 2-5, 2007, Naxos 8.660209-10, 2008, streaming audio, accessed November 2, 2023, Chandos Records, 7.

² Benoît Dratwicki, "Passion," liner notes for Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Passion*, Véronique Gens, Ensemble Les Surprises, artistic director Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas, recorded November 2020, Alpha Classics 747, 2021, streaming audio, accessed November 1, 2023, Naxos Music Library, 22.

³ Dratwicki, 22.

⁴ Dratwicki, 22.

⁵ Rosow, "Armide, Lully's ultimate triumph," 8.

See the Forsaken Fair displays Eccles' ability to set text skillfully and beautifully.⁶ The song begins mournfully as a woman mourns her parting lover. The mood shifts to joy and triumph when they are reunited. Eccles writes wonderfully for the voice, and this piece is a joy to sing.

I burn, my brain consumes to ashes belongs to "the mad song" genre which was popular during Eccles' time. Mad songs involved a female character expressing fury and sadness due to unrequited love or unfaithfulness.⁷ Eccles wrote this song to be performed by the actress Mrs. Bracegirdle. She loved Eccles' music so much that she asserted she would not sing the music of any other composer.⁸ Tragically, Mrs. Bracegirdle suffered a violent assault at the hands of two fans, and mad songs then became an important focus of her career.⁹ *I burn* involves abrupt tempo changes and sudden shifts in character and emotion, effectively expressing the tormented and conflicted emotions of a jilted lover.

Purcell: *Sound the Trumpet*

Purcell was a composer in the court of Queen Mary II and wrote this celebratory and memorable duet for her birthday in 1694. The voices playfully mimic the sound of trumpets and echo each other in a joyful dialogue.

Mozart: *Als Luise die Briefe, Das Veilchen, and Dans un bois solitaire*

These three songs belong to the collection of approximately 30 lieder that Mozart composed throughout his lifetime. His lieder were not the focus of his career, and he wrote these beautiful songs primarily for special occasions.¹⁰ He called his lieder "pieces for friends."¹¹ In *Als Luise die Briefe*, Luise expresses her anger, despair, love, and sadness, as she burns the letters of her unfaithful lover. Mozart's famous song, *Das Veilchen*, depicts a man's heart being trampled underfoot like a violet. In *Dans un bois solitaire*, a man is in a forest alone and finds Cupid sleeping under a tree. Cupid, furious at being awakened, pierces him with an arrow, sentencing him to remain forever in love with his unfaithful lover.

⁶ Stoddard Lincoln, "Eccles, John," in *Grove Music Online*, accessed September 25, 2023, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com>.

⁷ Lindsay Kemp, "John Eccles: The Judgement of Paris/Three Mad Songs," liner notes for John Eccles, *Eccles*, Lucy Crowe, Claire Booth, Susan Bickley, Benjamin Hulett, Roderick Williams, Early Opera Company, cond. Christian Curnyn, recorded July 22-23, 2008, Chandos 0759, 2009, streaming audio, accessed October 17, 2023, Alexander Street, 12.

⁸ Kemp, 12.

⁹ Diana Solomon, "From Infamy to Intimacy: Anne Bracegirdle's Mad Songs," *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 35, no. 1 (2011): 1, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43293866>.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Sämtliche Lieder für mittlere Stimme (Transposition)*, ed. Ernst August Ballin (Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter, 1999), IV.

¹¹ Mozart, IV.

Bach: *Cantata BWV 170*

Bach's Cantata BWV 170 is one of approximately 200 of his surviving cantatas. These works were primarily written to be performed during church services. Cantata BWV 170 was composed for the sixth Sunday after Trinity, and the text is based on the sermon text and gospel reading for that Sunday.¹² The sermon text was Romans 6:3-11, regarding being dead to sin and alive to Christ.¹³ The gospel reading was from Matthew 5:20-26 which addresses the importance of loving one's neighbour.¹⁴

The opening aria expresses hope for the rest of heaven where there will finally be true peace and concord. The subsequent recitative describes the cruelty humanity is capable of. The middle aria laments this painful truth while acknowledging the grace of God and his love for sinful people. The next recitative expresses a desire for freedom from this life of pain and sin and a longing for a life with God. In the closing aria, the singer sings about the joy of living a renewed life that is free from the bondage to sin and alive to Christ.¹⁵

Handel : *Quando mai, spietata sorte and Dopo notte, atra e funesta*

The aria *Quando mai, spietata sorte* is from Handel's opera Radamisto. Zenobia sings this aria as she is fleeing with her husband, Radimisto, from King Tiridate. The evil king desires to take her for his own and kill her husband. Zenobia is exhausted and despairing and does not know if she will be able to go on. The aria features a tender and heartrending duet between voice and oboe.¹⁶

The final aria on the program, *Dopo Notte*, is taken from Handel's opera, *Ariodante*. During this opera, an elaborate plan has been carried out to trick Prince Ariodante into thinking that his betrothed has been unfaithful to him. Ariodante attempts to take his own life in his sadness. He survives, however, and the plot is revealed to him. He is reunited with his lover and sings of his overwhelming happiness and relief in this exhilarating and joy-filled aria.

¹² J.S. Bach, *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust*, ed. Daniela Wissemann, vocal score (Stuttgart, Germany: Carus, 2012), 4.

¹³ Bach, 4.

¹⁴ Bach, 4.

¹⁵ Bach, 4.

¹⁶ Richard Wigmore, "Radamisto," liner notes for George Frideric Handel, *Handel Arias*, Alice Coote, The English Concert, cond. Harry Bicket, recorded June 6-9, 2012 and September 6-7, 2013, Hyperion, 2014, streaming audio, accessed November 23, 2023, Bach Cantatas Website, 5.

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Text and Translations

Lully: *Enfin, il est en ma puissance*

Enfin, il est en ma puissance,
Ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe vainqueur.
Le charme du sommeil le livre à ma vengeance.
Je vais percer son invincible cœur.
Par lui, tous mes captifs sont sortis d'esclavage.
Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage...

Quel trouble me saisit ! Qui me fait hésiter!
Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur la pitié veut me
dire? Frappons...ciel! Qui peut m'arrêter!
Achevons...je frémis! Vengeons-nous...je soupire!
Est-ce ainsi que je dois me venger aujourd'hui?
Ma colère s'éteint quand j'approche de lui.
Plus je le vois, plus ma vengeance est vaine,
Mon bras tremblant se refuse à la haine.

Ah! quelle cruauté de lui ravir le jour.
A ce jeune héros tout cède sur la terre.
Qui croirait qu'il fut né seulement pour la guerre!
Il semble être fait pour l'amour.
Ne puis-je me venger à moins qu'il ne périsse?
Hé ne suffit-il pas que l'amour le punisse;
Puisqu'il n'a pu trouver mes yeux assez charmants
Qu'il m'aime au moins par mes enchantements
Que s'il se peut, je le haïsse.

Venez, secondez mes désirs,
Démons, transformez-vous en d'aimables zéphyr
Je cède à ce vainqueur, la pitié me surmonte;
Cachez ma faiblesse et ma honte
Dans les plus reculés déserts
Volez, conduisez-nous au bout de l'univers.
(Philippe Quinault)

Eccles: *See the forsaken fair with streaming eyes*

See the forsaken fair with streaming eyes
Her parting lover mourn;
She weeps, she sighs, despairs and dies,
And watchful wastes the lonely livelong nights,
Bewailing past delights
That may no more, no never more return.
Oh! soothe her cares
With softest, sweetest airs,
Till Victory and Peace restore
Her faithful lover to her tender breast,
Within her folding arms to rest,
Thence never to be parted more,
No never to be parted more.
(William Congreve)

At last, he is under my power,
This mortal enemy, this proud conqueror.
Sleep's spell delivers him to my revenge.
I will pierce his invincible heart.
By him, all my captives were freed from slavery.
Let him suffer all my rage...

What trouble seizes me and makes me hesitate?
What can pity tell me on his behalf?
Let me hit! Heavens! Who can stop me?
Let me finish him...I shudder! Let me be avenged...I
sigh! Is this the way I will avenge myself today?
My anger wanes when I come near him.
The more I see him, the weaker is my revenge,
My trembling arm fails my anger.

Ah! How cruel it is to take his life.
To this young hero, everything on earth is subservient.
Who would believe that he was born only to wage
war? He seems made for love.
Can I not be avenged without his perishing?
Is it not enough that love punishes him?
Since he has not found my gaze charming enough,
Let him at least love me by my spell
So that I may hate him, if this is possible.

Come, fulfill my desires,
Demons, change yourselves into charming zephyrs,
I surrender to this conqueror, pity overwhelms me; Hide
my weakness and my shame
In the remotest deserts.
Fly, and bring us to the end of the universe!
(Translation by Louis Forget and Huston Simmons)

Eccles: *I burn, my brain consumes to ashes*

I burn, my brain consumes to ashes;
 Each eye-ball too, like lightning flashes;
 Within my breast there glows a solid fire,
 Which in a thousand ages can't expire.

Blow, the winds' greater ruler:
 Bring the Po and Ganges hither,
 'Tis sultry, sultry weather;
 Pour 'em all on my soul,
 It will hiss like a coal,
 But never be the cooler.

'Twas pride hot as hell
 That first made me rebel;
 From love's awful throne a curst angel fell;
 And mourn now the fate,
 Which myself did create:
 Fool, that consider'd not when I was well.
 Adieu, transporting joys;
 Off, ye vain fantastic toys,
 That dress'd this face and body to allure;
 Bring me daggers, poison, fire,
 For scorn is turn'd into desire;
 All hell feels not the rage which I, poor I endure.
 (Thomas D'Urfey)

Purcell: *Sound the Trumpet*

Sound the trumpet till around
 You make the list'ning shores rebound.
 On the sprightly hautboy play.
 All the instruments of joy
 That skillful numbers can employ
 To celebrate the glories of this day.
 (Nahum Tate)

Mozart: *Als Luise die Briefe*

Erzeugt von heißer Phantasie,
 In einer schwärmerischen Stunde
 Zur Welt gebrachte! – geht zu Grunde!
 Ihr Kinder der Melancholie!

Ihr danket Flammen euer Sein:
 Ich geb' euch nun den Flammen wieder,
 Und all' die schwärmerischen Lieder;
 Denn ach! er sang nicht mir allein.

Ihr brennet nun, und bald, ihr Lieben,
 Ist keine Spur von euch mehr hier:
 Doch ach! der Mann, der euch geschrieben,
 Brennt lange noch vielleicht in mir.
 (Gabriele von Baumberg)

Begotten by ardent fantasy,
 Born in a rapturous hour
 An emotional moment! Perish,
 Ye children of melancholy!

You owe your existence to flames,
 To flames I now return you
 And all those passionate songs;
 For ah! he did not sing for me alone.

Now you are burning, and soon, my dears,
 Not a trace of you will remain:
 But ah! the man who wrote you
 May smoulder long yet in my heart.
 (Translation by Richard Stokes)

Mozart: *Das Veilchen*

Ein Veilchen auf der Wiese stand,
Gebückt in sich und unbekannt;
Es war ein herzigs Veilchen.
Da kam ein' junge Schäferin
Mit leichtem Schritt und muntrem Sinn
Daher, daher,
Die Wiese her, und sang.

Ach! denkt das Veilchen, wär ich nur
Die schönste Blume der Natur,
Ach, nur ein kleines Veilchen,
Bis mich das Liebchen abgepflückt
Und an dem Busen matt gedrückt!
Ach nur, ach nur
Ein Viertelstündchen lang!

Ach! aber ach! das Mädchen kam
Und nicht in Acht das Veilchen nahm,
Ertrat das arme Veilchen.
Es sank und starb und freut' sich noch:
Und sterb' ich denn, so sterb' ich doch
Durch sie, durch sie,
Zu ihren Füßen doch.
Das arme Veilchen
Es war ein herzigs Veilchen!
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Mozart: *Dans un bois solitaire*

Dans un bois solitaire et sombre
Je me promenais l'autre jour,
Un enfant y dormait à l'ombre,
C'était le redoutable Amour.

J'approche, sa beauté me flatte,
Mais je devais m'en défier;
Il avait les traits d'une ingrante,
Que j'avais juré d'oublier.

Il avait la bouche vermeille,
Le teint aussi frais que le sien,
Un soupir m'échappe, il s'éveille;
L'Amour se réveille de rien.

Aussitôt déployant ses aîles et saisissant
Son arc vengeur,
L'une de ses flèches, cruelles en partant,
Il me blesse au coeur.

Va! va, dit-il, aux pieds de Sylvie,
De nouveau languir et brûler!
Tu l'aimeras toute la vie,
Pour avoir osé m'éveiller.
(Antoine Houdar de La Motte)

A violet was growing in the meadow,
Unnoticed and with bowed head;
It was a dear sweet violet.
Along came a young shepherdess,
Light of step and happy of heart,
Along, along
Through the meadow, and sang.

Ah! thinks the violet, if I were only
The loveliest flower in all Nature,
Ah! for only a little while,
Till my darling had picked me
And crushed me against her bosom!
Ah only, ah only
For a single quarter hour!

But alas, alas, the girl drew near
And took no heed of the violet,
Trampled the poor violet.
It sank and died, yet still rejoiced:
And if I die, at least I die
Through her, through her
And at her feet.
The poor violet!
It was a dear sweet violet!
(Translation by Richard Stokes)

In a lonely and sombre forest
I walked the other day;
A child slept in the shade,
It was a veritable Cupid.

I approach; his beauty fascinates me.
But I must be careful:
He has the traits of the faithless maiden
Whom I had sworn to forget.

He had lips of ruby,
His complexion was also fresh like hers.
A sigh escapes me and he awakes;
Cupid wakes at nothing.

Immediately opening his wings and seizing
His vengeful bow
And one of his cruel arrows as he parts,
He wounds me to the heart.

"Go!" he says, "Go! At Sylvie's feet
Will you languish anew!
You shall love her all your life,
For having dared awaken me."
(Translation by Emily Ezust)

Bach: Cantata BWV 170

I. Aria

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust,
 Dich kann man nicht bei Höllensünden,
 Wohl aber Himmelseintracht finden;
 Du stärkst allein die schwache Brust.
 Drum sollen lauter Tugendgaben
 In meinem Herzen Wohnung haben.

II. Recitative

Die Welt, das Sündenhaus,
 Bricht nur in Höllenlieder aus
 Und sucht durch Hass und Neid
 Des Satans Bild an sich zu tragen.
 Ihr Mund ist voller Ottergift,
 Der oft die Unschuld tödlich trifft,
 Und will allein von Racha sagen.
 Gerechter Gott, wie weit
 Ist doch der Mensch von dir entfernet;
 Du liebst, jedoch sein Mund
 Macht Fluch und Feindschaft kund
 Und will den Nächsten nur mit Füßen treten.
 Ach! Diese Schuld ist schwerlich zu
 verbeten.

III. Aria : Adagio

Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen,
 Die dir, mein Gott, so sehr zuwider sein;
 Ich zittre recht und fühle tausend Schmerzen,
 Wenn sie sich nur an Rach und Hass erfreun.
 Gerechter Gott, was magst du doch gedenken,
 Wenn sie allein mit rechten Satansränken
 Dein scharfes Strafgebot so frech
 verlacht.
 Ach! ohne Zweifel hast du so gedacht:
 Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen!

IV. Recitative

Wer sollte sich demnach
 Wohl hier zu leben wünschen,
 Wenn man nur Hass und Ungemach
 Vor seine Liebe sieht?
 Doch, weil ich auch den Feind
 Wie meinen besten Freund
 Nach Gottes Vorschrift
 lieben soll,
 So flieht
 Mein Herze Zorn und Groll
 Und wünscht allein bei Gott zu leben,
 Der selbst die Liebe heißt.
 Ach, eintrachtvoller Geist,
 Wenn wird er dir doch nur sein Himmelszion geben?

V. Aria

Mir ekelt mehr zu leben,
 Drum nimm mich, Jesu, hin!

I. Aria

Contented peace, beloved delight of the soul,
 you cannot be found among the sins of hell,
 but only where there is heavenly harmony;
 You alone strengthen the weak breast.
 For this reason nothing but the gifts of virtue
 should have any place in my heart.

II. Recitative

The world, that place of sin,
 bursts out only in hellish songs
 and strives through hatred and envy
 to bear upon itself the image of Satan.
 Its mouth is full of snake's venom
 that often deals a mortal blow to the innocent
 And only wants to say 'racha' [you worthless person]
 Most just God, how far
 are people therefore estranged from you;
 you love, but their mouth
 proclaims curses and enmity
 And they only want to tread their neighbour underfoot.
 Ah! it is difficult to gain pardon for such guilt through
 prayer.

III. Aria : Adagio

How sorry I feel therefore for those perverted hearts
 that against you, my God, are so set
 I truly shudder and feel a thousand pangs
 When they take delight only in vengeance and hatred.
 Most just God, what must you then think
 when with their truly satanic intrigues
 They so insolently deride your strict commands about
 punishment.
 Ah! without doubt you have thought:
 How sorry I feel therefore for those perverted hearts!

IV. Recitative

Who in these circumstances would
 wish to live here at all
 when only hate and misfortune
 Are seen in place of God's love?
 But since also my enemy
 as if he were my best friend
 should be loved by me according to God's
 commandment
 then there depart
 from my heart anger and resentment
 and my wish is to live for God alone
 Who is Love itself
 Ah, spirit filled with harmony,
 When will the promised land of heaven be given to you?

V. Aria

I feel revulsion to prolong my life,
 And so take me away from here, Jesus!

Mir graut vor allen Sünden,
 Laß mich dies Wohnhaus finden,
 Wo selbst ich ruhig bin.
 (Georg Christian Lehms)

Handel: *Quando mai, spietata sorte*

Quando mai, spietata sorte,
 Finirà l'alma a penar!
 (Nicola Francesco Haym)

Handel: *Dopo notte, atra e funesta*

Dopo notte, atra e funesta,
 splende in Ciel più vago il sole,
 e di gioja empie la terra;

Mentre in orrida tempesta
 il mio legno è quasi assorto,
 giunge in porto, e'llido afferra.
 (Anonymous)

I am horrified by all the sins,
 grant that I may find this place to live
 Where I myself may be at peace.
 (Translation by Francis Browne)

When, pitiless fate,
 Will the suffering of my heart end?
 (Translation by Bard Suverkrop)

After a night so bleak and foreboding,
 the sun shines forth in the heavens,
 all the dearer, as the earth fills with joy.

For in the midst of a horrid storm,
 my boat has been almost submerged,
 but it grasps at the shore as it returns to port.
 (Translation by Andrew Schneider)