



Anime Immortali
Franco Fagioli

KAMMERORCHESTER BASEL · DANIEL BARD



ANIME IMMORTALI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

La finta giardiniera, K. 196

1 Se l'augellin sen fugge 4. 19

Lucio Silla, K. 135

2 Ah se a morir mi chiama 7. 10

La finta giardiniera, K. 196

3 E giunge a questo segno 0. 35

4 Va pure ad altri in braccio 3. 15

Davidde penitente, K. 469

5 Lungi le cure ingrante 4. 56

La clemenza di Tito, K. 621

6 Parto, parto, ma tu, ben mio 6. 46

7 Deh per questo istante solo 6. 53

Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165

8 1. Exsultate, jubilate 4. 24

9 2. Fulget amica dies 0. 44

10 3. Virginum corona 5. 42

11 4. Alleluja 2. 31

Total playing time: 47. 17

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Kammerorchester Basel

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Fortepiano, Cembalo, Organ

Sergio Ciomei



I still remember when I first got to know Mozart, when I first heard his music. I was still a child and sang the first boy in *Die Zauberflöte*. What music! How joyful, how deep, how sad, how everything! Clearly it could not be otherwise for such a genius. I remember exactly the sensations when I was singing as part of the trio, in the scenes with Tamino, Pamina or Papageno, how that music moved me. And I clearly remember the emotion of listening to the orchestra and those solo singers performing their roles with such commitment. It was all evidently engraved in the depths of my being. At that moment, my need to study music was born. I chose to study the piano, somehow I wanted to be able to produce that music not only with my voice. And so I started, as I wanted to play Mozart.

I remember I went to a sheet music shop and I asked for something I could play by Mozart for someone who was just starting out. The shop clerk pulled out a little book that belonged to that well-known collection called "my first....". And then he showed me "My first Mozart". I remember it perfectly with its orange soft cover, capital lettering full of watermarks and a portrait of Mozart. So that's where I started, with a little minuet in F Major.

What a thrill! I was playing Mozart's music! Oh my God, I now realise how little I understood as I had to play the instrument, and due to the technical difficulties, I did not fully reach the music yet. But little by little I went on, played the famous sonata in C Major, and so on. I was completely in love with his music. Who would have thought that later on I would have the honour of being able to lend my voice to such beauty!

As a countertenor and looking into the repertoire of the old castratos, I happily discovered that Mozart had written for some of them, so I began to study the solo vocal music that Mozart had written for castrato singers. And such beautiful music it was! The aria 'Parto, parto' sung by Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito*, or the famous motet *Exsultate Jubilate*, and so many others. It is evident that Mozart had a connection with these singers.

Somehow, I notice in Mozart's operas that when he writes for the castrato the music is usually sublime and very deep. Undoubtedly, they connect me to that spiritual part of a young soul that Mozart had, and which becomes present in me when I sing the music.

That is why I have always been interested in interpreting this music and also in singing his operas on stage. For this album I have chosen those arias that I have come to know along my musical path, and through which I have managed to connect more intimately with the Mozartian spirit.

Franco Fagioli

Mozart and the (mostly) castrato voice

Mozart is not the first composer to spring to mind when considering the castrato. It is difficult to imagine revisions of the three Da Ponte operas with a part for that voice, although, in the spirit of recent conceptions of gender, the occasional countertenor has latterly essayed the mezzo-soprano 'trouser role' of Cherubino. These operas remain the most frequently performed from Mozart's oeuvre, alongside *Die Zauberflöte*. If one might transpose the castrato's otherworldliness to an alternative *Zauberflöte*, the altogether different world of Viennese popular theatre would militate against that in other ways. And yet, Mozart composed all but one aria in this collection with castrato in mind. Seven of his operas afforded roles to castrati, and one alone, *Mitridate, Re di Ponto*, had nine arias for them. If the voice's star were waning by Mozart's heyday, its eclipse, like that of the *opera serie* with which its fortunes were closely

though not exclusively intertwined, followed his death.

Mozart always wrote arias with specific singers in mind. Many castrati, especially in Italy, were still stars in the operatic firmament. It would only be surprising if they did not feature in his writing. By and large, the closer he came to *opera seria*, the more likely he was to write for them. Giovanni Manzuoli, star of the King's Theatre in London's Haymarket for the 1764-5 season, was seen first by the Mozarts there in the *pasticcio* opera *Ezio*. They became friends; it appears Manzuoli gave the young composer singing lessons and thus a crucial grounding in vocal technique, idiom, and expectations. Manzuoli created the role of Ascanio in *Ascanio in Alba* six years later.

There were scandalous tales, as there always have been concerning singers: what better way to tantalise and titillate an audience, perhaps to increase a fee?

Display was important, but so was pathos; range, as for any other voice then and now, was assessed emotionally as much as by interval. It is true that Mozart rarely spoke highly of their behaviour or character, but he was not particularly inclined to do so of other singers; his words generally reflect contemporary ideas and prejudices. We are best to assume something less outlandish, more 'musical' — and pragmatically to accept that, in modern performance, what works works, be that a countertenor, a soprano, a mezzo, or anything else. Such vocal types are, after all, umbrella terms, concealing as much as they reveal. Singers then as now sang with and learned from one another regardless of register. Anton Raaff, tenor creator of Idomeneo, studied with the castrato (and celebrated teacher) Antonio Bernacchi, as did the first Susanna, Nancy Storace with Venanzio Rauzzini.

In 1772, Rauzzini created the role of Cecilio in *Lucio Silla*, Mozart's third Milanese opera, commissioned for the Habsburg

duchy following the successes of *Mitridate* and *Ascanio*. Giovanni de Gamera's second libretto, considerably revised via correspondence by Pietro Metastasio in Vienna, is historically eccentric, irredeemable dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla transformed into an ideal of Enlightenment clemency. It served its contemporary purpose well enough, though, soon attracting Johann Christian Bach for a second setting. Mozart only wrote his arias once singers were present, entailing some delay in the case of so celebrated a *primo uomo*. Having heard Rauzzini sing 'Il tenero momento' 'like an angel' (Leopold Mozart), Mozart could write specifically for a 'voice ... sweet, flexible, and extensive, being in compass more than two octaves' (Charles Burney). This is what we hear in 'Ah se a morir mi Chiama', vocal leaps showcasing that range. In this aria, Cecilio assures Giunia, desired by Silla, of his constancy even unto death. In classic ternary form, a warm E-flat *Adagio* with oboes and horns cedes briefly to a central C Minor *Andante*

of faltering footsteps. An elaborated version in Nannerl's hand, ornamented throughout and not only in the reprise, probably reflects her brother's practice; it may correspond also to Rauzzini's.

Still in Milan, Mozart also composed for Rauzzini *Exsultate jubilate*. Premiered at the Theatine Church (Sant'Antonio Abate) on 16 January 1773, its style could hardly be more operatic if intended for the stage, and indeed Rauzzini probably performed both on the same day. For the same orchestra, albeit with organ continuo, as the *Silla* aria, two bravura outer movements, both in F Major, encase a short secco recitative and radiant A Major *Andante* bidding the highest crowned Virgin to console us. Mozart would revise this concerto-like work twice for Salzburg performance, for Trinity Sunday (soloist Francesco Ceccarelli) and Christmas, flutes replacing Milanese oboes, with variants of the anonymous Latin text.

From the 1772-3 carnival season to that two years later and *La finta giardiniera*, composed to a libretto of uncertain authorship for the court of Maximilian III Joseph, Elector of Bavaria. Its 'mixed' *buffa/seria* classification as *dramma giocoso* (like *Don Giovanni*) shows partly in the castrato role of the cavalier Ramiro. It was probably taken at Munich's Opernhaus am Salvatorplatz by Tommaso Consoli, who would also create in Salzburg that spring Aminta in *Il re pastore*. In Ramiro's first aria, 'Se l'augellin sen fugge', he declares he will not willingly exchange one case of unrequited love for another. Coloratura notwithstanding, it breathes the air of *opera buffa*. The writing also has something of the symphony to it — as Mozart's symphonies had something of the theatre to them. Ramiro's highly chromatic final aria, 'Va pure ad altri in braccio', takes us on a more richly orchestrated C Minor journey through 'pitiless, cruel fury' that honours and lightly parodies Mozart's Gluckian

inheritance via urgent emotions of newer musical and dramaturgical currents.

Setting psalms in Saverio Mattei's Italian translations for a Vienna *Tonkünstler-Sozietät* benefit concert, Mozart reused eight movements from his Salzburg Mass in C Minor for *Davidde penitente*, adding a cadenza to the final movement and two newly composed movements. The society diplomatically advertised 'a completely new cantata, adapted to this occasion by Sig Amadeo Mozart', for a concert also including the premiere of Haydn's Symphony No. 80 in D Minor. Forces used for the two Burgtheater performances in March 1785 were large, as Mozart always relished: 80 players and about 70 singers. 'Lungi le cure ingrato' recycles the Mass's 'Laudamus te' for the second soprano Elisabeth Distler (organiser the previous month of a concert in which Mozart had performed his D Minor Piano Concerto). More lightly scored, like several arias here, for oboes, horns, strings, and continuo,

echoing and intertwining lines vocal and instrumental lines highlight again the folly of imposing anachronistic distinctions of space, style, and purpose on Mozart's Enlightenment Catholicism, embracing secular and sacred as two sides to the same coin.

For Mozart's final *opera seria*, *La clemenza di Tito*, the now considerably more experienced De Gamerra took Metastasio's 1734 libretto and, with pleasing symmetry, engaged in fundamental revision, converting blank verse into ensembles and three acts into two. Clemency is again the order of the day; we turn again to a lovelorn conspirator-to-be-pardoned, Sesto. The Bohemian Estates' commission to celebrate the 1791 coronation of Leopold II as king of Bohemia resulted in a contract to the impresario Domenico Guardasoni revealing in priorities, exemplifying potential singers, 'I promise to give ... a *primo musico* of the first rank, such as ... [Luigi] Marchesini, or [Giovanni] Rubinelli,' suggesting three

potential subjects, yet requiring only an as-yet-unidentified 'distinguished composer'. Heeding Leopold's known dislike of his music, Antonio Salieri had declined five times before Guardasoni turned to Mozart. Sesto turned out to be Domenico Bedini, already known to the erstwhile Grand Duke of Tuscany, having sung in Florence between 1780 and 1786, once with Maria Marchetti Fantozzi as *prima donna*, again assuming that role in Prague as Sesto's lover Vitellia.

In the aria 'Deh, per questo istante', Sesto's internal conflict plotted in an *Adagio-Allegro-Più allegro* trajectory, he recalls friendship to the Emperor (Tito), regretting treachery yet shielding its guiding force, Vitellia. The earlier 'Parto, parto' has Sesto, bewitched by her beauty, assent to Vitellia's (unsuccessful) plan to burn the Capitol and to kill Tito. Both arias exhibit tonal and psychological range conceivable only in the light of Mozart's 1780s compositional activity. 'Parto, parto' boasts an obbligato as touching as it is virtuosic, every inch

the equal of the vocal part, for Mozart's clarinettist friend Anton Stadler. A month on from the premiere, back in Vienna for *Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart write to Constanze of transformed fortunes reported from *Tito*'s last night, 30 September: '... on the very evening when my new opera was performed for the first time to so much applause, *Tito* was performed for the last time in Prague, also with exceptional applause. ... Bedini sang better than ever before. ... For Stodla [Mozart's spelling mimics Bohemian dialect]: Oh Bohemian miracle! He writes: '... there were shouts of *bravo* from the parterre and even from the *orchestra*.' To consider this *opera seria*'s last hurrah would sentimentalise. The genre persisted some way into the nineteenth century, though castrati would vanish sooner from the stage. Transformation, aesthetic and humanitarian, was nonetheless afoot; the operas of Mozart, who died before 1791 was out, played their part in that change.

Mark Berry



Lyrics

1

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · La finta giardiniera, K. 196

Ramiro

Se l'augellin se n' fugge
dalla prigione un giorno,
al cacciatore intorno
non più scherzando va.
Liberò uscito appena
da un amoroso impaccio,
l'idea d'un altro laccio
ah che tremar mi fa.

If the little bird escapes
from prison one day,
he will no longer flutter
around the hunter.
Having just freed myself
from a loving embarrassment,
the idea of another snare
makes me tremble.

2

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · Lucio Silla, K. 135

Cecilio

Ah se a morir mi chiama
Il fato mio crudele
Seguace ombra fedele
Sempre sarò con te.
Vorrei mostrar costanza

Ah, if my cruel fate
summons me to die
I will be forever with you
As a faithful guardian shade.
I want to show resolution,

Cara, nel dirti addio
Ma nel lasciarti, oh Dio!
Sento tremarmi il piè.

my darling, in saying goodbye,
but leaving you, o Lord,
makes my foot tremble.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · La finta giardiniera, K. 196

3

Ramiro

E giunge a questo segno
la tua perfidia ingrata!
Dimmi, barbara donna, iniquo mostro
di crudeltà, di qual delitto è reo
questo povero cor? Ah, che la rabbia
m'impedisce il respiro.
E sento nel mio petto,
odio, sdegno, furor, ira e dispetto.

So your perfidy, ungrateful,
has come this far,
tell me, barbarous woman, wicked monster
of cruelty, of what crime
is this poor heart guilty? Ah, the rage
prevents me from breathing.
And I feel it in my chest,
hate, indignation, fury, anger and spite.

4

Ramiro

Va' pure ad altri in braccio,
perfida donna ingrata:
furia crudel spietata,
sempre per te sarò.

Go then, to the arms of someone else,
Perfidious, ungrateful woman:
For you I will always be
A merciless Fury.

Già misero mi vuoi
lontan dagl'occhi tuoi,
misero morirò.

Since you want me to be miserable,
I will die miserably,
far from your eyes.

5

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · Davidde penitente, K. 469

Lungi le cure ingrate,
ah, respirate omai.
S'è palpitato assai,
è tempo da goder.

Far away from sad afflictions
respire again.
If once you were afraid,
now is the time to rejoice.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · La clemenza di Tito, K. 621

6

Sesto

Parto, ma tu ben mio,
Meco ritorna in pace;
Sarò qual piu ti piace;
Quel che vorrai farò.

Sextus

I go, but, my dearest,
make peace again with me.
I'll be what you like most;
Whatever you want done.

Guardami, e tutto oblio,
E a vendicarti io volo;
A questo sguardo solo
Da me si penserà.
Ah qual poter, oh Dei!
Donaste alla beltà.

Look at me, and I will forget all
and fly to avenge you;
I will think only
of that glance at me.
Ah, gods, what power
you have given to beauty!

Sesto

Deh per questo istante solo
Ti ricorda il primo amor.
Che morir mi fa di duolo
Il tuo sdegno il tuo rigor.

Di pietade indegno e vero,
Sol spirar io deggio orror.
Pur saresti men severo,
Se vedessi questo cor.

Disperato vado a morte;
Ma il morir non mi spaventa
Il pensiero mi tormenta!
(Tanto affanno soffre un core,
Ne si more di dolor!)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165

Exsultate, jubilate
O vos animae beatae
dulcia cantica canendo;
cantui vestro respondendo
psallant aethera cum me

7

Sextus

Ah for this single moment,
remember your first love.
For your anger, your severity,
make me die of grief.

Unworthy of pity, it is true,
I ought only to inspire horror.
Yet you would be less harsh
if you saw this heart.

I die in despair;
but what torments me isn't death,
it is my thoughts!
(A heart can suffer so much pain,
yet not die of it!)

8

Rejoice, shout,
o you blessed souls,
singing sweet hymns;
responding to your song
the skies sing psalms with me.

9

Fulget amica dies,
jam fugere et nubila et procellae;
exorta est justis inexpectata quies.
Undique obscura regnabat nox;
surgite tandem laeti, qui timuistis ad huc,
et jucundi aurorae fortunatae
frondes dextera plena et lilia date.

Tu virginum corona,
tu nobis pacem dona,
tu consolare affectus,
unde suspirat cor.

Alleluja

This friendly daylight shines,
both clouds and storms have now fled;
for the right- eous and unexpected calm
has come.
Everywhere dark night reigned; rise up at
last in gladness, you who were afraid until
now, and joyfully present to the happy
dawn handfuls of lilies.

You crown of virgins,
give us peace,
you, ready to give comfort
wherever a heart sighs.

Alleluia.

10

11



Acknowledgements

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