



Steingrímur Rohloff (b. 1971)

Medea/Lysistrata

Peter Laugesen, voice ⁷

Tuva Semmingsen, mezzo-soprano

Esbjerg Ensemble

Conducted by Henrik Vagn Christensen

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704)

Arranged and recomposed by Steingrímur Rohloff (2020)

Médée (H. 491, 1693)

Tragédie lyrique

1 Act III, scene 3: Air, Quel prix de mon amour 6:13

Five Songs by Medea (2019)

21:28

Texts by Peter Laugesen

2 Hvorfor fuglene synger (Why the birds sing) 6:28

3 Skæbnen er en rotte (Fate is a rat) 2:19

4 Jasons kranie (Jason's skull) 2:59

5 Jeg kan tænde vulkaner (I can light volcanoes) 4:20

6 Jeg slukker nu (I'll finish now) 5:22

Lysistrata (2015-16)

27:29

Overture and Lysistrata's Songs

Freely based on the play by Aristophanes

with texts by Peter Laugesen

7 Ouverture (Overture) 6:10

8 Lysistrates plan (Lysistrata's plan) 3:06

9 Pyntesyge kvinder (Showy women) 4:21

10 Den slags pjat (That kind of foolishness) 5:06

11 Smerten (The pain) 1:38

12 Glem (Forget) 7:08

Total 55:12

World premiere recordings



Danish Arts
Foundation

Worlds bound together

By Andrew Mellor

Poetry's sixth sense, the dramatic power of emotional extremes and the fantastical capabilities of melody and harmony lie behind Steingrímur Rohloff's success as an opera composer. His music's surface beauty and finesse conceal deep and frequently dark explorations of human life. His storytelling instincts have made his stage works creatively embracing despite their musical rigour and clarity.

Rohloff was born in Reykjavík to Icelandic and German parents, and has lived in Denmark since 2003. He studied composition with Krzysztof Meyer at the Conservatory in Cologne and later with Marc-André Dalbavie and Gerard Griséy at the Conservatoire National

Supérieur de Paris, which led him to courses at IRCAM. It was in France that Rohloff discovered an appetite for orchestration, convincing himself, at the same time, that the world of harmony was rife with unexplored avenues. 'I decided that you have to write your *own* harmonies based on characteristics, expression and implication,' he says; 'there is still much more experimentation to be done there.'

Rohloff's adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *Story of a Mother* won the 2009 Reumert (a Danish Tony or Olivier Award) for Best Children's Theatre Production and he has twice been nominated in Reumert's opera category, leading to a major commission from the Royal Danish Opera. 'I like extremes and feel drawn to them,' the composer says. The words could apply as much to his activity in opera as to his emotionally acute concert works.

Steingrímur Rohloff



They include orchestral scores and a large number of ensemble pieces born from close associations with the Esbjerg Ensemble, Figura Ensemble, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen and Ensemble Modern.

Five Songs by Medea (2019)

During a residency with Figura Ensemble in 2010, Rohloff was introduced to the character of Medea as written by Euripides – a woman abandoned by Jason, the lover she had helped to military victory and on whom she became determined to wreak revenge. For a project titled *Fire vinkler på Medea* (Four Angles on Medea), four composers including Rohloff were asked to imagine the character of Medea in four contrasting theatrical styles.

Rohloff knew who to call to write texts for his music. Verse by the Danish poet Peter Laugesen had captivated the composer during his student days in Cologne,

long before he lived in Denmark. 'I loved his poems immediately and still do,' says Rohloff; 'whether Laugesen is being beautiful or dirty or realistic, there is a punch in the language which draws me to my own extremities.' During the Figura project, it became clear to Rohloff that Laugesen viewed Medea from 'a special angle'. After a decade of collaborations including the opera *Lysistrata*, the composer returned to Laugesen's 2010 texts for the new work *Five Songs by Medea*, written for this recording in 2019 with the Esbjerg Ensemble and Tuva Semmingsen as partners.

Laugesen's verse is steered less by Euripides's telling of the Medea myth than by Ovid's, which is imbued with more magic and mystery. The five poems allude to Medea's expulsion from Corinth, where she had settled with Jason before he abandoned her for Cerusa. 'This is the worst time in her

life, the stuff tragedy is made of,' Rohloff says; 'but Laugesen is concerned with the magical aspect of Medea: that she is a stranger from one civilization going to another and that even though she is a princess she can still be suppressed. That idea goes right through to the end.'

The poetry searches those issues out. But it soon dawned upon Rohloff that there was a new opportunity for his music to do the same, given the circumstances under which it would be brought to life. 'The songs were made to record, so we knew we could get close to the microphone, using lower registers and this beautiful, special non-vibrato Tuva Semmingsen has when singing softly,' he explains. Always, he was led by the words: there are sudden intensities in Laugesen's poetry, big and small. I do like an overall idea, an overall arc, but I search and experiment within that – I don't take the

fun from it if there is something to respond to.' With subtle electronics and the lighter sound of the Esbjerg Ensemble, whose deepest instruments are cello and bassoon and where percussion brings surface resonance, Rohloff carved-out an intimate, crystalline instrumental context for his voice-led songs.

Focused aspects of Medea's character are explored in each of them, melody and text leading the music from the top down but the ensemble plummeting and swirling in reflection. 'Hvorfor fuglene synger' (Why the birds sing) is the song of the mystic outsider, long-breathed vocal lyricism laid over slow woven counterpoint. But Medea only becomes more characterful and defiant, through the zestful 'Skæbnen er en rotte' (Fate is a rat), the steely yet saddening 'Jasons kranie' (Jason's skull), the self-empowering 'Jeg kan tænde vulkaner' (I can light volcanoes) and

even the valedictory 'Jeg slukker nu' (I'll finish now), in which she dispels the music itself. 'I was the greatest, I was brilliant,' sings Medea, 'but I'll finish now.'

Lysistrata (2015-16)

Three years before the Medea songs, Den Fynske Opera (The Funen Opera) in Odense gave the first performance of the Rohloff/Laugesen opera after Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*. The Esbjerg Ensemble was the band and Tuva Semmingsen took the title role: a sensual woman attempting to incite her sisters to pacifistic rebellion by denying men sex. Lysistrata's world existed more than two millennia ago yet was filled with the same violence, oppression and forced migration we see today (however radical or unlikely her solutions, they might all have neutralized the problems faced by Medea).

Rohloff never imagined his piece as the quasi-comedy of the original

play, preferring to explore more troubling aspects of the text. Even so, the libretto he ordered from Laugesen turned out darker than expected. 'Peter was focused on writing texts about war and suffering,' the composer explains: 'I tried to push him in the direction of the sex strike and some elements of domestic life but the libretto just got darker still; maybe a part of me wanted and expected that. We don't have the happy ending of the original but that might make it more relevant. As a story, it could not be more existential; it's about war, peace, love, sex and reproduction.'

In plucking out the overture and five arias from the opera, there are notable parallels between this glimpse of Lysistrata and the thumbnail sketch of Medea heard before it. Rohloff describes *Lysistrata* as 'a number opera' in which he searches for distinctive characters or ideas from movement to move-

ment. Though the opera contains multiple characters and a chorus, we hear from the heroine alone on this recording. Text and music are non-narrative but emotionally, philosophically clear and there are myriad facets of humanity bubbling underneath both. In this version of the piece, the music ultimately evaporates much like that of the Medea songs. 'One solution to all the pessimism and disillusion at the end is just to forget – for Lysistrata and for the listener,' says Rohloff. His reference is to the multifaceted final song 'Glem' (Forget), in which Lysistrata drifts into the confusion of polyphony with herself: 'I sense Laugesen reminding us that as a society we keep forgetting, which is why we end up where we end up.'

We hear Laugesen's own voice, alongside those of children (the composer's own) over the tender introduction to what becomes a bustling, brutal overture. In the first

song 'Lysistrata's plan' as in the last 'Glem', the character's voice echoes and reflects itself, an electroacoustic device made physical by video-doppelgängers when the opera was staged – a Rohloff trademark and a sign of his work on the piece stretching far beyond the written score ('I always feel on the brink of wanting to direct operas myself,' he says).

The singularity of Semmingsen's voice comes to the fore in her sensual rendition of the smoky nightclub number 'Pyntesyge kvinder' (Showy women), the ensemble occupying the shadows behind her, and the half-coloratura of 'Den slags pjat' (That kind of foolishness), where Lysistrata rails against the futility of male war games. That piece is followed by a tugging intermezzo before the torment of 'Smerten' (The pain) and the distillation of 'Glem', its instruments breathing like a harmonium before they, like Lysistrata, run out of air.

Quel prix de mon amour (2020)

Rohloff is not the first composer to have felt the allure of Medea. 'I very much like the idea of old, re-written things, perhaps from the baroque, and it's something I have done before,' says the composer, referring to the bespoke miniature that opens the disc. 'Quel prix de mon amour' is a re-upholstering of the aria from Marc-Antoine Charpentier's 1693 opera on the Medea myth, *Médée*, sung at the moment the heroine finds herself abandoned by Jason (the libretto is by Thomas Corneille). Rohloff leaves Charpentier's vocal and bass lines relatively intact, but tenses the middle ground with flexing suspensions, dissonances and counterpoint that open up deep pits where Charpentier's major-minor chords had suggested straightforward tension and release.

Performers

The versatile Norwegian mezzo-soprano **Tuva Semmingsen** was educated at the Norwegian State Academy of Music and the Royal Opera Academy in Copenhagen. She made her debut in 1999 at the Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and has enjoyed great success in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and *Partenope* and Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Internationally, Tuva has amongst other things performed at the at Teatro la Fenice in Venice, the Royal Opera in Stockholm, the Norwegian Opera and festivals such as the Bergen International Festival and the prestigious Glyndebourne Festival. In the film world, Tuva Semmingsen is also known for her contribution to Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*,

where she sings the famous aria by Handel, 'Lascia ch'io pianga'.

Esbjerg Ensemble was founded in 1967 as the first professional chamber ensemble in Denmark, instigated by local forces and the Ministry of Culture. Esbjerg Ensemble has since kept the flag flying as a role model for similar ensembles in Denmark and abroad. The ensemble plays the complete canon of classical music, is recognized for its innovative and versatile programs, and is especially known for its reliable interpretation of contemporary works. Since the beginning, the ensemble has had a close cooperation with composers of our time, and pivotal figures like Karl-Aage Rasmussen, Hans Abrahamsen and Peter Bruun have been artistic directors over the years – a relationship that continues to develop through the annual workshop for young composers, initiated

by Frederik Gislinge in 1980. For Dacapo Esbjerg Ensemble has released several CDs with music by, among others, Per Nørgård, Peter Bruun and Bent Sørensen.

Henrik Vagn Christensen is a versatile conductor with a repertoire spanning a wide range of arts and genres: symphonies, contemporary music, opera, operetta and musicals and ballet. He is considered the leading Danish ballet conductor of his generation and was associated with the Royal Danish Theatre in 1996–2012 and from 2013 with the New York City Ballet. Henrik Vagn Christensen also conducted at the Finnish National Ballet, the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Norwegian Opera, the State Theatre in Pretoria, The Kennedy Center in Washington, and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. His close cooperation with the Danish Radio orchestras has brought him many engagements

from concerts and ballet to film and TV recordings – most recently the music for the TV series 1864. The Danish regional orchestras have been the point of departure for his symphonic repertoire, and over the years Henrik Vagn Christensen has played innumerable concerts with all of these as well as making CD recordings and educational productions for children and the young.

Forbundne verdener

Af Andrew Mellor

Poesiens sjette sans, den dramatiske kraft i følelsesmæssige ekstreme og de fabulerende muligheder i melodier og harmonier er grundelementerne i Steingrímur Rohloffs succes som operakomponist. Den musikalske overflades skønhed og raffinement dækker over dybe og ofte dystre undersøgelser af tilværelsen. Uanset den musikalske stramhed og klarhed i hans sceneværker har hans sans for at fortælle historier også gjort dem vidtfavnende.

Rohloff er født i Reykjavik af islandsk-tyske forældre og har siden 2003 boet i Danmark. Han har studeret komposition hos Krzysztof Meyer ved konservatoriet i Köln og senere hos Marc-André Dalbavie og Gérard Grisey ved Conservatoire

National Supérieur de Paris, efterfulgt af kurser ved IRCAM. I Paris blev Rohloff optaget af orkestrering og overbeviste samtidig sig selv om, at harmonikkens verden myldrede med udforskede stier. “Jeg opdagede, at man ud fra alle mulige særkender, udtryk og antydninger er nødt til at skrive sine *egne* harmonier,” siger han, “der er stadig mange flere eksperimenter at udføre.”

Rohloffs tonesætning af H.C. Andersens *Historien om en Moder* vandt i 2009 Reumert-prisen for bedste børneteaterforestilling, ligesom han to gange er blevet nomineret for bedste opera med en stor bestilling fra Den Kongelige Opera til følge. “Jeg kan godt lide ekstreme og bliver ofte tiltrukket af dem,” siger komponisten. Ordene er lige så dækkende for hans operaaktiviteter som for hans følelsesmæssigt finslebne koncertværker. Sidstnævnte opfatter både orkesterværker og en lang række en-

sembleværker i tæt samarbejde med Esbjerg Ensemble, Figura Ensemble, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen og Ensemble Modern.

Five Songs by Medea (2019)

Som gæstekomponist hos Figura Ensemble i 2010 stiftede Rohloff bekendtskab med kvindeskikkelsen Medea, sådan som hun beskrives af Euripidus – forladt af sin elsker Jason, som hun havde hjulpet til at sejre i krig og senere besluttede at hævne sig grusomt på. Til et projekt med titlen *Fire vinkler på Medea* blev fire komponister, heriblandt Rohloff, bedt om at forestille sig Medeafiguren i fire forskellige dramatiske stillejer.

Rohloff var ikke i tvivl om, hvem han skulle bede om at skrive tekster til sin musik. Allerede som studerende i Köln var han længe før sin ankomst til Danmark blevet betaget af den danske digter Peter Laugesens tekster. “Jeg faldt for hans digte på

stedet og er stadig vild med dem,” siger Rohloff, “for uanset om Laugesen skriver smukt eller beskidt eller realistisk, er der et bid i sproget, som gør mig opmærksom på mine egne ekstremer.” Under projektet med Figura blev det klart for Rohloff, at Laugesen så Medea fra “en helt særlig vinkel.” Efter ti års samarbejde om blandt andet operaen *Lysistrata* vendte komponisten tilbage til Laugesens tekster fra 2010 til sit nye værk *Five songs by MEDEA*, der er skrevet i 2019 direkte til denne indspilning med Esbjerg Ensemble og Tuva Semmingsen.

Laugesens digte er ikke så meget baseret på Euripides’ genfortælling af myten om Medea som på Ovids, hvor myten i højere grad er tilført magi og mystik. De fem digte refererer til Medeas forstødelse fra Korinth, hvor hun havde slået sig ned sammen med Jason, før han forlod hende til fordel for Cerusa. “Det er den værste periode i hendes liv,

sådan noget som tragedier skabes af,” siger Rohloff, “men Laugesen er mere optaget af Medeas magiske side; at hun er en fremmed fra en civilisation på vej til en anden og på trods af at være prinsesse stadig kan blive undertrykt. Det er grundtanken.”

Det er sådanne spørgsmål, der bliver undersøgt i digtene. Men Rohloff indså også hurtigt, at i betragtning af de omstændigheder, hans musik skulle realiseres på, kunne den meget vel få mulighed for at gøre det samme. “Sangene er skrevet med henblik på indspilning, så derfor var vi også bevidst om at kunne komme helt tæt på mikrofonen, bruge lave registre og Tuva Semmingsens helt særlige, smukke non-vibrato, når hun synger stille,” forklarer han. Han lod hele vejen igennem ordene være styrende; Laugesens poesi kan pludselig blive intens, både i stor og lille målestok. “Jeg foretrækker en overordnet ide, en overordnet bue,

men samtidig søger og eksperimenterer jeg inden for den – hvis der er noget at reagere på, ser jeg ingen grund til ikke at kaste mig ud i det.” Med diskret brug af elektronik og Esbjerg Ensembles sprøde lyd med cello og fagot som de dybeste instrumenter samt slagstøj til at lade overfladen give genlyd har Rohloff fået udmejslet en intim og krystalinsk instrumentalkulisse til sine stemmedominerede sange.

Hver af dem fokuserer på et bestemt aspekt af Medeas karakter, hvor melodi og tekst styrer musikken ovenfra, men ensemblet dykker og hvirvler rundt som et spejlbillede. “Hvorfor fuglene synger” er den mystiske outsiders sang med udspændt lyrisk stemmeføring ind over et langsomt vævet kontrapunkt. Men Medea bliver gradvis mere viljestærk og trodsig gennem den lystfyldte “Skæbnen er en rotte”, den stålsatte og alligevel sørgmodige “Jasons kranie”, den

selvbekræftende “Jeg kan tænde vulkaner” og sågar den resignerede “Jeg sukker nu”, hvor hun opløser musikken selv. “Jeg var den største, jeg var den mest lysende,” synger Medea, “men nu slukker jeg og går.”

Lysistrata (2015-16)

Tre år før Medea-sangene uropførte Den Fynske Opera i Odense Rohloff og Laugesens opera *Lysistrata* efter Aristofanes. Esbjerg Ensemble spillede til Tuva Semmingsen I titelrollen som en sanselig kvinde, der forsøger at vække sine medsøstre til et fredeligt oprør gennem at nægte mændene sex.

Selv om Lysistrata levede for over to tusind år siden, var hendes verden ikke desto mindre præget af den samme vold, undertrykkelse og tvungne migration, vi oplever i dag (uanset at hendes løsninger var radikale og usandsynlige, kan de stadig have bidraget til at neutralisere de problemer, hun stod overfor).

Fra første færd så Rohloff sit værk som noget helt andet end den oprindelige semi-komedie og foretrak i stedet at udforske tekstens mere foruroligende sider. Ikke desto mindre viste Laugesens libretto til formålet sig endnu mørkere end forventet. “Peter var optaget af at skrive tekster om krig og lidelse,” forklarer komponisten; “jeg prøvede at få ham i retning af sexstrejken og en vis grad af familieliv, men librettoen blev blot endnu mørkere, hvad jeg måske et eller andet sted også havde ønsket og forventet. I modsætning til originalen ender det ikke spor lykkeligt, men det gør det måske også kun endnu mere relevant. Historien som sådan handler om både krig, fred, kærlighed, sex og formering og kan dårligt være mere eksistentiel.”

I det foreliggende uddrag bestående af ouverturen og fem arier fra operaen optræder der markante paralleller mellem dette glimt af

Lysistrata og miniatureportrættet af Medea lige forinden. Rohloff kalder selv *Lysistrata* en “nummeropera”, hvor han fra sats til sats leder efter særlige figurer eller ideer. Uanset at operaen omfatter adskillige personer og kor, hører vi her på indspilningen udelukkende heltinden. Teksten og musikken er ikke fortællende, men følelsesmæssigt og filosofisk afklarede med utallige menneskelige facetter boblende lige nedenunder. I denne version af værket fordamper musikken på en måde meget lig Medea-sangene. “En mulig løsning på al pessimismen og desillusionen til slut består i ganske enkelt at glemme – både for Lysistratas vedkommende og for lytteren,” siger Rohloff. Han hentyder her til den mangefacetterede afslutningssang “Glem,” hvor Lysistrata bevæger sig ind i en forvirret flerstemmighed med sig selv; “jeg fornemmer Laugesen minde os om, at vi som samfund bliver ved med at

glemme og derfor også havner de steder, vi gør.”

Sammen med børnestemmer (komponistens egne børn) hører vi også Laugesens egen stemme ind over den blide introduktion til en gradvis mere livfuld og brutal overture. Både i den første sang, “Lysistratas plan” og i den sidste, “Glem,” er figuren sit eget ekko og spejler sig i sig selv, en elektroakustisk effekt som i sceneversionen af operaen blev gjort fysisk ved hjælp af videodobbeltgængere – hvad der er et særkende for Rohloff og udtryk for, at arbejdet med værket bevæger sig langt ud over det nedskrevne partitur (“Jeg føler mig altid på nippet til selv at ville instruere opera,” siger han).

Semmingsens særegne stemme kommer særlig til sin ret i hendes sensuelle gengivelse af det tilrøgede natklubnummer “Pyntesyge kvinder”, hvor ensemblet befinder sig et sted inde i skyggerne bag

hende, og i semi-koloraturen i “Den slags pjat”, hvor Lysistrata raser over mænds meningsløse krigslege. Satsen efterfølges af et huggende intermezzo før lidelsen i “Smerten” og koncentrationen i “Glem”, hvor instrumenterne ånder som et harmonium, før de ligesom Lysistrata ikke har mere luft tilbage.

Quel prix de mon amour (2020)

Rohloff er ikke den første komponist til at lade sig inspirere af Medea. “Jeg holder rigtig meget af tanken om gamle, genkomponerede ting, måske fra barokken, og har også ofte prøvet kræfter med det,” siger komponisten med henvisning til albummets indledende miniature “Quel prix de mon amour” er en ompolstring af arien fra Marc-Antoine Charpentiers opera fra 1693 til libretto af Thomas Corneille over Medea-myten, *Médée*, som bliver sunget i det øjeblik, heltinden bliver forladt af Jason. Rohloff lader

Charpentiers vokalparti og baslinje forblive nogenlunde intakt, men intensiverer mellemområdet med bølgende forudhold, dissonanser og modstemmer, der åbner dybe afgrunde, hvor Charpentiers dur/mol-akkorder før antydede enkel spænding og afspænding

Medvirkende

Den alsidige norske mezzosopran **Tuva Semmingsen** er uddannet på Norges Musikkhøgskole og på Operaakademiet i København. Hun debuterede i 1999 på Det Kongelige Teater som Cherubino i Mozarts Figaros bryllup og har høstet store succeser på teatret for sine roller i forestillinger som Händels *Julius Cæsar* og *Partenope* og Rossinis *Askepot* og *Barbereren i Sevilla*. Internationalt har Tuva bl.a. optrådt på La Fenice Operaen i Venedig, Kungliga Operan i Stockholm, Den Norske Opera og festivaler som Bergen Festspillene og den prestigefulde engelske Glyndebourne Festival. I filmverdenen er Tuva Semmingsen også kendt for sin medvirken på soundtracket til Lars von Triers film *Antichrist*, hvor hun synger den berømte Händel-arie *Lascia ch'io pianga*.

Esbjerg Ensemble blev dannet i 1967 som det første professionelle kammerensemble i Danmark på initiativ af lokale kræfter og Kulturministeriet. Ensemblet har siden holdt fanen højt som rollemodel for lignende kammerensembler i Danmark og internationalt. Ensemblet spiller hele den klassiske musiks kanon, er anerkendt for sin nyskabende og alsidige programlægning, og er i høj grad kendt for sin stilsikre fortolkning af samtidens værker. Ensemblet har siden starten haft et nært forhold til samtidens komponister, og centrale navne som Karl-Aage Rasmussen, Hans Abrahamsen og Peter Bruun har været ensemblets kunstneriske ledere igennem tiderne – et forhold, som fortsætter at udvikle sig igennem den årlige workshop for unge komponister, startet af Frederik Gislinge i 1980. Esbjerg Ensemble har udgivet en lang række cd'er bl.a. for Dacapo med værker

af Per Nørgård, Peter Bruun og Bent Sørensen.

Henrik Vagn Christensen er en alsidig dirigent med et repertoire, der spænder over en bred kam af kunstarter og genrer: symfonier, ny musik, opera, operette og musicals og ballet. Han anses som sin generations førende danske ballet-dirigent og har været tilknyttet Det Kgl. Teater fra 1996–2012 og fra 2013 New York City Ballet. Henrik Vagn Christensen har også dirigeret på Den Finske Nationalballet, Den Kgl. Svenske Ballet, Den Norske Opera, State Theatre i Pretoria, Teatro Real i Madrid, The Kennedy Center i Washington samt Mariinskij Teateret i Skt. Petersborg. Et nært samarbejde med DRs orkestre har budt på mange opgaver fra koncerter over ballet til film- og tv-indspilninger, senest musikken til tv-serien 1864. De danske landsdelsorkestre har været udgangspunktet for hans

symfoniske repertoire, og Henrik Vagn Christensen har gennem årene spillet utallige koncerter med dem alle samt lavet cd-indspilninger og formidlingsproduktioner for børn og unge.

Médée, Act III, scene 3:

Quel prix de mon amour

Tekst af Thomas Corneille

- 1 Quel prix de mon amour!
Quel fruit de mes forfaits!
Il craint des pleurs qu'il m'oblige à
répandre;
Insensible au feu le plus tendre
Qu'on ait vu s'allumer jamais;
Quand mes soupirs peuvent suspendre
L'injustice de ses projets;
Il fuit pour ne me pas entendre.
Quel prix de mon amour!
Quel fruit de mes forfaits!
J'ai forcé devant lui cent monstres à
se rendre.
Dans mon cœur où régnait une
tranquille paix,
Toujours prompte à tout entreprendre
J'ai su de la nature effacer tous les
traits.
Les mouvements du sang ont voulu me
surprendre,
J'ai fait gloire de m'en défendre,
Et l'oubli des serments que cent fois il
m'a faits,

Médée, Act III, scene 3:

Quel prix de mon amour

Text by Thomas Corneille

What a price to pay for my love!
Such are the fruits of my crimes!
He's afraid of the tears that he makes
me shed.
Insensitive to the most tender passion
that has ever been lit!
Although my sighs might put an end
to the injustice of his designs,
he flees lest he should hear them.
What a price to pay for my love!
Such are the fruits of my crimes!
I forced a hundred monsters to
surrender to him.
In my heart, where tranquil peace once
reigned,
I, who was always ready for every
undertaking,
I effaced all my natural traits.
When involuntary impulses sought to
catch me unawares,
I made it a point of honour to resist them.
He forgot the oaths that he swore a
hundred times to me.

L'engagement nouveau que l'amour lui
fait prendre,
L'éloignement, l'exil, sont les tristes
effets
De l'hommage éternel que j'en devais
attendre?
Quel prix de mon amour!
Quel fruit de mes forfaits!

Fem sange af Medea

Tekst af Peter Laugesen

2 Hvorfor fuglene synger

Jeg kommer fra et fjernt og køligt
lysende sted, hvor det
altid regner, og jeg har ingen
budskaber til jer. Ingen ting
at sige. Vi har ikke noget sprog
sammen. Man siger, at de findes,
men jeg har aldrig kendt dem. Jeg har
aldrig forstået, hvorfor
fuglene synger. Det er vel, fordi de
ikke ved, hvad der om lidt
vil ske. Det samme med menneskene.
Kongerne og de andre. Det er

The new commitment that his love
inspired,
My flight and exile – are these the sad
results
of the endless homage I could expect
from him?
What a price to pay for my love!
Such are the fruits of my crimes!

Five Songs by Medea

Texts by Peter Laugesen

Why the birds sing

I come from a distant and cool,
luminous place, where it
always rains, and I have no messages
for you. Nothing
to say. We have nothing to say to each
other. One says that they can be
found,
but I have never known them. I have
never understood how
the birds sing. That is good, because
they don't know what
will happen next. It's the same with
people. The kings and the others.
It is

ikke kun konger, jeg har med at gøre,
selv om de tror det.
Jeg har aldrig forstået, hvorfor fuglene
synger.

3 Skæbnen er en rotte

Skæbnen er en rotte
Den løber hid og did fra skib til skib
Den søger land og står til søs
Den er ingens far eller mor
Den er fælles for alle
Den splitter os ad og fører os sammen
Den er tung
Den er min
Den er din
Den er tam
Den er vild
Den er mund
Den er vild
Den skriger på skærmen
Den svinger sin hale af sorg og hævn
over alle himle
Skæbnen er en rotte

not only kings I have to work with,
even if they think so.
I have never understood why the birds
sing.

Fate is a rat

Fate is a rat
It runs hither and thither, from ship to
ship
It seeks land and goes to sea
It is no-one's father or mother
It is common to all
It splits us up and puts us together
It is heavy
It is mine
It is yours
It is tame
It is wild
It is mouth
It is wild
It shrieks on the screen
It swings its tail of grief and revenge
over all the sky
Fate is a rat

4 Jasons kranie

Skibet. Det har sejlet tusind år.
Gammelt er det på stranden. Kun det
vilde hoved hænger falmet på sit
spyd til halsen knækker under vægten.
Det falder ned og knuser Jasons
kranie.
Der hvor han ligger og sover som
sædvanlig efter nattens triste orgie.

5 Jeg kan tænde vulkaner

Vinde, bjerge, søer
Alle ånder, kom til stede!
Med jeres hjælp kan jeg
vende floderne om, så de løber
baglæns mod deres kilder, jeg kan
glatte de stormfulde have ud.
Jeg kan rejse deres slumrende vande
i flod
med mine sange. Jeg kan fjerne og
fremkalde skyer, samle og sprede
vindene. Jeg kan sprænge slanger
og hive træer af jorden med rødder.
Jeg kan tænde vulkaner, jeg kan rejse
de døde af deres grave. Månen
kan jeg trække ned på jorden.
Jeg rejse de døde fra deres grave,
tænde vulkaner.

Jason's skull

The ship. It has sailed a thousand years.
Old is it on the beach. Only the
wild head hangs faded on its
spike until the neck breaks under the
weight.
It falls down and shatters Jason's skull.
There where he lies and sleeps as
usual after the night's sad orgy.

I can light volcanoes

Winds, mountains, seas
All spirits, come here!
With your help can I
turn the rivers around, so they run
backwards towards their sources, I can
smooth the stormy seas out.
I can raise their slumbering flood tides
with my songs. I can send away and
recall the clouds, gather and spread
the winds. I can burst snakes
and heave trees from the ground with
[their] roots.
I can light volcanos, I can raise
the dead from their graves. The moon
I can drag down to the earth.
I can raise the dead from their graves,
light volcanoes.

6 Jeg slukker nu

Lad dem være
lad dem stå og hoppe
lad dem skribe
lad dem danse
lad dem synge
jeg var den største
jeg var den mest lysende
Jeg slukker nu og går

Ouverture og fem sange fra Lysistrate

Tekster af Peter Laugesen indrettet
af Karen-Maria Bille og Steingrímur
Rohloff

7 Ouverture

Komedien om Lysistrata og
hendes forsøg på at standse den
peloponnesiske krig opførtes for første
gang for 2.426 år siden, år 412 f.Kr., i
Athen. Krigen havde på det tidspunkt
varet i 29 år og skulle fortsætte endnu
15. Lige bag scenen, som Aristofanes
lod sine fortvivlede vittigheder
hvirvle hen over som sne, stod altså
krigens sorte meningsløshed. Som

I'll finish now

Let them be
Let them stand and hop
Let them shriek
Let them dance
Let them sing
I was the biggest
I was the brightest
I'll finish now and go

Overture and Five Songs from Lysistrata

Text by Peter Laugesen arranged by
Karen-Maria Bille and Steingrímur
Rohloff

Overture

This comedy about Lysistrata and her
attempt to stop the Peloponnesian
War was performed for the first time
2,426 years ago in Athens, in 412
B.C. At that point the war had been
in progress for 29 years, and would
continue for another 15 years. Behind
the drama, while Aristophanes allowed
his despairing jokes to whirl around like
snow, stood the black meaninglessness

den stod der 800 år før komediens førsteopførelse ved bredden af Skamandrosfloden i det styrtende Troja, og som den står der endnu bag øjeblikkets spektakel.

of the war. As it had been 800 years before, at the comedy's first performance by the banks of the Scamandros River in the falling Troy, and as it still stands, behind the spectacle of the moment.

8 Lysistrates plan

Jeg hedder Lysistrate

Lysistrata's plan

My name is Lysistrata

Jeg vil samle kvinderne
Jeg vil standse krigen

I will gather women
I will stop the war

Jeg har ventet længe

I have waited a long time

Hvorfor kommer de ikke?

Why don't they come?

De er vel på natklub som sædvanlig,
og de går ikke hjem,
før den sidste pære er brændt ud.

They are probably at a night club as usual, and they don't go home, before the last bulbs are burned out.

Hvis vi nu trommer dullerne sammen
fra alle lande, fra Maraton,
Salamis,
Orobos, Dekelia, Diakris, Eleusis,
Panaia, Anagyris, Alopeke

If we now drum up the dollies together from all the places, from Marathon, Salamis, Orobos, Dekelia, Diakris, Eleusis, Panaia, Anagyris, Alopeke,

Og Kreta, Theben, Sparta, Athen!

And Crete, Thebes, Sparta, Athens!

Vi enes om at nægte krigerne den løn,
de tror er deres, når de kommer hjem

We agree to deny the warriors the reward they think is theirs when they come home,

og vil gribe os med stive, kælne hænder,
der endnu drypper af andre menneskers blod

and will grab us with stiff, cuddly hands, that still drip with other people's blood

Vi nægter dem forløsning
at gøre færdigt hvad de fandt
af samme sag med sværd i hånd i fremmed land udstødte stupide kampskrig
angstens sved med ørkensand i næserne
og børneskrig i øret

We deny them the relief
To get finished what they found of the same kind, with sword in hand in a foreign land's expelled stupid battlecries
Anxiety's sweat with desert sand in their noses
And children's screams in their ears

der aldrig mere skal tystne selv ikke når de sover

That will never more be silenced
Even when they sleep

Hos os skal de ikke finde hjælp mod det

In our homes, they will not find help with that

9 Pyntesyge kvinder

Vi ordner
Vi maler
Vi ordner håret
Vi maler øjenlåg og læber

Showy women

We organise
We paint
We arrange our hair
We paint our eyelids and lips

Vi prøver nye sko og frække kjoler
mens de sejler rundt på havene
Vi ordner håret
Vi maler øjenlåg og læber
Vi prøver nye sko og frække kjoler
Mens de sejler rundt på havene
og slår hinanden ned i byer forvandlet
til grus og aske

De maler sig til jungle
til ørken til by til lig
De maler sig til lig

10 Den slags pjat

Er det her mænd, der styrer folkets
skæbne?
Eller er det lillebror og storebror,
der kives om en marmorkugle?
en spilleskærm, en tanketom, besat
robot?
I bruger jeres liv på den slags pjat,
I misbruger jeres styrke
når jorden står parat med åbne øjne
for at favne jer med fred.

We try new shoes and sexy clothes
while they sail round on the seas
We arrange our hair
We paint our eyelids and lips
We try new shoes and sexy clothes
While they sail around on the seas
and strike each other down in towns
transformed to rubble and ash

The paint themselves for the jungle,
to desert, to city, as corpse
They paint themselves as corpse

That kind of foolishness

Is it men who steer people's fate?
Or it is little brother or big brother,
That quarrel about a marble ball?
A game screen, a thoughtless,
obsessed robot
You use up your lives on this kind of
nonsense,
You abuse your strength
When the ground is ready with open
eyes
To embrace you in peace.

11 Smerten

Sårene! Feber! Skrigene! Skrig!
Sorte huller under jorden
mændene, bødler
kvinderne, bødler

historien, død

kærligheden, død

Heltene, bødler
i smerte med død

12 Glem

Glem hvad du er
Glem hvad du hedder
Glem at du findes
Glem at du glemmer
Glem
Glem din krop
Glem din sjæl
Glem at du før
Glem at aldrig
Glem at du var
Glem dine ønsker
Glem dine tanker

The pain

The wounds! Fever! The cries! Cry!
Black holes under the ground
Men, executioner
Women, executioner

History, dead

Love, dead

The heroes, executioner
in pain with death

Forget

Forget what you are
Forget what you're called
Forget that you exist
Forget that you forget
Forget
Forget your body
Forget your soul
Forget what you did before
Forget that you never
Forget that you were
Forget your wishes
Forget your thoughts

Et sprog
af sorg og skrig
Skønne forvirrede sætninger i små
 børns munde
Fikserbilleder tatoveret i blinde
 sangeres øjne
Din barndoms by
er blevet et andet sted
hvor fremmede forretter deres nødtørft
fjerne synkoper hulker i det spildte
 blod
tabets glødende sol
små kvæstede famlende sætninger
 hivende i halsen
alle veje gennem sproget er sprængt
 bort
... intet findes mere som før.

A language
of sorrow and crying
Beautiful confusing sentences in small
 children's mouths
Puzzle pictures of fish tattooed in
 blind singers' eyes
Your childhood city
Has become another place
Where strangers do what they need
 to do
Distant syncopations sob in the spilt
 blood
The glowing sun of loss
Short, injured fumbling sentences
 sticking in the throat
all ways through speech have blown
 away
... nothing can be found as it was
 before.

DDD

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**DANMARKS NATIONALE
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Dacapo Records, Denmark's national record label, was founded in 1989 with the purpose of releasing the best of Danish music past and present. The majority of our recordings are world premieres, and we are dedicated to producing music of the highest international standards.

Steingrímur Rohloff
Medea/Lysistrata

Peter Laugesen, voice

Tuva Semmingsen, mezzo-soprano

Esbjerg Ensemble

Conducted by Henrik Vagn Christensen