



(LEMS 8064)

## **BAROQUE CANTATAS AT VERSAILLES CLÉRAMBAULT / STÜCK**

D'Anna Fortunato, mezzo-soprano

John Ostendorf, bass-baritone

Rudolph Palmer, conductor

### TRACKS

LOUIS-NICOLAS CLÉRAMBAULT

Le soleil vainqueur des nuages

John Ostendorf

1 Prélude (1:51)

2 Récitatif et L'Air des Persans (3:52)

3 Récitatif sombre et L'Air animé (4:32)

4 Récitatif accompagné et Fanfares (5:17)

BATTISTIN (Jean-Baptiste Stuck, 1680-1755)

Héraclite et Démocrite

D'Anna Fortunato, John Ostendorf

5 Récitatif et L'Air plaintif (3:33)

6 Récitatif et L'Air de boire (4:50)

7 Duo (1:24)

8 Récitatif et L'Air léger (2:50)

9 Récitatif et L'Air élégant (2:59)

10 Récitatif à deux et Duo final (3:35)

LOUIS-NICOLAS CLÉRAMBAULT

Léandre et Héro

D'Anna Fortunato

11 Prélude et L'Air (4:21)

12 Récitatif et L'Air fort tendre (4:51)

13 Récitatif et Tempête (2:28)

14 Récitatif et L'Air final (3:38)

TOTAL TIME: 50:02

PROGRAM NOTES by John W. Freeman

The French cantata, *la cantate française*, enjoyed a vogue during the first decades of the 18th century. An outgrowth of the upper social customs during the late years of Louis XIV's rule and the Regency that followed, it all but disappeared with the French Revolution at the end of the century. One associates Louis XIV with the splendor of Versailles and the extroverted grand ballet and stage spectacle. As the Sun King grew old, however, the tastes of his court grew more subdued. Chamber music entered the royal repertory and came to dominate it, fostered by the Duc d'Orléans, who served as regent for the young Louis XV.

The cantates were, literally, chamber music for salons and dining rooms. A large body of performers was no longer practical—too much rehearsal would be necessary, and the servants (who formerly doubled as instrumentalists) were needed for other functions. Better a distinguished solo singer performing with a modest accompaniment by one or two accomplished instrumentalists and the ubiquitous keyboard continuo. So as not to tax a royal audience's attention span, the piece should be of moderate length (six sections were the norm) and its subject familiar—allegorical, philosophical, historical or mythological.

The air final would end the piece with a gentle moral. Of the many composers who embraced the cantate form, Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1740) was pre-eminent for the variety and brilliance with which he mastered the form. One of the finest organists of his day, he became supervisor of the concerts arranged by Mme. de Maintenon for Louis XIV during the king's declining years. In *Le soleil vainqueur des nuages* (1722) Clérambault approaches the ceremonial—the pretext for the work was the young Louis XV's nearly fatal illness, suggested by the allegorical text. The work is lavishly scored with strings, flute, oboe and continuo. The mythological *Léandre et Héro* (1713) is unusual in that the voice is accompanied by both strings and baroque flute and features a whirling *tempête* movement.

Jean-Baptiste Stuck (1680-1755), who published under the name Battistin, was born in Tuscany of German descent. A celebrated baroque cellist, he was honored by the Duc

d'Orléans and married the daughter of Louis XIV's court painter. His most unusual vocal work is the duet cantate *Héraclite et Démocrite* (1722) for soprano and bass with Italianate, obbligato strings. Two philosophers debate, one optimistic, the other pessimistic—first separately, then together.

#### ANNOTATED TRACKS:

##### TRACK 1

Prelude

##### TRACK 2

Recitative and Air

The Persians assembled on their vast plains.  
Sunrise gilding the mountains, they awaited a  
glorious day. Their eyes already enjoyed the fruits  
of its presence. They blessed the moment of the  
sun's birth, and their hearts expressed their love  
with their songs.

Pursue your brilliant course.

Reign, divine Sun, reign over mortals.

The blessings spread by your light

Raise altars to you in every heart.

It is but little to illuminate the world.

Your kind, glorious course is an abundant source  
Of a thousand precious treasures.

##### TRACK 3

Recitative and Air

But the day grows dark. Gods! What gloomy  
clouds suddenly cover the splendid shining! The  
fiercest blast that Thrace ever produced spreads  
thick darkness everywhere and makes day yield to  
the horrors of night.

Halt, dreadful destiny, the rigour of your blows,

Restore to us this revered object

Which alone produces our dearest assets.

Would you punish us for our crimes?

Let these mountains overturn on us;

Open the abysses of the earth;

Strike, we offer you your victims;

Vent your wrath on us!

##### TRACK 4

Recitative and Fanfare

Our prayers are granted. We delight in them with

a luminous radiance sparkling in the air. Shafts of  
fire dispel the clouds, and their rays restore a  
thousand pure paths to the eyes of the universe  
Let us prepare brilliant festivities,  
From the most pleasing games,  
Crown our heads with garlands,  
Let us sing and hail this happy day,  
Which restores the Sun to our prayers.  
It shapes the earth's destiny,  
On it our fine days depend.  
May nothing further trouble its course,  
And, declaring war on monsters,  
Let it reign forever triumphant...

BATTISTIN  
Héraclite et Démocrite

TRACK 5  
Recitative and Plainte  
Héraclite  
Into the horrid depth of sorrow and pain, my  
heart is plunged night and day. A thousand  
torments, in the face of human misery, silently  
beset it. One by one they attack, and the soul of  
Titias, clawed daily by hungry vultures, feels ever  
more feebly their deadly fury.  
Weep, o weep, my disconsolate eyes.  
Nature, cloaked in false charms,  
Offers me only hateful sights.

TRACK 6  
Recitative and Drinking Song  
Démocrite  
Here in Tranquility's bosom I enjoy myself to the  
fullest. I laugh at this agitated mortal, content to  
forge shackles upon his own freedom. To a thousand  
various frailties he submits his own heart at  
every turn. And his own wishes are hopelessly at  
odds with his elusive happiness.  
His mind is deluded, his goals lead him astray.  
Can one stop laughing at him? Oh no, no. Ha!  
This is all a joke to me.  
In seeking glory, our hero dashes headlong to his ruin.  
The ambitious one sets his sights on the single goal  
He cannot possibly achieve. His mind...

TRACK 7

Duet

Héraclite

I perish beneath your yoke, living grief, martyrdom.

Démocrite

For me the whole crazy lot of mankind  
Is nothing but as good excuse to laugh. Ha!

TRACK 8

Recitative and Graceful Air

Héraclite

But what now redoubles my sorrows? Where do you  
fly, precious innocence? O Age of Rhea, o century, o  
mortality. Of the fair sex, gods, what fidelity remains?  
Unwatched it grows fickle, one sees in it only artifice.  
Faithlessness is its only law, its love but caprice!  
More easily than a breeze  
One witnesses the lovely female changing course,  
And in the latest attraction take new pleasure.

TRACK 9

Recitative and Elegant Air

Démocrite

Shameful, silly lovers, are to trying to make me  
laugh? Do your pains, your cares, torments, earn you  
some special privilege? Go on treading love's jealous  
pathways; your sole reward will be humiliation.  
Otherwise, face without grumbling the inevitable  
choices that will betray your most fervant desires.

Bring your lady love ardent sighs,  
And, content with that, go dream your dreams.

TRACK 10

Recitative and Final Duet

Démocrite

No, nothing makes any sense these days.

Héraclite

It is man's lot to be happy.  
Death is the least of his afflictions.

Démocrite

It's man's lot to drive everyone else crazy!  
In the tempests and howling of the storms,  
A man watches his life pass by.  
In the nightmare of the shipwreck

The waves toss him at the mercy of the winds.

## CLÉRAMBAULT

Léandre et Héro

### TRACK 11

Prelude and Air

Far from young Hero, faithful Leander pined in vain. "Sweet object," he exclaimed, "of my ardent sighs, without you what happiness can I ever feel? Do you also share my futile passion? The unfeeling, barbarous sea poses a mighty obstacle to my most tender desires. How can you, God of Love, allow two hearts to be kept apart, for which you only wish happiness?"

"No, it is too much to bear the agony of separation. We must hear only of love. Venus, I seek your aid. Would you dash my hopes upon these waters From which you bring forth the dawn?"

### TRACK 12

Recitative and Intimate Air

With these words, he fearlessly sets forth from the shore. Silence and the night lent their aid. And the ardor that enflamed his heart hid the danger threatening his life.

God of the seas, halt the inconstant waves.

Calm the impetuous winds.

Love exposes the world's most faithful lover  
To the fearful waves.

### TRACK 13

Recitative and Tempest

And yet this kind lover found easy passage over the waters. The heavens seemed to smile on his intentions. Already he could see the shoreline, when suddenly, Boreas, emerging from his captivity, transformed the sweet calm into a hideous storm.

All the unbridled winds war with each other.

Lightning gleams in the sky and the sea,

Jostled by the thunder, unleashes defiant waves.

In this danger Leander cannot escape a horrid fate. Redoubled darkness blinds him to the light.

## TRACK 14

### Recitative and Final Air

It is done. He has perished. This awful news  
shatters tender Hero's grieving heart. She  
succumbs to her misery, and in these same  
waters, the faithful lover ends her life and her  
grief. But Neptune, moved by such devotion,  
receives the two among the ranks of the gods. And  
righting the wrong of destiny, he unites their dear  
souls in eternal bliss.

Love, absolute ruler over tender hearts,  
Tear off your blindfold, see your injustice.  
And no more let chance determine your actions!

## BREWER PERIOD INSTRUMENT CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Rudolph Palmer, conductor

Edward Brewer, harpsichord

Louise Schulman, solo violin/concertmaster

Evan Paris, Susan Winterbottom, Evan Johnson, Anka Nicalau, violins

Myron Lutske, cello

Jack Kulowitsch, violone

Daniel Waitzman, solo flute

Virginia Brewer, solo oboe

Philip Levin, bassoon

## PROJECT HISTORY

This album was conceived and recorded with Rudolph Palmer, my long-time collaborator, in 1984 for Daniel Nimetz' Spectrum Records and was first released as an analog LP. John Freeman of Opera News supplied the notes and plenty of enthusiasm for the project. Ed Brewer's period instrument forces, with Ed at the harpsichord, recorded the work in New York that summer.

Rudy and I have performed often with Boston colleague D'Anna Fortunato, celebrated in America and elsewhere for her classy musicianship and gorgeous mezzo voice. We're all grateful to Nick Fritsch for lovingly re-mastering the material and bringing it to life again on Lyrichord.

-- John Ostendorf

CREDITS

PERIOD INSTRUMENT RECORDING

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