Ombre di luce

TENOR ARIAS BY PAËR, MOZART, GLUCK, SALIERI & BOLOGNE

NATHAN GRANNER

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CLELIA CAFIERO

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Tenor Arias by Paër, Mozart, Gluck, Salieri & Bologne

Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839)

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

2 Il mio tesoro intanto from *Don Giovanni* (1787) 4. 09

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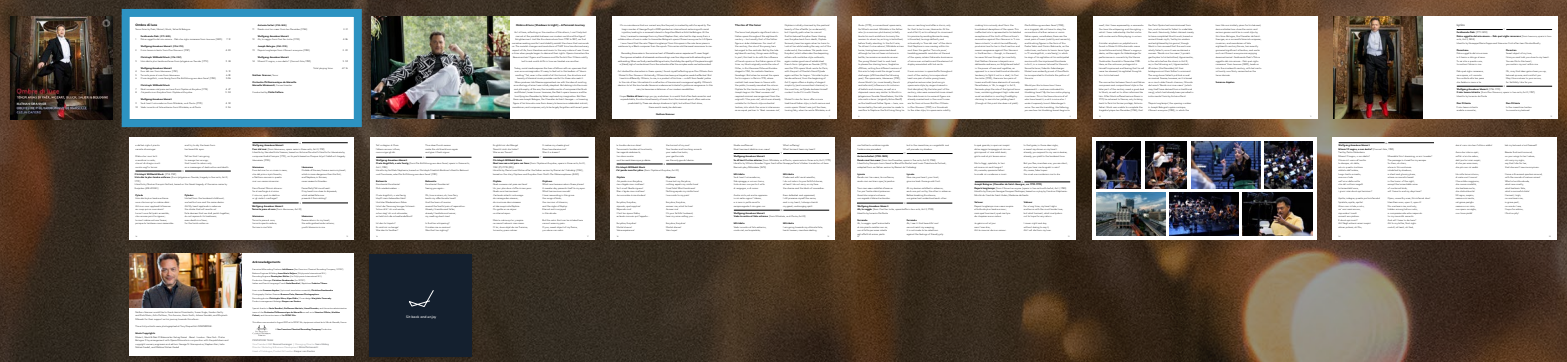
Total playing time: 67. 16

Nathan Granner, Tenor

Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille
Marcello Miramonti, Concertmaster

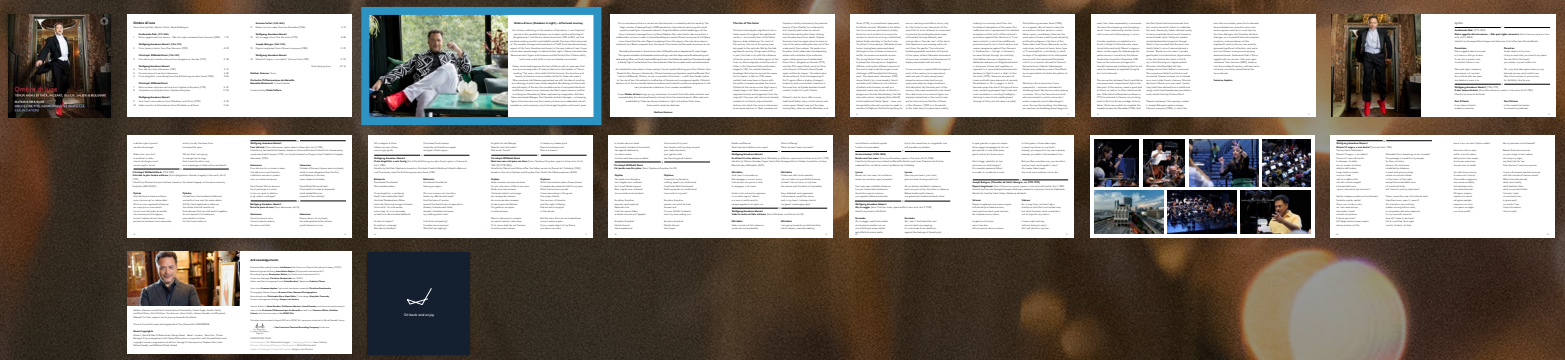
Conducted by **Clelia Cafiero**



Ombre di luce (Shadows in Light) – A Personal Journey

As I sit here, reflecting on the creation of this album, I can't help but marvel at the parallels between our modern world and the Age of Enlightenment. Just like the classical era from 1750 to 1827, we find ourselves seeking comfort and stability amidst the chaos that surrounds us. The societal changes and revolutions of THAT time transformed every aspect of life, from literature and music to the very nature of war. It was a time when people began to demand their rights. Opera characters like Beaumarchais' Figaro and Susanna and Da Ponte's Don Ottavio subtly led to real-world shifts in how we treated one another.

Today, social media exposes the lives of billions with an openness that was once unimaginable. It's easy to feel lost in this bedlam of "doom scrolling." Yet, even in the midst of all this turmoil, the structure and beauty of classical music provides comfort to those who seek it.
When producer Job Maarse approached me with the idea of curating an anthology of arias I was initially skeptical. But delving into the music and philosophy of the era, the incredible works of composers like Gluck and Mozart, lesser-known treasures, like Paër's opera *Leonora* and the horrifying *Les Danaïdes* by Salieri captured my imagination. But then there was Joseph Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges — a towering figure of his time who rose from slavery to become a celebrated violinist, swordsman, and composer, only to be largely forgotten until recent years.



It's no coincidence that our current era, like the past, is marked by calls for equality. The tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020 sparked an international reckoning with racial injustice, leading to a renewed interest in forgotten Black artists like Bologne. At the time, I received a message from my friend Stephen Karr, who had to step away from a collaboration of ours in order to transcribe Bologne's opera *L'Amant anonyme* for LA Opera. I soon found that the aria 'Depuis longtemps' from this opera is the sole tenor piece in existence by a Black composer from the epoch. This carries a bittersweet resonance to me.

Recording these arias in the summer heat of Marseille was an experience I'll never forget. The rigorous schedule of rehearsals and recordings over four days was both exhausting and exhilarating. When we finally reached Bologne's aria, the lullaby-like quality of the piece brought a (literal) sigh of contentment from the orchestra after the complex works we had recorded.

As I studied the characters in these operas, I found myself reflecting upon Don Ottavio from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Historically, Ottavio has been portrayed as weak/ineffectual. But I see him differently. Ottavio, to me, is a product of his time — a shift from feudal justice to the rule of law. His restraint is a reflection of trauma and courageous legality. Ottavio's decision to let the law handle Giovanni underscores his belief in justice as vengeance. In this vein, he becomes a talisman of our modern sensibilities.

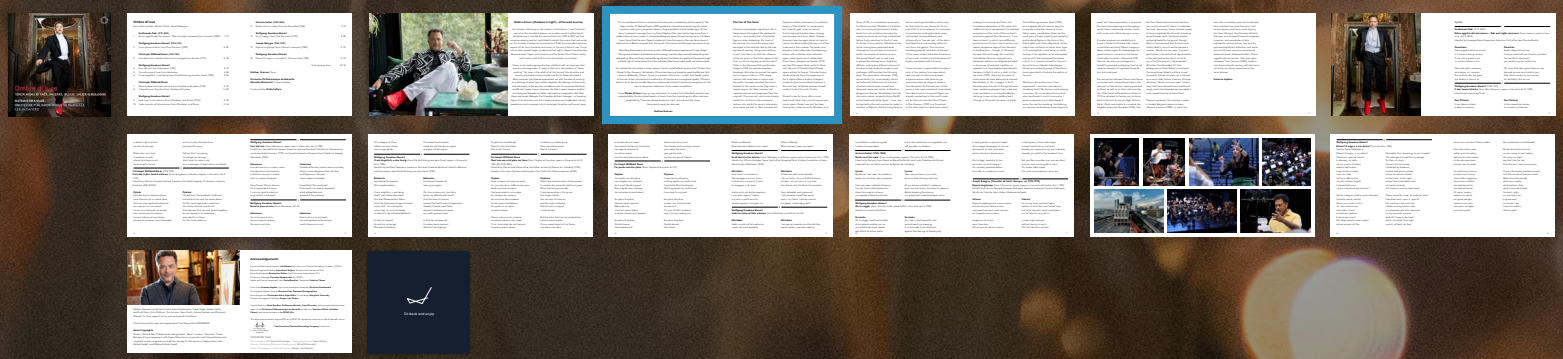
I hope **Ombre di luce** brings you joy and solace. In a world that often feels anarchic and unpredictable, the structured beauty of music from the classical epoch offers welcome predictability. There are always shadows in light, but without that shine, there would merely be darkness.

Nathan Granner

The rise of the tenor

The tenor had played a significant role in Italian opera throughout the eighteenth century — but usually that of the father figure or elder statesman. For most of the century, the role of the young hero belonged to the castrato. But by the late eighteenth century, things were shifting. In part, this had to do with the influence of French opera on the Italian genre at this time: so, Gluck originally wrote the role of Orfeo, in the Viennese *Orfeo ed Euridice* staged in 1762, for castrato Gaetano Guadagni. But when he revived the opera for his sojourn in Paris in 1774, where castrati had never been in favour with the public, he easily reworked the role as Orphée for the *haute-contre* (high tenor) Joseph Legros. His 'Quel nouveau ciel' required minimal rearrangement from the original's 'Che puro ciel', which was already notable for its French-style orchestral texture, into which the voice is interwoven as an equal partner. In 'Quel nouveau ciel', Orphée is initially charmed by the pastoral beauty of the afterlife (or underworld), but it quickly palls when he cannot find his beloved Eurydice there. Having won Eurydice back from death, Orphée famously loses her again when he turns to look at her while leading the way out of the underworld; the rondeau 'J'ai perdu mon Eurydice', which alternates the despairing refrain with recitative-style outbursts, again makes good use of established French form. *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779) was the fifth opera Gluck wrote for Paris, with the part of Oreste's friend Pylade again written for Legros. 'Unis dès la plus tendre enfance', from the beginning of Act II, again offers a display of elegant simplicity (and concomitant stamina) in the vocal line, as Pylade declares himself content to die if it is with Oreste.

Mozart's roles for tenor offer a more traditional Italian style, in both serious and comic opera. Mozart was just fourteen, touring Italy, when he wrote *Mitridate, re di*

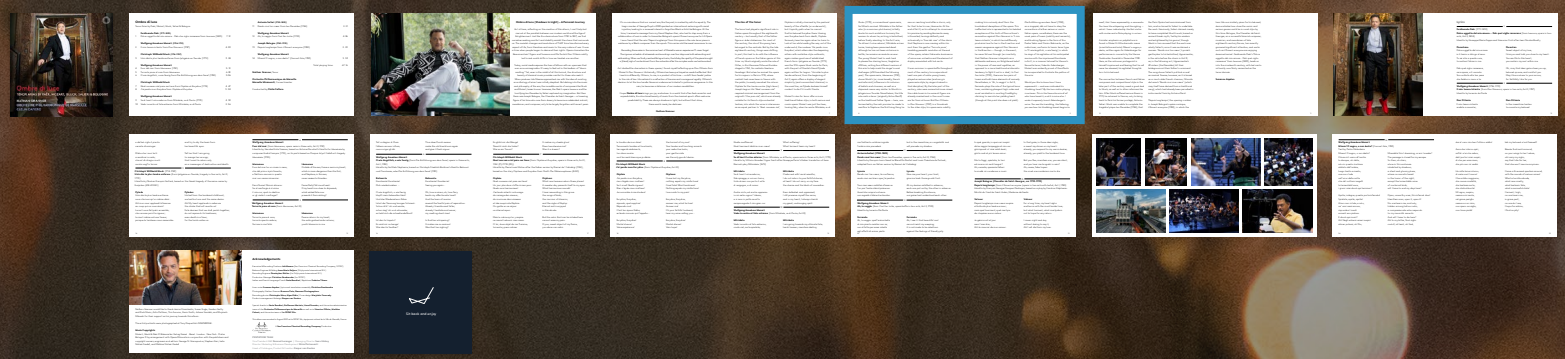


Ponto (1770), a conventional opera seria, for Milan's carnival. Mitridate is the father who (in a common plot device) initially blocks his son's ambitions to marry the woman to whom he, as king, is betrothed, before finally relenting. In the Act I aria, 'Se di lauri il crine adorno', Mitridate arrives home, having been presumed dead: although he has not been victorious in battle, he remains as resolute as ever. The young Mozart had to work hard to please the starring tenor, Guglielmo d'Ettore, writing four different versions of this aria to help mask the singer's vocal challenges (d'Ettore died the following year). The opera seria, *Idomeneo* (1781), shows Gluck's (or, more broadly, French and reformist) influence in its inclusion of ballets and choruses, as well as a shipwreck scene very similar to Gluck's in *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Nonetheless, the title role casts a tenor (originally Anton Raaff) as the traditional father figure — here, one tormented by the rash promise he made to sacrifice to Neptune the first living thing he saw on reaching land after a storm, only for that to be his son, Idamante. At the end of Act II, as his attempt to circumvent his promise by sending Idamante away is thwarted, he sings defiantly and virtuosically in 'Fuor del mar' of the storm that Neptune is now causing within his soul. Even the gentler 'Torna la pace', heralding peaceful resolution at the end of the opera, retains Italianate dominance of voice over orchestra and the element of display associated with bel canto.

It was common in opera buffa throughout most of the century to incorporate at least one pair of noble young lovers, played as serious roles (and sung in opera seria style, by singers trained in that discipline). By the later part of the century, roles were somewhat more mixed: the noble lovers in *Le nozze di Figaro* are already married and in the count's case are far from virtuous. But Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (1787) is a throwback to the older style, his opera seria nobility making him curiously aloof from the knockabout deceptions of the opera. This ineffectual role is represented in his belated acceptance of the truth of Donna Anna's accusation against Don Giovanni in 'Il mio tesoro intanto', in which he mellifluously proclaims love for her in the A section and swears vengeance against Don Giovanni in the B section — though, in the event, he never follows through (an inactivity that Nathan Granner interprets as a deliberate resilience, an Enlightened belief in the power of laws and legalities, as opposed to a more traditional aristocratic tendency to fight it out in a duel). In *Così fan tutte* (1790), there are two pairs of lovers and both have elements of comedy. Nonetheless, in 'Ah, lo veggio' in Act II, Ferrando plays the role of the typical tenor lover, combining plangent high notes and vocal acrobatics in courting Fiordiligi by claiming to see into her yielding heart (though at this point she does not yield).

Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1782), as a singspiel, did not have to obey the conventions of either serious or comic Italian opera, nonetheless, there are the usual pairs of lovers (nobility and servants), and blocking figures in the form of the Pasha Selim and Osmin. Belmonte, as the noble lover, conforms to heroic tenor type in 'O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig', in which he sings of his agitation at his anticipated reunion with the imprisoned Konstanze in Act I, in a manner tailored for Vienna's favourite tenor, Valentin Adamberger. Mozart was evidently proud of the effects he incorporated to illustrate the pathos of the aria:

Would you like to know how I have expressed it — and even indicated his throbbing heart? By the two violins playing in octaves. This is the favourite aria of all who have heard it, and it is mine also. I wrote it expressly to suit Adamberger's voice. You see the trembling, the faltering, you see how his throbbing breast begins to



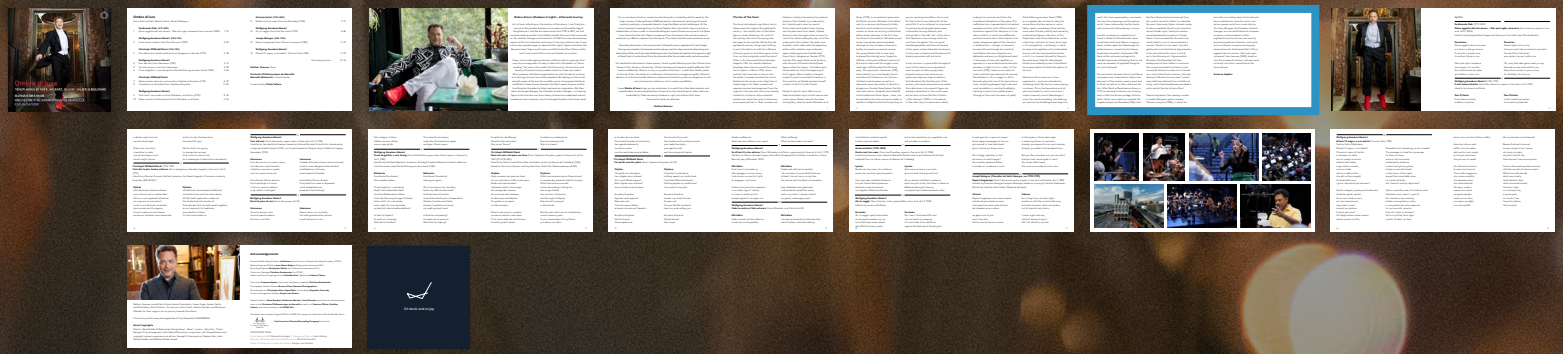
swell; this I have expressed by a crescendo. You hear the whispering and the sighing — which I have indicated by the first violins with mutes and a flute playing in unison.

A similar emphasis on palpitations is found in Mozart's little dramatic scena (a recitative and aria) *Misero! o sogno,o desto*, written again for Adamberger for performance in concerts by the Vienna *Tonkünstler-Societät* in December 1783. Here, as the unknown protagonist is himself imprisoned and fearing that he will never be released, his agitated thoughts turn to his beloved.

The connection between French and Italian composers and compositional style in the later part of the century owed a good deal to Gluck, as well as to other reformers like him. After Gluck suffered serious illness in 1779, he returned to Vienna, only to bring back to Paris his former protégé, Antonio Salieri: Gluck was unable to complete the tragédie lyrique *Les Danaïdes* (1784), that the Paris Opéra had commissioned from him, and so turned to Salieri to undertake the work. Graciously, Salieri claimed merely to have completed Gluck's work, based on ancient Greek myth, 'led by his wisdom and enlightened by his genius', though Gluck in turn avowed that the work was wholly Salieri's, once it was acclaimed a success. 'Rends-moi ton cœur', Lyncée's gentle plea to his betrothed, Hypermestre, is the calm before the storm in Act III, as, in the following act, Hypermestre's 49 sisters (the Danaïdes) kill their bridegrooms at their father's command. The song shows Salieri's political as well as musical finesse, however, as it is based on a much older French chanson, Orlando de Lasso's 'Rends-moi mon cœur' (which may itself have derived from a traditional song), which had already been parodied in instrumental form by Antoine Dard.

'Depuis longtemps', the opening number in Joseph Bologne's opéra comique, *L'Amant anonyme* (1780), in which the hero Valcour similarly pines for his beloved, demonstrates how close the comic and serious genres could be in vocal style by this time. Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, as a successful biracial composer, musician, and swordsman of late eighteenth-century France, has recently garnered significant attention, and works such as *L'Amant anonyme* are enjoying deserved revival. Ferdinando Paër's 'Dolce oggetto del mio amore... Deh quel ciglio rasserena' from *Leonora* (1803), leads us into the nineteenth century, with bel canto virtuosity now firmly cemented as the tenor domain.

Suzanne Aspden



Lyrics

1

Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839)
Dolce oggetto del mio amore... Deh quel ciglio rasserena (from *Leonora*, opera in two acts, Act II, 1804)
Libretto by Giuseppe Maria Foppa and Giacomo Cinti after Jean Nicolas Bouilly

Florestano
Dolce oggetto del mio amore
io ti bacio e stringo al seno.
Tu sei vita a questo core,
tu sostieni l'alma in me.

Deh quel ciglio rasserena,
cara sposa, e ti consola.
Sia conforto alla tua pena
che fedele io moro a te.

Florestan
Sweet object of my love,
I kiss you and hold you close to my heart.
You are life to this heart,
you sustain my soul within me.

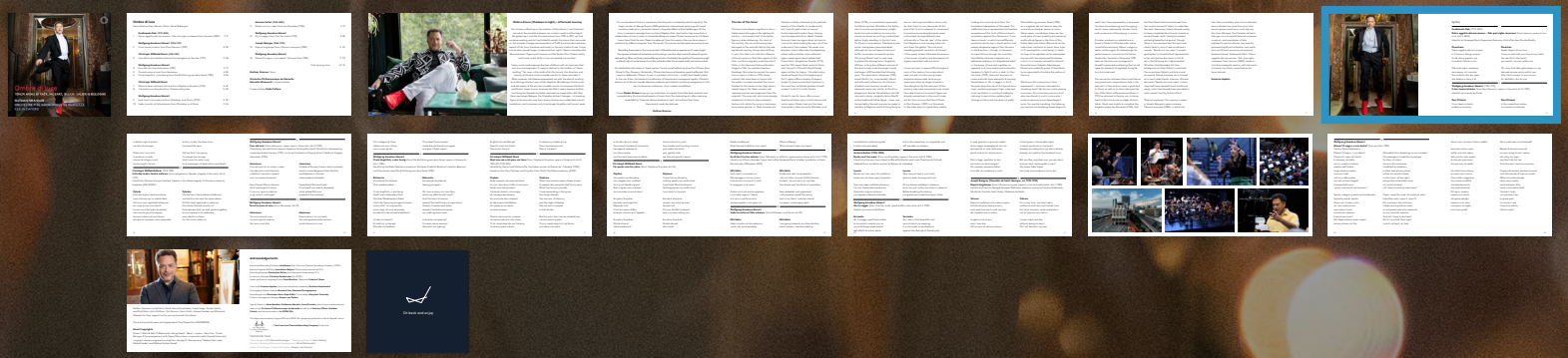
Oh, may that dear gaze cheer you up,
beloved spouse, and comfort you.
May it be a solace to your sorrow,
for faithfully I die for you.

2

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Il mio tesoro intanto (from *Don Giovanni*, opera in two acts, Act II, 1787)
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

Don Ottavio
Il mio tesoro intanto
andate a consolar,

Don Ottavio
In the meantime hasten
to console my beloved



e del bel ciglio il pianto
cercate di asciugar.

Ditele che i suoi torti
a vendicar io vado;
che sol di stragi e morti
nunzio vogl'io tornar.

and try to dry the tears from
her beautiful eyes.

Tell her that I am going
to avenge her wrongs;
that I want to return only
as a messenger of destruction and death.

3

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787)
Unis dès la plus tendre enfance (from *Iphigénie en Tauride*, tragedy in four acts, Act II, 1779)
Libretto by Nicolas-François Guillard, based on the Greek tragedy of the same name by Euripides (414-412 BC)

Pylade
Unis dès la plus tendre enfance
nous n'avions qu'un même désir:
Ah! mon cour applaudit d'avance
au coup qui va nous réunir!
Le sort nous fait périr ensemble,
n'en accuse point la rigueur;
la mort même est une faveur,
puisque le tombeau nous rassemble.

Pylades
United from the tenderest childhood,
we had but one and the same desire:
Ah! My heart applauds in advance
the stroke that will reunite us!
Fate decrees that we shall perish together,
do not reproach its harshness;
even death is a favor,
for the tomb unites us.

4

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Fuor del mar (from *Idomeneo*, opera seria in three acts, Act II, 1781)
Libretto by Giambattista Varesco, based on Antoine Danchet's libretto for *Idoménée* by composer André Campra (1712), on its parts based on Prosper Jolyot Crébillon's tragedy *Idoménée* (1705)

Idomeneo
Fuor del mar ho un mare in seno,
che del primo è più funesto,
e Nettuno ancora in questo
mai non cessa minacciar.

Fiero Nume! Dimmi almeno:
Se al naufragio è sì vicino
il mio cor, qual rio destino
or gli vieta il naufragar?

Idomeneo
Outside of the sea, I have a sea in my heart,
which is more dangerous than the first,
and Neptune, in this sea,
never ceases to threaten.

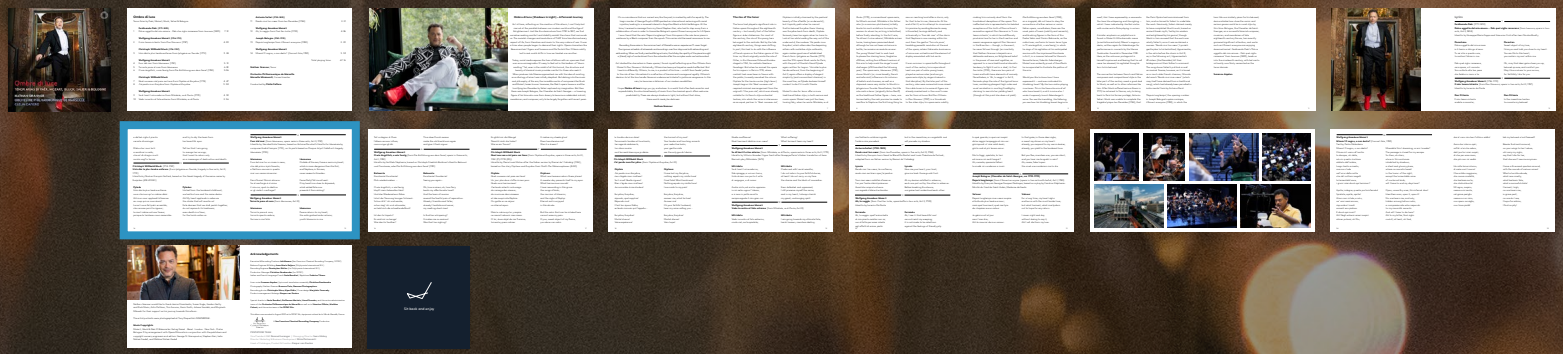
Fierce Deity! Tell me at least:
If my heart is so close to shipwreck,
what wicked fate now
prevents it from sinking?

5

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Torna la pace al core (from *Idomeneo*, Act III)

Idomeneo
Torna la pace al core,
torna lo spento ardore;
fiorisce in me l'età.

Idomeneo
Peace returns to my heart,
the extinguished ardor returns;
youth blossoms in me.



Tal la stagion di Flora
l'albero annoso infiora,
nuovo vigor gli dà.

Thus does Flora's season
make the old tree bloom again
and give it fresh vigour.

6

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig (from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, opera in three acts, Act I, 1782)
Libretto by Gottlieb Stephanie, based on Christoph Friedrich Bretzner's libretto *Belmont und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781)

Belmonte
Konstanze! Konstanze!
Dich wiederzusehen ...

O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig
klopft mein liebevolles Herz!
Und des Wiedersehens Zähre
lohnt der Trennung bangen Schmerz.
Schon zittr' ich und wanke,
schon zag' ich und schwanke;
es hebt sich die schwellende Brust!

Ist das ihr Lispeln?
Es wird mir so bange!
War das ihr Seufzen?

Belmonte
Konstanze! Konstanze!
Seeing you again...

Oh, how anxious, oh, how fiery
beats my affectionate heart!
And the tears of reunion
reward the fearful pain of separation.
Already I tremble and falter,
already I hesitate and waver;
my swelling chest rises!

Is that her whispering?
It makes me so anxious!
Was that her sighing?

Es glüht mir die Wange!
Täuscht mich die Liebe?
War es ein Traum?

It makes my cheeks glow!
Does love deceive me?
Was it a dream?

7

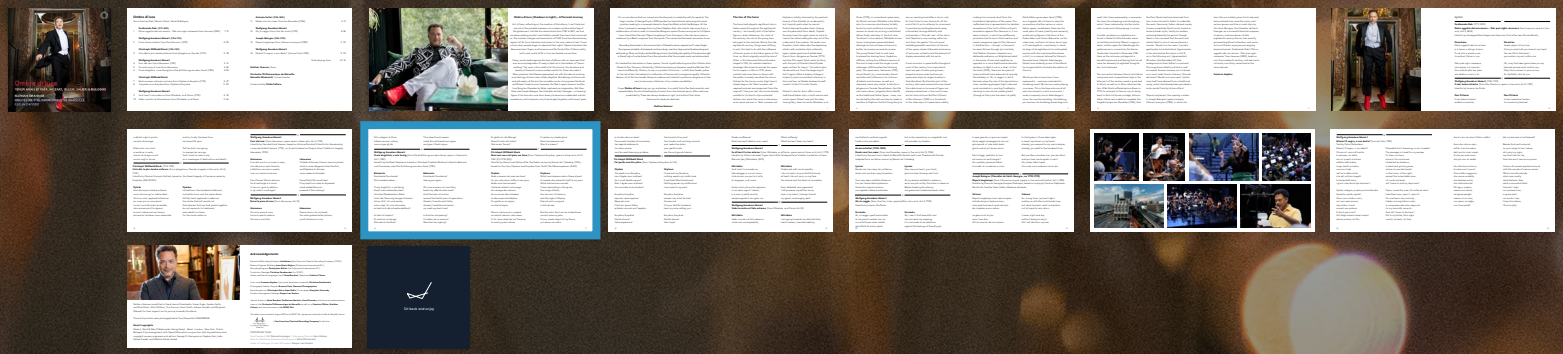
Christoph Willibald Gluck
Quel nouveau ciel pare ces lieux (from *Orphée et Eurydice*, opera in three acts, Act II, 1762 (IT)/1774 (FR))
Libretto by Pierre Louis Moline after the Italian version by Ranieri de' Calzabigi (1762), based on the story *Orpheus and Eurydice* from Ovid's *The Metamorphoses* (8 AD)

Orphée
Quel nouveau ciel pare ces lieux!
Un jour plus doux s'offre à mes yeux.
Quels sons harmonieux!
J'entends retentir ce bocage
du ramage des oiseaux,
du murmure des ruisseaux
et des soupirs de Zéphire.
On goûte en ce séjour
un éternel repos.

Mais le calme qu'on y respire
ne saurait adoucir mes maux.
O toi, doux objet de ma flamme,
toi seule y peux calmer

Orpheus
What new heavens adorn these places!
A sweeter day presents itself to my eyes.
What harmonious sounds!
I hear resounding in this grove
the songs of birds,
the murmur of streams,
and the sighs of Zephyr.
Eternal rest is enjoyed
in this abode.

But the calm that can be inhaled here
cannot ease my pain.
O you, sweet object of my flame,
you alone can calm



le trouble de mon âme!
Tes accents tendres et touchants,
tes regards séduisants,
ton doux sourire
sont les seuls biens que je désire.

the turmoil of my soul!
Your tender and touching accents
your seductive looks,
your gentle smile
are the only goods I desire.

8

Christoph Willibald Gluck
J'ai perdu mon Eurydice (from *Orphée et Eurydice*, Act III)

Orphée
J'ai perdu mon Eurydice,
rien n'égale mon malheur!
Sort cruel! Quelle rigueur!
Rien n'égale mon malheur!
Je succombe à ma douleur!

Eurydice, Eurydice,
réponds, quel supplice!
Réponds-moi!
C'est ton époux fidèle;
entends ma voix qui t'appelle...

Eurydice, Eurydice!
Mortel silence!
Vaine espérance!

Orpheus
I have lost my Eurydice,
nothing equals my misfortune!
Cruel fate! What harshness!
Nothing equals my misfortune!
I succumb to my pain!

Eurydice, Eurydice,
answer me, what torture!
Answer me!
It's your faithful husband;
hear my voice calling you...

Eurydice, Eurydice!
Mortal silence!
Vain hope!

Quelle souffrance!
Quel tourment déchire mon cœur!

What suffering!
What torment tears my heart!

9

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Se di lauri il crine adorno (from *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, opera seria in three acts, Act I, 1770)
Libretto by Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi after Giuseppe Parini's Italian translation of Jean Racine's play *Mithridate* (1672)

Mitridate
Se di lauri il crine adorno,
fide spiagge, a voi non torno,
tinto almen non porto il volto
di vergogna, e di rossor.

Anche vinto, ed anche oppresso
io mi serbo ognor l'istesso,
e vi reco in petto accolto
sempre eguale il mio gran cor.

Mitridate
If adorned with laurel wreaths,
I do not return to your faithful shores,
at least I do not carry on my face
the shame and the blush of cowardice.

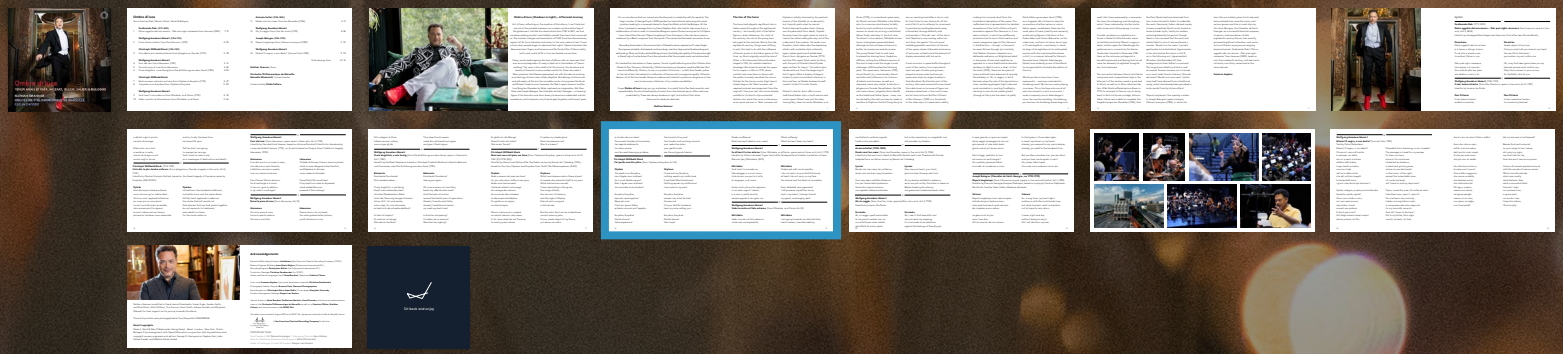
Even defeated and oppressed,
I still preserve myself the same,
and in my heart, I always cherish
my great, unchanging spirit.

10

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Vado incontro al fate estremo (from *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, Act III)

Mitridate
Vado incontro al fato estremo,
crudo ciel, sorte spietata;

Mitridate
I am going towards my ultimate fate,
harsh heaven, merciless destiny;



ma frattanto un'alma ingrata
l'ombra mia precederà.

but in the meantime, an ungrateful soul
will precede my shadow.

11

Antonio Salieri (1750-1825)
Rends-moi ton cœur (from *Les Danaïdes*, opera in five acts, Act III, 1784)
Libretto by François-Louis Gand Le Bland Du Roullet and Louis-Théodore de Tschudi, adapted from an Italian version by Ranieri de' Calzabigi

Lyncée
Rends-moi ton cœur, ta confiance,
rends-moi ces biens que j'ai perdus.

Tous mes vœux satisfais d'avance
l'un par l'autre éteint prévenus.
Avant de rompre le silence
nos regards s'étaient entendus.

Lyncée
Give me your heart, your trust,
give me back those goods I lost.

All my desires satisfied in advance,
each one put out by the other in advance.
Before breaking the silence,
our gazes had understood each other.

12

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Ah, lo veggio (from *Così fan tutte*, opera buffa in two acts, Act II, 1790)
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

Ferrando
Ah, lo veggio: quell'anima bella
al mio pianto resister non sa;
non è fatta per esser rubella
agli affetti di amica pietà.

Ferrando
Ah, I see it: that beautiful soul
cannot resist my weeping;
it is not made to be rebellious
against the feelings of friendly pity.

In quel guardo, in quei cari sospiri
dolce raggio lampeggia al mio cor:
già rispondi a' miei caldi desiri,
già tu cedi al più tenero amor.

Ma tu fuggi, spietata, tu taci
ed invano mi senti languir?
Ah, cessate, speranze fallaci:
la crudel mi condanna a morir.

In that gaze, in those dear sighs,
a sweet ray shines on my heart:
already, you respond to my warm desires,
already, you yield to the tenderest love.

But you flee, merciless one, you are silent,
and you hear me languish in vain?
Ah, cease, false hopes:
the cruel one condemns me to die.

13

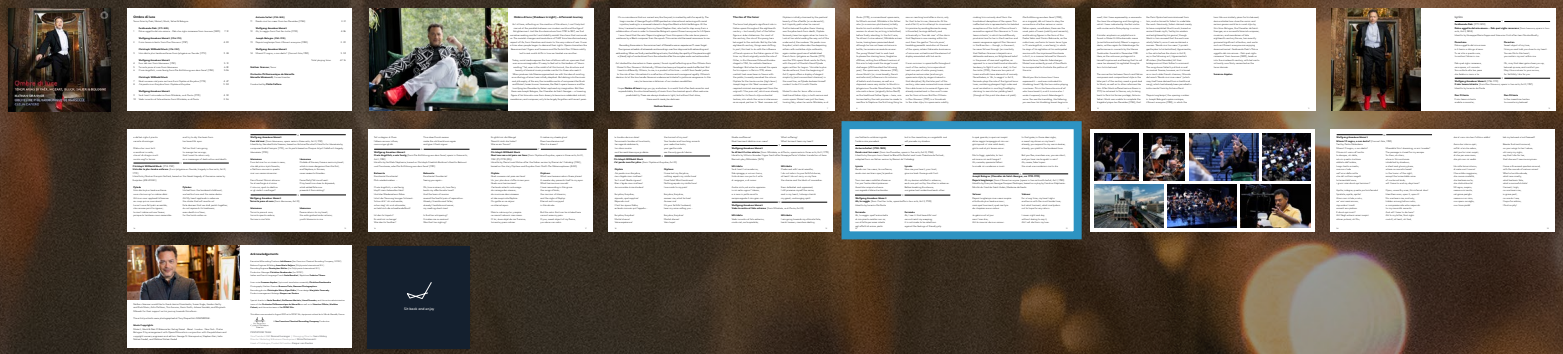
Joseph Bologne (Chevalier de Saint-Georges, ca. 1739-1799)
Depuis longtemps (from *L'Amant anonyme* (opera in two acts with ballet, Act I, 1780)
Libretto by François-Georges Fouques Deshayes, based on a play by Caroline-Stéphanie-Félicité du Crest de Saint-Aubin, Madame de Genlis

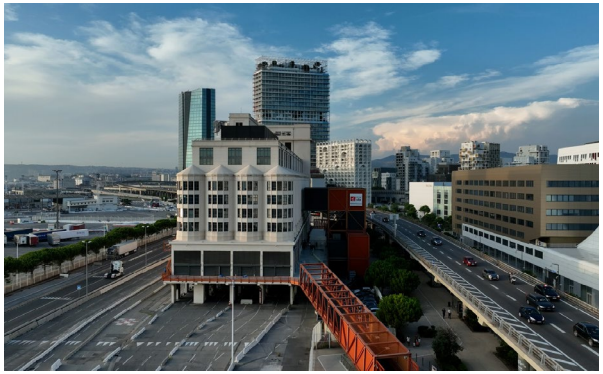
Valcour
Depuis longtemps mon cœur soupire
et brûle du plus tendre amour;
mais quel tourment, quel martyre
de n'espérer aucun retour.

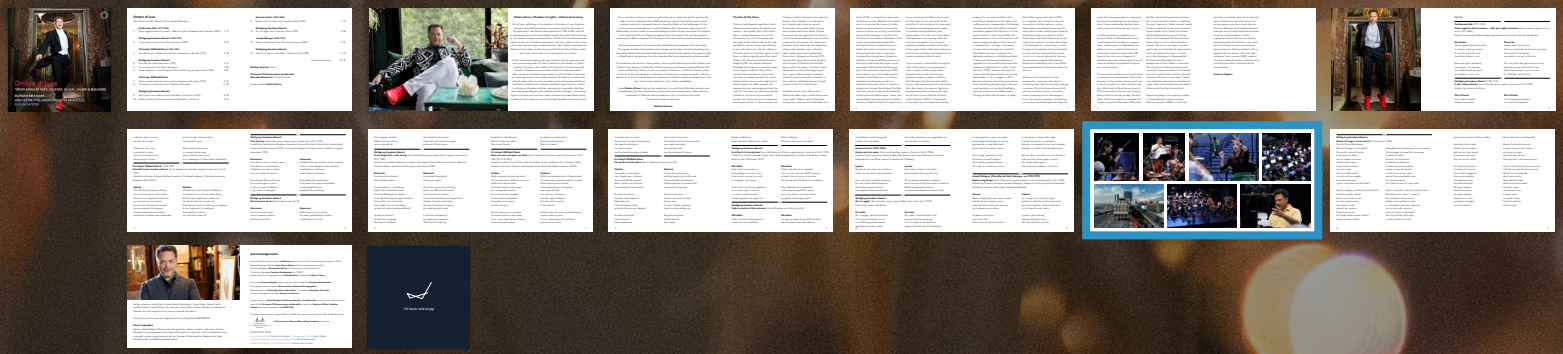
Je gémis nuit et jour
sans l'oser dire,
Ah! Je mourrai de mon amour.

Valcour
For a long time, my heart sighs
and burns with the most tender love;
but what torment, what martyrdom
not to hope for any return.

I moan night and day
without daring to say it,
Ah! I will die from my love.







14

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Misero! O sogno, o son desto? (Concert Aria, 1783)
Text by Pietro Metastasio

Misero! O sogno, o son desto?
Chiuso è il varco all'uscita.
Io dunque, oh stelle,
solo in questo rinchiuso
abitato dall'ombre,
luogo tacito e mesto,
ove non s'ode
nell'orror della notte
che de' notturni augelli
la lamentabil voce,
i giorni miei dovrò qui terminar?

Aprite, indegne, questa porta infernale!
Spietate, aprite, aprite!
Alcun non m'ode, e solo,
ne' cavi sassi ascoso,
risponde a' mesti
accenti eco pietoso.
E dovrò qui morir?
Ah! Negli estremi amari sospiri
almen potessi, oh Dio,

Miserable! Am I dreaming, or am I awake?
The passage is closed for my escape.
So then, oh stars,
alone in this enclosure
inhabited by shadows,
a silent and gloomy place,
where no sound is heard
in the horror of the night,
except the lamentable voice
of nocturnal birds,
will I have to end my days here?

Open, unworthy ones, this infernal door!
Heartless ones, open it, open it!
No one hears me, and only,
hidden among hollow rocks,
a compassionate echo responds
to my mournful accents.
And will I have to die here?
Ah! In my bitter, final sighs
could I, at least, oh God,

dar al caro mio ben l'ultimo addio!

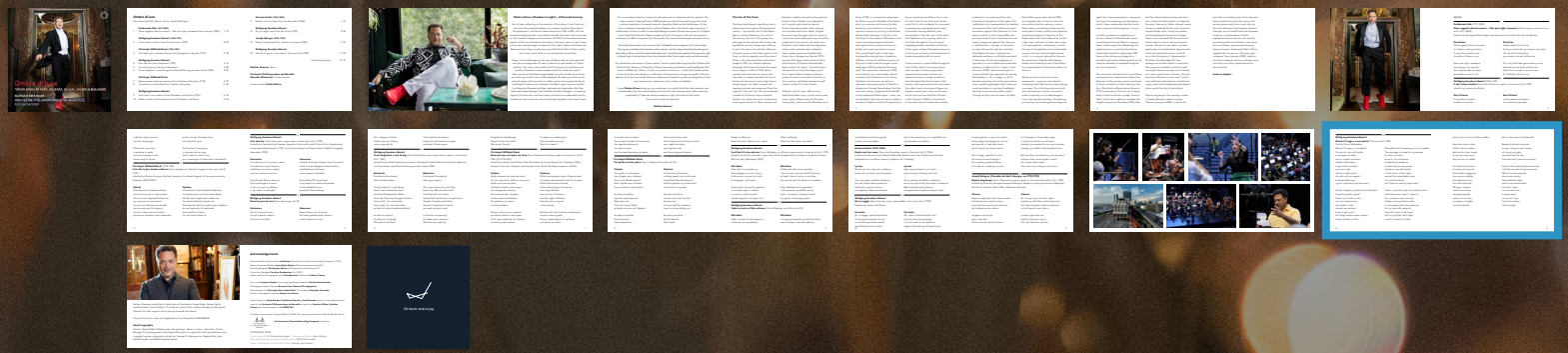
Aura che intorno spiri,
sull'ali a lei che adoro,
deh! porta i miei sospiri,
dì che per essa moro,
che più non mi vedrà.

Ho mille larve intorno,
di varie voci il suono!
Che orribile soggiorno,
che nuova crudeltà,
che barbara sorte,
che stato dolente!
Mi lagno, sospiro,
nessuno mi sente,
nel grave periglio
nessuno non miro,
non spero consiglio,
non trovo pietà!

bid my beloved a last farewell!

Breeze that swirls around,
on your wings to her I adore,
oh! carry my sighs,
say that I die for her,
that she won't see me anymore.

I have a thousand specters around,
with the sounds of various voices!
What a horrible abode,
what new cruelty,
what barbaric fate,
what a sorrowful state!
I lament, I sigh,
no one hears me,
in grave peril,
no one do I see,
I hope for advice,
I find no pity!



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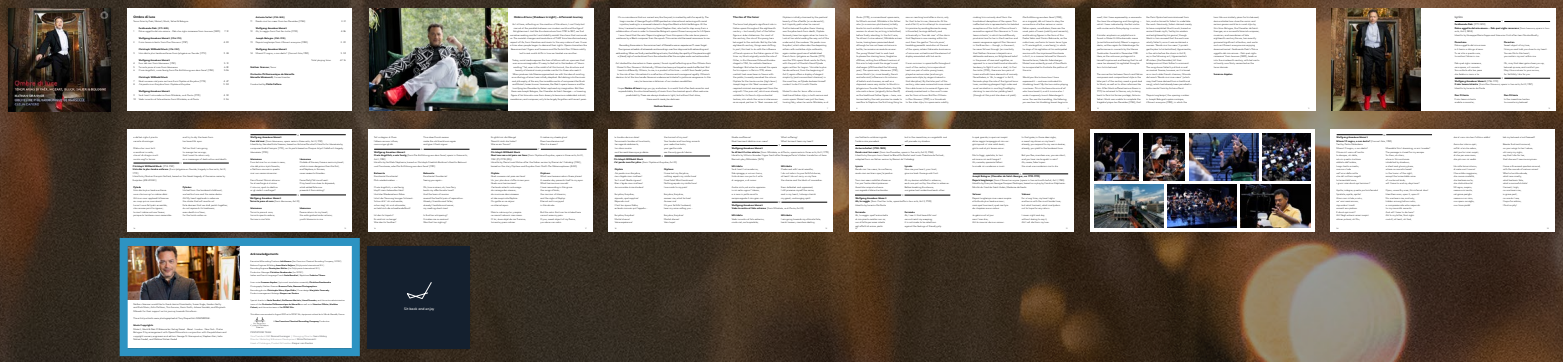
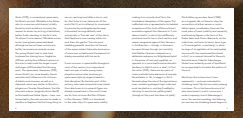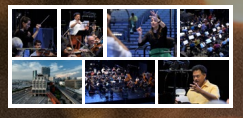
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