

The Society for Historically Informed Performance Presents:

Vox Feminae:
Songs of Powerful Women



Angie Tyler & Kendra Comstock, Sopranos
Ruth McKay, Harpsichord

The Pandora Consort

Angie Tyler, Kendra Comstock, Sopranos

Ruth McKay, Harpsichord

Sonetto proemio dell'opera

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)

Mio ben, teco il tormento

Luigi Rossi (1597-1653)

Orfeo, tu dormi? / Se desti pietà

Antonio Sartorio (1630-1680)

Susanne

Jacquet de La Guerre(1665-1729)

Ad arma, o spiritus

Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)

Lamento della Vergine

Antonia Bembo (c.1640-c.1720)

Il Lamento di Maria Stuarda

Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674)

Per Abbatter il rigore

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

About the Artists:

The Pandora Consort is composed of young artists who are passionate about early music, Kendra Comstock and Angie Tyler. Both graduates of the Historical Performance Masters program at the Longy School of Music, Angie and Kendra met in 2019 and bonded over their love of singing Early Music and creating unique performances. The two have performed with the Boston Camerata, the Amherst Early Music Festival, the Madison Early Music Festival, Ensemble 44, the Concordia Consort, and other early music groups. Past performances have included works by Purcell, C.P.E. Bach, J.S. Bach, Strozzi, Josquin, Handel, Lassus, De la Guerre, and others. This group was formed with the mission of creating accessible, modern performances of Early Music. The name comes from the myth of Pandora's box, and the human need to seek the unknown. The Pandora Consort aims to reimagine classical music performance with multimedia, interactive performance, under represented music. This is done by supporting young artists of every medium to create relevant, innovative performances that can attract a wider audience. The Pandora Consort pushes the boundaries of what a classical concert is.

The Pandora Consort is thrilled to be joined by harpsichordist, Ruth McKay:

Since earning a Master's Degree in Early Music Performance at the Longy School of Music in 1995, **Ruth McKay** has played with many different ensembles, mostly with La Donna Musicale, an ensemble specializing in music composed by women. Ruth is also a harpsichord technician keeping the regions harpsichords tuned and happy. She also serves on the board of SoHIP as treasurer. When she is not submerged in harpsichord work, Ruth dotes on her rescue horse, Miss Tallulah.

Vox Feminae: Songs of Powerful Women

Sonnetto Proemio dell'Opera

Mercé di voi, mia fortunata stella,
Volo di Pindo in fra i beati chori,
E coronata d'immortali allori
Forse detta sarò Saffo novella.

Così l'impresa faticosa e bella
Sia felice del canto e degl'amori,
Che s'unisco le voci i nostri cori
Non disunisca mai voglia rubella.

O che vaga e dolcissima armonia
Fanno due alme innamorate e fide,
Che quel che l'una vuol l'altra desia,

Che gioisce al gioir, ch'al rider ride,
Né mai sospiran, che'l sospir non sia
D'una morte che sana e non uccide.

~Giulio Strozzi

Mio ben, teco il tormento

Più dolce il troverei
Che con altri il contento
Ogni dolcezza è sol dove tu sei,
E per me Amor aduna
Nel girar de' tuoi sguardi ogni fortuna.

Thanks to you, my star of good fortune,
I fly from Mount Pindo among the blessed choirs,
and crowned with laurels of immortality
I will perhaps be considered a new Sappho.

Let the difficult and beautiful undertaking
be joyful with song and cupids,
so that our hearts united by voices
may never be disjoined by conflicting desires.

Oh what blithe and sweet harmony two faithful
souls in love make,
for what one wants the other desires,

They rejoice with each other's joy,
laugh with each other's laughter, and never sigh
except for the sigh of death
that heals and doesn't slay.

~translation Richard Kolb

Beloved, with you
torment would be far sweeter
than contentment with another.
Every sweetness lies only with you,
and Love has gathered every happiness
For me in your glances.

Translation printed with the courtesy of the label Erato -

Warner Classics for the CD of Philippe Jaroussky - La storia di Orfeo

Orfeo tu dormi? E ne gl' Abissi oscuri
Lasci Euridice, e l'amor suo ti scordi?
Così a la lira il dolce canto accordi,
E dal regno infernal trarmi non curi?

Se desti pietà, ne' tronchi e ne' stassi,
Volgendo anco i passi nel regno del pianto,
Là pur il tuo canto pietà troverà

Orpheus, are you sleeping? Can you forsake
Eurydice in the dark abyss and forget her love?
Can you sweetly sing to the sound of your lyre
And not think of saving me from Hades?

You whose song moves the trees and the rocks,
make your way now to the realm of tears
and there too inspire pity with your song.

Translation printed with the courtesy of the label Erato -
Warner Classics for the CD of Philippe Jaroussky - La storia di Orfeo



Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1861)



Top Left: Artemisia Gentileschi (c.1610)

Top Right: Pierre Van Hanselaere (c. 1820)

Bottom: Hendrik Golzius (1590s)

Susanne

Contre le saison trop ardente
Susanne, d'une eau Claire empruntoit la fraîcheur;
Et cachez pour la voir, deux Veillards qu'elle enchante,
D'un regard attentive irritoient leur ardeur.

Indiscrette Jeunesse,
Qui suives les Amours,
Ne croyez pas que la vieillesse,
Contre-eux vous garde aucun secours.
Celuy qu'Amours entraîne,
Dans son jeune printemps,
Traîne toujours sa chaîne,
Jusqu'à ses derniers ans.

Les beautez de Susanne animent leur audace,
Ces odieux Amants osent se découvrir,
Leur amour, joint à la menace,
Veut l'effrayer ou l'attendrir.

Cédez, il faut vous rendre,
À nos ardents desirs;
Pourrez-vous vous defender,
Des plus charmants plaisirs?

Soulagez nôtre peine,
Ou dès ce meme jour;
Redoutez une haine,
Egale à notre amour.

To combat the sweltering season,
Susanna borrows the coolness of a clear stream;
and, secretly viewing, two old men enamored of her,
arouse their desire with a watchful eye.

Indiscreet youth
that trails after love,
Do not believe that age
will give you any respite.
He who is hooked by love
in his youthful springtime
drags that chain forever,
until his final years.

Susanna's loveliness inspires their boldness;
these odious lovers dare to expose themselves.
Their desire, combined with threats,
seeks to intimidate or persuade her.

Yield; you must surrender yourself
to our most burning desire;
could you possibly ward off
the most enticing pleasure?

Ease our yearnings,
or from this day on
fear a hatred
equal to our love.

Ils doivent l'accuser d'une ardeur criminelle,
Que la Loy punit de la mort;
Pour vaincre sa vertu rebelle,
C'est de ce piège adroit que se sert leur transport.

Inhumains, est-ce ainsi que vous prétendez plaire?
Susanne, quel péril! Hélas! Qu'allez-vous faire?
Vous rendrez-vous à leur courroux,
Pour éviter la mort,
La mériterez-vous?

Non, dit l'Héroïne constant,
Vous pouvez me faire périr;
Mais s'il me faut mourir,
Je mourrai du moins innocente.

Que la même ardeur nous anime,
Un cœur innocent ne craint rien;
Non, pour lui le jour n'est un bien,
Que quand il en jouit sans crime.
~Antoine Houdar de la Motte

They propose to accuse her of a criminal passion,
which the Law punishes by death;
to conquer her recalcitrant virtue,
this is the clever trap which will serve their purpose.

Monsters, is this how you seek to please?
Susanna, what danger! Alas! What will you do?
To surrender yourself to their debauchery
in order to avoid death;
do you deserve this?

No, says the faithful heroine,
you can put me to death;
But if I must die,
At least I will die innocent.

For the same fervor animates us both,
an innocent heart fears nothing;
no, for such a heart no day is good
except when it is lived without sin.
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Ad arma, o spiritus

Ad arma, o spiritus rebelles, ad arma.

Tormenta parate, Furentes certate,
Crudeles saevite In artus imbelles,
Ad arma venite, O spiritus rebelles.

Non timet furores, Non pavet horrores
Nec spicula mortis.
Inermis pugnabit,
Imbellis certabit, Haec anima fortis.

O rarum spectaculum.
O admirabile prodigium.

Cadit hostis derelictus,
Et bellatrix triumphat.
Dum fugit triumphat
Et duces tartareos debellat.

Ad arma, . . .

Dum odit amores,
Est animo clemens,
Et servat in sinu Virgineos flores.
Mundana dum fugit, Est animo fortis.
Sic enim sit miles Divine cohortis.

O virgo fortunata, o triumphatrix gloriosa.
Jam laeta supemae Dent jubila voces
Et tibi veloces, O anima fortis.
Jam donent aeternae Confortia sortes
Et tibi veloces, O anima fortis.

Alleluia.

~Anon. author, possibly Isabella Leonarda

To arms, O warlike spirits, to arms.

Prepare your missiles, strive furiously,
be cruelly fierceto these unwarlike limbs;
come to arms, O warring spirits, come.

She does not fear fury, is not frightened
at terrors or the stings of death.
Unarmed, she will fight;
unwarlike, she will strive, this brave soul.

O rare spectacle,
O wonderful prodigy.

The enemy, abandoned, falls,
and the female warrior triumphs.
While the enemy flees,
she triumphs and vanquishes the leaders of hell.

To arms, . . .

While she hates earthly loves,
hers is a gentle nature,
and she keeps virgin flowers in her bosom.
While she flees worldly things, she is brave in spirit.
For thus may a soldier of the divine cohort be.

O fortunate virgin, O glorious victor.
Now may the celestial voices swiftly give you
exulting jubilation, O brave soul.
Now may eternal destinies swiftly grant you
comfort, O brave soul.

Alleluia.

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Lamento della Vergine

D'Onnipotente Padre uncio Figlio
Confitto in duro tronco
Sovra il calvario esangue lacero,
Et anelante quel gran verbo divino
Temea la morte al suo morir vicino.

Atra nube il sol copria
Si ascondeano gli astri ardenti,
E piangeano, e piangeano gli elementi,
Gli elementi al gran pianto di Maria.

Ella che fra i singhiozzo dal profondo dell'alma
Angosciosi sospir mesta traeva
Contro la morte crudel così dicea:

Che fai, che tenti? Che tenti, che fai?
Tirana pessima ombra dolente e che nulla sei.
Pria ch'il ciel fosse
Fu il tuo fattor tutt'era vita,
Tutt'era vita e non t'è dato trat dall'atemo
L'esser di morte se vita eterna e il Sommo Dio.

The only Son of the Omnipotent Father,
Crucified on the hard wood
At Calvary, his body bloodless and lacerated,
And yearning for the great divine word,
Feared death, as his own time for dying came near.

Black clouds covered the sun,
The shining stars hid themselves,
And the elements wept and wept again
At the immense lament of Mary.

With sobs torn from the depths of her soul

She heaved agonising and mournful sighs,
And spoke thus to cruel Death:

“What are you doing, what are you tempting?
Wicked tyrant, doleful shade, you are nothing.”

“Before heaven existed,
Your creator existed, and all was life,
All was life, and you cannot create from eternity
The state of death if God Almighty is life eternal.”

Staccato dal ramo di pianta fatale, Il fallo
d'Adamo die frutto mortale.
Con pena infinita cangio trista sorte, quell'arbor
di vita in arbor di morte.

Dunque se l'huorno die vita a la morte
Contr'il mortal sfoga il tuo sdejno atroce
Nostro spietato e rio
Che non può morte dar la morte a Dio.

che fai, che tenti?
Tiranna pessima ombra dolente che nulla sei.

Larva diliguati, fantasma involati
Cadi nel baratro, scendi in obli,
Che vincer non può Dio e altri' che Dio.

Volgeva in tanto al Padre il moribondo ciglio,
Il Re del cielo e presso a l'ultima hora,
Cosi con flebil voce
Sciolse gli ultimi accenti in su la croce.

Padre deh caro, caro Padre perché mi laschi,
ohimé,
L'udì la trista Madre e svenuta cadè.

Ma perche trino et un voler superno
Cosi dispose ne l'empirea corte
In dar la morte al suo fattor eterno
Tremo, sudo,

“Plucked from the branch of a deadly plant,
The fault of love bore mortal fruit,
With infinite labour sad fate changed
That tree of life into a tree of death.”

“So then if man gave life to death
Wreak your dreadful rage against mortals,
Cruel and pitless monster
For Death cannot make God die.

“What are you doing, what are you tempting?
Wicked tyrant, doleful shade, you are nothing.”

“Ghost disappear, spectre, fly off!
Fall into the abyss, descend to oblivion,
For none other than God can vanquish God.”

Then did the dying one turn his glance to his Father
The King of Heaven, and his last hour came,
Thus in a feeble voice
He pronounced his last words on the Cross:

“Father, beloved Father,
Alas, why dost Thou forsake me?”
The sorrowing mother heard this, and fainted.

But because the supreme will of the Trinity
So decided in the Court of Heaven,
In giving death to its eternal creator
Death itself trembled, tottered

Il Lamento di Maria Stuarda

Ferma, lascia ch'io parli, sacrilego ministro!
Se ben fato inclemente
a morte indegna come rea mi destina,
vissi e moro innocente,
son del sangue Stuardo e son Regina.
Perche bendarmi i lumi?
S'io mirai tanti giorni, ho petto ancora
da mirar l'ultim'ora, e s'io gl'apersi al cielo,
saprò ben senza velo alla vita serarli.
Ferma, lascia ch'io parli!

Ma che dirò pur troppo?
Oggi favella a mio prò l'innocenza,
e di sì rea sentenza a Dio s'appella.
Vilipesa innocenza,
s'una Regina a te salvar non lice,
cui l'invidia fa guerra
a chi ricorrer deve in Inghilterra
un mendico, un vassallo, un infelice?
Vilipesa innocenza,
vattene pur da me, torna alle stelle,
ch'io con anima intrepida e serena
sarò fra tante squadre a Dio rubelle
di mia tragedia e spettatrice e scena.

A morire!
Per serbar giustiziae fede
più non vaglion le corone
che di stato la ragione
anco la verità sa far mentire.

Hold, let me speak, sacriligious minister!
If indeed inclement fate
has destined me to a shameful death as a criminal,
I lived and died innocent;
I am of Stewart blood and a Queen.
Why should I bind my eyes?
If I have seen so many days, I have the heart yet to see
the last hour, and if I have opened them to heaven,
I know well, without any veil, how to close them to life.
Hold, let me speak!

But what more can I say? Today innocence
speaks on my behalf,
and calls upon God for such a cruel sentence.
Contemptible innocence!
If a Queen cannot turn to you for salvation,
with whom envy makes war,
to whom in England shall go
a beggar, a servant, an unhappy one?
Contemptible innocence,
leave me, return to the stars,
so that I, with a spirit brave and serene
before such forces rebellious to God,
May be both a witness and subject of my tragedy.

To die!
To preserve justice and faith
crowns are no longer any worth
since instead reason and
even truth know how to lie.

A morire!

Versarò dal collo il sangue,
ma non già da' i lumi il pianto
che se bene io resto esangue
la costanza al mio duol mesce elisire.

Voi mie care Donzelle,
che m'inchinaste al soglio, et or piangenti
mi seguite a' i tormenti, compatite i miei casi,
e s'io lassa rimasi spogliata d'ogni ben,
d'ogni fortuna, non per questo morendo
gl'obblighi miei tralascio;
partitevi l'amor con cui vi lascio.
Soffrite costanti la dura mia sorte,
e s'invida Morte stillandovi in pianti
a voi mi toglie, o fideancelle in terra,
con sempiterno riso
v'abbraccierò compagne in Paradiso.

Mira Londra, et impara le vicende mondane
e tu ch'all' Anglicane schiere dai legge
o Jezabelle altera, di giustizia severa
aspetta i colpi, e se per farti in brani
mancheranno alle belve artigli e morsi
serviranno di cani i tuoi rimorsi.

To die!

I will gush forth blood from my neck,
but not yet from my eyes tears;
for though I remain bloodless,
my constancy with mix elixir with my grief.

You, my dear Ladies-in-waiting,
that knelt at my throne, and now weeping
follow me to torment, sharing my lot,
if I am left here stripped of every good,
of every possession, not for this, dying,
will I abandon my obligations;
share the love I leave with you.
Suffer in constancy my hard fate,
and if envious Death takes me from you
dissolving you in tears, o faithful servants on earth,
with an eternal smile
I will embrace you in Paradise.

Behold, London, and learn the ways of the world;
and you, who gives the laws to the English people,
o second Jezebel, await the blows of severe justice;
and if the wild animals lack talons and teeth to shred
you to tatters, your own remorse
will serve as hound.

Sì, sì sfogati, assali, scarica su'l mio capo a cento, a
mille del tuo furor gli strali!

Vibra senza pietà su questo petto esangue
strazi, scempi, flagelli, atrocità!

Lascia ch'un mar di sangue m'inostr' il nero manto;
fulmina pur, che tanto straziarmi non saprai, quant'
io soffrire:

A morire!

Qui tacque, e forte, e invitta
al suo destin s'arrese la Regina Scozzese,
ne guari andò ch'un colpo indegno e rio
divise il Corpo, et unì l'anima a Dio.

Yes, yes, fume, assail, unleash upon my head a
hundred, a thousand times the darts of your fury!
Hurl down without pity upon this bloodless breast
torment, havoc, scourges, atrocities!

let a sea of blood adorn me with a black shroud;
rage away, since I will not know what torture
I suffer:

To die!

Here she fell silent, and strong, and unconquered
the Scottish Queen arrived at her destiny;
nor went much farther before a cruel and unworthy blow
divided her body, and united her soul to God.

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Per Abbatter il rigore

Per abbatter il rigore d'un crudel
spietato core,
forte scudo è la costanza e il valor
di fedeltà.

Volga al cielo i sguardi, ai numi,
chi al fulgor di quei bei lumi vuol
nutrire la speranza
di trovar un dì pietà.

In attacking the coldness of a cruel,
pitiless heart,
constancy is a strong shield and so is the
valour of fidelity.

Let him turn his heaven to the gods,
who in the splendour of those fair eyes would
nourish hope
of one day finding compassion.
~translation by Anthony Hicks



François de Troy

Thanks for watching!

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Don't miss our upcoming
Worlds Collide Showcase

Oct 14th 8pm at The LilyPad