

Voices of Light

An Oratorio Inspired by Carl Dreyer's Film
The Passion of Joan of Arc

LIBRETTO

Richard Einhorn

Voices of Light is an opera/oratorio for voices and amplified instrumental ensemble in celebration of Joan of Arc. It may be performed during a screening of Carl Dreyer's great silent film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, or with other staging, or as a concert work.

The libretto for *Voices of Light* is a patchwork of visions, fantasies, and reflections assembled from various ancient sources, notably the writings of medieval female mystics. The texts may be thought of as representing the spiritual, political and metaphorical womb in which Joan was conceived.

Voices of Light was first performed at the Academy of Music in Northampton, Massachusetts on February 12 and 13, 1994 by The Arcadia Players and the Da Camera Singers, Margaret Irwin Brandon conducting. The performances were produced by the Northampton Arts Council, Bob Cilman, director.

Voices of Light was released on CD by Sony Classical on October 22, 1995 performed by Anonymous 4, Radio Netherlands Philharmonic and Choir, Susan Narucki, and other musicians, conducted by Steven Mercurio.

RE

PRELUDE*

[Exclamavit autem voce magna...] «Deus aeterne, qui absconditorum es cognitor, qui nosti omnia antequam fiant, tu scis quoniam falsum testimonium tulerunt contra me; et ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum me.»

[She cried out in a loud voice] "Everlasting God, who knows things hidden and all things before they happen, you know they have borne false witness against me; and see! I die, although I am innocent of everything their malice has invented against me."

Daniel 13:42

Thronus...flammae ignis,
Rotae eius ignis accensus.
Fluvius igneus rapidusque
egrediebatur a facie eius;
Millia millium ministrabant...
Et decies millies centena millia
assistebant...
Iudicium sedit,
et libri aperti sunt.

[His] throne..was ablaze with flames,
His wheels were a burning fire.
A swift river of fire
came forth from his countenance
A thousand thousand waited upon him
Ten thousand times a hundred thousand
stood by.
The court sat,
and the books were opened.

Daniel 7:9

* All words sung by Joan of Arc are in italics.

VICTORY AT ORLEANS

(LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)

Jehanne...la Pucelle vous fait savoir des nouvelles de par decha que en VIII jours elle a cachie les Angloix hors de toutez les places quilz tenoient sur le revire de Loire par assaut et autrement ou il en eu mains mors et prins et lez a desconfis en bataille[...]le frere du conte de Suffort et Glasias mors.

Jehanne...the Maid sends you news from these parts: that in one week she has chased the English out of all the places that they held along the Loire river, either by assault or otherwise, in which encounters many English were killed and captured and she has routed them in a pitched battle. A brother of the Earl of Suffolk's and Glasdale were killed.

Je vous promectz et certifie[...]en toutes les villes quy doivent estre du saint royaume[...]quy que vyenne contre.

I promise and assure you [that we will take possession] of all the cities that must belong to [our] holy realm ... in spite of all opposition!

Car Dieu, le Roy du ciel, le veult, et cela est révélé par la Pucelle...

So God King of Heaven, wills it; and so it has been revealed by the Maid...

INTERROGATION

HOMASSE!

Hee! quel honneur au femenin
Sexe!...
Par qui tout le regne ert desert,
Par femme est sours et recouvert.

Virtutem...mysterium secretarum et
admirandarum visionum a puellari
aetate...essem usque ad praesens tempus
mirabili modo in me senseram ...

HOMASSE!

Une fillete...
A qui armes ne sont pesans...

Et devant elle vont fuyant
Les ennemis, ne nul n'y dure.

«Velis aut nolis haec erit tuum. Ego scio
quid elegi»

Ex nemore canuto puella eliminabitur ut
medelae curam adhibeat.

Non inductur
mulier veste virili,
nec vir utetur
veste feminea:
abominabilis enim
apud Deum
est qui facit haec.

Masculine Woman!

(Medieval slur directed at women)

Oh! What an honor for the feminine sex!...
This entire realm, once lost by [wretched
men], restored and saved by a woman again
Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc by Christine de
Pizan, 1429, one of the earliest known
feminist writers.

From my girlhood to the present time, in a
wondrous fashion I have felt in myself the
power and mystery of secret and
wonderful visions...

St. Hildegard of Bingen, mystic, poet,
and composer from the early 12th Century.

Masculine Woman!

A little girl [...]
Upon whom arms and armor
weigh lightly; [...]
Before her all foes take off at a run,
Of them none remains, not even a one.

Ditié
Christine de Pizan

"Whether or not you wish it, this will be
yours. I know what I have chosen."
Na Prous Boneta, 14th Century French
heretic who was burned at the stake.

Out of an oak forest a girl will be sent forth
to bring healing.

Ancient prophecy of Merlin thought to
refer to Joan of Arc's mission.

A woman shall not wear
the clothes of a man
Nor a man
the clothes of a woman.
For abominable
in the eyes of God
Oare those who do so.
Deuteronomy 22:5

THE JAILERS

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Feme a un cuer par heritage
Qui ne puet estre en un estage.

A woman's heart is just not able
To chart a course that's firm or stable

Or est sauvage, or est privee;
Ore veult paiz, or veult meslee;

Now she's wild, now she's demure;
Now wants peace, then starts a war;

Femme engine en poi d'ure
Dount un[e] tere tout ploure.

The schemes she quickly engineers
Can drown a countryside in tears

Que qui aime et croit fole fame
Gaste son temps, pert corps et ame.

Who loves and trusts mad womankind
Damns soul and body, wastes his time.

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.
Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,
Let's flee and leave them far behind!
Now that I've told you of womankind,
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

The Vices of Women
late 13th Century misogynist poem

PATER NOSTER

*Pater Noster, qui es in caelis,
Sanctificetur nomen tuum.
Adveniat regnum tuum.
Fiat voluntas tua,
Sicut in caelo
et in terra.*

*Our Father, who art in Heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name
Thy Kingdom Come
Thy will be done
In Earth as it is
in Heaven.*

Matthew 6:9-6:10

«Filia mea dulcis michi; filia mea, delectum meum, templum meum; filia delectum meum, ama me: quia tu es multum amata a me, multum plus quam tu ames me.

"My daughter, sweet to me; my daughter, my beloved, my temple; my daughter, my beloved, love me, since you have been much loved by me, much more than you love me.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo colca te tu in me.

"And after I have laid myself in you, now lay yourself in me."

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"This is my creature."

Blessed Angela of Foligno
13th Century mystic and penitent

*Pater Noster, qui es in caelis
Sanctificetur nomen tuum
Adveniat regnum tuum
Fiat voluntas tua,
Sicut in caelo
et in terra.*

*Our Father, who art in Heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name
Thy Kingdom Come
Thy will be done
In Earth as it is
in Heaven*

Matthew 6:9'-6:10

et sentiebam dulcedinem divinam ineffabilem.

And I felt an ineffable divine sweetness.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo colca te tu in me.

"And after I have laid myself in you, now lay yourself in me.

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"This is my creature."

«Filia mea dulcis michi; filia mea, delectum meum, templum meum; filia delectum meum, ama me: quia tu es multum amata a me, multum plus quam tu ames me."

"My daughter, sweet to me; my daughter, my beloved, my temple; my daughter, my beloved, love me, since you have been much loved by me, much more than you love me.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo colca te tu in me.

"And after I have laid myself in you, now lay yourself in me.

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"This is my creature."

Blessed Angela of Foligno

THE JAILERS RETURN

Tant y a feme scet bon taire!

When it comes to women, men, hold your
tongue!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire!

When it comes to women, men, hold your
tongue!

Femme est dehors religieuse,
Dedanz poignaunt e venimose;

On the outside she's religious,
On the inside keen and venomous;

A soy sera d'aucun complainte,
Ir se fait moult juste et moult sainte.

She will not tolerate complaint,
She's lady justice and a saint.

Femme engendre bataille e guere,
Exile gent de gaste tere;

Woman fosters strife and wars,
And exiles men from ruined shores;

Femme ard chasteus e prent citez
Enfudre tours e fermetez.

Castles she burns, cities defeats
Destroys the towers and the keeps.

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies!
Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,
Let's flee and leave them far behind!
Now that I've told you of womankind,
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

The Vices of Women
Late 13th Century misogynist poem

TORTURE

Glorioses playes...

Et desiderabam videre vel saltem illud
parum de carne Christi quod portaverant
clavi in ligno.

Glorioses playes...

...ostendit cor suum perforatum quasi ad
modum portulae unius parvae laternae ...
quod ex ipso corde exiverunt radii solares.
Imo solaribus radiis clariores...

Glorioses playes...

...«non est aequum, velle solum de melle
meo gustare, et non de felle: si perfecte vis
mecum uniri, mente intenta recogita
illusiones, opprobria, flagella, mortem, et
tormenta, quae pro te sustinui.»

Glorioses playes...

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt, early 14th
Century visionary and poet.

And I longed to see at least that little bit of
Christ's flesh that the nails had fixed to the
wood.

Blessed Angela of Foligno

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

He showed [her] his heart, perforated like
the openings in a small lantern...From his
very heart issued forth rays of the sun --no
--- brighter than the sun's rays...

Na Prous Boneta

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

..."It is not fair to wish to taste only of my
honey, and not the gall. If you wish to be
perfectly united with me, contemplate
deeply the mockery, insults, whippings,
death and torments that I endured for
you."

Blessed Margarita, disciple of
St. Umiltà, 14th Century.

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

ILLNESS

(LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)

Jehanne la Pucelle vous requiert de par le Roy du ciel,[...]vous puis que ne guerroyez plus ou saint Royaume de France,[...]et sera grant pitié de la grant bataille et du sang qui y sera respendu de ceux qui y vendront contre nous.

Jehanne the Maid begs you on behalf of the King of Heaven, make war no longer in the holy Kingdom of France, ...and a pitiful thing will be that great battle and the blood that will be shed therein by those who come there against us.

SACRAMENT

O feminea forma, O soror Sapientie,
quam gloriosa es
quoniam fortissima vita
in te surrexit,
quam mors nunquam suffocabit.

O feminine form, O sister of Wisdom
How glorious you are
for in you has arisen
the mightiest life
that death will never stifle.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Oh maledetti! Oh grande indignazione!

O cursed ones! O great indignation!

St. Umiltà of Faenza, great
14th Century Italian mystic.

Fuge, fuge speluncam
antiqui perditoris
et veniens veni in palatium regis.

Flee, flee the cave
of the ancient destroyer
and come, coming into the palace of the
king.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

...car plus est adjoustee foy au mal de tant
comme le bien y est plus autentique...

...evil is rendered more believable by
putting it together with good to make it
more respectable...

From *The Quarrel of the Rose*
Christine de Pizan

ABJURATION

Exaudi, Deus omnipotens, preces
populi...Puelle agentis secundum opera que
sibi dixeras

Hear, Almighty God, the prayers of your
people...of the girl acting according to the
works which you had spoken of to her.

Prayer commissioned by King
Charles VII pleading for Joan's
freedom from imprisonment,
1431.

Si quis in me non manserit,
mittetur foras sicut palmes,
et arescet,
et colligent eum,
et in ignem mittent,
et ardet.

Those who do not remain in me
will be discarded like branches:
they will wither.
So they will be gathered up,
thrown on the fire,
and burnt.

John 15:6, recited to Joan of Arc
by Father Erard during her trial,
at the confrontation in front of
St. Ouen.

« Domine, istud quod facio, non facio nisi
ut inveniam te. »

"Lord, that which I do, I do only to find
you."

Blessed Angela of Foligno

«Depone animos.»

"Renounce your purpose."

From The Passion of St.
Perpetua, a history of an early
Christian martyr.

...Une femme -- simple bergiere --
Plus preux qu'onc homs ne fut à Romme!

...a woman -- a simple shepherdess --
More valiant even than Rome's worthiest!
Ditié

Christine de Pizan

Ne universos nos extermines.

Destroy us not all together.

St. Perpetua

Benedicite, ignis et aestus, Domino;

Fire and heat, praise the Lord!

Daniel 3:66

«Depone animos.»

...N'y a si forte
Resistance qui à l'assault
De la Pucelle ne soit morte.

Hester, Judith, et Delbora,
Qui furent dames de grant pris,[...]

Mains miracles en a pourpris.

Plus a fait par ceste Pucelle.

"Renounce your purpose."

St. Perpetua

... No force is there so strong --
Try as they might to resist the attack
Of the Maid -- it dies in vain before long.

One hears of Esther, Judith and Deborah,
Who were ladies of great courage and
worth; [...]
Through them God performed miracles on
Earth,
But he fulfilled even more through this
Maid.

Ditié
Christine de Pizan

«Depone animos.»

...eadem hora mittemini in fornacem ignis
ardentis. Et quis est Deus qui eripiet vos
de manu mea?
Benedicite, ignis et aestus, Domino;

"Renounce your purpose."

St. Perpetua

...The same hour you will be thrown into a
furnace of burning fire.
And who is the God who will snatch you
from my hand?
Fire and heat, praise the Lord!

Daniel 3:15 and 3:66

« *Domine, istud quod facio, non facio nisi
ut inveniam te. Inveniam te postquam id
perfecero!* »

*"Lord, that which I do, I do only to find
you. May I find you after I have completed
it!"*

Blessed Angela of Foligno

RELAPSE

Karitas
habundat in omnia
de imis excellentissima
super sidera
atque amantissima
in omnia
quia summo regi osculum pacis
dedit.

Love
overflows into all things,
From out of the depths to above the
highest stars;
And so Love overflows into all best
beloved, most loving things,
Because She has given to the highest King
The Kiss of Peace.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

ANIMA

...anima eius amore fluens et languens.

...The Spirit flowing and melting with love.

There are Seven Manners of
Loving
Beatrice of Nazareth, 13th
Century.

...est ceste Ame cheue d'amour en nient.

...This Soul has fallen from love into
nothingness.

Marguerite Porete, 14th Century
member of the Free Spirit
movement who was burned at the
stake.

...mens eius insane suspensa ex vehementi
cupidine...

...The Spirit madly possessed by violent
desire...

...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in
aeternitatem Amoris

...Only through everlasting Love is it
drawn into the eternity of Love.

...anima eius amore fluens et languens.

...The Spirit flowing and melting with love.

Beatrice of Nazareth

...est ceste Ame cheue d'amour en nient.

...This Soul has fallen from love into
nothingness.

Marguerite Porete

...anima eius amore fluens et languens
...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in
aeternitatem Amoris

...The Spirit flowing and melting with
love...Only through everlasting Love is it
drawn into the eternity of Love...The
Spirit flowing and melting with love...Only
through everlasing Love is it drawn into the
eternity of Love.

...anima eius amore fluens et languens
...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in
aeternitatem Amoris

Beatrice of Nazareth

THE FINAL WALK

[Exclamavit autem voce magna...] «Deus aeterne, qui absconditorum es cognitor, qui nosti omnia antequam fiant, tu scis quoniam falsum testimonium tulerunt contra me; et ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum me.»

[She cried out in a loud voice] "Everlasting God, who knows things hidden and all things before they happen, you know they have borne false witness against me; and see! I die, although I am innocent of everything their malice has invented against me."

Daniel 13:42

THE BURNING

Dominus condit sibi unum ignem dicendo sic: «vides hunc ignem; qualiter totam materiam et substantiam lignorum convertit in suam naturam, eodem modo natura divinitatis convertit in se animas quas sibi vult...»

The Lord made for her a fire, saying: "You see this fire; as it changes all the matter and substance of wood into its own nature, even so, Divine Nature changes into itself the souls it wants for itself..."

Na Prouz Boneta

Rex noster promptus est
suscipere sanguinem innocentum.
Sed nubes super eundem sanguinem
plangunt.
Unde angeli concinunt
et in laudibus sonant.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui sancto.
Rex noster promptus est
Suscipere sanguinem innocentum.
Sed nubes super eundem sanguinem
plangunt.

Our king is swift
to receive the blood of innocents.
But over the same blood the clouds
are grieving.
Hence the angels sing
and resound in praises
Glory to the Father, The Son and The
Holy Ghost.
Our king is swift
to receive the blood of innocents.
But over the same blood the clouds
are grieving.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Jehanne, Jehanne!

Joan, Joan!

THE FIRE OF THE DOVE

Ah! Jehanne, Jehanne!

Ah! Joan, Joan!

Oh!

Oh!

...valde beatus fuisti cum Verbum Dei te in igne columbe imbuit.

...you were greatly blessed when the Word of God steeped you in the fire of the dove.

(ubi tu quasi aurora illuminatus es...)

(where you were illumined like the dawn...)

...valde beatus fuisti cum Verbum Dei te in igne columbe imbuit.

...you were greatly blessed when the Word of God steeped you in the fire of the dove.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

EPILOGUE

(LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)

*Car Dieu le Roy du ciel le veult, et cela est
révélé par la Pucelle...*

*So God King of Heaven, wills it; and so it
has been revealed by the Maid...*

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Translations from the Bible, Hildegard von Bingen's *Visions of St. Hildegard*, *The Confessions of Na Prou Boneta*, *The Book of Blessed Angela of Foligno*, *Concerning the Blessed Margarita of Faenza*, *Prayer of Charles VII*, *There are Seven Manners of Loving*, copyright © 1995 by Peter K. Marshall All rights reserved. Used by permission.

The letters of Joan of Arc from which the libretto's letters were constructed, may be found in *Letters of Joan of Arc*, translated and edited by Claire Quintal and Daniel Rankin (Pittsburgh Diocesan Council of Catholic Women). 1969. Used by permission

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