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**Bella mia fiamma, addio**

W. A. Mozart | Josef Mysliveček

**Programme**

**W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**

Overture, *Mitridate, re di Ponto* KV 87

Allegro – Andante grazioso – Presto

**Josef Mysliveček (1737-1781)**

Sarete al fin contenti / Mi parea del porto in seno, *Demetrio*

**W. A. Mozart**

Symphony No. 27 in G Major KV 199

Allegro – Andantino grazioso – Presto

Bella mia fiamma, addio! / Resta, o cara KV 528

**Cast**

Václav Luks | conductor

Simona Šaturová | soprano

**Collegium 1704**

Concert Master | Helena Zemanová

Violin I | Markéta Knittlová, Petra Ščevková, Jan Hádek

Violin II | Simona Tydlitátová, Veronika Manová, Martina Kuncl Štillerová, Adéla Štajnochrová

Viola | Dagmar Valentová, Eleonora Machová, Julia Kreichbaum, Jakub Verner

Violoncello | Hana Fleková, Libor Mašek

Double Bass | Luděk Braný

Harpsichord | Pablo Kornfeld

Oboe | Katharina Andres, Petra Ambrosi

Recorder | Julie Braná, Lucie Dušková

Bassoon | Györgyi Farkas, Kryštof Lada

Corno | Miroslav Rovenský, Jiří Tarantík

**Production**

Direction | Tokpa Korlo

Sound | Filip Beneš

Camera | Tokpa Korlo, Katarína Korlo, Robert Müller

Editing | Tokpa Korlo

Lights | Filip Dámec

**Lyrics**

**Josef Mysliveček**

Sarete al fin contenti / Mi parea del porto in seno, *Demetrio*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sarete al fin contenti, o miei pensieri!  Qual Nume infausto semino tra noi  questa Sete d’onor? Che giova al Mondo  di tal Gloria tiranna il reo Martire  se per viver a lei convien morire!    Mi parea del porto in seno  chiara l’onda, il ciel sereno;  ma tempesta più funesta  mi rispinge in mezzo al mar.    M’avvilisco, m’abbandono;  e son degna di perdono,  se pensando a chi la desta  incomincio a disperar. | My cares, you shall at length be satisfied!  What adverse god threw betwixt our loves  this cruel and unhappy bar of honour?  What gain we by this tyrant fame, while we,  to that live martyrs, die to all things else.  Quite overburdened with my grief  this heart, alas, finds no relief,  enlivening hope, where art thou now?  Ah, hapless I, I do not know.  Cruel fate, a speedy death through pity give,  or else from cruel grief relieve,  in this pain, my complaints are all vain,  the afflicted heart no peace can gain. |

Text by Pietro Metastasio, English translation adapted from J. Chrichley.

**W. A. Mozart**

Bella mia fiamma, addio! / Resta, o cara KV 528

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bella mia fiamma, addio!  Non piacque al cielo di renderci felici.  Ecco reciso, prima d’esser compito,  quel purissimo nodo, che strinsero  fra lor gl’animi nostri con il solo voler.  Vivi: Cedi al destin, cedi al dovere.  Della giurata fede la mia morte t’assolve.  A più degno consorte ... O pene!  unita vivi più lieta e più felice vita.  Ricordati di me, ma non mai turbi  d’un felice sposo la rara  rimembranza il tuo riposo.  Regina, io vado ad ubbidirti...  Ah, tutto finisca il mio furor col morir mio.  Cerere, Alfeo, diletta sposa, addio!  Resta, o cara, acerba morte mi separa,  oh Dio... da te!  Prendi cura di sua sorte,  consolarla almen procura.  Vado ... ahi lasso!  Addio, addio per sempre.  Quest’affanno, questo passo  è terribile per me.  Ah! Dov’è il tempio, dov’è l'ara?  Vieni, affretta la vendetta!  Questa vita così amara  più soffribile non è! | Light of my life, farewell!  Heaven did not intend our happiness.  Before the knot was tied,  those pure strands were severed  that bound our spirits in a single will.  Live: Yield to fate and to your duty.  My death absolves you from your promise.  O grief! United to a more worthy consort  you will have a happier, more joyous life.  Remember me, but never let  stray thoughts of an unhappy lover  disturb your rest.  Majesty, I go in obedience to your will...  Ah, let death put an end to my raving.  Ceres, Alpheus, beloved heart, farewell!  Stay, dear heart, cruel death tears me away,  o God… from you!  Look after her,  comfort her at last.  I go... alas!  Farewell, farewell for evermore.  This anguish, this step  is hard for me to bear.  Ah! Where is the temple, where is the altar?  Dear heart, farewell forever!  A life as bitter as this  can be borne no longer! |

Text by Michele Sarcone, English translation by Anne Evans.

**Programme Note**

The names **Josef Mysliveček** (1737-1781) and **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791) always come to mind to music lovers who reflect on the rich traditions of music making in 18th-century Prague. The older master, Josef Mysliveček, was the son of a prosperous miller who left the city as a young man to seek acclaim in Italy, whereas Mozart came to the city in 1787 from Vienna as a foreigner anxious to savour the admiration for his musical talents that was uniquely intense in Prague. For a time, between 1770 and 1778, the two were intimate friends, and Mozart learned much from Mysliveček about musical composition. Mysliveček betrayed Mozart’s trust, however, by failing to fulfil a promise to use his influence to secure him an opera commission in Naples. As a result, Mozart terminated what had been one of the most treasured relationships he had ever maintained with a fellow musician.

In the summer of 1770, the fourteen-year-old Mozart was preoccupied with the composition of his opera *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, a work that had been commissioned by Count Karl von Firmian for presentation at the Regio-Ducal Teatro in Milan at the end of the year. In his mid-teens, a project as large as a three-act Italian serious opera was quite daunting for Mozart. In light of this, it is hard to over-emphasize the importance of Mysliveček’s acquaintance with the Mozarts at this time. There were a number of talented composers who might have been able to acquaint the young Mozart with the latest trends in operatic composition in Italy, either directly or indirectly, but only one—Mysliveček—was a daily visitor to the Mozart household and an intimate friend of Leopold Mozart at the time Wolfgang composed his *Mitridate*.

Mozart’s *Mitridate* could certainly be described as a Myslivečkian work and there is no mistaking the orientation of Mozart’s opera towards Mysliveček’s compositional procedures. The arias Mozart composed for *Mitridate* represent a significant stylistic shift from the arias in such works as *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (1767) and *La finta semplice* (1769), and the concert arias he composed in Italy in 1770 before he began work on *Mitridate*. Completing the opera appears to have led him to study Mysliveček’s opera *La Nitteti* carefully, and to have borrowed a number of musical ideas from it. That Mozart would be interested in Mysliveček’s *La Nitteti* should not be surprising since the original commission Mozart received had in fact been for a *La Nitteti* opera. The Milanese commissioners later settled on *Mitridate* and it was that text that Mozart eventually set.

Josef Mysliveček completed twenty-six serious operas in Italian between 1766 and 1780, a larger number than any other composer in Europe during the same period. As a northerner, Mysliveček was remarkable for his ability to penetrate the ranks of a select group of musicians who were mainly responsible for composing the serious operas performed in Italian theatres of the day. The vocal piece by Mysliveček chosen for this programme is largely unknown to modern audiences, even though it is certainly an outstanding vocal composition of its era: the virtuoso aria “Mi parea del porto in seno” from the opera *Demetrio* (1779). *Demetrio* was one of the most popular librettos by Pietro Metastasio and Mysliveček set it twice: first for Pavia in 1773 and again in 1779 for Teatro San Carlo in Naples in honour of the birthday of Queen Maria Carolina. The second version of *Demetrio* belongs to Mysliveček’s final period of operatic activity and it is marked by a fresh absorption on his part of styles popular at the Teatro San Carlo. This last period of composition before his death encompassed only three years of activity that nonetheless saw the composition of seven new operas. The works of this last period are the most varied in musical and dramatic format and exhibit a melodic style closest to that of the mature Mozart. The aria “Mi parea del porto in seno” comes from Act II of *Demetrio* and is sung by the heroine, Queen Cleonice of Syria, who expresses her emotional turmoil, caused by a supposed conflict between love and duty to her people.

From Mozart, the programme features a vocal masterpiece, the concert aria “Bella mia fiamma”, which was written during the second of Mozart’s trips to Prague in autumn of 1787, when he was present in the city to supervise the first performance of *Don Giovanni*. Its completion is recorded in Mozart’s own catalogue of musical compositions on 3 November 1787, five days after the première of the opera. The aria was prepared specifically for the use of the Prague singer Josefa Dušková, a great fixture of musical life in the city who appeared strictly as a singer in public concerts, never in operatic roles. She and her husband František were the owners of the famous Bertramka Villa, and according to Mozart’s son Karl Thomas (in a reminiscence written down in 1856), the aria was written there. Karl Thomas was not present to witness the incident, rather he would have learned about it when he lived in Prague after his father’s death during the 1790s. He claimed that Dušková locked Mozart up in a pavilion on the grounds of the Bertramka and told him that she would not let him out until he finished a setting of the text “Bella mia fiamma” that he had earlier promised to prepare just for her. According to Karl Thomas, Mozart did just as he was told, but added some exceptionally difficult passagework and swore that if Dušková proved herself unable to sing it perfectly at first sight, he would destroy the aria immediately. Whether or not the threat was in earnest, or if the anecdote is even true, the aria has certainly survived, and the account of its genesis recorded by Karl Thomas Mozart nearly 70 years after it supposedly occurred is in fact the only surviving documentation of any visit that his father ever made to the Bertramka Villa.

The reason for Dušková’s attraction to the text “Bella mia fiamma” – or even the means by which it came to her attention – is completely unknown. It was originally used in an obscure operaof Niccolò Jommelli written in 1772 to be sung by a male soprano in a male role. The scene portrayed in the aria takes the form of an elaborate farewell of the character Titano, an ancient “King of Iberia,” to his beloved Proserpina, daughter of Queen Cerere of Sicily, who also happens to be Titano’s captor. Titano is under a sentence of death from the queen because he has dared to propose marriage to her daughter. Audiences of the time would never doubt that the queen’s objections would be overcome in time and the couple would be able to marry by the end of the opera.

The background for the emotional parting between the lovers is given out in the introductory recitative, which is lavishly accompanied by the full orchestra and followed by another vocal piece in slow-fast format. The mood of the slow section is based on Titano’s despair at the prospect of an imminent “bitter death.” The evocative word “bitter” is what appears to have suggested the exceptionally complicated chromaticism (i.e., added sharps and flats) introduced by Mozart in the vocal line. The style of the fast section is prompted by an exhortation to hurry up and get the execution over with as soon as possible. Of course, no execution is ever carried out.

*Programme note prepared by Collegium 1704 on the basis of texts by* ***Daniel Freeman****, author of the monographs* Josef Mysliveček, “Il Boemo”: The Man and His Music *and* Mozart in Prague*.*

**Simona Šaturová**

Simona Šaturová was born in Bratislava, Slovakia. She studied singing at the Bratislava Conservatoire and attended various master classes, most notably with the soprano Ileana Cotrubas and with Margreet Honig in Amsterdam.

Highlights of her 2019-20 season include the debut in the role of Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro* in a Mozart – Da Ponte Trilogia production at the Théatre de la Monnaie in Brussels, and the role of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and the solo part in Beethoven’s *Missa solemnis* with Manfred Honeck in Pittsburgh.

She is a frequent guest at La Monnaie. Apart from Violetta (*La traviata*, Andrea Breth, cond. Ádám Fischer) and Gilda (*Rigoletto*, Robert Carsen, cond. Carlo Rizzi), she has also performed there asIlia (*Idomeneo*)*,* Sandrina (*La finta giardiniera*)*,* Servilia(*La clemenza di Tito*),Ismene (*Mitridate*),and most recently as Celia(*Lucio Silla*)*.* Since her highly acclaimed success as Konstanze(*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), she is also closely connected to the Aalto-Theatre in Essen.

Simona Šaturová has also earned an international reputation as a concert and oratorio soloist. She has appeared as a guest performer in New York, Dallas, Oslo, Detroit, Toronto, Granada, Istanbul, Japan, Israel, and Venezuela, at the Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, the Festival Internazionale di Musica e Arte Sacra Roma, the Vienna Spring Festival or the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival.

Conductors with whom the soprano has worked include Christoph Eschenbach (Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, NDR Sinfonieorchester), Manfred Honeck (Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic), Ádám Fischer (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment), Jiří Bělohlávek (Czech Philharmonic), Helmuth Rilling (Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra), Iván Fischer, Christopher Hogwood (Münchner Symphoniker), Tomáš Netopil (Orchestra Accademia Nazionaledi Santa Cecilia), Philippe Herreweghe (Orchestre des Champs-Elysés), Sir Neville Marriner, Leopold Hager, Sylvain Cambreling, Gennadij Rožděstvenskij, John Fiore, Kent Nagano, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Rolf Beck, Martin Haselböck, and others.

Simona Šaturová has a special relationship with Mozart’s music: “His music has always been with me. His *Mass in C minor* has been an especially important work for me. I have already sung it more than 50 times all over the world.” In January 2009 she performed her favourite piece of music in the Sistine Chapel as a guest of Pope Benedict. She also sang it in Baltimore under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki and in Berlin with Jörg-Peter Weigle.

She is also featured on a number of CD recordings, including Dvořák’s *Moravian Duets* (2018) and Martinů’s *Ariane* (2016) by Supraphon. In 2009 the Orfeo label released her first solo recording with the NDR Radiophilharmonie under the title *Haydn Arias*. This CD was selected as “Editor’s Choice” by the magazine *Gramophone*. Her recording of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach received the Supersonic Award and Preis der deutschen Schallplatten Kritik. Her CD *Decade* (2014) includes arias by W. A. Mozart and J. Mysliveček, several of them in world-premiere recordings.

Simona Šaturová was awarded the Walter and Charlotte Hamel Foundation Prize at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in 2007 and the Czech Thalia Award for the best vocal performance of 2001.

[www.saturova.com](http://www.saturova.com/)

**Collegium 1704 & Collegium Vocale 1704**

The harpsichordist and conductor Václav Luks founded the two ensembles on the occasion of the project Bach – Prague – 2005. Since 2007, they have been making regular guest appearances at festivals all over Europe. In 2008, Music Bridge Prague – Dresden began, bringing together the two cities’ wealth of cultural traditions. Their collaborations with such world-famous soloists as Magdalena Kožená, Vivica Genaux, and Bejun Mehta in 2012 led seamlessly to a second Collegium 1704 concert series at the Rudolfinum. Since autumn 2015, the two cycles have been merged into a single concert season that continues to take place in parallel in Prague and Dresden. In 2019 Collegium Vocale 1704 launched a series of chamber choir concerts in Prague.

In the field of opera, Collegium 1704 followed up on the international successes of its production of Handel’s *Rinaldo* with performances of Josef Mysliveček’s *L’olimpiade*, nominated for the 2014 International Opera Awards, and of Antonio Vivaldi’s *Arsilda, regina di Ponto* in its modern-era world premiere. Collegium 1704 has received invitations recently from such prestigious presenters as the Salzburger Festspiele (2015, 2016, 2018), the Berliner Philharmonie, London’s Wigmore Hall, Vienna’s Theater an der Wien and Konzerthaus, the Lucerne Festival, BOZAR (Palais des Beaux-Arts) in Brussels, the Chopin Festival in Warsaw, Wratislavia Cantans, and the Elbphilharmonie, and it is an ensemble-in-residence at the renowned festival Oude Muziek in Utrecht and at the Leipzig Bachfest.

In 2014, under the baton of Václav Luks Collegium 1704 collaborated with Bejun Mehta on a DVD of Gluck’s opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* with the stage director Ondřej Havelka and with Rolando Villazón on the making of the BBC 2 documentary *Mozart in Prague*. The ensemble took part in making the director Petr Václav’s epic film *Il Boemo* about the life of Josef Mysliveček.

The recordings of Collegium 1704 are popular with listeners and music critics (they have repeatedly won the Diapason d’Or, CD of the Month & Editor’s Choice, and nominations for CD of the Year Gramophone Magazine). Among their successful CD recordings have been the violin concertos of Josef Mysliveček, oboe concertos, cantatas, and the *B Minor Mass* by Johann Sebastian Bach, the world premiere of J. D. Zelenka’s *Missa Divi Xaverii*, and sonatas by Zelenka (both Zelenka recordings were honoured with the prestigious Diapason d’Or).

In 2019, Collegium 1704 issued the first complete Czech recording of Handel’s *Messiah* and a collection titled *Il giardino dei sospiri* with selections from Baroque secular cantatas sung by Magdalena Kožená. The latest recordings are an imaginary mass by J. D. Zelenka, *Missa 1724*, and the opera *Les Boréades* by Jean-Philippe Rameau.

… and why 1704? 1704 is a year of special significance for Jan Dismas Zelenka, our “composer laureate”. In August 1704, the church of St. Nicholas in Prague witnessed the magnificent performance of the Jesuit play *Via Laureata* with Zelenka’s music. As we know next to nothing about Zelenka’s previous life, this event heralds the arrival of the greatest genius of Czech Baroque music, who was also one of the most original composers in history.

[www.collegium1704.com](http://www.collegium1704.com)