

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Alcide

Alcide, the youthful Hercules, is led by his tutor, Fronimo, to a crossroads; there he is confronted by a choice between pleasure and virtue, represented by the goddesses Edonide and Aretea. By choosing the latter Alcides earns the praise of the gods. Here he puzzles whether to follow the allure of pleasure.

Alcide:

Mi sorprende un tanto affetto,
non ricuso, non l'accetto,
ma domando all'alma oppressa
qualche istante a respirar.
Son confuso, e in sen mi sento
fra il contento e lo stupore,
la ragione opposta al core
agitarsi e vaccillar.

I am stunned by such a powerful feeling,
I can neither resist it, nor accept it;
But only ask to my anguished soul
To breathe for a few moments.
I am bewildered, and in my breast,
Divided between happiness and astonishment,
Reason challenges my heart,
Anguished and irresolute.

From slightly earlier in the story: Fronimo has just left Alcide to face his trial. Alcide worries and asks the gods for help.

Alcide - Recitative:

In qual mar di dubbiezze Fronimo, m'abbandona! Il primo dunque, il più difficil passo nel cammin della vita muover solo io dovrò! Ma Giove è padre, Fronimo è amico, e non m'avranno esposto a rischio, che non sia superabil da me. Si quell'innata e libera ragion ch'ora è mia guida. L'uno e l'altro sentier vegga e decida. Questo agevole e ameno col tremolar dei fiori, col mormorar dell'onde, col vaneggiar d'un'odorosa erbetta. Par che voglia sedurmi e non m'alletta.

In what a sea of doubts Fronimo has left me!
I must, then, make the first and most difficult journey of my life alone! But Jove is my father, and Fronimo a friend: surely they are not exposing me to a danger that I cannot overcome. Yes, that eternal and free reason, which now leads me, shall evaluate both paths and then decide. The first one is simple and alluring: with its quivering flowers, murmuring waves, and freshly scented grass, it tries to seduce me, yet does not tempt me.

L'altro alpestre, scosceso, erto e selvaggio, degno d'un'alma audace, par che voglia atterirmi, eppur mi piace. Sì, questo si scelga, e se mai fosse l'altro il miglior? Per ingannar altrui non han composte i Numi sì potenti lusighe, al chiaro invito ceder convien, quindi si vada... Oh, dio, non so per qual cagione il piè non mi seconda, il cor s'opponne. Che fo? Chi mi consiglia? Il tempo stringe. La dubiezza s'acresce; oso, pavento, voglio, scelgo, mi pento e il cor intanto par, che cominci a palpitarmi in petto. Questo debole affetto, questi palpiti ignoti, ah, forse sono rimproveri del Ciel! Da me negletto così forse il suo sdegno ei mi palesa. Ah, sì, dal Cielo incominciam l'impresa.

The other one is steep, arduous, precipitous, wild, but worthy of a bold soul. It appears terrifying, but it pleases me. Yes, I will choose this one. But what if the former is better? The gods did not conceive such compelling attractions to deceive others; I should therefore yield to such overt invitation and advance further. ... O god, I don't know why my feet will not support me, and my heart resists. What shall I do? Who will advise me? Time is running out, and my hesitation grows. I venture, dread, choose, and regret, while my heart pounds in my chest. These weak feelings, these unfamiliar throbs - ah, perhaps they are admonitions from heaven! Maybe this is how it manifests its scorn, which I have so far ignored. Yes, from heaven, I shall begin my endeavour.

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Aria:

Dei clementi, amici Dei,
che il mio cor vedete appieno
io vi chiedo un sol baleno
che rischiari il mio pensier.
Senza voi dubbioso e lento sento
il cor languirmi in seno,
ed egual con voi lo sento
ogni impresa a sostener.

Benevolent and friendly gods,
Who fully see into my heart,
I ask only for a flash
To illumine up my mind.
Without you, I feel uncertain and reluctant
My heart languishes in my breast,
And, like you, I feel
That it should sustain all my efforts.

Le Faucon

An impoverished Spanish nobleman, Don Federigo, disappointed in love, retreats to his country estate with nothing to his name but his servant and his beloved pet falcon. The widow Elvira, who has previously rejected him, now visits him and demands the falcon to revive the spirits of her ailing son; Federigo reveals that he has just served the bird to her for dinner, since he had nothing else to offer. Elvira takes this as an earnest of true love and accepts Federigo's marriage proposal.

Elvira:

Ne me parlez point de tendresse
Pour un autre que pour mon fils.
Pour lui, pour lui seul
Mon coeur s'intéresse.
O ciel! n'entens - je point ses cris?
Mères! quand pour un fils on tremble
Qui pourroit charmer notre ennui?
Est-il quelqu' amour qui reszemble,
A l'amour qu'on a pour lui!

Do not speak to me of tenderness
For anyone but my son.
In him, in him alone
My heart takes an interest.
Heavens! Do I not hear his cries?
Mothers, when we tremble for our son,
Who could ever divert us from our troubles?
Is there any love that can compare
To our love for him?

Elvira:

Pour toi l'amour seul a des charmes,
Et peu zensible à mes alarmes,
Tu ne songes qu'à ton amour,
Mais il viendra peut-être un jour,
Qui te coûtera bien des larmes.
Alors, toute en proie aux douleurs,
Dupe de ces fausses douceurs,
Dont la jeunesse est trop avide,
Tu ne verras dans le perfide
Qu'un serpent, caché sous les fleurs.

For you, only love has charms,
And, regardless of my warnings,
You dream only about your love.
But perhaps the day will come
When this will cost you many tears.
That day, overwhelmed by your sorrow,
Cheated by those false sweetnesss,
For which youth is all too eager,
You will see that the traitor
Is nothing but a snake hiding among the flowers.

La forza dell'amore e dell'odio

Taxile:

Colle procelle in seno
Sembri tranquillo il mar
E un Zefiro sereno
Col placido spirar
Finga la calma.
Ma se quel Cor superbo
L'istesso ancor sarà
Vi lascio in libertà
Sdegni dell' alma.

Despite the storm in my breast,
May the sea appear calm,
And may the peaceful Zephyr,
With its placid breezes,
Pretend composure.
But if that haughty heart
Remains unchanged,
Then I shall set you free,
O disdain of my soul.

Talestri:

Amico, Tiranno
Lusinghe, rigore
Con pari valore
Sprezzare io saprò
Nel barbaro affanno,
Che il core mi preme,
Quest' alma non teme
Spavento no ho'

Both the friend and the tyrant,
Flattery and diligence
I shall despise
With equal determination.
Despite the barbarous grief
That afflicts my heart,
My soul is not afraid,
I feel no terror.

Nirena:

Scherza la Pastorella
al colle al fonte, al prato
Se de la ria procella
Vede il furor placato,
E da le sciolte nubi
Il Sole a scintillar.
Cosi felice anch'io
Accanto a l'Idol mio
Godrò le scorse pene,
Gli affanni in rammentar.

The young shepherdess jests
On the hillside, by the spring, in the meadows
When she sees that
The violent storm is over,
And the sun shines again
Since the clouds have cleared out.
So, I will be happy
Near my beloved;
I too will enjoy the memories
Of the past troubles and anxieties.

Demofonte

The king of Thrace, Demofonte, asks the oracle of Apollo how long the practice of the annual sacrifice of a noble virgin must continue, receiving the puzzling answer: "as long as the innocent usurper sits on the throne". The nobleman Matusio tries to protect his daughter Dircea from sacrifice, unaware that she is secretly married to Thracian crown prince Timante with whom she has had a child. Demofonte wants Timante to marry Creusa, a princess of Phrygia. While Timante's younger brother Cherinto accompanies her to Thrace, however, he falls in love with her. Meeting Creusa, Timante admits without explanation that he can't marry her.

Dircea has been caught trying to flee the country and imprisoned. Demofonte orders that she be sacrificed. Timante tries to release her but with no success. He is also imprisoned. Creusa asks Demofonte for mercy. The king releases Timante and Dircea. Overjoyed Timante offers abdicate the throne in favor of Cherinto but is cast into despair when a letter reveals that Dircea is the daughter of Demofonte. However, a second document reveals that Timante is the son of Matusio. The "innocent usurper" is identified. Cherinto can marry Creusa, and the marriage of Timante and Dircea becomes legal. There is great rejoicing.

It is unclear exactly where the first aria falls, as it seems not to have been part of the original libretto, and Berezovsky's opera does not survive intact.

The second aria follows the delivery of the first letter. Timante contemplates his young son with horror as the child of incest.

Demofonte:

Mentre il cor con meste voci
mi palesa il duol che asconde,
la speranza al cor risponde,
che contento al fin godrà.

While the heart with sorrowful sounds
Reveals its hidden grief,
Hope replies to the heart
That, in the end, it will revel in happiness.

Timante:

Misero pargoletto
il tuo destin non sai;
Ah non gli dite mai
qual' era il genitor!
Come in un punto, oh Dio!
Tutto cambiò d'aspetto!
Voi foste il mio diletto,
Voi siete il mio terror.

Unhappy child, the child of woe,
Your destiny you do not know;
Ah! would you spare his future shame,
Never declare his father's name.
How sudden all is changed! O god!
To what extremity I am driven!
What was the darling of my heart,
Now makes my soul with horror start.

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