

Ceruleo

Love Restor'd

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Ceruleo

Emily Owen, **Jenni Harper** *sopranos*
Toby Carr *theorbo, baroque guitar*
Kate Conway *viola da gamba*
Benedict Williams *harpsichord*

Love Restor'd

Couch'd by the pleasant Helliconian spring — **John Blow** 1648/9-1708

Oh, the sweet delights of love — **Henry Purcell** 1659-95
A New Ground in E minor
O Let me Weep
Overture from *The Fairy Queen*
Crown the altar, deck the shrine
Many such days may she behold

Laudate Nomen Domini — **John Blow**
The Queen's Epicedium

O dive custos — **Henry Purcell**

Chaconne — **Francesco Corbetta** *c.* 1615-1681

She loves and she confesses too — **Henry Purcell**

Haste, give me wings — **John Eccles** *c.* 1668-1735

No, resistance is but vain — **Henry Purcell**
If music be the food of love
From rosy bow'rs
If love's a sweet passion

It was as undergraduate students that we had our first memorable encounters with the music of Restoration-era England, beginning with Henry Purcell. For several of us that was via his opera *Dido and Aeneas*, the appeal of which for Toby was 'great tunes, rhythmic interest, and an ability to be concise that is rare in classical music'. Emily sang Purcell songs as a student and found them to be 'super-dramatic, full of variety in texture and rhythm and dealing with themes that still seemed relevant'. Jenni grew up immersed in the sound world of period instrument performance, and so the memorable experience for her was re-discovery as a mature musician and realising that this music can be approached with all of the same dramatic and vocal technique that she would use in later classical repertoire. The harmonies were something that struck Kate early on: 'It's weird… the dissonances are unexpected and slightly outrageous, but they usually work out and resolve eventually. You don't feel like the rug is completely taken away from under you, or at least it is put back in the end!'

In 2018, Ceruleo embarked on a nationwide tour of a show about Henry Purcell, in collaboration with the writer Clare Norburn, director Thomas Guthrie and actor Niall Ashdown. The experience of staging much of this music was invaluable. Originally written in memory of Queen Mary but in our show *Burying the Dead* made intensely personal, ***O dive custos*** is a particular work where the theatricality has lived long in our memories and continued to influence our performances. For Emily, Purcell is 'the most wonderful composer for the stage, for me even his sacred music is somehow related to that world. That feeling of bringing dramatic imagination to what could also be done quite "straight" is something that has become particularly important to this group.' Jenni relates that to Purcell's setting of text, with the weeping ('flete') in *O Dive Custos* coming across clearly in Latin despite any language barrier.

This gets to the heart of why we want to share this music, and how we came up with this programme of some of our most treasured works. In Toby's words: 'this great composer of dramatic music was also limited by what kind of commissions and potential performances were available to him. This programme contains several pieces from *The Fairy Queen*, a work full of outstanding music but something of a narrative nightmare to try and stage in its entirety, belonging to that curious and short-lived English genre of semi-opera.' For Kate, the purpose of the programme is to 'provide a snapshot of the kind of music you might have heard in English theatres and (the very first!) concert halls, creating a kind of performance – like the stage works of Purcell and Blow – which flits between deep emotion, humour and melancholy, all interspersed with instrumental dance music.'

The French style of both music and dance was fashionable in England during the late seventeenth century, in part due to the musicians that Charles II brought with him when he returned from exile in France to be restored as monarch in 1660. One of those musicians was the guitarist Francesco Corbetta, whose **Chaconne** is paired here with Purcell's ***She loves and she confesses too***, an example of the intertwining of instrumental and vocal music typical of theatrical performances. The task of Purcell, Blow and Eccles was to mix this French style with elements of the Italian (the other influential style in Europe) along with their own innovations to create a new English way of composing.

Exploring the relationships between instruments and voices has been central to what Ceruleo have done ever since we formed in 2014. Reminiscing about our very first concert at an event in London's Barbican Centre, we remembered our first performance of Satoko Doi-Luck's arrangement of **A New Ground**, itself an example of the connection between Purcell's vocal and instrumental music, existing also as the song *Here the deities approve*. Of the instruments in our group, the viola da gamba with its sustained and rich tone is most suited to 'singing' without words, and the harpsichord and theorbo reprise their roles as flexible and dynamic accompaniment instruments, for which they were prized in the seventeenth century.

Eccles' ***Haste, give me wings*** comes from a work for the stage called *The Fickle Shepherdess*, and features sudden changes of mood which are typical of the so-called 'mad song'. As with Purcell's ***From rosy bow'rs***, the protagonist can go from triumph to anguish within a bar, giving the composer license to showcase many different facets of their abilities in a short space of time. Blow and Eccles were both renowned composers in their own right – worthy of programmes dedicated to their own music – but rather than focusing exclusively on one composer, we wanted to build on the idea of a 'snapshot' of English dramatic music, with a wide variety of pieces enriching each other by virtue of their contrasts and similarities, experienced sequentially. This took precedence over the desire for a simple depiction of the repertoire, and for all of us this is what makes it truly feel like a Ceruleo programme.

These songs and instrumental pieces deserve a life outside of their original narrative settings, but we believe they are still best experienced within a dramatic context embedded in the style of music and theatre in which they were created. That has certainly been our aim with *Love Restor'd*.

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Formed in 2014 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Ceruleo create dramatic programmes using spoken text alongside music for two sopranos and continuo. Every member of the group performs as a soloist, and they use all available combinations of instruments and voices to build innovative and captivating performances.

The ensemble released their first album, *Love Restor'd* – Songs from Restoration England – in December 2022 on the Resonus label. They have since toured the programme throughout the UK from Exeter to Helensburgh and will be recording their next disc with Resonus, featuring the music of Barbara Strozzi, in early 2024.

Ceruleo's focus on narrative programmes led them to commission *Burying the Dead*, a stage show about Henry Purcell, written by Clare Norburn and directed by Thomas Guthrie. The show has appeared at the Buxton International Festival, Lake District Summer Music, Baroque at the Edge at LSO St Luke's, Brighton Early Music Festival and the York Early Music Christmas Festival. The ensemble also created and premièred *Rival Queens*, an immersive operatic experience, for Handel & Hendrix House in London in 2017.

On the concert platform, Ceruleo have performed at venues including St John's Smith Square, St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Courtauld Gallery. Formerly Artist Fellows at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and members of the Brighton Early Music Festival's Live! Scheme, they have given recitals for City Music Society, the London Handel Festival and the Folkestone Literature Festival, and have broadcast live on BBC Radio 3's In Tune.

Couch'd by the pleasant Helliconian spring

from *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day,* 1691

Couch'd by the pleasant Helliconian spring;
Of bright Cecilia they sing;
The bright Cecilia that inspires the Brain;
The awful Goddess that their cause maintains;
And with her Sacred Power;
The artful Hand, and tuneful Voice,
And gives a taste of Heavenly Bliss;
In more than Martial Strains.

Oh, the sweet delights of love, Z627
a duet for the two Wood Gods from *Dioclesian*

Oh! the sweet delights of love!
Who would live and not enjoy 'em?
I'd refuse the throne of Jove,
Should power or majesty destroy 'em.
Give me doubts or give me fears, Give me jealousies and cares;
But let love, let love remove 'em. I approve 'em.

Thomas Betterton 1635-1710

O let me weep ('The Plaint'), Z629
from *The Fairy Queen*

O, let me weep!
O let me for ever weep,
My eyes no more shall welcome sleep.
I'll hide me from the sight of day,
And sigh my soul away.
He's gone, his loss deplore,
And I shall never see him more.

Anon

Crown the altar, deck the shrine, Z321
from *Celebrate This Festival,* a Birthday Ode for Queen Mary

Crown the altar, deck the shrine;
Behold the bright Seraphic throng
prepare our harmony to join;
the sacred choir attend too long.

Nahum Tate 1652-1715

Many such days may she behold, Z.331
from *Love's Goddess Sure,* a Birthday Ode for Queen Mary

Many such days may she behold,
Like the glad sun without decay,
May Time, that tears where he lays hold,
Only salute her in his way.

Charles Sedley 1639-1701

Laudate Nomen Domini

Laudate nomen Domini,
Laudate servi Dominum,
Qui statis in domo Domini,
In atriis domus Dei nostri.
Laudate nomen Domini,
Quia bonus Dominus.
Psallite nomini eius quoniam suave est.
Benedictus Dominus ex Sion
Qui habitat in Jerusalem.
Laudate Dominum.

Psalm 134: 1-3, 21

Praise the name of the Lord,
You, his servants, praise the Lord,
You who stand in the house of the Lord,
In the courts of the house of our God.
Praise the name of the Lord,
For the Lord is good.
Sing to his name, for it is sweet.
Blessed be the Lord out of Sion
Who dwells in Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord.

Elegy on the death of Queen Mary, The Queen's Epicedium

No, Lesbia no, you ask in vain,
My harp, my mind's unstrung,
When all the world's in tears, in pain,
Do you require a song?

See, how ev'ry nymph and swain
Hang down their heads, and weep!
No voice nor pipe is heard in all the plain,
So great their sorrows, they neglect their sheep.

The Queen of Arcadie is gone!
Lesbia, the loss can't be expressed,
Not with the deepest sigh, or groan,
Or throbbings of the breast.
Ah! poor Arcadians, how they mourn,
Oh! the delight and wonder of their eyes!
She's gone, and never must return:
Their star is fix'd, and shines beyond the skies.

George Herbert 1593-1633

O dive custos, Z504

O dive custos auriacae domus,
Et spes labantis certior imperi,
O rebus adversis vocande,
O superum decus in secundis!

Seu te fluentem pronus ad Isida
In vota fervens Oxonidum chorus,
Seu te precantur, quos remoti
Unda lavat properata Cami.

Descende caelo, non ita creditas
Visurus aedes praesidiis tuis,
Descende, visurus penates
Caesaris, et penetrale sacrum.

Maria Musis flebilis occidit,
Maria, gentis deliciae breves,
O flete Mariam, Camoenae!
O flete, Divae, dea moriente!

O God, guardian of the House of Orange,
and surer hope of fleeting power,
O you who should be invoked in adversity,
O divine ornament in prosperity –

whether the eager choir of Oxford
by the river Isis calls
on you in prayer of they who are washed
by the swift stream of the distant Cam –

come down from heaven to visit with your help
the palace not thus entrusted,
come down and visit the chapel of our Monarch
and the sacred chamber.

Mary is dying, lamented by the Muses,
short-lived darling of her people,
O weep for Mary, O weep you Muses,
O weep you Goddesses, Weep for the dying divinity.

Henry Parker 1604-52, translated by Oliver Taplin

She loves and she confesses too, Z413

She loves and she confesses too,
There's then at last no more to do;
The happy work's entirely done,
Enter the town which thou hast won;
The fruits of conquest now begin,
Io, triumph, enter in.

What's this, ye Gods! What can it be?
Remains there still an enemy?
Bold Honour stands up in the gate,
And would yet capitulate.
Have I o'ercome all real foes,
And shall this phantom me oppose?

Noisy nothing, stalking shade,
By what witchcraft wert thou made,
Thou empty cause of solid harms?

But I shall find out counter charms,
Thy airy devilship to remove
From this circle here of love.

Sure I shall rid myself of thee
By the night's obscurity,
And obscurer secrecy;
Unlike to ev'ry other spright
Thou attempt'st not men to affright
Nor appear'st but in the light.

Abraham Cowley

Haste, give me wings
A mad song in *The Fickle Shepherdess*, set for Mrs Bracegirdle

Haste, give me wings, and let me fly,
That I may mount the starry sky,
And there of all the gods enquire
How I may quench my fierce desire.

See, where the charming nymph does lie:
Oh, give her to me, or I die;

I'll mount above
And rescue my love, and I'll tumble the tyrant down;
He shall not dare to court my fair, tho' grac'd with th'imperial crown.

See Neptune with his watery train;
Come, ye Tritons, come all around,
Come plunge me in the briny main,
And all my flames confound.

Anon

No, resistance is but vain, Z601
from the incidental music to *The Maid's Last Prayer*

No, no, no, no, resistance is but vain,
And only adds new weight to Cupid's Chain:
A Thousand Ways, a Thousand Arts,
The Tyrant knows to Captivate our Hearts:
Sometimes he Sighs imploys, and sometimes tries

The Universal Language of the Eyes:
The Fierce, with Fierceness he destroys:
The Weak with Tenderness decoys.
He kills the Strong with Joy, the Weak with Pain:
No, no, no, no, Resistance is but vain.

Anthony Henley 1667-1711

If music be the food of love

If music be the food of love,
Sing on till I am fill'd with joy;
For then my list'ning soul you move
To pleasures that can never cloy.
Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare
That you are music ev'rywhere.

Pleasures invade both eye and ear,
So fierce the transports are, they wound,
And all my senses feasted are,
Tho' yet the treat is only sound,
Sure I must perish by your charms,
Unless you save me in your arms.

Henry Heveningham 1651-1700

From rosy bow'rs, Z758

from *Don Quixote*

From Rosy Bow'rs where sleep's the God of Love,
Hither ye little waiting Cupids fly;
Teach me in soft melodious songs,
To move with tender passion,
My heart's darling joy:
Ah! Let the soul of music tune my voice,
To win dear Strephon who my soul enjoys.

Or if more influencing is to be brisk and airy,
With a step and a bound and a frisk from the ground,
I will trip like any fairy;
As once on Ida dancing,
Were three Celestial bodies,
With an air, and a face, and a shape, and a grace,
Let me charm like Beauty's Goddess.

Ah! 'Tis in vain, 'tis all in vain,
Death and despair must end the fatal pain;
Cold despair disguised like snow and rain,
Falls on my breast,
Bleak winds in tempests blow,
My veins all shiver, and my fingers glow,
My pulse beats a dead march for lost repose,
And to a solid lump of ice my poor fond heart is froze.

Or, say ye pow'rs my peace to crown,
Shall I thaw myself or drown?
Amongst the foaming billows increasing,
All with tears I shed on beds of ooze,
And crystal pillows, lay down my lovesick head.

No, I'll straight run mad that soon my heart will warm,
When once the sense is fled love has no pow'r to charm:
Wild through the woods I'll fly,
Robes, locks shall thus be tore;
A thousand deaths I'll die,
E're thus in vain adore.
Thomas D'Urfey 1653-1723

If love's a sweet passion, Z629
from *The Fairy Queen*

If love's a sweet passion why does it torment?
If a bitter, oh tell me, whence comes my content?
Since I suffer with pleasure, why should I complain,
or grieve at my fate, when I know it's in vain?
Yet so pleasing the pain is so soft as the dart,
That at once it both wounds me and tickles my heart

I press her hand gently, look languishing down,
and by passionate silence I make my love known.
But oh! How I'm blest when so kind she does prove,
by some willing mistake to discover her love.
When in striving to hide, she reveals her flame,
and in our eyes tell each other what neither dares name.

Thomas Betterton 1635-171