

PYGMALION SCÈNE LYRIQUE

A melodrama from 1762 by
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

With music by
HORACE COIGNET

Pygmalion: João Luís Veloso Paixão

Galathée: Laila Cathleen Neuman

Musical Director: Mark Tatlow

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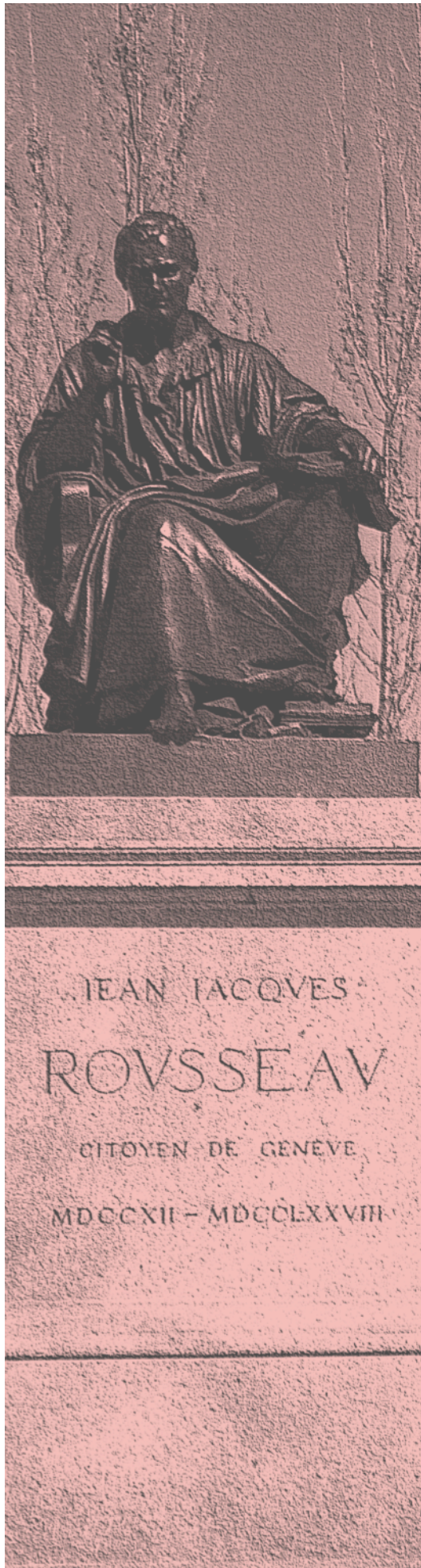
THE RESEARCH GROUP PERFORMING PREMODERNITY

Performing Premodernity is an interdisciplinary research group of international academic and artistic scholars devoted to studying the musical and theatrical ideals, practices and conditions that prevailed in Sweden and the rest of Europe between 1760 and 1815. The research embraces both the material and the immaterial dimensions of late eighteenth-century theatrical performance. The project aims to make a substantial and timely contribution to the understanding of premodern theatre practices and their cultural relevance today. The project is based at Stockholm University and is funded by The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond).



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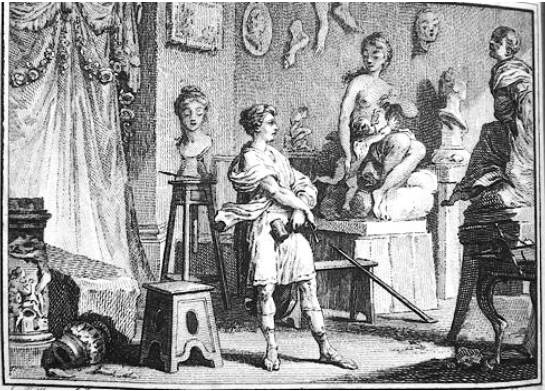
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PYGMALION

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU'S LYRIC SCENE

WITH MUSIC BY HORACE COIGNET

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune (the Younger), 1773, published in Pygmalion de M. J.J. Rousseau, Mise en vers par M. Berquin, 1775.



"Has my genius left me? What's happened to my talent? My fire has died. My imagination is frozen."



"Transfixed in this studio by some unimaginable spell, I can do nothing, but I can't get away."



"But why hide it? What do I gain from that? Now I'm reduced to idleness, why deprive myself of the pleasure of contemplating the most beautiful of my works?... "

THE OVIDIAN MYTH about the Greek sculptor Pygmalion who falls in love with his own statue was popular among 18th-century opera composers, and perhaps this was one reason why Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) decided to use it when writing his 'scène lyrique' *Pygmalion* in 1762. First performed at the Hôtel de Ville in Lyon in 1770, it can be understood as a reaction against what he saw as the insubstantial and shallow Parisian opera world. To Rousseau, French opera tended to flatter the ears and eyes of the audience by means of ornamentation and a beautiful surface, rather than move their hearts by means of simple harmony and expression: It is "a certain principle and one founded in nature that every Music in which all the chords are complete, must produce a great deal of noise, but have very little expressiveness: which is precisely the character of French Music", writes Rousseau in his *Letter on French Music* 1753 (translation by John T. Scott).

FURTHERMORE, Rousseau did not find the French language as well-suited for singing as the Italian. This is why the text in *Pygmalion* is spoken rather than sung while the silent stage action is accompanied by instrumental music. The brief orchestral interludes that accompany the movements of the actors are meant to help the audience understand the inner feelings of the characters.

PYGMALION IS OFTEN referred to as *the* first melodrama. Rousseau described the new genre as follows in his *Letter to Mr. Burney* (1777):

“

I have devised a genre of Drama in which the words and the Music, instead of proceeding together, are made to be heard in succession, and in which the spoken phrase is in a way announced and prepared by the musical phrase. The scene Pygmalion is an example of this genre of composition, and it has not had imitators. By perfecting this method, one would bring together the double advantage of relieving the Actor through frequent rests and of offering to the French Spectator the type of melodrama most suited to his language. (...) a sensitive and intelligent Actor, by bringing together the tone of his voice and the accent of his declamation with what the musical line expresses, mixes these foreign colours with such artfulness that the spectator cannot discern its nuances.

”

[Translation by John T. Scott]

THE MUSIC FOR *PYGMALION* was composed under Rousseau’s supervision by the amateur composer Horace Coignet (1735-1821), a resident of Lyon (two ritornellos were written by Rousseau himself, however). In the years following its premiere, *Pygmalion* gained popularity throughout Europe, and it was soon performed in German, Italian and Spanish, while the melodrama became more and more established as a genre. Several composers, including Franz Aspmayer and Georg Anton Benda, wrote new music for Rousseau’s lyric scene. Considered lost for many years, Coignet’s score was rediscovered in 1995, which has made it possible to perform *Pygmalion* the way Rousseau envisioned.



“Galatea! Receive my homage. Yes, I made a mistake. I meant to make you a nymph, but I made you a goddess. Even Venus is less beautiful than you.”



“Great gods! I feel the chisel pushed away by palpitating flesh!”



“Yes, masterpiece worthy of my hands, of my heart and of the gods, it is you, it is you alone. I have given you my whole being. From now on, I will live only through you.”

CAST AND COLLABORATORS



JOÃO LUÍS PAIXÃO: *PYGMALION*

João Luís Paixão is a singer and researcher specialising in Early Music. He began his career in Lisbon, where he received his musical training. In The Netherlands, he continued his theatrical endeavours in a three year collaboration with composer Arthur van der Kuip, creating a panoply of live improvised soundtracks for the Dutch dance company T.R.A.S.H. He is the co-founder of ensembles "A Dialogue on a Kiss", dedicated to the dramatisation of English lute song repertoire, and "Heptachordum", devoted to the gestural re-enactment of the French cantata, with which he was awarded the first prize in the 26th edition of Prémio Jovens Músicos. Since 2014, he has been a member of the ensemble "Seconda Pratica". His stage appearances have included works such as W. A. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Leporello), *Die Zauberflöte* (Papageno) and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Figaro), G. F. Händel's *Rodelinda* (Garibaldo), J. Peri's *L'Euridice* (Caronte), and G. Bizet's *Carmen* (Escamillo).

Since 2011, he has intensified his activity as a practice-based researcher, giving special attention to eighteenth century declamation, gesture and aesthetics, and its connection with singing. He has taken part in a number of conferences and given occasional workshops. Together with Dr. Jed Wentz, he has worked on the reconstruction of monologues from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. In September 2014, he performed Jason in G. Benda's melodrama *Medea* at the Utrecht Early Music Festival.



LAILA CATHLEEN NEUMAN: *GALATHÉE*

Laila Cathleen Neuman began her studies in the Netherlands, before studying with Rosina Crosatti and Margaret Hayward at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Milan. After this she received an Erasmus scholarship to study at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, where she obtained her master's degree in Lied and Oratorio with honours. She participated in master classes with Dalton Baldwin, Evelyn Tubb, Johannette Zomer, Trevor Pinnock, Angelika Kirschlager and Deda Cristina Colonna. She has taken a special interest in baroque music and dance, and the art of historic gesture, for which she has been working with Margit Legler and Reinhold Kubik. She made her début as Second woman in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and sang the leading role, Melpomene, in *Il Parnaso Confuso* by Gluck, in a production of the Mozart Opern Institut Salzburg in Vienna and Salzburg, directed by Josef Wallnig in Salzburg, Vienna, and Copenhagen.

Last season brought her back to Salzburg, to sing the role of Atalanta in *La Corona* by Gluck. Recent international activities include collaboration as a soloist in both the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, and the Christmas Oratorio by J.S. Bach, *Membra Jesu Nostri* by Buxtehude, with "Ensemble Esprit" directed by Jan Hulst, "Ensemble La Silva", the "Philadelphus Ensemble", "Ensemble Eik en Linde" and "Convivio d'Arte" in the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Italy.

DIRECTING TEAM FROM PERFORMING PREMODERNITY:

MARK TATLOW: *MUSICAL DIRECTOR*

British-Swedish conductor Mark Tatlow was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the University of London, the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio, London and has had a distinguished career over thirty years, in major opera houses as conductor, répétiteur and harpsichordist, on the concert platform as pianist and accompanist, and in international archives as a researcher and scholar. His engagement with young musicians has spanned his entire career and has included appointments in England, a professorship at the University College of Opera, Stockholm (2002-2012) and an active role as Musical Advisor to Scandinavia's only specialist music school, Lilla Akademien. He was Artistic Director of Drottningholms Slottsteater (2007-2013), where he conducted Sweden's first Monteverdi cycle, as well as operas by Cavalli, Cimarosa, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, and he now holds a visiting research professorship at Stockholm University of

the Arts, leading Performing Premodernity. Within Performing Premodernity his research interests include the vocal and instrumental performance practice of 17th and 18th century recitative, text declamation, and the influence of orchestral seating layout on musical leadership and interpretation.



JED WENTZ: *HISTORICAL ACTING COACH*

Jed Wentz's work is centred both practically and scholarly on the historically informed performance of music written before 1800. He is professionally active as a performer, a teacher and a researcher.

He received a Bachelor of Music from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, a Master's degree from the Royal Conservatory of the Hague and his doctorate from the University of Leiden. He founded and has performed extensively, both as flautist and operatic conductor, with the early music ensemble "Musica ad Rhenum", with whom he has recorded more than 30 CDs of 18th-century repertoire.

He teaches at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and has published articles on music and dance in *Tijdschrift voor Oude Muziek*, *Early Music*, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *The Eighteenth-Century Novel*, *The Cambridge Opera Journal*, *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* and *Music in Art*. In 2012 he became artistic advisor to the Utrecht Early Music Festival.



MARIA GULLSTAM: DRAMATURGE



Maria holds an MA in literature and is a PhD student in Theatre Studies. She is writing her doctoral dissertation on Jean-Jacques Rousseau under the (working) title: *Rousseau's performance aesthetics: The search for an antidote to the poison of shadows*. Maria's research draws on both Rousseau's own work for the theatre (plays and operas) and on his philosophical texts concerning theatre, music and art, in order to investigate Rousseau's theatre aesthetics. Since *Pygmalion* can be seen as the culmination of Rousseau's lifelong experiments as a playwright and as a theorist of theatre, Maria's involvement in the production of *Pygmalion* will have an important influence on her thesis. Apart from Rousseau and his oeuvres, Maria's research interests include the Enlightenment and its parallel transition towards the Romantic era, Rousseau's influence in Sweden, melodramas, libretto translations, gender studies, women's creativity and its reception.

MAGNUS SCHNEIDER: CONSULTANT DRAMATURGE



Magnus wrote his PhD thesis on the original production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Aarhus University, 2009). He is a co-founder of the Nordic Network for Early Opera. In Copenhagen, he has directed: Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (2007), Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (2011), and Cavalli's *Gli amori d'Apollonia e di Dafne* (2014). Magnus is a post-doctoral research fellow within Performing Premodernity and his research centres on the dramaturgy of Italian opera, in relation to the history of ideas as well as to the scenic and vocal performance practices and aesthetics. He is interested in the original productions and early performance histories of famous and less known masterpieces, which he studies from a perspective that involves aesthetic programmes, poetic, dramaturgical and musical analysis, philology, intertextuality, original singers as performers, original stage practice, original reception, and the political and cultural context of the original productions.

PETRA DOTLAČILOVÁ: COSTUME CONSULTANT



In February 2015 Petra commenced doctoral research at the University of Stockholm with a project entitled *The Characters of the 18th Century Stage: Libretto – Costume – Representation*. In her dissertation she will focus on the representation of theatrical characters in text, design and costume, and on the changes of these representations through the variation of costume design in the 18th century. She also collaborates with Dr Hanna Walsdorf's project *Ritual Design for the Ballet Stage: Constructions of Popular Culture in European Theatrical Dance (1650-1760)* at the University of Leipzig. Petra is also working on the analysis of theoretical texts and ballet librettos from this period and is currently preparing critical translations into Czech of texts by the 18th century choreographers Gasparo Angiolini and Jean-Georges Noverre.

PYGMALION

By

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

French source text: *Pygmalion. Scène Lyrique*, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Édition thématique du Tricentenaire. Œuvres complètes: Vol. 16. Théâtre et écrits sur le théâtre*. Sous la direction de Raymond Trousson et Frédéric S. Eigeldinger, Édition Slatkine: Genève, 2012.

Translation by Maria Gullstam, Felicity Baker and Magnus Tessing Schneider, 2015.

PYGMALION. SCÈNE LYRIQUE (EN FRANÇAIS)

Le théâtre représente un atelier de sculpteur. Sur les côtés on voit des blocs de marbre, des groupes, des statues ébauchées. Dans le fond est une autre statue cachée, sous un pavillon, d'une étoffe légère et brillante, orné de crépines et de guirlandes.

Pygmalion assis et accoudé rêve dans l'attitude d'un homme inquiet et triste ; puis se levant tout à coup, il prend sur une table les outils de son art, va donner par intervalles quelques coups de ciseau sur quelques-unes de ses ébauches, se recule et regarde d'un air mécontent et découragé.

PYGMALION

Il n'y a point là d'âme ni de vie ; ce n'est que de la pierre. Je ne ferai jamais rien de tout cela.

Ô mon génie, où es-tu ? mon talent qu'es-tu devenu ? Tout mon feu s'est éteint, mon imagination s'est glacée, le marbre sort froid de mes mains.

Pygmalion, ne fais plus des dieux : tu n'es qu'un vulgaire artiste ... Vils instruments qui n'êtes plus ceux de ma gloire, allez, ne déshonorez point mes mains. *Il jette avec dédain ses outils, puis se promène quelque temps en rêvant les bras croisés.*

Que suis-je devenu ? quelle étrange révolution s'est faite en moi ?...

Tyr, ville opulente et superbe, les monuments des arts dont tu brilles ne m'attirent plus, j'ai perdu le goût que je prenais à les admirer : le commerce des artistes et des philosophes me devient insipide, l'entretien des peintres et des poètes est sans attrait pour moi, la louange et la gloire n'élèvent plus mon âme, les éloges de ceux qui en recevront de la postérité ne me touchent plus ; l'amitié même a perdu pour moi ses charmes.

Et vous, jeunes objets, chefs-d'œuvre de la nature que mon art osait imiter, et sur les pas desquels les plaisirs m'attiraient sans cesse, vous mes charmants modèles qui m'embrasiez à la fois des feux de l'amour et du génie, depuis que je vous ai surpassés, vous m'êtes tous indifférents.

Il s'assied et contemple tout autour de lui.

Retenu dans cet atelier par un charme inconcevable, je n'y sais rien faire, et je ne puis m'en éloigner. J'erre de groupe en groupe, de figure en figure, mon ciseau faible, incertain ne reconnaît plus son guide : ces ouvrages grossiers restés à leur timide ébauche ne sentent plus la main qui jadis les eût animés ...

Il se lève impétueusement.

C'en est fait, c'en est fait ; j'ai perdu mon génie ... Si jeune encore ! je survis à mon talent.

Mais quelle est donc cette ardeur interne qui me dévore ? Qu'aïje aïje en moi qui semble m'embraser ? Quoi ! dans la langueur d'un génie éteint sent-on ces émotions, sent-on ces élans des passions impétueuses, cette inquiétude insurmontable, cette agitation secrète qui me tourmente et dont je ne puis démêler la cause ?

J'ai craint que l'admiration de mon propre ouvrage ne causât la distraction que j'apportais à mes travaux ; je l'ai caché sous ce voile ... mes profanes mains ont osé couvrir ce monument de leur gloire. Depuis que je ne le vois plus, je suis plus triste, et ne suis pas plus attentif.

PYGMALION. SCENE WITH MUSIC (IN ENGLISH)

A sculptor's studio. Stage left and stage right, blocks of marble and groups of rough-hewn statues. Back stage, another statue is concealed inside a tent made of lightweight glittering fabric, decorated with fringes and garlands.

Pygmalion seated, slumped on his elbows and looking mournful and troubled. He stands up abruptly, takes his working tools from a table and starts chiselling away at some of his rough blocks in a desultory manner. Then he steps back to consider his work, looking dissatisfied and despondent.

PYGMALION

It has no soul — there's no life in it. It's stone, that's all. I'll never make anything out of all this.

Has my genius left me? What's happened to my talent? My fire has died. My imagination is frozen. The marble is still cold; it shuns the touch of my hands.

Stop creating gods, Pygmalion... you are just a common artist... Vulgar instruments! Since you no longer bring me fame, don't debase my hands!

With a gesture of contempt, he throws down his tools, and then paces about absent-mindedly for a while, with arms crossed.

What has become of me? What is this strange upheaval in me...?

Tyre, you proud, opulent city, the brilliance of your great works of art no longer attracts me. I've lost the taste for admiring them that I had before. The company of artists and philosophers has lost its flavour for me. Conversing with painters and poets doesn't appeal to me now. Praise and fame no longer lift my soul. The tributes of people that posterity will likewise praise no longer move me. Even friendship has lost its charms for me.

And as for you young objects of desire, you, nature's masterpieces that my art dared to imitate — ! Pleasure once constantly made me follow in your footsteps. You, my charming models, who could set me alight with the flames of love and genius combined— now that I've surpassed you, you are all a matter of indifference for me.

He sits down and gazes all around him.

Transfixed in this studio by some unimaginable spell, I can do nothing, but I can't get away. I'm wandering from group to group, from figure to figure, my chisel is weak and unsteady. I can't recognise its guiding hand. These rough works, still almost formless blocks, cannot feel the touch that once would have brought them to life...

He gets up on a sudden impulse.

It's over, it's all over. I've lost my genius... And still so young! I've outlived my talent.

But — then, what's the passionate ardour I feel consumed by? I seem to be ablaze with an unknown fire. No! Does burnt-out genius feel such emotions in a state of torpor? Such outbursts of impetuous passions? This uncontrollable restlessness, this secret agitation that torments me without my knowing why?

I was afraid that my admiration for my own creation was distracting me from my work. So I hid it under this veil... My profane hands dared to cover this monument to their glory. Now that I cannot see it, I am sadder, but I am not more focused.

Qu'il va m'être cher, qu'il va m'être précieux, cet immortel ouvrage ! Quand mon esprit éteint ne produira plus rien de grand, de beau, de digne de moi, je montrerai ma Galathée, et je dirai : voilà mon ouvrage.

Ô ma Galathée ! quand j'aurai tout perdu tu me resteras, et je serai consolé.

Il s'approche du pavillon, puis se retire, va, vient, et s'arrête quelquefois à le regarder en soupirant.

Mais pourquoi la cacher ? Qu'est-ce que j'y gagne ? Réduit à l'oisiveté, pourquoi m'ôter le plaisir de contempler la plus belle de mes œuvres ?... Peut-être y reste-t-il quelque défaut que je n'ai pas remarqué ; peut-être pourrai-je encore ajouter quelque ornement à sa parure ; aucune grâce imaginable ne doit manquer à un objet si charmant ... peut-être cet objet ranimera-t-il mon imagination languissante. Il la faut revoir, l'examiner de nouveau. Que dis-je ? Eh ! je ne l'ai point encore examinée : je n'ai fait jusqu'ici que l'admirer.

Il va pour lever le voile, et le laisse retomber comme effrayé.

Je ne sais quelle émotion j'éprouve en touchant ce voile ; une frayeur me saisit ; je crois toucher au sanctuaire de quelque divinité. Pygmalion, c'est une pierre ; c'est ton ouvrage ; ... qu'importe ? On sert des dieux dans nos temples qui ne sont pas d'une autre matière, et n'ont pas été faits d'une autre main.

Il lève le voile en tremblant, et se prosterne. On voit la statue de Galathée posée sur un piédestal fort petit, mais exhaussé par un gradin de marbre, formé de quelques marches demi-circulaires.

Ô Galathée ! recevez mon hommage. Oui je me suis trompé : j'ai voulu vous faire nymphe, et je vous ai fait déesse. Vénus même est moins belle que vous.

Vanité, faiblesse humaine ! Je ne puis me lasser d'admirer mon ouvrage ; je m'enivre d'amour-propre ; je m'adore dans ce que j'ai fait ... Non, jamais rien de si beau ne parut dans la nature ; j'ai passé l'ouvrage des dieux ...

Quoi ! Tant de beautés sortent de mes mains ? Mes mains les ont donc touchées ? ... ma bouche a donc pu ...

... Je vois un défaut. Ce vêtement couvre trop le nu ; il faut l'échancre davantage ; les charmes qu'il recèle doivent être mieux annoncés.

Il prend son maillet et son ciseau ; puis s'avançant lentement, il monte en hésitant les gradins de la statue qu'il semble n'oser toucher. Enfin, le ciseau déjà levé, il s'arrête ...

Quel tremblement ! quel trouble !... Je tiens le ciseau d'une main mal assurée ... je ne puis ... je n'ose ... je gêterai tout.

Il s'encourage, et enfin présentant son ciseau il en donne un seul coup, et saisi d'effroi il le laisse tomber en poussant un grand cri.

Dieux ! je sens la chair palpitante repousser le ciseau !...

Il redescend tremblant et confus.

... vaine terreur, fol aveuglement !... Non ... je n'y toucherai point ; les dieux m'épouvantent. Sans doute elle est déjà consacrée à leur rang.

This immortal creation is going to be so dear, so precious for me! Now that my lifeless spirit is not going to produce anything great or beautiful or worthy of me, I will show my Galatea, and I'll say: 'This is my creation!'

Oh, my Galatea! when I've lost everything, you'll still be with me, and I'll feel consoled.

He approaches the tent, then draws back. He comes and goes, sometimes pausing to look at it with a sigh.

But why hide it? What do I gain from that? Now I'm reduced to idleness, why deprive myself of the pleasure of contemplating the most beautiful of my works?... Perhaps there is still some flaw that I haven't noticed. Perhaps I can still add some ornament to her finery. Such a charming object must lack no imaginable grace... Perhaps the sight of her will bring my languishing imagination back to life. I must see it again, examine it again. No, what am I saying? So far, I have not examined it. Until now, I have only admired it.

He is about to lift the veil, but lets it drop as if frightened.

I do not know what emotion fills me when I touch this veil. I am seized by terror. I think I am touching the sanctuary of some divinity. This is a stone, Pygmalion. It is your creation. ... But what's the difference? In our temples, we serve gods that are no different: made of the same material, and by the same human hand.

Trembling, he lifts the veil away, and bows low. We see the statue of Galatea placed on a pedestal that is very small, but set on a marble platform made up of steps in a semi-circle.

Galatea! Receive my homage. Yes, I made a mistake. I meant to make you a nymph, but I made you a goddess. Even Venus is less beautiful than you.

Vanity, the human weakness! I cannot tire of admiring my creation. I'm drunk with vanity [amour-propre]. I adore myself in the object I've made. No, nothing so beautiful ever appeared in nature. I have surpassed the creation of the gods...

Really? Have so many beautiful aspects emerged from my hands? My hands have touched them?... Could my mouth have...

Pygmalion! I see a flaw. This garment covers the nude too much. It must be cut lower. The charms it hides must be better prefigured.

He picks up his hammer and chisel, then slowly moves closer. Hesitantly, he climbs the steps of the statue, but he seems unable to dare touch it. Finally, with the chisel already raised, he stops.

What turmoil! I can't stop trembling! I can't hold the chisel in this unsteady hand... I cannot... I dare not... I'll spoil everything.

He summons his courage and finally strikes the statue just once with his chisel, but then overcome by fright, he drops it and utters a loud cry.

Great gods! I feel the chisel pushed away by palpitating flesh!

He steps down from the pedestal, trembling and confused.

Vain terror, mad blindness! No, I shall not touch it. The gods terrify me. She's no doubt already consecrated among them.

Il la considère de nouveau.

Que veux-tu changer ? regarde ; quels nouveaux charmes veux tu lui donner ?... Ah ! c'est sa perfection qui fait son défaut ... Divine Galathée ! moins parfaite il ne te manquerait rien ...

Tendrement.

Mais il te manque une âme : ta figure ne peut s'en passer.

Avec plus d'attendrissement encore.

Que l'âme faite pour animer un tel corps doit être belle !

Il s'arrête longtemps. Puis retournant s'asseoir il dit d'une voix lente et changée.

Quels désirs osé-je former ? Quels vœux insensés ! qu'est-ce que je sens ?... Ô ciel ! le voile de l'illusion tombe, et je n'ose voir dans mon cœur : j'aurais trop à m'en indigner.

Longue pause dans un profond accablement.

... Voilà donc la noble passion qui m'égaré ! c'est donc pour cet objet inanimé que je n'ose sortir d'ici !... un marbre ! une pierre ! une masse informe et dure, travaillée avec ce fer !...

Insensé, rentre en toi-même ; gémis sur toi ; vois ton erreur, vois ta folie. ... mais non...

Impétueusement.

Non, je n'ai point perdu le sens ; non, je n'extravague point ; non, je ne me reproche rien. Ce n'est point de ce marbre mort que je suis épris, c'est d'un être vivant qui lui ressemble, c'est de la figure qu'il offre à mes yeux. En quelque lieu que soit cette figure adorable, quelque corps qui la porte, et quelque main qui l'ait faite, elle aura tous les vœux de mon cœur. Oui, ma seule folie est de discerner la beauté, mon seul crime est d'y être sensible : il n'y a rien là dont je doive rougir.

Moins vivement, mais toujours avec passion.

Quels traits de feu semblent sortir de cet objet pour embraser mes sens et retourner avec mon âme à leur source ! Hélas ! il reste immobile et froid, tandis que mon cœur embrasé par ses charmes voudrait quitter mon corps pour aller échauffer le sien. Je crois dans mon délire pouvoir m'élancer hors de moi ; je crois pouvoir lui donner ma vie et l'animer de mon âme. Ah que Pygmalion meure pour vivre dans Galathée ! ... Que dis-je, ô Ciel ! Si j'étais elle je ne la verrais pas, je ne serais pas celui qui l'aime ! Non, que ma Galathée vive, et que je ne sois pas elle. Ah ! que je sois toujours un autre pour vouloir toujours être elle ; pour la voir, pour l'aimer, pour en être aimé ...

Transport.

Tourments, vœux, désirs, rage, impuissance, amour terrible, amour funeste ... oh tout l'enfer est dans mon cœur agité ... Dieux puissants, dieux bienfaisants ; dieux du peuple, qui connûtes les passions des hommes, ah vous avez tant fait de prodiges pour de moindres causes ! voyez cet objet, voyez mon cœur, soyez justes et méritez vos autels !

He considers her once more.

What do you want to change? Look! What new charms do you want to give her?... Ah! Her perfection is her flaw... Divine Galatea! Less perfect, you would lack nothing...

Tenderly.

But you have no soul. Your features must have a soul.

Even more tenderly.

How beautiful must be the soul fit to give life to such a body!

He pauses for a long time. Going back to sit down, his voice strained, he then says:

What am I daring to desire? These are insane wishes! What is this feeling in me? Oh, heaven! The veil of illusion is falling and I dare not see what's in my heart. I'd have too much cause for indignation.

Long pause, in a state of deep dejection.

So it's this noble passion misleading me! So I dare not leave this this room — because of this lifeless object!... A block of marble! A stone! A hard, shapeless mass, worked with this chisel!...

You mad fool, come to your senses. Bewail your state. Wake up to your mistake, your folly... no, no...

Impetuously.

No, I have certainly not lost my senses. No, I'm certainly not delirious. No, I've nothing to feel bad about. I'm not in love with this dead marble, but with a living being who looks similar. I'm in love with the form before my eyes. Wherever these adorable features may be, whatever body may bear them, and whatever hand may have created them, this being will have all my heart's desires. Yes! My only folly is that I can discern beauty. And my only crime is that I'm sensitive to it. There's no shame in that.

Less intensely, but still with passion.

Such of flame seem to fly out of this statue to make my senses blaze, then fly back with my soul to their source! Alas! She's still cold and motionless, while her charms set my heart on fire, as if it would leave my body to warm hers. In this delirious fever, it's as if I can fling myself out of my body, as if I can give her my life, breathe my soul into her. Oh, let Pygmalion die, to live in Galatea!... What am I saying? Heavens! If I were Galatea, I would no longer see her, no longer be the one who loves her! No, let Galatea live, and may I not be Galatea. Oh! may I always be another, so as to want to be her for ever, so as to see her, love her, be loved by her...

In transports of desire.

Torments of longing and desires, rage, impotence, terrible love, deathly love... Oh, all hell is in my troubled heart... Powerful gods, kindly gods! Gods of the people, you who knew the passions of men... Ah! you who have worked such wonders for lesser things! See this object, see my heart! Be just, so that your altars are deserved!

Avec un enthousiasme plus pathétique.

Et toi, sublime essence qui te caches aux sens et te fais sentir aux cœurs, âme de l'univers, principe de toute existence ; toi qui par l'amour donnes l'harmonie aux éléments, la vie à la matière, le sentiment aux corps, et la forme à tous les êtres ; feu sacré, céleste Vénus par qui tout se conserve et se reproduit sans cesse ; ah ! où est ton équilibre ? où est ta force expansive, où est la loi de la nature dans le sentiment que j'éprouve, où est ta chaleur vivifiante dans l'inanité de mes vains désirs ? Tous tes feux sont concentrés dans mon cœur et le froid de la mort reste sur ce marbre ; je péris par l'excès de vie qui lui manque. Hélas ! je n'attends point un prodige ; il existe, il doit cesser ; l'ordre est troublé, la nature est outragée ; rends leur empire à ses lois, rétablis son cours bienfaisant et verse également ta divine influence. Oui, deux êtres manquent à la plénitude des choses, partage-leur cette ardeur dévorante qui consume l'un sans animer l'autre ; c'est toi qui formas par ma main ces charmes et ces traits qui n'attendent que le sentiment et la vie ; donne-lui la moitié de la mienne, donne-lui tout, s'il le faut, il me suffira de vivre en elle. Ô toi qui daignes sourire aux hommages des mortels, ce qui ne sent rien ne t'honore pas ; étends ta gloire avec tes œuvres ; déesse de la beauté, épargne cet affront à la nature qu'un si parfait modèle soit l'image de ce qui n'est pas.

Il revient à lui par degrés avec un mouvement d'assurance et de joie.

Je reprends mes sens. Quel calme inattendu ! quel courage inespéré me ranime ! Une fièvre mortelle embrasait mon sang : un baume de confiance et d'espoir court dans mes veines ; je crois me sentir renaître.

Ainsi le sentiment de notre dépendance sert quelquefois à notre consolation. Quelque malheureux que soient les mortels, quand ils ont invoqué les dieux, ils sont plus tranquilles ...

Mais cette injuste confiance trompe ceux qui font des vœux insensés ... Hélas ! en l'état où je suis on invoque tout et rien ne nous écoute ; l'espoir qui nous abuse est plus insensé que le désir.

Honteux de tant d'égarements je n'ose plus même en contempler la cause. Quand je veux lever les yeux sur cet objet fatal, je sens un nouveau trouble, une palpitation me suffoque, une secrète frayeur m'arrête ...

Ironie amère.

... Eh ! regarde, malheureux ; deviens intrépide ; ose fixer une statue.

Il la voit s'animer, et se détourne saisi d'effroi et le cœur serré de douleur.

Qu'ai-je vu ? Dieux ! qu'ai-je cru voir ? Le coloris des chairs, un feu dans les yeux, des mouvements même ... ce n'était pas assez d'espérer le prodige ; pour comble de misère, enfin, je l'ai vu ...

Excès d'accablement.

Infortuné, c'en est donc fait ... ton délire est à son dernier terme ... ta raison t'abandonne ainsi que ton génie !... Ne la regrette point, ô Pygmalion ! Sa perte couvrira ton opprobre ...

Still with enthusiasm, but with more pathos.

And you, the sublime being who hides from the senses and makes herself felt in our hearts, soul of the universe, source of all existence — you who, through love, give harmony to the elements, life to matter, feeling to bodies, and form to all beings: sacred fire, celestial Venus by whom everything is preserved and reproduced forever — ah! Where is your balance? Where is your expansive force, where is the law of nature in the sentiment I feel, where is your invigorating heat in the emptiness of my vain desires? All your fires are concentrated in my heart, but the coldness of death remains on this block of marble. I will perish by the excess of life that it lacks.

Alas! I expect no miracle. It exists, it must end. Order is disturbed, nature is outraged. Give back to the laws of nature their empire over us; restore nature's benign course and likewise, pour out your divine influence upon us. Yes, two beings lack the completeness of the things of the world; share between them this devouring ardour that consumes the one without animating the other. It is you who, by my hand, gave form to these charms and these features that await only feeling and life: give her half of mine, or give her all of mine if need be; it is enough for me to live through her. Oh, you who deign to smile at the homage of mortals, any being that feels nothing cannot honour you. Extend your glory with your works! Goddess of beauty, spare nature this affront, whereby such a perfect model remains the mere image of what is not in nature.

Little by little, with a movement of confidence and joy, he comes back to himself.

I'm recovering my senses. What an unexpected calm! I feel revived by an unhopd-for courage. My blood was hot with a deadly fever, but now a balm of confidence and hope flows in my veins. I think I can feel myself being born again.

This is how the feeling of our dependence can sometimes be our consolation. However unhappy we mortals are, once we have invoked the gods, we are calmer...

And yet this wrongful trust can deceive those who form senseless wishes... Alas! when we are in my present state, we invoke everything, but nothing heeds us. Then the hope that deludes us is more meaningless than our desire.

Ashamed as I am of my many distracted states, I no longer dare even to gaze upon their cause. When I want to raise my eyes to that fatal object, I feel disturbed again, a palpitation chokes me, a secret terror stops me...

Bitter irony.

Well then, look up, you miserable wretch. Be bold! Dare to stare at a statue.

He sees the statue come to life and turns away, seized with fright, his heart stricken with pain.

What did I see? Good gods, what did I think I saw? The colour of flesh, a fire in the eyes, even movements... It was not enough to hope for a miracle. Finally to see it — this is the deepest misery.

Extreme dejection.

So, you unhappy man, it's all over... your delusion has reached its final stage... your reason abandons you, just as your genius did! Don't be sorry, Pygmalion! The loss of your reason will cover your shame...

Vive indignation.

Il est trop heureux pour l'amant d'une pierre de devenir un homme à visions.

Il se retourne et voit la statue se mouvoir et descendre elle-même les gradins par lesquels il a monté sur le piédestal. Il se jette à genoux et lève les mains et les yeux au ciel.

Dieux immortels ! Vénus ! Galathée ! ô prestige d'un amour forcené.

GALATHÉE *se touche et dit.*

Moi.

PYGMALION *transporté.*

Moi !

GALATHÉE *se touchant encore.*

C'est moi.

PYGMALION

Ravissante illusion qui passes jusqu'à mes oreilles, ah ! n'abandonne jamais mes sens !

GALATHÉE *fait quelques pas et touche un marbre.*

Ce n'est plus moi.

Pygmalion dans une agitation, dans des transports qu'il a peine à contenir, suit tous ses mouvements, l'écoute, l'observe avec une avide attention qui lui permet à peine de respirer.

Galathée s'avance vers lui et le regarde ; il se lève précipitamment, lui tend les bras, et la regarde avec extase. Elle pose une main sur lui ; il tressaillit, prend cette main, la porte à son cœur, puis la couvre d'ardents baisers.

GALATHÉE *avec un soupir.*

Ah ! encore moi.

PYGMALION

Oui, cher et charmant objet ; oui, digne chef-d'œuvre de mes mains, de mon cœur et des dieux, c'est toi, c'est toi seule : je t'ai donné tout mon être ; je ne vivrai plus que par toi.

FIN

Intense indignation.

It's too lucky for the lover of a stone to become a man of visions.

He turns around, and sees the statue moving and coming, herself, down the steps of the pedestal that he climbed earlier. He falls to his knees and raises his eyes and his hands to the sky.

Immortal gods! Venus! Galatea! Oh, the magic power of a crazed love!

GALATEA *touches herself and says:*

Me.

PYGMALION *transported with emotion.*

Me!

GALATEA *touching herself again.*

This is me.

PYGMALION

Ravishing illusion, you even reach my ears. Oh, never abandon my senses!

GALATEA *takes a few steps and touches a block of marble.*

Now, that is not me.

Pygmalion, in the grip of turmoil and transports of joy that he can hardly contain, follows all her movements, listens to her, observes her with an avid attention that almost takes his breath away.

Galatea walks towards him and looks at him; he stands up hastily, holds out his arms to her, and looks at her ecstatically. She lays her hand on him; he shivers, takes her hand and lays it on his heart, then covers it with ardent kisses.

GALATEA *with a sigh.* Ah! T

his is me, once more.

PYGMALION

Yes, dear and charming object; yes, masterpiece worthy of my hands, of my heart and of the gods, it is you, it is you alone. I have given you my whole being. From now on, I will live only through you.

THE END

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