

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 8.1

OPERA

title: *La Púrpura de la rosa* (The Blood of the Rose)

composer: Tomás Torrejón y Velasco

librettist: Pedro Calderón de la Barca

language: Spanish

performing forces: five female voices (Judith Malafronte as Venus); harp (Andrew Lawrence-King), theorbo, viola da gamba, violone

form: free, with some repetition of material

function: theatrical performance

source: *La Púrpura de la rosa* (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77355-2, 1999)

Listen for:

- speech-like passages
- metered passages
- timbres of accompanying instruments
- plucked instruments (harp, theorbo) versus bowed instruments (viola da gamba, violone)
- dialogue
- chorus
- changes in texture
- syllabic setting

Note: The harp, which we've heard in many other kinds of Latin American music, is prominent in this opera and in this excerpt. Skilled harpists, such as the one featured in this recording, can imitate other plucked instruments, such as the guitar. In this excerpt, bowed instruments reinforce the cadences.

Timing	Structure and text	What happens
00:00	Venus Pues extremos que él vio o cajas que yo oí, ausentaron a Marte,	Venus sings at a brisk tempo, accompanying instruments play chords (harp, with theorbo on bass notes)
00: 09	dejadme discurrir sin mí y conmigo a solas el ameno país destes montes, en cuyo marañada confín	mood begins to change after the words “a solas” (alone) tempo slows slightly, Venus lingers slightly over her thoughts high note on “destos,” as Venus contemplates the mountains instruments gradually less prominent ritardando leading to

00:21	He de ver, ¡ay de mí!	Venus's cry of anguish ("¡ay!"), the longest note so far
00:30	si hallo el descanso donde le perdí.	on "¡ay!" bowed instruments enter (viola da gamba prominent) triple meter established violin, viola da gamba prominent in low bass notes, reinforcing cadence on "perdí" (I lost)
00:41	Flora, Libia, Cintia, and Clori (Venus's nymphs) Flora: Considera . . . Venus: No tienes, Flora, qué me decir.	plucked instruments return Venus interrupts Flora
00:49	Libia: Mira . . . Venus: ¿Qué he de mirar?	Venus interrupts Libia
00:53	Cintia: Advierte . . . Venus: No he de oír . . .	Venus interrupts Cintia
00:57	Clori: ¿Tanto de una tristeza te dejas vencer?	
1:04	Venus: Sí. Dejadme, pues, dejadme sola; todas os id. Flora, Libia, Cintia, Clori:	Venus lets Clori finish and answers a direct question before bidding the nymphs to leave her alone
1:12	A pesar del amor que nos lleva tras ti, te dejaremos.	nymphs sing in four-part harmony plucked instruments accompany
1:21	Venus Ya que las eche de aquí	Venus alone onstage, her entrance overlapping with last note sung by the four nymphs
1:26	he de ver, ¡ay de mí!	repeats "¡ay de mí!" and the ensuing phrase (see above 00: 21)
1:35	si hallo el descanso donde le perdí.	bowed instruments reinforce the cadence

English translation (Louise K. Stein, liner notes *La Púrpura de la rosa*)

Venus

Since Mars has been drawn away
either by the extremes he observed in me
or the drums that I heard,
let me discourse with myself
beyond myself and with myself alone
in the lovely countryside
of these mountains, in whose
dense thicket
I have to see, alas,
if I can find peace where I lost it.

Flora

Consider . . .

Venus

Flora, you need not speak to me.

Libia

Look

Venus

What do I have to look at?

Cintia

Listen . . .

Venus

I don't have to hear

Clori

You allow yourself to be overcome by this sorrow?

Venus.

Yes.
Leave me, leave me alone;
all of you leave.

Nymphs

In spite of the love that binds us to you
we will leave you alone.

Venus

Now that I have banished them from here
I have to see, alas!
If I can find peace here I lost it.

Consider:

- Listen to the excerpt again from beginning to end, noticing especially the passages at 00:21 to 00:30 and at 1:21 to 1:35. Given that Venus has already expressed her despair and confusion, what is the effect of this repetition?

- What dramatic impact is created by allowing the nymphs only a few words in the conversation between them and Venus? How closely do these overlapping responses resemble ordinary conversation?

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