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The Themes Variés of Conrad Berens

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By Tom Moore

A previous article for Flute Focus explores the question of the correct name for Conrad Berens, and presents a preliminary works list, in the context of examining his operatic potpourris. His op. 9 is the only surviving work from Berens presenting the traditional selections of favorite airs or themes with variations for the flute. An earlier collection, op. 7, containing three themes and variations, is indexed in an 1822 bibliography by Whistling, but apparently does not survive. There are at least two editions of the collection op. 9, one issued by Cranz in Hamburg, the other by Ewer & Co. in London, with very similar titles in French (Thèmes Variés pour la Flute), and both noting that the publication is Liv. 1, which would seem to indicate that at least one additional livre or livraison was expected. The Cranz edition, with two cahiers, of two themes each, is held at the Royal Library in Copenhagen; the Ewer edition, nos. 1-2 only, is held at Yale University. Berens’s sonata for piano and flute, op. 14, was already published by 1824, so it is reasonably to date the op. 9 to 1822/1823, at which point the composer would have been only 21, if the birthdate of 1801 is correct.

IV Thèmes Variés pour la Flute, contenant

Cah. 1

1. *Duett aus Titus*, v. Mozart
   *In deinem Arm zu weilen*

2. *Duett aus Titus*, v. Mozart
   *Ach! Verzeih’ du Auserwählte*

Cah. 2.

3. *Arie aus Don Juan*
   *Wenn du fromm bist*

4. *Romanze aus Don Juan*
   *Horch auf den Klang der Zitter*

*Composés et dédiés à Monsieur H.F. Faure de St. Peray*
*Par Conrad Berens, op. IX, Liv. 1 – Pr. 10 Gr.*

*Hambourg chez A. Cranz*

The choice by Berens to issue a collection in the third decade of the 19th century dedicated exclusively to themes from late operas by Mozart seems rather unusual, both for the choice of works from thirty years earlier, and also simply for the choice to single
out one composer to draw one for musical building-material. Noteworthy as well is the fact that although the title of the collection is in French, the information about the sources is given in German, not the original Italian.

1. **In deinem Arm zu weilen**

This is no. 3 from *La Clemenza di Tito* (Mozart’s final opera seria, premiered September 6, 1791, in Prague), a duettino for Annio and Sesto, not a love duet, but a duet for two male friends. Annio is in love with Sesto’s sister, Servilia; Sesto, his friend, is in love with Vitellia, daughter of Vitellio, emperor deposed by Tito. Other instrumental arrangements include a set of variations for piano by J.B. Cramer, a sonatina for piano by Nicholas Rolfe, and an arrangement for harp and piano by Federigo Fiorillo. It is worth noting that a recent publication devoted to sets of variations for solo flute (*Con Variazioni*, ed. by Gerhard Braun, Heinrichshofen, 2003) includes this item in vol. 1 in a radically truncated form – only the theme and first variation – while the original composition contains an additional four virtuoso variations.

The original Italian libretto:

*Deh, prendi un dolce ampesso,*
Amico mio fedel,
*E ognor per me lo stesso,*
*Ti serbi amico il ciel.*

Oh, receive a fond embrace,
My faithful friend;
And may Heaven always
Preserve you as my friend.

The German libretto:

*In deinem Arm zu weilen,*
Freund, welche Seligkeit!
*Lass Glück und Schmerz uns theilen,*
*Voll treuer Zärtlichkeit.*

Translation of the German libretto:

To dally in your arms,
Friend, what blessedness!
Let joy and pain divide us,
Full of true tenderness.
Ach! Verzeih’ du Auserwählte

This is no. 7 from La Clemenza di Tito, a duo for Annio and Servilia.

Italian libretto:

**ANNIO**

Ah, perdona al primo affetto
Questo accento sconsigliato:
Colpa fu del labbro usato
A così chiamarti ognor.

**SERVILIA**

Ah, tu fosti il primo oggetto,
Che finor fedel amai;
E tu l'ultimo sarai
Ch'abbia nido in questo cor.

**ANNIO**

Cari accenti del mio bene.

**SERVILIA**

Oh mia dolce, cara speeme.

**SERVILIA, ANNIO**

Più che ascolto i sensi tuoi,
In me cresce più l'ardor.
Quando un'alma è all'altra unita,
Qual piacere un cor risente!
Ah, si tronchi dalla vita
Tutto quel che non è amor.

**ANNIO**

Ah, forgive my love
These uncounseled words:
The guilt belongs to these lips,
Ever used to addressing you thus.

**SERVILIA**

Ah, you were the first object,
Whom I loved faithfully until now;
And you will be the last to
Have a nest in this heart.
Dear words of my love.

Oh, my sweet, dear hope.

The more I hear your words
The more my ardor grows.
What pleasure the heart feels!
Ah, it removes from life
Everything that is not love.

German Libretto:

Annio:
Ach verzeih', du Auserwählte,
Diesen Namen meinem Munde,
Noch gewohnt von unserm Bunde
Ihm mit Wonne dir zu weihn.

Servilia:
Ach, hör' auf mein Herz zu quälen,
Du, der Erste, dem ich brannte,
Den ich mein auf Erden nannte,
Du wirst auch der Letzte sein.

Annio:
Ah, forgive, chosen one,
his name in my mouth,
accustomed through our union
to dedicate it to you with joy.

Servilia:
Ah, cease to torment my heart,
You, the first for whom I burned,
Whom I called mine upon the earth,
You will also be the last.

Cahier 2

Don Giovanni (or Don Juan in German) is not only far more well-known than La Clemenza di Tito, but is indeed one of the most well-known and often performed of all Italian operas, presenting the story of the famous seducer Don Juan of Seville, first
presented on the stage in a play by Tirso de Molina in the Spain of the early seventeenth century.

No. 3

Wenn du fein fromm bist

This is from Don Giovanni, Act 2, no. 18, with Zerlina to Masetto, in which she consoles her bridegroom after he has been beaten up by the Don. Variation settings were published by both Bochsa (harp) and Cramer (piano).

Italian libretto:

Vedrai, carino,
se sei buonino,
Che bel rimedio
ti voglio dar!
È naturale,
non dà disgusto,
E lo speziale
non lo sa far.
È un certo balsamo
Ch’io porto addosso,
Dare tel posso,
Se il vuoi provar.
Saper vorresti
dove mi sta?
Sentilo battere,
toccamì qua!iii

You will see, dearest,
If you behave yourself,
What a fine remedy
I can give you!
It is natural,
It doesn’t taste bad,
And the pharmacist
Does not know how to prepare it.
It is a certain substance
That I carry with me,
I can give you some
If you would like to try it.
Would you like to
Know where it is?
Feel it beating,
Touch me there!

German libretto:

Wenn du fein fromm bist,
Will ich dir helfen,
Ich weiss ein mittel
Für alles gut.
Es schmeckt so lieblich
Und hilft so plötzlich:
Du sollst dich wundern
Wie woll dir’s thut, ja!
Wie woll dir’s thut, ja!
Wie woll dir’s thut!
Ach, das zertheilet,
Lindert und heilet
Alle Beklemmung
Und allen Schmerz!
Soll ich dir’s nennen?
Das Händchen her!
Räthst du heute denn so schwer?
Fühlst du, wie klopfet hier?
Das helfe dir!
Wirst du’s nun kennen?
Brauch ich’s zu nennen?
Das helfe dir!

If you are nice and good,
I will help you,
I know something that
Is good for all your ills.
It tastes so fine
And helps right away:
You will be surprised
At how much it helps, oh yes!
Ah, it reduces
Soothes and heals
All distress
And all pain!
Shall I tell you what it is?
Put your hand here!
Are you so slow today?
Do you feel how it beats?
It will help you!
Would you like to get to know it now?
Do I need to name it?
It will help you!vi

No. 4

Horch auf den Klang der Zitter

This serenade from Don Giovanni to Zerlina is one of the best known arias from the opera, although not often the subject of arrangements or variations.

Italian libretto:

Deh, vieni alla finestra

Deh, vieni alla finestra, o mio tesoro,
Deh, vieni a consolar il pianto mio.
Se neghi a me di dar qualche ristoro,
Davanti agli occhi tuoi morir vogl’io!
Tu ch’hai la bocca dolce più del miele,
Tu che il zucchero porti in mezzo al core!
Non esser, gioia mia, con me crudele!
Lasciati almen veder, mio bell’amore!vii

Oh, come to the window, o my treasure,
Oh, come to console my lament.
If you deny me any consolation
I shall die before your eyes!
You whose mouth is sweeter than honey,
You, who have sugar in your heart!
Do not be cruel to me, my joy!
Let me at least see you, my beautiful love!

Horch auf den Klang der Zitherviii
Mach auf das Gitter!
O lindre meine Pein
und laß mich glücklich sein!
Läßt du mich trostlos flehn
So macht ein rascher Tod,
Du falsche sollst es sehen,
Ein Ende meiner Not.
Mir lacht dein süßes Mündchen
Voller Wonne
Und dein liebliches Auge strahlt
Wie die Sonne
Magst du auch grausam scheinen,
was gilt’s, du hast mich lieb,
lasse mich nicht allein
Du loser Herzensdieb.

Hear the sound of the zither,
And open the window!
O relieve my pain,
And let me be happy!
If you let me die without consolation
I will die quickly,
You, false one, will see it,
The end to my woe!
Your sweet mouth laughs
Full of joy
And your dear eyes shine
Like the sun
If even you may seem cruel
Who cares, you like me
Do not leave me alone
You thief of hearts.

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1 Cited in Adolf Bernhard Marx, Die Lehre der musikalischen Komposition: praktisch theoretisch, vol. 4, p. 487.
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http://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Don_Giovanni/Atto_Secondo/Scena_sesta

iii http://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Don_Giovanni/Atto_Secondo/Scena_sesta

iv Translation by Friedrich Rochlitz. Text from full score, Act 2, published, Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, accessed through IMSLP:

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vi http://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Don_Giovanni/Atto_Secondo/Scena_sesta