

High Spirits and Naughty Hijinks – Texts and Notes

Die Schlaunen Mägdchen- Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg; poem by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert

The brief cantata "Die schlaunen Mägdchen" was almost completely lost to posterity, if not for a lute entabulation by Johann Christian Beyer, a Leipzig-based lutenist who was a contemporary of J.S. Bach. Through some modern detective work, we have ascertained that the actual composer of the work is Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, who was more generally known as a theorist and music critic in the mid-18th century. Beyer's entabulation includes the vocal line, the bass, and fragments of obbligato passages. With the invaluable expertise and assistance of lutenist Olav Chris Henriksen, we have reconstructed the piece for fortepiano on the assumption that the original was a keyboard work.

Beyer also included the text, so a singer could either accompany themselves, or join with a lutenist; and the poem is by one of the most revered and popular poets of the age, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert. Gellert was both a clever wordsmith and a deeply spiritual thinker; he became known for witty moral tales with punchlines, and for long, profound religious meditations in verse. Most of these texts are strophic, but the libretto to "Die schlaunen Mägdchen" is in a fluid cantata form with clear divisions into aria and recitative. The narrative shifts from third person to first person, with a constant eye to the moral perspective. Marpurg seizes on this entertaining and sparkling text to create a fast-paced narrative, brimming with dramatic characterization, sardonic asides, and mock-tragic laments.

~ Pamela Dellal

Zwey Mägdchen brachten ihre Tage
Bey einer alten Base zu.

Die Alte hielt, zu ihrer Muhmen Plage,
Sehr wenig von der Morgenruh.
Kaum, krächte noch der Hahn bey frühen Tage;
So rief sie schon:

“Steht auf! steht auf! ihr Mägdchen, es ist spät.
Der Hahn hat schon zweymal gekräht!”
Die Mägdchen, die so gern
Noch mehr geschlafen hätten,
Denn überhaupt sagt man,
Daß es kein Mägdchen giebt,
Die nicht den Schlaf und ihr Gesichte liebt;
Die wundern sich in ihren Betten,
Und schwuren den verdammten Hahn den Todt,
Und thaten ihm, da sie die Zeit erfahn,
Den ärgsten Todt rachsüchtig an.

Ich habs gedacht, du guter Hahn,
Erzürnter Schönen ihrer Rache,
Kann kein Geschöpf so leicht entfliehn,
Und ihren Zorn sich zuzuziehn,
Ist leider eine leichte Sache.

Der arme Hahn war also aus der Welt.
Vergebens nur ward von der Alten
Ein scharf Examen angestellt.
Die Mägdchen thaten fremd und schalten
Auf den, der diesen Mord gethan,
Und weinten endlich mit der Alten,
Recht bitterlich um ihrem Hahn.

Allein! Was halfs den schlaunen Kindern?
Der Todt des Hahns sollt ihre Plage mindern,
Und er vermehrte sie noch mehr:
Die Base, die sie sonst nicht eh im Schlafe störte,
Als bis sie ihren Haushahn hörte,
Wußt in der Nacht itzt nicht, um welche Zeit es wär.
Allein, weil es ihr Alter mit sich brachte,
Daß sie um Mitternacht erwachte,
So rief sie die auch schon um Mitternacht,
Die früher auferstehn, den Haushahn umgebracht.

Two girls started their mornings
with an old Aunt.
the old woman didn't hold (much to
the dismay of her nieces) with sleeping late.
Scarcely had the cock crowed in the early
morning, but she would call them:

“Get up, get up, you girls, it's late!
The cock has crowed twice already!”
The girls, who would rather
have slept longer,
since after all, they say,
there isn't a girl alive
who doesn't love her sleep and her own looks;
made plans while lying in bed,
and swore death to the accursed rooster;
and at the first opportunity they vengefully
gave him a most wicked death.

I have always thought, you good rooster,
that the rage of thwarted beauties
no creature can easily escape;
but to incur their wrath
is, unfortunately, a very easy thing.

The poor rooster thus departed this world.
In vain did the old woman
undertake an investigation:
the girls played innocent, and scolded
the one who committed the murder;
and wept bitterly with the old woman
over her rooster.

And yet! What did it help those crafty children?
The death of the rooster was supposed to lessen their
troubles, and instead, it increased them:
the aunt, who usually slept soundly without stirring,
until she heard her rooster call,
now had no idea what time of night it was.
Therefore, since her age brought it about
that she would wake up at midnight,
then even at midnight she would call them;
so they had to get up earlier with the rooster dead.

Wärst du so klug, die kleinen Plagen
Des Lebens willig auszustehn:
So würdest du dich nicht so oft genöthigt sehn,
Die größern Übel zu ertragen.

Were you clever enough to put up
with the little inconveniences of life,
you wouldn't find it necessary
so often to bear greater hardships.

Arianna a Naxos – Franz Joseph Haydn

Haydn wrote the cantata *Arianna a Naxos* during one of his trips to London. Unusually, it is written for and intended to be played on the fortepiano instead of chamber orchestra. Ariadne is a princess of Crete. She meets Theseus, prince of Athens, when he is sent to Crete as tribute with a group of young Athenians, to be fed to the monstrous Minotaur. Ariadne falls in love with Theseus and helps him to slay the Minotaur, freeing himself and his companions. He promises to bring her back to Athens as his wife. On their way back from Crete, they stop at a deserted island called Naxos. There the god Dionysius appears to Theseus, commanding him to leave Ariadne behind on the island. Thus Ariadne appears in this cantata, and in numerous other musical depictions, abandoned and betrayed. Haydn's characterization of her is breathtaking: showing her before she realizes her predicament, we see a confident, vain, slightly spoiled princess who cannot even imagine the extent of her situation at first. Confident that Theseus is just around the next bush, she sings an exquisite aria for his benefit, to make him rush to her side. Haydn illustrates her coyness with clever pauses, as she listens to see if her singing is having any effect. When she discovers the Greeks sailing away from Naxos, we see the imperious princess calling down vengeance from the gods, and a girl suddenly without resources, all at once.

~ Pamela Dellal

Teseo, mio ben, ove sei tu?
Vicino d'averti mi pareo,
ma un lusinghiero sogno fallace m'ingannò.
Già sorge in ciel la rosea Aurora
e l'erbe e i fior colora Febo
uscendo dal mar col crine aurato.
Sposo, sposo adorato, dove guidasti il piè?
Forse le fere ad inseguirti chiama
il tuo nobile ardor!
Ah, vieni, ah, vieni o caro,
ed offrirò più grata preda a tuoi lacci.
Il cor d'Arianna amante che t'adora costante,
stringi, stringi con nodo più tenace
e più bella la face splenda del nostro amor.
Soffrir non posso d'esser da te diviso un sol momento.
Ah, di vederti, o caro, già mi stringe il desio.
Ti sospira il mio cor. Vieni, vieni, idol mio.

Dove sei, mio bel tesoro?
Chi t'invola a questo cor?
Se non vieni, io già mi moro,
nè resisto al mio dolor.
Se pietade avete, o Dei,
secondate i voti miei,
a me torni il caro ben.
Teseo, dove sei?

Ma, a chi parlo? gli accenti
Eco ripete sol.
Teseo non m'ode, Teseo non mi risponde,
e portano le voci e l'aure e l'onde.
Poco da me lontano esser egli dovrìa.
Salgasi quello che più d'ogni altro
s'alza alpestre scoglio,
ivi lo scoprirò.
Che miro? O stelle! misera me!
Questo è l'Argivo legno!
Greci son quelli! Teseo – ei sulla prora!
Ah, m'inganasse almen...no, no, non m'inganno.
Ei fugge, ei qui mi lascia in abbandono.
Più speranza non vè, tradita io sono!

Theseus, my love, where are you?
I thought you were nearby,
but an alluring, false dream deceived me.
Already rosy dawn rises heavenward,
and golden-haired Phoebus colors plants and flowers
as he rises from the sea.
Adored husband, where do your steps take you?
Perhaps your noble ardor calls you
to hunt wild beasts!
Ah, come, my dear one,
and I will offer a more welcome prey to your snares.
Bind the heart of your constant, loving Ariadne
in a more tenacious knot,
and let the torch of our love shine more brightly.
I cannot bear to be parted from you for a single moment.
Ah, I am seized with desire to see you, my beloved.
My heart sighs for you. Come, come, my idol.

Where are you, my fair treasure?
Who steals you from my heart?
If you do not come, I will surely die,
unable to resist my grief.
If you have any pity, O gods,
favor my prayers,
and return my dearly beloved to me.
Where are you, Theseus?

But to whom do I speak?
Echo alone repeats my words.
Theseus does not hear me, Theseus doesn't answer,
and my voice is borne away
by the wind and the waves.
He must be not far away.
Let me scale this steep, towering cliff;
there I will spot him.
What do I see? Oh heavens! Wretched me!
That is the Argive vessel!
Those are Greeks! Theseus – it is he in the prow!
Ah, perhaps I was mistaken... no, I am not wrong.
He flees; he leaves me abandoned here.
No hope remains, I am betrayed.

Teseo! m'ascolta! Teseo!
Ma oimè, vaneggio!
I flutti e il vento lo involano
per sempre agli occhi miei.
Ah, siete ingiusti o Dei,
se l'empio non punite!
Ingrato! perchè ti trassi dalla morte?
Dunque tu dovevi tradirmi?
E le promesse? E i giuramenti tuoi?
Spergiuro! Infido!
Hai cor di lasciarmi?
A chi mi volgo?
Da chi pietà sperar?
Già più non reggo, il piè vacilla,
e in così amaro istante
sento mancarmi in sen l'anima tremante.
Ah, che morir vorrei in sì fatal momento,
ma al mio crudel tormento
mi serba ingiusto il ciel.
Misera abbandonata,
non ho chi mi consola,
chi tanto amai s'invola,
barbaro ed infedel.

Theseus! Hear me, Theseus!
But alas, I am raving.
The waves and the wind take him
out of my sight forever.
Ah, you are unjust, O gods,
if you do not punish this wicked man!
Ingrate! Why did I save you from death?
So that you could betray me?
And your promises? Your vows?
Liar! Faithless wretch!
Have you the heart to leave me?
To whom may I turn?
From whom may I hope for pity?
I can no longer stand, my foot gives way,
and at such a bitter instant
I feel my trembling soul grow faint in my breast.
Ah, how I long to die at such a fatal moment,
But in cruel torment
I am saved by unjust heaven.
Miserable and abandoned,
I have no one to console me;
the one I loved so much flees away,
barbarous and faithless.

Maria Theresia von Paradis - Fantasie in G major

Maria Theresia von Paradis was a pianist, composer, and singer well known throughout Europe in the 18th and early 19th centuries. She was born in Vienna in 1759, the daughter of the Imperial Secretary for the court of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, for whom von Paradis was named. By the age of three, Maria Theresia was completely blind, but the empress seems to have played a part in still insuring a fine music education for the prodigy. She studied piano with Leopold Kuzeluch and voice with Vincenzo Righini. She is known to have been friends with both Mozart and Salieri, and the former is believed to have written his Piano Concerto No. 18 for von Paradis. Haydn is also known to have composed for her, and her virtuosic performances were met with great acclaim throughout Europe, especially in Paris, London, and Prague.

Maria Theresia von Paradis was prolific as a composer from a young age, and several large-scale works by her (operas, oratorios, and concerti) were performed during her lifetime. During her final tours as a pianist, she focused her composition on keyboard works, including the G major *Fantasie* from 1807. She established a music school in Vienna in 1808, teaching piano, voice, and theory while also producing a prominent series of student concerts until her death in 1824.

~ Vivian Montgomery

Die Grazien - Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach; poem by Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach is chiefly renowned for his keyboard works and orchestral pieces, not for his vocal compositions. However, he wrote a large amount of music for voices, including over 300 songs for voice and keyboard. In Bach's final collection of songs, *Neue Lieder-Melodien*, W. 200 (1789), published posthumously, pride of place is given to a piece from 1774: the cantata *Die Grazien* (The Graces). Unlike any other cantatas of Bach, this is intended for voice and keyboard alone. The text, by Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737–1823), oscillates between prose and poetry and shifts meter and verse forms rapidly. The fluidity of its structure affords the composer opportunities to transition from one character or texture to another in a seamless manner, without the breaks between recitative and aria in traditional cantatas. The inventiveness of the lengthy text is more than equaled by Bach's music. Melting from secco recitative to arioso to metrical aria and back again, he responds to every shift in tone with imaginative and original gestures. Bach concludes the cantata with a melodramatic postlude, as the leaps in the keyboard expand absurdly to encompass the entire range of the instrument.

Als an einem Frühlingsabende sich die drey Grazien neben
einem Walde in acidalischen Quellen belustigten, verlor sich
plötzlich Aglaja, die schönste der Grazien. Wie erschrocken die
Töchter der Anmuth, als sie Aglajen vermißten! Wie liefen sie
durch die Bäume und suchten und reifen!

So ängstlich bebt auf Cremonesersaiten
Der zärtste Silberton.
"Aglaja!" – rief der Silberton.
"Aglaja!" – half der Nachhall sanft verbreiten.
Umsonst, Aglaja war entflohn.
"Ach, Pan schlich längst ihr nach! Der Frevler hat sie schon!
Ach, Acidalia! Blick her von deinem Thron!
Soll sie nach langen Ewigkeiten
Nur jetzt nicht länger uns begleiten?
Zwo Grazien sind aller Welt zum Hohn,
Und ach! Die Dritte hat er schon! –"
So klagten sie. Umsonst! Aglaja war entflohn.

Nun schlichen sie an den Büschen herum, und schlugen leise
an die Blätter, und flohen nach jedem Schlage furchtsam
zurück. Denn stellten sie sich gleich, den Räuber auszuspähen,
So zitterten sie doch für Furcht, ihn nur zu sehen.

Endlich kamen sie an ein Rosengebüsche, das meine Chloe
versteckte – und mich. Chloe saß vor mir, ich hinter Chloen.

Itzt bog ich schlau an ihrem Hals mich langsam über,
Und stahl ihr schnell ein Küßchen ab;
Itzt bog sie unvermerkt den Hals zu mir herüber,
Und jedes nahm den Kuß auf halben Weg sich ab,
Den jedes nahm und jedes gab.

In diesem Spiele überraschten uns die Grazien, und sie lachten
laut, da sie uns küssen sahen, und hüpfen fröhlich zu uns
herbey. "Da ist Aglaja!" riefen sie. "Die Schleicherin! – Du
küssest, da man unruhig herumirrt, und dich nicht finden
kann?" Und itzt liefen sie mit meiner Chloe davon.

"Was!" Rief ich, "Lose Räuberinnen!
Wie sollte sie Aglaja seyn?
Ihr irrt euch sehr, ihr Huldgöttinnen!
Für Grazien ist das nicht fein!
Gebt Chloen mir zurück! Betrogne, sie ist mein!"

As on a spring evening the three Graces enjoyed themselves
near a forest in Acidalia's [Aphrodite's] spring, they suddenly
lost Aglaia, the loveliest of the Graces. How frightened the
daughters of delight were, when they found Aglaia missing!
How they ran through the trees and searched and called!

Thus anxiously, trembled on Cremonese strings
The softest silver tones.
"Aglaia!" – called the silver note.
"Aglaia!" – the echo softly helped to spread.
In vain, Aglaia was gone.
"Alas, Pan has crept after her so long! The wicked one has
her now! Alas! Acidalia! Look down from your throne!
Shall she, for all of eternity,
From now on no longer be with us?
Two Graces are an embarrassment to the entire world,
And alas! He has the third! –"
So they lamented. In vain! Aglaia was gone.

Now they slipped through the bushes, and beat the leaves
softly, and fearfully recoiled at every blow.
Then they hid themselves, to spy on the thief;
Yet they trembled from fear even to see him.

Finally thy came to a rose bush, which concealed my Chloe –
and me. Chloe sat in front of me, I behind her.

First I bent myself slyly around her neck,
And quickly stole a little kiss from her;
Then she bent her neck unnoticed around to me,
And each received the kiss halfway,
Each giving and each receiving.

In this game we were interrupted by the Graces, and they
laughed aloud to see us kissing, and leapt around us happily.
"There is Aglaia!" they cried. "The sneak! – You were
kissing, while we ran around troubled, and couldn't find
you?" And then they ran off with my Chloe.

"What!" I cried. "Crazy thieves!
How can she be Aglaia?
You're very wrong, you goddesses of grace!
For Graces, that's not very nice!
Give Chloe back to me! You scoundrels, she is mine!"

Doch die Grazien hörten mich nicht, und liefen mit meiner
Chloe davon. Zornig eilt ich ihnen nach, als plötzlich Aglaja
hinter einer Buche hervortrat, und mir winkte, und freundlich
lächelnd also zu mir sprach:

“Warum willst du zu Chloen eilen?
Beglückter Sterblicher, Aglaja liebet dich.
Kuß itzt einmal statt Chloen mich!
Wünsch nicht dein Mädchen zu ereilen:
Ich, ein Göttin, liebe dich. Kuß mich!”
Schüchtern sah ich die Huldgöttinn an.

Auf ihren Wangen sprach Entzücken,
Und Jugend und Gefühl aus den verschämten Blicken.

Gefährliche Reizungen! – Aber mir dreuster Hand ergriff ich die
Huldgöttinn, führte sie zu ihren Schwestern, und sprach: “Hier
ist Aglaja, ihr Grazien! –

O Chloe, meine Lust, mein Glück! –
Gebt meine Chloe mir zurück!
Ist dies Aglajens Mund und Blick?
Da! Nehmt die Huldgöttinn zurück.”

But the Graces didn't hear me, and ran away with my Chloe.
Angrily I rushed after them, when suddenly Aglaia stepped
out from behind a beech-tree, and waved to me, and smiling
warmly spoke thus to me:

“Why do you want to hurry after Chloe?
Lucky mortal, Aglaia loves you.
Now kiss me instead of Chloe;
Don't think about catching up with your girl:
I, a goddess, love you. Kiss me!”
Suspiciously I looked at the Grace.

Delight sprang from her cheeks,
And youth and feeling out of her bashful glance.

Dangerous enticements! – But with a bold hand I seized the
Grace, led her to her sisters, and said:
“Here is Aglaia, you Graces! –

O Chloe, my joy, my happiness! –
Give me my Chloe back!
Is this Aglaia's face and appearance?
There! Take the Grace back.”

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