

# VOICES OF LIGHT

An Opera/ Oratorio Inspired by Carl Dreyer's Film  
*The Passion of Joan of Arc*

LIBRETTO

**Richard Einhorn**

Voices of Light is an opera/oratorio for voices and amplified instrumental ensemble in celebration of Joan of Arc. It may be performed during a screening of Carl Dreyer's great silent film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, or with other staging, or as a concert work.

The libretto for *Voices of Light* is a patchwork of visions, fantasies, and reflections assembled from various ancient sources, notably the writings of medieval female mystics. The texts may be thought of as representing the spiritual, political and metaphorical womb in which Joan was conceived.

**Voices of Light** was first performed at the Academy of Music in Northampton, Massachusetts on February 12 and 13, 1994 by The Arcadia Players and the Da Camera Singers, Margaret Irwin Brandon conducting. The performances were produced by the Northampton Arts Council, Bob Cilman, director.

**Voices of Light** was released on CD by Sony Classical on October 22, 1995 performed by Anonymous 4, Radio Netherlands Philharmonic and Choir, Susan Narucki, and other musicians, conducted by Steven Mercurio.

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## PRELUDE\*

[Exclamavit autem voce magna...] «Deus aeterne, qui absconditorum es cognitor, qui nosti omnia antequam fiant, tu scis quoniam falsum testimonium tulerunt contra me; et ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum me.»

[She cried out in a loud voice] "Everlasting God, who knows things hidden and all things before they happen, you know they have borne false witness against me; and see! I die, although I am innocent of everything their malice has invented against me."

Daniel 13:42

Thronus...flammae ignis,  
Rotae eius ignis accensus.  
Fluvius igneus rapidusque  
egrediebatur a facie eius;  
Millia millium ministrabant...  
Et decies millies centena millia  
assistebant...  
Iudicium sedit,  
et libri aperti sunt.

[His] throne..was ablaze with flames,  
His wheels were a burning fire.  
A swift river of fire  
came forth from his countenance  
A thousand thousand waited upon him  
Ten thousand times a hundred thousand  
stood by.  
The court sat,  
and the books were opened.

Daniel 7:9

\* All words sung by Joan of Arc are in italics.

## VICTORY AT ORLEANS (LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)

*Jehanne...la Pucelle vous fait savoir des nouvelles de par decha que en VIII jours elle a cachie les Angloix hors de toutes les places quilz tenoient sur le revire de Loire par assaut et autrement ou il en eu mains mors et prins et lez a desconfis en bataille[...]le frere du conte de Suffort et Glasias mors.*

*Je vous promectz et certifie[...]en toutes les villes quy doivent estre du saint royaume[...]quy que vyenne contre.*

*Car Dieu, le Roy du ciel, le veult, et cela est révélé par la Pucelle...*

*Jehanne...the Maid sends you news from these parts: that in one week she has chased the English out of all the places that they held along the Loire river, either by assault or otherwise, in which encounters many English were killed and captured and she has routed them in a pitched battle. A brother of the Earl of Suffolk's and Glasdale were killed.*

*I promise and assure you [that we will take possession] of all the cities that must belong to [our] holy realm ... in spite of all opposition!*

*So God King of Heaven, wills it; and so it has been revealed by the Maid...*

# INTERROGATION

HOMASSE!

Hee! quel honneur au femenin  
Sexe!...  
Par qui tout le regne ert desert,  
Par femme est sours et recouvert.

Virtutem...mysterium secretarum et  
admirandarum visionum a puellari  
aetate...essem usque ad praesens tempus  
mirabili modo in me senseram ...

HOMASSE!

Une fillete...  
A qui armes ne sont pesans...

Et devant elle vont fuyant  
Les ennemis, ne nul n'y dure.

«Velis aut nolis haec erit tuum. Ego scio  
quid elegi»

Ex nemore canuto puella eliminabitur ut  
medelae curam adhibeat.

Non induetur  
mulier veste virili,  
nec vir utetur  
veste feminea:  
abominabilis enim  
apud Deum

Masculine Woman!

(Medieval slur directed at  
women)

Oh! What an honor for the feminine sex!...  
This entire realm, once lost by [wretched  
men],  
restored and saved by a woman again

Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc  
by Christine de Pizan, 1429, one  
of the earliest known feminist  
writers.

From my girlhood to the present time, in a  
wondrous fashion I have felt in myself the  
power and mystery of secret and  
wonderful visions...

St. Hildegard of Bingen, mystic,  
poet, and composer from the  
early 12th Century.

Masculine Woman!

A little girl [...]  
Upon whom arms and armor  
weigh lightly; [...]  
Before her all foes take off at a run,  
Of them none remains, not even a one.

Ditié  
Christine de Pizan

"Whether or not you wish it, this will be  
yours. I know what I have chosen."

Na Prous Boneta, 14th Century  
French heretic who was burned at  
the stake.

Out of an oak forest a girl will be sent forth  
to bring healing.

Ancient prophecy of Merlin  
thought to refer to Joan of Arc's  
mission.

A woman shall not wear  
the clothes of a man  
Nor a man  
the clothes of a woman.  
For abominable  
in the eyes of God

est qui facit haec.

are those who do so.

Deuteronomy 22:5

## THE JAILERS

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Feme a un cuer par heritage  
Qui ne puet estre en un estage.

A woman's heart is just not able  
To chart a course that's firm or stable

Or est sauvage, or est privee;  
Ore veult paiz, or veult meslee;

Now she's wild, now she's demure;  
Now wants peace, then starts a war;

Femme engine en poi d'ure  
Dount un[e] tere tout ploure.

The schemes she quickly engineers  
Can drown a countryside in tears

Que qui aime et croit fole fame  
Gaste son temps, pert corps et ame.

Who loves and trusts mad womankind  
Damns soul and body, wastes his time.

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,  
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.  
Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,  
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,  
Let's flee and leave them far behind!  
Now that I've told you of womankind,  
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire

When it comes to women, men, hold your tongue!

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,  
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,  
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

The Vices of Women  
late 13th Century misogynist  
poem

## PATER NOSTER

Pater Noster, qui es in caelis,  
Sanctificetur nomen tuum.  
Adveniat regnum tuum.  
Fiat voluntas tua,  
Sicut in caelo  
et in terra.

Our Father, who art in Heaven  
Hallowed be Thy Name  
Thy Kingdom Come  
Thy will be done  
In Earth as it is  
in Heaven.

Matthew 6:9-6:10

«Filia mea dulcis michi; filia mea, delectum  
meum, templum meum; filia delectum  
meum, ama me: quia tu es multum amata  
a me, multum plus quam tu ames me.

"My daughter, sweet to me; my daughter,  
my beloved, my temple; my daughter, my  
beloved, love me, since you have been  
much loved by me, much more than you  
love me.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo  
colca te tu in me.

"And after I have laid myself in you, now  
lay yourself in me."

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"This is my creature."

Blessed Angela of Foligno  
13th Century mystic and penitent

Pater Noster, qui es in caelis  
Sanctificetur nomen tuum  
Adveniat regnum tuum  
Fiat voluntas tua,  
Sicut in caelo  
et in terra.

Our Father, who art in Heaven  
Hallowed be Thy Name  
Thy Kingdom Come  
Thy will be done  
In Earth as it is  
in Heaven.

Matthew 6:9-6:10

et sentiebam dulcedinem divinam  
ineffabilem.

And I felt an ineffable divine sweetness.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo  
colca te tu in me.

"And after I have laid myself in you, now  
lay yourself in me.

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"This is my creature."

«Filia mea dulcis michi; filia mea, delectum  
meum, templum meum; filia delectum  
meum, ama me: quia tu es multum amata  
a me, multum plus quam tu ames me."

"My daughter, sweet to me; my daughter,  
my beloved, my temple; my daughter, my  
beloved, love me, since you have been  
much loved by me, much more than you  
love me.

«Et postquam ego colcavi me in te; modo  
colca te tu in me.

«Ista est mea creatura.»

"And after I have laid myself in you, now  
lay yourself in me.

"This is my creature."

Blessed Angela of Foligno

## THE JAILERS RETURN

Tant y a feme scet bon taire!

When it comes to women, men, hold your  
tongue!

Tant y a feme scet bon taire!

When it comes to women, men, hold your  
tongue!

Femme est dehors religieuse,  
Dedanz poignaunt e venimose;

On the outside she's religious,  
On the inside keen and venomous;

A soy sera d'aucun complainte,  
Ir se fait moult juste et moult sainte.

She will not tolerate complaint,  
She's lady justice and a saint.

Femme engendre bataille e guere,  
Exile gent de gaste tere;

Woman fosters strife and wars,  
And exiles men from ruined shores;

Femme ard chasteus e prent citez  
Enfudre tours e fermetez.

Castles she burns, cities defeats  
Destroys the towers and the keeps.

Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,  
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies!  
Ore vous ai dit de lur vies,  
Fuoums de lur cumpaignies.

Now that I've told you of womankind,  
Let's flee and leave them far behind!  
Now that I've told you of womankind,  
Let's flee and leave them far behind!

The Vices of Women  
late 13th Century misogynist  
poem

# TORTURE

Glorioses playes...

Et desiderabam videre vel saltem illud  
parum de carne Christi quod portaverant  
clavi in ligno.

Glorioses playes...

...ostendit cor suum perforatum quasi ad  
modum portulae unius parvae laternae ...  
quod ex ipso corde exiverunt radii solares.  
Imo solaribus radiis clariores...

Glorioses playes...

...«non est aequum, velle solum de melle  
meo gustare, et non de felle: si perfecte vis  
mecum uniri, mente intenta recogita  
illusiones, opprobria, flagella, mortem, et  
tormenta, quae pro te sustinui.»

Glorioses playes...

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt, early 14th  
Century visionary and poet.

And I longed to see at least that little bit of  
Christ's flesh that the nails had fixed to the  
wood.

Blessed Angela of Foligno

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

He showed [her] his heart, perforated like  
the openings in a small lantern...From his  
very heart issued forth rays of the sun --no  
--- brighter than the sun's rays...

Na Prous Boneta

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

..."It is not fair to wish to taste only of my  
honey, and not the gall. If you wish to be  
perfectly united with me, contemplate  
deeply the mockery, insults, whippings,  
death and torments that I endured for  
you."

Blessed Margarita, disciple of St.  
Umiltà, 14th Century.

Glorious wounds...

Marguerite d'Oingt

## ILLNESS

(LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)

Jehanne la Pucelle vous requiert de par le Roy du ciel,[...]vous puis que ne guerroyez plus ou saint Royaume de France,[...]et sera grant pitié de la grant bataille et du sang qui y sera respendu de ceux qui y vendront contre nous.

Jehanne the Maid begs you on behalf of the King of Heaven, make war no longer in the holy Kingdom of France, ...and a pitiful thing will be that great battle and the blood that will be shed therein by those who come there against us.

# SACRAMENT

O feminea forma, O soror Sapientie,  
quam gloriosa es  
quoniam fortissima vita  
in te surrexit,  
quam mors nunquam suffocabit.

O feminine form, O sister of Wisdom  
How glorious you are  
for in you has arisen  
the mightiest life  
that death will never stifle.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Oh maledetti! Oh grande indignazione!

O cursed ones! O great indignation!

St. Umiltà of Faenza, great 14th  
Century Italian mystic.

Fuge, fuge speluncam  
antiqui perditoris  
et veniens veni in palatium regis.

Flee, flee the cave  
of the ancient destroyer  
and come, coming into the palace of the  
king.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

...car plus est adjoustee foy au mal de tant  
comme le bien y est plus autentique...

...evil is rendered more believable by  
putting it together with good to make it  
more respectable...

From *The Quarrel of the Rose*  
Christine de Pizan

## ABJURATION

Exaudi, Deus omnipotens, preces  
populi...Puelle agentis secundum opera que  
sibi dixeras

Hear, Almighty God, the prayers of your  
people...of the girl acting according to the  
works which you had spoken of to her.

Prayer commissioned by King  
Charles VII pleading for Joan's  
freedom from imprisonment,  
1431.

Si quis in me non manserit,  
mittetur foras sicut palmes,  
et arescet,  
et colligent eum,  
et in ignem mittent,  
et ardet.

Those who do not remain in me  
will be discarded like branches:  
they will wither.  
So they will be gathered up,  
thrown on the fire,  
and burnt.

John 15:6, recited to Joan of Arc  
by Father Erard during her trial,  
at the confrontation in front of  
St. Ouen.

« Domine, istud quod facio, non facio nisi  
ut inveniam te. »

"Lord, that which I do, I do only to find  
you."

Blessed Angela of Foligno

«Depone animos.»

"Renounce your purpose."

From The Passion of St.  
Perpetua, a history of an early  
Christian martyr.

...Une femme -- simple bergiere --  
Plus preux qu'onc homs ne fut à Romme!

...a woman -- a simple shepherdess --  
More valiant even than Rome's worthiest!

Ditié  
Christine de Pizan

Ne universos nos extermines.

Destroy us not all together.

St. Perpetua

Benedicite, ignis et aestus, Domino;

Fire and heat, praise the Lord!

Daniel 3:66

«Depone animos.»

"Renounce your purpose."

St. Perpetua

...N'y a si forte  
Resistance qui à l'assault  
De la Pucelle ne soit morte.

Hester, Judith, et Delbora,  
Qui furent dames de grant pris,[...]

Mains miracles en a pourpris.

Plus a fait par ceste Pucelle.

«Depone animos.»

...eadem hora mittemini in fornacem ignis  
ardentis. Et quis est Deus qui eripiet vos  
de manu mea?  
Benedicite, ignis et aestus, Domino;

« Domine, istud quod facio, non facio nisi  
ut inveniam te. Inveniam te postquam id  
perfecero! »

... No force is there so strong --  
Try as they might to resist the attack  
Of the Maid -- it dies in vain before long.

One hears of Esther, Judith and Deborah,  
Who were ladies of great courage and  
worth; [...]  
Through them God performed miracles on  
Earth,  
But he fulfilled even more through this  
Maid.

Ditié  
Christine de Pizan

"Renounce your purpose."  
St. Perpetua

...The same hour you will be thrown into a  
furnace of burning fire.  
And who is the God who will snatch you  
from my hand?  
Fire and heat, praise the Lord!  
Daniel 3:15 and 3:66

"Lord, that which I do, I do only to find  
you. May I find you after I have  
completed it!"

Blessed Angela of Foligno

## RELAPSE

Karitas  
habundat in omnia  
de imis excellentissima  
super sidera  
atque amantissima  
in omnia  
quia summo regi osculum pacis  
dedit.

Love  
overflows into all things,  
From out of the depths to above the  
highest stars;  
And so Love overflows into all best  
beloved, most loving things,  
Because She has given to the highest King  
The Kiss of Peace.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

# ANIMA

...anima eius amore fluens et languens.

...The Spirit flowing and melting with love.

There are Seven Manners of  
Loving  
Beatrice of Nazareth, 13th  
Century.

...est ceste Ame cheue d'amour en nient.

...This Soul has fallen from love into  
nothingness.

Marguerite Porete, 14th Century  
member of the Free Spirit  
movement who was burned at the  
stake.

...mens eius insane suspensa ex vehementi  
cupidine...

...The Spirit madly possessed by violent  
desire...

...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in  
aeternitatem Amoris

...Only through everlasting Love is it  
drawn into the eternity of Love.

...anima eius amore fluens et languens.

...The Spirit flowing and melting with love.

Beatrice of Nazareth

...est ceste Ame cheue d'amour en nient.

...This Soul has fallen from love into  
nothingness.

Marguerite Porete

...anima eius amore fluens et languens  
...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in  
aeternitatem Amoris

...The Spirit flowing and melting with  
love...Only through everlasting Love is it  
drawn into the eternity of Love...The  
Spirit flowing and melting with love...Only  
through everlasing Love is it drawn into the  
eternity of Love.

...anima eius amore fluens et languens  
...per solum Amorem aeternum trahitur in  
aeternitatem Amoris

Beatrice of Nazareth

## THE FINAL WALK

[Exclamavit autem voce magna...] «Deus aeternae, qui absconditorum es cognitor, qui nosti omnia antequam fiant, tu scis quoniam falsum testimonium tulerunt contra me; et ecce morior, cum nihil horum fecerim quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum me.»

[She cried out in a loud voice] "Everlasting God, who knows things hidden and all things before they happen, you know they have borne false witness against me; and see! I die, although I am innocent of everything their malice has invented against me."

Daniel 13:42

## THE BURNING

Dominus condit sibi unum ignem dicendo  
sic: «vides hunc ignem; qualiter totam  
materiam et substantiam lignorum convertit  
in suam naturam, eodem modo natura  
divinitatis convertit in se animas quas sibi  
vult...»

Rex noster promptus est  
suscipere sanguinem innocentum.  
Sed nubes super eundem sanguinem  
plangunt.  
Unde angeli concinunt  
et in laudibus sonant.  
Gloria Patri et Filio  
et Spiritui sancto.  
Rex noster promptus est  
Suscipere sanguinem innocentum.  
Sed nubes super eundem sanguinem  
plangunt.

Jehanne, Jehanne!

The Lord made for her a fire, saying: "You  
see this fire; as it changes all the matter and  
substance of wood into its own nature,  
even so, Divine Nature changes into itself  
the souls it wants for itself..."

Na Prous Boneta

Our king is swift  
to receive the blood of innocents.  
But over the same blood the clouds  
are grieving.  
Hence the angels sing  
and resound in praises  
Glory to the Father, The Son and The  
Holy Ghost.  
Our king is swift  
to receive the blood of innocents.  
But over the same blood the clouds  
are grieving.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Joan, Joan!

## THE FIRE OF THE DOVE

Ah! Jehanne, Jehanne!

Ah! Joan, Joan!

Oh!

Oh!

...valde beatus fuisti cum Verbum Dei te in igne columbe imbuit.

...you were greatly blessed when the Word of God steeped you in the fire of the dove.

(ubi tu quasi aurora illuminatus es...)

(where you were illumined like the dawn...)

...valde beatus fuisti cum Verbum Dei te in igne columbe imbuit.

...you were greatly blessed when the Word of God steeped you in the fire of the dove.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

# **EPILOGUE**

## **(LETTER FROM JOAN OF ARC)**

Car Dieu le Roy du ciel le veult, et cela est révélé par la Pucelle...      So God King of Heaven, wills it; and so it has been revealed by the Maid...

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Translations from the Bible, Hildegard von Bingen's *Visions of St. Hildegard, The Confessions of Na Prou Boneta, The Book of Blessed Angela of Foligno, Concerning the Blessed Margarita of Faenza, Prayer of Charles VII, There are Seven Manners of Loving*, copyright © 1995 by Peter K. Marshall All rights reserved. Used by permission.  
Ma

The letters of Joan of Arc from which the libretto's letters were constructed, may be found in *Letters of Joan of Arc*, translated and edited by Claire Quintal and Daniel Rankin (Pittsburgh Diocesan Council of Catholic Women). 1969. Used by permission

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The misogynist poetry may be found in *Three Medieval Views of Women*, translated and edited by Gloria K. Fiero, Wendy Pfeffer, & Mathé Allain (Yale University Press) Copyright © 1989 by Yale University. Used by permission.

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