Estat aí en greu

cossirier

For mezzo-soprano and bass

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**Estat ai en greu cossirier** (2009)

Text: La Comtessa de Dia (c. 1160)

A music theatre piece for mezzo-soprano (La Comtessa de Dia) and bass (a scribe).

*Premiered by Bright Cecilia at the York Late Music Festival, 2010.*

Duration c. 10 minutes
I. Estat ai en greu cossirier
per un cavallier q'ai agut,
e vuoi sia totz temps subut
cum eu l'ai amat a sobrier.
Ara vei q'ieu sui trahida
car eu non li donei m'amor
don ai estat en gran error
en lieig e qand sui vestida.

II. Ben volria mon cavallier
tener un ser en mos bratz nut,
q'el s'en tengra per ereubut
sol q'a lui fezes cosseillier;
car plus m'en sui abellida
no fetz Floris de Blanchaflor;
eu l'autrei mon cor e m'amor,
mon sen, mos huoills e ma vida.

III. Bels amics, avinens e bos,
cora.us tenrai en mon poder,
e que iagues ab vos un ser,
e qe.us des un bais amoros?
Sapchatz gram talan n'auria
qe.us tengues en luoc del marit
ab so que m'aguessetz plevit
de far tot so qu'eu volria.

I. I have been sorely troubled
for a knight that I had
and I want it known for all time
how exceedingly I loved him.
Now I see myself betrayed
because I didn't grant my love to him
whereupon I have suffered much distress
in bed and when I am clothed.

I would like my knight
to hold one night, in my arms - naked,
for he would be overjoyed
were I only serving as his pillow
for he makes me more radiant
than Floris of Blanchaflor;
I grant him my heart, my love,
my mind, my eyes and my life.

III. Fair friend, charming and good,
when will I hold you in my power,
lie beside you one evening,
and give you loving kisses?
Know that I'd strongly desire...
to have you in my husband's place
provided you pledged to do
everything that I desire.¹

Notes:

¹ 'Estat ai...' is a light-hearted music theatre piece for two or three performers. Preferably, the performer playing the part of the scribe will learn to sing the part whilst writing the words notated in the score within the given rhythmic durations. A camera should be placed on the scribe's desk - concealed by piles of books etc. - and linked by a live feed to a large projector screen behind the performance space. If the camera is positioned above the paper on which the scribe writes, the words will be projected onto the screen, thus providing the audience with an English translation.

¹ Original text taken from Bruckner, Shepard and White, Songs of the Women Troubadours: 10. English translation by Robin Bier.
It is also possible to perform this piece with a third, offstage performer, who writes the notated words while the scribe pretends to write on stage. The third performer's eriting hand is projected onto the screen, so that it appears to belong to the scribe.

Theatrical directions are shown in boxed text in the score.

**Pronunciation of phonetic symbols:**

Explanations are in Received Pronunciation English unless otherwise stated.

- [a]: 'â' as in the French 'pâtes'
- [o]: 'a' as in 'father'
- [e]: 'e' as in 'bed'
- [e]: 'é' as in French santé
- [o]: 'o' as in American English 'bode'
- [m]: 'm' as in 'man'
- [l]: 'l' as in 'light'
- [s]: 's' as in 'see'
La Comtessa de Dia (c. 1160)  
Stef Conner

The Comtessa de Dia is upstage, reclining on a long seat with an expression of aristocratic affliction. She summons her scribe, who enters and sits at a desk in front of her, facing the audience. The Comtessa begins to dictate a letter...

\[ j = 100 \]

languid and lugubrious, as if yawning

\[ \text{E - stat } \, \text{ai } \, \text{en } \, \text{greu } \, \text{cos - si - rier} \]

with conscientious concentration

fondly, with a little more energy

\[ \text{Per un } \, \text{ca - val - lier } \, \text{q' ai } \, \text{a - gut } \, \text{e vuoi} \]

The scribe looks up on hearing the word 'agut', bemused, then continues writing...

And I want it known for all time...
The Comtessa's tone is suddenly more urgent. She sings imploringly to the scribe, who struggles to keep up (with his dictation)...

The scribe repeats the Comtessa's words affirmingly, with some sympathy.

The Comtessa turns towards the audience and begins to stand.

The Comtessa's tone is suddenly more urgent. She sings imploringly to the scribe, who struggles to keep up (with his dictation)...

The scribe repeats the Comtessa's words affirmingly, with some sympathy.

The Comtessa turns towards the audience and begins to stand.

The Comtessa's tone is suddenly more urgent. She sings imploringly to the scribe, who struggles to keep up (with his dictation)...

The scribe repeats the Comtessa's words affirmingly, with some sympathy.
The Comtessa walks towards the scribe, stopping when she is close enough to make him uncomfortable. She almost whispers the words 'en lieig' into his ear.

Don ai est en gran error

take your time

The scribe looks furtively from side to side, a little embarrassed (after writing 'in bed').

When I am clothed
The Comtessa’s attention wanders from the scribe and his writing. She moves towards a different part of the stage.
A Tempo ($J = 100$)

intense and earnest; less playful than before

poco rit. smiling

The scribe is more at ease when he can concentrate intently on writing.

The Comtesse takes the scribe's face in her hands. She sings to him with fervent emotion and he fidgets awkwardly.

The Comtesse releases the scribe's face and he quickly resumes writing, embarrassed.

The scribe is more at ease when he can concentrate intently on writing.
Comt. Scribe Scr. (w.)

The scribe nods with smug, scholarly satisfaction at the mention of a familiar literary reference.

The scribe stands; he shows the Comtessa his paper. They read together.

With a flourish, the Comtessa abandons the read-through and begins the next section of text. This goes un-noticed by the scribe who is absorbed with a self-congratulatory examination of his work.
A litte faster ($\dot{=}$ c. 250)

The Comtessa continues, detached and giddy...

The scribe realises with a start that he has been left behind. He tries frantically to follow what Comtessa is saying.

The Comtessa absentmindedly strokes the scribes hair. He appears guilty and embarrassed, as he tries to conceal his pleasure.

The Comtessa absentmindedly strokes the scribes hair. He appears guilty and embarrassed, as he tries to conceal his pleasure.
The Comtessa continues to tease the scribe with suggestive gestures. She remains in his personal space, touching him and singing in his ear. He appears as if his defenses are beginning to break down.

The scribe is overcome with sympathy for the comtessa's heartfelt passion. He sighs audibly.

The Comtessa focuses her gaze directly at a small part of the audience and sings with passionate intensity.

The scribe raises an eyebrow, in mild disapproval.
The scribe appears confused and shocked by the Comtessa’s final words. He is frozen with indecision for a moment, so the Comtessa gently takes the pen from his hand and write the words ‘I desire’.