

*Estat aí en greu
cossirier*

For mezzo-soprano and bass

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Estat ai en greu cossírier (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

Text:

Canso - La Comtessa de Dia (c. 1160)

I. Estat ai en greu cossirier
per un cavallier q'ai agut,
e vuoil 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 Blancaflor;
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 Blancaflor;
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:

'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'
- [ɔ]: 'a' as in 'father'
- [ɛ]: 'e' as in 'bed'
- [e]: 'é' as in French santé
- [o]: 'o' as in American English 'bode'
- [m]: 'm' as in 'man'
- [ɪ]: 'I' as in 'light'
- [s]: 's' as in 'see'

Estat ai en greu cossirier

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...

$\text{♩} = 100$

languid and lugubrious, as if yawning

La Comtessa de Dia

3/4

mp

E - stat ai en greu cos - si - rier

with conscientious concentration

Scribe (writing)

3/4

I have been sorely troubled

fondly, with a little more energy

10 Comt.

mf

Per un ca - val - lier q 'ai

subtly provocative sp

a - gut

warm and earnest mf

e vuoil

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

Scr. (w.)

f o r a knight that I had

The Comtessa gradually straightens up from her reclined position.

17 Comt.

si - a totz temps sau - but cum e - u lai a - mat a so -

And I want it known for all time how ex-

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

Comt. 23

emphatic

suddenly agitated

brier cum_ e-u lai a - mat a_ so - brier [a] A - ra

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

Scribe

mf

f

f

Cum e-u lai a - mat a so - brier A - - - ra [a]

Scr. (w.) -ceedingly I loved him

The Comtessa turns towards the audience and begins to stand.

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.

molto rit. $\text{♩} = 66$

47

Comt. *ror* *en lieig* *e qand su-i ve -*

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

Don ai__ e - stat en_ gran__ e - ror

Scr. (w.) *m-u-c-h d-i-s-tress i-n b - e-d*

take your time

$\text{♩} = 100$ *The Comtessa reads over the scribe's shoulder.*

55

Comt. *sti - da* *E - stat* *ai* *en_ gre-u__*

Scribe *The scribe appears slightly reassured,
but still uncomfortable.*

mf *E - stat* *ai* *en_ gre-u__*

Scr. (w.) *when I am clothed and*

63

Comt. *cos - si - rier* *per un ca val - lier* *q'ai* *a - gut e*

Scribe *cos - si - rier* *per un ca val - lier* *q'ai* *mf*

The Comtessa's attention wanders from the scribe and his writing. She moves towards a different part of the stage.

71

Comt. vuoil si - a totz temps sau - but cum e-u l'ai_ a - mat a so - brier

Scribe vuoil si - a sau - but cum e-u l'ai_ a - mat a so brier

sweetly, in an amorous reverie

79 pp

Comt. Ben vol - ri-a mon ca-val - lier Ben vol - ri - a mon ca-val -

Scribe Ben vol - ri-a Ben vol - ri-a mon ca-val -

Scr. (w.) I would like m - y

indelicate: spoiling the mood!

Seemingly oblivious to the scribe's discomfort, the Comtessa allows her physical gestures to become increasingly sexual and provocative. She steps closer to him with each word, noting his reactions mischievously.

87

Comt. lier salacious te - ner un ser en mos bratz nut_ nut! _____

poco rit.

(high squeak)

Scribe lier [m] _____

dubious p alarmd mp

nut? 3

Scr. (w.) knight to hold one night in my arms naked

A Tempo ($\text{♩} = 100$)

intense and earnest; less playful than before

poco rit. smiling

94 Comt. *mf* intense and earnest; less playful than before
q'el s'en ten-gra per e-re-u - but per e - re-u - but

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

Scribe *mp* *mf* The scribe is more at ease when he can concentrate intently on writing.
q'el s'en ten-gra per e - re-u but

Scr. (w.) for he'd b-e overjoyed

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

A Tempo ($\text{♩} = 100$) impassioned

99 Comt. *mf* impassioned
sol q'a lui fe - zes cos - seil - lier Car

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

Scribe *mp* nervous
sol q'a lui fe - zes cos - seil - lier

Scr. (w.) were I only serving as his

106 Comt. *p* *mp* plus men sui a - bel - li - da

Scribe *mp* *p* *mp* Car plus men sui a - bel - li - da

Scr. (w.) pillow *f-o-r* *h-e* makes me more radiant

molto rit. $\text{♩} = 76$

Comt. 115 *camp* serious and impassioned

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

Scribe *camp*

Scr. (w.) *th an Floris of Blancha - flor I grant*

p

The Comtessa places her hand on her heart, with solemn sincerity.

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

$\text{♩} = 100$

Comt. 123 *mf* *p*

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...

Comt. 132 *mf* $\text{♩} = 100$

The Comtessa continues, detached and giddy...

A litte faster ($\downarrow = \text{c. 250}$)

140

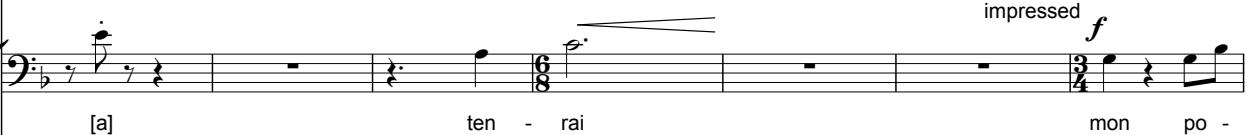
Comt. 
— a-mics a - vi-nense bos__ Be e a - mics_ a - a - vi-nens e bo - s cor-

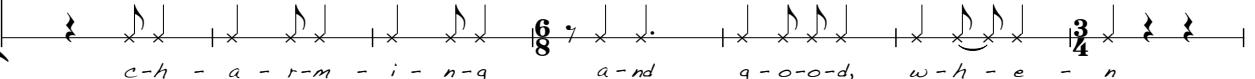
Scribe 
The scribe realises with a start that he has been left behind.
He tries frantically to follow what Comtessa is saying.
falsetto
[a] [e] [els] [a] [a] [o]

Scr. (w.) 

147

Comt. 
a - a - us ten - rai en mon po - der en mon po -

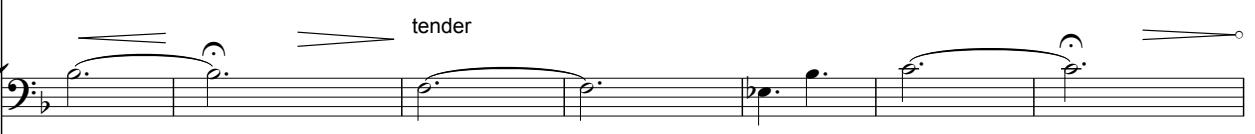
Scribe 
[a] ten - rai mon po -

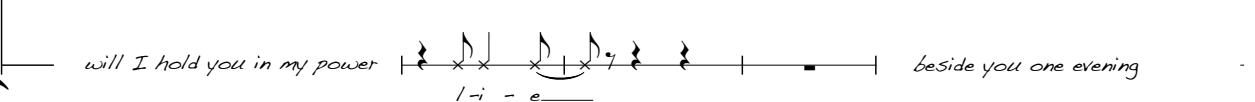
Scr. (w.) 
c-h - a - r-m - i - n-g a - nd g - o-o-o-d, w - h - e - n

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

154

Comt. 
der e__ que ia - gues ab_ vos un_ ser e__

Scribe 
- der que vos un ser

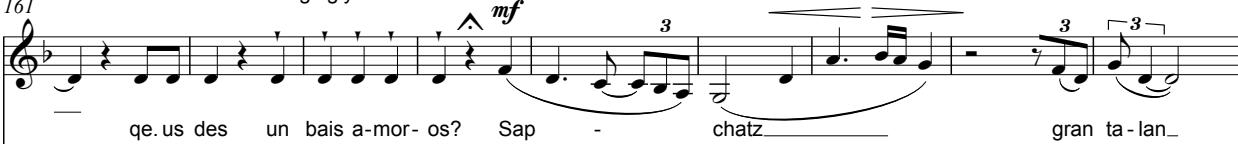
Scr. (w.) 
will I hold you in my power beside you one evening

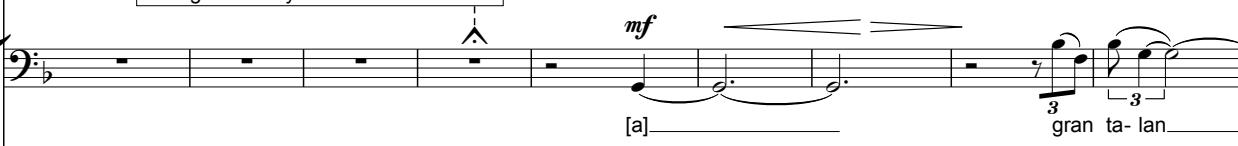
The Comtessa continues to tease the scribe with suggestive gestures. She remains in his personal space, touching him and singing in his ear. He appears as if his defenses are beginning to break down.

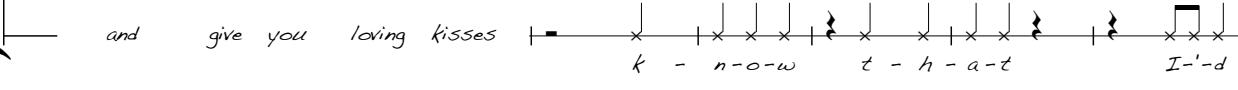
poco rit. $\text{♩} = 100$

longingly

161

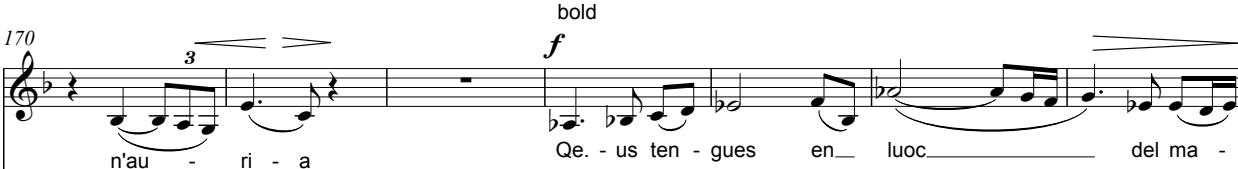
Comt. 
qe.us des un bais a-mor- os? Sap - chatz gran ta-lan_

Scribe 
[a] gran ta-lan_

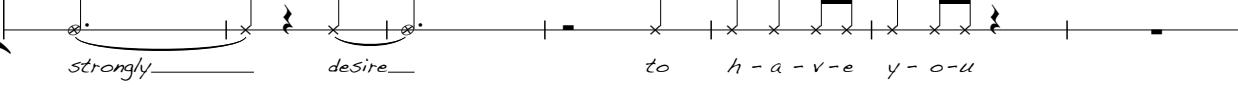
Scr. (w.) 
and give you loving kisses k-n-o-w t-h-a-t I-d'

bold

170

Comt. 
n'au - ri - a Qe. - us ten - gues en_ luoc del ma -

Scribe 
n'au - ri - a Qe. - us del ma -

Scr. (w.) 
strongly desire to h-a-v-e y-o-u

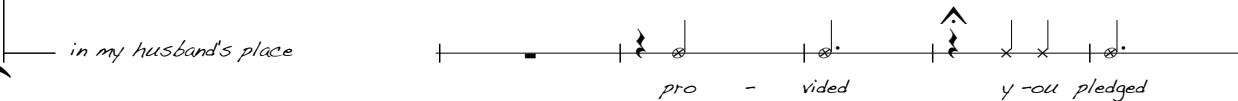
The Comtessa focuses her gaze directly at a small part of the audience and sings with passionate intensity.

177

Comt. 
-rit ab so que m'a - gues-setz ple - vit de far tot so

The scribe raises an eyebrow, in mild disapproval.

Scribe 
rit! ab so que [m]

Scr. (w.) 
in my husband's place pro - vided y - ou pledged

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'.

lustful

mf

rall.

184

Comt. Scribe Scr. (w.)

qu'e-u vol - ri - a de far_ tot_ so_ qu'e-u vol - ri - a

to do everything

I desire. ||