Letters

a monodrama for small ensemble, soprano & narrator

Music & Libretto

by

Daniel Manera
INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano (voice)

Narrator (male or female)

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Pianoforte
Programme Notes

Plot
A woman rejoices in the receipt of the latest letter from her lover with whom she has not yet met.

Performance Notes

Soprano

Parentheses – Lyrics in parentheses are actions that are to be performed on the beats under which those parenthetical lyrics lie.

The Single Line Staff – There are sections that utilise a single line staff with crossed note-heads. When the soprano part is written in this way it is to be spoken according to the rhythm written.

He/She – Because the narrator may be either male or female, the soprano must sing the appropriate gender word according to the narrator’s sex. Lyrics separated by a slash (ex. His/Her) are open to gender adjustment. This just means that if the narrator is male the soprano would sing ‘His’, and if the narrator were female the soprano would sing ‘Hers’.

Narrator

Notation – The narrator’s part is notated on the score by means of a single note with a corresponding line of text under it. The note only indicates that the corresponding text must have its delivery begin at the approximate point at which the note appears on the score, but the duration of that delivery is not notated. The narrator should speak the text at a comfortable speed.
Parentheses – Texts in parentheses are descriptions of actions that are to be performed on the beat under which those texts are notated.

Two Voices – The narrator should prepare two voices for their part. One voice for the text of the ‘lover’, and another voice for the text of the ‘lover’s colleague’. On the score the voice that is to be used is marked in parentheses.

Balance – At all times the narrator should be audible but not so loud as to overpower the ensemble. The narrator may or may not be amplified.

He/She – The narrator may be either male or female.

General

Staging – Although there are stage directions written in the score the piece may or may not be staged, it is entirely up to the director’s sensibilities.

Attacca – All movements are to begin attacca.
Letters

a monodrama for augmented pierrot ensemble, soprano & narrator

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D. P. Manera

Score in C - Duration: 12'15" ca.

I. A New Letter - Allegro  \( \frac{\text{f}}{\text{e}}\) sempre

Scene: We see a dresser with a mirror on the left side of the stage and a bed covered in opened envelopes and pieces of paper in the centre. On the other side of the stage there is a door.

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Stage direction: Soprano enters the scene from the door brandishing a new letter.

A brand new piece of mail has arrived for me today.
It is here, a brand new poem, for me to love and
Stage direction:
Soprano reads the letter (The narrator's voice speaks the text as she reads.)

cherish,
from my lover.

My dearest flower...

...Excitement
is welling in my chest as I pack my bags to finally make the journey to meet you... I have developed a terrible ache from sharing secrets with you by pen but rest assured...
Stage direction:
Soprano continues
to read the letter.

Soprano:

Oh!

(In the voice of the lover)

...I come to you now provoked to the point of eruption

I pray that the way I find you

Flute:

P

Bassoon:

P

Violin:

P

Viola:

P

Violoncello:

P

Piano:

P

ppppp
does not push me past this point. For if when I find you, I see that your state exceeds my own, I shall surely
Finally after so long he/she will come to succumb and remain eternally your ward.
This is my chance, I will dress well. If I dress well he/she will succumb.
I do have the cure. I must prepare for him/her!
I must prepare. Succumbing! Succumbing! He/She will be mine! I will be his/hers. I will be his/hers.
Sweet agony for me!

I have to prepare, for him/her.
I have to prepare.
I need to have him/her.

(loudly whispered.)
Have him/her!

I don't have long. Time is short, time is short. Time!

I don't have long. Time is short, time is short. Time!
Stage direction: Soprano goes over to her dresser and begins to prepare herself for the meeting (applying make up, fixing her hair and elaborately dressing up.)
make up my face, to capture his/her soul. His/Her words captured mine but my face, to capture his/her soul.

His/Her words captured mine but my
flesh can take hold.

I make up myself to strip bare all those
words that you stuck to me.
At last I have you sensuous (s)ly, physically
As long as you find me appropriately.
But poems can not feel

poem can express lust,
Once I'm made up your words will melt away.
With just a spot here, there, and there, there and there, here, and

Stage direction: Soprano is using a make up brush to apply make up. (It is intended for this section that she apply the make up with the brush simultaneously with the words 'here' and 'there'.)
there, there, here and here, and here, here,
Stage direction: The soprano hears the knock at the door and runs over to it to find a letter on the ground. She opens it and begins to read it (the narrator's voice speaks the text that she reads).
Dear Madam...

(In the voice of the lover's colleague.)
...you don't know me and I suspect that we will never meet...

I write to you now in the capacity of a former colleague...

...of which... we are mutually acquainted...
...I don't know how the two of you began to write to each other... whether intentionally or by some mistake in the post I don't know... but there has been a turn of events... I understand that you...
both wrote and that special burgeoning you... I was that informed you intended to meet today... My colleague as I understand the plan was to be, the plane just yesterday afternoon...
...after a brief taxi across the tarmac... the pilot throttled up the engines... a mighty rumble shook the air and the massive craft launched down the runway and began...
to pitch upwards... ...it could have been the pilot that may have seen something the sun... ...or that perhaps he saw a flock of birds his but whatever he the sharply the

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The flight authorities tried desperately for hours to make contact with the pilot... but the pilot had turned the radio off... they could, however, see
the plane still on their instruments... they watched it inexorably travel toward the horizon, until it dissapeared entirely from their scopes... as if it had indeed flown off the edge of this world, never to be seen again.
...In the capacity in which I write to you I cannot say what happened for sure... but I can tell you that...
it seems the two of you shall never meet... ...I imagine you can take some comfort in the perpetuity that the letters you already have can offer... ...Perhaps it is on
those papers that you've love always existed, and will continue

therefore, to exist... ...for sometimes... ...if we put enough of ourselves

into an object... ...for example... ...a letter...
...that letter becomes a vessel for our humanity... ...and through it, we can exist long after we are gone.
III. An Old Letter - Dolce  \( \dot{q} = 120 \) (\( \dot{q} = \dot{j} \) sempre)

Stage direction: Soprano throws herself on her bed amongst the piles of letters.
Stage direction: Soprano begins to rummage through the old letters on her bed.
Stage direction: Soprano finds an old letter and reads it
(The narrator's voice speaks the text as she reads.)
To make a seal across that sweet warm crescent in your pout...
cross that sweet warm sweet pout... and...
...A weak moment

...in a weakened moment...
escape a delicate breath

...let escape the most delicate breath of approval.
Our bodies intertwined...
...in a poetry of shape...
...where our two souls can be pressed together.
An old letter has arrived
Sweat...
Words of gold, written just for me.

...sweat... ...like...

for me.
Shall I read it? What poems lay within?

...like glistening points of excitement...

I read it? What poems lay within?
How exciting this is to...

...running across a far horizon...

...this is to...
Stage direction: Soprano begins to touch herself.

As we grapple against each other's opiated agonies...
Stage direction: Soprano is masturbating.
(Sexually)
...and draw in the plumes of heat...

\[
\text{Pizz. Pizz.}
\]
...that radiate up from a deep and welcome blush.
(sobbing)...
(louder sobbing)

An incomprable longing...

[piano]
to shed tears from an eye that can't shed.
All at once our sentience let go...
...and we shall know God's face...
and be buried in the happiest death.