

Poetry in Music: Texts Quoted in Class 5

Friedrich Schiller: from "Ode to Joy"

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Wem der große Wurf gelungen
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein;
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Joy, beautiful spark of the gods,
Daughter from Elysium,
We enter, drunk with fire,
Heavenly One, thy sanctuary!
Your magic binds again
What convention strictly divides;
All people become brothers,
Where your gentle wing abides.

Who has succeeded in the great attempt,
To be a friend's friend,
Whoever has won a lovely woman,
Add his to the jubilation!
Indeed, who calls even one soul
Theirs upon this world!
And whoever never managed, shall steal himself
Weeping away from this union!

— *translator unknown (Wikipedia)*

John Milton: from "L'Allegro"

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But haste thee, Mirth, and bring with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.
And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprieved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow.
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

Antonio Vivaldi: "Spring" from "I Quattro Stagioni"

Allegro

Giunt' è la Primavera e festosetti
La Salutano gl' Augei con lieto canto,
E i fonti allo Spirar de' Zeffiretti
Con dolce mormorio Scorrono intanto:
Vengon' coprendo l' aer di nero amanto
E Lampi, e tuoni ad annuntiarla eletti
Indi tacendo questi, gl' Augelletti;
Tornan' di nuovo al lor canoro incanto:

Largo

E quindi sul fiorito ameno prato
Al caro mormorio di fronde e piante
Dorme 'l Caprar col fido can' à lato.

Allegro

Di pastoral Zampogna al suon festante
Danzan Ninfe e Pastor nel tetto amato
Di primavera all' apparir brillante.

— see over for translation

Allegro

The Spring is here with all that pleases;
The little birds rejoice in festive song.
The murmuring streams, caressed by gentle breezes,
Run merrily their joyful course along.
Now thunder roars as herald of the season,
And lightning splits the somber skies in twain.
But they give o'er, and earth returns to reason;
The birds take up their charming songs again.

Largo

When flower-strewn field and shady grove beguile him,
And leafy branches rustle overhead,
The goatherd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him.

Allegro

Now summoned by the bagpipes' festive measures,
Nymphs and shepherds dance in rustic style,
In Spring's decor, a gleam with floral treasures.

— *translated by r.b.*

Adam Mickiewicz: from "The Nymph of Lake Switez"

So saying, she places her wreath on his brow
And, making no longer stay,
She has waved him good-by from afar and now
She is over the field and away.

Vainly the hunter increases his speed
For her fleetness outmatches his own;
She has vanished as light as the wind on the mead,
He is left on the shore alone.

Alone he returns on the desolate ground
Where the marshlands heave and quake
And the air is silent - the only sound
When the dry twigs rustle and break.

He walks by the water with wandering tread,
He searches with wandering eyes.
On a sudden the winds through the deepwood spread
And the waters seethe and rise.

They rise and they swell and their depths divide-
Oh, phantoms, seen only in dreams!
On the field of the Switez all silver-dyed
A beautiful maiden gleams!

Her face like the petals of some pale rose
That is sprinkled with morning dew;
Round her heavenly form her light dress blows
Like a cloud of a misty hue.

“My handsome young stripling,” so o’er and o’er
Comes the maiden’s tender croon,
“Oh, why do you walk on the desolate shore
By the light of the shining moon?”

“Why do you grieve for a wanton flirt
Who has cozened you into her trap,
Who has turned your head and brought you to hurt
And who laughs at you now, mayhap?”

“Oh, heed my soft words and my gentle glance,
Sigh and be mournful no more,
But come to me here and together we’ll dance
On the water’s crystal floor.

“You may sleep in the silvery depths at night
On a couch in a mirrored tent
Upon water lilies soft and white,
Amid visions of ravishment.”

— *translator unknown (Wikipedia)*

Percy Bysshe Shelley: from “To a Skylark”

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight [...]

Rita Dove: from "Sonata Mulattica"

He frightens me. I've never heard music
like this man's, this sobbing
in the midst of triumphal chords,
such ambrosial anguish,
jigs danced on shimmering coals.
Oh, I can play it well enough—hell,
I've been destined to travel these impossible
switchbacks, but it's as if I'm skating
on his heart, blood tracks
looping everywhere, incarnadine
dips and curves . . .
I'm not making sense.

You're making ultimate sense
he seems to say, nodding
his rutted, heroic brow.

Anne Sexton: "Music Swims Back to Me"

Wait Mister. Which way is home?
They turned the light out
and the dark is moving in the corner.
There are no signposts in this room,
four ladies, over eighty,
in diapers every one of them.
La la la, Oh music swims back to me
and I can feel the tune they played
the night they left me
in this private institution on a hill.

Imagine it. A radio playing
and everyone here was crazy.
I liked it and danced in a circle.
Music pours over the sense
and in a funny way
music sees more than I.

This music swims back to me.
The night I came I danced a circle
and was not afraid.
Mister?

Roger Brunyate: Two Scenes from "Calisto Retold"

5. Jove-as-Diana and Calisto

Now Jupiter returns, but who would know him,
in bodice, dress, and buskins, with a bow?
The image of Diana (though advised
by Mercury to cut down on the *machismo*)
he woos Calisto with unmatched charisma:

Budding blossom of my bosom,
little virgin, just emerging,
 how could you be absent from your goddess?
For without you, mad about you,
I've no treasure, find no pleasure
 in the hunt without my little novice.

He's not the greatest poet, but Calisto
sees no falseness in his cloying strain:

O Diana, dearest diva, you
 who guide the silver orb around the earth!
Wild beasts took me from your presence,
 depriving me of your beloved worth.

(We do not need to quote their further blisses.
For Jove intends to put things right with kisses.)

30. Diana and Endymion

Diana drives them off. Alone now with
each other, they exchange their loving hopes.
The usual metaphors, the usual tropes,
neo-platonic *badinage* as foreplay:

*Where lies your love? Within my heart.
Where lies your heart? Within your breast.
How came it there? You called in sleep;
to you it flew. How can you live?
It's mine to give, and yours to keep...*

...and so *ad infinitum*, were it not
that Diana seeks to change the scene.

She'll take her faithful shepherd to the Mount
of Latmus, a minor peak in modern Turkey,
and there by moonlight they'll make moonlight love.

A love, that is, comprising only kisses—
the soft caresses of her silver rays.

Somewhat improbably, Endymion agrees.

He says he's master of his body's fire,
and will not burn with animal desire.

There is a painting in the Paris Louvre
by Girodet: *Endymion Asleep*.

The naked body lies stretched out, one arm
above his head. His eyes are closed. A smile
adorns his lips. And in his shadowed lap,
his manhood nestles soft and unaroused.

Cupid's there, but only as a symbol.

Endymion's true lover is the moonlight,
stealing through the foliage to make
his right flank glow with incandescent light.

Diana need not come herself to grant release;
Endymion is contented and at perfect peace.