

**PRIMA DONNA LIBRETTO
A SYMPHONIC VISUAL CONCERT**

**BY RUFUS WAINWRIGHT and
BERNADETTE COLOMINE**

**AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL,
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MARIE :
In my land of Picardie
One is wary of men
Not like here, not like in Paris
Where with love one is reckless
Paris is not Picardie

When we're little girls, we concentrate on braiding hair
Not like here, not like in Paris
Where we concentrate on the derrière
And with love one is reckless
No, Paris is not Picardie

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Ah! Worries! Don't talk to me about worries...

That's what kept me up all night . You may have heard, I'm resuming my career in opera

MARIE:

Oh yes, it's in all the papers. Six years people have been waiting for your return.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

I'm returning with my most famous opera, the best role of my life, *Aliénor of Aquitaine*.

MARIE :

Oh yes, that's what the papers said, the world is waiting for your triumphant return in *Aliénor*.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Aliénor, what a marvelous woman! Wife of two kings, queen of France, then of England, mother of eight, patron and muse of troubadours. Through her, courtly love reigned over all. Through her, knights, kings, emperors, popes became civilized. And this opera was written for me! For me!

The premiere was a triumph... and a malediction!

The second night, I lost my voice. Why? I don't know, but now I am to make my return to the stage. The contracts are signed, the press has been alerted. Once again I'm giving life to this opera that I love so much, but which may be cursed and which I left so unresolved.

I'm scared, Marie!

MARIE :

Come now, Madame, you can count on me. Together, Madame, everything will be fine.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

You are very kind, but how can one erase time? The memories of my past glory are what haunt me.

MARIE :

You will see, I will help you, you will recover the voice of your youth. I want to see it!

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

I want to see it, you will help me, I will recover the voice of my youth. I want to see it!

MARIE :

Yes, Madame.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Call me Régine.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :
Régine, what majesty
When you sang, my soul stood still
Régine, what depth
My heart was profoundly touched
Sing again! Sing again!
I beg of you, Régine

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
In this lush and magnificent garden
The moon will illuminate our ardent love
May we hold within us the burning flame,
The all consuming flame
Our ardent love...

Six years, it's been six years since I last sang a note in public. Do you know the tenor aria?

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :
Very well. I even brought the score.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
You'd do well to impress me now.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :
Abandon, lay down your crown just for a moment
Flee, leave this world and look up at the heavens

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
Just for a moment
See how vast it is

The heavens... how vast they are

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :
Abandon, lay down your crown just for a moment...

VOCALIZATION MOMENT

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
The voice is still there! I should be able to sing it.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
Now Aliénor, it's you and me
What is this wave overwhelming my sense?
Am I drunk with joy? Or with sad...

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
When I was a young student at the conservatoire, I was fearless except when I saw the wolf in the woods, from the corner of my eye.
When I was a young student, the colossal works of the great composers didn't frighten me except when my mother would leave me alone in the dark, in my head.
I am no longer a young student and the music has left me, gone as fast as it came. I see darkness, a wall closing in. The wolf is in the dark and I am alone. Music...

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :
The album from the premiere, my last time on stage. I have never even heard it... whatever happens, it is now time. The music will decide.

ALIENOR & HENRY :

In this lush and magnificent garden
The moon will illuminate our ardent love
May we hold within us the burning flame,
The all consuming flame
Our ardent love
Your beauty intoxicates me
Under your spell
An exquisite flame

MADAME SAINT LAURENT / ALIENOR :
Henry!

ANDRE LETOURNEUR / HENRY :

In this lush and magnificent garden

ALIENOR :

Look!

This bottle, the last of a long lineage contains a most coveted marvel
A wine extracted from the inmost depth of my sovereign land,
The glorious Aquitaine!
It will unite you and I forever.

HENRY :

Aliénor, my beloved, I hope you know how much I adore you.
Pour me this wine, I'll drink it, your wishes are my commands!

ALIENOR :

Drink, let us share this cup!

I shall drink after you

My sweet love

ALIENOR & HENRY :

Such bliss...

In this lush and magnificent garden etc.

What is this wave overwhelming my sense?

Am I drunk with joy? Or with sadness!

PHILIPPE :

It's now time for us to go our separate ways .

Well, Madame, I wish you the best of luck.

And... forgive m...

The journalist!

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :

Well! What a bizarre atmosphere!

Quite stormy.

I've returned as planned.

MARIE :

Of course, Monsieur, we were expecting you . Please come in and make yourself comfortable . Would you like some aperitif?

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

I'm happy you've come back.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :

I'm happy I came back. But I can't stay.

MARIE :

Who is this person in the hallway? Who is this woman?

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Why?

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :

I completely forgot, I'm supposed to go out with my fiancée...

I completely forgot, forgive me, I'm sorry.

Régine, here she is, may I introduce you to Sophie.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Who is this woman? She's so beautiful, so young. He is lucky. I hope he is happy.

MARIE :

Completely forgot! Ingrate! Men are so cruel!

What are they looking for?

No matter how much we give them, they're never happy.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR, MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Sophie. She is so beautiful.

MARIE :

Ingrate!

And with love one is reckless.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

You are lucky.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :

Yes.

MARIE :

And with love one is reckless.

MADAME SAINT LAURENT:

I hope you're happy.

ANDRE LETOURNEUR :

But please, before I leave, I would like to ask you something. I took the liberty of bringing my own album of *Aliénor*, the one I bought back then.

Would you be kind enough to sign it?

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

Take it,

Care for it,

This is the last album I'll ever sign.

Frame it,

My career,

Because it's over

And I give it to you signed

It served conductors, composers and the public.

Did it serve me?

I'm not sure but perhaps, perhaps...

But wait, wait, you're not deserving...

Take it,

Care for it,
This, this is the last album I'll ever sign.
You deserve my last autograph,
My last act as an artist.
I give her to you, *La Prima Donna*.
Did she serve me?
I'm not sure but perhaps, perhaps...

Alright, children of the revolution, run along!
I want to be alone now

BRIEF PERCUSSION FIREWORKS MUSIC

MADAME SAINT LAURENT :

The fireworks are calling
Go down into the streets
The fireworks are calling
Explode over town
The fire once in the sky
Descends into the street
And love is not longer longed for
All is joy and cheer
All of Paris celebrates
I'm staying, I'm staying, I'm staying and watching
Young men, descend with your girlfriends
Young women, make the most of the time you have left
I'm staying, I'm staying, I'm staying here
I'm watching from my large window
The fireworks are over
It didn't last long