

« Pour Toi » : une lettre à Pascal Dusapin

Barbara Hannigan

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Pascal Dusapin : la parallaxe des voix

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Nous reproduisons ici une lettre de Barbara Hannigan à Pascal Dusapin, non datée mais rédigée lors des répétitions de l'opéra Passion. Sa création eut lieu le 2 juillet 2008 au Théâtre du Jeu de Paume, dans le cadre du Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, avec Barbara Hannigan et Georg Nigl dans les rôles principaux (Lei et Lui – « Elle » et « Lui » en italien), et l'Ensemble Modern Frankfurt sous la direction de Franck Ollu. Dans l'Enquête de ce numéro, préparée par Emanuelle Majeau-Bettez, Barbara Hannigan relate ainsi les circonstances de l'écriture de cette lettre (propos recueillis le 22 juin 2018) :

There were some parts in the opera that were too high for me to comfortably be consistent, and I remember I wrote Pascal a letter. We saw each other every single day for rehearsals, but still, I decided not to ask him to change it, like “Pascal can you change this for me?” I wanted to, literally, write a letter to him. I gave it to him at the end of the day, with why I thought this area should be altered—the artistic reasons and the technical reasons why I made this request. It was a very beautiful letter... The next day, he said, “Yes, of course.” And I really liked this. I could have just sat him down and negotiated with him, but I wanted to write it to him in a letter, because there was a formality about it, and it was more poetic. What I like with Pascal is that I really felt that we were collaborating. There was trust there, from the very beginning. He let me find my way because he knew that we had the same interest, which was to really bring this to birth.

Conservée par Pascal Dusapin qui l'a aimablement transmise à Circuit, nous reproduisons ici le fac-similé de cette lettre suivie d'une transcription en caractères d'imprimerie, avec son accord et celui de Barbara Hannigan.

② One Octave Down

Sc 7 m 878-883
m 887-889
m 934-936
m 937-938

Sc 9 m 1124
m 1126-27
m 1190-1197 (from 3rd beat →

m 1201 (I do the *ossia ottava bassa*...)

③

beat of all, I hope
these are not "forever"
requests. Maybe even by
the premiere you have them
all back - but maybe
only one, or maybe one
or two. *Strasbourg*... I
try - my best, you must
know
as written

① Dear Pascal,

Your opera is more than beautiful - it touches me in a very intense way, a personal way - both from inside the piece + outside. It upsets me + moves me + inspires + honours me.

I wish I was a better singer, or a different singer, let me say, so that I could achieve everything you desire, but I have tried + some passages are impossible for me. You may wonder why I can sing some high b or c or ct or d perfectly (or at least adequately, but others I cannot do) but

101
Jen

it is a matter of placement, tessitura and stamina.
In fact, I am a lyric soprano masquerading as a
coloratura sometimes. I write this request to
you because I am afraid to ask in front of anyone
else - it's not a matter of practise or time - it
is what is/is not possible with my limitations.
And to ask + try in front of my colleagues only
makes me feel more inadequate. You must
know I do not make silly or selfish requests
when it comes to music, and I hope that I
understand Lei from a deep place + that this
is the way I can be her.
Je t'embrasse. Barbara

Pour Toi

Dear Pascal,

Your opera is more than beautiful—it touches me in a very intense way, a personal way—both from inside the piece and outside. It upsets me and moves me and inspires and honours me. I wish I was a better singer, or a different singer, let me say, so that I could achieve everything you desire, but I have tried and some passages are impossible for me. You may wonder why I can sing some high B or C or C# or D perfectly (or at least adequately, but others I cannot do) but it is a matter of placement, tessitura and stamina. In fact, I am a lyric soprano masquerading as a *coloratura* sometimes. I write this request to you because I am afraid to ask in front of anyone else—it's not a matter of practice or time—it is what is/is not possible with my limitations. And to ask and try in front of my colleagues only makes me feel more inadequate. You must know I do not make silly or selfish requests when it comes to music, and I hope that I understand Lei from a deep place and that this is the way I can be Her.

Je t'embrasse.

Barbara

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One Octave Down

Sc 7 m 878-883
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Last of all, I hope these are not “forever” requests. Maybe even by the premiere you have them all back—but maybe only one, or maybe one in Strasbourg... I try my best, you must know.