

Program Notes and Texts/Translations

The **pardessus de viole** is a hybrid combination of a violin and a viola da gamba. Whereas the viola da gamba saw its beginnings around 1480 and spread throughout western Europe, the pardessus did not appear on the scene until around 1700, and its popularity was limited to France only. While the 17th-century explored the lower range of instruments, the 18th-century experienced an upward extension of the range of melodic instruments, of which the pardessus is a product. It was considered primarily an instrument for ladies of nobility and high society. Mmes. Sophie and Adélaïde, and Victoire, the daughters of Louis XV, played the pardessus. A lady could “smile while playing the pardessus, as compared to the violin, which contorts the face and upper body while being played.” Another bonus of the pardessus is that it didn’t spoil the line of the dress while being played.

Instruments in the 18th-century were more than functional machines that produced sound. They were also made to be works of art. Many instruments would have elaborate carvings in the scroll or ivory inlay in the fingerboard. Stripes were fashionable in ladies’ dress, and this was often reflected in stripes in the back and sides of the pardessus. The pardessus lost popularity later in the 18th-century. Negative attitudes toward the aristocracy during the time surrounding the French Revolution assured the instrument’s demise, since it was so closely associated with that class. And, the democratization of the concert-going experience and subsequent larger concert halls created a need for a technical innovation in instruments to fill the space, for which the violin gladly stepped up fill the need.

Music for pardessus included arrangements of popular opera arias, overtures, and ballets (taken from music of Lully, Gretry, and Pergolesi) and ranged in levels from easy to extremely virtuosic. The pardessus, was a strictly amateur instrument intended for ladies, though *amateur* had a different feeling at the time - if you were very wealthy, you had plenty of time to practice and play music for fun and could achieve high levels of musical ability. Many duos for two pardessus or two pardessus and continuo (accompaniment) were composed in a short time in mid 18th-century France.

Air du *Faucon*

Ce garçon me plait,

Il est bien mon fait,

Ce qu’il a dans ’ame

Se fait dans ses yeux,

Et s’il prenoit femme,

Ce garçon joyeux

Combleroit ses vœux.

Quel fond de gaieté!

Quel air de santé,

C’est une bonne ame,

Et s’il prenoit femme,

Dans ce lieu sauvage

Dans cet hermitage,

Je demeurerois,

Quoi dans ces forets

Je demeurerois

Et pour telle vie,

J’abandonnerois Madame Clitie?

Ah! Non jamais. Non, jamais!

This boy pleases me,

He suits me

That which he has in his soul,

Is revealed in his eyes,

And if he took a wife,

This joyous boy,

Would fulfill her wishes.

What a fount of gaiety!

What an air of health,

He has a good soul,

And if he took a wife, etc.

But in these forests,

In this wild place,

In this isolated home,

I would live,

Why in these forests,

I would live such a life,

I would abandon Madame Clitie?

No, never.

Vous Amans que j'interesse par mes pleurs et ma tristesse,
Apprenés de ma foiblesse à fuir des appas trompeurs,
Cet Amour que vous caresse a cause tous mes malheurs.
Il vous flatte, il vous entraîne,
Mille fleurs parent sa chaîne
Séduit par autant de charmes, vous perdés la liberté:
Et c'est de vos l'armes que le traître est enchanté.
Vous dont le cœur ne respire que l'Amour et son empire
Aux transports qu'il vous inspire,
Ah! Scachés mieux résister aujourd'hui,
Je ne soupire que d'avoir seul'écouter,
L'esperance qu'il vous donne les plaisirs cette couronne
quand la paix vous abandonne sont de trop funestes dons,
non.
Vous Amans que j'interesse par mes pleurs et ma tristesse,
Ne voyés dans ma foiblesse que mes plus vives douleurs:
Cet enfant qui vous caresse a cause tous mes malheurs.

From *Pygmalion* (Rameau)

Fatal amour, cruel vainqueur,
Quels traits as tu choisis pour me percer le cœur.
Je tremblois de t'avoir pour maître,
J'ai craint d'être sensible, il falloit m'en punir;

Mais devois je le devenir, pour un objet qui ne peut l'être.

From *La Servante Maitresse* (Pergolesi)

Vous gentilles, jeunes filles,
Aux vieillards, qui tendés vos filets,
Qui cherchés des maris beaux ou laids,
Aprenés, aprenés,
Retenés bien mes secrets,
Vous allés voir comme je fais.
Tour à tour avec adresse
Je menace, je caresse.
Quelque tems je me defends,
Mais je me rends.

You lovers that I concern by my tears and sadness,
Learn of my weakness to flee from deceitful charms,
This Love that caresses you has caused all my misfortune.
He flatters you, he carries you away,
A thousand flowers embellish his chain,
Seduced by so many charms, you lose your freedom:
And it is by your tears that the traitor is enchanted.
You whose heart breathes only for Love and his empire,
He inspires you to raptures,
Ah! Better to resist today,
I sigh, having alone heard the hope that he gives you
The pleasures of this crown,
when peace abandons you, are gifts too sad.
No.
You lovers whom I concern by my tears and sadness,
See only in my weakness my sharpest pains,
This child (Cupid) who caresses you is the cause of all
my misfortunes.

Fatal love, cruel conqueror,
what darts have you chosen to pierce my heart?
I trembled at having you for my master,
I feared to give into my heart (be moved), I ought to
punish myself for it.
But did I need to fall in love with an object which cannot be?

You sweet ones, young girls,
With old men, who stretch out your nets
Who search for handsome or ugly husbands
Let me tell you this,
Remember well my secrets,
You are going to observe what I do
By turns, with skill
I threaten, I caress.
Sometimes I fight back,
But I surrender.

Tircis couché sur l'herbette dans le fond de ce valon en revant a sa Nanette. un jour chantoit sur ce ton Non, non, il nest point de si joli nom que ce luy de ma Nanette.

Air de *Lucile*

Au bien suprême

Hélas! Je touchois de si près
O toi que j'aime,
Tu m'adorois
Le charme cesse
Et ne me laisse
Que des regrets,
Ne me laisse
Que des regrets
Sans résistance
Quittons l'objet de tant de pleurs
Vaine constance,
Je sens que je me meurs.

Musettes, resonnés dans ce riant bocage,
Accordés vous sous l'ombrage
Au murmure de ruisseaux
Accompagnés le doux ramage
Des tendres oiseaux.

Tircis lying down on the grass in the bottom of this valley while dreaming of his Nanette One day sang in this way, no, there is no name prettier than that of my Nanette.

To Supreme Happiness

Alas, I touched so close

O you whom I love,

You adored me,

My charm ceases,

And leaves me,

Only regrets

Do not leave me

Only regrets

Without resistance

Let us leave the object of so many tears,

Vain constancy,

I feel I am dying.

Bagpipes, resound in this laughing grove.

Tune yourself in this shade

to the murmuring of streams.

Accompany the sweet warbling

of tender birds.