

DRITTER TEIL

No. 18 CHOR

Schmücket die Stufen zu Allahs Thron,
schmücket sie mit Blumen, Freundinnen alle,
daß auf des Himmels Unterste auch
gnädig ein Blick des Ewigen falle!
Schlinget den Reigen,
laßt uns verneigen
freudig, demutsvoll vor dem Herrn!

VOKALQUARTETT

Auch der Geliebten vergesst nicht,
die auf der Erde zurückgeblieben!
Unten ist's dunkel, oben das Licht,
Haß ist dort, hier ewiges Lieben.

Schmücket die Stufen *usw.*

SOPRAN I & II und CHOR

Seht da, die Bahn zum ew'gen Licht
kommt schon die Peri herangeflogen!
Liebliche Peri, verzweifelt nicht,
Treu' und Glaub' hat noch nie betrogen!
Suche das Gut,
im Auge ruht,
was das Teuerste ist dem Herrn!
Jetzo zurück in die Rosenlauben,
Freude zu geben, Freud' zu empfangen,
an des Geliebten Lippen zu hangen,
Küsse zu bieten, Küsse zu rauben.
Schon naht die Sonne, ewige Wonne
harret, die freudig dienen dem Herrn!

No. 19 TENOR-SOLO

Dem Sang von ferne lauschend, schwingt
die Peri höher sich empor;
der reinsten Liebe Seufzer bringt
sie als Geschenk vor Edens Tor.
Hoch kopft ihr Herz, die Hoffnung spricht's:
Bald soll sie Edens Palmen nahn,
denn lächelnd nimmt der Geist des Lichts
am Tore diese Gabe an.

PART THREE

No. 18 CHORUS

*Bedeck the steps to Alla's throne,
Strew them with flowers, companions all,
So that the Eternal Gaze
May even on the lowliest fall.
Let us all join hands in a round
And in humility profound
Bow joyfully before our Lord!*

VOCAL QUARTET

*Do not forget the lovers' plight
Who on earth must still remain!
Below is darkness here is light,
There is hatred, this is love's domain.*

Bedeck the steps, etc.

SOPRANOS I & II and CHORUS

*Lo, to the path to eternal light
The Peri now has taken her flight.
Lovely Peri, be thou not afraid;
Truth and faith have never been betrayed!
Seek what is good;
In thine eye there lies
What is most precious to the Lord.
Now go back to the rosy bower,
Joy to give, joy to receive,
To the beloved's lips to cleave,
Kisses to offer and devour.
The sun draws near; endless reward
Waits for those who joyfully serve the Lord.*

No. 19 TENOR SOLO

*Harkening to the distant song,
Again the Peri soars above,
Bearing to Heav'n that precious sigh
Of pure, self-sacrificing love.
High throbb'd her heart, with hope elate,
The Elysian palm she soon shall win,
For the bright spirit at the gate
Smil'd as she gave that offering in;*

Und horch, von Himmelsbäumen ruft
kristallner Glöckchen Klang, sie lauscht
dem Läuten in ambrosischer Luft,
die her von Allahs Throne rauscht;
sie sieht die Sternenschalen blinken,
rings um den See des Lichts gereiht,
wo die verklärten Seelen trinken
den ersten Trank der Herrlichkeit.
Doch eitel war der Peri Hoffen,
noch stand das ew'ge Tor nicht offen;
es spricht der Engel, Schmerz im Blick:

DER ENGEL

Noch nicht!

Treu war die Maid, und die Geschichte,
geschrieben überm Haupt des Herrn,
liest lange noch der Seraph gern;
doch, Peri, noch währt der Verschluß
von Edens Tor:

Viel heil'ger muß die Gabe sein,
die dich zum Tor des Lichts läßt ein!

No. 20 DIE PERI

Verstoßen! Verschlossen
aufs neu das Goldportal!
Gerichtet! Vernichtet,
der Hoffnung letzter Strahl!
So soll ich's nimmer finden,
das edle, köstliche Gut,
weh mir, ich fühl' ihn schwinden,
den hohen Mut;
doch will ich nicht ruhn, will ohne Rast
von einem Pol zum andern schreiten,
durchpilgern will ich alle Weiten
bis ich das Gut, bis ich's erfaßt,
das mir das höchste Glück verheißt,
das, Eden, mir dein Tor erschleußt.
Und wär's bewacht in Grau'n und Nacht,
tief in der Erde tiefsten Gründen,
ich will, ich muß das Kleinod finden!

And she already hears the trees
Of Eden, with their crystal bells
Ringing in that ambrosial breeze
That from the throne of Alla swells;
And she can see the starry bowls
That lie around that lucid lake,
Upon whose banks admitted souls
Their first sweet draught of glory take!
But, ah! even Peri's hopes are vain –
Again [the Fates forbade, again]
Th' immortal barrier clos'd.
The angel *said, as with regret:*

THE ANGEL

Not yet!

True was the maiden, and her story,
Written in light o'er Alla's head,
By seraph eyes shall long be read.
But, Peri, see – the [crystal] bar
Of Eden moves not – holier far
Than ev'n this sigh the boon must be
That opes the gates of Heav'n for thee.

No. 20 THE PERI

*Cast out! From the golden gate
Once more turned away!
Condemned! Of hope
Denied the smallest ray!
Like this I shall never gain
The noble, precious gift
Ah, woe is me; my spirits wane,
I feel they nevermore will lift.
Yet I will never rest, nor cease
To wend my way from pole to pole,
A pilgrim till I reach my goal
And seize the prize of perfect peace
That I will hope to celebrate
When to me Eden opens the gate.
And even, if by a fate so cruel,
It lay hidden in the deepest depths,
I will, I must now find this jewel!*

Nr.21 BARITON-SOLO

Jetzt sank des Abends goldner Schein
auf Syriens Rosenland herein,
wie Glorienschimmer hing die Sonn'
über dem heil'gen Libanon.
Es ragt in Wintermajestät
sein Haupt, vom ew'gen Schnee beglänzt,
indes der Sommer schläft bekränzt
am Fuß auf einem Blumenbeet.
Die aus der Höhe konnte schau'n
herab auf all die Zauberau'n,
wie schön erschien ihr nicht die Welt,
das rege Leben, rings erhellt
der Gärten Pracht, der Wellen Schimmern,
an ihren Ufern goldne Früchte,
die schöner noch im Sonnenlichte,
und dann das tausendstimm'ge Rufen,
das alte Schäferrohr, das Summen
der Bienen im gelobten Land,
die schwärmen über Blumenfelder,
und Jordan, dein beglückter Strand
und deine nachtigallenreichen Wälder!

No. 22 TENOR-SOLO

Und wie sie niederwärts sich schwingt,
eine Schar von Peris sie umringt:

CHOR

Peri, ist's wahr,
daß du in den Himmel willst?
Genügt dir nicht
das Sonnenlicht
und Sterne, Mond und Erde?
Peri, ist's wahr,
daß du in den Himmel willst?
so nimm uns eilig mit.

No. 21 BARITONE SOLO

Now, upon Syria's land of roses
Softly the light of eve reposes,
And, like a glory, the broad sun
Hangs over sainted Lebanon;
Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet,
While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is sleeping rosy at his feet.
To one, who look'd from upper air
O'er all th' enchanted regions there,
How beauteous must have been the glow,
The life, the sparkling from below!
Fair gardens, shining streams, with ranks
Of golden melons on their banks,
More golden where the sun-light falls; –
And then the mingling sounds that come,
Of shepherd's ancient reed, with hum
Of the wild bees of Palestine,
Banqueting through the flowery vales;
And, Jordan, those sweet banks of thine,
And woods, so full of nightingales.

No. 22 TENOR SOLO

*And as she downward wings her way,
A host of Peris with her say:*

CHORUS OF PERIS

*Peri, is it really true
That thou dost long for Heaven's blue?
Is the light of the glorious sun
Not itself of sufficient worth,
Along with stars, the moon and earth?
Peri, is it really so
That thou to Heav'n dost long to go?
Then make haste to take us too!*

BARITON-SOLO

Mit ihrer Schwestern Worten wächst ihr Schmerz,
schwer ist ihr Fittich, trüb' ihr Herz;
freudlos sieht sie die Sonn' sich neigen
dort hinterm Tempel, einst ihr eigen,
des Säulen, hoch und einsam, weit
die Schatten breiten durch die Au'n.

No. 23 DIE PERI

Hinab zu jenem Sonnentempel!
Ein Amulett, auf dessen Stein
ein Zeichen glänzt, vom Blitz hinein –
geschmolzen, dort gewahr' ich's, auch
ein Blatt, auf welchem rein
das Siegel prangt von Salomo;
vielleicht entziffern sie mir's, wo
auf Erden, in den Meeren ruht
die Zaubermacht, das edle Gut,
das Eden öffnet sünd'gen Wesen,
vielleicht vermag's mein Aug' zu lesen,
hinab!

TENOR-SOLO

Sie schwebt herab im frohen Hoffen,
noch lacht des Himmels Auge hold,
die Lauben auch aus Abendgold
stehn noch im Westen offen.
Jetzt über Balbecks Tal sich schwingend,
erblickt im Spiele sie ein Kind,
inmitten wilder Rosen singend,
so rosig wild wie selbst sie sind.
Beim Knaben, der, des Spiels nun satt,
in Blumen sich gelagert hat,
sieht sie vom heißen Rosse steigen
jetzt einen müden Mann und schnell
an einem hochumgrasten Quell
zum Trunke sich hinunterbeugen,

BARITONE SOLO

[...] *Her sisters' words increase her pain;*
Her soul is sad – her wings are weary –
Joyless she sees the sun look down
On that great temple, once his own,
Whose lonely columns stand sublime,
Flinging their shadows *on the plain.*

No. 23 THE PERI

Downward to that temple of the sun!
An amulet, upon whose stone
Appears a lightning-flash's glint,
Do I see there, also a page
That bears great Solomon's imprint.
Perhaps they will decode for me
Where on earth or in the sea
Lies the magic power, the noble boon
That will open Eden soon
To sinners. Let my eye read it:
I will go down!

TENOR SOLO

Cheer'd by this hope she bends her thither; –
Still laughs the radiant eye of Heaven,
Nor have the golden bowers of even
In the rich west begun to wither; –
When, o'er the vale of Balbec winging
Slowly, she sees a child at play,
Among the rosy wild flowers singing,
As rosy and as wild as they;
And near the boy, who tir'd with play
Now; nestling 'mid the roses lay,
She saw a wearied man dismount
From his hot steed, and on the brink
Of a small imaret's rustic fount
Impatient fling him down to drink.

dann kehrt er schnell sein wild' Gesicht
aufs schöne Kind, das furchtlos saß,
obgleich noch nie des Tages Licht
ein wild'res Antlitz sah als das,
entsetzlich wild, ein grauser Bund,
wie Wetterwolck' aus Nacht und Glut,
dort stehn die Laster all, es tut
dort jedes Bubenstück sich kund –
Meineid, erschlag'ner Gast,
betrog'ne Braut, mit blut'ger Schrift
auf jenem Antlitz stand's geschrieben.

MEZZOSOPRAN-SOLO

Doch horch, wie Vesperruf zum Beten,
da still die Sonn' herniederschwebt,
von Syriens tausend Minaretten
jetzt durch die Lüfte bebt;
vom Blumenbeet hebt sich der Knab',
das seinem Haupt ein Lager gab,
kniert nieder auf dem blum'gen Grund,
worauf mit reinem Engelsmund
er Gottes ew'gen Namen spricht;
er scheint, indem er Blick und Hand
zum Abendhimmel aufgewandt,
ein Engelskind, das sich hernieder
verirrt hat
und seine Heimat suchet wieder.

TENOR-SOLO

Und was fühlt er, der sünd'ge Mann,
der dort lehnt und sich nun entsann
so manchen Jahrs voll Schuld und Blut,
der auf des Lebens dunkler Flut
umsonst späht nach dem Rettungspfade,
wo nichts den Ölzweig bringt der Gnade!

DER MANN

's war eine Zeit, du selig Kind,
da jung und rein, wie du, mein Tun
und Beten war – doch nun!

Then swift his haggard brow he turn'd
To the fair child, who fearless sat,
Though never yet hath day-beam burn'd
Upon a brow more fierce than that, –
Sullenly fierce – a mixture dire,
Like thunderclouds, of gloom and fire;
In which the [Peri's] eye could read
Dark tales of many a ruthless deed;
The ruin'd maid – the shrine profan'd –
Oaths broken – and the threshold stain'd
With blood of guests! – there written, all.

MEZZO-SOPRANO SOLO

But, hark! The vesper call to prayer,
As slow the orb of daylight sets,
Is rising sweetly on the air,
From Syria's thousand minarets!
The boy has started from the bed
Of flowers, where he had laid his head,
And down upon the fragrant sod
Kneels lisping the eternal name of God
From purity's own cherub mouth,
And looking, while his hands and eyes
Are lifted to the glowing skies,
Like a stray babe of Paradise,
Lost upon the earthly plain
And seeking for *his home* again.

TENOR SOLO

And how felt he, the wretched man,
Reclining there – while memory ran
O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
Flew o'er the dark flood of his life,
Nor found one sunny resting-place,
Nor brought him back one branch of grace.

THE MAN

There was a time, [he said, in mild
Heart-humbled tones] – thou blessed child! –
When, young and haply pure as thou,
I look'd and pray'd like thee – but now!

No. 24 VOKALQUARTETT und CHOR

O heil'ge Tränen inn'ger Reue,
in eurer sanften Sühnungsflut
die einzige, die erste neue
schuldlose Lust für Schuld'ge ruht!

No. 25 DIE PERI

Es fällt ein Tropfen aufs Land
Ägypten, von Juniushitze verbrannt,
vom Mond herab,
von so heilender Kraft, daß zur Stunde
der Dämon der Pest entschwebt
und Gesundheit Himmel und Erde belebt.
Läßt so, o Sünder, nicht genesen
dich dieser Reuetränen Fall?
Wie glüh'nd die Wunden der Brust gewesen,
ein Himmelstropfen, er heilt sie all'!

TENOR-SOLO mit CHOR

Und sieh, demütig betend kniet
der Mann dort an des Kindes Seite,
indes ein Sonnenstrahl auf beide,
den Sünder und den Reinen glüht.
Und Hymnen durch den Himmel schweben,
denn einer Seele ward vergeben!
Gesunken war der gold'ne Ball,
noch lagen sie auf ihren Knien,
da fiel ein rein'rer, schön'rer Strahl,
als je aus Sonn'und Sternen schien,
auf jene Träne.
Hymnen durch den Himmel schweben,
denn einer Seele ward vergeben!
Ein sterblich' Auge nähm' ihn zwar
als Meteor, als Nordlicht wahr,
doch weiß die Peri wohl: der Schein,
es muß des Engels Lächeln sein,
womit er mild die Träne grüßt,
die bald den Himmel ihr erschließt.

No. 24 VOCAL QUARTET and CHORUS

Blest tears of soul-felt penitence!
In whose benign, redeeming flow
Is felt the first, the only sense
Of guiltless joy that guilt can know.

No. 25 THE PERI

There's a drop [...] that down from the moon
Falls through the withering airs of June
Upon Egypt's land, of so healing a power,
So balmy a virtue, that ev'n in the hour
That drop descends, contagion dies,
And health re-animates earth and skies! –
Oh, is it not thus, thou man of sin,
The precious tears of repentance fall?
Though foul thy fiery plagues within,
One heavenly drop hath dispell'd them all!

TENOR SOLO with CHORUS

And now – behold him kneeling there
By the child's side, in humble prayer,
While the same sunbeam shines upon
The guilty and the guiltless one,
And hymns of joy proclaim through Heaven
The triumph of a soul forgiven!
'Twas when the golden orb had set,
While on their knees they linger'd yet,
There fell a light more lovely far
Than ever came from sun or star,
Upon the tear. [...]
And hymns of joy proclaim through Heaven
The triumph of a soul forgiven!
To mortal eye this light might seem
A northern flash or meteor beam –
But well th' enraptur'd Peri knew
'Twas a bright smile the angel threw
From Heaven's gate, to hail that tear
Her harbinger of glory near!

No. 26 DIE PERI

Freud', ew'ge Freude, mein Werk ist getan,
die Pforte geöffnet zum Himmel hinan,
wie selig, o Wonne, wie selig bin ich!
Süß Eden, wie finster sind gegen dich
Schedukiams Demanttürme, wie matt
die duftenden Lauben von Amberabad!
Lebt wohl, ihr Düfte der Erd', ihr verraucht
schnell, wie der Liebenden Seufzer verhaucht!
Vom Tubabaum ist nun mein Schmaus,
er duftet der Ewigkeit Odem aus!
Lebt wohl, ihr Blüten in meinem Kranz,
ihr blühtet so schön und verwelket doch schon;
o was sind Blumen im irdischen Glanz
doch gegen den Lotos vor Allahs Thron,
mit ew'gen Blütenästen umstrebt,
wo in jeglichem Blatt eine Seele lebt!
O ewige Freud', mein Werk ist getan,
die Pforte geöffnet zum Himmel hinan,
wie selig, o Wonne, wie selig bin ich!

CHOR DER SELIGEN

Willkommen, willkommen
unter den Frommen!
Du hast gerungen und nicht geruht,
nun ist's errungen, das köstliche Gut!
Sei uns willkommen,
sei uns begrüßt!
Ja, gibt es ein Opfer der Erdenwelt,
ein Geschenk, das teuer der Himmel hält,
die Träne ist's, die du gebracht,
die aus dem Aug' des Sünders floß,
die dir den Himmel wieder erschloß.
Du hast gerungen und nicht geruht,
nun hast du's errungen, das köstliche Gut!
Aufgenommen
in Edens Garten,
wo liebende Seelen deiner warten,
dich ew'ge Wonne umfließt,
sei uns willkommen,
sei uns begrüßt!

No. 26 THE PERI

Joy, joy for ever! my task is done –
The gates are pass'd, and Heaven is won!
Oh! am I not happy? I am, I am –
To thee, sweet Eden! how dark and sad
Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,
Amid the fragrant bowers of Amberabad!
Farewell, ye odours of Earth, that die
Passing away like a lover's sigh; –
My feast is now of the Tooba tree,
Whose scent is the breath of eternity!
Farewell ye vanishing flowers, that shone
In my fairy wreath, so bright and brief; –
Oh! what are the brightest that e'er have blown,
To the lote-tree, springing by Alla's throne,
*With eternal flowering branches strewn
Where a soul dwells in every leaf.*
Joy, joy for ever! my task is done –
The gates are pass'd, and Heaven is won!
Oh! am I not happy? I am, I am!

CHORUS OF THE BLESSED SPIRITS

*Welcome, welcome
Among the godly!
Without cease thou hast striven and strained;
Now thou hast the precious boon obtained.
Welcome among us,
We greet thee!
Yes, if there is an earthly prize,
A gift that heav'n holds ever dear,
It is the former sinner's tear
That drops in penitence from his eyes
That opens heaven's gate for thee.
Without cease thou hast striven and strained;
Now thou hast the precious boon obtained!
Accepted at last
In Eden's garden,
Where loving souls extend a pardon
And eternal bliss awaits thee,
Be welcome among us
And receive our greeting!*



PROGRAM NOTES

by Donald Draganski

Most listeners are familiar with Robert Schumann primarily as a composer of piano music, chamber music and lieder, in addition to his well-known symphonies and piano concerto. It may therefore come as something of a surprise to learn that Schumann secured his international reputation with his oratorio, *Das Paradies und die Peri*, composed in 1843 and set to a text by the Irish poet Thomas Moore.

In that year the thirty-three year old composer had already composed over 150 songs, three string quartets, his first symphony, and a veritable library of piano music. He was also editing the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a journal that he had founded nine years earlier. A growing family (he and Clara would eventually produce a brood of seven children) made further demands on this phenomenally busy man's time and energy. (It should also be noted that Schumann suffered from frequent bouts of manic-depression. During his active periods he produced one work after another in quick succession with amazing speed and alacrity; but when he suffered through his spells of depression – he referred to them as “turbid melancholy” – he would brood for months in a state of paralytic inactivity.)

Schumann had encountered Thomas Moore's poetry many years earlier, and in 1841 the composer's boyhood friend Emil Flechsig suggested adapting Moore's *Lalla Rookh* which he had translated into German as a suitable libretto for an oratorio. Schumann eagerly agreed and, in a letter to a friend, he wrote, “At the moment I'm involved in a large project, the largest I've yet undertaken – it's not an opera – I believe it's well-nigh a new genre for the concert hall. I plan to put all my energy into it and hope to have finished it within a year.” Although a few interruptions slowed his work a bit – he complained of a larcenous cook who stole fifty bottles of wine from his cellar – he completed the oratorio on the 16th of June, 1843.

Thomas Moore, the Irish poet whose work so inspired Schumann, was born in Dublin in 1779. He was the first Catholic to be admitted to Trinity College where he received his degree in 1798. The next year he left for England and became quite the social success in London, first as a singer, then as an essayist and poet. A brief position as a deputy in the British Admiralty took him to the United States and Canada. Shortly after his return to England, he read a highly uncomplimentary review of his poetry in which the writer referred to Moore as a “public nuisance” and his poetry as “licentious.” The ever-mercurial Moore challenged the critic to a duel; both survived – the critic's pistol was unloaded – and the two became fast friends. A long and productive period followed, interrupted by a brief period of exile on the continent to avoid debtor's prison. His last years were marked by chronic money problems, although his straits were relieved somewhat during his last years when he was awarded a Civil List pension. He died in 1852.

Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, published in 1817, consists of a series of oriental tales and stories, with alternating verse and prose passages. It tells the story of the emperor's daughter, Lalla Rookh

(“Tulip Cheek”) who is traveling from Delhi to Kashmir to be married to the king of Bucharia. During the journey a Kashmiri poet, Feramorz, diverts the princess by spinning four verse tales. Upon their arrival in Kashmir, the young poet identifies himself as the very king to whom Lalla is betrothed, and the work concludes with a traditional happy ending.

Of the four tales with which the Kashmiri poet entertained the princess, Schumann chose the second, “Paradise and the Peri” as the text for his musical setting. Peris, according to Persian mythology, are fairy-like creatures who are the offspring of fallen angels and mortals. Although Peris have been entrusted with the task of accompanying the saved to heaven, their questionable parentage bars them from gaining admittance into the heavenly realm. However, Moore’s Peri has been promised entry into heaven if she can produce a suitable gift. In Part One she presents the blood of a warrior killed by a tyrant, but the guardians of Heaven dismiss this gift. In Part Two the Peri brings back the sighs of a young maiden who had died in the arms of her beloved during a time of plague. This gift is also found wanting, but in Part Three, the gatekeeper to Paradise accepts the final gift: the tears of a repentant criminal, and the oratorio ends triumphantly as the Peri is ushered into paradise.

Upon completion of the oratorio, Schumann wrote the following in his diary: “On June 16th my Peri was completed after several days of strenuous work. What a great joy! I don’t know of anything similar in the musical repertory. I don’t like to write or speak about my own works; my wish is that they will have a good effect on the world and secure for me the loving memory of my children.”

The work received its premiere six months later at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, in December of 1843. The public response was sufficiently favorable to schedule a second performance a week later. Within five years the work had been presented in most of the European music centers, and by 1848 it had even reached the shores of America where it was performed by the American Musical Institute in New York.

As John Daverio states in his excellent biography of Schumann, “The *Peri* was the work that made Schumann into an international, as opposed to a merely German phenomenon. Not only was [Schumann] getting older; he was poised to develop into a cosmopolitan figure.”

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Donald Draganski was born in Chicago and received his Bachelor’s degree in music from DePaul University where he studied composition privately with the late Alexander Tcherepnin. He is now retired, after having served as Music Librarian at Roosevelt University for twenty-five years. He holds the chair of first bassoonist with the Evanston Symphony Orchestra and is also composer-in-residence for the Pilgrim Chamber Players. His musical compositions include works in all forms, vocal and instrumental, including his *Geometry of Music*, a choral piece written in 1985 to mark the 50th anniversary of the North Shore Choral Society. He has been writing program notes for the Society since 1980. Those wishing to know more about Don’s activities are invited to consult his web site: www.draganskimusic.com