

# **TO DAMASCUS**

## **Libretto**

### **ACT 1**

#### **Overture to Act 1**

#### **Song of the Scarab (Michael, Michele, Chase)**

Giralamo: And the Lord said unto Satan "From whence comest thou?"

And Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the Shadow of Death into the morning,

Fiore: drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace.

Lorenzo: Lord God almighty and Everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day.

#### **Act 1 (Michele, Chase, Michael)**

Fiore: Giovanni my friend and son of my great and beloved friend Lorenzo.

Lorenzo: Have you not heard what Fra Giralamo said of late?

Fiore: I am grieved Giovanni. Your glorious father is ill.

Lorenzo: Giralamo prophesied the coming death of my father the Magnifico and of the Pope.

Fiore: The Prince Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Giralamo: How is the Magnifico?

Fiore: His condition seems unchanged since you saw him.

Giralamo: Lorenzo lives, the while you sing his death.

Fiore: No, my Lord.

Giralamo: Strange. Were you with your friend today?

Lorenzo: No, Giralamo.

Giralamo: I understand. Where is your friend?

Lorenzo: Piero? How should I know?

Giralamo: But now tell me, tell me! How did Lorenzo take this latest news?

Fiore: Which news, my Lord?

Giralamo: Giralamo's latest joke ... the scandal in the cathedral.

#### **Fiore's Intro (Michele)**

I have lately been going to sit at the Frate's feet. I appear in the cathedral nearly a half hour too late. I show much less restraint! A whole brilliantly dressed cortege surrounds my litter. A silent, bitter struggle goes on between the divine Giralamo and me.

### **Act 1 continued (Chase, Michele, Michael)**

Lorenzo: Shall not one master this madness?

Fiore: How goes it with the Lord of Florence?

Lorenzo: Well, very well, excellently well. Pico!

Fiore: I am at your side, my Lorenzo.

Lorenzo: Look at me!

Fiore: So you still love me, Lorenzo de' Medici?

Lorenzo: I should love you no more.

Fiore: Indeed you are very ailing,

Lorenzo: Call Brother Giralamo.

Fiore: He is coming. Welcome to Firenze, May I congratulate you?

Giralamo: I will speak to you only from my pulpit.

Fiore: Not everybody is so stern.

Giralamo: I live only in my pulpit.

Fiore: So down here you are dead?

Giralamo: You drove me up to my pulpit

Fiore: It takes as much talent to revile as to praise.

Giralamo: The Word is hard, but it is holy!

Lorenzo: Will you not sit down?

Giralamo: I am beloved, Lorenzo.

Lorenzo: I am not without honor.

Giralamo: I am chosen.

Lorenzo: You are a monk. And you have ambition.

Giralamo: Fame is the school of scorn.

### **Collect 1 (Chase)**

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heav'n and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber; Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. Amen.

### **Lamentations (Michele)**

It was autumn, and the carnival had come down from the North complete with clowns, carousels, and wondrous magic. A six-year-old child was there; turning, playing tag in laughter. The memories falling gently into the night. Down came the sun, the stars playing hide and seek with wondrous magic. The ship moves, but its smoke moves with the wind faster than the ship; thick coils of it through leafy trees, pressing upon the river at wondrous magic. The heat makes this place of the woods, a room in which two robins pain; crying distractedly over the plight of their unhappy young.

### **Sarabande (Michael)**

It happened a long time ago in a different land. A girl brought alive my sense through her attraction to my innocence. She too seemed smitten with my attention. When I saw her in the cathedral I knew renunciation was my call. Your heart was engulfed with him. He cannot let you go! The time has come for eternal rest. So wait to remember.

### **Lord's Prayer (Chase)**

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

### **The Heavenly Benediction (Chase)**

O SING unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show his salvation from day to day; show his salvation from day to day. Bless the Lord, O my soul: Amen.

### **A Day of Creation (Michele)**

Praise my wish: do of my notion.  
Raise up fish out of my ocean.  
Transmute scale to feather;  
Fin to claw and wing.  
My mind, encompassed  
By integuments, suscepts  
Incessant thoughts.  
I would hear fish dance the weather;  
And we shall see them sing.  
Where the mind is its own place,  
Like falling off the edge of a picture.

## **ACT 2**

### **Prelude to Act 2**

### **Introit (Michael)**

Come unto me, all ye who travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

### **Kyrie (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Christe eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

**Gloria (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

Glória in excélsis Deo  
et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis.  
Laudámus te,  
benedícimus te,  
adorámus te,  
glorificámus te,  
grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam,  
Dómine Deus, Rex cæléstis,  
Deus Pater omnípotens.  
Dómine Fili unigénite, Jesu Christe,  
Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris,  
qui tollis peccáta mundi, miserére nobis;  
qui tollis peccáta mundi, súscipe deprecatióem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad déxteram Patris, miserére nobis.  
Quóniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dóminus, tu solus Altíssimus,  
Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spíritu: in glória Dei Patris. Amen

**Ode (Michael)**

Long last am I light with lists to bring earth's sweet pleasures, into a world of soft shadows, amid the joys of this kingdom.

**Sanctus (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

Heilig, heilig, heilig ist Gott der Herr Zebaoth! Alie Lande sind seiner Ebre voll!  
Hosianna in der Hohl Oelobt sie der da kommt Im Namen des Herrnl Hosianna in der Hoh!

**Tract (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name; in all the earth I who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visiteth him? that thou visiteth him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy bands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name; in all the earth!

### **Pied Beauty (Michele)**

Glory be to God for dappled things. For skies of color as a brinded cow, for rosemoles all in stipple upon trout that swim, fresh firecoal chestnut falls, finches' wings; landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough; and all trades their gear and tackle and trim. All things counter original, spare, strange; whatever is fickle, freckled, (who knows how?) With swift, slow, sweet, sour; adazzle, dim, He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise him.

### **Agnus Dei (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

## **ACT 3**

### **Prelude to Act 3**

#### **Ricercar (Michele, Michael)**

Fiore: Is that what you are afraid of?

Giralamo: It is not death but being alone. May I speak to you? I want to know where I am.

Fiore: In the cloister. This is a house of charity.

#### **Air (Michael)**

O evening star how bright does your light shine amongst men, whose hearts intertwine; above the pace of worldly woe, that bids farewell to the foe.

#### **Praeludium (Michele)**

But if thou wilt not harken to the voice of the Lord thy God. To observe all his commandments and his statutes. All these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city; and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shalt thou be. Cursed shalt thou be. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comes in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

#### **Gradual (Michael, Michele, Chase, Imani, Elisabeth)**

My thoughts turn south, a white city, we will wake in one another's arms. Forasmuch as ye know that, ye were not redeemed by corruptible things as silver and gold, but in whom we have redemption through his blood, unto the forgiveness of sins.

Holy art thou; holy art thou! My thoughts tum south, a white city, we will wake in one and another's arms. And then went down to the ship, set keel to breakers forth on the godly sea, and we set up mast and sail on the swart ship. Holy art thou; holy art thou. My thoughts turn south, a white city, we will wake in one another's arms. Holy art thou; holy art thou. The Redeemer shall come to Zion, for thou art my help and my deliverer and my goodness. Thou art the God of my salvation. Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden. Amen.

**Benedictus (Michael)**

I have desire to go where springs not fail, to fields where flies no sharp and sided hail.  
And a few lilies bloom. I have asked to be where no storms come. Where the green swell  
is in the havens dumb and out of the swing of the sea.

**Canto (Michele)**

So, look in yonder place to behold, finding neither silence nor sound; just remember the  
story as it was told, and listen to the music that you have not found.