Delphica Gaedhlica

for Gallicantus

Dan Trueman
2014
"Delphica Gaedhlica" is a macaronic setting of the third of the *Prophetiae Sibyllarum*, and is inspired in part by Orlando di Lassus’s wonderful set of motets. The setting is primarily in Irish, using a translation by Iarla Ó Lionáird made for this piece, though parts of the Latin and English versions also find their way into the piece.

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Non tarde veniet, tacita sed mente tenendum  
Hoc opus. hoc memori semper qui corde reponet,  
Huius pertentant cur gaudia magna prophetae  
Eximii, qui virginea conceptus ab alvo  
Prodibit, sine contactu maris. omnia vincit  
Hoc naturae opera: at fecit, qui cuncta gubernat.


He shall not come slowly (but this work must be held with quiet thought), he who will ever store this in a mindful heart, why his prophets may announce great joys of this exalted one, who shall come forth conceived from the virginal womb without taint of man. This conquers all the works of nature: yet he has done this who governs all things.

—Translation from the Latin by Peter Bergquist (ibid)

Ni mall a thiocfaidh sé ach is i gciún mhacnaimh  
gur coir an saothar seo a chaomhnu. An té a choinneoidh go deo é seo ina chroi intinne  
Árdoigh a shaoithibh lúcháir an té is airde;  
A thiocfaidh chugainn ó bhroinn na maighdean  
gan locht ár gcinne. Sáraionn sé seo oibreacha uile dúrtha an domhain,  
ach fós féin is eisean a riallaionn thar an uile ni a rinne é.

—Translation by Iarla Ó Lionáird

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I can provide recordings of Ó Lionáird (a native Irish speaker) reading this text to assist with translation, as needed.
The only non-standard notation in this piece results from a particular sonority that I ask the singers to tune in a “natural” way according to the overtone series, as seen to the left. Here, a sonority built on A demands that the G be tuned like the 7th-partial (31 cents lower than the equal-tempered 7th), the D# be tuned like the 11th-partial (a quarter-tone lower than the equal-tempered tritone), and the F be tuned like the 13th-partial (41 cents, very nearly a quarter-tone, higher than the equal-tempered minor-6th). The third (C#) is presumed to be just-tuned, as would be normal in a vocal ensemble, and is not given any special notation.

The sonority buzzes beautifully and takes on a completely new character when tuned this way; it is essential that every effort be made to learn how to sing this sonority and to not revert to something more tempered (I can provide example recordings and software tools for practice, as needed). However, it is also important not to become bogged down in absolute precision; this can be something of an aspirational sonority, one that represents a kind of “other” that is perhaps not perfectly attainable.
Do not try to match vowels from different words. Rather, do them naturally—I am interested in the timbral variation that the rotation and layering of the vowels should create.
qui - et qui - et qui - et qui - et ach is a gci ún_mhac-naimh re-
n gciú - n gciú - n gciú - n gciú - n mmm

qui - et qui - et qui - et qui - et ach is a gci ún_mhac-naimh
gciú - n gciú - n mmm

thar seo a chao - mh - nú ach is a gci ún_mhac-naimh

flec-tion mhac-naimh slow - ly comes he not an té

mhac-naimh slow - ly comes he not an té

mhac-naimh slow - ly comes he an té

re-flec-tion mhac-naimh slow - ly comes he an té
he who comes not to me a choinne-oidh go deo e seo

he who comes not to me a choinne-oidh go deo e seo

he who comes not to me a choinne-oidh go deo e seo

he who an te choi nne-oidh deo

chroi in-tin-ne an te choi nneoidh deo chroi

in a chroi in-tin-ne an te a choi-nneoidh go deo e seo in a chroi

in a chroi in-tin-ne an te a choi-nneoidh go deo e seo in a chroi

in a chroi in-tin-ne an te a choi-nneoidh go deo e seo in a chroi

chroi in-tin-ne te an te choi nneoidh deo chroi
Ár doigh a shaoi-thibh lú-chair an té is air-de Non
dear de Ár doigh a shaoi-thibh lú-chair an té is air-de Ár doigh a shaoi-thibh lú-chair an té is air-de Ár
an té is air-de ár doigh a shaoi-thibh Non
dear de ár doigh a shaoi-thibh Non
dear de

de non tarde ve-ni-et ta-

dear de a shaoi-thibh lú-chair an té is air-de Ár-
dear de a shaoi-thibh lú-chair an té is air-de Ár-

tar-de ve-ni-et ta-

tar-de ve-ni-et ta-
air - de sed men - te tenen dum Hoc opus hoc memori sem-per go deo

for-ev-er al-ways re-mem ber this a thioce-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn

for-ev-er al-ways re-mem ber this a thioce-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn

for-ev-er al-ways re-mem ber this a thioce-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn

for-ev-er al-ways re-mem ber this a thioce-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn
a thioc-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn na maigh-de an gan locht
not a thioc-faidh chu-gainn ó bhroinn na maigh-de an gan locht

ár gci-nne Sá-rai - onn Sáí rai- onn Sáí-rai -

ár gci-nne Sáí - rai-

ár gci-nne Sáí rai- onn Sáí -

ár gci-nne ár gci-nne ár gci-nne
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onn Sáí rai- onn conquers all he rules all he rules

- onn Sáí - rai - onn conquers all he rules all he rules

rai - onn Sáí - rai - onn nature works nature

ár gci-nne Sáí - rai - onn nature works nature

ár gci-nne Sáí - rai - onn Sáí - rai - onn om - ni - a om - ni -

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all sé seo oib-rae - cha uí - le dúl - ra an

all sé seo oib - rea - cha uí - le dúl - ra an

works sé seo oib - rea - cha uí - le dúl - ra an

works sé seo oib - rea - cha uí - le dúl - ra an domh -

- a sé seo oib - rea - cha uí - le dúl - ra an
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domhain ach fós féin ach fós féin at fecit ach fós féin

domhain is eiscen a rial-laionn thar an uile ni

domhain is eiscen a rial-laionn thar an uile ni

-ain ach fós féin ach fós féin ach fós

domhain ach fós féin ach fós féin at fecit ach fós féin

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ach fós féin at fecit ach fós féin at fecit Sárai-onn sé

is eiscen a rial-laionn thar an uile ni a rinne é

is eiscen a rial-laionn thar an uile ni a rinne é

féin at fecit ach fós féin Sárai-onn

ach fós féin at fecit not Sárai-onn sé
seo oib-reacha uile dul-ra dul-ra

this__con-quers this__con-quers all na-ture dul-ra

this__con-quers all this____con-quers na-ture dul-ra

oib-reacha uile dul-ra dul-ra

seo oib-reacha uile dul-ra dul-ra

dul-ra not not not ni

dul-ra not not not mall

dul-ra not not not not

dul-ra not not not not

dul-ra not not not not