

MISS HAVISHAM'S WEDDING NIGHT

The character of Miss Havisham is based on the same character from Dickens' famous novel *Great Expectations*. Years prior, Miss Havisham was preparing herself to wed Matthew Compeyson when at 20 minutes before 9:00, received a letter from her soon-to-be husband that the wedding was off. He had found another more beautiful and richer than Aurelia Havisham. In the original story, Miss Havisham has blocked the outside light and stopped all of the clocks to reflect 20 minutes before 9:00, the time she received the letter. Each night, Aurelia Havisham relives her 'wedding day' when she slips into delusions, hearing knocks on her door and seeing those from her past, such as her Nanny, her Father and even Matthew Compeyson. As she sings, "The door opens, slowly. Fear is it? Apology? Is it you, Matt?" she goes through her delirious rage when she lets Matt know that she has gone mad. In this piece, Dominick Argento has set the libretto in a manner sensitive to Aurelia's cyclical delusions, from calm to outbursts of rage and back to calm when she accepts that Matthew isn't her husband. The orchestration follows this pattern with held chords of double tonality to moving passages that describe the words that Aurelia sings and then back to simple, tonal lines with her acceptance of her fate.

In the original story Miss Havisham adopted a daughter, Estella, for the sole purpose of teaching her how to break a man's heart. Estella is growing to be a beautiful young lady, and at the end of her 'wedding night', as Aurelia has calmed down to have her tea, she calls Estella into her room to teach her all about men.

MISS MANNERS ON MUSIC

This staged song cycle originated from letters written by Miss Manners (Judith Martin), an etiquette columnist whose work appeared in over 200 newspapers worldwide. When writing her responses to those seeking advice from her, she would refer to herself in the third person. In this presentation, Miss Manners answers questions about:

(Prologue)

Manners at a Concert

Manners at the Ballet

Manners for Contemporary Music

Manners at a Church Recital

Manners at the Opera

(Envoi)