

THE MILK MAN

— AARON'S ARIA

MARK PAJAK

(LIBRETTO)

BOFAN MA

(MUSIC)

(2016)

PROGRAMME NOTE:

Composed for the 'Make an Aria' project co-organised by the RNCM (Royal Northern College of Music), MMU (Manchester Metropolitan University), and MTW (Music Theatre Wales) in 2016; this piece could be regarded as the very opening scene of an 'imaginary' opera (title to be confirmed), on the subject matter of 'immigration'. The plot is developed upon a series of mental transformations that the main character Aaron goes through, within a 'post-Brexit' social context. The aim is not to provoke anything that has already been controversial; but to find a certain 'balance' between one's sense of national identity and a tendency of its becoming somewhat nationalistic.

The consensus of achieving such an objective had already been established since the very beginning of this collaboration between Mark and myself. As a foreigner studying in the UK, I have had to deal with the border control on a regular basis; whereas (although) being a British citizen, Mark had once witnessed one of his co-workers being evicted by the border force right from their office. That said, we both try putting ourselves neutrally to respond to a scenario where one could only be judged by their residential legitimacy; and simultaneously where one has the privilege to judge. In addition, we tend to discuss the potential impact that such a scenario may exert to one who witnesses but struggles to take a side at the meantime.

Hence the core concept of the opera is neutrality, or the neutrality that one was proud of before undergoing a certain peculiar event. If we were to argue, such a notion of 'in-betweenness' would not always protect one from being struggled - it could be quite the opposite.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ARIA:

Aaron went to his local dairy store to get some milk. Everything went as usual, just another ordinary day of this midland small village, where Aaron has been building all his life in since graduated from the university. All of a sudden, a car arrived with a few people from the UK Border Force. They broke in and arrested one of the store staff, whom was claimed to be 'under illegal immigrant status'. Aaron witnessed the whole process as the incident happened, being completely in shock, he ran to the corner to calm down, where he made some radical realisations which would later lead to his involvement in a bigger tragedy.

LIBRETTO

— Mark Pajak (2016)

I came in for milk.
Just a pint of cream.
Then the police...
The border force...

The seller. His face was milk.
He was breathing
words, a whisper
as they escorted him passed;

his head wilted
on his chest. My dream
blur of adrenaline
as I witnessed... him.

His soft words, silk
torn on his lip's seam.
My dream
blur of adrenaline
as I witnessed... him.

What language?
Not English.... Lithuanian?

He was always quiet.
But he wasn't. Didn't seem
foreign. This town is too small
for foreign. For them.

I'm not a prejudice.
I'm open. Always have been.
But his face was milk
white. White. Not foreign.

My stomach tilts.
How many of them go unseen?

I mean. I'm open.
Don't mind them.

So why do I feel ill?
He's a human being.
But not local and this
is my local corner shop.

That sneaky bastard!
Human. But a different breed.
If his lot go unseen, how can we
know them? Control them?

There'd be a spill.
Our streets teeming
like bad milk with salmonella,
E. coli, Listeria, Lithuanian
Bulgarian, Russian, Polish,
Romanian, Hungarian, Slovakian,
Croatian, Greek, Estonian.

A white country
unpasteurised.... But I'm open.
Don't mind them.

My mind needs to still.
These thoughts are unclean.
Or is it right? Isn't it better
to know them by sight?

The Milk Man

---- Aaron's Aria

Libretto by Mark Pajak

Music: Bofan Ma

Aug. 2016

Intense ♩ = 120

♪ = ♩

Aaron
(Baritone)

Piano

R.H.

Intense ♩ = 120

♪ = ♩

5

Aaron

Pno.

9

Aaron

Pno.

M.P. _____
(middle pedal)

M.P. _____
ff

M.P. _____
ff

ff

ff

ff

2
14 **Tranquil**

Aaron

Pno.

Tranquil

pp *mp* *p* *mf*

A

18 *mp*

Aaron

I came in for milk,

Pno.

pp *p*

(hold as long as possible, use the middle pedal)

pp *p*

B

21 *pp* *mp*

Aaron

just a pint of cream.

Pno.

pp cresc. *p*

pp cresc. *p*

C

25 *f*

Aaron

Then the po - lice! The bor - der force!

Pno.

mp *ff* *ff*

mp *ff* *ff*

30 **D** *mp*

Aaron *mp* The sell - er his face was

Pno. *f* *pp cresc.*

34 **E** *cresc.*

Aaron milk. He was breath - ing words a

Pno. *p cresc.*

39 *f*

Aaron whis - per, as they es - cort - ed him passed;

Pno. *ff* *sff* *p* *f*

42 **F**

Aaron

Pno. *pp subito* *mp* *p*

45

Aaron

Pno.

48

Aaron

Pno.

G Con moto

mf *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

51

Aaron

Con moto

mp cresc.

Pno.

54

Aaron

f *p*

Pno.

56 *mf*

Aaron

His soft words, silk, torn on his lip's seam,

Pno.

58

Aaron

my dream blur, blur of a-dren - a-line as I wit - nessed

Pno.

f *ff*

60 *f* *mp* *f*

Aaron

him, wit- nessed him...

Pno.

accel.

62 **I** ♩ = 80

Aaron

Pno.

f *mp*