

# Le Violette

*The Violets*

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English version by  
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Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)  
Edited by John Glenn Paton

Allegretto,  $\text{♩} = 72 - 88$   
*mf*

3

5

Note: Treble notes with upward stems are played by unison violins in the original. Treble notes with downward stems are part of the realization supplied by the editor.

8

Ru-gia-do - se, O - do - ro - se,  
Ten-der vio - let, I a - dore you,

10

12

Ru-gia-do - se, O - do - ro - se, Vi - o - let - te Gra - zi -  
Ten-der vio - let, I a - dore you, O how bash - ful, Gent - ly

14

o - se, Vi - o - let - te Gra - zi - o - se, Voi vi sta - te Ver - go -  
grace - ful, O how bash - ful, Gent - ly grace - ful, How you shrink from My ad -

*Idiomatic translation:* Dewy, fragrant, graceful violets, you stand there modestly,

16

gno - se,  
vanc - es,

Mez - zo as - co - se,  
Hid - ing shy - ly,

18

Mez - zo as - co - se Fra le fo - glie, E sgrida - te  
Hid - ing shy - ly In the grass - es, Much too hope - ful

20

Le mie vo - glie,  
Are my wish - es,

Che son trop - po am - bi  
You - re - buke my ar - dent

22

zio - se,  
glanc - es,

E sgrida - te  
Much too hope - ful

half hidden among the leaves, and you rebuke my desires, which are too ambitious.

24

Le mie vo - glie,  
Are my wish - es,

Che\_ son trɔp -  
You - re - buke,

po, son  
yes, re -

26

trɔp - po am - bi - zio - se.  
buke my ar - dent glanc - es.

Ru - gia -  
Ten - der

28

do - se, O - do - ro - se,  
vio - let, I a - dore you,

Vi - o -  
O how

30

let - te gra - zi - o - se,  
bash - ful, gent - ly grace - ful,

Ru - gia -  
Ten - der

32

do - se, O - do - ro - se,  
vio - let, I a - dore you,

Vi - o -  
Ten - der

34

let - te, vi - o - let - te gra - zi - o - se,  
vio - let, ten - der vio - let, I a - dore you,

Vi - o - let - te gra - zi - o -  
Ten - der vio - let, I a - dore

*tr*

36

se!  
you!

38

*tr*



# "Le Violette"

from *Pirro e Demetrio*  
pir:ro e demɛtrjo

Alessandro Scarlatti  
ales:sandro skarlat:ti

## Poetic idea

"Have you tiny violets been put here as a message for me? Am I aiming too high in loving such a wonderful person?" The person who sings this is a youth named Mario in the opera *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*. He is alone in a garden, thinking about his love for a woman who is nobly born.

## Background

After his youthful successes in Rome, Scarlatti moved to Naples, which was under Spanish rule, and became the musical director to the Spanish viceroy. His appointment included directing the leading opera theater with a permanent company of nine singers and five instrumentalists. *Pirro e Demetrio* (1694) was among Scarlatti's most successful operas. It was performed in many cities, even in London, but the numerous performances brought the composer no additional payment.

The interweaving of the voice and violin parts in this aria is typical of Scarlatti's mature operas, some of which contain no continuo arias.

## Sources

(1) *Pirro e Demetrio*, manuscript score of the opera in Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, Rari 7.1.11. (Microfilm courtesy of Prof. Karl Kroeger, Music Library, University of Colorado at Boulder.) Scored for voice (soprano clef, starting on a2), violins "*tutti all'unisono*", and continuo. Key: A.  
(2) *Songs in the new opera call'd Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (London: Walsh, 1709?). Copy in the Clark Library, University of California at Los Angeles. English text only. Violin part omitted. Voice and continuo parts exactly duplicate those in the Naples score, except for one interesting variation: m32 is altered to minor

rudʒadoze  
**Rugiadose**,  
Dewy,

odoroze  
**Odorose**  
fragrant

violet:te gratsioze  
**Violette graziose**,  
violets graceful,

voi vi state  
**Voi vi state**  
you there stand

vergogn:noze  
**Vergognose**,  
modest,

mɛd:zoaskoze  
**Mezzo ascose**  
half hidden

fra le fɔʎ:ʎe  
**Fra le foglie**,  
among the leaves

e zgridate  
**E sgridate**  
and you-rebuke

le mie vɔʎ:ʎe  
**Le mie voglie**,  
[the] my desires,

ke son trɔp:po ambizioze  
**Che son troppo ambizioso**.  
which are too ambitious.

(c-naturals instead of c-sharps in A Major).

A libretto published for the London production in 1709, in which the role of Mario was sung by a woman, gives this singable translation:

Blushing violets,  
Sweetly smelling,  
From your verdant fragrant dwelling,  
You upbraid me  
For aspiring  
And admiring  
Those above me,  
Tho' they love me;  
And deride me  
With too much Ambition swelling.

The familiar version, made by an anonymous editor, omits m4-m11 and omits or alters other passages. Having shortened the aria drastically, the editor lengthened it overall with a long repetition beginning with "*Voi vi state vergognose*." This extension is furnished with ornaments, which are acceptable but are certainly not from Scarlatti.