

Love Purcell. Love Coldplay. Love Music

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment continues to redefine classical music with new Purcell aria in reverse.

Taking its energy from the Coldplay hit *The Scientist*, the OAE's newest genre-bending film reimagines Purcell's tragic 'When I am Laid in Earth' from *Dido and Aeneas* into a modern-day drama, recorded in recognisable locations around London.

Featuring OAE's Rising Stars alumnus, mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston, this film is the second in a series of visually captivating remakes of iconic pop videos with baroque arias.

Crispin Woodhead, OAE Chief Executive, comments:

'We are very proud of this series and we hope that it signals the way ahead for a creative life in digital that can contribute not only to our appreciation of our repertoire, but expand that audience and break down barriers between genres.'

What is the link between the two songs?

In the Coldplay video, singer Chris Martin is a dazed man, wrestling with logic after losing his lover. He moves through his life in a reverse narrative with melancholic lyrics willing the laws of science to allow him to 'go back to the start.' The film progresses, or rather regresses, from the opening shot of Martin lying on a bare mattress in the middle of a street to discovering that he has suffered a horrifying car crash with his girlfriend who, it seems, has not survived the accident. Martin knows that he cannot undo the damage of the past, and as he ambles through the wilderness in a trance-like state, we can sense the confusion and trauma of his loss.

The evocative scenes in the Coldplay video resonate in the lyrics of Purcell's Dido's Lament in which the young queen struggles to make sense of the loss of her Trojan warrior lover, Aeneas, and yearns to undo the damage to her reputation. Through hauntingly beautiful, drawn-out notes that pierce through the hazy London nightscape, our modern-day Dido ambles through the city in dazed confusion. She pleads to not be remembered as a rejected girl and instead she wants to return her image to that of the capable, independent woman.

The OAE's remake presents Dido's lament alongside social media photo frames and captions, drawing parallels with the way in which these platforms allow us to curate our image. Through our posts, we can relive rose-tinted memories while also hiding our grief and denying our most painful moments ever happened. Neither Dido, nor the Scientist, have this luxury. They must endure the brutality of real life.

How was the film made?

To pull off the reverse filming effect, Helen sang the lyrics backwards whilst moving through each scene. When asked about this challenge, Helen explained:

'We quickly discovered this wasn't just a case of writing the words out backwards and trying to say them. We needed to think about how the words were formed backwards and how they would work phonetically. I spent longer than I care to remember sitting in my living room filming myself saying the words backwards and then reversing them on an app I

had found online to see if the words it created were anything like the real ones. Once I'd worked it out, I memorised these new phrases and we were set to go.'

The OAE is currently working on a series of eight 'music video remake' films, in which they take the production values of iconic popular music videos and apply them to baroque arias. Each film features an alumnus of the Orchestra's Rising Stars of the Enlightenment Scheme for young singers. The first of the OAE's Rising Star films, a dangerous underwater remake of Radiohead's *No Surprises* with baritone James Newby singing Handel's *Cara Pianta*, is available to watch on the OAE's YouTube channel for free. [Watch the video here.](#)

If music is good, it's good regardless of its genre. **Love Coldplay. Love Purcell. Love Music.**

This film is sponsored by Mark Allen Group, Gramophone.

Notes to Editors

For more information, please contact anna.bennett@oae.co.uk

This film will premiere at 10am GMT on Friday 19 February on the OAE's YouTube channel. [Watch the video here.](#)

Launched in 2017, the Rising Stars of the Enlightenment is the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's singers' scheme for talented, emerging artists. For each cohort, the OAE take on up to eight singers on their two-year-long programme, in which our Stars perform regularly with the Orchestra on both the national and international stage.

The Rising Stars programme is part of a broader commitment to nurturing the next generation of performing artists. It sits alongside the OAE's well-established Ann and Peter Law Experience scheme for instrumentalists where gifted and aspirational players are welcomed into the OAE ranks, many of whom graduate to become regular members of the ensemble.