

*A Kalmus Classic Edition*

Henry

# PURCELL

## 15 SONGS AND AIRS

for Contralto or Baritone  
with English text

VOCAL SCORE

K 06850





## NOTES

The opera of Purcell's day was, by the modern interpretation of the word, no opera at all, but drama with incidental music. Into the spoken play were introduced masques, spectacular or comic scenes, songs, dances, and so forth ; but as a general rule these musical interludes, however long and elaborate, did nothing to carry on the dramatic action. The actors were seldom called upon to sing ; sometimes, however, a soliloquy was sung behind the scenes while the actor stood still on the stage. "What shall I do to show how much I love her ?" sings the voice, while Maximinian "stands gazing at the Princess all the time of the song."

It is in this sense that the words "opera" and "operatic" are used in the following notes.

### Nos. 1 and 2 : DIDO AND ÆNEAS

Purcell wrote one true opera, in the classical sense of the word. In *Dido and Æneas* there is neither spoken dialogue nor musical interlude, but a real welding of music and drama.

(1.) "Ah ! Belinda, I am press'd with torment" is Dido's first utterance shortly after the rise of the curtain. Torn between love of Æneas and fear of divine vengeance, she tells her waiting-woman of her grief, but not of its cause.

(2.) "When I am laid in earth" is her last farewell before death.

### Nos. 3-7 : THE FAIRY QUEEN

*The Fairy Queen* is an anonymous operatic adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ; but none of Shakespeare's lyrics is used in the musical setting.

(3.) The magic flower is in Oberon's hands, and Titania, before retiring to rest, changes the scene to "a prospect of grottoes, arbours, and delightful walks," where a masque of Night, Mystery, Secrecy, and Sleep is enacted.

(4.) After the translation of Bottom, Titania conjures up her enchanted lake and entertains him with a fairy masque, of which this song is a part.

(5.) When at last the lovers' tangle is set to rights, Juno descends in "a machine drawn by peacocks" to bestow her blessing.

(6.) Juno reascends, and Oberon, possibly to allow time for the setting of the final transformation scene, calls for—

"the plaint that did so nobly move,  
When Laura mourn'd for her departed love."

(7.) The final scene is set in a Chinese garden. "Hark ! how all things with one sound rejoice" is one of the two songs that precede the entrance of Hymen.

## No. 8: KING ARTHUR

In the production of *King Arthur, or The British Worthy*, Dryden collaborated with Purcell, but not without a certain asperity. "The numbers of poetry and vocal music are sometimes so contrary, that in many places I have been obliged to cramp my verses, and make them rugged to the reader, that they may be harmonious to the hearer. . . . I flatter myself with an imagination, that a judicious audience will easily distinguish betwixt the songs wherein I have complied with him (the composer), and those in which I have followed the rules of poetry in the sound and cadence of the words."

(8.) The play ends with a patriotic masque, in which Venus herself sings the praises of Britain.

## No. 9: THE INDIAN QUEEN

Dryden, with Sir Robert Howard, was also responsible for *The Indian Queen*, but the operatic version is a later adaptation by an unknown hand.

(9.) Zempoalla, the usurping Indian Queen, is in love with Montezuma. Troubled by a dream, she consults the sorcerer, Ismeron. The vague reply of the deity that he summons infuriates her, and Ismeron tries, a little tactlessly maybe, to calm her rage by pointing at the truth through the agency of spirit voices. "I attempt from love's sickness to fly in vain" speaks, as it were, for Zempoalla's own heart.

## No. 10: THE TEMPEST

Another adaptation of Shakespeare, or rather an operatic version of an adaptation by Dryden and Sir William Davenant.

(10.) The final scene is, as usual, a masque. Amphitrite, wife of Poseidon (Neptune), rises from the sea to bless the departing mortals.

## No. 11: BONDUCA

Bonduca (more familiarly Boadicea) is the heroine of a tragedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, again adapted to operatic ends.

(11.) The queen and her two daughters have taken refuge in a fort after their defeat by the Roman army. Bonvica, the younger, sings to dispel her "dire consuming melancholy."

## No. 12: DON QUIXOTE

D'Urfey's first burlesque of *Don Quixote* was such a success that it was followed immediately by a second, and in the following year by a third, which was a failure.

(12.) The Duchess's waiting-woman, Cervantes' "desenvuelta y discreta Altisidora," plots to make Don Quixote unfaithful to Dulcinea. She teases him with "a whimsical variety, as if I were possess'd with several degrees of passion."

"From rosy bow'rs" is said to have been Purcell's last composition, "it being in his sickness."

### No. 13: KING RICHARD THE SECOND

Nahum Tate's adaptation of Shakespeare's play, stopped after the second night on account of political allusions, made no provision for music except two incidental songs.

(13.) "Retir'd from any mortal's sight" was sung in the prison scene of Act 4, but whether Purcell's setting was composed for the stage or not it is impossible to tell.

### No. 14: THE OLD BACHELOR

(14.) This song occurs in the second act of Congreve's famous comedy. Araminta, Belinda, Vainlove, and Bellmour are together:

*Araminta.*—Nay come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull. If my Musick-master be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new song, which comes pretty near my own opinion of love and your sex. Who's there?

(*Enter Footman.*)

Is Mr. Gavot gone?

*Footman.*—Only to the next door, Madam; I'll call him. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Musick-master.*)

*Araminta.*—O, I am glad we shall have a song to divert the discourse. Pray oblige us with the last new song.

#### SONG

*Araminta.*—So, how d'ye like the song, Gentlemen?

*Bellmour.*—O, very well perform'd. But I don't much admire the words.

*Araminta.*—I expected it. There's too much truth in 'em.

### No. 15: PAUSANIAS

*Pausanias, the Betrayed of his Country, Written by a Person of Quality*, was published in 1696.

(15.) This song and a duet ("My dearest, my fairest"), both set by Purcell, are sung behind the stage, and serve to create the right atmosphere for the scene in which Pandora, the Persian mistress of Pausanias, attempts to seduce the young Argilius.



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# AH! BELINDA, I AM PRESS'D WITH TORMENT

FROM  
DIDO AND AENEAS

Original Key C mi.

Andante espressivo (♩ = 76)

DIDO *p*

Ah! ah! ah! Be - lin - da, I — am

*p molto legato e cantabile*

*simile*

*mf*

press'd With — tor - ment, Ah! ah! ah! Be -

*mf*

-lin - da, I — am press'd — With tor - ment not to be con -

ORIGINAL ACCOMPANIMENT: figured bass, with strings in the *ritornello*  
CONTRALTO (or Baritone)