

Purcell

by

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ACT ONE; SCENE ONE.

1 INT. A TAVERN - NIGHT 1

Henry Purcell's father and his uncle Thomas are drinking a toast to a fellow who has sung a bawdy tune.

THE ELDER HENRY

Ten years of plain singing has been too long. Let us drink to the return of the King.

THOMAS PURCELL

We will raise up the Chapel Choir and indulge our passion for harmony.

THE ELDER HENRY

No more unison and syllabic singing.

THOMAS PURCELL

Only the polyphonic weaving in and out of voice parts that was the pride of our father.

THE ELDER HENRY

And the setting of several notes to one syllable will be our daily diet.

Note

The two sing exaggerated harmonies and sustained notes.

2 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 2

Henry & Elizabeth Purcell at the baptism of their son Henry.

Note

Music

3 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 3

Elizabeth and young Henry - five years old - at the funeral of Henry the Elder.

Note

Music

4 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 4

Thomas escorts Henry into the choir school.

THOMAS PURCELL

They will teach you everything that you need to know here, Henry. This will be a great new age of music, so enjoy it.

Note

Music

5 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 5

Henry, who is nine, is singing in the chapel choir.

Note

Music

6 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 6

Henry is writing out notation.

Note

Music

7 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 7

Henry is mending instruments.

Note

Music

8 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 8

John Blow directs a ceremony to confirm Henry, eighteen years old, as the organist at the Abbey. His mother and Thomas congratulate him

THOMAS PURCELL

Directing the choir is a great privilege, but we are waiting to hear all the new hymns you will compose. Your father would be mightily proud of you on this day.

9 INT. A TAVERN - NIGHT 9

Note

Catches

Henry sings catches to the delight of the customers. Nahum smiles and drinks his ale.

DISSOLVE TO:

10 EXT. SMITHFIELD FAIR - MORNING 10

Note

Music to WHEN MONARCHS UNITE chorus.

Nahum and Eliza are standing at a market stall. She is sorting through ribbons and trimmings. She twirls around, holding the trimmings to her hair. She laughs. Nahum watches her performance; completely captivated.

DISSOLVE TO:

11 INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING 11

Note

Music to THE HILLS AND THE VALES chorus.

Frances sings and smiles at Henry who is directing her. We see him completely captivated by her beauty and her voice.

DISSOLVE TO:

12 EXT. OPEN GROUND NEAR THE CITY - MORNING 12

Note

Music to THE TRIUMPHING DANCE.

Henry walks along a lane as though he is giving a royal performance. His violin is strung across his shoulder,

giving his limbs the freedom to exercise extravagant movements. His steps are governed by the tempo he is singing, so they have a regular rhythm, but his arms move up and down, independent of each other, in an irregular fashion. His hands, operating a different rhythm to his arms, twist and dance in every direction while his fingers express the punctuation in the music. Now and then Henry stops and points the toe of his right foot at the ground, giving the music emphasis; then he moves forwards again. At other times, he takes a few steps backwards and then moves forward again until he finally re-joins his familiar rhythm.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 13

Note

Magnificat In G

Henry is directing the choir. Many people have gathered to listen to his inspiring and beautiful direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 INT. A TAVERN - NIGHT 14

Note

Catches

Henry sings catches and other fellows sing.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT. HENRY'S STUDIO AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 15

Note

Music to THE ECHO DANCE OF THE FURIES

Henry composing & dancing to the rhythm of his composition.

DISSOLVE TO:

16 INT. ELIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 16

Note

Music to THE GROVE; RITORNELLE

Eliza, with love in her eyes, watches Nahum reading.

NAHUM

Don't forget the races, either: the spacious Circus offers chances galore. No need here of private finger talk. Or secret signals, nods conveying messages: you'll sit right beside your mistress, without let or hindrance, so be sure to press against her wherever you can - an easy task: the seating divisions restrict her, regulations facilitate contact.

ELIZA

Nahum Tate, what actions this Roman poet inspires. I think I'll make dresses to facilitate contact.

NAHUM

Eliza, your cheeky thoughts fill me with fear that I might not be the one who enjoys them.

ELIZA

Oh, Nahum, you are too quick with your jealousy. Come give me a kiss.

The couple fall into each others arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

17 INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING 17

Note

She that would gain a faithful lover

Frances is singing.(she has an extraordinary soprano voice.)

FRANCES

Whilst they're in doubt their flame increases, And all attendance they will pay; When once confess'd their ardour ceases, And vows like smoke soon fly away.

HENRY

You should sing the word 'fly' as if you were flying away. Try to exploit its expressive potential and sing; vows like smoke soon flyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy away.

Frances smiles with love in her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING 18

Note

Music to THE SHIPS; THE WITCHES DANCE

Henry is playing the harpsichord and Josias is dancing - showing his pupils their dance moves.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 EXT. THE DOORSTEP OF ELIZA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 19

Note

Music to A DANCE TO ENTERTAIN AENEAS

Eliza hands a dress to Alethea.

ELIZA

I'll have the last dress ready by Friday. I will miss you, but we should meet to go dancing.

ALETHEA

You'll enjoy making costumes at the Theatre Royal that's for sure. Do you still see that fellow who often took you to the theatre?

ELIZA

I'm expecting him any minute. He doesn't take me out much these days. Oh, how I love the comedies. You should see me with great tears rolling down my cheeks and my stomach aching from laughter.

Nahum arrives.

ELIZA

Hello Nahum. This is Alethea.

NAHUM

Pleased to meet you.

ALETHEA

You too, but I must be on my way.

ELIZA

See you on Friday. Nahum, my dear, shall we take a short stroll?

NAHUM

I would rather come up to your apartment.

He takes her in his arms.

ELIZA

Nahum, you arrive with too much excitement, it's a wonder you don't burst into flames.

NAHUM

I long to have you in my arms, Eliza.

He tries to hold Eliza and she pushes him away.

ELIZA

Wait until I invite intimacy; don't demand it.

NAHUM

Sorry Eliza, I love you. I can do nothing but express my feelings.

ELIZA

No Nahum, I can't be attending to your feelings today, I have dresses to make. I think you should go. We can meet up next week and I will tell you about my new job at the Theatre Royal.

NAHUM

Are you making costumes the Theatre Royal?

ELIZA

Yes. My friend, a scene painter, introduced me to the stage manager. I shall see performances every day and laugh 'til I drop.

NAHUM

Please Eliza, let me stay.

ELIZA
No you should go.

NAHUM
I'll stay.

ELIZA
You'll go.

NAHUM
But Eliza.

ELIZA
Just go. See me next week.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. A TAVERN - EVENING

20

NAHUM
I have argued with Eliza. I wanted to be with her and she insisted I leave. I asserted that I would stay, but she maintained I should go.

Note

Henry hears the musical argument scene - NO NO I'LL STAY - from Dido and Aeneas and the audience see the opera version.

NAHUM
Henry are you listening to me?

HENRY
I have a new love.

NAHUM
What? Who is the lucky woman.

HENRY
Frances Pieters.

Nahum freezes, astonished.

NAHUM
Frances Pieters. Your pupil at school?

Henry sings.

HENRY
When her languishing eyes said love - too soon the soft charm I obey'd.

NAHUM
Does Frances return your feelings?

HENRY
The emotion that passes between us can mean no other thing.

NAHUM

Her beautiful voice has captivated you, Henry. If music warms the soul to love, then the intimacy of singing must heat it to even greater effect.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. JOSIAS PRIEST'S STUDY - MORNING 21

Note

Overture to Dido and Aeneas

Josias is at his desk. Henry and Nahum enter.

JOSIAS

My news is that we're moving to the Old School House in Chelsea. I hope you will stay with us, despite the journey. The new school has a huge hall that will suit my dance classes admirably. Cecelia and I would like to mark the opening with an entertainment and we would like you to compose something for us.

NAHUM

How long do we have?

JOSIAS

Three months at least. We should like it to be a lively masque with plentiful dancing and singing by the pupils.

HENRY

We will see what we can devise.

JOSIAS

Wonderful, I will give Cecelia the good news.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 EXT. THE GARDEN OF THE SCHOOL - MORNING 22

Note

Overture to Dido and Aeneas

Henry and Nahum walking.

NAHUM

I will not work without being paid.

HENRY

It's an entertainment, not a royal commission. We could use your play, Brutus of Alba.

NAHUM

It's the story of Dido and Aeneas; a tragic tale of disappointed love. The death of a heroine is never going to be a celebratory theme for a girl's school to perform.

HENRY

But I have recently composed an overture that would suit the tragedy perfectly.

NAHUM

Henry, I have never written a musical production.

HENRY

We must dance it, Nahum, not write it. The barest of actions will carry the meaning. All we need is ten songs, ten chorus refrains and ten dances.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 INT. THE STAGE AT THEATRE ROYAL - AFTERNOON

23

Note

Love's Goddess Sure was Blind

Nahum arrives.

KILLIGREW

Glad to see you Nahum. I must cancel my December production, so I am thinking of putting on your Richard II instead.

NAHUM

Excellent Do you have my manuscript?

KILLIGREW

I have asked Prizeman to find John Petty. He oversees the manuscripts.

Enter Prizeman.

PRIZEMAN

No one can find Mr, Petty, sir.

Squeals of laughter and the sound of a chase come from backstage. Eliza runs onto the stage and freezes. John Petty arrives without a shoe on; he freezes. Eliza gives Nahum a quick nod and glances across to the scaffolding where the scene painter is glaring at her. Eliza throws the shoe to John Petty, who catches it and puts it on.

KILLIGREW

Do you have time for chasing games, Petty?

PETTY

No Sir. Sorry Sir.

KILLIGREW

Do you have Nahum's manuscript?

PETTY

I sent it to the Lord Chamberlain for approval.

KILLIGREW

Ah, good, I'll ask Prizeman to fetch it. Where is he? Come with me Petty. Give me a second, Nahum.

ELIZA

Hello Nahum.

NAHUM

Hello Eliza. I hope you're not promoting jealousy.

ELIZA

Don't censor my actions, Nahum. I intend no harm.

NAHUM

This isn't easy for me. I'm a simple Irishman.

ELIZA

Well, simple Irishman, just love me with courtesy.

NAHUM

The thought of loving you with chastity fills me with horror.

ELIZA

Forget chastity, I said courtesy. I am not suggesting you live a life of abstinence.

Nahum laughs. Killigrew returns.

KILLIGREW

Everything is now in order.

DISSOLVE TO:

24 INT. HENRY'S MUSIC STUDIO - EVENING

24

Nahum, John Blow, Nicholas Staggins and Henry are arguing about where to go for a drink.

HENRY

The drinks must wait. I want to play my song for Nahum's History of King Richard II.

Henry sits at the harpsichord.

Note

Henry composed the music to accompany these words -

HENRY

"Retir'd from any mortal's sight the pensive Damon lay, He blessed the discontented night and cursed the smiling day."

NAHUM

Henry, the meaning you have extracted is pure enchantment. The sadness of the tones will move our audience to tears.

JOHN

Your elaborate embellishments on wholly unimportant words reminds me of Matthew Locke. Locke knows more about declamation than anyone, but he does not have your instinctual inspiration for communicating text.

HENRY

Allow me to play my overture for our musical entertainment.

Note

Overture to Dido and Aeneas

He plays and they all applaud.

JOHN

Beautiful. We are speechless and overwhelmed, Henry. Come now, we need a drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 INT. A TAVERN - EVENING

25

Note

Music to THE GROVE; HASTE, HASTE TO TOWN.

Nicholas, Henry, Nahum and John are engaged in conversation.

NAHUM

It is our intention to adapt my play, Brutus of Alba for the musical entertainment.

JOHN

You should proceed with caution. There is a world of difference between writing a libretto and writing a play. You can't adapt a long narrative and turn it into songs for this kind of musical entertainment. You'll try to keep everything. Consider a modest number of scenes with a few songs in each and you will have plenty of material.

NAHUM

But how should I write the songs?

JOHN

The job of the librettist is to convert everything to the short stanza. You must use as many short verses as possible. Try to vary the length of the verses and employ stops wherever you can. Let Henry help with the refrains; his trained ear will make easy work of them. The most important thing to remember is that comprehension is only a small part of the equation. Think about pleasing the hearing of the audience not about gratifying their understanding. Allow rhyme to take the place of reason. The rest is common sense. What you don't know now you'll soon learn. Let Henry get to the music as soon as possible.

Three sailors are singing over by the bar. Henry attends to them closely.

Note

Henry hears the COME AWAY, FELLOW SAILORS from Dido and Aeneas and the audience see it as performed in the final production.

SAILORS

Come away, fellow sailors, Your anchors be
weighing, The tides will have no delaying, Take a
boozy short leave, Of your girls on the shore, And
silence their mourning, With vows of returning,
But never intending, To visit them more.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 INT. A SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

26

Note

<i>music from the GUITAR GROUND, a dance</i>
--

Nahum is reading papers. Anna Pieters enters.

ANNA

May I talk to you Mr. Priest?

NAHUM

Yes, I thought you were on holiday.

ANNA

Frances and I will not be returning next year. My
father's will left us only enough for a single
year's study.

NAHUM

Oh, I will miss you. Is your family well?

ANNA

Yes, but everyone is too busy and I want to write.
Are you aware that Mr. Purcell comes to sing at
our eating house each Thursday and Friday.

NAHUM

No. Amazing that Henry hasn't told me. Is Frances
aware of Henry's feelings for her?

ANNA

Yes, she is delighted by his presence. There will
be trouble though, if my mother discovers their
feelings for each other. Sentiments are running
high between City Whigs and the Tories at Court.

NAHUM

Henry will also have to contend with adverse
opinions at Westminster.

ANNA

He has asked my mother if Frances and I can sing
the lead roles in the school entertainment. She
has agreed providing he teaches us at home.

NAHUM

Ha, what a fellow. How wonderful.

ANNA

And I'd like you to show me how you write a
libretto. Could you come to the house with Henry?

NAHUM

I think you should ask your mother first.

ANNA

I will. Thank you and can you come this Thursday?

NAHUM

If Henry agrees, I will be there.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 INT. A TAVERN - EVENING

27

Nahum arrives. He sees Eliza sitting at a table with two men and a woman. One of the men is whispering in Eliza's ear. She is laughing, but when she sees Nahum, she pushes the man away and stands.

ELIZA

Nahum, you are late.

NAHUM

Yes, my apologies.

ELIZA

These are my friends from the theatre. Do join us.

NAHUM

Pleased to meet you. How is life at the theatre?

Nahum addresses this to Eliza.

ELIZA

Wonderful. They are all very kind to me.

THE WOMAN

We love her. She's already one of us.

NAHUM

I am discussing my new play with Killigrew.

ELIZA

How exciting. I am hoping to do some acting.

NAHUM

Really? You will be very good on the stage.

Eliza, indicating the man sitting next to her.

ELIZA

This is Jack Thomas. He is directing a Wycherley play and he is going to give me a part.

NAHUM

Dear Eliza, I am sure you could live your whole life in a comedy.

DISSOLVE TO:

Note

Music to THE GROVES DANCE

Nahum enters. Henry is singing and playing the violin. He nods a welcome to Nahum and continues to play.

HENRY

How is it that weeks can pass without us meeting?

NAHUM

I have no idea, but I am delighted to see you. I am in love, Nahum, and it fills me with so much music I can't stop composing.

NAHUM

I know. Anna told me everything. How did you manage to win Amy Pieters' affection?

Henry laughs and claps his hands.

HENRY

I was spying on them and then I offered to sing. Amy was so impressed, she asked me to sing again.

NAHUM

And shame on you for not inviting me.

HENRY

I have been too busy charming Amy. It is the job of a 'would be' son-in-law after all.

NAHUM

You are unstoppable. Yesterday I went to visit the school in Chelsea and there I met the Duchess de Mazarin, the king's mistress. She is very excited by the opera and insists we call it Dido and Aeneas. She wants to help us and she is talking to Josias about it today.

Henry lifts Nahum's hands and kisses each one.

HENRY

The Duchess is always right. She will be a great help to us.

Henry places on the table a large roll of paper covered in words, diagrams and musical notation.

HENRY

I must direct your attention to structures, Nahum. The entire opera is notated here. The section on the left shows the six scenes and a description of the prime emotion of that scene. Each scene has its own key and each key is aligned to specific dramatic events in the narrative. No one has aligned musical keys to dramatic situations before. In my structure, the scenes alternate

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)
 between minor and major keys. The minor keys for Dido will be C and G and the minor keys for Aeneas will be A and E. Now we can proceed with composing the songs.

Nahum and Henry pour over the notation and discuss the work.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 INT. A TAVERN - EVENING 29

Henry singing catches while Nahum drinks and listens.

Note

Catches

DISSOLVE TO:

30 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - MORNING 30

Note

Blow up the trumpet in Sion.

Nahum stands listening as Henry directs the choir.

HENRY

This morning you are excellent. That will be all for now. Please be here at five o'clock.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING 31

Nahum and Henry enter together.

HENRY

We will work on Dido's first song.

Henry plays a light-hearted tune on violin.

Note

Music to SHAKE THE CLOUD FROM OFF YOUR BROW

HENRY

This is the chorus, expressing their pleasure at the love between Dido and Aeneas.

He plays plaintive chords on the harpsichord.

Note

Music to AH, BELINDA I AM PRESSED

HENRY

This is to be Dido's first song.

Henry goes to his table and writes out changes to his notation while humming the melancholy melody. When he has finished, he sings it through, stopping occasionally to make further corrections.

HENRY

That's it. Give me words to accompany the melody, Nahum. Dido is expressing the uncertainty she feels about her love for Aeneas. Just give her words of everyday speech. Da, da, di, di, da, da, da, da. There are four repeating bars in the first section and each repeat starts with the same set of words. I will sing something to get you started. My, my, my dear Anna, I am so encumbered. My, my, my dear Anna, I am so encumbered by my love.

Nahum looks blank.

Note

Henry plays PEACE AND I ARE STRANGERS GROWN from Dido and Aeneas and the audience see the final version.

HENRY

My heart whenever he appears, Does something so delightful find, My joys could not be more sublime.

NAHUM

How can you invent words so quickly?

HENRY

I borrowed them from another song.

Nahum laughs and begins writing; frantically trying to keep up with Henry's exaggerated, but rhythmic, da, di, di, da sounds. When he feels that he has achieved something, Nahum sings his words to Henry, who, with eyes closed and an intense expression, either nods or shakes his head to signal his reaction. Now and then Henry shouts words to further encourage his librettist. 'Monosyllables,' he says or 'rhyming' and Nahum does his best to respond. When the intensity becomes too much Nahum asks the composer to stop. For a while, Nahum sits quietly, considering his words, while Henry continues to notate. When this task is complete, Henry takes up Nahum's words and sings them to him very slowly, stressing every syllable.

HENRY

My, my, my dear Anna, I am pressed; With Torment, not to be confessed. Peace and I are strangers grown, I languish 'til my grief is known, Yet would not have it guessed.

NAHUM

I love it, but you work too fast for me.

HENRY

It is not possible to do this slowly. Now we'll do the chorus line that precedes Dido's song.

Henry sings and Nahum tries a few attempts to compose the words. He hands them to Henry who plays and sings.

HENRY

Banish sorrow, Banish care, Let not Grief approach
the fair. Excellent. Now we can go to the tavern.

DISSOLVE TO:

32 INT. THE PIETERS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

32

Note

*Music from the opening scene of Dido and Aeneas and the
audience see what Henry imagines - the final opera.*

HENRY

We will start with the chorus line that precedes
the first song. Banish sorrow, Banish care, Let
not Grief approach the fair.

Henry takes up his violin, plays the chorus line and sings
the words to Anna and Frances before asking them to sing.

FRANCES AND ANNA

(singing)

Banish sorrow, Banish care, Let not Grief approach
the fair.

HENRY

Lighten the tone and give it more open expression.

FRANCES AND ANNA

(singing)

Banish sorrow, Banish care, Let not Grief approach
the fair.

HENRY

The second line is not right. It cannot begin with
'let not', we need stronger words.

ANNA

Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

HENRY

Perfect, Anna. Now we'll sing Dido's first aria.
Frances is Dido and Anna will be her sister, Anna.

ANNA

No, I don't want to have the same name and role in
opera that I have in life.

NAHUM

How does the name Belinda suit you?

HENRY

My Be..lin..da. Much better . Ah! Belinda, Ah!
Belinda, I am pressed, With torment, not to be
confessed. Frances, in this aria Dido expresses
anxiety about her first stirrings of love. Try to
conjure a deep, resonant sound - you will need
plenty of breath - and, if you can, prolong the
exclamation 'Ah!' without losing its precision. I
want Dido's yearning to sound profound.

FRANCES

Ah! Belinda, Ah! Belinda, I am pressed, With
Torment, not to be confessed. Peace and I are
strangers grown, I languish 'till my Grief is
known, Yet would not have it guessed.

HENRY

Languish longer over the several notes sung on the
'lan' of languish.

They laugh at Henry's words. Frances repeats the song.

DISSOLVE TO:

33 INT. DINING ROOM AT THE SPANIARD - EVENING 33

Nahum and Henry sitting at a table in a crowded room.

HENRY

I must soon inform Amy Pieters of my love for her
daughter. Tomorrow I will ask Frances if she will
marry me. We must think of a way we can be alone.
Now I must entertain Amy guests.

Henry takes his violin from a case and sings his first song.

Note

Henry set this song to music

HENRY

When her languishing eyes said 'love', Too soon
the soft charm I obeyed...

This receives great applause. Henry sings a second song.

Note

Henry set this song to music

HENRY

My heart, whenever you appear, Does something so
delightful find.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. THE BANQUETING HOUSE - MORNING 34

A gathering of people and musicians. Mr. John Blow claps his
hands.

JOHN BLOW

Henry, we should like to hear your preliminary
response to Horace's libretto.

HENRY

Preliminary? But I have completed it.

His statement surprises everyone. Henry laughs a cheeky
boyish laugh and everyone joins in the laughter.

JOHN BLOW

Shall we hear what you have achieved?

Henry picks up his violin and stands next to a young man at the harpsichord. A young woman joins them on the platform. They and the singers perform the King's Welcome Ode.

Note

Henry's Welcome Ode

CHOIR

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome, Vice regent of the mighty King.

John Blow claps thunderously. All cheer noisily.

JOHN BLOW

You have indeed composed the Welcome Ode. The overture is pure genius. The dotted rhythms were not unlike my own, if you don't mind me saying.

Henry laughs.

HORACE

How is it that you can align the music to the individual word accents so closely?

HENRY

I have no idea, other than that the words join with the music of their own accord.

Laughter from everyone.

JOHN BLOW

Henry, you are teasing us. You may possess a particular genius, but that the music should join the words of their own accord is beyond belief.

Laughter from everyone. They all disperse.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 INT. AMY PIETERS HOUSE - AFTERNOON

35

Note

Henry hears music from the beginning of Act Two and the audience see what Henry imagines - the final opera.

Anna opens the door to Henry and Nahum. She is anxious and whispers with urgency.

ANNA

The rehearsal is impossible. You must return without delay. I'll write. Please do not enquire further. You must not remain a minute longer.

HENRY

What's happening? You must explain.

ANNA

It's my mother. She heard Frances express her fears of falling in love with you. Oh, Henry, Please don't ask any further questions now.

HENRY

I must talk to your mother.

ANNA

Please, Henry, my mother is very angry.

Amy Pieters comes down the stairs.

AMY

Anna, what are you doing here? Return to your room. So, gentlemen, you have chosen to visit me.

HENRY

Please Mrs. Pieters, allow me...

Amy, standing on the bottom step of the stairs, looms over Henry.

AMY

No, Mr. Purcell, this is my house and you will do me the courtesy of allowing me to speak first. I am deeply offended. I invited you into this house in good faith to rehearse your entertainment with my daughters, but you have taken it into your head to entertain my daughters in another fashion.

Henry tries to interject. Amy silences him with her hand.

AMY

Do you think that we do not know you, Mr. Purcell? Do you imagine that your bawdy songs and drunken behaviour fail to express how it goes with you? Do you expect me to celebrate when you attempt to force your attentions upon my daughter? You must reckon we lack any form of self-respect.

HENRY

Please, let me explain.

AMY

No, I care nothing for your lies. You would have us believe that only noble thoughts direct your gaze, but your ornamental life is nothing but a poor imitation of the Court you serve and I care nothing for the frivolous butterfly that is called King. You are all tarred with the same brush and your giddy lives know only gallantry and pleasure. Damn you to presume that my daughter deserves your attentions. These afternoons were just an excuse for your idle passion and flirtatious dalliance. How dare you wheedle your way into this house with false promises and blatant lies. We are not fooled by this gilded artifice that you wear so proudly, you cannot hide the dishonesty and greed that are the stuff of you. You can leave this house now. I do not expect to see you again.

HENRY

Madam, you are wrong about me. My life is dedicated to the Church and its music.

Amy laughs a terrible laugh, full of aggressive hatred.

Note

Henry hears the witches - ho, ho, ho, and the audience see what Henry imagines - the final opera.

AMY

This is how you speak, but not the way you act.

HENRY

I love Frances more than I love my life.

AMY

You can go to hell and take your love with you.

Amy again laughs her laugh of aggressive hatred.

HENRY

I want to marry Frances. I want to look after her.

Amy thrusts herself towards him in a threatening manner.

AMY

What do you own? What business are you engaged in?

HENRY

I work for the King.

AMY

You work for the King. Ha, ha, ha. The King pays nothing, even when he has money. Do you own any property? Do you have an inheritance? Is there anything to recommend you?

HENRY

I live with my mother and my family.

AMY

You live with your mother. And I suppose my daughter is also to live with your mother, is she? You are wasting my time. You have angered me and your foolish proposal makes a mockery of me. Now, I have given you all the time I intend to give. You will leave this house and you will not return. Is that clear?

Amy opens the door. Henry and Nahum leave the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

36 EXT. THE CITY STREETS - AFTERNOON

36

Note

Henry hears music from the beginning of Act Two and the audience see what Henry imagines - the final opera.

The sky turns dark, thunder sounds and it starts to rain. Henry, lost to himself, is composing and walking, making weird ho, ho, ho, and ha, ha, ha sounds. Nahum walks beside him, silent and fearful.

HENRY

Amy Pieters is a dried up old witch and the opera's witches will be just like her. I must have Amy's half-crazed sounds down on paper before her revulsion ceases to afflict me.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - EVENING

37

Note

They compose music for the Sorceress and witches and the audience see the final opera as Henry imagines it.

Henry and Nahum throw off their wet clothes.

HENRY

Quickly now, write the words you devised on the boat. Are they still in your head?

NAHUM

Of course.

Nahum writes. Henry, violin in hand, plays a spontaneous outburst, his rhythm aggressive, his melody vicious.

HENRY

This is the prelude for the witches. Does it strike terror into you? Does it prepare our audience for the harridans who are about to appear and cause havoc?

Nahum nods his head, shocked and silent.

HENRY

It will be the sorceress who opens the scene by demanding the presence of the witches.

Henry plays. Nahum intones his words.

NAHUM

Wayward sisters, you that fright, The lonely traveller by night. Who like dismal ravens crying, Beat the windows of the dying. Appear, appear.

HENRY

What do the witches reply?

NAHUM

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

Delirious, they dance and sing 'harm's our delight, ho, ho, ho,' until they are exhausted.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 EXT. THE PIETER'S HOUSE - EVENING

38

*Note**Music to THY HAND BELINDA*

Henry climbs a drainpipe, onto a shed at the rear of The Spaniard Inn. He crawls along the ridge to a window. It is locked. He can see a staircase, but its not clear because of the rain. A maid sees him and shouts loudly. Henry hurriedly crawls back along the roof, but it is very slippery. He falls into the alley. Shouting comes from the yard. Henry, standing, realises his ankle is injured, but he runs off.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

39

*Note**music from the beginning of Act Two*

There is loud knocking at Nahum's front door. He opens it and sees a figure slumped on the doorstep.

NAHUM

Henry, what has happened?

He tries to lift him, but he is a dead weight.

NAHUM

Are you hurt? Are you drunk? Henry speak to me.

Henry groans and laughs hysterically. Nahum can't lift him.

HENRY

I love her, Nahum. I tried to steal her away.

Nahum drags Henry into his bedroom and lays him on the bed. He removes Henry's clothes, his boots and stockings, fetches a towel and dries him. He wraps a blanket over him. He watches Henry in a fever and wipes pearls of sweat from Henry's brow. All communication from Henry has ceased.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

40

*Note**music to WITH DROOPING WINGS*

Dr. Stöll examines Henry.

DR. STÖLL

Henry's ankle is sprained, but there are swellings in his groin and neck that are very serious. I've given him a physic and there's little more I can do. I will return later in the day.

NAHUM

What are these swellings?

DR. STÖLL

Henry's ague was probably brought on by extremes of heat and cold, exacerbated by shock and exhaustion. Sleep is the best cure. Keep the fever down or he will simply boil over.

NAHUM

What do you mean boil over?

Nahum breaks down weeping.

DR. STÖLL

Nahum, you must take some rest. Here is a list of herbs. Mix these ingredients into a broth and make sure some of it gets into Henry. Stop worrying. I doubt Henry is ready to depart this life just yet.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 INT. NAHUMS STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON.

41

Note

Music from the overture

There is a knock at the door. Nahum opens it.

NAHUM

Anna. Have you heard about Henry.

ANNA

Yes. How is he?

NAHUM

He is exceptionally unwell. Come into the study.

Nahum escorts her in.

NAHUM

We may be losing him.

ANNA

Oh no, it's not possible.

NAHUM

He came here after his reckless escapade at your house. Does your mother know it was Henry?

ANNA

Yes, she has issued a summons. Frances and I were so shocked - he must have been in great distress. But things are also very bad for Frances.

NAHUM

How so?

ANNA

My mother has insisted that Frances give up her feelings for Henry. She has accepted a suitor for her. Frances has taken to her bed and refuses to talk or eat.

NAHUM

Does Amy really have a suitor for Frances?

ANNA

Yes. My mother manages The Spaniard and also a company that imports goods from Spain. Alfonso Balbas buys the goods. He is a business partner and wants to legalise his immigration status, so he demands that Frances marry his son, Diego. He's not the right kind of husband for Frances.

NAHUM

Great heavens, terrible. Poor Frances.

ANNA

I can't talk to her. I can't deal with it alone.

NAHUM

I will do anything I can. We will meet whenever possible and share our news.

ANNA

There is no possibility now of being involved with the opera. It's unbearable.

NAHUM

Anna, visit me, whenever you wish. Something will occur to shake the clouds from off your brow.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

42

Note

Henry hears music from DIDO'S LAMENT and the audience see the final opera as Henry imagines it.

Nahum sits beside Henry.

NAHUM

Henry, you are awake.

HENRY

I have been dreaming in G minor. G minor is the key of the final scene.

NAHUM

Henry, with music in your dreams I know that you are truly with us again.

Henry is quietly singing da dum de dee, da dum de dee to the tune that will become "remember me, remember me."

NAHUM

It's the saddest phrase I ever heard.

HENRY

It is Dido's final lament. I need you to give me some words. Da dum de dee, da dum de dee.

NAHUM

Remember me, remember me.

HENRY

Excellent. After this the melody is, da.., da.., da, da, da...., da, da, da, da, da.

NAHUM

But ah, forget my fate.

HENRY

Yes, Nahum. Here is the preceding melody. These are Dido's last words. She has thrust the knife into her breast and she is feeling the weight of her deed.

Henry sings the first lines of the lament and Nahum spends some time mouthing words he might use.

NAHUM

When I am laid, am laid in earth, May my wrongs create no trouble in thy breast.

HENRY

That's it. Now sing the whole lament.

NAHUM

When I am laid, am laid in earth, May my wrongs create no trouble in thy breast; Remember me, remember me, but ah! forget my fate. Remember me, remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

HENRY

Nahum, we young men, forlorn and rejected by love, have just composed the most heart rending lament for a woman to sing.

NAHUM

It is wondrously beautiful. It goes straight to the very heart of me and touches everything.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 INT. NAHUM'S STUDIO - EARLY EVENING

43

Note

Music from the overture

Nahum answers the door to the Duchess.

THE DUCHESS

I've heard the distressing news. Can I see Henry?

NAHUM

He is sleeping, but come and talk to me.

Nahum escorts her into his studio.

THE DUCHESS

Tell me everything that has happened to him.

NAHUM

Henry has fallen in love with Frances Pieters, one of his pupils. Her mother agreed that Henry could engage her and her sister to sing the lead roles in the opera. Frances' mother then learned that Henry was trying to woo her daughter and she became crazy with anger. Henry couldn't cope with the rejection, so he made an uninvited return to the house. They imagine he was trying to break in. Now I learn from her sister, only yesterday, that Amy is insisting that Frances marry the son of her business partner, a Spaniard. Frances has taken to her bed in sheer misery.

THE DUCHESS

So, who is this Spaniard?

NAHUM

Alfonso Balbas. His son is called Diego.

THE DUCHESS

Thank you. I will return shortly.

DISSOLVE TO:

44 INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

44

Note

music from GREAT MINDS & THY HAND BELINDA

NAHUM

How are you feeling?

HENRY

I can hear the ending of the opera where the chorus respond to Dido's grief.

NAHUM

How is it that musical themes and melodies arrive in your head fully formed?

HENRY

I have no idea, but when they come to me in great abundance I must notate them or burst. You must try to smuggle in a pen and some paper, Nahum, my mother has banned me working, but I will become ill again if I cannot notate these sounds.

NAHUM

Is the music always overwhelming?

HENRY

No, sometimes it is a gentle presence. That day when I went to The Spaniard, a strange, delicate power was upon me. I was outside myself.

NAHUM

How long did it last?

HENRY

I did not wake from it until I was lying in your bed. That night I was trembling. Death invaded me; my spirit was departing from my body. I accepted that the darkness was shading me, because death was a welcome guest. I wanted to be free of sorrow. Later, music was resonating in me again and I knew that death had passed me by. The music of great beauty that was singing me back to life was Dido's Lament. Now there is music in me again and I must notate it. How a mind can conspire against itself in this manner I do not know.

NAHUM

Great minds conspire against themselves and shun the cure they most desire.

HENRY

Say that again.

NAHUM

Great minds conspire against themselves and shun the cure they most desire.

HENRY

I know where it fits. It's the chorus refrain that precedes the lament. Wait...Dido must have some recitative after this. Invent something. Think of Dido in the palace, sitting on the stairs. Belinda is by her side and she has Aeneas's sword in her hand. Like me she knows that death is invading her and she regards it as a welcome guest.

NAHUM

Then have the words you have spoken to me. Thy hand Belinda, darkness shades me, On thy bosom let me rest, More I would, but death invades me. Death is now a welcome guest.

HENRY

God preserve your poetry forever, Nahum.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 INT. A TAVERN - EVENING

45

Note

<i>music from the SONG OF MERCURY TO AENEAS</i>

Eliza and Nahum are sitting together.

ELIZA

Why are you again writing about this woman who killed herself?

NAHUM

Dido teaches us that love can be a destructive force when thwarted.

ELIZA

Agh!... broken hearts. Tell me about Aeneas.

NAHUM

Aeneas, son of Venus, having survived Troy, was expected to found Rome and continue the sacred lore of his culture.

ELIZA

Could Dido not have gone with him to Rome?

NAHUM

No, Carthage was Dido's land. Aeneas had to decide between love and responsibility. He was a fearless fighter, but when the flower of love bloomed, its fragrance overwhelmed him. An innocent soldier dazed by beauty, he is an easy target for destructive forces.

ELIZA

I hope the fragrance doesn't overwhelm you, Nahum.

NAHUM

Oh no, it seems to me that I am banned even from seeing a flower of love, let alone taking in its scent.

ELIZA

Maybe that's for the best. I must be on my way. Keep cheerful and meet me here next Sunday.

DISSOLVE TO:

46 INT. NAHUM'S STUDIO - NIGHT

46

Note

Music from the overture

A knock on the door. Nahum answers it.

NAHUM

Anna, come in, what has happened.

They enter the studio. Anna starts to cry and then she is laughing. She can hardly find her breath.

ANNA

Señor Balbas has returned to Spain.

NAHUM

What?

ANNA

He left a hurried note to say he was leaving.

NAHUM

What was his reason?

ANNA

He gave no reason. I sat with Frances repeating the news until she squeezed my hand. She opened her eyes and smiled. Oh, Nahum, I cannot tell you how lightly my heart sang at this moment.

Anna starts to cry again.

NAHUM

Was he in trouble?

ANNA

I have no idea. When my mother saw how Frances reacted she apologized. She is going to wind up the trading business. I wish we could celebrate together.

NAHUM

Will Frances write to Henry?

ANNA

Yes. I must return now, before I am missed. Thank you. I'm sure you did something to facilitate this

DISSOLVE TO:

47 INT. THE DUCHESS' ENTRANCE HALL - MORNING

47

The Duchess meets Nahum and Henry in her entrance hall.

THE DUCHESS

This is an important day, my dears. Henry, go in and prepare yourself. You must give Cecelia and Josias an overview of the opera. You must convince them that all the major decisions have been made. Nahum, stay here. I have a few words for you.

Henry enters the dining room.

THE DUCHESS

Is there any news about the health of Frances?

NAHUM

Señor Balbas has returned to Spain, so she is well again. She wrote to Henry confirming her love. He is a happy man. Don't say anything to Henry, he didn't know about Señor Balbas.

THE DUCHESS

How bizarre that the Spaniard simply departed. Did he give any excuses for his exit?

NAHUM

Nothing. It's unexplained, but Anna's certain they are not returning.

THE DUCHESS

I wouldn't be surprised if Customs and Excise had something to do with it.

NAHUM

Do you think they were smuggling goods?

THE DUCHESS

It's possible. Import and export businesses hardly ever pay their taxes willingly.

Nahum considers this remark and, turning to the Duchess he sees a smile on her face.

NAHUM

Is this issue of taxes something...Your Grace, did you arrange...?

THE DUCHESS

Sh...not so loud, we must not say so much. Suffice it to say that I have an acquaintance who owed me a favour and he fulfilled his task admirably.

Nahum is overtaken with glee, but the Duchess quietens him.

THE DUCHESS

The least said about Court diplomacy the better.

Nahum gives her a joyous hug.

DISSOLVE TO:

48 INT. THE DUCHESS' DINING ROOM - MORNING

48

Nahum greets Cecelia and Josias. They are frosty. Henry is sitting at the harpsichord.

THE DUCHESS

Henry, will you give us an overview of the music.

Henry plays the overture. He then improvises snippets of the possible melodies for all the scenes, adding short descriptions of the action and the key.

Note

Henry plays snippets from the opera and the audience see what he imagines in the final performance. A melody of the opera's music accompanies the rest of the scene.

HENRY

Dido is melancholy - C minor; Belinda celebrates love - C major; Aeneas arrives - G major with cadence change to E minor; Aeneas courts Dido - E minor moving to G major; Aeneas and Dido confirm their love - C major. The sorceress calls the witches - F minor. They plot Dido's downfall - F major. The hunting party at Diana's Grove - D minor. The storm - D major. Mercury arrives - A minor. The sailors prepare to depart - B flat major. The witches celebrate - B flat major. Dido's grief - G minor.

Everyone is astounded. The applause from The Duchess and Nahum is rapturous. Cecelia and Josias show less enthusiasm.

The Duchess rises, takes Henry's hands and kisses him.

THE DUCHESS

Your final G minor has extraordinary melancholy.

She turns with a great smile of pleasure to the Priests and waits for them to speak.

CECELIA

The music has great charm and it is clear that Henry's genius could honour any theme, so why must we be fixed on the story of Dido and Aeneas?

Silence. No movement from the others.

CECELIA

I trust that the theme is not entirely fixed.

HENRY

It is entirely fixed.

CECELIA

Fixed, even if it doesn't have the best interests of the school at heart, even if I object to it?

Henry nods.

CECELIA

It will not be performed at my school, Henry, no matter how you dress it in beautiful key changes.

They all look at Josias who shrinks into his chair.

THE DUCHESS

Cecelia, it is extraordinary to claim that you have no need of beauty.

CECELIA

I have a care for beauty, but I am also mindful of its context. It can detract or it can inspire.

THE DUCHESS

Could you then suggest a subject that will keep us on the straight and narrow.

CECELIA

Keep the music, but change the story.

THE DUCHESS

You cannot object to the subjects of life and death as if they were issues of comfort and discomfort. You cannot propose an opera and then offer your guests a few romantic dances.

CECELIA

I didn't ask for an opera, only an entertainment. There are operas that do not conclude with death and in this instance, it is inappropriate.

HENRY

I have already started rehearsals and I will write no other work for the school.

THE DUCHESS

Cecelia, you are about to lose one of the great performances of our age.

CECELIA

If the subject is disappointed love and if it ends with death, then it is not for me.

THE DUCHESS

If you will support us, I will invite the King.

JOSIAS

The King?

THE DUCHESS

I will also persuade Betterton and Killigrew to lend costumes and sets and I will ask the Lord Chamberlain to give us Lindsey House for rehearsals. You are aware that he lives next door.

CECELIA

You will not show scenes of passion between Dido and Aeneas or show us Dido as she kills herself?

NAHUM

The music will carry the action.

JOSIAS

I think there is a lack of dancing. It is, after all, one of the school's great achievements. Maybe you could compose a prologue with happy dances to create a genial beginning.

HENRY

I am sure we could manage that.

JOSIAS

Very good. We are agreed. I will need the dance music by the beginning of September. I will prepare lists of singing pupils and dance pupils. Oh, by the way, I understand the Pieters' sisters are no longer singing the lead roles. May we know who you are rehearsing?

HENRY

I am rehearsing my cousin and my sister.

JOSIAS

You cannot invite your relatives to perform, Henry. We have promoted this opera as a school production. The female roles must be sung by our pupils. How could you imagine otherwise?

HENRY

You've no idea how difficult it is to....

JOSIAS

I have a perfectly good idea....

HENRY

No, you have no idea how demanding it is to sing these parts. If I choose my sister and my cousin it is because they have the ability. Other than Frances and Anna, you cannot possibly provide me with a pupil, past or present, to match their talents. I have started rehearsals and time will not permit me to start again with new singers.

JOSIAS

Why was I not consulted on this?

THE DUCHESS

I think Henry needed to confirm the success of his decision before informing you. Once you have heard these young ladies, you will agree with Henry.

JOSIAS

So, I have fraudulently advertised the opera as a performance by young ladies of the school.

THE DUCHESS

It is usual to make the lead roles an exception.

JOSIAS

Who will be singing the male role.

HENRY

John Gostling. He's the finest tenor in the land and he must return to Canterbury next week, hence my need to progress rehearsals with speed.

CECELIA

We must agree, there is no time left for argument.

JOSIAS

Very well, but all other roles go to my pupils.

HENRY

I have chosen the Sorceress.

JOSIAS

Enough, don't test my patience to the limit.

HENRY

No pupil could sing this role. If the Sorceress doesn't have a powerful voice, then all is lost.

JOSIAS

I will find someone and I'll not engage in further discussions about it. I'll prepare a list of dates and times for the delivery of musical scores, manuscripts and rehearsals.

THE DUCHESS

I will be dressing the performers and styling the scenery, so I will need information from you both. I want to fly the gods about the stage.

NAHUM

But we have no gods.

HENRY

Maybe we could have them in the Prologue.

DISSOLVE TO:

49 INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - EVENING

49

Note

Henry hears the songs of the Prologue and the audience see what he imagines in the final performance.

Nahum enters and finds Henry writing his music.

NAHUM

Stop your working and come for some wine.

HENRY

But the day has hardly begun.

NAHUM

I've written the Prologue and I want to celebrate.

HENRY

Then celebrate we shall. How did it come so fast?

NAHUM

I had a dream and saw Phoebus riding in his chariot over the sea, calling the Nereids and Tritons to rise up and offer him their devotion. As soon as I started writing the words flowed from me. Listen to this. "From Aurora's Spicy bed, Phoebus rears his Sacred Head."

HENRY

Does it have a theme?

NAHUM

Yes. When Venus arrives on the scene her lustre appears to eclipse the light that Phoebus gives to the world and he reacts to her beauty with bewilderment and desire. He sings, "Ten thousand thousand harms, From such prevailing charms, To gods and men must instantly ensue." The Chorus replies, "And if the deities above, Are victims of the power of love, What must wretched mortals do?" Then Venus sings. "Fear not Phoebus, fear not me, A harmless Deity. These are all my guards ye view. What can these blind archers do?" To which Phoebus responds, "Blind they are, but strike the heart." And Venus tells him, "What Phoebus says is always true. They wound indeed, but 'tis a pleasant smart."

HENRY

It amuses me that you make Phoebus a hot-headed fellow who cannot resist courting the sovereign queen of beauty. Your attraction to Eliza has no doubt prepared you for this.

They laugh. Henry gathers up his papers and the two men leave the studio.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING

50

HENRY

I have finished the thirteen dance melodies; six are improvised pantomimes, which I wrote before, and now the formal dances are complete.

Henry sings the dance tunes.

Note

Henry hears the dances of the Prologue and the audience see what he imagines in the final performance.

NAHUM

How can you store so much music in your head?

HENRY

Habit. Give us news of the sets, Your Grace.

THE DUCHESS

I have just come from a meeting with James Billingsley at Mr. Wrens office. The drawings and models are magical. The platform James has invented can now move other characters on and off stage. When Phoebus arrives, one side is covered with a chariot on clouds. When Venus enters the platform is turned round to reveal her chariot. The Sorceress also stands upon it, her long flowing gown covering the platform and down to the ground. You'll love it; the most beautiful Persephone you will ever see. Mercury will also use it. It will be covered in clouds when he appears and when the cupids arrive, they will scatter roses over Dido from the tower.

NAHUM

It all sounds marvellous.

HENRY

And I have invited my Sorceress and there is nothing Josias can do to stop this now.

DISSOLVE TO:

51 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - MORNING

51

Note

Variations on the echo dance of the witches

The hall is populated by scene painters, prop makers and an army of young ladies; mending, making and altering costumes. The Duchess is everywhere, issuing instructions like a general preparing for battle. When she sees Nahum, she leads him by the arm to show him the costumes.

THE DUCHESS

Here is Phoebus's suit of gold. Venus has this blue silk dress and she has a sparkling tiara to go with it. Spring has this; have you ever seen such an extravagant floral costume? For Dido, there are four beautiful gowns from the royal wardrobe and for Aeneas, Prince of Troy, a military costume with black boots and a great plumed helmet. And look at this wine-red, silk gown, this is for the Sorceress. It's nearly eleven feet long.

The Duchess pulls it across the floor. The Sorceress will be the star of the show: all will fall silent before her.

NAHUM

Are Killigrew's dressmakers responsible for these?

THE DUCHESS

No. Thomas Purcell sent dressmakers from Somerset House. Killigrew was too busy programme, so his seamstresses were only here for a week. I was fond of one of them; a very good dressmaker who flirted with the scene painters and prop makers. She is a born actress. They all loved her entertainment.

NAHUM

What is her name?

THE DUCHESS

Eliza. Do you know her from Killigrew's theatre?

NAHUM

No.

(Nahum realises that he answered too quickly and abruptly. He looks guilty. The Duchess eyes him.)

THE DUCHESS

She's a new kind of woman. You should get to know her kind, very good for you, but you should not fall in love with them. You'd have to master your sensitivity before you do that and I'm not sure that's a good thing. I must educate you, Nahum.

NAHUM

Thank you, I will be an eager pupil.

(The Duchess smiles.)

THE DUCHESS

Have you been to Lindsey House yet?

NAHUM

No.

THE DUCHESS

Then off you go now and leave me to my work. The rehearsals must have started.

NAHUM

I will. Goodbye, Your Grace, and thank you.

The Duchess smiles and Nahum walks off.

DISSOLVE TO:

52 INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING

52

Nahum enters the hall where Henry and Josias are rehearsing the dances of the Prologue.

Note

The dances of the Prologue and the audience see what Henry imagines in the final performance..

DISSOLVE TO:

53 INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING

53

Note

Henry composes music for the ECHO SONG; CAVE SCENE and the audience see what he imagines in the final opera.

The opera is being rehearsed.

HENRY

The cave scene is without magic.

JOSIAS

But we cannot change the cave.

HENRY

Then the music must strengthen it. Nahum, write two lines that will create the impression that spells are being cast in the cave.

Nahum thinks, scribbles and reads to Henry.

NAHUM

In our deep vaulted cell, the charm we'll prepare,
Too dreadful a practice for this open air.

HENRY

You are a genius, Nahum.

Henry walks around the hall and then calls everyone to him.

HENRY

I want half of you to go backstage and half of you to remain on the stage. This chorus refrain takes place in a cave where singing creates an echo. Those who are behind the wings will repeat the endings of the phrases that are sung by those who are on the stage. The echo singers must imagine that their voices have travelled a great distance. This should conjure the presence of a cave.

The repetition of the words is completely credible as an echo and everyone laughs at its beauty and audacity.

THE DUCHESS

I find it difficult to measure the level of genius that can musically conjure a cave.

Nahum smiles and shakes his head in disbelief.

DISSOLVE TO:

54 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - MORNING 54

Note

Part of the overture

Henry is reading a letter. He calls across to Nahum.

HENRY

Amy has gone to Richmond to look after her new grand daughter, so Frances and Anna can come to the performance.

Henry dances and puts his arms about Nahum. There are tears in his eyes and a great smile on his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

55 EX.FIELDS NEAR THE SCHOOL - MORNING 55

A long shot of Henry and Nahum taking a walk.

DISSOLVE TO:

56 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - MORNING 56

Henry and Nahum enter. There is an intense air of focussed engagement - everyone inventing some task or other to distract their attention away from the coming event. Nahum sits watching Henry check sheets of notation and placing them on the musician's stands.

HENRY

Walk with me to the Beaufort Steps, Nahum. I can do nothing until I have seen Frances.

They walk out together.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 EXT. THE LANE BY THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON 57

Henry and Nahum walk up and down the lane. Carriages arrive and park on Lovers Walk. The guests are gathering in the courtyard. Nahum leaves Henry and goes into the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

58 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - AFTERNOON

58

Nahum peers out between the screens and sees the guests taking their seats. John Blow, Nicholas Staggins, Henry's mother and uncle, Thomas Killigrew, Horace and Mary Heveningham, James Billingsley and finally Peter Beardsley accompanying Eliza.

THE DUCHESS

(Speaking in a whisper.)

The time to start is approaching.

She goes backstage and lines up the performers.

JOSIAS

Nahum, where is Henry?

NAHUM

I will go out to look for him.

DISSOLVE TO:

59 EXT. THE LANE BY THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

59

Nahum arrives at the courtyard entrance he hears Henry calling him. Nahum sees Henry, with Frances on one arm and Anna on the other. They run to each other and hug.

NAHUM

How wonderful to see you.

FRANCES

We are delighted to be here.

NAHUM

But hurry now; you must take your places.

HENRY

Nothing will begin without me.

DISSOLVE TO:

60 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - AFTERNOON

60

Josias, Nahum, Frances and Anna take their seats. The musicians stop tuning their instruments. The audience become silent. Cecelia steps onto the stage.

CECELIA

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen. We present an entertainment to mark the opening of our new school. It is our very great pleasure to give you the opera, Dido and Aeneas.

Henry takes up his position at the harpsichord, bows in response to the enthusiastic applause, and lifts his baton. With the first bars of music, the candle bearers move to the back of the stage by the great blue wall.

Quick glimpses of all the following scenes of the prologue and opera fade in and out.

Note

Snippets of music to accompany each scene.

* Phoebus enters on his chariot and calls to the Nereids to pay him their respects.

* The Nereids sing to him of Venus.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Nahum and in his minds eye he sees Eliza at Smithfield fair.

* Venus enters on her chariot surrounded by Tritons who dance in her honour.

* The chorus sing, the Nereids dance and Spring enters in all her glory to welcome Venus to the shore.

* Phoebus declares his undying love of Venus.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Henry and in his minds eye he sees Frances singing at school.

* Venus is charmed by this. The heavenly couple leave.

* Spring and her nymphs dance and sing in praise of the courting couple and dancing shepherds and shepherdesses join them in the celebrations.

* The chorus sing, Let us love and happy live, while the nymphs dance around them.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Nahum and in his minds eye he sees Eliza and himself on her bed.

* A shepherd asks a shepherdess why this morning is so full of joy. She replies, The sun has been to court our queen, and tired the Spring with wooing.

* The country maids dance and gradually leave the stage.

The end of the Prologue. Applause. The screens positioned along the front of the stage are pulled back, revealing Dido's palace in Carthage. Henry's overture for Act 1 fills the hall.

* Dido, Belinda and their courtiers enter. Belinda entreats Dido to shake the cloud from off your brow.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Anna and in her minds eye she sees herself talking to Frances.

* The chorus bid Dido to banish sorrow, banish care, grief should ne|er approach the fair.

* Dido replies to Belinda. Ah! Belinda, I am pressed with torment not to be confessed.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Frances and in her minds eye she sees herself talking to Anna.

* Belinda and the court ladies try to dissuade her. Fear no danger to ensue, the hero loves as well as you.

* The court ladies dance around the central column.

* Aeneas enters. Belinda addressed Dido. See your Royal guest appears; how god-like is the form he bears.

* Aeneas asks Dido, When Royal fan shall I be blessed, with cares of love, and state distressed?

Note

We catch a glimpse of Nahum and in his minds eye he sees himself appealing to Eliza.

* Dido. Fate forbids what you pursue.

* Aeneas has no fate but you.

* The chorus sing. Cupid only throws the dart.

* Aeneas pleads. if not for mine for Empire's, sake, some pity on your lover take.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Eliza and in her minds eye she sees herself rejecting Nahum.

* Belinda addresses Dido. Pursue thy conquest love.

* Belinda. Her eyes confess the flame her tongue denies.

* The court ladies dance. The chorus sing, To the hills and the vales, to the rocks and the mountains, to the musical groves and the cool shady fountains, let the triumphs of love and of beauty be shown, go revel ye cupids, the day is your own.

END OF ACT 1 - Applause. The props of the palace scene are pulled back; the countryside screen is pulled into place and two men carry the cave onto the stage. Young women surround the cave and dance with extravagant gestures. The sound of thunder and lightning fills the hall. The candle bearers move to the front of the cave. The musicians play the prelude for the witches. The giant Sorceress glides onto the stage. Everyone gasps. Her voice is like thunder.

* The Sorceress sings, Wayward sisters you that fright the lonely traveller by night, Appear, Appear.

* The witches reply. Say, Beldam, say, what's thy will, harms our delight and mischief all our skill.

* The Sorceress sings, The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate, as we do all in prosperous state, 'ere sunset, shall most wretched prove, deprived of fame, of life and love.

* The chorus laugh. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Henry and in his minds eye he sees Amy mocking his love of Frances.

* The Sorceress sings of her wicked plan to fool Aeneas into believing that he must depart for Italy.

* The witches dance, celebrating their wickedness. Ho, ho, ho, but 'ere we this perform, we'll conjure for a storm to mar their hunting sport and drive 'em back to Court.

* The sorceress departs. The witches return to their cave.

* The echo song sung by two chorus groups. In our deep vaulted cell, vaulted cell, the charm we'll prepare, prepare, too dreadful a practice, too dreadful a practice, for this open air, for this open air.

Note

We catch a glimpse of The Duchess and in her minds eye he sees Henry composing at rehearsals.

END OF ACT 2 - Applause. The screens of the country scene are replaced with the screens depicting the docks. The prop movers lay out the barrels and when Henry plays his hornpipe the sailors dance and sing.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Henry and in his minds eye he sees the sailors singing in the tavern.

* The Sorceress returns on her moving platform.

* The dockyard barrels are removed and the props of the palace scene are put in place.

* After the argument, Dido walks up the stairs and sits on a step. For the final aria, she stands and looks towards the harbour where her lost Aeneas is now departing.

Note

We catch a glimpse of Nahum and in his minds eye he sees Henry and himself when Henry is at death's door.

* Dido dies on the stair. Belinda sits beside her and lifts her head in her arms.

* The moving platform returns to the stage, this time with cupids in the clouds.

* When it is next to the staircase, the cupids scatter roses over Dido and Belinda.

* The candle bearers walk up the stairs with melancholy in their steps. They turn to face the audience and stand on either side of Dido's fallen body.

* The chorus gather at the base of the stairs to sing their final song.

At the end, all is still and silent. It is some time before anyone in the audience moves. Killigrew is the first to stand. He shouts 'bravo' and then everyone stands and claps.

Heads are shaking in disbelief and handkerchiefs are dabbing at tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - EVENING

61

Note

Silence

A great excited crowd fill the hall. Henry and Nahum are congratulated at every step. Anna runs to Nahum and gives him a hug.

NAHUM

Anna, did you enjoy it?

ANNA

I loved it more than anything in the world.

Henry and Frances join them.

ANNA

Henry, your beautiful songs could never be called tragic. It's sad but uplifting at the same time.

Henry places his arm about her.

HENRY

What pleasure it is to hear this. I could dance and sing all night.

Henry puts his arm around Frances.

HENRY

Would you dance with me if the musicians agreed to play dance tunes?

FRANCES

I cannot dance dressed like this.

HENRY

Well, I know where many costumes can be found.

Henry pulls her onto the stage. They run behind the screens.

ANNA

It is such a joy to see them together at last.

A group of Anna's school friends grab her attention. Nahum makes his way through the crowds who engage him in excited chatter. He sees Eliza laughing with the scene painter. When Eliza sees Nahum she walks to him.

NAHUM

Hello Eliza, did you enjoy the opera?

ELIZA

I was overwhelmed. You were right about Dido's Lament; it is the saddest and most beautiful song.

*Note**Dance tunes*

The sound of violins fill the hall. Eliza moves closer to see what is happening. Nahum follows. Henry and Frances are dancing, Henry wearing the golden suit of Phoebus and Frances wearing the blue robes of Venus. A great circle gathers around them, clapping to encourage their dance. Nahum gazes at Eliza. When the dance is over, Henry and Frances join Nahum.

HENRY

You have a charming companion, Nahum. May I introduce Frances, my inspiration in everything and the love of my life.

NAHUM

This is Eliza Ashton. Before long, she will one of the the finest actresses on the English stage.

HENRY

What could be better. Did you enjoy our tragedy?

ELIZA

I was deeply moved by it.

HENRY

Excellent, I feel this way about it myself. Would you mind if I borrowed Nahum for a short while, I will return him to you in good spirits?

Eliza smiles and nods. Henry walks off, pulling Frances behind him. Nahum squeezes Eliza's hand briefly and follows the couple to the Lobby. Henry pulls at Anna's arm and she directs a questioning gaze at Frances. Neither she nor Henry offer any hint of the reason behind their need of her. Henry, still holding onto Frances, marches away. Anna and Nahum follow behind.

ANNA

What is Henry up to?

NAHUM

I have no idea.

Henry takes John Gostling by the arm.

JOHN

Where are we going, Henry?

HENRY

To a private celebration.

He leads the group further into the school.

DISSOLVE TO:

*Note**Silence*

Henry enters the chapel and all follow. With the altar at their backs, Henry and Frances stand facing their guests - Henry in his shimmering gold suit as bright as the sun and Frances in the heavenly blue gown of the Goddess of Love.

HENRY

I solemnly declare, before you and this altar, that Frances and I have consummated our marriage.

ANNA

I knew it.

She places her hands on her cheeks. All are transfixed.

HENRY

Dear John, my esteemed friend and Reverend, Frances and I beseech you to perform a ceremony that will make our marriage official in the eyes of the Church.

John, Nahum and Anna stand silent and frozen.

JOHN

I do not know what to say. My intuition tells me that it would be prudent to take more time to consider this decision.

HENRY

It would be a waste of time. Frances and I were certain of our marriage long ago.

John glances at Nahum, then he addresses Anna.

JOHN

Would your parents consent to this marriage?

Anna considers carefully.

ANNA

My father is dead and my mother is aware that neither Henry nor Frances will find happiness unless they are together.

The Reverend Gostling addresses Henry.

JOHN

You do not need parental consent, but if I do your bidding I will be fined for undertaking this ceremony without a license and without the necessary marriage bans being published.

HENRY

I will gladly pay the fine.

John nods his head. Slowly and solemnly he walks to the altar. He motions for Henry and Frances to stand before him.

JOHN

Will you please take off your rings and hand them to each other. Henry, repeat after me. I, Henry Purcell.

HENRY

I, Henry Purcell.

JOHN

Take Frances Pieters.

HENRY

Take Frances Pieters.

JOHN

To be my lawful wedded wife.

HENRY

To be my lawful wedded wife.

JOHN

Frances, repeat after me. I, Frances Pieters.

FRANCES

I, Frances Pieters.

JOHN

Take Henry Purcell.

FRANCES

Take Henry Purcell.

JOHN

To be my lawful wedded husband.

FRANCES

To be my lawful wedded husband.

JOHN

I now pronounce you man and wife.

Henry and Frances kiss. John embraces the newlyweds.

JOHN

I wish you a long and happy marriage.

Anna hugs and kisses them.

NAHUM

I will always remember your happiness on this day.

Henry, beaming, takes Frances by the hand, walks her back down the aisle and exits the chapel, followed by John, Nahum and Anna.

DISSOLVE TO:

Henry whispers his news to the Duchess and she offers a toast to the married couple. Henry's mother, Elizabeth, is shocked, happy and crying. She holds Frances in one arm and Henry in the other. The noise of happy chatter increases. Anna continues to hug Frances.

Note

Dance tunes

The Duchess leads more dancing in the hall.

Nahum scans the room for sight of Eliza. Killigrew is heading towards him.

KILLIGREW

I am leaving, Nahum. Wonderful news and marvellous entertainment. You must visit me soon.

NAHUM

I will. Is Eliza accompanying you to London?

KILLIGREW

No, she left with Betteron's scene painter.

NAHUM

Oh...well...I will..um...see you at the theatre.

KILLIGREW

Yes, goodbye.

Killigrew departs. Nahum sees the Duchess standing near. He looks guilty. They share a smile.

THE DUCHESS

Is Eliza the woman of your dreams?

NAHUM

Yes, she's wild, but I gave her my heart.

THE DUCHESS

I knew the playful Eliza was important to you, and I expressly told you not to give her your heart.

NAHUM

It happened long ago.

THE DUCHESS

She is very good at attracting hearts.

NAHUM

My destiny is poetry, solitude and tranquility. Eliza's is comedy, crowds and action.

THE DUCHESS

Not necessarily. Change is always nearby. I will no longer be the King's mistress. Charles has valiantly put up with my many affairs, but when
(MORE)

THE DUCHESS (cont'd)
news of my liaisons with the Prince de Monaco
leaked out, he had to send me away from court.

NAHUM
Your Grace, I am sorry to hear this.

THE DUCHESS
Don't be. I am relieved. Charles and I will still
be friends. Now I will have more time for creative
friends, like you, and who knows, maybe the chance
to work on a theatrical events like this one.

She hold up her arms, inviting a dance and Nahum takes her
onto the dance floor, where Henry and Frances and a good
many others are dancing.

THE END