

A Lover's Opera
Screenplay
by Peter Stickland

THE CAST

Nahum Tate	Writer and librettist
Henry Purcell	Composer
Eliza Ashton	Nahum's love
Josias Priest	Choreographer; Head of School
Cecelia Priest	Wife of Josias; Head of School
Frances Pieters	Henry's love
Anna Pieters	Sister of Frances
Amy Pieters	Mother of Frances
Ellen Fairweather	Nahum's housekeeper
Harry Fairweather	ELLEN's son
Horace Heveningham	Nahum's friend
Mary Heveningham	Horace's wife
The Duchess de Mazarin	The King's stylist
John Blow	Master of the King's music
Thomas Killigrew	Director of the Theatre Royal
Belinda Perryman	Mary's friend
Elizabeth Purcell	Henry's mother
Daniel Purcell	Henry's brother
Katherine Purcell	Henry's sister
Thomas Purcell	Henry's uncle
Elizabeth Purcell	Daughter of Thomas
John Gostling	Singer
John Petty	Killigrew's secretary

Episode 1

Opening credits (00.00) - Henry sings catches with Nahum in a tavern. Nahum writes. Frances sings & smiles. Henry walks & composes. Eliza twirls & laughs. Nahum gives manuscript to printer. Henry at Westminster Abbey directing the choir. Nahum in library. Henry composes. Frances & Eliza with love in eyes.

1.(03.00) EXT. OPEN GROUND NEAR THE CITY - MORNING)

(Henry Purcell walks along the lane as though 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.)

(Nahum greets him)

NAHUM

Henry, I've been looking for you everywhere.

HENRY

And here I am, composing. An evening hymn is required tonight. Walking helps the rhythm. Join me, you can sing the words.

Now, now that the sun hath veil'd his light
And bid the world goodnight...

NAHUM

Do you know what time it is?

HENRY

I know my musical time.

(The pace of their walk varies. Henry's arms and hands never

stop moving)

NAHUM

What are your movements?

HENRY

Well, I keep the tempo with my left hand and the melody with my right; this allows me to work on different instrumental parts at the same time. I move my left arm to follow the sounds of the bass viol and I use the repeated movements of my left hand to express a sequence of sustained single notes.

(Nahum tries to work this out with his own hands and arms.
Henry laughs)

HENRY

With my right arm, I am working on the harpsichord refrain. Because I am using the harpsichord to fill in an improvised realisation of the chords suggested by the bass, the movement of my right arm is more complex than the left.

(Henry's movements are comical.)

I am using my feet for punctuation.

(Standing still, Henry points his toe in front of him and then digs his heel into the ground.)

To the soft bed my body I dispose,
But where shall my soul repose?

(Nahum stands confused. Henry walks on ahead, singing. Mary Heveningham and Belinda Perryman walk towards Nahum.

MARY

Is that you, Nahum. What a pleasure to see you.

NAHUM

Mary, Belinda, lovely to see you both. Belinda, you are looking the very picture of health and happiness.

(Belinda smiles and pats her stomach)

MARY

The lucky woman is expecting her third child.

BELINDA

Who is your friend, the comical, young singer?

MARY

That is Henry Purcell. Composer for violins to his Majesty King Charles and Organist at Westminster Abbey.

(Belinda is shocked)

NAHUM

And he is also the keeper, maker, mender and tuner of every kind of musical instrument in the vicinity of Westminster.

BELINDA

Henry Purcell. I have heard the name. It wouldn't surprise me if they are celebrating his musical walk in Heaven.

NAHUM

You should visit the Abbey one day. Sit in the Lady Chapel and hear how Henry directs the choir; the beauty of their voices is a marvel. From the age of seven he was a chorister for the Chapel Royal, so he has spent most of Henry's days there.

(Belinda walks on ahead to hear what Henry is singing)

MARY

You are meeting Horace this week? He needs you to translate Ovid's, The Art of Love.

NAHUM

Yes, I will be with him on Thursday. Look at those two.

(Henry and Belinda are dancing together)

I am a great admirer of Belinda; especially her smile.

MARY

She is a bright star in the firmament of married motherhood.

NAHUM

She awakens powerful instincts in me. I thought of her recently. She inspired me to write a scene where the Queen expresses deep affection for her husband.

MARY

And there is irony in that, for she has a fool for a husband.

- FADE OUT -

2.(07.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON)

(ELLEN and Nancy walk into the kitchen. Nancy puts a laundry basket on the table.)

ELLEN

Thank you, Nancy. Harry should have picked it up from you before now. He spends all his time playing on the streets. (She hands Nancy some coins)

Nancy

You wouldn't find him out there. The carriages are blocking The Strand from here to St. Clements Church. I saw your Mr. Tate outside, deep in conversation. How is he?

ELLEN

He's well, he writes every hour of the day and night. He's returning now from teaching at the Priest's school in Leicester Fields.

NANCY

I saw him late one night with that friend of his who also teaches at the Priest's school. They were so drunk they swayed in every direction.

ELLEN

That's Henry Purcell. Nahum thinks the world of him.

NANCY

Do they not have women demanding their attention?

ELLEN

Well, there's Eliza Ashton; she's never far from Nahum's thoughts and trouble, if you ask me. Always writing to her, he is, and asking Harry to deliver his letters.

NANCY

Ah!... here's the boy now. Gracious what has happened to you?

HARRY

I fell over.

ELLEN

You have been fighting, Harry.

HARRY

No I haven't.

ELLEN

Then why is there a large bump on your eye and a cut on your lip?

NANCY

I'll leave you, Ellen. It's time Harry had something to do to keep him off the streets.

HARRY

I ain't working.

(Nancy departs. Harry curls up on Ellen's lap. She strokes his hair. Nahum arrives)

NAHUM

What has happened.

ELLEN

Harry's been fighting again.

Harry

Mother's going to send me to work.

NAHUM

No one will be sending you to work. (Addressing Ellen) If he learned to read and write he could discuss his differences rather than fight about them.

ELLEN

Nahum, have you just landed from the moon?

NAHUM

I bought these for you, Harry.

(Nahum places paper, pen and ink on the table)

Now you can start writing out the alphabet.

HARRY

Am I starting lessons today?

ELLEN

You certainly are not. You can go and get washed. (Exit Harry)
You spoil us, Nahum.

NAHUM

Ellen, I do this because I appreciate your kindness. It means everything that you are looking after me and this house.

ELLEN

Nahum, you've turned into a saint.

- FADE OUT -

3.(10.00. INT. KILLIGREW'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON)

(The sign on the door to Killigrew's office reads - Thomas Killigrew - Director - Theatre Royal. A knock on the door)

KILLIGREW

Come in. Ah Nahum, excellent fellow, lovely to see you. Allow me to introduce James Billingsley, a designer from Mr. Wren's office. This is Mr. Nahum Tate, the celebrated playwright. Is your new play ready?

NAHUM

Yes, here is the manuscript. I am seeing Henry Purcell later today. He is going to set some words to music.

KILLIGREW

Excellent, I have a high regard for Mr. Purcell's talents. Billingsley is designing the sets and clever stage scenery for a new production of Psyche at The Dukes Theatre.

BILLINGSLEY

I have designed a stage on two levels; the upper one is for the gods and the lower one for the mortals. I have employed so many cogs and pulleys that even the rigours of exact science need a few prayers to ensure its success. So, what is your new play?

NAHUM

The History of King Richard II; my second adaptation of Shakespeare.

BILLINGSLEY

What was your first?

NAHUM

King Lear. I received some notoriety for ending the play with Cordelia marrying Edgar and much criticism for getting rid of the Fool. I am inspired to adapt great works with love as their theme.

KILLIGREW

Like Brutus of Alba, which comes from Dido and Aeneas.

NAHUM

Yes. Dryden said I should not lay my hands on it as it is one of the great legends of the age, so I changed the names of the characters, set the play in Sicily and called it Brutus of Alba. That way I could not be blamed for tampering with a work that is rooted in literature's Holy Ground. Thomas Betterton was very taken by it and made an elaborate production of it at The Dukes Theatre.

KILLIGREW

And the new play, is it set to music?

NAHUM

Just one song. My big ambition is to relieve King Richard of the responsibility for his downfall. I want to confirm Bolingbrook as the guilty usurper, but encouraging the audience's sympathy for the deposed King is not an easy task.

BILLINGSLEY

A topical subject then.

NAHUM

Indeed. In the final act Richard is imprisoned in the Tower and I want to express his sense of loss and bewilderment. A song will work well because it's certain that Henry will deepen the pathos.

KILLIGREW

Capital, Henry will bring a tear to every eye. I am keen to have its first performance at the Theatre Royal.

- FADE OUT -

4.(12.00. HORACE AND MARY'S LIBRARY - MORNING)

(Horace reads from a book)

HORACE

"Love is a species of warfare. Slack troopers, go elsewhere!
It takes more than cowards to guard these standards.
Night-duty in winter, long route-marches, every hardship,
All forms of suffering: these await the recruit who
Expects a soft option. You'll often be out in Cloudbursts,
And bivouacked on the bare ground."
It is incredible how much Ovid can say about The Art of Love.
Maybe the sheer volume of his text is the reason no-one wanted
to translate it.

NAHUM

This was never reason to neglect other great works.

HORACE

I know, but as for me, I have too much work from the King to
give it my attention. Roger Tonson wants it translated by late
September - not a lot of time, but it's possible. He will not
pay the fee until it is complete. Would you like an advance?

NAHUM

Thank you, Horace, you know my circumstances well. I am so
grateful to have paid work.

HORACE

Then we are doing each other a favour.

- FADE OUT -

5.(12.30. EXT. THE DOORSTEP OF ELIZA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON)
(Eliza hands a dress to Alethea)

ELIZA

I'll have the last dress ready by Friday. I will miss you, but
maybe we could arrange to go out dancing.

ALETHEA

Lovely. Do you start your other job on Monday?

ELIZA

Yes, off to The Theatre Royal to make costumes.

ALETHEA

Good for you. What a lucky chance that is. Do you still see your writer friend? He was always taking you to the theatre.

ELIZA

I am expecting him any minute. He doesn't take me out these days, too busy, but he calls in to see me now and then.

ALETHEA

Silly man; if he knows what cheers you he should exploit it.

ELIZA

Yes, I could see comedies every night. I love laughing with great tears rolling down my cheeks and my stomach aching.

ALETHEA

Me too. Those comic writers are so clever.

ELIZA

Nahum is envious of them. He could never invent witty conversations about daily life.

(Nahum arrives.)

ELIZA

Hello Nahum. You are always on time. This is Alethea.

NAHUM

Pleased to meet you.

ALETHEA

Very pleased to meet you.

ELIZA

So, Alethea, come about the same time on Friday.

ALETHEA

Yes, see you then. Enjoy yourself.

ELIZA

I will. Goodbye. So, dear boy, shall we take a walk?

NAHUM

I would rather come up to your apartment.

(He takes her in his arms.)

ELIZA

Nahum, you come to my door with so much excitement, it's a wonder you don't burst into flames.

NAHUM

That's true.

ELIZA

Well it's not right. Come let's walk to the garden.

NAHUM

I need to have you in my arms, Eliza.

ELIZA

You should wait until I invite intimacy; not just demand it.

NAHUM

Sorry Eliza, I love you so much. I did not mean to offend you.

(They walk down an alley. Eliza is friendly & takes his arm.)

NAHUM

I truly love you, Eliza. Don't be upset with me. I'm not a man to treat you casually.

ELIZA

Oh, Nahum Tate, casually is exactly the way you treat me.

NAHUM

How can you say that?

ELIZA

Easily. You write every hour to earn a living and expect me to

stay at home waiting to satisfy your desire.

NAHUM

I write you love poems.

ELIZA

And I want to go out and see how people live.

NAHUM

I will tell you everything I know.

ELIZA

Good, but I also need to venture out. It is two years since my husband died and I must move on. The intimacy we shared is very important to me, but now I must be active in the world.

(They reach a little garden.)

NAHUM

How do you propose to do this?

ELIZA

From next week, I will be employed to make costumes at The Theatre Royal. I am going to laugh every day and go to the comedies as often as I wish.

NAHUM

You are working at The Theatre Royal?

(They sit on a bench.)

ELIZA

Yes. A friend of mine, a scene painter, suggested it. You too could help me do things. Friendship isn't only about passion.

NAHUM

Of course, I will help you, but we also need passion.

ELIZA

You talk of passion, but an easy attainment makes love shallow and a difficult one makes it dear. So, think on this, Nahum

and wait patiently until I invite you.

NAHUM

Are you saying our relationship is over?

ELIZA

No, I'm saying that I want us to be friends. I would like you to take me to the theatre and treat me to supper now and then.

NAHUM

But are we never to be alone again?

ELIZA

Who knows. Being in public isn't so bad.

(She kisses his cheek, squeezes his leg and laughs.)

There's one huge difference between you and the rest of the world. You know something real about me, they will only see the surface.

(Nahum thinks about her words.)

NAHUM

Suddenly, I can't find the words, but love is real.

ELIZA

Yes, our eyes said it when we were lost in love.

NAHUM

Thank you, Eliza, that means everything to me.

ELIZA

See me Sunday week and I'll tell you about life back stage.

(They stand up, hug each other and leave the garden.)

- FADE OUT -

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6.(16.00. INT. A TAVERN - EVENING)

NAHUM

Eliza changed my dreams; she changed my writing. Before I met her, my notion of love was as light as the wind. Now it is as deep as the ocean. I cannot believe she has put these new constraints upon me. How can I live like this?

HENRY

Where does your love comes from, Nahum? When you feel it, why does it feel so complete?

NAHUM

I've no idea, but her sparkling eyes, her delightful smile and the sound of her laughter are always with me. I vowed that I would love her forever, but my words mean nothing. Henry, are you listening to me? Is there something oppressing you?

HENRY

I too know about the force of love. It's just the first new shoots, I'm feeling. It's a marvellous thing.

NAHUM

Henry if you are in love, tell me who the lucky woman is.

HENRY

Frances Pieters.

(Nahum freezes, astonished.)

I am in love with Frances Pieters.

NAHUM

Frances Pieters. Your pupil at school?

HENRY (singing.)

When her languishing eyes said 'Love!'
Too soon the soft charm I obey'd.

NAHUM

Does Frances return your feelings?

HENRY

It must be so. The emotion that passes between us can mean no other thing. I have not spoken to her about it; it is too difficult a thing.

NAHUM

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

HENRY

I must win her Nahum; I must have her as my wife. She is the prize that exactly matches my heart. I have wept tears of happiness for the simple good fortune of being by her side. The very fact that she is alive makes me entirely blissful. Landlord! Where is the man?

(Henry departs and returns with a bottle of wine.)

HENRY

There are times, though, when I want to be rid of my love. My passion is too fierce. It causes me nothing but despair. I will perish by the very charms that inspired me.

NAHUM

Oh, Henry. I am also faint with exhaustion. Finding solace is impossible.

HENRY

I am so irresistibly drawn to Frances, so captivated by her beauty, that I can think of nothing else.

NAHUM

When we are in the sway of love, we cannot temper our feelings. Until I met Eliza, I always conducted myself with restraint, but with her I cannot. I tried to become timid, but this only increased my misery.

HENRY

When disguising our feelings, we become haunted by the abysmal hollowness of inaction. It is better to be cut by swift

disdain than remain forever on this terrible threshold of not knowing.

NAHUM

Every sound Eliza utters is music to my ears. The smallest glance of her eye or movement of her hand can ignite my love.

HENRY

Then we're doomed to bathe in our love's beauty and receive nothing but rejection.

NAHUM

Has Frances rejected you?

HENRY

When she arrived for her lesson this afternoon, I swear she was flirting with Monsieur Spurrier, the French teacher. She was standing in the doorway and he was in the corridor. Now and then she glanced at me, to see if I was looking. How could she behave like this if it were not directed at my feelings for her?

NAHUM

She probably meant nothing by her actions. You are under the spell of love, Henry. You should not read intentions into ordinary actions.

HENRY

Ha. I am resolved to make art of this ridiculous innocence that is so easily overwhelmed by powerful emotions.

(The two sorry men toast each other and continue drinking.)

- FADE OUT -

7.(19.00. INT. JOSIAS PRIEST'S STUDY - MORNING)

(Henry and Nahum enter)

JOSIAS

Please sit my dears. My news is that we moving to the Old School House in Chelsea. It has a large hall, where the pupils can dance. I hope you will come to Chelsea to teach.

(Nahum frowns. Henry smiles.)

Cecelia and I would like to mark the opening with a performance and we would like you to devise an entertainment.

NAHUM

I am extremely busy Josias. How long do we have to devise the performance?

JOSIAS

Plenty of time. Six months at least. The show should display the pupil's skills to best effect. Think of it as a lively masque with endless rounds of dancing and singing.

NAHUM

How much will we be paid for our services?

JOSIAS

Well, my dears, we do not have any funds yet, but we will. There are many wealthy patrons who would be only too pleased to contribute.

NAHUM

A promise will not keep me alive Josias.

HENRY

But in the meantime, we'd be happy to see what we can devise.

JOSIAS

That would be wonderful, my dears, simply wonderful. I will go and tell Cecelia. She will indeed be very pleased.

- FADE OUT -

8.(20.00. EXT. A FIELD NEAR THE CITY - MORNING)

(Henry and Nahum walking.)

NAHUM

I will not work without being paid.

HENRY

Oh, come now. A new production for Josias won't take long.

NAHUM

Henry, I am not devising a new production. All I will do is find some words - then you can devise the music.

HENRY

It is time that I composed a piece of musical theatre in this town.

NAHUM

Josias wants an entertainment for the opening his school, Henry; it's not a royal commission. I'll do no more than knit together some existing songs for him.

HENRY

We should not pass over this proposal lightly. To be given a venue and a host of musicians, singers and dancers to perform with is not insignificant.

NAHUM

But I work day and night and still don't make ends meet.

HENRY

Nahum, our creative abilities are a gift. We must repay this blessing with invention. I will not take existing songs. Why don't we use your play, Brutus of Alba?

NAHUM

Well yes, but no. It is not a suitable subject. Brutus of Alba is a tragedy, a tale of disappointed love. The death of a heroine would never work as a celebratory theme for the opening of a girl's school.

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 theme. Words alone will not carry the meaning.

NAHUM

How can narrative arise out of dance?

HENRY

If Josias danced for you, you would soon invent a narrative sequence to connect them. If we had ten songs, ten chorus refrains and ten dances, each lasting two minutes we would have a piece of musical theatre that lasted an hour.

(The two men carry on their discussion into the distance.)

- FADE OUT -

9.(22.00. INT. A TAVERN - EVENING)

(Nahum arrives. He sees Eliza sitting at a table with two men and a woman. One of the men is very close to Eliza, whispering in her 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. Sit with us.

NAHUM

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

(Nahum cold shoulders the man who was flirting with Eliza.)

ELIZA

Wonderful. They are all very kind to me.

THE WOMAN

We love her. She's one of us.

NAHUM

I will be there soon to discuss my new play with Killigrew.

ELIZA

How exciting. We are planning to do some acting.

NAHUM

Really? There will be no-one left back stage then.

ELIZA

Well, we are just making a start. We want to perform an extract from a Wycherley play to raise money for him.

NAHUM

Really, Wycherley?

ELIZA

Yes, he married the Countess of Drogheda without her family's consent and when the Countess died, her family inherited her fortune. They object to Wycherley and have left him nothing.

NAHUM

He is a great talent. Has Killigrew agreed to produce the play?

ELIZA

No, but he has invited us to present a scene for him.

THE WOMAN

Look, there's Emily. Emily.

(She and the two men rush over to the bar to talk to Emily.)

ELIZA

Nahum, if you have some influence with Killigrew, would you come to the audition and speak well of us?

NAHUM

I can certainly speak well of you. You will be the most beautiful actress that has ever graced the stage.

ELIZA

I am doing this for a charitable cause, Nahum. This is not about me or beauty.

NAHUM

Sorry, but your beauty deserves applause. I have never felt such love as I feel for you.

ELIZA

Well, maybe, but a flower only blooms when the time is right. You must learn more poise and modesty.

NAHUM

Poise and modesty? I want to marry you.

ELIZA

Nahum, I do not want to marry you. I want to act.

NAHUM

But this doesn't stop us loving each other.

ELIZA

No, but you must learn how to love me.

NAHUM

My heart does not know how to survive these changes, Eliza.

ELIZA

Let it grow into them. I gave you a very important part of me and you don't find that every day. It's something real, that

only belongs to us. Treasure it, Nahum, it's our secret.

(The others return with Emily and sit at the table.)

- FADE OUT -

10.(24.00. INT. THE BANQUETING HOUSE - MORNING)

(A gathering of people and musicians.)

HORACE

Ah... there you are Nahum. Are you enjoying The Art of Love?

NAHUM

It is startling and wonderful. Ovid is an inspiration. Is Mary with you?

HORACE

No, but allow me to introduce you. Mr. John Blow, Organist for the Chapel Royal, composer in ordinary to the King and master of the King's music. This is Mr. Nahum Tate, poet, playwright and collaborator with Henry Purcell.

NAHUM

Delighted to meet you. Henry refers to you as his mentor.

JOHN

That's as maybe, but I've given him the task of composing the King's welcome ode.

(They laugh. Henry, in the distance, is joking playfully with his musicians.)

Henry's playfulness is child-like yet there is no mistaking his genius. The young fellow can improvise around a complex musical structure with such confidence you could only imagine that he has the musical score in front of him.

HORACE

I walked here with Henry; a ten-minute walk from New Palace

Yard, along King Street, into the Privy Gardens and here to the Banqueting House. It took us half an hour.

NAHUM

The music on Henry's mind determines the length and complexity of his walk.

JOHN

There was never a man who could create such an inexhaustible stream of variations on a theme and make each new departure richer in expressive beauty than the last. We are all astounded by his inventiveness. Let us hear what he has prepared for us. (He claps his hands.) Your attention please. 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

Shall we hear what you have achieved?

(Henry bows, picks up his violin and stands next to a young man seated at the harpsichord. A young woman joins them on the platform. They play the King's Welcome Ode and the singers sing. [Approx. 60 secs.])

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

(John Blow claps thunderously. All cheer noisily.)

JOHN

My dear Henry, you have indeed composed the Welcome Ode. The overture, where you superimposed the chorus over the opening melody, was pure genius and the final chorus was astounding. I thought that the dotted rhythms were not altogether unlike my own, if you don't mind me saying.

(Henry laughs)

HORACE

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

HENRY

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

(Laughter from everyone.)

JOHN

Henry, you are teasing us. You may possess a particular genius, but that words should exhibit such actions on your behalf is beyond belief.

(Laughter from everyone. They all disperse.)

JOHN

Congratulations Horace. The expressive quality of your words will please the King. As for Henry; you'll agree that no composer before has displayed such eloquent talent for the coupling of music with language. His compositions give off the very odour of the theatre.

HORACE

Indeed, he is a master of musical gesture. I cannot believe that he has not yet been given a chance to show his talents in the theatre. It seems he was born with the ability for dramatic artifice already fully formed.

(Henry joins them.)

JOHN

We all agree that you capture the voice of angels. I can assure you that the King will love you for it. Have you scored the parts for all the instruments?

HENRY

Yes, I have.

JOHN

Then I have nothing to do but recruit the musicians and set up the rehearsals. Thank you. You have made our lives simple and filled this day with delight.

- FADE OUT -

11.(29.30. INT. KILLIGREW'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum enters)

KILLIGREW

Good day Nahum. Did you enjoy the production of Psyche? It was a strange collaboration, don't you think?

NAHUM

Yes, not a drama as such; more a collection of music, curious dances and splendid scenes.

KILLIGREW

And all of it handsomely elaborated by Billingsley's special machinery. Who was the beautiful young woman accompanying you?

NAHUM

Belinda Perryman. Enchantment itself. She is a friend of Mary Heveningham. I was their escort as Horace was with the King.

KILLIGREW

Good. Now on to business. I wrote to you about producing Richard II because I must cancel my December production. I hope it is not too soon for you?

NAHUM

Not at all. I am delighted. 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.

NAHUM

This is rather distressing. It is my only copy.

KILLIGREW

Be calm Nahum. John Petty will have kept your manuscript safe.
Let us go down to the stage. He can't be far.

- FADE OUT -

12.(30.30. INT. THE STAGE AT THEATRE ROYAL - AFTERNOON)

(Killigrew and Nahum are on the stage. 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 of recognition and glances across to the scaffolding, down which a fellow is descending. Once on the stage he glares at Eliza. She 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 know the whereabouts of Nahum's manuscript?

PETTY

I sent it to the Lord Chamberlain's Office for approval.

KILLIGREW

Ah! there we have it then. I will 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 sowing the seeds of jealousy.

ELIZA

We are each responsible for the jealousy we feel, Nahum. Don't censor my fun. I mean no harm by it.

NAHUM

This is not easy. I love you. I'm just 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 about chastity, I said courtesy. I want you to help us produce a comedy not live a life of abstinence.

(Nahum laughs. Killigrew returns.)

KILLIGREW

Everything is now in order.

NAHUM

Thomas, thank you. I must go now. Let me know when you have retrieved the manuscript.

(Nahum departs. All characters depart. Killigrew calls Eliza.)

KILLIGREW

You're a pretty maid, Eliza. I hope you don't cause trouble.

ELIZA

There's no need for you to worry about me Sir, I promise you.

KILLIGREW

I'm very glad to hear it, I should hate to lose you.

- FADE OUT -

13.(33.00- INT. THE ENTRANCE HALL IN NAHUM'S HOUSE - MORNING)
(Ellen receives the laundry from Nancy.)

NANCY

How is Harry?

ELLEN

He is well, thank you. Nahum is teaching him. He wrote a story for the boy to read. It's called, Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Beans. It's about a boy who climbs a beanstalk and discovers a giant. Teaching Harry to read is slow work. Wait while I get your money.

(Ellen joins Nahum and Harry in the kitchen.)

NAHUM

Try sounding the words letter by letter. Begin with 'Once upon a time'.

HARRY

You've missed out the 'w' at the beginning.

NAHUM

No Harry, I have not. The letters 'o', 'n', 'c', 'e' make the sound 'wonce'

HARRY

How can 'once' start with an 'o' and not a 'w'?

NAHUM

I can't explain just now. You can skip the first word.
(Ellen takes coins from a purse, returns to the hallway and hands them to Nancy.)

ELLEN

It is comical in there. When Nahum asked Harry to read with him, the boy just read Nahum's lips and when he asked him to read by himself Harry just invented a story. He didn't bother about the written words. Nahum told him this wasn't reading, but Harry just laughed and Nahum laughed with him.

NANCY

I think he loves the boy. You have done well, Ellen.

(Nancy departs and Ellen returns to the kitchen.)

HARRY

Mother. M-O-T-H-E-R. Jack. J-A-C-K. Late. L-A-Y-T.

NAHUM

No Harry, Jack is late. L-A-T-E.

HARRY

Who is the funny man who gave Jack the beans? Are they magical? Are they useful?

NAHUM

We should wait for the story to tell us.

HARRY

But will it tell us about the man with magical beans?

NAHUM

Maybe he has come to help Jack because he's poor.

HARRY

Is he a wizard? Would you swap a cow for coloured beans? His mother thinks he's stupid. I couldn't swap a cow for beans. Does that mean I'll never see magic?

NAHUM

Harry, your questions are endless. I know nothing about magic.

(Harry runs out.)

- FADE OUT -

14.(35.00. INT. JOSIAS PRIEST'S STUDY - AFTERNOON)

(Henry and Nahum enter.)

JOSIAS

Good afternoon Gentlemen. I hope you are enjoying the school holidays. Have you given the performance any thought?

NAHUM

We are working on something like the production of Psyche at Dorset Garden.

JOSIAS

I doubt our purse will extend to such finery, but give me your thoughts.

NAHUM

Did you see my play Brutus of Alba or the Enchanted Lovers?

(Nahum hands him the play script. Josias makes great play about the weight of it.)

JOSIAS

I know the story well. It is the tale of Dido and Aeneas.

NAHUM

We will simplify the plot.

JOSIAS

I would have thought that Virgil's tale is simple enough. The tragedy ends with the death of Dido. Does your play change this in any significant way?

NAHUM

We'll revise the roles to suit the predominantly female cast.

JOSIAS

My dear Nahum, I am not sure that you have noticed, but the entire cast from this school is female. How can you omit the male roles and still have this play?

HENRY

The music will carry the narrative not the libretto. We will devise an entertainment of songs and dances, so you need not worry about the story.

JOSIAS

So, it's not a tale about a soldier and a Queen whose lives are ruined by their passion for each other?

HENRY

Our performance will not carry so much detail. Italian and French audiences are not entertained by lectures on love from their playwrights; they prefer to listen to the emotion of the music.

JOSIAS

Well, Henry, if there are songs then there are words. We are celebrating the opening of a new school and a production that ends with the death of the heroine by her own hand is not something that will inspire my pupils to dance elegantly or their parents to applaud loudly. Don't make them weep, Henry.

NAHUM

It's a moral tale not a tragedy.

JOSIAS

Gentlemen, why you are clinging to this so adamantly, there must be any number of themes that would serve us equally well.

HENRY

And you might get one, but we can't describe it before we've composed it. Trust us.

JOSIAS

I do. I trust you to devise something that will express the charm and grace of my pupils. I will not have them perform scenes of lovemaking or death.

HENRY

I will compose the music, you will choreograph the dances, Nahum will weave his elegant words and together we will make a performance that reflects our dreams.

JOSIAS

Henry, my dear, I am prepared to follow your lead, but please know that I am under considerable pressure with this change of schools.

HENRY

Please read the play and see how many dances you can extemporize on the theme. If the choreography of disappointed love is a challenge beyond your grasp, let us know.

JOSIAS

During the holidays, I must pack up this school and construct a new one in Chelsea. I have no time to invent dances and nowhere to rehearse them. These are my worries. I was hoping you'd relieve me from having to worry about the opening performance.

NAHUM

Is there any news about being paid?

JOSIAS

Could I increase your salaries next term to cover the fee?

HENRY

That will be fine. Trust us, Josias. You do not have to worry.

(Josias opens the door and the duo depart.)

-FADE OUT -

15. (37.30- INT. HENRY'S MUSIC STUDIO - EVENING)

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

HENRY

Ahh!... here is Nahum. The drinks must wait.

(He sits at his harpsichord and sings his song for Nahum's History of King Richard II.)

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.

(Nahum hugs the composer.)

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.

(He plays. [Approx. 01.50] Applause after the music.)

JOHN

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

- FADE OUT -

16.(41.00. INT. A TAVERN - EVENING)

(Nicholas and Henry are engaged in conversation and Nahum and John are engaged in another.)

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. You must also write words with open vowel sounds. The audience will understand nothing if the consonants get clogged.

NAHUM

I must etch your words into my memory. Thank you.

JOHN

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. Leave your big ambitions at home and let Henry get to the music as soon as possible.

(Three sailors are singing over by the bar.)

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.

- FADE OUT -

17.(43.00- INT. KILLIGREW'S OFFICE - MORNING)

KILLIGREW

Welcome, my dear Tate.

NAHUM

Good morning. Why this urgency to see me?

KILLIGREW

Brace yourself, Nahum. Prizeman went to fetch your manuscript and he has it, but it is returned with a letter from The Lord Chamberlain's Office.

(He hands a letter to Nahum who reads it aloud.)

NAHUM

We have read The History of King Richard II, and it is the opinion of this office that anyone who produces this play will be carrying out a highly irresponsible act. If it were performed at the Theatre Royal, it would cause the King's subjects to remember his father's unhappy fate and might serve to incite opposition to the King. It will certainly increase the King's vulnerability and jeopardise his position at a time when the Court is experiencing considerable strains. Therefore, permission and license to perform The History of King Richard II will not be granted. This injunction is binding on all subjects of the King and any who give offence in this matter will be answerable under laws pertaining to acts of treason. Yours faithfully, Robert, Earl of Lindsey, Lord Chamberlain.

(Nahum shakes the paper at Killigrew)

It is beyond understanding. How in God's name can a history of times long past be suppressed as a libel upon our own? I have

everywhere given King Richard the language of an active, prudent Prince, someone who prefers the good of his subjects to his own pleasure. I even inserted a new scene with the Queen to show the King in the best possible light.

KILLIGREW

Maybe there's something in the character, his timid ambition maybe, that causes the anxious connection.

NAHUM

It's the malignancy of the King's fortune that is the reason for his unhappy state, not the poverty of his character, and if he suffers from an extremity of distress why should this be translated into a weakness of ambition? Every scene confirms my respect of majesty and the dignity of court. No page breathes anything but loyalty and for my trouble I am accused of crimes against the King.

KILLIGREW

Gently my friend, it will not help to rail on so.

NAHUM

But I am wronged by this letter and I must be given an opportunity to explain my good intentions. You must help me make the Lord Chamberlain aware that this decision could not possibly represent the King's best interests.

KILLIGREW

Nahum, I doubt this decision is reversible.

NAHUM

Oh, yes, it is. I will speak to the Lord Chamberlain myself.

KILLIGREW

Nahum, calm yourself. You cannot go making this kind of commotion. It will jeopardize your chances of a new production in December.

NAHUM

And what chances are these? I have no other play waiting to be produced.

KILLIGREW

Well, we might retrieve something of this yet. You might change the names of the characters and set the scene in a land far from merry England to avoid comparison.

NAHUM

I can't believe I'm being coerced into changing the context of a play again. Changing Carthage for Sicily was one thing, but The History of King Richard II is nothing if it is not an English tale. It relies on its association with England, where the audience remember their King. A tale from the other side of the channel will not affect them.

KILLIGREW

I must counsel you against acting rashly. I will produce a revised version if the Lord Chamberlain accepts it.

- FADE OUT -

18.(46.00- INT. THE HALLWAY OF NAHUM'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON)
(A knock at the door. Ellen opens it.)

ANNA

Good day to you. Is this the house of Nahum Tate?

ELLEN

Yes, it is. Can I say who is calling?

ANNA

Yes, my name is Anna Pieters.

(Ellen goes to Nahum who comes to the door.)

NAHUM

Anna. What a surprise to see you here. I hope all is well.

Anna

Yes, all is well.

NAHUM

Come in. And your sister is well?

Anna

Yes, all is well.

NAHUM

Ellen, we will talk in my study. Would you be kind enough to bring refreshments.

- FADE OUT -

19. (47.00- INT. NAHUM'S STUDY - AFTERNOON)

NAHUM

Please take a seat. I hope you have kept up with your writing.

ANNA

Not really, Mr. Tate, I am sorry. After the end of term everything has changed.

NAHUM

Tell me.

ANNA

My father could only afford to send Frances and I to school for one year, so our studies are over. We are now helping our mother run The Spaniard. After the death of my father she has been responsible for the eating house.

NAHUM

And what do you do?

ANNA

Frances is involved with the trading activities and I am engaged with buying the food and preparing it.

NAHUM

So, I will not have you as my student. I shall miss you.

ANNA

We both miss living at the boarding school. I am finding it horribly difficult. How can I be optimistic about future possibilities when my life is filled with chores?

NAHUM

So, how can I help you?

ANNA

As you probably know, Mr. Purcell comes to sing at the Spaniard each Thursday and Friday.

NAHUM

No Anna. I had no idea. I am amazed that Henry has not informed me. Is Frances aware of Henry's feelings for her?

ANNA

Oh, yes. The opportunity Mr. Purcell has created gives Frances greater happiness than anything she could have dreamed of.

NAHUM

You must be enjoying listening to Henry sing.

ANNA

Oh, no, we are not allowed to listen to him; his songs are too bawdy. Surprisingly, my mother is very fond of him. I think he is good for business.

NAHUM

Why are your mother's feelings for Henry a surprise to you?

ANNA

There has never been a time when divisions between the Whigs of the City and Tories at Court had been so acutely drawn. We are Whigs and Dutch so we are not very popular.

NAHUM

It is true. The two sides regard each other with utter disdain. Your mother will think only of City merchants when considering

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

ANNA

Henry has asked my mother's permission for Frances and I to sing the roles of the Queen and her sister in the new school entertainment he is composing. My mother has agreed on condition that he teaches us at home. So, we are to sing with Henry on the days he sings for my mother.

NAHUM

And you know that I am writing the libretto?

ANNA

Yes, and I want to ask if I could sit with you sometime when you are writing. It would make me completely happy if you could attend our lessons and write some of the words while we are together.

NAHUM

Of course, I would be delighted to work with you.

ANNA

Are you sure that I am not being too demanding?

NAHUM

I am completely certain.

- FADE OUT -

20.(49.30. EXT. RURAL RIVER BANK & LARGE HOUSES - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum arrives up steps from the river and stands on the bank wondering which way to go. A couple walk towards him.)

NAHUM

Excuse me. I am looking for the School House on Lover's Walk.

THE DUCHESS

Ah...you should have taken the boat on to the Beaufort Steps for the School House. This is The Pound, sometimes referred to as the Apothecary Garden. And that is Paradise Row; the place

I like to retreat to. I am the Duchess de Mazarin and this is my secretary, Nicholas Campion.

NAHUM

I am very pleased to meet you. My name is Nahum Tate.

THE DUCHESS

Well, Mr. Tate. you are welcome to join us. We are walking in that direction and I would like to learn about what is happening at the school.

NAHUM

I know very little about the school developments. I taught at the Priest's school when it was in Leicester Fields. Josias Priest has asked Henry Purcell and I to compose a musical entertainment to celebrate the opening of his school. I have never visited the place, so I thought I would make a visit.

THE DUCHESS

I am delighted to hear this, Mr. Tate. I know your name. You are a playwright. Henry Purcell, I know; he has played at my house on two occasions. I have a very high regard for his talents. I once helped Thomas Lowe and Jeffrey Banister produce a masque in the old school. These days I am kept busy by the King when he is St. James's Palace. Sadly, I have no time for theatre productions; though I do organise the King's parties and musical evenings. I hope your entertainment will be a colourful affair. We need a little more excitement in Chelsea. Is it to be in the French or the Italian style?

NAHUM

Well its style cannot be easily defined.

THE DUCHESS

Well, if Henry is composing the music it will be a grand production.

NAHUM

There are still many things to consider, but love is at the heart of it.

THE DUCHESS

And who are the lovers?

NAHUM

Gods and mortals both.

THE DUCHESS

Delighted to hear it.

(The Duchess points in the distance.)

That belongs to the Duke of Beaufort and that

(she points ahead of them)

belongs to Robert, Earl of Lindsey; the King's Lord Great Chamberlain. This is Lover's Walk and here is the School.

NAHUM

I suppose the Chamberlain is not at home?

THE DUCHESS

No, he will be with the King.

(The school is covered in scaffolding and the gates to the courtyard are locked.)

THE DUCHESS

What a pity we can't look inside. Do you have an engagement with someone here?

NAHUM

No, being here was merely curiosity.

THE DUCHESS

Then you should join us for dinner.

(The trio return down Lover's Walk.)

NAHUM

It seems there is much work to do on the School. Josias was

very concerned about it being ready in time for rehearsals.

THE DUCHESS

Indeed. Well, Lindsey House here is empty most of the time. I will ask Robert, the Earl of Lindsey if the house could be made available to them. It has a splendid hall; ideal for dancing.

NAHUM

Oh... I was merely imparting information, not making a request for assistance. I am sure that the Priests would not want to impose on the Lord Chamberlain.

THE DUCHESS

Nonsense. Nothing is ever achieved by proceeding delicately. Robert would like nothing better than to have his house populated with young ladies. He will probably pay us a visit just for the pleasure of watching them.

- FADE OUT -

21.(53.00. INT. DINING ROOM IN THE DUCHESS' HOUSE - EVENING)
(The Duchess and Nahum at a dining table after dinner.)

THE DUCHESS

So, tell me more about the subject of your entertainment.

NAHUM

Please excuse my vagueness, Your Grace, the school has been on holiday and I have not yet discussed the latest developments with Henry. He was keen to use my play Brutus of Alba as the subject. It is set in Sicily.

THE DUCHESS

Brutus of Alba. I hope you do not call it this. Brutus sounds so brutal. It is fine for a play you understand, but not for an opera. It will be an opera wont it?

NAHUM

If this kind of thing is an opera, we will call it an opera. Dido and Aeneas were the original characters of my play.

THE DUCHESS

Dido and Aeneas; then you must call it this. Dido and Aeneas are beautiful names and Carthage is a much nicer setting for romance. Keep it as this. Sicily will never do. Why change the names and location of a marvellous, classical story, known to everyone and perfect for an opera?

NAHUM

I was advised to hide the play's provenance out of respect for Virgil.

THE DUCHESS

But Virgil wrote a prose poem not a libretto for an opera. If you are going to sing in honour of this tale, then honour it; the rest is all stuff and nonsense. If you ask me, Dido and Aeneas should be the opera's subject and its title. Indeed, if this is the enterprise then I should like to assist the school with its opera.

NAHUM

But Your Grace, it will be a very modest production.

THE DUCHESS

My dear man, if this is to be England's first opera then there is no way on God's earth that it will be a modest affair and with Henry Purcell composing the music I suspect it will be the finest that England will know. I will hear no more and I will order a carriage to take you home. I will call upon Josias and Cecelia Priest in the morning.

- FADE OUT -

22.(54.00. HORACE AND MARY'S LIBRARY - AFTERNOON)

(Horace hands Nahum a book.)

HORACE

This is the only copy of Heroides I know of. Care for it well.

NAHUM

I will, thank you. I am working daily on The Art of Love. I know this is unusual, Horace, but payment is still months away and - well - my income is as precarious as ever - would it be possible for me to receive a second advance?

HORACE

Of course, Nahum. You must always tell me if you are in need. How is the house and your wonderful housemaid?

NAHUM

Ellen. She is very well. I am teaching young Harry to read. The boy has much talent and he's as entertaining as you could wish. He has absolutely no idea about letters.

HORACE

Are you preparing the boy for school?

NAHUM

I doubt school will be a likely possibility for Harry.

HORACE

At one time, I was a warden of the Stationers' Company. My job was to raise money for the charity that supported the poorer members of the company to attend a school in Bolt Court, just off Fleet Street. I could ask how the boys obtain a place there, if you wish.

NAHUM

Would you? Do the boys started at eight? Must they read and write before starting? Is it only company members who attend?

HORACE

Ha, ha, wait, Nahum. I will find out the costs and make other enquiries. I like your concern for the boy. You must be very attached to him. If my research proves fruitful and there's room for Harry at the school, I will finance his first year.

NAHUM

Horace, I thank God for you.

- FADE OUT -

23. (55.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - EVENING)
(Nahum enters.)

NAHUM

How are you Ellen?

ELLEN

I don't know what's got into Harry. He wants every grown up to show him how to do magic.

NAHUM

This is an important day, Ellen.

ELLEN

Oh, my goodness what day is it? I'm just here, in the kitchen.

NAHUM

Maybe you should sit while I give you my wonderful news.

(Ellen is flustered. She dries her hands and straightens her apron and hair.)

ELLEN

What is it? I'm not used to excitement. Do I have to sit down or can I stand?

NAHUM

You can remain standing, Ellen, if you wish. Are you ready?

(ELLEN turns away and back again. She nods her head)

It is good news, Ellen, you do not have to look so frightened.

ELLEN

Then for goodness sake tell me what it is or I shall die of suspense before you get the words out.

NAHUM

Harry is going to school.

(Ellen says nothing and she does not move.)
Horace Heveningham has promised to pay for the first year of Harry's schooling.

ELLEN

What kind of school takes a boy that can't read nor write?

NAHUM

The Stationers' Company School; just off Fleet Street. It's a very good school.

(Ellen lifts her apron to wipe tears. She shakes her head and great sobs, come from her repeatedly, accompanied by the words "I don't believe it." Nahum takes her by the hand and directs her to sit down. Ellen sits, stands up and sits down again.)

ELLEN

Where is Harry? Harry. Harry. Where is the boy?

NAHUM

He is delivering the laundry to Nancy.

ELLEN

Oh, yes, I forgot. Oh, I hope he will behave himself, Nahum. I hope they will not send him home on account of his bad behaviour. He does not know how to behave at school. He is sure to misbehave. What shall I do if he is sent home?

NAHUM

Ellen, he hasn't even started and you are worrying about him being expelled. You must stop worrying, Harry will be fine. Is there any refreshment in this kitchen? I should like a carafe of wine and something to eat.

ELLEN

Oh, yes, goodness me, I am sorry.

(Ellen prepares some broth.)

My little boy, going to school, who could believe it. Oh, that's Harry, home now. You must tell him, Nahum. I can't remember anything you said.

(Harry enters.)

NAHUM

I have a friend, Harry and he is going to arrange for you to go to school.

(Harry looks down at the floor and nods his head.)

What do you think?

(Harry runs to his mother and puts his head in her lap.)

ELLEN

Is this the only response you can find for a man who has just done you great service?

NAHUM

Ellen, desist.

(Ellen weeps again.)

ELLEN

How is his reading coming along?

NAHUM

Oh, he will be reading before long.

ELLEN

Must he be reading before he goes to a school?

NAHUM

I expect so.

ELLEN

Will they examine him? What age do they start? He will need new clothes. Where are the other boys from? Do we have to buy books? Will you take him? I'm sure I can't take him. Will they ask about his father? I've no idea where his father is.

- FADE OUT -

END OF EPISODE ONE - 58 Minutes.

Episode 2

Opening credits (00.00) - Henry sings catches with Nahum in a tavern. Nahum writes. Frances sings & smiles. Henry walks & composes. Eliza twirls & laughs. Nahum gives manuscript to printer. Henry at Westminster Abbey directing the choir. Nahum in library. Henry composes. Frances & Eliza with love in eyes.

1.(03.00. INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING)

(Nahum enters Henry's studio. Henry is vocalizing a series of notes and building music around them on the violin. He nods a welcome to Nahum and continues to play until it is complete.)
[Approx. 02.00)

HENRY

Nahum, how is it that weeks can pass without us meeting?

NAHUM

I have no idea, but I am delighted to see you and I love your beautiful improvisations more than I can say.

HENRY

Oh, no, dear Nahum, they are not improvisations. They are my fantasias and they are based upon a series of regular rhythms and sequences played around a repetition of counterpoints.

(He plays again)

Can you hear how the notes are uniformly augmented to create a series of canons and inversions that weave in and out of the underlying structure?

NAHUM

Well they are extraordinary; I have not heard anything like them before.

HENRY

The King dislikes them. He is only interested in simple melodies to accompany the royal supper. He also prefers his musicians to be dressed in richly coloured taffeta trimmed

with tinsel. I have been with the King in Windsor and I am maddened by court life. I compose fantasias to get their ridiculous frivolities out of my head.

(Henry hands Nahum eight manuscripts, each containing several pages of musical notation for violin.)

NAHUM

They are unbelievably complicated and indescribably beautiful. They depict the methodical mind behind your dancing.

HENRY

Oh, Nahum, I am in love and it fills me with so much music I can't stop composing.

NAHUM

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

(Henry laughs and claps his hands)

HENRY

I visited the eating-house regularly. One night the entertainers didn't show up, so I offered to sing. I have never received such cheering uproar as I did that night and Amy was so impressed, she asked me to sing again.

NAHUM

And shame on you for not inviting me.

HENRY

I have asked Amy if Anna and Frances can sing in our entertainment. She was flattered by this, but she was also very careful about her daughters. She asked endless questions and I was careful about the subject, but eventually she agreed. I try to charm Amy whenever I can; it's the job of a 'would be' son-in-law after all.

NAHUM

You are unstoppable.

HENRY

It wouldn't have been so sweet without Anna's help. She diplomatically buries herself in pages of music when she can see that Frances and I need to exchange intimacies.

NAHUM

I'm very proud of Anna. It is surprising that one so young can encourage love's emotions.

HENRY

So, what of your news?

NAHUM

Killigrew is interested in The History of King Richard II, but I can say nothing about my bewildering feelings for Eliza. Every attempt I make at soothing my anguished states fails.

HENRY

Nahum, I'll not offer words of wisdom. When I am miserable, I feel like an old rag lost at sea and I want to be left alone, to flop helplessly and not be offered advice. I'd do anything to bring your smiles back, but what can one do about rejected love? Is there no one else who inspires your interest?

NAHUM

Well, someone in Chelsea did, yesterday. The Duchess de Mazarin.

HENRY

You can't be serious.

NAHUM

Very serious, but not in the way you read it. Meeting the Duchess has important consequences for our work. She says we must call it an opera and that Dido and Aeneas should be its title. She is talking to Josias about it and offering to help.

(Henry lifts Nahum's hands and kisses each one.)

HENRY

The Duchess is always right.

NAHUM

I also know more about the subject now. When I wrote Dido and Aeneas, the tragedy centred on Aeneas, just as the Aeneid did, and in Brutus of Alba I did not even give the Queen a name. This time I should like to voice Dido's cares.

(Henry lifts his head, closes his eyes and moves his fingers as if he is playing the harpsichord. Suddenly he gathers up his manuscripts and fills the empty table with a large roll of paper covered in words, diagrams and musical notation.)

HENRY

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 between minor and major keys. I had to reverse the first two scenes, because Dido's emotional turbulence at being in love had to be in a minor key and Aeneas's declaration of love had to be in a major key.

(While Henry elaborates upon the conjunction of moods and keys he adds notes to express his current inspiration.)

If we shift the emphasis from Aeneas to Dido, it marries perfectly with my sequence of keys. The minor keys for Dido will be C and G and the minor keys for Aeneas will be A and E. The timing of your return couldn't have been better, Nahum, for now is the perfect time for us to work together on the opening scene. I need a song to rehearse with Frances and Anna next Thursday.

(Nahum and Henry pour over the notation and discuss the work with enthusiasm.)

- FADE OUT -

2.(09.00. INT. AUDITORIUM THEATRE ROYAL - MORNING)

(Killigrew sitting in the auditorium. Nahum joins him.)

NAHUM

Thomas, here is the new Richard II.

KILLIGREW

Ah, Nahum, what a surprise. That was quick work.

NAHUM

Yes, it is now called The Sicilian Usurper. I think it should be set in modern times.

KILLIGREW

Nahum, I have historical costumes by the score; a modern play would cost me a fortune. I'll read it and we'll talk further. Stay awhile and watch a scene from The Country Wife. My employees have prepared it for me. (He shouts.) Hello. Is there anyone there? We are waiting too long, my performers. Mr. Petty, fetch us some brandy before we die of boredom.

(Mr. Petty serves them brandies. A man presents himself from behind the curtains.)

A MAN

We present the first scene of the second act of The Country Wife by Wycherley.

(The curtain opens. Eliza is dressed as Mrs. Pinchwife. The woman from the tavern is Alithea)

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Pray, Sister, where are the best Fields and Woods to walk in London?

ALITHEA

A pretty Question, Sister! Mulberry Garden and St. James's Park, and for close walks the New Exchange.

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Pray, Sister, tell me why my Husband looks so glum here in Town and keeps me up so close and will not let me go a walking nor let me wear my best Gown yesterday?

ALITHEA

O he's jealous, Sister.

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Jealous, what's that?

ALITHEA

He's afraid you should love another Man.

MRS. PINCHWIFE

How should he be afraid of my loving another man when he will not let me see any but himself?

ALITHEA

Did he not carry you yesterday to a Play?

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Ay, but we sat amongst ugly People, he would not let me come near the Gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see them. He told me none but naughty Women sat there, whom they toused and moused. But I would have ventured for all that.

ALITHEA

But how did you like the Play?

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Indeed, I was a weary of the Play, but I liked hugely the Actors. They are the goodliest properest Men, Sister.

ALITHEA

O, but you must not like the Actors, Sister.

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Ay, how should I help it, Sister?

(Enter Mr. Pinchwife)

ALITHEA

But here comes your Husband.

MRS. PINCHWIFE

Oh, my dear, dear Bud, welcome home. Why dost thou look so fropish?

PINCHWIFE

You're a Fool.

(Mrs. Pinchwife goes aside and cries.)

ALITHEA

Faith, so she is for crying for no fault, poor tender Creature!

PINCHWIFE

What? You would have her as impudent as yourself? An errant Jilflirt, a gadder, a Magpie and a mere notorious Town-Woman?

ALITHEA

Brother, the honour of your Family shall sooner suffer in your Wife, there, than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the Town.

PINCHWIFE

Hark you, Mistress, do not talk so before my Wife!

ALITHEA

Why, pray, who boasts of any intrigue with me? I keep no Company with any Women of scandalous reputations.

PINCHWIFE

No, you keep the Men of scandalous reputations Company.

ALITHEA

Where? Answer them in a Box at the Plays? In the drawing room at Whitehall? In St. James's Park? Mulberry Garden? Or---

PINCHWIFE

Hold, hold, do not teach my Wife where the Men are to be

found. I bid you keep her in ignorance as I do.

(There is laughter and the scene goes dark. The light goes up and Killigrew claps noisily as the actors bow and curtsy.)

KILLIGREW

You have performed well. What do you think, Mr. Petty?

PETTY

Excellent. The audience will love it. We should rehearse the whole play and put it into production.

KILLIGREW

Fulsome praise. What do you think of their efforts, Nahum?

NAHUM

I agree. They perform extremely well. I concur with John Petty. They should develop the whole play.

KILLIGREW

I am inclined to agree, but produce it I cannot.

(The sound of disappointment from the actors.)

It is a very long comedy with too many parts. I would gladly help dear Wycherley, but not at the cost of ending up in the debtor's prison myself.

PETTY

Perhaps someone could edit the play for us.

ELIZA

Mr. Tate could edit it.

(Nahum lifts his hands, as if protecting himself from a gale.)

NAHUM

No, no. I have neither the temperament nor the time to rewrite a comedy. If you try to reorganise a play like this, all hell is let lose. Do an extract, but never attempt to rewrite it.

(Eliza looks at him in horror.)

KILLIGREW

I take your point, but this is common practise for us. However, we will not push your reluctance. Perhaps someone who is familiar with comedy would do it. How about Sir George Etheridge? He's married to a rich old widow; he could easily afford some generosity towards our unfortunate Mr. Wycherley.

PETTY

Excellent notion, sir and if Nahum's new play doesn't materialise we could replace...

KILLIGREW

Mr. Petty, I despise you for such a comment. It is very bad luck to speak so. We'll think on it and I'll talk to Etheridge. He may even agree to finance rehearsals.

- FADE OUT -

3.(15.00. INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING)

(Nahum and Henry enter together.)

HENRY

We must work on Dido's first song. I must have something for Frances to sing on Thursday.

(Henry plays a light-hearted tune on violin) [Approx.00.30]

This expresses the chorus' pleasure for the love between Dido and Aeneas.

(He plays plaintive chords on the harpsichord) [Approx.0.15]

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) [Approx.0.30]

There, it is complete. Give me words to accompany the melody.

NAHUM

I thought it was my task to initiate the songs; words generally come first.

HENRY

Well, I am sorry. Don't let this reversal surprise you.

NAHUM

I can't write words without knowing the action.

HENRY

Dido is expressing the uncertainty she feels about her love for Aeneas - that's all. You don't have to write poetry, Nahum; just give her words of everyday speech to sing.

NAHUM

Who is she talking to?

HENRY

I don't know. Her sister.

NAHUM

What shall I call her?

HENRY

Nahum, call her anything. Call her Anna.

HENRY

I will take no notice of your bewilderment.

(Henry sings.)

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.

(NAHUM remains completely blank)

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 still looks blank)

My heart when...ev...er he app...ears
Does some...thing so de...light...ful find
My Joys could not be more sub...lime.

NAHUM

How can you invent words so quickly?

HENRY

I just 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. With this task is complete, Henry takes up Nahum's words and sings them to him very slowly, stressing every syllable) [Approx. 01.45]

My, my, my dear Anna, 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.

NAHUM

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

HENRY

One more thing and then we can celebrate in the tavern. We need 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.)

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

Excellent. Now we can leave for the tavern.

- FADE OUT-

4.(20.00. INT. LOBBY OF THE THEATRE ROYAL - MORNING)

KILLIGREW

You still want to make The Sicilian Usurper a modern play?

NAHUM

It would be good for me to get away from history.

KILLIGREW

But I happen to know about Sicily. You can't have a King if it is set in our current times. Sicily is ruled by a Spanish viceroy. You must change the King into a viceroy, Nahum, a Spanish nobleman with a palace in Palermo.

NAHUM

I will not exchange my King for a viceroy.

KILLIGREW

Then how about a prince?

NAHUM

I will not accept a prince either. We must invent a King for Sicily.

KILLIGREW

Very good. Now we must discuss the sets and costumes. As you know, I am nervous about setting the play in our own times, because there is nothing to identify the place as Sicily. The Lord Chamberlain will not hesitate to stop the play if he connects these events with England. I must plead with you to

set it in ancient times. I have classical sets and costumes here, ready to use, and I am under strict instruction from the accountants to cease my extravagant spending or there will be no more plays at the Theatre Royal.

NAHUM

I concede and in truth my words need a classical setting.

(Nahum exits the lobby and meets Horace and Marry Heveningham, walking as though there is a dark mood upon them.)

HORACE

Bad news, Nahum, we are on our way to Belinda Perryman's funeral.

(Nahum stands immobile, shocked. He takes their hands.)

MARY

She died on Sunday night. There were complications with the birth. Both she and the child were lost.

(She starts to cry and Nahum sheds a tear. His voice trembles)

NAHUM

We have lost Belinda. We have lost Belinda. I just cannot comprehend it. She was perfect for this world.

(Tears came to all three and Nahum's body makes an involuntary jerk as the sobs leave him)

We were all together at the performance of Psyche a few weeks ago. She was full of life. Belinda was beautiful. Everything about her had beauty connected with it. Where is the funeral?

HORACE

St. Paul's, here in Covent Garden.

NAHUM

I will join you.

(They walk along together.)

- FADE OUT-

5.(22.00. INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD - MORNING)

(Mary and Nahum stand together as the guests arrive)

MARY

She should never lie in the ground. I want her with me, always with me in the library.

NAHUM

I will ask Billingsley, one of Wren's men, to design a mausoleum or some suitable monument to honour Belinda's memory.

NAHUM

Look at the sun. Today it is a sad, red ball floating in the grey. It is like an eye that has wept too much.

(He walks over to a new mound of earth and Mary joins him)

These simple mounds of earth give such eloquent expression to the presence of death. This sorrowful tumulus is the perfect monument. We know everything from this. I should like to cover Belinda's grave each day with fresh earth so that her departure will never appear to be more than one day old.

MARY

Beautiful, Nahum. Will you write a poem for her?

NAHUM.

I will. Each day a man will dig the ground, to lay fresh soil upon your mound.

MARY

Your death now close, we won't forget, to lose your heart is our regret.

(they walk, sorrowfully, arm in arm into the church)

- FADE OUT-

6.(23.00. INT. THE PIETER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON)

(A maid opens the drawing room door for Henry and Nahum.)

FRANCES

Henry.

ANNA

Nahum, I am delighted to see you. Did you bring a copy of the libretto?

NAHUM

No, Anna. It is not written and besides, Henry starts our composition and I then find the words for the music.

ANNA

Oh!... Then will you play for us Henry?

HENRY

One small section at a time, Anna. We will start with the first song, but before we get to that, we will sing the chorus line that precedes it.

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

(Henry takes up his violin and plays the chorus line. He sings the words to Anna and Frances twice and asks them to sing.)

FRANCES AND ANNA

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

HENRY

Try lightening the tone, Try a more open expression.

FRANCES AND ANNA

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

HENRY

No, no, no, the second line is not right. Let not grief approach the fair. It cannot begin with 'let not', we must have stronger words here.

ANNA

Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

HENRY

Grief should ne'er approach the fair. You have it, Anna. This is perfect. Now we can sing Dido's first aria.

FRANCES

Henry, are you using the name, Dido now?

HENRY

Yes, we are reverting to the original characters, Dido and Aeneas. The title of the opera will also take their names. You will be Dido and Anna will be her sister, Anna.

ANNA

Oh, no, I don't want to have the same name and role in opera that I have in life. Surely we can change my name.

HENRY

Well, Mr. Librettist, what is to be done?

NAHUM

In Brutus of Alba, I changed the sister to the Queen's lady-in-waiting, a role which you may also not like. I called her Amarante, but this will never do because the location is now Carthage and not Sicily.

ANNA

I am happy to be the lady-in-waiting and any Carthaginian name will suit me fine.

NAHUM

I have no clue about Carthaginian names. How does the name Belinda suit you?

HENRY

My Be..lin..da. It has more rhythm to it than 'my dear An..na.

(He closes his eyes and sings)

Ah! Belinda, Ah! Belinda, I am pressed
With torment, not to be confessed.

'Ah' is more open than 'my' and it suits the mood of longing better.

(Nahum smiles)

HENRY

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 (radiant)

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 and Frances repeats the song.)

ANNA (an aside to Nahum)

Their love is confirmed and enriched by the phrases they sing.

THE MAID

Mrs. Pieters requests her daughters to return to their work.

ANNA

Thank you, gentlemen. You have brightened our days.

FRANCES

Yes, thank you. It would be blissful to sing every day.

(she whispers into Henry's ear in passing and he starts to sway. Nahum, runs to his side. They all depart)

HENRY

I could die from sheer delight.

- FADE OUT-

7.(27.00. INT. DINING ROOM AT THE SPANIARD - EVENING)

(Nahum and Henry sitting at a table)

HENRY

I must soon inform Amy Pieters of my love for her daughter.
(He sighs) One minute love is lifting us up to heaven and the next it is dropping us back on earth. Now that Frances is not with me I am completely despondent. I will die if Amy responds badly to my expression of love. Perhaps I should ask Frances if she will marry me before I talk to her mother. Tomorrow I will ask Frances to marry me and then I will ask her permission to request Amy's approval. I need your assistance in this, Nahum, please say that you will help me.

NAHUM

How can I help you?

HENRY

There must be a time when Frances and I are together. You could create a writing task for Anna and yourself that must be carried out in a nearby room.

NAHUM

Henry, I drink to your success.

(They drink)

HENRY

I am almost too jolly to sing for the guests, but I have no intention of disappointing Amy. This is what I have prepared for her. (Henry reads the first lines of the songs)

A thousand sev'ral ways I tried
To hide my passion from your view...

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

My heart, whenever you appear,
Does something so delightful find...
Ye happy swains, whose nymphs are kind,
Teach me the art of love...

NAHUM

Henry, you match the longing in your heart with these songs.

- FADE OUT-

8.(29-00. INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING)

(Nahum arrives to see Henry covering various diagrams with small pieces of paper and writing new notation over them.)

HENRY

The recitative and the dances dictate the drama more than the songs do.

NAHUM

Good morning, Henry.

HENRY

A song can express a character's hopes and fears, but the recitative can describe the action and situate the songs in the plot more precisely.

NAHUM

In classical theatre, the chorus is often the voice of the community. It is they who offer insights, instructions or encouragement and they can even take on the inner voice of a character.

HENRY

Excellent, Nahum. Then the songs and the recitative must support each other and we must integrate the chorus more precisely.

(They discuss Scene One)

Then at the end of Dido's first aria, Dido and Belinda will introduce Aeneas with recitative and the chorus will describe the Carthaginian court's hopes for a marriage.

(He adds another set of instructions to the large plan)
There must be a song from the chorus before each dance and a dance at the end of each scene.

NAHUM (studying the notation)

This is an extraordinary palimpsest of narrative and musical ideas, Henry. You are composer, dramatist and map maker for the entire process.

HENRY

I want to play everything I have composed thus far.

(He searches through his papers)

Have you seen my prologue?

NAHUM

I had no idea you had written one.

(Henry finds it)

HENRY

The prologue is a masque. We must have dances at the start, so the masque will be here rather than at the end.

(Henry plays an expressive sequence of melodies - the six dance tunes from the prologue. He follows this with the opera's overture. After playing a few bars from Belinda's opening aria, Henry sings the chorus that Frances and Anna had sung the day before and followed this with Dido's first aria. He then improvises some recitative where he is short of material and returns to his plan to add notes)

We must have a song from the chorus to break up the recitative. It is too long.

(He sits at the harpsichord, plays a few bars to represent the chorus and repeats the recitative)
Here is the dance that will end the scene.

(Henry improvises a dance tune)

NAHUM

It sounds altogether too cheerful for a tragedy.

HENRY

Indeed, it does, but we must please our audience before we invite their tears.

(He falls silent)

I must also admit that I am thinking of this afternoon, when I will ask Frances for her hand in marriage. The chorus express their joy at Dido's feelings for Aeneas, and I will ask Frances to sing this before introducing my subject.

(Henry improvises a bright melody to suit his purposes)

Invent some phrases, Nahum.

(Henry nods when he likes Nahum's offerings and shakes his head when he doesn't.)

HENRY (shouting advice)

Too intellectual. Listen to the sweetness of the melody.

(Nahum continually revises his phrases)

No, no, no, we must start again.

NAHUM

Why, for heaven's sake?

HENRY

Because deep emotion needs simple expression. There is also a paucity of open vowel sounds. Consonants clog comprehension.

(They try again and again and eventually reach the result Henry is after)

Fear no danger to ensue,
The Hero loves as well as you,
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling.
Cupids strew your path with flowers,
Gathered from Elysian Bowers.

- FADE OUT-

9.(34.00. INT. THE PIETERS HOUSE - AFTERNOON)

(A maid opens the drawing room door for Henry and Nahum.

FRANCES

Henry, welcome.

ANNA

Greetings. I thought today would never come.

HENRY (sings)

Fear no danger to ensue,

The Hero loves as well as you,
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling.
Cupids strew your path with flowers,
Gathered from Elysian Bowers.

Anna, this is the chorus at the end of Scene One. I would like you and Nahum to write another chorus expressing similar sentiments while I rehearse Dido's aria with Frances. Is there another room where we can do this?

ANNA

Why do you need another room?

HENRY

Because we will disrupt one another.

ANNA

I am not certain my mother would approve.

FRANCES

Come, we can sing in the corridor. There's no harm in that.

(Frances escorts Henry from the room and Anna starts to sing her melody while Nahum writes the words. They switch roles, writing and singing alternately. Their final words are -)

ANNA

When Monarchs unite how happy their State,
They triumph at once on their Foes and their Fate.

(Anna then listens at the door)
It is very quiet out there.

(She opens the door and sees Frances, in tears. Seeing Anna, Frances runs up the stairs and Anna runs after her. Henry joins Nahum. He stands looking up at the ceiling, his arms in the air)

HENRY

I am pleading for God's help. Frances cannot imagine how we can be married. She says she loves me, but she will not allow me to speak to her mother about marriage. The suggestion terrified her. I will marry her, Nahum, even if I must steal her away, I will marry her.

(Anna enters the room)

ANNA

It is not what you imagine, Henry. Please don't be upset. If you make a commotion my mother will hear and our singing will end.

NAHUM

Anna is right. We must not alert Amy to any drama.

ANNA

Allow me to explain. It is not difficult to understand. My mother has many difficulties at present and she is unlikely to be sympathetic to your request. Her import business is in great trouble and her maid, who has been with her many years, is seriously ill. There is a great amount of sickness in the city and my older sister, Amy, has recently left us to live in Richmond. She is with child again and it is safer for her to be with her husband's family, but it upsets my mother to be without my sister and her grandchild. There is no doubt that Frances is delighted by your expression of love, but you must let matters rest until she is certain that the time is right to discuss this with our mother.

HENRY

God help us.

ANNA

We must also cancel Thursday's rehearsals. We are hosting a large party to celebrate the birthday of a local alderman and there will be no time to sing. Please be patient with us, Henry. There is a better time to talk of marriage.

(Henry nods his head)

If you can remain in the room for the period of the lesson, my mother's suspicions will not be aroused.

(Anna departs leaving Henry and Nahum)

- FADE OUT-

10.(37.00. INT. THE DINING ROOM AT THE SPANIARD - EVENING)
(HENRY and NAHUM sitting at a table.)

AMY

Good evening Henry, did the rehearsals go well?

HENRY

Indeed, they did madam. Allow me to introduce my friend and colleague, Nahum Tate. He is writing the libretto for the opera.

(Nahum and Amy shake hands)

AMY

Were you also at the rehearsal?

NAHUM

Yes, I was.

AMY

I think we should have been introduced before the lesson began, don't you?

NAHUM

YES, I apologise madam. I should have introduced myself.

AMY

Well, I'm pleased to meet you. Anna has often talked of your excellent teaching.

NAHUM

Thank you. I will ensure you will not have to consider my neglectful behaviour again.

AMY

I'm sure I will not and if you'll allow me, I will mention one further thing. You may be aware that Anna has an ambition to help with writing the libretto. My view is clear. In these times, we must ensure our survival by keeping busy. If Anna is distracted from this purpose, more than she already is, it will be to the detriment of the family. She's a persuasive girl, but I hope you'll not encourage her in this ambition.

NAHUM

Of course, madam.

(He bows his head to show agreement)

AMY

Now, if you will excuse me, I have many matters to attend to. Entertain my guests well, Henry.

(Amy departs)

NAHUM

The effect she has is like a hurricane.

(Henry nods. They sit in silence)

NAHUM

When Monarchs unite how happy their state,
They triumph at once on their Foes and their Fate.

HENRY

What is that?

NAHUM

These are the words Anna and I devised for the chorus.

HENRY

They are excellent. Now I will sing.

(HENRY takes to the stage)

Ah! Powerful Love! What cursed arts
Hast thou to torture human hearts...

If grief has any pow'r to kill,
I have receiv'd my doom.

(Henry returns to the table, picks up his violin and plays one of his fantasias. The dinner guests stop eating to listen. After each new piece the shouts of appreciation grow ever louder. When Amy returns to the dining room her broad smile is perfect illustration of her pleasure)

- FADE OUT-

11.(41.00. INT. THE DUCHESS' DINING ROOM - MORNING)

(Nahum and Henry enter. Greetings. Henry and the Duchess met like old friends. Cecelia is frosty. Josias is nervous.

THE DUCHESS

How marvellous that we are all now acquainted and this great enterprise can commence. Henry, you should start the proceedings by updating us on your composition.

(Henry sits at the harpsichord and plays the prologue and the overture. He then improvises snippets of the possible melodies for all the scenes, adding short descriptions of the action and the key - everyone is astounded.)

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.

(The applause from The Duchess and Nahum is rapturous. Cecelia and Josias show less enthusiasm. The Duchess rises, takes Henry's hands and kisses his cheeks.)

THE DUCHESS

Henry, 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 ingenuity could honour any theme, so why must we be fixed on the story of Dido and Aeneas?

(Silence. No movement from the others)

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 the tale?

(Henry nods)

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

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

CECELIA

I never said this. I have a care for beauty, but I am also mindful of its context. It can detract or it can inspire.

THE DUCHESS

I wonder what theme you would chose. Suggest a subject that will keep us on the straight and narrow.

CECELIA

Keep the music, but change the story.

NAHUM

May the good Lord save us.

THE DUCHESS

You have in your garden the first shoots of a marvellous flower, but you have no idea how to nurture it. 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. The opera needs connection to themes of antiquity. It must establish some resonance for us if we are to associate it with greatness.

CECELIA

I did not ask for an opera, only for an entertainment. Besides, there are operas without love and death as their abiding passions and in this instance, they are inappropriate.

HENRY

This work could establish your school as the finest in the land and I will not revise it. I am already in rehearsal with Frances and Anna Pieters.

JOSIAS

With Frances and Anna Pieters?

HENRY

Yes. I will compose this opera with them and write no other work for the school.

THE DUCHESS

Mrs. Priest, you are about to lose one of the great performances of our age and I cannot contemplate it. If you would only broaden your view, we could address your concerns.

CECELIA

If the subject is disappointed love and if it must end with the death of the heroine, then it is not for me.

JOSIAS

We do not have the resources for an opera.

THE DUCHESS

We can find the resources. Money is never the problem. If we invite the King, we will find many with fat purses eager to attend. We will go nowhere with an offer of a few dances.

JOSIAS

The King?

THE DUCHESS

I will persuade Betterton and Killigrew to lend costumes and sets and I will ask Robert, Earl of Lindsey to give us Lindsey House for rehearsals.

CECELIA

But not one parent attending this performance by their daughters would want to witness scenes of passion between Dido and Aeneas or see Dido killing herself.

NAHUM

We will not show these scenes. The music will carry the action.

CECELIA

Then I insist that Nahum must write an epilogue to emphasise the virtuous lives of our pupils.

NAHUM

I would be happy to do so.

JOSIAS

I think we are now agreed. I will prepare lists of singing pupils and dance pupils; including our ex-pupils, Frances and Anna Pieters. Henry, you will need to give me the dance music by the beginning of September, if I am to rehearse the dances.

HENRY

Very good. I will find a bass vocalist to sing Aeneas and arrange for some in the Abbey choir to sing the base and tenor parts in the chorus.

THE DUCHESS

Cecelia, I think you and I will have a major role to play. We will meet regularly to plan the production.

(She calls on her maid to provide refreshment. They toast the success of Dido and Aeneas. Josias and Cecelia depart.)

THE DUCHESS

I intend to oversee dressing the performers and styling the scenery, so I need information from you both.

NAHUM

I have not prepared a description of the scenes or a list of the characters yet.

THE DUCHESS

Extraordinary. Well, I will need it soon, Nahum. I should like to have something like the sets James Billingsley designed for Psyche. I want to fly the gods about the stage.

NAHUM

But we have no gods.

THE DUCHESS

Then we shall fly the witches. I will talk with James Billingsley as soon as possible. I should also like to see a sumptuous palace and pastoral settings for the prologue and the hunting scenes. Where does the witches' scene take place?

NAHUM

It could take place in a cave.

HENRY

And the sailor's must dance by a harbour.

- FADE OUT -

12.(47.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - MORNING)

(Ellen in cutting Harry's hair)

HARRY

You've scrubbed my ears off, now you're cutting my hair off.

(Nahum enters the kitchen.)

NAHUM

Why the noise, Harry?

ELLEN

If the school are going to test him he had better appear neat and tidy.

(Ellen pulls the boy to her.)

NAHUM

They're not going to test him. We are only going to make arrangements for him to attend the school.

ELLEN

Whoever heard of a school accepting a boy without testing him.

(Harry picks at some bread and runs off)

NAHUM

Your time would be better spent getting yourself ready.

(Ellen takes off her apron. Underneath she has a new dress.

She checks to see that her hair is neatly tied at the back.

Nahum picks at some bread departs.)

- FADE OUT -

13.(48.00. SCHOOL ENTRANCE LOBBY - MORNING)

(Ellen pulls Harry's cap off and smooths his hair. The doorman walks to the headmaster's office. Mr. Percy Summers, a tall, thin man with an unusually bright smile, enters.)

PERCY

Good morning. Welcome to our school. Are you Harry?

HARRY

Yes, I am Harry.

PERCY

Do you know what a stationer is?

HARRY

Yes. Mr. Tate told me. A man who sells paper and pens, but I still don't know why he should be called that?

PERCY

Then we will look up the word in a dictionary. What is your ambition Harry?

HARRY

I don't know what it means, Sir.

PERCY

Very well, what are your thoughts about the future?

HARRY

I want to have lots of gold.

PERCY (Smiling)

Well that's a start. I will show you the classrooms. Do you think you will like it here?

HARRY

I've never been to a place with so many boys before. Are they allowed to talk to each other?

PERCY (Smiling)

Don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to play and talk. Now I think it's time we determined what you know. Your mother and guardian can wait here, while you and I carry out a short test in the classroom.

(Mr. Summers and Harry depart.)

ELLEN

Nahum Tate, you may be an excellent play writer, but you know nothing about schools. I told you they would test him. What will we do? He knows nothing about tests.

NAHUM

Ellen, I don't know how to calm you, but your agitation must subside or you will burst.

(View of a clock)

- FADE OUT -

14.(50.00. SCHOOL ENTRANCE LOBBY - MORNING)

(View of a clock)

PERCY (Smiling)

Harry reads as well as any boy his age, but he knows nothing about arithmetic.

(Ellen digs her fingers into Nahum's leg. He gives a start.)

When I asked him to subtract twenty-four from fifty-seven, Harry said that he had never had fifty-seven of anything, so he couldn't possibly know the answer.

(Mr. Summers' voice indicates his surprise. Ellen is furious. Nahum is shocked. Harry smiles proudly. Ellen steps towards Harry with punishing intent, but the headmaster halts her)

PERCY

In short, I like Harry and I will offer him a place. All we need to do now is sign the agreement.

(Ellen swoons and all gather round her.)

- FADE OUT -

15.(51.00. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING)

(Nahum arrives in studio.)

NAHUM

Henry, I have a letter from Anna, let me read it to you,
Dear Nahum, I apologize for the explosive emotions in our house last week. I can't abide the drudgery of domestic duties and the temper of my mother. I wish I could banish care and sorrow. Frances has such a troubled notion of love. I bid her to shake the clouds from her brow and enjoy the fortune that smiles upon her, but nothing I say works to help her mood. Please ask Mr. Purcell to be patient with us. I am certain it will not be long before our household returns to its happy state and Frances can enjoy the stirrings of her heart. I should like to think more on the libretto and if I had a description of the characters and the sequence of scenes I could do this. Would you please send me something? WEE look forward to singing again on Friday.

HENRY

Shake the clouds from her brow. These are nice words, Nahum. It's exactly the advice Belinda should give Dido. Take her letter, Nahum and conjure from it some words for Belinda's opening aria.

(Nahum writes while Henry plays the harpsichord. Nahum hands Henry his page and Henry sings) [Approx. 00.50]

Belinda: Shake the cloud from off your brow,
Fate your wishes do allow.
Empire growing, Pleasures flowing,
Fortune smiles and so should you,
Shake the cloud from off your brow.

Chorus: Banish sorrow, banish care,
Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

Dido: 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.

Belinda: Grief increasing, by concealing,

Dido: Mine admits of no revealing.

Belinda: Then let me speak, the Trojan guest,
Into your tender thoughts has pressed.

(They dance happily round the studio.)

- FADE OUT -

16. (54.00. THE PIETERS HOUSE - AFTERNOON)

(Anna opens the door as Henry and Nahum are walking up the steps. She is anxious and whispers with urgency.)

ANNA

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

HENRY

What is happening? You can't leave this unexplained.

ANNA

It's my mother. Oh, please don't ask now.

HENRY

I will not leave until I know.

ANNA

Frances was on the stairs, weeping; complaining that love could only bring turmoil. She could not have known that our mother was listening. When we realised, it was too late. My mother has instructed us to stay in our rooms. Please go before my mother hears you.

HENRY

Did Frances mention her love for me?

ANNA

Yes. Now make haste. It will be worse if my mother catches us.

HENRY

I will talk to your mother and explain everything.

ANNA

Frances was told that you receive considerable attention from the women at Court. My mother says that all courtiers have something of the gallant about them. She believes you have tricked Frances.

AMY

Anna, what are you doing here? Return to your room. So, gentlemen, as you have chosen to visit me, I would be grateful if you came in off the street.

(Amy steps aside. Henry and Nahum enter. Amy closes the door. Henry tries to speak.)

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 entertain my guests, but you have taken it into your head to entertain my daughter.

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

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 condone your behaviour and celebrate when you attempt to force your attentions upon my daughter? You must reckon that we lack any form of honour or self-respect.

HENRY

Please, let me explain.

AMY

No sir, I do not want to listen to 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. You are all tarred with the same brush and your giddy lives are dedicated to nothing but 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, I compose music for the King. I resent being accused of imitating the lives of his courtiers.

AMY

Ha, ha, ha. Resent what you will. I have no interest in the frivolous butterfly that is called King.

HENRY

You are wrong about me. My life is dedicated to the Church and its music. You should not demean me or deny my high regard.

AMY

I know this is the way you speak, but it is not the way you act. High regard, ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha.

HENRY

I love Frances more than I love my life.

AMY

Then you can go to hell and take your love with you. Love, ha, ha, ha.

(Amy has a terrible laugh, full 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, Mr. Purcell? 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, Mr. Purcell. You have angered me considerably and your foolish proposal makes a mockery of me and my family. Now, I have given you all the time that 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.)

- FADE OUT -

END OF EPISODE 2

EPISODE 3

Opening credits (00.00) - Henry sings catches with Nahum in a tavern. Nahum writes. Frances sings & smiles. Henry walks & composes. Eliza twirls & laughs. Nahum gives manuscript to printer. Henry at Westminster Abbey directing the choir. Nahum in library. Henry composes. Frances & Eliza with love in eyes.

1.(03.00. EXT. THE CITY STREETS - EARLY EVENING)

(The sky is very dark. There is a thunderstorm. Henry speeds ahead of Nahum. He catches up with Henry at The Monument. Henry is beating his fists against it. When he is exhausted, he slides down and sits with his back against it, his eyes shut, his hands over his ears. Nahum sits beside him and tries to comfort him.)

NAHUM

Amy Pieters is a dried up old witch. Her only response to love is destruction. She is without a heart, an indulgence of miserable opinion. Her interest is gold, her daughter a means of securing it.

HENRY

Shut up, Nahum, please shut up.

(Henry lets out a great anguished cry and repeats this until it loses all meaning and energy. They are silent.)

NAHUM

I can tell you, Henry, the opera's witches will act just as Amy has done. Old hags; horror their pleasure and pain their enjoyment.

(He put his hand around Henry's shoulder.)

I will model our witches on Amy. They, with destruction their sole intent, will only laugh derisively. I am not going to write anything for them to say, Henry, their laughter will portray their horror. Ha, ha, ha.

(Nahum sings with all the meanness and derision he can muster. His vocalizing distracts Henry and before long he too has taken up the sounds, preferring an intense 'ho, ho, ho,' to Nahum's half craved 'ha, ha, ha'.)

HENRY

We must return, Nahum.

(He stands and offers Nahum his hand.)

We must have Amy's depraved and wretched sounds down on paper before her revulsion ceases to afflict us.

- FADE OUT -

2.(05.00. INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - EVENING)

(Henry, violin in hand, plays a spontaneous outburst, his rhythm aggressive, his melody vicious.)

HENRY

This is the prelude for the witches. Does it have enough anticipation of the terror to come? Does it prepare our audience for the harridans whose sole intent is harm?

(Nahum nods his head, shocked and silent.)

It will be the sorceress who opens the scene and with these sounds she will demand the presence of the witches. Write it for me Nahum.

(Nahum writes. 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 at my call, and share in the fame,

Of a mischief, shall make all Carthage to flame.
Appear, Appear.

HENRY

That is a song is full of power and foreboding. It carries the charge of our anger, but it is both wicked and amusing. I do not know whether to laugh or cry.

(Henry plays the violin, discovering another melody underneath the first.)

This is equally full of mischief. Can you imagine this as a dissolute dance?

NAHUM

Yes.

HENRY

The chorus will sing this. You must give me some words.

NAHUM

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

(Exhausted and delirious, they dance about the studio.)

- FADE OUT -

3.(08.00. INT. HORACE & MARY'S LIBRARY - EVENING)

MARY

What will you read at Belinda's memorial?

NAHUM

I'll read from Ovid's Heroides. Dido's words to Aeneas.
And so, at fate's call, the white swan lets himself
Down in the water-soaked grasses by
The Meander's shoreline to sing his last song;

MARY

A sad portrait of Dido. Is love a sadness for you, Nahum?

NAHUM

It's a mystery; it both attracts and repels. Sometimes it's a tale so sad and full of woe, only baleful planets could have inspired it. Sometimes it's a tale that could melt the rocks and dance on the summer breeze.

HORACE

Do you speak of a love you have lost?

NAHUM

Never lost, never forgettable. The woman I love enchants me but she wants to teach me to love her without desire in my heart. I have agreed, but how will I ever teach my eyes to erase her alluring form, they are dedicated to her beauty?

MARY

Certainly, physical attraction should not count for so much. Beauty is an illusion, a mirage that is best avoided at the start. Once obsession lives in your eyes, you can't eject it.

NAHUM

I am a poet, Mary, her image is more present to me than life.

HORACE

Don't live a tragedy, Nahum. Maybe you are using this folly to increase your energy. Obsessions can help build a literary armoury, make work bear fruit, but you'll live to regret it.

MARY

If she is not for you, why accept the challenge?

NAHUM

Because her beauty and her character deserve it.

MARY

Some women have considerable power, Nahum, a power that grows appreciably when they want to attract a man. This woman charms your potency, but if she feels you crave possession, she could

thwart your desire and challenge your potency. If you have the merest thought of dominating her, she will block you. If you can't check your craving, she will strengthen her control. What you are left with is a broken heart.

NAHUM

You are right, but how do you know it?

MARY

It's a theme repeated endlessly in art as well as life.

NAHUM

But if it's true of me, what can I do?

MARY

You must stop the flow of images you conjure around her. If you are stuck in repetition, because you have allowed this woman to become the embodiment of stimulation, then you must break the connection, even if it's the end of your friendship.

NAHUM

She is my inspiration in everything. How can I stop myself from being stimulated by her looks?

MARY

I don't know. It takes something truly remarkable to honour a woman's beauty without wanting to possess it. Better move on. If you remain in limbo, you will be consumed with resentment.

NAHUM

I can hardly bear to think about it.

MARY

Then don't, thinking won't help. You will either grow with this or not. Men define themselves by the attention they receive. Beauty steals their minds and restriction steals their identity. In the great scheme of things, it is important that women rule men's hearts; they have no other way of distracting them from the affairs of the world that they cling to so avidly. How else would we establish families and ensure future generations? Your hearts are your strength and they are

your weakness. Women must rule the heart, not follow it; they accept this or they sacrifice victory. That's the way it is.

NAHUM

But where is decent government without the heart. Where is poetry, music and art? Some affairs of men must come from the heart. Women shouldn't rule it outright.

MARY

True, but the heart takes many forms. With a woman, it is love and with love there is only giving.

NAHUM

Oh, Mary. I want your words resonating in my head; even though I cannot understand how to live by them.

- FADE OUT -

4.(11.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT)

(There is a tremendous knocking at Nahum's front door. Nahum goes to the bedroom window to see who is there. It is impossible to discern anything.)

NAHUM

Who's there? Why the disturbance?

(He leans out as far as he can. The rain is heavy. There is a figure slumped against his steps. Nahum runs down and opens the door. A hand reached up to him.)

NAHUM

Henry, what is it?

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

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

(Henry groans and laughs hysterically. Nahum continually tries to lift him. Finally, Henry slumps down.)

HENRY

My ankle, my ankle.

(Nahum drags him into the hallway and remove his wet cloak.)

NAHUM

Talk to me, Henry, tell me what happened.

HENRY

I love her, Nahum. I tried to steal her away because I love her and then I fell.

NAHUM

Ellen, Ellen, please come and help me.

(Ellen enters, see the injured Henry lying in the hall and runs off for a towel and some blankets. Henry, between bouts of delirious laughter, repeats his love for Frances. Ellen removes Henry's coat and dries him. She and Nahum carry him into the kitchen and lay him on the table.)

NAHUM

You must tell me what happened, Henry.

HENRY

You must tell me what happened. You will not believe what happened, Nahum.

(Ellen removes his boots and stockings and discovers that his ankle was heavily swollen and an ugly marbled crimson.)

ELLEN

That'll need something cold. He must have his foot up. Should we take him to your bed?

NAHUM

Yes.

(The task of getting Henry up the stairs is very difficult. He is heavy, he has hysterical bouts of laughter, interspersed

with feverish shivering, and he insists on whispering into Nahum's ear.)

HENRY

I tried to steal her, Nahum, I tried to steal Frances.

NAHUM

Henry, you must help us get you to bed. Put your arm around me. You must try to hop on your good leg.

(They make it up the stairs and once Henry is in bed, covered in blankets, he becomes quiet. Ellen brings some milk.

ELLEN

It seems to me that he's shivering too much.

(Nahum wipes pearls of sweat from Henry's brow. He is full of fear. Other than the occasional moan, there's no communication from Henry. Ellen's attempts to get Henry to drink the milk are hopeless.

ELLEN

There's nothing to confirm he's conscious.

(The two sit patiently at the bedside.)

- FADE OUT -

5.(15.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT)

(Nahum is asleep by Henry's side.)

Henry (Shouting)

We need help. The boats are floating up King Street. Try the park. The park is a lake. You can't even wade through it.

NAHUM

Henry, Henry, it is alright. You are dreaming.

HENRY

Oh, Nahum. Am I here? Did you have rain?

NAHUM

Yes, Henry, it poured all day.

HENRY

I could hear the world singing, Nahum. I had to wade through, but I could hear the sound of angels. I tried to see Frances. I knew she was there. I wanted to steal her away. That's very bad of me, isn't it? I was waiting for her, but they found me out. 'It's a burglar. It's a burglar,' they kept shouting.

NAHUM

Who was shouting?

(Henry laughs hysterically. Ellen enters. She and Nahum share looks of deep alarm.)

I think Henry was at The Spaniard. He must have dragged himself all the way here. His fever is high again. He keeps slipping in and out of consciousness and his conversation is rambling.

HENRY

Hold my hand. My foot hurts. I climbed a drainpipe and slipped. I fell onto one of the sheds. I could see in to the staircase. I crawled along the ridge. It was a maid who saw me. She shouted 'burglar' and I had to run.

(Tears fall down Henry's cheeks and his shivering returns.)

What should I do? What should I do? I have no idea what I should do.

(Nahum strokes Henry's hand. He and Ellen sit by him, encouraging him to rest. Henry continues to moan and mumble incomprehensibly and then falls to sleep)

- FADE OUT -

6.(16.30. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT)

(Nahum is asleep by Henry's side. Henry's nightmare shouts wake him. He feels Henry's forehead. He is boiling up. Nahum places a cold towel on his forehead. Henry shivers violently. Nahum pulls the bed covers over him. Ellen enters. She feels Henry's forehead. She wrenches the covers back and opens the window.)

Ellen

You had better go and fetch Dr. Stöll.

(Nahum departs.)

- FADE OUT -

7.(17.30. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING)

(Dr. Stöll enters with Nahum.)

ELLEN

There's no change in him. He's like an oven.

(Dr. Stöll examines Henry. Nahum and Ellen sit in silence.)

DR. STÖLL

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

NAHUM

What are these swellings you speak of?

DR. STÖLL

All I can say is that Henry's ague was probably brought about by extremes of heat and cold. No doubt his condition is

exacerbated by the collective states of shock and exhaustion, that and the distress that disappointed love has brought him, but sleep is the best cure for that. Keep the fever down or he will simply boil over.

NAHUM

What do you mean boil over? Is that the end for Henry?

(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. I also want you to wrap him in pack-thread, as much as will go five times about the neck, wrists and ankles. Dip them in oil of amber twice a day. Stop worrying. You too could take some of the physic I've prescribed for Henry. I doubt Henry is ready to depart this life just yet.

ELLEN

I will go and buy these things. You must sleep, Nahum.

(Ellen and Dr. Stöll depart.)

NAHUM

Dear God, what possible reason can you have for putting Henry's life in danger? Only Henry can hear the sound of angels, the golden music of heaven. Who will glorify your name with music if you take him from us now?

- FADE OUT -

8.(19.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - LATE MORNING)

(Nahum enters with Henry's mother, Elizabeth, Henry's brother, Daniel and his sister, Katherine. In trepidation and silence they watch Henry battle with his raging fever. Elizabeth, sitting by her son's side, holds his hand and repeats his name as though it is a litany. Ellen enters with the broth she has prepared. She begins the seemingly impossible task of making

Henry swallow the liquid and is soon overcome by the unbearable sadness in the room.

- FADE OUT -

9.(20.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum, Elizabeth, Daniel and Katherine watch as Dr. Stöll examines Henry.)

DR. STÖLL

I am considerably more concerned than I had hoped. It could be days before we know how much danger Henry is in. I'll return.

- FADE OUT -

10.(20.30. INT. NAHUM'S STUDY - EVENING)

(Horace and Mary comfort Nahum)

NAHUM

It is my fear for Henry that causes me to contrast my inadequate literary contribution compared to the immeasurable value of his music.

HORACE

You must not go on so. Sleep now, Henry's mother will alert you if his condition worsens.

NAHUM

Compared to Henry, my ridiculous ambition is arrogance and any confidence I have is pure vanity.

MARY

Nahum, you cannot blame yourself.

NAHUM

I do. I blame myself for not developing real insight, for deluding myself about my perceptions and for not having tried

harder to understand life. I pray to God that he will take me in place of Henry. I'd gladly walk towards death to save him.

MARY

I doubt God will take either you or Henry this night, or even the next night. Sleep Nahum. Horace will visit again tomorrow.

- FADE OUT -

11.(21.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - MORNING)

(Nahum with Horace Ellen, Horace and Mary sit at the table.)

HORACE

Nahum, are you rested?

NAHUM

Yes. I have just called in to see Henry. Elizabeth is spooning the broth to Henry so beautifully. Henry remains unconscious. What other news is there?

HORACE

Daniel went to Westminster to inform the Dean of the Abbey. I have sent news to John Blow at Windsor. Katherine went to Somerset House to inform her Uncle Thomas.

NAHUM

Very good.

(He picks up a letter and opens it.)

And here is a letter from Josias Priest asking about progress and requesting a meeting. The world must stand still now.

(There is a knock on the door. Ellen enters with Thomas Purcell and Katherine.)

THOMAS

Good day. What news of Henry?

NAHUM

He is still sleeping.

THOMAS

I wish I were not the bearer of fearful news that must be heaped upon existing fearful news, but I have been handed a summons from the Magistrate's Court. It reads, To Thomas Purcell, Master of the King's Wardrobe. As guardian to Henry Purcell, you are hereby requested to accompany your nephew and attend Bow Street Court at ten o'clock tomorrow, where Henry Purcell is required to explain his presence on the roof of the Pieters' House in Thames Street in the City of London.

(The assembled company are shocked.)

NAHUM

It is true. Henry described it during his fevered state.

THOMAS

Then I will attend to explain Henry's circumstances and plead his case. Nahum, I need you to tell me everything you know. If ever prayers were needed it is now.

- FADE OUT -

12.(22.30. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - EVENING)

ELIZABETH

Henry is having a fit. Come quickly.

(Nahum enters to witness a distraught Elizabeth holding Henry. Henry is thrashing about and shouting as though he is fighting off terrible demons.)

NAHUM

I going to get Dr. Stöll. Ellen please help to calm him.

- FADE OUT -

13.(23.30. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - EVENING)

(Dr. Stöll examines Henry.)

DR. STÖLL

Henry's swellings have reduced.

(His words take everyone by surprise.)

Your son is plagued by nightmares, but his condition has greatly improved.

(Elizabeth weeps. Dr. Stöll holds out a bag of herbs.)

Add these to the physic. I don't care how much Henry complains, just ensure that he drinks it. If the swellings reduce further he will be out of the worst danger and you can look forward to his company again. Let me know the progress.

(Dr. Stöll departs.)

- FADE OUT -

14.(24.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - MORNING)

(Nahum, Elizabeth, Daniel and Katherine are sitting. Thomas Purcell and John Blow enter with Ellen.)

THOMAS

Well you will be pleased to know that the case against Henry is closed.

(They all jump up and hug each other.)

The magistrate recognised the extremity of Henry's condition and accepted that he intended no harm to the house or its inhabitants. Not unexpectedly, Amy Pieters pressed her case with some vigour and the magistrate felt bound to accept her wishes that an injunction be placed on Henry, preventing him from making any further visits to the house.

(They all display great relief.)

JOHN

By now the entire Court will know of Henry's condition. The King is distraught and he has asked me to ensure that all possible arrangements are made to affect Henry's recovery. He offers his physicians to attend on him and I am authorized to contact them if needs be.

NAHUM

Dr. Stöll is an excellent physician.

JOHN

Good, then we will leave the task of recovery to him. The King does not know about the circumstances at the Pieters' house, or the subsequent proceedings at the magistrate's court, and we must keep this to ourselves. The King's distress will be nothing compared to his displeasure should he learn of Henry's escapade in the City. The King is also concerned about the arrangements for the Welcome Ode. Rehearsals are expected to begin on Monday. It is of the utmost importance that the King's return to London is a great State occasion; he has been planning this event for months and nothing can be allowed to cloud his day. I will now direct the rehearsals, but I need the manuscript to achieve this.

DANIEL

It is in the Monk's Refectory. I will go with you to retrieve it.

JOHN

First, I must see Henry.

- FADE OUT -

15.(25.30. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum, John, Elizabeth, Daniel and Katherine are gathered. John Blow, his agitation is clearly visible, sits at Henry's bedside, weeping and stroking his cheeks.)

JOHN

Just recover, Henry. You are important to this age.

(To everyone's surprise and delight, on hearing John's voice, Henry opens his eyes and seeing John's hand upon his own, he touches it softly, almost as though he is offering him some assurance. They weep at the significance of this small sign.)

(All depart, except Henry and Elizabeth. Henry extends his hand towards his mother and she holds it lovingly.

HENRY

Where did you find me?

ELIZABETH

Nahum found you on his doorstep.

(Henry smiles and returns to sleep.)

- FADE OUT -

16. (26.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING)

(Elizabeth is sitting beside Henry. Nahum and Dr. Stöll enter to discover Henry awake.)

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.

(Dr. Stöll examines Henry.)

DR. STÖLL

The yellow lumps on Henry's neck and groin have receded. He is now out of danger. Mrs. Purcell, if you would like to take him home, you can.

(All are delighted.)

NAHUM

Henry, I have business to attend to, but I will be back soon.

- FADE OUT -

17.(27.00. INT. Killigrew's office - MORNING)

(knock on the door.)

KILLIGREW

Come in. Nahum, how lovely to see you. What news of Henry?

NAHUM

He is better and talks already of musical keys.

KILLIGREW

You have just missed Eliza. I have sent her to collect flyers.

NAHUM

I have left a note for her with Prizeman.

KILLIGREW

I had a visit from the Duchess de Mazarin. She is scrounging costumes for your opera.

NAHUM

Excellent. Well, it may be good for you, but after I had agreed to give her costumes, she declared I was a miserly old rogue and insisted that I provide scenery and women to dress the performers in addition. 'It is for the honour of England,

she told me. I love her well enough and I did what anyone would do, I agreed to everything.

(They both laugh.)

- FADE OUT -

18.(28.00. INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON)

(Henry is quietly singing da dum de dee, da dum de dee.)

NAHUM

It's the saddest phrase I ever heard.

It is Dido's final lament. I need you to give me some words.

HENRY

Da dum de dee, da dum de dee.

NAHUM

Remember me, remember me.

HENRY

Excellent Nahum. After this phrase, the melody goes something like, da, da, da, da, da, da, accept my fate.

NAHUM

But ah, forget my fate.

HENRY

Yes, Nahum. Here is the preceding melody. Remember 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.

HENRY

Nahum, do you realise that two men, forlorn and rejected by love, have just created this most heart rending of laments for a woman to sing.

NAHUM

I can hardly describe the beauty of it. It goes straight to the very heart of me and touches everything.

- FADE OUT -

19.(30.00. INT. NAHUM'S HOUSE - MORNING)

(Nahum, Ellen, Harry and the Purcell family are gathered to get Henry down stairs and out to a carriage.)

NAHUM

I will visit you soon Henry. Now, young Harry, tomorrow is your first day at school. Are you ready?

(Harry nods and Ellen bustles him off to his room, agitated. There is a knock at the door. Nahum opens it.)

NAHUM

Anna. You have just missed Henry.

ANNA

I saw the carriage and all the fuss about him and decided to wait until he had departed. What is wrong with him?

NAHUM

He has been exceptionally unwell and there were times when we thought we had lost him, but he fought through and is now well enough to go home. He came here straight after his reckless escapade at your house. Your mother issued a summons at the Magistrate's Court.

ANNA

I know. My mother wanted him in prison. Frances and I were shocked by Henry's visit - he must have been in great distress to attempt access to our house without permission. I felt so sorry for him that day. But things have turned worse, Nahum.

NAHUM

How is that possible?

ANNA

My mother insisted that Frances give up her feelings for Henry, and Frances refused, so my mother informed her that she has accepted a suitor on her behalf. Frances was furious and vowed that on the issue of marriage she would follow her heart. My mother demanded that Frances be mindful of her duty, but they fought the day long and at its end, Frances took to her bed. She has remained there ever since. She has no condition that medical prognosis can determine, but she refuses to talk, even to me, and she refuses to eat. Her health is now a serious concern. My mother knows that Frances is being wilful, but she still attempts to control her and this only adds to Frances' anger.

NAHUM

Does she really have a suitor for Frances.

ANNA

Yes. It is complex. My mother manages two businesses - 'The Spaniard' and a company that imports merchandise from Spain. My father employed a Spaniard, Alfonso Balbas, to travel to Spain to purchase the goods. He is a resident of London. After my father's death, this man asked for my mother's hand in marriage - I learned this only recently from Lina, my mother's maid. When my mother refused him, he threatened to leave her

employment unless she made him a partner in the business. My mother accepted his demands and agreed to share the profits with him, but Señor Balbas, displeased with his share of the business, now threatens to set up in competition with my mother unless she consents to a marriage between Frances and his son, Diego. There is nothing wrong with Diego, he is a fine, handsome man, but he is completely the wrong kind of husband for Frances. My mother refuses to accept this.

NAHUM

Great heavens. How much more. Can you not talk with Frances?

ANNA

No, she refuses my entreaties. I am now so shaken by this business that I can't deal with it alone. Help me Nahum.

NAHUM

I will do anything I can, but what? We must of course meet whenever possible and share our news.

ANNA

But if Frances will not give up her principles, her death will be the sad conclusion of this unhappy tale.

NAHUM

No, Anna. This will not happen.

ANNA

Please don't inform Henry of these events; there is nothing he can do and he might make matters worse. I also do not want him to suffer any more for his love. There is no possibility now of Frances and I being involved with the opera. This upsets me deeply. It was my only solace.

NAHUM

Anna, write to me, visit me and keep your hope. Something will shake the clouds from off your brow.

- FADE OUT -

20.(33.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - EVENING)

(Nahum enters.)

ELLEN

Ah! Nahum, I have been waiting up for you.

NAHUM

Why, is anything wrong.

ELLEN

You should have been here for Harry's first day at school.

NAHUM

Sorry Ellen. Was there a problem?

ELLEN

Well... (she sobs) it has not been easy. The other boys mocked him for not having a father and he fought with them. It's no way for a boy of nine to spend his birthday.

NAHUM

Oh, Ellen, I had no idea it was his birthday.

ELLEN

But what will we do about school? How can he put up with the boy's cruelty. Maybe he'll refuse to go to school.

NAHUM

Calm yourself and get some sleep. I'll show the boys that I'm Harry's father. I will accompany him to school in the morning.

- FADE OUT -

21.(34.00. INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - MORNING)

(Nahum enters.)

ELLEN

Where have you been? Harry is ready for school.

NAHUM

I have been to Mr. Garthway's stable to hire two horses.

ELLEN

Why? Where are you going?

NAHUM

To school. Come on Harry. We are riding horses.

- FADE OUT -

22.(34.30. EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL - MORNING)

(Nahum and Harry riding up to the gates.)

NAHUM

Turn your horse next to mine and face those entering.

(Nahum and Harry sit on their horses.)

NAHUM

Keep your horse as still as a statue and greet no one.

(Nahum takes a book from his bag and reads from it. The school boys gather to watch them rather than enter the school gates.)

NAHUM

The Tales of The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote Of La Mancha.
O perpetual discoverer of the Antipodes! Torch of the world!
Eye of Heaven! Sweet stirrer of wine coolers! Here Thymbrius,
there Phoebus, now archer, now physician! Father of Poetry,
inventor of Music, you who always rise and - though you seem
to - never set! On you I call, sun, by whose aid man engenders
man. On you I call to favour this boy, my ward, and light the
darkness of his school days.

(The school bell rings. The boys wait for Harry to dismount. They greet him like a hero and ask him a hundred questions.)

- FADE OUT -

23.(36.00.INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - MORNING)

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 can arrive in your head fully formed?

HENRY

I have no idea, but at times they come to me in great abundance and I must notate them or burst with the weight of them. You must try to smuggle in a pen and some paper, Nahum, I must write it down. My mother has banned me from working, but I will become ill again if I cannot notate these sounds.

NAHUM

Does the music come to you every day?

HENRY

Yes, but there are times when it's presence overwhelms me and times when it's presence is gentle. That fateful day when I went to The Spaniard, a strange power was upon me. I was outside myself, fighting to gain control.

NAHUM

Were you completely lost to yourself?

HENRY

Completely; I did not wake from this state until I was lying in your bed and then I was trembling, because I knew that death was invading me. I could feel my spirit separating from my body and I could not stop it. Indeed, I accepted it; I did not want to return to the misery of my loss; darkness was shading me and death had become a welcome guest. I imagined that I was at last free of sorrow, but later I realised that music was resonating in me again, that my senses had returned, and 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 against themselves conspire and shun the cure they most desire.

HENRY

Say that again.

NAHUM

Great minds against themselves conspire 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 will know that death is about to invade her, but she now 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.

NAHUM

But you add the sound of angels to my words.

HENRY

Tell me is there any news of Frances?

NAHUM.

None.

HENRY

Did you write my letter for Amy?

NAHUM

I did. I will read it. Dear Mrs. Pieters, I apologize a thousand times for my unacceptable visit to your house; my foolishness fills me with repentance and I doubt my tears of regret will ever cease their flow. I wish that I could kneel before you to beg your forgiveness, but I shall never intrude uninvited into your presence again - may I perish if I neglect this promise. Please know that my behaviour was an unusual act brought about by extreme circumstances, but rest assured, I will never allow myself to lapse into such a condition again. I pray that you might one day feel that your reckoning of me was a little unjust and realise that I do not deserve the contempt in which you hold me. I am not poorly endowed with grace, as your comments suggested, and if I imagined that you might forever keep to this opinion it would leave my banished soul with nothing to sustain it. That my love for Frances offends you, leaves me encumbered with despair, but this will be nothing compared to my misery should I suspect that you apportion Frances with some of the blame. I promise that she is guilty of nothing. With all my heart, I believe her to be the fairest of women and I would rather die than cause her any distress. I would gladly pay all the riches in the world to have my feelings for Frances meet with your approval, but as you so clearly observe, I have no such riches. I possess love in great store and the hope that one day our difficulties will resolve. If I cannot hope, if I am lost to you and your

daughters forever, that will be my greatest sorrow. Yours most sincerely, Henry Purcell

HENRY

AH! Nahum. It is a plea for justice, not just a letter of apology. Thank you. And did you write to Josias?

NAHUM

I have put off the meeting for another week.

(Elizabeth enters.)

ELIZABETH

Are you happy to receive the Duchess de Mazarin?

HENRY

I am delighted to receive the Duchess.

(Enter the Duchess de Mazarin.)

THE DUCHESS

Henry, allow me to make an extravagant but brief fuss of you.

(She kisses him and rubs his head.)

HENRY

Enough, Your Grace. I would rather have your news.

THE DUCHESS

Well, my dears. Killigrew was a darling about lending costumes, but Betterton was entirely reticent - he claims to have precious little for himself. When I railed at him for being miserly he offered to lend us Peter Beardsley, his scene painter. We can have him for the time it takes to paint two scenes and no more. I believe it was Beardsley who painted the sets for Brutus of Alba. Now about the costumes. Dressing the leading ladies is easy, but what about the remainder of the cast. Are they wearing antique or present day costumes? The present day is by far the easiest for they are all to hand."

HENRY

Yes. My uncle Thomas is Master of the King's Wardrobe. He will lend costumes. Visit him at Somerset House.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent, one can never have too many gowns. Can I measure the women who are singing the lead roles?

NAHUM

Our singers were the subject of recent catastrophic events at The Spaniard. You know about this of course.

THE DUCHESS

Of course, good heavens, I had no idea about the connection. So, what do we do now? Josias is already frantic about finding the dancers; he'll not welcome this added trial.

HENRY

My cousin Elizabeth will sing Dido, and my sister Katherine will sing Belinda.

NAHUM

Josias will insist on using his pupils.

HENRY

I will have rehearsals underway before we visit Josias.

THE DUCHESS

The audience will never know the difference. Can I measure Katherine now? Is she the same size as her cousin?

HENRY

Nahum. Please ask Katherine to join us.

(Nahum exists)

THE DUCHESS

Who is singing Aeneas.

HENRY

John Gostling. Just prepare to dress a very big man. You cannot measure him at present for he is in Canterbury and besides, I have not yet asked him.

THE DUCHESS

I know the Reverend Gostling and I will dress him as a Trojan general.

(Nahum returns with Katherine.)

THE DUCHESS

Her shape and size are standard and therefore perfect.

KATHERINE

May I know the reason for these comments about my size?

HENRY

I am inviting you to be a lady-in-waiting in the opera and Elizabeth, I hope, will perform the queen.

KATHERINE

Truly?

THE DUCHESS

Yes, and you and Elizabeth will dress in beautiful gowns made by the court dressmaker.

(Elizabeth, Henry's mother enters.)

ELIZABETH

This room is too full of excited animation. Henry must rest.

- FADE OUT -

24. (42.30.INT. NAHUM'S KITCHEN - EVENING)

HARRY

Is Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Beans about me?

NAHUM

Yes Harry, in a way it is. It is good to imagine yourself in stories.

HARRY

Jack doesn't have a father and I don't have a father, so I think we are the same. Is the funny little man with the beans his father?

NAHUM

No, but his father probably sent him because he can do magic.

HARRY

But you can do magic and you pretended you were my father.

NAHUM

You're a comic. What kind of magic can I do?

HARRY

You did magic with the horses. You made all the boys be my friends. Do you think my father is good at magic?

NAHUM

I am certain of it

HARRY

Do you know what wizards do?

NAHUM

No, Harry I do not, but now you are at school, you can ask your teachers all the questions you want. It would be awful to use all your questions up on me.

(Harry nods wisely.)

- FADE OUT -

25.(43.30.INT. LIBRARY AT ST, JAMES' PALACE - MORNING)

THE DUCHESS

There is no point pleading innocence with me Nahum Tate, I want to know everything that happened.

NAHUM

It started when Frances' mother attacked Henry for trying to woo her daughter. Henry made an uninvited return because he is madly in love with Frances. Now I learn, and I have not told Henry, that Amy is insisting that Frances marry a Spaniard and Frances has collapsed out of misery and wilfulness.

THE DUCHESS

So, who is this Spaniard?

NAHUM

Amy is in partnership with his father, Alfonso Balbas. He insists that Frances marry his son, Diego, or he will cease the partnership.

THE DUCHESS

Thank you, all I need is their names. So, tell me about Dido. I want her history, her character, her qualities; everything.

NAHUM

The responsibility of explaining the qualities of one powerful woman to another powerful woman, might be too much for me.

THE DUCHESS

Come now, we are not as complex as you like to make out.

NAHUM

Well, in Virgil she is the queen of Carthage, but Dido is also the name the Carthaginians use for Aphrodite, the Goddess of love and beauty. In Virgil, she is a Phoenician princess from Tyre, married to Sychaeus, the richest of all Phoenician landowners. She loved her husband ardently, but her brother, Pygmalion, being a monster of unmatched wickedness and blind with lust for gold, murdered her husband for his wealth. Dido,

in fear and horror, fled her homeland and sought refuge in Libya. Here she founded Carthage, making it the most powerful and beautiful city in the known world. She was a formidable woman. Virgil portrays her as a vengeful queen, but we have no theme of revenge in our opera.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent, I love her.

NAHUM

The Trouble is caused by a sorceress and her two witches.

THE DUCHESS

Delightful, do you have any detail on them?

NAHUM

Not really. I modelled the witches on Amy.

(The Duchess roars with laughter.)

THE DUCHESS

Your method of inspiration is entirely comic. So, there is no model for the sorceress? Hmm. This will never do. I can't dress a character who is without qualities. She might be a cave dweller or a Duchess and still be a sorceress. You must know more, Nahum, think.

NAHUM

She is neither cave dweller nor Duchess.

THE DUCHESS

Come, we will go to ask Mr. Sanders. He always has answers when one is plagued by such matters.

(She & Nahum walk down many corridors and enter the library.)

THE DUCHESS

Mr. Sanders! Mr. Sanders!

MR. SANDERS

Here Your Grace.

THE DUCHESS

Ah, Somers. We have a Carthaginian sorceress in our opera who we know nothing about. We must devise a costume for her, so we need your assistance.

MR. SANDERS

Sorceress, Sorceress, Sorceress. Is she significant?

THE DUCHESS

Absolutely, she is the very Queen of the night.

MR. SANDERS

Well, there you have it. You should dress her as Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent, you are always so clever and helpful. Thank you. So, now we have two queens and no cave dwellers and this can only be a good thing. One can never have too many queens.

- FADE OUT -

26.(46.30.INT. A TAVERN - EVENING)

(Eliza arrives and gives Nahum a friendly kiss.)

ELIZA

I'm sorry I'm late. We are having so many problems making Wycherley's play work for five actors. It's impossible.

NAHUM

I warned you a play disintegrates if you attempt to unpick it.

ELIZA

All we are trying to do is share the roles. Couldn't you at least help us make it work for fewer actors?

NAHUM

I could not. I'm no magician. Better to perform extracts.

ELIZA

But Nahum, we need you. You don't have to re-write it.

NAHUM

The task will consume me. I can't have The Country Wife in my head alongside Dido and Aeneas.

ELIZA

Why is this opera such a demanding thing?

NAHUM

Because it is difficult to establish a narrative when there is only music and singing to inform it. There's so little room for words and so much for Dido to express.

ELIZA

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

NAHUM

Dido teaches that love is a destructive force when thwarted.

ELIZA

Why is it that clever people always go on about thwarted love? If Dido had been pregnant, Aeneas would not have left her.

NAHUM

The point is, Henry has given distress the most beautiful voice. Dido's lament is the saddest song you will ever hear.

ELIZA

But I don't want to live with laments and sadness, Nahum.

NAHUM

Well grief of any kind needs soothing. If Henry can compose music that brings solace to a broken heart, that is glorious.

ELIZA

I don't want to think about broken hearts. Who was Aeneas?

NAHUM

Aeneas, son of Venus, survived the battle when Troy was lost. He was responsible for looking after its sacred lore and religious rites. His task was to found Rome, but the glories of this quest are not the subject of our opera.

ELIZA

Could Dido not have gone with him to Rome?

NAHUM

No, Dido had to remain in Carthage. Aeneas must weigh the balance between love and responsibility, there is little room for romance. Aeneas is innocent. He is a fearless fighter in the field, but when the flower of love blooms, its fragrance and abundant beauty overwhelm him. He's a soldier who is lost in the presence of beauty and this makes him an easy target for destructive forces.

ELIZA

I like to hear about the ancient tales, but do you ever write about today.

NAHUM

Well, Dido's real name is Elissa, not unlike your own. Perhaps I'm secretly writing about you, eulogizing your beauty and praising your beguiling ways.

ELIZA

How flattering, but what passed between our eyes in love is a thing that must remain a secret. You will never describe that.

NAHUM

This is true. Do not fear, your bounteous love will be kept safely in my dreams.

ELIZA

Good, then you are learning something Aeneas should have learned. I don't want you lost in the presence of beauty.

NAHUM

You are an inspiration, Eliza.

ELIZA

Excellent, and now I must be on my way. Keep cheerful and meet me here next Sunday.

(Eliza leaves with a smile and blows a kiss from the door.)

- FADE OUT -

27.(50.00.INT. NAHUM'S HALLWAY - MORNING)

(Nahum opens the door.)

ANNA

Nahum, I have no time to enter. I must be brief. Frances has become so unwell that the possibility of her demise has become real. My mother and I speak to her constantly, but Frances does not reply. We have no reaction from her that leads us to assume she is aware of our presence. She lives on small doses of liquid that we force upon her, but the doctor, along with everyone else we have spoken to, has no idea what is to be done. It is my mother's insistence that she marry Diego Balbas that causes this, but my mother insists it is not so. I spend my days telling Frances that she will one day marry Henry, other than that I can only pray. What can I do?

NAHUM

Come with me. We are going to get the help of Dr. Stöll.

- FADE OUT -

28.(50.30.INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum enters.)

NAHUM

Henry, was the King pleased with your Welcome Ode.

HENRY

The King said he was delighted, but he also added that I must regard the Court as my family, stay close by and not wander to the city. I suspect he had wind of my escapade.

(Nahum gasps.)

Oh, you need not fear, nothing at Court remains the same for long. The King has too much on his plate to concern himself with my forays into the uncharted waters of love. I have a letter from Josias, reminding me that rehearsals start at Lindsey House on Monday. Laurence Webster is coming tomorrow to learn the music for the prologue and we are expected at the school on Saturday. We have much to compose today. Do you have a copy of your words for the prologue?

(Nahum hands the pages to Henry.)

Wonderful. We can rehearse this with the singers on Thursday. Elizabeth will sing Venus, Katherine will sing Spring and the Reverend John Gostling will sing Phoebus.

NAHUM

Tell me about John Gostling.

HENRY

He's a minor Canon at Canterbury Cathedral and a major bass vocalist - his voice is the best in the land. The Gostling and Purcell families have been friends for years. Last year, at my Uncle's request, he received the Royal summons to sing for the Chapel Royal.

NAHUM

I thought Thomas was Master of the King's Wardrobe.

HENRY

He is but he also sings for the Chapel Royal. Anyway, the King was greatly impressed with John and invited him to sing the Welcome Ode. During rehearsals, I asked if he would sing the part of Aeneas and he agreed. The King has engaged him to sing for the Private Music during September, so this will give us time to rehearse. He must be in Canterbury during the first

half of October, but he will sing for the King again when the Court returns from Newmarket.

(Daniel enters.)

Good you are here. Daniel will help me with notation.

(This sequence sketches how they work. They commence the opening scene of the Prologue. Henry improvises melodies; the music coming from him like gushing water, Nahum throws words at him and Daniel notates the music as fast as Henry delivers it. Phoebus, the Nereids and Venus have songs and the Tritons and Nereids have dances.)

HENRY

All very good. Now we must complete Scene Two. There is a dance for Spring and her nymphs to perform when welcoming Venus to the shore, a light-hearted tune to mark the entrance of the shepherdesses, a further dance for the Nymphs, a duet for the shepherds and shepherdesses and a final dance for the country maids to celebrate love.

(Another sequence sketching how they work.)

- FADE OUT -

29. (56.00. INT. NAHUM'S HALLWAY - NIGHT)

(A knock on the door. Nahum answers it.)

NAHUM

Anna, what has happened.

ANNA

Oh, Nahum, hold me. I am so out of breath.

NAHUM

Come in. Sit here in the kitchen.

(Anna starts to cry and tries to get her breath back. Then she is laughing and tries to find her breath.)

NAHUM

Anna, please tell me what has happened.

(Anna takes a big breath.)

ANNA

Señor Balbas has returned to Spain.

NAHUM

What?

ANNA

Yes, he has gone. We had no forewarning. He wrote a hurried note to my mother; probably as he was preparing to leave.

NAHUM

What was his reason?

ANNA

He gave no reason, but he was clear that he would not return. I sat with Frances repeating the news to her. First she squeezed my hand and then she opened her eyes. When I asked if she understood she gave me a smile. Oh, Nahum, I cannot tell you how lightly my heart sang at this moment.

(Anna starts to cry again.)

NAHUM

How is this possible?

ANNA

I have no idea.

NAHUM

What did your mother say?

ANNA

She was speechless. She saw how Frances reacted and she now agrees that I was right about Frances's condition.

NAHUM

Do you mean she is happy?

ANNA

She smiles now for the first time in weeks. She says she is going to wind up the trading business. We will live on less, but we shall be happy. I wish that you and Henry could come and celebrate with us.

NAHUM

Will Frances write to Henry?

ANNA

Yes.

NAHUM

There is a delightful adage that states - it is futile to worry about events before they have occurred.

ANNA

Well today I realise its worth.

- FADE OUT -

END OF EPISODE THREE

EPISODE 4

Opening credits (3.00) - Henry sings catches with Nahum in a tavern. Nahum writes. Frances sings & smiles. Henry walks & composes. Eliza twirls & laughs. Nahum gives manuscript to printer. Henry at Westminster Abbey directing the choir. Nahum in library. Henry composes. Frances & Eliza with love in eyes.

1.(03.00. INT. THE ABBEY - MORNING)

(Nahum walks through the Abbey and out into the cloisters. Daniel, Elizabeth and Katherine are waiting outside the Old Monk's Refectory - Henry's studio.)

DANIEL

Henry is at the Palace. He's rehearsing a concert for the King, but he should be here by now.

NAHUM

What glowing anticipation I feel at the prospect of rehearsing with a full complement of singers.

ELIZABETH

We have been trying out costumes, jewellery and wigs at Somerset House.

KATHERINE

And we visited to the Theatre Royal with the Duchess to find costumes for Venus and Spring.

Henry and John Gostling arrive. Henry opens the door.)

HENRY

Ah good, you are here. My first rehearsal today was a shamble, it has put me in a very poor temper, or worse than that, so I'm relying on you to lighten my spirits. This is John Gostling, our star Aeneas.

(Henry throws his studio door wide and starts moving the furniture to the sides of the room.)

JOHN

I am delighted with the opportunity to sing in the opera.

(Henry claps his hands to gain their attention.)

HENRY

I've been plagued by idle clowns all morning, so I'm now in need of added vigour. If we are to celebrate the romance of the gods we must sing with our hearts.

(Henry gives each of them a note and suddenly their sounds become the chords of the Prologue. Daniel sits at the harpsichord and Nahum hands the libretto to the singers.)

No, no, no, take them back, we do not read words, we sing.

(Henry sings phrases and the singers repeat them.)

To Phoebus and Venus our homage we'll pay,
Her charms bless the night, as his beams bless the day.

Do you want to make any changes, Nahum?

NAHUM

No, all is well.

HENRY

I must. Daniel, please repeat the themes on the harpsichord while I improvise my changes on the violin.

(When he's satisfied, he plays them to Daniel to notate them.)

Excellent. John and I must return to the Palace to rehearse the King's concert again. Meet me in the morning Henry and we will take a boat to Chelsea.

- FADE OUT -

2.(03.00.EXT. LOVERS LANE - MORNING)

Nahum and Henry are walking to the school.

HENRY

This morning I am happier than I can express. I had a letter from Frances and her love for me is alive and well.

NAHUM

Henry, I am delighted.

HENRY

Did you know that she has been unwell?

NAHUM

Yes, Anna informed me.

HENRY

You have been keeping this knowledge back from me.

NAHUM

I only thought...

HENRY

Nahum, please, always give me news of Frances.

(They turn into the schoolyard. It is a building site. Nahum and Henry are greatly surprised.)

- FADE OUT -

3.(04.00.INT. THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE - MORNING)

(Henry and Nahum enter the hall. It is busy with builders and covered in scaffolding. The walls have no plaster and there are no doors. The stage is a bare platform, but its frontage extends the full length of the hall. Its depth, increased with a new rear extension, makes it a large dancing stage. The Duchess, Josias and Cecelia greet them.)

JOSIAS

Here we are gentlemen. This is the most impressive performance space in London. Now that you have seen it, we will go to our meeting at the Duchess' house.

- FADE OUT -

4.(06.00.EXT. LOVERS LANE - MORNING)

(At the end of the lane, Henry, Josias and Cecelia go into Lindsey House to view the hall. The Duchess holds Nahum back.)

THE DUCHESS

Have you received any news about the health of Frances?

NAHUM

Frances is on the road to recovery and Henry is like a new man. She has written to him confirming her love and more extraordinary still, Anna tells me that Señor Balbas has unexpectedly departed for Spain.

THE DUCHESS

How extraordinary. Did he give excuses for his hurried exit?

NAHUM

Not a thing. It's unfathomable that he should give no reason to explain his departure. Anna says they are not returning. He wrote to Amy, saying as much. What a mystery is this? Why should the man pack up and leave in such a hurry?

THE DUCHESS

Oh, I wouldn't be in the least surprised if Customs and Excise didn't have something to do with it.

NAHUM

Do you think they may have been smuggling goods?

THE DUCHESS

It's possible. Import and export businesses are infamously bad at paying their taxes. It wouldn't surprise me if sooner or later we learn that Señor Balbas was in trouble of this kind.

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

NAHUM

Is this issue of taxes a supposition of yours?

THE DUCHESS

What else would it be?

(Her smile broadens and she displays a look of triumph.)

NAHUM

Your Grace, did you arrange to...?

THE DUCHESS

Sh... Not so loud, my dear. We must not say too 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 least said about diplomacy at Court the better.

(Nahum gives her a quick joyous hug.)

- FADE OUT -

5.(08.00.INT. THE DUCHESS' DINING ROOM - MORNING)

Henry, Nahum, The Duchess, Josias, Cecelia, John Campion, the Duchess' secretary, and Roger Somerson, the school secretary.

THE DUCHESS

My thanks to John and Roger for sending out the invitations. I have news that the King will not be attending because he is meeting the French and Dutch Ambassadors that week.

(Cecelia shows no surprise. Henry expresses disappointment.

Cecelia spreads out a large sheet of paper.)

CECELIA

Here is the calendar. It shows how the pupils will divide their days between lessons and rehearsals, how the dormitories will be inhabited and what times they will take their meals. Here is a list of performer's names and their roles - dancers, singers and musicians. In this column, it states what costumes they will wear and next to it are notes confirming who has lent the item or who is responsible for making it.

(Josias spreads out a large sheet of paper.)

JOSIAS

Here is the information about the school building programme, the set building programme, a list of who is responsible for the stage, its scenery and its lighting. Next Saturday, Peter Beardsley will visit to discuss the painted sets and James Billingsley to discuss the design and manufacture of the stage machinery. Henry, Nahum, you are responsible for briefing the artists on your requirements for stage scenery and effects. Could we ask you to give an account of your progress?

HENRY

We have completed everything, including the Prologue and the rehearsals are progressing well.

JOSIAS

I understand the Pieters' sisters are no longer performing. 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 have absolutely no idea how difficult it is to....

JOSIAS

I have a perfectly good idea....

HENRY

No, you do not. You cannot imagine how difficult it is to lose your lead singers. 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 and the temperament to sing these roles. Other than Frances and Anna, you cannot possibly provide me with a pupil, past or present, to match the talents and experience of Katherine and Elizabeth. 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 time to confirm the success of his decision before informing you. I assure 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

Dear Josias, it is usual to make the lead roles an exception.

JOSIAS

So, 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 must go to my pupils.

HENRY

I must choose the Sorceress.

JOSIAS

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

HENRY

I know of no pupil who could sing this role. If the Sorceress does not have a powerful voice, then everything is lost.

JOSIAS

I will find someone and I'll not engage in any further discussions about it. Here are the dates and times allocated for the delivery of musical scores and manuscripts, and here is the list and subject of each rehearsal.

CECELIA

Thank you everyone. We are progressing well.

- FADE OUT -

6.(11.00.INT. THE DUCHESS' DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON)

(Henry, Nahum and the Duchess. A servant serves wine.)

THE DUCHESS

Henry, I also have some demands for the Sorceress. For Nahum and I, she is Persephone, Queen of the Underworld. I see her as a young and seductive woman, beautiful and grand.

HENRY

I'm happy with this, providing she has a deep, powerful voice. I need the kind of richness that no young girl can achieve, for it generally suggests a certain size and development.

THE DUCHESS

Then have your way. I will, in any event, dress her as a goddess. If she is not young and slender I'll ask James Billingsley to construct some apparatus to make her so.

NAHUM

What stage machinery do we require? I think Phoebus and Venus should arrive in chariots and there must be some apparatus to fly cupids about the stage.

HENRY

What about the spirit, disguised as Mercury, could he arrive hidden in a cloud?

THE DUCHESS

We will see. I imagine the country scene of the Prologue could double with the hunting scene of the opera, but I have no idea how a cave might be depicted or how the final scene could start at a harbour and end in the palace. I presume this is where Dido sings her final lament?

HENRY

Yes, she must sing her final lament on a staircase as she cannot collapse to the ground. A stair is the only place she can stand and sit and swoon.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent, it will also make it less obvious that she is dead. Can we fly the cupids on the staircase do you think?

(Henry closes his eyes and sways his body gently. The Duchess and Nahum wait until he is ready to respond.)

HENRY

Da de, de dum, Da de, de dum, you cupids come. Think, Nahum, what's the line?

NAHUM

With drooping wings, you cupids come.

HENRY

And the rest Nahum. Four lines at least.

NAHUM

With drooping wings, you Cupids come,
To scatter roses on her tomb.
Soft and gentle as her heart,
Keep here your watch and never part.

HENRY

Perfect, we have it. We have the cupids.

THE DUCHESS

Beautiful. You compose so marvellously. Now I will order a coach. It is too dangerous to return by boat after dark.

- FADE OUT -

7.(14.00.INT. A TAVERN - AFTERNOON)

(Eliza enters and joins Nahum at a table.)

ELIZA

Sorry, rehearsals ran late. I'm having trouble with Lady Fidget's accent. She's the wife of Sir Jaspar and talks like this, all la di da. And in addition to this role I'm playing Mrs. Pinchwife, who's country girl. I'm going crazy.

NAHUM

Practice your accent with me. Talk as Lady Fidget.

ELIZA

I can't. I wish you would rewrite Wycherley's play for us. We are too few. We get frustrated and lose all the humour.

NAHUM

You are trying to do too much. Killigrew should take it up and use Wycherley's unfortunate circumstances to attract more players. You should make a broadsheet, explaining why you are

performing the play, and advertise it to other actors. Ask Betterton and the actors at The King's Theatre to help.

ELIZA

Will you help me write a broadsheet?

NAHUM

Yes, I'll help and I'll ask Roger Tonson to print the copies.

(Eliza gives Nahum a kiss on the cheek.)

ELIZA

Thank you, Nahum. Tell me about the opera.

NAHUM

Henry and I have just completed the scene at Diana's Grove - the place where Dido and Aeneas make love.

ELIZA

Who is Diana?

NAHUM

Diana is the goddess of chastity and hunting. In classical tradition, the grove and the hunt were often the places where love was undone. I want to connect Dido with her. We have no love scenes in the opera, so a reference to the grove will help to imply one. I created a similar scene in Brutus of Alba where two witches conjure a storm, causing the prince and the queen to take shelter in a cave. A sorceress has already given them a magic potion rich enough to fire their breast with loose desires, so passions are high. I had taken a potion like this the day I met you.

ELIZA

Really, do you have some I could try?

NAHUM

But you are my magic potion, Eliza. There are no other potions for me. The audience will simply have to assume that Dido has lost her chastity at the grove.

ELIZA

How did Diana lose her chastity?

NAHUM

She didn't lose it. Actaeon merely threatened her chastity by invading the grove, but it was enough for Diana to turn his own hounds upon him and, under her spell, they killed him.

ELIZA

So, Aeneas was lucky. How can love be undone while hunting?

NAHUM

Well, Venus fell in love with Adonis, who was a great hunter. She wanted him to cease hunting, he refused and they argued. The jealous Persephone heard the row and, as she wanted Adonis with her, she assumed the form of a wild boar, killed him and brought him to live with her in the Underworld.

ELIZA

Ahh...! Jealousy is a terrible thing. Poor Venus.

NAHUM

Poor Adonis. Venus turned him into a flower.

ELIZA

Good heavens, Nahum, you love these connections.

NAHUM

Understanding enjoys connections. When our eyes connected, even for the smallest moment, then we understood each other. There's nothing more rare or important.

ELIZA

Thank you, Nahum, so, you will help me?

NAHUM

I cannot refuse you anything, Eliza, I love you.

ELIZA

And it's not a love inspired by avarice?

NAHUM

You always suspect me of avarice. Do you like anything about my feelings for you?

ELIZA

I like it that you turn pale when you see me and your heart beats wildly. I don't like it that you think of me so much.

NAHUM

Eliza, you are my beautiful muse. Right or wrong, my feelings for you give me defining qualities for love.

ELIZA

Something we will keep quietly in our hearts.

NAHUM

I'll come to the theatre tomorrow with the broadsheet and if Killigrew allows, you can come with me to visit Roger Tonson.

ELIZA

Thank you.

(She whispers in his ear. They leave, Eliza's arm in Nahum's.)

- FADE OUT -

8.(18.00.INT. HENRY'S STUDIO - MORNING)

NAHUM

Can we go over the larger themes and overall plan of the opera again? I'm concerned. Aeneas has only three short appearances and this is not enough for me to make anything of him.

HENRY

Careful Nahum, I do not want you to waste your words on making him pious and respectful.

NAHUM

The pious words I gave Brutus may have been too plentiful, but there must be more to Aeneas than three appearances.

HENRY

I don't mind, providing you can make your point efficiently in the scenes he has and not indulge him with long speeches. It was you who suggested that Dido must be the subject and Aeneas the guest.

NAHUM

Very well, I agree. Here is the libretto for the Grove Scene. Initiating these songs with my words is almost as pleasing as instigating the songs with music.

JOHN GOSTLING

Ha, ha, the banter between you is remarkably robust.

ELIZABETH

Are you only rehearsing the songs of Aeneas today?

HENRY

No, but first, Nahum wants to introduce the characters.

NAHUM

Dido and Aeneas are personages of great destiny. Dido is reluctant to fall in love with Aeneas, but Belinda takes it upon herself to encourage it. For Aeneas, love is a private intimacy, but for Dido love is a thing of the world. She is first and foremost a Queen. Aeneas would forget that they are rulers of empire with duties of state, but Dido has declared her chastity publicly and Aeneas must agree to become her prince or she will lose her reputation and the respect of her people. Aeneas is true to his heart, but he lacks the wisdom that his position demands. He should have realised that a casual love affair would wound Dido and he knows that Carthage does not figure in his destiny.

JOHN

Poor fellow. Must he take responsibility for the tragedy then?

NAHUM

Only because he is innocent. I should like to save Aeneas from a fate that has eluded every other hero in history, but I fear that in this instance I cannot.

JOHN

So there is nothing to save him, not even the realisation of his innocence. Am I to characterise this innocence?

NAHUM

The audience will be well aware that he has lost love. This is the Prince's recitative following Mercury's injunction that he departs for Rome.

Jove's commands shall be obeyed,
Tonight our anchors will be weighed,
But Ah! What language can I try,
My injured Queen to pacify.
No sooner she resigns her heart,
But from her arms I'm forced to part.
How can so hard a fate be took,
One night enjoyed, the next forsook.
Yours be the blame, ye gods, for I
Obey your will - but with more ease could die.

JOHN

Do you give him a chance to express his thoughts to Dido, explain the terrible sadness he feels about leaving her?

NAHUM

No, there is no time. He starts to explain, but Dido is angry and gives him no opportunity. She reads his change of heart as faithlessness, prevarication born of a lack of conviction, and she demands that he go. There's a brief argument between them, an expression of their misunderstanding and vulnerability, but Aeneas departs with discord still between them.

HENRY

We are going to have an argument? Nahum, you never told me.

(Henry sings)

Away, away... no, no, I'll stay... away, away... no, no, I'll stay...
no, no, away, I'll stay and love obey... away, away... I'll stay
and love obey... away, away... I'll stay... to death I'll fly if
longer you delay... I'll stay and love obey... away... and love
obey... away!

(Nahum, John, Elizabeth and Katherine laugh in wonderment.)

- FADE OUT -

9.(21.00.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL HALL - MORNING)

(James Billingsley talks with Josias. Nahum and Henry enter.

JOSIAS

Ahh... gentlemen, allow me to introduce James Billingsley, the
virtuoso of mechanical devices. Peter Beardsley is expected,
but the Duchess and Cecelia are not joining us. I am
explaining the workings of the proscenium screens and
shutters. So, these two rows of grooves in the floor allow the
screens to be moved on and off the stage.

JAMES

Umm...I see. I think the potential for apparatus is more
limited than I imagined. There's nothing to fix anything to,
not even the possibility of hanging something from the
ceiling.

(Josias is agitated by the news, but lost for words.)

JAMES

Don't worry too much, though as the machinery can also work
from the floor and sometimes this makes the job easier.

JOSIAS

Ahh! Excellent. So, Nahum, perhaps you could describe the
scenes and explain exactly where machinery is needed.

(Nahum wonders off explaining the scenes to James, who makes sketches. Henry and Josias discuss where the musicians will be located. They all come together when Peter Beardsley enters.)

JAMES

Chariots in the prologue I can do. The staircase in the final palace scene is fine. I can increase the stature of the Sorceress and create something for the witches' cave, but I've no idea how to fly Mercury and the cupids about the stage.

JOSIAS

Then we must consider this at more length. Peter, we need your help for the final scene. The problem is that we must feature both the palace and the harbour.

PETER

Very good. If we give the palace a terrace, we can pull a balustrade across the lower section of the harbour backdrop when the harbour scene is over. The audience will then read the harbour as a place in the distance.

JOSIAS

Wonderful, you are all geniuses. Do you think that a single screen of the harbour could support two scenes; the sailors making ready to depart and the palace scene?

(Peter draws sketches to explain his vision and James draws the props for the palace. He creates a regal looking staircase to one side of it, a terrace balustrade to the other and a single column supporting a pediment in the centre.)

JOSIAS

All excellent, my dears. Now, we still have a problem with the opening scene of the Prologue. Betterton insists that Peter can paint no more than two backdrops and if these are the harbour and the country scenes, how are we to achieve a sky and the sea for the entrance of Phoebus?

PETER

Just paint the rear wall blue.

JOSIAS

Gentlemen, you have made my day delightful.

JAMES

Come to Mr. Wren's office next week and I will show some maquettes of the machinery.

JOSIAS

Excellent, we will walk you to the Beaufort Steps. Choreographer, composer and librettist are now going to Lindsey House to have our first view of the Prologue dances.

- FADE OUT -

10.(25.00.INT. THE HALL OF LINDSEY HOUSE - AFTERNOON)

(A group of young dancers converse together in the hall.)

NAHUM

They look like a host of angels in their white shifts.

HENRY

I hope their lightness of step accords with their looks.

JOSIAS

Fear not, they will float like clouds.

(Laurence Webster, the accompanist, is sitting at the harpsichord. Henry talks with him while Josias gathers up his dancers and arranges them on either side of the hall. Henry and Nahum stand in eager anticipation. Josias gives Laurence the signal to begin. The dancers weave in and around each other in long snaking lines that cover the full length of the hall. The choreography is gay, the dancers sprightly and every repetition in the music is reflected in their movements. Henry, affected by the marriage of dance and music, sways to the rhythms as though his body was conducting their movements. The dancers, finding it impossible to hide their surprise and enjoyment at his enthusiasm, exchange smiles between them.

Josias is also extravagant in displaying the considerable love he has for his graceful art. Nahum and Henry give generous applause and Josias bows. He is a picture of happiness.)

JOSIAS

My congratulations to you all. You have danced beautifully. Henry, I can hardly wait to begin work on the other dances. When might I receive the remainder of the music?

HENRY

I will deliver it to you next week.
(Henry and Nahum walk out into the night. We see them waiting some time for a boat to take them down river.)

- FADE OUT -

11.(27.00.EXT. A RURAL RIVER BANK - EVENING)

(Henry is dragging Nahum over mud and reeds. He lays Nahum against a tree trunk. Henry, spluttering and crying, uses his hand to wipe the blood streaming down Nahum's face. Henry pulls off his shirt and wraps it over the gash on Nahum's head. Henry, keeping his arm about him, instructs Nahum to stay awake. He rocks him gently. Two boatmen enter.)

BOATMAN 1

How is he?

HENRY

I can't tell, there's too much blood. Stay awake, Nahum.

NAHUM

I'm cold.

BOATMAN 1

He'll catch a chill if he is not taken to his bed. We'll help you carry 'im to Westminster.

BOATMAN 2

Can't return home 'til the Lambeth boys do.

(Henry and the two water-logged mariners stumble along the Embankment with Nahum.)

- FADE OUT -

12.(27.50.INT. NAHUM'S HOUSE - NIGHT)

(Ellen rushes to the door at the sound of banging. Henry and Nahum are there. Ellen, horrified, practically swoons when she sees them. She helps Henry carry Nahum to the kitchen, puts a pan of water on the stove and yells at Harry to fetch blankets.)

ELEEN

What happened to him?

(While Henry tells the tale, Ellen removes Nahum's clothes, washes and dries him, wraps him in a blanket and together with Henry helps him upstairs to bed.)

HENRY

Two Wapping boatmen were taking us to Westminster when we saw boats colliding and crewmen fighting. It was the Lambeth boat boys controlling their territory, but the oarsmen of our skiff couldn't turn around because the current was too fast. Nahum and I tried to help them get our skiff to the bank, but three of the Lambeth boats drew up to us and these boys thrashed us with their oars. One of the ruffians struck Nahum on the head with an almighty crack and he fell into the water. I dragged Nahum ashore and the Wapping boatmen helped me bring him here.

(NAHUM'S BEDROOM)

ELLEN

I am going to warm some broth.

(Henry sits soothing Nahum's brow.)

- FADE OUT -

13.(30.00.INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - THE FOLLOWING EVENING)

ELLEN

How are you feeling?

NAHUM

I am definitely recovering.

ELLEN

We must be out, Nahum. There is more vegetable broth on the stove should you feel hungry. Please stay in bed.

NAHUM

You go and enjoy the company of your friends.

- FADE OUT -

14.(30.30.INT. A TAVERN - EVENING)

(Nahum sits waiting for Eliza to arrive.)

ELIZA

Heavens, Nahum, you are covered in cuts and bruises.

NAHUM

I got caught up in a fight between the Wapping and Lambeth boat boys. The injuries are not serious.

ELIZA

Look, here's my broadsheet. We already have new actors.

NAHUM

Excellent.

ELIZA

I was nervous about going to see Betterton, but John Petty accompanied me and he also asked Killigrew for a letter of introduction. He's very kind to me.

NAHUM

When you talk of your fondness for other men I imagine you are teaching me not to care for you too much.

ELIZA

Are you feeling alright Nahum? You look very pale.

NAHUM

I should like more.....more nights ... like...

(Nahum crumples to the floor. Eliza cries out for assistance. She gently lifts his head in her arms and speaks sweetly to him, but she receives no response. He is as white as a sheet, his eyes rolling in their sockets. A crowd quickly gathers.)

ELIZA

He has fainted.

TAVERN GUEST 1

He's got som'at worse if you ask me.

TAVERN GUEST 2

There is a lot of blood flowing from that bandage.

TAVERN GUEST 3

I'll call a hackney.

(Nahum doesn't stir, even when he's lifted into the carriage.)

- FADE OUT -

15.(32.00.EXT. OUTSIDE NAHUM'S HOUSE - EVENING)

(On the doorstep, Eliza, in a panic, wipes the blood from Nahum's head. She knocks on his door, Nahum propped against her. Ellen opens the door and sees Nahum on the doorstep.)

ELLEN

Harry, go to fetch Dr. Stöll.

(She attends to Nahum. A group of neighbours help Ellen carry him inside. She steps outside again to address Eliza.)

How did he come to be in your company?

ELIZA

I met him by chance in the Pied Bull.

ELLEN

He's very sick, yet still you make demands on him. Why is he always looking after you? Why can't you leave him in peace?

ELIZA

It's not how it seems.

(Ellen slams the front door shut.)

- FADE OUT -

16.(35.00.INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - EVENING)

(A series of scenes. 1. Ellen is sitting beside him. 2. Nahum gets out of bed and sits to write something at his desk. 3. Nahum slumps onto the table and makes a hazardous journey back to bed. 4. Ellen is sitting beside him. He is breathless and panting. Lucidity is his for only brief moments, before he slips back into describing some rambling thoughts like dreams. He is constantly coughing.)

NAHUM

I had a black Irish wolfhound when I was a child. He sounded like me.

ELLEN

Nahum, Nahum, try to wake up, try to drink something.

(He is revolted by the drink and coughs on. Dr. Stöll enters.)

ELLEN

His chest still hurts him.

DR. STÖLL

It could well be tuberculosis.

ELLEN

And it could be the pneumonic plague. He did fall in the river.

DR. STÖLL

If he had pneumonic plague he would be dead by now.

(Nahum opens his eyes and smiles weakly.)

DR. STÖLL

Are you awake, Nahum. (Nahum nods.) Promise me that you will drink my physic. Nahum falls asleep.

- FADE OUT -

17.(37.00.INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING)

(Harry is reading to Nahum.)

HARRY

...he had taken no more than a mouthful of bread when the Giant could be heard in the hallway. The woman told Jack to hide in the wardrobe. She shut the door on him, but the keyhole was large enough for Jack to see through. A voice like thunder cried out. 'Fe, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Let him be alive or let him be dead, I'll grind his bones to make his bread'."

(Nahum opens his eyes.

NAHUM

Harry.

HARRY

Mr. Tate, they say you might die.

NAHUM

No, Harry. I'm not going to die. I will be better soon.

HARRY

Shall I tell my mother?

NAHUM

Yes, Harry. Tell Ellen that I am better.

HARRY

I thought that reading would make you feel better.

NAHUM

It did Harry. Thank you. I liked it very much.

(Ellen arrives with broth and encourages Nahum to eat while easing the liquid into his mouth.)

ELLEN

Your friends have been to visit.

NAHUM

What day is it?

ELLEN

Sunday.

NAHUM

Really, Sunday. Would you please ask Harry to go to the Pied Bull in Smithfield to inform Eliza that I'm too sick to visit?

ELLEN

Uh, uh.

- FADE OUT -

18.(39.00.INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING)

(Henry enters. Nahum holds his hand out to him.)

HENRY

How is the librettist?

NAHUM

Better for seeing you, but not recovered. When you lay sick in this bed, I promised God that if he would save you I would gladly offer myself in your place. Do you think he has come now to collect his debt?"

HENRY

No, my dear. God will have neither of us yet, not until we have properly sung his praises, and this opera is only the beginning. I have finished composing all the dance melodies for Josias. There are thirteen. Six are improvised pantomimes, which use tunes I have already written, and the rest are formal dances I completed last week.

(Henry sings the dance tunes.)

NAHUM

I have no idea how you can store so much music in your head.

HENRY

Have you had visitors?

NAHUM

Yes, friends who like to make me laugh and I end up coughing. But my fecund goddess, who I dearly want to see, doesn't visit.

HENRY

I'm sorry. But I know of another fecund goddess who waiting down stairs.

NAHUM

Who can you mean? Not the Duchess de Mazarin?

HENRY

Completely correct and Josias and Cecelia are with her. Shall I say you are well enough to see them?

(Nahum nods and Henry departs to return with the trio.)

THE DUCHESS

Ah...Nahum, so glad you are feeling better. We have just come from our meeting with James Billingsley and Peter Beardsley. Are you well enough to hear about it?

(Nahum nods and coughs.)

THE DUCHESS

I can't tell how impressive their drawings and models of the machinery are. James has invented a platform to move characters on and off stage. It's about two feet square and five feet high. It's not unlike a small, high table, but it has runners on its base. A man with a long rod can push it on and pull it off the stage. When Phoebus arrives, the side of the platform that faces the audience will be covered with a flat 'cut out' of a chariot set on clouds. Some steps will be fixed to the front of the platform and Phoebus will walk down from his chariot onto the stage. The platform will then be pulled back and turned around to reveal Venus's chariot on the opposite side; such a clever man, James Billingsley.

CECELIA

Nahum may need to rest now.

THE DUCHESS

Are you up to this, Nahum? Good. I must tell you about the Sorceress. Well, once the chariot's sides have been removed, the Sorceress will arrive, standing on the same platform, her long flowing gown covering the platform down to the ground. You will love it. She'll be more than ten feet tall, covered in red silk; the most beautiful Persephone you will ever see. Mercury will also stand on the platform. It will be covered in

clouds when he appears to Aeneas and when the cupids use it, they will scatter roses over Dido from the tower.

NAHUM

Sounds marvellous. (Coughing.)

THE DUCHESS

Peter says he will paint a cave on a large freestanding screen for the witches to hide behind. He wants them to arrive on stage through a cut in the fabric. I'm not so certain about this.

JOSIAS

It will be fine. I wish you could visit us soon, Nahum. You will not believe how splendid the hall is and the stage, now it has a proscenium arch. Once the screens and shutters are in place we will start rehearsing.

(Ellen enters.)

ELLEN

I am concerned that you will overtire my patient.

NAHUM

Oh, no, it's fine.

(Nahum has such a bout of coughing that she does not have to insist any further. His guests say goodbye and Cecelia hands him an envelope.)

CECELIA

Here are some invitations to the entertainment. Have you yet had the opportunity to write the epilogue? I can always invite someone else to write it.

NAHUM

No, no, I will do it as soon as I am well enough.

(They all depart except Henry.)

HENRY

I have finally found my Sorceress. Mrs. Amanda Lockhart. Her voice is so resonant you would think that Vulcan himself had forged it. The Duchess says that she will make her the greatest beauty of the age. I have invited Frances and Anna to the performance, but I cannot see how they can attend, there is no sign that her mother will allow us to meet. They are to attend Mr. Simpson's Dance Academy ball on Saturday. It is Amy's strategy to find husbands for them. She will not succeed. I wish you could come with me.

NAHUM

You can't go.

HENRY

I must go, just to catch a glimpse of her. Don't worry, I will not dance. Perhaps I will ask Mr. Simpson if I can join the orchestra.

- FADE OUT -

19.(44.00.INT. NAHUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING)

(Nahum sits at his writing desk reading a letter from Anna Pieters. ON SCREEN [I continue to hope that we might attend the opera without my mother's knowledge. It is possible that during this time Amy will visit my sister in Richmond.] Nahum smiles and writes names on envelopes for his invitation cards. Horace and Mary Heveningham, Dr. Stöll, Thomas Killigrew and Eliza Ashton. He calls Harry and he and Ellen enter.)

NAHUM

Harry, would you please post these invitations and these two are for you both.

HARRY

'Cor. Am I going to a musical?

NAHUM

Yes.

ELLEN

I'm not sure it's our place to attend such functions.

NAHUM

Ellen, don't be silly. It is important for Harry's education that he attend an opera.

ELLEN

I'm not convinced.

NAHUM

Then you will offend me. (He takes an envelope from the drawer.) You will need a dress to wear at the performance, so please take this.

ELLEN

You cannot do this, Nahum

NAHUM

It is my way of thanking you for looking after me.

- FADE OUT -

20.(45.00.EXT. LINCOLN INN FIELDS - MORNING)

(Nahum is taking a walk when he meets Eliza.)

ELIZA

Nahum, how wonderful to see you. Are you feeling better?

NAHUM

Yes. Did you not get my messages? Let us sit on the bench.

ELIZA

No, I had no messages. Killigrew is producing Wycherley's play for us. We have a full cast of actors and I'm playing Mrs. Pinchwife. Now someone else is tackling Lady Fidget.

(She imitates her comic pronunciation and Nahum laughs.)

How is the writing progressing?

NAHUM

I still have much to do on the translation. One day I will give you a copy of Ovid's book, *The Art of Love*. I think you will like it. As for the opera, it is almost complete.

ELIZA

I know. I went briefly to the school to help with costumes, but Killigrew ordered us to return to the theatre. Did you give Aeneas a decent role?

NAHUM

No, there's no room in the opera to develop his character. Someone else will write about him I am sure. He will not go down in literary history as the careless deserter.

ELIZA

Why was Dido so devastated by his departure?

NAHUM

Aeneas and Dido had different needs and responsibilities. She had struggled to create Carthage and, having proved herself to be a responsible queen, she needed a king, not a lover. She had lost her husband and she had promised to honour his name forever, but then Aeneas arrived; it must have been difficult to make this decision about love.

ELIZA

When I met you, my situation and Dido's were similar.

NAHUM

Because you had just lost your husband?

ELIZA

Yes. I didn't promise him so much, but love was startling.

NAHUM

Was it love then? (Nahum takes her hand.)

ELIZA

At the time, it's impossible to describe what it is. I didn't know how to live my life. I hardly knew who I was.

NAHUM

Then I came along.

ELIZA

Yes, you came along with all your talk of love. Love demands a decision. I had no idea how to make promises. I didn't know if I could trust anyone. I needed time.

NAHUM

Maybe love needs a simple, quick decision.

ELIZA

Ha, Dido trusted Aeneas and it turned out badly. No, I made my decisions slowly and they suit me. I am not like Dido now.

NAHUM

And I am not like Aeneas. It was his destiny to found Rome. He could not alter his fate for the sake of love and Dido could not alter Aeneas' fate either. It was Belinda and the court who persuaded Dido that love had the power to change events.

ELIZA

And as soon as she loves, Aeneas announces his departure.

NAHUM

That is the tragedy, Eliza, but was it so difficult to decide to trust me? I certainly had no thoughts of leaving you.

ELIZA

You were too full of desire. I had never been anyone's lover before and I didn't want what you expected of me.

NAHUM

But I loved you.

ELIZA

You did, but I was not in love. Vulnerability was all I had. I couldn't talk. I had no idea how I felt. I was very grateful that you found me attractive, because it gave me confidence.

NAHUM

You were the centre of my life.

ELIZA

We were too different. Your character was fully formed. I was only half baked. You were dedicated to your writing. How could I possibly imagine that I would count in your world?

NAHUM

You imagine I was confident, but I was also vulnerable. It was you who inspired my emotions and my poetry. When I connected with the real and beautiful you, it gave me boundless joy and a reason to celebrate life.

ELIZA

Oh, Nahum, you can't possibly tell me that you lacked reasons to celebrate life. Your optimism and enthusiasm were your most distinctive features - they still are.

NAHUM

But without your love they are worthless. Without your love, I only have work. I need more to show at my journey's end than an odd collection of words that have gathered dust around me.

ELIZA

Please don't say this, Nahum. I don't believe you mean it.

NAHUM

I do. I hear important words when my heart's alive, but after the works are complete they lie around me like the remnants that lie in the street when the market is over.

ELIZA

Oh, Nahum, I liked you because you were not like this. I never wanted to be consumed by swirling emotions, but I did want the confidence to progress. You were always confident.

NAHUM

How can one be confident and ignore swirling emotions? It's the emotions that create life, that give it meaning.

ELIZA

Maybe you're right. (She lifts Nahum's hand and kisses it.)
I just don't know how to say it.

NAHUM

You already gave it expression. Our eyes said it when we were lost in love. Those were your words.

ELIZA

Thank you. I love you. Now I must return to the theatre. Let us meet soon.

(She departs and Nahum watches her.)

- FADE OUT -

21.(50.00.INT. THE PRIESTS SCHOOL - MORNING)

(The school 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' 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.) Remember, the Sorceress will stand on a high moving platform to wear this.

She's the star of the show. When Persephone floats onto the stage everyone falls silent before her.

NAHUM

Are Killigrew's dressmakers responsible for these?

THE DUCHESS

Oh, no. Thomas Purcell sent me the court dressmakers from Somerset House. Killigrew had a busy programme. I could only have his costume department for a week. I was very fond of one of his women. She sewed quickly and left herself time to flirt with the scene painters and prop makers. She should be an actress. They were her audience and she entertained them well.

NAHUM

What is her name?

THE DUCHESS

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

NAHUM

No.

THE DUCHESS

I've seen comparable performances by courtesans, but at court the routines are sinister; there's too much at stake. These courtesans thrive on vile competition and attention. When they float onto the stage, as our Persephone does, men fall silent. To gain power they will charm a husband from a wife or have a prince dispatched to a foreign land. Once the heart of their hapless swooner has been won, it is cast adrift. Terrifying.

NAHUM

I doubt this young dressmaker could be so calculating.

THE DUCHESS

No, Eliza just celebrates the dance. But here's the point. Virgil had the gods dissuade Aeneas from choosing love and you decided that a Sorceress was closer to the mark. But closer

still are the women who live to compete and control hearts.
They are the envious Persephones of this world.

NAHUM

I am not certain that I thought about this very deeply.

THE DUCHESS

Listen to your words for the Sorceress and her witches. Harms
our delight and mischief all our skill. The Queen of Carthage
whom we hate, as we do all in prosperous state, er'e sunset
shall most wretched prove, deprived of fame of life and love.

NAHUM

I didn't imagine it like this when I wrote it. It was inspired
by the angry and possessive mother of Frances.

THE DUCHESS

Ah! How I long to live away from these destructive forces.

NAHUM

I agree.

THE DUCHESS

Have you been to Lindsey House yet?

NAHUM

No.

THE DUCHESS

Then off you go now and leave me to my work. You must take
part in the rehearsals.

NAHUM

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

THE DUCHESS

My pleasure.

(Nahum walks off.)

- FADE OUT -

22.(52.30.INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING)

(Nahum enters the hall. Elizabeth and Katherine welcome him and he sits with them to watch Henry and Josias rehearse the chorus and dance scenes. It is not going well as there are many interruptions and repetitions that cause conflict between composer and choreographer. When one of them stops the action, it makes the other exasperated and there is no end to it until Henry storms into the centre and claps his hands.)

HENRY

My dear musicians, singers and dancers, I would like to thank you for your outstanding work.

(They all look at him aghast.)

I apologize for the difficulties, but your hard work has paid off. We are now ready to perform the entire work. We will start at the beginning and take no breaks until the end.

(Everyone is surprised and perplexed - they look around, attempting to judge if their surprise is shared by others.)

Trust yourselves to get it right and relax. It's in your memory and if you invite it nicely, your part will flow from you as though you'd performed it all your life.

(There is not a sound or a movement from those in the hall.)

Breath through your whole body and find an openness of spirit that you can offer to everyone. If you forget anything remain silent and still until you can regain your place. We will stop for nothing.

(A great sense of purpose fills the hall and Josias gathers up his dancers and directs them to their starting positions. Once in place, their attention fixed upon Henry, he begins.)

Consider the place where your heart beats. Share your love and, with your spirits enlivened, perform as though you have lost all sense of doubt and know only how to play.

(They make mistakes, but they are insignificant. The marriage between dance and song has a magical unity. Henry expresses his pleasure by dancing to the fast movements and swaying to the slow ones. The only time he is static is when the great Sorceress, sings. Her voice is as deep as the earth and Nahum is aghast. At the rehearsal's end, the cast applaud each other. Great peals of laughter accompany deep sighs of relief and everyone is indulgent with their praises. Their pleasure has been full and rewarding.)

- FADE OUT -

END OF EPISODE FOUR

EPISODE 5

Opening credits (3.00) - Henry sings catches with Nahum in a tavern. Nahum writes. Frances sings & smiles. Henry walks & composes. Eliza twirls & laughs. Nahum gives manuscript to printer. Henry at Westminster Abbey directing the choir. Nahum in library. Henry composes. Frances & Eliza with love in eyes.

1.(03.00. INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - MORNING)

(Nahum arrives with John Gostling. James Billingsley is inspecting the props and directing the stage hands in their operation. Henry talks John through the recent changes in the libretto and Nahum discusses the layout of the final scene with James. The scene movers pull the harbour screen into position and fill the stage with crates and barrels to create the dock side scene. Josias adjusts the props and tests the space with his dancers. The scene movers take away the props belonging to the harbour scene and replace them with the scenery for the palace scene. A staircase is pulled into position on the left-hand side of the stage and a single large column is moved into the centre. They placed a stone-like balustrade to the right of the column, thus creating a distant view of the harbour. Nahum stands on the staircase. From here Dido would see the anchored Trojan boats making ready for their departure. Henry calls everyone to prepare for the first scene of Act One. The scene movers prepare the stage again and the Duchess, Josias and Nahum sit in their directing chairs. Henry addresses them.)

HENRY

I want intense concentration at this rehearsal. Consider the placement of the performers, the quality of their stage presence and, most importantly, how they contribute to the graceful flow of events. I don't want to stop the action unless it falls apart, but if you feel the need to make a comment, speak it out for everyone to hear and the performers will respond.

NAHUM (An aside to the Duchess.)

I am amazed at Henry's decisiveness. He always takes control of events and orchestrates every aspect of the action. No one has ever taught him how to do this.

THE DUCHESS

He knows it in his bones.

HENRY

You are to listen to the comments of our directors. Anyone hearing advice directed at them will immediately act upon it without stopping the rehearsal. Is that clear?

(There is a general nodding of heads.)

Good. So, take up your positions for the beginning of the rehearsals.

(Tying together the many strands - the orchestra, the singing, the dancers and the props - and making it work as a single unit requires intense concentration. The smallest of gestures either contributed to or distracted from the action. Josias is particularly attentive and eager with his instructions to the dancers. The Duchess also delivers a great many instructions, and the performers quickly respond to her. Henry gives few instructions, but he listens intently - an expression of pain appearing on his face whenever a sound does not meet with his approval. For the most part, all the performers keep their eyes on him and if he says anything it is a whispered phrase directed to a particular individual. "Stand still," he tells them, or "face the audience.")

- FADE OUT -

2.(05.00.INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING)

(The audience should be given the impression of a series of rehearsals. Gradually, the directors shift their concerns to the detail. They listen to the way a recitative interweaves with an aria and they discuss the change of a single word or note so that it might improve the whole. The skills of the performers increase, both visibly and audibly, and Elizabeth

becomes a striking presence both on and off the stage. She has grown into her role, giving her the air of a royal personage. The Sorceress on her platform is a resounding success. She floats, very slowly, for a few meters, high above the stage, with her long gown flowing to the ground, just as the Duchess promised. Her presence is exceptionally demanding when she beckons her witches to her side. Everyone shudders at the sound of her voice.)

Wayward Sisters, you that fright
The lonely traveller by night, appear, appear...

- FADE OUT -

3.(10.00.INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING)

HENRY

It is obvious that the cave scene lacks the necessary magic. The 'walk on' cave is irritating. The awesome presence of the Sorceress on her platform dominates the action at the start of the scene, but there is nothing to celebrate the end.

JOSIAS

But we cannot change the cave.

HENRY

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

(Nahum thinks and scribbles and offers Henry this...)

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 exits.)

- FADE OUT -

4.(11.00.INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING)

(Henry returns and calls Daniel and the musicians to him. Together they play and notate the score for the musicians and singers.)

- FADE OUT -

5.(12.00.INT. LINDSEY HOUSE - MORNING)

(The musicians are distributing copies of the score.)

HENRY (Addressing the singers.)

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. Only then can we conjure the presence of this cave.

(The repetition of the resounding 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.)

- FADE OUT -

6.(13.30.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING)

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

HENRY

Amy is staying in Richmond. She has a new granddaughter to attend to and Frances and Anna are coming to the performance.

(Henry dances and puts his arms about Nahum. There are tears in his eyes and a great smile on his face. Cecelia arrives on the stage with Lady Dorothy Burke, a pupil of the school. Cecelia is unaware of Nahum's presence and she asks Lady Dorothy Burke to read. The young woman commences.)

YOUNG LADY

The vocal part we have tonight perform'd
And if by Love our hearts not yet are warm'd
Great Providence has still more bounteous been
To save us from those grand deceivers, men.

(Nahum flies to Cecelia.)

NAHUM

Who has written these lines?

CECELIA

UGh! Urm... um... Thomas D'Ufrey.

NAHUM

And please inform me about their function.

CECELIA

Why, they are the epilogue. I asked D'Ufrey to write them. I imagined you had completely forgotten to do so and I thought it best not to trouble you about them.

NAHUM

Well this certainly troubles me. I do not care for D'Ufrey and I care even less for his ridiculous words.

CECELIA

Well I think they serve to..."

NAHUM

I'll tell you what they serve, Cecelia, they serve to undermine all the eloquent speech and poetic thought that has preceded them and I will not allow them to be read. Do you understand me? You simply cannot end the performance with these offensive lines.

CECELIA

Nahum, you do not need to address me as though you have lost your wits. I have never seen you so heated. Dorothy, my dear, please return to your class.

NAHUM

How dare you deliver this when I had promised to do it.

(The Duchess arrive on stage, followed quickly by Josias. The two combatants shout at each other and do not cease their furious argument or even respond to the Duchess' attempts to calm their battle.)

CECELIA

I've no idea why he's so distressed.

NAHUM

Then I'll tell you. I have spent the last four months sounding out every one of my syllables, gaining a sense of their resonance and confirming their meaning, and if you think I'm going to allow some casual collection of words by D'Ufrey to have the final say, you're further from reality than I thought you were.

CECELIA

Oh, really. How can D'Ufrey's words be offensive?

NAHUM

Well, they are and I am adamant. I will not have these lines follow my libretto and what is more I will not write another epilogue to replace them.

CECELIA

Well that's really helpful! All you've proved is how impossible you've become. So, what's to be done now?

THE DUCHESS

I'm sure we can resolve this. Maybe if Josias ended the performance with a speech, something extemporized, it would better suit everyone.

JOSIAS

Oh! Heavens. What do you think my dear?

(Cecelia gives him a furious look.)

THE DUCHESS

If you ask me, it's rather too much to add a rhyming epilogue to an opera's libretto. By the end of it our guests will have had a surfeit of formal words. This, I think, is the point Nahum is trying to make.

NAHUM

Indeed.

THE DUCHESS

Make a relaxed speech, Josias. This is entirely your sort of thing and it would be so ungracious to apologize for something that has not caused offence.

JOSIAS

Well, one way or another we must have resolution. Cecelia, I think the Duchess has a reasonable point. To us the opera is beautiful, we have worked at it assiduously and we should not pre-empt our audience's response before we have seen it.

CECELIA

There's no point looking at me for approval, ask Mr. Tate, he's the one who's going to have a tantrum about it one-way or another.

(Josias turns to Nahum.)

NAHUM

If you promise not to use D'Ufrey's rhymes, I agree, but you must avoid any philosophising on the subject of love and if you say anything to suggest that we need saving from 'those grand deceivers, men', I'll run you through with a sword.

JOSIAS

Fear not, I will only make reference to the qualities and talents of the pupils.

NAHUM

Very good. I apologise Cecelia. My temper and strong words were unacceptable.

- FADE OUT -

7.(17.00.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON)

(The final dress rehearsal is a shaky affair. It is the first time that the twenty candle lighters have performed.)

[The audience are now presented with edited highlights of the opera, focussing on the actions that don't work well. - 03.00]

THE DUCHESS

I think the consensus is that all final dress rehearsals are awful. No one expects the actual performance to be like this.

JOSIAS

For me, the biggest problem was the lighting arrangements; they were ragged and distracting. I must try to choreograph their actions to make the whole more graceful.

JAMES

I agree, their disorganised coming and going is a distraction. I have added to this complexity, by asking for the candles be moved about the stage to create different lighting effects. During the cave scene with the witches, I wanted a great number of candles to be placed in front of the cave to give the illusion of a fire. Then, when the sailors are preparing their departure, I wanted the candles placed on the crates by

the dock side. The finale is very important and the chorus must carry candles up the stairs beside Dido. The young women should look like a procession of angels, adding to the solemnity of the final minutes.

THE DUCHESS

I think Josias and I should choreograph and rehearse the candle movers. Entertain yourselves and we will call you back when we are ready.

- FADE OUT -

8.(21.00.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - EVENING)

(The Duchess sends the candle holders off to gather everyone. The directors enter and take their seats before the stage.)

THE DUCHESS

Ladies and gentlemen, we present the candle holders performance.

[The audience are now presented with young ladies performing in silence and travelling with all the grace expected of dancers.] 01.30 - Applause.

HENRY

Delightful. It is a magical vigil of light.

NAHUM

I could have watched it all evening.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent. It was the finest way of marking the eve of England's first opera that anyone could have wished for.

- FADE OUT -

9.(23.00.EXT. FIELDS NEAR THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING)

(A long shot of Henry and Nahum taking a walk.)

- FADE OUT -

10 (23.30.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - MORNING)

(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 and Henry checks sheets of notation before placing them on the musician's stands. Then Henry plays a brooding melody on the harpsichord for a short while and stops.)

HENRY

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

(They walk out together.)

- FADE OUT -

11. (24.30.EXT. THE LANE BY THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON)

(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.)

- FADE OUT -

12. (27.00.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON)

(Nahum visits the back stage area and the changing rooms. He goes out through the hall into the refectory and back again. He is too nervous to stand still. He adjusts the chairs until the guests enter and then he retreats backstage. He peers out between the screens and sees the guests taking their seats. Dr. Stöll, John Blow, Nicholas Staggin, James Billingsley. He is perturbed to see Peter Beardsley with the set painter from Killigrew's theatre. In the front row is Henry's mother and uncle. Thomas Killigrew, Mary Heveningham and Horace arrive. Harry enters and sits next to Horace. Ellen, on the other side

of her son, looks about nervously. Harry talks to Horace and both are beaming with delight. Then he sees Eliza. "Ah, my beautiful muse," he whispers. She sits next to Killigrew. The hall is so full that the several doors leading to the refectory are opened so that further guests can seat there. The two seats near the front that Henry has reserved for Frances and Anna remain empty.) 03.00

THE DUCHESS (speaking in an uncharacteristic whisper.)
The time to start is approaching.
(She goes backstage and starts lining up the performers.)

JOSIAS (whispering.)
Nahum, do you know where Henry is?

NAHUM
No. I will go out to look for him.

- FADE OUT -

13.(30.30.EXT. THE LANE BY THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON)
(Nahum walks up and down Lovers Walk and just as he arrives at the courtyard entrance he hears Henry calling him. Nahum looks up Lovers' Walk and see Henry, with Frances on one arm and Anna on the other. Nahum runs to them.

NAHUM
How wonderful to see you.

ANNA & FRANCES
We are delighted to be here.

NAHUM
But hurry now - you must take your places.

HENRY
Nothing will begin without me.

NAHUM

Of this I am certain.

(Nahum hurries them along to the lobby where Josias is waiting. We hear the musicians tuning their instruments.)

JOSIAS

I was getting agitated by your lateness. Delighted to see you both, but now hurry to your places.

HENRY

Is everything ready?

JOSIAS

Of course, of course. Come along, come along.

(Nahum stands still. The musicians stop tuning their instruments.)

JOSIAS

Come sit with me on the balcony, Nahum.

(They exit.)

- FADE OUT -

14.(35.00.INT. THE PRIEST'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON)

(A group of young ladies at the sides of the hall move their candles to the front of the stage. 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.)

We now see selected highlights of the prologue and the opera.

- Phoebus enters on his chariot and calls to the Nereids to pay him their respects.
- The Nereids sing to him of Venus.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

End of Prologue. Applause. Josias slaps Nahum on the leg.

JOSIAS

We have them, Nahum, they love it.

(Nahum smiles. The screens positioned along the front of the stage are pulled back, revealing Dido's palace in Carthage. Henry's overture fills the hall. ACT 1.)

- Dido, Belinda and their courtiers enter. Belinda entreats Dido to "shake the cloud from off your brow."
- 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."
- 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."
- 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."
- 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."
- The Sorceress sings of her wicked plan to fool Aeneas into believing that he must depart for Italy.
- The witches dance to celebrate their wickedness. " Ho, ho, 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."

- FADE OUT -

END OF EPISODE FIVE

EPISODE 6

Opening credits (2.00) Repeat of the Sorceress and witches scene at the end of episode 5.

1.(02.00. INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - EVENING)

The Grove Scene. ACT 2

The remainder of the opera is mostly performed in full.

Important stage directions are as follows...

- Henry produces great claps of echoing thunder.
- A cloud carries the false 'Mercury' aloft.

END OF ACT 2

(The screens of the country scene are replaced with the screens depicting the docks. The prop movers lay out the barrels and when Henry's hornpipe struck up, the sailors began to dance and sing. ACT 3.)

- 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.
- Dido dies on the stair. Belinda sits beside her and lifts her head in her arms.
- The moving platform, this time with cupids in the clouds, returned to the stage.
- When it is next to the staircase, the cupids scatter roses over Dido and Belinda.
- The candle bearers walk up the stairs with great 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.)

- FADE OUT -

2.(36.00.INT. BACKSTAGE - EVENING)

(Josias and Nahum enter. Dido and Belinda are still applauded. Two pupils present them with flowers and the Duchess shouts 'bravo' loudly. Elizabeth and Katherine leave the stage.)

THE DUCHESS

Come to me, Elizabeth, your beautiful presence was perfect for this tragedy.

(She hugs Elizabeth. John Gostling takes to the stage for his applause. The Sorceress glides on to the stage, for her cheers from the audience. Amanda Lockhart bows gracefully to the hall from her platform and then a stage hand places a ladder next to her platform. A young pupil climbs the ladder and presents her with flowers. The sorceress glides back behind the screens and the assembly of performers return again for more applause. There are cries for Henry. He jumps onto the stage and gestures for others to join him. The Duchess pushes Josias and Nahum out to join him in receiving applause. Josias motions for Cecelia and the Duchess to join them. Two little cupids present them with flowers. Josias calls James Billingsley and Peter Beardsley to come up to the stage. The company of dancers return; the company of singers return and the musicians stand to receive their applause. Josias motions for the audience to become quiet, but he cannot stem the tide of excitement. He is too filled with emotion to make his voice heard. He thanks the audience briefly and returns backstage.)

- FADE OUT -

3.(39.00.INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - EVENING)

(Nahum tries to make for the courtyard, but he is stopped and congratulated at every step. Ellen stands before him.)

ELLEN

Well if ever there was a great occasion Nahum Tate, you have helped make it. (She sheds a tear and wipes her eye.)

NAHUM

I'm delighted that the opera acted upon you so positively.

DR. STÖLL

If I ever again help a man to stay alive, I doubt it could ever be in the cause of guaranteeing a greater event as your opera. What a wonder. Now you will be famous.

NAHUM

Thank you. How about you, Harry did you enjoy it?

HARRY

I think so, but when all this took place, did people sing to each other or did you make this up?

NAHUM

No, Harry, they spoke as we do, but an opera is an entertainment where words are converted into songs.

HARRY

It's a funny thing to do. It makes people act strange, but I wouldn't mind if we sung to each other sometimes.

NAHUM

And nor would I. (Nahum laughs.)

NICHOLAS STAGGINS

Completely brilliant, Nahum. Congratulations. Opera will soon become the preferred form of musical drama. We are on the threshold of a new era.

ANNA

I simply loved it more than anything.

(Henry and Frances join them.)

Henry your songs are so uplifting. They have changed my relationship with tragedy. I imagined this opera would invite only sadness, but it's a beautiful marriage of music, libretto and dance and this can only lift the spirits.

HENRY (placing his arm about her.)

What pleasure it is to hear your words. I could dance and sing all night. (He puts his arm around Frances) Would you dance with me if the musicians agreed to play dance tunes?

ANNA

I cannot dance dressed like this.

HENRY

Well, I know where costumes for all occasions can be found.

(Henry pulls her up onto the stage and they disappear behind the screens.)

ANNA

It is such a joy to see their happiness.

(A group of Anna's school friends grab her attention. Nahum makes his way through the crowds, listening to excited chatter and sipping wine.)

JOHN BLOW

I congratulate you heartily, Nahum, your words are splendid. You are the most generous of librettists. Most writers lay too much literature on the music, but you, my dear, you were perfect for Henry. You supported him and gave him a partnership. Without you he could never have done it.

(Nahum has tears in his eyes. He hugs him. Killigrew claps him on the back.)

KILLIGREW

I had no idea that crying could give so much pleasure. It was the most moving hour of my life. But what you said about Dido is incorrect. She is angry. Hers is not a withering, broken

heart; it's a heart that is passionate and angry, if it were not, the Prince's departure would never have killed her.

NAHUM

Thank you, Thomas. Time for some light heartedness then.

KILLIGREW

Oh, yes, but from now on there will be some enthusiasm for it at the Theatre Royal. Has our friend Betterton enquired about producing it?

NAHUM

Not that I am aware.

KILLIGREW

Good. I will go and talk with him and learn his intentions.

HORACE

That was magnificent, Nahum. Look who I've found.

HARRY

And look who I've found.

ELLEN

Harry.

MARY

I have never seen a boy so full of questions.

HARRY

Mr. Heveningham is going to show me the classrooms.

HORACE

I am. Come on Harry, we will do it now.

MARY

Tonight, you have won my heart, Nahum.

NAHUM

Thank you.

(Nahum sees Eliza standing with Peter Beardsley and Martin, the set painter from Killigrew's theatre. Eliza sees Nahum and walks to him.)

NAHUM

Hello Eliza. Did you enjoy the opera?

ELIZA

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

NAHUM

Allow me to introduce Mary... Oh, they have gone.

(The sound of violins fills 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, the finest actress at The Theatre Royal.

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.)

FRANCES

Do you know anything about Henry's important matter?

NAHUM

Nothing.

(Henry takes John Gostling by the arm.)

JOHN

What is all this about, Henry?

HENRY

It's a private celebration.

(He leads the group further into the school.)

- FADE OUT -

4.(45.00.INT. THE SCHOOL CHAPEL - EVENING)

(Henry enters the chapel and all follow him. 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 puts a hand to her mouth and all three 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

Is it likely that your family will 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 it will not please my superiors. 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. 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.

Henry repeats all statements.

To have and to hold... from this day forward... for better or for worse... for richer, for poorer... in sickness and in health...to love and to cherish... from this day forward... 'til death do us part.

(Frances does likewise, but with trembling voice. Anna and Nahum are moved to tears.)

JOHN

I now pronounce you man and wife.

Henry and Frances kiss to confirm their marriage. John embraces the newlyweds, wishing them 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.)

ANNA

Nahum, my longing to be in love is more than I can bare. I am completely happy for Frances, but her marriage will consign me to the family forever. My life has no possibilities now, for I must assist my mother in everything.

NAHUM

Oh, Anna, this is not inevitable. I thought the business was a thing of the past. You will see, many things happen in life that cause it to change direction.

ANNA

But you do not know my mother. (silence.) Henry's action was entirely heroic, wasn't it?

NAHUM

Henry's determination is truly impressive.

ANNA

Could you have stolen me away?

NAHUM

Oh! Anna, what a question. Maybe I could not... that is, I doubt that we would...

ANNA (laughing.)

Only if we had fallen in love, you silly thing.

NAHUM

I would go to the ends of the earth for the woman I loved.

ANNA

Good, I knew you would. So, if I found someone like you I could be happy. It's important that my husband loves literature for I must dedicate my life to study and writing. (Nahum nods.) Will I ever find someone?

NAHUM

Oh, Anna, your life has only just begun. Don't be impatient. Love will find you. There's nothing you can do to arrange it. Stay close to writers if you will, wait patiently if you can, but be certain that love will surprise you someday.

ANNA

Will you now regard me as your friend rather than your pupil?

NAHUM

I already do and I promise that we will meet regularly. I regard Henry as my brother and if my brother is married to your sister then we are brother and sister in law.

(Anna gives Nahum a kiss and the two exit the chapel.)

- FADE OUT -

5.(50.00.INT. THE SCHOOL HALL - EVENING)

(The Duchess offers a toast to the married couple. Henry's mother, Elizabeth, is crying. She holds Frances in one arm and Henry in the other. Henry's uncle, Thomas, downs his cup at the toast, refills it generously and drinks from it again. The noise of chatter increase steadily as the news of the wedding spreads throughout the school. Anna kisses Frances and the Duchess leads more dancing in the hall. Nahum introduces Anna to Horace and Mary.)

NAHUM

Anna has a keen interest in literature.

MARY

What inspired it.

ANNA

An urgent need to express my feelings in words.

MARY

That's an excellent place to start, but what is it that interests you? What do you read?

ANNA

I read everything, but when an author takes me by surprise, then this is what I love.

MARY

I like you and we may prove equally beneficial to each other. I have many projects you might be interested in. Nahum, you must bring her to the house.

ANNA

My, but the world turns around so quickly. Thank you.

(Anna gives Nahum another kiss and runs off to give Frances her news. Nahum surreptitiously scans the room for sight of Eliza. Killigrew is heading towards him.)

NAHUM

You are leaving.

KILLIGREW

I am. Thank you again for the marvellous entertainment. Here stands a man who will henceforth delight in his enthusiasm for the opera. You must visit me soon for we have already started rehearsals for King Richard.

NAHUM

I will. Is Eliza accompanying you to London?

KILLIGREW

Oh, no, she has returned with John Petty. I have no idea how he came to be here. She asked me to give you this note.

(The note reads - "Our eyes said it. Keep that alive." Nahum smiles. Killigrew departs.)

MARY

Is Eliza the woman in your heart?

NAHUM

Yes, but our romance is secret. Here's an odd truth. I tried to steal her, yet she stole me and I am very glad she did. She is an expert in attracting hearts and, as long as I live, I will never stop wanting to earn her favours.

MARY

Nahum, it would be better if you found another place to rest your heart.

NAHUM

Well, you are right and I tried. Goodness knows, I tried in every way I could. There just aren't words to describe the struggle I have been through.

MARY

So, are you free.

NAHUM

No, we shared something real that will last forever. If you give your heart to someone and they grow with it, why would you create a cage to contain it?

MARY

I think you found the grace you needed.

HORACE

My dear Mary, the world is once again calling me. Before the night is out I must be with the King. Nahum, it has been a long time since I enjoyed the company of a boy like Harry. His inquisitive mind is nothing but a marvel. I am delighted to play a part in his education.

NAHUM

I am pleased. I hope he will be a credit to your generosity.

HORACE

You have entertained us extremely well. Thank you. You are a credit to us all. We will remember your opera forever.

MARY

Visit me soon Nahum. Trust that all will be well.

(They embrace and depart.)

- FADE OUT -

6.(52.00.EXT. THE SCHOOL COURTYARD - NIGHT)

(Nahum and Anna sit together. Ellen arrives.)

ELLEN

Nahum, I've been looking for you everywhere. Harry is walking around in a daze. He is so tired he is about drop. Will you return with us to The Strand?

NAHUM

I will. Give me a minute to say my goodbyes.

(He goes to Henry.)

What arrangements have you made for your return to London?

HENRY

I'm taking Frances and Anna to the City by coach. Would you join us? We have room for one more.

NAHUM

No, thank you. I will take the boat with Ellen and Harry.

HENRY

Is that wise?

NAHUM

I will ensure that a Lambeth man has the oars.

(Cecelia arrives and hugs him warmly.)

CECELIA

Have you forgiven me?

NAHUM

Oh, Cecelia, I could ask you the same question. We will not talk of forgiveness. We have shared the making of a great performance and I will always cherish our time together. Josias, your dances were spectacular. They nourished me.

JOSIAS

What fine words, and for me, your poetry is destined to entertain Kings. How will we return to our mundane lives after this? Maybe we should continue to make performances.
(The Duchess kisses Nahum squarely on the lips, embraces him heartily and takes both his hands in hers.)

THE DUCHESS

You must come to visit me regularly. Our time together has been extraordinary. I should like to think of it as the beginning of something that does not have an end just yet.

NAHUM

I will be with you as often as you wish.

THE DUCHESS

Excellent, and as I am about to retire from Court, I may expect your company more than you imagine.

NAHUM

I cannot imagine how you will ever retire.

(He kisses her and blows several kisses to her before joining the Purcell family and Anna standing by the coach.)

ANNA

Thank you for all your kindnesses, Nahum. We will meet again soon, won't we?

NAHUM

Yes, we'll happily embrace our new family connections. Henry, Frances, I cannot express how much pleasure your marriage has given me. Your courage deserves a lifetime filled with love. I

pray that Amy will soon learn that a love like yours cannot be held by the boundaries she thought to impose upon it.

(All but Henry step into the coach. Henry hugs him.)

HENRY

On the subject of Amy, I would like you to visit us at The Spaniard tomorrow. We need your help to write another letter.

NAHUM

Such a task will require the finest literary skills, so I too will need some assistance. Do you happen to know of anyone who might have the talents for such a task?

HENRY

Ha, ha. Anna, are you ready for your first commission?

ANNA

Umm! I think that an elegiac poem in honour of the Great Mother might be called for.

NAHUM

And we'll add a sonnet in praise of love.

ANNA

Indeed, we will, and we will stress the beauty of our theme with open vowels and rhyming couplets.

(Laughter fills the coach and Henry's mother Elizabeth comes to the window.)

ELIZABETH

Nahum, you are a very special man. I'm truly proud of you.

ELLEN

The whole world should be proud of him.

(The crowded coach cheers her sentiments and they depart down Lover's Lane. The trio bound for The Strand make their way to the Beaufort Steps, where many school guests are waiting for a

vessel to take them down river. Harry, suddenly awake, runs to a boat and throws himself into the first skiff.)

NAHUM

Harry, you must wait your turn.

A WAITING GUEST

No really, I insist. Please take the boat.

NAHUM

Thank you.

(Harry sits at the front, facing forwards, and Nahum and Ellen sit at the rear. The boatman hands them a blanket which they wrap over their shoulders.)

NAHUM

Ellen, I feel I am leaving my previous life behind on that riverbank. Dido and Aeneas is over; it has defined my life and given me the greatest occupation. There is nothing so lonesome in the entire world as the end of a performance. I cannot imagine how I will start something new or begin life afresh.

ELLEN

You are white, Nahum, are you feeling unwell?

NAHUM

No, I am lost in thought. You should not concern yourself.

ELLEN

Your opera filled me with a wonder that will stay with me forever.

NAHUM

It pleases me greatly that you say so.

ELLEN

I cannot compare the delight of this occasion to anything in my life and nor can I have any idea how anyone could begin to

compose anything as beautiful as an opera. How is it that you know about these things, Nahum?

NAHUM

My dear Ellen, until recently, I knew nothing about opera.

ELLEN

Well, you must be the happiest man alive.

NAHUM

Yes, I'm so happy I could cry.

(He turns his head to the water to hide his tears. Ellen places her hand gently in the centre of his back and Nahum regains his composure.)

NAHUM

Ellen, your hand is melting something frozen in me. Is it possible that such a simple gesture can achieve so much?

ELLEN

If you respond to a touch, you will live to play another day.

(Ellen shuffles closer and Nahum wraps the blanket around them. Harry shouts to the boatman in the skiff ahead of them.)

HARRY

Move over. We have urgent business; let us pass.

-FADE OUT -

THE END