

Henry Purcell

(1659 - 1695)

The Fairy Queen



Opéra en 5 actes

Livret de *Shakespeare* "*Songe d'une nuit d'été*"

Première représentation : Queen's Theatre, Dorset Garden à Londres, le 2 mai 1962



Overture

ACT I

(A palace. Enter Titania, leading the Indian boy, the fairies attending)

FAIRIES

Come, come, come, let us leave the town,
and in some lonely place,
where Crowds and noise were never known,
resolve to spend our days.
In pleasant shades upon the grass
at night our selves we'll lay;
our days in harmless sport shall pass,
thus time shall slide away.

(Enter fairies, leading a drunkard and blinded poet)

Scene of the drunken poet

DRUNKEN POET

Fill up the bowl, then...

1st FAIRY, CHORUS

Trip it, trip it in a ring;
around this mortal dance, and sing.

POET

Enough, enough,
we must play at blind man's buff.
Turn me round, and stand away,
I'll catch whom I may.

2nd FAIRY, CHORUS

About him go, so, so, so,
pinch the wretch from top to toe;
pinch him forty, forty times,
pinch till he confess his crimes.

POET

Hold you damn'd tormenting punk,
I do confess...

FAIRIES

What, what...

POET

I'm drunk,
as I live boys, drunk.

FAIRIES

What art thou, speak?

POET

If you will know it,
I am a scurvy poet.

FAIRIES

Pinch him, pinch him for his crimes,
his nonsense and his Dogrel rhymes.

POET

Hold! Oh! Oh! Oh!

FAIRIES

Confess more, more.

POET

I confess I'm very poor.
Nay prithee do not pinch me so,
good dear devil let me go;
and as I hope to wear the bays,
I'll write a sonnet in thy praise.

FAIRIES

Drive 'em hence, away, away,
let 'em sleep till break of day.

First act tune: Jig



ACT II

(A wood, by moon-light. Enter Titania and her train. While the fairies dance the scene changes to a prospect

of grotto's, arbors, and delightful walks; the arbors are adorn'd with all variety of flowers, the grotto's supported by terms, these lead to two arbors on either side of the scene, of a great length, whose prospect runs toward the two angles of the house. Between these two arbors in the great grotto, which is continued by several arches, to the farther end of the house)

Prelude and song

Come all ye songsters of the sky,
wake, and assemble in this wood;
but no ill-boding Bird be night,
none but the harmless and the good.

Prelude

CHORUS

May the god of wit inspire,
the sacred nine to bear a part;
and the blessed heavenly quire,
shew the utmost of their art.
While Echo shall in sounds remote,
repeat each note,
each note, each note.

*(Then a composition of instrumental music,
in imitation of an echo.)*

Eccho

CHORUS

Now join your warbling voices all.

(Then a fairy dance)

A dance of fairies

Song and Chorus

Sing while we trip it on the green;
but no ill vapours rise or fall,
nothing offend our fairy queen.

*(Titania leaves down. Enter Night, Mystery,
Secresie, Sleep, and their attendants.)*

NIGHT

See, even night her self is here,
to favour your design;
and all her peaceful train in near,
that men to sleep incline.
Let noise and care,
doubt and despair,
envy and Spight,
(the fiends delight)
be ever Banish'd hence,
let soft repose,
her eye-lids close;
and murmuring streams,
bring pleasing dreams;
let nothing stay to give offence.

MYSTERY

I am come to lock all fast,
love without me cannot last.
Love, like counsels of the wise,
must be hid from vulgar eyes.
'Tis holy, and we must conceal it,
they profane it, who reveal it.

SECRESIE

One charming night
gives more delight,
than a hundred lucky days.
Night and I improve the tast,
make the pleasure longer last,
a thousand, thousand several ways.

SLEEP

Hush, no more, be silent all,
sweet repose has clos'd her eyes.
Soft as feather'd snow does fall!
Softly, softly, steal from hence.
No noise disturb her sleeping sence.

A dance for the followers of Night

*(Oberon squeezes the flowers on Titania;
Lysander and Hermia fall asleep.)*



ACT III

*(Enter Titania, Bottom and fairies. The scene
changes
to a great wood, a long row of large trees on each
side;
a river in the middle, two rows of lesser trees of a
different kind just on the side of the river, which
meet
in the middle, and make so many arches, two great
dragons make a bridge over the river, their bodies
form two arches, through which two swans are seen
in the river at a great distance. Enter a troop of
fawns,
dryads and naides)*

CHORUS

If love's a sweet passion, why does it torment?
 If a bitter, oh tell me whence comes my content?
 Since I suffer with pleasure, why should I complain,
 or grieve at my fate, when I know 'tis in vain?
 Yet so pleasing the pain is, so soft is the dart,
 that at once it both wounds me, and tickles my heart.
 I press her hand gently, look languishing down,
 and by passionate silence I make my love known.
 But oh! how I'm blest when so kind she does prove,
 by some willing mistake to discover her love.
 When in striving to hide, she reveals all her flame,
 and our eyes tell each other, what neither dares
 name.

Symphony while the swans come forward

(While the symphony's playing, the two swans come swimming on through the arches to the bank of the river, as if they would land; these turn themselves into fairies and dance; at the same time the bridge vanishes, and the trees that were arch'd, raise themselves upright)

Dance for the fairies

(Four savages enter, fright the fairies away, and dance an entry)

Dance for the green men**Song**

Ye gentle spirits of the air, appear;
 prepare, and joyn your tender voices here.
 Catch, and repeat the trembling sounds anew,
 soft as her sighs and sweet as pearly dew.
 Run new division, and such measures keep,
 as when you lull the god of love asleep.

(Enter Coridon and Mopsa)

Dialogue between Coridon and Mopsa**CORIDON**

Now the maids and the men are making of hay,
 we h've left the dull fools, and are stolen away.
 Then Mopsa no more
 be coy as before,
 but let us merrily play,
 and kiss the sweet time away.

MOPSA

Why, how now, Sir Clown, what makes you so bold?
 I'd have ye to know I'm not made of that mold.
 I tell you again,
 maids must never kiss no men.
 No, no, no kissing at all;
 I'll not kiss, till I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Not kiss you at all?

MOPSA

No, no, no kissing at all!

CORIDON

Why no kissing at all?

MOPSA

I'll not kiss, till I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Should you give me a score,
 'twould not lessen your store,
 then bid me chearfully kiss, chearfully kiss
 and take, and take, my fill of your bliss.

MOPSA

I'll not trust you so far, I know you too well;
 should I give you an Inch, you'd soon take an ell.
 Then lordlike you rule,
 and laugh at the fool.
 No, no...

CORIDON

So small a request,
 you must not, you cannot, you shall not deny,
 nor will I admit of another reply.

MOPSA

Nay, what do you mean?
 O fie, fie, fie!

Song**A NYMPH**

When I have often heard young maids complaining,
 that when men promise most they most deceive,
 then I thought none of them worthy my gaining;
 and what they swore, resolv'd ne're to believe.

But when so humbly he made his addresses,
 with looks so soft, and with language so kind,
 I thought it sin to refuse his caresses;
 nature o'ercame, and I soon chang'd my mind.

Should he employ all his wit in deceiving,
 stretch his invention, and artfully feign;
 I find such charms, such true joy in believing,
 I'll have the pleasure, let him have pain.

If he proves perjurd, I shall not be cheated,
 he may deceive himself, but never me;
 'this what I look for, and shan't be defeated,
 for I'll be as false and inconstant as he.

Dance of Haymakers**Song and chorus**

A thousand, thousand ways we'll find
 to entertain the hours:
 no two shall e're be known so kind,
 no life so blest as ours.

Third act tune: Hornpipe

ACT IV

Symphony

(The scene changes to a garden of fountains. A sonata plays while the sun rises, it appears red through the mist, as it ascends it dissipates the vapours, and is seen in its full lustre; then the scene is perfectly discovered, the fountains enrich'd gilding, and adorn'd with statues; the view is terminated by a walk of cypress trees which lead to a delightful bower. Before the trees stand rows of marble columns, which support many walks which rise by stairs to the top of the house; the stairs are adorn'd with figures on pedestals, and rails; and balusters on each side of'em. Near the top, vast quantities of water break out of the hills, and fall in mighty cascade's to the bottom of the scene, to feed the fountains which are on each side. In the middle of the stage is a very large fountain, where the water rises about twelve foot. Then the Four Seasons enter, with their several attendants)

Solo and Chorus

ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS

Now the night is chas'd away,
all salute the rising sun;
'tis that happy, happy day,
the birth-day of king Oberon.

Duet

TWO OTHERS

Let the fifes, and the clarions,
and shrill trumpets sound,
and the arch of high heav'n the clangor resound.

Entry of Phoebus

(A machine appears, the clouds break from before it, and Phoebus appears in a chariot drawn by four horses)

PHOEBUS

When a cruel long winter has frozen the earth,
and nature imprison'd seeks in vain to be free;
I dart forth my beams, to give all things a birth,
making spring for the plants, every flower,
and each tree.

'Tis I who give life, warmth, an vigour to all,
even love who rules all things
in earth, air, and sea;
would languish, and fade, and to nothing would fall,

the world to its chaos would return, but for me.

CHORUS

Hail! Great parent of us all,
light and comfort of the earth;
before your shrine the seasons fall,
thou who gives all nature birth.

SPRING

Thus the ever grateful spring,
does her yearly tribute bring;
all your sweets before him lay,
then round his altar sing, and play.

SUMMER

Here's the summer, sprightly, gay,
smiling, wanton, fresh, and fair;
adorn'd with all the flowers of may,
whose various sweets perfume the air.

AUTUMN

See my many colour'd fields,
and loaded trees my will obey;
all the fruit that autumn yields,
I offer to the god of day.

WINTER

Now winter comes slowly, pale, meager, and old,
first trembling with age, and then quiv'ring with cold;
benum'd with hard frosts, and with snow cover'd o're,
prays the sun to restore him, and sings as before.

CHORUS

Hail! Great parent of us all,
light and comfort of the earth;
before your shrine the seasons fall,
thou who gives all nature birth.

(After a short time all go out except Robin-Good-Fellow, who applies the juice of the herb to Lysander's eyes)

Fourth act tune: Air



ACT V

Prelude

(While a symphony plays, the machine moves forward, and the peacocks spread their tails, and fill the middle of the theatre.)

Epithalamium

JUNO

Thrice happy lovers, may you be
for ever, ever free,
from that tormenting devil, jealousy.
From all that anxious care and strife,
that attends a married life:
be to one another true,
kind to her as she to you,
and since the errors of this night are past,
may he be ever constant,
she for ever chaste.

(The machine ascends. After Juno's song, Oberon asks to hear the plaint of Laura for her departed love.)

The plaint

O let me weep, for ever weep,
my eyes no more the shall welcome sleep;
I'll hide me from the sight of day,
and sigh, and sigh my soul away.
He's gone, he's gone, his loss deplore;
and I shall never see him more.

(While the scene is darken'd, a single entry is danded.)

Entry dance

(Then a symphony is play'd)

Symphony

(After that the scene is suddenly illuminated, and discovers a transparent prospect of a Chinese garden, the architecture, the trees, the plants, the fruits, the birds, the beasts quite different to what we have in this part of the world. It is terminated by an arch, through which is seen other arches with close arbors, and a row of trees to the end of the view. Over it is a hanging garden, which rises by several ascents to the top of the house; it is bounded on either side with pleasant bowers, various trees, and numbers of strange birds flying in the air, on the top of a platform is a fountain,

throwing up water, which falls into a large basin. A Chinese man enters and sings)

Song

A CHINESE MAN

Thus the gloomy world
at first began to shine,
and from the power divine
a glory round about it hurl'd;
which made it bright,
and gave it birth in light.

Then were all minds as pure,
as those ethereal streams;
in innocence secure,
not subject to extreams.
There was no room then for empty fame,
no cause for pride, ambition wanted aim.

CHINESE WOMAN

Thus happy and free,
thus treated are we
with nature's chiefest delights.

We never cloy,
but renew our joy,
and one bliss another invites.

CHORUS

Thus wildly we live,
thus freely we give,
what heaven as freely bestows.

We were not made
for labour and trade,
which fools on each other impose.

CHINESE MAN

Yes, Daphne, in your looks I find
the charms by which my heart's betray'd;
then let not your disdain unbind
the prisoner that your eyes have made.
She that in love makes least defence,
wounds ever with the surest dart;
beauty may captivate the sence,
but kindness only gains the heart.

(Six monkeys come from between the trees and dance)

Monkeys' dance

(Two women sing in parts)

1st WOMAN

Hark how all things with one sound rejoice,
and the world seems to have one voice.

2nd WOMAN

Hark now the echoing air a triumph sings,
and all around pleas'd Cupids clap their wings.

CHORUS

Hark! Hark!

2nd WOMAN

Sure the dull god of marriage does not hear

BOTH

We'll rouse him with a charm.

Hymen, appear!

CHORUS

Hymen, appear!

BOTH

Our Queen of Night commands thee not to stay.

Appear!

CHORUS

Our Queen...

(Enter Hymen.)

Prelude**HYMEN**

See, see, I obey.

My torch has long been out, I hate

on loose dissembled vows to wait,

where hardly love out-lives

the wedding-night,

false flames, love's meteors,

yield my torch no light.

(Six pedestals of china-work rise from under the stage; they support six large vases of porcelain, in which six china-orange-trees.)

BOTH WOMEN

Turn then the eyes upon those glories there,

and catching flames will on thy torch appear.

HYMEN

My torch, indeed, will from

such brightness shine,

love ne'er had yet such altars, so divine.

(The pedestals move toward the front of the stage, and the grand dance begins of twenty-four persons; then Hymen and the two women sing together.)

TRIO

They shall be as happy as they're fair;

love shall fill all the places of care,

and every time the sun

shall display his rising light,

it shall be to them a new wedding-day;

and when he sets, a new nuptial-night.

CHORUS

They shall be as happy as they're fair;

love shall fill all the places of care,

and every time the sun

shall display his rising light,

it shall be to them a new wedding-day;
and when he sets, a new nuptial-night.

(All the dancers join in it.)

Chaconne: Dance for Chinese man and woman.