

PURCELL



The Fairy Queen

The Scholars Baroque Ensemble



Henry Purcell (1659 - 1695) The Fairy Queen

Henry Purcell, one of the greatest English composers, before English music was overwhelmed by the activities of Handel in the next century, was born in 1659. the son of a musician Thomas Purcell and nephew of Henry Purcell, both of whom served as gentlemen of the Chapel Royal after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. At the age of ten the younger Henry Purcell became a chorister at the Chapel Royal under Captain Henry Cooke, who had been charged with the task of reviving the Chapel after the years of Commonwealth rule under Cromwell. In 1672 Cooke died and was succeeded as master of the children of the Chapel Royal by Pelham Humfrey, who had been sent to study abroad in France and Italy, after great success as a boy chorister and composer. Purcell took lessons from Humfrey, and two years later, after the latter's early death, from John Blow, the new master of the children. The same year brought the appointment of Purcell, whose voice had by now broken, as organ tuner at Westminster Abbey, where he became organist five years later, in 1679. His position as a composer had already been acknowledged by appointment in 1677 as composer in ordinary for the Twenty- Four Violins of the King, the group of musicians established by Charles Il in imitation of the practice of the French court.

Purcell's career went on as it had begun, with continuing royal favour, allowing the composition of a series of Welcome Songs and Odes for the celebration of royal occasions and appointment to the king's private music under James II and William III, in addition to appointment as an organist at the Chapel Royal. Under the joint monarchy of William and Mary he provided notable music for the Queen's birthdays, as he did for her death which took place in late December 1694. Eleven months later Purcell himself was dead, having caught cold, it was later rumoured, from being locked out by his wife, tired of his late hours. As a composer he had written a large amount of music, sacred and secular. In addition to the Odes and Welcome Songs were anthems, service settings, hymns, psalms and sacred songs. His secular songs included catches, three-part songs, duets and solo

songs with continuo. Instrumental music by Purcell ranges from relatively conservative compositions for groups of string instruments to sets of trio sonatas that acknowledge a debt to Italy, and suites for harpsichord. Over a period of some fifteen years he wrote music for the theatre, providing music for plays from Nathanael Lee's tragedy Theodosius in 1680 to the stuttering poet Thomas D'Urfey's Comical History of Don Quixote in 1695. He enjoyed a particularly close association with the United Companies, formed from the Dorset Gardens and Drury Lane companies, during the last seven years of his life.

Opera, an art that had developed in Italy throughout the seventeenth century and in France with Lully had reached a high degree of dramatic sophistication, had found no proper permanent place in London, and was not to do so until Handel settled there as a composer of Italian opera. As a genre Italian opera was, in any case, to arouse in some quarters a measure of ridicule for its lack of apparent dramatic realism, a critical attitude fomented by linguistic and national prejudices. Purcell himself wrote only one short English opera, Dido and Aeneas, for performance at a Chelsea boarding-school for young ladies. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, however, there developed in London a form that has come to be known as semi-opera. While plays always had a place for songs and musical interludes of one sort or another, the semi-opera included a larger musical element as a necessary part of a play, although the music was generally confined to subsidiary characters, spirits, fairies or demons. The five semi-operas by Purcell are The Prophetess or The History of Dioclesian, King Arthur or The British Worthy, The Tempest or The Enchanted Isle, The Indian Queen and The Fairy Queen. These works all belong to the 1690s, with The Fairy Queen, an adaptation of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream now conjecturally attributed to Thomas Betterton, first staged at Dorset Gardens in 1692 and revised for further performances in the following February. This was Purcell's third work in this form, after Dioclesian and King Arthur. The lavish production cost £3000 and, while it proved popular, it brought little profit to the company.

Keith Anderson

About this recording:

The music for "The Fairy Queen" is clearly separated from the action of the play. The music contains no parts for singing actors and the singers take no part in the play. Indeed, it was observed at the time that not only was putting on the performance of the play together with Purcell's music an enormous expense but also "some would come for the music - others for the play". The conclusion was that it was "best to have either by itself".

Previous recordings of the Fairy Queen logically contain the music "by itself", but perhaps less logically have included all the music in the order in which it appears in the Purcell Society score without allowing for the fact that some of it is not related at all to the five self-contained masques which make up the music for each Act. The Scholars Baroque Ensemble, therefore, choose to start with the Overture and then present the music which is an integral part of each masque. All instrumental music related only to the play has been put together at the end of the 2nd CD as an Appendix.

The Scholars Baroque Ensemble are grateful for the help and advice from Purcell specialists Andrew Pinnock and Bruce Wood in preparing their own edition of The Fairy Queen. The Haymakers' Dance is put where it belongs at the end of the Dialogue between Coridon and Mopsa; The Plaint is recorded for the first time with an oboe obbligato and the Chaconne is identified as the "missing" Grand Dance and put in its rightful place just before the vocal finale.

David van Asch

Henry Purcell The Fairy Queen

In his music for THE FAIRY QUEEN, Purcell reduces the events of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to the initial transfer from town to country (No. 2) and the passage of time from day to night. The "Shews" or Masques which make up the musical content of each Act pay homage to the Fairy Queen, Titania, who is the central figure. She alone experiences the errors and triumphs of love, and the opposing forces of disorder and harmony acknowledge her royal presence.

CD 1

1 Overture (1:25)

ACTI

Titania, fleeing to the woods to escape the jealousy of her husband Oberon, has ordered the fairies to entertain her Indian page. They are to blindfold, spin round and pinch any mortal who should disturb them until he confesses his sins. A suitable victim is found and the fairies relent only when the stuttering poet confesses that he is a drunkard and a terrible poet.

2 Duet (Diane Atherton, Adrian Peacock)

(2:02)

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.

3 Scene of the Drunken Poet

(6:47)

(David van Asch, Helen Parker, Kym Amps & Chorus)

Poet

Fill up the bowl then -

1st Fairy

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

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 Punck, I 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

Oh! oh! oh!

1st Fairy

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.

Chorus

Drive him hence, away, away Let him sleep till break of Day.

4 First Act Tune - Jig

(1:08)

ACT II

Song and Dance establish the moonlit world of the Fairy Kingdom. The four allegorical figures of Night, Mystery, Secresie and Sleep sing Titania to sleep. The Masque ends with the Followers of the Night dancing around Titania while Oberon casts a spell on her by sprinkling juice from a magic flower into her eyes.

5	Prelude and song (Robin Doveton)	(2:07)
	Come all ye songsters of the Sky, Wake, and Assemble in this Wood; But no ill-boding Bird be nigh, None but the Harmless and the Good.	
6	Prelude	(1:04)
7	Chorus	(0:59)
à.	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 Eccho shall in sounds remote, Repeat each Note, Each Note, each Note.	
8	Chorus	(0:30)
	Now join your Warbling Voices all.	
9	Solo (Helen Parker), Chorus & Dance of Fairies	(2:10)
	Sing while we trip it on the Green; But no ill Vapours rise or fall, Nothing offend our fairy Queen.	
10	Night (Diane Atherton)	(4:50)
8.5506	See, even Night her self is here, To favour your Design; And all her Peaceful Train is near, That Men to Sleep incline. Let Noise and Care, Doubts and Despair, 60-1	

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.

11 Mystery (Robin Doveton)

(0:54)

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.

12 Secresie (Angus Davidson)

(2:14)

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.

13 Sleep (Adrian Peacock) & Chorus

(5:10)

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.

14 Dance for the followers of Night

(1:21)

ACT III

The masque in Act III is dominated by the idea of Titania's suffering under Oberon's spell and alternates between Titania's sensibility and the coarseness of the Green Men and the amorous Haymakers. At the beginning of the Act, Titania charms Bottom by transforming the scene into a great forest with swans swimming in a distant river. After the first song and while a Symphony is played, the swans come forward and turn themselves into fairies who dance until they are driven away by four green savages. Then, after the song "Ye Gentle Spirits" the shepherd Coridon and his escort Mopsa enter and play out their comic scene, which ends with the Haymakers Dance.

15 Prelude, solo (Helen Parker) & Chorus

(2:28)

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.

16 Symphony while the swans come forward

(1:40)

17 Dance for the Fairies

(0:51)

18 Dance for the Green Men

(1:41)

19 Song (Kym Amps)

(5:21)

Ye Gentle Spirits of the Air, appear; Prepare, and joyn your tender Voices here. Catch, and repeat the Trembling sounds anew, Run new Division, and such measures keep, As when you lull the God of Love asleep.

20 Dialogue between Coridon and Mopsa (David van Asch, Angus Davidson)

(3:42)

Coridon

Now the Maids and the men are making of hay, we have left the dull Fools, and are stol'n away. Then Mopsa no more Be Coy as before, But let us merrily, merrily Play, And Kiss. and Kiss the sweet time away.

Mopsa

Why, how now, Sir Clown, how came you so bold? I'd have you to know I'm not made of that mold. I tell you again,
Maids must Kiss no men.
No, no; no, no; no Kissing at all;
I'le not Kiss, till I Kiss you for good and all.
No, no

Coridon

Should you give me a score, 'Twould not lessesn the store, Then bid me chearfully, chearfully Kiss, And take, and take, my fill of your Bliss.

Mopsa

I'le not trust you so far, I know you too well; Should I give you an Inch, you'd take a whole 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? Oh, fie, fie, fie!

21 Dance for the Haymakers

(0:55)

22 A Nymph (Kym Amps)

(3:12)

When I have often heard you 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 the pain. If he proves Perjur'd, I shall not be Cheated, He may deceive himself, but never me; 'Tis what I look for, and shan't be defeated, For I'll be as false and inconstant as he.

23 Song (Robin Doveton) & Chorus

(2:24)

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.

CD 2

ACT IV

Oberon wakes Titania and Bottom from their enchantment and asks the Fairy Queen for music. A symphony welcomes the rising Sun and the Four Seasons enter with their Attendants who sing in celebration of the new day which is also Oberon's birthday. Phoebus appears on a cloud and the Seasons and Chorus pay their tribute.

1 Symphony (6:24)

2 An Attendant (Helen Parker) & Chorus

(2:02)

Now the night is chas'd away, All salute the rising Sun; 'Tis the happy, happy Day, The Birth-Day of King Oberon.

3 Two Attendants (Angus Davidson, Robin Doveton)

(1:28)

Let the Fifes, and the Clarions, and shrill trumpets sound, And the Arch of high heav'n the Clangor resound.

4	Entry of Phoebus	(0:38)
5	Phoebus (John Bowen)	(2:50)
	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, being 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.	
6	Chorus	(1:54)
á	Hail! Great Parent of us all, Light and Comfort of the Earth; Before your Shrine the Seasons fall, Thou who giv'st all Nature Birth.	
7	Spring (Diane Atherton)	(2:02)
	Thus the ever Grateful Spring, Does her yearly Tribute being; All your Sweets before him lay, Then round his Altar Sing, and Play.	
8	Summer (Angus Davidson)	(1:09)
	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.	

9 Autumn (Robin Doveton)

(2:36)

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.

10 Winter (David van Asch)

(2:39)

Next 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.

11 Chorus

(1:58)

Hail! Great Parent of us all, Light and Comfort of the Earth; Before your Shrine the Seasons fall, Thou who giv'st all Nature Birth.

ACT V

The Masque of Act V is the most fantastic of all. Juno (the classical goddess of marriage) sings a eulogy about love in its blessed matrimonial state. This is movingly answered by the Plaint of mournful love that endures beyond death. Then, while the Symphony is played, there is a fantastic change of scene to a Chinese Garden, complete with exotic plants and fruits and even monkeys: a Chinese man and Woman experience the happiness and freedom of love in a golden age. Finally, two Women succeed in charming the god Hymen into relighting his torch.

12 Prelude

(1:07)

13 Juno (Helen Parker) (2:52)Thrice happy Lovers, may you be For ever, ever free. From that tormenting Devil, Jealousie. 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 Chast, 14 The Plaint (Kym Amps) (7:04)O Let me ever, ever weep, My Eyes no more 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: For I shall never see him more. 15 Symphony (0:50)16 A Chinese Man (Robin Doveton) (4:21)Thus the gloomy World At first began to shine. And from the Power Divine A Glory round it hurl'd:

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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 for empty Fame, No cause for Pride, Ambition wanted aim.

17 A Chinese Woman (Diane Atherton) & Chorus

(1:03)

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.

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.

18 A Chinese Man (Robin Doveton)

(2:22)

Yes, Xansi, 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.

19	Monkeys' Dance	(0:55)
20	First Woman (Diane Atherton)	(2:02)
	Hark! how all things in one Sound rejoice, And the World seems to have one Voice.	
21	Second Woman (Kym Amps)	(2:35)
	Hark! how the Echoing Air a Triumph sings, And all around pleas'd Cupids clap their Wings.	
22	Two Women (Helen Parker, Kym Amps) & Chorus	(2:57)
	Sure the dull God of Marriage does not hear; We'll rouse him with a Charm. Hymen, appear! Our Queen of Night commands you not to stay.	
23	Prelude	(0:19)
24	Hymen (Adrian Peacock)	(2:15
	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.	
25	Two Women (Kym Amps, Helen Parker)	(1:31)
	Turn then the Eyes upon those Glories there, And catching Flames will on thy Torch appear	
26	Hymen (Adrian Peacock)	(1:05)
	My Torch, indeed, will from such Brightness shine: Love ne'er had yet such Altars, so divine.	

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18

 27 Chaconne - The Grand Dance 28 Trio (Kym Amps, Helen Parker, Adrian Peacock) & Chorus	(2:44) (1:53)
APPENDIX	
29 First Musick Prelude	(1:49)
30 First Musick Hornpipe	(0:58)
31 Second Musick Air	(0:56)
32 Second Musick Rondeau	(1:27)
33 Second Act Tune (Air)	(1:17)
34 Fourth Act Tune (Air)	(0:57)
35 Third Act Tune (Hornpipe)	(1:00)
36 Entry Dance	(1:34)

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The Scholars Baroque Ensemble

Sopranos: KYM AMPS *, Helen Parker *, Diane Atherton *

Counter tenors: ANGUS DAVIDSON *, Philip Newton Tenors:

ROBIN DOVETON *, John Bowen * Basses: DAVID VAN ASCH *, Adrian Peacock *

Violins: PAULINE NOBES (leader), William Thorp,

> Julia Bishop, Fiona Huggett, Helen Orsler, Frances Turner

Violas: Stefanie Heichelheim, Martin Kelly, Rosemary Nalden

Violoncello: Pal Banda Violone: Jan Spencer

Recorders: Nancy Hadden, Elizabeth Stanbridge

Oboes: Robin Canter *. Mark Baigent

Bassoon: Frances Fustace Harpsichord: **Terence Charlston** Theorbo & Guitar: Robin Jeffrey

Trumpets: Stephen Keavy *, Crispian Steele-Perkins

Robert Howes Timpani:

Artistic Coordinator: David van Asch

(* = soloist)

Harpsichord by Alan Gotto of Norwich

THE SCHOLARS BAROQUE ENSEMBLE was founded in 1987 by David van Asch with the idea of complementing the "a capella" work of the vocal quartet THE SCHOLARS. This group, consisting also of the soprano Kym Amps, counter tenor Angus Davidson and tenor Robin Doveton, has had worldwide success during the last twenty years.

The members of The Scholars Baroque Ensemble are all specialists in the field of Baroque music and play original instruments (or copies) using contemporary techniques. Singers and players work together without a Director to produce their own versions of great baroque masterworks such as the St. John Passion by Bach, the 1610 Vespers by Monteverdi, The Fairy Queen by Purcell and the Messiah and Acis and Galatea by Handel, all of which are being released by Naxos.

Performances by The Scholars Baroque Ensemble have been acclaimed by critics and audiences alike, perhaps because the artistic aim of the ensemble goes far beyond that of so-called "authenticity"; more important is the clarity and vitality achieved by the use of a minimum number of players and singers to a part (often only one), a common practice in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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