

PURCELL
The Indian Queen
The Scholars Baroque Ensemble



Henry Purcell (1659-1695) The Indian Queen

The Indian Queen, written by John Dryden and his brother-in-law Sir Robert Howard (scholars hotly dispute which of the two was the main contributor) was first performed as a play in 1664. Thirty years later, following a series of successful semi-opera productions, the famous actor Thomas Betterton was commissioned to “get up ye Indian Queen” as an opera. Who made the adaptation of the play, reducing it from 1,400 lines to around 750, is not known, but Henry Purcell was the obvious choice to write the musical “Shews” or Masques to complement the play. After the successes of his previous semi-operas (*Dioclesian* in 1690, *King Arthur* in 1691 and *The Fairy Queen* in 1692) Purcell had been firmly established as the *Orpheus Britannicus* of his time. *The Indian Queen* was his last major work before his death in 1695 at the age of only 35.

As with all the other semi-operas, Purcell’s music is an adaptation of the play designed to be performed along with the play. The music is an element by itself which can successfully be presented without the play, as in this performance, and which falls into two categories, instrumental and vocal: the instrumental music was designed to be played before the play began, at the end of each act, and at other times to cover changes of scenery or to introduce each masque. These miniature masques usually introduced allegorical characters although occasionally (the conjurer Ismeron is an example) Purcell used characters from the play.

It has not been determined when the first performance took place. Some authorities claim that it was before the composer’s death in November 1695, even though the *Masque of Hymen* of the last act, which gives the semi-opera a happy ending (the play was a tragedy), was written by Henry Purcell’s brother Daniel, which would imply a first performance after his death.

David van Asch

Such is the brilliance of Purcell’s genius that it is easy to forget he was not alone in rejuvenating English music after the Golden Age of the madrigalists. John Blow (c. 1648-1708), Matthew Locke (1633?-77), Henry Lawes (1596-1662), among a number of others were no less instrumental in raising English music once more to a remarkable pinnacle. Purcell did, however, more than any other, combining startling powers of invention with an all-round mastery of the musical genres in vogue at the time.

Henry Purcell came relatively late to dramatic music, writing scores for no less than forty plays in the last six years of his all too short life. Many required only an overture, curtain music (called ‘act-tunes’) and a couple of songs. The music for others, however, was much more elaborate, and these can reasonably be called semi-operas. It was a striking fact that despite the talent available, opera before Handel never established itself in England as it did in Italy, France and Germany. This was in part because a clear distinction was always kept between acting and singing, with the consequence that recitative, singing in a naturalistic, non-lyrical manner, was little appreciated by the public and little exploited by composers. It is also true that opera remained essentially independent of the court and official patronage, which favoured masques and stage plays. Significantly, Purcell’s one true opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, was possibly written for a girl’s boarding-school.

The Indian Queen was the last of Purcell’s semi-operas, the others being *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Bonduc* and *The Tempest*. The text of *The Indian Queen*, by John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard, had originally been staged with music by John Bannister in 1664. In 1695, for a revival at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Purcell was asked to write entirely new music.

The extravagant plot follows the fortunes of Montezuma, an adventurer in the service of the Ynca of

Peru. Having captured a Mexican prince, Acasis, in battle, Montezuma requests as a reward the hand of the Ynca's daughter, Orazia, in marriage. When this is refused, Montezuma deserts to the other side, attacks the Peruvians, and seizes the Ynca and his daughter. The plot thickens when the Mexican queen, Zempoalla, although jealous of his military success, conceives a passion for Montezuma, Acasis, meanwhile, having fallen in love with Orazia. As Montezuma repels her advances, Zempoalla consults a magician-priest, Ismeron. During an incantation, the God of Dreams dissuades him from looking into the future, but the queen, furious with Ismeron's temporising, threatens to burn all his temples if he does not find a charm to make Montezuma fall in love with her. The stratagem fails, and Montezuma is condemned to be sacrificed to the gods along with the prisoners of war. The final act takes place in the Temple of the Sun. The Ynca, Orazia and Montezuma are led in, but the sacrifice is interrupted by Acasis who tries to save Orazia. Acasis is himself cut down, and just then messengers arrive to announce that a revolution has broken out and that Montezuma is the rightful king of the Mexicans. In the ensuing disorder, Zempoalla stabs herself, the Ynca is released and Montezuma is free to wed Orazia.

The Indian Queen is prefaced by an overture, but the overture itself is preceded, as was the custom, by *First Music* (two airs for strings, [1]-[2]) and *Second Music* (two hornpipes, [3]-[4]) that were played as the audience took their seats.

The *Overture* ([5]) is followed by a *Prologue*, which, unusually, is entirely set to music. The curtain rises to reveal an Indian boy and a girl, Quivera, sleeping under two plantain trees. A *Trumpet Tune* ([6]) wakes the lad, who in turn wakes Quivera ([7]). A short instrumental prelude leads to Quivera's air ([8]) *Why should men quarrel here?* After the boy's recitative *By ancient prophecies we have been told* ([9]), Quivera joins him in a duo *If these be they, we welcome then our doom* ([10]).

The *Prologue* ends with a repeat of the *Trumpet Tune* ([11]), which can be repeated again as the First Act-tune.

The music for Act II consists of a *Masque of Fame and Envy*, staged before Queen Zempoalla, and having no place in the intrigue. The masque opens with an instrumental *Symphony* (*Largo – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*), ([12]), the first three sections of which Purcell had used the previous year as the introduction to his birthday ode for Queen Mary, *Come ye Sons of Art*. Fame's praise of the Queen ([13] *I come to sing great Zempoalla's story*) is taken up by the chorus. Envy and his two snaky assistants, whose interjections are most effectively limited to the word 'hiss', answer with *What flatt'ring noise is this?* ([14]). Fame's fearless assertion that *Scorned Envy, there's nothing here that thou canst blast* ([15]) results in Envy's retreat ([16], *I fly from the place*), followed by Fame's dismissive *Begone, curst fiends of Hell* ([17]). The masque concludes with a repeat of the opening solo and chorus (*I come to sing*, [18]).

Scenes of the supernatural were always a highlight both musically and visually of a semi-opera, and the incantation scene with the magician-priest Ismeron, Zempoalla and the God of Dreams, is no exception. After a triumphant dance celebrating Montezuma's victory over the Peruvians ([19]), Ismeron invokes the God of Dreams with one of Purcell's most famous bass airs: a recitative *Ye twice ten hundred deities* leads to *By the croaking of the toads* ([20]). The chromaticism, both melodic and harmonic, is wonderfully descriptive of the air of gloom and decay. An instrumental symphony depicts the rise of the god of Dreams ([21]) who warns *Seek not to know what must not be revealed* ([22]). The god descends ([23]) and a brilliant *Trumpet Tune* ([24] – actually a three-part instrumental episode) introduces a change of mood as two Aerial Spirits try to cheer the sombre Queen with *Ah, how happy we are!* ([25]) followed by two other Aerial Spirits and a chorus (*We the spirits of the air*, [26]). The Queen replies with another famous air, in French *rondeau* form, *I attempt*

from Love's sickness to fly in vain (27). A Third Act-Tune is played as the curtain descends (28).

The music for Act IV consists of just one song, *They tell us that your mighty powers* (29), sung by Orazia as she is held captive along with Montezuma. An instrumental version of this song can be used as an act-tune for the end of Act IV.

The final part of Purcell's music for *The Indian Queen* occurs at the start of Act V, during the sacrifice scene. An instrumental prelude (30) introduces a brief chorus *While thus we bow before your shrine* (31), followed by *You who at the altar stand*, sung by the High Priest with choral interjections (32). A splendidly chromatic choral fugue, *All dismal sounds thus on these off-rings wait* (33) rounds off the sequence.

The *Masque of Hymen*, for which Daniel Purcell wrote the music, was added to the operatic version of *The Indian Queen* in order to provide a celebratory ending. A *Trumpet Symphony* (34) is followed by a series of solos and duets commencing with songs of praise for Hymen (35-36). A doubting married couple have to be encouraged by him to look on the bright side of life (37-39). Cupid offers to make the joys of wedlock last and his followers extol the *heroes that delight in arms to put on love's chains*. Another fulgent *Trumpet Air* (43) leads to the final chorus in praise of Montezuma, *Let loud renown with all her thousand tongues* (45).

Jeremy Drake

The Scholars Baroque Ensemble

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 latter 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 Bach's *St John Passion*, Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers*, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Handel's *Messiah* and *Acis and Galatea*, all of which have been recorded for Naxos. Performances of 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 seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Sopranos Kym Amps, Anna Crookes
Countertenors Angus Davidson, David Gould
Tenors Robin Doveton, Julian Podger
Basses David van Asch, Adrian Peacock

Violins Pauline Nobes, William Thorp
Viola Jane Norman
Bass violin Jan Spencer
Oboes Michael Niesemann, Mark Baigent
Recorders Nancy Hadden, Abigail Graham
Trumpet Stephen Keavy
Bassoon Frances Eustace
Theorbo/Guitar Lynda Sayce
Harpisichord Terence Charlston

Artistic Co-ordinator David van Asch

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|-------------|-----------|--|-------------|
| 1 | First Music – First Aire | 1:28 | 11 | Trumpet Tune | 0:41 |
| 2 | First Music – Second Aire | 1:05 | | ACT II – The Masque of Fame and Envy | |
| 3 | Second Music – First Aire | 1:01 | | Fame – Robin Doveton • Envy – David van Asch | |
| 4 | Second Music – Second Aire (Hornpipe) | 0:53 | | Zempoalla is seated on the throne, frowning upon her attendants. Fame and his chorus bravely sing Zempoalla's praises while Envy and his snake assistants allude to Montezuma. | |
| 5 | Overture | 3:35 | 12 | Symphony | 4:06 |
| | PROLOGUE AND ACT I | | 13 | Solo (Fame) & Chorus: I come to sing | 1:16 |
| | Boy – Angus Davidson • Girl – Anna Crookes | | | <i>I (we) come to sing great Zempoalla's story</i> | |
| | The curtain rises and an Indian Boy and Girl are discovered sleeping under two Plantain trees. During a tune expressing alarm the Boy wakes and sings. | | | <i>W hose beauteous sight</i> | |
| | | | | <i>So charming bright</i> | |
| | | | | <i>Outshines the lustre of glory.</i> | |
| 6 | Trumpet Tune | 0:39 | 14 | Trio (Envy & two assistants): | |
| 7 | Solo (Boy): Wake, Quivera, wake | 2:24 | | What flatt'ring noise | 0:52 |
| | <i>Wake, Quivera, wake; our soft rest must cease,</i> | | | <i>What flatt'ring noise is this,</i> | |
| | <i>And fly together with our country's peace;</i> | | | <i>At which my snakes all hiss?</i> | |
| | <i>No more must we sleep under plantain shade,</i> | | | <i>I hate to see fond tongues advance</i> | |
| | <i>Which neither heat could pierce nor cold invade;</i> | | | <i>High as the Gods the slaves of chance.</i> | |
| | <i>Where bount'ous nature never feels decay,</i> | | 15 | Solo (Fame): Scorn'd Envy | 0:58 |
| | <i>And opening buds drive falling fruits away</i> | | | <i>Scorn'd Envy, here's nothing that thou canst blast:</i> | |
| 8 | Solo (Girl): Why should men quarrel? | 1:26 | | <i>Her glories are too bright to be o'ercast.</i> | |
| | <i>Why should men quarrel here, where all possess</i> | | 16 | Solo (Envy): I fly from the place | 1:16 |
| | <i>As much as they can hope for by success?</i> | | | <i>I fly from the place where flattery reigns.</i> | |
| | <i>None can have most where nature is so kind</i> | | | <i>See those mighty things that before</i> | |
| | <i>As to exceed man's use, though not his mind.</i> | | | <i>Such slaves like gods did adore</i> | |
| 9 | Solo (Boy): By ancient prophecies | 0:50 | | <i>Contemn'd and un pittyd in chains.</i> | |
| | <i>By ancient prophecies we have been told</i> | | | <i>I hate to see fond tongues advance</i> | |
| | <i>Our land shall be subdued by one more old;</i> | | | <i>High as the Gods the slaves of chance.</i> | |
| | <i>And see that world's already hither come.</i> | | | <i>What flatt'ring noise is this,</i> | |
| 10 | Duet (Boy & Quivera): If these be they | 3:38 | | <i>At which my snakes all hiss?</i> | |
| | <i>If these be they, we welcome then our doom.</i> | | 17 | Solo (Fames): Begone, curst fiends of Hell | 1:05 |
| | <i>Their gentle looks are such, that mercy flows</i> | | | <i>Begone, curst fiends of Hell,</i> | |
| | <i>from thence,</i> | | | <i>Where noisome vapours dwell,</i> | |
| | <i>More gentle than our native innocence.</i> | | | <i>While I her triumph sound,</i> | |
| | <i>By their protection let us beg to live;</i> | | | <i>To fill the univers around.</i> | |
| | <i>They came not here to conquer but forgive.</i> | | | | |
| | <i>If so your goodness may your pow'r express;</i> | | | | |
| | <i>And we shall judge both best by our success.</i> | | | | |

- 18** Dance, Solo (Fame) & Chorus:
I come to sing great Zempoalla's story 1:56

ACT III

Ismeron – Adrian Peacock
God of Dreams – Kym Amps
Aerial Spirits – Angus Davidson, Robin Doveton
Another Aerial Spirit – Kym Amps
Zempoalla/Another Ariel Spirit – Anna Crookes
 After a triumphant dance celebrating the Indian's victory, Zempoalla finds the conjurer Ismeron in his 'dismal den' and recounts a dream she has had. Ismeron conjures up the God of Dreams but the God refuses to give an interpretation. The music, however, imparts an unspoken message: Zempoalla is doomed. The masque that follows is to divert Zempoalla's depression, the gloom is swept away by a *Trumpet Overture* and the Spirits encourage Zempoalla to forget about her love for Montezuma.

- 19** Dance 0:58

- 20** Solo (Ismeron):
You twice ten hundred deities 5:01

*You twice ten hundred deities,
 To whom we daily sacrifice;
 You pow'rs that dwell with fates below,
 And see what men are doom'd to do
 Where elements in discord dwell;
 Thou God of Sleep arise and tell
 Great Zempoalla what strange fate
 Must on her dismal vision wait.*

*By the croaking of the toad
 In their caves that make abode,
 Earthy dun that pants for breath
 With her swell'd sides full of death;
 By the crested adder's pride,
 That along the cliffs do glide;
 By thy visage fierce and black,
 By the death's head on thy back,
 By the twisted serpents plac'd
 For a girdle round thy waist,
 By the hearts of gold that deck
 The breast, thy shoulders and thy neck,*

*From thy sleeping mansion rise
 And open their unwilling eyes,
 While bubbling springs their music keep
 That use to lull thee to thy sleep.*

- 21** The God Of Dreams rises 1:11

- 22** Solo (God of Dreams): Seek not to know 3:07
*Seek not to know what must be reveal'd;
 Joys only flow where Fate is most conceal'd;
 Too busy man would find his sorrows more
 If future fortunes he should know before;
 For by that knowledge of his Destiny
 He would not live at all, but always die.
 Enquire not then who shall from bonds be free,
 Who 'tis shall wear a crown or who shall bleed.
 All must submit to their appointed doom;
 Fate and misfortune will too quickly come.
 Let me no more with pow'rful charms be prest,
 I am forbid by fate to tell the rest.*

- 23** The God Of Dreams descends 1:14

- 24** Trumpet Overture 2:40

- 25** Duet (Aerial Spirits):
Ah! how happy are we 2:05
*Ah! how happy are we,
 From human passions free,
 Those wild tennants of the breast
 No, never can disturb our rest.
 Yet we pity tender souls
 Who the tyrant Love controls.
 Ah! how happy are we,
 From human passions free.*

- 26** Duet (Another two Aerial Spirits) & Chorus:
We the spirits of the air 1:34
*We the spirits of the air
 That of human things take care
 Out of pity now descend
 To forewarn what woes attend.*

*Greatness clog'd with scorn decays,
 With the slave no empire stays.
 We the spirits...*

*Cease to languish then in vain,
Since never to be lov'd again.
We the spirits...*

- 27** **Solo (Zempoalla):**
I attempt from Love's sickness 3:23
*I attempt from Love's sickness to fly in vain,
Since I am myself my own fever and pain .*

*No more now, fond heart, with pride no more swell,
Thou canst not raise forces enough to rebel.
I attempt from Love's sickness...*

*For Love has more pow'r and less mercy than fate
To make us seek ruin and on those that hate.
I attempt from Love's sickness...*

- 28** **Third Act Tune (Rondeau)** 1:55

ACT IV

Orazia – Kym Amps

Orazia and her lover, Montezuma, are held captive by the villain Traxalla, who offers to spare the hero if Orazia will submit. Orazia sings of her love and torment.

- 29** **Prelude & Song (Orazia):**
They tell us that your mighty powers 6:05
*They tell us that your mighty powers above
Make perfect your joys and your blessings by Love.
Ah! why do you suffer the blessing that's there
To give a poor lover such sad torments here?
Yet though for my passion such grief I endure,
My love shall like yours still be constant and pure.*

*To suffer for him gives an ease to my pains
There's joy in my grief and there's freedom in
chains;*

*If I were divine he could love me no more
And I in return my adorer adore
O let his dear life the, kind Gods, be your care
For I in your blessings have no other share.*

ACT V

High Priest – Adrian Peacock

The Temple of the Sun, all of gold, is ready for the Sacrifice.

- 30** **Symphony** 0:34

- 31** **Chorus: While thus we bow** 1:13
*While thus we bow before your shrine,
That you may hear great pow'rs divine,
All living things shall in your praises join.*

- 32** **Solo (High Priest) & Chorus:** 1:16
You, who at the altar stand
*You, who at the altar stand
waiting for the dread command,
The fatal word shall soon be heard,
Answer then, is all prepar'd?
(Chorus: All's prepar'd.)*

*Let all unhallow'd souls be gone
Before our sacred rites come on
Take care that this be done.
(Chorus: All is done.)*

*Now in procession walk along
And then begin your solemn song.*

- 33** **Symphony & Chorus: All dismal sounds** 2:31
*All dismal sounds thus on these off rings wait,
Your pow'r shown by their untimely fate;
While by such various fates we learn to know,
There's nothing to be trusted here below.*

THE LAST ACT

Daniel Purcell (c. 1661-1717)

THE MASQUE OF HYMEN

Hymen – Adrian Peacock

Follower of Hymen – Kym Amps

Two married people – David van Asch

Anna Crookes

Cupid – Kym Amps

Cupid's followers – Robin Doveton

David van Asch

(Not in the original play and added to the opera version to provide a celebratory ending). The masque begins with songs of praise for Hymen, but two doubting married people have to be encouraged by him to look on the bright side of life. Cupid offers to make the joys of wedlock last and the followers of Cupid extol the heroes that delight in arms to put on love's chains. The final chorus is in praise of the hero, Montezuma.

[34] Trumpet Symphony 0:59

[35] Solo (Hymen): To bless the genial bed 1:14
*To bless the genial bed with chaste delights
 To give you happy days and pleasant nights,
 Lo, I appear to crown your soft desires,
 And with this sacred torch to consecrate Love's fires.*

[36] Solo (A follower of Hymen) & Chorus: 1:38
*Come, all, come at my call
 Come, all, come at my call,
 Heroes and lovers, come away,
 Come and praise this glorious day.
 Come, all, and sing great Hymen's praise,
 The god who makes the darkest night
 Appear more joyful and more bright
 Than thousands of victorious days.*

[37] Duet (Two married people): 0:43
*I am glad I have met him
 I am glad I have met him,
 Let me come at him,
 Bane of passion, pleasure's curse,
 Confounded inventor of better for worse.
 You told us indeed you'd heap blessings upon us,
 You made us believe you and so have undone us.*

*In railing, and wailing
 Lamenting, repenting,
 We pass all our days.
 What stomach have we to sing thy praise?*

[38] Solo (Hymen): Good people 0:33
*Good people, I'd make you blest if I could,
 But he that can do't must be more than a god;
 Although you think more perhaps you are curst
 I'll warrant you thought yourselves happy at first.*

[39] Duet (Two married people): My honey 1:06
*My honey, my pug,
 My feters, my clog,
 Let's tamely jog on
 As others have done,
 And sometimes at quiet, but oftner at strife,
 Let's tug (hug) the tedious load of married life.*

[40] Solo (Cupid): The joys of wedlock 2:42
*The joys of wedlock soon are past
 But I, if I please, can make 'em last.
 When love's a trade and hearts are sold,
 How weak's the fire, how soon 'tis cold.
 The flame increases and refines
 Where virtue and where merit joins.*

[41] Solo (One of Cupid's followers): 1:48
Sound the trumpet
*Sound, sound the trumpet; let Love's subjects know
 From Heav'n's high vault to Erebus below
 that from this hour their discords all shall cease
 Love that can only do't will give 'em peace.*

[42] Duet (Two of Cupid's followers): 1:07
Make haste to put on love's chains
*Make haste to put on love's chains,
 Ye heroes that delight in arms;
 Forsake fond honour's sardy charms
 And join your trumpets to our rural strains.*

[43] Trumpet Air 0:37

[44] Chorus: Let loud Renown 1:31
*Let loud Renown with all her thousand tongues
 Repeat no name but his in her immortal songs.*



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STEREO

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Henry
PURCELL

(1659-1695)

The Indian Queen

DDD

Playing
Time
78:37

The Scholars Baroque Ensemble

(Soloists, Chorus and Ensemble on original instruments)

1-5	Curtain Music and Overture	8:02
6-11	Prologue and Act I	9:38
12-18	Act II	11:29
19-28	Act III	23:08
29	Act IV	6:05
30-33	Act V	5:34
34-44	Daniel PURCELL (c. 1661-1717): The Masque of Hymen	13:58

Libretto in English included

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Engineer: Dave Harries
Music Notes: David van Asch and Jeremy Drake

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