

The Works of John Eccles

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Performance parts are available from the publisher.

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Rinaldo and Armida

Prologue

Since what is new, will likeliest entertain you,
With a new Prologue first, we'll strive to gain you.
The Prologue's so entirely new today,
It ne'er can serve for any other play.
Then all you sparks who have to Paris rid, 5
And there heard Lully's musical Armide;
And ye too, who at home have Tasso read,
This in precaution to you must be said;
Armida's picture we from Tasso drew, 10
And yet it may resembling seem to few;
For here you see no soft bewitching dame,
Using incentives to the amorous game,
And with affected, meretricious arts,
Secretly sliding into hero's hearts.
That was an error in the Italian muse, 15
If the great Tasso we're allowed t'accuse;
And to descend to such enervate strains,
The tragic muse with majesty disdains.
The great Torquato's heroine shall appear,
But proud, fierce, stormy, terribly severe, 20
Such as the Italian has Armida shown,
When by the world's disorder, she'd revenge her own.
To change Rinaldo's manners, we had ground,
Who in the Italian is unequal found.
At first he burns with fierce ambition's fire, 25
Anon he dotes like any feeble squire,
The mere reverse of all that's noble in desire.
Then in a moment leaves the lovesick dame,
And only burns, and only bleeds for everlasting fame.
In a just play such heroes ne'er have part, 30
For all that offends nature, offends art.
What we have changed, we leave to you to scan,
Yet judge with all the candor that you can;
So shall your pleasure be the writer's care,
Who for it neither time nor thought will spare; 35
Which we're not wanting now, to give this play its due,
To make it truly great, and truly worthy you.

Scene: The top of a mountain in the Canaries.

The action of the play begins with the beginning
of the Overture, which is a Trumpet Tune, supposed
to be played by the good Spirits who have the
conduct and care of the action, and the
guardianship of the persons concerned in it.

Act 1

*Scene: A delightful wilderness on the top of a mountain
in the Canaries. Overture with trumpets.*

Enter Urania, Ubaldo, and Carlo.

UBALDO: Thus heaven declares th'importance of our
enterprise,

While angels their ethereal trumpets sound,
To animate us in our glorious march.

URANIA: At length the labors of that march are o'er,
At length the sharpness of th'ascent is conquered; 5
And we through ways untractably abrupt
Have reached this towering summit of the mountain,
Where never mortal yet, by mortal force,
Was known t'ascend, from whose commanding
height

At once two worlds lie subject to our view. 10

UBALDO: By its transcendent beauty and its height,
This sure must be the paradise of nature.
O blest retreat! O fields beloved by heaven!
O island justly called the Fortunate,
And with high reason by the ancients thought 15
Th'Elysian seat of happy heroes' souls!

CARLO: But, O amazing height!
At what remote and what stupendous distance,
Yon tyrannizing main below,
Insults the foaming shore! 20

Ubaldo, see how very far beneath us
With flagging wings the painted meteors fly
Through all th'infernal regions of the air!
How far below, illustrious in its flight,
The nimble lightning scours along the sky! 25
And hark how far, how very far beneath us,
Th'exasperated thunder roars,
To plague the guilty world!

URANIA: But never storm disturbs this happy place,
The very pride and pomp of wanton nature, 30
The very darling of indulgent heaven;
Which still the sun, the world's great eye,
contemplates,

And never suffers interposing cloud
To bar th'eternal prospect; 'tis a scene
Not unbecoming of the glorious action, 35
Which heaven's almighty will has chosen you,
Its ministers t'accomplish; to this place
Armida's magic power conveyed Rinaldo.

Here the great champion of the Christian faith
Lies languishing and half dissolved in love. 40
The terror of the unbelieving world,
And of thy proud oppressors, O Jerusalem,
Is here become an impious woman's slave!
A woman, who, like Lucifer of old,
Of all the angels of her sex created, 45

The brightest and the nearest to divinity,
Is fallen and lost by her excessive pride:
And not contented with her native charms,
Holds guilty commerce with infernal spirits.
Here in th'embraces of his young enchantress 50
The blooming hero passes all his days,
And his luxurious nights in wanton joys,

As wanton as the wings of western winds,
 Whose spicy breaths throughout these flowery
 plains
 Maintain eternal spring. Him you must free, 55
 Or thou must still be enthralled, O sacred city;
 For on Rinaldo's conquering sword
 Thy destiny depends.

CARLO: The very place assists us in the action,
 The very place inspires magnanimous thoughts, 60
 As by the help of so sublime a station
 Here on the frontiers of the rolling skies,
 We stand and breathe, the borderers of heaven;
 So exalts our very souls, and lifts them
 As far above the level of mankind 65
 As here we walk above th'inferior world.

URANIA: So had it need, for dangers are t'ensue,
 Enough to shake the constancy of martyrs,
 And move the blest inhabitants of heaven.

CARLO: What greater dangers can ensue, 70
 Than what in reaching hither we surmounted?
 For, have we not by heaven's supreme decree
 Transgressed the bounds established by Alcides?
 Have we not insolently dared to plow
 The world's uncultivated waste, the ocean, 75
 And dauntlessly explored its dreadful wonders?
 And in ascending this ethereal mountain
 Stood firm against the fierce assaults of hell,
 Repelled more monsters than Alcides vanquished,
 And baffled furies, who in horrid shapes 80
 With stormy rage opposed our steep ascent?
 And can we now be capable of fear,

In the great cause of heaven? And in a place
 Intended for delight, and not for terror?
 URANIA: But yet remember, Carlo, that Alcides 85
 Who subdued monsters, triumphed over hell,
 Nay, and supponed heaven, became a slave
 To pleasure.

UBALDO: Things terrible are enemies to nature, Carlo,
 Declared and open enemies, 90
 And all that's great and noble in that nature,
 At their approach still rouses to resist them.
 But pleasure, though its secret foe,
 At least appears its friend.

CARLO: Hark! What enchanting sound salutes
 my ear? 95

URANIA: Ay, now the dangerous conflict must begin,
 For in this moment hell begins th'attack,
 For know thou hear'st no human sounds, the skill
 Of all that's exquisite in mortal man,
 Could ne'er produce such harmony, the work 100
 Of spirits which usurp th'ethereal air,
 Who formerly enjoyed sublimer stations,
 And so divinely touched imperial lyres
 As pleased, even him who turns th'harmonious
 spheres,
 And sweetly tunes the universe. But see 105
 How yonder fabric like a meteor rises,
The enchanted palace rises to music.
 Advancing through the skies its pompous front,
 To this enchanting symphony.

CARLO: Hark! Voices in the air.

Musical Entertainment No. 1

Song by one of Armida's spirits, while the enchanted palace is supposed at some little distance to rise.

♩ Symphony

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Spirit

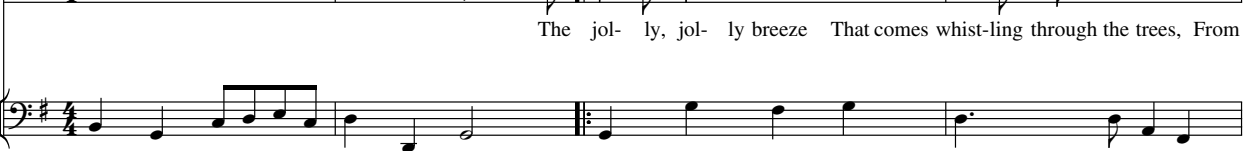
Basso continuo

5 3 6 4 5 3 4 2 6 5 6 6 6 [4]

170

Shep. (B) 

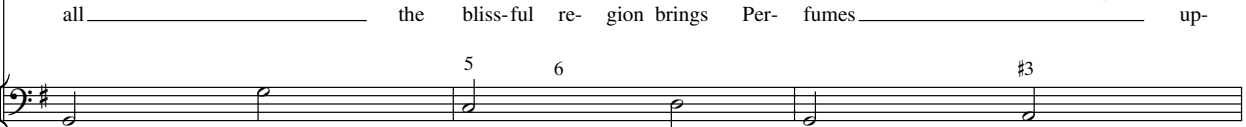
The jol- ly, jol- ly breeze That comes whist-ling through the trees, From

B.c. 

174

Shep. (B) 

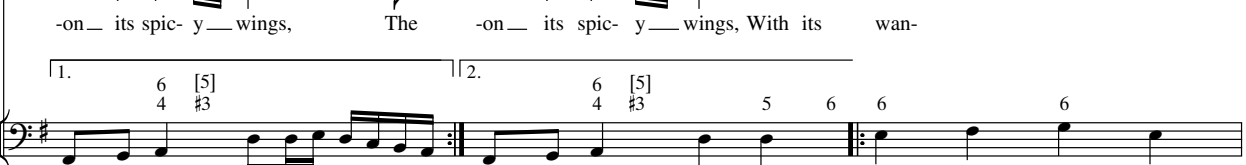
all the bliss-ful re- gion brings Per- fumes up-

B.c. 

177

Shep. (B) 

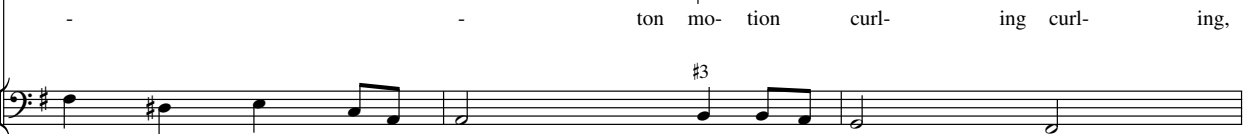
-on its spic- y wings, The -on its spic- y wings, With its wan-

B.c. 

180

Shep. (B) 

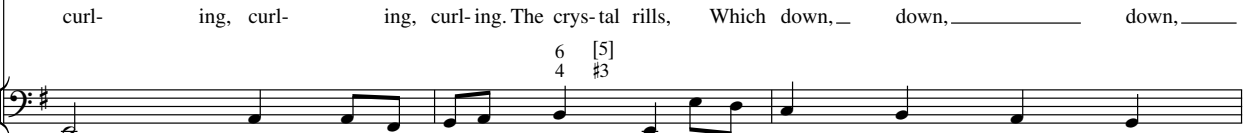
- ton mo- tion curl- ing curl- ing,

B.c. 

183

Shep. (B) 

curl- ing, curl- ing, curl-ing. The crys- tal rills, Which down, down, down,

B.c. 

186

Shep. (B) 

down, down the hills Run, run, run, run, run

B.c. 