

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 13 January 2025
7.30pm

Purcell: The Indian Queen

The Sixteen

Harry Christophers conductor

Sarah Sexton violin I solo

Sarah Moffatt violin I

Daniel Edgar violin II solo

Jean Paterson violin II

Nia Lewis violin II

Martin Kelly viola

Stefanie Heichelheim viola

Jane Norman viola

Joseph Crouch cello

Imogen Seth-Smith cello

Gavin Kibble cello

Alexandra Bellamy oboe I, recorder II

Sarah Humphrys oboe II, recorder I

Sally Jackson bassoon

Robert Farley trumpet

Eligio Quinteiro theorbo

Joy Smith harp

James Orford organ, harpsichord

Grace Davidson soprano

Alexandra Kidgell soprano

Daniel Collins alto

Mark Dobell tenor

Oscar Golden-Lee tenor

Jeremy Budd tenor

Ben Davies bass

Eamonn Dougan bass

Stuart Young bass

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum Z335 (1687)

Daniel Purcell (c.1664-1717)

The Masque of Hymen (pub. 1695)

Interval

Henry Purcell

The Indian Queen Z630 (1695)

To all lovers of music Z282 (1687)

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Most of the operas produced in late 17th-century London were old, more or less successful plays grandly re-purposed. New musical episodes were spliced in. Splendid scenes, costumes and choreography heightened the music's effect. Ticket prices doubled both to signal special-ness; and to pay for it. Since a single theatre company controlled the entire market from 1682 through to nearly the end of 1694, audiences unwilling to pay the premium had to go without opera at all. **Henry Purcell's** career-defining 'big three' – *Dioclesian* (1690), *King Arthur* (1691) and *The Fairy Queen* (1692) – were high-risk ventures only possible in this commercially advantageous but unstable funding environment.

In 1694, the 'United Company' split in two. Its leading performers walked out, opened a rival theatre and left less experienced former colleagues to carry on as best they could. Though Purcell may have been tempted to join the breakaways, contractual arrangements made with the United Company's proprietors in happier times prevented his doing so.

The Indian Queen took shape as this theatrical rebellion unfolded. Purcell composed most of its music in spring 1695, heading for a summer première. He worked within tighter financial constraints than he was used to, wrote for smaller forces, and fell ill before he had finished: hence his brother **Daniel Purcell's** involvement as substitute masque-composer towards the end. But constraints never affected the quality of Henry's music, just the scale on which it was conceived. Fitting the whole score to the capacities of available performers, he allowed them to shine – and made *The Indian Queen* into a regularly-revived success for which no excuses were necessary. Its all-sung prologue would have taken audiences by surprise (prologues then were almost always delivered by a single speaker), setting out a temptingly exotic musical stall even before the actors required for Act I, Scene I came on stage.

The Indian 'South American' Queen Zempoalla had her brother murdered so that she could seize power in Mexico. Her brother's wife and young son fled into exile. Now the Mexicans are at war with their Peruvian neighbours. Thanks to inspirational leadership provided by a young warrior called Montezuma, the Peruvians are winning. Nothing seems to be known about Montezuma's past (He is, of course, the murdered Mexican king's son).

The Inca of Peru promises Montezuma any reward he cares to name, but breaks his word when Montezuma asks for his daughter's hand in marriage (The pair are, of course, in love). To avenge this betrayal Montezuma switches to the Mexican side and leads it to victory. The Inca and his daughter are taken prisoner. Act II's Fame and Envy masque celebrates a triumph that Zempoalla owes entirely to Montezuma, warning her not to let it go to her head.

Zempoalla falls in love with Montezuma. In Act III she consults the conjurer Ismeron, hoping he will foretell a future in which Montezuma yields to her advances. This Ismeron conspicuously fails to do. He conjures up 'airy

spirits' to comfort Zempoalla but they make matters worse, claiming other-worldly imperviousness to messy human passions.

The solo song 'I attempt from love's sickness to fly' ventriloquizes Zempoalla's feelings at the start of Act III. 'They tell us that you mighty powers above' is (probably) an Act IV counterbalance allowing the Inca's daughter to express her feelings for Montezuma while both are in goal awaiting execution. Zempoalla will allow the couple to 'unite' only in death.

Act V opens with a solemn procession to the place where Montezuma, the Inca's daughter and the Inca himself will be put to death. News arrives in the nick of time: proof that Montezuma is the rightful king of Mexico, and a fittingly blue-blooded breeding partner for the Inca's daughter. In an unexpected act of magnanimity mixed with hopeless love, Zempoalla frees Montezuma then kills herself using a concealed dagger – despite promises of forgiveness from the Inca and everyone else should she choose to live on.

Although right has triumphed by the end of Act V, legitimate Mexican monarchy has been restored and all impediments to a dynastic match ending conflict between Mexicans and Peruvians have been cleared away, the emotional gear-shift forced on audiences by Daniel Purcell's final 'Masque of Hymen' still seems rather abrupt. It may have been commissioned for a revival in 1696 (Daniel's music first appeared in print that year), by theatre managers thinking that an extra dose of musical comedy would make the show easier to sell.

Tonight's concert opens with a performance of 'Sound the trumpet, beat the drum' (1687), the last of Henry Purcell's three welcome songs for King James II. Welcome songs marked the king's return to court in London after a period of holiday or other absence, in what by modern standards seems a ludicrously overblown way. Caesar and Urania, here, are James and his Queen Mary of Modena in easily-seen-through allegorical disguise. The grand chaconne placed at the mid-point of 'Sound the trumpet, beat the drum' re-surfaced in *King Arthur* several years later, and is much better known in that operatic context. In similar, time-saving spirit, Purcell recycled part of the overture to his 1694 Queen Mary birthday ode 'Come ye sons of art into The Indian Queen', using it to open Act II's Fame and Envy masque.

The concert ends with a brief, three-part catch, its words supposedly addressed 'To all lovers of music' by the London music publisher John Carr, directing customers to his shop. Though 'Carr' mocks the quality of products that he and his fellow publisher John Playford brought to the market, in real life both were admired for their enterprise and general integrity. They published Henry and Daniel Purcell, among others. Seventeenth-century lovers of music held them in high regard.

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Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum Z335

Symphony

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,
Caesar and Urania come.
Bid the Muses haste to greet 'em,
Bid the Graces fly to meet 'em,
With laurel and myrtle to welcome them home.

Crown the year and crown the day

Crown the year, and crown the day,
While distant shores their tribute pay,
While never-failing Thames shall glide,
With treasures and pleasures renew'd with each tide.
To Caesar all hail, unequal'd in arms!
To Urania all hail, unequal'd in charms!

Let Caesar and Urania live

Let Caesar and Urania live;
Let all delights the stars can give
Upon the royal Pair descend,
Let Discord to the shades be driv'n,
While earth and sky our song attend,
And thus our loyal vows ascend:
'O, O preserve 'em, Heaven!

What greater bliss can Fate bestow

What greater bliss can Fate bestow,
While Caesar rules these Isles
And bright Urania smiles?
The spheres above no better sway can show,
Jove is Heav'n's Caesar
Caesar Jove below.
With Plenty surrounding,
and loyalty sounding
lo paeans of joy,
We'll pay our devotion
To the Monarch of Britain and Lord of the Ocean.

Chaconne

While Caesar like the morning star

While Caesar, like the morning star,
Our British sphere shall grace,
No more alarms of rebel war
Shall Albion's beauteous soil deface.
His arms did first the rebel host confound;
His godlike mercy next the conquest crown'd.
His fame like incense mounts the skies,
While never, no, never more to rise,
Pride and Discord headlong go down,
Down to the deep Abyss below.

To Urania and Caesar delights without measure

To Urania and Caesar delights without measure,
With empire no trouble, and safety with pleasure;
Since the joys we possess to their goodness we owe,
'Tis but just our best wishes like that should o'erflow.

Daniel Purcell (c.1664-1717)

The Masque of Hymen

No. 1. Symphony

No. 2. To bless the genial bed - Come all, come at my call

Hymen

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.

A follower of Hymen

Come all, come all,
Come, come at my call,
Heroes and lovers, come away,
Come all, and praise this glorious day.

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Chorus

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.

No. 3. I'm glad I have met him

Two married people

He: I'm glad I have met him.

She: Let me come at him!

He: Bane of passion,

She: pleasure's curse!

Both: 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.

He: In railing

She: and wailing,

Both: Lamenting, repenting, we pass all our days,

What stomach have we to sing thy praise?

Hymen

Good people, I'd make you all blest if I could,

But he that can do't must be more than a god;

And though you think now perhaps you are curst,

I'll warrant you thought yourselves happy at first.

Two married people

She: My honey, my pug,

He: My fetters, my clog,

Both: Let's tamely jog on as others have done,

She: And sometimes at quiet,

He: But oft'ner at strife,

Both: Let's hug the tedious load of a married life.

**No. 4. The joys of wedlock soon are past -
Sound, sound the trumpet**

Cupid

The joys of wedlock soon are past

But I, if I please, can make 'em last.

Where 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.

Follower of Cupid

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.

Two followers of Cupid

Make haste, make haste to put on Love's chains,

Ye heroes that delight in arms!

Forsake fond honour's gaudy charms;

And join your trumpets to our rural strains

**No. 5. Make haste, make haste to put on
love's chains**

**No. 6. Trumpet Air - Let loud renown with
all her thousand tongues**

Trumpet Air

Grand Chorus

Let loud Renown with all her thousand tongues

Repeat no name but his in her immortal songs.

Interval

Henry Purcell

The Indian Queen Z630 (1695)

John Dryden and Robert Howard

First Music

Air

Hornpipe

Second Music

Air

Hornpipe

Catch (To all lovers of music) (1686-7)

(John Carr)

To all lovers of music, performers and scrapers,

To those that love catches, play tunes and cut

capers;

With a new catch I greet you, and tho' I say it that

shouldn't,

Like a fiddle, tis music, tho' the words are but

wooden.

But my brother, John Playford, and I shall present

you

E'er long with a book I presume will content you.

Tis true we know well the sale of good music,

But to hear us perform would make him sick or you

sick.

My maggotman Sam, at the first Temple gate,

Will further inform you, If not my wife Kate;

From between the two Devils near Temple Bar,

I rest, your friend and servant John Carr.

ACT I

Overture; Trumpet Tune

Prologue

Indian Boy

Wake, Quivera, our soft rest must cease,
And fly together with our country's peace;
No more must we sleep under plantain shade,
Which neither heat could pierce nor cold invade;
Where bounteous Nature never feels decay,
And op'ning buds drive falling fruits away.

Indian Girl

Why should men quarrel here, where all possess
As much as they can hope for by success?
None can have most, where Nature is so kind
As to exceed man's use, though not his mind.

Boy

By ancient prophecies we have been told
Our land shall be subdu'd by one more old;
And see! that world's already hither come.

Girl, Boy

If these be they we welcome then our doom.

Boy

Their looks are such that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence;
By their protection let us beg to live:
They come not here to conquer, but forgive.

Girl, Boy

If so your goodness may your power express,
And we shall judge both best by our success.

Trumpet Tune

ACT II

Symphony

Fame and chorus

I come to sing great Zempoalla's story
Whose beauteous sight, so charming bright,
Outshines the lustre of glory.

Envy and two followers

What flatt'ring noise is this,
At which my snakes all hiss?
At which my snakes all hiss?
High as the Gods the slaves of chance.

Fame

High as the Gods the slaves of chance.
Scorn'd Envy, here's nothing that thou canst blast:

Envy and followers

I fly from the place where flattery reigns;
See those mighty things that before
Such slaves like gods did adore,
Contemn'd and unpitied in chains.
I fly from the place where flattery reigns;
I hate to see fond tongues advance
High as the Gods the slaves of chance.
What flattering noise is this,
At which my snakes all hiss?

Fame

Begone, curst fiends of Hell,
Sink down, where noisome vapours dwell,
While I her triumph sound,
To fill the universe around.

Chorus

We come to sing great Zempoalla's story ...

ACT III

Ismeron

You twice ten hundred deities
To whom we daily sacrifice,
To whom we daily sacrifice,
Ye pow'rs that dwell with fates below
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 adders' pride
That along the cliffs do glide;
By their visage fierce and black;
By death's head on their back;
By the twisted serpents plac'd
For a girdle round thy waist;
By the hearts of gold that deck
Their breast, thy shoulders and thy neck:
From thy sleeping mansion rise
And open their unwilling eyes;
While bubbling springs their music keep,
That used to lull thee in their sleep.

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Symphony: The God of Dreams rises

God of dreams

Seek not to know what must not 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 freed,
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 powerful charms be press'd:
I am forbid by Fate to tell the rest.

Trumpet Overture

Aerial spirits

Ah, how happy are we,
From human passions free!
Those wild tenants of the breast
Never can disturb our rest.
Yet we pity tender souls
Whom the tyrant Love controls.

Aerial spirits and chorus

We, the spirits of the air
That of human things take care,
Out of pity now descend
To forewarn what woes attend.
Greatness clogg'd with scorn decays,
With the slave no empire stays.
Cease to languish then in vain
Since never to be loved again.

Soprano solo

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.
For love has more power and less mercy than fate,
To make us seek ruin and of those that hate.

Third Act Tune: Rondeau

ACT IV

Air

ACT V

Chorus

While thus we bow before your shrine,
That you may hear, great pow'rs divine,
All living things shall in your praises join.

High priest

You who at the altar stand
Waiting for the dread command,
The fatal word shall soon be heard:
Answer then, is all prepared?

Chorus

- All's prepared.

High priest

Let all unhallow'd souls be gone
Before our sacred rites come on;
Take care that this is also done.

Chorus

- All is done.

High priest

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

Chorus

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.

They tell us that you mighty powers above

4th Act Tune

**Prelude and Chorus: While thus we bow
before your shrine**

You who at the altar stand

Prelude

**All dismal sounds thus on these off'rings
wait**

Air

We the spirits of the air

We, the spirits of the air
That of human things take care,
Out of pity now descend
To forewarn what woes attend.
Greatness clogg'd with scorn decays,
With the slave no empire stays.
Cease to languish then in vain
Since never to be loved again.

Duet and Quartet: Ah! Ah! How happy are
we!

I attempt from Love's sickness to fly

Why should men quarrel

Ye twice ten hundred deities

1st Music (Air and Hornpipe)

2nd Music (Air and Hornpipe)

Overture (Grave and Canzon)

Trumpet tune

Wake Quivera, wake

Prelude

Symphony

I come to sing great Zempoalla's story

Trio: What flatt'ring noise is this

Trumpet tune

Symphony

Dance

2nd Act Music (Trumpet tune reprise)

No. 1. Dance

No. 3. Symphony

No. 4. Seek not to know what must not be
reveal'd

No. 5. Trumpet Overture (Canzon and
Adagio)

No. 8. 3rd Act Tune (Rondeau)

To all lovers of music Z282