



Georg Friedrich Händel

L'ALLEGRO

ED

IL PENSEROSO

(1740)

An Ode

Words by Charles Jennens

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

L'Allegro

Il Penseroso

Chorus

PARTE PRIMA

1. *Accompagnato*

L'Allegro (tenor)

Hence loathed Melancholy
Of Cerberus, and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

2. *Accompagnato*

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Hence vain deluding joys,
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

3. *Air*

L'Allegro (soprano)

Come, thou goddess fair and free,
In Heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne;
And by men heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister-graces more,
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.

4. *Air*

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Come rather, goddess sage and holy;
Hail, divinest Melancholy,
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight;
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore.

5. Air and Chorus

L'Allegro (tenor)

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek,
Sport, that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter, holding both his sides.

Chorus

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity;
Sport, that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter, holding both his sides.

6. Air and Chorus

L'Allegro (tenor)

Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe.

Chorus

Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe.

7. Accompagnato

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure;
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train.

8. Arioso

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.

9. Accompagnato and Chorus

Il Penseroso (soprano)

There held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm peace, and quiet,
Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the muses in a ring
Round about Jove's altar sing.

Chorus

Join with thee calm peace, and quiet,
Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet.

10. Recitative

L'Allegro (tenor)

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But haste thee, Mirth, and bring with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.

L'Allegro (soprano)

And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

11. Air

L'Allegro (soprano)

Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprieved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night;

Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow.
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

12. Accompagnato

Il Penseroso (soprano)

First, and chief, on golden wing,
The cherub Contemplation bring;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night.

13. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
I woo to hear thy even-song.
Or, missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wand'ring moon
Riding near her highest noon.
Sweet bird. . . *da capo*

14. Recitative

L'Allegro (bass)

If I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

15. Air

L'Allegro (bass)

Mirth, admit me of thy crew!
To listen how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.

16. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging slow, with sullen roar;
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.

17. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano or tenor)

Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.

18. Recitative

L'Allegro (tenor)

If I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!

19. Air

L'Allegro (tenor or soprano)

Let me wander, not unseen
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green.
There the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles over the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

20a. Air

L'Allegro (soprano)

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
While the landscape round it measures
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray.

21. *Accompagnato*

L'Allegro (soprano or bass)

Mountains, on whose barren breast
The lab'ring clouds do often rest:
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide
Tow'rs and battlements it sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees.

20a. *Air*

L'Allegro (soprano)

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
While the landscape round it measures
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray.

22. *Air and Chorus*

L'Allegro (soprano or tenor)

Or let the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the checquer'd shade.

Chorus

And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail.
Thus past the day, to bed they creep,
By whisp'ring winds soon lull'd asleep.

PARTE SECONDA

23. *Accompagnato*

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Hence, vain deluding joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred;

How little you bestead,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys.
Oh, let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tow'r,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato to unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions hold
Th'immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.

24. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

25. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)
But oh, sad virgin, that thy pow'r
Might raise Musaeus from his bow'r,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheeks
And made hell grant what love did seek.

26. Recitative

Il Penseroso (soprano)
Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
Till unwelcome morn appear.

27. Solo & Chorus

Il Penseroso (bass)
Populous cities please me then,
And the busy hum of men.

Chorus

Populous cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold;
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
Populous cities. . . *da capo*

28. Air

L'Allegro (soprano or tenor)

There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask, and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.

29. Accompagnato

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Me, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me goddess bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves;
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look.

30. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)

Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
Which at her flow'ry worth doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.

Then as I wake, sweet music breathe,
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th'unseen genius of the wood.

31. Air

L'Allegro (tenor)

I'll to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

32. Air

L'Allegro (soprano)

And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out;
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.

33. Air

L'Allegro (soprano)

Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumbers on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flow'rs, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice.

34. Air and Chorus

L'Allegro (tenor)

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

Chorus

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee we mean to live.

35. Recitative

Il Penseroso (soprano)

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high-embowed roof,
With antic pillars' massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

36. Solo & Chorus

Chorus

There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voic'd quire below,
In service high and anthems clear!

Il Penseroso (soprano)

And let their sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes!

37. Air

Il Penseroso (soprano)

May at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of ev'ry star that Heav'n doth show,
And ev'ry herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.

38. Solo and Chorus

Il Penseroso (soprano)

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

Chorus

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And we with thee will choose to live.