

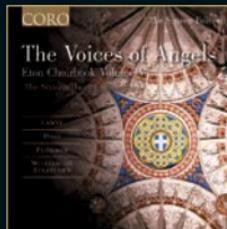
CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

Other Sixteen Edition recordings available on Coro



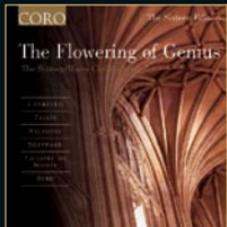
Iste Confessor
The Sacred Music of
Domenico Scarlatti
CORI6003
*"Outstanding... astonishing
stylistic and expressive range"*
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE



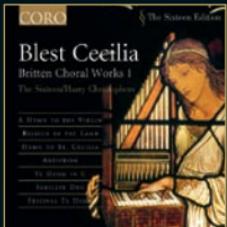
The Voices of Angels
Music from the Eton Choirbook, Volume V
CORI6002

*"Foreigners were
astonished at the quality
of English choirs.
Theirs were "the voices
of angels", a tribute
which The Sixteen
deserves no less today."*
CLASSIC CD

The Flowering of Genius



Guerrero, Tallis,
Byrd, Victoria
CORI6001
*"The Sixteen's sound
is distilled, ethereal -
hard to imagine a more
sublime performance."*
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE



Blest Cecilia

Britten Volume 1
CORI6006
*"A disc of exceptional
quality, reinforcing the
Sixteen's reputation as
one of the finest choirs
of our day."*
GRAMOPHONE

Gramophone magazine said of The Sixteen's recordings
"This is what recording should be about...excellent performances and recorded sound...beautiful and moving."

To find out more about The Sixteen, concerts, tours, and to buy CDs, visit www.thesixteen.com CORI6005

CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

The Fairy Queen

Henry Purcell - 2 CD

The Sixteen/Harry Christophers
The Symphony of Harmony and Invention

ANN MURRAY

LORNA ANDERSON

GILLIAN FISHER

JOHN MARK AINSLEY

MICHAEL CHANGE

RICHARD SUART

IAN PARTRIDGE

MICHAEL GEORGE



§ The Sixteen

The Fairy Queen

AN OPERA IN 5 ACTS
BY HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

Libretto by an anonymous author after William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

THE SIXTEEN
The Symphony of Harmony and Invention

Conductor
Harry Christophers

Ever since I was a boy, I have had a passion for the music of Henry Purcell but there was one particular period of my life that made me aware of his real greatness.

Soon after I left university, I was lucky enough to become a member of English Music Theatre, successor to the disbanded English Opera Group, which was the brainchild of conductor, Stuart Bedford and producer, Colin Graham under the presidency of Benjamin Britten. It was to prove an exciting existence and one production, in particular, that delighted audiences all over the world was Purcell's Fairy Queen. I knew then that one day I wanted to perform this opera myself.

Purcell's use of the English language is second to none but it is the magic, wit and sensuality of his music that captured my imagination. And so we spent the happiest week of our recording life in St Bartholomew's Orford (a church often used by Britten on his beloved Suffolk coast), resulting in this recording of Purcell's Fairy Queen. For everyone concerned with this project, fond memories abound.



Harry Christophers

Conductor
Harry Christophers

Soprano 1
Gillian Fisher

Soprano 2
Lorna Anderson

Soprano 3
Ann Murray

Alto
Michael Chance

Tenor 1
John Mark Ainsley

Tenor 2
Ian Partridge

Bass 1
Richard Suart

Bass 2
Michael George

Solo violins
David Woodcock, William Thorp

Cello & bass viol continuo
Mark Caudle

Theorbo & baroque guitar
Robin Jeffrey

Harpichord continuo
Paul Nicholson

Soprano
Fiona Clarke, Libby Crabtree, Ruth Dean,
Sally Dunkley, Lynne Hirst, Carys Lane

Alto
Robin Barda, Michael Lees,
Philip Newton, Christopher Royall

Tenor
Simon Berridge, Peter Burrows,
Philip Daggett, Duncan MacKenzie

Bass
Simon Birchall, Robert Evans,
Timothy Jones, Simon Preece

Violin
David Woodcock (Leader), William Thorp,
Theresa Caudle, Marc Ashley Cooper,
James Ellis, Stefanie Heichelheim,
Jean Paterson, Pauline Smith

Viola
Jane Norman, David Brooker

Cello & bass viol
Mark Caudle, Katherine Sharman

Recorder
Marion Scott, Barnaby Robson

Oboe
Catherine Latham, Cherry Baker

Bassoon
Michael Brain

Harpichord
Paul Nicholson

Trumpet
Crispian Steele-Perkins, David Blackadder

Timpani
Benedict Hoffnung

The Fairy Queen

CD1

FIRST MUSICK

1 PRELUDE

2 HORNPIPE

SECOND MUSICK

3 AIR

4 RONDEAU

5 OVERTURE

ACT ONE

The opera begins in the palace of the Duke. Egeus enters dragging in his daughter Hermia, and Lysander who is in love with her, to be judged before the Duke. It emerges that Egeus wants to marry Hermia to a young man called Demetrius, but Hermia who requites Lysander's love refuses to obey him. An ancient law decrees that a daughter must marry the man her father chooses or end her days in a nunnery. Egeus requests the Duke to enforce the law and oblige Hermia to marry Demetrius. In fact, Demetrius has already been betrothed to Helena, a friend of Hermia's but has forsaken her declaring that he no longer loves Helena but Hermia.

Lysander pleads his love for Hermia before the Duke but the latter decrees that he must yield to the law: Hermia must either marry Demetrius the next day, according to her father's will, or enter a convent. Left alone, Lysander and Hermia resolve to flee the city. Lysander knows of a place outside Athenian jurisdiction where they can be married. They decide to meet after nightfall and leave together. As they are parting to prepare for their flight, they meet Helena and tell her of their plan. When they have left Helena decides to tell Demetrius of their flight, thinking that she will thereby persuade him to resign himself to the situation and win back his love.

Unknown to everyone, several tradesmen of the town plan to bring themselves into favour by putting on a play for Hermia's wedding.

Their choice falls upon "The Tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe", hardly the most appropriate piece for the occasion, but in the hands of the ignorant clowns the dramatic tale of the two lovers driven to suicide becomes a hilarious comedy. They meet at the house of Quince, the carpenter, to decide on the parts each will play. Bottom, the weaver, is the most overbearing of them all and so eager to be the star that he wants to play all the parts himself. He is given the part of Pyramus but is vexed when he learns that Pyramus is a lover: he would have preferred him to be a hero or a tyrant. On hearing that Thisbe is a female part he wants to play her too, and demonstrates in a falsetto voice that he is capable of expressing tender passion. But the others will not have it and Flute, the bellowsmender, will play Thisbe. Later on Bottom finds out that there is a lion in the play and terrifies his companions with his roars. Horrified, they all try to convince him to play Pyramus. After endless palavering they finally make up their minds and everyone goes home to learn his part, agreeing to meet that same night in a wood outside Athens for a private rehearsal.

Meanwhile, Titania, the Fairy Queen, has come to this very wood fleeing from her husband Oberon. The King of the Fairies is in a jealous rage because Titania intends keeping a young orphaned Indian boy whose mother had been one of her ladies.

6 DUET (Ann Murray, Michael George)

Come, come, 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 ourselves we'll lay;
Our days in harmless sport shall pass,
Thus time shall slide away.

*Enter Fairies leading in three Drunken Poets.
One of them is blindfolded.*

7 SCENE OF THE DRUNKEN POET

BLINDFOLDED POET (Richard Suart),
FAIRIES (Gillian Fisher, Lorna Anderson)

BLINDFOLDED POET

Fill up the bowl, then,
fill up the bowl, then ...

FIRST FAIRY AND CHORUS

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.

SECOND FAIRY AND CHORUS

About him go, so, so,
Pinch the wretch from top to toe;
Pinch him forty, forty times,
Pinch till he confess his crimes.

POET

Hold, you damned tormenting punk,
I do confess.

FAIRIES

What, what?

POET

Hold, you damned tormenting punk,
I do 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.

CHORUS

Pinch him, pinch him for his crimes,
His nonsense and his dogrel rhymes.

POET

Hold! Oh! oh! oh!

FAIRIES

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 boys
I'll write a sonnet in thy praise.

CHORUS

Drive'em hence away, away;
Let'em sleep till break of day.

The Indian boy is asleep in Titania's arms when a fairy enters to tell her that Oberon has sent Puck to watch over the boy. Titania thereupon hides him in an underground cavern and furiously leaves to confront Oberon.

8 FIRST ACT TUNE: JIG

ACT TWO

Puck encounters one of Titania's fairies in the wood and learns that the Fairy Queen will keep her revels there tonight. Knowing that Oberon too intends coming to the forest, Puck warns the fairy to dissuade the Queen. But hardly has he finished speaking than both Titania and Oberon enter and find themselves face to face. Titania accuses Oberon of infidelity and taunts him with having come to Athens only to amuse himself at Hermia's wedding. Oberon reports that she is really in love with the young Indian boy, but promises to mend his ways if she will give him the boy. Titania disdainfully refuses and leaves Oberon in a towering rage. He vows revenge for the insult. He shows Puck a little western flower the juice of which, laid upon the sleeping eyelids of a man or woman, will make him or her fall in love with the first person seen upon waking. Oberon wishes to use the juice of this flower to humiliate Titania and sends Puck to fetch it for him. Demetrius comes running into the wood pursued by Helena. Oberon secretly observes them. Helena has told Demetrius of Hermia's plan to flee with Lysander and Demetrius has rushed into the wood to find them. He is furious that Helena has followed him. When she proclaims her love for him he answers her in scorn and runs out, dodging among the trees to escape her, but she chases after him. Oberon who has seen and heard everything feels that

Demetrius's treatment of Helena is unjust and decides to use the juice of the flower on him so that he will fall in love with Helena again. Puck returns with the flower and Oberon orders him to seek out Demetrius who he describes by his apparel. He tells Puck to place a few drops of the juice in Demetrius's eyes. He then goes in search of Titania. Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, Titania and her fairies have begun their revels.

9 TENOR SOLO (John Mark Ainsley)

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.

10 PRELUDE

CHORAL TRIO

May the god of Wit inspire
The sacred Nine to bear a part;
And the blessed heavenly choir
Show the Utmost of their art;
While Echo shall in sounds remote
Repeat each note, each note, each note.

Echo

11 CHORUS

Now join your warbling voices all.

12 SOPRANO SOLO (Lorna Anderson)

CHORUS

Sing while we trip it upon the green;
But no ill vapours rise or fall,
Nothing offend our fairy Queen.

Dance of Fairies

Titania lies down and orders them to sing her to sleep.

Enter Night, Mystery, Secrecy and Sleep and their Attendants.

13 NIGHT (Gillian Fisher)

See, even Night herself is here
To favour your design;
And all her peaceful train is near,
That men to sleep incline.
Let noise and care,
Doubt and despair,
Envy and spite
(The fiend's delight)
Be ever banish'd hence.
Let soft repose
Her eyelids close,
And murmuring streams
Bring pleasing dreams;
Let nothing stay to give offense.

14 MYSTERY (Ann Murray)

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.

15 SECRECY (Michael Chance)

One charming night
Gives more delight
Than a hundred lucky days.
Night and I improve the taste,
Make the pleasure longer last
A thousand, thousand several ways.

16 SLEEP (Michael George)

CHORUS

Hush, no more, be silent all;
Sweet repose has closed her eyes,
Soft as feathered snow does fall!
Softly, softly steal from hence.
No noise disturb her sleeping sense.

17 DANCE FOR THE FOLLOWERS
OF NIGHT

Titania falls asleep and the fairies and elves vanish. Oberon steals into the glade and finds the sleeping Queen. He squeezes the juice of the flower on her eyelids, foreseeing that she will open them upon some vile creature and fall in love with it. After his departure Lysander and Hermia Enter. They have lost their way wandering through the wood and are so tired that they promptly fall asleep on the turf. Puck, still looking for Demetrius, comes upon them. He recognizes Lysander's clothes as those described by Oberon. So, taking Lysander for Demetrius, he pours the love-philtre into his eyes.

18 SECOND ACT TUNE: AIR

ACT THREE

Helena has lost track of Demetrius and wanders forlornly into the glade where she sees the sleeping Hermia and Lysander. Fearing that they are dead, she awakens Lysander. Puck's love-philtre instantly takes effect and he falls madly in love with her. When he rapturously declares his passion, poor Helena is utterly dumbfounded. She thinks he is making fun of her and rushes away from him. But Lysander, leaving Hermia asleep, goes after her, calling out his love. Hermia awakes. She has had a fearful nightmare in which a serpent was eating her heart away. She suddenly realises that she is alone and that Lysander has gone. Terror-stricken, she runs into the wood in search of her beloved.

The tradesmen now take possession of the clearing to begin their rehearsal. Several aspects of the story worry them. In the first place, Pyramus and Thisbe, whose meetings must be kept secret from their families, whisper their words of love through a chink in a wall. Another problem is that the lovers meet by moonlight. After deliberation, they decide to disguise Starveling, the tailor, as the wall, and Snout, the tinker, will represent Moonshine, with a dog, a bush of thorns and a lantern. As they are about to begin their rehearsal, Puck enters and decides to be an auditor. After the prologue, spoken by

Quince, in which the audience is told that the actors mean only to please, Pyramus (Bottom) and Thisbe (Flute) enter and whisper their love through Starveling's outstretched fingers that represent the cranny in the wall. They swear eternal love and try to kiss, but can only kiss the hole in the wall. Pyramus then suggests that they meet by night at Ninus's tomb where they may kiss to their hearts' delight. The lovers then go off. In the next scene Snout comes on as Moonshine and explain his strange appearance to the audience. Thisbe now enters to meet Pyramus before the tomb as agreed, but she is horrified to find a lion there instead of her lover. The lion, played by Snug the joiner, chases Thisbe, but she escapes, letting fall her mantle upon which the lion weeps before going off in search of something more succulent to eat.

When Pyramus enters he sees the crumpled mantle and concludes that the lion has devoured Thisbe. In despair he kills himself, just as Thisbe warily steals in. She now kills herself too, thus bringing the absurd play to an end. Puck, unseen by the actors, has enormously enjoyed their farce. Oberon, though, has ordered him to be sure that some vile creature be near Titania when she awakes and Puck decides to turn Bottom's head into that of an ass. Unaware of the transformation, Bottom continues to

strut about the glade, braying loudly. The noise rouses the Fairy Queen from her slumber and, as Puck had intended, she forthwith falls in love with the ass. Her passion for the hideous beast is so strong that, murmuring sweet words of love, she resolves to lead him to her bower. After their departure Oberon appears. Puck tells him what has happened and he rejoices at the success of his trick. At this moment Helena and Lysander run across the clearing and Oberon realizes that Puck has mistaken his man. He commands him to put matters right as soon as possible. Meanwhile Titania has reached her secret bower and starts to caress her beloved Bottom, blind to his ass's head.

The scene is a large forest. On either side is a long row of trees with a stream in the middle. Two rows of bushes stand on the banks of the stream, their tops forming an arch. Two large dragons form a bridge over the water with their arched bodies, through which two swans are seen on the stream in the distance.

19 SOPRANO SOLO (Ann Murray)

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.

CHORUS

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.

20 SYMPHONY WHILE THE
SWANS COME FORWARD

While the symphony is played the two swans come closer, swimming through the arches, and approach the bank. They are about to come alongside when they turn towards the fairies and dance with them. At this moment the bridge vanishes and the arched bushes stand upright. Four wild men enter and frighten the fairies away. They, too, now execute a dance before running off.

21 DANCE FOR THE FAIRIES

22 DANCE FOR THE GREEN MEN

23 SOPRANO SOLO (Ann Murray)

Ye gentle spirits of the air, appear!
Prepare, and join your tender voices here.
Catch and repeat the trembling sounds anew,
Soft, as her sighs and sweet as pearly dew.
Run new divisions, and such measure keep
As when you lull the god of Love asleep.

*Enter a couple of haymakers,
Coridon and Mopsa.*

24 DIALOGUE BETWEEN
CORIDON AND MOPSA
(Michael George, Michael Chance)

CORIDON

Now the maids and the men are making
of hay,
We've left the dull fools and are stolen away.
Then Mopsa, no more
Be coy as before,
But let's merrily, merrily play
And kiss and kiss the sweet time away.

MOPSA

Why, how now Sir Clown, what makes
you so bold?
I'd have ye to know I'm not made of
that mold.
I tell you again, again and again:
Maids must never kiss no men.
No, no, no, no, no, no,; no kissing at all;
I'll not kiss til I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Not kiss you at all?

MOPSA

No, no, no, no, no.

CORIDON

Why no, no, no, no?

MOPSA

I'll not kiss, til I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Should you give me a score
'Twould not lessen your store,
Then bid me cheerfully kiss
And take my fill of your bliss.

MOPSA

I'll not trust you so far, I know you too well;
Should I give you an inch you'd soon take
an ell.
Then lordlike you rule, and laugh at the fool.

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, fie!

CORIDON

You must not, you cannot,
you shall not deny.

25 DANCE FOR THE HAYMAKERS

26 A NYMPH (Gillian Fisher)

When I have often heard young
maids complaining
That when men promise most they
most deceive
Then I thought none of them worth
of my gaining,
And what they swore resolved ne'er
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 changed
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 perjured, 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.

27 DUET

(John Mark Ainsley, Michael George)

CHORUS

A thousand, thousand ways we'll find
To entertain the hours;
No two shall e'er be known so kind,
No life so blest as ours.

*After this happy entertainment Titania
takes Bottom to her couch.*

28 THIRD ACT TUNE: HORNPIPE

ACT FOUR

Oberon and Puck have found Demetrius asleep in the wood. Oberon pours the philtre on his eyelids in order that he should fall in love again with Helena. She enters the glade, still pursued by the love-sick Lysander. Helena is exasperated by his behaviour and while they are arguing Demetrius awakes. Naturally he immediately falls in love with Helena, to whom the situation has now become even more unbearable. Hermia enters, discovers that Lysander is pursuing Helena, and a violent quarrel breaks out among the four young lovers. Hermia realizes that Lysander has forsaken her for Helena and accuses the latter of having stolen him from her. Helena, on the other hand, finds herself loved by both young men and does not believe in the sincerity of either. Lysander and Demetrius accuse one another of spitefulness and treachery, and both of them want to marry Helena. All four of them hurl insults at each other and go off to find a place where they can fight it out. Puck is amused by the situation, but Oberon berates him for the mischief he has wrought and orders him to undo it by bringing the

rightful lovers together again. Puck obeys, and, invisible to them, leads the four young people astray in the forest until they are exhausted and fall asleep. In the meantime, Oberon has decided to release Titania from the love-philtre's spell. He has recovered the young Indian boy he covets and when he awakens the queen she is reconciled with him. She remembers the events of the night as no more than a dream, but is appalled at the idea that she had been in love with an ass. Puck restores Bottom to his human shape and while he, like the four young lovers, is still asleep, the fairies celebrate the break of day.

The scene changes to a garden of fountains. A symphony is played as the sun rises. At first it is a reddish glow through the mist and as it rises it dispels the vapours and finally shines out in full splendour. The bright light reveals the gilded fountains ornamented with statues. A row of cypresses leads to a leafy bower. In front of the trees stand rows of marble columns and staircases with statues on pedestals. From the top of the stage large quantities of water cascade down the hill and fill the fountains on either side of the front of the stage. In the centre is a large fountain with a waterspout twelve feet high.

[1] SYMPHONY

Enter the four Seasons and their Attendants.

[2] AN ATTENDANT (Gillian Fisher)

CHORUS

Now the night is chased away,
All salute the rising sun;
'Tis that happy, happy day,
The birthday of King Oberon.

[3] DUET (Simon Berridge, Philip Daggett)

Let the fifes and the clarions and shrill
trumpets sound,
And the arch of high heaven the
clangour resound.

*(Enter Phoebus out of the clouds,
in a chariot drawn by four horses.)*

[4] ENTRY OF PHOEBUS

[5] PHOEBUS (Ian Partridge)

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 and vigour 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

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 (Lorna Anderson)

Thus – the ever grateful Spring
Does her yearly tribute bring;
All your sweets before him lay,
Then round his altar sing and play.

[8] SUMMER (Michael Chance)

Here's the Summer, sprightly, gay,
Smiling, wanton, fresh and fair,
Adorned with all the flowers of May,
Whose various sweets perfume the air.

[9] AUTUMN (Ian Partridge)

See my many coloured fields,
And loaded trees my will obey;
All the fruit that Autumn yields,
I offer to the God of Day.

10 WINTER (Michael George)

Next Winter comes slowly, pale,
meager and old,
First trembling with age, and then quivering
with cold;
Benumbed with hard frosts, and with snow
covered o'er,

Prays the sun to restore him,
and sings as before:

11 CHORUS

Hail! Great parent of us all,
Before your shrine the Seasons fall,
Thou who giv'st all Nature birth.

(On Oberon's orders Puck now applies another magic philtre to the eyelids of the still sleeping Lysander: when he wakes, his love for Hermia will have been re-kindled, and "all shall be well".)

12 FOURTH ACT TUNE: AIR

ACT FIVE

Day has broken and the Duke and Egeus are hunting in the forest. To their astonishment they come upon Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius and Helena lying asleep on the ground. They awaken them and ask them how they come to be there together. The young lovers describe what has befallen them during the night and Lysander and Hermia confess that they have fled from Athens. Demetrius now admits that his love for Hermia has vanished and he loves Helena as he did before. The Duke overrides Egeus's protests and pronounces the betrothal of Lysander and Hermia and of Demetrius and Helena. They then hasten away to Athens to celebrate the marriages. When they have left Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout and Starveling creep into the glade, hoping to find Bottom: without him they will not be able to present their play, and they are distressed at his disappearance. However, the hunting-horns have awoken Bottom who, upon seeing his friends, promptly wants to tell them of a dream he has had. But they interrupt him and tell him that the lovers are already at the temple about to be married, and they all hurry away to give their play during the nuptial festivities. The Duke can hardly believe the nocturnal adventures recounted by the lovers. Whereupon all the fairies appear to convince him.

13 PRELUDE

Juno appears in a chariot drawn by peacocks. While the Prelude is played they move forward, spreading their tails, which fill the middle of the stage.

14 JUNO (Gillian Fisher)

Thrice happy lovers, may you be
For ever, ever free
From that tormenting devil, Jealousy;
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 be ever chaste.

(Oberon commands the singing of the plaint which the nymph Laura once sang for her lost lover.)

15 THE PLAINT (Ann Murray)

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,
And I shall never see him more.

(Oberon now orders Puck to summon up the shades of night, in readiness for the coming nuptial revelry.)

As the stage slowly darkens a dance is presented. Then a symphony is heard and the stage suddenly lights up, discovering a Chinese garden. The architecture, trees, plants, fruits, bird and animals are quite unlike those we know in our part of the world. There is a large arch through which can be seen other arches with close-set trees and an arbour. Above, a hanging garden rises in terraces surrounded by pleasant bowers, with a variety of trees and numerous strange birds circling about. From the topmost platform the water from a spurting fountain falls into a large pool.

Enter Chinese men and women.

16 ENTRY DANCE

17 SYMPHONY

18 A CHINESE MAN
(John Mark Ainsley)

Thus the gloomy world
At first began to shine,
And from the power divine
A glory round it hurled,
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 extremes.
There was no room for empty fame,
No cause for pride, ambition wanted aim.

19 A CHINESE WOMAN (Ann Murray)

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.

CHORUS

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.

20 A CHINESE MAN

(John Mark Ainsley)

Yes, Xansi, in your looks I find
The charms by which my heart's betrayed;
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 sense
But kindness only gains the heart.

*Six monkeys suddenly appear from behind
the trees and dance.*

21 MONKEYS' DANCE

22 A CHINESE WOMAN (Gillian Fisher)

Hark! How all things with one sound rejoice,
And the world seems to have one voice.

23 A CHINESE WOMAN

(Lorna Anderson)

Hark! The echoing air a triumph sings,
and all around pleased cupids clap
their wings.

CHORUS

Hark! Hark!

24 TWO CHINESE WOMEN

(Gillian Fisher, Lorna Anderson)

Sure the dull God of Marriage does not hear;
We'll rouse him with a charm.
Hymen, appear!

CHORUS

Hymen, appear!

CHINESE WOMEN AND CHORUS

Our queen of night commands you not
to stay.
Appear, appear!

Enter Hymen

25 PRELUDE

26 HYMEN (Richard Suart)

See, see I obey.
My torch has long been out. I hate
On loose dissembled vows to wait,
Where hardly love outlives the
wedding night;
False flames, love's meteors, yield my
torch no light.

*Six China orange trees, growing in large porcelain
vases and laden with glowing fruit, rise from
under the stage.*

TWO CHINESE WOMEN

Turn then thine eyes upon those glories there,
And catching flames will on thy torch appear.

HYMEN

My torch indeed will from such
brightness shine;
Love ne'er had yet such altars so divine.

27 TWO CHINESE WOMEN
AND HYMEN

They shall be as happy as they're fair; Love shall
fill all the places of care.
And every time the sun shall display
His rising light,
It shall be to them a new wedding day,
And when he sets, a new nuptial night.

A Chinese man and woman dance.

28 CHACONNE

29 CHORUS

They shall be as happy ...

END

Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Antony Howell
Recorded at St. Bartholomew's Church, Orford, Suffolk
Recorded from the Novello Purcell Society edition at pitch A=415

Design: Richard Boxall Design Associates
Cover photograph: Matthew Power
Cover image: Reflection of the Mercury Fountain
in Tom Quad, Christ Church, Oxford.

CORO The Sixteen Edition
© The Sixteen Productions Ltd 2002
© The Sixteen Productions Ltd 2002
www.the-sixteen.com

For translations of the texts,
please contact coro@thesixteen.org.uk
or telephone 00 44 1869 331 544.