

LIBRETTO – ACIS AND GALATEA

by John Gay, with Alexander Pope and John Hughes

Act I

Sinfonia

Chorus

O the pleasure of the plains!
Happy nymphs and happy swains,
Harmless, merry, free and gay,
Dance and sport the hours away.
For us the zephyr blows,
For us distills the dew,
For us unfolds the rose,
And flow'rs display their hue.
For us the winters rain,
For us the summers shine,
Spring swells for us the grain,
And autumn bleeds the vine.
O the pleasure ...

Recitative

Galatea

Ye verdant plains and woody mountains,
Purling streams and bubbling fountains,
Ye painted glories of the field,
Vain are the pleasures which we yield;
Too thin the shadow of the grove,
Too faint the gales, to cool my love.

Air

Galatea

Hush, ye pretty warbling choir!
Your thrilling strains
Awake my pains,
And kindle fierce desire.
Cease your song, and take your flight,
Bring back my Acis to my sight!
Hush, ye pretty ...

Air

Acis

Where shall I seek the charming fair?
Direct the way, kind genius of the mountains!
O tell me, if you saw my dear,
Seeks she the groves, or bathes in crystal fountains?
Where shall I seek ...

Recitative

Damon

Stay, shepherd, stay!
See, how thy flocks in yonder valley stray!
What means this melancholy air?
No more thy tuneful pipe we hear.

Air

Damon

Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?
Heedless running to thy ruin;
Share our joy, our pleasure share!
Leave thy passion till tomorrow,
Let the day be free from sorrow,
Free from love, and free from care!
Shepherd ...

Recitative

Acis

Lo! here my love! Turn Galatea, hither turn thine eyes;
See, at thy feet the longing Acis lies!

Air

Acis

Love in her eyes sits playing,
And sheds delicious death;
Love on her lips is straying
And warbling in her breath!
Love on her breast sits panting,
And swells with soft desire;
No grace no charm is wanting,
To set the heart on fire.
Love in her eyes ...

Recitative

Galatea

Oh! didst thou know the pains of absent love,
Acis would ne'er from Galatea rove.

Air

Galatea

As when the dove
Laments her love,
All on the naked spray;
When he returns,
No more she mourns,
But loves the live-long day.
Billing, cooing, panting, wooing,
Melting murmurs fill the grove,
Melting murmurs, lasting love.

As when ...

Duet

Galatea and Acis

Happy we!

What joys I feel!

What charms I see!

Of all youth, thou dearest boy!

Of all nymphs, thou brightest fair!

Thou all my bliss, thou all my joy!

Chorus

Happy we!

What joys I feel!

What charms I see!

Act II

Introduction

Chorus:

Wretched lovers! Fate has passed
This sad decree: no joy shall last.
Wretched lovers, quit your dream!
Behold the monster Polypheme!
See what ample strides he takes!
The mountain nods, the forest shakes:
The waves run frightened to the shores:
Hark, how the thund'ring giant roars!

Recitative

Polyphemus:

I rage, I melt, I burn!
The feeble god has stabb'd me to the heart.
Thou, trusty pine,
Prop of my god-like steps, I lay thee by!
Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth;
In soft enchanting accents let me breathe
Sweet Galatea's beauty, and my love.

Air

Polyphemus:

O ruddier than the cherry,
O sweeter than the berry,
O nymph more bright
Than moonshine night,
Like kidlings blithe and merry!
Ripe as the melting cluster,

No lily has such lustre;
Yet hard to tame
As raging flame
And fierce as storms that bluster!
O ruddier ...

Recitative

Polyphemus:

Whither, fairest, art thou running,
Still my warm embraces shunning?

Galatea:

The lion calls not to his prey,
Nor bids the wolf the lambkin stay.

Polyphemus:

Thee, Polyphemus, great as Jove,
Calls to empire and to love,
To his palace in the rock,
To his dairy, to his flock,
To the grape of purple hue,
To the plum of glossy blue,
Wildings, which expecting stand,
Proud to be gather'd by thy hand.

Galatea:

Of infant limbs to make my food,
And swill full draughts of human blood!
Go, monster! bid some other guest:
I loathe the host, I loathe the feast!

Air

Polyphemus:

Cease to beauty to be suing,
Ever whining love disdaining.
Let the brave their aims pursuing,
Still be conq'ring, not complaining.
Cease to beauty ...

Air

Damon:

Would you gain the tender creature,
Softly, gently, kindly treat her:
Suff'ring is the lover's part.
Beauty by constraint possessing
You enjoy but half the blessing,
Lifeless charms without the heart.
Would you...

Recitative

Acis:

His hideous love provokes my rage;
Weak as I am, I must engage!
Inspir'd with thy victorious charms,
The god of love will lend his arms.

Air

Acis:

Love sounds th'alarm,
And fear is a flying!
When beauty's the prize,
What mortal fears dying?
In defence of my treasure,
I'd bleed at each vein;
Without her no pleasure
For life is a pain.
Love sounds ...

Air

Damon:

Consider, fond shepherd,
How fleeting's the pleasure,
That flatters our hopes
In pursuit of the fair!
The joys that attend it,
By moments we measure,
But life is too little
To measure our care.
Consider ...

Recitative**Galatea:**

Cease, O cease, thou gentle youth,
Trust my constancy and truth,
Trust my truth, and pow'rs above,
The pow'rs propitious still to love!

Trio**Galatea, Acis:**

The flocks shall leave the mountains,
The woods the turtle dove,
The nymphs forsake the fountains,
Ere I forsake my love!

Polyphemus:

Torture! fury! rage! despair!
I cannot, cannot bear!

Galatea, Acis:

Not show'rs to larks so pleasing,
Not sunshine to the bee,
Not sleep to toil so easing,
As these dear smiles to me.

Polyphemus:

Fly swift, thou massy ruin, fly!
Die, presumptuous Acis, die!

Recitative

Acis:

Help, Galatea! help ye parent gods!
And take me dying to your deep abodes.

Chorus:

Mourn, all ye muses! weep all ye swains!
Tune your reeds to doleful strains!
Groans, cries and howlings fill the neighb'ring shore:
Ah, the gentle Acis is no more!

Solo and Chorus

Galatea:

Must I my Acis still bemoan,
Inglorious crush'd beneath that stone?

Chorus:

Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!
Bewail not when thou canst relieve.

Galatea:

Must the lovely charming youth
Die for his constancy and truth?

Chorus:

Call forth thy pow'r, employ thy art,
The goddess soon can heal the smart.

Galatea:

Say what comfort you can find?
For dark despair o'er clouds my mind.

Chorus:

To Kindred gods the youth return,
Thro' verdant plains to roll his urn.

Recitative

Galatea:

'Tis done: thus I exert my pow'r divine;
Be thou immortal, tho' thou art not mine!

Air

Galatea:

Heart, the seat of soft delight,
Be thou now a fountain bright!
Purple be no more thy blood,
Glide thou like a crystal flood.
Rock, thy hollow womb disclose!
The bubbling fountain, lo! it flows;
Through the plains he joys to rove,
Murm'ring still his gentle love.

Chorus:

Galatea, dry thy tears,
Acis now a god appears!
See how he rears him from his bed,
See the wreath that binds his head.
Hail thou gentle murm'ring stream,
Shepherds pleasure, muses' theme!
Through the plains still joy to rove,
Murm'ring still thy gentle love.