

Spem

(or 'The School for Negentropy')

A Comic Opera in 2

Acts

Music by

Joe St.Johanser

Book and libretto (adapted from
Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis')

by Joe St.Johanser

CHARACTERS

Karen/Venus Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Lada/Adonis Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Fran Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Danny/Hound Baritone

Miles/The Boar Baritone.

Josh/The Stallion Baritone

Elizabeth. Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Sharon. Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Will Shakespeare The bard.

Opera chorus, children's chorus and dancers (Forest trees, lords and ladies, palfreys and hounds, furry animals, Sun, Moon, silver doves and a snakes head fritillary)

NOTES ON CHARACTERS

Karen/Venus A quiet, somewhat shadowy, middle aged, lower middle class Englishwoman of mousy appearance. Schoolteacher. Would be opera singer - or - the Goddess of Love, frighteningly powerful and rapacious.

Lada/Adonis Energetic, hardworking, artistic, intellectual, Slav (with accent). Practical computer programmer – works for Miles and adores him but feels she needs to take him down a peg - or -the beautiful boy, a stranger to love.

Fran/Guru conductor Quiet but oddball and quirkily rebellious. A faded Bohemian. Biology teacher. Friend of Karen. – or – Director of Spem. Renaissance music guru.

Danny/The Hound Chirpy, working class opportunist (with accent). Somewhat childish. A bright eyed fresh graduate in the University of Life. Genius nerd idiot savant programmer. Works for Miles.

Miles/ The Boar Energetic, middle-aged computer science professor preoccupied with work and practicalities. – or - fearsomely tasked slayer of Adonis.

Josh/The Stallion A pleasant, simple and happy man. Ever youthful. Life is passing him by. School teacher. Colleague of Karen. – or – mournful steed of Adonis.

Elizabeth Member of the chorus

Sharon Member of the chorus

Will Shakespeare The Bard. Declaims his mighty lines.

NOTES ON STAGING

The action takes place during the course of one long day at Womborne Summer Music Festival – held at a girl's boarding school vacated for the holidays – somewhere in England in the present day.

ORCHESTRA**2 Flutes****1 Oboe****1 Bass Clarinet in B flat****1 Tenor Saxophone in B flat****2 Horns in F****1 Trumpet in C****2 Trombones****1 Percussion – Timpani, Marimba, Chimes,
Triangle, Cymbals, Woodblock, Tam tam****1 Piano****2 Cellos****1 Double Bass.****Total – 15 Players.****COMPOSER'S NOTES**

Singer's staves - *bel canto* singing (normal noteheads); *Sprechstimme* Style A (triangle noteheads) - declamatory sung speech with shortened vowels and lengthened consonants, pitches maintained; Style B (diamond noteheads) - more speechlike than A, much expression (growls, croaks, squeals), pitches only approximate with much portamento; Style C (cross noteheads) - pure speech - poetry reading - pitches natural (not notated), but rhythm approximately as per notes.

String staves - generally on the string with much vibrato.

OVERTURE

Overture:

***** ACT 1 *****

SCENE 1

(curtain opens on the stage at Womborne Summer Music Festival – in the morning at the end of the first rehearsal run through of the Tallis opera. Cast are half in costume - especially forest trees, Miles, Josh and Karen - half in civvies. Big sign announces ‘Venus and Adonis - a Ballet Masque- Final Act’)

No. 1 Venus and Adonis last part of Third Movement):

(Venus is arising from sleep, Guru and Hound on stage and chorus as forest trees.)

Guru, Hound Anon she hears them chant it lustily,

And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.

(exit Venus)

As falcons to the lure away she flies;

The grass stoops not she treads on it so light;

(Hunting party dance entry - The Boar in the lead - until The Boar turns on the hunters - they flee but Adonis is slain and dies front centre)

And in her haste unfortunately spies

The foul boar’s conquest on her fair delight;

Which seen, her eyes, as murd’red with the view,

Like stars asham’d of day, themselves withdrew;

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hurt,

Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,

And there, all smoth’red up, in shade doth sit,

Long after fearing to creep forth again;

So at his bloody view her eyes are fled

Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

Venus ‘Alas poor world, what treasure had thou lost!

What face remains alive that’s worth the viewing?

Whose tongue is music now? What can’st thou boast

Of things long since, or any thing ensuing?

The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim;

But true beauty liv’d and died with him.

Chorus With this, she falleth in the place she stood,

And stains her face with his congealed blood.

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill’d

Was melted like a vapour from her sight, And in his blood that on the ground lay spill’d

A purple flower sprang up, check’red with white,

(A dancer dressed as a purple flower - snakes head fritillary - appears alongside the dead Adonis)

Venus ‘There shall not be one minute in an hour Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love’s flow’r.’

Chorus Thus weary of the world, away she hies,

(Venus exits in her chariot drawn by dancers as silver doves)

And yokes her silver doves; by whose swift aid

Their mistress mounted, through the empty skies

In her light chariot swiftly is convey’d,

Guru Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen

means to immure herself, and not be seen.

(quick bows)

(Claps from the chorus in the bows - everybody beaks up and chats in groups - Fran has been directing as well as taking a chorus role - interrupts with a few words)

Fran

Thank you everyone. That was just about acceptable as a rousing finale to Mr. Tallis’s opera. - though I think someone may have been feeding Miles’ computer mouse a bit too much cheese - the ladies worked hard - thank you ladies - in the hunting dance, but the men need a bit more spring. Try harder chaps. May I remind you there are a mere 10 hours left to the performance. Look at the energy the silver doves put in to it. Adonis - please lie still when you’re dead dear - the snake’s head fritillary girl is the one who’s supposed to do the dancing - you’re upstaging her something rotten with your twitching legs. Karen darling - you timed Venus’s exit very nicely *(Karen nods her thanks)*.

Miles, do you want to say anything?

Miles
(*costumed as the Boar*)

Thanks very much chaps. It was hard work uncovering this music - my computer had to work overtime trawling the little nooks and cobwebs of the internet - but I'm happy that all this work we did is justified and Thomas Tallis's wonderful opera ballet masque 'Venus and Adonis' can see the light of day again after 400 years of oblivion.

(*Karen gives Miles a hug - A few more claps from the chorus - Miles and Karen exit - curtains close with a few front of curtain and others come front*)

Lada

Fran can we have another run through? I'm still having trouble with the idea of being a beautiful boy seduced by Venus. I can't get used to it.

Fran

Keep trying my love. This is a modern version. You are beautiful - you're just not a boy. Relax. Think gin and tonic. You'll get there. We've got to do some auditions for our new recruit as The Hound replacement - this is Danny - he's a tenor (*enthusiasm from all*).

Sharon

Don't be too hard on him Fran!

(*chorus breaks up into groups that laugh and chat - Danny follows Miles behind curtain upstage and sings scales and arpeggios pitched by Miles's hum over chat and following dialogue*)

Sharon (*aside to Fran*)

I see Josh is still wandering about alone - on the loose.

Fran

I'm working on it. If I rush him he'll run a mile.

Sharon

A sort of spooky horse (*Josh is in costume as the Stallion*)

Fran

Exactly. And if I close in too quickly he'll jump off over the nearest five barred gate and head for the hills.

Sharon

Gently does it. You'll soon have a saddle and bridle on him!

Fran

He really is a lovely guy. We shouldn't joke. (*to Josh*) Come here Trigger! (*she grabs Josh's arm and exits with him*)

Lada (*aside to Elizabeth*)

What do you think of crazy opera by Miles? Do you think revered critics and our respected audience will like?

Elizabeth

I don't see why not. It should be a good laugh.

Lada

Oh it will be good laugh for sure. But will it be great musical event?

Elizabeth

Oh that too I'm sure... Now I'm suspicious. That bit we've just sung is the first time I've ever seen a Renaissance piece in 5 flats. What do you know that I don't? It is a real piece of music isn't it? Actually by Thomas Tallis - the guy that wrote the 40 part motet - what's it called - Spem in something?

Lada

Oh it's real all right. Spem in Alium. Spem is hope in Latin. Spem in Alium. Hope in another - or sperm and onions (*beat*) Latin teacher joke. It looks good to me - what I've seen. As far as music goes you have to remember that our computer edition is of fancy six part Court version - it's just a question of removing some of inevitable entropy.

Elizabeth

Inevitable what?

Lada

Entropy darling - inevitable increase in disorder among molecules that will in due course result in heat death of Universe - things fall apart - (*patiently*) the reason you can't put Humpty Dumpty back together again is because he is broken egg and time's arrow flies one way - (*more patiently*) - it's what happens to the contents of your handbag even though you pack it up so carefully (*still bafflement - but interrupted...*)

Miles (*comes
through - to all*)

Excuse me! Thank you ! I'm happy to say that
Danny has made it. We have a new Hound
(*enthusiasm from all*) . Take a break now. See
you all after coffee.

SCENE 2

(curtain opens on Karen's accommodation during coffee break. Karen and Fran are sitting with a percolator and a box of chocolates.)

Fran

Your coffee is miles better than that stuff they serve at break – well – how's your love life today? It seems to be going from bad to worse. I hope you're not going to let it spoil the group. Miles is a jolly good group leader, whatever kind of male chauvinist he is.

Karen

He's not a male chauvinist. *(exits)*

Fran

What exactly was it that he said to you about children? *(to Karen offstage)* There is a problem with Miles though isn't there? You've had that long suffering look for the last couple of weeks.

Karen *(from offstage)*

I haven't had a chance to tell you about it.

Fran

What?

Karen *(enters)*

I haven't had a chance to tell you about it yet. *(pause)* I hate to say it but you were right. He wants to perpetuate the bloody species - using my long suffering body.

Fran

Ouch!

Karen

Yes ouch, bloody, sodding ouch!

Fran

I'm sorry.

Karen

I've told him I'm not interested in all that stuff. He knows full well that I want a career and time for myself now that Tom and Jenny have finally flown the sodding nest.

Fran

But it makes no difference.

(pause)

Karen

He wants to have children.

Fran

Well he hasn't got any. What's wrong with that? I thought he looked like turning in to an old bachelor.

Karen

You know my views on children. I've done my bit for world population. Jenny and Tom are grown up and gone.

Fran

Flown the sodding nest was how you put it.

Karen

Precisely. And now I've got some time for myself. I can't face all that again. I want to live my own life. There's so much I want to do.

Fran

Like be an opera star.

Karen

Like be an opera singer in whatever capacity I can.

Fran

You're not too old for it.

Karen

Thank you darling ... Oh you mean for children. Not yet. I'm sure I could produce if I didn't take care not to.

Fran

Why can't Miles accept that? If he loves you he'll take you as you are.

Karen

He's got this thing about reproduction – he says his selfish genes are driving him to reproduce. He says its not a conscious thing. But that he knows he'll never be happy if he doesn't.

Fran

The selfish gene thing is real you know... He's left it a bit late if he feels like that.

Karen

He says he's only felt it now that he is getting older.

Fran

He is serious isn't he?

Karen

He loves me and I love him and he is going to spoil it all for some stupid idea. I really love him you know.

(pause)

Fran

I can understand how he might be feeling. Not because I feel that way myself but because that is the way biology works.

Karen

And of course you would know being a biology teacher.

Fran

(sarcastically)

The neural hard wiring of the brain is not on the GCSE syllabus, as a matter of fact. But it does happen to be something I have studied. If human male brains weren't geared to reproduction they wouldn't have reproduced and they wouldn't be here.

Karen

Sex with Miles is fine. His brain is geared to that all right. Isn't that all a male needs? The reproduction's a consequence of sex, isn't it, not of wanting children?

No. 2 Recit (Fran, Karen): It's all very subtle

Fran It's all very subtle.

Nobody knows.

But in this humble Darwinian's humble opinion there must be a powerful effect-

a powerful behavioural effect-

from an extended sexual partnership with no children coming along.

Heed this wicked witch's warning.

After a couple of years the male will tend to move on.

How long have you been going with him?

Karen Two. Two years.

We were hoping to get married this year.....

I don't believe any of this Darwinian behavioural nonsense.

To hell with Biology!

Arioso (Fran): I can take you to hell with biology!

Fran I can take you to hell with biology!

Dante's Inferno is like a kiddy's playground

Compared to the real world of the selfish gene;

Really red in tooth and claw.

The gene's claws have a long, long reach.

They reach out

To change the behaviour

Of we poor creatures

And mock our free will.

Sit still my dear and I'll tell you a story

Of a species of snail

That normally loves to live in the dark

At the bottom of the bush,

Where it is safe.

That is the snail's wish,

But the parasitic fluke

Leucocloridium

That infects the snail

Has other ideas.

Aria (Fran): The Creepy Snail

I'll tell you a tale of a creepy snail

Whose will was no longer his own

He resisted in vain

And became quite insane

When the fluke got into his horn.

The creepy snail climbs to the top of the twig

The topmost twig of the branch

For that is where the light

Is strong and bright

His normal negative phototaxis has been replaced by positive light seeking

As he climbs, his horns,

His precious horns

With his eyes on top
Pulsate and throb, pulsate and throb.

'Tis the fluke my dear
Leucocloridium, Leucocloridium

Moiling and toiling inside the horn

Inevitably
A bird will see
Will bite off the horns
Will set the fluke free
To live its next stage
Inside the bird
And live out its destiny

Poor Miles is in thrall to his genes my dear. You'll just have to accept it.

Listen Fran the others are starting to come back
You should go off now and get your costume
We've a long day of rehearsals ahead of us.
(Blackout and very brief curtain close -15 seconds- and open - no music)

SCENE 3

(Curtain opens on Danny's accommodation with computer link- after lunch – before afternoon chorus rehearsal. Danny and Lada are talking to the computer via a link on his desk. He is wearing a head set.)

Danny (to himself)

Try the usual password hack dummy... try ebcidc dummy they're military...ah thank you. (to Lada) We're through ..(to himself) OK report on Tallis search...great, great...what?.. Shakespeare?... really?.. OK now set up hologram pattern tango alpha lima lima India hotel... *(Miles enters)*

Miles

How's it coming? I'd like to show the Tallis demo simulation to the group after the rehearsal

before tea. Karen wants us all there for tea in her room at four o'clock.

Lada

Haven't you heard? No .. I suppose you'd be last one to know... Karen has decided she can't sing Venus and has pulled out of opera... So we have no Venus...(pause) She is in real tiz-woz. What did you do to upset her?

Miles

What?...*(can't work it out)* but she was ideal for the part.

Lada

Of lust crazed sex goddess?

Miles

No .. she has a beautiful voice...she must be upset because of what I said. *(trails off – pause - pulls himself together – resolutely practical)*

Talking of which... Lada - you have a beautiful voice - how would you like to try playing Venus?

Lada

Oh you're such flattering person. I can't think if it's my beautiful voice or my act as lust crazed sex goddess. *(bump and grind)*

Miles

Nonsense - you'd be ideal.

Danny

Great. Hang on..... assume stasis. *(takes off headset)*. We've come up positive - I've got a weird new lead.

Lada

It'll go with your weird new head.

Danny

Its only a haircut Lada. It'll soon grow again. Then you'll have to think of something else to say about me... whereas you will still be Lada, the butt of badly built Russian car jokes ... *(observes another bump and grind)* with a dodgy suspension.

Lada

Thanks for compliment o buggy one. That'll teach me to get my bra from Safeway.

Danny

The new material integrates with the stuff from the old German archives... look... the result is positive that Shakespeare wrote the libretto!

Lada

What do old Germans know about Shakespeare?

Miles

Nineteenth century German scholars went a bundle on Shakespeare. Are you sure? I thought we had established that Tallis took the title of Venus and Adonis for the opera from the poem.

Danny

No its the other way round. Shakespeare actually wrote the opera first and then wrote the poem later. 1584... see - he went up to London as a young man of 22 with his new wife and kid. He needed a job. Tallis needed a libretto. You could say that Tallis started the whole thing off. Shakespeare was just a country schoolteacher in Stratford at the time...

Lada

Wow this is great stuff. Have you put that in demo simulation?

Danny

I'm working on it.

Miles

Perhaps we ought to have the meeting here rather than in Karen's room. (*he exits*)

Lada

You are real fulfilled guy Danny. Computer software programming - fixing bugs all day. It's not natural but you love it.

Danny

Yeah I love it! Reversing time's arrow by creating order out of chaos. Why isn't it natural?

Lada

Because genes of human evolved on African plains - killing animals and finding nuts - not software bugs. Our logic brains have made computer software all by themselves with no help from genes and evolution.

Danny

Yeah I love it! Creating order out of chaos - creating negentropy all day long... You sound like you've been talking to Fran - she tells you about genetic evolution and you tell her about computer software. (*beat*)Real girl talk. Wait till

you see my demo. You'll think my logic brain's gone ballistic and created artificial intelligence!

Lada

I don't think demo will replace us and make us extinct just yet.

Danny

No. Not just yet.

(Danny and Lada move in front of the closing curtain behind which scene changes while they sing, some dancers - 4 girls and 2 boys - in various V and A costumes- gradually join in with Danny and Lada as a backing group)

No. 3 Duet (Lada, Danny): Song of the Software men

Danny and Lada We spend our day in fixing software bugs,

And when we fix them - we feel quite smug

Each time I fix a bug I find

Its one more small step for mankind

How smug of us!

We bring order out of chaos

We ... pay us ..nay say us gainsay us way lay us

We like to see

Negentropy

I love my logic brain

Lets sing our song again

(they exit - curtain open immediately)

SCENE 4

(Danny's room -tea time. Karen is making tea in the kitchen facility. Miles, Josh, Lada and Fran are talking.)

Josh

I'm perfectly happy to book my holidays at Womborne Music festival and perfectly happy to spend time with this gang working on whatever music you give us Miles, but I'm still having trouble with the idea of an opera from 1584. I'm not entirely convinced.

Fran

Let's run through one of Karen's Tallis anthems to get you in the mood of 1584.

Miles

After the demo. Danny will be back in a minute. He's going to bring our computer equipment so we can hook up. I think you'll find what he has to show us most illuminating.

Lada

Oh, its very illuminating. You might actually need your sunglasses.

Josh

What?

Miles

It's a hologram. It does get a bit bright. We can't dim it down and keep the same information density.

Josh

What?

Miles

We have an information density of 26 terabits per second. We need light wavelengths to carry that much information.

Josh

I see.

Lada

I doubt it, but you soon will. You can ask him first question.

Josh

Who?

Lada

Why William Shakespeare of course.

Fran

Of course... Why not Thomas Tallis?

Miles

We can't assemble the material from the time zone. Much of the Shakespeare stuff comes from 50 years later and that makes all the difference. Tallis speaks to us through his music but not otherwise. We'll just have to make do with Shakespeare.

Fran

I'll try to manage. *(Karen enters with tea tray)*
Karen, apparently we are to meet Mr. Shakespeare this evening. But we'll just have to make do.

Karen

(puzzled)

I really do worry about you sometimes.

Fran

Don't worry about me. Just give me a cup of tea.

Miles

Well Karen. Are you coming or not? Just come and see this and then you can go and sulk in your corner.

Karen *(pause)*

Yes. I'm coming. Pig face *(exits)*.

Fran

You know that poor creature is nuts about you don't you?

Miles

I know. I'm nuts about her too.

(door knock)

Lada

Talking of nuts that must be Danny. Let's see if he's got the stuff.

(Danny enters with Lada giving him a hand with kit)

Miles

Set it up Danny. We want to get to rehearsal on time. *(Danny sets up comlink)* OK what we're going to see is a scenario hologram. The computer has set it up based on information supplied. It is used as an interactive planning tool. The responses are probably a very accurate simulation of what the subject would actually do and say if here in person.

Lada

Probably.

Miles

Within the margin of experimental error and the inevitable entropy that has accrued over 400 years.

Lada

And inevitable entropy that has accrued since Danny's last program bug.

Miles

Yes.

Josh

Entropy? *(pause)* Why does it always have to be me? Do you know what entropy is Fran?

Fran

Decrease in information due to the one way flow of time. Increase in randomness and disorder. What happens to my bedroom when I don't tidy it up for six weeks. *(beat)*. Of course, when I do tidy it up I'm going against Nature - introducing order into a disorderly universe with my logic brain. *(beat)* Now that's called negentropy - the opposite thing.

Josh

I see.

Lada

I doubt it, but you soon will if you hang around Fran much longer. Have you got first question ready?

Miles *(shouts)*

Come on Karen! *(Danny switches on – the hologram blazes forth and Shakespeare is revealed standing in the middle of it - Karen enters and is stunned – she and Fran give a little scream)*

OK now who is first?

Lada

We said Josh could do it.

Josh

What do I do?

Lada

Just ask question.

(pause)

Josh

William Shakespeare I presume?

Shakespeare

Invalid input.

Lada

Just ask question. Only louder - imagine he is stupid foreigner.

Josh *(louder)*

William Shakespeare I presume?

Shakespeare

Well met by moonlight.

Lada

Or at least laser light.

(pause)

Josh *(still loud)*

Who wrote your plays?

Shakespeare

You do but jest.

I swear to you, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

Not marble nor the gilded monuments

Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme;

But Will shall shine more bright in these contents than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.

Lada

We get the picture. Please summarise the plot of your libretto for the opera 'Venus and Adonis'

Shakespeare

(lights flicker as the machine goes awry)

He that commends me to mine own content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.

I to the world am like a drop of water...

That in the ocean seeks another drop,

Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,

Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself,...

So I, to find a mother and a brother,

In quest of them, ... unhappy, ... lose myself.

(beat)

Lada

There's still a few bugs in it.

(Fran, Miles and Josh enter in front of curtain for next number - in bits of costume, Karen enters separately in civvies and stands apart)

No. 4a Sextet (Fran, Karen, Lada, Danny, Miles, Josh): If ye love me

All If ye love me, keep my commandments and I will pray the Father, that He may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth.

(curtain opens with no break in the music to reveal chorus in costume - principals exit for quick change)

SCENE 5

(Chorus rehearsal after tea. Members of the opera cast are set in groups for the opera scene facing the audience, Chorus are in costume for Venus and Adonis - exits are made for those that must enter later and for Karen -some children enter in costume in dance just before they sing and then exit. Karen is missing, Lada is struggling into a version of Venus's costume)

No. 4b Chorus: If ye love me

All If ye love me, keep my commandments and I will pray the Father, that He may bide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth.

Fran

There's still a few bugs in it but that was a nice warm up... 1584 mood music. Miles - are you sure your computer hasn't fiddled around with Tallis' music? All that 5/4 time? Never mind - I know the answer - within the margin of experimental error and inevitable entropy - whatever that is when it's at home. Sharon - please just concentrate - I'm sure you can sing the part of Venus just as well as Karen would have done and probably better. I can't abide people who pull out of commitments because of some silly personal problems. We all have them but we don't let them interfere.

Lada

I am concentrating but please tell Richard if he makes any more car jokes I'll bite his leg.

Josh

Car jokes?

Fran

Poor Lada – she is always getting these car jokes.

Lada

Ho ho ho Lada, I'd like to switch on your ignition: I wonder if you'd like to go for a spin Lada : how long is it since you had a good service Lada: what she needs is good decoke – ho, ho ho. *(beat)*

Josh

What's a decoke?

Lada

Don't ask.

Fran

Settle down - settle down! Let's just run it again. Danny please try to get your act together. You're supposed to be a fierce proud hunting hound - not a bloody poodle. Elizabeth you're supposed to be a palfrey - that's a riding horse not a rocking horse.

Danny

I don't know how to be a hound.

Sharon

You gave a pretty good imitation in the pub last night.

Janet

Show him Sharon. *(business and brief hubbub)*. All right! All right! Take your places for the entrance. *(most exit)* Settle down. From the entry of the hunting party.

No. 5 Act 1 Finale Chorus 'Venus and Adonis – First Movement

(Big sign announces 'Venus and Adonis - a Ballet Masque- First Act' Dress rehearsal – Lada in makeshift costume as Venus, some chorus still in civvies . Children's chorus and dancers dance in as furry animals, followed by dance entrance of hunting party, with Adonis in the centre, riding the Stallion, Sun takes leave of Morn/Moon)

Chorus Even as the sun with purple-colour'd face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.

(Adonis is wooed by a lady - children's chorus dance round the lady as Adonis rejects her)

ha, ha ha, ha

(Venus enters)

Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-fac'd suitor gins to woo him.

Venus 'Thrice fairer than myself,'

Chorus thus she began,

Venus 'The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,

Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man'

'Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,

And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;
 If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed
 A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know.
 Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses,
 And, being set, I'll smother thee with kisses.

Chorus Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her
 force

Courageously to pluck him from his horse

*(Venus plucks up Adonis and ties up the Stallion -
 business - Lada initially gentle then very vigorous - Janet
 darts about trying to fix it)*

Children's Chorus Over one arm the lusty
 courser's rein,

Under her other was the tender boy,

Chorus Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,

With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;

She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,

He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The Stallion The studded bridle on a ragged
 bough

Nimbly she fastens - O how quick is love!

The steed is stalled up, and even now

To tie the rider she begins to prove:

Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,

And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust

(Venus rocks Adonis back and forth and ties him up)

Children's Chorus Look how a bird lies tangled
 in a net,

*(Lada enjoys Fran's being tied up to tickle her - Fran is
 annoyed)*

Chorus So fastened in her arms Adonis lies;

Pure shame and awed resistance made him fret,

Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes.

*(all are moving and freeze on music cue - swift fadeout of
 lights to black except for spot on Fran's indignant face and
 Lada's grin. Quick curtain in silence)*

***** INTERVAL

ACT 2

SCENE 1

(curtain opens on stage - this time it is a dress rehearsal in full costume with glitzy stage set, Karen as Venus, Lada as Moon Big sign announces 'Venus and Adonis - a Ballet Masque- Second Act')

No. 1 Chorus – 'Venus and Adonis' – Second Movement

Venus 'O, pity,' - 'flint-hearted boy!

'Tis but a kiss I beg; why art thou coy?'

Chorus Never did passenger in summer's heat
More thirst for drink than she for this good turn:
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;
She bathes in water, but her fire must burn.

Venus 'I have been wooed, as I entreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,
Who conquers where he comes in every jar;
Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shall have.

Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His batter'd shield his uncontrolled crest,
And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance,
To toy, to wanton, dally, smile and jest,
Scorning his churlish drum and ensign red,
Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.
Thus he that overrul'd I overswayed
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain;

Adonis 'Fair queen', - 'if any love you owe me,
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years;
Before I know myself, seek not to know me;
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears.

The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
Or being early pluck'd is sour to taste.'

'Look, the world's comforter, with weary gait,
His day's hot task hath ended in the west;

(exit Sun, enter Moon, change lights)

Chorus The owl, night's herald, shrieks; 'tis very late;

The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest;

Children's Chorus And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light

Do summon us to part and bid good night.'

Adonis 'Now let me say "good night" and so say you;

If you will say so you shall have a kiss.'

Venus 'Good night' **Chorus** quoth she; and, ere he says **Adonis** 'adieu',

Chorus The honey fee of parting tend'ered is:

Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;

Incorporate they seem; face grows to face.

He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth,

Their lips together glued, fall to the earth.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,

With blindfold fury she begins to forage;

Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,

And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage;

He now obeys and no more resisteth,

(masked by the chorus Venus has her way with Adonis)

While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,

Yet love breaks through and picks them all at last.

For pity she can now no more detain him;

The poor fool prays her that he may depart.

She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him;

Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,

The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,

He carries thence incaged in his breast.

Venus 'Tell me, love's master, shall we meet tomorrow?

Say, shall we? shall we? wilt thou make the match?'

Chorus He tells her no; tomorrow he intends

To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

Venus 'The boar!'

O, be advis'd! Thou knowst not what it is

With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,
Whose tushes never sheathed he whetteth still,
Like to a mortal butcher bent to kill.

(enter Boar- unseen by Venus and Adonis)

The Boar 'On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes that ever threat his foes;
His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret;

His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes;
Being mov'd, he strikes what'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
If thou encounter with the boar tomorrow.'

Adonis Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain;
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.
Love surfeits not: lust like a glutton dies.
Love is all truth; lust full of forged lies.'

(Adonis struggles and breaks free and exits - Venus)

Chorus With this he breaketh from the sweet
embrace

Of those fair arms which bound him to her
breast,

And homeward through the dark laund runs
apace;

Leaves Love upon her back, deeply distress'd.

Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye.

(Curtain)

SCENE 2

(The stage at Womborne Summer Music Festival. It is the last session of the afternoon before the opera performance. The cast are in the middle of a rehearsal break, Miles and Fran sitting together downstage, Lada and Josh are sitting on the floor relaxing and stretching. Karen and Danny are standing backstage. The mood is sombre.)

Miles (to
Fran.)

I've done my best. It seems that my best just
isn't bloody good enough. I'm sorry but it looks

as though it's going to be a cock up of
Brobdignagian proportions.

Fran

Brobdignagian. I suppose that means big.

Miles

Absolutely. Vast, monumental.

Fran

Monstrous, gigantic.

Lada *(adds
from other side of
room)*

Bonecrushingly brontosaurian.

(pause)

Josh *(wanders
over)*

Catastrophically cataclysmic. Devastatingly
dis...

Fran *(having
stood up – stops Josh's
mouth with her hand)*

Miles

Its actually not funny. I never realised that Peter
would find the band parts so complicated. I
thought he was supposed to be a top rate
conductor.

Lada

He didn't say complicated. He said missing.

Miles

Shut up Lada. Pretend you've just run out of
petrol or something.

Lada

He is also missing sackbuttist – the ancient
trombone player – not ancient as in old – you
know - pretty young thing that plays early
music trombone. She's gone off to play modern
trombone in Paris. Didn't you notice hole in
harmony O Maestro?

Josh

I noticed that my note was missing from my
entry.

Miles

We all noticed. You missed your entry
completely. The silence in the next 22 bars was
deafening. Lada had her mouth open like a

goldfish wondering what was supposed to be happening. Danny started looking around wildly in panic and Karen looked like she needed to go to the toilet.

Josh

Sorry. I'll do better.

Karen

I always need to go to the toilet when I'm nervous.

Miles

Perhaps I've tried to take on too much – singing as well.

(*there is a silence*) Thank you for your support.

Fran

It's not your fault. It's just fate. You couldn't have foreseen that they would be doing Madame Butterfly in the main theatre on the same evening.(*pause*)

Josh

If we outnumber the audience I'll just die.

Karen

If the press and TV don't come after all my phone calls I'll just die. I told them how important it was. A world premiere of an unknown opera. You would think they would have been really keen to come. The journalist person just kept asking whether Pavarotti was in it and would anyone be taking their clothes off.

Fran

I told you you were wasting your time with the Sun.

Karen

This was the chap from the Times. (*pause*)

Miles

Perhaps we ought to have someone take their clothes off. For the sake of the publicity. I could work it into the show somehow. Venus and Adonis is all about sex. Venus practically rapes Adonis through 40 steamy stanzas - not to mention the horse. It might be authentic to have nudity.

Lada

Are you volunteering?

Miles

I was thinking of one the girls.

Lada

Well I never would have guessed.

Josh

Weren't all the girls parts played by boys anyway.

Danny

Not in the opera. The computer was clear on it. There were female singers around - at private functions in Court circles among the nobles. They were used by Tallis - in imitation of the Italians. They were part of the Court and were actresses as well. The actresses did have something of a reputation as courtesans.

Lada

Something of reputation. I suppose nothing changes.

Fran

You speak for yourself, darling. I'm a singer not an actress.

Lada

Well I never would have guessed.

Josh

Now, now girls. Lets all stay friends.

Fran

We all noticed your eyes light up like 1000 watt bulbs at the thought of ... I wonder you don't get enough of that on cable TV. Are you willing to personally sacrifice yourself for the sake of art?

Karen

I am. If it will help. We are responsible for bringing this into the light and we are responsible for making that light good and bright so that Tallis's masterpiece which belongs to the world will not be forgotten.

Lada

We all agree on that.

Miles.

Its too late for changes now. Lets get back to rehearsal with the show we've got. It will stand or fall on its merits. If the press don't come, if the music has holes, if we don't have an audience - then too bloody bad.

(*blackout curtain - music over curtain*)

SCENE 3

(Fran's accomodation at Womborne Summer Music Festival- evening same day – relaxing before the performance. Fran is lounging on the bed in her bathrobe with a towel round her wet hair. Josh is giving her a foot massage.)

No. 2 Massage Duet (Fran, Josh)

Fran Ooh that's lovely. I can feel all my tension drifting away. I got so wound up at the rehearsal that I thought I would get one of my headaches, but now its all gone away. Who taught you to do that?

Josh Its Tai Chi massage. The idea is that your spirit is reached through your feet, which have to bear the burden of your body all day.

Fran Weird philosophy but a wonderful result.

Josh *(laughs)* A bit like Miles's opera. Is a wonderful piece but I think the whole consultation of the spirits of the past thing is spooky.

Fran Anyway I'm glad I'm here. The opera may be going to pot but the company is wonderful.

Josh Any company in particular?

Fran Well you in particular if you must know.

Josh You like me then?

Fran Yes dear. I like you. Isn't it obvious? It's been obvious to Karen for months.

Josh Poor Karen. She really is in a bind with Miles. I hope she doesn't give in though. It would be awful to have children just because somebody else wanted them.

Fran But she loves that somebody else and can't stand the thought of losing him – the bastard!

(pause) You can try reaching my spirit a bit higher up if you like.

(Josh puts his arms round her waist and is about to kiss her when Karen bursts in. She is distraught and crying.)

Karen

Oh Fran I'm sorry. I thought you were on your own.

Fran

Now come in and sit down. What's the matter you poor love? Josh is just giving me a Tai Chi foot massage. You look as though you could do with one yourself.

Karen

Miles wants me to make my mind up. He says I must decide.. I can't decide Fran. I want to get away and stay free. I won't have any more children hanging round me! But I can't do without him. I'll die if he leaves me. *(she flings herself on the bed and weeps- Fran tries to comfort her but only succeeds in producing more wailing which carries on through the following dialogue)*

Fran

Men are all bastards. Sorry Josh, not you.

Josh

Miles is not a bastard. He is being reasonable by his way of seeing things. Surely you understand that biological thing about procreation. Especially as a biology teacher. Don't you feel the need to have children?

Fran

Lets not get into that now please.

(Miles bursts in. He is also distraught, but has been drinking and is angry rather than crying.)

Miles

I knew she would come to you. Karen you have to give me an answer. I'm not going to decide for you. I love you. *(pause)* I'm sorry Fran. Other peoples troubles are always a bore. Sorry Josh. Come on Karen don't keep running away. You know we're right for each other. I'll love you and support you. Why can't you have my children?

Josh

Won't this keep till tomorrow?

Miles

No it bloody won't. And if you don't mind bloody keep out of it.

Josh

Don't you swear at me you bastard.

Fran

Josh please.

(Lada bursts in with Danny a little behind.)

Josh

Now the whole world knows about it.

Karen

Aaaaaah!

Lada

What on earth's the matter? It sounds like the last act of Rigoletto all this wailing.

Fran

Miles is insisting that Karen makes her mind up whether to leave him or not.

Miles

We could put a more positive spin on that and say she was just ready to agree to marry me.

Karen

Aaaaaah!

Lada

Just about ready I'd say - for the Rigoletto everybody gets killed scene with extra wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Miles

You may think its bloody funny but I don't. *(pause)* I'm a normal man. I'm well into my life's allotted span. I know what life is about. The purpose of life - you're born, you grow old, you die. Simple. Soon I'll be old, then I'll be dead. We'll all be dead. The dirt in the ground is made from the bodies of the dead. *(the others are fascinated and/ or reluctant onlookers to this extended outburst of emotion)*

No. 3 Aria (Miles): The dirt in the ground

The dirt in the ground is made from the bodies of the dead.

We walk on them.

Under my feet right now

are the long rotted bodies

of men that died on this spot

over millions and millions of years.

But life doesn't die. It goes on living.

It started three thousand million years ago

and it has just kept going.

It didn't keep going by accident.

Whatever God's plan for the universe is

it obviously didn't include life dying.

You can see the mechanism.

The genes that had a drive to procreate

did procreate and lived on.

Those that didn't didn't.

Those genes are still around.

They're in my friends

– they urge me to have children.

They're in my mother

– she pushes me to have children.

They're in me.

Driving me with the weight of a billion generations

from back when they were apes in trees,

or small creatures fleeing from dinosaurs.

Or worms in the sea at the dawn of time.

I must procreate or my selfish genes will die.

And they will not die.

Karen and I are perfect for each other. We can live happily together for the rest of our lives. It's rare that that happens. But I must have children.

No. 4 Duet (Karen, Miles): My love for him is helpless

Karen My love for him is helpless

Against their selfish strength I fail

God help me, in my weakness,

Resist this blind pressure from the male

Of the species

Miles My friends, my mother drive me

My ancestors push with the weight

With the weight of a billion generations

The drive to procreate

My selfish genes

Karen I must resist

Or my self will be

snuffed out

Miles Oh God you gave me my nature

Oh God you gave me free will

My logic brain

Must pull me from my chains

And set me free again

I must resist his billion generations

procreate

Or my self will be snuffed out

selfish genes will die.

I must

Or my

And I will not let it
they will not.

And

I know. It just doesn't always show. *(pause)*
But I do know.

Against their selfish strength
their selfish strength

Against

(pause) There now. Go get Miles - he's
probably still in the bar - he was just about
legless when I left.

My love for him is helpless
for her is helpless

My love

*(Lada exits and enters with Miles who is very
drunk and staggering back to his room -
business)*

I must say no.

I must
say no.

(pause) For God's sake
get me a drink! *(Miles exits)*

Lada

Lada
Wait till you see this Miles, the scenario
hologram has undergone exponential growth
with the new link to the CIA snoopy spy
computer in Maryland.

Not Rigoletto - more like Hamlet.

Miles

Fran

CIA. What the hell are you doing. That's off
limits. We could all end up in the Tower.

With plenty of ham. Men are all bastards. Sorry
Josh – not you. Sorry sweetheart – come on I'll
buy you a drink. Leave her alone.

Lada

(they all exit except Karen)

Or in a sack at the bottom of the river with a
knife in you.

Karen *(sobs on pillow alone on stage)*

Danny

(Curtain)

You're really obsessed with Rigoletto aren't
you.

SCENE 4

Miles

*(Danny's accommodation at Womborne Summer
Music Festival – evening same day just before
the performance. Danny has set up his
computer and is working on it. Lada is by his
side helping him. They are exhausted.)*

Rigoletto?

Lada

Lada

Never mind that. Ok Danny lets go.

Come on Danny – keep going. We're nearly
there. That last test was pretty well perfect.

*(The hologram blazes forth and Shakespeare
appears - he sounds like King Lear at full
volume)*

Danny

Shakespeare

Its got to be right or it won't work. These things
are stochastic you know – they're not
predictable.

When shall we three meet again

In thunder lightning or in rain?

Lada

Lada

We've patched it all in. Why don't you ask it a
question?

We've got to go through with it. The opera will
have to be cancelled if the leading lady and man
have cancelled.

Miles *(sits
heavily in chair- holds
head in hands)*

Danny

How can I get my Karen to marry me and have
my children?

Not to mention having their lives ruined by
some stupid quarrel.

Lada

Lada

I'm not quite so hard and cold as you think
Danny. I'm doing it for them as well.

Please discourse on the benefits of children to
parents.

Danny

Shakespeare

If she must teem,
 Create her child of spleen, that it may live
 And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.
 Let it stamp wrinkles in the brow of youth,
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
 To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child.

Miles (*aghast*)

No, no stop it! I know my sweet Karen wouldn't
 produce such a child.

Shakespeare

Behold yon simpering dame
 Whose face between her forks presages snow,
 That minces virtue and does shake her head
 To hear of pleasure's name-
 The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above;
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiends'
 There's hell, there's darkness, there is the
 sulphurous pit-
 Burning, scalding, stench, consumption.....

Miles (*even
 more agitated*)

No, no stop it! Lada turn the foul thing off!

Shakespeare
 (*over Miles*)

Burning, scalding, stench, consumption.....

*(Lada switches off the hologram. Shakespeare
 suddenly is cut off and vanishes and the light go
 dim)(pause)*

Miles

None of this is right.

Lada

Actually Miles – I have to be serious for once
 – Danny found something that you ought to
 know about.

Danny

Sorry Miles.

Miles

What?

Lada

Actually Miles – I don't know how to say this –
 Danny broke into your medical file and ran
 diagnostic on your selfish genes - your DNA.

Miles

What?

Danny

Sorry Miles.

Lada

Miles – you can't have children – you're sterile
 – it's a genetic thing – you really can't have
 children.

(long silence)

Miles

What? *(reality penetrates – he responds
 practically but is then overcome)* Well ... the
 genes may have a long, long reach... but it
 seems I may have exceeded their grasp.

I'm so sorry. *(rises from chair – falls sobbing on
 knees)(Karen enters)*

Karen

Miles... poor Miles. I've reached my decision
 Miles...if you want children you should have
 them... and I shouldn't stand in your way. I'm
 leaving you. I'll do the show and then you won't
 see me again. Goodbye.*(Karen exits)*

(Blackout- curtain.)

SCENE 5

(The stage at Womborne Summer Music Festival. It is the evening of the opera performance – just before curtain up. The cast are warming up behind the curtain– half in costume almost ready to go on stage- principals in front of curtain.)

Lada

Here's another cup of coffee Miles - I'll get you sober if it kills you.

Miles

(still drunk –but just sober enough to play the Boar-)

You've all done your besht. It's going to be a bloody marvellous show. The place is packed and they're standing at the back. Thank you ver mush for all your hard work.

Lada

Amen to that. I think we should thank the Gods of the theatre for giving us an audience.

Fran

The people to thank are those guys that took the soprano playing Butterfly to that football match last night. She yelled her head off. Now she can't even squeak. What a shame they didn't have an understudy. The whole show cancelled.

Lada

Shame. But its an ill wind that blows nothing but food.

Josh

I think you mean – nobody any good.

Lada

Yes dear person you may give me instruction in English language if you wish. But no car jokes or I'll run over your tooties.

Fran

Judging from the amount of TV crews wandering about inside trailing cables under everybody's feet, we should get a wave of publicity.

Fran

Well we'd better get fit. Miles we've been warming up before with an anthem of Thomas Tallis. What do you think?

Miles

Perfeck. Very appror appror - iate. Hic. Let's hope that after all these yearzh the opera remains in the light of day for a bit before vanishing like a vapour into opera graveyard. OK team - one lasht time with the great man's anthem to spirtually and love for the brotherhood of man.

Fran

And sisterhood of women, darling.

Miles

Of course, darling. Man includzhs woman. And woman includzhs man. Hic. *(puts arms round both Fran and Lada - both are amused but Karen is not)*

Lada

Amen to that.*(pause) (Karen gives out music)*

Karen *(aside to Danny)*

See on page 4 the 'spirit of truth' - some sing 'spirt' - one syllable -

Danny

Spirit - like sprit of truth or spurt of truth - one syllable?

Karen

Yes spirit of truth - weird isn't it - they say that is how Tallis said it - but we're using spirit - two syllables. *(to Miles- coldly)* But you may have a view on this I suppose?

Miles

Yes. Well we've now clinched it for certain, haven't we? You can add to your speech to the audience.

Fran

I really don't think its best for Karen to give the speech. It's much better coming from you. You're the main man in all this.

Karen

I've agreed to do it – for love or something. *(recites speech)* The first opera was not by Giacomo Peri in 1601 as all the gurus in the text books say. Well we think this stuff, real opera with recitative, was invented by Thomas Tallis, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in the court of Queen Elizabeth the First - no doubt about it - with an opera called "Venus and Adonis", to a poem written by the young Will Shakespeare...

Lada

It's been dead for nearly 400 years and we're going to bring it back to life with our God like powers.

Josh

Is that one of your jokes? (*looks at music*) If ye love me keep my commandments. Isn't that one of the commandments - Thou shalt have no other God but me?

Lada

Of course. And what are others? There are hundreds of commandments - not just ten.

Josh

Not just ten?

Lada

Moses received hundreds. Read Bible. Exodus 21 is real hoot. (*recites*) Exodus 21 'When a slave owner strikes a male or female slave with rod and the slave dies immediately, the owner shall be punished. But if slave survives a day or two, there is no punishment: for slave is the owner's property'. (*beat*) If you're a slave and you want justice after your beating better kick bucket quick. (*general amusement*)

Miles

Following commandments - problematic isn't it? Which part of ourselves is the true conscience - the spirit of truth that Tallis refers to? Our instinct or our logic - they command different things. (*awkward silence- Miles is sobering up and has further solemnised the mood – all retreat into their own thoughts*)

Karen

I vote for logic please Miles. If I may. My free will is me. My instinct is the animal part that just happens to occupy my body.

No. 5 Sextet (Fran, Karen, Lada, Danny, Miles, Josh) If ye love me reprise

Sextet If ye love me keep my commandments

No. 6 Sextet (Fran, Karen, Lada, Danny, Miles, Josh) My free will is me.

Karen My free will is me.

Josh Thou shalt have no other God but me.

Lada Yes, but who is me?

Miles Which part of ourselves is the true part - the spirit of truth?

Danny What is the Truth - is it one syllable or two?

Lada Is me the slave in Exodus? Am I God's slave? Am I God's property? Do I have free will? Will I get justice when I die?

Fran The animal is strong in woman and man. I have deep needs. What's the difference?

All Who is me? Will I get justice when I die? What is the truth?

Karen My instinct is the animal part that just happens to occupy my body.

Danny Truth is a many splendoured thing. Thank you. The door seems to be open. Thank you.

Lada Yes, but who is me? We're going to bring it back to life

Danny Truth is a many splendoured thing. Thank you. The door seems to be open. Thank you.

Josh If ye love me keep my commandments.

Fran The animal is strong in woman and man

Karen I am not an animal. My free will is me

No. 7 Aria (Miles): The life of man is short

Miles The life of man is short,

That is the truth.

Which part of ourselves

Is the true conscience?

God's plan

For artificial intelligence-

Take brown soup and evolve

For two billion years -

God's plan needs reproduction.

The well-spring of evolution

Is the offspring of each generation.

(*during the ensemble they all move in front of the curtain which closes behind to change scene while they sing - curtain opens with no break in the music to reveal*)

SCENE 6

(the stage - this time it is the first night performance - children's chorus do not sing - so those who need to leave early can go after Act 2 opening, but furry animals and dancers still needed if possible)

No. 8 Finale Chorus 'Venus and Adonis' - Third Movement

(Big sign Final Act. Curtain opens on night and Moon in silver glory - then sunrise - Sun enters with lights and Moon - washed out, departs)

Guru Lo, here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,

Chorus And wakes the morning, from whose
silver breast

The sun ariseth in his majesty;

Guru Who doth the world so gloriously behold

Chorus That cedar tops and hills seem burnish'd
gold.

Guru, Hound Venus, arising, hasteth to a myrtle
grove,

Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,

And yet she hears no tidings of her love;

She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn.

Anon she hears them chant it lustily,

And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.

(Hunting party dance - The Boar in the lead - until The Boar turns on the hunters - they flee but Adonis is slain and dies front centre)

As falcons to the lure away she flies;

The grass stoops not she treads on it so light;

And in her haste unfortunately spies

The fowl boar's conquest on her fair delight;

Chorus, Guru, Hound

Which seen, her eyes, as murd'ered with the view,

Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew;

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hurt,

Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,

And there, all smoth'ered up, in shade doth sit,

Long after fearing to creep forth again;

So at his bloody view her eyes are fled

Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

Venus 'Alas poor world, what treasure had
thou lost!

What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?

Whose tongue is music now?

The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim;

But true beauty liv'd and died with him.

Chorus With this, she falleth in the place she
stood,

And stains her face with his congealed blood.

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill'd

Was melted like a vapour from her sight, And in
his blood that on the ground lay spill'd

A purple flower sprang up, check'ed with white,

(A dancer dressed as a purple flower - snakes head fritillary - appears alongside the dead Adonis)

(The Boar enters, whispers in Venus's ear, pulls her to her feet and kisses her, the chorus are much confused but decide to go with the flow)

Venus 'There shall not be one minute in an hour
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flow'r.'

Chorus Thus weary of the world, away she hies,

(Silver doves prepare chariot but no exit)

And yokes her silver doves; by whose swift aid

Their mistress mounted, through the empty skies

In her light chariot swiftly is convey'd,

Guru Holding their course to Paphos

Where their queen,...

Venus Means to invite everyone to her wedding

Boar Look how he can she can not choose but
love;

And from her fair immortal hand she swears

From his soft bosom never to remove

Till he take truce with her contending tears

Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all
wet;

And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Venus

Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty

A summer's day will seem an hour but short

Being wasted in such beguiling sport.

(The Boar takes off headdress comes out of character and sings to audience- chorus listen, then dance)

No. 9 Finale Miles Conversion Song, Chorus and Dance

Miles

The Tallis opera has come to life
Not without strife
What once was dead can live again
Or so I claim.
I guess I've seen the light of day at last
My billion ancestors - are in the past
My selfish genes don't want to let me go
I'll overthrow.
I'll overthrow them with my logic brain
God's plan for me at least is plain.
Negentropy will be my gain
I'm here on earth to love my wife
Live a good life.

(Adonis comes alive -all 'Venus and Adonis' actors come out of character)

So join with me in having fun

Lets see the sun

Lets see the sun arise in a blue sky

And now goodbye.

Chorus And now goodbye.

(Miles and Karen come forward, ditto Fran and Josh, Lada and Danny, cast all dance merrily, especially snakes head fritillary and Sun, who dance together centre stage)

(final curtain and bows)

I've been in love before but not like this
I love his laugh, the way he walks,
The way he touches me.
His gentleness
I can't imagine life without him.
He's going to leave me Fran.
I know what you say is true, about the power of genes,
The urge to procreate.
I've seen it coming for some time - more and more he's restless.
When we see children he makes remarks!
He asks me which I want, a boy or a girl.
Or one of each,
A pigeon pair!
I can't face my life without him.
But if I give in
If I surrender to his wishes
Then I lose my life
If I give in
If I surrender
Then I lose...
I will not give in
I will stay strong
My life is my life
My life is my life

No. 5 Aria (Karen): Dilemma Aria

Karen

I love him Fran

He pulls my heart from my body when he looks at me

It's not a brief passion

For two years we've been together - our love has grown