



The Unhappy Lovers

HWV 228 ¹

da 24 English Songs (n. 18)

Musica di

George Frederick Handel

As Celia's fatal arrows flew
Amongst the youthful train,
A glance ill-levelled missed the crew,
And pierced an humble swain.
The nymph was sorry for his smart,
And blamed her erring charm;
"Alas! She said, "poor bleeding heart",
To thee I meant no harm".

But whilst her pity she suppressed,
And feigned a cold disdain,
Her rigour chilled his aching breast
And still increased his pain.
By absence next his cure she tries,
And fled his am'rous moan,
The swain was banished from her eyes,
And left to sigh alone.

But how she longs again to hear
His soft complaining tale;
What harm, she thought, to please her ear

With what could ne'er prevail.
The swain, bless'd with a second view,
Was with a frown dismissed:
he Humby begged a soft adieu,
He wept, adored and kissed.

How sweet was ev'n the parting kiss,
To the poor hapless swain.
No hopes had he of further bliss,
But thus to part again.
She saw him once, she saw him thrice,
And tried her utmost skill,
He mended not by her advice
But she herself grew ill.

Yet Celia's heart was chilled with pride,
Though melting with desire:
Oh Hecla's summit thus abide,
At once, the snow and fire.
Her love and honour rules by turns,
By minutes, not by days,
And now she freezes, now she burns,
And both alike obeys.

But flame too fierce to be confined
Within her tender breast
Burst forth, and thus to soothe his mind
Her passion she confessed.
"Avenge thy love on my proud Heart,
For so the Fates decree,
Act in thy turn the scornful part,
And kindly fly from me.

"Yet, gentle still, forgive a wrong,
Attended with its curse,
If ill I treated thee so long,
Myself I Treated worse.
Veiled with feigned scorn, I strove to hide
The love I durst not own,
Whilst Cupid ev'ry lok belied,
And peeped through ev'ry frown.

"See this fair flow'r thet long has strove
Against the winter's frost:

It peeps, is cropped, so fares our love,
Still fated to be lost.
E'er yon full moon that shines so bright
Shall end its monthly wane,
Celia shall vanish from thy sight,
Ne'er to return again.

“Hymen no longer time allows:
Then, then my nuptial day;
Another claims my plighted vows,
I cannot, dare not stay.
This crystal stream shall backwards glide
And leave this craggy shore,
But I, the fatal knot once tied,
Shall never see thee more”.

Too true, next circling month, the same
That saw her first a wife
A quicker and less cruel flame
Cut short her thread of life.
Him too, the fever did invade:
Ah, fever too unkind!
'Twas meant to waft him to her shade,
But left him lost behind.

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