

Three songs from *Thespis*

Stuart R Palmer



Song (Nicemis) "Little maid of Arcadee"

WS Gilbert

Stuart R Palmer

♩ = 96 Andantino

1. Lit - tle maid of Ar - ca - dee
2. Mo - ments fled as mo - ments will,
3. To her lit - tle home she crept,

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sat on cou - sin Ro - bin's knee, thought in ___ form and face and limb,
hap - pi - ly e - nough, un - til af - ter, _ say, a month or two,
there she sat her down and wept; mai - den_ wept as mai - dens will,

9

no - bo - dy could ri - val him; he was brave and she was fair; _
Ro - bin did as Ro - bins do: wea - ry of his lo - ver's play, _
grew so thin and pale, un - til cou - sin Ri - chard came to woo! _

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truth, they made a pret-ty pair. Hap - py lit-tle mai-den, she,
 jil - ted her and went a - way. Wret - ched lit-tle mai-den, she,
 Then a - gain the ro - ses grew! Hap - py lit-tle mai-den, she,

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hap - py maid of Ar-ca - dee! Hap - py lit-tle mai den, she,
 wret - ched maid of Ar-ca - dee! Wret - ched lit-tle mai den, she,
 hap - py maid of Ar-ca - dee! Hap - py lit-tle mai den, she,

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hap - py maid of Ar - ca - dee!
 wret - ched maid of Ar - ca - dee!
 hap - py maid of Ar - ca - dee! Happy maid of Ar ca - dee.

Song (Mercury) "Oh, I'm the celestial drudge"

WS Gilbert

Stuart R Palmer

♩ = 108 Moderato

1. Oh, I'm the ce - les - ti - al
2. I'm the slave of the gods, neck and
3. Then rea - ding and wri - ting I

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drudge, from mor - ning to night I must stop at it, on
heels, and I'm bound to o - bey, though I rate at 'em; and I
teach, and spel - ling books ma - ny I've e - di - ted! And for

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er - rands all day I must trudge, and I stick to my work till I
not on - ly or - der their meals, but I cook 'em, and serve 'em, and
brin - ging these arts with - in reach, that don - key Mi - ner - va gets

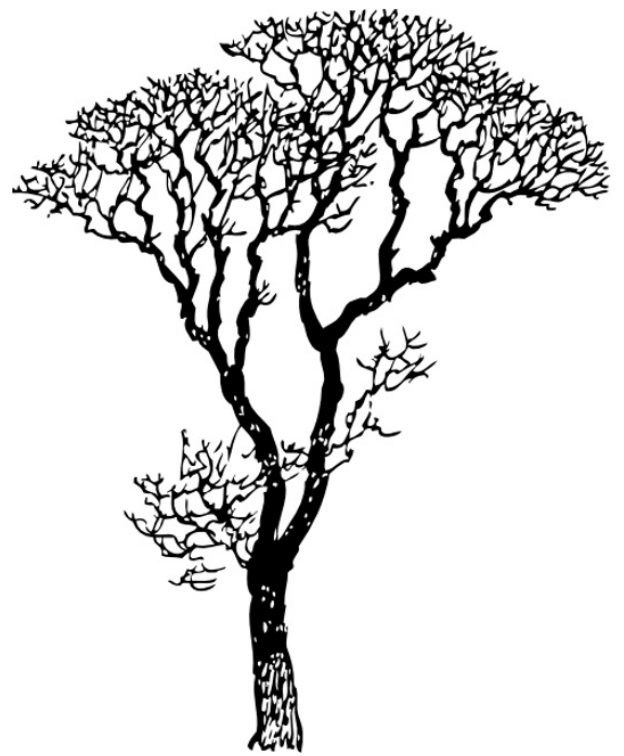
drop at it! In sum-mer I get up at one, (as a good na-tured don-key I'm
wait at'em. Then I make all their nec-tar, I do, (which a ter-ri-ble li-quir to
cre-di-ted. Then I scrape at the stars with a knife, and plate-pow-der the moon (on the

ranked for it), then I go and I light up the Sun, and
rack us is), and when-e-ver I mix them a brew, why
days for it), and I hear all the world and his wife a -

Phoe - bus A - pol - lo gets thanked for it! Well,
all the thanks - gi - vings are Bac - chus - 's!
-war - ding Di - a - na the praise for it!

well, it's the way of the world, and will be through all its fu - tu - ri - ty; though

noodles are baroned and earled, there's no-thing for cle-ver obs - cu - ri - ty!



Song (Mercury) "Olympus is now in a terrible muddle"

WS Gilbert

Stuart R Palmer

♩ = 192 **Vivace**

1. O - lym - pus is
2. Then migh - ty Mars
3. Then Plu - to in
4. Then Cu - pid the
5. This would - n't much
6. In short, you will

10

now in a ter - rib - ble mud - dle, the de - pu - ty de - i - ties
has - n't the pluck of a par - rot, when left in the dark he will
kind - hear - ted ten - der - ness er - ring, can't make up his mind to let
ras - cal, for - get - ting his trade is to make men and wo - men im -
mat - ter, for bash - ful and shy men, when skil - ful - ly hand - led are
see from the facts that I'm sho - wing, the state of the case is ex -

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all are at fault; they splut - ter and splash like a pig in the
qui - ver and quail; and Vul - can has arms that would snap like a
a - ny - one die: the *Times* has a pa - ra - graph ev - er re -
par - tial - ly smart; will on - ly shoot at pret - ty young
cer - tain to fall, but a - las that de - ter - mined young ba - che - lor
- cee - ding - ly sad. If Thes - pis - 's peo - ple go on as they're

pud - dle, and dic - kens a one of 'em's ear - ning his salt. For_
 car - rot, be - fore he could drive in a ten - pen - ny nail! Then
 - cur - ring, "Re - mar - ka - ble in - stance of lon - ge - vi - ty." On_
 la - dies, and ne - ver takes aim at a ba - che - lor's heart. The re -
 Hy - men re - fu - ses to wed a - ny - bo - dy at all! He_
 go - ing, O - lym - pus will cer - tain - ly go to the bad! From

Thes - pis as Jove is a ter - rib - ble blun - der, too ner - vous and
 Ve - nus - 's freck - les are ve - ry re - pel - ling. And Ve - nus should
 some it has come as a se - ri - ous on - nus, to o - thers it's
 - sults of this freak, or what - ev - er you term it, should co - ver the
 swears that Love's flame is the vi - lest of ar - sons, and looks up - on
 Ju - pi - ter down - wards there is - n't a dab in it, all of 'em

ti - mid, too ea - sy and weak, when - e - ver he's called on to
 not have a squint in her eyes; the lear - ned Mi - ner - va is
 quite an ad - van - tage: in short, while ev - 'ry Life Of - fice de -
 wick - ed young scamp with dis - grace; while ev - 'ry young man is as
 mar - riage as quite a mis - take; now what in the world's to be -
 quib - ble and shuf - fle and shirk; A pre - mier in Dow - ning Street

ligh - ten or thun - der, the thought of it keeps him a - wake
 weak in her spel - ling, and scat - ters her h - 's all o -
 -clares a big bo - nus, the poor un - der - ta - kers are all
 shy as a her - mit, young la - dies are pop - ping all o -
 -come of the par - sons, and what of the ar - tist who su -
 for - ming a ca - bi - net, could - n't find peo - ple less fit

1-5. 6.
 for a week!
 -ver the skies.
 in the court!
 -ver the place!
 -gars the cake?
 for their work!



Composer's notes

Thespis was WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's "lost" opera. First performed in December 1871, it never enjoyed the popularity of the later Savoy Operas. No vocal score was ever published and, with a couple of exceptions, the music has been lost. The text and music of *Climbing over rocky mountain* made a re-appearance a few years later in *Pirates of Penzance*, and sheet music for *Little maid of Arcadée* surfaced some time afterwards. Whether Sullivan "recycled" the music from *Thespis*, as he once joked, is unknown. Even if he did not do so explicitly, it would not be too surprising if there were not at least some echoes of the forgotten score in his later compositions.

There have been various attempts to revive *Thespis*, sometimes using music from other G&S works, but none has been truly successful. These three songs were part of a project to re-create a score in Sullivan's early style. Mostly it never got beyond the stage of sketches.

The reality is that the libretto is not particularly strong: it tells of a theatrical company who wander up Mount Olympus and encounter the gods, agreeing to exchange roles so that the gods can visit earth while the thespians take on the responsibilities of the gods, responsibilities for which they are totally unsuited, and chaos ensues. Apart from a largely incidental love triangle, that's about all there is to it; no-one was ever going to be seriously interested, and like Gilbert and Sullivan themselves, I eventually lost interest in the project too. These three songs had been fully-developed and hence survive, but the sketches for other songs have long since been consigned to the bin and *Thespis* seems destined to remain for me, as it has for so many others, no more than a passing historical curiosity.

Performance notes

Just think "early G&S".

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Feedback

Comments on the music are welcomed. It would also be good to hear of performances taking place and to receive copies of any recordings made.

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