

## Stephen Duck, "On Music"

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STEPHEN DUCK

“*On* MUSIC”

I.

MUSIC the coldest Heart can warm,  
The hardest melt, the fiercest charm;  
Disarm the Savage of his Rage,  
Dispel our Cares, and Pains assuage;  
With Joy it can our Souls inspire, 5  
And tune our Tempers to the Lyre;  
Our Passions, like the Notes, agree,  
And stand subdu'd by Harmony.  
This found the *melancholy* King,  
When David tun'd the trembling String: 10  
Sweet Music chas'd the fullen Spleen away,  
And made his clouded Soul serenely gay.

II.

WHILE Music breathes in martial Airs,  
The Coward dares forget his Fears;  
Or, if the Notes to Pity sound, 15  
Revenge and Envy cease to wound:  
The Pow'r of MUSIC has been known,  
To raise or tumble Cities down:  
Thus *Theban* Turrets, Authors say,  
Were rais'd by MUSIC's Magick Lay; 20  
And antient *Jericho's* Heav'n-hated Wall,  
To sacred MUSIC, ow'd its destin'd Fall.

III.

NOR Mortals only MUSIC love;  
It cheers celestial Saints above:  
Sweet Hallelujahs Angels sing 25  
Around their great Ethereal King;  
CeaslessCeasless they sound the FATHER'S Praise,

The FATHER too approves their Lays;  
For HE (as all Things) MUSIC made,  
And SERAPHIMS before Him play'd: 30  
When over *Horeb's* Mount He came,  
Array'd in Majesty and Flame;  
After the sounding Trump, sublime, He rode;  
The sounding Trump proclaim'd the' approaching GOD.

IV.

MUSIC had Being, long before 35  
The solemn Organ learnt to roar:  
When MICHAEL, o'er the heav'nly Plain,  
Advanc'd, to fight the rebel Train;  
Loud Trumpets did his Wrath declare,  
In MUSIC, terrible to hear: 40  
And when the Universe was made,  
On golden Harps the Angels play'd:  
And when it falls, (as fall it must)  
MUSIC shall penetrate the Dust;  
The Trump shall sound with the Archangel's Breath; 45  
And, sweetly dreadful! wake the Dead from Death.

**NOTES:**

**6** *Lyre* "A stringed instrument of the harp kind, used by the Greeks for accompanying song and recitation" (*OED*).

**9** *melancholy King* An allusion to King Saul in the Bible.

**10** *David tun'd the trembling String* In the first book of Samuel, David would play the lyre to calm Saul when the evil spirit of God was upon him (1 Samuel 16:23).

**11** *Spleen* "Excessive dejection or depression of spirits; gloominess and irritability." (*OED*).

**19** *Theban Turrets* A structure or tower belonging to Thebes, ancient capital of Boeotia in Greece.

**20** *Lay* "A short lyric or narrative poem intended to be sung" (*OED*).

**21** *Jericho's Heav'n-hated Wall* In the Bible Joshua is instructed to sound trumpets before taking over the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:20).

**30** *Seraphims* Biblical angels.

**31** *Horeb's Mount* The mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God.

**32** *Majesty and Flame* Allusion to the Burning bush that the Lord appeared as to give Moses the Ten Commandments.

**37** *MICHAEL, o'er the heav'nly Plain* Michael was an archangel who fought the Devil in heaven.

**45** *The Trump shall sound with the Archangel's Breath* An allusion to the archangel Michael sounding his triumph after defeating the Devil in heaven (Jude 1:9 and Revelation 12:7-9).

**Source:** *Poems on Several Occasions*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) (London, 1753), pp. 49-51. [Google Books]

*Edited by Noelle Gallagher*