

Stephen Duck, "On Music"

Description

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 subdued by Harmony.
This found the *melancholy* King,
When David tuned the trembling String: 10
Sweet Music chased the full-blown 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 Power of MUSIC has been known,
To raise or tumble Cities down:
Thus *Theban* Turrets, Authors say,
Were raised by MUSIC's Magick Lay; 20
And ancient *Jericho's* Heaven-hated Wall,
To sacred MUSIC, owed its destined Fall.

III.

NOR Mortals only MUSIC love;
It cheers celestial Saints above:
Sweet Hallelujahs Angels sing 25
Around their great Ethereal King;
Ceaseless they sound the FATHER'S Praise,
The FATHER too approves their Lays;
For HE (as all Things) MUSIC made,
And SERAPHIMS before Him played: 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.

45-46 *The Trump shall sound with the Archangel's Breath/ wake the Dead from Death* Alludes to the literary tradition of the archangel Gabriel sounding a trumpet to welcome Christ back to Earth for the Last

Judgement (see John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, ll. 72-76). In the Biblical tradition, Gabriel is neither an archangel, nor is it clear that he's the trumpeter (see I Corinthians 15:52).

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

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