

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 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 FATHERâ€™S Praise,

The FATHER too approves their Lays;

For HE (as all Things) MUSIC made,

And SERAPHIMS before Him playâ€™d: Â

Â 30

When over *Horeb*â€™s Mount He came,

Array'd in Majesty and Flame;

After the sounding Trump, sublime, He rode;

The sounding Trump proclaimâ€™d theâ€™ approaching GOD.

IV.

MUSIC had Being, long before Â

Â 35

The solemn Organ learnt to roar:

When MICHAEL, oâ€™er the heavâ€™nly Plain,

Advanc'd, to fight the rebel Train;

Loud Trumpets did his Wrath declare,

In MUSIC, terrible to hear: Â

Â Â Â Â 40

And when the Universe was made,

On golden Harps the Angels playâ€™d:

And when it falls, (as fall it must)

MUSIC shall penetrate the Dust;

The Trump shall sound with the Archangelâ€™s Breath; Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 45

And, sweetly dreadful! wake the Dead from Death.

NOTES:

6 *Lyre* â€œA stringed instrument of the harp kind, used by the Greeks for accompanying song and recitationâ€• (OED).

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

10 *David tunâ€™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* â€œExcessive dejection or depression of spirits; gloominess and irritability.â€•(OED).

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

20 *Lay* â€œA short lyric or narrative poem intended to be sungâ€•(OED).

21 *Jerichoâ€™s Heavâ€™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 theÂ Dead from DeathÂ 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). Â 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]

Â Edited by Noelle Gallagher