

The Bohemian Girl

[Grand opera, in three acts; text by Bunn. First produced at Drury Lane Theatre, London, November 27, 1843.]

PERSONAGES.

Arline, daughter of Count Arnheim. Thaddeus, a Polish exile. Gypsy Queen. Devilshoof, Gypsy leader. Count Arnheim, Governor of Presburg. Florestein, nephew of the Count.

[Retainers, hunters, soldiers, gypsies, etc.]

The scene is laid at Presburg, Hungary; time, last century.

"The Bohemian Girl," usually designated as grand opera, strictly speaking, is a ballad opera, and is one of the few English works of its class which has made a success upon the Continent and in the United States. The first act opens with the rescue of Arline, daughter of Count Arnheim, from the attack of a stag by Thaddeus, a Polish fugitive, who has joined a gypsy band to save himself from arrest. In return for his timely aid, the Count invites him to a banquet, where he gets into trouble by refusing to drink the health of the Emperor. Devilshoof, the leader of the band, saves him from the angry soldiers, but in turn is himself seized. The Count allows Thaddeus to go, and Devilshoof subsequently escapes, carrying Arline with him.

Twelve years elapse between the first and second acts. The Count has received no tidings from Arline and has given her up as lost. The second act opens in the gypsy camp in the suburbs of Presburg, and discloses Arline asleep with Thaddeus watching over her. The gypsies themselves depart in quest of plunder, headed by Devilshoof, and happen upon Florestein, the Count's nephew, returning in a drunken condition from a revel. They speedily relieve him of his valuables. After their departure Arline awakes, and Thaddeus tells her how she

received the scar upon her arm and of her rescue from the stag, at the same time declaring his love for her. Arline confesses her love for him, and the two are united according to the laws of the tribe by the Gypsy Queen, who is also in love with Thaddeus, and vows vengeance upon the pair. The scene now changes to a street in the city. A fair is in progress, and the gypsies resort to it with Arline at their head. As they mingle among the people, Florestein attempts to insult Arline, and an altercation ensues between them, ending in his repulse. He seeks revenge by having her arrested for stealing a medallion which belonged to him and which the Gypsy Queen, knowing it to be his, had maliciously given to her. Arline is brought before the Count for trial, during which he asks her about the scar on her arm. She replies by relating the story Thaddeus had told her, and this leads to his discovery of his daughter.

The last act finds Arline restored to her old position but still retaining her love for Thaddeus. With Devilshoof's help he secures a meeting with her. The Gypsy Queen gives information to the Count, and Thaddeus is ordered to leave. Arline implores her father to relent, and threatens to go with her lover. The situation happily resolves itself when Thaddeus proves that he is of noble descent. The Count thereupon yields and gives his daughter to him. The baffled and furious Gypsy Queen induces one of the tribe to fire at Thaddeus, but by a timely movement of Devilshoof the bullet pierces the heart of the Queen.

The principal musical numbers of the first act are the Count's solo, "A Soldier's Life"; the pathetic song, "'T is sad to leave your Fatherland"; the gypsy chorus, "In the Gypsy's Life you may read," and the prayer in the finale, "Thou who in Might supreme." The second act contains some of the most melodious and effective numbers in the work, including the quaint little chorus, "Silence, Silence, the Lady Moon"; the joyous song, "I dreamed I dwelt in Marble Halls," which is a universal favorite; the musical dialogue and ensemble, "The Secret of her Birth"; the gypsy's song, "Come with the Gypsy Bride"; the

beautiful unaccompanied quartette, "From the Valleys and Hills," and the impressive reverie by the Count, "The Heart bowed down." The last act has two delightful numbers,--the tender and impassioned song, "When other Lips and other Hearts," and the stirring martial song, "When the Fair Land of Poland," in which Thaddeus avows his noble descent and boasts the deeds of his ancestry in battle.