

Dutton Epoch CDLX 7269

**MICHAEL HURD** (1928-2006)

Pippa Goss soprano

Louise Winter mezzo-soprano

Michael Bundy baritone

Orchestra Nova

City of Canterbury Chamber Choir

conducted by George Vass

**THE WIDOW OF EPHEBUS** (1971) [CD tracks 1-17]

Chamber Opera in One Act

Music by Michael Hurd

Libretto by David Hughes and Michael Hurd

The Maid – Pippa Goss

The Widow – Louise Winter

The Soldier – Michael Bundy

*A burial place near Ephesus, some time during the reign of the Emperor Nero. On one side can be seen the imposing entrance to a large family vault. A light flickers in the darkness, and it seems that there are two women inside the tomb, weeping and wailing.*

Widow            Woe ! Woe ! Alas, ah woe is me !

Maid             Woe ! Woe ! Woe !

*These lamentations continue, each woman vying, as it were, with the other. Eventually the Maid comes out of the tomb. She is young and pretty, slightly dishevelled and more than a little irritated. The Widow continues her lamentations inside the tomb.*

Maid             Woe ! Woe ! Woe betide me if I don't say " Woe ! "

Widow           Woe !

Maid             He's dead !

Widow           He's dead !

Maid             Dead ! Dead !

Widow           Dead ! Dead !

Maid             Oh, I've not forgotten ! No such luck !

I'm tired, and hungry and cold !

I'm cold, and hungry and wet ! This sort of life is killing me !

Five days weeping, sleeping never.  
We've been mourning, morning and night.  
Light and life are gone forever.  
Underground and out of sight.  
Our days are surely numbered.  
We're the ones who're dying now.  
All because my foolish mistress  
Took a rather hasty vow !  
What's the good of moaning, sighing.  
For a husband cold and dead ?  
All this grief is very trying.  
Aching heart and aching head !  
I'm not cut out for weeping  
In a cold and dismal tomb.  
How I miss the central heating  
And the comfort of my own familiar room !

Widow      Woe ! Woe ! Woe !  
Maid        Woe !  
Widow      He's dead, ah woe is me !  
Maid        I'm tired of weeping night and day.  
Widow      Dead, and in the tomb !  
Maid        It really isn't very fair.  
Widow      My husband's dead and in the tomb,  
              I wait impatiently to join him there.  
Maid        I'm cold. I'm wet. I'm nearly dead.  
Widow      Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! Woe !  
Maid        The master's lying in the tomb,  
              I wait impatiently to slip away.  
Widow      Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! Woe !  
              Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! Woe !

*The Widow's moans gradually subside.*

Maid        She's quiet ! She's sleeping !  
              Maybe I can go now ?

*But before she can slip away a soldier appears in the distance. He is obviously making for the burial place.*

Maid        What's this ? A man ! A soldier !  
              Woe ! Woe ! Wo . . .  
              What am I doing ? I must be mad !

Oh Gods look down from heaven above  
 And send that soldier over here.  
 He's seen me ! He's coming !  
 I'll make believe I haven't noticed—  
 It's more dignified.

*She turns her back. The Soldier enters. He is young and very handsome.*

Soldier        Hello ! What's this ? A woman ! Crying ! Oh no !  
                   Battles I can stand, but tears, no ! Here, blow ..

*He gives her a handkerchief.*

Soldier        Why are you crying ? Tell me why.  
 Maid            I am not crying, no not I.  
 Soldier        Yet there are tears upon your face. I can see them, plainly.  
 Maid            They are not real tears. They are not my tears.  
 Soldier        Forgive me my dear, but I do not understand you,  
                   I know when a girl's been crying.  
 Maid            Oh yes. they are tears of a sort.  
                   But tears are not tears when tears are planned.  
 Soldier        Alas, but I still do not understand.  
                   Planned for what, and planned for whom ?  
 Maid            Planned for my master in the tomb.  
 Soldier        This is not the kind of thing a soldier likes to hear !  
                   Death is no light and laughing thing to joke about, my dear.  
 Maid            This is not the kind of thing a soldier likes to hear.  
                   Death is a real and frightening thing to soldiers, it is clear.  
 Maid            Oh no, it's no joke I assure you. Far from it !  
 Soldier        Then will you please explain yourself ?  
 Maid            My master, my beloved master, is dead - like I said.  
                   My mistress, my beloved mistress, mourns for him - like I said.  
                   She weeps in the tomb. She will not eat.  
                   She will not drink, or sleep,  
                   Or anything you might expect of a lady  
                   Of beauty and fortune, and youth.  
 Soldier        And youth !  
 Maid            She is determined to die.  
 Soldier        Poor lady !  
 Maid            And if she does, then so must I.  
 Soldier        I'm sorry to hear the news !  
                   Will nothing make her change her mind ?

Maid No nothing, nothing.  
Soldier Can her love be quite so blind !  
Maid She thinks nothing of it,  
It's all in a day's work to her.  
She's set her mind on it.  
Soldier She must be like a Goddess !  
Maid She is too virtuous to let her sorrow cease.  
She is too womanly to give him any peace.  
In death she follows him, as once she did in life.  
Nothing less will do, for she is the perfect wife.  
Soldier Was he the perfect man that she should love him so ?  
I doubt it very much, but only you would know.  
He surely had his little faults, and yet his wife  
Never found them out.  
Ah me ! what a perfect life !  
Maid Well, now that you mention it.  
There are a few things I could tell you.  
He gave a helping hand when I made up the beds.  
Soldier I might have guessed it ! He sounds a cad.  
Maid He said, " I'm sorry " when he tore my clothes to shreds.  
Soldier A model of politeness, too !  
Maid Although his conduct was a trifle underhand,  
He never let her know what she wouldn't understand.  
Soldier And so she's ready to die for such a love.  
Maid That's life.  
Soldier That's woman !  
Maid Well, if it's anything, I think it's habit.  
She was always eager for love and duty.  
Men came from afar to admire her beauty.  
Admire her virtue, admire her tact,  
It wasn't some kind of occasional act.  
Soldier Very nice. Very commendable. But you don't impress me.  
I'm all for pleasure while I can.  
I have no stomach for indulging in woes.  
I am a cheerful sort of man,  
As everybody knows.  
Maid You're right, you're right ! You can't eat virtue.  
Soldier That reminds me - food !  
Maid Food !  
Soldier That is why I came here - to eat.  
Maid Food !  
Soldier Somewhere nice and quiet. Away from all those bodies.

Maid Food ! Bodies ! What do you mean ?  
Soldier Didn't I tell you ?  
Maid No.  
Soldier I'm on guard. I'm on duty. Guarding the bodies of three able-bodied criminals who have paid for their crimes with their lives.  
Maid Oh dear !  
Soldier We don't want the relatives to take the bodies away and give them decent burial. It wouldn't be right. And so I'm on guard, keeping watch, all night. But oh, it's a melancholy task for a man of sprightly habits. I like to lie in the sun and dream the shadows away, I like to lie with the one I love, by night and by day, I like pleasant company. I like my bed. I am the man that you see I am; a plain man, born and bred.  
Maid Bread ! Bread ! Isn't there something else you can talk about ?  
Soldier I like to sit with a book and let the moments pass by,  
Maid That's better ! Go on.  
Soldier I like to ponder and look upon the stars in the sky. I like a sweetheart that I can call mine. Give me but half of these things and I'll have no cause to whine.  
Maid There you go again ! You're driving me to ... desperation !  
Soldier I like to live as a man should live; without any fear. I do no need any plan to make the future seem clear. I like all things that are simple and free. I am a man with the kind of life that suits him to a T.  
Maid What's " T " ?  
Soldier Only a figure of speech. You can't eat it.  
Maid I could eat a horse,  
Soldier No need for that. I've something far more appetising. Here, in my bag.  
Maid Food. Food. Food, food !  
Wonderful, marvellous, food !  
I'm starving. I'm very nearly dead.  
Widow Dead ! Dead ! Dead !  
Maid Oh dear !  
Soldier What is it ?  
Widow Dead ! Dead ! Dead !  
Maid My mistress has woken up ! Oh dear !  
The night is not half over. But for me it's mourning again.  
Widow Woe! Ah woe ! (etc)  
Maid She's coming out ! She mustn't see you here. Her grief is private, she doesn't like an audience.  
Soldier That's alright. I'll be quiet. She'll never notice me. I shan't make a sound. I may be just a soldier, but I can eat like a gentleman - silently, you'll see.

Widow           Woe !  
Maid            Look out ! She's coming !  
Widow           Woe ! Woe ! Woe is me ! (etc)  
Soldier          Madam, you shouldn't be here - it's far too cold. Why not stay in the nice warm tomb ?  
  
Widow           I wanted a breath of air.  
                  Day and night I've wept and sighed.  
Soldier          Bacon rashers ! Crisply fried !  
Maid            Ah, woe is me !  
Widow           Ash to ash and dust to dust.  
Soldier          Bread with appetising crust !  
Maid            Oh, the smell of food !  
Widow           Such a husband !  
Soldier          Such a wine !  
Maid            Ah, woe is me !  
Widow           Gone forever !  
Soldier          And now to dine.  
Maid            I'm dying to eat !  
Widow           There is nothing left to go on living for.  
Soldier          Food like this is well worth waiting for.  
Maid            Ah, it is too much, it is not fair !  
Widow           Oh my heart, oh my beloved one !  
Soldier          Bread and butter ! Currant bun !  
Maid            Ah, woe is me !  
Widow           Can so fine and good a man be dead ?  
Soldier          Pour the wine and break the bread.  
Widow           Oh, no it cannot be !  
Maid            This is torture, woe is me !  
Widow           Life is nothing more to me,  
Soldier          This is the life for me.  
Maid            Meat and drink, but not for me.  
Widow           Such the anguish and the sorrow.  
                  How I long to die  
                  And join my husband in the tomb !  
Soldier          Such food is poetry,  
                  I am in ecstasy.  
                  The food and wine restore my energy.  
Maid            If only I could eat !  
Widow           Ah, let me die !  
Maid            A slice of bread - I do not ask for meat.  
Soldier          I shall return to my duty now.  
                  I feel refreshed and twice the man I was.

Widow Ah, hear my cry. My husband's dead.  
I only wish to join him now.

Maid A slice of bread, a crust,  
The smallest crumb is all I need !

*For the first time, the Soldier and the Widow look fully at each other;*

Soldier How beautiful she is ! How beautiful.

Widow Who is it ? There ! There in the shadows !

Soldier She's seen me. Oh dear !

Maid I don't see anyone.

Widow It looks like a man.

Maid Impossible !

Widow A soldier.

Maid Quite impossible !

Widow And yet I seem to see him. There ! A soldier ! A man.

Maid A man !

*The Maid has a sudden inspiration*

Maid Madam ! Madam ! Can you not see ! This is no ordinary soldier. Indeed,  
no !

Widow What is he then ?

Maid He is a vision ! He is a vision,  
Come down from heaven  
And bearing snacks.

Widow A vision ?

Soldier A vision ?

Maid Thus work the Gods  
With inscrutable wisdom  
Behind our backs.

Widow They do ?

Maid Your husband bids us eat our fill.  
He would not see us weak and ill.  
We cannot mourn him without good food.  
Such attitudes, he says, are crude.  
Don't disobey his Olympian decisions.  
Do not turn your back on Divine Provisions.  
That's what he says. That's what he says. Madam !  
And I for one won't stop till I've finished  
All the wine and every morsel of that lovely food.

Widow Food ! Food ! Food ! Food !

Soldier           And I for another, must go and do my duty  
                       To the Gods, the Governor, the citizens.  
                       And the three criminals who are dead.

Widow            Dead ! Dead ! Everybody's dead !  
                       I've had about as much as I can stand !  
                       Can any woman live with her loneliness.  
                       Love but a memory locked in the tomb ?  
                       Can she deny her longing for happiness.  
                       Lying alone in a cold empty room !  
                       Is she to blame if she longs to be loved again,  
                       Held in the comfort of strong loving arms ?  
                       Is she to blame if she cannot help noticing  
                       That living's a pleasure and still has its charms ?  
                       Can any woman live with her loneliness ?  
                       Love but a memory locked in the tomb ?

Maid             Will you not eat, Madam ? Eat, Madam !

Widow            Should I ? Ought I ? Dare I ? May I ? Do you think ... ?

Maid             Yes, Madam.

Widow            He is a God, you say ?  
                       In that case I ought, I should. I dare. I must !

Soldier           You owe it to the man who died, Madam.  
                       To keep your lovely self alive.

Widow            I do ?

Maid             You do, you do !

Soldier           You owe it to the man who lives, Madam,  
                       To keep your lovely self alive.

Widow            I do ?

Maid             You do. Madam.

*The Maid retires to eat. The Soldier helps the Widow to food and wine, taking each chance to snuggle close.*

Widow            What are you doing ?

Soldier           Filling your glass.

Widow            Thank you for doing it.

Soldier           Thank you for letting me.

Widow            What are you doing now ?

Soldier           Giving you food to eat.

Widow            I like it.

Soldier           Will you have some more ?

Widow            I still seem to be hungry.

Soldier           This time a larger slice.



Widow           The more I eat, the more my appetite is roused.  
 Soldier         Such food is good for you.  
 Widow         Do you really think so ?  
 Soldier         I do.  
 Widow         The more I have, the more I need.  
                   The more you give, the more I take.  
                   My appetite is great indeed  
                   My thirst is very hard to slake.  
 Soldier         The more you take, the more I'll give.  
                   The more you need, the more you shall have.  
                   Resolve to live !  
                   Ah, why should you die ?  
                   If we hide somewhere for a moment ...  
 Widow         My servant will not see me make a pig of myself.  
 Soldier         In the tomb ! Come ...

*They slip into the tomb, leaving the Maid alone.*

Maid            I wonder what they're doing ?  
                   I wonder what they're saying ?  
 Widow         More ! More ! More and more !  
 Soldier         More ! More ! More and more !  
 Maid            Oh dear ! I wonder what the master would say !  
                   But he's dead now. and I suppose it doesn't matter.  
                   Ah well. I don't care.  
                   Oh no ! I am not jealous, not I,  
                   Her need is greater than mine.  
                   Besides, there are more fish in the sea,  
                   And I shall catch them.  
                   Oh yes, you may be sure of it.  
                   Farewell to all that virtue !  
                   To hell with being faithful unto death !  
                   We've heard the last little sigh  
                   For the departed.

*The Soldier appears suddenly, slightly dishevelled.*

Maid            You're back ! Already ! That was quick !  
 Soldier         Keep an eye on your mistress. I shan't be long.  
                   I'm going to see to my bodies, over there, on the gallows.  
                   I must do my duty to the Governor, and the citizens,  
                   Before I can relax and enjoy myself.

*He goes out. The Widow comes from the tomb, obviously distressed.*

Widow        Oh, he's gone.  
Maid         Only for a minute, Madam. He'll soon be back.  
Widow        A minute is a long time. I cannot wait.  
Maid         The time will soon pass.  
Widow        Never.  
Maid         Ah, Madam, you're too impatient.  
               A man like that is worth waiting for.  
               How long doesn't matter.  
               He will return. You may be sure.  
Widow        Hear me, O God of Love, listen to my prayer.  
               When I turn my eyes again, let him be there.  
               Oh send him back to me, bring him to my side.  
               He would be my husband, and I his bride.  
               Look deep into my heart, search it through and through,  
               You will not find another woman half so true.  
               God of the human heart, take pity on my pain,  
               Listen to my prayer and send my loved one back again.  
Maid         Look, Madam ! He comes !

*The Soldier reappears. He looks very unhappy.*

Soldier       Ah, woe !  
Widow        What's the matter ?  
Soldier        Woe is me !  
Widow        What is it ?  
Soldier        I must prepare myself to die, that's all !  
Widow        Are you mad !  
Soldier        There's nothing left for me, I have no choice. Farewell !  
Maid         Farewell !  
Soldier        Farewell !  
Maid         Farewell !  
Soldier        Farewell !  
Maid         Farewell !  
Widow        Silence ! Kindly explain yourself. I do not understand.  
Soldier        I went to the gallows, to the criminals.  
               Instead of three bodies, there were only - two !  
Maid         Only two !  
Widow        Only two !  
Soldier        Yes.

Widow        There must be some mistake,  
Soldier       There's no mistake. It's all too clear,  
                  Some relative of the criminals  
                  Has taken the body  
                  To give it decent burial.  
                  And I shall be blamed.  
                  And I shall pay the price for it.  
                  With my life !  
Maid         Alas, alack ! Farewell !  
Soldier       Farewe ...

*With an imperious gesture the Widow stops him.*

Widow        Be silent. I will not let you go.  
Soldier       Oh there's no help for it.  
                  Honour demands that I should kill myself.  
                  I leave this world without regrets.  
                  An hour with you is worth a lifetime of renown.  
                  I only ask one thing  
                  To spend eternity side by side  
                  With your husband in the tomb  
                  So that we both may talk of you.  
                  Farewell, farewell.  
                  Go, fetch my sword. It's in the tomb. Be quick about it.

*The Maid goes off. The Soldier looks at the Widow, who is smiling strangely.*

Soldier       Well ? Haven't you anything to say ?  
Widow        My man is dead.  
Soldier       I know.  
Widow        Long live my man.  
Soldier       This is no time for riddles.  
Widow        What would you say  
                  If I said in a month or two,  
                  Without breathing  
                  A word to a soul,  
                  Very quietly  
                  We two together  
                  Crept off to a little place I know by the sea,  
                  And sunbathed all day and slept in each other's arms  
                  All night and were happy ? What would you say ?  
Soldier       You're joking, and it's in very bad taste.

Widow           What would you say  
                   If I said in a moment,  
                   Without breathing  
                   A word to a soul,  
                   Very quietly  
                   We two together  
                   Took my husband's body out of the tomb  
                   And carried it a hundred yards and hung it on the gallows  
                   Instead of the criminal who has vanished  
                   And saved your life ?  
                   What would you say ?

Soldier          You are joking ! You must be joking !

Widow           My husband enjoyed a joke.  
                   He would have understood me.  
                   Understood that I do not love him less. That I simply love you more.

Maid            I've found it ! It's heavy, and sharp !

Soldier          They always are.

Maid            Take it then.

Soldier          Thank you.

*He seems very reluctant to use it.*

Maid            I thought your honour was at stake ?

Soldier          There's been a slight change of plan –  
                   Thanks to her husband, that generous man.

Widow           Follow us and you will see.

*They turn and enter the tomb.*

Widow }       All will be well. Here in the tomb  
 Soldier }       A new life will begin  
                   For us all.

*The Maid, left alone, hesitates for a moment.*

Maid            I may not understand it, but who am I to say no !

Widow }       We who love to live  
 Soldier }       Shall live to love.

Maid            Whatever it is they're doing.  
                   It's better than crying " Woe " !

*She runs quickly into the tomb.*

*Curtain.*

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## **MR OWEN'S GREAT ENDEAVOUR** (1990) [CD tracks 18-27]

Ballad Cantata for Narrator, Mixed Chorus and Small Orchestra

Music and Words by Michael Hurd

Narrator – Michael Bundy

Chorus        There was a time, ages ago  
                  When life was very leisurely and slow  
                  But that was long ago  
                  People were kind, people were just  
                  They tilled the land  
                  As till the land they must  
                  But that was long ago  
                  Then with the passing of the years  
                  That life began to wane  
                  What were the thoughts, the hopes and fears  
                  Before the grief and pain took over ?  
                  It was the vision of a land  
                  Where peace and plenty hand in hand might go  
                  But that was long ago  
                  Ever so long ago

Narrator        By the middle of the eighteenth century, the gentle rhythms of English life had begun to quicken. For now there were more mouths to feed, more backs to clothe. The landowners, desperate to try out new and more effective ways of farming, made their decision:

Chorus        In the interests of economy we have to take a stand  
                  And impose upon the peasants the enclosure of the land  
                  For nothing is worth doing if you cannot make it pay

Rich men will get richer in the same old way

For although each strip supported a small family or two  
As a modern way of farming it will never never do  
For nothing is for nothing at the ending of the day  
Rich men will get richer in the same old way

Poor men may be starving but the rich make hay  
Medieval methods are so wasteful, medieval methods make us poor  
Medieval methods are distasteful, and unproductive, what's more

When the factory wheels are turning each must lend a willing hand  
So abandon farm and village, turn your backs upon the land  
There's really nothing better than the new industrial way  
Who will reap the benefit I dare not say

It's a kind of revolution, it's the kind we like the most  
It will make our country prosper, so I give you all a toast  
There's nothing quite so splendid (and you cannot say me nay)  
Who will reap the benefit I dare not say  
Here's to making money ! Hip-hip, hip-hip, hip-hip hooray !

Narrator Next it was the turn of the old crafts. Work by hand would have to give way to work by machine:

Chorus Mister Hargreaves, Mister Arkwright, Mister Cartwright too  
Thought about the spinning wheel and said it would not do  
The time it took to spin the yarn was really far too long  
What they did about it is the burden of my song

Spinning Jenny, Spinning Frame and then the Power Loom  
Were the answers they provided, each they thought a boon  
The time it took to spin the yarn and weave it into cloth  
Halved and halved and halved again, much to the weavers' wrath

Water wheels provided power, finally came steam  
Faster, faster turned the wheels, an economic dream  
In factory now the workers toil instead of in the home  
Wondering what has happened to the freedom they had known

Industry in revolution, cotton, iron and coal  
Are the basis of the nation's profit-making goal

Throughout the Midlands and the North are dark satanic mills  
Breeding grounds for discontent and nursery of ills

Thus Britain glorified industrial success  
Exports ever rising and consumption to excess  
But even though the balance sheets were healthy just as planned  
Oh what had happened to a green and pleasant land ?

Narrator And so the Age of the Machine had arrived, and with it a new kind of  
working man.

Chorus Work, work, work the machinery  
Sixteen hours a day  
Work, work, work for a pittance  
So little is the pay  
Work, work, work the machinery  
Work 'til you drop  
The wheels go round and round and round  
The wheels will never stop  
Oh, work, work, work like a galley slave  
Day in, day out  
Oh, work, work, work is the thing  
That the life of the worker is all about

Work, work, work the machinery  
Six days a week  
Work, work, work in a factory  
Bitter, cold and bleak  
Work, work, work the machinery  
Work though you ache  
The wheels go on and on and on  
Until your heart could break  
So work, work, work like a prisoner  
Bound and in chains  
Oh work, work, work is the source  
Of our grief and misery and all our pain

Narrator Of all forms of labour, the cheapest and most abundant was to be found  
among the children of the poor.

Chorus When I was a little boy, seven years old  
My mother said to me

“There’s nothing to eat and we’re shivering with cold.”

I could not but agree  
And so it was that I went to work  
To earn the family a crust  
From six in the morning to eight at night  
Oh work all day I must

Three pennies a day was the generous sum  
The gov’nor gave to me  
For slaving away in the cotton mill  
Deprived of liberty  
Tho’ every year he paid me more  
Now fourteen is my age  
Full thirty-six pennies and nothing more  
The total of my wage

Oh where is the little boy, seven years old  
That once I used to be ?  
Oh look in the mirror and catch your breath  
An old and broken man is he

Narrator      A few men stood out against this form of child slavery. One of them was the owner of a great cotton mill at New Lanark, one of the largest and most prosperous in the country. His name was Robert Owen, and he had a theory. Most people found it rather surprising:

Chorus          Treat the worker like a human being  
Treat the worker as you would a friend  
You will find that you have made a better  
Bargain in the end  
Give him houses that are fit to live in  
Work conditions that are safe and clean  
You will find that your investment’s made him  
Lucrative and keen  
Give the workers’ children education  
Teach the little ones to read and write  
You will find that you have made them happy  
Biddable and bright  
There’s no madness in the Owen method  
Nothing good will come by being cruel  
That his method is the great exception  
Merely proves the rule



Treat the worker as an individual  
Treat the worker with respect and tact  
You will find the stories of his virtue  
Are a living fact  
Do to workers as you would be done by  
They're entitled to a living wage  
You will find that their achievements are  
The glory of the age

Master Owen is an inspiration  
He's a man that we should learn to thank  
Demonstrating that a little kindness  
Never broke the bank  
Raise your glasses then, to Robert Owen  
His example is a shining light  
If we follow his enlightened footsteps  
Wrong will yield to right

Narrator Mr Owen was particularly concerned for the welfare of children. Instead of herding them into factories, he thought they should go to school, until they were at least twelve years old. Accordingly, on the 1st January 1816 he opened the New Institution for the Formation of Character. Here, at New Lanark, children were to receive a useful, enlightened education:

Chorus Come children listen to me now  
And you shall learn about a cow  
You'll find here useful, live or dead  
Whether she's black or white or red  
When milkmaids milk her morn and night  
She gives us milk so fresh and white  
And this we little children think  
Is very nice for us to drink

The milk we skim and shake in churns  
And then it soon to butter turns  
The curdled milk we press and squeeze  
And so we make it into cheese  
The skin with lime and bark together  
Tanners tan and make it leather  
Without this what should we do  
For soles for every boot and shoe ?

This is not all as you will see  
Her flesh is food for you and me  
Her feet provide us glue and oil  
Her bones tend to improve the soil  
And last of all if ta'en with care  
Her horns make combs to comb our hair  
And so we learn thanks to our teachers  
Cows are very useful creatures

Narrator At New Lanark there were no rewards or punishments. Children, said Mr Owen, would learn best when learning was made enjoyable. Certainly they must learn to read and write, but they must also learn to dance and sing.

Interlude New Lanark Dances

Narrator The children thrived in this enlightened atmosphere, and people came from all over the world to marvel at Mr Owen's "Great Experiment". It was the cradle of infant education:

Chorus See the children are receiving  
Education night and day  
Their achievement's past believing  
Credit to the Owen way  
Here's a method that's effective  
Here's a method that is sound  
No need here for stern corrective  
Happiness is all around

See them reading see them writing  
See them learn to dance and sing  
Owen's method is exciting  
Surely it's the coming thing  
See how sturdily they're growing  
Always merry, gay and bright  
This they owe to Mister Owen  
His philosophy is right

Mr Owen's bold endeavour  
Is a lesson to us all  
May his spirit live for ever  
May his standards never fall

Give three cheers and give them loudly  
Celebrate the Owen Plan  
Tell the world and tell it proudly  
Robert Owen was a very perspicacious man  
A most surprising, enterprising man

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