

FIVE SHAKESPEARE SONNETS FOR ORCHESTRA AND SOPRANO

I SONNET 43

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And darkly bright are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright, 5
How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day, 10
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me. 14

II SONNET 20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling, 5
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all 'hues' in his controlling,
Much steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting, 10
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure. 14

III SONNET 10

For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident.
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
But that thou none lovest is most evident;
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate 5
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire.
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind!
Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love? 10
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:
Make thee another self, for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee. 14

IV SONNET 129

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight, 5
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme; 10
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell. 14

V SONNET 87

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting? 5
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gavest, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking; 10
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter. 14

UNPERFECT ACTOR (SONNET 23) *

As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart.
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say 5
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might.
O, let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast, 10
Who plead for love and look for recompense
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O, learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit. 14

* Opdracht orkestversie Residentie Orkest, wereldpremiere 16 januari 2026, Amare

Aria uit *Hadrian* (Akte II): Will You Have Egypt With Me?

Our Spring departed long ago.
Will you have Egypt with me?
Or will I have Egypt alone?
Will I wait any longer?
And for what am I waiting?
Egypt.
Where is your heart?
Where is your heart?
I'm your wife, do you see?
Will you look at me?
Husband look at me!
Will I wait any longer?
And for what am I waiting?
Egypt.
Where is your heart?
Where is your heart?
Do I stand here before you?
Have I a spirit become?
Do you see through me?
Egypt.
Where is your heart?
Will you have Egypt with me?
Or will I have Egypt alone?

Tekst: Daniel McIvor

Aria uit 'Prima Donna' (Akte II): Les feux d'artifice

Les feux d'artifice t'appellent
Desends dans la rue
Les couleurs dans ciel
Eclatant sur la ville
Le feu du ciel qui fut
Descends dans la rue
L'amour n'est plus attendu
C'est la joie l'allégresse
Dans tout Paris, fait la fête
Je reste
Je regarde

Jeunes hommes descendez vous maîtresses
Jeunes filles partez du temps que reste
Je reste
Je regarde par grande fenêtre
Les feux d'artifice sont finis
Ça n'a pas duré longtemps