

Bob's Opera World

Opera Libretti

Norma

Tragedia lirica in 2 acts

Libretto by Felice Romani

Based on Soumet's verse tragedy "Norma"

Music by Vincenzo Bellini

First performance :December 26, 1831, Teatro alla Scala, Milan.

Source: The English libretto was scanned from the version published by Oliver Ditson & Co. of Boston, in 1859.

Roles

Orovaso, head of the DruidsBass
Pollione, Roman proconsul in GaulTenor
Flavio, friend of PollioneTenor
Norma, priestess, daughter of OrovasoSoprano
Adalgisa, priestessSoprano
Clotilde, Norma's confidante Mezzo-soprano
Two Children of Norma and Pollione

Druids, bards, priestesses & Gallic soldiers

Scene : Sacred forest, temple, Gaul, during the Roman occupation.

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Act I

SCENE 1.

Sacred Grove of the Druids.

In the centre, the Oak of Irminsul; at the foot of which is seen a Druidical Stone, serving as an Altar.—Hills in the distance, partially covered with Trees.—It is night: lights are seen among the Trees at the back.

A Religious March is heard.—Enter the Gallic Army, followed by a Procession of Druids; and, lastly, the Chief Priests, headed by Oroveso.

Oroveso

High on you mountain, O ministrants,
Watch if the heav'n displayeth
That with a poop of timid light
The moon her beam essayeth;
And at the first beguiling
Of her young virgin smiling,
Bid thrice our solemn sacred bronze
Boom through the temple's hail.

Chorus.

Doubtless to cull the mistletoe
Norma appears?

Oroveso

Aye, Norma, she appears.

Chorus of Druids

With thy prophetic oracle,
Terrible God, inform her;
Esus awake! Inspiring
Hate to the Roman, untiring,
Cause her to break the spell of peace,
Chaining, enslaving all, aye!

Oroveso.

Deep from within this ancient grove,
Soon may thy accents thunder,
Bidding the sons of Gallia
To burst their bond asunder;
Spear then on shield rebounding,
Harshly shall ring asounding.

Oroveso & Chorus.

High on the Cæsar's Capitol;
And number'd are its years!

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Chorus.

Moon be dissolv'd in silv'ry tears,
Norma, thy rival nears.

(The whole disperse, and disappear among the Trees in the Forest depths at the back. From time to time, their voices are heard in the distance.)

**SCENE 2.
Pollio & Flavio.**

(Flavio and Pollio enter cautiously, enveloped in their togas.)

Pollio

Night's airy pulses heat with a solemn stillness;
Let's thin' the forest—

Flavio

Where hideous death is latent.
Norma forewarned thee.

Pollio

Icy shud'rings probe me At her mere mention.

Flavio

What mean these words?
Thy lover, the mother of thy children?

Pollio

Far keener arrows
Than your reproaches sting my culprit conscience;
Within this burning bosom
Love's first pale blossom some fiend bath blighted!
Some demon, envying me the treasure:
Who goads my footstep to deep abysses,
Stealing the will to turn it.

Flavio

Glow'st with another flame

Pollio

Whisper it softly!
Another, aye, Adalgisa!
Beauty's young morning blushes in holy pureness
On her innocent cheek; a sun of grace
In the blood-bespatter'd temple; she lends a radiance
To the clouds that enshroud her; light amid darkness.

Flavio

Wretched apostate! doth she then
Requite thy madness ?

Pollio

I dare to hope it.

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Flavio

What account
Will ye render up to Norma?

Pollio

Her vengeance, her angers,
Too dread for utt'rance, before my sight assemble;
A vision—

Flavio

Narrate it!

Pollio

Merely rememb'ring, I tremble.
With me in Rome before the shrine
Was Adalgisa bending;
Bound in her locks in hue divine
Rivail'd were lilies blending;
Softly her hand she press'd in mine,
Air breath'd with incense round us.
Sweeter delights await us—
Thy holiest pleasures, love!
When an unearthly, awful shade,
Fashion'd itself from nothing,
Mists, like a Druid mantle laid,
Around it ghastly floated.
Tempest his legion flames arrayed,
Daylight shrank out all sickly,
Hideous, 'mid darkness, thickly
Sepulchred horrors move.
Vainly I sought the gentle one
There at the altar kneeling,
Mocking my search, a stifled moan
On o'er the night came stealing;
While in a deep, mysterious tone,
Re-echo'd thro' the temple:
"Norma thus makes example
Of traitors false to love."

(The sacred Bronze is heard sounding.)

Flavio

Listen; as their rite commenceth soon,
Norma doth bend this way now.

Chorus.

(In the distance.)

Druids, behold the rising moon;
Foes to oar faith; away now!

Flavio

Hasten—

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Pollio

Go, leave me.

Flavio

Hear, in mercy!

Pollio

Infidels!

Flavio

From hence!

Pollio

I their worst defy,

Flavio

Hasten from hence,
Ere 'tis too late to fly.

Pollio

Spread thick your snares, ye infidels.
Their worst I do defy.
Both protecting and defending,
Greater nerve than theirs inspires me,
This all-guiding thought that fires me
The flame is the flame with which I sigh.
Of the god whose vain contending
Fain would rob me of that virgin,
Burnt from centre to the margin
Grove and altar, grove and alter low shall lie!
Grove and altar low shall lie!
Grove and altar low shall lie!

(Exeunt hastily.)

SCENE 3.

(Enter, from the back, Druids, Priestesses, Soldiers, Bards, Sacrificers, &c.—In the centre, at their head, Orovaso.)

Chorus.

Norma cometh; her pale, solemn temples
Bear the crown of the faith of our fathers;
From the moonbeam her pure presence gathers,
Heaven's sanctity symbol'd in light.
Rome's red star on his proud orbit trembles;
Dread shall shake the imperial summit,
Esus borne 'pon the wings of a comet
Sweep it out with the bosom of night.

SCENE 4.

(Enter Norma, in the midst of attendant Priestesses: her hair streaming wildly over her shoulders— her forehead bound by a wreath of the mystic vervain—in her hand a golden sickle.)

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With a solemn air she ascends the Druidical Stone, and glances around, as one inspired with prophetic power.—All maintain a deep silence.)

Norma

Lo; ye attempt seditious!
Crying for warfare, tonguing the trump of battle
At the shrine of your godhead, who thus presuming,
Foresteps the mission of the prophetic Norma?
Who deviseth for Rome deadly conclusions
That ne'er depended on the pow'r of mortal?

Oroveso

When shall her dread oppression
Flag to its end Contaminate and trampled,
Should not our antique forest
Ill suit as eyrie for her rapacious eagles
The blade of Brunnus yet crumbles in the rust of disusal.

All.

May it fall on the foeman!

Norma

Shatter'd in splinters!
In splinters, aye, if its untimely presence
Be your daring pretension: the ripe, rich summer
Of our harvested vengeance bears not its fruits yet:
Strengthen'd by Fate's protection
Is the Roman oak lustier than Gallic iron.

All.

What will on you empyrean art thou divining?

Norma

In the mysterious moonbeams
Eloquent omen: irrevocably cancell'd,
Ras'd from th' enwombed future is Rome the mighty;
Trodden down to the dust, but not by Gallia!
She, poison'd by her vices,
Dies, a scorpion, self-stung; until the moment
Esus bath mark'd to use his thunder power,
Peace dwell amongst ye! to her I offer this flower.

(Norma cuts branches of the Mistletoe, which the Priestesses receive and deposit in their consecrated baskets. She then advances, upraising her arms on high.— The Moon beaming forth in full effulgence.—All kneel reverentially.)

Norma.

Queen of Heaven! Queen of Heaven!
While thou artreigning,
Love upon us,
Love upon us,
Love upon us is still remaining,
Clad in pureness, alone disdainig
Grosser Earth's nocturnal veil,



In pureness clad, alone disdaining
Grosser Earth's nocturnal veil.
Hallowed by thy parent presence,
Let its holier, sweeter essence,
Quelling ev'ry unlawful license,
As above, so here prevail.

Chorus

Queen of heaven, while thou'rt reigning
Love upon us is remaining,
Clad in pureness, and disdaining
Grosser earth's nocturnal veil.

Norma

All is ended, be now the forest
Disencumber'd of aught mortal.
When our god-head's thirsting anger
Wills the lifeblood of the stranger,
From our temple's awful portal
My command then thunders forth.

All.

May it! this cause with glory bright'ning
Shall in vengeance outswEEP the lightning,
And deliver, are 'tis finish'd,
You Proconsul to our wrath.

Norma

My wrath would see him punish'd,
(But to punish the soul is loth.)
The bloom of life is lying
As flow'rets pale when dying,
The zepher's softest sighing,
A coldness ever bllows;
Restore to mine affliction
One smile of love's protection,
My heart in thy affliction
Its only summer knows, its summer knows.

Chorus

In slnmb'ring preparation
May war's glad declaration
From stain'd page of creation
Blot out these cursed foes!

(Exit Norma, the rest follow in procession.)

SCENE 5.

(Enter Adalgisa.)

Adalgisa

Grove, is thy only tenant
Quivering moonlight Pale and gently trembling

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As that mute watcher, here may my bosom utter
A secret sighing for the fatal Roman
Who has render'd it rebel to worthier religion.
Would this sigh were the last! Empty expectance!
Some most resistless magic
Urgeth me hither and clothes his lov'd remembrance
In brighter beauty; air echoes still his accents,
Seeming infected with eloquent music.

(She advances and throws herself prostrate on the steps of the altar.)

Protect me now, great power! lest I sink and am lost!

SCENE 6.

(Enter Pollio and Flavius.)

Pollio

'Tis she! hence ! Unhand me
Nor waste persuasions!

(Exit Flavius.)

Adalgisa

Thou, thou here!

Pollio

And dew drops
Upon thy cheek?

Adalgisa

I worshipp'd.
In mercy: leave me,
For pray'r is sacred.

Pollio

A God thou prayest
Atrocious and cruel, averse to our desirings, our passion:
Soul of my being! In Love alone
Acknowledge a deity!

Adalgisa

In love? ah, silence;
I dare not hear you.

(Retreating.)

Pollio

Vainly thou fleest;
To Thul's remote confine, there would I follow.

Adalgisa

Then follow
Unto the temple whose decree I cherish.

Pollio

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The temple ! and our affection?

Adalgisa

O let it perish!

Pollio

Go, unkind one, to thy dark altar
With a worthy off'ring hear thee,
Take my lifeblood; nor deem I'd falter.
Pain were pleasure suffer'd near thee.
Proof on proof my lip exhausteth,
Fault when thine is robb'd of guile,
Ev'ry pearly tear it costeth
Dews in germ a blooming smile.

Adalgisa

'Tie not pictur'd within thy bosom
How the lightest fault can sadden;
Summer sooner would yield its blossom
Than her innocence the maiden:
Conscious of my perjur'd spirit,
Earnest pray'r its sin bewail'd;
Heaven knew the deep demerit,
Frown'd, and with a cloud was veil'd.

Pollio

Skies undimm'd by thought of sorrow,
Rome the mighty ever can proffer.

Adalgisa

(Anxiously.)

Dost thou seek it?

Pollio

Upon the morrow.

Adalgisa

Dost thou—and I?

Pollio

Will coldly suffer
My return to home, still houseless,
Exil'd from my home in thee.

Adalgisa

O unsay it!

Pollio

The wave were foamless

(Much agitated.)

Did it bear ye back with me!

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Adalgisa

Hence in mercy!

Pollio

Lovely flower,
Yield to me!

Adalgisa

No; I dare not.
Guide, direct me, awful pow'r!

Pollio

You then abandon my soul to languish
In hopeless longing for thee!

Duet
Adalgisa, Pollio.

Pollio

Yes, to Rome, angelic virgin,
Blithesome blessing will entrance you,
Come and tempt at this mine surging
Dreams too bright, too bright for mortal fancy;
Since thou art betroth'd to Heaven,
Here, its earthly foretaste prove,
With co-equal pureness given
In the boundless bliss of love.

Adalgisa

(Aside.)

Vows declar'd 'neath pallid moonbeam,
Robed in dread's mysterious clothing,
Glide as snow before the sunbeam,
Softly, silently to nothing:
As its vapors when collecting
From the ray cull ev'ry hue,
May these tears, his truth reflecting,
Glow a hopeful rainbow too.

Pollio

Art won then?

Adalgisa

Oh, forbear!

Pollio

Joy on joy shall there receive ye.

Adalgisa

I dare not.

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Pollio

Is then thy faith a fiction'?

Adalgisa

I do implore thee, leave me!

Pollio

And *this*, thy false affection? Adalgisa!

Adalgisa

You would betray me;
Such relentless love is hollow.

Pollio

Adalgisa, dost wish to slay me?

Adalgisa

Slay thee?—ah no!—
'Tis ended: thy fate I follow.

Pollio

At this hour to-morrow, duly
Meet me here.

Adalgisa

I promise truly.

Pollio

Swear it!

Adalgisa

Yes, love.

Pollio

The hour, O let not It escape thee.

Adalgisa

I swear to forget not.
Both my God, my home forsaking,
Home and God are in thee now.

Pollio

From a life-long night thou'rt waking
To Aurora's brightest glow.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 7
Norma's dwelling.

(Enter Norma and Clothilde, leading by the hand two young children.)

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Norma

Bear them to a safe concealment.
Strangely emotion'd
I tremble whilst embracing.

Clothilde

Do seeds of loathing
Breed in thy breast this cold nnns'd rejection'?

Norma

Not so ;—two rival passions
Strive there for mastery; hating I love them, and loving
Hate mine offspring; suffer when present; when absent
Long for their presence: hath this twin so monstrous
Birth in my bosom of mingled shame and pleasure
Their mother's portion?

Clothilde

Their mother truly

Norma

Would I were not!

Clothilde

Heart-rending conflict!

Norma

Imagination sickens,
Belov'd Clotilde, knowing that his Senate
Call for Pollio.

Clothilde

He takes thee with him?

Norma

No word,
No look assures me.
Ah! would he think to fly me,
Here leave me widow'd; what, will he e'en abandon
These wretched children?

Clothilde

Canst deem he could?

Norma

I dare not;
Such hideous dreams would establish
Fire-brain'd madness on the throne of reason.
A step advanceth:
Hence! conceal them!

(Exit Clotilde with children. Norma embraces them.)

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SCENE 8.

Adalgisa *and* Norma.

Norma

Adalgisa!

Adalgisa

(In the background.)

Heart, he thou steadfast!

Norma

Approach me,
O timid flow'ret,
Approach me.
So pale and trembling!
I hear thou seekest
Advice on matter of a weighty import.

Adalgisa

'Tis true.—But from my vision
Shroud the celestial beam sublime, inhabiting
All thy presence. Like summer blossom, op'ning
To breathe full fragrance meets my heart, thy sun-smile.

(She prostrates herself before Norma. Norma raises her.)

Norma

Embrace me; speak freely: what afflicts ye?

Adalgisa

(After a moment's hesitation.)

I've yielded,
Slave, unto love! hopes to resist were feathers
Before a storm-blaze; my thousand pray'rs he heard not
Deafly remorseless. Little thy spirit can fancy
What I have sworn this moment—to fly the temple—
Betray the shrine that owns me its affianc'd—
Abandon too my country!

Norma

Worse than unhappy!
Hath life's big sorrow clouded
Too hetimes thy young morning? Yet, how was
This feeling born in so pure a breast

Adalgisa

Of glance scarce glanc'd,
Of sigh scarce sigh'd, in our sacred forest
Bow'd at the altar, 'mid solemn silence praying,
I trembled, my falt'ring accents
Fail'd to frame a petition; to win my worship

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I saw his holier presence, a brighter deity,
Proffering sweetly diviner heaven before me.

Norma

(Aside.)

O dear remembrance! 'twas even thus, thus o'er me
The virgin ray of affection's dawn did glisten.

Adalgisa

But—you do hear me not'?

Norma

Speak on—I listen.

Adalgisa

Oft time, in secret, our meeting
Glow'd with Elysium's pleasure;
Earth I had deem'd so fleeting
Shrin'd O, more than a treasure!

Norma

(Thus was I won to bliss—
The speechless bliss of loving.)

Adalgisa

“Angel,” he cried, “allow me
Here in thy light to bow me,
Charm'd with the magic wreathing
Each little word, thy breathing
Robbing yon happier zephyr,
Yield me one tress to kiss.”

Norma

(O, with these lurings,
In very self-same fashion,
With equal music pleaded he his passion.)

Adalgisa

Purer than seraph's sighing
Fell his re-utter'd vowing,
Brightness to sun a universe
In his each look was glowing.
Now, e'en as then, I perish;
Of thy great mercy cherish,
Here on thy breast correct me,
Through this my night direct me,
From weaker self protect me—
Save me from mine own heart!

Norma

Ah! still these tears;
Thy tie with heaven unto affection, its earthly type, be given!

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Adalgisa

Let thy lip repeat to me
That hallow'd, blest consenting.

Norma

From hence each quickly passing hour
Some fresher charm shall find thee;
With blushing wreaths the bridal flow'r
In love's own bond shall hind thee.
E'en joy shall seek thy presence
To know of new delight.

Adalgisa

O let thy lip repeat to me
That hallow'd, blest consenting,
And dissipate in ecstasy
All clouds of doubts tormenting:
My soul of pleasure's essence
Partakes the fullest light.

Norma

But say; thy bosom's deity
Is he of friend or foeman?

Adalgisa

Alien to rugged Gallia—
Rome is his country—

Norma

Roman!
His name? his calling?

SCENE 9.

(Enter Pollio.)

Adalgisa

Behold him!

Norma

Polio ! oh heav'n!

Adalgisa

Thus anger'd?

Norma

'Twas he, e'en he, thou sayest?
Ha! heard I rightly?

Adalgisa

Ah, yes!

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Pollio

See'st the abyss thou treadest'?

(Drawing near Adalgisa.)

Adalgisa

Not I.

Norma

Tremblest thou? And for what'?

(Some moments of silence. Pollio is confused, Adalgisa trembling. Norma advances, furiously.)

Shake to thy centre, perfidious one!
Thou know'st the cause is ample;
Aye, for thy felon self alone
Well have ye need to tremble:
Shrink out of life in fear
For those thine offspring, for me!

Adalgisa

O explain this! Pollio!
Art silent? Woe's me!

(Adalgisa covers her face with her hands: Norma seizing her by the arm compels her to look on Pollio, who stands trembling beneath Norma's gaze.)

TERZETTO.

Norma.

O how his art deceived thee!
Love lured ye too confiding;
Shrouding the lie, a specious truth
His double falsehood, his falsehood was hiding.
It not his equal crime to me
Worthy so fit conclusion,
Trampling in vile delusion
Thy young and tender heart,
thy young and tender, and tender heart.

Adalgisa.

Ah, what a black reality
Though that dark hint appeareth!
Wrong in each nerve, my trembling soul,
Quivers, quivers the while it heareth,

Norma.

O how his art, how his art deceived thee!
For shrouding the lie, a specious truth
His double falsehood, his falsehood was hiding.

Adalgisa.

Yet thy intenser miseries
Bit me in their cause languish,
Numbing the piercing anguish



My lesser woes impart,
My lesser woes, my lesser woes impart.

Norma.

Is not his equal, his equal crime to me
Worthy so fit conclusion,
Trampling thy young and tender heart,
Thy young and tender, and tender heart.

Pollio.

Norma! On me, to me alone
Utter thine indignation,

Norma.

O how his art, his art deceived thee!
Love lur'd ye, too confiding.

Adalgisa.

Ah, what a black reality!
Wrong in each nerve, my trembling soul
Quivers the while the while it heareth.

Pollio.

Spare yon afflicted innocent
The page of this, of this relation;

Norma.

Shrouding the lie, a specious truth.

Adalgisa.

Yet thy intenser miseries

Pollio.

No sweet the sin of loving her,

Norma.

His falsehood was hiding.

Adalgisa.

Bid me in their course languish,

Pollio.

I'd vaunt my vast affection

Norma.

Wretch! So thou dearest—

Adalgisa.

Numbing the placing anguish
My lover woes impart,
My lesser woes, my lesser woes impart.

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Pollio.

Of Pluto's certain, his certain dart.

Norma.

Is not, is not his equal crime to me
Worthy worthy thy so fit conclusion,
As trampling in vile delusion, in vile delusion
thy young and tender heart, thy tender heart?
Thy young and tender heart,
Trampling on thy tender heart.

Adalgisa.

Yet, ah yet, thy intenser miseries
Bid me, bid me in their cause languish,
Numbing this anguish, this piercing anguish
My lesser woes impart, my woes impart.
My, My lesser woes impart, impart,
My woes, my woes impart.

Pollio.

So sweet, aye, so sweet,
A sin, 'tis to love her
I'd vaunt my passion
'Neath grim Death's sure dart.
'Neath Pluto's certain dart,
'Neath Pluto's sure dart.

Norma.

Faithless one!

Pollio.

(Withdrawing.)

Be silent.

Norma.

Wretch, away!

Pollio

Come, then!

(Endeavoring to force Adalgisa to accompany him.)

Adalgisa.

Go, leave me! Set me free!

(Getting free of Pollio.)

Thou art the spouse of Norma!

Pollio.

Fled is she past forever.
Leave my Elysium? Never!
Adamant fetters now bind us,
Resist not, Fate wills the tie!

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Norma.

'Tis well! Fulfil it—and leave me.

(Repressing her anger.)

(To Adalgisa.)

Follow him!

Adalgisa.

No! Rather would I die!

Norma.

(To Pollio.)

From my sight, and from remembrance,
To the hell thy deeds create thee!
Hatred shows a term of temp'rance
By the scorn with which I hate thee !
To the threshold of existence
These my curses thy soul pursuing
Shall inhabit th' eternal distance
Of thy night beyond, in death!

Pollio

(In accents of desperation.)

Rage for ever, and let the tempest
Be a whisper to thy raving;
Still my love shall win its purpose,
That unheeded anger braving.
Though the gods propose this passion
For my utter worst undoing,
I would worship such blissful ruin
With my latest, latest breath.

Adalgisa

(To Norma.)

O my failing, my guilt has cost ye,
Mortal blessing's divinest jewel.
Had my crime its author lost ye
Juster fate were far less cruel.
Ne'er my bosom can dream of lightness,
'Neath a sunbeam so robb'd of brightness,
Art thou dark, a constant shadow
Whelms in gloom mine earthly path!

Chorus

(From within.)

Norma, seek the temple! in tones appalling
Hear the voice of Esus calling!

Norma & Adalgisa

The sound of death !—it speaks to thee in warning.



(To Pollio.)

Fly! fly—hence, I implore! prepar'd it comes.

Pollio

Ah! I defy it, scorn it—yes; but first
I'll o'erthrow thy fell Deities at thy feet.

(The Sacred Bronze is heard sounding from the Temple.—Norma is summoned to the rites.—With one arm she repulses Pollio, and with the other imperatively points for him to retire, which he does, in great anger.)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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Act II

SCENE 1.

(Interior of Norma's Dwelling—On one side, a Roman Couch, covered with Bear-skins, on which the Children of Norma are sleeping.)

(Enter NORMA, with a lamp and a dagger in her hands. She seats herself placing the lamp on a table. She is pale and distracted.)

Norma

Calmly they slumber—and a blow can hearse them
In sleep eternal. Heart, be steel as the dagger
Doom'd their destroyer.
Death awaits them in Gallia;
In Rome, disgrace, than death far worse opprobrium;
Slav'ry, a second mother; enslav'd! ah, never!

(Rises resolutely.)

They must die—yes.
A nerveless step
Withholds me.

(She stops short.)

(Making a step towards the conch.)

My bloody purpose sticks,
Ic'd with its own inherent dread—
What! slay mine offspring!

(With tenderness.)

Gems from the mine of affection,
Are they not jewell'd here, in this bosom?
Brightly their smiling dimples
Emblem congregating beams of hopeful morning;
Must I blot out its light!—How are they guilty?
Their being born to Pollio,
Amplly gives answer. Spurn'd with the hate I bear him,
For him they perish;
Standing mine off'ring to an anger'd godhead!
I strike—

(She rushes to the bed, raises her hand to give the fatal blow; but uttering a piercing cry, she falls on her knees in tears beside them. They awake.)

Ah no! they're my children I my children!

(Embracing them, with tears.)

Clotilde!

(Enter Clotilde.)

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Norma

Hasten,
Hither bring Adalgisa.

Clothilde

Outsighing zephyr,
And outweeping the dewdrops, she mourneth misfortune.

Norma

Fly—

(Exit Clotilde.)

This crime once aton'd for, be death my portion.

SCENE 2.
Adalgisa and Norma.

Adalgisa

Thou call'st me, Norma.
What unwonted pallor
Dwells on thy cheek?

Norma

Death's certain signet.
Thy heart is stain'd with knowing my failing;
This the last pray'r I utter, h'ear it and fulfill it,
If thy breast distilleth thro' my shame's starless night
The balm of pity.

Adalgisa

All things I promise.

Norma

You swear it?

Adalgisa

I swear it.

Norma

Listen; the breath of nature withdraws its pulses
From my tainting presence; the pile awaits me;
To the tomb I hear not these wretched orphans,
Be thou their guardian!

Adalgisa

Ah, no! Still live, their mother!

Norma

In the foe's encampment
Guide them before him, whose name my tongue refuseth.

Bob's
Opera World
Adalgisa

What do ye ask me?

Norma

May he,
A spouse less cruel, long cherish and adore thee.

Adalgisa

Husband! ah never!

Norma

I for his children implore thee!

Deign in infancy to tend them,
From the snares of youth defend them;
While thine own win honor'd Fortune
With thy love their better portion,
Be to these a bright salvation
From the slave's deep degradation,
In a sacred recollection
How I perish for thy sake:
Adalgisa, its affection
From my parting spirit take;
Adalgisa, its affection
From my parting spirit take.

Adalgisa

Norma, Norma, remain as ever
Still a mother to them and me:
Take thine offspring from hence;
I never Quit a spot to God devoted.

Norma

But thy promise—

Adalgisa

By that promise.
Be thy welfare alone promoted:
To the tent my mission treading,
I will tell thy loud lamenting,
And by friendship's angel pleading
Win his heart to blest relenting.
I can touch his better nature
With the heaven that inspires me,
In his breast the reigning feature,
Norma shall resume her sway.

Norma

As a suppliant such act requires me
To seem.

Adalgisa

Suffer—permit me.

Bob's
Opera World

Norma

No, I dare not. Leave me, pray.

Adalgisa

Leave thee I will not.

DUET.

Norma & Adalgisa.

Adalgisa.

Dearest Norma! Before thee kneeling,
View these darlings, thy precious treasures;
Let that sunbeam, a mother's feeling
Break the night, the night around thy soul.

Norma.

Wouldst win that soul, by this entreating
back to Earth's delusive pleasures,
than the phantoms far, for more fleeting
Which do Death's deep ocean shoal?

Adalgisa.

Norma, view these darlings, thy precious treasures, view these darlings thy treasures,
Dearest Norma! Before thee kneeling,
View these darlings, thy precious treasures;
Let that sunbeam, a mother's feeling
Break the night, the night around thy soul.

Norma.

Ah! wouldst win that soul back to Earth's delusive pleasures?
Wouldst win that soul, by this entreating
back to Earth's delusive pleasures,
than the phantoms far, for more fleeting
Which do Death's deep ocean shoal?

Adalgisa

Ah, he persuaded.

Norma

Deceive me not,
His passion—

Adalgisa

Dies in repentance.

Norma

And thine?

Adalgisa

In friendship. My love for him
Now wears a more befitting sentence.

Bob's
Opera World
Norma

Angel of Pity, this kindness—

Adalgisa

Or shall restore your husband,
Or with thee seek oblivion
Far from the haunt of men.

Norma

Thou hast conquer'd—embrace me now;
Life is mine own again!

DUET.
NORMA & ADALGISA.

Norma.

O nevermore, nevermore asunder,
Freedom and Joy, and Joy our example,

Norma & Adalgisa.

Through pain or grief we wander
Over Creation, Creation so ample:
From the source in our bosoms
Friendship has rear'd twin-blossoms,
Blooming in sunlight or drooping in rain,
Drooping, or blooming in sunlight together,
Or drooping alike, alike in rain,
Or drooping alike in rain.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE 4.

(A solitary spot near the Druids' Wood, surrounded by rocky Caverns.—In the distance is a Lake, over which is a Stone Bridge.)

(Enter Soldiers and Gauls.)

Chorus of Druids.

Hath he left?

Chorus of Warriors.

That still he tarries,
All bear witness the armors rattle,
The battles trumpet throat Braying her alarums forth.

All.

Tho' hindrance wearies,
Strength must stay for wisdom's warrant;
Prudent slumber dams the torrent
Of our future fatal wrath.

Bob's
Opera World
SCENE 5.

(Enter Oroveso.)

Oroveso

Brave warriors, I hop'd to meet ye
With joyful earnest of better tidings;
My lip so ripe with counsel
Destin'd to fan your ardor—
Breathing soul to flame; our God hath sealed.

Chorus

Answer: if 'tis permitted;
Shall the tyrant Proconsul yet enslave us?
Or seek the Tiber

Oroveso

That iron rule were lightsome Beside the ruder bondage
Of Pollio's new successor.

Chorus

Doth Norma know? and coldly
Still ice our blood in peace?

Oroveso

The mind of Norma Secretes itself in silence.

Chorus

Then how advise us? Ore. To let not
The wound within ye, gaping fester;
But nurture, till consummation finally do heal it.

Chorus

What, still dissemble.

Oroveso.

O hard condition; I feel it.
Haughty Roman! by thy oppression;
Fetter'd freedom to madness driven,
Yet obeying a prescient heaven
Lulls her power, and stoops to feign.
Then approve the wise concession,
That our foe may deem she slumbers,
'Till arising, our myriad numbers
Cancel his usurping reign.

Chorus

But tho' we lull it, our sleeping anger
Breeds destruction for the stranger.
Soon shall Rome at God's permission
Melt as breath from off the plain.

(Exeunt.)

**Bob's
Opera World**

SCENE 6

Temple of Irminsul: an altar on one side.

(Enter Norma.)

Norma

He will return. Yes! Confidence reposes
In Adalgisa. Tenderly we shall welcome
As a suppliant this lover.
O my coming heaven
Does shame the blest hereafter
Our minstrel-prophets picture a sun approaches
That to my heart unfoldeth a living brightness.

(Enter Clotilde.)

Clotilde!

Clothilde

O Norma! look for the worst.

Norma

What tidings?

Clothilde

Bitt' rest.

Norma

Unburden—unburden.

Clothilde

The pleadings Of Adalgisa were bootless.

Norma

Was I persuaded
Of her persuasion to trust this rosebud
With dew on its cheek of damask, lovelier by affliction,
Into his power?

Clothilde

Back to her God she turneth,
Lowly and weeping, imploring
To repronounce allegiance.

Norma

And Pollio?

Clothilde

Most madly
Essays to tear her e'en from the shrine of Esus.

Bob's
Opera World

Norma

He, bath he such presumptions?
In success to his effort, thou fit libation,
Lifeblood of Rome, gush forth now in torrents!

(She rushes to the altar and strikes the shield thrice.)

Chorus

(Within.)

'Tis a call to the temple.

SCENE 7.

(Enter hastily, from various sides, Oroveso, Druids, Bards, the Officiating Priestesses—By little and little, the Temple becomes filled with armed men.—Norma takes her place on the Altar.)

Oroveso & Chorus

Norma, how now? Why striketh
Thy hand yon brazen shield?
Tell, if permitted,
God's mighty purport.

Norma

Warfare!
Slaughter! destruction!

Oroveso & Chorus

Thy lip but lately
Bade us to wear the yoke in mute subjection.

Norma

Those bonds that quell'd ye
Now are they snapp'd asunder,
Let warrior cries for battle outroar the thunder!

Norma & Chorus

Warfare! warfare! the hungry wolf glances
Not with half of our rage on his prey;
Thick as leaves on her oak's sturdy branches,
Gallia numbers defenders to-day.

Blood! blood! the Gallic battle-axes gleaming,
Shall cut them off forever—wash'd out all
In the dark waters of the foul Ligari—
Flowing, with funeral sound, their dirge.

Slaughter now for a like slaughter calleth,
Vengeance crowns ev'ry blow ere it falleth;
Sever'd, mown down as grass by the reaper,
We from thought of existence will sweep her.

Rome is doom'd to oblivion so total,
Mem'ry shall not e'en tell of her name.



See! to give pious anger promotal
Esus comes on a whirlwind of flame.

Oroveso

To end thy rite, O Norma,
Still a sacrifice lacketh.

Norma

Nor will't be wanting.
The awful shrine of Eons
No victim ever fails.—
But why this tumult?

SCENE 8.

(Enter Clotilde, hastily.)

Clotilde

A Roman's impious braving
Sullies our temple; in the sacred secret
Of our virginal cloisters vigilance seiz'd him.

All.

How, a Roman?

Norma

(What hear I?
Should it be Pollio—)

All.

They drag him hither.

Norma

(It is so!)

SCENE 9.

(Enter Pollio, conducted by a troop of warriors.)

Oroveso

Polio!

Norma

(Mine art thou now, O vengeance!)

Oroveso

Most sacrilegious despot, say, what could prompt ye
To profane these our forbidden myst'ries;
Thus to dare God's appalling wrath?

Pollio

Quick, strike me,
But no interrogations.



Bob's
Opera World
Norma

(Revealing herself.)

Mine be that office;
Withdrew from him.

Pollio

Whom see I? Norma?

Norma

Aye, Norma.

Chorus

Thy blow creates the victim
A worthier off'ring.

Norma

(Snatching the knife from Oroveso and advancing towards Pollio)

Yes, I strike—

(She stops short.)



The End