

## **The Beautiful Galatea**

[Opéra comique, in two acts; text by Zell and Genée. First produced in Vienna, 1865.]

### PERSONAGES.

Galatea, the statue. Ganymede, Greek boy. Pygmalion, sculptor.  
Midas, art patron.

[Chorus of Grecians.]

The scene is laid in Greece; time, mythological.

The opera of "Die Schöne Galatea" ("The Beautiful Galatea"), though of slight construction, is one of Suppé's most melodious works, while the story is a clever setting of the familiar mythological romance in a somewhat modern frame, in which respect it resembles the stories of Helen of Troy and Orpheus and Eurydice, which Offenbach so cleverly travestied. The first act opens with a graceful chorus of Grecians on their way to worship at the temple of Venus, at dawn ("Aurora is awaking in Heaven above"). Ganymede, Pygmalion's servant, declines to go with them, preferring to sleep, and bids them good-by with a lullaby ("With Violets, with Roses, let the Temple be decked"). His master, Pygmalion, who has finished a statue of Galatea, his ideal, also goes to the temple, and Ganymede decides to take a nap. His slumbers are interrupted, however, by Midas, a professional art patron, who has heard of the statue and informs Ganymede that he is ready to buy it, but first wishes to see it. The servant declares it is impossible, as his master is in love with it. Midas makes a further appeal to him in a long descriptive arietta ("My Dear Father Gordias") in which he boasts of his abilities, his patronage, and his conquests. He finally bribes Ganymede to show it to him, and as he stands gazing at it and praising its loveliness, Pygmalion, who has suddenly returned, enters and upbraids them. After a spirited trio,

"Boiling Rage I feel within me," Ganymede takes to his heels and Midas is driven out. When Pygmalion is alone with the statue, a sudden impulse moves him to destroy it because it has been polluted by Midas's glances, but his hand is stayed as he hears the chorus of the returning worshippers, and he makes an impassioned appeal to Venus ("Venus, oh, see, I fly to thee") to give life to the marble. Venus answers his prayer. The statue comes to life, and Galatea falls in love with Pygmalion, the first man she has seen, which gives an opportunity for a charming number, the Awakening Duet ("I feel so warm, so sweet"), and for a solo closing the act ("Lightly sways and gently sweeps").

The second act opens with the couplets of Ganymede ("We Grecians"), at the close of which he espies Galatea gathering flowers. As soon as the fickle Galatea sees Ganymede, she falls in love with him because he is younger and handsomer than Pygmalion. As they are discoursing admiringly, Midas appears and recognizes Galatea, and proceeds to woo her with offers of jewels. A pretty trio follows, "See the Trinkets I have brought you." She accepts his trinkets and his money, but declines to accept him. As they are negotiating, Pygmalion returns. Ganymede once more takes to his heels, and Galatea conceals Midas by putting him on the pedestal behind the screen where she had stood. She then hides her jewels, and tells Pygmalion she is hungry. Ganymede is summoned and arranges the table, and they sit down, the servant with them at Galatea's request. She sings a brilliant drinking-song ("Bright in Glass the Foaming Fluid pass"), in which Pygmalion and Ganymede join. During the banquet Midas is discovered behind the screen, and Pygmalion also learns of Galatea's fickle conduct later, when he surprises her and Ganymede in a pretty love scene ("Ah, I'm drawn to Thee"). By this time Pygmalion is so enraged that he prays Venus to let her become a statue again. The goddess graciously consents, and the sculptor promptly gets rid of Galatea by selling her to Midas.