## Where'er you walk

Aria from "Semele"









## Where'er You Walk (Semele)

## By George Frederick Handel

It has often been said that the singer may perfect his voice through the use of Handel's vocal music, most of which possesses a certain freshness of melodic invention, and involves the use of a broad and smooth-flowing tone. This song especially exemplifies these qualities. Handel's phrases are often so long that the usually unpardonable sin of breathing in the middle of words is occasionally allowed. In fact it would be wrong not to breathe in the middle of the phrase shown below.



Some editors have advised the repetition of the word shade on each breath, but the consensus of opinion is usually in favor of the original.

Another law of singing is traditionally broken in the rendition of the last phrase of the aria:



We do not usually breathe after a preposition, but a breath may be taken the last time this phrase occurs. To break the phrase the first time would ruin the artistry of the song. We bow to the genius of Handel in this particular. Perhaps that is sufficient explanation. Be sure to avoid breathing in the middle of a word, or after a preposition in most cases. Reserve this license for few composers and with them only under certain circumstances. Where'er You Walk is a true art-song.

The tempo of the song is largo, slow. The mood is graceful. The words and music are in perfect accord. There is almost no opportunity for variation of rhythm or speed, but there is plenty of room for imagination.

The first part of the song should be sung in a quiet, peaceful style. In the second section, Where'er you tread brightens slightly; a flourish is apparent and great joy is expressed. Part three, a repetition of the first, is sung in a similar manner, but with varied nuances. The song ends in a heavier tone than was used at the beginning. There is also a marked slowing down at the conclusion of the voice part. Do not oversing this song. It should be treated as something of intense beauty.