

The Indian Queen

Plot and narration

Music 1: **Orchestra**

Music 2: **Orchestra, during which: ACTION:** The family: Zempoalla deposes her brother, helped by Traxalla. Acacis tries to stop her. Amexia gives baby to Garucca and they run away.

Music 3: **Fighting:** the two nations. Incas (with Montezuma) beat the Mexicans (with Acacis). From the fighting, a boy and a girl (one from each team) emerge.

Music 5: **Boy**

Music 6: **Girl**

Music 7: **both duet:** *why must there be war? It is prophesied that we will meet our doom.*

GARUCCA: So this is what has become of the Mexican people. The King, our gentle and noble ruler, free from cruelty, murdered by the hand of his General Traxalla, under orders from the King's sister Zempoalla! She wanted her own son Acacis to inherit the kingdom – but he never for a moment wanted to come to power by such base means. The Old King's wife, Queen Amexia, rightly feared for her own life and that of her baby, and fled the country by night, secretly leaving her child in my safe hands. I brought the child up as my own, and I too was exiled. Mexico was ruled by the usurping, murdering Queen Zempoalla and the treacherous Monster Traxalla: but over the years under this new reign, Mexico's fortunes turned and they found themselves under attack from the proud neighbouring Inca empire.

TRAXALLA: I led three tactical retreats from the Incas, who were led by their valiant general Montezuma. He had come only lately to the Inca court, a stranger – but fought and led them to immediate victory – and captured prince Acacis. Yet in return for these services, he wanted nothing from King Inca save one thing: the hand in marriage of Inca's daughter, Orazia. Again and again the King dismissed Montezuma's suit, shouting that this wandering stranger would never be worthy of his daughter's love:

INCA: Thou glorious sun, dost thou not blush to shine, while such base Blood attempts to mix with thine!

MONT: That sun thou speakst of did not hide his face, when he beheld me conquering for his Race.

TRAXALLA: Montezuma, rash and passionate, wanted immediate revenge for this slight on his character, but the noble prisoner prince Acacis restrained him, urging caution.

ACACIS: Can you so little Orazia prize, to give the conquest to her enemies? Can you so easily forego her sight?

TRAXALLA: But Montezuma believed that King Inca's injustice towards him had broken all bonds of loyalty – and decided to defect to the Mexican side! He offered to release Acacis, so that they could return together to Mexico, but Acacis believed himself bound by honour to stay – freedom should be earned, he said, not stolen. So Montezuma left, and Acacis stayed, a prisoner of honour. King Inca was so impressed by this that he himself offered Acacis his liberty – which the prince now felt able to accept. Thus it was that both Montezuma and Acacis made their way back to our Mexican camp.

GARUCCA: Meanwhile, in that Mexican camp, Queen Zempoalla was bewailing the loss of her beloved son Acacis. She promised sacrifices to the gods if the Mexicans were successful from then on:

ZEMP: And with a thousand Feasts thy flames I'll feed; all that I take shall on thy Altars bleed; Princes themselves shall fall, and make thy shrine, dyed with their blood, in glorious blushes shine.

GARUCCA: and sure enough, straightaway there came news of the return of her beloved son Acacis, and of Montezuma stirring up the Mexican troops to glorious battle against his old friends the Incas.

ZEMP: Great God of vengeance: I see thou dost begin to hear me now: make me thy off'ring if I break my vow.

TRAXALLA: so, Montezuma, new Mexican warrior, caught up with King Inca and his fair daughter Orazia and captured them. Inca felt his prejudices to be confirmed and condemned Montezuma for his unbridled, savage passion, but Montezuma only gloated in his success. As soon as I heard about this, I went to take Inca prisoner, to seize him as my prey, but that pup Montezuma stopped me!

MONT: Stay your bold hands from reaching at what's mine!

TRAXALLA: and, adding to my humiliation, Inca then surrendered himself freely to Acacis! What was that, some sort of honour competition?! What sort of King was this, to cede willingly to his captor? Well, then it got interesting – I thought we were arguing about King Inca, but noticed that Acacis couldn't take his eyes off Orazia! Well, whoever claimed the prisoners, it was Queen Zempoalla who claimed the glory for the conquest over the Incan people – though I don't see what she had done to deserve it.

MUSIC 9 martial music

MUSIC 10 Fame and chorus to Zempoalla's glory

GARUCCA: Angry at his loss of face with Montezuma and Acacis, Traxalla let the Queen know of the situation about the new prisoners – and she reacted as he, her right hand man for so many years, knew she would.

ZEMP: Would you permit a private man to have the great Peruvian Inca for his slave! Shame to all princes! Was it not just now I made a sacred and a solemn vow to offer up (if blest with victory) the prisoners that we took? And they shall die! Those Deities in whom I place my trust, shall see: when they are kind, that I am just.

GARUCCA: Oh how that pleased the envious, proud Traxalla!

MUSIC 11 Envy and Fame etc.

MUSIC 12

MUSIC 13

“ (exit Traxalla with Envy through the audience. Envy's 2 followers retreat into the chorus).

MUSIC 14 chorus: Zempoalla's glory

GARUCCA On hearing that Traxalla had taken away the prisoners to be prepared for sacrifice, Acacis urged caution to the furious, impulsive Montezuma – and admitted his own love for Orazia. They agreed to put aside their rivalry for the moment, and fight the monster Traxalla together.

TRAXALLA And together they came, challenging our authority, Montezuma with his brutish fury and Acacis with his misplaced honour. I was heavily guarded – they had no chance. Zempoalla, my beloved Queen, was strangely reticent –

- why did she not just kill Montezuma at once for his impudence? Why just send him from her sight?
The fool Acacis railed against his mother yet again for her treachery against her brother the Old King. He said he felt it as his own burden, his own 'badge of sorrow' (hah!). He begged in vain to save the life of Orazia, and with his overpowering sense of... virtue? – vowed thus:
- ACACIS Like you I vow: when to the Powers divine you pay her guiltless Blood, I'll offer mine. (exit)
- TRAXALLA I watched my Queen carefully, listened to the words she did not say. And I realised... my Queen – She loves him! In love with a blustering man of war! In one moment this new guest has drove me out from this false woman's breast!... and her son enslaved by love to Orazia, her rival in love!
I warned her – get rid of Montezuma!
(to Zempoalla:) I find this rash Unknown is dangerous, and if not timely slain, may plunge your Empire in new wars again.
But she would be advised by no-one but herself.(exit)
- MUSIC 23** **Zempoalla: I attempt from love's sickness to fly.** (*alone on stage*)
- GARUCCA The love-sick 'Queen' told her conjuror and adviser Ismeron of a dream she had had – a lion she had once held captive, turning all his rage on her. Now she doubted her own destiny and powers. Ismeron, to interpret her dream, needed to call on the Gods and the spirits.
- ISMERON From those dark caves those powers shall straight appear; be not afraid, whatever shapes they wear.
- ZEMPOALLA There's nothing thou canst raise can make me start; a living form can only shake my heart.
- MUSIC 16** **dance** (*gathering of the spirits, gods and chorus; Royal family to one side.*)
MUSIC 17 **Ismeron conjures the god of dreams** (*with 2 lines of dialogue*)
MUSIC 18 **The god of Dreams rises**
MUSIC 19 **The God of dreams sings**
- GARUCCA (*unsympathetically!*) Poor Zempoalla, alone, drooping under the weight of rage and care – and now fearing for her fate. Traxalla, jealous and vengeful; Acacis guilt-ridden and in love; Montezuma imprisoned; Inca and Orazia doomed to be sacrificed. (*characters leave as he names them; he then leaves through audience*).
- MUSIC 22** **spirits duet and chorus. Exeunt.**

INTERVAL

- MUSIC 20** **overture.** *During the end of this, Traxalla walks Orazia over to Montezuma then takes his narration place again.*
- TRAXALLA Superstition is useless. Action is all! So I took Orazia to Montezuma to force his hand. Who should die – he or she?
At last Montezuma seemed to show a modicum of honour, offering to die for her – or was it just more foolish passion?

ORAZIA O Montezuma, can you be so careless of yourself, but more of me? Though you have brought me to this misery, I blush to say - I cannot see you die.

TRAXALLA Oho, a neat twist – she loves him back! But this is your destiny:
DRAW!

Freeze as Zempoalla enters and holds Orazia.

ZEMPOALLA Hold, hold, or Orazia dies. (*Mont. And Trax. both pull back*) O, is it Orazia's name that makes you stay? 'Tis her great power, not mine, that you obey!

GARUCCA The plot thickens! Zempoalla has seen through Traxalla's wiles – he wants Orazia too! What a web of deceit, disloyalty, and changing passions!

Action: Traxalla runs to kill Montezuma but Orazia puts herself between them and protects Montezuma.

GARUCCA Zempoalla could not stand to hear the declarations of love between Orazia and Montezuma, and ordered her guards to take him away.

ZEMPOALLA Come, my Traxalla, let us both forgive, and in these wretches' fates begin to live. The altars shall be crowned with Funeral boughs, peace-offerings paid – but with unquiet vows. (*exeunt*)

GARUCCA Honour came to the rescue again. Acacis, unhappy son and unwilling prince, freed Montezuma, putting their rivalry aside to save the innocent Orazia.

But, once Orazia was safe, their passions would out. Montezuma and Acacis fought, bravely and well – but Acacis was no match for Montezuma, and fell wounded. Orazia, alarmed by the noise, ran back, and was horrified at the bloodshed in her name, stating that she would go to her father in prison and have neither of them. They ran after her.

TRAXALLA We stopped them all of course, and, proving that honour yet again is the choice of Losers, Orazia chose to be captured with Montezuma rather than letting him die alone!

So be it: prepare the sacrifice!

ZEMPOALLA Lead to the temple straight; a priest and altar for those lovers wait: they shall be joined, they shall.

TRAXALLA And I will prove those joys in vengeance, which I lack in love.

MUSIC 27 long sacrifice scene: Iseron and chorus.

GARUCCA Even facing death, King Inca would not accept the love that flowed between Orazia and Montezuma, who seemed to grow in honour and righteousness with every moment.

MONTEZUMA Weep not, we both shall have one destiny: as in one flame we lived, in one we'll die.

TRAXALLA I cannot stand this talk of love and honour! Why do we waste in vain these precious hours? Each minute of his life may hazard ours: he shall fall first, and teach the rest to die.

ZEMPOALLA Hold – who is it that commands – ha, you or I? Your zeal grows too strong: sure you may allow your empress freedom first to pay her vow.

TRAXALLA No-one fears or obeys you any more!

ZEMPOALLA Traitor!

TRAXALLA Ha!

ZEMPOALLA Let the sacrifice begin!

TRAXALLA (*narrating*) – Acacis, by now weak from his injuries sustained in the duel with Montezuma, tried to stop Zempoalla committing further murder. He appealed to the soldiers, knowing that they were opposed to such primal bloodshed:

ACACIS not one looks up – lest sudden pity should their hearts surprise, and steal into their bosoms through their eyes.

TRAXALLA but to no avail. Zempoalla would not relinquish her desperate, jealous, hate-filled path, and Orazia could not comfort or support Acacis. Oh, Acacis, full of shame for his mother's sins, and hoping to atone for the murder of his uncle - with a strange, twisted, self-sacrificing honour, Acacis stabs himself!

ZEMPOALLA (*screams*)

TRAXALLA To Zempoalla's horror and agony, Acacis dies, with Orazia's fair face the last image in his eyes.

CHORUS - *shout and cheer, facing offstage; Garucca leaves to join the action*

TRAXALLA Suddenly, there is uproar in the streets! Messengers calling us to arms! The exiled Queen Amexia, beloved by the people, and her faithful friend Garucca are seen in the streets!

– (*to Z*) We must go and meet them ere it be too late! - Rise, madam, rise – have you no sense of fate?

GARUCCA (*announcing*): Loyal Mexicans, unite – this valiant Montezuma, who has led you to victory, and whom I raised as my own, is not my son, but the son of our banished queen Amexia and her dead husband, the rightful King!

CHORUS *shout and cheer*

TRAXALLA (*giving Zempoalla his dagger and pushing Montezuma towards her*): strike, strike!

(*Zemp moves towards Montezuma, but gives him the dagger instead of stabbing him.*)

TRAXALLA Am I betrayed? (*he draws his weapon on Montezuma, who kills him*)

GARUCCA And so the proud, treacherous, ambitious General Traxalla dies. Great was my jubilation, and fast flowed the happy tears of Queen Amexia, on meeting Montezuma again! Further joys came with King Inca, now satisfied with Montezuma's birthright, acknowledging his right to marry Orazia. In the light of Zempoalla's mercy towards Montezuma, they all forgave her – yet she could not escape her grief for Acacis – the loss of her son, and now her throne – what had she left to rule other than her own destiny?

(*Zempoalla takes the knife and kills herself*)

And so Zempoalla, this most unhappy and false queen, at last is mistress of her own fate.

Rebellion is calmed, treachery punished, the rights of true succession triumph. Acacis lives on in the hearts of Montezuma his friend, and Orazia his beloved. Families are reunited, and love reigns supreme.

Action: all stand and re-arrange themselves.

Let us now present to you a final masque, showing the triumph of true love.

- MUSIC 28** **Symphony**
- MUSIC 29** **Hymen**
- MUSIC 30** **follower of Hymen and chorus**
- MUSIC 31** **2 married people. Grumpy...**
- MUSIC 32** **Hymen**
- MUSIC 33** **2 married people, happy**
- MUSIC 35** **Cupid's follower**
- MUSIC 38** **Chorus**