

**NORMA: A  
LYRICAL TRAGEDY  
IN THREE ACTS**

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Norma: A Lyrical Tragedy in Three Acts by Jos. Reese Fry

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**JOS. REESE FRY**

**NORMA: A  
LYRICAL TRAGEDY  
IN THREE ACTS**



*Wm Wood from*  
*Mr. Fry.*

**NORMA:**

A

**LYRICAL TRAGEDY,**

IN

**THREE ACTS:**

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF FELICE ROMANI,

AND ADAPTED TO THE ORIGINAL MUSIC OF

**BELLINI,**

*z*

BY JOS. REESE FRY.

*First performed in English at the Chestnut Street Theatre.*

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## **NORMA.**

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**CLAUDIAN.** A Roman Proconsul over Gaul; secretly espoused to Norma.

**ORVESO.** The chief of the Gallic Druids and Father of Norma.

**FLAVIUS.** A Roman officer and friend of Claudian.

**NORMA.** The Chief Priestess and Superior of the Gauls.

**ELBERTA.** A noble virgin dedicated to the service of the God Irminsul.

**CLOTILDA.** A friend of Norma.

Two children of Claudian and Norma-

Chief Priests, Inferior Druids, Astrologers, Bards, Ministers and Virgins of the Temple of Irminsul, Gallic Nobles and Soldiers.

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The scene is laid in Gaul about one hundred and fifty years after the Roman conquest. The action is in and near the Temple of the God Irminsul, and occupies one night and the following day.

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[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1841, by JOS. KANAN FAY, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

## ACT FIRST.

SCENE 1ST.—*The sacred grove near the Temple of Irminsul. Time, Evening.*

*Enter Chief Priests, Druids and Orveso.*

ORVESO.

Druids ascend yon mountain height,  
There watch the day declining,  
While all unveiled in silver light  
The crescent moon is shining!

There be your sacred duty  
To hail her virgin beauty,  
And sounding thrice the mystic shield  
Bid all to her meet homage yield!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS, &c.

Shine forth, young moon, beneath thy light  
Norma will sacrifice to-night!

PRAYER.

Oh! Irminsul prophetic Power,  
Be present in this awful hour:  
Against Rome's tyranny inspire  
Thy Priestess with puissant ire:  
Oh! dreadful God, strike off the chain,  
Let Gallia be free again!

*Orv.* Yes! guarding still this ancient wood  
Wherein his altars long have stood,  
Freedom on us he will bestow,  
Death on the eagle-bearing foe.

*Chorus.*—His arms divine then clashing,  
Like living thunder crashing,  
E'en to the seven-hill'd city's wall  
Shall echo vengeance with its fall!

Shine forth, young moon, beneath thy light  
Norma will sacrifice to-night! (*Exeunt.*)

*Enter Claudian and Flavius.*

RECITATIVE.

*Cl.* All have departed, and their dread retreat  
Is silent. Fæely may we enter now.

*Fl.* Who enters here shall perish :—so saith Norma.

*Cl.* Norma! What anguish doth that name awaken!

*Fl.* Oh wherefore feel thus, hearing Norma's name.  
The mother of thy children—

*Cl.* Thou sayst truly

My children's mother,—my sole idol once :

But that long cherished passion, in despite

Of ev'ry struggle is departed now

And proves me faithless to one faithful ever !

Nor to this only care am I a prey ;—

The future opens an abyss so dark

I dare not look into its dreadful depths.

*Fl.* What—dost thou love another ?

*Cl.* Sad confession—

Yes! 'tis a noble virgin, who is bound

By oath to serve a vot'ress in this temple.

In youth's sweet freshness blooming, and a  
gentle,

Most artless creature, in her beauty peerless,

She hath won from me all my heart's affections.

*Fl.* What hope hast thou in passion unreturned ?

*Cl.* I am not hopeless—

*Fl.* Yet dost thou not fear

Norma's just anger ?

*Cl.* Aye! that harrowing thought

Is present ever, and hath reared of late

A life-like vision warning me to pause.

*Fl.* How? Tell me!

*Cl.* With remembrance e'en, I tremble!



## CLAUDIAN.

When bound in slumber's golden chain  
 This dream stole gently o'er me :—  
 Methought that in a nuptial fane  
 Elberta stood before me.  
 As bridal songs then rose above  
 Our wedded faith was plighted,—  
 How swelled my heart delighted  
 With grateful transport and with love !

But soon was hushed the strain of mirth,  
 Each eye in terror gleaming—  
 While rose a phantom from the earth,  
 In form a priestess seeming.  
 Fast flashed the lightning, gory red,  
 Bolt echoed bolt of thunder,  
 Cleaving the fane asunder,  
 All striking mute with dread.

No more my lovely bride was nigh,—  
 Sepulchral gloom prevailing  
 Bore from afar her suppliant cry  
 With infants' feeble wailing.  
 Then burst a sound more dread than all  
 My inmost soul appalling ;—  
 'Twas Norma sternly calling  
 Thus, heartless traitor, fall !

*(The brazen shield sounds.)*

*Flavius.* Hark ! to perform their mystic rite  
 Norma leads forth her virgin choir !

*Chorus. (within)* Druids ! the moon is beaming  
 bright ;—  
 Strangers profane, retire !

- Flavius.* Come hence!  
*Claudian.* No, leave me!  
*Flavius.* Perils here  
 Surround thee.  
*Claudian.* Nay! I scorn all fear,—  
*Flavius.* Farewell!  
*Claudian.* Go thou, I will not flee.  
*Flavius.* These mysteries none save Gaius may  
 see;—  
*Claudian.* No! treason prompts this secret rite,  
 And rebels thus conspire.  
*Chorus.* Druids, the moon is beaming bright,  
 Strangers profane, retire!

CLAUDIUS.

Darkling storms now vainly lower,  
 Never shall my spirit cower,  
 Urged by more than earthly power,  
 My love and my Elberta's charms,  
 What though ev'ry vow unholy  
 Bind her to these altars solely!—  
 Blasted all and fallen lowly  
 They shall yield her to my arms. *(Exeunt.)*

*Enter Druids, Astrologers, Bards, Soldiers, followed  
 by Oruso.*

CHORUS.

Lo! Norma comes by virgins awaited,  
 Solemn her pace, her fair brow elated,  
 Bearing green bows to heaven dedicated  
 While her sickle of gold shines afar!  
 As she advanceth, Rome's glory waneth,  
 Irminsul still omnipotent reigneth,  
 Still supernal effulgence maintaineth,  
 Downward' hurling oppression's red star!

*Enter Norma and Virgins.*

RECITATIVE.

*Norma.* Seditious spirits! who presumptuous thus,  
E'en at the altar's base calls you to war  
Unbidden? Who dares cry rebellion now  
Ere the avenging moment is declared  
By Norma,—striving thus to speed the fate  
Of Rome yet unrevealed? Infuriate men,  
Know her destruction waits not human power!

*Or.* How long beneath oppression must we languish;  
How long be spurned in silence and resign  
Our homes, our altars and our country,—all  
To foreign despots? Shall the sword of Brennus  
That would leap forth to havoc, slumber still?

*Chorus.* No! no! strike home for freedom!

*Nor.* Draw who dares!  
And may the sword unsheathed before its hour  
Faithless and broken prove! The destined time  
For Gallic vengeance hath not ripened yet,  
Nor can the falchions of Sicambrian hordes  
Yet pierce the triple mail of Latin cohorts!

*Oru. & Cho.* But speak! What doth our God fore-  
tell? Declare  
His promise!

*Nor.* Listen Gauls, and learn heaven's sentence.  
On death's eternal tablets is the name  
Of proud and cruel Rome most darkly graven:  
There have I read her dire and certain doom.  
That doom ye cannot speed: the measure deep  
Of all her crimes o'erflowing, she ere long  
Must drain, and thus forever fall! Peace now  
Compatriots and our hallowed work attend!