Timothy Mather Spelman
(1891-1970)

The Sea-Rovers
opera in three acts
(1928)

the play by
Leolyn Louise Everett

typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information
The characters

**Sigismund**, a lord of Venice - bass

**Piero**, a young Venetian gentleman - tenor

**Deolus**, an astrologer in the service of Sigismund - tenor

**Giulio**, the captain of the enterprise - baritone

**Isabel**, the wife of Sigismund - mezzo soprano

**Bianca**, her companion - lyric soprano

The scene is in **Venice**, on the sea and on the small island of **Ardea**. The period is the height of the **Renaissance**.
Act One

The sea-wall terrace beside Sigismund's house. All the way along the back runs a white marble balustrade, broken slightly to the centre of stage left by a small square landing from which an unseen flight of steps, running flush with the wall, descends to the bay. Above and thro' this balustrade, one sees the vivid turquoise shine of the water. To the extreme left the undisturbed blueness of sky and sea is cut by the sharp point of one bright orange sail from a boat moored below the wall. To the right downstage, Sigismund's house its rosy stone elaborately decorated in white lace-like traceries and arabesques in the Byzantine style. Facing the stage an arched and carved doorway, whence three brief marble steps lead, between two small couchant stone lions, to the terrace. Above this doorway, a square marble balcony with a tall pointed window opening onto it. It is essential that the proportions of this building are just, the balcony must be at least fifteen feet from the stage level, the door at least eight feet high and the window leading onto the balcony seven. Two oblong stone benches right and left about half way upstage.

Isabel and Bianca, walking slowly to and fro, the former tall, dark and beautiful, twenty-five years old and in the flower of the superb maturity that that age gives the Italian woman, the latter slighter and younger, a little blonde woman with the marks of worry about her. Isabel wears a gown of vivid purple velvet square cut at her magnificent throat and revealing like a glove the splendid lines of her figure. Bianca's dress of a mouse-colour between brown and grey expresses to a nicety the tone of her mood.

From the unseen beach below the voices of the sailors rise.
Act One

Allegro moderato

The Sailors

piano

Andante moderato

(The curtain rises)

(The curtain rises)

While we wait, we wait at the

While we wait, we wait at the

har - bour gate our hearts are as low as the tides that flow to the dy - ing moon in the month of June and we curse our fate while we wait, we

har - bour gate our hearts are as low as the tides that flow to the dy - ing moon in the month of June and we curse our fate while we wait, we

pianos
The Sailors

Isabel

piano

a tempo

Allegro moderato

But when we turn free to the bound-less sea, our hearts are as high as the

wait!

a tempo

unite

But when we turn free to the bound-less sea, our hearts are as high as the

piano

accel.

allargando

f

f

f

da tempo

A reckless

birds that fly in the stor- my sky, when we turn once free to the bound-less sea, to the bound-less sea.

The Sailors

piano

birds that fly in the stor- my sky, when we turn once free to the bound-less sea, to the bound-less sea.
Bianca
song that stirs the blood. These are the knaves my hus-band deals with?

Isabel

Bianca

Piano

Lo stesso movimento

Isabel

Bianca

To me a-ny-way this seems a mad ad- ven-ture.

Piano

ritard.  Andante
Isabel

He is not prone to folly.

He has here an excellent position and were loath to tempt a doubtful venture.

p

Isabel

heard of this dare-devil that he buys,

a man whose sword's for sale,

a pirate whose bare name beggars the ocean of its ships,

a man of courage dauntless, recklessness unmatched

p, ff

Isabel

hath allargando

a tempo

he daunt that he can win the island?
and brilliance of manoeuvre. Could you ask a better list of favours? 'Tis the day of private war-fare.

And you think, once won, that he can hold it?

Once his own, he can commend him to the highest bidder, thus gaining protection from his need. You should have been a statesman.
Isabel (piano)

Very ill. I have felt my blood dance for battle, had my heart leap at some trick of state-craft.

Bianca

It very ill. You are a woman.

Isabel (piano)

Allegro agitato

as no man could ever make it leap, my soul cry out for reckless life and glory, anything but this, this death-in-living.

Isabel (piano)

this accursed routine of lack of passion. Do you think I am afraid to die? I'd take my life in my ten fingers, as a

piano

typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information
Isabel

piano

gift and toss it to dark death with laugh-ter, had I lived!

If but one hour I had known my

life, as I was meant to have it, would I fear to pay the high-
est cost-mark of my joy? But thus, thus, thus! Held

down, con-fined, a thing so need-less e-ven to my-
self, so well, dis-pensed with, with the li-ta-ny of days chant-ing the sil-ly

Isabel

piano

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.
160 
\[ \text{ritardando} \]

\[ \text{Giulio} \]

\[ \text{Isabel} \]

\[ \text{Bianca} \]

\[ \text{piano} \]

167 
\[ \text{allargando} \]

\[ \text{Giulio} \]

\[ \text{Isabel} \]

\[ \text{Bianca} \]

\[ \text{piano} \]

\[ \text{Fie! You laugh at worthy} \]

\[ \text{va-pid cir-cle round in mo-ck-ry...} \]

\[ \text{Love! What is love? I had a-mache once in my fin-ger?} \]

\[ \text{You do not love your lord? An amache they say.} \]

\[ \text{You} \]

\[ \text{not} \]

\[ \text{love} \]

\[ \text{your} \]

\[ \text{lord?} \]

\[ \text{mat-ers?} \]

\[ \text{Would you that I wept?} \]

\[ \text{Your mood is most cap-ri-cious and se-vere and yet your bles-sings are as va-rious! It had not seemed a wo-man could ask} \]

\[ \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{p con tenerezza} \]

\[ \text{andante cantabile} \]

\[ \text{Lento} \]

\[ \text{9} \]
more than all the admiration and the praise that your strange beauty brings you, meetly bound with honour such as is your wife's due as spouse of such a worthy esteemed by all his proper fellow citizens. You have whole hosts of lovers asking naught but a small curl or 

What do I desire! There is no limit to my wish. I could

Pray what more do you desire?
com-pass the world with flame and so set forth to fight for space and all the stars. I want to leave this

all, to throw it by and go out, on the ocean, in the wind, to feel chance, in its living presence, by my side.

reckoning or betraying...

Ah, we will set forth too shortly. All I hope is that we are not murdered in our sleep.

This is typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) – see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information.
Bianca

Isabel

ear, with Spank-knives, our rings stripped from our nerve-less fingers, our long hair short, shorn like the pale

sis-
ters, sai-lors ropes made from the rag-ged tres-ses...

(putting her hands over her ears)

Andante moderato

In pi-ty, stop!

Look
Sigismund is about sixty, a thin upright old man with grey beard, arrogant but timid. He is richly but darkly dressed. Leaving Giulio a little way behind him. (Sigismund and Giulio having entered from the steps along the sea-wall, turn down-stage. Sigismund crosses to Isabel)

Sigismund: there, your lord and...

Bianca: (drawing back with a sharp intake of breath) (quasi parlando)

Bianca: (she pauses in doubt)

Sigismund: I scarce thought to find you here. You had best retire and make you ready. We will sail some time tomorrow.

Isabel: (held as if against her will and speaking with false ease) I took the air the house is most oppressive.

Isabel: Ex-cellent, my lord! Then...
Thy' wish is not complete-ly fit-ting, I have thought in this re-gard, that tho' it is mis-placed be speaks your ea-ger wish to keep my side, for mo-tives' sake I might be

I will tra-vel with you?

leni-ent and have ar ranged it.

A plea-sant wife-ly gra-ni- tude. Fare-well. Mes-sier, this is my

That was good of you. May I not meet our al-ly in this quest?
Giulio

Your wife.

(bowing over her hand after one vivid glance that sweeps her from head to foot)

(isolating, speaking so with an involuntary eagerness)

Your name is known already to me since I have some taste for the high seas.

(piano)

Ah never! Your pardon but the winds and waves have taught me little else.

(bowing back)

I should have been a man. You are bold.

I like it. I am not afraid of
Nor yet the sea?

Isabel:

(words. Nor yet the sea nor all the world. You see I have scant wisdom.

 Giulio:

...os-ophy, I think. Why should we be such mi-ers of our lives that make a show of boun-ty.

 Isabel:

Oh, that is my very thought! You live it but, you see,
Isabel

I, by the curse on women needs must stand aside and merely think it. You must love your life for fear of losing while I hate mine for the length of

piano

Isabel

Yes, I love my life. Yours also, it will change, the world be yours as it is mine now.

 Giulio

(impelled by some powers beyond her control)

Isabel

I living.

 Giulio

You are full contented, to the very soul. You love?

piano

Giulio

wind, the sky, the ocean, the mad light that leads one on to battle and the wars of heaven and earth that are so great the ship is but a bubble in the

piano
Giulio

piano

cur-eent; love the strug-gle of it, vic-to-ry, the spray salt on my lips and in my eyes.

Lento e tranquillo

Giulio

pp

the cool green mar-vel of the wa-ter when it lies more still than sleep, the shock of it that comes in leap-ing to its

piano

pp

rit.-------------------------------

Giulio

nf

depths, the air, the sun warm on my shoul-ders and my ship, my love,

piano

nf
dim.

rt...---------------------------

nf

allargando
Giulio

that I have chosen for my bride, the wife that's my companion, that's a warrior or a mere sailor with me, love her dressed in all her flags and

piano

flaunting them when forth she sails down the harbour mirrored by the little lazy waves

piano

and love her more when she is tattered, when her sails are rent, her dear sides battered and she flings herself

Giulio

Molto largo e sostenuto

allargando a tempo

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.
fort from a com-bat, vic-tor! These my loves!

That ne-ver will be ri-valled?

I would wish my-self to have some-converse with our guest.

No. Nor I. It is a wretched fo-bly.

If, in my pass-ion for this quest, my lord, I...
You have o'er passed the time for women's talk.

And did not

loitered here un-due-ly.

keen to learn of no-ta-ble ad-ven-ture, 'tis not strange.

If you come with me it will be bet-ter.

I will see your

speak the fol-ly of my sex the cap-tain will bear wit-ness.
 Giulio

la-dy-sho to-mor-row.

Isabel

On your ship,
your thrice be-loved ves-sel.

Do you think in such a bliss-ful state,

(giving her the slow and full ben-et
of a glance in which annoyance mingles
with and is over-run by some more
ardent but less explicable motive)

Julio

As I think
I would find
time in heav-en or in hell.

Isabel

you will find
time to note
my hum-ble pre-sence?

Calmsuch unchurch-ly words

piano
Sigismund

Giulio

Isabel

If you please, this way.

Farewell.

and pray the saints we may ne'er see the latter.

Farewell.

Moderato ma agitato

Do not be a fool!

Oh, Isabel you do amaze me!

Kind

piano
Isabel
What about it? Is he not a very devil? Did you hear him say that he loved nothing but his ship?

Bianca
Vir-gin!

piano
un poco meno mosso
stor my words. You do fright me. For five minutes’ talk thus to leap up flame-lit and flame-inspired, as if your old wild theories were the

Bianca

piano
Andante con moto

Isabel

My old wild theories. That is it. I have some dreadful madness in my veins. He woke the god and devil in me

Bianca

truth.

piano

and

seem

My

leap
together. I will teach him! Oh you great in coldness, is it strange?

allargando

Isabel

and they seem to leap together. I will teach him! Oh you great in coldness, is it strange? Did you not see that dark

piano

ritardando

Moderato

Isabel

glance that suddenly flashes to lightning just a certain way as natural as breathing and as
Isabel:
marked as wholly of himself? To tender-ness he would be like a child in tender-ness but as a warrior, steel bound and

Isabel:
forged both soul and body! There’s a man who might have all a woman’s heart for song

Isabel:
if she were twice a triple fool most women are! He has the way to take it, just that smooth cool in-so-lence and under neath what fire, I'd give my very soul to...
Isabel

know I mean she would, the foolish woman. I am not a foolish woman the' thus stirred by some great fascination. You have noticed it? You

piano

(Piero is a thin dark dandy of her own age with a somewhat foppish attire and somewhat foppish manner ably in variance with a kind of haggard and sinister passion which occasionally reveals itself.)

Andante lento

(As Piero enters halfway upstage left she sinks down on the bench right.)

For fate smiles that I should see you.

must have having eyes to see! And here we have that foolish Piero!

463

allargando a tempo

469

Andante con moto

poco accel.

Andante con moto

poco accel.

(Piero)

(kissing Isabel's hand)
Isabel
You are unkind.
Not on me. You should not trouble me!
You do not know the meaning of the word!

Piero
Can you not see my love that drives me? Have you not some pity for my love?
And you, can you not tell me what you think it is?
A fire that drinks the blood, death yet not
Isabel

Piero

p

You have learned quickly.

Isabel

dead. Yet more intense than life naught, naught, naught!

No - thing! You can read my phrases in the

poco accel.

Allegro moderato

ritardando

An idyll.

poem there. It is a bit to your own liking, an intrigue in walled gardens, heavy with perfume.
Isabel

Piero

500

505

I will not grant me a moment's hearing?

Long but futile.

Scarce that. I prize my moments

(taunted to anger)

Piero

Isabel

I - sa - bel. tempt not too long the jenousy that lies so quiet now...

Have I no honor? Pray what of my husband?

dear-ly.

Have I no honor? Pray what of my husband?

(typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information)
To his wor-thi-ness, his agrand his po-si-tion, re-ve-rence, this is his due and ours, no more. The rest... I do re-

Piero piano

af marcato

Piano

Piu lento di prima

peat as I have said and said o-ver and o-ver to those pret-ty ears as ob-di-ant as mar-ble I re-pet when pas-sion

Piero piano

Grazioso

Piero speaks, it is a jest to give a man thus cus-tom-cho-sen, pro and con, so much for dow-ry and for youth aged

Piero piano

The autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information
three at your betrothal, were you not? and be a score and ten and widow'd excellent! To

Isabel


give a paternal spouse like this more than a fidelity.

And yet, think of the

Isabel

sacriety the married state conveys, the dangers that a rash man runs who sticks the pins of intrigue in the side that our first mother sprang to
Piero
A formal marriage. The true marriage is a bond of love...
Have you no pity? Love me!

Isabel
(interrupting in a flash)
I'll never marry you!
Does one say "Here, pretty

Piero
Never! Else had I loved a less lovely lady, far more kind.

Isabel
Love, thou puppydog, and Love, come to the whistle?

piano
(growing more eloquent)

typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information
Isabel

Piano

Pause for one moment to be pitiful!

Isabel

Take her your grace, in sweetener-cy’s name.


Isabel

Is love? Love that you mouth likewise old ritual become too dry and me carnal in-voiced for both the toothache and the hope of a salvation

Piano

Colla parte

Isabel

In a better-world, it is but babble! Why be pitiful? Is weariness not pun-ishment enough for both of us and all of us? Farewell.

Piano

dolce e legato
Thus for my love! And yet be warned: I will be venged for your disdainment. I will stay where you least want me.

When your blood leaps up to that which you deny. You dream to pass thro' life without some passion rising up to seize you by the throat and strangle you.

Tis but a dream. Your wound is warm and red as mine that has made laughter for your play of cruelty and polish for your wit. Let it be
allargando  a tempo

Piero

so.  To-morrow we set sail. And as I am lieu-ten-ant close be-hind your ag-ed hus-band in this en-ter prise, if we can win this is land that is
torn and wea-ried out by con-stant ci vil wars, I stand forth, bet ter ed in so ma ny ways, my soul will scarce-ly know me. Mi x-ey of

heart you gave me, an guish, bit ter ness, and hope less long ing.

I will bring them back
(As Sigismund and Giulio, enter as before, Piero draws back a little.)

for your own use.

The pirate and my lord in weighty conversation.

(continuing)

come along the western side. There is a bay of easy shelter and long beach where we may land if you will have it. I suggest we head straight for the
I am not a fighting man, you know.

Good

(They are now downstage center)

I am a fighting man, thanks to be God who gave my soul this body.

Ve-ry well. You had best manage it. If you will call your
Sigismund

men
I'll give them drink.

Piero

Most willing! But they are a bare-handed some lot.

Giulio

Giulio goes upstage and calls over the balustrade

Piero

(scornfully, to Sigismund)

Giulio

(with some warmth, feeling that the wisdom of his choice of a leader is questioned)

Piero

A swaggerer whose name is feared by all the courts of

Giulio

It’s all swag and gives an order to ther servant who appears there

Sigismund

Europe. In my younger days, he would have been my hero.

Piero

It is well that you grow elder. Oh no! 'Tis but a jest.

Giulio

(Giulio returns downstage. The sailors begin to enter from the beach. Sigismund goes to the door of the house and gives an order to their servant who appears there)
And now a song to make our throats more eager for the drink.

ʅ ritardando

Winds of the ocean.

No need for that, I fancy, yet begin a ship...
The Sailors

Thou' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones under the waves we sailed so free. It's on to my love of the

piano

staccato e leggiero

Sigismund

sea!

staccato e leggiero

The Sailors

Thou' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones under the waves we sailed so free. It's on to my love of the

piano

staccato e leggiero

allargando
Sails of the vessel, fly!
Sails of the vessel, fly, fly!
Sails of the vessel, fly!
Sails of the vessel, fly!
Sky, sky!
I know no fear the sea's my dear
On to my love of the

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!

From the stormy sky!

Sky, sky!
a tempo

Allegro giusto

ritardando

Lento

Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones, under the waves we sailed so free, it's on to my love of the

Sea!

Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones, under the waves we sailed so free, it's on to my love of the

My love of the

My love of the

My love of the

My love of the

My love of the
(Isabel and Bianca come out on the balcony unseen by the men)
Sigismund

Bess of the tavern, weep!

Piero

Bess of the tavern, weep!

Giulio

weep! Bess of the tavern, sleep, sleep! You're not my love there's one a-

The Sailors

Bess of the tavern, weep!


Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones under the waves we

bove on to my love of the sea!

Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones, under the waves we

Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones under the waves we

Tho' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones, under the waves we
The Sailors

Sigismund

sailed so free, it's on to my love of the sea!

Piero

sailed so free, it's on to my love of the sea!

Giulio

It's on to my love of the sea!

Isabel

Oh, I could almost hate him! Let us wait. His love-ly love-ly

The Sailors

sailed so free, it's on to my love of the sea!

piano

typeset from the autograph manuscript by Tobias Broeker (2020) - see www.tobias-broeker.de for further information
Sigismund

Piero

Giulio

Isabel

The Sailors

Accelerando

Allegro giusto

Senza ritardando

Thou' bye and bye we have to lie our white dead bones as still as stones under the waves we sailed so free it's

Lady of the sea.
The Sailors

Sigismund

Piero

Giulio

The Sailors

(As the servants come out of the house with flagons and goblets of wine, the curtain falls)

End of Act One