

Dido and Aeneas

An opera by Henry Purcell, the second
opera ever to be written in English;
performed by Diamond Valley Singers

An episode from Virgil's *Aeneid* –
the Journey of Aeneas

Dido	Marilla Homes
Belinda	Lesley Walton
First woman	Caroline Arrowsmith
Second woman	Jessica Heard
Aeneas	Daniel Broadstock
Sorceress	Jessica Heard (sub for Judith O'Shea)
First witch	Annette Dick
Second witch	Kim Kocijan
Spirit	Caroline Arrowsmith
Sailor	David Cox
Piano	Gerard Banner
Conductor	Ian Lowe

Act 1

Scene: The Palace of Dido, Queen of Carthage

BELINDA

Shake the cloud from off your brow,
Fate your wishes does allow;
 Empire growing,
 Pleasures flowing,
Fortune smiles and so should you.

CHORUS

Banish sorrow, banish care,
Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

DIDO

Ah! Belinda, I am pressed
With torment not to be confessed,
Peace and I are strangers grown.
I languish till my grief is known,
Yet would not have it guessed.

BELINDA

Grief increases by concealing,

DIDO

Mine admits of no revealing.

BELINDA

Then let me speak; the Trojan guest
Into your tender thoughts has pressed;
The greatest blessing Fate can give
Our Carthage to secure and Troy revive.

CHORUS

When monarchs unite,
how happy their state,
They triumph at once
o'er their foes and their fate.

DIDO

Whence could so much virtue spring?

What storms, what battles did he sing?

Anchises' valour mixed with Venus' charms

How soft in peace, and yet how fierce in arms!

BELINDA

A tale so strong and full of woe
Might melt the rocks as well as you.
What stubborn heart unmoved could see
Such distress, such piety?

DIDO

Mine with storms of care oppressed
Is taught to pity the distressed.
Mean wretches' grief can touch,
So soft, so sensible my breast,
But ah! I fear, I pity his too much.

FIRST AND SECOND WOMAN

[Repeated by Chorus]

Fear no danger to ensue,
The hero loves as well as you,
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling,
Cupid strew your path with flowers
Gathered from Elysian bowers.

BELINDA

See, your Royal Guest appears,
How Godlike is the form he bears!

AENEAS

When, Royal Fair, shall I be blessed
With cares of love and state distressed?

DIDO

Fate forbids what you pursue.

AENEAS

Aeneas has no fate but you!
Let Dido smile and I'll defy
The feeble stroke of Destiny.

CHORUS

Cupid only throws the dart
That's dreadful to a warrior's heart,
And she that wounds
Can only cure the smart.

AENEAS

If not for mine, for Empire's sake,
Some pity on your lover take;
Ah! make not, in a hopeless fire
A hero fall, and Troy once more expire.

BELINDA

Pursue thy conquest, Love; her eyes
Confess the flame her tongue denies.

CHORUS

To the hills and the vales,
to the rocks and the mountains

To the musical groves
and the cool shady fountains.

Let the triumphs of love
and of beauty be shown,

Go revel, ye Cupids,
the day is your own.

THE TRIUMPHING DANCE

ACT 2

Scene The Witches' Cave

SORCERESS

Wayward sisters, you that fright
The lonely traveller by night
Who, like dismal ravens crying,
Beat the windows of the dying,
Appear! Appear at my call,
 and share in the fame
Of a mischief shall make all Carthage flame.
Appear!

FIRST WITCH

Say, Beldam, say what's thy will.

CHORUS OF WITCHES

Harm's our delight
and mischief all our skill.

SORCERESS

The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate,
As we do all in prosperous state,
Ere sunset, shall most wretched prove,
Deprived of fame, of life and love!

CHORUS

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

TWO WITCHES

Ruined ere the set of sun?
Tell us, how shall this be done?

SORCERESS

The Trojan Prince, you know, is bound
By Fate to seek Italian ground;
The Queen and he are now in chase.

FIRST WITCH

Hark! Hark! the cry comes on apace.

SORCERESS

But, when they've done, my trusty elf
In form of Mercury himself
As sent from Jove shall chide his stay,
And charge him sail tonight with all his
fleet away.

CHORUS

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

TWO WITCHES

But ere we this perform,
We'll conjure for a storm
To mar their hunting sport
And drive 'em back to court.

CHORUS [in the manner of an echo.]

In our deep vaulted cell
the charm we'll prepare,
Too dreadful a practice
for this open air.

ECHO DANCE

Scene 2: The Grove

BELINDA

[Repeated by Chorus]

Thanks to these lonesome vales,
These desert hills and dales,
So fair the game, so rich the sport,
Diana's self might to these woods resort.

[Diana is the goddess of the hunt.]

SECOND WOMAN

Oft she visits this loved mountain,
Oft she bathes her in this fountain;
Here Acteon met his fate,
Pursued by his own hounds,
And after mortal wounds
Discovered, discovered too late.
Here Acteon met his fate.

AENEAS

Behold, upon my bending spear
A monster's head stands bleeding,
With tushes far exceeding
Those did Venus' huntsman tear.

DIDO

The skies are clouded, hark! how thunder
Rends the mountain oaks asunder.

BELINDA

[Repeated by Chorus]

Haste, haste to town, this open field
No shelter from the storm can yield.

SPIRIT

Stay, Prince and hear great Jove's
command;

He summons thee this night away.

AENEAS

Tonight?

SPIRIT

Tonight thou must forsake this land,
The angry god will brook no longer stay.
Jove commands thee, waste no more
In Love's delights, those precious hours,
Allowed by the Almighty Powers
To gain the Italian shore
And ruined Troy restore.

AENEAS

Jove's commands shall be obeyed,
Tonight our anchors shall be weighed.

[Exit Spirit.]

But ah! what language can I try
My injured Queen to pacify:
No sooner she resigns her heart,
But from her arms I'm forced to part.
How can so hard a fate be took?
One night enjoyed, the next forsook.
Yours be the blame, ye gods! For I
Obey your will, but with more ease could
die.

ACT 3

Scene 1 The ships

SAILOR

[Repeated by Chorus]

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors
be weighing.

Time and tide will admit no delaying.

Take a boozy short leave of your nymphs
on the shore,

And silence their mourning

With vows of returning

But never intending to visit them more.

SORCERESS

See the flags and streamers curling
Anchors weighing, sails unfurling.

FIRST WITCH

Phoebe's pale deluding beams
Gliding o'er deceitful streams.

SECOND WITCH

Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook.

TWO WITCHES

Elissa's ruined, ha, ha!

Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook, ha, ha!

[Elissa is the witches' name for Dido.]

SORCERESS

Our next motion

Must be to storm her lover on the ocean!

From the ruin of others our pleasures we
borrow,

Elissa bleeds tonight, and Carthage
flames tomorrow.

CHORUS OF WITCHES

Destruction's our delight
Delight our greatest sorrow!
Elissa dies tonight
and Carthage flames tomorrow.

Scene: Dido's Palace

DIDO

Your counsel all is urged in vain
To Earth and Heaven I will complain!
To Earth and Heaven why do I call?
Earth and Heaven conspire my fall.
To Fate I sue, of other means bereft
The only refuge for the wretched left.

BELINDA

See, Madam, see where the prince appears;
Such sorrow in his looks he bears
As would convince you still he's true.

AENEAS

What shall lost Aeneas do?
How, Royal Fair, shall I impart
The God's decree, and tell you we must part?

DIDO

Thus on the fatal Banks of Nile,
Weeps the deceitful crocodile
Thus hypocrites, that murder act,
Make Heaven and Gods the authors of
the fact.

AENEAS

By all that's good ...

DIDO

By all that's good, no more!

All that's good you have forswore.

To your promised empire fly

And let forsaken Dido die.

AENEAS

In spite of Jove's command, I'll stay.
Offend the Gods, and Love obey.

DIDO

No, faithless man, thy course pursue;
I'm now resolved as well as you.
No repentance shall reclaim
The injured Dido's slighted flame.
For 'tis enough, whate'er you now decree,
That you had once a thought of leaving me.

AENEAS

Let Jove say what he will: I'll stay!

DIDO

Away, away! No, no, away!

AENEAS

No, no, I'll stay, and Love obey!

DIDO

To death I'll fly if longer you delay;

Away, away!.....

[Exit Aeneas]

DIDO

But Death, alas! I cannot shun;
Death must come when he is gone.

CHORUS

Great minds against themselves conspire
And shun the cure they most desire.

DIDO

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,
On thy bosom let me rest,
More I would, but Death invades me;
Death is now a welcome guest.

DIDO

When I am laid in earth,
may my wrongs create
No trouble in thy breast;
Remember me,
but ah! forget my fate.

CHORUS

With drooping wings you Cupids come,
To scatter roses on her tomb.
Soft and gentle as her heart
Keep here your watch, and never part.

FINIS

Dido

Belinda

Aeneas

First woman

Second woman

and Sorceress

First witch

Second witch

Spirit

Sailor

Piano

Conductor

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