

## Purcell - Dido and Aeneas (Hogwood) [1995]

Written by bluesever

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1 Overture 0:02:04 2 Shake The Cloud From Off Your Brow 0:01:02 ACT I - Belinda 3 Ah! Belinda, I Am Prest With Torment 0:04:13 Dido 4 When Monarchs Unite 0:00:17 Chorus 5 Whence Could So Much Virtue Spring? 0:01:31 Dido 6 Fear No Danger Dance 0:02:07 Belinda, Second Woman 7 See, Your Royal Guest Appears 0:00:46 Belinda 8 Cupid Only Throws The Dart 0:00:34 Chorus 9 If Not For Mine 0:00:22 Aeneas 10 Pursue Thy Conquest, Love 0:00:50 Belinda 11 A Dance Gittars Chacony 0:00:20 12 To The Hills And The Vales 0:01:10 Chorus 13 The Triumphant 0:01:12 Dance 14 Prelude For The Witches - Wayward Sisters 0:01:26 ACT II - Sorceress 15 Harm's Our Delight 0:00:13 Chorus 16 The Queen Of Carthage, Whom We Hate 0:02:41 Sorceress 17 In Our Deep Vaulted Cell 0:01:11 Chorus 18 Echo Dance Of Furies 0:01:04 19 Ritornelle - Thanks To These Lonesome Vales 0:03:12 Belinda 20 Gitter Ground A Dance 0:00:29 21 Oft She Visits - Ritornelle 0:01:35 Second Woman 22 Behold, Upon My Bending Spear 0:00:31 Aeneas 23 Haste, Haste To Town 0:00:44 Belinda 24 Stay, Prince 0:02:45 Spirit 25 Ritornelle 0:00:54 26 Prelude - Come Away, Fellow Sailors 0:01:36 ACT III - First Sailor 27 The Sailors' Dance 0:00:48 28 See The Flags And Streamers Curling 0:01:26 Sorceress 29 Destruction's Our Delight 0:00:34 Chorus 30 The Witches' Dance 0:01:35 31 Your Counsel All Is Urg'd In Vain 0:03:41 Dido 32 Great Minds Against Themselves Conspire 0:00:58 Chorus 33 Thy Hand Belinda -When I Am Laid In Earth 0:04:06 Dido 34 With Drooping Wings 0:04:20 Chorus Dido - Catherine Bott (soprano) Belinda - Emma Kirkby (soprano) Aeneas - John Mark Ainsley (tenor) Second Woman - Julianne Baird (soprano) Sorceress - David Thomas (bass) First Witch - Elisabeth Priday (soprano) Second Witch - Sara Stowe (soprano) First Sailor - Daniel Lochmann (tenor) Spirit - Michael Chance (countertenor) The Academy Of Ancient Music Christopher Hogwood - conductor

Purcell's Dido and Aeneas was commissioned by and first performed at Josias Priest's School for Young Ladies in Chelsea. The libretto is by Nahum Tate, who extracted the story of Queen Dido and the sailor, Aeneas, from Virgil's Aeneid. Into Virgil's story Tate introduced some of the more popular elements of Baroque opera, including a sorceress, a hunt, and a storm. The first performance took place in 1689, probably in mid-May.

The story concerns Aeneas, who is shipwrecked at Carthage, where the Carthaginian Queen, Dido, falls in love with him. Aeneas returns her love, but knows he must leave eventually - it is his destiny to found Rome. After their final parting, Dido realizes she cannot live without him and looks forward to her death.

Dido and Aeneas is considered to be the only true opera that Purcell composed; its continuous music and purpose-written libretto set it apart from his other dramatic works, which are more properly considered semi-operas or, in the case of *Timon of Athens*, a masque. Although brief, Dido and Aeneas nevertheless embraces a wide range of emotional content, and achieves a dramatic lyricism that was then unprecedented in England. Purcell deftly tailored the score to the performing forces available at Josias Priest's school. There are only four principal roles and the orchestra consists of just strings and continuo; together, the opera's three acts last only about one hour. However, Dido is not a work for amateurs: the vocal writing demands highly skilled singers, and the presence of male voices in the score (not least of which is Aeneas himself, a tenor) indicate that some professional performers were most likely imported for the first production. Dances in the piece, such as the "Dance of Triumph" for Dido's court and another for the witches, were most likely written at the suggestion of Priest, who was a dance instructor. The French overture that opens the work is reminiscent of Lully, as is the homophonic chorus in minuet rhythm, "Fear no danger." More akin to the music of Purcell's English contemporaries are "Purse thy conquest, Love" and "Come away, fellow sailors" (which boasts a metrically irregular melody). Most interesting are the recitatives, which are in neither the quick, Italian recitativo secco style nor the more rhythmically regular French fashion. Instead, Purcell tailored his writing to the particular accents and cadence of the English language, creating an entirely new declamatory style.

Three of the arias in Dido and Aeneas are of the ground bass variety. The most famous of these, "When I am laid in Earth," is the last in the opera and is often referred to as "Dido's Lament." In the aria, we hear a chromatic bass line that descends through a fourth, then closing an octave below where it starts. This ground bass is repeated nine times, supporting a vocal line filled with expressive dissonance. The opera close with the chorus, "With drooping wings," in which descending minor scales suggest the text of the title.--- John Palmer

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