

THE MUSIC AND COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENTS
WITH THE
BOBBI BIRON THEATRE PROGRAM
PRESENT
ENGLAND'S FIRST OPERA

DIDO & AENEAS

BY HENRY PURCELL



& SELECTED MADRIGALS OF LOVE & WAR
BY GIULIO CACCINI, CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD VON GLUCK AND CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI
FEATURING STUDENTS OF THE ACTING OPERA WORKSHOP • GUEST APPEARANCE BY JOHN WESLEY WRIGHT
DIRECTED BY DR. T. PAUL PFEIFFER • MUSICAL DIRECTION BY JOHN WESLEY WRIGHT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY ROB BAKER

APRIL 17-20*

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Stage Direction Dr. T. Paul Pfeiffer
Artistic/Musical Direction John Wesley Wright
*Musical Coach/
Orchestral Conductor* Robert A. Baker
Technical Direction Thomas Anderson

Set Design Dr. T. Paul Pfeiffer
Costume Design Dashielle Horn
Lighting Design Thomas Anderson

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NOTES FROM THE STAGE DIRECTOR

DIDO AND ÆNEAS

Book Four of Virgil's *Aeneid* (29-19 BC) relates the story of Dido, queen of Carthage and the Trojan refugee Aeneas. Shipwrecked in Carthage, Aeneas and the queen fall in love. However, Aeneas is bound by Jove's command to leave Dido to found Rome. After he is gone, Dido commands her handmaidens to assemble and burn all of her lover's gifts—including the bed they shared. As the pyre burns brightly, Dido throws herself upon the burning bed, thrusts Aeneas' sword into her breast and dies. The gods, in mercy for her suffering, release her spirit to peace in the Underworld.

With a libretto by Nahum Tate (1652 – 1715) and music by Henry Purcell (1659-1695) *Dido and Æneas* is considered the first English opera. Based on Virgil's *Aeneid*, the story of Dido and Aeneas would have been well familiar to Purcell's audience. Tate had already written a version for the stage in 1678 which would be adapted to *Dido and Æneas*.

The first known performance of *Dido and Æneas* was in 1689 in cooperation with Josiah Priest, a dancing master and the choreographer for the Dorset Lane Theatre. Priest's wife kept a boarding school for young gentlewomen, in Chelsea, where the opera was performed. The first performances of this work, however, may pre-date this documented one of 1689. That the piece was first performed by the girls of Priest's school would surely explain the great number of dances—each of which separate the scenes. Taken out of this context, however, these dances are problematic for a modern audience as they distance one from the emotional moment and disrupt the momentum toward dramatic climax.

This practice is in keeping with the 17th century stage, in which songs were frequently introduced between acts. If however, *Dido and Æneas* was, in fact, produced prior to 1689, it may well have been applied in just such a manner as a series of connected scenes played as Intermezzi between the acts of another play or, as the piece is so brief, it could have been played as an afterpiece. For this production, especially as our focus is on the music, we have elected not to include dancing and, therefore, most of the dance music has been trimmed to serve its other purpose of transitioning from scene to scene.

Another difficulty with this opera is its compressed form. Purcell and Tate obviously counted on the familiarity of their story as *Dido and Æneas* seems to present 'highlights' from what might have been developed as a full-length work.

(continued)

No such piece is known, and so we must assume that the audience would have been comprised of literary-minded Londoners well-versed in Virgil's epic poem. Yet liberties are taken. For instance, rather than retain the original's battle between the goddesses over Dido and Aeneas, Tate replaces this conflict with the destructive envy of the witches.

This change would have resonated clearly with the audience of 1689. The introduction of witches and witchcraft on the stage was an unveiled reference to the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, in setting the witches against the ill-fated lovers, the opera sets forth its anti-papist sentiments and furthers its supposed celebration of the coronation of William and Mary—and re-established English Protestantism.

The Epilogue, now missing, was perhaps intended as a message to the young ladies of the school about the dangers of male charms. This theme would have been particularly relevant considering the waning of Restoration licentiousness—and ironic considering the many bawdy songs written by Purcell.

The best means of learning the intrinsic value of any work of dramatic or musical art is through the intimate study of rehearsal. To gain this depth of understanding and to share in these discoveries have been our chief goals. Together we have discovered the very modern shadings of Purcell's music and the deeper emotion beneath Tate's highly concentrated libretto. Most importantly, we have discovered that *Dido and Æneas* is a masterful work of dramatic art which communicates across the ages: psychological realism, emotional depth and the universal struggle of duty and love.

Thank you for sharing in this experience with us!

Dr. T. Paul Pfeiffer

NOTES FROM THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR

MADRIGALS OF LOVE AND WAR

Borrowing the title from Monteverdi's eighth book of madrigals (*Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi*), the first half of our program explores the sentiments and sonorities of opera's origins. The Baroque Period in music history (c. 1600-1760) was both an evolutionary and revolutionary time for opera and the song in general. The compositional devices utilized during this period lay the foundation for the development of opera and its future. From the employment of a simple, yet poignant single line melody (monody) by Caccini, to the intense use of text painting, autonomous bass lines and grinding dissonances by Monteverdi and the maturation of dramatic style by Gluck, these devices influenced the whole of Europe and arguably inspired the writing of Purcell's *Dido and Æneas*.

John Wesley Wright

Our Early Baroque Orchestra

Conductor Robert A. Baker

Violins Richard Leavitt, Sofia Park,
Pamela Staso

Violas George Hayne, Jenel Waters

Violoncello Dan Kotowski

Contrabass Thomas Long Jr.

Harpsichord Robert A. Baker

Lute Danielle Cumming

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Danielle Sanford

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Madrigals of Love and War

Giulio Caccini (1546-1618)

Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714-1787)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Zefiro torna (Monteverdi)

Book VII, Madrigal of Love

James Calvin Robinson & John Wesley Wright, tenors

Lasciatemi morire! (Monteverdi)

from the opera *L'Arianna*

Brittany Spicer, mezzo-soprano

O del mio dolce ardor (Gluck)

from the opera *Paride ed Elena*

Stacy Markle, soprano

Amarilli, mia bella (Caccini)

Robert Slangen, tenor

Se vittorie sì belle (Monteverdi)

Book VIII, Madrigal of War

James Calvin Robinson & John Wesley Wright, tenors

Lamento della Ninfa (Monteverdi)

Book VIII, Madrigal of Love

Lainey Prendeville, soprano; Brandon Pippens & Robert Slangen,
tenors; Korey Cunningham, bass

Second Harpsichord Suite in g minor

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Almand & Prelude

Robert A. Baker, harpsichordist

Su, su, su, pastorelli vezzosi (Monteverdi)

Book VIII, Madrigal of Love

Kelly Hays, soprano; Rachel Hann & Shanice Jones, mezzo-sopranos

15-MINUTE INTERVAL

Dido and Æneas

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Dido/Elissa, Queen of Carthage – Laurel Noone, mezzo-soprano
Belinda, Dido's sister and confidante – Lainey Prendeville, soprano
Second Woman/Dido's Attendant – Monica Harwood, soprano
Aeneas, Warrior Prince of Troy – Robert Slangen, tenor
Sorcerer, envious of Dido – William Willis, baritone
First Witch – Kelly Hays, soprano
Second Witch – Becky Norris, mezzo-soprano
Spirit, posing as Mercury – Allison Bewley, soprano
First Sailor – Brandon Pippens, tenor

**Courtiers,
Witches, Sailors and Wenches:**

Sopranos:

Allison Bewley, Monica Harwood, Kelly Hays, Stacy Markle

Altos:

Rachel Hann, Shanice Jones, Aubrey Maggio, Becky Norris,
Brittany Spicer, Christie Stone

Tenors:

Brandon Pippens, Calvin Robinson, Robert Slangen, Matthew Weaver

Baritones/Basses:

Nathan Anderson, Korey Cunningham, William Willis

Note:

Smoke effects are used in this production.
Nothing in this substance is in any way harmful.

MADRIGALS OF LOVE AND WAR

Zefiro torna (Ottavio Rinuccini)

Zefiro torna, e di soavi odori
l'aer fa grato, e'l piè discioglie a l'onde,
e mormorando tra le verdi fronde,
fa danzar al bel suon su'l prato i fiori.

Inghirlandat'il crin Fillide e Clori
note tempran d'amor care e gioconde;
e da monti e da valli ime e profonde
raddoppian l'armonia gli antri canori;
sorge più vaga in ciell'aurora, e'l sole
sparge più luci d'or, più puro argento
fregia di Teti il bel ceruleo manto.

Sol io per selve abbandonate e sole,
l'ardor di due begli occhi e'l mio tormento,
come vuol mia ventura, or piango or canto.

Zephyr returns

Zephyr returns, and blesses the air
with his soft perfume, draws bare feet to the
shore and,
murmuring among the green branches,
makes the flowers dance in the meadows to his
pretty tune.

Phyllis and Chloris, their hair braided with
garlands,
temper sweet and happy notes of love,
and from high mountains and deep valleys,
the caves sing an echo to their melody.
Dawn arises more lovely in the heavens;
the sun spreads ever more golden rays,
and a purer silver crests the fair waves of
Thetis' azure mantle.

But I alone, in the solitary, lonesome forest,
as my fate would have it, now sing of the
ardour of two fair eyes,
now weep for the torment they cause me.

Lasciatemi morire!
(Ottavio Rinuccini)

Lasciatemi morire!
e che volete voi che mi conforte
in così dura sorte?
in così gran martire?
lasciatemi morire!

O del mio dolce ardor
(Raniero de' Calzabigi)

O del mio dolce ardor
Bramato oggetto,
L'aura che tu respiri,
Alfin respiro.

O vunque il guardo io giro,
Le tue vaghe sembianze
Amore in medipinge:
Il mio pensier si finge
Le più liete speranze;
E nel desio che cos'“
M'empie il petto
Cerco te, chiamo te, spero e sospiro.

O del mio dolce ardor ...

Let me die!

Let me die!
And whom do you want to comfort me
in such cruel fate,
in such ordeal?
let me die!

Of my sweet ardor

Oh, desired object
Of my sweet ardor,
The air which you breathe,
At last I breathe.

Wherever I turn my glance
Your lovely features
Paint love for me:
My thoughts imagine
The most happy hopes,
And in the longing which
Fills my bosom
I seek you, I call you, I hope, and I sigh.

Oh, desired object
Of my sweet ardor ...

Amarilli, mia bella
(Giovanni Battista Guarini or his
uncle Alessandro Guarini)

Amarilli, mia bella,
Non credi, o del mio cor dolce desio,
D'esser tu l'amor mio?
Credilo pur: e se timor t'assale,
Dubitar non ti vale.
Aprimi il petto e vedrai scritto in core:
Amarilli, Amarilli, Amarailli
è il mio amore.

Se vittorie sì belle (Fulvio Testi)

Se vittorie sì belle
han le guerre d'amore,
fatti guerrier mio core.
E non temer degli amorosi strali
le ferite mortali.
Pugna, sappi ch'è Gloria
il morir per desio de la vittoria.

Amarilli, my beautiful one

Amaryllis, my beautiful one,
do you not believe, o my heart's sweet desire,
That you are my love?
Believe it thus: and if fear assails you,
Doubt not its truth.
Open my breast and see written on my heart:
Amaryllis, Amaryllis, Amaryllis,
Is my beloved.

If love's wars

If love's wars have such
beautiful victories,
become a warrior, my heart,
and do not fear the mortal wounds
made by the arrows of love.
Fight in the knowledge that it is glorious
to die of desire for victory.

Lamento della Ninfa (Ottavio Rinuccini)

Non havea Febo ancora
recato al mondo il dì,
ch'una donzella fuora
del proprio albergo uscì.

Sul pallidetto volto
scorgeasi il suo dolor;
spesso gli veniva sciolto
un gran sospir dal cor.

S' calpestando fiori
errava hor qua, hor là,
i suoi perduti amori
cos' piangendo va:

"Amor," dicea, il ciel
mirando, il piè fermo,
""ove, dov'è la fè
ch'el traditor giurò?"

Miserella.

"Fa' che ritorni il mio
amor com'ei pur fu,
o tu m'ancidi, ch'io
non mi tormenti più."

Miserella, ah più no, no,
tanto gel soffrir non può.

"Non vo' più ch'ei sospiri
se non lontan da me,
no, no che i martiri
più non darammi affè.

Perché di lui mi struggo,
tutt'orgoglioso sta,
che sì, che sì se'l fuggo
ancor mi pregherà?

Se ciglio ha più sereno
colei, che'l mio non è,
già non rinchiude in seno,
Amor, sì bella fè.

Ne mai sí dolci baci
da quella bocca havrai,
ne più soavi, ah taci,
taci, che troppo il sai."

Sí tra sdegnosi pianti
spargea le voci al ciel;
così ne' cori amanti
mesce amor fiamma, e gel.

Lament of the Nymph

The Sun had not brought
The day to the world yet,
When a maiden
Went out of her dwelling.

On her pale face
Grief could be seen,
Often from her heart
A deep sigh was drawn.

Thus, treading upon flowers,
She wandered, now here, now there,
And lamented her lost loves
Like this:

— O Love — she said,
Gazing at the sky, as she stood —
Where's the fidelity
That the deceiver promised?

Poor her!

— Make my love come back
As he used to be
Or kill me, so that
I will not suffer anymore. —

Poor her! She cannot bear
All this coldness!

I don't want him to sigh any longer
But if he's far from me.
No! He will not make me suffer
Anymore, I swear!

He's proud
Because I languish for him.
Perhaps if I fly away from him
He will come to pray to me again?

If her eyes are more serene
Than mine,
O Love, she does not hold in her heart
A fidelity so pure as mine.

And you will not receive from those lips
Kisses as sweet as mine,
Nor softer. Oh, don't speak!
Don't speak! you know better than that! —

So amidst disdainful tears,
She spread her crying to the sky;
Thus, in the lovers' hearts
Love mixes fire and ice.

Su, su, su, pastorelli vezzosi
(Anonymous)

Su, su, su, pastorelli vezzosi,
correte, venite
a mirar, a goder l'aure gradite
ch'a noi porta ridente.
Mirar i prati
pien di fior odorati
ch'al suo vago apparir ridon festosi.

Su, su, su, augeletti canori,
sciogliete, snodate
al cantar, al gioir, le voci amate
del sol che i monti indora
e sui ramati
pien di vaghi fioretti
del leggiadro suo crin dite gli honori.

Su, su, su, fonticelli loquaci,
vezzosi correte
a gioir, a scherzar come solete
di quai splendor si veste
e di quai lampi
coloriti son i lampi
che promettono ai cor gioie veraci.

Come, come, come,
charming shepherd lads

Come, come, come, charming shepherd lads,
run, come
to see and enjoy the pleasant breezes
that the springtime brings us smilingly.
See the meadows
full of fragrant flowers that
smile festively as it appears in its beauty.

Come, come, come, songbirds,
give vent, give rein
by singing, by rejoicing, to your voices beloved
by the sun that gilds the mountains,
and, on the little branches
full of lovely little flowers,
recite the honors of his comely rays.

Come, come, come babbling brooks
flow charmingly
to rejoice, to sport as is your custom,
seeing with what splendors the springtime is
clothed and with what flashes of color
the fields are dotted,
promising true joys to all hearts.

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Dr. Linda Cockey, chair,

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Dr. Darrell Mullins, chair,

and Patti Burton, administrative assistant,

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