
DIDO AND AENEAS

Opera.

Text by

Nahum Tate

Music by

Henry Purcell

First performance: July 1688, London.



Cara lettrice, caro lettore, il sito internet **www.librettidopera.it** è dedicato ai libretti d'opera in lingua italiana. Non c'è un intento filologico, troppo complesso per essere trattato con le mie risorse: vi è invece un intento divulgativo, la volontà di far conoscere i vari aspetti di una parte della nostra cultura.

Motivazioni per scrivere note di ringraziamento non mancano. Contributi e suggerimenti sono giunti da ogni dove, vien da dire «*dagli Appennini alle Ande*». Tutto questo aiuto mi ha dato e mi sta dando entusiasmo per continuare a migliorare e ampliare gli orizzonti di quest'impresa. Ringrazio quindi: chi mi ha dato consigli su grafica e impostazione del sito, chi ha svolto le operazioni di aggiornamento sul portale, tutti coloro che mettono a disposizione testi e materiali che riguardano la lirica, chi ha donato tempo, chi mi ha prestato hardware, chi mette a disposizione software di qualità a prezzi più che contenuti.

Infine ringrazio la mia famiglia, per il tempo rubatole e dedicato a questa attività.

I titoli vengono scelti in base a una serie di criteri: disponibilità del materiale, data della prima rappresentazione, autori di testi e musiche, importanza del testo nella storia della lirica, difficoltà di reperimento.

A questo punto viene ampliata la varietà del materiale, e la sua affidabilità, tramite acquisti, ricerche in biblioteca, su internet, donazione di materiali da parte di appassionati. Il materiale raccolto viene analizzato e messo a confronto: viene eseguita una trascrizione in formato elettronico.

Quindi viene eseguita una revisione del testo tramite rilettura, e con un sistema automatico di rilevazione sia delle anomalie strutturali, sia della validità dei lemmi.

Vengono integrati se disponibili i numeri musicali, e individuati i brani più significativi secondo la critica.

Viene quindi eseguita una conversione in formato stampabile, che state leggendo.

Grazie ancora.

Dario Zanotti

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Prologue's Characters

PHOEBUS

FIRST NEREID

SECOND NEREID

VENUS

SPRING

Opera's Characters

DIDO, Queen of Carthage, also known as

Elisa **SOPRANO**

BELINDA, sister of Dido **SOPRANO**

SECOND WOMAN of the bedchamber **SOPRANO**

The **SPIRIT** of the sorceress **MEZZO-SOPRANO**

AENEAS, a Trojan prince **TENOR**

A trojan **SAILOR** **TENOR**

Nymphs.

Chorus of Nereids.

Chorus of Tritons.

Chorus of Shepherds and Shepherdesses.

The sorceress (bass).

Two witches (trebles).

Chorus of Carthaginian courtiers.

Chorus of witches.

Chorus of hunters.

Chorus of sailors.

Train of Dido, Train of Aeneas.

THE PROLOGUE

Scene: the sea

Phoebus rises in the chariot, over the sea. The Nereids out of the sea.

PHOEBUS From Aurora's spicy bed,
Phoebus rears his sacred head.
His coursers advancing,
curvetting and prancing.

FIRST NEREID Phoebus strives in vain to tame 'em,
with ambrosia fed too high.

SECOND NEREID Phebus ought not now to blame 'em,
wild and eager to survey
the fairest pageant of the sea.

PHOEBUS, CHORUS Tritons and Nereids come pay your devotion
to the new rising star of ocean.

*Venus descends in her chariot, the Tritons out of the sea.
The Tritons dance.*

[Exit.]

FIRST NEREID Look down ye orbs and see
a new divinity.

PHOEBUS Whose lustre does out-shine
your fainter beams, and half eclipses mine,
give Phoebus leave to prophecy.
Phoebus all events can see.
Ten thousand thousand harmes,
from such prevailing charmes,
to gods and men must instantly ensue.

CHORUS And if the deitys above,
are victims of the powers of Love,
what must wretched mortals do.

VENUS Fear not, Phoebus, fear not me,
a harmless deity.
These are all my guards ye view,
what can these blind archers do.

PHOEBUS Blind they are, but strike the heart.

VENUS What Phoebus says is always true,
they wound indeed, but it is a pleasing smart.

- PHOEBUS Earth and skies address their duty,
to the sovereign queen of beauty.
All resigning,
none repining
at her undisputed sway.
- CHORUS To Phoebus and Venus our homage wee'l pay,
her charmes blest the night, as his beams blest the day.

The Nereids dance.

[Exit.]

Scene: the grove

The Spring enters with her Nymphs

- VENUS See the Spring in all her glory,
- CHORUS Welcomes Venus to the shore.
- VENUS Smiling hours are now before you,
hours that may return no more.

[Exit Phoebus, Venus.] Soft musick.

SPRING

Our youth and form declare,
for what we were designed.
'Twas nature made us fair,
and you must make us kind.
He that fails of addressing,
'tis but just he shou'd fail of possessing.

The Spring and Nymphs dance.

Enter the country Shepherds and Shepherdesses.

SHEPHERDESS

Jolly shepherds come away,
to celebrate this genial day,
and take the friendly hours you vow to pay.
Now make trial,
and take no denial.
Now carry your Game, or for ever give o're.

The Shepherds and Shepherdesses dance.

CHORUS

Let us love and happy live,
possess those smiling hours,
the more auspicious powers,
prepare those soft returns to Meet,
that makes loves torments sweet.

The Nymphs dance.

HE Tell, tell me, prithee dolly,
and leave thy melancholy.
Why on the plains,
the Nymphs and Swaines,
this morning are so jolly.

SHE By zephires gentle blowing.
And Venus graces flowing.
The Sun has bin
to court our queen,
and tired the Spring with wooing.

HE The Sun does guild our bowers,
SHE the Spring does yield us flowers.
She sends the vine,
HE he makes the wine,
to charm our happy hours.

SHE She gives our flocks their feeding,
HE he makes'em fit for breeding.
SHE She decks the plain,
HE he fills the grain,
and makes it worth the weeding.

CHORUS

But the jolly nymph Thitis that long his love sought,
has flusted him now with a large mornings draught,
let's go and divert him, whilst he is mellow,
you know in his cups he's a hot-headed fellow.

The country's maids dance.

FIRST ACT

[Ouverture]

Scene: the palace

[Enter Dido and Belinda, and Train.]

[N. 1 - Scena and Chorus]

BELINDA Shake the cloud from off your brow,
fate your wishes does allow;
empire growing,
pleasures flowing,
fortune smiles and so should you,
shake the cloud from off your brow.

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

[N. 2 – Song]

DIDO

Ah! Belinda, I am prest
with torment not to be confest,
peace and I are strangers grown.
I languish till my grief is known,
yet would not have it guest.

[N. 3 - Recitative]

BELINDA Grief increasing by concealing.

DIDO Mine admits of no revealing.

BELINDA Then let me speak the Trojan guest
into your tender thoughts has prest.

SECOND WOMAN The greatest blessing fate can give,
our Carthage to secure, and Troy revive.

[N. 4 - Chorus]

CHORUS

When monarchs unite how happy their state,
they triumph at once on their foes and their fate.

[N. 5 - Recitative]

DIDO Whence could so much virtue spring?
what storms, what battles did he sing?
Anchises' valour mixt with Venus' charmes,
how soft in peace, and yet how fierce in arms.

BELINDA A tale so strong and full of wo,
might melt the rocks as well as you.

SECOND WOMAN What stubborn heart unmoved could see
such distress, such pity?

DIDO Mine with storms of care oppress
is taught to pity the distress.
Mean wretches grief can touch,
so soft, so sensible my breast,
but ah! I fear, I pity his too much.

[N. 6 - Duet and Chorus]

BELINDA, SECOND WOMAN

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.

CHORUS

Fear no danger to ensue,
the hero loves as well as you:
Cupid strew your path with flowers
gathered from elysian bowers.

Dance this chorus.

Scene: the baske

[Aeneas enters with his Train.]

[N. 7 - Recitative]

BELINDA See, your royal guest appears,
how godlike is the form he bears!

AENEAS When, royal fair, shall I be blest
with cares of love and state distress?

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.

[N. 8 - Chorus]

CHORUS

Cupid only throws the dart
that's dreadful to a warrior's heart,
and she that wounds can only cure the smart.

[N. 9 - Recitative]

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.

[N. 10 - Air]

BELINDA

Pursue thy conquest, love; her eyes
confess the flame her tongue denies.

A dance. Gittars chacony.

[N. 11 - Chorus]

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.

[N. 12 - The triumphing dance]

A dance.

SECOND ACT

Scene: the cave

[Enter Sorceress.]

[N. 13 - Prelude for the witches]

SORCERESS Wayward sisters, you that fright
the lonely traveller by night
who, like dismal ravens crying,
beat the windows of the dying,
appear at my call, and share in the fame
of a mischief shall make all Carthage to flame.

[Enter Inchanteresses.]

INCHANTERESSES Say Beldam say what's thy will.

[N. 14 - Witches chorus]

CHORUS

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

[N. 15 - Recitative]

SORCERESS The Queen of Carthage whom we hate,
as we do all in prosperous state,
ere sunset, shall most wretched prove,
depriv'd of fame, of life and love!

[N. 16 - Chorus]

CHORUS

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!
[etc.]

[N. 17 - Recitative]

TWO WITCHES Ruin'd e're 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.

[N. 18 - Chorus]

CHORUS

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!
[etc.]

[Enter a drunken sailor.]

A dance.

[N. 19 - Duet]

TWO WITCHES

But e're we, we this perform,
we'll conjure for a storm
to mar their hunting sport
and drive 'em back to court.

[N. 20 - Chorus]

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.

[N. 21 - Echo dance of furies]

Echo dance [Enchantresses and Furies].

Scene: the grove

[Enter Aeneas, Dido, Belinda, and their Train.]

[N. 22 - Ritornelle]

Ritornelle.

[N. 23 - Song and Chorus]

BELINDA

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

CHORUS

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

Gitter ground a dance.

[N. 24 - Song]

SECOND WOMAN

Oft she visits this loved mountain,
oft she bathes her in this fountain;
here Actaeon met his fate,
pursued by his own hounds,
and after mortal wounds
discovered, discovered too late.

A dance to entertain Aeneas by Dido's women.

[N. 25 - Recitative]

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 a sunder.

[N. 26 - Song and Chorus]

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

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

[Exeunt Dido and Belinda and trains.]

[The Spirit of the Sorceress descends to Aeneas in the likeness of Mercury.]

[N. 27 - Recitative]

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 Hesperian shore
and ruined Troy restore.

AENEAS Jove's commands shall be obey'd,
tonight our anchors shall be weighed.

[Exit Spirit.]

AENEAS 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.

The Sorceress and her Inchanteress.

CHORUS

Then since our charmes have sped,
a merry dance be led
by the Nymphs of Carthage to please us.
They shall all dance to ease us,
a dance that shall make the spheres to wonder,
rending those fair groves asunder.

The groves dance.

THIRD ACT

Scene: the ships

[Enter the Sailors, the Sorceress, and her Inchanteress.]

[N. 28 - Prelude]

SAILOR

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors be weighing.
Time and tide will admit no delaying.
Take a bouzy short leave of your nymphs on the shore,
and silence their mourning
with vows of returning
but never intending to visit them more.

CHORUS

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors be weighing.
Time and tide will admit no delaying.
Take a bouzy short leave of your nymphs on the shore,
and silence their mourning
with vows of returning
but never intending to visit them more.

[N. 29 - The sailors dance]

The Sailors' dance.

[N. 30 - Recitative]

SORCERESS See the flags and streamers curling
anchors weighing, sails unfurling.

FIRST WITCH Phoebus' pale deluding beams
gilding more deceitful streams.

SECOND WITCH Our plot has took,
the queen's forsook.

TWO WITCHES Elisa's ruin'd, ho, ho!
Our plot has took,
the queen's forsook, ho, ho!

SORCERESS

Our next motion
must be to storme her lover on the ocean!
From the ruin of others our pleasures we borrow,
Elisa bleeds tonight, and Carthage flames tomorrow.

[N. 31 - Chorus]

CHORUS

Destruction our delight, delight our greatest sorrow!
Elisa dyes tonight and Carthage flames tomorrow.

*[Jack of the the Lanthorn leads the Spaniards out of their way among the
Enchantresses.]*

[N. 32 - The witches dance]

The witches dance.

[Enter Dido, Belinda and Train.]

[N. 33 - Recitative]

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.

[Enter Aeneas.]

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 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.]

[N. 34 - Recitative]

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

[N. 35 - Chorus]

CHORUS

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

[Cupids appear in the clouds o're her tomb.]

[N. 36 - Recitative]

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.

[N. 37 - Song]

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

[N. 38 - Chorus]

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.

Cupids dance.

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