



Henry Purcell (1659–1695) Dido and Aeneas

OVERTURE

ACT I

Scene: The Palace
[*enter Dido, Belinda and train*]

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 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.

BELINDA

Grief increases by concealing,

DIDO

Mine admits of no revealing.

BELINDA

Then let me speak; the Trojan guest
Into your tender thoughts has prest;
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 mixt 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 unmov'd could see
Such distress, such piety?

DIDO

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

BELINDA 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
Gather'd from Elysian bowers.

THE BASKE

[*Aeneas enters with his train*]

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 distrest?

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.

A DANCE. GITTARS CHACONY.

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 II

Scene [I]: The Cave
[*enter Sorceress*]

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! Appear at my call, and share in the fame

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Of a mischief shall make all Carthage flame.
Appear!
[*enter Enchantresses*]

FIRST WITCH

Say, Beldam, say what's thy will.

CHORUS

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

SORCERESS

The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate,
As we do all in prosp'rous state,
Ere sunset, shall most wretched prove,
Depriv'd of fame, of life and love!

CHORUS

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

TWO WITCHES

Ruin'd 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

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! [etc.]
[*Enter a Drunken Sailor; a dance*]

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 [*Enchantresses and Fairies*]

Scene [II]: The Grove
[*enter Aeneas, Dido, Belinda, and their train*]

RITORNELLE [Orchestra]

BELINDA [*Repeated by 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

SECOND WOMAN

Oft she visits this lov'd mountain,
Oft she bathes her in this fountain;
Here Actaeon met his fate,
Pursued by his own hounds,

And after mortal wounds
Discover'd, discover'd too late.
[*A Dance to entertain Aeneas by Dido's women*]

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.

BELINDA [*Repeated by Chorus*]

Haste, haste to town, this open field
No shelter from the storm can yield.
[*exeunt Dido and Belinda and train*]

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

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,
Allow'd by th' Almighty Powers
To gain th' Hesperian shore
And ruined Troy restore.

AENEAS

Jove's commands shall be obey'd,
Tonight our anchors shall be weigh'd.
[*Exit Spirit.*]
But ah! what language can I try
My injur'd Queen to Pacify:
No sooner she resigns her heart,
But from her arms I'm forc'd to part.
How can so hard a fate be took?
One night enjoy'd, the next forsook.
Yours be the blame, ye gods! For I
Obey your will, but with more ease could die.

THE SORCERESS AND HER ENCHANTRESSES (CHORUS)

Then since our Charms 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

ACT III

Scene: The Ships
[*enter the Sailors, the Sorceress, and her Enchantresses*]

PRELUDE

FIRST SAILOR [*Repeated by Chorus*]

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors be weighing.
Time and tide will admit no delaying.

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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.

THE SAILORS' DANCE

SORCERESS

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

FIRST WITCH

Phoebe's pale deluding beams
Guiding more deceitful streams.

SECOND WITCH

Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook.

TWO WITCHES

Elissa'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,
Elissa bleeds tonight, and Carthage flames tomorrow.

CHORUS

Destruction's our delight
Delight our greatest sorrow!
Elissa dies tonight and Carthage flames tomorrow.
[*Jack of the the Lanthorn leads the Spaniards out of their way
among the Enchantresses.*]

A DANCE

[*Enter Dido, Belinda and train*]

DIDO

Your counsel all is urged in vain
To Earth and Heav'n I will complain!
To Earth and Heav'n why do I call?
Earth and Heav'n 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 promis'd 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 resolv'd as well as you.
No repentance shall reclaim
The injur'd 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*]
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

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

CUPID'S DANCE

FINIS