

Dido and Aeneas Libretto

Cast:

DIDO *or Elissa*, Queen of Carthage (Soprano)
BELINDA, her sister (Soprano)
SECOND WOMAN (Soprano)
SORCERESS (Mezzo-Soprano)
FIRST WITCH (Soprano)
SECOND WITCH (Soprano)
SPIRIT (Mezzo-Soprano)
AENEAS, a Trojan Prince (Tenor)
SAILOR (Soprano or Tenor)

CHORUS
Dido's train, Aeneas' train, Fairies, Sailors

PROLOGUE

[The music to the prologue is lost]

*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
Phoebus ought not now to blame'em,
Wild and eager to Survey
The fairest Pageant of the Sea.

PHOEBUS
Tritons and Nereids come pay your Devotion

CHORUS
To the New rising Star of the Ocean.
Venus Descends in her Chariot,
The Tritons out of the Sea.

The Tritons Dance

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 Deity's 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 say's is alwayes true.
They Wound indeed, but 'tis 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.

The Spring Enters with her Nymphs.

SCENE I
The Grove.

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, 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

SHEPHERDESSES
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,
And gentle Planets give.
Prepare those soft returns to Meet,
That makes Loves Torments Sweet.

The Nymphs Dance

Enter the Country Shepherds and Shepherdesses.

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 Flustred 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 Countreys Maids Dance

Exit

ACT THE FIRST

Overture

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 press'd
With torment not to be confess'd,

Peace and I are strangers grown.
I languish till my grief is known,
Yet would not have it guess'd.

BELINDA
Grief increases by concealing,

DIDO
Mine admits of no revealing.

BELINDA
Then let me speak; the Trojan guest
Into your tender thoughts has press'd;
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 mix'd 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.

SECOND WOMAN
What stubborn heart unmov'd could see
Such distress, such piety?

DIDO
Mine with storms of care oppress'd
Is taught to pity the distress'd.
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.

Dance this Chorus

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 bless'd
With cares of love and state distress'd?

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 Triumphant Dance

ACT THE SECOND

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
Of a mischief shall make all Carthage flame.
Appear!

Enter Enchantresses

FIRST WITCH
Say, Beldame, 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
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

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

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

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 lone 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.

CHORUS
The Sorceress and her Enchantresses
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 THE THIRD

SCENE I
The Ships
Enter the Sailors

Prelude

FIRST 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.

The Sailors' Dance

Enter the Sorceress, and her Enchantresses

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

FIRST WITCH
Phoebe's pale deluding beams
Gilding o'er 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 storm 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. Ha, ha!

The Witches' Dance

Jack of the the Lanthorn leads the sailors out of their way among the Enchantresses.

SCENE II
The palace
Enter Dido, Belinda and train

DIDO
Your counsel all is urg'd 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.

Enter Aeneas

BELINDA
See, Madam, see where the Prince appears;
Such sorrow in his look 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 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

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.

Cupids appear in the clouds o'er her tomb

CHORUS

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

Cupids Dance
