

Libretto - by Nahum Tate

Overture

SCENE 1

(The Palace. Enter Dido, Belinda and attendants)

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.

SECOND WOMAN

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' valor 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
Fear no danger to ensue,
The hero loves as well as you.
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling
Cupids strew your paths with flowers
Gather'd from Elysian bowers.

CHORUS
Fear no danger to ensue
The hero loves as well as you.
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling.
Cupids strew your paths with flowers
Gather'd from Elysian bowers.

Dance
(*Æneas enters with his train*)

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

ÆNEAS
When, royal fair, shall I be bless'd,
With cares of love and state distress'd?

DIDO
Fate forbids what you pursue.

ÆNEAS
Æneas 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.

ÆNEAS
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.

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

SCENE 2

(The Cave. Enter Sorceress)

Prelude for the Witches

SORCERESS

Wayward sisters, you that fright
The lonely traveler 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 flame.
Appear! Appear! Appear! Appear!

(Enter witches)

FIRST WITCH

Say, Beldame, 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, etc.

FIRST and SECOND 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, etc.

FIRST and SECOND 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 our deep vaulted cell.
The charm we'll prepare,
Too dreadful a practice
for this open air.

Echo Dance of Furies

SCENE 3

Ritornelle

(The Grove. Enter Æneas, Dido, Belinda and their train)

BELINDA

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

SECOND WOMAN

Oft she visits this lone mountain,
Oft she bathes her in this fountain.
Here, Actæon met his fate,
Pursued by his own hounds;
And after mortal wounds,
Discover'd too late
Here Actæon met his fate.

*(A dance to entertain Æneas
by Dido's women)*

ÆNEAS

Behold, upon my bending spear
A monster's head stands bleeding
With tushes [tusks] far exceeding
Those did Venus' huntsman tear.

DIDO

The skies are clouded:
Hark! How thunder
Rends the mountain oaks asunder!

BELINDA

Haste to town! this open field
No shelter from the storm can yield
Haste to town!

CHORUS

Haste to town! This open field
No shelter from the storm can yield
Haste to town!

*(The Spirit of the Sorceress descends to
Æneas in the likeness of Mercury)*

SPIRIT

Stay, Prince, and hear great Jove's command:
He summons thee this night away.

ÆNEAS

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 ruin'd Troy restore.

ÆNEAS

Jove's commands shall be obey'd;
Tonight our anchors shall be weigh'd.
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

SCENE 4

(The Ships)

SAILOR

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.

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 Sailor's Dance

(Enter Sorceress and Witches)

SORCERESS

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

FIRST and SECOND WITCHES

Phoebe's pale deluding beams
Gilding o'er deceitful streams.
Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook!
Elissa's ruin'd, ho, o, ho, etc.

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.

Ho, ho, ho, etc.

The Witches Dance

*(Jack of the Lanthorn leads the Sailors out of
their way among the Witches)*

(Enter Dido, Belinda and women)

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.

BELINDA

See, madam, see where Prince appears!

Such sorrow in his look he bears

As would convince you still he's true.

ÆNEAS

What shall lost Æneas do?

How, royal fair, shall I impart

The god's decree, and tell you we must part?

DIDO

Thus on fatal banks of the Nile

Weeps the deceitful crocodile;

Thus hypocrites that murder act

Make heav'n and gods the authors of the fact!

ÆNEAS

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.

ÆNEAS

In spite of Jove's commands 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, what e'er you now decree,
That you had once a thought of leaving me.

ÆNEAS

Let Jove say what he please, I'll stay!

DIDO

Away, away!

ÆNEAS

No, no, I'll stay and Love obey.

DIDO

No, no, away, away,
To Death I'll fly
If longer you delay.
Away, Away!

(Exit Æneas)

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 ye Cupids come,
And scatter roses on her tomb.
Soft and gentle as her heart;
Keep here your watch, and never part.

(Cupid's Dance)

FINIS