

# Dido and Aeneas: An Epic Opera in Three Acts

## Synopsis

*Dido and Aeneas* is a baroque opera in three acts, composed by Henry Purcell to a libretto by Nahum Tate. It was first performed in 1689 at Josias Priest's boarding school for young gentlewomen in Chelsea, London. The opera tells the tragic story of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and her doomed love for the Trojan warrior Aeneas.

Act I opens with Dido receiving Aeneas and his followers into Carthage. She falls in love with Aeneas, and they are secretly married. However, Aeneas is destined to found a new city in Italy, and he must eventually leave Dido.



## Dido and Aeneas - An Opera in Three Acts: Vocal (Opera) Score with English Text (Kalmus Edition)

by Craig Duncan

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

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In Act II, the sorceress Belinda plots to destroy Dido's happiness. She sends a false vision of Mercury to Aeneas, commanding him to leave Carthage. Aeneas is torn between his love for Dido and his duty to his destiny. In the end, he chooses to leave, and Dido is left heartbroken.

In Act III, Dido prepares for her own death. She builds a funeral pyre and sings a lament for her lost love. As she dies, she prays that Aeneas will remember her.

## Characters

- **Dido**, Queen of Carthage (soprano)
- **Aeneas**, a Trojan warrior (tenor)
- **Belinda**, a sorceress (soprano)
- **Second Woman**, Dido's confidante (soprano)
- **First Sailor** (tenor)
- **Second Sailor** (bass)

## Musical Highlights

*Dido and Aeneas* contains some of Purcell's most beautiful and haunting music. The opera is full of exquisite melodies, rich harmonies, and evocative orchestration. Some of the most famous highlights include:

- "When I Am Laid in Earth," Dido's lament for her lost love
- "Dido's Lament," a powerful aria in which Dido expresses her grief and despair
- "The Sorceress's Song," Belinda's aria in which she plots to destroy Dido's happiness
- "The Sailor's Song," a lively and patriotic chorus

## Historical Context

*Dido and Aeneas* was composed during a time of great political and social upheaval in England. The country was in the midst of the Glorious Revolution, which saw the overthrow of King James II and the accession of William and Mary to the throne. The opera's themes of love, duty, and sacrifice resonated with audiences who were living through a period of great change and uncertainty.

*Dido and Aeneas* is also significant for its role in the development of English opera. It was one of the first English operas to be composed in a fully developed and sophisticated style. The opera's success helped to establish English opera as a major force in the musical world.

## **Legacy**

*Dido and Aeneas* remains one of the most popular and beloved operas in the repertoire. It is frequently performed by opera companies around the world, and it has been recorded by many of the world's leading singers. The opera's beautiful music, tragic story, and timeless themes continue to captivate audiences today.

## **Image Gallery**







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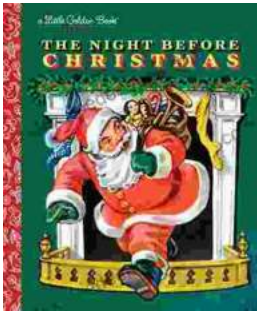
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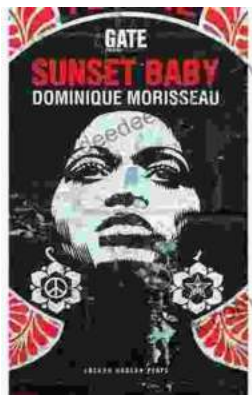
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