

## **DIDO AND ANEAS**

Composed by Purcell

### **Act I**

Dido, queen of Carthage, appears surrounded by her court and attended by her lady-in-waiting, Belinda. Dido is unhappy and Belinda suggests it is the presence of the Trojan prince, Aeneas, which is at the root of the queen's sorrow. Belinda tells Dido that the prince does indeed love her, and that a union between the two would not only bring the queen the happiness she deserves, but Carthage would also benefit. Aeneas enters and proclaims his devotion to the queen, and the scene ends with Dido's acceptance celebrated by the whole court.

Scene 2 An evil Sorceress and her companions plot the destruction of Dido and Carthage. Meanwhile, Dido, Aeneas and followers are engaged in a hunt.

### **Act II**

The hunting group pause in the grove during the hunt, Belinda sings of the peculiar delights of the spot they have just reached. Suddenly Dido hears distant thunder and the party makes haste for town. Aeneas is stopped by the appearance of the God Mercury (really a witch in disguise) who tells him he must leave Carthage to found the new Troy on Latin soil. Aeneas accepts the God's commands, but dreads leaving Dido.

### **Act III**

All is in preparation for the Trojan fleet's departure. The Sorceress appears, gleeful at the success of her plan, now she wants to destroy Aeneas. Dido and Belinda come down to the harbour, Dido fearful that Aeneas will abandon her. Aeneas tells her that he will defy and stay with her, but she will have nothing to do with a lover who once thought of leaving her. After Aeneas leaves, the heartbroken Dido and attendants leave to prepare her farewell to life.