

Mp3 New Trinity Baroque, Dir. Predrag Gosta / Tubb, Meglioranza Etc - Henry Purcell: "dido & Aeneas"

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One of Henry Purcell's most loved chamber operas, presented by one of the USA's leading period instrument orchestras, New Trinity Baroque, and international soloists - Evelyn Tubb, Thomas Meglioranza, Julia Matthews, et al. 39 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Orchestral, CLASSICAL: Traditional

Details: Dido Aeneas, an opera in three acts by Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Story telling, singing, myth and ritual are some of the many children born from the union of a deep human desire for self-expression and the need to make sense of the world and our place in it. The explorations of modern psychology and the study of mythology have given many people a deeper appreciation of the place that art and imagination have in the subtle inner workings of their psyches. As mythologist Joseph Campbell said: Myth is a story which is fantasy on the outside, but true on the inside. Some of the truths these studies reveal may be eternal and universal, while others are colored by the prevailing world-view of their times. In post-Renaissance Europe, classical stories were used by artists in ways that became more conscious expressions of the dynamics of our inner world. A gentlemen about town in Restoration London would not have literally believed that gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus schemed and fought over the destinies of mortal men and women, but he would have found the stories of their antics useful metaphors for human character and its foibles: sometimes comic, sometimes tragic. Composers and playwrights of the time explored the subtleties, contradictions and layers of meaning inherent in character and the emotions through tales of the dramatic machinations of the gods and of fate. This was an age where conspiracy and deception were rife in both the political sphere and in many private lives. Theatre-goers would have seen themselves and their intrigues reflected in stories of the relations between gods and mortals, and the seemingly arbitrary or whimsical actions of fate and fortune. A singing actress in Purcell's day had to be adept at wringing all the emotional depth out of a tragic piece - especially in the lament, a genre which had ruled the vocal repertoire as the supreme test of a singer's art since the work of Monteverdi. A popular development of the lament in Restoration England was the mad song, which allowed the singer (usually a woman) to throw off all the trappings of repressive social conditioning and

give public display of such extreme emotions as griefs, woes and groanings¹ through heartfelt wailings which tested her musical, emotional and dramatic virtuosity. Dido's Lament brings together aspects of both traditions in a climactic point for baroque music, which has come to be loved as one of the great moments in opera - one that usually leaves an audience moved to tears, as many can identify with her sense of hopelessness and fatal betrayal. Today, we see situations such as Dido's not as factual tales of the plotting of gods and sorcerers, but as mirrors of the dynamics of our spiritual struggles with our own internal demons and demigods. We are not single, simple personalities, but an aggregate of complexes, neuroses, habits and conditionings that leave even the retribution. This is provided through the stratagems of the Sorceress, who brings about Dido's undoing by placing her in a position where her shame and guilt - as much as her broken heart - dictate that she must perish. Thus, we see in the counterbalancing of Dido and the Sorceress what Freud or Jung might explain as a dramatization of two warring parts of a divided personality - one wanting to enjoy life, the other trying to prevent it through fear, guilt and sabotage. Though Purcell and Tate did not see their characters through the lens of modern depth psychology, they - and their audiences - were certainly aware of this timeless inner drama and the emotional tensions in it. Historians are still debating whether Dido Aeneas was composed for a Chelsea girls finishing school in 1689 or for the court of King Charles II in 1685, but either audience would have been able to appreciate its layers of meaning and message. Both were certainly a clientele thoroughly trained in the classics, and the arts of rhetoric, music and gesture - refinements denied to most modern audiences. Dido is an example of the extreme social conditioning of her rank. She cannot act freely with spontaneity, but is confined by her position, tormented by doubts and hesitant to accept love. When she does give in to her natural desires, she becomes fearfully expectant of divine wrath and sanest of us feeling we are host to a gaggle of warring characters. The Sorceress in Dido Aeneas is a classic example of the actions of one facet of these inner sub-personalities we play host to: the Saboteur. It was the yearning to explore these multiple layers of meaning in performance that led us (Evelyn Tubb, Michael Fields and Predrag Gosta) to produce this present recording. The seed for this collaboration was sown in a 1996 production at the Belgrade International Early Music Festival. The three of us had been involved in productions of Dido Aeneas for many years - individually, as well as together - and had been refining our interpretations along the way. In this recording we felt it was time to go further and experiment with both Dido and the Sorceress being portrayed by the same singer - each role characterized to its

emotional extreme. While there are many fine recordings of Dido in the catalogue, none has incorporated both the view of the Sorceress as Dido's Shadow and offered a historically informed interpretation of a Restoration Witch. By 1685, witches were regarded as caricatures of malevolence - quite different to Macbeth's witches. After years of performing laments and mad songs, we are convinced of the need for the singer to characterize through the voice all the emotions this repertoire depicts, even when some of these are not very nice and call for a complimentary distortion of tone - something that most classical singers would reject as unbecoming. Evelyn has no such inhibitions; she is an artist always ready to go to the edge in the search for dramatic and emotional truth, and puts this into practice for both Dido and her shadowy partner in fate. In early music, none of us can claim to have all the answers or reach a definitive interpretation, and that is not what we are trying to achieve through this recording. Instead, we hope to get the listener thinking, encourage further exploration and - above all - entertain, edify, and give spiritual uplift: perhaps the most authentic aspect of anyones art. Michael Fields Predrag Gosta (Note: 1 - from Woods, Rocks and Mountains, by Robert Johnson (c.1620) - an early example of an English mad song)

REVIEWS: "[Tubb's] runs are fluent ... and her decorations apt and neatly done.... Impeccable work from the 13-piece band." (Opera magazine) "Thomas Meglioranza gives a thoughtful and sympathetic performance that sends a breath of fresh air blowing gently through the opera." (Early Music) "Tubb sings splendid Dido, but it is as the Sorceress that she truly makes this recording stand out." (Early Music America)

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE: New Trinity Baroque is recognized as one of USA's leading baroque orchestras and early music ensembles. Founded in London in 1998, the group was initially established as an ensemble of international musicians, and since then it continues to maintain this presence through working closely with both U.S. and international artists. Led by the young conductor and harpsichordist, Predrag Gosta, the ensemble's home base is Atlanta, where it continues its mission by presenting over 30 concerts and educational events each season. The members of the ensemble perform on period instruments, specializing in music of the 17th and 18th centuries. The group's performances range from chamber to orchestral, from cantatas to operas, and its styles from Renaissance to Classical. Its concerts were presented in many cities throughout the USA and Europe, including New York, Boston, London and Belgrade.

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