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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
FOUNDED 1830

UNIVERSITY CHOIR

James Erb, Director

April 9, 1992, 8:15 PM

Cannon Memorial Chapel

PROGRAM

I.

Dido and Æneas

Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

Dido, Queen of Carthage - - - - -	Elaine Bowen, '93
Belinda, her sister and handmaid - - - - -	Megan Taylor, '93
Second Woman - - - - -	Amy Craver, '94
Sorceress - - - - -	Ann Ory Brown
First Witch - - - - -	Cary Fridley, '92
Second Witch - - - - -	Lesly de Groot, '95
Spirit - - - - -	Matthew Beams, '93
Æneas, a Prince of Troy - - - - -	Travis Allison, '94
Sailor - - - - -	Scott Edwards, '92
Chorus - - - - -	University Choir

INTERMISSION

II.

Christ lag in Todesbanden, BWV 4

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Versus I:	Christ lag in Todesbanden
Versus II:	Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
Versus III:	Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn
Versus IV:	Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg
Versus V:	Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm
Versus VI:	So feiern wir das hohe Fest
Versus VII:	Wir essen und leben wohl

Program Notes

Henry Purcell
Dido and Æneas

Until the advent of Benjamin Britten in this century, Purcell's little opera was England's only major contribution to the form. Written for a girls' school entertainment, it was first performed in London in 1689. It has yet to establish a permanent place in opera houses outside the British Isles. Its American première, for example, took place in 1924.

There are some reasons for this state of affairs, despite Purcell's wonderful score. The first is its relative brevity, which makes it awkward to program. Furthermore, there are some problems with Nahum Tate's libretto, which is based on events described in Vergil's *Æneid*. Essential actions are referred to very briefly and only in passing. We never learn, for example, how much time elapses between the opening of Act I and the end of the opera; and Æneas, lamenting that he must leave Dido, speaks of "one night enjoyed, the next forsook," so we are left to infer how this could actually have come about, since tradition has it that the consummation occurred in a cave during the hunt. Some characterizations, too, are weak. Æneas has only recitatives to sing, and these give scant opportunity to establish a character strong enough and attractive enough to give Dido credible cause to die either of a broken heart or as a suicide--even the manner of her death is unclear.

Nevertheless, *Dido* is now often performed in England and in the United States. The reason for its inclusion on this program is the large role given the chorus. In this opera, the chorus plays the role of an observer involved with the characters in nearly every scene, commenting in Act I, "When monarchs unite, how happy their fate!"; or in the first scene of Act II, laughing demonically as the Sorceress describes how she will bring about Dido's fall; or singing the sad farewell that closes the opera. As in Greek tragedy, renaissance drama, and most baroque opera and oratorio, this function resembles that of the "laugh track" in modern TV situation comedy, in that it indicates to the audience the appropriate response to the action.

Plot Synopsis

Act I:

Æneas, destined by the gods to found the city of Rome, wanders westward with his followers after the Trojan War, stopping in Carthage, where he meets and falls in love with proud and passionate Queen Dido. Although her sister Belinda

urges her to make the most of her good fortune, Dido confesses her unease (*Ah, Belinda, I am pressed with torment*); but Belinda reassures her (*Fear no danger to ensue*). Æneas appears and continues to press his suit upon Dido, and Belinda enthusiastically encourages the match (*Pursue thy conquest, Love*).

Act II:

In her gloomy cave, the malicious Sorceress explains that she hates Dido "as we do all in prosperous state," calling her demons to torment the happy lovers and bring all Carthage down "ere the set of sun." The demons rejoice (*Harm's our delight*). Aware that Æneas is fated to move on to Italy, she announces she will send a spirit to him "in form of Mercury himself" who will command Æneas to leave immediately. However, Dido, Æneas and the court are in the country on a hunt, and the witches declare their intention to "mar their hunting sport and drive 'em back to court." Singing their echoing *In our deep vaulted cell*, they plan the charm that will bring this about.

In a grove, the hunting party rests, reflecting that Diana and Actæon may have hunted there. Æneas proudly displays the head of a boar he has killed, but Dido already notices the coming storm, and Belinda urgently calls for a retreat (*Haste, haste to town*). As the others leave, the spirit sent from the Sorceress accosts Æneas, telling him that Jove commands him to leave at once. He sadly accepts the order, wondering how to tell Dido, with whom he apparently has made love during the hunt.

Act III

Æneas' men noisily prepare to weigh anchor and be off (*Come away, fellow sailors*), breezily telling each other to "take a boozy short leave of your nymphs on the shore, and silence their longing with vows of returning, though never intending to visit them more." The Sorceress and her witches, calling Dido by their own name for her, exult: "our plot has took, the Queen's forsook! Elissa's ruined!" To confirm their malice, they conjure another storm to harrass Æneas' departing fleet, rejoicing that "Elissa dies tonight, and Carthage flames tomorrow!"

Dido, having learned of Æneas' impending departure, confronts him and scorns his grief as hypocrisy. She rejects his offer to stay in spite of Jove's command, and sends him away. Her rage then subsides to tender resignation and the acceptance of death. In her memorable closing air *When I am laid in earth* she pleads to Belinda "remember me; but ah! forget my fate!" The chorus closes the opera with an invitation to the Cupids to come and scatter roses on her tomb (*With drooping wings*).

J. S. Bach
Cantata 4, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*
(BWV 4)

This cantata, like Purcell's *Dido and Æneas*, owes its uncommon popularity to its strong attraction to choral groups--as distinct from that of works in which the solistic element is dominant. Two of its movements are for a single vocal part; two others are duets. Although it is likely that Bach gave these to soloists rather than the chorus, their dependence on a chorale tune is strong enough to justify the alternative of singing them in choral unison, since chorales by definition are intended for congregational singing.

Like much of Bach's other church music, this draws its tunes, structures and techniques from earlier generations. Its specific model, both in the tune it is based on and in its overall structure as a chain of variations, is an earlier cantata on the same tune by Johann Pachelbel. Given this dependence on earlier music (normal for its time), one may ask why Bach's contribution merits any more attention than any other. The answer is as audacious as it is simple: it is better, deeper, and more abidingly worth while, and comparisons are a waste of time.

The alert listener will note that the same solemn eight-phrase tune underlies all seven movements. Using techniques of text-illustration already over two centuries old in his day, Bach dramatically highlights the emotional content of each succeeding stanza of Martin Luther's famous chorale tune for Easter. The same alert listener is urged to find the tune as it appears in each stanza, noting Bach's attention to individual words, images and symbols, and the emotional impact this attention conveys. In its solemn way this cantata is every bit as dramatic as an opera, and its traditional culmination is a monumentally satisfying, straightforward statement of that chorale tune that has hovered over each of the preceding six stanzas.

* * * * *

We are grateful to Professors Catharine Kirby and Ann Ory Brown for invaluable coaching of solo performers.

J. S. Bach
Cantata 4, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*
(BWV 4)
Text and Translation

Versus I:

Christ lag in Todesbanden
Für unsre Sünd gegeben,
Er ist wieder erstanden
Und hat uns bracht das Leben;
Des wir sollen froh sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
Und singen Hallelujah.
Hallelujah!

Christ lay in the bonds of death,
Delivered up for our sins,
He is risen again
And has brought life to us;
For this we must be glad,
Praise God and to him be thankful
And sing Hallelujah.

Versus II:

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
Bei allen Menschenkindern
Das macht' alles unsre Sünd,
Kein Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
Und nahm über uns Gewalt,
Hielt uns in seinem Reich gefangen.
Hallelujah!

Over Death no one could prevail
Among all the children of mankind.
This was all caused by our sin,
No innocence was to be found.
For this Death came so soon
And took power over us,
Holding us captive in his realm.

Versus III:

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn
An unser Statt ist kommen
Und hat die Sünde weg getan,
Damit dem Tod genommen
All sein Recht und sein Gewalt,
Da bleibet nichts denn Tods Gestalt.
Den Stachel hat er verloren.
Hallelujah!

Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
In our stead is come
And has cast sin aside,
Thereby taking from Death
All his rights and his power.
Naught remains but Death's form.
His sting has he lost.

Versus IV:

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg
Da Tod und Leben rungen,
Das Leben das behielt den Sieg,
Es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
Wie ein Tod den andern fraß.
Ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Hallelujah!

It was a marvellous battle
When Death and Life were struggling.
Life won the victory,
It has swallowed up Death.
The Scripture has foretold this,
How one death consumed the other.
A mockery has been made of Death.

Versus V:

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
Davon Gott hat geboten,
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
In heißer Lieb gebraten.
Das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür
Das Hält der Glaub dem Tode für
Der Würger kann uns nichts mehr schaden.
Hallelujah!

Here is the true Passover Lamb
Which God has bidden.
It is high up on the cross's **D**
Roasted in ardent love.
Its blood marks our door,
Our Faith holds it up before

Versus VI:

So feiern wir das hohe Fest
Mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
Das uns der Herre scheinen läßt,
Er ist selber die Sonne,
Der durch seiner Gnaden Glanz
Erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz.
Die Sündennacht ist verschwunden.
Hallelujah!

So we celebrate the high feast
With heartfelt joy and delight
That the Lord lets shine on us,
He is himself the sun,
Who through his grace's splendor
Lights up our hearts utterly.
The night of sin has vanished.

Versus VII:

Wir essen und leben wohl
In rechten Osterfladen
Der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
Sein bei dem Wort der Gnaden.
Christus soll die Koste sein
Und speisen die Seel allein,
Der Glaub will keins anderen Leben.
Hallelujah!

We eat and live well
With the true Pascal bread,
The old leaven shall not
Be with the Word of Grace.
Christ would be the meal
And nourish the soul only,
Our Faith wants no other life.

VERSITY CHOIR

J. S. Bach ANO:
Cantata Akin
(BWV 4) Anders
Text and e Bowen
perly Bower
Versus Craver, President
de Groot
Christ la el Enoch
Für un Gardiner
Er is ley
Ur eth Kristiansen
Michelle Mawicke
Pamela Mellinger
Shannon Monaghan
Katherine Myers
Charity Rouse
Meagan Schnauffer
Laurelyn Smith
Megan Taylor
Jennifer Welsh
Kate Wheeler

TENOR:

Matthew Beams
Jay Brinson
Scott Edwards
Rich Mento
John Polhill, Jr.
Matthew Straw
Keith Tan

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1:

Yen Yu, concertmaster
Galina Istomin
Deborah Warner

VIOLIN 2:

Colette Cerve, principal
Xiao-Cao Xia
Stephen Pershing

VIOLA 1:

Jan Murray, principal
Sandra Parrott

ALTO:

Carol Bowen
Courtney Butler, past President
Catherine Chamblee, assistant conductor
Cary Fridley
Linda Gehrs
Gina Gray
Katherine Greskovich
Jennifer Hain
Christiana Kuczma
Joellyn Moore, Secretary
Jennifer Oster
Dora Paolucci
Amy Sue Payne
Robin Prager
Claudia Sgro, choir accompanist

BASS:

Thomas Farrar
Carlton Greer
James Hruschka
Tripp Hudgins
Rich Miller
Vernon Phillips
Scott Rothrock
Matt Zemon

VIOLA 2:

Marika Fischer Hoyt, principal
Martin Erb

VIOLONCELLO

Jacquelin Spears, principal
Barbara Gaden
Francis Church

CONTRABASS:

John Smith

KEYBOARD

Catherine Chamblee

Next: University Orchestra
Fred Cohen, director
April 14, 1992, 8:15 PM
Camp Theatre