

From the Creative Team...

A Note About Our Inspiration

from Dramaturg, **Daniel Leech-Wilkinson**
Professor, King's College London

Classical musicians may be the only Western artists still trained to believe that their job is to reproduce the practices and intentions of the dead, as faithfully as possible, for ever. This is hardly an environment in which artistic creativity can flourish. It is not hard to show that the traditional justifications for denying significant agency to performers are historically and ethically ill-founded. So there seems every reason, from here on, to encourage performers to engage much more imaginatively with composers' scores. Among many other benefits (artistic, psychological, social and economic) this removes the conflict characteristic of opera production between the interpretative strategies of those directing on the stage and in the pit. Our 'Dido & Belinda' has emerged from a cooperation founded on this approach, where both directors understand Purcell's 'Dido & Aeneas' score as a starting-point for interrelated critical thought focusing on dilemmas that matter today.

A Note About the Score

from Conductor/Composer, **Leo Geyer**

In collaboration with the production team, we agreed that some significant changes needed to be made to the score prior to the first rehearsal, including re-harmonising choruses, re-ordering songs, and adjusting the orchestration and musical style. I therefore created a new score, not to be used as gospel in rehearsals, but rather as a starting point for discussion. Throughout the rehearsal process the entire cast participated in further modifications to the score, allowing the music to develop organically in tandem with the dramatic interpretation. Our alterations include subtle changes to phrasing, dynamics and articulation, as well radical forms of "compositional transformation" including rhythmic variations, extending the harmonic language, and decorating melodies. Essentially, we have re-imagined almost every aspect of the music except for the notes themselves. In my mind, the music is still undoubtedly Purcell's.

Thank You...

To our valued partners

Experimental work like this could not happen without the generous support and contributions from our incredible sponsors. We're very grateful to our partners at King's College London Department of Music, the Arts & Humanities Research Institute, the Principal of King's College London and the King's Cultural Institute for their contributions and support throughout the production. We would also like to thank Rachel Condon from WhiteLight, and Alexandra Creighton & Daniel Leech-Wilkinson for their help in getting this production off the ground.

To our valued audience

Our aim in this project was to bring opera to new audiences, and to re-invigorate interest in classical music for the next generation of musicians. This movement does not end when we turn off the lights. **Please share your thoughts and critiques with Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (daniel.leech-wilkinson@kcl.ac.uk)**, as it will help further his research and ultimately the progress of Classical Music as a whole.



From left to right: Leo Geyer, Emily Adamson, Frances Bradshaw, Ella Marchment, Robert Youngson, Maggie Schroeder, William Cole, Robert Hersey, and Simeon John-Wake.



12th, 13th, 14th October 2016, 7.30pm
King's College London



A collaboration between King's College London's Department of Music and Helios Collective, supported by the Principal's Fund, the Arts & Humanities Research Institute and the Cultural Institute at King's

Elissa's Ruined...

Part I: The Court

It's London fashion week, and Dido, a top model born into the Carthage fashion label, is now the face of the family brand. We find her struggling with the pressure, media attention and above all her inner turmoil at seeing Aeneas, who has returned after a two-year absence at sea and expects to marry her to secure his elite social status. Dido looks for comfort in her lover Belinda, but Aeneas soon appears. The proposed marriage appears to be the ideal match between two celebrities and is feted by all. Dido and Belinda resolve to take a different path and, while Aeneas and his posse celebrate the forthcoming marriage, they escape to find help.

Part II: The Club

Dido and Belinda find themselves in a different world – a downtown club that fizzles with liberated female power, freedom and energy. Dido summons up the courage to ask them for help to get rid of Aeneas's unwanted attention, and the Sorceress vows to help them both. Before her plan is put into action she and the witches test the trustworthiness of the two lovers.

Part III: The Woods

Dazed and confused, Dido and Belinda wake to find themselves in the woods. They put on disguises as Aeneas interrupts his hunt for foxes (and women). Dido and Belinda watch as he stalks his prey, and Belinda holds Dido back before she reveals herself prematurely. The witches appear and conjure up a storm to stall Aeneas. Belinda, now in disguise as the prostitute Mercury, seduces Aeneas, which Dido catches on camera. The humiliated Aeneas is left to curse his own misfortune and promises to leave in the morning.

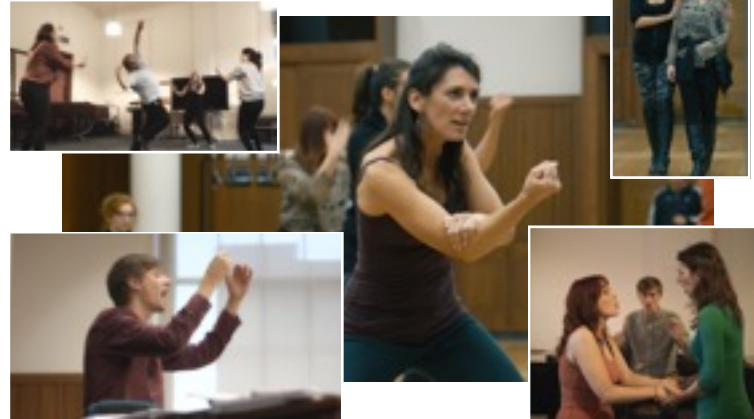
Part IV: The Dock

Aeneas's drunk sailors sing and dance the night away at the dock while the Witches and the Sorceress put the last part of the plan into action. They resolve to create a storm to sink Aeneas's ship, and then in a frenzy of bloodthirsty violence beat the drunken sailors to near-unconsciousness to punish them for their lack of respect for women. Dido calls a press conference, and Aeneas returns to plead with Dido to take him back. Dido feigns sadness but commands him to go. As the press leave, Dido and Belinda, bring the plan to its conclusion and write Dido's suicide note. They then stage her death, and her note is read to her friends who express their sorrow. The witches reappear, in disguise, to "take care" of the body, and as the public depart Dido and Belinda escape to a new life of anonymity.

Our Team...

Production Team

Director...	Ella Marchment
Composer/Conductor...	Leo Geyer
Asst. Director...	Robert Hersey
Asst. & Cover Conductor...	William Cole
Movement Director...	Simeon John-Wake
Designer...	Frances Bradshaw
Costume Supervisor...	Emily Adamson
Lighting Designer...	Robert Youngson
Dramaturg...	Daniel Leech-Wilkinson
Stage Manager...	Beatrice Wallbank
Asst. Stage Manager...	Becky Peskett
Producer...	Maggie Schroeder



Principles

Dido... Camilla Bull	2nd Woman... Sophie Gallagher
Belinda... Isolde Roxby	Sorceress... Lily Papaioannou
Aeneas... Samuel Pantcheff	1st Witch... Charlotte North
	2nd Witch... Catrin Woodruff

Chorus & Covers

Madeleine Joyce (Dido)	Rebecca Hardwick (2nd Woman)
Jenny Begley (Belinda)	Emma Newman-Young (1st Witch)
Guy Withers (Aeneas)	Kathleen Green (2nd Witch)
Grainne Gillis (Sorceress)	Olivia Bell, Matthew Duncan, Joan Munoz, & Callum Speed

Orchestra - Lead by Philipa Mo

Violin I - Clarice Rarity, Rachel Gorman
 Violin II - Tim Rathbone, Maria Fiore Mazzarini
 Viola - Elin Parry, Mark Gibbs
 Continuo Cello - Philip Collingham
 Tutti Cello - Lucy Railton
 Double Bass - Toby Hughes
 Theorbo - Arngeir Hauksson
 Keyboards - William Cole (Cover: Bertie Baigent)

Ella Marchment (Director) Artistic director of Helios Collective, director of productions at Constella OperaBallet, and part of the steering committee for Operatic Mass Actions (Aarhus, Denmark), Ella has worked on over eighty opera and theatre productions throughout Europe and produced events that span opera, ballet, theatre, and more. Her directing credits include Alexander Goehr's *Tryptich* at Mariinsky II, an opera-ballet production of Stravinsky's *Renard*, and an acclaimed international tour of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs For A Mad King*—described by Opera Now as one of the best productions worldwide in 2014. Ella is also co-founder of Theatre N16.

Leo Geyer (Composer) is a 24-year-old London born composer and conductor. He studied Junior Trinity, Manchester University, The Royal Northern College of Music and The Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts. Leo has been awarded the RNCM Gold Medal Award, PRS / ESO Composition Competition and the Philip Bates Award. His opera *The Mermaid of Zennor* was hailed by The Times as "imaginative and beautifully shaped." Leo is the Music Director for EMG Symphony Orchestra, conductor for Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra, and the founder and Artistic Director of Constella OperaBallet. www.leogeyer.co.uk

William Cole (Asst. Conductor) is Music Director of multi-genre club night Filthy Lucre and contemporary theatre collective Indomitable Productions, and has worked with Opera Lyrica, Opera and More, Melos Sinfonia, Gestalt Arts Collective, Goldsmiths Choral Union, Concanenda and Ensemble X.Y. William currently holds the position of Choral Director at London's Youth Music Centre and was Graduate Musician in Residence at North London Collegiate School from 2013-2015. As a Yeoman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, he frequently gives composition workshops in London schools. He read Music at Clare College, Cambridge, and is currently at the Royal Academy of Music.

Simeon John-Wake (Movement Director) trained at London Studio Centre. His choreographic credits include: Tamerlano (Movement Director, Buxton Opera House), Dracula (Movement Director, KBank Theatre Bangkok), The Sting (Choreographer, Wilton's Music Hall), Dear Lupin (Choreographer, National Tour/Apollo Theatre), Murder in the Cathedral (Assistant Director, Temple Church), The Horror! The Final Curtain (Choreographer, Wilton's Music Hall/Bedlam Theatre), The Dead Wait (Movement Director, Park Theatre), A Christmas Carol (Choreographer, Talkwood Productions) and A Day at Work (Director, Short Film).

Frances Bradshaw (Designer) designs for theatre include: *Adding Machine* (Finborough Theatre), *Clickbait* and *A First World Problem* (Theatre503), *Barbarians* (Young Vic – JMK Award 2015, Olivier Award Nominated) *Grav* (Torch Theatre, Wales), *Stories from the Sea* (Unity Theatre, Liverpool) *Punk Rock* (Actor's Studio, Liverpool), *A Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Comedy of Errors* (LIPA, Liverpool). Site-specific work includes co-designing: *Karagula* (STYX, Tottenham) and *If Walls Could Talk: 100 Seel Street* (Seel Street, Liverpool). She has worked as associate designer to Christopher Oram, and was a Linbury prize finalist in 2015 working with the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. www.frankiebradshawdesign.com

Rob Youngson (Lighting Designer) is a theatre lighting designer and unit stills publicity photographer. Rob trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and has worked across the UK, Iceland and Norway. Rob's most recent projects include 'Maria De Buenos Aires' at The Arcola, 'Barbarians' for Tooting Arts Club and being publicity photographer for Lionsgate on feature film 'My Name is Lenny'. Rob is excited to be working with Helios again after previous collaborations at the Bloomsbury Theatre and the Arcola. Rob can usually be found at the production desk or wherever there are chocolate hobknobs and coffee.

Maggie Schroeder (Producer) With nearly seven years of international experience in theatre and arts management, Maggie has a strong background in producing and stage & company management for theatre and opera. She now runs her own business to help start-up arts companies develop long-term financial sustainability, MSP Theatre, which has worked with successful theatre companies around the EU. She has previously worked with companies including Sky and Apple, and aims to continue to be a force for major change and sustainability in the arts.

Camilla Bull (Dido) - From the Isle of Wight, Camilla moved to London initially for her BMus at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, under Annette Thompson. She continues to study with Robert Dean and work across the UK and Europe. During her time on Opera Works, Camilla enjoyed working with leading conductors and directors while performing on the ENO stage and with Grange Park Opera. In the last year, roles have included Isabella in Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Pop Up Opera), Mercedes and cover Carmen (Opera Up Close), and Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte* (Opera Vera). www.camillabull.com.

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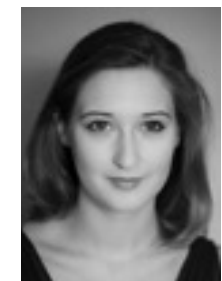
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