

"PEACE AND I ARE STRANGERS GROWN"



# DIDO & AENEAS

## BoardroomBanter

**Aeneas accepts from Mercury** "His fate is sealed."



"My trusy ee, in form of Mercury himself, as sent from Jove, shall chide his stay, And charge him sail tonight with all his feet away."

**GO REVEL YE CUPIDS, THE DAY IS YOUR OWN!**

To the gods and the seas, in the rocks and the mountains, in the mist of groves and the year-shady mountains... I at the triumph of the god of speed for power. Go revel ye Cupids, the day is your own.

**BE MINE**



Dido & Aeneas Pursue thy conquest, Love! Her eyes confess the flame her tongue denies.



**NEW RELEASES**

**The Hunt**

When a man is...  
...the...  
...the...  
...the...

**MAGAZINE**

**Now:**

**Then...**

**The Downward Spiral**

**What shall lost Aeneas do?**

...the...  
...the...  
...the...

## Hollywood Journal

**AENEAS CAUGHT!**

**Aeneas WRECKED!**

**What did Dido see**

...the...  
...the...  
...the...

**Q&A with Aeneas**

How does it feel to have all of the attention directed at you?

...the...  
...the...  
...the...



Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects

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# Jody Oberfelder, choreographer, puts a new spin on Henry Purcell's classic opera, *Dido & Aeneas*.

The New York Times

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2008

## *Dido and Aeneas, Pursued by Paparazzi*



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A scene from Jody Oberfelder's version of Purcell's opera "Dido and Aeneas," commissioned by the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

For a modern-dance choreographer, "Dido and Aeneas" is not just a story from Virgil's "Aeneid" or a 17th-century opera by Purcell but, most frighteningly, a celebrated work by Mark Morris. None of this seems to have daunted Jody Oberfelder, who has created a fresh, imaginative and utterly charming version of this piece in collaboration with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the La Guardia High School senior chorus.

The piece was commissioned by St. Luke's for its arts education program, and from Monday to Wednesday it was performed before 6,500 New York City schoolchildren. On Wednesday evening it had just one public

performance, at La Guardia High School on the Upper West Side.

That's a pity, because Ms. Oberfelder's delightful production deserves to be seen more widely. She gives the classic story a contemporary twist by reincarnating Aeneas and Dido as a modern celebrity couple parted by the current incarnation of divine forces: the media and business interests. (In Virgil's tale, it's the gods who intervene; in Purcell's opera, it's a sorceress.) If this sounds contrived on paper, it doesn't come across as such, because Ms. Oberfelder lets the emotions inherent in the music and lyrics shine clearly through the dancing without any onstage self-consciousness.

The contemporary context is cleverly set up by a series of pro-

### Dido and Aeneas

La Guardia High School

jected images (the "set concept" is by Juergen Riehm, the photographs by Jillian Patterson) that show celebrity magazine-style features, with paparazzi-esque snapshots and big headlines about the characters. ("What Shall Aeneas Do?" "His Fate Is Sealed!") The twist is that the words are mostly the lyrics from the opera, an ingenious short-hand version of surtitles that leaves us free to concentrate on Ms. Oberfelder's dances and the music, played beautifully by the St. Luke's ensemble.

Performed with great verve by her eight dancers, the choreography is mostly full of invention and wit, with breaking and acrobatics punctuating more conventional movement. The singers, all good, mostly remain unobtrusively on the side of the stage but occasionally interact with the dancers — to particularly moving effect when Dido (Rebekah Morin) and her singing counterpart (Adrienne Danrich) come together in the famous final aria with the refrain "Remember me, forget my fate."

Purcell wrote "Dido and Aeneas" for a girls' school, and so the teenage chorus, led by John Russell, seems particularly appropriate here, as does the giddy what-will-happen-next rush of the production. Love, lust, breakups. Some things never change.



true heroism: the balance between love, duty, fate and will. Employing rich visual elements, (set concept by Juergen Riehm, photography by Jillian Patterson, visual design by Design Brooklyn, lighting by Kathy Kaufmann, costumes by Wade Jensen and Katrin Schnabl) presented in a parallel visual narrative and spectacular physicality, this epic is perfect for all audiences.

### Originally commissioned by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, *Dido & Aeneas*

was created during a residency provided by the Joyce Theater Foundation, New York City, with major support from The Andrew Mellon Foundation. This work is made possible with additional support from the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the generosity of individual donors.

### Jody Oberfelder combines strength and virtuosic movement with levity and whimsical physical imagination.

Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects has performed in numerous venues in New York City as well as nationally and internationally in festivals from Serbia to Korea. Jody's dance film LineAge won a People's Choice Award from Cinedans for 2007, and her other dance films and commercial work have been screened worldwide. Jody has received various commissions and university residencies, and is a teaching artist for Lincoln Center Institute and The Orchestra of St. Luke's. Jody was also a '07-'08 Joyce Resident Artist. This is her first opera.

"One of the funniest modern-dance choreographers in New York,"  
- Jennifer Dunning, NY Times

"Spirited and kinetically rich... indomitable power-house of a dancer,"  
- Gus Solomons, Dance Magazine

"Exudes a humanism rooted in reality,"  
- Tobi Tobias, The Village Voice

