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**About the composer**

**Henry Purcell** (born Henry Purcell, 1659-1695.) - A prominent English composer of Irish origin, a representative of the Baroque style. Brother of composer Daniel Purcell.

Born in London in 1659 at London's Westminster in a musical family. His father, Thomas Purcell, whose ancestors migrated to England from Ireland, was at the Stuart court musician: singer Chapel, lute player, played the viola. Henry Purcell from childhood has been associated with the court circles. Coming into the world on the eve of the Restoration, he is still in early childhood found brilliant musical abilities. With six or seven years of age, he sang in the choir of the royal chapel, where he studied vocal art, composition, played the organ and harpsihorde (a type of harpsichord English wing-shaped, like the modern piano). His teachers in the chapel were excellent musicians - Captain Cook, John Blow and connoisseur of French music Pelham Humphrey. Purcell was twenty years old when his brilliant play paved the way for him to wide acclaim. In 1679 he became organist of Westminster Abbey, and in the first half of the 1680's and the court chapel, where he recently sang a modest boy, invited him to the post. His fame as a virtuoso grew. Plebeian strata of the capital - the musicians and artisans, poets and restaurateurs, merchants and actors - were one of his circle of acquaintances and customers.Another was the royal court with his aristocratic and bureaucratic periphery. The whole life of Purcell, razdvaivayas, took place between these two poles, but it was the first he had always gravitated.
In the 1680s, at the end of the Restoration, came the rapid and brilliant flowering of his genius composer. He wrote with a kind of feverish haste, referring to a variety of genres, sometimes distant and even opposite to each other. His household odnogolosyj and polyphonic songs were born in the festivities, in taverns and clubs Catch, with the friendly party, in an atmosphere of cordiality, free-thinking, and sometimes rampant. Purcell was a regular in this environment; it is known that one of the taverns of London was decorated with his portrait. Some of the songs of those years leave no doubt that the patriarchal conservatism inherent once Thomas Purcell, was not inherited by his son. But next to these song-creation - democratic, playful, satirical - there were patriotic cantatas, odes and welcome songs written frequently for the royal family and nobles to their anniversaries and celebrations.
Number of songs he created huge. Together with those written for the theater, it is in the hundreds. Purcell - one of the largest-songwriter. Some of his song melodies even in vivo acquired almost Vseanglijsky popularity.

Special mention should be at the Purcell-satire songs, epigrams, songs, sarcastic, witty, sarcastic. Some mocked puritanical prudes, businessmen of the time; in other irony is poured upon the great light, with its vices. Sometimes the subject of skeptical judgments, set to music, it is the parliament (Catch "contains tips All England"). But in a duet "locusts and fly" - even the King James II. However, there is at Purcell and officially allegiance grace-opus, which could not be at the time when his or her position. Quite a few in the legacy of Purcell songs written under the impression he had seen pictures of everyday life of the common people, its sorrows and joys. The composer achieves great strength and the truth of life, drawing unvarnished portraits of the homeless poor of his country.

Purcell wrote songs and heroic, filled with high pathos of his era, rushing more passion. Here, most clearly showed masculine side of his nature. Inspired sound of his almost romantic "Song of the prisoner." This proud, free song of the XVII century it is impossible to listen without emotion.
Inspiration his spiritual composition - psalms, hymns, motets, Anthem, church organ interludes. Among the spiritual works of Purcell allocated its many Anthem - majestic anthems on the texts of the Psalms. Purcell boldly introduced a secular concert beginning, skillfully used with the surface, but the hot passion of secular music, which has become a kind of fashion craze in the wealthy classes in England under Charles II. Anthem Purcell transformed into a large composition concert plan, and sometimes pronounced civic character. Secular trend of the genre was in England for the unprecedented phenomenon of the clergy, and after 1688 Purcell ran into particularly sharp rejection of the Puritan community.

Sacred Works Purcell interspersed with a lot of purely secular - suites and variations for harpsichord, fantasy for string ensemble, Trio Sonatas. In the creation of the latest Purcell was a pioneer in the British Isles.
His trials and indignant prevailed everywhere "at the top" selfish attitude to music as a pleasant pastime. In 1683, in the preface to the trio-sonatas he wrote, paying tribute to the Italian masters, "... seriously, the significance associated with this music, come to the recognition and honor our compatriots. It is time they start to tire windy levity, which are peculiar to our neighbors (under "neighbors" are of course France). "Obviously, the incredible creative tension, coupled with the onerous duties of the court and overly distracted way of life, had already undermined the forces of the composer.

Parliamentary coup in 1688 - the overthrow of James II and the accession of William of Orange - relatively little has changed then in the musical life and the fate of musicians. The power of "profiteers of the landowners and capitalists" established regime less carefree and wasteful, but vain patronage Restoration replaced profound indifference to the music. The unfortunate consequence of the first to speed up the decline of organ and harpsichord art, and then touched and theater. Purcell, count on the patronage of the Queen Mary, soon convinced them illusory. By then, having mastered almost all the vocal and instrumental genres, it is with great enthusiasm turned to music for the theater and created in this area values ​​of lasting value.Theatrical music in their own way to synthesize nearly all the vocal and instrumental genres Purcell and became a recognized peak of his creativity. He seemed to be united tradition of musical design of public theater with drama masks composers. This is widely mastered was the experience of overseas masters - Lully, Italians. However, in the composer's lifetime his works were largely misunderstood and unappreciated.

This is what happened with the opera "Dido and Aeneas". Purcell made England the first real opera, and, moreover, brilliant. It was written to a libretto by the then-known poet N. Tata, a literary source which served as "Aeneid" - the famous epic poem the Roman classics Maron Virgil.

Of the thirty-eight rooms of "Dido" fifteen - a choir. Chorus - lyrical interpreter of drama adviser heroine and scenically is its environment.
Here, most clearly affected the ability of the composer to combine different genres and means of expression - from the finest lyricism to juicy and tart people's everyday language, from the realistic images of everyday life to a fairy-tale fantasy Shakespeare Theatre. Farewell song of the heroine - passacaglia - one of the most beautiful arias ever created in the history of music.The British are proud of it.

The idea of ​​"Dido and Aeneas" highly humanistic. The heroine of the drama - sad victim of the game of the dark forces of destruction and misanthropy. Her image is full of psychological truth and charm; the forces of darkness embodied as a Shakespearean dynamism and scope. All product sounds like a bright hymn to humanity.
However, the opera "Dido and Aeneas" was staged in the XVII century only once - in 1689, and not on the stage, and in a boarding house for Noble Maidens in Chelsea. Then there was the two performances - one at the beginning and another at the end of the XVIII century. It took another hundred years before this is the best creation of the greatest composer of England was exhumed from the archives and was confirmed on the English, and then on the world stage. A year after the premiere of "Dido and Aeneas" Purcell with a noble faith in his art and at the same time bitterly wrote in the preface to put them to music drama "Diocletian": "... Music is still in its infancy, but it is a promising child. He will still feel what it can become in England, only to master music used is a great encouragement. "

He wrote little for the court scene, which is still dominated by the repertoire and style, reflects the influence of French classicism. There his theatrical music, absorbed the traditions and techniques of folk ballads, could not count on lasting success. Creating dozens of musical and dramatic opus, he was referring to the initiative of private individuals and with their help settled in a small theater at the Dorset Garden, accessible to the general public. He took a direct and active part in productions, actively collaborated with playwrights, directing, and often he participated in productions as an actor or a singer (he was a magnificent bass).Creating a large, highly artistic Opera, brings joy to the people and supported by the Government, Purcell as a matter of honor of the English nation. He bitterly saw how far was this ideal from reality. Hence a deep ideological rift with the circles of English society, which mainly depended on his fate and the fate of the music. There is little doubt that this ideological conflict, more or less deep-seated, but insoluble, was one of the factors of the tragic early death of the great composer. He died of an unknown illness (according to one version, tuberculosis) November 21, 1695, in the prime of his life, only thirty-six years old.

In the third year after his death, he published a collection of his songs, "The British Orpheus".He was soon sold out, and then went out a few other publications. His popularity was very high. Singing these songs, the English people paid tribute to the national genius of his music.