

2012, “Qui la voce...Vien, diletto” (Here I heard his voice so tender...Come, my dearest)
I PURITANI, Act II, 1835. Music by Vincenzo Bellini, libretto by Count Carlo Peponi, based
on the play, *Têtes rondes et cavaliers* (Roundheads and Cavaliers) by François Ancelot and
Xavier Boniface Saintine, derived from Sir Walter Scott’s novel, *Old Mortality*.

SYNOPSIS: Elvira and Arturo are in love, and although he is a Cavalier and she a Puritan,
and there is a civil war raging between the two factions, Elvira’s father, Lord Walton, has
given his consent to the marriage. When Arturo arrives for the wedding, a disguised
woman prisoner is brought in and Arturo recognizes her as Queen Henrietta, widow of
King Charles I. Elvira playfully decorates the prisoner with her wedding veil and
leaves momentarily, allowing Arturo to lead the Queen to freedom. When Elvira returns for
the ceremony, Arturo has disappeared and the shock of the situation results in her losing her
mind...In this aria and cabaletta, she relives her trauma and vacillates between lamenting
and joy, as she mistakes her uncle, Sir George, for Arturo.

ELVIRA (*offstage*)

*O, rendetemj la speme,
O lasciate, lasciatemi morir! *

*Oh, restore some hope within me,
or, I beg you, I beg you let me die..*

(*She enters.*)

Qui la voce sua soave
mi chiamava...e poi sparì.
Qui giurava esser fedele,
qui il giurava,*
e poi crudele, mi fuggì!
*Ah! mai più qui assorti insieme
nella gioia del sospir.
*O, rendetemj la speme,
O lasciate, lasciatemi morir! *

Here I heard his voice so tender;
first, he called me...and then was gone.
Here he promised he would be faithful
here he swore it, he swore it,
and then, cruel fellow, *ran away!
* Ah, no more we’ll be together*
to share love’s joyous sighs.
*Oh, restore some hope within me,
or, I beg you, I beg you let me die!*

.....

CABALETTA

(*She joyfully imagines that ARTURO is with her.*)

Vien, diletto, è in ciel la luna!
Tutto tace intorno, intorno.
Finchè spunti in cielo il giorno
*vien ti posa sul mio cor. *
Deh! t’affretta, o Arturo mio,
riedi, o caro, alla tua Elvira.
Essa piange e ti sospira,
Vien, o caro, *all’amore, etc.

Come, my dearest, see the moon is shining,
All around us, only silence.
Till the light of morning wakes us,
* come and rest here on my heart.*
Oh, please hurry, my Arturo,
come back quickly to your Elvira.
How she weeps and can’t stop sighing,
Come, my dearest, *to your lover,*etc.

(* = repeat)

--From “Bel canto Masters,” a course for Lifelong Learners at UC Santa Cruz.
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