

“Bel raggio lusinghier...Dolce pensiero” (Alluring ray of light...How sweet to picture)
SEMIRAMIDE, Act I, Giacchino Rossini, libretto by Gaetano Rossi, 1823, based *Semiramis*.
the play by Voltaire.

SYNOPSIS: Semiramide, Queen of Babylon, is in love with Arsace, her long-absent victorious general (who is really her son, although neither one knows the other’s identity.) Finally, Arsace has returned to Babylon and has asked for an audience with the queen.

SEMIRAMIDE

Bel raggio lusinghier,
di speme, e di piacer
alfin per me brillò!
Arsace ritornò,
sì, a me verrà.
Quest'alma che finor
gemè, tremò, languì, oh!
come respirò!
Ogni mio duol sparì,
dal cor, dal mio pensier,
si dilegnò il terror.
Bel raggio lusinghier,
di speme, e di piacer
alfin per me brillò!
Arsace ritornò,
Qui a me verrà.

Alluring ray of light,
of endless hope and joy,
at last you shine for me!
Arsace has returned;
he'll soon be here.
This soul, that for so long
would sigh and weep in pain, oh!
how happy it feels!
All my sorrow is gone;
from my heart and my thoughts
the awful fear has fled.
Alluring ray of light,
of endless hope and joy,
at last you shine for me!
Arsace has returned;
he'll see me here.

CABALETTA

Dolce pensiero,
di quell'istante,
a te sorride
l'amante cor, sì.
Come più caro,
dopo il tormento,
è il bel momento
di pace, e amor,
è il bel momento
di gioja, e amor.

How sweet to picture
that happy instant
when I can greet you
with loving heart, yes!
How even dearer,
after the torment,
will be the moment
of peace and love,
will be the moment
of gladness and love.*

(*Note: As is usual with Cabalettas, there is much repetition of various lines, as they are ornamented to display the inventive (and impressive) talents of the singer.)

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