

“Mira, o Norma...Sì, fino all'ore estremo” (See, oh Norma...Yes, for all the rest of our days)
duet, Act III, NORMA, Vincenzo Bellini; libretto by Felice Romani, 1831.

SYNOPSIS: Norma, High Priestess of the Druids, has broken her vows of chastity and has had two children with Pollione, Roman commander of the occupying army. Although she still loves him, Norma learns that he is now pursuing Adalgisa, one of the younger priestesses. In desperation, Norma contemplates killing her children, much to Adalgisa's horror. This famous duet, which begins as a confrontation between the two rivals, ends in a warm expression of reconciliation, when both women decide that their friendship is worth more than Pollione's "love."

ADALGISA

Mira, o Norma, a' tuoi ginocchi
questi cari tuoi pargoletti!
Ah! Pietade di lor ti tocchi,
se non hai di te pietà!

NORMA

Ah! Perché, perché la mia costanza
vuoi scemar con molli affetti?
Più lusinghe, ah, più speranza
presso a morte un cor non ha.

ADALGISA

Mira questi cari pargoletti,
questi cari, ah, li vedi, ah!

ADALGISA & NORMA [together]

[Mira, o Norma, a' tuoi ginocchi
questi cari tuoi pargoletti!
Ah! Pietade di lor ti tocchi,
se non hai di te pietà!]

NORMA

[Ah! Perché, la mia costanza, ecc.]

ADALGISA

Cedi! Deh, cedi!

NORMA

Ah! Lasciami! Ei t'ama.

ADALGISA

Ei già sen pente.

NORMA

E tu?

ADALGISA

L'amai. Quest'anima
sol l'amistade or sente.

NORMA

O giovinetta! E vuoi?

See, oh Norma, kneel down before you,
those dear children, so sweetly pleading.
Ah, have pity and let it move you,
though you do not pity, do not pity yourself.

Ah, oh why, oh why, attempt to weaken me
with tender feelings, when I've decided?
No illusions, ah, little hoping,,ah,
fill the heart, the heart of one soon to die..

Look at these dear children pleading,
these dear ones, ah, just see them, ah!

See, oh Norma, before you kneeling,
your dear children, so sweetly pleading.
Ah, let your pity be strong and move you,
though you may not pity yourself.

Ah, oh why attempt to weaken me, etc.

Listen, ah, listen!

Ah, leave me! He loves you!

But he's repenting...

And you?

I loved him... Now I can feel
only a friendship that's stronger.

Oh, dear child!... What will you do?

ADALGISA

Renderti i dritti tuoi,
o teco al cielo agli uomini
giuro celarmi ognor.

NORMA

Sì... Hai vinto... Abbracciami.
Trovo un'amica amor.

I'll give back what's rightfully yours,
or swear to heaven I'll hide with you
far from all mankind itself. Yes.

Yes... You've won me. Embrace me!
I found my lost loving friend.

CABALETTA: NORMA and ADALGISA

Sì, fino all'ore estreme
Compagna tua m'avrai.
Per ricovrarci insieme,
ampia è la terra assai.
Teco del fato all'onte
ferma opporrò la fronte,
finchè il tuo core a battere
o senta sul mio cor, sì, ecc.*

(*There are several repeats and vocalizations with "Ah!" in the Cabaletta.)

Till all our days are over,
I will be your close companion.
So we'll be safe together,
we'll find our place, our place on earth.
Facing outrageous fortune,
firmly we'll keep on fighting,
as long as your heart is beating,
is beating just like mine, yes! etc.*

--From "Bel canto Masters," a course for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Santa Cruz, ©2014, Miriam Ellis