

“Serbami ognor si fido” (Serve me still longer, faithfully), SEMIRAMIDE, Act I, duet, Semiramide and Arsace; music by Rossini, libretto by Gaetano Rossi, 1823, based on a play, *Semiramis*, by Voltaire.

SYNOPSIS: •Arsace, victorious general of Queen Semiramide, returns to her court after a long absence. Unknown to Semiramide, he is, in fact, her son, Arsace, whom she has not seen since he was a young child, and she is in love with him. However, Arsace loves Princess Azema. In this duet, the Queen and her son sing of their emotions, each misinterpreting what the other is expressing.

(•NOTE: Arsace is a “pants role,” typically sung by a mezzo.)

SEMIRAMIDE

Serbami ognor sì fido
il cor, gli affetti tuoi,
e tutto sperar puoi,
e tutto avrai da me.

Serve me still longer, faithfully,
with courage and devotion,
and keep on having dreams;
I’ll make them all come true.

ARSACE

A te sacrai, Regina,
la fede, il cuore, il brando,
vinsi per te pugnando;
saprò morir per te.

To you I swore, Your Majesty,
my faith, my heart, my valor,
winning for you in battle;
I’ll gladly die for you.

SEMIRAMIDE

No: tu per me vivrai...

No; you will live for me.

ARSACE)

Ah! se mi leggi in core...

Ah! if you could read my heart...

SEMIRAMIDE

Tu dunque!..

You’re feeling...

ARSACE

Ah! sappi omai...
M’arde il più vivo amore...

Ah! I must confess it!
I burn with an ardent love...

SEMIRAMIDE

Spera, sì, bell’ardore

Patience; such fervent passion

oggi otterrà mercé.

will be returned today.

CABALETTA

SEMIRAMIDE and ARSACE

•Alle più care immagini
di pace e di contento,
già s'abbandona l'anima
e fra i più dolci palpiti
ritorna a respirar. •

To the most cherished images
of peace and deep contentment,
quickly the soul surrenders.,
and between the sweetest heartbeats,
can breathe in peace once more. •

(•Note: The Cabaletta is repeated with variations and ornaments.)

--From a lecture for Santa Cruz Opera Society, Inc. (SCOSI) "Three Transcendent Artists," ©2019 Miriam Ellis

SEMIRAMIDE

Continue to serve me loyally,
with courage affection,
And everything you can wish for
you will have it all from me.

Arsaces)

To you I swore, oh Queen,
my faith, my heart, my sword,
and conquered for you, in battle,

ever willing to die for you.

Semiramide

No, no; you will live for me ...

Arsaces

Ah! if you could read my heart...

Semiramide

So you... ..

Arsaces

Ah! know now at last
that my soul burns with ardent love ...

Semiramide

Have hope, if you feel such love
today you'll fulfill your dream...

CABALETTA

SEMIRAMIDE and ARSACE

To the most cherished images
of peace and contentment,
the soul is already abandoned
in such a beautiful moment.
And among the sweetest heartbeats
it finds it can breathe once more.