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! *

(She enters.)
Qui la voce sua soave
mi chiamava...e poi sparì.
Here I heard his voice so tender;
first, he called me...and then was gone.

Qui giurava esser fedele,
qui il giurava,*
Here he promised he would be faithful
here he swore it, he swore it,
e poi crudele, mi fuggi!
*Ah! mai più qui assorti insieme
*and then*, cruel fellow, *ran away!
nella gioia del sospir.
*Ah, no more we'll be together*
to share love’s joyous sighs.

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

.......... CABALETTA
(She joyfully imagines that ARTURO is with her.)
Vien, diletto, è in ciel la luna!
Vien, o caro, *all’amore, etc.
Come, my dearest, see the moon is shining,
Come, my dearest, *to your lover,* etc.

Tutto tace intorno, intorno.
Essa piange e ti sospira,
All around us, only silence.
How she weeps and can’t stop sighing,

Finché spunti in cielo il giorno
Vien, o caro, *
Till the light of morning wakes us,

*vi en ti posa sul mio cor. *
Deh! t’affretta, o Arturo mio,
*come and rest here on my heart.*

riedi, o caro, alla tua Elvira.
Come back quickly to your Elvira.

Essa piange e ti sospira,
Come, my dearest, *to your lover,* etc.

Vien, o caro, *all’amore, etc.

(*=repeat)

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