

## June 18, 2020 – Vincenzo Bellini's *I Puritani*

An encore performance of Vincenzo Bellini's *I Puritani* (*The Puritans*), hosted by the late **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007), will be heard on this week's Thursday Evening Opera House. With a libretto by Carlo Pepoli, after Jacques Ancelot and Xavier Boniface Saintine's *Têtes Rondes et Cavalier*, which was itself based on Sir Walter Scott's *Old Morality*, the opera was first performed in Paris on January 25, 1835.

In mid-17th-century Plymouth, the Puritan governor Lord Gualtiero Valton (bass **Nicolai Ghiaurov**) has promised the hand of his daughter Elvira (soprano **Joan Sutherland**) to Sir Riccardo Forth (baritone **Piero Cappuccilli**). However, Elvira loves the royalist Lord Arturo Talbot (tenor **Luciano Pavarotti**) and Gualtiero consents to the match. On the wedding day, Arturo is given a pass to leave the castle with his bride. He discovers that Charles I's widow Enrichetta di Francia (**Anita Caminada**) is held captive in the castle and uses his pass to let her escape, wearing Elvira's bridal dress as a disguise. Sir Riccardo sees Arturo leaving with another woman, and the knowledge causes Elvira to go out of her mind. Returning later to see Elvira, Arturo is arrested and sentenced to death. However, news is brought of a Puritan victory and a general amnesty for all prisoners. Elvira regains her reason and is reunited with Arturo.

**Richard Bonyng**e conducts the London Symphony Orchestra and the Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in this 1987 Decca/London recording, CD 417588.

**Luciano Pavarotti** sings Arturo's act I aria "A te, o cara" from *I Puritani*:  
<https://youtu.be/PMnCOW26Hkw>.

Tune in next Thursday, June 25th, for Gustav Charpentier's *Louise*, a tale of a working-class girl who escapes to Paris to avoid an arranged marriage and to be with her lover. This 1991 recording features **Ileana Cotrubas** in the title role and **Plácido Domingo** as Julien. Heard in other principal roles are **Jane Berbié** as Louise's Mother and **Gabriel Bacquier** as her Father. **Georges Prêtre** conducts.

The Thursday Evening Opera House is heard every Thursday evening at 7 o'clock in the Eastern time zone on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We're streamed online at <http://www.theclassicalstation.org>, or you can listen on WCPE's Android or iPhone apps.

*Bob Chapman*

**W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Evening Opera House**