

Vincenzo Bellini: Beatrice di Tenda

Beatrice di Tenda was Vincenzo Bellini's penultimate opera, and it will be featured on this week's Opera House in an encore performance hosted by the late **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007). First performed in Venice on March 16, 1833, it was a failure despite being ultimately judged as one of the composer's finest works.

The story takes place in a castle near Milan in 1418. Having gained his dukedom by marriage to Beatrice (soprano **Joan Sutherland**), whose subjects he rules by oppression, Filippo Visconti (baritone **Cornelius Opthof**) tires of his wife and falls in love with Agnese del Maino (mezzo-soprano **Josephine Veasey**). Beatrice has rejected the advances of Orombello (tenor **Luciano Pavarotti**), whom Agnese secretly loves but whom she eventually betrays to the Duke. Under torture, Orombello falsely testifies against Beatrice but, although he recants, the Duke remains obdurate in condemning his wife to death. As she is led to her execution, Beatrice forgives the now distraught and repentant Agnese.

Richard Bonynge conducts the London Symphony Orchestra and the Ambrosian Chorus in this 1966 Decca/London recording.