



### **Editor's Notes for Soprano Duet in the Second Act of *La Tregua di Ptolemaide***

This soprano duet, arranged for voice and piano, is from the second opera by Hilarión Eslava, "La Tregua di Ptolemaide" or "Las Treguas de Tolemaida" as it was also known in Spanish. The opera premiered in 1842 in Cádiz, followed by Sevilla and Madrid to much general acclaim. The libretto was by Luigi (Luis) Bertochi, very loosely based on the ca. 1810 romance "The Saracen, or Matilda and Malek Adhel" by French novelist Sophie Cottin.

The story takes place during the 3rd Crusade in the 12th century. Matilde is the sister of Riccardo (King Richard the Lionheart). She has been betrothed to Filippo (Philip, the King of France). However, Riccardo decides to break this engagement to marry her off to Lusiñan, the former ruler of Jerusalem, who was deposed by a sultan. This does not sit well with either Matilde or Filippo, and I'll leave the opera synopsis at that.

This particular duet occurs in Act 2 Scene 9 of the opera. Here Berenguela (the wife of Riccardo/Richard) has been informed by Richard that he has called off the marriage arrangements with Filippo/Philip, and promised her hand to Lusiñan. Berenguela must now deliver that news to Matilde.

Here is an approximate English translation of the Italian lyrics:

Matilde: Why so sad? Tell me.

Berenguela: I'm unhappy!

M: Your pain is intense! What is the cause?

B: But ... if you ... here ... fly into these arms,  
you are more dear than ever to me, Matilde.

M: What does this mean? You make me shudder,  
Hidden in your words seems to be a fatal omen for my poor heart.

B: Listen to me, and arm yourself with courage.  
To disturb the tranquility of your days,  
you march proudly and change the turn  
of the political scheme condemning you to tears.  
Sacred are the affections to the throne  
of the unfortunate family, which rocks in a royal crib,  
when it opens its eyes to the light.

M: But explain yourself, make sense,  
for my heart, pity is a martyrdom

B: I don't know if it causes you outrage or martyrdom,  
But Richard has denounced Philip.

M: Ah Richard! Philip!  
Great God! I have lost all hope of peace.  
For the one born in royal cradle, even thought is false,  
and duty and virtue are a whim.  
Everything yields to the foot of the throne,  
even the oath is vain words,  
everything changes with the wind  
and friendship has no faith.

B: Calm down, Matilde and remember  
that Richard is your lord and brother

M: No, it is not my brother who oppresses me  
and undoes my heart's bonds.  
But the duty of my blood makes me deaf  
with fear only of flame, and of horror,  
Richard's pride undermines the affections of a tender love.

B: Your unhappy crying overwhelms me,  
And doubles the pain in my breast,  
But that fear for Richard undermines  
the affections of a tender love.  
He knows in the end.

M: The scourge already falls on my head.

B: Matilde, take heart.

M: I am the most miserable person ever seen,  
When I cry tears of dust,  
his soul will find calm again.  
The tender friend forgets the gods,  
and if a tear reaches her the cold ash will smile.

B: You are the most miserable person ever seen,  
Tender friend, you will always have me,  
And this barbarous fate will subside.  
In the end your soul will shake tears from the gods,  
I'd cry for you if it would change things,  
You have my pity.