

Editors Notes for “*Io perdetti la mia pace*” from the opera *Il Solitario*

Here we have a very brief fragment from Hilarión Eslava’s first opera, *Il Solitario del Monte Selvaggio*.

This opera, in three acts, and sung in Italian, with libretto by César Perini, was based on a popular XIX century novella of the same title by French romantic writer Charles-Victor Prévot, vicomte d'Arincourt (1788-1856). “*Il Solitario*” premiered in 1841 in Cádiz and soon thereafter in Sevilla, Madrid, and Pamplona to enormous acclaim. In Sevilla, for example, “*Il Solitario*” had 17 performances in just three months. The success of this work led critics to compare Eslava to many of the greatest opera composers of the time and showered him with much acclaim. The opera included beautiful, romantic melodies with flowing accompaniments and a great dramatic sense. Sadly, most of the opera score and the vast majority of the music from Eslava’s subsequent two operas, *La Tregua di Ptolemaide* (1842) and *Pietro il Crudele* (1843) have probably been lost forever.

This particular fragment was found among some manuscript documents by Eslava that were originally part of a private collection of original autographed documents by famous historical figures, property of a certain Eugenio Alonso Sanjurjo (1824-1844). The collection is kept at the Archivo Histórico Nacional de España. It is by no means a complete score and was probably intended to be nothing more than a little memento from the Maestro, but it does reflect one of the melodies from the opera that we had not yet encountered. This song takes place toward the end of Act 1, Scene IV. The line would have been sung by “*Il Solitario*” and this is probably an excerpt from the scene’s finale.

Italian lyrics:

“Io perdetti la mia pace, sono io stesso in odio a me; ogni oggetto ch'altrui piace, per me lieto più non è.”

Approximate English translation:

“I lost my peace, I find myself in hatred of me; every object that is pleasing to others does not content me.”