

## Editor's Notes for *Innocente tortorella* from *La Tregua di Ptolemaide*

Hilarión Eslava wrote three operas early in his career (1841-1843), motivated at least in part by financial need caused by drastic budget cuts at the Cathedral of Sevilla, where he was serving at the time as Master of the Chapel. Opera writing, however, was not something Eslava's employer particularly approved of, and before long, this aspect of the composer's career came to an end. None of the operas have survived to this day in complete form. Here we have a *canzoneta* or "little song" for soprano. Previously uncatalogued, this piece belonging to Eslava's opera "La Tregua di Ptolemaide" has been obtained in the form of a reduction for voice and piano, probably printed after 1860 at the shop owned by Eslava's nephew, Bonifacio Eslava. The score was found in a public library in Spain's Galicia region, at the Fondo Canuto Berea of the Biblioteca Provincial, Deputación da Coruña. We are indebted to the Deputación da Coruña for granting us access to this music and to Adela Sanz and Pedro Gómez for obtaining the digital images that are the basis for this transcription.

The opera "La Tregua di Ptolemaide" ("Las Treguas de Tolemaida" or "The Truce of Ptolemais"), from a libretto in Italian by Luigi (Luis) Bertochi,) was Eslava's second work for the lyric stage. It was premiered in May 1842 in Cádiz and then in November of that year in Sevilla, to great acclaim. It reached Madrid in August 1844, where it was performed at the prestigious Teatro del Circo. The story, *very loosely* based on the ca. 1810 romance "The Saracen, or Matilda and Malek Adhel" by French novelist Sophie Cottin, and a bit of an improbable pot-boiler, takes place during the Third Crusade, in the 12th century. Matilde is the sister of Riccardo (King Richard I, 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 Lusignano, 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. Historically speaking, the author appears to have confused Matilde with her younger sister, Joan, but other than that, the story does have a few kernels of truth to it.

This particular *canzoneta* would have been performed at the beginning of Scene III in Act 2; Matilde is singing alone in her melancholy while Filippo listens, unbeknownst to her, with rapturous attention. In the lyrics, the name "Fileno" in conjunction with a shepherd may be a reference to a story called "Clori, Tirsi, e Fileno", about a pretty shepherdess who loves two young men, but loses both when they discover her fickleness (the story was set to music in a 1707 comic cantata by George Frideric Handel, and is thought to be a source for some of the arias in his later operas). In Eslava's opera, Matilde's words are interspersed with Filippo's ardent declarations of love, which are not included in this score. Interestingly, the figure of the *innocente tortorella* as a symbol of undeclared love also appears, though in a completely different setting, in the first Act of Vincenzo Bellini's 1827 opera "La sonnambula" ("The sleepwalker").

BERTOCHI ITALIAN LYRICS	APPROXIMATE ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Innocente tortorella libra l'ali, e spiega il volo inesperta, meschinella corre in braccio al cacciator.	The innocent turtle dove hovers on her wings, and because of her unskilled flight, recklessly runs into the arms of the hunter.
Così un dì la bella Nice donò il core al suo Fileno, Ma! la misera infelice trovò un empio in quel pastor.	Thus, one day the fair Nice gave her heart to her Fileno, Alas! the miserable wretch found a scoundrel in that shepherd.