

## September 30, 2021 – Vincenzo Bellini's *Il Pirata*

On this week's Thursday Night Opera House I'm pleased to present Vincenzo Bellini's *Il Pirata* (*The Pirate*), his third opera. Set to an Italian libretto by Felice Romani, the opera was based on Charles Nodier's 1826 melodrama *Bertram, ou le Pirate*. *Il Pirata* was premiered at Milan's Teatro alla Scala on October 17, 1827.

Set in Sicily in the middle of the thirteenth century, Gualtiero (tenor **Bernabé Marti**) is driven into exile by his rival, Ernesto (baritone **Piero Cappuccilli**), and turns to piracy. After being defeated by Ernesto in a sea battle, Gualtiero and his men run aground in their native Sicily. Gualtiero meets his beloved Imogene (soprano **Montserrat Caballé**), who's been forced to marry Ernesto in order to save her father, despite still being in love with Gualtiero. Ernesto and Imogene have a son. Disguised, Gualtiero and his men are presented to Ernesto, who's suspicious—especially after Imogene offers them her protection. Ernesto badgers Imogene into admitting her love for Gualtiero. He learns from a messenger that Gualtiero has returned to Sicily. Imogene tells Gualtiero that she cannot leave with him. Ernesto overhears them and challenges Gualtiero, who kills his rival and then gives himself up to the authorities. At this point Imogene goes mad, after which Gualtiero is condemned and led off to be executed.

**Gianandrea Gavazzeni** conducts the Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra in this 1971 EMI/Angel recording.

From a 2013 Barcelona concert, **Mariella Devia** sings the Act 2 aria "Col sorriso d'innocenza": <https://youtu.be/Pq9rDTP8diA>.

As a bonus we'll hear two excerpts from Bellini's *I Puritani* sung by **Lucia Aliberti**, **Michele Pertusi** and **Carlos Alvarez**.