

9. AN ANALYSIS OF THE VOCAL ENSEMBLES FROM THE OPERA “I PURITANI” BY VINCENZO BELLINI

Cristina Simionescu⁶³

Abstract: *I Puritani* is the masterpiece that crowned the creation of the Italian composer Vincenzo Bellini, being remarked and appreciated for the richness of his melodicy and profound symbols filled with the inspiration and creativity of a creator. This was the last of the ten works composed by Bellini, whose disappearance was premature, at only 33 years, but the passion and talent with which he created revealed a work dominated by essence and emotion, which establishes a close connection between chant and the poetic text, providing new expressive valences to the lyrical universe. The extremely difficult and demanding vocal writing raises serious challenges, the Bel-canto style meaning not only a “beautiful chant” but also a difficult texture, a certain specific phrasing and a spread of spectacular acute tones.

Key words: *Bel-canto, Italian opera, musical romance, musical ensemble*

1. Introduction

In his last work, *the Puritans* (1835), he reached a new strenght and temerity in the field of orchestral effect. **The Puritans** (in Italian “**I puritans**”) is a 3-act work by Vincenzo Bellini, with a libretto written by Carolo Pepoli (inspired by the comedy “*Têtes rondes et cavaliers*” from 1833 of the authors Jacques-François Ancelot and Xavier-Boniface Saintine, who in their turn were inspired by the novel *Old Mortality* written by Walter Scott in 1816). It was the last opera composed by Vincenzo Bellini. The premiere of the opera took place at the “*Théâtre Italien*” in Paris on 24 January 1836.

2. Elvira - Giorgio Duet

”**O amato zio**”, the orchestral introduction of **Elvira - Giorgio duet** takes the form of an accompanying monody describing Elvira's unease and concern because she is forced by her father to accept the marriage to Riccardo and renounce to Arturo's love. *Allegro molto* (4/4) announces the rushing to the uncle Giorgio's room, which she considers her last chance of rescue. Elvira's overwhelming mood is suggested by the gradual, descendant and melodic motion in *A Minor scale*, the line “*O amato zio, o mio secondo padre!*”⁶⁴ (with no accompaniment) sounding like a grief of pain. Ex. 1 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Rome, 2006, act I, Stage IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: Amato zio, p. 38, ms 32-34).



⁶³ Associate Professor PhD., “George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași, România, email: crystina.simionescu@yahoo.com

⁶⁴ *O, my beloved uncle, my second father!* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

Giorgio's response brings agogic changes starting from *Maestoso* (the grandeur of the character) to *Lento*, which expresses the calm, gentleness and love for his niece. Giorgio wants to convince her that wedding is a reason for joy, not sadness, and in this respect, the composer makes passages from minor to major (*A Minor – B-flat Major*), in *pianissimo* tone, up to the replies: *o figlia mia diletta, oggi sposa sarai*⁶⁵ (*in forte*), showing that father's decision is final. From Elvira's repeated *sposa* response (*con forza*) springs up fear, anxiety, despair but also the desire to put in a good word to her father in order to change his decision. *Allegro giusto* brings back the agitation from the introduction of the orchestral duet, while the transition from *piano* to *fortissimo* through *crescendo*, on an orchestral bridge in which prevails both the sixteenths and descending conjunction motions renders the young woman's inner torture, disappointment and defeated soul. Ex. 2 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Rome, 2006, Act I, Stage IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 40, ms. 53-61).

Elvira confesses to her uncle the sincere love for Arturo (*Sai com'arde in petto mio bella fiamma onnipossente; sai ch'è puro è il mio desio, che innocente è questo core*⁶⁶). The second stanza is a rhythmic-melodic variation of the former, but with dynamic differences, Elvira's voice reaching up to *fortissimo*. The musical discourse supports the literary text by accents (*Se tremante all'ara innante strascinata un dì sarò... forse in tanta di dolore io morirò!*⁶⁷). Ex. 3 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Rome, 2006, Act I, Stage IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 41, pp. 76-84).

After listening carefully, Uncle Giorgio gives her the big news: Arturo is waiting for her at the altar. Elvira's surprise and enormous happiness are described by a phrase with short rhythmic-melodic cells (in *A major*) interrupted by quaver rests (*fuor di se per la gioia*⁶⁸). Ex. 4 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 44, ms. 115-119).

⁶⁵ *O, my dear daughter, today you will be a bride!* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁶⁶ *You know how the beautiful flame of love burns in my chest; you know how pure is my desire, how innocent is this heart* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁶⁷ *I tremble thinking of the inevitable news when I will be dragged to the altar ... maybe then, in a moment, I will die of pain* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁶⁸ *Exploding of joy* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

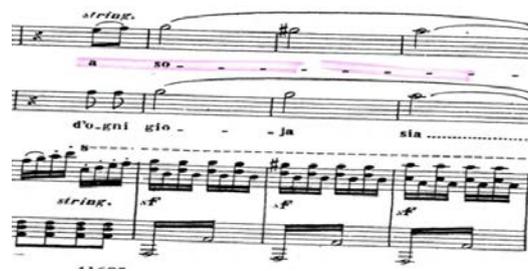
Giorgio takes over Elvira's melodic line, and then they are joining their voices upon a descending third interval, in a rhythm of martial character (*sì vinta dai gioire*⁶⁹) from which it comes out their joy and deep soulful contentment. Ex. 5 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 45, ms. 141-149).

The hunting horns announce Arturo's appearance, bringing new tempo changes that show the solemnity of the moment (*Allegro moderato*, 2/4). The Men's Choir welcomes the arrival of Arturo Talbo, while *Elvira resta immobile per l'attenzione che presterà. Nel suo volto si devono scorgere i gradi d'una gioja che alle parole „Arturo Talbo” deve essere all'entusiasmo*⁷⁰; the orchestra doubles the voices (in thirds), achieving harmonic support. Ex. 6 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 55, ms. 332-337).

Coda is the culmination of the previous *Allegro* fragment and emphasizes Elvira and Giorgio's happiness on an orchestral accompaniment of harmonic support, in *forte*, with small *sforzandos* at each bar beginning. Ex. 7 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene IV, Duetto Elvira - Giorgio: *O amato zio*, p. 55, ms. 345-348).

⁶⁹ Happiness wins out over all! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁷⁰ Elvira remains immobile, careful about what will happen. On her face there must be a joy that grows up to excitement when pronouncing the name "Arturo Talbo". (t.a.Cr.S.A.).



3. The Quartet *A te, o cara*

Brass instruments from the instrumental introduction (6/8, *Maestoso assai*) announce Arturo's arrival. The place of action is as such: *Sala d'arme. Il fondo della scena è aperto. Fra le colonne si veggono sempre alcune traccie di fortificazioni ecc. Dal lato destro esce Lord Arturo con alcuni Scudieri e Paggi, i quali recano vari doni nuziali, e fra questi si vedrà un magnifico velo bianco. Dal lato sinistro escono Elvira, Valton, Sir Giorgio, Damigelle con Castellani e Castellane che portano festoni di fiori e gl'intrecciano alle colonne. Dal fondo della scena escono i soldati guidati da Bruno, che fanno corteggio e danno compimento al decoro della festa*⁷¹. The melodic line is weaved in Acute on the ascending and descending stepwise motion, with harmonic accompaniment (chords in the low register), the festive character being revealed by the Neapolitan dance rhythm (6/8) and *staccato* from the melodic line combined with *legato* musical motifs. The entrance of the choir (*Ad Arturo onore, ad Elvira onore!*⁷²) is made on large note values of homophonic style, while the predominant *forte* tone is accompanied by accents on the weak beats (syncopes), emphasizing the solemnity of the moment.

The bridge towards Arturo's *solo* part is built on *A Major* accords, in *Allegro vivo*. The melodic line of the tenor brings agogic, rhythmic and tonal changes (*Lento*, 12/8, with transposing from *A Major* in *D Major*), reflecting and putting musical value to the young man's feelings. The culmination of the phrase is reached on the response *tra la gioja e l'esultar*⁷³ (*forte*) doubled by the orchestra (in octaves or ascending third); *piano*, which appears suddenly, and *morendo* indicate the purity of the love feelings, happiness and soul fulfillment next to the beloved one. Elvira, Giorgio and Gualtiero Valton express the gratitude for their happiness (*Senza occaso questa aurora mai null'ombra, o duol vi dia: santa in voi la fiamma sia, pace ognor v'allieti il cor*⁷⁴). The choir follows up with more wishes (a melodic line with aspect of homophonic accompaniment: *Cielo, arridi a voti miei! Benedici a tanto amor!*⁷⁵). In the orchestra, over the *A note pedal tone* it overlaps a melodic line that doubles the

⁷¹The Gun Room. In the background, the scene is open. Between columns there are traces of fortification, etc. Lord Arturo comes out from the right side, accompanied by squires and pages that are bringing bridal gifts, including a lovely white veil. From the left side, Elvira, Valton, Sir Giorgio, the bridesmaids, castellans and castelania are coming, carrying feast flower garlands, with which they adorn the columns. The soldiers led by Bruno come in sight from behind the stage, forming a cortegium and completing the festive décor (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁷²In honor of Arturo, in honor of Elvira! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁷³Between joy and exaltation (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁷⁴May your love sun never die!, May no shadow or pain appear in your day: Holy be the flame of love inside you, May peace always floods your soul! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁷⁵Heaven, listen to our prayer! Bless their great love! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

voices of Gualtiero and Giorgio, and then doubles the melodic line taken from Elvira to Arturo (parallel octaves). Ex. 8 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene V, Quartetto: *A te, o cara*, p. 70, ms. 11-16).

The first motif of the phrase “*Cielo, arridi a'voti miei!*” has a melodic stepwise motion ornamented with embroidery and passage notes in *crescendo* to *fortissimo* that reflects the love of young people, while the second motif (*benedici a tanto amor*) is in *pianissimo*, like a flaming praying for the immortality of love. Ex. 8 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene V, Quartetto: *A te, o cara*, p. 71, ms. 17-19).

Coda brings melodic, rhythmic and dynamic changes: Elvira's phrases are ornamented melismas, the melodic stepwise is ascending with high-sounding stops, showing the enthusiasm and satisfaction of the dream come true. The Valton brothers (unison) and Arturo (upper quart) sing in the first musical motif (*benedici a tanto amor*) a melodic line of recitativic nature (*crescendo* to *forte*) that renders the hope into a marriage blessed by Heaven. The melodic line of the second motif (*Cielo, arridi a'voti miei, benedici a tanto amor*) translates the calm and gratitude that dominate the whole picture. In the chorus, the soprano I and tenor II voices double Elvira's voice, while the soprano II, tenor I and bass voices realize the harmony that supports the masculine characters line (the first motif). In orchestra, in the upper voices, the first rhythmic-melodic pattern (cell) from Elvira's discourse is repeated by intoning the same melisma, doubled at the octave interval, while in the low (grave) register *a tremolo* achieves the harmonic support. The Quartet is ended by a motif with a cadencial role, holding the melodic line from Arturo to Elvira and backwards, while the rest of the

The choir answers in *piano* and *pianissimo* sounds, on short rhythmic patterns (cells), all the people being astonished by the unexpected and flashing turn of the fate, so suddenly from the happiness of the wedding to the fatal madness. The *forte* shade is fading like the string of Elvira's life and from the short responses (group of maximum three notes) we understand that the poor girl is losing her rationality and identity, splitting her identity. Ex. 11 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene XI, Finale I, p. 123-124, ms. 341-366).

ELV. (nel suo delirio, crede vedere Arturo)
 Ar-tu-ro! Tu-ri-tor-ni? T'apprea-sa... an-cor... an-cor... Ah vie-ni! Ah vien-i!

Largo sostenuto (4/4, *F* Major), *declamato con tutto lo slancio d'un core innocente contento*⁸⁰, in *pianissimo* - *sotto voce* develops the love song through which the heroine expresses the desire and hope that Arturo will return to her. The melodic leak-wise motion of the phrases suggests the beginning of Elvira's emotional instability, suffering and sighs. Although the fragment is in *pianissimo*, some words are accented (*con te vivo d'amor*⁸¹), the accompaniment doubling the soloist's melodic line and making the harmonic support in the grave (low) register. Ex. 12 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene XI, Finale I, p. 124, ms. 367-375).

declamato con tutto lo slancio d'un core innocente contento
 LARGO SOSTO (d=54) Oh vie-ni al tem-pio, fe-de-le Ar-tu-ro, e-ter-na fe-de, mio ben, ti giu-ro! Com'og-gi è pu-ro, sempre avrò il cor. Ah... Vie-ni con te vi-vrò d'a-mor,

Elvira's gentle responses (stepwise or leak-wise motion) are incessantly interrupted by the sharp renderings of Giorgio, Riccardo and men's choir, which are accusing Arturo of the girl's tragedy. Ex. 13 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene XI, Finale I, p.131, ms. 407-410).

⁸⁰ *Declamated with the enthusiasm of a happy innocent heart* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁸¹ *It's you I want to live my love with* (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

The dynamics shows a wide palette with many sonorous plans (in accompaniment, chorus and soloists) – starting from *pianissimo* to *sforzando* and *fortissimo*, obtaining, depending on the literary text, several layers of different intensity like in a contrapuntal cantus. If so far, the men's choir, Giorgio and Riccardo expressed their hatred towards Arturo's dishonoring gesture, now they are gradually dominated by mercy and pain for Elvira's state of mind. Elvira's final cadence (*a piacere*) on a descending chromatism (direct attack on *acute B flat*) is like a cry of despair and suffering that is slowly fading away. Ex. 14 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene XI, Finale I, p. 132, ms. 413-418).

In the unaccompanied recitative that follows, Elvira *fa un moto, quasi tornando a vedere Arturo, che fugge*⁸² while the answers written in *lento, a piacere*, with very short melodic patterns (cells) and dotted rhythm (*Ma tu già mi fuggi? Crudele, abbandoni...*⁸³) suggest the sighs and torment. Ex. 15 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act I, Scene XI, Finale I, Recitativo: *Ma tu già mi fuggi*, p. 133, ms. 1-4).

The *allegro vivace* from the finale of the act inflects from *D Major* in *A Major*, *G Major*, *F Major*, *E-flat Major* and *B Major*; these distant modulations appear suddenly, anticipating the period of Musical Romanticism. The musical numbers that make up this final act (Arturo's *arietta*, Elvira's *aria*, and the moments of ensemble performance) are not distinct, but running from one to the other without being signaled by a title or double bar, Bellini anticipating thus the Wagnerian technique of open numbers.

4. Elvira – Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Sì, è desso!*

Elvira – Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Sì, è desso!* This duet from the third act takes place before the finale scene of the opera, in a *Loggia in un giardino a*

⁸² Elvira makes a move as if she were turn back to see Arturo who is running (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁸³ But, are you running away from me? Are you so ruthless and want to abandon me? (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

*boschetto, vicino alla casa d'Elvira: questa casa ha la porta e le finestre con vetri assai trasparenti*⁸⁴. Elvira is crooning a short barcarolle (6/8) that awakens in Arturo sweet memories and the desire to be back again with the loved one. The song is suddenly interrupted by a trumpet sound that makes the young man to see the cruel reality: he is a fugitive, and if he is caught, he will not be able enjoy the love of Elvira, but the scaffold. The Puritans are looking for him in frenzy, and Arturo has to hide until the enemy moves away. Elvira appears on stage with the hope that the voice she has heard is the voice of her lover Arturo. In general, the phrase has a descending stepwise motion, and the binary rhythm describes the idea of a life that is flowing anchored in the past, into the lost happiness. The rhythmic-melodic patterns (cells) are interrupted by pauses completed with chords (*pianissimo*) in order to suggest the disorder of the girl who is hardly gathering her thoughts. Ex. 16 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Si, è desso!*, p. 222, ms. 1-6).

The connection with the past is described very well by the melodic line taken from the quartet *A te, o cara* (modified rhythmically and melodically). Elvira is mourning her sad fate and loss of the beloved one in a fragment (*Andante sostenuto, pianissimo*) that renders in a very particularly expressive way the reverie and emotions of the old times, supported by the accompaniment that doubles Elvira's voice in acute; the other voices perform the harmonic support. Ex. 15 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Si, è desso!*, p. 222, ms. 7-13).

Arturo's appearance in flesh and bones (answering in turn and kneeling before her) shocks her, and in the first moment she cannot believe that the joy that floods inside her is real. Elvira's responses (close notes and short rhythmic cells of *parlato* nature) show the astonishment and precipitation caused by the rencontre with her lover, whose love she believed lost forever (*Allegro giusto*); the orchestra (*tremolo* and *crescendo* from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*) prepares and supports the explosion of joy. Ex. 17 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Si, è desso!*, p. 223, ms. 16-24).

⁸⁴ Kiosk in a garden with bushes next to Elvira's house: this house has its doors and windows with very transparent windows (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

The joy of their rencontre is described by the orchestral introduction *Allegro più maestoso*, in *C Major*, *pianissimo*, which reveals the atmosphere of the duet itself. Arturo asks for forgiveness through a melodious cantilena that greatly disturbs Elvira (we will find it later in the melodic line of the soprano). Only now Elvira realizes that Arturo has been absent for three months and she is making efforts to remember what has happened to her during this period (*fra se cercando di risovvenirsi*⁸⁵). Ex. 18 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Si, è desso!*, p.226, ms. 65-76).

Cadenza on the word *cor* (heart) expresses the sincere love and pure feelings springing from the hearts of the two lovers. Ex. 19 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Si, è desso!*, p. 226, ms. 78-96).

The martial rhythm and repetition of *F* note (trumpets) create the formal atmosphere of royalty by which Arturo justifies why he left his girlfriend. Soon afterwards, Elvira realizes that Arturo has just saved the life of the sovereign, no feelings of love being concerned, and thus she is expressing her happiness by a *crescendo* that reaches up to *fortissimo* (*Qual lume rapido or la mente mi rischiara! Dunque m'ami?*⁸⁶). On a cantabile line, Arturo asks his girlfriend to lie in his arms, promising that he will always be there; in the girl's response we will find the melodic and rhythmic stepwise motion taken over from the tenor.

⁸⁵ Trying to remember (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁸⁶ This sparkling is now clarifying me everything! So, are you still loving me? (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

The calmness and tranquility of the scene come from the literary text, accompaniment (repetitive quaver) as well as from the melodic conjunct motion with small intervallic jumps, supported by dynamic indications expressing desires and feelings of love. Ex. 20 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Scene II, Finale III, Elvira - Arturo Duetto: *Arturo? Sì, è desso!*, p. 230, ms. 158-174).

Elvira and Arturo are performing in resume (sixth note interval) the cantilena from which mutual love breaks through, then suddenly going to the cadence moment of the codes (*sempre con te vivrò d'amor*⁸⁷). The *crescendo* from *pianissimo* to *forte* is achieved very quickly (during a beat), the accents give strength to the musical motifs, the *tempo* becomes faster with the indication *Più mosso* (which lasts until the finale) while the orchestra maintains its role of accompaniment.

5. The Finale of the Opera: *Al suono del tamburo mostra Elvira una fisionomia alterata ed una espressione di derisione*

The finale of the opera: *Al suono del tamburo mostra Elvira una fisionomia alterata ed una espressione di derisione*⁸⁸ announces a new change in the young girl behavior. The sound of the drums and male choir intervention that blow around Cromwell's victory make Elvira feeling terrified, the poor girl believing that Arturo has left her again. This thought determines her to ask for help from her friends, without realizing that her behavior can draw Arturo's condemnation to death. Along with the nuances (shades), the drama of the moment is supported by the scenic indications from the partition that show a new manifestation of the girl's psychic disequilibrium: *Si prostra ed abbraccia, piangendo, le ginocchia d'Arturo*⁸⁹. Arturo has only just become aware of Elvira's mental disorder (in a state of shock) and he is feeling pity for her (*Arturo che si avvede della demenza di Elvira, resta impietrito di dolore... Elvira e invece stupida per quello che vede*⁹⁰).

The scene is written in *fortissimo possibile*, with accents on the notes that support the dramatic tension in accompaniment: in the low register a melodic descending line reveals the threat of death on Arturo, while the *tremolo* high

⁸⁷ I will always live my love with you (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁸⁸ Upon the sound of the drum, Elvira is changing her physiognomy, getting a mocking expression (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁸⁹ She is kneeling down, and crying, she is hugging Arturo's knees (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁹⁰ Arturo realizes Elvira's madness and remains hardened by pain... Elvira, in return, is appalled by what she sees (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

voices from the strings amplify the dramatic unfolding of events. The rhythmic-melodic cell consisting of three-four time quarter notes per measure with descending conjunct motion moves into the acute register, in *pianissimo*, with *decrescendo* on each formula, preparing the *Andante lugubre*. The brass (funeral rhythm) completes the horror show that is announcing the death penalty for Arturo - a traitor of country and honor (from the perspective of the Puritans). Lost in her world, Elvira does not realize the tragedy experienced by Arturo, and thus she continues to express her thoughts in the form of an *aparte*, starting from a rhythmic-melodic cell that she is intervallically varying, separated from the other cells by pauses of eight and quarter notes that are showing her lack of coherence in thinking (*Credi, o Arturo, ella non t'ama; sol felice io ti farò*⁹¹). Ex. 21 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Finale III, p. 243, ms. 108-119).

ELVIRA (con fisonomia di sicurezza) (con entusiasmo)
 Cre-di-o Ar-tu-ro, el-la non t'a-ma; sol fe-li-ce io ti fa-
 PP sotto voce

RICCARDO
 Ten. -rò, sì. Tal-bo Ar-tu-ro, la pa-tria e Di-o
 Tal-bo Ar-tu-ro, la pa-tria e Di-o
 Bassi Tal-bo Ar-tu-ro, la pa-tria e Di-o

The choir of men together with Riccardo announce the sentence: *Talbo Arturo, la patria e Dio te alla morte condannò...*⁹², but the word *death* has the effect of bringing Elvira back to reality, backed by an accompaniment with rapid passes from *pianissimo* to *forte* and a series of *sforzando* almost on each beat. It is only now that Elvira realizes she has thrown her lover into the arms of death having no chance of escape in front of the Puritans, and she says farewell to him. The composer has built several sonorous plans: Elvira and Arturo have a solo role (independent melodic line), while the rest of the voices make up the harmonic accompaniment expressing different states in *pianissimo possibile*, and *sotto voce*. Ex. 22 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Finale III, p. 247, ms. 166-171).

ELVIRA pp
 Qual mai fu ne-re-a vo-ce fu-ne-sta mi scuo-le e de-sia
 Ric - viri! ppp sotto voce Tra - ea sua vi - ta
 GIOR. ppp sotto voce Quel suon fu - ne - re-o ch'a-pre u - na tom - ba, al cor,
 Sop. ppp sotto voce Quel suon fu - ne - re-o fe - ral rim - bom - ba, nel sen mi piom - ba, m'ag -
 Ten. ppp sotto voce Quel suo - no fu - ne - reo di trom - ba ci piom -
 Ric. ppp sotto voce Quel suon fu - ne - reo, ch'a-pre u - na tom - ba, ci piom -
 B. ppp sotto voce Quel suon fu - ne - reo ch'a-pre u - na tom - ba, ci piom -
 48 ppp

⁹¹ Believe me Arturo, she does not love you; only I can make you happy! (t.a.Cr.S.A.i).

⁹² Talbo Arturo, your country and God to death condemn you! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

Gradually, sensitized by Elvis's crying, Riccardo and the women's choir join Giorgio (*la pietate Iddio v'apprenda*⁹³); the rest of the angry Puritans demand the death sentence for the traitor (*Dio comanda a'figli suoi che giustizia or mai si renda, cada alfin l'ultrice spada sopra il capo al traditor*⁹⁴). Arturo protests with all the force of his odium (*fortissimo*) accusing the puritans of cruelty, but his outcries (*crudeli*⁹⁵) are suddenly interrupted by the *pianissimo* when he talks about Elvira. *Allegro marciale* suddenly announces the arrival of a messenger who brings unexpected news: happy about the victory of royalty, Cromwell demands clemency for all those convicted to death. The finale brings happiness and thanksgiving to the Puritans, but especially to the souls of the two lovers. The grandeur of the final moment is enhanced by the major tonality (*D major*), *tempo - in più mosso assai*⁹⁶, *forte* and *fortissimo* nuances as well as by the general homophony found in soloists, chorus and orchestra. Ex. 23 (V. Bellini - *I Puritani*, BMG Ricordi, Roma, 2006, Act III, Finale III, p. 262, ms. 300-311).

The image displays a musical score for the finale of Act III of the opera *I Puritani* by Vincenzo Bellini. The score is written for a vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked *Più Mosso assai*. The lyrics are in Italian, and the music is in D major. The score includes a rehearsal mark [57].

6. Conclusions

I Puritani is the masterpiece that crowned the creation of the Italian composer Vincenzo Bellini, being remarked and appreciated for the richness of his melodicy and profound symbols sprinkled with inspiration and creativity by the composer. This was the last of the ten works composed by V. Bellini, whose disappearance was premature, at only 33 years old, but the passion and talent with which he created revealed a work dominated by essence and emotion, which establishes a close connection between chant and the poetic text, providing new expressive valences to the lyrical universe. Bellini composed *I Puritani* for Théâtre Italien, after his arrival in Paris in 1833, where an „artistic revival” was experienced at that time. The absolute premiere took place on the same Parisian scene on January 24, 1835, being a remarkable success that would remain a benchmark in the universal lyrical history, being acclaimed by Rossini himself, who said: “You are born Bellini, you will never become Bellini”. The subject of the opera revives the period of the 17th century English Revolution, namely, the confrontations between the Puritans`army led by Cromwell and the

⁹³ Let God's mercy be with you! (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁹⁴ God commands his sons justice be made, and let revengeful sword fall upon the traitor's head (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

⁹⁵ Ruthless! (it.).

⁹⁶ Very much movement or faster (t.a.Cr.S.A.).

Stuarts` partisans (The Royal Knights), the action taking place near Plymouth Harbor and focusing on the love story between Elvira (daughter of Lord Gualtiero Valton, a Puritan) and Lord Arturo Talbo (partisan of the Stuarts). The strong sentiment of duty makes Arturo to abandon his girlfriend right on the eve of the wedding, which provokes her madness.

The masterpiece that crowned the creation of the Italian composer, a work rich in melodicy and profound symbols, brings in national premiere on the stage of the Opera House in Cluj a show full of essence and emotion, rarely found in our native lyrical universe. The audience is invited to walk alongside the artists of the Romanian National Opera in Cluj and its special guests within the atmosphere of the seventeenth century England, in a story that blends belcantistic partitions with the medieval knightly honor, the sentiment of duty and pure love. Bellini composed *I Puritani* for Théâtre Italien, after his arrival in Paris in 1833, where an „artistic revival” was experienced at that time. The absolute premiere took place on the same Parisian scene on January 24, 1835, being a remarkable success that would remain a benchmark in the universal lyrical history, being acclaimed by Rossini himself, who said: “You are born Bellini, you will never become Bellini”. The subject of the opera, which takes place at Plymouth Fortress, England, around 1650, revives the period of the English Revolution, namely, the confrontations between the Puritans` army led by Cromwell and the Stuarts` partisans (The Royal Knights), the action taking place near Plymouth Harbor and focusing on the love story between Elvira (daughter of Lord Gualtiero Valton, a Puritan) and Lord Arturo Talbo (partisan of the Stuarts). The strong sentiment of duty makes Arturo to abandon his girlfriend right on the eve of the wedding, which provokes her madness.

Bibliography

1. Arbore, A. I. – *Realizarea spectacolului lyric (Creating A Lyrical Opera Performance)*, Musical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992
2. Arbore, A.I. – *Interpretul teatrului lyric (The Lyrical Theater Interpreter)*, Musical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984
3. Arbore, A. I. – *Istoria spectacolului lyric, Curs litografiat pentru uzul studenților (History of Lyrical Opera Performance, Lithographed Course for Students Use)*, Bucharest, 1983
4. 1. Buga, A. and Sârbu, C.M. – *Patru secole de teatru musical (Four Centuries of Musical Theater)*, Style Publising, Bucharest,1999
5. Combarieu, Jaques – *Histoire de Musique*, Delagrave, Paris, 1931.
6. Constantinescu, Grigore – *Diversitatea stilistică a melodiei în opera romantic (The stylistic diversity of the melody in the romantic opera)*, Musical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1980
7. Pascu, George and Boțocan, Melania – *Popasuri în istoria muzicii (Layover in the History of Music)*, Spiru Haret Publishing House, Iași, 1995
8. Voinea, Silvia – *Incursiune în istoria artei cântului și a esteticii vocale (Survey in the history of the art of chant and aesthetic voice)*, Pro Transilvania Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002