

# WASHINGTON CONCERT OPERA

## I PURITANI: Recorded in Concert Synopsis

### ACT I

England, around 1650. Plymouth, a Puritan stronghold, is threatened by siege from the Royalists. It's the wedding day of Elvira, daughter of Gualtiero Valton, the commander of the fortress. Riccardo enters, lamenting that his promised bride, Elvira, loves another man – a Stuart partisan.

**Selection: “Ah, per sempre io ti perdei” beginning at 00:01:42**

Elvira's father will not force her to marry against her will, and so Riccardo decides to devote his life to leading the parliamentary forces. Elvira has told her uncle, Giorgio, that she would rather die than marry Riccardo, and her uncle reassures her that he has persuaded her father to let her marry her lover, Arturo. Arturo, although a Royalist, has been welcomed into the fortress. He greets his bride and sings of his love for her.

**Selection: “A te, o cara” beginning at 00:08:53**

He learns that King Charles's widow, Queen Enrichetta, is a prisoner in the castle and will soon to be taken to trial in London. Arturo vows to save her even if it means his death. Elvira has been presented with the bridal veil and sings of her happiness at her approaching wedding.

**Selection: “Son vergin vezzosa” beginning at 00:16:18**

When he is alone again with the queen, Arturo explains that a bridal veil will provide the perfect disguise for escape from the castle. As they are about to leave, Riccardo stops them, determined to kill his rival. Enrichetta separates them and reveals her identity. Riccardo lets them get away, knowing this will ruin Arturo. The others return for the wedding, and Riccardo tells of Arturo's escape with Enrichetta. Soldiers rush off in pursuit. Elvira, believing herself betrayed, is overcome by madness.

## ACT II

Giorgio, mourning Elvira's breakdown, explains that she continues to long for Arturo.

**Selection: "Cinta di fiori" beginning at 00:22:09**

Riccardo arrives to announce that Arturo has been condemned to death by Parliament. Elvira wanders in, reliving her happy past. In her madness, she mistakes Riccardo for Arturo and dreams of her wedding.

**Selection: "Qui la voce sua soave" beginning at 00:28:08**

When she leaves, Giorgio tries to convince Riccardo to save Arturo. Riccardo initially responds disdainfully, but is finally moved to help Elvira, and the two men unite in patriotism: if Arturo returns as a friend, he shall live – if as an armed enemy, he shall die.

**Selection: "Suoni la tromba" beginning at 00:46:31**

## ACT III

In Elvira's garden, Arturo reveals that his love for her has brought him back to Plymouth, despite all the inherent dangers. He overhears her sing their old love song and is torn between his affection for her and his loyalty to the Stuarts.

**Selection: "Son salvo..." beginning at 00:59:29**

Elvira herself appears and Arturo reassures her that, even though he was compelled to save his Queen, she, Elvira, is his only love.

**Selection: "Finì... me lassa!" beginning at 01:09:44**

Riccardo rushes in to arrest Arturo, who is more concerned about Elvira's fragile state of mind than his own predicament.

**Selection: "Credeasi misera" beginning at 01:20:37**

Just then, a diplomat arrives with the news of the Royalists' final defeat and a general pardon for all who have been taken prisoner. The shock of this news restores Elvira's senses, and all rejoice at the prospect of peace as Elvira sings of her new happiness.

**Selection: "Ah! Sento, o mio bel angelo" beginning at 01:29:01**