

# Il crociato in Egitto

Melodramma eroico in due atti

First performance: 7.3.1824, Venice. Teatro La Fenice



With Meyerbeer's last Italian opera, whose lead role was written for the famous castrato Giovanni Battista Vellutti, the composer achieved the greatest triumph of his career so far. In this work Meyerbeer took a step towards historical opera that was crucial to his later operatic output. Admittedly, the plot is clearly determined by personal conflict, but this conflict is embedded in the historical events of the Sixth Crusade. To create a drama of contrasts, Meyerbeer uses the confrontation between two cultures and religions, the antagonism between knight crusaders and Egyptians. The dramatic means range from separate numbers to integrated solo/choral tableaux, from traditional vocal virtuosity to a modern dramatic use of timbre, from melodic turns typical of the 18th century to anticipations of middle-period Verdi, these antitheses being held together purely by the strikingly forceful individual style.

The autograph is lost. The critical edition is based on surviving copies (Venice, Bologna, Boston, and others).

Critical Edition, edited by Claudio Toscani

## Text:

Gaetano Rossi

## Cast:

Aladino, sultan of Damietta (b)

Palmide, his daughter (s)

Osmino, vizier (t)

Alma, Palmide's confidante (s)

Adriano of Monfort, Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes (t)

Felicia, Adriano's niece, disguised as a man (contralto)

Armando of Orville, Knight of Rhodes, calling himself Elmireno (s)

## Silent role:

Mirva, a five-year-old boy

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

2 fl (also picc), 2 ob (2nd also c.a), 2 cl, 4 fg, c-fg, 4 hn, 4 tpt, 3 tbn, timp, perc (bs dr, cym, trg), hp, strings, b.c.;

stage ensemble: 8 tpt, c-fg, 3 tbn, 3 s dr, bs dr, cym, 4 ten dr;

banda: picc. 2 fl, 2 ob, F cl, 5 cl, 2 fg, 4 hn, 2 key tpt, 6 tpt,

2 tbn, serpent, s dr, bs dr.

## Place and Time of the Action:

In and around the Egyptian harbour city of Damietta, c. 1250

## 10 scenes:

- Act I: A beachside courtyard in the sultan's palace,  
close to the harbour  
Garden with pavilion  
Harbour  
Location in the garden  
In the palace
- Act II: In the palace  
Location in the garden  
Secluded beach  
Prison cell  
Big town square in Damietta