

1971, YOUNG PLACIDO DOMINGO AS HUON

(Act 3, Scene 3 of Oberon by Carl Maria von Weber
with Donald Grobe as Oberon)

We're playing to a disenchanted house,
No one is buying this fool tale, and who
Can blame them? Huon, what a night, forget
The "k," your knightliness is dubious.
Redundant recitatives, the purple soup
Of superfluity-- it takes two acts,
An ocean set, supporting strings and brass
To sing you into credibility.

And now, last act, last chance for you to be
A hero, rousing empathy, the deep
Emotions that can equal music's spell,
The maestro's wand, the choral trills and frills.

Poor Donald and his freaking fairy king,
His damned enchanted blowpiece. Yeah, we need
A lovesick royal elf, an eighteen karat
Magic horn to pull this off, and all
This tenor can project of ardor's range.

This Huon's difficulties multiply
With every measure, strain both truth and timbre
Near the breaking point. The audience
Is oozing disbelief as you reject
The passes of the Emir's horny wife.

Thank God the denouement is drawing near.
I think the logs would gladly light
The fire and tie you to the waiting stake.
They might have mercy on your faithful femme.
Oh hell, just let your squire toot up the horn.

But wait-- your breath and blood begin to stir,
A newly wakened presence no rehearsal
Conjured up-- this Huon is alive!

Can I inject the passion credited
To me? Can I perfect the needed warmth?
Von Weber's chords are lifting me,
The end may justify the whole, the notes
May triumph over words. Sir Huon may
Be worthy of his beautiful brave lady--
And worthy of the courts of Charlemagne.

And maybe I'm now worthy of the part.