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Abstracts

Abstract

Abstracts of papers about Giuseppe Verdi and his works, presented at joint meetings of the AIVS and Greater NY Chapter of the American Musicological Society, 1979-81 (Hepokoski, Lawton, Chusid, Hornick, Nádas, Tomlinson, Garrison, Powers), at the 1982 national meeting of the American Musicological Society (Harwood), and at an NEH-sponsored summer seminar at NYU in 1980 (Beams, Cole, Cordell, Davis, Fry, King, Mason, McCauley, Town).

Keywords

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Abstracts

AIVS-AMS (1979-1982)

The Paris Version of Verdi's Falstaff

(1979)

James A. Hepokoski, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH

Verdi's insistence on revising portions of *Falstaff* for special productions after its premiere in Milan (February 1893) led him to sanction no less than three versions of the opera: the Milanese, the Roman (April 1893), and the Parisian (April 1894). For Paris, Verdi not only authorized the Boito-Solanges translations into French but also revised five passages of *Falstaff* a few months before the production.*

Three of the changes are substantial

and involve both text and music; two are modifications of individual notes. The five revisions appeared in the first French edition (March-April 1894) but were not reflected in any Italian edition until 1897, when, translated, they were all incorporated into a new Ricordi piano-vocal score. Modern scores almost universally fail to include two of the five revisions.

The Paris changes raise three fundamental questions: (1) *Since Verdi*

*They are set out in Mr. Hepokoski's review of Julian Budden: *The Operas*

of Verdi, 3, in *JAMS* 35 (Fall 1982), 581. (Ed.)

never entered them into the autograph score, did he in fact compose them? Unpublished correspondence and a hitherto unidentified early manuscript version—now in private hands—of one of the changes leave no doubt that they are genuine. (2) *Did he approve of their transference to the 1897 Italian score?* Written evidence, unfortunately, is lacking, but given the history of the revisions and Ricordi's

relationship with the composer, it is difficult to maintain that the 1897 score violates Verdi's intentions. (3) *How should these revisions affect modern performances?* If historical accuracy is a concern of the production, the five Parisian revisions should be performed or omitted as a group. The modern, hybrid *Falstaff* is historically unjustifiable.

(1979)

The Harmonic Language of Aida

David Lawton, S.U.N.Y., Stony Brook, NY

The chromatic harmony of *Aida* led some early critics to accuse Verdi of having capitulated to Wagnerian influence. A closer look at the chromaticism in Verdi's score reveals that it has little in common with the altered and symmetrical chords with multiple root references that Wagner used to move easily and quickly between remote key areas. The structural voices—the vocal part and the bass line—in much of *Aida* are fundamentally diatonic at higher structural levels. Altered tones appear predominantly in the inner voices, and they often have a unifying or associative function. In "Celeste Aida," for

example, linear analysis of the opening period reveals that there are three separate lines embedded within the vocal melody, all unfolding at different rates of speed. The generation of unusual chord progressions from a counterpoint between a top voice and a bass line that to some extent contradicts the harmonic implications of the melodic line is characteristic of the harmonic language of *Aida*. The chromaticism that these progressions often cause frequently functions as a local summary of important large-scale tonal relations.

The Don and the Duke: Parallels Between Don Giovanni and Rigoletto

Martin Chusid, New York University

Don Giovanni, the opera by Mozart most frequently performed in Italy during Verdi's lifetime and which he studied with his composition teacher, Lavigna, offered a model for the Italian composer's exploration in the dramatic use of tonality. This paper continues the author's analysis of key symbolism in Verdi's earliest undisputed masterpiece which began with "Rigoletto and Monterone: A Study in Musical Dramaturgy" (Proceedings of the XI Congress of the I. M. S.,

Copenhagen, August 1972, reprinted *Verdi Bollettino* 9, 1982) and continued with "Gilda's Fall" (Joint meeting of the American Institute for Verdi Studies and the Greater New York Chapter of the A. M. S., New York University, December 1976). The third paper in this series offers new views on tonal organization in *Don Giovanni* and suggests ways in which Verdi both followed and deviated from his model while composing *Rigoletto*.

Stiffelio into Aroldo, *A Study of the Revision* (1979)

Andrew Hornick, New York University

A number of Verdi's operas exist in more than one version. Well-known works such as *Don Carlos* and *Macbeth* have been extensively researched to ascertain the rationale and the extent of musical and textual changes. However, little attention has been paid in the literature to the substantial difference between two lesser-known works, *Stiffelio* and *Aroldo*.

Stiffelio was first produced in 1850, but religious pressure soon forced alterations of the plot, in which the wife of a minister commits adultery. The moral lesson of the story loses con-

siderable impact as a result of these alterations. This was clearly evident to Verdi, who undertook a more complete reorganization of both the music and the libretto. *Aroldo* (1857) is the result of these efforts.

The paper outlines the musical and textual distinctions between *Stiffelio* and *Aroldo*, giving special attention to the relationship between the two types of revision. In summary, good coordination exists between the revised music and libretto, but many of the dramatic highlights of *Stiffelio* lose focus in *Aroldo*.

New Light on the Pre-1869 Revisions of La forza del destino (1980)

John Nádas, University of California, Santa Barbara

The revision of *La forza del destino* appears to have engaged Verdi's attention for five years: from first thoughts late in the summer of 1863—after the Madrid production which he directed—until the winter of 1868, just a few months prior to the Milan premiere of the definitive second version. For the student of Verdi, this period signals an important stage of a richly documented career, including as it does the revision of *Macbeth* and the composition of *Don Carlos*—both for the Paris stage and therefore constituting long-distance efforts that generated much correspondence. Just how extensive this documentation is has never been fully appreciated until the work of the past two decades unearthed an astounding amount of surviving correspondence.

On the surface it would appear that the period between the two *Forzas* (1863–68) has been dealt with fully in the scholarly literature. But with the assembling of materials from many widely scattered sources, fresh insights are possible. New documents and let-

ters in the AIVS archive bear directly on *Forza*. And although many of these were reported briefly in the Institute's *Newsletter* No. 7 of 1979, much more is the fruit of research and filming in Italy from June of 1979 to September 1980: (1) Correspondence in the Sant'Agata collection from the Ricordi firm, Léon Escudier, Angelo Mariani, Francesco Maria Piave (with libretto materials as well), and Giuseppina Strepconi Verdi's *Copialettere* (5 volumes, beginning with letters from 1860); (2) New letters from friends, singers, publishers, and impresarios in the Sant'Agata collection. The most important are those from Mauro Corticelli, Enrico and Achille Tamberlick, Bagier, Gaetano Frascini, Angelo Mariani, Emile Perrin and Léon Escudier; (3) Materials from libraries and archives around the world, including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Berlin Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, the Museo Teatrale in Milan, and libraries in Rome, Forlì, and Ravenna. The most significant additions of documents from outside Sant'Agata come

plays. Hugo's realism involved a joining of comic and grotesque elements with the beautiful and sublime to which tragedy had previously limited itself. It involved a profound fidelity to the inner spirit of the period and people on stage. It was a function of characters who showed all the rich complexity of real men and women, characters who united within themselves the grotesque and the beautiful. And, finally, Hugo's romantic drama was an explicitly political art form, serving the didactic and populist ends of contemporary French liberalism.

Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* of 1833, on a libretto by Felice Romani after Hugo's *Lucrece Borgia*, is a precocious musical realization of Hugo's ideals. Donizetti achieves a novel continuity of musical texture, and hence a new dramatic realism, by blurring the boundaries between numbers and movements and abandoning almost completely the double aria as a musical building block. He mirrors Hugo's Renaissance hedonism in the tinselly *banda* music that plays so large a role in his score, and he captures the comic dimension of the tragedy in his characterization of the thugs Rustighello and

Astolfo. Most interestingly, he gives musical expression to the conflicting sides of Lucrezia's ambivalent personality in the two recurring themes of the opera.

Verdi extended and deepened the application of Hugo's ideals to Italian opera in his two works on Hugo's plays, *Ernani* and *Rigoletto*. In *Ernani*, though he was unable to project distinctively the half-comic character of Hugo's Don Carlos, he found the perfect dramatic framework for the "populist" musical idiom he had begun to develop in earlier works like *Nabucco*. In other words, he manifested in *Ernani* his sympathy for Hugo's political ideals; it was left for him to realize Hugo's more strictly artistic goals in *Rigoletto*. And by 1850 he had developed the musical means to do so—to express, that is, the hedonism of Hugo's Renaissance court, Hugo's mixture of tragic actions and grotesque humor, and, above all, the opposed sides of his complex and richly human protagonist. Not surprisingly, musical similarities reveal that Verdi returned for guidance in composing *Rigoletto* to the opera which had first embodied Hugo's ideals seventeen years earlier: Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*.

Verdi's Setting of the Te Deum

(1981)

Leonard Garrison, S.U.N.Y., Stony Brook, NY

The text of the *Te Deum* combines two contrasting elements. In its first fourteen verses, the hymn sings the praises of the Lord. The second half is a plea to Christ for mercy on Judgment Day. This combination of elements poses the major problem of setting the *Te Deum*; the composer must somehow balance and relate these two ideas.

Verdi provided a comprehensive interpretation of the hymn in a letter of February 18, 1896 to Giovanni Tebal-

dini. In this letter he objected to the traditional use of the hymn for celebrations. From its musical settings there had always emanated an atmosphere of jubilation. For the second part of the text, the plea to Christ, the contrast between the ideas of salvation and human sin was often expressed musically, but humanity's hope of salvation triumphed over its fear of damnation. Verdi thought the text contained a different message: its concluding verses are "dark, moving, and sad

from the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra and the Archives Nationales in Paris.

An analysis of these materials points up several earlier misconceptions regarding Verdi's revision of *Forza*. It is untrue, for example, that following the 1863 Madrid production Verdi's thoughts did not return to the opera until the winter of 1868. In fact, except for the period of the *Don Carlos* rehearsals and production in Paris (Fall 1866 to Spring 1867), the composer struggled continually with ideas for revision. Indeed, there was no entity, as such, that could be labeled "the revision of *Forza*" but rather a search for a solution to problems which yielded several different results. The protracted effort, I believe, points to Verdi's ultimate satisfaction with the 1862 St. Petersburg version; it was—and still is—a powerful work. The impetus to revise clearly came from without; the public dislike for the violent ending and Casa Ricordi's pressures to turn *Forza* into a box-office success. Moreover, Tito Ricordi sought to oppose a successful new Verdi creation to what he termed the "invasion of foreign operas." There were three principal stages of revision: (1) Verdi requested a new ending from Piave in the fall of 1863; Piave's autograph changes for Act IV are now with the librettist's other materials at Sant'Agata. The composer, however, was disappointed with a solution that included too many moments that stopped the action, and he insisted that the only satisfactory revision was one which would justify the title of the opera; (2) There was continued pressure on

the composer during 1864–65 from Ricordi and colleagues, as well as the prospect of mounting a worthy Paris production of the opera, culminating in a rich exchange of letters between Verdi, the Paris Opera and Léon Escudier. The results were a revised ending by Achille de Lauzières and the beginnings of a French translation and revision in anticipation of a Paris production in 1866. Verdi, however, again felt his artistic standards to be compromised with these solutions; neither Piave nor de Lauzières was able to provide the opera with a dramatically convincing continuity or a satisfactory close. Act I of this version favored the enhancement of scenic effects and included the addition of a colorful *tableau* at the beginning, derived from the first scene of the original Spanish play; (3) In 1868, Giulio Ricordi re-introduced Antonio Ghislanzoni to Verdi, and with great tact and diplomacy managed to effect both a friendship and a collaboration between librettist and composer. Work on the revised text was completed in the period from mid-November to New Year's Eve of 1868, and Verdi's emphasis now focused almost exclusively on the ending of the opera. Returning to his earlier ideas, he was no longer tempted by the magnificence of the French stage into considering further additions. New documents, including Ghislanzoni's autograph of proposed revisions, show that in the end Verdi's solution, embodying a "Manzoni-like spirit of Christian resignation," was the only acceptable one left to the composer.

Donizetti, Verdi, and Hugo's Romantic Drama

(1980)

Gary Tomlinson, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

In his spoken dramas of the 1820s and '30s, and in the prefaces with which he introduced them, Victor Hugo set forth the artistic goals of a new, "romantic" genre: *le drame*. He asserted

that the modern dramatist must reject conventional rules limiting artistic inspiration—rules like the pseudo-Aristotelian unities of time and place—and seek instead a true-to-life realism in his

plays. Hugo's realism involved a joining of comic and grotesque elements with the beautiful and sublime to which tragedy had previously limited itself. It involved a profound fidelity to the inner spirit of the period and people on stage. It was a function of characters who showed all the rich complexity of real men and women, characters who united within themselves the grotesque and the beautiful. And, finally, Hugo's romantic drama was an explicitly political art form, serving the didactic and populist ends of contemporary French liberalism.

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porary writings that there was a general lack of outstanding violinists, and that old and disabled violinists were sometimes retired to the viola section to finish out their careers. By contrast, almost all orchestras of the period boasted relatively large double bass sections, which were typically larger than either of the middle string sections. Other problems being confronted at this time include the size and make-up of the brass section (notably the relative merits of the ophicleide and the cimbasso as the bass instrument), the demise and gradual abandonment of the continuo, the seating arrangement of the players, increased concern over the technical proficiency and musical artistry of the orchestra members, and the change from having the first violinist as director of the ensemble to the practice of using a separate conductor. There is no evidence that conductors

apart from the first violin were used in Italian orchestras before the 1860s.


One of the major sources of documents that illustrate the presentation is archival records from major opera houses. A particularly rich archive is that of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, which contains individual files for each orchestra member with letters, contracts, records of payment, and other documents, and minutes of the meetings of the theater presidency. Other illustrations are drawn from published theater chronicles, contemporary playbills and posters, pictures and drawings, and sets of orchestral parts from 19th-century productions. A final source of examples is writings of the period, such as travelogues written by foreign visitors, descriptions found in contemporary periodicals and newspapers, and letters—published and unpublished—written to and from various conductors and composers.

NEH SUMMER SEMINAR (1980)

The Influence of Scribe's Versification on Verdi's Composition of Les vêpres siciliennes

Richard B. Beams, Pine Manor College, Chesnut Hill, MA

The libretto for *Les vêpres siciliennes*, written by Eugène Scribe originally for Donizetti's uncompleted *Le Duc d'Albe*, emphasizes the 12-syllable line, the alexandrine. This poetic meter permeates the more serious moments of the drama, and its varied use ranges from isolated couplets for stress and contrast to extended monologues. The lines often break naturally into 3-syllable, anapestic units reflecting a further subdivision of the classical alexandrine's tendency to break into two 6-syllable units, each with two accented syllables. Verdi capitalized on this

characteristic to develop the pervasive anapestic rhythmic motive. , which as Frits Noske has indicated, is associated dramatically with the concept of death both in this opera and elsewhere* It may also be noticed that the more fluid text of the Italian translation, *I vespri siciliani*, does not reveal to the same degree the coincidence of musical and poetic anapests as does the French original.

* "The Musical Figure of Death," in *The Signifier and the Signified* (The Hague, 1977).

The First Don Carlos in America

William P. Cole, S.U.N.Y., Oneonta, NY

The first performance of *Don Carlos* on the North American continent took place April 12, 1877, at the Academy of Music, site of eleven Verdi premieres in the U.S. The Academy, opened in 1854 and demolished in 1925, was in its time one of the largest opera houses in the world with a seating capacity of 4,600.

The libretto for the performance, published by the house (copyright 1877), indicates that a version in four acts without ballet was used. Although the translators are not specified, the text resembles the libretto printed by Covent Garden, London, at the time, and there the Italian is credited to Achilles de Lauzières, and the English to Thomas J. Williams. If the New York libretto is an accurate reflection of the performances, the version used resembled that of Naples (1872) in omitting the C major *marziale* section from the final duet of Elisabetta and Don Carlo, although the number containing the most important revision Verdi made for Naples, the duet of Philip and Posa, seems to have been omitted completely.

Advance publicity provides the names of the principals,* the size of

the chorus (60), that of the stage band and orchestra (75), and also claims that 200 "auxiliaries" were used. The orchestra was under the direction of Max Maratzek, who led many other Verdi premieres in the U.S., and the director appears to have been a Sig. Palmieri whose wife sang Elisabetta. The impresario was De Vivo and a co-director was listed as Sig. Albites.

Don Carlos shared the Academy season with two Wagner premieres. On January 26, 1877, Clara Louise Kellogg's English Opera Company gave the first American performance in English of *The Flying Dutchman*, and a Wagner festival, organized by J. C. Fryer, included the first performance in the U. S. of *Die Walküre*. Both works were received tepidly by New York critics, who complained of the incompetence of the singers, except for Miss Kellogg herself as Senta. The sensation of the season, it was agreed, was *Don Carlos*.

* For names see *Verdi Newsletter* No. 3 (June 1977) p. 11, where the date of the first performance is inaccurately given as August.

Verdi's Orchestration in the Two Versions of Simon Boccanegra

Albert O. Cordell, Edinboro State College, Edinboro, PA

The revised version of *Simon Boccanegra* (1881) shows the following differences in orchestration when compared with the original (1857):

1. A refinement of instrumental timbres; specifically the substitution at a number of points of the oboe for the clarinet in combination with the voice and bassoon.

2. The addition of sustaining winds,

especially the horns, to passages that are otherwise quite similar in the two versions. New passages in the later *Simon* also make extensive use of sustained winds.

3. More separation and differentiation of the string instruments. See especially the writing for the violas, for example in the new sections of the Prologue.

4. More interesting use of the orchestra in choral sections. The instruments provide a richer accompaniment rather than merely doubling the voice

parts. At times Verdi allows an alternation of melodic material between the chorus and orchestra in the later version.

The Recitative and Sextet from Act I of Un giorno di regno (Il finto Stanislao) in English, with Introductory Comments on Translating Verdi for Modern Audiences

Marianne Davis, Emory and Henry College, Emory, VA

This singing translation is on deposit at the archive together with an introduction that includes some of Verdi's own thoughts on the subject of translating his operas for the stage. He suggests that recitative may be translated in blank verse; concerning a French translation of *Macbeth* he recommends re-

taining certain key words, e.g. "Follie, follie" in the duet of Act I "because perhaps in these words and in this infernal derision . . . is . . . the secret of the effect of this piece"; and of a German version of *Otello*, he complains bitterly that key words in the "Willow" song and Otello's death scene are badly translated.

Some Observations on Key and Drama in Otello

Loryn E. Fry, Louisiana College, Pineville, LA

This paper attempts to correlate aspects of Otello's character and his downfall with Verdi's use of specific tonal regions. It appears that F is often used when the libretto refers to the love of Desdemona and Otello (e.g. it is the most important key in the love duet ending Act I), or to a related aspect, Desdemona's incapability of being un-

faithful to Otello (Act III, "Io prego il cielo per te"). The key of E is frequently associated with Otello and his power (the end of the opening storm scene, his arrival on Cyprus and the ensuing celebration). It is also the key in which he kisses Desdemona several times (Act I and the end of Act III), and in which he dies.

Some Documents Relating to the Libretto of the Original Simon Boccanegra

Ben King, Houghton College, Houghton, NY

This paper studies three documents of importance for the libretto of *Simon* on film in the Verdi Archive at NYU: a scenario of 19 pp. by an unknown person, a 14 page scenario by Verdi for Acts II and III, together with a page of verbal sketches by the com-

poser for the opening of Act III, and Piave's prose libretto in 37 pp. In addition there is an appendix comparing the play by Gutierrez with the libretto for the Venetian premiere and the three documents mentioned above.

Revisions in the Autograph of *Attila*

James Mason, Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, CA

The autograph of *Attila* reveals that Verdi made minor revisions by means of scraping or erasing, blotting, or crossing out. Major revisions are of two sorts: measures crossed out in all staves of the full score, and extended revisions of a vocal and/or instrumental line. The most important of the latter type of correction is to be found

in Odabella's cabaletta "Da te questo" originally set to another text (ff. 29v-31v), which is discussed in detail in the paper. There are also comments on the sequence of events in Verdi's compositional process. It is clear from the autograph, for example, that the composer completely revised Odabella's cabaletta before he began the process of orchestration.

Un ballo in maschera: Some Comments on Censorship, the Legal Documents, and the *Disposizione Scenica* with Regard to the Boston Setting

William E. McCauley, Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC

The well-known interventions by the Neapolitan and Roman censors have led to some glaring inconsistencies in the text and drama of the most frequently performed setting of *Un ballo in maschera*, Boston in the 17th century. The primitive and puritan nature of 17th-century New England is opposed in almost every respect to the opera's courtly and elegant setting, music, and characters. Perhaps the weakest feature of this version is provided by Ulrica. Her presence, while crucial to the plot, is both historically and geographically disturbing to many Americans. Oscar and Renato also present problems in the Boston setting.

The principle baritone is described as a "Creole" in the score and in the *Disposizione Scenica* printed by Ricordi and written by Giuseppe Cencetti. As the title page indicates, this staging is based on the premiere at the Teatro Apollo, Rome 1859, a production rehearsed and directed by Verdi himself. In Act III, the production book calls for Renato to be costumed as a Scottish gentleman, and at the end of the opera he is to "see England again." It may be observed that this volume, useful in many other respects, omits the set for Act II on p. 5 where the sets for all the other scenes are described.

Observations on a Cabaletta from Verdi's *Il corsaro*: Non-Definitive Revisions

Stephen Town, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL

This paper discusses *puntature* for Seid's cabaletta "S'avvicina il tuo momento" (*Il corsaro*, Act III) to be found in the MS copy of the orchestral score sent to Trieste for the premiere in 1848. Contrary to his usual practice, Verdi was not present, and the *puntature* are not his. Also discussed is a

substitute for this cabaletta with both new words and new music. Written for a performance of the opera in Naples (1854), in all probability it was composed by a local maestro. The paper will be published in *Current Musicology* No. 32.