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Problems of Structure in Verdi's Otello

Keywords

Giuseppe Verdi, Otello

Problems of Structure in Verdi's *Otello*

by Roger Parker, Cornell University,
and Matthew Brown, Harvard University

Our main focus was the love duet which closes Act One of *Otello*. A detailed examination of the piece's structure was preceded by brief consideration of certain tonal models in the "storm" scene which opens Act One, and followed by a discussion of the influence of the "bacio" theme in the remainder of the opera, particularly in the final scene. Our main purpose was to explore some of

the different systems of which Verdian analysts must be aware, and to stress that no single analytical perspective--whether traditional-formal, motivic, or tonal--can satisfactorily engage questions of overall structure in a work of this complexity. [The final version of this paper entitled "*Ancor un Bacio: Three Scenes from Verdi's Otello*" was published in *19th Century Music* vol.9 no.1 (Summer 1985)]

A Biographical Note: Verdi and Beethoven

Our thanks to Theodore Front, a longtime friend of the Institute, who forwarded the following information.

In 1880 a brochure was published commemorating the formal transfer of a Beethoven Monument to the city of Vienna from the "Beethoven-Denkmal-Comité" headed by Johannes Brahms, Edouard Hanslick, Gustav Nottebohm, Hans Richter and a

few others. The last name on the printed, alphabetical list of donors was Joseph Verdi.

Although Verdi's admiration for Beethoven has been noted in the past, this is the first time he is known to have expressed this admiration in a financial fashion, and the contribution may well mark his only donation to a cause in Austria.