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Conferences and Announcements

Abstract

Brief recap of a three-day conference on Verdi's *Oberto* held at the Teatro Comunale of Bologna; announcement of the creation of a Verdi critical edition, *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*, to be published jointly by the University of Chicago Press and Ricordi; details of an upcoming conference on Verdi's *Macbeth* at the University of Danville (Kentucky)

Keywords

Giuseppe Verdi

Bologna conference

In January, the Teatro Comunale of Bologna sponsored a three-day conference on *Oberto*, conte di San Bonifacio, to coincide with a production of the opera. Two of the participants have sent us this report:

Both international Verdi specialists and scholars of the literary and visual arts attended—a feature that added valuable, though often controversial, approaches to the topic. The first round-table discussion began with a paper by Julian Budden entitled 'Il melodramma finitimo', which offered valuable insights into the development of Italian opera before *Oberto* and ended with a lengthy analysis of Act I of Nicolai's *Il templario*, a work whose historical position adds perspective to any judgment of Verdi's first attempt. Philip Gossett's comments on this paper were interesting, particularly on the subject of Rossinian forms remaining in the operatic language.

The second session, on 'La formazione musicale di Verdi', centered on a joint paper by Pierluigi Petrobelli and Roger Parker that traced Verdi's musical education in some detail and presented important new facts about Verdi's early life in Milan, notably the existence of a cantata written for Milan, the libretto for which survives. First Noske added a stimulating comparison between Wagner's first opera, *Die Feen*, and *Oberto*; unfortunately, his praise of Wagner was taken by some as an attack on Italy's musical heritage, and in the resulting polemic the author's original intentions tended to be lost sight of.

'Lettura di *Oberto*', the third round table, was concerned with analysis of the score. Tito Gotti offered a detailed commentary, and Rosanna Delmonte produced interesting results by following a particular melodic formula through Verdi's early works. 'Letteratura e racconto' brought in the literary scholars, headed by Ezio Raimondi, who provided a flamboyant demonstration of Manzonian traits in 19th-century libretti and provoked some serious thought about the possible application of other critical disciplines to Verdi studies. Paola Giovanelli discussed the aesthetic ideals of Verdi's first librettist, Antonio Piazza, many of whose writings she had traced in the columns of the *Gazzetta privilegiata di Milano*.

The final discussion, 'Immagini davanti al pubblico', centered on the visual arts. Wanda Bergamini presented an interesting paper on some general aspects of art history during the period, accompanied by many slides. The final paper, by Giovanni Morelli, entitled 'Il 17 Brumaio di Giuseppe Verdi', gave rise to much hostility in some quarters, while some of the less voluble *congressisti* found food for thought in yet another approach to Verdi criticism. In fact, the real novelty of the conference and its most positive aspect was the simultaneous presence of different approaches, each of them producing valid results. The need to overcome traditional views and to apply methodologically coherent and logically justified criteria was strongly felt: witness the papers of Dalmonte and Morelli. The proceedings, with the discussions in summary, are to be published by the Teatro Comunale.

The performance of *Oberto* was competent, although some of the settings and stage direction seemed arbitrary. It succeeded admirably, however, in setting the opera in dramatic perspective. The Leonora-Cuniza duet of Act II, which appears in the autograph but not in the current Ricordi score, was included. It was heartening to see, particularly in the second act, that many of the more sceptical members of the audience were won over at last by the work's power and sincerity.

The Complete Edition

The University of Chicago Press has announced its proposal to publish, in collaboration with Ricordi, a critical edition of the complete works of Verdi. Three ten-year cycles of publication are planned. The works projected for the first cycle are *Nabucco*, *Ernani*, *I masnadieri*, *Macbeth*, *Luisa Miller*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Don Carlos*, *Aida*, the Requiem, the String Quartet, and the songs for voice and piano. Each volume is to be published in two parts: in large format, a critical edition of the score; and a critical commentary in Italian and English. The projected price for score and companion volume is about \$100; and for a piano-vocal score, about \$10.

The editorial board is composed of Julian Budden, Francesco Degrada, Philip Gossett, Ursula Günther, and H.C. Robbins Landon. A prospectus, 'Toward a Critical Edition of the Works of Verdi,' is issued by the University of Chicago Press.

The Danville Congress: accomodation and travel

Accommodation is available at various rates in inns and motels in Danville and adjacent areas (rates start at about \$6 a night per person, quadruple occupancy, or \$10 a night per person, double occupancy).

There will be free bus service from accommodations approved by the *Macbeth* Congress to and from the Regional Arts Center, where all official Congress activities will take place. Inquiries about accommodation may be made to The Macbeth Congress, The Centre College Regional Arts Center, Danville, Kentucky 40422, (606) 236-4692.

There are flights from most major cities in the United States either to Lexington, Kentucky (35 miles from Danville), or to Louisville, Kentucky (85 miles from Danville). Bus service at nominal fees between airports and Congress accommodation sites will be available at approximately three-hour intervals on Wednesday, November 9 from the airports, and Saturday evening, November

12 and Sunday, November 13 to the airports. Travel arrangements can be made with your own agent or with the assistance of Mrs Robert Gabbard, Aero Space Travel Inc., 326 W. Main Street, Danville, Kentucky 40422, (606) 236-2505.

By car:

From Lexington and the north—Take US 60 and the Bluegrass Parkway (BG) West out of Lexington. Exit at US 127 South (first toll booth), 24 miles to Danville.

From Louisville—Take I-64 East to US 151 South (Lawrenceburg-Graefenburg exit). This becomes US 127 South. Follow to Danville.

From the southwest—Take I-65 North to Elizabethtown. Get on BG Parkway and take it East to either US 150 East or US 127 South. Both highways lead to Danville.

From the southeast—Take I-75 North to US 150 West (Mt. Vernon exit). Take US 150 to Danville.

American Institute for Verdi Studies

New York University
Faculty of Arts and Science
Department of Music
24 Waverly Place, Room 268
New York, N.Y. 10003