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A landmark. This carefully edited, amply annotated, and very handsomely produced publication contains the 301 letters that passed between Verdi and Boito (178 from Verdi, 123 from Boito). Its importance for the making of Otello, the revised Boccanegra, and Falstaff needs no stressing. Most of the Verdi letters were presented to the Parma Institute by Leonardo Albertini in 1973; the Boito letters are at Sant’Agata. They are here printed in sequence—the first time both sides of a full Verdi correspondence has appeared in this way. The publication was underwritten by the “Premio Mattioli” honoring the memory of Raffaele Mattioli, former administrator and president of the Banca Commerciale Italiana. (Hans Busch has received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to prepare an English translation of the correspondence.)


PIETRO SPADA, ed: Inediti per tenore (vocal score). (Suvini Zerboni: Milan, 1978). The early tenor scena ‘Io la vidi’, ‘Tantum ergo’ (1837), and the alternative arias written for Ivanoff (Ernani), Mario (Foscari), Mariani (Attila), and Villaret (Vêpres) Review: Julian Budden, Music and Letters 60 (1979), 110-1


ANDREW PORTER: “Observations on Don Carlos,” The World of Opera 1, No. 3, 1-10. Mentions two unpublished letters: (i) Verdi sets out text of the 1872 revision of the Philip-Posa duet and asks Ghislanzoni to versify it; (ii) Verdi revises Italian translation of the 1883 version.

DENIS VAUGHAN: ‘The Inner Language of Verdi’s Manuscripts’, Musicology 5 (1979) 67-153. A long detailed study, with many pages illustrated in full score, of Verdi’s notational practice, and an argued plea for a closer adherence to the letter of his text than that suggested in the provisional “Guidelines” circulated by the editorial committee of the forthcoming Verdi complete edition.

DENIS VAUGHAN: ‘Markings and Meanings in Verdi’, The World of Opera 1, No. 1 (1978), 43-54; some points from the above.

GUSTAVO MARCHESI: Verdi (Milan: Fabbri, 1979; 144 pp.) Copiously illustrated, exemplary, concise introduction to Verdi in the series ‘I Grandi della Musica’.


Reviews: Verdi’s Aida by Hans Busch; reviewed by William Weaver, 19th Century Music 3 (1979), 171-4; by Julian Budden, Music & Letters 60 (1979), 83-6

The Dramatic Genius of Verdi by Vincent Godefroy, reviewed by George Steiner, 19th Century Music 2 (1979), 263-6