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How Verdi's Operas Begin: An Introduction to the Introduzioni

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One of the most intriguing alterations made during Verdi's transformation of *Stiffelio* (1850) into *Aroldo* (1857) is his replacement of the elaborate *introduzione* of the earlier opera with an off-stage chorus and the (newly-written) *preghiera* (prayer). To be sure, there are problems specific to this particular *introduzione* that may have led Verdi to make this drastic change, and I shall take them up in due course. But it is important to view this particular revision in the broader context of Verdi's changing strategies for getting an opera underway. The principal subject of this brief study, then, is Verdi's opening gambits, from the beginning of his career through *Aida*.[2]

Let us begin with what might be called the semantic approach: how does Verdi label the opening sections of his operas in the autograph scores -- in particular, how does he use the crucial term "introduzione"?[3] Verdi's division and labeling of the numbers of his scores, while never intended as rigorous musical analyses and therefore not without inconsistencies, offer useful clues about his view of the structure of his operas. They are clearly more valuable evidence than the indications found in early Ricordi scores, which regularly break up larger unified structures like *introduzioni* and *finali* into smaller, easily marketable "pezzi staccati". An example from *Stiffelio*: what Ricordi printed and sold as three separate pieces -- "2. Introduzione e Racconto", "3. Scena e Settimino", and "4. Seguito e Stretta dell'Introduzione" -- Verdi had labeled as "Introduzione" and numbered as a single piece. Table I details his use of the word "introduzione" in the first act, our primary concern here. There are two fundamental questions.

1. For Verdi what are the defining characteristics of the term "introduzione"? The *sine qua non* is the presence of a chorus, but in Verdi's usage the term may

denote anything from an opening chorus (e.g. *Ernani*) to a complex organism making extensive use of the chorus, but not necessarily right at the opening (e.g., the opening *tableau* of *Rigoletto*). That the term is not used in *I masnadieri* and *Il corsaro*-- where the chorus is off stage and therefore at least visually subordinate -- might suggest the further requirement that the chorus be prominent and on stage. There are counter-examples, however: although the chorus is off stage in *Aroldo* and *Don Carlos*. Verdi labeled both openings "introduzione" (or "introduction").

2. Where does the "introduzione" end? -- that is, at what point does the first number (e.g., "2. Introduzione") end and the next number (e.g., "3. Scena e Cavatina") begin? Stendhal's overly neat definition that the term refers to "everything sung from the end of the overture to the first recitative" simply does not work for Verdi.[4] Almost all numbers labeled "introduzione" which consist of more than just an opening chorus contain passages of recitative.[5] Indeed, the "introduzioni" of *Stiffelio, Il trovatore* and *Simon Boccanegra* (1881 version) even begin with recitative. As a general guideline, the following would be closer to the mark: (1) in Verdi's usage, "introduzione" may simply refer to the opening chorus, as in the works listed under II -- there the chorus is followed by a solo which, as we shall see, is less integrated with the chorus than in Group IV. Otherwise, (2) the typical Verdi "introduzione" ends when the chorus leaves the stage.[6]

Verdi's use of "introduzione" in later acts--see Table II--adds little to our understanding of the term, partly because Verdi does not employ it consistently throughout his career. After *Macbeth* (1847), he prefers the label "coro" for a chorus opening an act subsequent to the first, even when it is no different in form

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or function from those choruses that he earlier labeled "introduzione". The term generally refers simply to a chorus at the opening of an act; it seems to be immaterial whether the following number is a solo or an ensemble.

In Table III I propose a typology of Verdi's openings which takes account of Verdi's own terminology but is based on an independent examination of the works. It goes without saying that with phenomena as complex as musical compositions there is neither a single "correct" set of categories nor even a single "correct" way of distributing the works into a given set of categories.

Nearly two-thirds of the openings consist of a chorus -- almost never including solo parts -- followed by a solo (see Table III [I]). This combination of chorus and solo is ultimately derived from the practice of Verdi's predecessors. Philip Gossett describes Rossini's simplest *introduzione* form as consisting of three parts: "a) an opening movement for chorus, sometimes with solo parts for minor characters; b) a slow movement, often introducing a major character; c) a final cabaletta for the major character, with assistance from the chorus and others on stage."[7] Typically, this complex is entirely in *versi lirici* (i.e., rhymed, scanning verse)--a corollary of Stendhal's definition quoted above -- and is tonally closed. This description fits the *introduzione* of *Un giorno di regno* perfectly,[8] but the structure found in most early Verdi operas is much simpler, much more loosely constructed.

In ten of Verdi's first thirteen operas--that is, through *Il corsaro*--an opening chorus is followed by a two-movement entrance aria, the so-called "cavatina". See Group I A of Table III.[9] Even though Verdi generally gives separate titles to the two pieces, the "introduzione" (chorus) and the "cavatina" (or "aria") are perceived as a scenic unit, though not as tightly-knit a unit as is found in Rossini. The opening chorus is generally sung on stage, and (except in *I due Foscari*) the chorus remains on stage to takes a prominent part in the solo piece, especially

in the cabaletta. If the chorus sings off stage at first (Subgroup 2), it will enter in time to participate in the solo piece. In both cases, once the cabaletta is finished, the chorus and soloist leave the stage together.[10]

In almost all of these cavatinas the slow movement is preceded by a section of *versi sciolti* (unrhymed and freely alternating *settenario* and *endecasillabo* lines) set as recitative. In three libretti written or revised by Solera, however, the *versi lirici* continue through the end of the cavatina, a conservative link with the Rossinian *introduzione*.[11] In *Oberto*, there is no separate text for a recitative--the opening chorus is followed directly by the text for the slow movement of Riccardo's cavatina. Verdi sets the first two lines as a declamatory phrase, sung *a piacere*, cadencing into the slow movement proper. In both the "Reci[tativo e] Cavatina Zaccaria" (*Nabucco*) and the "scena e Cavatina Odebella" (*Attila*), the text provided for the recitative (or *scena*) is in *versi lirici*. Verdi's setting of Zaccaria's speech (beginning with "Sperate, o figli") lacks the flexibility of a true recitative built upon *versi sciolti*; it often repeats the same text-determined rhythmic pattern, an effect encouraged by the rhythmic regularity of *versi lirici*. Although this effect would be inappropriate in most recitatives, Verdi may have found it suitable for the solemn intonations of Zaccaria. (For a similar example, see Pagano's ceremonial speech, "Qui nel luogo santo e pio" in the *introduzione* of *I lombardi*.) On the other hand, Verdi sets Odabella's *scena* in *parlante*, that is, as though it were to be the *tempo d'attacco* of a duet.[12]

What follows this pairing of chorus and cavatina depends upon who sings the cavatina. In Subgroups 1 and 2 of Group I A, it is the tenor in seven of nine cases. After his cavatina, there is a scene change (except for *Oberto*, where the stage is cleared but without a scene change), and the process of developing the dramatic action must begin anew. The interaction of characters in duets occurs only after the soprano has sung her entrance aria. This

aria may follow immediately (*Oberto, Ernani, I due Foscari, Il corsaro*), or the baritone may precede her, either with a *scena* (*Giovanna d'Arco*) or with his cavatina (*Alzira* and *I masnadieri*). After the self-contained unit featuring the tenor, the soprano must therefore act as catalyst to initiate the action.

But the situation is vastly different if someone other than the tenor sings the cavatina, as in the five instances in Group I A. Rather than a scene change, the stage clears, except for the singers who are to participate in the following number. More important, that following number is an ensemble, except for *Luisa Miller* where the stretta of the soprano aria is itself an ensemble.

There is generally a difference in the dramatic situation as well. A common situation in the scenes with tenor cavatina: the male chorus (of bandits, pirates, soldiers, etc.) praises the adventurous life, and at the end of the scene the tenor and his cohorts indeed go off together on some adventure--a male-bonding exercise. Even in different dramatic situations the chorus -- probably a mixed chorus -- expresses solidarity with the tenor (e.g., *Giovanna d'Arco*). (That the chorus in *I due Foscari* is hostile to the tenor is surely the reason why it does not take part in his cavatina.) On the other hand, in both *Attila* and *Les Vêpres siciliennes* the soprano's cavatina is a confrontation with the enemy and thus advances the dramatic action.[13] Why this curious, special treatment of the tenor?

Until the mid-1850's, with *Les Vêpres siciliennes* and *Simon Boccanegra*, all three principal singers were entitled to at least one two-movement aria. The tenor generally the least interesting of the three characters--Stiffelio is an exception--and therefore he is given his aria before the action has started. Even after Verdi stopped writing solo cabalettas, he still tends to place the tenor *romanza* early in the work, as in *Don Carlos* and *Aida*. Objecting to the unauthorized repositioning of Don Carlos's opening *romanza* to the opera's third act, Verdi complained, "It is a cantabile that can work well at the beginning of the action, but not when the action is at its height."[14] Placing the two-movement aria of the baritone, Verdi's most complex, most interesting character, at the beginning -- before suitable dramatic situations (*posizioni drammatiche*, to use Verdi's term) have had a chance to develop, would be a wasted opportunity. It comes as no surprise that with the unimportant exception of *Un giorno di regno* Verdi never does so. The argument presented thus far claims that Verdi fulfilled his obligations to the tenor at the beginning because he had better uses for the soprano and, especially, for the baritone. But there may also be a more positive argument.

It is easy to criticize the *conventional*, static nature of the chorus-plus-cavatina formula, especially but not exclusively that with the tenor cavatina followed by a scene change. Yet this may have been precisely what was wanted: a formal frame, similar to that provided by the overture or prelude. That Verdi would soon look for ways to undermine the static nature of this mechanism does not preclude that he may have accepted this inheritance at the outset of his career. And it is surely possible that at that time he regarded the tenor as better suited to this framing function of the *introduzione*.

We may now consider what follows the combination consisting of chorus plus solo. It may be interesting to compare Verdi's procedure with that described by Carlo Ritorni in his 1841 treatise, *Ammaestramenti alla composizione d'ogni poema e d'ogni opera appartenente alla musica* (see the Appendix for excerpts).[15] According to Ritorni, after the *introduzione* there normally follow three cavatinas in a row, perhaps with a scene change before the second and/or third. This is not Verdi's way. Even when he adopts the scheme consisting of opening chorus plus two-movement entrance aria, he is eager to set the dramatic action -- and the ensembles-- in motion. Of the twelve works in Group I A, only *Alzira* and *I masnadieri* give all three principals an entrance aria before the first ensemble, and even there there are "extenuating circumstances". In *I masnadieri*

the third of the successive entrance arias, the soprano's explicitly labeled "cavatina", consists of a slow movement only. And in *Alzira* the first cavatina closes an act, and a chorus precedes the second of the three cavatinas. Even so, Verdi asked Cammarano, "don't three cavatinas in a row seem too many to you?"[16] The only case of a parade of three two-movement cavatinas sung without intervening numbers came about when Verdi supplied Ignazio Marini with a cavatina for the carnival 1841-42 performances of *Oberto*. This exception confirms the rule, for on 15 November 1841 Verdi wrote to Marini, "Be careful that the first act doesn't turn out too long, and if the *prima donna* wanted to omit her cavatina it would be better, since there are three cavatinas in a row."[17]

In five works it is the soprano, bass, or baritone who sings the first entrance aria, and an ensemble ensues immediately. In the remaining five operas the tenor cavatina is followed by the soprano entrance aria, leading in turn to the first ensemble.[18]

Ritorni also describes two variations of the three-cavatina scheme, but neither is found in Verdi: (1) Two characters may enter together and sing a duet *ex abrupto* (i.e., without a preceding recitative), taking their arias later in the act; (2) the first two principal singers, after their cavatinas, share a duet before the entrance of the third singer with his/her cavatina. This arrangement is incompatible with Verdi's principle that characters should exit after singing a cavatina --if not impossible, it is at least awkward to manuever back on stage two characters who have just sung their cavatinas after their exits.[19]

Attila is the last of the operas which, without substantial refinements, follow the convention of an on-stage chorus plus two-movement aria. As with so many other facets of Verdi's style, then, it is with *Macbeth* that Verdi begins a search for new ways of setting his operas into motion. Verdi's choice of strategy depends upon a number of factors, including the dramatic situation, and therefore there is no linear, uni-directional progression from one opera to the next. It seems best therefore to

examine these trends in terms of our typological categories, rather than proceeding in strict chronological order.

A recurring theme in this discussion will be the undermining of one or another of the two pillars in the structure: the opening chorus and the solo piece. Verdi aims at both in his 4 April 1851 letter to Cammarano about *Il trovatore*.

> [...] *If in operas there were neither cavatinas, nor duets, nor trios, nor choruses, nor finali, etc. etc., and if the whole opera were -- I was going to say -- but a single piece, I would find that more reasonable and appropriate. And for that reason I will tell you that if at the beginning of this opera one could avoid the chorus (all operas begin with a chorus) and Leonora's cavatina, and begin immediately with the troubadour's song and combine the first two acts into a single act, it would be good, because these pieces so isolated [from one other], with a scene change for each one, give me the impression more of pieces for a concert than for an opera.[20]*

Despite the hyperbole of the opening sentence (and Verdi's eventual acceptance of Leonora's cavatina), the passage should be taken seriously. Its most important suggestion may be that Verdi's dissatisfaction with the chorus-plus-cavatina opening was due not only to its conventionality but also (and primarily?) to an independent aesthetic fault: its discontinuity. If true -- and it rings true -- this account has the advantage of placing the individual stylistic feature (Verdi's changed approach to the opera's opening) within a general context (his efforts to insure greater continuity of the opera as a whole). The alternative explanation -- that at a certain point in his career Verdi suddenly came to regret that for years he had been opening his operas in a "conventional" manner and resolved to mend his ways -- seems less probable and is certainly less interesting.

As we have seen, there are two operas within Group I A where the opening chorus

is off stage -- see Subgroup 2. Furthermore, the chorus in *I masnadieri* is merely a brief interruption of the opening recitative. By de-emphasizing the role of the chorus Verdi subtly undermines the convention of the *introduzione*, and, significantly, neither opening is so labeled in Verdi's autograph. Nonetheless, in these two works Verdi basically accepts the conventional chorus-plus-aria structure, merely changing its balance.

This is also true of the three disparate works classified as Subgroup 3, in which Verdi included both chorus and the following set piece under the rubric "introduzione". If *Un giorno di regno* provides a clear example of the Rossinian model, complete with both the participation of secondary characters within the opening chorus and tonal closure, the *introduzioni* of *Luisa Miller* and to a lesser extent, *Les Vêpres siciliennes* are at least indebted to the model for a cohesion rarely found in Subgroups 1 and 2. As in *Un giorno di regno* the cabaletta (or stretta) in the *Luisa Miller introduzione* is an ensemble with chorus, and in both *Luisa Miller* and *Les Vêpres siciliennes* Verdi obscures the edges between sections of the aria structure itself. The first movement of Luisa's aria ends with a deceptive cadence, and in *Les Vêpres siciliennes* the slow movement consists of only nine measures of cantabile melody surrounded by dramatic declamation--with the result that it is perceived as an introduction subordinate to the cabaletta.

In the works in Group B the formal element of the two-movement aria is undermined, being reduced to a single movement. Furthermore, in all three works the chorus is off stage and, unlike the procedure in *I masnadieri* and *Il corsaro*, does not enter to participate in the following solo number.[21] In *Aroldo* the chorus sings to an empty stage, detaching the sounds of celebration from Mina's plight. The works in Group I C, *Il trovatore* and both versions of *Simon Boccanegra*, open with a recitative and lack an independent chorus, but give the chorus a prominent role in the aria. In that the framing role of the chorus is undermined, the strategy here is

similar to that of *I masnadieri* and *Il corsaro* Both *Il trovatore* and the 1881 version of *Simon Boccanegra* also lack an independent opening orchestral piece.[22]

Group II A includes those *introduzioni* that are based upon both chorus (not necessarily at the opening) and a two-movement ensemble with the same heft as a *finale*: a *pezzo concertato* and *stretta*. The *introduzione* of *Stiffelio* is highly unconventional, as Budden observes,[23] but most of the unconventional aspects have precedents. The appearance of the chorus was postponed in *Jérusalem* as well, and this maneuver is surely related to the more comprehensive strategy of undermining the formal initial chorus, found already in *I masnadieri* and *Il corsaro*. In any event, the center of gravity of all three *introduzioni* in this group is a two-movement set piece. While this may have been the procedure that Ritorni described as "exquisite" ("l'introduzione squisita"), Verdi tried this solution only three times, abandoning it after *Stiffelio*.

Let us set aside for a moment our survey of Verdi's openings in order to concentrate on *Stiffelio* and at least to speculate about the reasons why Verdi suppressed its *introduzione* when he created *Aroldo*.
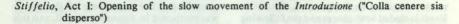
It is of course possible that he was not dissatisfied with the piece *per se* but simply felt it inappropriate in the new context of *Aroldo*. The addition of a new fourth act may well have suggested the cutting of any unnecessary material. But this simply shifts the question: why then was the *introduzione* held to be dispensable while other scenes were retained? In any event, it would be intellectually lazy to grasp at such a weak answer without considering other possibilities.

Might the change in dramatic situation have rendered the *Stiffelio introduzione* unusable? The two *pezzi concertati* in the *introduzione* and *finale* of Act I of *Stiffelio* present an apt capsule summary of the *Rigoletto*-like dichotomy upon which the entire plot is based: in the *introduzione* ("Colla cenere disperso") Stiffelio the pastor generously burns one letter, and in the
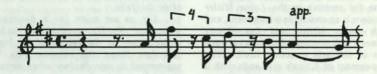
MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1

a.

Stiffelio, Act I: Opening of the slow movement of the *Introduzione* ("Colla cenere sia disperso")

b.

Stiffelio, Act I: Slow movement of the Finale ("Oh qual m'invade ed agita"), mm. 33-34

c.

Stiffelio, Act I: Opening of the stretta of the *Introduzione* ("A te Stiffelio un canto")
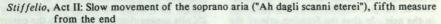
d.

Stiffelio, Act I: Stretta of the *Introduzione* ("A te Stiffelio un canto"), mm. 21-22

e.

Stiffelio, Act II: Slow movement of the soprano aria ("Ah dagli scanni eterei"), fifth measure from the end

finale ("Oh qual m'invade ed agita") Stiffelio the husband burns to read another. The irony inherent in the parallelism of the two dramatic situations is underscored by the similarity of these two slow movements: the most obvious parallels between them are their G minor-major tonality, adagio tempo, and the staccato figuration of the accompanimental vocal parts.

The musical example shows a further similarity between the opening theme of"Colla cenere" and the climactic phrase of "Oh qual m'invade": their overlapping fourths and sharply dotted rhythms. (And both themes, especially the phrase from "Oh qual m'invade", are also related to two other prominent themes in the opera: the stretta of the *introduzione* and the climax of the slow movement of Lina's Act II aria.)[24] To be sure, this salient dramatic point in *Stiffelio* would have been less effective in *Aroldo*, for the principal effect of the transformation into *Aroldo* is to denature this powerful dichotomy between injured husband and priest sworn to charity and forgiveness. However, this fact cannot fully explain Verdi's decision to remove the *introduzione*, for with some changes of text it could easily have been adapted for *Aroldo* with at least a residue of its original dramatic force.

In spite of the long-range dramatic point made by the parallel between the *introduzione* and the *finale* of *Stiffelio*, there is, on a more local level, also a flaw in the dramaturgy. Once Stiffelio burns the letter, there is no adequate dramatic situation for the *pezzo concertato*. (To motivate the ensemble Piave and/or Verdi seized upon this one concrete action, which in the stage play is merely one link in a chain.) The character of the stretta brings this home, underlining that the situation has not advanced. Lina's impassioned asides, ironically set to the same motivic material as the chorus, are in my view not sufficient to prevent the piece from evoking the conventional opening chorus with which Verdi might just as well have begun.

Other problems, however, appear to be inherent in this particular approach to the opening, as they are present in *I lombardi*

and *Jérusalem* as well. The characters are still virtually anonymous when the *pezzo concertato* begins,[25] a problem which Verdi only partially resolves in *Jérusalem* and *Stiffelio* by squeezing in at least one set piece before the *pezzo concertato*. A second problem is the great weight of the *introduzione* which is thus set up as a rival to the *finale* even though in comparison to these *finali* so little has happened to justify all the activity! A related point is that the form -- *pezzo concertato* plus stretta-- anticipates that of the *finale*. While there is no direct evidence that Verdi held that to be a fault, his later objection that two acts in *Les Vêpres siciliennes* had the same cut is indicative.[26]

In considering the suppression of the *Stiffelio introduzione*, then, it is important to remember that its structure was far from being a preferred one. It appears in only two original works, surviving in modified form in a third. Furthermore, by the period of *Aroldo* Verdi was already experimenting with other approaches to the opening, all of which involved a reduction in the importance of the formal chorus and two-movement number.

The solution of *Macbeth* (Group II B) is unusual in two respects: it substitutes a small one-movement ensemble for the usual cavatina -- Verdi felt it necessary to reassure the baritone "You'll be able to do well for yourself with the first duettino (more than if it were a cavatina)."[27] -- and it rounds out the structure with a fast chorus performing the function of a stretta.

In the operas that follow *Macbeth*, Verdi tries a number of strategies. We have already discussed those that work within the chorus - solo convention, making it more flexible and more subtle: Group I A, Subgroup 3. But there are two tendencies which were more frequently followed: first, to undercut the framing function of the chorus by moving it off stage -- as in *I masnadieri*, *Il corsaro*, *Aroldo*, and *Don Carlos* -- or by postponing its entrance-- as in *Stiffelio*. This direction leads ultimately to the works in Group III -- *La forza del destino* and *Aida*, which begin with a *scena e romanza* avoiding the *coro*

d'introduzione convention entirely. The second principal tendency is that of building extended structures that introduce at least two of the principals-- tenor and baritone in all but *La traviata*-- using nearly every kind of musical form available but the two-movement aria. (See Group II C). The structures range from the

static ceremonial symmetry of the *introduzione* of *La battaglia di Legnano* with its inset solos, recurring themes, and tonal closure, to the powerful forward motion of the *introduzione* of *Rigoletto*.

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NOTES

1. This article is reprinted, with minor changes, from *Tornando a Stiffelio: popolarità, rifacimenti, messinscena, effettismo e altre "cure" nella drammaturgia del Verdi romantico: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Venezia, 17-20 dicembre 1985)* (Quaderni della Rivista italiana di musicologia), Giovanni Morelli, ed. (Florence: Leo Olschki, 1987), pp. 203-21. I thank the original publisher for permission to reprint the article here. Limitations both spatial and temporal prevent consideration of two important issues: (1) the role of the opening orchestral piece (prelude or overture), and (2) the relationship of Verdi's practice to that of his predecessors and contemporaries.

2. While the openings of specific operas are discussed in the Verdi literature, the only other general account seems to be an unpublished paper delivered by Bruce Carr at the Fall 1969 meeting of the New England chapter of the American Musicological Society.

3. This approach was first applied to Verdi studies by Martin Chusid, in his "The organization of scenes with arias: Verdi's cavatinas and romanzas" (in *Atti del I.° Congresso internationale di studi verdiani* [Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1969], 59-66. Such investigations have been made easier by Chusid's *A catalog of Verdi's operas* (Music Indexes and Bibliographies, edited by George R. Hill, v. 5 [Hackensack, N.J.: Joseph Boonin, 1974]), which provides, along with other information, the numbering and subtitles in Verdi's autograph manuscripts. My analysis of Verdi's usage of the term "introduzione" is based upon data presented there.

4. "On appelle *introduction* tout ce qu'on chante depuis la fin de l'ouverture jusqu'au premier récitatif." M. De Stendhal, *Vie de Rossini*, (Paris, Auguste Boulland, 1824), p. 66 (footnote 1). William Ashbrook also comments on this "rule of thumb", but notes that "there are exceptions to [it]" (*Donizetti and his operas* [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982], p. 244). See pp.243-49 for his brief but useful discussion of Donizetti's *introduzioni*.

5. An example from *Aroldo*: Mina's prayer not only begins with a passage of recitative, but the entire solo is a setting of *versi sciolti* (i.e., unrhymed lines normally intended to be set as recitative). For a discussion of the genesis of this scene, based upon the manuscript libretto, see Steven W. Shrader, "Verdi, *Aroldo*, and Music Drama", *Verdi Newsletter* [American Institute for Verdi Studies] n.12 (1984), pp. 8-18.

6. Only *Aroldo* slips between these two categories, for the chorus does not appear on stage during the "introduzione".

7. "Gioacchino Rossini and the conventions of composition", *Acta musicologica* 42 (1970): pp. 48-58, at 54.

8. Julian Budden notes its relationship to the Rossinian model, also pointing out thematic connections linking the *sinfonia* and the *introduzione*. *The operas of Verdi*, 3 vols. (London: Cassell, 1973, 1978, 1981) 1: pp. 74-76.

9. At least in Verdi's usage the term "cavatina" refers not to the slow movement alone, but to the entire two-movement complex (except for Amalia's cavatina in *I masnadieri*, which consists of a slow movement only). All arias labeled "cavatina" are entrance arias, but some entrance arias are labeled with the more general term "aria" even when "cavatina" would have been equally appropriate. For example, only four of the seven arias in Subgroup I are labeled "cavatina." In this article the term refers to any entrance aria, whether or not Verdi so labels it. For further discussion of "cavatina" see Chusid, "Organization".

10. There are two exceptions: *Un giorno di regno* and *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, where the soloist remains on stage to take part in an ensemble. As noted, in *I due Foscari* the chorus is not present during the cavatina.

11. See Scott Balthazar, "Evolving conventions in Italian serious opera: scene structure in the works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, 1810-1850" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1985), pp. 235, 245-46. Balthazar also cites a similar example in Act II of *Giovanna d'Arco*, also by Solera. Not surprisingly, the multi-section *introduzioni* of *Uno giorno di regno* (a Romani libretto written in 1818) and *I lombardi* (Solera again) consist entirely of *versi lirici*.

12. Another example of an aria prepared as though it were a duet is "Morrò, ma prima in grazia" (*Un ballo in maschera*, III)--see Harold S. Powers, "'La solita forma' and 'The uses of convention'", *Acta musicologica* 59 (1989), 65-90, at 72. In this opening of *Attila* Solera seems interested in displaying metric virtuosity; the opening chorus uses a combination of *quinari* and *doppi quinari*, while Odabella's *scena* begins with two five-line stanzas, each consisting of four *settenari* and a concluding *endecasillabo*.

13. In *Nabucco* the dramatic situation of the chorus and Zaccaria's cavatina is superficially similar to that of the typical complex with tenor aria, but its main function--like that of Ferrando's *racconto* in *Il trovatore*--is to establish the opera's *tinta*.

14. "È un cantabile che può andar bene in principio dell'azione, ma non quando l'azione è nel suo pieno." Letter to Camille Du Locle, Genova, 5 December 1867. Ursula Günther, "La Genèse de *Don Carlos*, opéra en cinq actes de Giuseppe Verdi, représenté la premiere fois à Paris le 11 mars 1867," *Revue de Musicologie* 58 (1972): 16-64 and 60 (1974): pp. 87-158 (and 16 unnumbered pages of plates at 58:18).

15. See Scott Balthazar, "Ritorni's *Ammaestramenti* and the conventions of Rossinian Opera," *Journal of Musicological Research* 8 (1989): pp. 281-311). I understand that Dr. Alessandro Roccatagliati is preparing an edition of the *Ammaestramenti* (I have set aside my own plans to do so, which were announced in the original publication of this article).

16. "[...] non vi sembrano troppe tre cavatine di seguito?" Letter of 27 May 1845, in *I copialettere di Giuseppe Verdi*, Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio, eds. Milano: Commissione esecutiva per le onoranze di Giuseppe Verdi [...], 1913, p. 430.

17. "Bada che il primo atto non riesca troppo lungo, e se la prima donna volesse omettere la sua cavatina sarebbe meglio tanto che vi sono tre cavatine di seguito." "Afterword" of the first volume of Claudio Gallico's critical edition of *Ernani*, in *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*, Series I, v.5 (Chicago and London; Milan: University of Chicago Press and Ricordi, 1985).

18. In *Giovanna d'Arco* a short baritone *scena* precedes Giovanna's entrance aria, and the stretta is an ensemble.

19. *Un giorno di regno* is the only case that even approaches this scheme, and here four principals are involved. The duet is sung by the baritone, who has remained on stage after his cavatina (or the equivalent of one placed within an *introduzione*), and by the tenor, who will not have his aria until Act II. After the duet, the two women enter in turn, each with her cavatina. For Verdi's view that cavatinas should ideally be followed by an exit, see his 22 May 1844 letter to Piave, in *I copialettere*, p. 426.

20. [...] Se nelle opere non vi fossero né Càvatine, né Duetti, né Terzetti, né Cori, né Finali etc. etc., e che l'opera intera non fosse (sarei per dire [che] un solo pezzo, troverei più ragionevole e giusto. Per questo vi dirò che si potesse evitare nel principio di quest'opera [*Il trovatore*] il Coro (tutte le opere cominciano con un Coro) e la Cavatina Leonora, e cominciare addirittura col canto del Trovatore, e fare un sol atto dei due primi, sarebbe bene, perchè questi pezzi così isolati con cambiamento di scena a ciascun pezzo m'hanno piuttosto l'aria di pezzi da concerto che d'opera." Cited from Marcello Conati's revision of *Giuseppe Verdi: Autobiografia dalle lettere*, Aldo Oberdorfer, ed., rev. ed. (Milano, Rizzoli, 1981), 312n.

21. However, an extensive *Introduction* (with on-stage chorus) was removed before the 1867 première of *Don Carlos*.

22. On the parallels between Verdi's two Gutiérrez operas, see Daniela Goldin's "Il *Simon Boccanegra* da Piave a Boito e la drammaturgia verdiana," in *La vera Fenice: Librettisti e libretti tra Sette e Ottocento* (Torino: 1985, Einaudi), pp. 283-334, especially at 300-301.

23. Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, 1: 455. On the *Stiffelio-Aroldo* revision, see the chapters on these works in Budden's study and Shrader, *"Aroldo"*.

24. Budden, noting the motive of two overlapping fourths in "Colla cenere" and Jorg's opening recitative, mentions but rightly rejects the hypothesis that this motive stands for the religious element in the opera (*Operas* 1: 457). A third g-minor appearance of Stiffelio in this act is the slow movement of his aria.

25. A point also noted by Budden (*Operas* 1: 459) and Shrader (*"Aroldo"*, pp. 13 and 15).

26. Letter of 3 January 1855 to Crosnier, *Copialettere*, 157.

27. "Nel primo Duettino tu potrai cavare molto partito (meglio che se fosse una cavatina)." Verdi's letter to Felice Varesi of 7 January 1847, in David Rosen and Andrew Porter, eds., *Verdi's "Macbeth": A sourcebook* (New York and London: W.W.Norton, 1984), p. 30.

28. See *inter alia* Budden, *Operas, passim*; John Knowles, "The banquet scene from Verdi's *Macbeth*: an experiment in large-scale musical form," in Rosen and Porter, *Verdi's "Macbeth"*, pp. 284-92; Roger Parker and Matthew Brown, "Motivic and tonal interaction

in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*", in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36 (1983): pp. 243-65; Fabrizio Della Seta, "Il tempo della festa: su due scene della *Traviata* e su altri luoghi verdiani", *Studi verdiani* 2 (1983): pp. 108-46.

TABLE I

THE TERM "INTRODUZIONE" IN VERDI'S AUTOGRAPH SCORES: THE OPENING ACT*

N.B.: Terms in quotation marks refer to titles in these scores.

I. The term does not appear:

> *I masnadieri* (1847). The short off-stage chorus is subsumed under the title "Scena ed Aria Carlo".
> *Jérusalem* (1847). "Choeur" is preceded by "1. Preludio" and "2. Rec.vo et Ave Maria."
> *Il corsaro* (1848). "Coro Scena ed Aria Corrado".
> *La forza del destino* (1862 and 1869 versions). "Scena e Romanza".
> *Simon Boccanegra* (1857 version), *Don Carlos* (1884 version), *Otello* (1887), and *Falstaff* (1893). Titles and numbers offer no evidence or are lacking entirely.

II. "Introduzione" refers to the opening chorus only; the following solo has a separate number and title. In all but *I due Foscari* and *Don Carlos* the chorus plays a prominent role in the solo number and exits at the end.

> A.   On-stage chorus; two-movement solo:
> *Oberto* (1839).
> *Nabucco* (1842).
> *Ernani* (1844).
> *I due Foscari* (1844).
> *Giovanna d'Arco* (1845).
> *Alzira* (1845).
> *Attila* (1846).

> B.   Off-stage chorus; one-movement solo:
> *Don Carlos* (1867). "Introduction et Romance".

III. "Introduzione" refers to a scena and two-movement aria with prominent chorus. There is neither a separate orchestral number nor an independent, initial chorus.

> *Il trovatore* (1853).

IV. "Introduzione" includes both the opening chorus and the following solo:

> *Un giorno di regno* (1840) N.B. The opening chorus incorporates a duet section for the two *bassi buffi*.
> *Luisa Miller* (1849).

*In those few cases when the autograph is not available, in these Tables I use the indications from the contemporary manuscript sources described in Chusid, *Catalog* (see note 2 above).

Les Vêpres siciliennes (1855).

Aroldo (1857) "Introduzione ed Aria Aroldo" places both the opening off-stage chorus and the soprano's one-movement *preghiera* within the "introduzione". "Sinfonia", chorus, and *preghiera* are linked by their common tonality of D major.

V. "Introduzione" refers to a more extended complex number, involving the chorus (but not necessarily at the beginning):

> *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843) "Introduzione" includes everything between the prelude and the chorus of "claustrali" associated with Pagano's aria.
> *Macbeth* (1847, 1865) -- the entire first scene (i.e., *tableau*)
> *La battaglia di Legnano* (1849) -- the entire first scene
> *Stiffelio* (1850) -- everything between the *sinfonia* and the tenor's "Scena ed Aria"
> *Rigoletto* (1851) -- the entire first scene
> *La traviata* (1853) -- everything between the "Preludio" and "Aria Violetta"
> *Un ballo in maschera* (1859) "Preludio ed Introduzione" refers to the entire first scene.
> *Aida* (1871) -- everything between the "Preludio" and "Scena Aida" ("Ritorna vincitor")

VI. Unclassifiable:

> *Simon Boccanegra* (1881 version) The extent of the "introduzione" is not clear from Verdi's "Preludio e Introduzione Prologo", the only indication in the entire prologue.

TABLE II

THE TERM "INTRODUZIONE" IN VERDI'S AUTOGRAPH SCORES:
AFTER THE FIRST ACT (OR PROLOGUE)

I.   "Introduzione" refers to a chorus opening an act:

> *Nabucco*, III
> *I lombardi*, II: "Introduzione Atto II. Coro di Turchi" (includes a short solo passage for Acciano).
> *I lombardi*, III
> *Ernani*, II
> *I due Foscari*, III: "Introduzione Atto III / Coro e barcarola" -- "Introduzione" probably refers to the two choruses, separated by a short recitative
> *Giovanna d'Arco*, II (Act I, in scores that divide the work into a Prologue and three acts) -- the chorus includes short solo passages for Talbot
> *Macbeth* (1847), IV: "Coro Int[roduzione]".
> *Don Carlos* (1867), III: "Introducto" refers to the short opening scene; a single piece including chorus, a scene (mainly in *parlante*) between Elisabeth and Eboli, and solo passages for Eboli, all based upon similar musical material.

II. "Introduzione" refers to a somewhat larger unit than the opening chorus:

> *Un giorno di regno*, II: "Introduzione Coro ed Aria Edoardo" -- a dialogue (in *versi lirici*) of chorus and tenor, based on the material of the chorus, serves as a transition to his two-movement aria (taking the place of a recitative); "Introduzione" probably includes the aria.

III. Unclear or "erroneous" uses of the term

I due Foscari, II: "Introduzione / Scena ed Aria Jacopo" -- the term refers either to the complex consisting of prelude, scena and one-movement aria (without chorus) or to the prelude alone; since either usage would be unique, the use of "Introduzione" here is best regarded as a lapsus.

Simon Boccanegra (1857), III: "Introduzione" appears at the opening of the act, but it is unclear how much of the act the term encompasses.

Aida, II: "Introduzione / Coro Scena e Duetto", followed only by "Finale II". It is not clear whether "Introduzione" is meant to include the "Scena e Duetto" as well as the opening chorus.

TABLE III

A TYPOLOGY OF THE OPENINGS OF VERDI'S OPERAS

N.B. The number preceding the title indicates Verdi's nomenclature (see Table I).

I. Chorus + Solo piece (the soloist is indicated after the title).

    A. Chorus and 2-movement aria (with chorus except for *I due Foscari*):

        1. Opening chorus is onstage.

II A	*Oberto* (1839)	T
II A	*Nabucco* (1842)	Bass
II A	*Ernani* (1844)	T
II A	*I due Foscari* (1844)	T
II A	*Giovanna d'Arco* (1845)	T
II A	*Alzira* (1845)	T
II A	*Attila* (1846)	S

        2. Opening chorus is off stage:

I	*I masnadieri* (1847)	T
I	*Il corsaro* (1848)	T

        3. Similar to Subgroup 1, but more elaborate and more unified:

IV	*Un giorno di regno* (1840)	Bar
IV	*Luisa Miller* (1849)	S
IV	*Les Vêpres siciliennes* (1855)	S

    B. Off-stage Chorus + single-movement solo piece:

IV	*Aroldo* (1857)	S
II B	*Don Carlos* (1867)	T
I	*Don Carlos* (1884)	Bass (comprimario)

C. Solo piece with prominent chorus, but there is no independent, initial chorus.
    (* = also lacking an independent opening orchestral piece):

III	*Il trovatore* (1853)	Bass (two-movement solo)
I	*Simon Boccanegra* (1857)	Bass (one-movement solo)
VI	**Simon Boccanegra* (1881)	Bass (one-movement solo)

II. More Extended *Introduzioni*

A. Based upon Chorus (possibly not at the opening) + 2-movement ensemble of *finale*
    proportions:

V	*I lombardi* (1843)
I	*Jérusalem* (1847)
V	*Stiffelio* (1850)

B. Based upon Choruses framing a small one-movement ensemble:

| V | *Macbeth* (1847, 1865) |

C. Extended, unified structures

V	*La battaglia di Legnano* (1849)
V	*Rigoletto* (1851)
V	*La traviata* (1853)
V	*Un ballo in maschera* (1859)

III. Entering *in medias res* without framing chorus

| I | *La forza del destino* (1862, 1869) |
| V | *Aida* (1871) |

APPENDIX

Excerpts from Carlo Ritorni, *Ammaestramenti alla composizione d'ogni poema e d'ogni opera appartenente alla musica* (Milan: Pirola, 1841), pp. 47-49. At this point in the treatise Ritorni sets out the rules of the modern *melodramma* without "allowing [his] pen to stray into premature criticism, as would have been its natural tendency" ("[...] senza lasciar libera la penna a precoce critica, cui sembrava naturalmente voler trascorrere." pp. 50-51). Then, unleashing his ironic pen, he attacks, on grounds of dramatic appropriateness, the "inaugural ceremony" (*proemiale ceremonia*) that is the *introduzione* (pp. 51-52).

LIII. [...] Perhaps the magnificent modern *introduzione* made it seem that one can do without the overture. Rossini having given the authoritative -- or, if one prefers, seductive -- example, it found too many adherents, and it became a convenient procedure to many-- not without complaints from the critics. For indeed that solemnity that is the *introduzione* has even greater need of a preamble that, organizing the pleasures of listening, prepares the mind for vocal harmony through simple instrumental music.

There are two types of *introduzione*. One consists of choruses, without which no one begins a modern opera. Woven into the chorus is the singing of one or more subordinate characters, and of [all] this a complete *piece* is formed--albeit a secondary one in its

performers--which functions as prologue to the drama. The other type--and this is the exquisite *introduzione*--includes one or more principal characters as well, and is an orderly musical design which in the gradation of its parts has much the same nature as a *grande scena* [i.e., an internal *finale*] and ranks lower only in the greater simplicity of the material, in its pacing, and in its placement. Thus what was said [earlier] about concerted pieces for many voices [a più parti] also applies to the composition of an *introduzione*.

LIV. After the *introduzione* it is necessary to see to the so-called entrances [sortite] of the main characters, which normally occasion [dar luogo a] three cavatinas, [each] preceded by a brief recitative, or, more often, *ex abrupto* [i.e., without this recitative]. This, their triumphal first entrance, which provokes anticipatory applause from the audience, and which allows the audience to know immediately who and how many the [principal characters] are, is so indispensable for them that [while] in some scores even the *rondò* in the second act may be sacrificed, the cavatina almost never is. The way these cavatinas clash [compete] one with the other might seem to pose a serious obstacle, but, perhaps because it is the nature of the beast [literally, intrinsic to the thing], one does not worry much about it. [It is sufficient] to effect a separation by changing the locale, varying the sets (and usually the scenes are changed about four times in each act). Thus two, or perhaps even all three of the cavatinas are set apart. Sometimes, however, two characters enter together with an *ex abrupto* duet, one with the flowing character of a cavatina. Both the characters then have an aria, that is, their cavatinas, during the course of the act.

The narration of the *antefatto* and the indispensable exposition of the action is touched upon by the *introduzione*, then a bit more is explained with the recitatives that follow the *introduzione* and the cavatinas.

[...] The breadth of the individual numbers [copia di composizione] has grown so much, with the number of pieces declining proportionately, that the first act--between the *introduzione* and the *finale*--consists of only a duet, or a pair of ensemble scenes [*pezzi dialogati*] besides the said cavatinas. Sometimes a duet between two characters is sung before the third character enters with a cavatina. [...]

LIII. [...] Forse la magnifica moderna introduzione persuase che si potesse far senza della sinfonia. Datone dal Rossini l'autorevole, o se vuolsi, seducent' esempio, ebbe poi troppi seguaci, e diventò usanza comoda a molti, non senza lagnanze de' critici. E infatti quella solennità dell'introduzione appunto richiede maggiormente un preambolo, che regolando i piaceri dell'udito, disponga l'animo colla semplice musica istrumentale all'armonia vocale.

Di due sorta è l'introduzione. L'una consiste ne' cori, senza cui non s'incomincian opere moderne; a' quali s'intreccia il canto d'uno o più interlocutori subalterni, e se ne forma un completo *pezzo*, sebben secondario ne' suoi esecutori, che fa come prologo al dramma. L'altra, ed è l'introduzione squisita, ammettendo ancora qualche primario personaggio, è un composto quadro musicale che nella graduazione delle parti tien il carattere della grande scena, e solo nella maggior semplicità de' materiali, nell'andamento, e nella sua collocazione relativamente le cede. Quanto dunque si disse de' pezzi concertati a più parti abbraccia la composizione ancora d'una introduzione.

LIV. Dopo l'introduzione bisogna pensare alle così dette sortite de' primarj personaggi, le quali sogliono dar luogo ordinariamente a tre cavatine, precedute da breve recitativo, e più spesso exabrupto. Codesto loro trionfale primo arrivare, che provoca ne' spettatori anticipati applausi, e che li fa subitamente sentire quanti e quali sono, è così per essi indispensabile, che si veggono in alcuni spartiti perfino rinunciare al rondò del second'atto, alla cavatina quasi mai. Un grave ostacolo sembrerebbe offerire il contrastamento che fanno una coll'altra

queste cavatine, ma a questo difetto, forse perchè intrinseco alla cosa, non si pon mente gran fatto. Solo s'introduce qualche distaccamento col cambiar luogo, variando scena (e le scene si sogliono rinnuovare circa quattro vo!te ogni atto). Cosi si disgiungono due, o fors' anche tutte tre le cavatine. Talora però escono due assieme con un duetto exabrupto tessuto col carattere scorrevole di cavatina. Ambo i personaggi poi hanno un'aria, ossia loro cavatina nel decorso dell'atto.

La narrazione dell'antefatto, e l'esposizione indispensabile dell'azione s'accenna coll'introduzione, poscia alcun poco più si spiega co' recitativi che seguono l'introduzione e le cavatine. [...]

È tanto cresciuta la copia di composizione, che calando proporzionatamente il numero de'*pezzi*, il primo atto, fra introduzione e finale consta solamente d'un duetto, o d'un pajo di *pezzi* dialogati, oltre le dette cavatine. Qualche volta si concerta un duetto fra due primi, avantiché esca il terzo personaggio colla cavatina. [...]