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## Verdi at 200: Recent Scholarship on the Composer and His Works

### Keywords

Giuseppe Verdi, opera

## Verdi at 200: Recent Scholarship on the Composer and His Works\*

Linda B. Fairtile

In December 2012 the Italian media were ablaze with outrage as the Teatro alla Scala inaugurated its new season with a performance of *Lohengrin*. Opening La Scala with a Wagner opera is nothing new: in 1898 Arturo Toscanini chose *Die Meistersinger* to begin his tenure as music director there. In the recent case, however, the timing struck many as a deliberate slight. Although both Verdi and Wagner were born in 1813, on the eve of their shared bicentenary Italy's most prestigious opera house selected the German for the honor of an opening night. Certainly, politics played a part in the Italian press's reaction. With the struggling economy forced to look northward for support, any whiff of German advantage was bound to rankle.

Verdi and Wagner—as men, as composers, and as cultural figures—have been linked as yin and yang since at least the 1860s. Each played a role in his country's struggle for nationhood and each became the standard bearer for its musical tradition. Recently, cultural historian Peter Conrad profiled both composers in a thick monograph called *Verdi and/or Wagner*.<sup>1</sup> Conrad's title invites readers to compare and choose between the twin subjects of his study; the latter is, of course, easy for some and impossible for others. While Verdi's generosity and comparative humility elevate him as a man, and Wagner's all-consuming ego and posthumous association with Nazism forever debase him as a cultural icon, Conrad nonetheless seems to give the nod to the German, whose music and thought aspire to the cosmic, and not simply the human.

Musicology's Teutonic origins guaranteed that the academy would not easily accept Verdi on his own merits. As is well known, Verdi scholarship gained momentum in the 1960s, after the founding of the Istituto (now, Istituto Nazionale) di Studi Verdiani in (INSV) Parma, Italy. By amassing an archive of primary source materials, publishing books and journals, and sponsoring exhibits and scholarly events, the INSV led the effort to recognize Verdi as a serious composer. In the next decade, the American Institute for Verdi Studies (AIVS) followed suit. Established at New York University, the AIVS assembled a vast microfilm archive of correspondence and performance materials, while also emulating Parma in publishing and promoting new scholarship.

Recent years have witnessed the passing of three giants who helped lay the foundations of modern Verdi studies: Julian Budden (1924–2007), who wrote the definitive historical-analytical study, *The Operas of Verdi*; Harold Powers (1928–2007), a pioneer in exploring Verdi's adaptations of operatic convention; and Pierluigi Petrobelli (1932–2012), the prolific and incisive President of the INSV. Other prominent writers on Verdi who have died in recent years include Francesco Degrada (1940–2005) and Wolfgang Osthoff (1927–

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Conrad, *Verdi and/or Wagner: Two Men, Two Worlds, Two Centuries* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

2008).<sup>2</sup> Mary Jane Phillips-Matz (1926–2013), author of the monumental *Verdi: A Biography*, and one of the founders of the AIVS, departed early in the year of the composer's bicentenary.

Publications resulting from the centennial commemoration of Verdi's death in 2001, as well as the burgeoning interest in opera studies in general, guarantee that a bibliography of recent Verdi-themed scholarship would easily reach several hundred entries. Thus the present article is, of necessity, a selective look at some recent trends and popular topics over the past decade. Readers desiring a more comprehensive account of Verdi studies through the end of 2010 should consult Gregory W. Harwood's *Giuseppe Verdi: A Research and Information Guide*, now in its second edition.<sup>3</sup> Other commentators who have reflected on recent directions in Verdi scholarship include Roberta Montemorra Marvin,<sup>4</sup> as well as Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart<sup>5</sup>.

### Conferences

After irregularly scheduled activity in the 1960–90s, Verdi conferences now seem to cluster around important anniversaries. The centennial of the composer's death, commemorated in 2001, inspired close to a dozen such gatherings. The largest by far was "Verdi 2001," jointly sponsored by the INSV, the AIVS, and Yale University. This two-week megaconference, held consecutively in Parma, New York City, and New Haven, produced a two-volume set of conference proceedings<sup>6</sup> whose thirty-three papers and seven roundtable discussions have been ably characterized by Gregory Harwood<sup>7</sup>. Among the many themes explored at this gathering were Verdi's cultural impact in Italy and beyond, the performance of his works in his own time and today, and reflections on his late style.

Additional conferences held in 2001 include "Primal Scenes: Staging and Interpreting Verdi's Operas," at the University of California at Berkeley<sup>8</sup>; "La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee," at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome<sup>9</sup>; "Verdi e la cultura tedesca, la cultura tedesca e Verdi," at the Villa Vigoni in Como<sup>10</sup>; "Verdi,

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<sup>2</sup> Shortly after this article first appeared, we also lost Martin Chusid (1925–2013), the Founding Director of the AIVS.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory W. Harwood, *Giuseppe Verdi: A Research and Information Guide*, 2d ed. Routledge Music Bibliographies (New York; Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012). First edition: *Giuseppe Verdi: A Guide to Research*, Composer Resource Manuals, 42 (New York: Garland, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Verdi Scholarship at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century," *Nineteenth-Century Studies* 15 (2001): 89–97.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart, "Verdi, 2001, and Us," *Studi Verdiani* 18 (2004): 295–312.

<sup>6</sup> Fabrizio Della Seta, Roberta Montemorra Marvin, and Marco Marica, eds., *Verdi 2001: Atti del convegno internazionale, Parma, New York, New Haven, 24 gennaio – 1 febbraio 2001*, 2 vols., *Historiae Musicae Cultores*, 94 (Florence: Olschki, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Harwood, *Giuseppe Verdi, A Research and Information Guide*, pp. xxiv, 74–75.

<sup>8</sup> Proceedings published in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002).

<sup>9</sup> Proceedings published as Francesco Degrada et al, eds., *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee, Convegno Internazionale (Roma, 29–30 novembre 2001)*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei, 193 (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings published as Markus Engelhardt et al, eds., *Verdi e la cultura tedesca, la cultura tedesca e Verdi, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Villa Vigoni, 11–13 ottobre 2001* (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2003).

l'Europe et la France," at the Opéra National du Rhin, Strasbourg<sup>11</sup>; "The Century of Victoria and Verdi: the 21st Annual Nineteenth-Century Studies Association Conference," held in Roanoke, Virginia; and "Verdi e o Mundo Operatico do Seculo XIX" ("Verdi and the Operatic World in the 19th Century"), at the Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos in Lisbon.

To celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Verdi's birth in 2013, it appears that far fewer large-scale conferences are planned: only "Verdi's Third Century: Italian Opera Today," sponsored by the AIVS and New York University (New York City), and a shared program titled "The Staging of Verdi and Wagner Operas," sponsored by the Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini (Pistoia, Italy), have been announced through the customary channels.

## Biography

Recent biographical studies have tended to focus on two areas in particular: Verdi's fiscal activity and his relationship with Giuseppina Streponi, the singer who would become his second wife. Concerning the former, the economist Paolo Panico analyzes Verdi's commercial dealings, from his earliest employment contracts through his agreements with theaters and publishers, while also addressing his contribution to the evolving concept of authors' rights.<sup>12</sup> Pierluigi Petrobelli explores what Verdi did with his earnings, proposing that his exceptional generosity towards people in need grew from the same social conscience that animates his operas.<sup>13</sup>

While Verdi earns praise as both a businessman and a philanthropist, studies of his romantic life reveal inevitable human failings. Leo Karl Gerhartz explores the nexus between art and (auto)biography in *La traviata*, tracing the exceptional centrality of Violetta's private drama to the socially unacceptable relationship between the then unmarried Verdi and Giuseppina Streponi.<sup>14</sup> Marcello Conati, too, focuses on Streponi, reviewing her brief singing career and attendant personal misfortunes, as well as her sometimes unhappy, yet ultimately fulfilling life with Verdi.<sup>15</sup>

Verdi's educational experiences have also become a popular topic of investigation. Roberta Montemorra Marvin's monograph presents a detailed study of the materials and methods employed in his own musical studies, as well as in his interactions with his sole pupil, Emanuele Muzio.<sup>16</sup> Both Marvin and Andrea Avanzini<sup>17</sup> also examine Verdi's role as

<sup>11</sup> Proceedings published as Gina Giannotti, ed., *Verdi, l'Europe et la France: Actes du Colloque pour le centième anniversaire de la mort de Giuseppe Verdi, Opéra National du Rhin, Strasbourg, 26–27 janvier 2001* (Strasbourg: Les éditions de l'Istituto Italiano di Cultura de Strasbourg, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Paolo Panico, *Verdi Businessman* (Biella: Gruppo Editoriale Atman, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Pierluigi Petrobelli, "La coscienza sociale dell'uomo Verdi," in *La sensibilità sociale di Giuseppe e Giuseppina Verdi: Dalle Società di Mutuo Soccorso alla tutela dei musicisti d'oggi*, ed. Franca Cella and Davide Daolmi, pp. 17–26, Quaderni dell'Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 6 (Milan: Casa di Riposo per Musicisti, Fondazione Giuseppe Verdi; Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Leo Karl Gerhartz, "Klangplädoyer für die humane Gesellschaft: Der Sonderfall *La traviata* in Verdis Schaffen," in "*Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*": *Opern des 19. Jahrhunderts von Beethoven bis Verdi*, ed. Hanspeter Krellmann and Jürgen Schläder, pp. 177–85 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Marcello Conati, "La sensibilità sociale e culturale di Giuseppe e Giuseppina Verdi," in *La sensibilità sociale di Giuseppe e Giuseppina Verdi*, pp. 27–36.

<sup>16</sup> Roberta Montemorra Marvin, *Verdi the Student – Verdi the Teacher*, Premio Internazionale Rotary Club di Parma "Giuseppe Verdi", 5 (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2010). An earlier version of

leader of a commission charged with overhauling the curriculum of Italian music conservatories.

### *Correspondence*

Verdi was a prolific and candid correspondent. Collections of his letters began appearing in print mere months after his death in 1901,<sup>18</sup> and the publication of previously unavailable correspondence continues unabated. A recent volume of 102 letters drawn from a private Swiss collection addresses a variety of subjects, including performers and performance practice, plans for unrealized works, the current state of Italian opera, and Verdi's final wishes concerning his estate.<sup>19</sup> Seventy of Verdi's letters to the Contessa Clara Maffei document the nearly fifty-year friendship between Verdi and this sponsor of the most stimulating artistic salon in Milan.<sup>20</sup>

Within the past decade, the INSV has issued three volumes in its *Edizione critica dell'epistolario verdiano*: the *Carteggio Verdi-Somma* (edited by Simonetta Ricciardi) in 2003, the *Carteggio Verdi-Luccardi* (edited by Laura Genesisio) in 2008, and the *Carteggio Verdi-Ricordi 1886–1888* (edited by Angelo Pompilio and Madina Ricordi) in 2010. Marco Marica considers the difficulty of creating a hypothetical critical edition of the correspondence between Verdi and his most accommodating collaborator, Francesco Maria Piave, due, most notably, to the wide dispersal of the composer's letters. Ten Verdi letters, most of them previously unpublished, are given in an appendix to Marica's essay.<sup>21</sup>

### *Documentary Materials*

Over the past decade the Ricordi publishing house, Verdi's own publisher, has issued a number of primary source materials related to his works. In 2002 they produced a deluxe facsimile of the *Otello* autograph score, together with a selection of costume and set designs, sketches of props, and other documentary materials. In the same year, Ricordi issued a critical edition of the *disposizione scenica* (staging manual) for *Un ballo in maschera* as it

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chapter 2 appeared as "Verdi Learns to Compose: The Writings of Bonifazio Asioli," *Studi Musicali* 36/2 (2007): 469–90.

<sup>17</sup> Alessandra Avanzini, "Sui conservatori d'Italia: Note a margine della proposta di Riforma del 1871," in *Giuseppe Verdi: Un profilo pedagogico*, ed. Alessandra Avanzini, pp. 70–87, La pista storica, 9 (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> The largest of these early collections of correspondence are Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio, eds., *I copialettere di Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan: Commissione Esecutiva per le Onoranze a Giuseppe Verdi, 1913; reprinted, Bologna: Forni, 1968), published to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, and the four-volume Alessandro Luzio, ed., *Carteggi verdiani*, Reale Accademia d'Italia, Studi e documenti, 4 (Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1935–47). Neither of these editions can be considered authoritative in any sense, since both contain countless inaccuracies and arbitrary cuts.

<sup>19</sup> Antonio Baldassare and Matthias von Orelli, eds. *Giuseppe Verdi: Lettere 1843–1900* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Cristina Gastel Chiarelli, ed., *Niente zucchero nel calamaio: Lettere di Giuseppe Verdi a Clara Maffei* (Milan: Archinto, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Marco Marica, "Le lettere di Verdi a Piave custodite presso l'Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano di Roma: Problemi dell'edizione critica del Carteggio Verdi-Piave," in *Pensieri per un maestro: Studi in onore di Pierluigi Petrobelli*, ed. Stefano La Via and Roger Parker, pp. 299–312, Biblioteca di cultura musicale: Documenti e saggi, 24 (Turin: EDT, 2002).

was produced at Rome's Teatro Apollo in 1859, together with set and costume designs, and essays on the history of the manual and its relationship to the La Scala production of 1862.<sup>22</sup>

Recent volumes in *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*, the critical edition of scores that Ricordi publishes jointly with the University of Chicago Press, include *Stiffelio* (edited by Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, 2003), *Macbeth* (edited by David Lawton, 2006), the *Inno popolare* and *Inno delle nazioni* (edited by Roberta Montemorra Marvin, 2007), *Giovanna d'Arco* (edited by Alberto Rizzuti, 2009), instrumental chamber music (edited by Gundula Kreuzer, 2011), and *Attila* (edited by Helen M. Greenwald, 2013). Recently issued vocal scores in the critical edition are *Il trovatore* (2002), *Il corsaro* (2003), *Luisa Miller* and *I masnadieri* (2004), *Stiffelio* and *Macbeth* (2007), and the two *Inni* (2009). In advance of his forthcoming edition of *I due Foscari*, Andreas Giger discusses two little known documents that have informed his work on that opera: an anonymous prose scenario and a copyist's score with heretofore unrecognized revisions by the composer.<sup>23</sup>

While most of the documentary materials issued in recent years have come from Ricordi, in 2008 Praesens Verlag published a German translation of letters and other documents related to *Simon Boccanegra*.<sup>24</sup> This volume also includes Antonio García Gutiérrez's play, *Simón Bocanegra*, in the original Spanish; the prose scenario that Verdi made from it; and a detailed reception history of both versions of the opera.

### *Verdi's Operas and Their Literary Sources*

Over his long career, Verdi cast a comparatively wide net in his search for operatic subjects, with Italian sources inspiring fewer of his librettos than German, English, Spanish, and especially French works. Scholarship concerning Verdi's literary sources and his methods of adapting them for the lyric stage has recently favored German drama, thanks in large part to two collections of essays.<sup>25</sup>

Unable to read the German language, Verdi acquired knowledge of its literature from a variety of sources. Pierluigi Petrobelli examines the role that Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* played in acquainting Verdi with the works of Friedrich Schiller,<sup>26</sup> while Daniela Goldin Folena traces the influence of the poet and critic August Wilhelm Schlegel on both Madame de Staël, whose salon he frequented, and on Verdi, who likely read Schlegel's commentaries in the standard Italian translation of Shakespeare.<sup>27</sup>

Verdi's operas based on Schiller's dramas—*Giovanna d'Arco* (1845), *I masnadieri* (1847), *Luisa Miller* (1849), part of *La forza del destino* (1862), and *Don Carlos* (1867) —

<sup>22</sup> David Rosen and Marinella Pigozzi, eds. *'Un ballo in maschera' di Giuseppe Verdi*, Musica e spettacolo (Milan: Ricordi, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Andreas Giger, "Notes on Verdi's *I due Foscari*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 24/1 (2012): 99–126.

<sup>24</sup> Christian Springer, ed., *Giuseppe Verdi, Simon Boccanegra: Dokumente—Materialien—Texte zur Entstehung und Rezeption der beiden Fassungen* (Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Daniela Goldin Folena and Wolfgang Osthoff, eds., *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur / Verdi e la letteratura tedesca: Tagung im Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani, Venedig 20.–21. November 1997*, Thurnauer Schriften zum Musiktheater, 19 (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2002); Helen Geyer and Wolfgang Osthoff, eds., *Schiller und die Musik*, Schriftenreihe der Hochschule für Musik :Franz Liszt", 4 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Pierluigi Petrobelli, "Verdi e Madame de Staël," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 153–64.

<sup>27</sup> Daniela Goldin Folena, "Verdi e il Corso di letteratura drammatica di August Wilhelm Schlegel," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 165–90.

have increasingly captured scholarly attention. Dieter Borchmeyer<sup>28</sup> and Gilles de Van<sup>29</sup> both discover parallels between the dramaturgy of Schiller and of Verdi, with de Van focusing on familial tensions resulting from the conflict between public duty and private happiness. In another study, de Van discusses how Salvatore Cammarano transformed Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* into a libretto for *Luisa Miller* by softening depictions of the heroine and her father and moving them from a bourgeois to a semi-rural setting.<sup>30</sup> The resulting mix of political conflict and French-style melodrama produced an *opera semi-seria*. Marcello Conati remarks that in *Luisa Miller* Verdi emphasizes personal and familial tragedy at the expense of Schiller's social criticism<sup>31</sup>; interestingly Annamária Szilágyi makes a similar observation about the relationship between *Il trovatore* (written only four years later) and its literary source, Antonio García Gutiérrez's *El trovador*.<sup>32</sup>

Verdi's transformation of Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orléans* into *Giovanna d'Arco* is the subject of several recent studies. Maria Nadia Bitante emphasizes differences between the two works, especially as the opera de-emphasizes the original drama's pastoral and miraculous features in order to appeal to a Risorgimental audience.<sup>33</sup> Cristina Ricca compares the two title characters, observing that Schiller's heroine is fundamentally a warrior, while Verdi's is, above all, a loving woman.<sup>34</sup> Mercedes Viale Ferrero's generously illustrated essays compare earlier operatic and balletic adaptations of Schiller's drama to Verdi's opera, concluding that despite significant divergences, each demonstrates an exceptionally effective scenic vision that is epitomized by the coronation scene.<sup>35</sup>

Verdi based five operas on the works of English playwrights, Lord Byron and William Shakespeare. Verdi's admiration for Shakespeare is well known, and his settings of the Bard's plays are among his most esteemed works. As a result, the Shakespearean operas that Verdi did *not* write have long fascinated scholars. In a sprawling essay the Austrian music critic Christian Springer addresses differences in characterization and tone between *Macbeth*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff* and the plays that inspired them, before concentrating on Verdi's three unrealized Shakespeare projects, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, and *King Lear*.<sup>36</sup> Giorgio Melchiori compares the aesthetic position of Italian opera in the early 1800s to that of drama in Elizabethan times, noting that Verdi's affinity for Shakespeare depended to a large extent on the ability of his librettist: hence the extraordinary success of *Otello* and

<sup>28</sup> Dieter Borchmeyer, "Schiller und Verdi oder die Geburt des Dramas aus dem Geiste der Oper," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 21–37.

<sup>29</sup> Gilles de Van, "Padre e figlio in Verdi e Schiller," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 191–98.

<sup>30</sup> Gilles de Van, "Luisa Miller fra Schiller e Verdi," in *Schiller und die Musik*, pp. 211–15.

<sup>31</sup> Marcello Conati, "A proposito di *Luisa Miller*," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 201–16.

<sup>32</sup> Annamária Szilágyi, "Sulla caratterizzazione del personaggi in dramma e melodramma: *Il trovatore* di Gutiérrez e Verdi," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 42/4 (2008): 477–98.

<sup>33</sup> Maria Nadia Bitante, "Die Jungfrau von Orleans di Schiller e *Giovanna d'Arco* di Solera e Verdi," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 55–68.

<sup>34</sup> Cristina Ricca, "Schillers 'Salto mortale in eine Opernwelt': Dramaturgische Betrachtungen zur Oper *Giovanna d'Arco* von Solera und Verdi," in *Schiller und die Musik*, pp. 123–31.

<sup>35</sup> Mercedes Viale Ferrero, "Giovanna d'Arco o dell'efficacia della visione scenica di Schiller," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 227–55. Also "Giovanna d'Arco in palcoscenico: Dal dramma di Schiller al ballo di Viganò all'opera di Verdi," in *Schiller und die Musik*, pp. 133–48.

<sup>36</sup> Christian Springer, "Shakespeare und Verdis Opernlibretti," in *Verdi-Studien*, pp. 309–409 (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2005).



*Falstaff* and the nonexistence of *King Lear*.<sup>37</sup> In a twist on the customary use of correspondence to document compositional process, Philip Gossett cites the indifferent tone of Verdi's letters to Antonio Somma to confirm that no music was ever composed for the latter's *King Lear* libretto.<sup>38</sup>

Scholars with training in both music and English literature are frequently drawn to Verdi's Shakespeare operas. Christoph Clausen's monograph approaches *Macbeth* from the dual perspectives of Shakespeare criticism and musicology, exploring both play and opera in their own contexts before confronting the meanings that are shared by both. Witchcraft and politics are at the center of this challenging study.<sup>39</sup>

Although nearly half of Verdi's operas are based on French sources, recent studies of the adaptation process focus on only two dramas. Alessandro Di Profio considers *Ernani*'s French premiere, under the title *Il proscritto*, in light of the scandalous reception accorded its literary source, Victor Hugo's *Hernani*.<sup>40</sup> While Di Profio contrasts the aesthetics of *drame romantique* with those of Italian opera, Damien Colas, inspired by a later review that described *Hernani* in musical terms, discovers "operatic" traits that link the play to *Il proscritto*.<sup>41</sup> Addressing Verdi's adaptation of Alexandre Dumas fils's *La Dame aux camélias*, Roger Parker asks how *La traviata*, as a work of music, might be perceived as sharing meaningful aesthetic qualities with the realistic drama that inspired it.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Text and Libretto Studies***

Studies that focus on the texts of Verdi's operas—aspects of their creation or their particular use of language—have been numerous in the past decade. Owing to the interrelationship of textual and musical forms in nineteenth-century Italian opera, the crafting of a libretto became, in a sense, the first step in composition. Alessandro Roccatagliati investigates Verdi's involvement in the creation of his librettos, his influence on both the choice of a subject and the formation of dramatic and poetic structures, and his cultivation of a variety of working relationships with his collaborators.<sup>43</sup> Vittorio Coletti examines the high-flown language that is typical of Verdian librettos, arguing that its archaic quality suits the outdated plots and extreme emotions, and encourages text and music to be synchronized with stylized

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<sup>37</sup> Giorgio Melchiori, "Shakespeare e Verdi: due drammaturgie all'opera," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 9–20.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Gossett, "The Hot and the Cold: Verdi Writes to Antonio Somma about *Re Lear*," in *Variations on the Canon: Essays on Music from Bach to Boulez in Honor of Charles Rosen on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Robert Curry et al, pp. 207–24, Eastman Studies in Music, 58 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> Christoph Clausen, *Macbeth Multiplied: Negotiating Historical and Medial Difference Between Shakespeare and Verdi*, Internationale Forschungen zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, 93 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Alessandro Di Profio, "'Ernani in gondoletta': La ricezione de *Il proscritto* a Parigi (Théâtre Italien, 1846), Victor Hugo e lo spettro del teatro francese," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 149–90.

<sup>41</sup> Damien Colas, "Victor Hugo, *Hernani*, e l'estetica del melodramma ottocentesco," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 91–147.

<sup>42</sup> Roger Parker, "Verdi and Verismo: The Case of *La traviata*," in *Music, Libraries, and the Academy: Essays in Honor of Lenore Coral*, ed. James P. Cassaro, pp. 215–22 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Alessandro Roccatagliati, "Verdi e i suoi libretti: Una messa a fuoco," *Musica e storia* 17/2 (2009): 353–76.

gestures.<sup>44</sup> In light of the composer's active participation in fashioning his texts, Michel Beretti defends Verdi's librettists, and Francesco Maria Piave in particular, against charges that their efforts were unworthy of the composer's musical settings.<sup>45</sup> Owing to his relative inexperience, Piave was often the target of criticism, even from Verdi. After examining the powerful tone and unusual poetic structures in Temistocle Solera's incomplete libretto for *Attila*, Francesco Izzo details the librettist's angry response to the conclusion supplied by Piave.<sup>46</sup>

A number of scholars have recently considered the libretto for *I masnadieri*, written by Verdi's friend, the poet and translator Andrea Maffei. Roberta Montemorra Marvin analyzes their sparsely documented collaboration, and especially Maffei's responsibility for the failure of a work that he seems to have looked down upon.<sup>47</sup> Birgit Schmidt compares corresponding scenes in *I masnadieri* and in its literary source, Schiller's *Die Räuber*, to illuminate Maffei's efforts to craft a libretto from the idiosyncratically constructed drama.<sup>48</sup> Peter Ross notes Maffei's unusual faithfulness to Schiller's original structure and verse types, which, in turn, inspired Verdi to experiment with musical conventions.<sup>49</sup>

Analyses of nineteenth-century librettos benefit from a broad familiarity with literature. Pierluigi Petrobelli identifies numerous passages in Antonio Ghislanzoni's libretto for *Aida* that strongly resemble phrases or situations in spoken tragedies by the Duke of Ventignano.<sup>50</sup> He posits that other Verdian librettos are similarly full of literary allusions that scholars are only now beginning to grasp. One author who meets that challenge is the classical scholar Michele Curnis, who traces literary allusions in Antonio Somma's libretto for *Un ballo in maschera* to works by Dante and by Virgil.<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, many of these bizarre references are related to the character of the sorceress, Ulrica. In a similar vein, Denise Gallo studies the Italian and French translations of Shakespeare that left their mark on Boito's *Falstaff* libretto.<sup>52</sup> Each of these sources offers an outline of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* featuring dramatic improvements that have long been credited to Boito.

Verdi's operas composed for the Parisian stage contain a number of stylistic features,

<sup>44</sup> Vittorio Coletti, "Il gesto della parola: La lingua nel melodramma e nei libretti verdiani," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 41–57.

<sup>45</sup> Michel Beretti, "Livrets et librettistes de Verdi," in *Verdi, l'Europe et la France*, pp. 99–113.

<sup>46</sup> Francesco Izzo, "Verdi, Solera, Piave and the Libretto for *Attila*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21/3 (2009): 257–65.

<sup>47</sup> Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Andrea Maffei's 'Ugly Sin': The Libretto for Verdi's *I masnadieri*," in *Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations*, ed. Stephen A. Crist and Roberta Montemorra Marvin, pp. 280–302, Eastman Studies in Music, 28 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Birgit Schmidt, "... Wenn ihr das Herz nicht habt, etwas grosses zu wagen! Ein Vergleich der Exposition von Schillers *Räubern* (I, 1 und I, 2) und Verdis *Masnadieri* (I, 1)," in *Schiller und die Musik*, pp. 211–15.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Ross, "Der Dichter als Librettist – Andrea Maffei's Textbuch zu Verdis *I masnadieri*," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 117–51.

<sup>50</sup> Pierluigi Petrobelli, "Altri modelli linguistici per il libretto di *Aida*," in "*Finché non splende in ciel notturna face*": *Studi in memoria di Francesco Degrada*, ed. Cesare Fertonani et al., pp. 299–305 (Milan: LED, 2009). Reprinted, in English translation, as "Other Literary Models for the *Aida* Libretto," *Verdi Forum* 34 (2007): 3–8.

<sup>51</sup> Michele Curnis, "Salamandre ignivore... orme di passi": Sul libretto di *Un ballo in maschera*, *Studi Verdiani* 17 (2003): 166–92.

<sup>52</sup> Denise Gallo, "Repatriating *Falstaff*: Boito, Verdi and Shakespeare (in Translation)," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 7/2 (2010): 7–34. [Reprinted, with minor modifications, in *Verdi Forum* 37–38 (2010–2011): 35–62.]

such as a five-act structure and prominent ballet, that catered to French tastes. Perhaps more significant in the long run is the effect that setting French texts had on Verdi's compositional development. Andreas Giger's work illuminates stylistic differences between the vocal melodies in Verdi's French and Italian operas.<sup>53</sup> Giger studied versification treatises, as well as Verdi's musical settings, to determine how the composer assimilated the irregular line lengths and accent patterns of French poetic texts into melodies with regular phrase lengths. To a similar end, Kitty Messina compares Auber's *Gustave III* to Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, analyzing the metric choices made by Scribe and by Somma, respectively, in order to detect the influence of French textual structures on Verdi's Italian operas.<sup>54</sup>

### *Compositional Process and Revision*

Verdi's compositional method, from preliminary sketching to post-performance revision, has been well documented, and has even inspired its own vocabulary. In recent years, scholars have addressed every step of the process. Alberto Rizzuti draws on Verdi's newly published sketches for *La traviata* to illustrate how appearances of the "Di quell'amor" melody coincide with structurally significant positions in the opera, although the passage no longer appears in the Preludio, thanks to a shift in dramatic emphasis.<sup>55</sup>

Philip Gossett focuses on Verdi's skeleton score (the initial layer of the full score, consisting of the bassline, vocal parts, and sporadic instrumental solos) for *Una vendetta in dominò*, a heavily censored precursor of *Un ballo in maschera*.<sup>56</sup> He describes the work's tortured genesis and reveals that the "lost" *Una vendetta* can be largely reconstructed from the *Ballo* autograph. In a later publication, Gossett corrects the mischaracterization of skeleton score fragments related to *I due Foscari* and to *Attila*.<sup>57</sup> Fabrizio Della Seta explores Verdi's compositional process in *Il trovatore*, which seems to have been drafted in a less continuous manner than the much-studied *Rigoletto*.<sup>58</sup> Focusing on the same period, Roger Parker recounts the overlapping compositional histories of *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*,

<sup>53</sup> Andreas Giger, "The Triumph of Diversity: Theories of French Accentuation and Their Influence on Verdi's French Operas," *Music & Letters* 84/1(2003): 55–83. Also, Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic: Verse, Stanza, and Melody in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Kitty Messina, "I versi in ballo. Da *Gustave III* ou *Le bal masque* a *Un ballo in maschera*: Sulle scelte metriche del medio periodo verdiano," *Studi Verdiani* 21 (2008–2009): 17–72.

<sup>55</sup> Alberto Rizzuti, "'Misterioso, alter(at)o,' ossia: Il potere dell' enarmonia," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 44/4 (2010): 477–84.

<sup>56</sup> Philip Gossett, "The Skeleton Score of *Una vendetta in dominò*: Two Surviving Fragments," *Notes* 64/3 (2008): 417–34. Reprinted in "*Finché non splende in ciel notturna face*," pp. 187–202.

<sup>57</sup> Philip Gossett, "Verdi's 'Skeleton Scores,'" in *Noter, annoter, éditer la musique: Mélanges offerts à Catherine Massip*, ed. Cécile Reynaud and Herbert Schneider, pp. 513–23, *Hautes études médiévales et modernes* (Geneva: Droz, 2012). Reprinted, with minor modifications, in *Verdi Forum* 35–36 (2008–2009): 5–14.

<sup>58</sup> Fabrizio Della Seta, "'D'amor sull'ali rosee': Analisi della melodia e prospettiva genetica," in "*Finché non splende in ciel notturna face*," pp. 113–36. Reprinted, in English translation, as "'D'amor sull'ali rosee': Analyzing Melody and the Creative Process," in Fabrizio Della Seta, *Not without Madness: Perspectives on Opera*, trans. Mark Weir, pp. 96–115 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). This volume also reprints, in most cases for the first time in English, several of Della Seta's essays on Verdi originally published in the 1980s and 1990s.

identifying one passage in each opera where the other seemingly intrudes.<sup>59</sup> Such uncanny correspondences, he writes, suggest that musical creation may be a less controllable act than scholars would like to believe.

Recent studies of Verdi's revision practices tend to focus on his French operas. Arrigo Quattrocchi examines the speedy transformation of *I Lombardi* into *Jérusalem*, as Verdi, his librettists, and the management of the Paris Opéra adapted the Italian work to the conventions of grand opera.<sup>60</sup> Roger Parker uses the heavily revised scene for Philippe and Posa, from Act II of *Don Carlos*, as a catalyst to consider the act of revision: is the resulting mixture of musical styles disruptive or does it serve to renew an older work?<sup>61</sup> Looking at the same passage, Peter Cahn compares Verdi's difficulties with the scene to Schiller's, arguing that this confrontation, in successively less conventional guises, represents the dramatic heart of the story.<sup>62</sup> Giuseppe Pintorno offers close readings of texts from Verdi's operas that exist in multiple versions, whether due to adaptation for the Paris Opéra or self-motivated revision.<sup>63</sup> The resulting changes in characterization and dramatic emphasis, he proposes, do not always represent improvements.

Verdi's revisions to his Italian-texted operas have also drawn attention. Emanuele Senici compares the original and two alternate versions of Foresto's romanza from the third act of *Attila*.<sup>64</sup> Verdi composed the substitute arias for two different tenors, and each of the three versions employs a different rhetorical strategy. Jürgen Schläder compares the conclusions of *Macbeth* in the 1847 setting, which emphasizes the title character's personal downfall, and the 1865 revision, which, like Shakespeare's original, focuses on the triumphant restoration of the old order.<sup>65</sup>

### *Analysis and the Uses of Convention*

For much of the last century, Verdi's output was typically judged (and found deficient) in accordance with Germanic standards of unity and organic development.<sup>66</sup> Analysis of his operas based on their relationship to distinctively Italian operatic convention—*la solita forma*—peaked in the late 1980s, but examples can still be found today. Daniele Carnini groups Verdi's varied uses of the *concertato* (an ensemble reaction to the revelation of

<sup>59</sup> Roger Parker, "Of Andalusian Maidens and Recognition Scenes: Crossed Wires in *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*," in Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions from Handel to Berio*, pp. 22–41, Ernest Bloch Lectures, 13 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>60</sup> Arrigo Quattrocchi, "L'Ermite": Verdi entra alla 'Grande Boutique'," in *Pensieri per un maestro*, pp. 289–98.

<sup>61</sup> Roger Parker, "Philippe and Posa Act II: The Shock of the New," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 133–47. Parker explores this topic further in *Remaking the Song*, especially the chapter titled "In Search of Verdi," pp. 67–89.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Cahn, "Die Szene Filippo-Posa in Verdis *Don Carlos*," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 249–77.

<sup>63</sup> Giuseppe Pintorno, "L'importanza della lingua nelle opera di Verdi," in *Verdi, l'Europe et la France*, pp. 115–31.

<sup>64</sup> Emanuele Senici, "Per Guasco, Ivanoff e Moriani: Le tre versioni della romanza di Foresto nell'*Attila*," in *Pensieri per un maestro*, pp. 273–88.

<sup>65</sup> Jürgen Schläder, "Individualtragödie gegen gesellschaftliche Utopie: Zu den beiden Schlüssen in Verdis *Macbeth*," in "*Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*," pp. 158–66.

<sup>66</sup> See Steven Huebner, "Structural Coherence," in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, ed. Scott L. Balthazar, pp. 139–53, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) for an examination of the cultural and temporal relevance of coherence in Verdi's operas.

fundamental dramatic details) into categories that depend on the presence of individualized responses and on the types of musical textures and structures employed.<sup>67</sup> Paolo Russo describes an unconventional use of the coda in *Ernani*: since recitatives are minimal in this opera, key plot details are sometimes revealed in “static” musical numbers, and emotional reactions are postponed to the final, tonally inert measures.<sup>68</sup>

Convention influenced Verdi's choices not only in the musical sense, but also with regard to dramatic expression, and several recent studies consider his use of common dramatic tropes. Claudio Toscani considers Verdi's use of the *racconto*, a musically distinct passage in which dramatic time is suspended while a character narrates a past event, dream, or premonition.<sup>69</sup> Acknowledging the somewhat checkered critical reaction to operatic curses, Gary Tomlinson identifies the curse in *Simon Boccanegra*'s council chamber scene as a particularly effective moment of dramatic, musical, and visual convergence.<sup>70</sup> Shiamin Kwa investigates the tropes of the joke, the curse, and the vow of love in *Rigoletto*, concluding that the opera's tragic conclusion grows from incompatible conceptions of words and their meaning.<sup>71</sup> The representation of verbal deception is the theme of David Rosen's study, in which he examines numerous scenes to determine whether Verdi's music “lies” along with the characters or reveals their falsehood.<sup>72</sup>

Today, scholars apply a variety of analytical approaches, sometimes building on the notion of convention. In a penetrating study of Verdi's late style, Antonio Rostagno interprets the melting away of conventional forms in *Otello* as a symbol of both the title character's crumbling reality and the Italian nation's abandonment of Risorgimental ideals.<sup>73</sup> Paolo Gallarati accepts the usefulness of measuring Verdi's closed numbers against conventional models, but he also advocates for what he calls “rationalist-deductive” and “realistic-inductive” methods of analysis.<sup>74</sup>

Another common analytical method focuses on melodies or musical motives. Friedrich Lippmann uses Bellini's famously long melodic structures as a point of comparison for Verdi's, observing that the latter employs extended melodies as psychological portraits of his suffering heroines.<sup>75</sup> Anselm Gerhard applies melodic analysis to arias and duets from several of Verdi's later operas, noting significant distinctions between Italian- and French-texted works, to uncover correspondences of characterization and situation.<sup>76</sup> In her revised

<sup>67</sup> Daniele Carnini, “I concertati nelle opera di Verdi,” *Studi Verdiani* 17 (2003): 70–109.

<sup>68</sup> Paolo Russo, “Le code d'*Ernani*,” *Studi Verdiani* 22 (2010–2011): 11–26.

<sup>69</sup> Claudio Toscani, “‘Odi, ed inarca il ciglio!’: Tecniche del racconto nel teatro verdiano,” *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 209–20.

<sup>70</sup> Gary Tomlinson, “Learning to Curse at Sixty-Seven,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 229–41.

<sup>71</sup> Shiamin Kwa, “The Unbearable Lightness of Meaning in Verdi's *Rigoletto*,” *Verdi Forum* 30–31 (2003–2004): 26–36.

<sup>72</sup> David B. Rosen, “‘Mentir cantando’: Verdi's Deception Scenes,” in *Pensieri per un maestro*, pp. 313–33. Revised and expanded as “‘Gonfia di gioia ho il core’ (*piange*): Verdi's Deception Scenes,” *Verdi Forum* 32–33 (2005–2006): 3–52.

<sup>73</sup> Antonio Rostagno, “*Otello*, le novità dello stile tardo di Verdi,” *Studi Verdiani* 22 (2010–2011): 27–72.

<sup>74</sup> Paolo Gallarati, “Oltre la solita forma,” *Il saggiautore musicale* 16/2 (2009): 203–44.

<sup>75</sup> Friedrich Lippmann, “Verdi und die ‘melodia lunga lunga lunga’,” *Studi Verdiani* 17 (2003): 11–69.

<sup>76</sup> Anselm Gerhard, “Il primato della melodia: Riflessioni sull'analisi del dettaglio musicale nelle opera di Verdi,” *Studi Verdiani* 18 (2004): 313–31. Revised as “Der Primat der Melodie: Überlegungen zur Analyse des musikalischen Details in Verdis Opern,” *Die Musikforschung* 59/4 (2006): 311–27.

doctoral dissertation, Ingrid Czaika contrasts Verdi's use of recurring musical motives in his first sixteen operas with analogous techniques employed by Meyerbeer and by Wagner.<sup>77</sup> Julian Budden discusses the *tinta*—the collection of musical elements that give each opera its characteristic sound—that Verdi devised for *Don Carlos*, exemplified by an expressive four-note melodic figure.<sup>78</sup> Drawing on recent analytical models, William Rothstein examines the musical and dramatic significance of particular pitches, motivic gestures, and tonalities in the original version of *La forza del destino*.<sup>79</sup>

Meter and tempo have also been considered as structural markers in Verdi's works. David Rosen asks whether the web of tempo relationships found in his operas beginning with *Attila* (the first to include metronome markings) has structural or semantic significance.<sup>80</sup> William Rothstein observes that the particular interaction of verse meter and musical meter in nineteenth-century Italian opera renders it resistant to the metrical theories of Fred Lehrdahl and Ray Jackendoff, which are inherently configured for German music.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Rothstein concludes, expressions of musical meter are culturally dependent.

### *Dramatic Themes*

Verdi was one of the first operatic composers to explore psychological themes such as dreaming and interiority, often in conjunction with the supernatural. Perhaps not surprisingly, *Macbeth* is the opera that is most frequently associated with fantasy and abnormal psychology. Jane Bernstein<sup>82</sup> and Daniel Albright<sup>83</sup> both find that Verdi bent the conventions of Italian opera in order to depict fantastical elements such as the weirdness of Shakespeare's witches and the diabolically transgressive nature of Lady Macbeth. In her study of the Act I duet for Macbeth and his wife, Elizabeth Hudson traces Verdi's melding of exterior and interior worlds to reflect the characters' altered mental states.<sup>84</sup> David J. Levin instead maintains that *Macbeth*'s depictions of interiority seem strangely empty, leaving the externally active protagonists with a hollow core that reflects their personal mediocrity; Levin believes that Pamela Rosenberg's intention to portray this dichotomy led the San Francisco Opera to cancel her 2004 production of the opera.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Ingrid Czaika, *Frühe Verdi-Motivik: Charakterisierungsmethoden in den frühen Opern von Oberto bis Rigoletto*, Musikwissenschaft, 10 (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2006).

<sup>78</sup> Julian Budden, "Don Carlos: The Four-Note Matrix," in *Words on Music: Essays in Honor of Andrew Porter on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday*, ed. David Rosen and Claire Brook, pp. 30–36 (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2003).

<sup>79</sup> William Rothstein, "Motive, Key, *Sonorità*, and *Tinta* in *La forza del destino* (1862)," *Verdi Forum* 35–36 (2008–2009): 15–31.

<sup>80</sup> David B. Rosen, "Tempo as a Structural Element in Verdi's Operas?" in *Words on Music*, pp. 284–99.

<sup>81</sup> William Rothstein, "Metrical Theory and Verdi's Midcentury Operas," *Dutch Journal of Music Theory / Tijdschrift Voor Muziektheorie* 16/2 (2011): 93–111.

<sup>82</sup> Jane Bernstein, "'Bewitched, bothered and bewildered': Lady Macbeth, Sleepwalking, and the Demonic in Verdi's Scottish Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 31–46.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel Albright, "The Witches and the Witch: Verdi's *Macbeth*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17/3 (2005): 225–52.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Hudson, "'...Qualche cosa d'incredibile...': Hearing the Invisible in *Macbeth*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 11–19.

<sup>85</sup> David J. Levin, "Opera Out of Performance: Verdi's *Macbeth* at San Francisco Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16/3 (2004): 249–67.

Interiority is also a common theme in studies of Verdi's other operas. Carlos Maria Solare explores musical portrayals of interiority in the form of dreams depicted or described in *I Lombardi*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *Attila*.<sup>86</sup> Melina Esse examines arias from *Il corsaro* and *Un ballo in maschera* that pair intense interior struggle with disembodied, instrumental "weeping" to strikingly different dramatic effect.<sup>87</sup> Alessandra Campana brings a similar association to *Simon Boccanegra*, likening this opera's abundant narratives to ghosts mediating between the present and a sometimes idealized past.<sup>88</sup>

### Gender Issues

Like other opera composers, Verdi has undergone considerable scrutiny for his treatment of female characters, though the topic seems less prevalent in recent years. Joseph Kerman observes that in the six stage works written between 1849 and 1853 (*La battaglia di Legnano*, *Luisa Miller*, *Stiffelio*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*), Verdi punishes his heroines for their sexual transgressions, perhaps subconsciously reflecting his new romantic relationship with the "fallen" Giuseppina Strepponi.<sup>89</sup> Jürgen Schläder explores a theme that begins to emerge in Verdi's operas of this period: trapped between propriety and personal happiness, a woman dies believing—in vain, it turns out—that her demise will benefit the man she leaves behind.<sup>90</sup>

The transgression of gender stereotypes is the subject of Heather Hadlock's study of *Il corsaro*, in which a female hero violently rescues herself and the opera's unexpectedly passive male protagonist from captivity.<sup>91</sup> Exploring Verdi's penultimate opera, *Otello*, Scott L. Balthazar identifies two sides of Desdemona's personality, observing that while her "girlish" demeanor calms her enraged husband, expressing her womanly and sensual nature only serves to fuel his fatal jealousy.<sup>92</sup>

The study of male characters and operatic masculinity is gaining in popularity. Addressing this theme in its broadest sense, Susan Rutherford identifies Verdi's use of dramatic conflict, with music that agitates, disturbs, and provokes the audience, as part of a new aural code of virility in a developing bourgeois society.<sup>93</sup> In many studies the male characters defy stereotypes and gender-based expectations. In a brief yet dense monograph,

<sup>86</sup> Carlos Maria Solare, "'È sogno? o realtà?'" Träume und Traumerzählungen in Giuseppe Verdis Opern," in *Traum und Wirklichkeit in Theater und Musiktheater: Vorträge und Gespräche des Salzburger Symposions 2004*, ed. Peter Csobádi et al, pp. 311–21, Wort und Musik, 62 (Anif/Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, 2006).

<sup>87</sup> Melina Esse, "'Chi piange, qual forza m'arretra?': Verdi's Interior Voices," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 59–78.

<sup>88</sup> Alessandra Campana, "Comparing Notes: Amelia/Maria and the 'larve del passato'," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 211–27.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Kerman, "Verdi and the Undoing of Women," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18/1 (2006): 21–31.

<sup>90</sup> Jürgen Schläder, "Die sinnlos-süssen Opfer und ihre Verklärung: Frauenrollen in Verdis Opern seit 1850," in *Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*, pp. 278–90.

<sup>91</sup> Heather Hadlock, "'The Firmness of a Female Hand' in *The Corsair* and *Il corsaro*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 47–57.

<sup>92</sup> Scott L. Balthazar, "Desdemona's Alienation and Otello's Fall," in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, pp. 237–54.

<sup>93</sup> Susan Rutherford, "'Il grido dell'anima' or Un modo di sentire": Verdi, Masculinity and the Risorgimento," *Studi Verdiani* 19 (2005): 107–21.

David A.J. Richards draws on the gender theories of Carol Gilligan to explain how Verdi's male characters navigate the troubled space between patriarchal authority and democratic expression.<sup>94</sup> Jürgen Schläder tackles the representation of heroes in Verdi's late operas, arguing that Desdemona's murder represents a moment of psychological transformation for Otello, since her death brings him clarity and restores his love.<sup>95</sup> He posits that this new type of Verdian hero, capable of reflecting on the final catastrophe, first emerged in *Aida* and might have been influenced by Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*.

Other authors focus on individual operas and the restrictive conditions that society imposes on their male protagonists. Noting that Verdi was pressured to cast Ernani as a mezzo-soprano *en travesti*, Rosa Solinas considers his indulgent, diva-like personality and wavering sense of self.<sup>96</sup> Ralph Hexter relates the story of Sweden's King Gustaf III and his fictitious representations, which reveal the monarch's only partially masked homosexuality, and which Hexter suggests were inspirations for the male protagonist in *Un ballo in maschera*.<sup>97</sup> David Rosen explores how Posa's death motivates the emotionally paralyzed Don Carlos, as text and music convey the latter's new sense of self-discipline and purpose.<sup>98</sup>

Two recent studies address gender issues in novel ways. Luca Serianni offers a lexicon of key terms and phrases common to Italian opera librettos, which Verdi applies differently depending on the character's gender.<sup>99</sup> Emanuele Senici's close reading of the Riccardo/Amelia duet in *Un ballo in maschera* relates it to other operatic seduction scenes and notes the lovers' penchant for role reversal.<sup>100</sup>

### *Studies of Individual Operas*

While each of Verdi's operas has been the object of study over the past decade, three works have clearly captured the scholarly imagination: *Don Carlos* for its *grand opéra* conventions, melancholy atmosphere, and convoluted revision history; *Aida* for its exoticism and complex layers of race and nationhood; and *Falstaff* for its genre-bending, modernity, and status as Verdi's final opera.

Gloria Staffieri calls *Don Carlos*, based on the tragedy by Friedrich Schiller, "perhaps the most elusive and enigmatic" of Verdi's operas.<sup>101</sup> She examines its genesis and repeated revision, concluding that Verdi's intense preoccupation with the libretto exposes him as its real author, and proposing that his use of "double action" is derived from Victor Hugo's analysis of Shakespeare's works. Udo Bermbach also explores this opera's compositional

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<sup>94</sup> David A. J. Richards, *Tragic Manhood and Democracy: Verdi's Voice and the Power of Musical Art* (Brighton, UK; Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2004).

<sup>95</sup> Jürgen Schläder, "Die Verklärung des Heroen im Liebestod: Das neue Heldenkonzept in Verdis *Otello*," in "*Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*," pp. 243–52.

<sup>96</sup> Rosa Solinas, "Ernani: The Tenor in Crisis," in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, pp. 185–96.

<sup>97</sup> Ralph Hexter, "Masked Balls," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 93–108.

<sup>98</sup> David B. Rosen, "Don Carlos as *Bildungsoper*: Carlos's Last Act," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 109–31.

<sup>99</sup> Luca Serianni, "Maschile e femminile nella librettistica verdiana," in *Dal libro al libretto: La letteratura per musica dal '700 al '900*, ed. Mariasilvia Tatti, pp. 145–63 (Rome: Bulzoni, 2005).

<sup>100</sup> Emanuele Senici, "'Teco io sto': Strategies of Seduction in Act II of *Un ballo in maschera*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 79–92.

<sup>101</sup> Gloria Staffieri, "'L'action traînant sa lune': Note sulla drammaturgia del *Don Carlos*," *Pensieri per un maestro*, pp. 335–48.



history, blaming its initial failure on its pervasive tone of resignation and inaction.<sup>102</sup> David J. Levin surveys the different versions of *Don Carlos*, proposing a hybrid that combines the Paris and Modena versions.<sup>103</sup> He offers an interpretation of plot, characterization, relationships, and musical details that would influence the staging and interpretation of the work. The opera's conclusion is the subject of Adriano Cavicchi's study, in which he argues in favor of the original, supernatural ending on the grounds that Verdi believed it would compensate for the lack of spectacle in Schiller's drama.<sup>104</sup>

The characters in *Don Carlos* have been discussed by several authors. According to Uwe Schweikert, each lives in the shadow of death, either literally or through the language that they choose to describe their struggles.<sup>105</sup> The tragic Elisabeth of Valois is the subject of Daniela Goldin Folena's study, which draws on historical depictions, Schiller's drama, and the two scenarios prepared for Verdi's use, as well as the opera itself.<sup>106</sup> Jens Malte Fischer examines dramatically parallel confrontations involving church and state, in which two characters discuss an absent third party.<sup>107</sup>

Edward Said famously dismissed *Aida* as an Orientalist fantasy, but scholars continue to debate its elaborate cultural intersections. Christopher R. Gauthier and Jennifer McFarlane-Harris view the opera's 1871 premiere from the perspective of the Egyptian audience, who found themselves portrayed as the dominant power, with Ethiopians as the exploited Other.<sup>108</sup> Ralph P. Locke investigates textual and musical symbols that, while not meeting the textbook definition of "exotic," nonetheless convey the essence of imperial Egyptians and conquered Ethiopians, with the latter functioning as surrogates for Verdi's own experience with colonial domination.<sup>109</sup> In later studies Locke surveys a range of interpretations, from the literal to the metaphorical, which focus on *Aida*'s portrayals of the conquerors and the conquered.<sup>110</sup> Steven Huebner considers the ambiguous role played by patriotism, as reflected in Radames' blind narcissism, *Aida*'s agonizingly divided loyalty, and the work's wider cultural significance.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Udo Bernbach, "Zwischen Inquisition und Freiheit: Zum Kernkonflikt in Verdis *Don Carlos*," in *Opernsplitter: Aufsätze, Essays*, pp. 127–40 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).

<sup>103</sup> David J. Levin, "Between Sublimation and Audacity: Verdi's *Don Carlos*," in his *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*, pp. 136–76 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>104</sup> Adriano Cavicchi, "Ipotesi interpretative sulle diverse versioni del finale di *Don Carlo*," in *Verdi und die deutsche Literatur*, pp. 281–89.

<sup>105</sup> Uwe Schweikert, "Von Gräbern umzingelt: Rettung und Vernichtung in Verdis *Don Carlo*," in *Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*, pp. 219–26.

<sup>106</sup> Daniela Goldin Folena, "La figura di Elisabetta nel *Don Carlos* di Verdi," in *Schiller und die Musik*, pp. 363–78.

<sup>107</sup> Jens Malte Fischer, "Gespräche über abwesende Dritte: Zu zwei zentralen Szenen in Verdis *Don Carlo*," in *Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser*, pp. 227–41.

<sup>108</sup> Christopher R. Gauthier and Jennifer McFarlane-Harris, "Nationalism, Racial Difference, and 'Egyptian' Meaning in Verdi's *Aida*," in *Blackness in Opera: How Race and Blackness Play Out in Opera*, ed. Naomi Andre et al, pp. 55–71 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

<sup>109</sup> Ralph P. Locke, "Beyond the Exotic: How 'Eastern' Is *Aida*?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17/2 (2005): 105–39.

<sup>110</sup> Ralph P. Locke, "*Aida* and Nine Readings of Empire," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3/1 (2006): 45–72. Revised and condensed in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Hilary Poriss, pp. 152–75 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>111</sup> Steven Huebner, "'O patria mia': Patriotism, Dream, Death," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 161–75.

Other aspects of *Aida*'s music and text have also attracted attention. Gabriela Cruz offers a meditation on Verdi's idiosyncratic use of the flute in this opera—as archeological remnant of a dead and decaying Egypt and a surrogate for the human throat—despite his disappointment at failing to obtain a redesigned, louder instrument.<sup>112</sup> Anette Unger observes that death is ever-present in *Aida*, in both intimate and spectacular settings, and the four protagonists experience it in a variety of guises.<sup>113</sup> Katherine Bergeron focuses on the vision of a new political order as conveyed by *Aida*'s spectacle and as embodied in the character of Radames.<sup>114</sup>

Recent studies of *Falstaff* focus on its unusual musical style and genre, as well as its significance as Verdi's last work for the stage. Helen M. Greenwald explores the threat that the prevailing emphasis on musical continuity represented for the genre of comic opera in the late nineteenth century,<sup>115</sup> while Laura Basini interprets *Falstaff*'s eclectic musical style in the context of post-Unification culture.<sup>116</sup> Finding an unlikely musical allusion to *Parsifal*, Roger Parker considers whether Verdi's final opera might be viewed not as a valedictory summation, but instead as a step towards modernity and fragmentation.<sup>117</sup> Udo Bermbach also detects the intrusion of modernity as a foil to Falstaff's private reality, but he interprets this as a variation on Verdi's accustomed trope of conflict between personal and political spheres.<sup>118</sup> Barbara Zuber briefly considers the musico-dramatic portrayals of each of *Falstaff*'s main characters, locating the genius of Verdi's autumnal masterpiece in its unusually varied vocal and orchestral palette.<sup>119</sup> Manfred Osten discusses Boito's assignment of particular text meters to characters and situations in *Falstaff*, and how Verdi sets those meters to a flexible *parlando* that enables every word to be clearly heard.<sup>120</sup>

### Performance Issues

While scholarly interest in Verdi's works has not abated, increased attention is now being paid to vocal interpretation, staging, set design, dramaturgy, and visual communication. Christian Springer's wide-ranging essay covers many aspects of performance both during and beyond Verdi's lifetime, applying the evidence of his scores, correspondence, and contemporary practice to such topics as ornamentation, the importance of the text, the "Verdi

<sup>112</sup> Gabriela Cruz, "Aida's Flutes," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 177–200.

<sup>113</sup> Anette Unger, "Der Liebestod als Weg ins Leben: Todesarten am Beispiel von Verdis Oper *Aida*," in "Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser," pp. 234–42.

<sup>114</sup> Katherine Bergeron, "Verdi's Egyptian Spectacle: On the Colonial Subject of *Aida*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 149–59.

<sup>115</sup> Helen M. Greenwald, "Comic Opera and National Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century: Verdi, Wagner, and the 'Restoration of a Proper Society,'" in *Politische Mythen und nationale Identitäten im (Musik-)Theater: Vorträge und Gespräche des Salzburger Symposions 2001*, ed. Peter Csobádi et al, pp. 545–55, Wort und Musik, 54 (Anif/Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, 2003).

<sup>116</sup> Laura Basini, "The Plays of Art are for a Playful Art: History, Puzzles, and Play in Verdi's *Falstaff*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74/2 (2005): 740–49.

<sup>117</sup> Roger Parker, "In Search of Verdi," in *Remaking the Song*.

<sup>118</sup> Udo Bermbach, "Private List und öffentlicher Hohn: Zur Figur von Verdis *Falstaff*," in *Opernsplitter*, pp. 141–46.

<sup>119</sup> Barbara Zuber, "Musik über Musik, Spiel im Spiel: Varianten musikalischer Komik in Verdis *Falstaff*," in "Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser," pp. 261–76.

<sup>120</sup> Manfred Osten, "Personencharakteristik durch Versmetren: Verdis *Falstaff* als Klangrede," in "Die Wirklichkeit erfinden ist besser," pp. 253–60.

voice,” false traditions, scenic design, and conductors’ interpretations.<sup>121</sup> Antonio Rostagno proposes that *Aida* exemplifies the late nineteenth-century trend to modify the role of the opera orchestra, by requiring increased instrumental forces, greater variety of instrumental timbre, more advanced instrumental technique, and direction by a baton-wielding conductor.<sup>122</sup> Alessandro Di Profio draws on iconography, correspondence, testimony of contemporaries, and press accounts to profile Verdi’s conducting activity in Paris.<sup>123</sup> His research sheds light on differences between French and Italian orchestra direction during the 1860s–70s while also charting the rise of the baton conductor in Europe during that period.

A few recent studies focus on vocal interpretation. Roger Freitas examines Verdi’s remarks about his preferred vocal style, noting that it often conflicts with the bel canto-based technique favored by most modern performers and pedagogues.<sup>124</sup> Karen Henson examines the career of baritone Victor Maurel, whose acting skills and exaggerated, “modern” performing style may have influenced the creation of *Otello*.<sup>125</sup> Performers themselves have also spoken out about their craft. Two celebrated singers, baritone Giuseppe Taddei<sup>126</sup> and soprano Adriana Maliponte,<sup>127</sup> give insight into their interpretations of key Verdi roles. Conductor Bruno Rigacci cites examples from several operas to argue that certain vocal traditions—principally, tempo distortions and interpolated high notes—undermine Verdi’s carefully crafted musical structures.<sup>128</sup>

Fabio Failla offers a profile of Giuseppe Cencetti, the librettist and stage designer who likely prepared the *disposizione scenica* (staging manual) for *Un ballo in maschera*.<sup>129</sup> While acknowledging that the application of the *disposizioni sceniche*’s prescriptive contents is neither practical nor desirable today, scholars have long appreciated their value as historical documents. Andreas Giger has found a new purpose for another opera’s staging manual, uncovering visual parallels to *Otello*’s large-scale structures in the form of blocking and gestural instructions corresponding to formal divisions in the score.<sup>130</sup>

Two recent studies of Verdian stage design focus on operas set in exotic locations. Emilio Sala introduces Achille Befani Formis’s painting of a scene from *Aida*’s third act, which hung in Verdi’s home. Sala believes that the painting is more faithful to the intentions expressed in the opera’s *disposizione scenica* than is Girolamo Magnani’s set design for the

<sup>121</sup> Christian Springer, “Zur Interpretation der Werke Verdis,” in *Verdi-Studien*, pp. 185–306.

<sup>122</sup> Antonio Rostagno, “*Aida* e l’orchestra: Le prime esecuzioni, le partiture, le prassi esecutive,” *Studi Verdiani* 16 (2002): 265–92.

<sup>123</sup> Alessandro Di Profio, “L’Ours à la baguette: Verdi, chef d’orchestre à Paris,” *Musique, images, instruments: Revue française d’organologie et d’iconographie musicale* 12 (2010): 130–68.

<sup>124</sup> Roger Freitas, “Towards a Verdian Ideal of Singing: Emancipation from Modern Orthodoxy,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 127/2 (2002): 226–57. Revised version published in *Classical and Romantic Music*, ed. David Milsom, pp. 121–52 (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>125</sup> Karen Henson, “Verdi, Victor Maurel and *fin-de-siècle* Operatic Performance,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/1 (2007): 59–84. Also “Verdi versus Victor Maurel on *Falstaff*: Twelve New Verdi Letters and Other Operatic and Musical Theater Sources,” *19th-Century Music* 31/2 (2007): 113–30.

<sup>126</sup> Giuseppe Taddei, “Interprete verdiano,” in *Verdi, l’Europe et la France*, pp. 83–86.

<sup>127</sup> Adriana Maliponte, “Verdi belcantista,” in *Verdi, l’Europe et la France*, pp. 87–91.

<sup>128</sup> Bruno Rigacci, “L’opéra verdien entre fidélité et tradition,” in *Verdi, l’Europe et la France*, pp. 93–97.

<sup>129</sup> Fabio Failla, “Giuseppe Cencetti, Verdi, e la disposizione scenica di *Un ballo in maschera*,” *Studi Verdiani* 20 (2006–2007): 15–45.

<sup>130</sup> Andreas Giger, “Staging and Form in Giuseppe Verdi’s *Otello*,” in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, pp. 196–218.

opera's Italian premiere.<sup>131</sup> Davide Nadali discusses the sets of *Nabucco* performances from the 1840s and 1850s and their fanciful representations of ancient Babylon, with special focus on the work of Filippo Peroni.<sup>132</sup> Peroni's designs for Verdi are also the subject of a study by Olga Jesurum, perhaps the foremost scholar of set design in nineteenth-century Italian opera.<sup>133</sup> In addition, Jesurum recently authored an article concerning visual elements in historical performances of *Un ballo in maschera*.<sup>134</sup>

The significance of lighting in Verdi's operas is beginning to attract scholarly attention. Helen M. Greenwald's study of the sunrise at the close of *Attila*'s Prologue situates this visually inspired musical event in the tradition of Haydn's *Creation*, Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, and Félicien David's *Le Désert*, and in the theatrical context of optical entertainments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>135</sup> Anselm Gerhard also explores the theme of light in *Attila*, noting that Verdi translates many of the light and dark metaphors of the opera's literary source, Zacharias Werner's drama, into visual effects that carry political significance.<sup>136</sup> Clemens Risi describes productions of Verdi's operas by Hans Neuenfels and Peter Konwitschny, who each expand the performance space into the audience by keeping the house lights on and forcing the audience to confront its own role in the spectacle. Risi proposes that Verdi might not have disapproved of efforts to jolt spectators out of their accustomed passivity.<sup>137</sup>

Now that the Metropolitan and other opera companies are broadcasting to movie theaters around the world, audience expectations will inevitably change. Although high-definition video and close-up camera shots are a boon for savvy directors, they have led to accusations that vocal quality has become a lower priority in casting decisions. If true, will this change in values affect opportunities for "Verdi voices" who do not conform to new visual standards? Will we see more—but not necessarily better—performances of operas, such as *La forza del destino*, which are notoriously difficult to cast with vocally appropriate singers? Scholars with an interest in performance will, no doubt, monitor these trends.

### Reception Studies

The public's response to Verdi's works and its embrace of him as a cultural symbol have become exceptionally fruitful areas of study. For Italians, Verdi has always been a potent

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<sup>131</sup> Emilio Sala, "Desertico o pittoresco? Il III atto di *Aida* secondo Girolamo Magnani e Achille Formis," *Studi Verdiani* 22 (2010–2011): 89–102.

<sup>132</sup> Davide Nadali, "L'archeologia di *Nabucco*: L'oriente antico in scena," *Studi Verdiani* 22 (2010–2011): 73–88.

<sup>133</sup> Olga Jesurum, "Lo spazio del dramma: Le scenografie di Filippo Peroni," in *Pensieri per un maestro*, pp. 211–16.

<sup>134</sup> Olga Jesurum, "From Giuseppe Rossi to Primo Conti: Italian Set Designs for Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* 34/1–2 (2009): 254–73.

<sup>135</sup> Helen M. Greenwald, "Son et lumière: Verdi, *Attila*, and the Sunrise Over the Lagoon," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21/3 (2009): 267–77.

<sup>136</sup> Anselm Gerhard, "Politische Aussagen in neuem Licht: *Attila* und die Bedeutung des 'Chiaroscuro' für Verdis musikalische Dramaturgie," *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft / Annales suisses de musicologie / Annuario svizzero di musicologia*. Neue Folge 28–29 (2008): 151–70. Condensed as "Verdi's *Attila*: a Study in Chiaroscuro," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21/3 (2009): 279–89.

<sup>137</sup> Clemens Risi, "Shedding Light on the Audience: Hans Neuenfels and Peter Konwitschny Stage Verdi (and Verdians)," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14/1–2 (2002): 201–10.

figure, although the nature of his significance has not remained static. In recent decades scholars have increasingly questioned his identification as an icon of the Risorgimento, the creator of political art designed to whip audiences into a revolutionary frenzy, and instead have sought a more nuanced understanding of when and how he became a representation of Italian unity and patriotism. The work of Laura Basini, in particular, illuminates post-Unification efforts to weave Verdi into the national narrative.<sup>138</sup> Her study of his late-career sacred compositions illuminates the resolutely conservative role of the Catholic Church in the new Italian nation.<sup>139</sup> Alessandra Avanzini also discusses the roots of the “Verdi myth” and argues that a re-examination of the composer’s political views can be an effective pedagogical activity.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, in his analysis of Italian history textbooks, Giovanni Genovesi finds that Verdi’s value as a patriotic symbol typically outweighs, and even distorts, his efforts as a musician.<sup>141</sup>

Of course, the perpetuation of the Verdi myth would not have been possible without the media’s participation. The contemporary reporting of Verdi’s death and its subsequent commemorations is the subject of Gavin Williams’s study.<sup>142</sup> He links Italy’s mourning of Verdi to its response to King Umberto’s recent assassination, noting that both events inspired the public enacting of a unifying, ritualized silence. Ornella Calvano compares two biographical films, *Divine armonie* (1938), which depicts Verdi as an almost superhuman exemplar of fascist ideals, and *Giuseppe Verdi* (1953), which attempts a more realistic, if melodramatic, portrayal of the aged composer’s reminiscences.<sup>143</sup>

With a clearer understanding of Verdi’s emergence as a republican icon in the post-Unification period, scholars have been reconsidering conclusions about his so-called revolutionary works of earlier decades. Marveling at an unknown composer’s remarkable good fortune to have his first opera produced at La Scala, Anselm Gerhard investigates the young Verdi’s connections to Milanese nobility, including aristocratic journalists who may have given him favorable treatment.<sup>144</sup> Mary Ann Smart explores the tension between Verdi’s place in the pantheon of Italian patriotic cultural figures and the flexible and intimate political sentiments expressed in his works, with emphasis on his only explicitly Risorgimental opera, *La battaglia di Legnano*.<sup>145</sup> Arguing that neither Verdi’s 1840s operas nor his audiences were inherently nationalistic, the sociologist Peter Stamatov explores the role played by “interpretive activists,” small groups of audience members who initiated

<sup>138</sup> Laura Basini, “‘Cults of Sacred Memory’: Parma and the Verdi Centennial Celebrations of 1913,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13/2 (2001): 141–61.

<sup>139</sup> Laura Basini, “Verdi and Sacred Revivalism in Post-Unification Italy,” *19th-Century Music* 28/2 (2004): 133–59.

<sup>140</sup> Alessandra Avanzini, “Il mito di Giuseppe Verdi: Un problema educativo,” in *Giuseppe Verdi, un profilo pedagogico*, pp. 9–21.

<sup>141</sup> Giovanni Genovesi, “Giuseppe Verdi nei libri di scuola: Un’analisi dei testi di storia (1925–2000),” in *Giuseppe Verdi, un profilo pedagogico*, pp. 22–35.

<sup>142</sup> Gavin Williams, “Orating Verdi: Death and the Media c. 1901,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 23/3 (2011): 119–43.

<sup>143</sup> Ornella Calvano, “Italienische Verdi-Bilder zwischen Faschismus und Republik: Die biographischen Filme von Gallone und Matarazzo,” in *Geschichte, Musik, Film*, ed. Christoph Henzel, pp. 161–82 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010).

<sup>144</sup> Anselm Gerhard, “‘Cortigiani, vil razza bramata!’: Reti aristocratiche e fervori risorgimentali nella biografia del giovane Verdi (prima parte),” *Acta Musicologica* 84/1 (2012): 37–63.

<sup>145</sup> Mary Ann Smart, “Verdi, Italian Romanticism, and the Risorgimento,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, pp. 29–45.

politically motivated demonstrations at theatrical performances.<sup>146</sup> Pushing back against revisionist claims, Douglas L. Ipson documents the highly charged political atmosphere surrounding the December 1847 performances of *Attila* in Rome.<sup>147</sup> Addressing this same work, Carlotta Sorba sees Verdi's interest in the subject of *Attila* as typical of a Risorgimental fascination with conquerors and conquered peoples.<sup>148</sup>

Offering a new interpretation of revolutionary sentiments in Verdi's operas, the political scientist Udo Bermbach equates these ideals with the implicit values on which singers orient their actions.<sup>149</sup> If Verdi's identification as a symbol of the Risorgimento is now understood to be largely a post-Unification development, politics in *Nabucco* nonetheless emerge as an existential struggle for survival. Comparing Verdi to Wagner, Bermbach observes that Verdi neither participated in revolutionary activity nor indulged in political theorizing;<sup>150</sup> rather, he was a pragmatist whose concept of theater was apolitical, but whose operas nonetheless engaged with "everyday politics."

A well-known consequence of the volatile atmosphere in pre-Unification Italy is Verdi's battles with censorship. Recent research focuses on his conflicts with Rome, in particular. Both Andreas Giger<sup>151</sup> and Dominik Höink<sup>152</sup> examine rare manuscripts of censored librettos from Rome's Archivio di Stato. Giger's study concerns premiere performances of *Un ballo in maschera* and *La forza del destino* that bear the conscientious interventions of a police chief, an impresario, and a stage manager, acting in place of the ineffectual official censors. Francesco Izzo finds that context often determined the outcome of a censor's investigation and proposes that contradictory reactions to Marian references in two of Verdi operas were occasioned by the particular female characters associated with them, one embodying traditional womanly virtues and the other aggressive and politically subversive.<sup>153</sup> Marcello Conati offers examples from *Macbeth* to demonstrate that the geographical location of a performance often determined whether religious or political censorship predominated.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, David B. Rosen reports on several censored *Ernani*

<sup>146</sup> Peter Stamatov, "Interpretive Activism and the Political Usages of Verdi's Operas in the 1840s," *American Sociological Review* 67/3 (2002): 345–66. [Reprinted in modified form in *Verdi Forum* 37–38 (2010–2011): 9–34.]

<sup>147</sup> Douglas L. Ipson, "Attila Takes Rome: The Reception of Verdi's Opera on the Eve of Revolution," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21/3 (2009): 249–56.

<sup>148</sup> Carlotta Sorba, "Attila and Verdi's Historical Imagination," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21/3 (2009): 241–48.

<sup>149</sup> Udo Bermbach, "'Oh, mia patria si bella e perduta': Über Macht und Unmacht in Verdis *Nabucco*," in *Opernsplitter*, pp. 117–26.

<sup>150</sup> Udo Bermbach, "'Ich liebe die Politik nicht': Verdi und Wagner--Ähnlichkeiten und Differenzen," in *Opernsplitter*, pp. 241–57.

<sup>151</sup> Andreas Giger, "Behind the Police Chief's Closed Doors: The Unofficial Censors of Verdi in Rome," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 7/2 (2010): 63–99.

<sup>152</sup> Dominik Höink, "Das Zensurverfahren gegen Giuseppe Verdis *Don Carlo* vor der römischen Inquisition," *Die Musikforschung* 60/4 (2007): 362–77.

<sup>153</sup> Francesco Izzo, "Verdi, the Virgin, and the Censor: The Politics of the Cult of Mary in *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* and *Giovanna d'Arco*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60/3 (2007): 557–97.

<sup>154</sup> Marcello Conati, "Verdi censurato: *Macbeth* fra Papa e Zar," in *L'immaginario scenografico e la realizzazione musicale: Atti del convegno in onore Di Mercedes Viale Ferrero*, ed. Maria Ida Biggi and Paolo Gallarati, pp. 181–89 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2010).

librettos, most notably, a version prepared for the Papal States and used in southern Italian cities.<sup>155</sup>

In addition to his place in Italy's national narrative, Verdi also played an important role in European artistic life, portrayed by the press as everything from Wagner's valiant foil to the more-or-less willing victim of the German's pervasive influence. In contrast to the universal popularity of Verdi's works among ordinary operagoers, Antonio Baldassarre finds a range of responses from professional critics.<sup>156</sup> French writers, impressed by middle-period works such as *Luisa Miller* and *Les vêpres siciliennes*, embraced him as their own, while German critics found his early operas deficient in comparison to Mozart's, but his later operas much improved thanks to Wagner's perceived influence. Myriam Garcia surveys nineteenth-century Italian and French biographies of Verdi, noting that their accounts of his operas' fortunes could be bent to the service of larger historical or stylistic (i.e. pro- or anti-Wagnerian) narratives.<sup>157</sup> Christian Springer contrasts Verdi's knowledge of and curiosity about Wagner's works with Wagner's dismissive attitude towards Verdi's music, traces journalistic attempts to identify a Wagnerian influence in Verdi's later scores, and compares the two composers' home lives.<sup>158</sup>

Germans, too, have had a complicated relationship with Verdi. Gundula Kreuzer's recent monograph is a comprehensive study of the country-wide anxiety that resulted when Germany's self-ascribed musical superiority bumped up against the undeniable popularity of Verdi's operas.<sup>159</sup> Kreuzer's article on *Don Carlos* traces the German performance history of that work, from the 1920s to the present, to illuminate today's *Regieoper* trends.<sup>160</sup> More narrowly focused studies of German Verdi reception include Johannes Streicher's spotlight on the nineteenth century,<sup>161</sup> and two similarly titled studies of the Requiem's fate in Germany, by Egon Voss<sup>162</sup> and by Gundula Kreuzer.<sup>163</sup> Josef-Horst Lederer also explores the

<sup>155</sup> David B. Rosen, "'Si ridesti il Leon di Castiglia la fiamma sopita': Ricordi's Censored Libretto of *Ernani* and Some Vicissitudes of the Conspiracy Scene," *Verdi Forum* 34 (2007): 9–27.

<sup>156</sup> Antonio Baldassarre, "'Critiche stupide, ed elogi più stupidi ancora ... spropositi e sciocchezze sempre': Konstanzen und Besonderheiten in der europäischen Verdi-Rezeption des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Wie europäisch ist die Oper? Die Geschichte des Musiktheaters als Zugang zu einer kulturellen Topographie Europas*, ed. Peter Stachel and Philipp Ther, pp. 127–59, Gesellschaft der Oper, 3 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009; Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).

<sup>157</sup> Myriam Garcia, "L'Accueil des opéras de Verdi en Italie et en France à la lumière des premières biographies consacrées au maître de Busseto: Un cas de stratégie d'orientation de la réception," in *Esthétique de la réception musicale: Actes rencontre interartistique du 22 mars 2005*, ed. Anne-Marie Gouiffès and Emmanuel Reibel, pp. 47–60, Observatoire Musical Français, Série conférences et séminaires, 32 (Paris: Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2007).

<sup>158</sup> Christian Springer, "Verdi und Wagner," in *Verdi-Studien*, pp. 155–81.

<sup>159</sup> Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans: From Unification to the Third Reich*, New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism, 26 (Cambridge University Press, 2010). This work won the American Musicological Society's Lewis Lockwood Award in 2011.

<sup>160</sup> Gundula Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos* and the Modern Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18/2 (2006): 151–79.

<sup>161</sup> Johannes Streicher, "Verdi in Germania," in *Mito opera: Percorso nel mondo del melodramma / Ein Weg in die Welt des Musiktheaters*, ed. Giacomo Fornari, pp. 31–48 (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2002).

<sup>162</sup> Egon Voss, "'Oper im Kirchengewande': Zur Rezeption von Verdis Requiem im deutschen Sprachraum," *Das Bild der Italienischen Oper in Deutschland*, ed. Sebastian Werr and Daniel Brandenburg, pp. 191–99, Forum Musiktheater, 1 (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004).

<sup>163</sup> Gundula Kreuzer, "'Oper im Kirchengewande'? Verdi's Requiem and the Anxieties of the Young German Empire," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58/2 (2005): 399–449.

Requiem's reception, this time at its Viennese premiere.<sup>164</sup> Like most studies of the Requiem, these three relate the work's reception to questions about its genre.

Christian Springer examines some of the people, events, and reactions tied to Verdi's two visits to the Austrian capital, to conduct *Nabucco* in 1843 and the Requiem in 1875, with additional material on Viennese productions of *Don Carlos* and *Otello*.<sup>165</sup> Springer also offers a wealth of excerpts from the writings of Eduard Hanslick to support his belief that the Austrian critic's insultingly poor assessment of Verdi's works was largely attributable to national prejudice.<sup>166</sup> A more measured assessment emerges from Mathias Mayer's survey of judgments about Verdi's works, which were made by prominent cultural figures in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, suggesting that each commentator appears to appreciate those aspects of the composer's oeuvre that best reflect his individual aesthetics.<sup>167</sup>

Several factors influenced Verdi's generally positive reception in France, including his extended residence in Paris, his numerous conducting appearances there, and his willingness not only to adapt completed scores such as *I Lombardi* and *Il trovatore* to the conventions of *grand opéra*, but also to compose new works in that genre. Marcello Conati surveys Verdi's encounters with French culture, characterizing Paris as a locus of artistic and personal renewal, despite some frustrating dealings with theaters and journalists,<sup>168</sup> while Roland Mancini traces Verdi's experiences at the Opéra, culminating with the first performances of *Don Carlos* in 1867.<sup>169</sup>

More than any other foreign country, France made its mark on Verdi's music. Gian Paolo Minardi looks at his transformations of *I Lombardi*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, and *Otello* into French-texted versions that conform to the conventions and dramaturgical values associated with the Paris Opéra.<sup>170</sup> Andreas Giger investigates other French influences that may have guided Verdi toward an increased reliance on the chorus, the incorporation of dance, and more expressive instrumental accompaniments in his Italian operas.<sup>171</sup> Dance music is also an important theme for Emilio Sala, who finds evidence of Verdi's Parisian experiences in the milieu depicted in *La traviata*.<sup>172</sup>

While Verdi's impact on the English-speaking world has not received anywhere near the level of scholarly attention given to German and French cultures, the British reaction to his works has been the theme of a few recent studies, including Massimo Zicari's brief consideration of the fate of Verdi's operas in 1840s London.<sup>173</sup> Paul Rodmell discusses the

<sup>164</sup> Lederer, Josef-Horst, "‘Noch ist das musikalische Italien nicht verloren...’: Zur Erstaufführung von Verdis *Messa da Requiem* an der Wiener Hofoper (1875)," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft: Beihefte der Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* 53 (2007): 205–18.

<sup>165</sup> Christian Springer, "Verdi in Wien," in *Verdi-Studien*, pp. 15–59.

<sup>166</sup> Christian Springer, "Hanslick versus Verdi," in *Verdi-Studien*, pp. 63–152.

<sup>167</sup> Mathias Mayer, "Aspekte der Verdi-Rezeption bei Hofmannsthal und im jungen Wien," in *Verdi e la cultura tedesca / La cultura tedesca e Verdi*, pp. 150–62.

<sup>168</sup> Marcello Conati, "‘Parigi, o cara...’," in *Verdi, l'Europe et la France*, pp. 65–82.

<sup>169</sup> Roland Mancini, "Verdi et l'Opéra de Paris: À propos de *Don Carlos*," *Verdi, l'Europe et la France*, pp. 9–32.

<sup>170</sup> Gian Paolo Minardi, "I rifacimenti francesi," in *Verdi, l'Europe et la France*, pp. 33–47.

<sup>171</sup> Andreas Giger, "French Influences," in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, pp. 111–38.

<sup>172</sup> Emilio Sala, *Il valzer delle camelie: Echi di Parigi nella 'Traviata'*, Biblioteca di Cultura Musicale, Improvisi, 23 (Turin: EDT, 2008). Similar ground is covered in Sala's "La Dame aux camélias: Immagini e suoni, a tempo di valzer (e di polka)," in *La drammaturgia verdiana e le letterature europee*, pp. 293–307.

<sup>173</sup> Massimo Zicari, "‘Nothing but the commonest tunes’: The Early Reception of Verdi's Operas in London, 1845–1848," *Dissonance: Schweizer Musikzeitschrift für Forschung und Kreation* 114 (2011): 44–49.



mixed critical reaction to the earliest British performances of *Macbeth*, considered an “obscure” opera that suffered in comparison to its Shakespearean source.<sup>174</sup> Roberta Montemorra Marvin’s research on the Victorian practice of supplying popular arias with morally acceptable English texts has opened an important new avenue in Verdian reception studies.<sup>175</sup> Only George Martin’s recent monograph addresses the fate of Verdi’s operas—and just his early works, at that—in the United States.<sup>176</sup>

Studies of Verdi reception in other countries have been scarce in mainstream scholarly literature, with Eastern Europe emerging as a dominant locus. Olga Haldey profiles the rise and fall of the Moscow Russian Private Opera, a small yet ambitious company that performed a number of Verdi’s operas with a mix of native and Italian singers, ultimately succumbing to a nationalistic preference for Russian works.<sup>177</sup> In her examination of Verdi and Wagner reception in nineteenth-century Zagreb, Vjera Katalinic’ finds that both composers were equally successful, even though the former’s operas had a twenty-year head start;<sup>178</sup> while some Croatian critics detected Wagnerian overtones in Verdi’s later scores, his originality was nonetheless admired and his earlier works were not denigrated. Markian Prokopovych questions Verdi’s symbolic role in the Hungarian national narrative, which linked the Risorgimento with local aspirations for independence.<sup>179</sup>

Clearly the field of reception studies provides ample opportunity for further exploration. Research on Verdi’s impact in the Americas, and especially in outposts of Italian culture such as Argentina and Brazil, would be especially welcome. The distribution of his music within Italy by means of arrangements for piano solo, band, reduced orchestra, and other non-standard performing forces would offer another valuable measure of his influence in both the pre- and the post-Unification periods.

### *New Directions*

Future Verdi scholarship will increasingly depend on digitized, and ideally, freely available resources. An especially promising undertaking is Progetto RADAMES (Repertoriizzazione e Archiviazione di Documenti Attinenti al Melodramma e allo Spettacolo, or, Indexing and Archiving of Documents Pertaining to *Melodramma* and Performance). This initiative, based at the University of Bologna, aims to digitize and index a wide array of primary sources related to Italian opera of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. According to Giorgio Pagannone, RADAMES will include librettos, scores, correspondence, set and costume

<sup>174</sup> Paul Rodmell, “‘Double, double, toil and trouble’: Producing *Macbeth* in Mid-Victorian Britain,” *Verdi Forum* 30–31 (2003–2004): 37–47.

<sup>175</sup> Roberta Montemorra Marvin, “Verdian Opera Burlesqued: A Glimpse into Mid-Victorian Theatrical Culture,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15/1 (2003): 33–66, publisher’s errata, 15/2 (2003): 209–11. Also “Verdian Opera in the Victorian Parlor,” in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, pp. 53–75.

<sup>176</sup> George Martin, *Verdi in America: Oberto through Rigoletto*, Eastman Studies in Music, 86 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011). Martin’s “Verdi Onstage in the United States. I: *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio*,” *Opera Quarterly* 18/4 (2002): 469–83, covers similar ground.

<sup>177</sup> Olga Haldey, “Verdi’s Operas at Mamantov’s Theater, 1885–1900: Fighting a Losing Battle,” *Verdi Forum* 30–31 (2003–2004): 3–25.

<sup>178</sup> Vjera Katalinic’, “Verdi vs. Wagner oder Verdi und Wagner auf der Zagreber Bühne im 19. Jahrhundert?” in *Wie europäisch ist die Oper?*, pp. 177–86.

<sup>179</sup> Markian Prokopovych, “‘Instead, I saw a little man’: The Reception of Verdi in the [sic] Late Nineteenth-Century Hungary,” in *Wie europäisch ist die Oper?*, pp. 161–76.

designs, staging manuals, and audio and video recordings, all searchable in numerous ways.<sup>180</sup> In addition to calling attention to the enormous amount of labor that such a project will require, Pagannone also warns potential users that the inevitable questions about copyright and royalty payments have yet to be settled.

Although scholars must wait for Progetto RADAMES to become a reality, it is currently possible to consult selected Italian manuscript materials online at the Internet Culturale Web site ([www.internetculturale.it](http://www.internetculturale.it)). It would be a boon to scholars and performers alike if the manuscripts housed at Verdi's Sant'Agata estate, rumored to include abundant sketches and drafts for many of his operas, were to be made available for study in a similar manner.

The assessment of Verdi's place in his own century and in ours continues, both in Italy and abroad. *Music in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, a recently published volume in W.W. Norton's Western Music in Context series of textbooks, locates him within a chapter devoted to operetta and "popular appeal," while giving Richard Wagner a chapter to himself. But at least, at the close of Verdi's bicentennial year, the Teatro alla Scala opened with *La traviata*.

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<sup>180</sup> Giorgio Pagannone, "Il Progetto RADAMES: Per una segmentazione ragionata delle opere di Verdi," *Studi Verdiani* 21 (2008–2009): 73–92.