

NAPLES AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE TENOR AS HERO IN ITALIAN SERIOUS OPERA

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The dwindling supply of castrati created a crisis in the opera world in the early 19th century. Castrati had dominated opera seria throughout the 18th century, but by the early 1800s their numbers were in decline. Impresarios and composers explored two voice types as substitutes for the castrato in male leading roles in serious operas: the contralto and the tenor. The study includes data from 242 serious operas that premiered in Italy between 1800 and 1840, noting the casting of the male leading role for each opera. At least 67 roles were created for contraltos as male heroes between 1800 and 1834. More roles were created for tenors in that period (at least 105), but until 1825 there is no clear preference for tenors over contraltos except in Naples. The Neapolitan preference for tenors is most likely due to the influence of Bourbon Kings who sought to bring Enlightenment values to Naples. After the last castrato retired in 1830 and the casting of contraltos as male heroic leads falls out of favor by the mid-1830s, the tenor, aided by a new chest-voice dominant style of singing, becomes the inheritor of the castrato's former role as leading man in serious Italian opera.

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A popular quotation attributed to George Bernard Shaw states that “opera is when a tenor and a soprano want to go to bed together but are prevented from doing so by a baritone.” That quip, while not completely accurate, certainly applies to many operas. In Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il trovatore*, for example, we have a love triangle between Manrico, a tenor, Leonora, a soprano, and the count, a baritone. There are dozens of other examples as well including *La traviata* (Alfredo, Violetta, Germont), *Tristan und Isolde* (Tristan, Isolde, Marke) or *Manon* (Des Grieux, Manon, Lescaut). There are also a great many exceptions like *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Macbeth*, or *Der Rosenkavalier*, but the casting of a tenor hero and a soprano heroine as lovers, or at least potential lovers, is common enough for a quip like Shaw’s to garner a chuckle.

The casting association of voice types with character types in nineteenth century opera, in fact, extends beyond the tenor and the soprano in a romantic pairing. The tenor is the hero, often of a revolutionary or at least establishment-challenging type. The lyric soprano is the heroine. (Lyric, in this usage, is a relative term and not necessarily the specific *soprano lirico* or *lyrisches Sopran* voice type.) The baritone is a complex character whose status as friend or foe is sometimes not clear until well into the opera. A secondary female lead played by either a coloratura soprano or a contralto is also around to complicate matters. The bass portrays the authority figure.

If we are rather loose with our categorizations or roles and voice types, we can easily place many of the best-known nineteenth century operas into this model. Because these operas are the most familiar to modern audiences these associations are often taken for

granted, however, this association of voice types with character types was a nineteenth century invention.¹ This chart shows the extent to which nineteenth century operas followed this pattern. Some operas follow the patter more strictly than others, but they all reference the audiences’ associations that had become standardized by the mid-nineteenth century.

Table 1. Voice Types Associated with Character Types in Well-Known 19th Century Operas

Title/Composer	Lyric Soprano Heroine	Coloratura/ Contralto Rival	Tenor Hero	Baritone Friend or Foe	Bass Authority Figure
<i>Les Huguenots</i>	Valentine	Marguerite	Raoul	Le Comte	Marcel
<i>Il trovatore</i>	Leonora	Azucena	Manrico	Conte	Ferrando
<i>Don Carlos</i>	Elisabeth	Eboli	Don Carlos	Rodrigue	Philippe II
<i>Aida</i>	Aida	Amneris	Radames	Amonasro	Ramfis
<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Elisabeth	Venus	Tannhäuser	Wolfram	Hermann
<i>Lohengrin</i>	Elsa	Ortrud	Lohengrin	Friedrich	Heinrich
<i>Carmen</i>	Micaela	Carmen	Don José	Escamillo	Zuniga
<i>Turandot</i>	Liù	Turandot	Calaf	Ping	Timur
<i>La Gioconda</i>	Giaconda	Laura	Enzo	Barnaba	Alvise

In eighteenth century opera, however, associations between voice types and character types were much weaker. Tenors were often prominent in *opera seria* like Mozart’s *Idomeneo* and *La clemenza di Tito*, but in both of those operas the tenor is the authority figure. The male love interests in those operas are Sesto and Idamante, both castrati in those operas’ original productions.² *Idomeneo* makes for an interesting contrast with the grand opera style. Yes,

¹ Peter Anton Ling, *Stimme, Stimmfach, Fachvertrag: Die Bedeutung der Opernstimmfächer am Beispiel der männlichen Stimmfächer* (Wißner Verlag, 2008): 162.

² Mozart recast the role of Idamante with a tenor for a concert version in Vienna in 1786.

there is a tenor in the title role, but he is the authority figure, not the lover. This casting was common in *opera seria*. The romantic couple that must overcome obstacles to unite is a tenor-soprano couple in Verdi's opera while Mozart casts a castrato as the male love interest, which was the standard practice in the eighteenth century. Meanwhile the main tenor role of *Idomeneo* is the authority figure, a character type that would be recast in the French Grand Opera tradition as a bass. *Opera seria*, as we shall see in the next chapter, existed at least in part to maintain the aristocratic status quo while Romantic opera elevates the revolutionary hero to prominence.

These changes happened slowly and for a variety of reasons. Castrati had to be replaced in opera as their numbers diminished. As the eighteenth century drew to a close, there was a sharp decline in the number of performers available to sing these operatic roles. This created a crisis in opera as impresarios struggled to find a suitable replacement. In the early years of the nineteenth century, these roles were taken in some cases by tenors, as in *Otello*, and in others by contraltos, as in *Tancredi*.

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that Rossini's practice of casting tenors in these roles in Naples while writing them for contraltos elsewhere was typical of overall casting trends in Italy at the time. I also explain why Naples is different from the other Italian cities at the time. Contraltos and tenors competed for these roles up through 1825, after which the preference shifts decidedly towards tenors. Finally, I show how the then-new chest-voice dominant style of tenor singing promoted by Domenico Donzelli, Gabriel-Louis Duprez and others embodied the new Romantic ideal of the operatic hero and came to dominate opera in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE AND FALL OF *OPERA SERIA* AND THE CASTRATI

Before exploring the changes in opera in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to reflect on the operatic landscape that came before, especially voice types and casting in the operas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Opera in the Baroque and Classical eras was dominated by *opera seria* and by its stars, the castrati. Recent scholarship has provided much-needed cultural context for these singers, the opera world of their time and the overall cultures in which they lived. Roger Freitas presents a detailed account of the life of one castrato, Atto Melani.³ Martha Feldman includes rarely seen portraits of the castrati, which provide a different view of their appearance than the often-used exaggerated caricatures.⁴ Patrick Barbier explores the phenomenon of the castrati and the operatic world they inhabited.⁵ This research provides us with a more comprehensive view of how these performers were viewed at the time, in stark contrast to the standard opera histories that too often have relied heavily on criticisms, parodies and outright mockery of these singers and the musical and theatrical culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Casting information of early opera is rare.⁶ We do, however, know that many of the male leads in early opera were taken by tenors, in some cases by the composers themselves.

³ Roger Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato: Politics, Patronage and Music in the Life of Atto Melani* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴ Martha Feldman, *The Castrato: A Reflection on Natures and Kinds* (University of California Press, 2015).

⁵ Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati: The History of an Extraordinary Operatic Phenomenon* (Souvenir Press, 1996).

⁶ Roger Freitas, "The Eroticism of Emasculation: Confronting the Baroque Body of the Castrato" *The Journal of Musicology* 20/2 (2003): 234.

Jacopo Peri, composer of *Euridice* (1600), one of the earliest surviving operas, was a tenor celebrated in his own time for his virtuoso singing and emotional performance of recitative.⁷ Only a few days after the premiere of that opera, he then performed in the premiere of Giulio Caccini's *Il rapimento di Cefalo*.⁸ Caccini, also well known in his own time as a tenor, gained a lasting reputation is from his compositions, especially *Le nuove musiche* (1602).

Castrati were already performing in the earliest operas, but at first usually played female characters or personifications of abstract ideas such as "music" or "love." For example, in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607), castrati sang not only the female lead Euridice but also the role of La Musica while a tenor sang the male hero Orpheus.⁹ The practice of assigning female roles to castrati was common in the Baroque era but slowly disappeared, lasting the longest in Rome where women were forbidden from appearing on the stage until 1798 when Pope Leo XII revoked the ban allowing women to sing in opera there for the first time.¹⁰

By the mid-seventeenth century, castrati had taken over most of the male leading roles with tenors reassigned to supporting roles of elders and servants. Tenors occasionally took on leading roles such as Aeneas in Francesco Cavalli's *La Didone* (1641), but more commonly, these roles were taken by castrati. In some cases such as Alessandro Scarlatti's *Il Pompeo* (1642) the roles played by the tenor and castrato were reversed between the performances in Rome and

⁷ Dan H. Marek, *Giovanni Battista Rubini and the Bel Canto Tenors: History and Technique* (The Scarecrow Press, 2013): 5.

⁸ John Potter, *Tenor: History of a Voice* (Yale University Press, 2009): 13.

⁹ John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge University Press, 1995): 33.

¹⁰ Roger Freitas, "The Eroticism of Emasculation": 235.

Naples.¹¹ Opera casting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was based on the availability of singers rather than any artistic intentions of the composer, a consideration that would not become common until well into the nineteenth century.¹² Music was often transposed, a practice that along with the frequent substitution of music by other composers, makes it difficult to know with any certainty what music was actually performed in any subsequent performances.

Castrati were still relatively new to Europe when opera began. No evidence of castrati singers in Europe exists before the 1550s. This practice was likely introduced to the continent by the Moors through Spain. They first appear in the papal chapel in 1562.¹³ The earliest known European castrati were therefore Spanish, but the practice quickly spread to Flanders and France and possibly even to Germany. By the eighteenth century, they were nearly all Italian.¹⁴ They quickly began to replace the falsetto singers in court chapels throughout Europe by the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Most castrati were employed by churches, and many took vows. Even in the eighteenth century when castrati dominated Italian opera, church jobs were far more plentiful than operatic engagements, but those with operatic careers are discussed more often only because there is more documentation of their lives and careers.¹⁶ The scarcity of

¹¹ Naomi Adele André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early Nineteenth Century Italian Opera* (Indiana University Press, 2006): 34.

¹² Dorothy Keyser, "Cross-sexual Casting in Baroque Opera: Musical and Theatrical Conventions" *The Opera Quarterly* 5/4 (1987): 53.

¹³ John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*: 34.

¹⁴ Irina Vladislavovna Rudakova, "Uncertain Nature: History of the Castrato Singer in Early Modern Gender Paradigm" (Dissertation: University of Washington, 1999): 105.

¹⁵ Anthony Milner, "Sacred Capons" *The Musical Times* 115.1561 (1973): 250-52.

¹⁶ Roger Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato*: 29.

documentation is also due to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church disavowed the practice of castrating boys to preserve their unchanged voices while remaining the largest employer of those upon whom the practice had been implemented.¹⁷

That such a practice was not only tolerated but also celebrated for over 200 years is perhaps the most difficult part of this phenomenon to understand from a modern perspective. The phenomenon of the castrati makes more sense, however, when viewed from the societal norms of their era. Martha Feldman points out that the advent of this practice coincides with a shift in European culture, especially in Italy. Prior to 1570, the common practice was to produce as many offspring as possible and marry off the sons strategically in order to produce the greatest possible number of kin thereby producing a clan. After 1570, all but the eldest were assigned to military or religious duty. The economy had worsened and families did not want to dilute their estates by having too many heirs.¹⁸ Although this might seem only to apply to the upper class, middle class families also employed similar strategies in order to move in the social order.¹⁹ Modern ideas about the welfare of children, moreover, did not exist among the upper classes in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Children were raised by servants and seen as a means to further the family's financial, social and political ambitions.²⁰ Florentines in the seventeenth century, for example, sent 44% of their daughters to convents. There was no fear of their family line ending, but having too many relatives with no inheritance could become a

¹⁷ Samuel D. Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Westview Press, 1996): 132.

¹⁸ Martha Feldman, *The Castrato*: 45.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 46.

²⁰ Roger Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato*: 27.

drain on the family's accumulated wealth.²¹ Although modern people understandably view this practice harshly, we should consider that today it is common for parents to push their children into show business in spite of decades of reports of tragic ends for former child stars. Roger Freitas compares the castration of boys with the hopes of a musical career to modern families procuring steroids for their children with the hopes that the use of performance-enhancing drugs will lead to a lucrative athletic career.²²

In addition to ethical concerns of this practice, modern people also have trouble understanding the appeal of performers that violate our ideas of gender norms. It is useful to note that at in the same era it was common for theatrical companies to consist only of male actors who played both male and female parts. This was merely a part of the artifice of the theater at that time. Susan McClary expounds on the nature of gender in eighteenth century opera:

Beginning with the rise of opera in the seventeenth century, composers worked painstakingly to develop a musical semiotics of gender: a set of conventions for constructing "masculinity" or "femininity" in music. The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by the prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also themselves participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music. Moreover, music does not just passively reflect society; it also serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted adopted, contested, and negotiated.²³

Because our modern ideas of the gendering of operatic roles is based on a nineteenth century French grand opera model, an understanding of operatic norms and continued popularity of the

²¹ Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (University of Chicago Press, 2013): 278.

²² Roger Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato*: 32.

²³ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 7-8.

opera seria era will require putting aside some assumptions about gender, character and voice types.²⁴ Although we may assume that our ideas about gender are immutable, gender roles have in fact varied greatly over time and among cultures.²⁵ A number of writers have viewed the castrati as supernatural dual-gendered beings. Wendy Heller notes that the castrati provided a type of performer that blended qualities of both the male and female.

This is a different kind of hermaphroditic being, one that linked adult male virtues—and vulnerabilities—to a female-like vocality. In Venetian opera, for the most part, castrati played male characters, a formulation that both divided and blurred a two-gender system.²⁶

Naomi Adele André concurs that by bringing together the codes for what is considered masculine and feminine, the castrati embodied many ambiguities both in their own time as well as in ours.²⁷ This might mislead us into thinking that castrati were viewed as asexual beings, but it was not only their singing that was admired. Roger Freitas observes that castrati were seen as “the most sensual, erotic of men.”²⁸ Findlen, Roworth and Sama elaborate:

Indeed, the evidence of the period confirms that, whereas now masculine eroticism can be epitomized by firm muscles, a “healthy” tan, and perhaps even an unshaven face, the earlier period prized a soft body, a pale skin and smooth cheeks. The ideal male was simply younger, and so more androgynous, than is currently typical.²⁹

²⁴ André: 47.

²⁵ McClary, *Feminine Endings*: 37.

²⁶ Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women’s Voices in Seventeenth Century Venice* (University of California Press, 2003): 18.

²⁷ André, *Voicing Gender*: 29-30.

²⁸ Roger Freitas, *Un Atto d’Ingegno: A Castrato in the Seventeenth Century* (Dissertation: Yale University, 1998): 163.

²⁹ Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama. *Italy’s Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour* (Stanford University Press, 2009): 213.

If this is confusing to modern audiences that such a being would play young kings and military leaders, it should be noted that many ascended to the throne as adolescents and that many married at what we would consider young ages in that era. Also, disease and living conditions would have made those in their 20s and 30s appear comparatively quite old by modern standards. This is in direct opposition to modern performances in which the same roles are taken by counter-tenors like David Daniels, who often performs with a beard and open shirt revealing a hairy chest. In modern performances, producers want to leave no doubt that while the performer on stage may sound more like a woman, his presentation is definitely that of an adult male. This was not the case in the seventeenth and eighteenth century performances of these operas by the castrati. This may be because those in positions of authority attained that power earlier than would be typical in modern times. It is difficult for us to imagine a barely adolescent youth as a king, but that was often the case in an earlier era with a much shorter life expectancy.

Even after the castrati no longer portrayed female characters, some aspects of their performances were still considered effeminate. Both expression of emotions and the singing of ornamental melismatic passages were considered feminine in the eighteenth century. Matthew Head notes that the singing of coloratura was seen to remove operatic expression from the “masculine world of intelligence and semantic meaning, transferring it to a purely sensory and therefore effeminizing realm.”³⁰ Even the act of falling in love would have been

³⁰ Matthew Head, “Like Beauty Spots of the Face of a Man: Gender and the Musical Genre of the Eighteenth Century” *The Journal of Musicology* 13/2 (1995): 147.

considered effeminate.³¹ Wendy Heller notes that opera was a prominent feature during the Carnival season (beginning the day after Christmas and lasting until the day before Ash Wednesday) which provided a space in which “shifting grounds between biological sex and gender could be repeatedly reinvented” on the stage as well as in the culture at large.³²

The transition from castrati portraying the personification of abstract ideas to erotic male leads happened in the 1630s and 1640s. At that time, Venetian opera became obsessed with the lives of women from history and legend who had not taken what at that time were typical feminine roles in their societies. Characters like Semiramis, Cleopatra, Zenobia and Lucretia became fascinations for audiences. The men around these women being somewhat emasculated by their association with powerful women are therefore portrayed by literally emasculated singers, the castrati.³³ Roger Freitas cites Jason, who was emasculated by the powerful Medea, as an example. This story was a popular one at the time, helping spread the Venetian opera style throughout Italy and promote the castrati along with it.³⁴

Opera was not, therefore, a medium that reflected eighteenth century social mores as much as it was a place in which those social norms were taught, normalized and reinforced. Wendy Heller notes, “The castrato was not the cause of gender ambivalence in Venetian opera; rather, he is but a symptom of a way of thinking about gender and sexuality that influences these operas at every juncture.”³⁵ Michael McKeon concurs that nineteenth century writers

³¹ Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence*: 18.

³² *Ibid.*: 17.

³³ *Ibid.*: 237.

³⁴ *Ibid.*: 238.

³⁵ *Ibid.*: 18.

sought to “normativize” feminine qualities in men, which would have previously been viewed negatively.³⁶ This would later become an important topic in the criticism of castrati and Italian opera, especially in Paris and London.

This approach to gendering of the operatic hero might have faded after the heyday of Venetian opera had it not been codified into the libretti that would dominate *opera seria* until the early years of the nineteenth century. Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) was an Italian poet and playwright best remembered for his opera libretti. Hundreds of settings of his libretti were composed beginning with Nicola Porpora’s 1720 setting of *Angelica*. Between 1723 and 1811, at least one new opera using a libretto by Metastasio premiered each year. After a brief drought, there were more from 1816 to 1819 and between 1823 and 1829. Nine more were composed between 1833 and 1877 with one final setting composed in 1932.³⁷ Metastasio, who in correspondence referred to Farinelli, the most famous castrato of his time, as his *gemello*, or twin, placed the castrato singer at the center of his libretti. Castrati were not simply a feature of *opera seria* performance practice; they were its *raison-d’être*. Metastasio’s heroes are not particularly masculine, at least from a Romantic or modern standard. Michael F. Robinson observes that they were considered indecisive by later generations, even comically so. “The tendency has been to assert that Metastasio’s heroes are more effeminate than manly, and that they are more interested in their psychological problems than anything else.”³⁸ The typical *opera seria* plot involves a ruler puzzling over what to do until reaching the “correct” decision in

³⁶ Michael McKeon, “Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergency of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28/3 (1995): 314.

³⁷ Charles H. Parsons, *Opera Librettists and their Works* (Edwin Mellin Press, 1987): 476-511.

³⁸ Michael F. Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford University Press, 1972): 47.

the end. Everything is set right by the end of the opera allowing the audience to rest assured that those in power always rule justly. It is unsurprising that these stories pleased the ruling class. Even as royal concerns shifted from palace intrigue to public uprisings, which were threatening the aristocracy itself, *opera seria* served as “a general nostalgia which typified the escapism of an urban society more and more entangled in bureaucratic concerns.”³⁹

Social and political changes challenging the old order put everything associated with the aristocracy in danger, including *opera seria* and its castrato heroes. As the eighteenth century was closing, the castrati had become a favorite surrogate for criticism of all things related to the monarchies of Europe and the Catholic Church. Much of this criticism came in the form of parody and caricature, which until the 21st century served as the primary source material on castrati and *opera seria* in the standard music history texts. Nevertheless, the few remaining castrati would continue performing until 1829 and *opera seria* in the Metastasian model would continue well into the nineteenth century. That such an antiquated performance tradition would last so far into the Age of Enlightenment is a testimony to the entrenchment of an Italian tradition and the power and influence of those who perpetuated it. Paula Findlen describes its continued popularity and eventual decline:

Within the conservatism of Italy and *opera seria*, the appreciation for artificially effeminate lovers survived the Age of Enlightenment—latter-day representations of an aesthetic that was under assault; the political and cultural changes of the nineteenth century, however, finally compelled their demise.⁴⁰

These cultural changes, while widespread, had little impact inside the insular world of

³⁹ Reinhard Strohm, *Dramma per musica: Italian Opera Seria of the Eighteenth Century* (Yale University Press, 1997): 6.

⁴⁰ Findlen, et al.: 215.

Italian serious opera. Attacks on both Italian opera and the castrati, however, were growing. Gender roles for both men and women become a serious topic by the 1790s.⁴¹ This was often driven by a desire by the bourgeoisie males to distinguish themselves from the effeminate dress and behavior of the aristocracy.⁴² Men “put aside their frilled cuffs, skirted satin coats, powdered wigs and pink stockings. Lace was folded, ribbon wound and beauty spots vanished from the masculine cheek.”⁴³

Opera seria or *dramma per musica* as it was sometimes called in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was out of place in the new Romantic Movement that was sweeping England and Germany, but Romanticism was slow to take hold in France and Italy. *Opera seria* remained popular in Italy in spite of being out of step with the new aesthetic. Martha Feldman notes that nature had become the new divinity of the Enlightenment and castrati were viewed as unnatural.⁴⁴ Aristocratic males were depicted in romantic literature as tyrants and hypocrites.⁴⁵ They were seen to “mirror and exemplify aristocratic dandyism and effeminacy.”⁴⁶ Only after castrati have disappeared from the operatic stages does their depiction turn from scorn to pity as in Honoré de Balzac’s *Sarassine* (1830). Romantics like Balzac depicted the castrati as just another type of diseased and suffering artist.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics, and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Hazlitt* (Macmillan Press, 1999): 5.

⁴² John Charles Beynon, “Men of Mode: Taste, Effeminacy, and Male Sexuality in Eighteenth Century England” (Dissertation: University of California, Riverside, 2001): 52.

⁴³ Head: 143.

⁴⁴ Martha Feldman, *The Castrato*: 178.

⁴⁵ Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity*: 9.

⁴⁶ James Q. Davies, “‘Veluti in Speculum’: The Twilight of the Castrato” (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 17/3 2005): 285-286.

⁴⁷ Katherine Bergeron, “The Castrato as History” (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 8/2 1996): 173.

Along with the castrati, *opera seria* itself was in conflict with Romanticism. Metastasio's stories of magnanimous monarchs were antithetical to the revolutionary cultures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the audiences for opera had shifted from being dominated by the nobility to a new bourgeois audience of wealthy merchants who could often better afford the boxes than the titled gentry could. The new audiences were not as inclined to accept a less than masculine voice portraying a male hero.

As tempting as it might be to attribute the decline of *opera seria* and the castrati who performed in them on changing societal attitudes, in fact both continued into the bel canto period. The castrati only disappeared from the opera stages in Italy when the supply of them declined. In 1748, Pope Benedict XIV was pressed to ban the practice of castration but instead merely banned amputations except where medically necessary.⁴⁸ That castrati were still alive into the twentieth century is evidence that the ban did not go immediately into effect. There were, however, few castrati still performing opera by about 1810 although they continued to populate church choirs until the early twentieth century.⁴⁹ In spite of a steady decline in the number of castrati to perform in *opera seria*, composers continued to compose for them for decades rather than explore acceptable alternatives.⁵⁰ *Opera seria* survived in spite of a changing world. Martha Feldman explains:

In the end, Italy had no eighteenth century revolution and did not really kill off *opera seria* any more than it killed off its monarchs. Nor, practically speaking, could it have done so very easily. Opera was almost literally everywhere on the Italian peninsula. By the end of the century, the institution was lodged in an astonishing number of theaters,

⁴⁸ Feldman, *The Castrato*: 179.

⁴⁹ André: 16.

⁵⁰ Laura DeMarco, "Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Male Roles in Italian and French Opera" (Dissertation: Columbia University, 1998): 29.

large and small, most of them public, and through interlocking networks of production, patronage and travel it was also spread far and abroad. In the absence of any single totalizing center of power or symbol around which Italian lands could coalesce, *opera seria*, at home and abroad, was able to give living form, however partial or erratic, to the sovereign ideal of the king who extended himself throughout the kingdom through the body of his people.⁵¹

By the early nineteenth century there were only four castrati of note still performing in Italian opera houses: Luigi Marchesi, Luigi Moriconi, Girolamo Crescentini and Giovanni Battista Velluti. Luigi Marchesi (1754-1829), also known as Marchesini, was active as a singer from about 1773 to 1805 at Il Teatro alla Scala in Milan, La Fenice in Venice and the Teatro Nuovo in Trieste and other important Italian theaters. After early training from his father, a trombonist, he studied singing with the castrati Caironi, Fiorini and Albuzzi while singing in the choir of the Cathedral of Milan.⁵² He premiered roles in operas by a number of composers including Antonio Salieri (*Annibale in Capua*, 1801) and Johann Simon Mayr (*La Lodoïska*, 1796, *Ginevra in Scozia*, 1801, and *Eroldo ed Emma*, 1805).⁵³ Luigi Moriconi had a shorter career premiering roles in operas by Mayr (*Lauso e Lidia*, 1798, *Adriano in Siria*, 1798, and *Gli Americani*, 1806), Niccolò Zingarelli (*La morte di Mitradite*, 1797 and *Carolina e Mexicow*, 1798). He sang at the Teatro di San Carlo in 1794 and in Venice (La Fenice and San Benedetto) from 1797 to 1806.⁵⁴

Girolamo Crescentini (1762-1846) studied singing in Bologna with Luigi Gibelli, one of the most celebrated teachers of his day.⁵⁵ After establishing himself as a leading singer in Italy,

⁵¹ Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth Century Italy*. (University of Chicago Press, 2007): 437-438.

⁵² K.J. Kutsch and Leo Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon* (K.J. Saur, 1997): 2207.

⁵³ Charles H. Parsons, *Opera Premieres: An Index of Casts/Performers* (The Edwin Millen Press, 1993): 801-802.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 899.

⁵⁵ Nicola Lucarelli, "Girolamo Crescentini" *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (Macmillan Press, 1992): 1005-1006.

he was taken to Paris after Napoleon conquered Naples in 1806. He was in residence at the French royal court theater from 1806 to 1812 where as a favorite performer of Napoleon Bonaparte he performed roles like Zingarelli's *Giulietta e Romeo*.⁵⁶ He also taught singing to members of the royal family and continued as a teacher after his retirement from the stage at the Bologna Conservatory and after 1825 at the Naples Royal Conservatory.⁵⁷

The other great castrato from this era was Giovanni Battista Velluti (1780-1861). While not the last castrato, he was certainly the last great one.⁵⁸ Velluti's voice was described as "sweet and full, smoothly produced, but of little emotional range."⁵⁹ He was the subject of vicious attacks in the London press while preparing for the London performances of Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto* in 1825.⁶⁰ Velluti would be the last castrato to perform on the London stage. Unwanted by opera producers, he became a voice teacher and finally settled into a life as an Italian gentleman farmer.⁶¹ With his retirement from the stage, the long era of domination of the castrati singers ended in 1830.⁶²

⁵⁶ Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*: 185.

⁵⁷ Lucarelli: 1006.

⁵⁸ André: 16.

⁵⁹ Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (University of California Press, 2006): 239.

⁶⁰ Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance*. (University of California Press, 2014): 288.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*: 300.

⁶² André: 3.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING A REPLACEMENT: TWO OPTIONS

Between the papal ban on “unnecessary amputations” in 1748 and the end of the eighteenth century, there does not seem to have been any attempt by impresarios or composers to find a replacement for the castrati.⁶³ Composers continued writing lead roles for them even as their numbers sharply declined. By the end of the eighteenth century, as the last few great castrati were nearing the ends of their careers, theaters finally began exploring two options as suitable replacements. One, an older tradition of using contraltos when castrati were not available, and the other, the tenor, a voice type that had risen to prominence in *opera buffa*.

Option I: The Contralto

As far back as Handel’s time, whenever castrati were unavailable, the standard practice had been to cast contraltos for the roles they normally sang, even when, as in London, counter-tenors were available.⁶⁴ It was therefore only natural that this practice would become more common as the number of castrati declined in the early nineteenth century. Contraltos sang in approximately the same range and likely possessed a similar but not identical timbre. The vocal folds of adult castrati were shorter than those of women. Adult women typically have vocal

⁶³ DeMarco, “Rossini and the Emergence of Dramatic Male Roles in Italian and French Opera”: 29.

⁶⁴ DeMarco, Laura E. "The Fact of the Castrato and the Myth of the Countertenor" (*The Musical Quarterly* 86/1 2002): 181.

folds that are 8-12 millimeters long, while those of castrati were only 7-8 millimeters.⁶⁵ The contralto larynx, therefore, is not physiologically identical that of the castrato, but still much more similar than that of a “natural” male voice.

The term for these singers as well as for the roles they sang is *musico*, a term that had also been used to refer to castrati. The “pants roles” more familiar to modern opera audiences were called *musichetti*. William Ashcroft provides an excellent description of both the *musico* and the *musichetto*:

“Musico” is a term Donizetti and his contemporaries used to refer to heroic male roles designed to be sung by female contraltos. By extension, the term also applied to singers (like Eckerlin and Pisoni) who specialized in such parts. These contralto hero parts, common in the early nineteenth century but pretty well disappearing during the late 1830s, derived from the castrato contralto heroes of the eighteenth century opera seria; after fashion and humanitarian considerations had banished the castrato from opera, the association of that vocal range with heroic characters survived for a time. This was also the period when tenors were expected to have developed falsetto ranges. Therefore, during the 1820s there was for the audience no strict correlation between the singer’s vocal sound and the sexual characteristics of the role he or she sang. The related term “musichetto” was applied by Donizetti’s generation to roles sung by women who impersonated pages and male adolescents.⁶⁶

In the absence of castrati, composers like Rossini wrote music as they would have for castrati, thereby preserving their artistic legacy even in their absence.⁶⁷ Rossini expressed his high regard for the contralto voice in a letter to Luigi Chrisostomo Ferrucci. “The contralto is the norm against which the other voices and instruments must be gauged.”⁶⁸ Rossini only

⁶⁵ Enid Rhodes Peschel and Richard E. Peschel, “Medical Insights into the Castrati in Opera” *American Scientist* 75/6 (1987): 579.

⁶⁶ William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Opera* (Cambridge University Press, 1982): 599-600n.

⁶⁷ André, *Voicing Gender*: 25.

⁶⁸ Leonella Grasso Caprioli, “Singing Rossini” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rossini*, ed. Emanuele Senici (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004), 192.

composed one role for a castrato (*Aureliano in Palmira*, 1813) but continued to compose for contraltos as male heroic leads up through *Semiramide* (1823), his final opera composed for an Italian theater. In spite of Rossini's professed love for the contralto voice, he shows no preference for any particular contralto. Only two of his contralto *musico* roles were premiered by the same singer (Marietta Marcolini), and the ten premieres happened in eight different theaters.

Rossini's only opera with a contralto *musico* role to premiere in Naples was *Maometto II* (1820) in which Adelaide Comelli performed the role of Calbo. The opera was composed during considerable political turmoil in Naples as a new Republican government was being installed. Rossini was forced to rework the libretto to tone down the political aspects of the text. This in part might explain the choice of an old-fashioned *contralto musico* casting for a male warrior. It is also noteworthy that the role was re-cast with a tenor when Rossini reworked the opera for Paris as *Le Siège de Corinthe* (1826).⁶⁹

While our main evidence for what these singers sounded like is the music composed for them and a few contemporary descriptions of their voices, it is also useful to consider the experience of more recent singers who performed the music composed for them. Marilyn Horne's observations are of particular interest as she sang so much of this repertoire during her career.

I would say that Tancredi, Arsace [in *Semiramide*], Néocles in *Siege of Corinth*, and Calbo in *Maometto II* are all contraltos. I'd say Falliero [in *Bianca e Falliero*] is a soprano; I would say that definitely Isabella [in *L'italiana in Algeri*] and Cenerentola are contraltos. Rosina is borderline; she's really a mezzo-soprano, probably. That's interesting because Cenerentola and Rosina were written for the same lady, but she

⁶⁹ Richard Osborne, *Rossini: His Life and Works, 2nd Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2007): 287.

always has the lower lines. Andromaca in *Ermione* is a mezzo-soprano, although Pisoni, a contralto, created this role, as well as that of Calbo [in *Maometto II*]. Malcolm [in *La donna del lago*] is a contralto. You see, in *La donna del lago*, the role of Elena, the soprano is iffy; it could easily be a high mezzo-soprano (it was written for Colbran).⁷⁰

Horne describes music composed for Alboni—by Rossini or any other composer as perfect for her voice, as well as music composed for Mercolini, Morrani or Pisoni. Some roles, written for other singers required adjustments. “Carolina Bassi was a soprano; Falliero was written for her, and I made some key adjustments.”⁷¹

In contrast with Rossini who composed contralto *musico* roles up through his last opera for an Italian theater (*Semiramide*), all of Donizetti’s *musico* roles were composed before his first major success with *Anna Bolena* in 1830. One of those four roles was actually intended for a tenor. Amerigo Sbigolo would have been the first Abenamet in *Zarouide in Granata* were it not for his sudden death. With no other tenors available, Donizetti had no choice but to compose the role for a contralto known only to us as Mazzanti.⁷² The identity of this singer is something of a mystery. William Ashcroft notes that he had attempted to find further information about this singer, but had not been able to.⁷³ In revivals of the opera, the role continued to be cast as a contralto. Benedetta Pisoni, for example, sang it in 1824.⁷⁴

Donizetti composed the male lead of *L’assedio di Calais* for the contralto Almerinda Manzocchi (1804-1869) because the three available tenors were, according to Donizetti,

⁷⁰ Jeannie Williams. “La Rossiniana: A Conversation with Marilyn Horne” *Opera Quarterly* 9.4 (1993): 77-78.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 80.

⁷² Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas*: 22-23.

⁷³ *Ibid.*: 601n.

⁷⁴ Dan Marek, *Alto: The Voice of Bel Canto* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016): 151.

“almost useless”. Giovanni David’s agent was not responding to the inquiries made by Neapolitan impresario Barbaja, perhaps due to the advanced state of David’s voice. The tenor Giovanni Basadonna was considered, but he was not available in time for the premiere.⁷⁵

Donizetti’s final two pants roles were both created for the same singer, Marietta Brambilla. Pieretto in *Linda di Chamounix* (1842) was originally written for Brambilla.⁷⁶ Another contralto *musico* role was created for the Paris version of *Maria di Rohan*. In the original Vienna version of the score, the role of Armondo di Gondi had been a minor one and assigned to the tenor Michele Novaro, but for the Paris premiere of the opera Donizetti reassigned the role to a mezzo-soprano and added two arias.⁷⁷

Bellini’s two *musico* roles are linked because after the failure of *Zaira*, Bellini repurposed much of the music into *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. The casting of Romeo with a female singer was a common practice in that era. A slightly earlier setting of the same subject by Niccolò Antonio Zingarelli (1796, Milan) had cast the role of Romeo with the castrato Crescentini, but women had begun taking on the role by 1800. Within ten years, it had become a star vehicle for singers like Giuditta Pasta, who used it to establish herself at the Théâtre Italien in Paris in 1821 and sang it at La Scala in 1829 in a production mounted especially for her.⁷⁸ Nicola Vaccai, using the same libretto that Bellini used, had also written Romeo for a woman’s voice. As both operas had similar voice types in the leading roles, it was possible to replace Bellini’s final scene with

⁷⁵ Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas*: 111

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 639n.

⁷⁷ Osborne, *The Bel Canto Operas*: 295.

⁷⁸ Heather Hadlock, “On the Cusp between Past and Future: The Mezzo-Soprano Romeo of Bellini’s *I Capuleti*” (*Opera Quarterly* 17/3 2001): 401.

Vaccai's. This quickly became the standard practice in this opera, and was the preference of Maria Malibran when singing the role of Romeo. While following the *musico* tradition in his casting, however, Bellini worked from a much-revised libretto by Felice Romani, who made considerable changes to the text in order to masculinize the character of Romeo.⁷⁹ These changes, however, met with some opposition, making Vaccai's "tomb scene" preferable to Bellini's in the opinion of many producers and singers.

The casting of a female singer as Romeo is part of a trend in the bel canto era of presenting two young people expressing a forbidden love as isolated from the more masculine world around them that disapproves. Heather Hadlock observes this phenomenon in Rossini's *Tancredi* and *La donna del lago*:

Although the paradigm extended into later Romantic opera, where soprano and tenor lovers suffer under the constraints of a patriarchal society represented by those interfering baritones, it did make a difference to have the heroes played by women. The two realms—a private world of love and desire opposed by fathers and governments—were more strictly (aurally) coded as female and male.⁸⁰

This manner of casting ends with the bel canto composers. Verdi composed no *musico* roles and specifically rejected the idea. He had received some pressure from the management of the Teatro alla Fenice in Venice to write the male lead in *Ernani* for their resident *contralto musico* Carolina Vietta. Verdi responded that he would attempt to find a suitable role for her, but that he was opposed to the idea of presenting a woman singing dressed as a man.⁸¹ He later cast the male lead in *Il corsaro* (1843) with a tenor even though Michele Carafa had cast

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 412-419.

⁸⁰ Heather Hadlock, "Women Playing Men in Italian Opera" in *Women's Voices Across Musical Worlds*, edited by Jane A. Bernstein (Northeastern University Press, 2004): 288.

⁸¹ Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi* (Praeger Publishers, 1973): Vol. I, 143.

the same role (to the same libretto) with a *contralto musico* in 1830.⁸² Verdi did, however, compose two *musichetto* roles: Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera* and Tebaldo in *Don Carlos*. Wagner also composed roles like Adriano in *Rienzi*, the young shepherd in *Tannhäuser*, and various apprentices and novices in *Die Meistersinger in Nürnberg* and *Parsifal* for women to portray young males. Never, however, would either Verdi or Wagner have considered casting a male heroic lead with a female singer.

Option II: The Tenor

The second option was to use male singers for heroic leads. Tenors were already established as leading men in *opera buffa*, *opéra comique* and *Singspiel*, as well as various forms of French opera. The move from comic to serious roles would seem to be obvious in hindsight, but that move happened slowly in most of Italy where opera buffa had become popular but was still not held in the same esteem as *opera seria*.⁸³

In contrast to Rossini's roles for contralto male leads, which were composed for a number of different singers, his leading tenor roles in serious operas were composed for only a few singers, most notably Andrea Nozzari and Giovanni David, and all were composed for either Naples or Paris. Rossini and the Impresario Domenico Barbaja are sometimes given credit for assembling these tenors in Naples, but Nozzari and David as well as a third tenor, Gaetano Crivelli, were already under contract to the Teatro di San Carlo in 1800.

Bellini's male heroic leads were written for Giovanni Rubini, Domenico Reina and

⁸² Hadley, "Women Playing Men in Italian Opera": 287.

⁸³ DeMarco, "Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Males Roles in Italian and French Opera": 32.

Domenico Donzelli, but Bellini's first choice in every case was Rubini. He began his training as a boy soprano.⁸⁴ He studied singing with Andrea Nozzari and attended Johan Mayr's school in Bergamo where he may have been classmates with Donizetti.⁸⁵ Rossini and Donizetti wrote major roles for him. Early in his career, he was often described as an "indifferent actor" who had "the usual tendency to embellish extensively without regard to the drama that his roulades might be obscuring." Bellini encouraged him to act and to find an emotional connection between the singing and the character he was playing.⁸⁶ The range and tessitura of his voice were quite high, and Bellini exploited this ability. Rubini was especially noted for his ability to change registers without any noticeable shift in timbre.⁸⁷ Only later in his career did he switch from opera buffa and roles created for him that suited his high tenor voice to the more dramatic roles like *Otello*.⁸⁸ He was less successful in the more robust roles, however. Rossini considered the title role in his *Otello* to be too "forza" for his voice.⁸⁹ His career continued to thrive into the 1830s even after the preferred manner of tenor singing had shifted to a more chest-voice based technique. He retired from singing in 1848.⁹⁰

After the success of *Il Pirata* (1827), Bellini hoped to duplicate that success with *La Straniera*. Unfortunately, Rubini was unavailable so the role went to Domenico Reina (1796-1843). Reina, a Swiss tenor from Lugano, had been trained in Milan. Bellini had first considered

⁸⁴ Potter, *Tenor*: 42.

⁸⁵ Marek, *Rubini*: 92.

⁸⁶ Potter, *Tenor*: 42.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: 24.

⁸⁸ Marek, *Rubini*: 101.

⁸⁹ Maurizio Modugno, "Domenico Donzelli e il suo tempo" *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 18/2 (1984): 214.

⁹⁰ Marek, *Rubini*: 251.

Berardo Winter, but found him unsuitable.⁹¹ Bellini wrote to his dear Neapolitan friend

Francesco Florimo on September 27, 1828:

I wrote to the tenor Reina in Lucca, and he answered graciously, telling me that his voice is virile, always in tune, with a chest register extending from B \flat under the staff to A above the staff and with falsetto notes up to high E, that he has agility and sings evenly, and that his style will adapt itself to my music....⁹²

Philip Gossett notes that in studying the score from the La Scala production with Rubini as Arturo that the parts are in a copyist's hand except for the changes made to alter the role for Rubini. "His revisions in particular raise the tessitura of the role, for Rubini's upper register was clearly stronger than Reina's."⁹³

Domenico Donzelli was born in Bergamo, Italy in 1790. He was first trained as a boy soprano and then as a lyric tenor. In Bergamo, he studied with Adamo Bianchi. He completed his studies in Naples with Giuseppe Viganoni and Gaetano Crivelli.⁹⁴ Unlike many of the tenors of the previous generation who had studied with castrati, all of Donzelli's teachers were tenors.⁹⁵ Adamo Bianchi (1764-after 1835) was a tenor known for purity of intonation and intensity of expression.⁹⁶ Giuseppe Viganoni (1757-1822) was a principle *seria* tenor in Paris and

⁹¹ Philip Gossett, "Introduction" in Bellini, Vincenzo, Felice Romani, and Philip Gossett, *La Straniera: Melodramma in Two Acts*. (New York: Garland, 1982): 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*: 3.

⁹³ *Ibid.*: 4.

⁹⁴ Modugno: 200.

⁹⁵ John Potter, "The Tenor-Castrato Connection, 1760-1860" (*Early Music* 35/1): 106.

⁹⁶ Modugno: 206.

London known for his impeccable technique.⁹⁷ Crivelli (1768-1836) was a baritonal tenor of limited range.⁹⁸

Donzelli made his professional singing debut at 18 and went on to sing roles in operas by Rossini, including *Tancredi*, *L'Inganno felice*, *Cenerentola* and in the première of *Torvaldo e Dorliska*, and other composers throughout Italy. He arrived in Naples in 1809 where he sang serious, semi-serious and comic roles.⁹⁹ He was admired in Paris in Rossini's *Otello* and in London as Roderic in *La Donna del Lago*.¹⁰⁰ He also created roles for Donizetti (*Ugo, conte di Parigi* and *Maria Padilla*), Mercadante (*Il bravo* and *Emma d'Antiocha*) and Pacini (*Cesare in Egitto* and *Carlo di Borgogna*).

While many applauded this new style of baritenor singing, not everyone was impressed with this new, more robust tenor sound. Stendhal, who maintained a clear preference for tenors who sang the top notes in falsetto,¹⁰¹ wrote "...the tenor Donzelli is very fine. His voice, however, does not impress me at all; it is veiled and, in the upper notes, resembles a yell."¹⁰² Bellini seems to have shared this opinion before working with Donzelli. When he began composing *Norma* for La Scala, Bellini was greatly disappointed that Rubini was unavailable for

⁹⁷ Marek, *Rubini*: 71.

⁹⁸ Modugno: 207.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: 200.

¹⁰⁰ Theodore Fenner, *Opera in London: Views of the Press, 1785-1830* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1994): 195.

¹⁰¹ Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas*: 605.

¹⁰² Quoted in William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) :30.

the role of Pollione, as Bellini had previously been less than thrilled with Donzelli's singing, finding his voice "hard and with a low tessitura."¹⁰³

Donzelli's voice could hardly have been more different from Rubini's. A clear example of this can be found in their performances of Gualtiero in Bellini's *Il pirata*. When Donzelli performed the role in London in 1830, he had the second act aria "Tu vedrai" transposed down from C major to B-flat major. When Rubini sang the role, he had transposed it up to D-major.¹⁰⁴

With Rubini unavailable, Bellini began composing the role of Pollione for Donzelli who, along with Giuditta Pasta, was already engaged by La Scala for the première of Donizetti's *Ugo, Conte di Parigi*. As was the custom of that era, Bellini inquired of Donzelli about his voice in order to compose a role suitable for his voice. In a letter dated May 3, 1831 Donzelli wrote Bellini to describe his own voice: "...the range of my voice is about two octaves, from low c to top c. The chest voice extends up to g, and it is this part of my voice that I can declaim with even force, and sustain the declamation with the full power of the voice. From high g to top c I can make use of a falsetto, which, employed with skill and with power, provides an ornamental resource. I have sufficient agility, but find it considerably easier in descending than ascending passages."¹⁰⁵ Bellini appears to have taken Donzelli at his word as the role was clearly written within the parameters of Donzelli's description of his vocal ability. Donzelli's stated two-octave range of "low c to high c" is used almost in its entirety as the role extends from d-flat to high c, coming within a half-step of the entirety of Donzelli's stated usable range. The role rarely goes

¹⁰³ Letter from Bellini to Florimo dated August 4, 1828, quoted in David Kimbell, *Vincenzo Bellini: Norma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 11.

¹⁰⁴ Herbert Weinstock, *Vincenzo Bellini: His Life and His Operas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971): 531.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in David Kimbell, *Vincenzo Bellini: Norma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 12.

above g, which would have allowed Donzelli to sing almost the entire performance in chest voice. There are a few a-flats and a-naturals, especially in the cabaletta “Me protégé, me difende,” but these are the exceptions. This is a considerable change from the tessitura of Bellini’s writing for Rubini. The highest note in the role, a high c, occurs only once, near the beginning of the Act I cavatina “Meco all’altar di venere.” Bellini goes so far as to insert a rest between the preparatory g and the high c, which would have allowed Donzelli to switch gears from chest voice to falsetto.

Norma was not an instant success. The first performance was not well received by either the audience or the critics. Bellini placed the blame for the lukewarm reception on insufficient rehearsal and exhaustion of the original cast,¹⁰⁶ but Bellini did make several revisions to the score, especially to the trio and the Adalgisa-Pollione duet.¹⁰⁷ It was after these revisions and subsequent productions that the opera became a success and a staple of the repertoire.

Donizetti composed roles for a number of tenors previously discussed. His work with French tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez, however, is of particular significance in the development of the Romantic tenor voice. The contrast between Duprez and his rival Adolphe Nourrit is in many ways parallel to the vocal differences between Giovanni Battista Rubini and Domenico Donzelli but with a great deal more drama.

Adolphe Nourrit was the son of tenor Louis Nourrit who combined a career as a diamond merchant with engagements at the Paris Opéra.¹⁰⁸ After a very brief career as an

¹⁰⁶ David Kimbell, *Vincenzo Bellini: Norma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 13.

¹⁰⁷ Herbert Weinstock, *Vincenzo Bellini: 429*.

¹⁰⁸ Potter, *Tenor*: 46.

accountant, the younger Nourrit began an intense course of study with Manuel Garcia I.¹⁰⁹ By the age of 26 Nourrit was the most important singer in France.¹¹⁰ Roles composed for him include four operas by Rossini including the Paris versions of *Le Siège de Corinthe* (1826) and *Moïse et Pharaon* (1827), as well as the *opéra comique* *Le Comte Ory* (1828), and the grand opera *Guillaume Tell* (1828). The role of Néocles in *Le Siège de Corinthe* was the most florid tenor role in a French opera up to that point.¹¹¹ He also premiered leading roles in Auber's *La Muette de Portici* (1828) and Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* (1831) and *Les Huguenots* (1831).

Like Rubini, Nourrit sang in “head voice” in his upper range. Nourrit was, however, a more skilled actor.¹¹² According to Quicherat, Nourrit and Rubini held each other in high esteem even though they were rivals at the Théâtre Italien in Paris in the 1820s and 1830s. One day Nourrit was holding forth in praise of Rubini to a small group of friends. One of them said, “Just recently Rubini was speaking in the same terms of you!” Each of the two secretly acknowledged to the other his own shortcomings. Perfection would have been found in a merger of their respective attributes.”¹¹³

Francis Rogers expresses a belief that “he had discovered some way of imparting a more or less masculine *timbre* to the usually feminine timbres of the falsetto, even in the topmost notes.... Inasmuch as the Parisians would never tolerate the sexless tones of the castrati, I can only assume that Nourrit's voice had enough of the masculine in it, even though really, or

¹⁰⁹ Henry Pleasants, *The Great Tenor Tragedy* (Amadeus Press, 1995): 8.

¹¹⁰ Francis Rogers, “Adolphe Nourrit” (*The Musical Quarterly* 25/1 1939): 12.

¹¹¹ DeMarco, “Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Male Roles in Italian and French Opera”: 260.

¹¹² Pleasants, *The Great Tenor Tragedy*: 2.

¹¹³ Quicherat, *Adolphe Nourrit: Sa vie, son talent, son caractère, son correspondance* (Librarie de L. Hachette, 1867): Vol. III, 82.

almost, falsetto to satisfy the public taste.”¹¹⁴ Rogers continues by explaining Nourrit’s other performing abilities that likely pleased nineteenth century French audiences. “He was rather short in stature, with a tendency to rotundity, but he moved with dignity and grace, and was adept in the art of costume and make-up. His features were strong and expressive, in particular his large blue eyes. As an actor, he was effective in both comedy and tragedy. Take him for all in all, he was the embodiment of everything the French thought and still think most desirable in a lyric actor.”¹¹⁵

Not all audience members, however, were equally charmed. Henry Chorley, critiquing a performance of Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*, described Nourrit as having a “clear metallic voice” that was “nasal in its falsetto.” He criticized his singing for “mannered over-grace and over-sweetness.” His acting was also sharply criticized. “He appears on recollection to have been more conscious of his handsome person, and high artistic accomplishments, than anyone I have ever seen on the French stage....”¹¹⁶

It was not only his singing and acting that would sometimes cause negative reactions. Nourrit was well versed in history and philosophy and was an active revolutionary. His political views may have caused him as many problems with the Neapolitan public as his vocal troubles as he struggled to sing in the new chest-voice dominant style. His active participation in revolutionary activities were “an obstacle to his success in reactionary Naples.”¹¹⁷ It is ironic

¹¹⁴ Rogers, “Adolphe Nourrit”: 16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.: 13.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Forrest Kelly, *First Nights at the Opera* (Yale University Press, 2004): 221.

¹¹⁷ Rogers, “Adolphe Nourrit”: 14.

that a performer who in real life espoused the revolutionary views would have trouble maintaining a successful career playing a revolutionary on the stage.

Unlike Nourrit who was trained in the Italian style of singing by Spanish tenor Manuel Garcia, Gilbert-Louis Duprez studied in Paris with his principal voice teacher Étienne Choron, who had set up singing schools in the provincial cities of France with the aspiration of scouting for the best talent to bring to Paris.¹¹⁸ It was only after his early success at the Odéon Theater in Paris that Duprez went to Italy, where he learned from Domenico Donzelli the technique of taking the chest voice higher into the range.¹¹⁹ He found further encouragement from Gaetano Donizetti who composed a number of roles for him including Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Evidence of Donizetti's exploitation of the new tenor technique can be found in the score of *Parisina* (1833) in which the tenor Ugo, a role composed for Duprez, is required to sing a high A over an orchestra marked fortissimo.¹²⁰

When Duprez returned from Italy, Nourrit welcomed his rival tenor to the Paris Opéra and even handed over some of his roles to Duprez. After the famous high C in *Tell*, however, he realized that if he were to compete with Duprez in Paris he too would have to travel to Italy and learn the *voix sombrée* technique from the source. The results of Nourrit's Italian adventure could not have been worse. As Pleasants details in *The Great Tenor Tragedy*, nothing went well for Nourrit in Italy in spite of letters of recommendation from Rossini. In Italy in 1838, Nourrit noticed that tenors there were no longer ornamenting the vocal line but singing the notes

¹¹⁸ Patrick Barbier, *Opera in Paris, 1800-1850: A Lively History* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 1995): 136.

¹¹⁹ Modugno: 216.

¹²⁰ DeMarco, "Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Male Roles in Italian and French Opera": 463

strictly as written by the composer. Expression and declamation were now more prized in Italy.¹²¹ Upon his return from Italy, Nourrit's wife Adele was alarmed that her husband's singing was now so loud and devoid of nuance.¹²² This observation mirrors that of physicians Paul Diday and Joseph Pétrequin who noted that the new style of singing gave the voice more power but limited its flexibility.¹²³ His health and mental state went into rapid decline, and in 1839 he killed himself. Pleasants notes:

Matters of health aside, Nourrit's going to Italy to master the new Italian style was, as his wife subsequently observed, a rash decision for one who was not only at the height of a glorious career, but who was also thirty-five years old, with a voice already exposed to sixteen years of singing some of the most exacting and exhausting roles in the tenor repertoire, many of them roles he created.¹²⁴

Nourrit would probably have fared better had he stayed in Paris where he was respected and even revered as a singer. Nourrit was a well-educated man whose influence on Parisian musical life extended beyond the operatic stage. His contributions to Parisian musical life include his introduction of the Lieder of Franz Schubert (in French translation) to the Paris salons.¹²⁵ Nourrit's style of tenor singing did not completely go out of style in France. A number of tenor roles in the second half of the nineteenth century call for pianissimo high notes, sometimes specifically marked by the composer for *voix mixte*. In Italy, however, the chest voice dominant sound would continue to dominate.

¹²¹ Pleasants, *The Great Tenor Tragedy*: 31-32.

¹²² Potter, *Tenor*: 49.

¹²³ Paul Diday et Joseph Pétrequin, "Memoire sur une nouvelle espèce de voix chantée" (*Gazette medicale de Paris*, 16 Mai 1840): 313.

¹²⁴ Pleasants, *The Great Tenor Tragedy*: 130.

¹²⁵ Potter, *Tenor*: 48.

CHAPTER 4

A CLOSER LOOK: SERIOUS OPERA, 1800-1840

If we only consider the operas by the major bel canto composers, the practice of casting contraltos in heroic leading roles would appear to have concluded with Bellini's *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*. Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, however, were by no means the only composers writing serious operas in Italy in the early nineteenth century. In order to study casting patterns for male leading roles in depth, I compiled a list of serious operas that premiered in Italy between 1800 and 1840. I then researched the casting of the male leading role for the premiere of each opera. Only premieres were studied because casting information was available for almost all operas from this period while information about subsequent casting is not as consistently available. Many of these operas' premiere cast lists could be found in Charles H. Parson's *Opera Premieres: An Index of Casts*.¹²⁶ Parson's multi-volume work includes lists of operas by composer, by librettist, by subject, and by singer. For some operas not included in those volumes, I was able to find digital copies of the programs from the initial productions using digital archives such as Google Books.¹²⁷ The study was limited to operas on serious subjects including those labeled *opera seria*, *dramma*, *dramma per musica*, *melodramma* and other similar categorizations. Operas listed as *farsa*, *buffa*, *semiseria* and other comic and semi-serious forms were not considered because castrati were never part of the comic opera tradition. The data includes 242 operas, of which original casting was available for all but 23. The complete list is found in Appendix A.

¹²⁶ Charles H. Parsons, *Opera Premieres: An Index of Casts* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993).

¹²⁷ <https://books.google.com/>.

The creation of new serious operas is highly inconsistent during the period studied, 1800-1840. At least one new serious opera premiered each year. The average number of new serious operas premiering in Italy during that period is six with a range from one to sixteen. From 1800 to 1816 between two and nine operas premiered each year. From 1817-1819 there is a sudden increase in the number of new serious operas with 16 in 1817, 10 in 1818, and 12 in 1819. From 1819 to 1834 there are between three and nine new serious operas per year. No more than five serious operas premiere in any single year between 1835 and 1840.

While castrati are generally associated with eighteenth century opera, at least six castrati performed new opera roles in the nineteenth century. The number of new operas composed with a castrato leading role range from zero to four per year between 1800 and 1824. No new operas were composed for castrati in Naples after 1806, the year Crescentini left Naples for the Parisian court. After 1819, Velluti is the only castrato for whom composers are writing new operas. Turin and Venice were the cities hosting most of the final castrato opera premieres. The final new operas for Velluti, Pavesi's *Egilda di Provenza* and Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto*, premiered at the Teatro alla Fenice in Venice in 1824.

Although contraltos had been taking on *musico* roles since at least 1794 in Ferdinando Paer's *Ero e Leandro*, they do not become common in new Italian operas until 1810. Only a few of these operas premiered in Naples. Two operas by G.B. DeLuca, *Giulio Sabino* (1809) and *Bajazet* (1810) premiered at the Teatro San Carlo. Rossini's *Maometto II* (1820) and Pietro Generali's *Gusmano de Valhor* (1817) are the only other *contralto musico* operas to premiere in Naples in that decade. Of the 66 serious operas that premiered in Italy from 1800 to 1840 featuring a contralto as the male lead, 17 premiered in Milan, 16 in Venice, eight in Naples, four

in Rome, and seven in Turin. New operas featuring a *contralto musico* lead continue to be composed at a steady pace of at least one or two per year until 1834. Five new *musico* operas premiered in 1831, three in 1832 and one each in 1833 and 1834. The final such opera found in this study is Alberto Mazzucato's *La fidanzata di Lammermoor* (1834).

In the same period 57 new operas premiere with tenor leads at Naples Teatro di San Carlo (plus four others premiering at other theaters in Naples), 26 at Milan's La Scala, three at Rome's Teatro Argentina (with one more in Rome's Apollo), 17 at Venice's La Fenice, and four at Turin's Teatro Regio. Tenors overwhelmingly dominated the serious operas in Naples and only later took over the leading roles in operas that premiered in other cities.

Naples use of tenors in serious opera had already begun in the late eighteenth century. Domenico Mombelli was premiering leading roles in operas by Giovanni Paisiello and others in the 1780s and 1790s. The preference in Naples is based on the location, not any desire of the part of the composer. Johann Simon Mayr, for example, began composing the role of Giasone in his *Medea in Corinto* (1813) for a soprano castrato but changed the role to one for a tenor because of the expectations in Naples already in place at the time.¹²⁸ Meanwhile tenor leads do not appear at Milan's La Scala until 1806 (Mayr's *Adelasia e Aleramo*) or in Rome until 1820 (Mercadante's *Scipione in Cartagine*). Curiously, tenors sing the male leads at Venice's La Fenice in five operas between 1799 and 1802 but only once (Mayr's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* in 1808) between 1802 and 1816, after which tenor leads become more common.

¹²⁸ C.S. Brauner, "Vincenzo Bellini and the Aesthetics of Opera Seria in the First Third of the Nineteenth Century" (Dissertation: Yale University, 1972): 174.

In the three years with the most new serious operas (1817-1819) the number of new operas with tenor leads and contralto leads are roughly the same. The practice of assigning tenors to male leading roles is primarily concentrated in Naples until 1817 when theaters in Venice and Milan begin creating roles with such roles for tenors rather than castrati or contraltos. This increase in new tenor leading roles correlates to the increase in new serious operas produced following the end of the Napoleonic wars in Domenico Donzelli's first serious role premiere is in that year (Peter Winter's *Maometto II* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala). Rubini begins creating new serious roles with Pacini's *Il barone di Dolsheim* in 1818. Previously he had mainly appeared in comic operas. Tenors are not significantly favored over contraltos for heroic male leads until 1825, the first year in which all the new serious operas feature a tenor hero.

Crossing Lines

Voice types tended to remain fixed in revivals of an opera. There are a few notable exceptions, most of them situations in which *musico* and *musichetto* roles from Italian operas were rewritten by the composer himself for premiers in Paris. One example occurs with the revised version of Rossini's *Maometto II* as *Le Siege de Corinthe*. For the French version of the opera, the role of Calbo, originally for contralto, was revised for tenor.

The reverse, however, happened at least once. Tenor Michele Novaro, who later composed the Italian National Anthem "Il Canto degli Italiani," premiered the role of Armondo di Gondi in the first performances Donizetti's opera *Maria di Rohan* (1842). When the opera was revived in Paris in 1843, the contralto Marietta Brabilla sang the role.

Most revisions involved adaptations of Italian operas for Paris, but in at least one instance a tenor role from an opera that premiered in Paris was recast with a contralto for its Italian premiere. At the first Italian performance of *Guillaume Tell* (in an Italian translation by Calisto Bassi) at the Teatro del Giglio in Lucca, the role of Arnaldo was taken by the contralto Benedetta Rosmundo Pisaroni.¹²⁹

Both Giuditta Pasta and Maria Malibran attempted the title role in Rossini's *Otello*. Malibran (1808-1836) was best known for her portrayals of Rossini heroines like Desdemona, but she also sang *musico* roles like Romeo, Tancredi and Arsace in *Semiramide*. On only one occasion did she take on a role originally composed for a tenor, the title role in Rossini's *Otello*, which she performed in Paris in 1831.¹³⁰ This casting already had a precedent created by Giuditta Pasta who had previously sung the role in London two years earlier. Pasta had shortened the opera by omitting the first act. The ever-competitive Malibran (who may have seen Pasta's London performance of the role) insisted on singing all three acts, although she did cut some of the music and transpose some numbers. Malibran may have been hoping for a triumph by taking on a role so closely associated with her father Manuel Garcia, but not a single reviewer was impressed. Biographer Howard Bushnell calls it the only personal failure of her singing career.¹³¹ Both of these performances happened while composers in Italy were composing new contralto *musico* roles.

¹²⁹ Gilbert-Louis Duprez, *Souvenirs d'un chanteur* (Calmann Lévy, 1880): 68.

¹³⁰ Howard Bushnell, *Maria Malibran: A Biography of the Singer* (The Pennsylvania University Press, 1979): 241-244

¹³¹ *Ibid.*: 132

Malibran's younger sister Pauline Viardot, whose career began after the last new contralto *musico* role was composed, sang very few of them herself. However, Berlioz created a contralto version of Gluck's *Orphée* for her in 1859, even though versions by Gluck for *haute-contre* and for tenor already existed. Unlike her sister's ill-fated attempt at *Otello*, *Orphée* was a triumph for Viardot, who retired from the stage three years later.¹³²

The Paris-Naples Connection

As we have seen, the strongest preference for tenors over contraltos for male leads in serious opera was in Naples. Although some sources point to Gioachino Rossini and the impresario Domenico Barbaja as the reason, the practice of casting tenors in these roles began well before either arrived in Naples. Both Giovanni Paisiello and Simon Mayr had composed several tenor-hero operas for Neapolitan premieres before 1800. This reason for this preference was set long before when Bourbon kings established rule over Naples.

Naples was perhaps the most important Italian city for opera in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Anthony DelDonna compares its importance in the development and dissemination opera in that era to Vienna's significance in the development and style of instrumental music.¹³³ Its four conservatories trained many important musicians including Vincenzo Bellini and Gaspare Spontini.¹³⁴ It was home to four opera houses, the Teatro di San

¹³² Flora Willson, "Classic Staging: Pauline Viardot and the 1859 *Orphée* Revival" (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 22/3 2012): 301

¹³³ Anthony R. DelDonna, "Opera in Naples" in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, edited by Anthony R. DelDonna and Perpaolo Polzonetti (Cambridge University Press, 2009): 214

¹³⁴ Gaia Servadio, *Rossini* (Constable, 2003): 47

Carlo, the Fiorentino, the Teatro Nuovo, and the Teatro del Fondo. The Teatro di San Carlo, the largest of the four, was originally built in 1737. It was later destroyed by fire in 1816 but rebuilt quickly, reopening the following year. The new theater was considerably larger than the original with seating to accommodate 3,500 patrons.¹³⁵ (By comparison, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City can seat 3,800.)

In 1805, Napoleon's armies conquered Naples and the Emperor installed his brother Joseph Bonaparte as ruler and then replaced him with his brother-in-law Joachim Murat in 1808. Under Napoleon, the local rulers abolished feudalism and centralized power following the Emperor's model.¹³⁶ Although Naples, ruled by Bourbon monarchs, had long been closely associated culturally with Paris, Napoleonic rule increased French influence on cultural life in Naples.

Neapolitan musical culture was first negatively affected by the occupation when Napoleon brought Naples' most important composer Giovanni Paisiello and most important singer Girolamo Crescentini to Paris.¹³⁷ Other changes, however, were positive. The conservatories were "meticulously reorganized along French lines." Theater facilities were also upgraded and modernized during the French occupation.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Smith, Micheal L., Jr. *Adolphe Nourrit, Gilbert Duprez, and the High C: The Influences of Operatic Plots, Culture, Language, Theater Design, and Growth of Orchestral Forces on the Development of the Operatic Tenor Vocal Production*, (Dissertation: University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2011): 88

¹³⁶ John A. Davis, "Opera and Absolutism in Restoration Italy, 1815-1860" (*Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36/4 2006): 575

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Davis, *Naples and Napoleon*: 247

In 1809 Joachim Murat brought Domenico Barbaja (1778-1841) from Milan to Naples as the new impresario as part of the modernization efforts of the new regime.¹³⁹ Unlike most Italian impresarios of the time, Barbaja was not from a theatrical family.¹⁴⁰ A former café waiter and billiard player, he introduced the roulette wheel into the opera house in Milan and made a fortune running casinos attached to theater. Profits from the casinos financed the opera productions. Immediately upon arriving in Naples, he installed gambling tables in the theaters there, which helped fund the theaters.¹⁴¹ Barbaja quickly introduced French opera to Neapolitan audiences with productions of Spontini's *La Vestale* in 1811 and Gluck's *Iphégenie en Aulide* in 1812.

In 1814-1815, the Congress of Vienna restored the Italian "legitimist" rulers following the fall of Napoleon's Empire.¹⁴² Upon being returned to his throne in 1815, Ferdinand IV began styling himself as a liberator from foreign occupation.¹⁴³ Italian nobility and their entourages of this era displayed themselves as representing the broader public they claimed to represent.¹⁴⁴ Following their liberation from Napoleonic rule, Neapolitans continued to embrace the French cultural model. Rossini's triumphs in Naples and elsewhere were seen as representing Naples as Italy's most modern city.¹⁴⁵ The restored monarchy wanted to be seen as modern, and a break with the static tradition of *opera seria* was part of that effort.

¹³⁹ Davis, "Opera and Absolutism in Restoration Italy, 1815-1860": 578

¹⁴⁰ John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi* (Cambridge University Press, 1984): 17

¹⁴¹ Davis, "Opera and Absolutism in Restoration Italy": 578

¹⁴² *Ibid.*: 569.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*: 576.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: 573-4.

¹⁴⁵ Davis, *Naples and Napoleon*: 292.

In 1815, Barbaja hired Rossini as musical and artistic director of the Teatro San Carlo.¹⁴⁶ He arrived only a month before Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.¹⁴⁷ Rossini found a roster of exceptionally capable tenors in Naples and began writing leading roles in both *opera buffa* and *opera seria* for them while continuing to write serious leading roles for contraltos elsewhere. The tenors under contract there included Andrea Nozzari, Giovanni David, Manuel Garcia I, Giovanni Rubini and Domenico Donzelli.¹⁴⁸ The assemblage of so many tenors allowed Rossini to compose a number of operas with multiple tenor roles including *Ermione* and *La donna del lago* with two such parts (for David and Nozzari). *Elisabetta* includes both a tenor lover (Leicester) and a tenor villain (Norfolk).¹⁴⁹ *Otello* featured three tenors, and remarkably *Armida* has six tenor roles (sung by four singers at the premiere). The importance of Naples among the Italian cultural capitals ended when Gaetano Donizetti, who had become musical director in 1829, left for Paris in 1838 due to the serious economic decline of the city.¹⁵⁰

Milan, second to Naples in terms of its adoption of the tenor hero, was also under French rule from 1796-1814.¹⁵¹ Attempts by Napoleon's Empire to make changes to La Scala were met with more resistance in Milan than in Naples. Upon the reestablishment of Austrian Habsburg rule in 1814, most of the changes were discarded. The only lasting influence was a

¹⁴⁶ DeMarco, "Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Male Roles in Italian and French Opera": 91.

¹⁴⁷ Servadio: 46.

¹⁴⁸ Marek, *Rubini*: 97.

¹⁴⁹ DeMarco, "Rossini and the Emergence of the Dramatic Males Roles in Italian and French Opera": 100

¹⁵⁰ Davis, "Opera and Absolutism in Restoration Italy": 575

¹⁵¹ Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi*: 43

redesign of the Teatro alla Scala.¹⁵² The Milanese rejected the French influence while the Neapolitans embraced it.

Contraltos and Tenors in Serious Opera

Contraltos only continue to be cast in *musico* roles in new operas for a few years after the last castrato retired from the stage. With the memory of castrati fading, the need to preserve their artistry faded as well. *Opera seria* was also diminishing in importance. Tenors were sometimes cast in operas based on Metastasio's libretti as in Morlacchi's *Le danaidi* (1810) and Pacini's *Alessandro nelle Indie* (1824), while *musici* were sometimes cast in operas based on romantic subjects. By the 1830s, however, the contralto *musico* had become as old-fashioned as the Metastasian libretto. That explains, at least in part, the quick disappearance of operas like Pacini's *Ivanhoe* (1832) or Mazzucato's *La fidanzata di Lammermoor* (1834) which had contralto male leads but Romantic plots adapted from novels by Sir Walter Scott.

In London contralto *musici* were facing the attacks similar to those aimed at the castrati. In 1825, the London press had gone on attack against Velluti who was preparing for the London premiere of Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto*.¹⁵³ An unnamed reviewer wrote, "We must confess that the performance was revolting. A hero, a valiant crusader, a soldier, a victor, and a lover, venting his emotions in a squalling treble...was more than we could endure." Only three

¹⁵² Raffaella Bianchi, "Space and Hegemony at La Scala, 1776-1850s" *European Legacy: New Paradigms* 19/6 (2014): 737

¹⁵³ Davies, "Velluti in Speculum": 288.

years later, the London critics had turned on the contralto *musico* as they had on the castrato.¹⁵⁴ Although the attacks were not so harsh, it was clear that the London public was no more enamored of the contralto *musico* than they had been of the castrato version.

Meanwhile, a mythos grew up around Duprez and the “ut de poitrine”. Thomas Laqueur notes, “The modern –post 1837—tenor voice has taken on something of a masculine mythos in popular culture. It is eerily powerful. Caruso could break glass with his high notes.”¹⁵⁵ This mythos did not arise by chance, however. In his biography of Adolphe Nourrit, Louis Quicherat accused opera director Henri Duponchel of concocting the “fiction of the new species of tenor” for profit.¹⁵⁶ Even Duprez’s insistence that his chest voice high C was an impulsive outburst rather than the result of years of study with Italian teachers may well be part of that public relations campaign. We continue to think of that style of singing as masculine. Naomi Adele André claims, “The tenor embodied the Romantic epoch’s reconstruction of what was considered to be the ideal heroic sound.” But reconstructed from what? Tenors were only briefly the male leads in opera. The switch to castrati happened during Monteverdi’s time and lasted into Rossini’s. It is more accurate to view, as Gregory Bloch claims, that the 1837 Paris *Tell* was the moment in which Gabriel Duprez “pathologized” the male falsetto voice.¹⁵⁷ Nourrit was the first star tenor to feel the pressure to adapt. James Q. Davies explains:

La Presse used the example of the “new tenor” both to question Nourrit’s masculinity and attack the high *voix mixte*. “For our part,” the correspondent wrote, “we have a horror of those little fluted falsetto notes, that make one doubt the virility of he who

¹⁵⁴ Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance*: 24.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas W. Laqueur, “Response: Men with a Past” (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/1 2007): 85

¹⁵⁶ Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance*: 124

¹⁵⁷ Gregory W. Bloch, “The Pathological Voice of Gilbert-Louis Duprez” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/1 (March 2007): 18

produced them, and prefer, as in modern drama, to hear a man's voice from a man's chest."¹⁵⁸

A number of sources credit Donzelli with the popularization of this singing technique. According to François-Joseph Fétis, the *voix sombrée* had been in use for some time but had previously only been used sparingly for the expression of intense emotions.¹⁵⁹ Duprez probably learned the chest-voice dominant tenor technique from Domenico Donzelli while in Italy. Alan Armstrong explains,

Under Donzelli's tutelage Duprez's instrument darkened, and he learned to extend both the power and the range of his voice. At that time, tenors customarily sang to g' with their full voice, but above that passed into head voice or a so-called *voix mixte*. Duprez dispensed with these approaches, carrying his chest voice as high as e" above the staff.¹⁶⁰

Duprez himself, however, makes no mention of Donzelli whatsoever in his autobiography *Memoires d'un chanteur*. His biographer Antoine Elwart also omits any reference to Donzelli.¹⁶¹ Instead, Duprez claimed that his famous 1837 chest voice high C in *Guillaume Tell* only happened because he had been carried away by "the manly accents, the supreme cries." His own account implies that he had never attempted this before and was not even entirely sure that it was possible until he attempted it in a live performance. "By heaven, I cried...I will get there!"¹⁶² Duprez represents his feat as a natural result of his masculinity

¹⁵⁸ Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance*: 124

¹⁵⁹ Louis Marie Quicherat and Adolphe Nourrit. *Adolphe Nourrit: sa vie, son talent, son caractère, sa correspondance*. (L. Hachette et cie., 1867): Vol. 3, 396.

¹⁶⁰ Alan Armstrong, "Gilbert-Louis Duprez and Gustave Roger in the Composition of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*" (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 8/2 1996): 149.

¹⁶¹ Antoine Elwart, *Duprez: Sa Vie Artistique : Avec une Biographie Authentique de son Maître, Alexandre Choron* (Paris: Victor Magen, 1838).

¹⁶² Duprez: 75-76.

rather than from years of careful training. The Romantic era embraced the more “natural” sound of the chest voice over the “unnatural” sound of the castrati, and this would extend to their surrogate, the contralto *musico*.

The new tenor hero meshed well with the new heroic male lead. No more were male leads in serious operas aristocrats upholding the authority of the crown. Now they were revolutionaries. They were prone to emotional outbursts and even acts of violence. They upended the old order rather than upholding it. Most importantly, they earned their power through physical strength and force of will rather than by virtue of royal heritage. Naomi Adele André explains, “The Romantic tenor exemplified the new and increasing power attained by aristocrats and the rising bourgeoisie. His voice was more ‘human’ as he produced a more ‘natural’ (unaltered surgically), yet still operatically stylized, sound. This was the voice of the nineteenth-century hero whose character, despite weaknesses and shortcomings aspired to a noble struggle against oppression, corruption, immorality.”¹⁶³ Thomas Laqueur summarizes, “The new tenor is, in short, more male than the old one.”¹⁶⁴

The new more virile tenor hero was of particular appeal to the rising bourgeoisie who, like the new Romantic operatic heroes, had earned their places in society rather than inherited them. The new hero has earned his respect not by noble birth but by noble deed. The older style quickly became passé. This coincides with a sartorial revolution in the 1830s. Upper class men ceased dressing flamboyantly with decorations and knee breeches. Instead, the new fashion called for somber-colored suits with minimal decoration. The French upper class

¹⁶³ André: 4.

¹⁶⁴ Laqueur, “Response: Men with a Past”: 85.

adopted a style of dress more akin to the English Puritans and Quakers. This normalized a polar opposition between male and female. Old Regime aristocrats were now stigmatized as feminine and weak because of their dress. The new bourgeois style symbolized outward conformity and modesty as achievement based on hard work and moral character replaced social rank as a status marker.¹⁶⁵

Two French physicians, Paul Diday and Joseph Pétrequin published a paper in a French medical journal in 1840 denouncing the new style of singing while holding up Rubini as a model for blending the old and new styles.¹⁶⁶ Some composers continued to write for singers using the older style of singing, especially in France. There are some passages in French opera calling for pianissimo singing on notes above the staff, as in “Vainement, ma bien-aimée” from Édouard Lalo’s *Le Roi d’Ys* (1888). Other tenor arias calling for a high pianissimo include “Je crois entendre encore” from Georges Bizet’s *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (1863), “Nymphes attentives” from Charles Gounod’s *Polyeucte* (1878), and “Oh, ne t’éveille pas encore” from Benjamin Godard’s *Jocelyn* (1888).¹⁶⁷ These are, however, exceptions. Overall, the new sound would become the standard.

Nourrit was not the only tenor unable to master the chest voice high C. We can see this in Verdi’s writing for the tenor voice. After writing a high B natural in *Oberto* and a high C in the opera buffa *Il finto Stanislao*, Verdi would not write another high B for a tenor until *Stiffelio*

¹⁶⁵ Lenard R. Berlanstein, *Daughters of Eve: A Cultural History of French Theater Women from the Old Regime to the Fin de Siècle* (Harvard University Press, 2009): 88.

¹⁶⁶ Diday and Pétrequin: 313.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Grubb, *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire*. (Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1979): 180-181.

(1850) and no high C for a tenor until *Aïda* (1871). It may have taken a few decades but this feat would become standard enough to be expected from tenors singing Radames or Rodolfo.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the *opera seria* tradition lasted far longer than is generally acknowledged. This tradition was extended by a few years beyond the retirement of the last remaining operatic castrati with contraltos singing those parts. Tenors eventually took over the leading male roles in opera, but the transition was longer and more complicated than is generally acknowledged.

Failure to look at the lesser-known works of any period usually leads to erroneous assumptions. Fortunately, recent scholarship by Martha Feldman, Roger Freitas, Hilary Poriss, Heather Hadlock, and others have helped us reconsider the history of opera in a historical context. This is especially true of the castrati who for too long have been viewed only from the perspective of a few English critics and represented only in caricatures exaggerating their physical appearance.

Similarly, the contralto *musico* was an important participant in Italian opera in the bel canto period. Although short lived, they inspired composers like Rossini to compose great music. In this thesis, I have provided a fuller context for our understanding of the operatic casting of the early nineteenth century and in doing so proved that the tenor was not the inevitable replacement for the castrato in Italian opera.

APPENDIX A

COMPLETE LIST OF OPERAS USED IN THIS STUDY

List of abbreviations used in this table can be found at the end of Appendix A.

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Capotorti, L.	<i>Enea in Cartagine</i>	1800	N-SC	NN	NN
Capotorti, L.	<i>Gli Orazi e i Curiazi</i>	1800	N-SC	NN	NN
Gnecco, F.	<i>Adelaide di Guesclino</i>	1800	F-Pe	NN	NN
Gnecco, F.	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>	1800	L-Re	NN	NN
Marinelli, G.	<i>La morte di Cleopatra</i>	1800	V-LF	Ten	Antonio Brizzi
Mayr, J.	<i>Gli Sciti</i>	1800	V-LF	Ten	Salvatore de Lorenzi
Portugal, M.	<i>Idante, ovvero i sacrifici d'Ecate</i>	1800	M-LS	Cas Ten	Luigi Marchesi Giacomo David
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Clitennestra</i>	1800	M-LS	NN	NN
Cercia, D.	<i>Scipione in Cartagena</i>	1801	N-SC	Ten Cas	Domenico Mombelli Francesco Fasciotti
Mayr, J.	<i>Ginevra di Scozia</i>	1801	T-Nu	Cas Ten	Luigi Marchesi Giacomo David
Mayr, J.	<i>Argene</i>	1801	V-LF	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Salieri, A.	<i>Annibale in Capua</i>	1801	T-Nu	Cas Ten	Luigi Marchesi Giacomo David
Tritto, G.	<i>Ginevra e Ariodante</i>	1801	N-SC	Cas Ten	Francesco Fasciotti Domenico Mombelli
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Armida e Rinaldo</i>	1802	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Mombelli
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Sesostri</i>	1802	N-SC	Ten Cas	Domenico Mombelli Francesco Fasciotti
Mayr, J.	<i>I Misteri Eleusini</i>	1802	V-LF	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Tritto, G.	<i>Gli americani</i>	1802	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Mombelli
Zingarelli, N.	<i>La notte dell'amicizia</i>	1802	V-LF	NN	NN
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Edipo a Colono</i>	1802	V-LF	Ten Con	Matteo Babini Andrea Martini
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Il trionfo di Claudia</i>	1803	F-Pe	NN	NN
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Il trionfo di Alessandro Magno</i>	1803	N-SC	NN	NN
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Piramo e Tisbe</i>	1803	N-SC	Ten Cas	Gaetano Crivelli G.B. Velluti
Capotorti, L.	<i>Obeide e Atamare</i>	1803	N-SC	Cas Ten	G.B. Velluti Gaetano Crivelli
Federici, V.	<i>Castore e Polluce</i>	1803	M-LS	Cas Ten	Luigi Marchesi Giacomo David
Mayr, J.	<i>Alonso e Cora</i>	1803	M-LS	Cas	Girolamo Crescentini
Federici, V.	<i>Oreste in Tauride</i>	1804	M-LS	Cas	Girolamo Crescentini

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Gnecco, F.	<i>Arsace e Semira</i>	1804	V-LF	Con	Brigida Giorgi-Banti
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Sedesclavo</i>	1805	R-AI	NN	NN
Capotorti, L.	<i>Il Ciro</i>	1805	N-SC	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Federici, V.	<i>Sofonisba</i>	1805	T-Re	Ten	Francesco Fiorini
Lavigna, V.	<i>Eraldo ed Emma</i>	1805	M-LS	NN	NN
Mayr, J.	<i>Eraldo ed Emma</i>	1805	M-LS	Cas Ten	Luigi Marchesi Giovanni Battista Binaghi
Orlandi, F.	<i>Corrado, Marchese di Monferrato</i>	1805	NN	Cas	Francesco Fasciotti
Tritto, G.	<i>Cesare in Egitto</i>	1805	R-AI	Con Ten	Marianna Sessi Gaetano Crivelli
Casella, P.	<i>Paride</i>	1806	N-SC	Cas	G.B. Velluti
DeSantis	<i>Licurgo</i>	1806	N-SC	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Farinelli, G.	<i>Climene</i>	1806	N-SC	Ten Cas	Gaetano Crivelli G.B. Velluti
Federici, V.	<i>Idomeneo</i>	1806	M-LS	NN	NN
Gnecco, F.	<i>I riti di bramini</i>	1806	L-Av	Con Ten	Marianna Sessi Gaetano Crivelli
Lavigna, V.	<i>Coriolano</i>	1806	T-Re	Ten Cas	Gaetano Crivelli Francesco Fasciotti
Mayr, J	<i>Adelasia e Aleramo</i>	1806	M-LS	Ten Ten	G.B. Binaghi Giacomo David
Mayr, J.	<i>Gli Americani</i>	1806	V-LF	Cas Ten Ten	Luigi Moriconi Luigi Santi Girolamo Marzocchi
Tritto, G.	<i>Elpinice e Vologeso</i>	1806	R-AI	NN	NN
Andreozzi, G.	<i>Il trionfo di Tomiri</i>	1807	N-SC	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Lavigna, V.	<i>Hoango</i>	1807	T-Re	NN	NN
Lavigna, V.	<i>Le metamorfosi</i>	1807	V-LF	NN	NN
Tritto, G.	<i>Andromaca e Pirro</i>	1807	R-Ar	NN	NN
Federici, V.	<i>La conquista delle Indie orientali</i>	1808	T-Re	Cas	Francesco Fasciotti
Mayr, J.	<i>Il ritorno d'Ulisse</i>	1808	V-LF	Ten Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Giovanni Bertacchi G.B. Binaghi
Niccolini, G.	<i>Coriolano</i>	1808	M-LS	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Paganini, E.	<i>La Conquista del Messico</i>	1808	M-LS	Ten	Giacomo David
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Il ritorno di Serse</i>	1808	M-Du	NN	NN
Cordella, G.	<i>Annibale in Capua</i>	1809	N-SC	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
DeLuca, G.B.	<i>Giulio Sabino</i>	1809	N-SC	Con Ten	Marianna Sessi Gaetano Crivelli

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Federici, V.	<i>Ifegenia in Aulide</i>	1809	M-LS	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Lavigna, V.	<i>Orcamo</i>	1809	M-LS	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Lavigna, V.	<i>Palmerio e Claudia</i>	1809	T-Re	Con	Francesca Festa
DeLuca, G.B.	<i>Bajazet</i>	1810	N-SC	Con Ten	Marianna Sessi Gaetano Crivelli
Lavigna, V.	<i>Chi s'è visto, s'è visto</i>	1810	M-LS	NN	NN
Morlacchi, F.	<i>Le danaidi</i>	1810	M-LS	Ten Con	Nicola Tacchinardi Matilde Nerozzi
Niccolini, G.	<i>Angelica e Medoro</i>	1810	T-Im	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Tritto, G.	<i>Marco Albino in Siria</i>	1810	N-SC	Ten	Girolamo Marzocchi/ Gaetano Crivelli
Casella, P.	<i>Virginia</i>	1811	M-LS	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Niccolini, G.	<i>Abradate e Dircea</i>	1811	M-LS	Con	Elisabetta Gaffroni
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Berenice, regina d'Armenia</i>	1811	R-Va	NN	NN
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Baldovino</i>	1811	R-Ar	Ten Con	Prospero Pedrazzi Maria Sessi Romani
Casella, P.	<i>Maria Stuarda, regina di Scozia</i>	1812	F-Pe	NN	NN
Manfroce, N.	<i>Ecuba</i>	1812	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Mayr, J.	<i>Tamerlano</i>	1812	M-LS	Ten	Antonio Brizzi
Rossini, G.	<i>Ciro in Babilonia</i>	1812	F-TC	Con	Marietta Marcolini
Rossini, G.	<i>Demtrio e Polibio</i>	1812	R-Va	Con	Marianna Mombelli
Rossini, G.	<i>Tancredi</i>	1812	V-LF	Con	Adelaide Malanotte
Capotorti, L.	<i>Marco Curzio</i>	1813	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Coccia, C.	<i>Arrighetto</i>	1813	V-SM	Ten	Serafino Gentili
Generali, P.	<i>Bajazet</i>	1813	T-Im	Cas	Giovanni Fasciotti
Mayr, J.	<i>Medea in Corinto</i>	1813	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Carafa, E.	<i>Il vascello l'occidente</i>	1814	N-Fo	Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Domenico Donzelli
Farinelli, G.	<i>Caritea regina di Spagna</i>	1814	N-SC	Ten Ten	Manuel Garcia Andrea Nozzari
Fiorvanti, V.	<i>L'Africano generoso</i>	1814	N-SC	Ten Ten	Domenico Donzelli Andrea Nozzari
Paganini, E.	<i>Cesare in Egitto</i>	1814	T-Im	Cas	Giovanni Francesco Fasciotti
Rossini, G.	<i>Sigismondo</i>	1814	V-LF	Con	Marietta Marcolini
Andreozi, G.	<i>Il trionfo di Alessandro Magno il Macedone</i>	1815	R-Ar	Con	Teodora Santer

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Coccia, C.	<i>Teseo e Medea</i>	1815	T-Re	Con Ten	Carolina Bassi Eliodoro Bianchi
Coccia, C.	<i>Evellina</i>	1815	V-LF	Con Ten	Maria Marcolini Claudio Bonoldi
Rossini, G.	<i>Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra</i>	1815	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Rossini, G.	<i>Otello</i>	1815	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Carafa, E.	<i>Gabriella di Vergy</i>	1816	N-Fo	Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Giovanni David
Generali, P.	<i>I bacchanali di Roma</i>	1816	V-LF	Ten Ten	Giovanni Binaghi Giovanni David
Rossini, G.	<i>Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra</i>	1816	N-SC	Con	Marina Manzi
Basili, F.	<i>L'ira di Achille</i>	1817	V-LF	Con	Adelaide Malanotte
Bonfichi, P.	<i>Abradate e Dircea</i>	1817	T-Re	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Carafa, E.	<i>Adele di Lusignano</i>	1817	M-LS	Con	Teresa Gallianis
Carafa, E.	<i>Ifigenia in Tauride</i>	1817	N-SC	Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Claudio Bonoldi
Farinelli, G.	<i>La donna di Bessarabia</i>	1817	V-SM	Ten	Giuseppe Crespi
Generali, P.	<i>Gusmano de Valhor</i>	1817	N-SC	Con Ten Ten	Adelaide Comelli Andrea Nozzari Giovanni David
Mayr, J.	<i>Lanassa</i>	1817	V-LF	Con	Elisabetta Gafforini
Mayr, J.	<i>Mennone e Zemira</i>	1817	N-SC	Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Giovanni David
Rossi, G.	<i>I riti d'Efeso</i>	1817	V-Mo	Cas Ten Con	Angelo Testori Zenone Cazzioletti Giulia Poletti
Rossini, G.	<i>La gazza ladra</i>	1817	M-LS	Con	Teresa Gallianis
Rossini, G.	<i>Adelaide di Borgogna</i>	1817	R-Ar	Con	Elisabetta Pinotti
Rossini, G.	<i>Armida</i>	1817	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Soliva, C.	<i>Berenice di Armenia</i>	1817	T-Re	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Tadolini, G.	<i>Mitridate</i>	1817	V-LF	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Winter, P.	<i>I due Valdomiri</i>	1817	M-LS	Con	Marianna Marconi
Winter, P.	<i>Maometto II</i>	1817	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Basili, F.	<i>L'orfano egiziana</i>	1818	V-LF	Con	Elisabetta Gafforini
Carafa, E.	<i>Elisabetta in Derbyshire</i>	1818	V-LF	Con	Carolina Brizzi
Carafa, E.	<i>Berenice in Siria</i>	1818	N-SC	Ten Ten	Giovanni David Andrea Nozzari

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Coccia, C.	<i>Donna Caritea</i>	1818	G-Ag	Con	Geltrude Giorgi
Donizetti, G.	<i>Enrico di Borgogna</i>	1818	V-SL	Con	Fanny Eckerlin
Morlacchi, F.	<i>Boadicea</i>	1818	N-SC	Ten	Giuseppe Ciccimarra
Pacini, G.	<i>Il barone di Dolsheim</i>	1818	M-LS	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Pavesi, S.	<i>Teodoro</i>	1818	F-TC	Con	Adelaide Malanotte
Rossini, G.	<i>Ricciardo e Zoraide</i>	1818	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Soliva, C.	<i>Giulia e Sesto Pompeo</i>	1818	M-LS	Ten Ten	Claudio Bonoldi Giovanni Battista Binaghi
Basili, F.	<i>Gl'Illeseni</i>	1819	M-LS	Con	Violante Camporesi
Basili, F.	<i>Il califfo e la schiava</i>	1819	M-LS	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Carafa, E.	<i>Il sacrificio d'Epito</i>	1819	V-LF	Ten	Nicola Tacchinardi
Mercadante, S.	<i>L'apoteosi d'Ercole</i>	1819	N-SC	Ten Ten	Andrea Nozzari Giovanni David
Meyerbeer, G.	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>	1819	T-Re	Con Ten Ten	Adelaide Dalman Naldi Claudio Bonoldi Ludovico Bonoldi
Meyerbeer, G.	<i>Emma di Resburgo</i>	1819	V-SB	Con Ten	Carolina Bassi Eliodoro Bianchi
Pavesi, S.	<i>Celanira</i>	1819	C-TC	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Rossini, G.	<i>Bianca e Falliero</i>	1819	M-LS	Con	Carolina Bassi
Rossini, G.	<i>Eduardo e Cristina</i>	1819	V-SB	Con	Carolina Cortesi
Rossini, G.	<i>Ermione</i>	1819	N-SC	Ten Ten	Giovanni David Andrea Nozzari
Rossini, G.	<i>La donna del lago</i>	1819	N-SC	Ten Ten	Giovanni David Andrea Nozzari
Stuntz, J.H.	<i>La rappresaglia</i>	1819	M-LS	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Mayr, J.	<i>Fedra</i>	1820	M-LS	Con Ten	Adelaide Tosi Nicola Taccinardi
Mercadante, S.	<i>Violenza e costanza</i>	1820	N-Fo	Ten	Giacomo Guglielmi
Mercadante, S.	<i>Anacreonte in Samo</i>	1820	N-SC	Ten Ten	G.B. Rubini Andrea Nozzari
Mercadante, S.	<i>Scipione in Cartagine</i>	1820	R-Ar	Ten	Claudio Bonoldi
Orlandi, F.	<i>Rodrigo di Vaneza</i>	1820	Brescia	Ten	Gaetano Crivelli
Pacini, G.	<i>La sacerdotessa d'Irminsul</i>	1820	T-Gr	Cas	G.B. Velluti
Pacini, G.	<i>Vallace</i>	1820	M-LS	Con	Carolina Bassi
Rossini, G.	<i>Maometto II</i>	1820	N-SC	Con	Adelaide Comelli
Stuntz, J.H.	<i>Rodrigo di Valeza</i>	1820	T-Re	Ten Con	Gaetano Crivelli Elisabetta Pinotti

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Mercadante, S.	<i>Andronico</i>	1821	V-LF	Cas Ten	G.B.Velluti Gaetano Crivelli
Mercadante, S.	<i>Maria Stuarda</i>	1821	B-Co	Con Con Ten	Carolina Bassi Marietta Gioja Carolina Bassi
Meyerbeer, G.	<i>L'esule di Granata</i>	1821	M-LS	Con Ten	Benedetta Pisaroni Bernardo Calvari Winter
Niccolini, G.	<i>L'eroe di Lancastro</i>	1821	T-Re	Cas Ten	G.B. Velluti Domenico Donzelli
Pacini, G.	<i>Cesare in Egitto</i>	1821	R-Ar	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Rossini, G.	<i>Matilde di Shabran</i>	1821	R-Ap	Con	Annetta Parlamagni
Carafa, E.	<i>Eufemio di Messina</i>	1822	R-Ar	Con Ten	Rosmunda Pisaroni Giovanni David
Donizetti, G.	<i>Zoraida in Granata</i>	1822	R-Ar	Con	Signora Mazzanti
Donizetti, G.	<i>La zingara</i>	1822	N-Nu	Ten	Marco Venier
Mercadante, S.	<i>Amleto</i>	1822	M-LS	Con	Isabella Fabbrica
Morlacchi, F.	<i>Tebaldo e Isolina</i>	1822	V-LF	Cas Ten Ten	G.B.Velluti Alessandro Mombelli Gaetano Crivelli
Pavesi, S.	<i>Arminio</i>	1822	V-TF	Ten Con	Gaetano Crivelli Adelaide Tosi
Rossini, G.	<i>Zelmira</i>	1822	N-SC	Ten Ten	Giovanni David Andrea Nozzari
Donizetti, G.	<i>Alfredo il grande</i>	1823	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Mercadante, S.	<i>Gli sciti</i>	1823	N-SC	Con Ten	Adelaide Comelli-Rubini Andrea Nozzari
Mercadante, S.	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>	1823	T-Re	Con	Fanny Eckerlin
Mercadante, S.	<i>Costanzo ed Almerisca</i>	1823	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Pacini, G.	<i>La vestale</i>	1823	M-LS	Con	Isabella Fabbrica
Rossini, G.	<i>Semiramide</i>	1823	V-LF	Con	Rosa Mariani
Celli, F.	<i>Ezio</i>	1824	R-Ar	Con Ten	Rosmunda Pisaroni Domenico Donzelli
Mercadante, S.	<i>Gli amici di Siracusa</i>	1824	R-Ar	Con Ten	Rosmunda Pisaroni-Carrara Domenico Donzelli
Mercadante, S.	<i>Nitocri</i>	1824	T-Re	Con	Brigitta Lorenzani
Meyerbeer, G.	<i>Il crociato in Egitto</i>	1824	V-LF	Cas Con Ten	G.B. Velluti Brigida Lorenzani Gaetano Crivelli
Niccolini, G.	<i>Aspasia e Agide</i>	1824	M-LS	Con	Brigida Lorenzani

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Pacini, G.	<i>Alessandro nelle Indie</i>	1824	N-SC	Ten	Andrea Nozzari
Pavesi, S.	<i>Egilda di Provenza</i>	1824	V-LF	Cas	B.G. Velluti
Carafa, E.	<i>Gl'italici e gl'indiani</i>	1825	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Mercadante, S.	<i>Ipermestra</i>	1825	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Mercadante, S.	<i>Erode, ossia Marianna</i>	1825	V-LF	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Pacini, G.	<i>Amazilia</i>	1825	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Pacini, G.	<i>L'ultimo giorno di Pompei</i>	1825	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Balducci, G.	<i>Tazia</i>	1826	N-SC	Ten	Giacomo David
Carafa, E.	<i>Il paria</i>	1826	V-LF	Ten Ten	Domenico Donzelli Giuseppe Binaghi
Conti, C.	<i>Olimpia</i>	1826	N-SC	Ten Ten	G.B.Rubini Giuseppe Binaghi
Donizetti, G.	<i>Elvida</i>	1826	N-SC	Con Ten	Brigitta Lorenzani G.B. Rubini
Donizetti, G.	<i>Alahor in Granata</i>	1826	P-TC	Con	Marietta Gioia-Tamburini
Mercadante, S.	<i>Caritea</i>	1826	V-LF	Ten Ten	Domenico Donzelli Giuseppe Binaghi
Pacini, G.	<i>Niobe</i>	1826	N-SC	Ten	G.B.Rubini
Raimondi, P.	<i>Il finto feudatario</i>	1826	N-Nu	NN	NN
Bellini, V.	<i>Il pirata</i>	1827	M-LS	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Donizetti, G.	<i>Otto mesi in due ore</i>	1827	N-SC	Ten	Signor Servoli
Generali, P.	<i>Jefta</i>	1827	V-LF	Con Ten	Marietta Brambilla G.B. Verger
Mercadante, S.	<i>Ezio</i>	1827	T-Re	Con	Carolina Bassi
Pacini, G.	<i>Gli arabi nelle Gallie</i>	1827	M-LS	Ten	Giovanni David
Vaccari, N.	<i>Giovanna d'Arco</i>	1827	V-LF	Con Ten	Teresa Cecconi Gaetano Crivelli
Conti, C.	<i>Alexi</i>	1828	N-SC	Ten	G.B.Rubini
Donizetti, G.	<i>L'esule di Roma</i>	1828	N-SC	Ten	Bernardo Calvari Winter
Pacini, G.	<i>I cavalieri da Valenza</i>	1828	M-LS	Con	Carolina Ungher
Pacini, G.	<i>Margherita regina d'Inghilterra</i>	1828	N-SC	Ten	Bernardo Calvari Winter
Bellini, V.	<i>Zaira</i>	1829	Parma	Con	Teresa Cecconi
Bellini, V.	<i>La Straniera</i>	1829	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Reina
Coccia, C.	<i>Rosmonda</i>	1829	V-LF	Ten Con	Giovanni Battista Verger Marietta Brambilla
Conti, C.	<i>Giovanna Shore</i>	1829	M-LS	Ten	G.B.Rubini

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Donizetti, G.	<i>Il castello di Kenilworth</i>	1829	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David
Donizetti, G.	<i>Il Paria</i>	1829	N-SC	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Pacini, G.	<i>I fidanzati</i>	1829	N-SC	Con	Adelaide Tosi
Pacini, G.	<i>Il talismano</i>	1829	M-LS	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Zingarelli, N.	<i>Malvina</i>	1829	N-SC	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Donizetti, G.	<i>Anna Bolena</i>	1830	M-TC	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Donizetti, G.	<i>Imelda de' Lambertazzi</i>	1830	N-SC	Ten	Gerardo Calvari
Pacini, G.	<i>Giovanna d'Arco</i>	1830	M-LS	Ten	G.B. Rubini
Bellini, V.	<i>Norma</i>	1831	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Coccia, C.	<i>Edoardo in Iscozia</i>	1831	N-SC	Bar Ten	Antonio Tamburini Berardo Calvari Winter
Coccia, C.	<i>Enrico di Monfort</i>	1831	M-LS	Con	Giuditta Grisi
Generali, P.	<i>Beniowski</i>	1831	V-LF	Con Ten Ten	Teresa Belloli Antonio Piacenti Claudio Bonoldi
Mercadante, S.	<i>Zaira</i>	1831	N-SC	Ten	Lorenzo Bonfigli
Pacini, G.	<i>Il corsaro</i>	1831	R-Ap	Con	Rosa Mariani
Pavesi, S.	<i>Fenella</i>	1831	V-LF	Con Ten	Signora Belloni Claudio Bonoldi
Pugni, C.	<i>La vendetta</i>	1831	M-LS	Con Ten	Signora Carradi-Pantanelli Domenico Donzelli
Pugni, C.	<i>Il disertore svizzero</i>	1831	M-Ca	Ten	Reina Domenico
Raimondi, P.	<i>La vita di un giocatore</i>	1831	N-Nu	NN	Sig. Jacenna
Donizetti, G.	<i>Sancia di Castiglia</i>	1832	M-LS	Ten	Giovanni Basadonna
Donizetti, G.	<i>Ugo, conte di Parigi</i>	1832	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Donizetti, G.	<i>Fausta</i>	1832	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni Basadonna
Mercadante, S.	<i>Ismalia</i>	1832	M-LS	Con	Antonia Binaghi
Mercadante, S.	<i>I normanni a Parigi</i>	1832	T-Re	Con Ten	Amalia Brabilla G.B. Verger
Pacini, G.	<i>Ivanhoe</i>	1832	V-LF	Con	Giuditta Grisi
Pugni, C.	<i>Ricciarda d'Edimburgo</i>	1832	T-Gr	Con Ten	Brigida Lorenzani Domenico Reina
Coccia, C.	<i>Caterina di Guisa</i>	1833	M-LS	Con Ten	Isabella Fabbrica Francesco Pedrazzi
Donizetti, G.	<i>Parisina</i>	1833	F-Pe	Ten	Gilbert-Louis Duprez
Mercadante, S.	<i>Il conte di Essex</i>	1833	M-LS	Ten	Francesco Pedrazzi
Pacini, G.	<i>Fernando duca di Valenza</i>	1833	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Reina
Pacini, G.	<i>Gli elvezi</i>	1833	N-SC	Ten	Gennaro Ambrosini

Composer	Opera	Date	Theater	Type	Singer
Pacini, G.	<i>Irene</i>	1833	N-SC	Ten	Giovanni David Domenico Reina
Pugni, C.	<i>Il contrabbandiere</i>	1833	M-Ca	Ten MS	Francesco Pedrazzi Cristina Giacomino
Donizetti, G.	<i>Rosmonda d'Inghilterra</i>	1834	F-Pe	Ten	Gilbert-Louis Duprez
Donizetti, G.	<i>Gemma di Vergy</i>	1834	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Reina
Donizetti, G.	<i>Maria Stuarda</i>	1834	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Reina
Mazzucato, A.	<i>La fidanzata di Lammermoor</i>	1834	P-No	Con	Marianna Hazon
Mercadante, S.	<i>La gioventù di Enrico V</i>	1834	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Reina
Mercadante, S.	<i>Emma d'Antiochia</i>	1834	V-LF	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Coccia, C.	<i>Marsa</i>	1835	N-SC	Ten	Gilbert-Louis Duprez
Pacini, G.	<i>Carlo di Borgogna</i>	1835	V-LF	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Coppola, A.	<i>Gli Illinesi</i>	1836	T-Re	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Coppola, A.	<i>La pazza per amore</i>	1836	V-Mo	Ten	Giovanni Battista Melesi
Raimondi, P.	<i>Isabella degli Abananti</i>	1836	N-SC	Bar	Paul Barroilhet
Mercadante, S.	<i>Il giuramento</i>	1837	M-LS	Ten	Francesco Pedrazzi
Baducci, G.	<i>Bianca Turenga</i>	1838	N-SC	NN	NN
Coccia, C.	<i>La solitaria delle Asturie</i>	1838	M-LS	Ten	Francesco Pedrazzi
Mercadante, S.	<i>Le due illustri rivali</i>	1838	V-LF	Ten	Napoleone Moriani
Vaccai, N.	<i>Marco Visconti</i>	1838	T-Re	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Mercadante, S.	<i>Il bravo</i>	1839	M-LS	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Mercadante, S.	<i>Elena da Feltre</i>	1839	N-SC	Ten	Adolphe Nourrit
Pacini, G.	<i>Furio Camillo</i>	1839	R-Ap	Ten	Domenico Donzelli
Ricci, F.	<i>Un duello sotto Richelieu</i>	1839	M-LS	Ten	Lorenzo Salvi
Vaccai, N.	<i>La sposa di Messina</i>	1839	V-LF	Ten	Napoleone Meriani
Mercadante, S.	<i>La vestale</i>	1840	N-SC	Ten	Domenico Reina
Pacini, G.	<i>Saffo</i>	1840	N-SC	Ten	Gaetano Fraschini

Abbreviations

NN	Unknown
Bar	Baritone
Cas	Castrato
Con	Contralto
Ten	Tenor

NN	Unknown
B-Co	Bologna Teatro Comunale
C-TC	Cremona Teatro Concordia
F-Pe	Florence Pergola
F-TC	Florence Teatro Comunale
G-Ag	Genoa Teatro Agostino
L-Av	Livorno Avvalorati
L-Re	Livorno Regio
M-Ca	Milan Teatro Cannobiana
M-LS	Milan Teatra alla Scala
M-TC	Milan Teatro Carcano
M-Du	Modena Ducale
N-Fo	Naples Fondo
N-Nu	Naples Teatro Nuovo
N-SC	Naples Teatro San Carlo
P-TC	Palermo Teatro Carolino
P-No	Padova Teatro Novissimo
P-Nu	Padova Teatro Nuovo
R-Al	Rome Alibert delle Dame
R-Ap	Rome Teatro Apollo
R-Ar	Rome Teatro Argentina
R-Va	Rome Valle
T-Nu	Trieste Teatro Nuovo
T-Im	Turin Teatro Imperiale
T-Gr	Trieste Teatro Grande
T-Re	Turin Regio
V-LF	Venice La Fenice
V-SB	Venice San Benedetto
V-SL	Venice San Luca
V-SM	Venice San Moisè
V-SS	Venice San Samuele
V-Mo	Verona Teatro Morando
V-TF	Verona Il Teatro Filarmonico

APPENDIX B

SERIOUS OPERA PREMIERES IN ITALY BY CITY AND VOICE TYPE, 1800-1840

Theater	Baritone	Castrato	Contralto	Tenor	Unknown	Total
Bologna			1			1
Brescia				1		1
Cremona		1				1
Florence			2	2	3	7
Genoa			1			1
Livorno			1		1	2
Milan		8	17	28	4	57
Modena					1	1
Naples	2	5	8	60	6	81
Padova			2			2
Palermo			1			1
Rome			10	4	4	18
Trieste		3	1			4
Turin		6	7	5	1	19
Venice		5	16	19	2	42
Verona		1		2		3
Unknown		1				1
Total	2	30	67	121	22	242

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