SPANISH ROMANTIC DRAMA SOURCES
OF GIUSEPPE VERDI OPERAS

APPROVED:

Major Professor

Minor Professor

Director of the Department of Foreign Languages

Dean of the Graduate School
Fleming, Leon O., Jr., Spanish Romantic Drama Sources of Giuseppe Verdi Operas. Master of Arts (Spanish), August, 1972, 123 pp., bibliography, 24 titles.

The Italian composer of operas, Giuseppe Verdi, relied heavily on plays of the Romantic Era as sources for opera librettos. Three such plays were from the Spanish Romantic School: El trovador and Simón Boccanegra by Antonio García Gutiérrez, and Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino by Angel de Saavedra, el Duque de Rivas. The operas which Verdi composed using these plays as sources—Il trovatore, Simon Boccanegra, and La forza del destino—range in popularity from near zenith (Il trovatore) to near nadir (Simon Boccanegra). The study attempts to assess the suitability of the three Spanish dramas as source material for operas, and to determine if this suitability is correlated to each opera's popularity.

After a brief survey of Italian opera prior to the advent of Verdi, and of the Spanish Golden Age and the ascendancy of Neo-classicism in Spain which led to a brief but frantic flowering of Romanticism, the study examines each of the three Spanish dramas and the three operas based upon them. First, a detailed summary of plots is presented. Then each play is compared against Verdi's operatic treatment of it in an effort to learn how and why the composer and his librettists effected changes in plot development and
character portrayal, how often original dialogue was retained and how often it was discarded, whether or not the composer and his librettists changed the emphasis of the original Spanish play, and how, if at all, the original story was altered in order to conform to the composer's needs for musical expression.

*Il trovatore*, it is learned, retains most of the essence of its Spanish counterpart. There are major changes in plot development, with the deletion of an entire act of the Spanish drama, and several minor characters are excised. But rather than harming the thrust of the play, these changes serve to make more compact the development of the story. Still points of confusion remain, and these have been criticized for obfuscating the opera's theme. *El trovador* is discovered to be a very "musical" play; in several instances the composer merely added notes to scenes created by García Gutiérrez.

*La forza del destino* follows very closely its Spanish counterpart. One major character from the drama is deleted, and new importance is given to three minor characters from the play. Dissatisfied with the original ending of the opera, which duplicated that of the play, the composer later rewrote this finale to completely alter the thrust of the story. Fragmentary scenes from two operas which Verdi contemplated but never composed make their appearance in
La forza del destino. Both, however, blend into the scheme of the Spanish play.

Verdi, displeased with his original Simon Boccanegra, extensively revised the opera in collaboration with Arrigo Boito, who carried out the libretto alterations. These changes were realized in the middle acts of the opera, thus leaving almost untouched the bracketing acts which still retain their similarity to corresponding acts from García Gutiérrez' play. The alterations serve to strengthen the opera, adding depth to the characterizations of two of the major figures. However, they have not as yet, as Verdi wished, brought about a greater public acceptance of Simon Boccanegra.

This report concludes that the relative popularity of the three Verdi operas seems to correlate to the suitability of the three corresponding Spanish plays as vehicles for operatic composition. El trovador is found to be the most suitable, Simón Bocanegra the least.
SPANISH ROMANTIC DRAMA SOURCES
OF GIUSEPPE VERDI OPERAS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Leon O. Fleming, Jr., B. A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1972
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION. ........................................... 1
II. EL TROVADOR AND IL TROVATORE. ................. 13
III. DON ALVARO O LA FUERZA DEL SINO
    AND LA FORZA DES DESTINO ....................... 51
IV. SIMON BOCANEGRA AND SIMON BOCCANegra. .... 89
V. CONCLUSION .............................................. 119

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................. 124
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Performing even the most casual inspection of source material employed by the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi, one is impressed by the number of times that great operatic genius dipped into the literature of the Romantic period for his plots. Many of his greatest successes are drawn from works of the Romantic era: Rigoletto, Il trovatore, and La traviata. Verdi drew heavily on Romantic themes for his early operas: I Lombardi, Ernani, I due Foscari, Giovanna d'Arco, Attila, I masnadieri, and Il corsaro. Even works of Verdi's later years were based on Romantic literature: La forza del destino, Simon Boccanegra, and Don Carlo. No composer of operas ever relied more on works of the Romantics. The reason for this may be found in the man himself.

A Verdi biographer writes, "Verdi was one of the partisans most deeply stirred by the Romantic movement. He himself was by nature a romantic: passionate, gloomy, reserved, secretive, solitary, discontented with himself and with everyone, and obsessed by an insatiable yearning for good."¹

Likewise: "Verdi's interest in opera lay in the musical possibilities of a situation in general, not in its detailed exposition. That is why the romanticism of Ernani appealed to him--new, violent and highly effective."²

Opera was never the same after the Verdi thunderbolt had been loosed. Before his advent, during the eighteenth century, the opera seria of Italy was bound up in the restraints of Classicism. Themes from mythology or history were the rule, and their stories were little more than convenient pegs upon which to hang a series of arias designed to display the vocal gifts of singers. These artists made little pretense of staying within the confines of the roles assigned them, or of following the notes written for them by the composers. Indeed, the singers were judged on their abilities to add embellishments to the arias provided for them: scales, runs, trills and the like.

But the nineteenth century changed all that. An influential middle class came into being, the power of the aristocracy waned, and opera became an entertainment for all the people, not just for the powdered and bewigged patricians. Just as importantly, Romanticism arose, postulated by Rousseau, enunciated by generations of poets, dramatists, novelists, and composers.

"Romanticism assigned a new role to the artist," writes George R. Marek, "gave him a new reason for being, and allowed

²Francis Toye, Giuseppe Verdi: His Life and Works (New York, 1931), p. 38.
him a new way of thinking about himself, a way which may have finally led to excessive arrogance--at least in some artists--but which for many years aided art by turning the artist into a privileged being in the eyes of society--and in his own eyes. . . . Now he expressed the state of his mind and soul. Now he was allowed eccentricities which in former times he would hardly have dared to arrogate to himself."

In Italian opera seria, Rossini was the first iconoclast: he demanded that his singers stay within their roles and hew to the written note; he wrote an unhappy ending for Otello, but changed it when so many objections were raised on the grounds that opera seria did not end unhappily; he wrote a title role for a bass (Mose in Eggito), unheard-of in opera seria; he insisted on better playing from his orchestra and took steps to make the orchestra an equal partner with the vocalists in musical expression; he wrote ensembles.

As logically as a blossom engenders fruit, Rossini's reforms led to Verdi. But the emergence of Verdi as an operatic reformer was not a sudden one. Rather, it took place over a period of twelve years, between Verdi's first opera, Oberto, in 1839, and his seventeenth, Rigoletto, in 1851. Of those seventeen operas, ten were based on works by

---

writers of the Romantic school. As illogical as it may seem, Verdi, the composer of some of opera's most famous arias, reduced the importance of the aria. In doing so, he gave new importance to the scene and thereby emphasized the dramatic line and form of the story he was attempting to present. Thus, where the first act of Ernani (1844) contained seven arias, the corresponding act of Rigoletto contained just two. As the scene gained new importance, so did the characters therein. Freed from having to interrupt the flow of his dramatic narrative in order to insert an aria, Verdi could devote new attention not only to the drama itself but to the characterization of his dramatis personae. In 1851, only Verdi could have written an opera about a hunchback. Thus, it seems only logical that a composer concerned with dramatic effects, interesting situations, and vivid characters would be attracted to Romantic works.

This paper will examine three such works, dramas from the Spanish Romantic period which served as source material for Verdi: *El trovador* by Antonio García Gutiérrez, which became *Il trovatore* in Verdi's hands; *Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino* by Angel de Saavedra, el Duque de Rivas, which became *La forza del destino*, and *Simón Boccanegra*, also by García Gutiérrez, which became *Simon Boccanegra*. Thus we will

---

4The authors represented are Tomasso Grossi, Alphonse Royer and Gustav Vaüz, Victor Hugo, Lord Byron, Friedrich Schiller, Zacharias Werner, and Emile Souvestre and Eugene Bourgeois.
be dealing with works by a mature Verdi, works which span the period from 1849, when Verdi first expressed an interest in García Gutierrez' El trovador, until 1881, when Verdi allowed his revised Simon Boccanegra to be staged.

What of the Spaniards toward whose works Verdi felt such empathy? To examine García Gutierrez and the duke of Rivas in their proper context, it will be necessary to survey briefly the history of the Spanish theater prior to the advent of Romanticism in Spain in the early 1830s.

No country, not even Elizabethan England, can boast of having had a siglo de oro, a "golden age," as Spain had. Concurrent with the burgeoning of Spanish wealth and influence during the middle decades of the sixteenth century was a new intensification in splendor of the Spanish arts, the drama foremost among them. Narciso Díaz de Escovar and Francisco de P. Lasso de la Vega describe the Golden Age theater as a veritable institution, "... not a theater of Greek gods and Roman heroes, but of all the people of Spain: kings to servants, captains to shepherds; a theater of Spanish customs and Spanish life."^5

The first great light was Lope Félix de Vega Carpio (1562-1635), who sampled all dramatic forms in the estimated 2,200 stage works he is believed to have written, from tragedy to religious drama and on to romantic, swashbuckling adventures. Lope's most famous contemporaries included Miguel de Cervantes

---

^5Historia del teatro español (Barcelona, 1924), p. 129.
Saavedra, whose dramas are overshadowed by his more famous Don Quixote; Gabriel Téllez (Tirso de Molina), author of some 400 pieces, foremost among them El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra, a play about Don Juan; Juan Ruiz de Alarcon, who excelled in character studies in his estimated twenty-three plays; and Guillén de Castro, whose works were typified by intrigue and exaggerated passions. These were but a handful of the dramatists active in the latter half of the sixteenth and first years of the seventeenth centuries. The year 1600 marked the birth of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the most famous of the second generation of siglo de oro dramatists. His masterworks are La vida es sueno, a philosophic work dealing with the struggle between passion and reason, and El alcalde de Zalamea, a play about honor. His works, which number slightly over two hundred, reached philosophic levels not attained before in Spanish drama. Calderón had many imitators, and it is with the plays of these writers that the seventeenth century came to an end, fifteen years after Calderon's death.

The dawning of the eighteenth century found the influence of Spain on the world stage waning. Likewise, there was a diminution of native originality in the arts. France and things French took hold in Spain. A Bourbon ascended the Spanish throne in 1700. The thirst for erudition inspired by the French example brought about the establishment in Spain of the National Library, the Spanish Academy and the academies
of medicine and history during the first four decades of the new century. French plays, or imitations of them, glutted the Spanish stage. Spanish disciples of Neo-classicism spoke out, again inspired by the French example.

Ignacio de Luzán, in his Arte poética (1737), established the ground rules that Spanish dramatists must follow if they were to purge their works of the wretched excesses, as Luzán saw them, of the contemporary theater. Look back to the Greeks was in sum what Luzán counseled. Observe the unities; use both comedy and tragedy for didactic purposes, but do not mix them; do not intermingle characters of plebeian and patrician backgrounds; eschew what Luzán saw as the bombastic style, exaggerations, lack of verisimilitude and improbable plotting of the siglo de oro dramatists.

Playwrights of Neo-classical persuasion appeared, Leandro Fernández de Moratin foremost among them. But Neo-classicism did not take hold among the Spanish masses, and theatergoers continued to prefer works from the Golden Age and the so-called "non-literary" plays of contemporary origin, plays dealing with the supernatural, lachrymose tragedies, and plays on heroic subjects, the latter of which harkened back to the siglo de oro. Neo-classic comedies and dramas were unable to achieve any significant popularity among the majority of Spanish theatergoers. Never during the ascendancy of Neo-classicism in Spain was there a total break with the theater of the past.
The nineteenth century opened with critics railing against the restraints imposed by Neo-classicism. But any impending rebellion against these strictures was quashed by the Napoleonic invasion and the ascension to the throne in 1814 of Ferdinand VII. Liberal thought ceased to be expressed, and thousands of Spaniards, including many writers, were forced into exile. It was in exile—in England, France, Italy and Germany—that these Spanish expatriates came in contact with Romanticism, steeped themselves in it, and later brought it back to Spain. What they brought back was hardly novel. Romanticism, of course, had filtered through the Pyrenees and was a known commodity even before the exiles returned in 1833 upon the death of Ferdinand VII. Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott found great popularity among the Spanish public, and Alessandro Manzoni's \textit{I promesi sposi} was widely read. Italian opera, too, made its way into Spain, and the works of Donizetti, Rossini, and Meyerbeer became popular. Victor Hugo, Dumas \textit{père et fils} and Lord Byron were read, the latter the most widely. But one salient point must be emphasized: romanticism (the lower-case "r" is used deliberately) existed in Spain long before Romanticism was a gleam in Rousseau's eye. Furthermore, romanticism never ceased to exist in Spain. Therefore, its journey to that country in 1833 was a homecoming, rather than the maiden voyage of a stranger. Many European proponents of Romanticism stressed their debt to Spanish literature and to the Spanish milieu.
and it is likely that as many Frenchmen as Spaniards knew of
the Cid epic and the medieval romances. Many works of
European Romanticism (Hugo's Hernani and the corresponding
Ernani of Verdi, for example) claimed Spanish settings. The
German August Wilhelm von Schlegel, in a series of lectures
in 1808, compared the dramas of Elizabethan England and
Golden Age Spain, finding common in them "the spirit of
Romantic poetry, expressed in dramatic form."^6

Perhaps this explanation serves to prove why works of
the Spanish Romantic dramatists failed to score resounding
successes during the three years of Romanticism's greatest
influence in Spain, 1834-37. Critical reception of the
Romantic genre never was unanimously favorable, though the
decade's most famous critic, Mariano José de Larra, spoke
unswervingly for it. Romantic works never reached the point
of public acceptance where all other works were excluded,
or even eclipsed. Golden Age dramas and reworkings of them,
patriotic plays, sentimental dramas, translations, and
Neo-classical plays continued to be staged. Four Spanish
Romantic dramas are considered to be the genre's masterpieces:
Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino (1835), El trovador (1836),
Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch's Los amantes de Teruel (1837), and
José Zorilla's Don Juan Tenorio (1844).

^6E. Allison Peers, The Romantic Movement in Spain
(Cambridge University, 1940), I, p. 85.
Angel de Saavedra, el Duque de Rivas (1791-1865), was one of those forced into exile by his liberal political beliefs. Paradoxically, the dramas of his early years were formed in the Neo-classical mold. And just as paradoxically, his return to Spain in 1834 marked the beginning of his conversion to more conservative political beliefs while his literary output was liberal. Many years of the duke's exile were spent on Malta, where he came to know John Hookham Frere, a poet, critic, and linguist, who had been British ambassador to Spain and who knew and admired Spanish literature. Frere made the duke aware of the literary heritage of Spain and opened to the Spaniard his large library, where works of Shakespeare, Byron, and Scott abounded. While on Malta, the duke began composition of *El moro expósito*, a lengthy, Romantically tinged verse treatment of the old Spanish legend of the seven infantes (princes) of Larra. With *Don Alvaro*, the poem is considered Rivas' masterpiece. With four years remaining in his period of exile, the duke went to France in 1830, coming under the sway of the Romantic revolution. It was in France that he wrote *Don Alvaro*, the original version being in prose. When he returned to Spain, Rivas set about three quarters of the play in verse. It was premiered March 22, 1835, achieving then and in later performances only a moderate success. One major and a series of minor works followed *Don Alvaro*: *Romances históricos* (1841), a series of ballads dealing with figures and events from
Spain's past; and four undistinguished dramas. The duke served in ambassadorial posts in Naples and Paris, and later was president of the Consejo de Estado.

Antonio García Gutierrez (1813-1884) was born three months and five days before Verdi and preceded the Italian in death by seventeen years. He began writing verses as a youngster and had completed four plays by the time he was twenty. El trovador, a resounding success, came three years later, in 1836, but only after its young author had served an apprenticeship as translator of French plays, most notably works of Scribe. El trovador launched its author on a career that was to include the composition of some thirty-five original dramas and comedies, a dozen zarzuela (musical comedy) librettos, poetry, and assorted articles. Unlike Rivas, García Gutierrez' fame as a dramatist does not rest on one work. Simón Bocanegra (1843) was a great success. Venganza catalana (1864) evoked the melodramatic Romanticism of El trovador and successfully intermingled themes of vengeance and love, just as the play of 1836 had done. Juan Lorenzo (1865) is a penetrating character study of a man whose ideals are turned against him by followers whom he no longer can control. García Gutierrez spent a period of five years in self-exile from Spain (1844-49), dissatisfied with the monetary rewards offered by the Spanish theater. But he did no better in Havana, where he worked as a newspaperman, and in Mérida de Yucatán, Mexico. The recognition he desired
came in 1855, when he was appointed to a government post in London. Civil service continued with consular duties in Bayonne and Genoa. García Gutiérrez was named to occupy a seat in the Spanish Academy in 1862. Undoubtedly content with that recognition, he soon turned out his two previously discussed masterpieces. Critics have called García Gutiérrez' talent for versification his greatest asset, pointing to the excellent verses in so minor a play as El rey monje (1837), as well as in the playwright's most praised works. "He has the power to imbue with poetic beauty even the wildest extravagances," writes Nicholson B. Adams.\(^7\)

This paper will examine six dramatic works: the three Spanish plays and the three operas they inspired. It will discuss the alterations Verdi and his librettists made in the original works and attempt to explain why these were carried out. It will survey how each play lent itself to operatic adaptation. It will analyze the inherent musicality of each play. Finally, it will attempt to assess the suitability of the three Spanish plays as "Verdi plays," using the criterion proposed by George Martin: "Verdi's genius was that of portraying human beings as the prey of tragic circumstances, pouring out their emotions in song."\(^8\)

\(^7\)The Romantic Dramas of García Gutiérrez (Instituto de las Españas en los E. U., 1922), p. 132.

\(^8\)Verdi: His Music, Life and Times (New York, 1963), p. 64.
CHAPTER II

EL TROVADOR AND IL TROVATORE

The five-act drama El trovador, by Antonio García Gutierrez, premiered March 1, 1836, in Madrid. Its cast of characters includes:

Don Nuno de Artal, Count de Luna
Don Manrique, the troubador
Don Guillén de Sesé
Doña Leonor de Sesé, his sister, lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Aragon
Don Lope de Urrea
Doña Jimena, servant of Doña Leonor
Azucena, a gypsy
Ruiz, servant of Don Manrique
Guzmán, Jimeno and Ferrando, servants of the Count de Luna
Soldiers, priests, nuns

The action of the entire play occurs in fifteenth-century Aragon. The first-act curtain opens upon a hall in the Aljafería palace in Zaragoza, where three servants of the Count de Luna are talking. Jimeno, the oldest, tells his two

1The following synopsis is taken from a 1908 edition of El trovador, published by D. C. Heath and Co., Boston, and edited by H. H. Vaughan. Quotations have been translated into English for the convenience of the reader.
companions of strange events which occurred in 1390. Don Lope de Artal, father of the present Count, had two children: Don Nuño, then about six months old, and Don Juan, about two years old. One night an old gypsy woman entered the palace, placed herself at the bedside of the sleeping Don Juan and stared at him for long moments. Discovered, she was driven away, but from then on the child had grown weaker and weaker. The old woman was caught and burned as a witch, whereupon the boy started to become well. Jimeno says that he advised that the old woman's daughter also be captured and burned, but his counsel was ignored. It wasn't long before the old Count had reason to regret this, for the child suddenly disappeared, and searchers soon found his charred skeleton on the very spot where the old woman had been executed. The daughter was never found.

Guzmán also has a tale to tell, this one concerning events of a more contemporary nature. Don Nuño, their master, is hopelessly in love with Doña Leonor. Unfortunately, his love is not returned, for Leonor loves a troubador named Manrique, a partisan of the Count of Urgel, claimant to the throne of Aragon. Nothing is known of Manrique's origin. Only the night before, Guzmán relates, the Count secured a key to Leonor's room with the intention of making his love known to her more forcefully. But just as he was about to carry out his plan, he heard the sound of Manrique's lute from outside. Thinking that Leonor must be in the garden with
the troubador, the enraged Count descended the staircase. Manrique saw the Count but mistook him for some curious squire. When Leonor entered the garden she mistook the Count for Manrique and led him to a dark part of the garden, where the Count wasted no time in setting his true identity straight. The sudden appearance of the moon from behind some clouds permitted Guzmán to see the climax of the scene: Manrique with his sword at the Count's chest, the Count's sword on the ground. But Manrique did not strike, and in an instant the garden was deserted.

The scene changes to Leonor's room, where Guillén reproaches his sister for loving a nameless troubador and for scorning the illustrious Don Nuño. He reminds Leonor of how much she admired the Count at a recent tournament and says he has given his word that she is to become Don Nuño's. Leonor must do as he wants, Guillén says, or go live in a convent. After Guillén has left, Leonor confesses to Jimena that she cannot love the Count and fears that, because of the incident in the garden the night before, Manrique now hates her. Manrique, disguised, enters, at first believing that Leonor has spurned him for the Count. Leonor's explanation that shemistook the Count for Manrique, as well as her fervent pledge that she still loves him, convinces Manrique of her fidelity. The Count enters and, taunting Manrique with insults about his low birth, forces the troubador to challenge the Count to a duel. The two exit.
A year has passed as the second-act curtain opens. The Count and Guillén are in the former's room, lamenting the assassination of the Archbishop of Zaragoza. Don Nuño has almost recovered from the severe wounds he suffered at the hand of Manrique in their duel. Manrique, though he survived the duel, is reported to have been killed in a battle at Velilla. Guillén tells the Count that Leonor is to take her vows at a convent in Zaragoza, thinking Manrique dead in the battle. When Guillén departs, Nuño summons the servant Guzmán and orders him to abduct Leonor from the convent, using his sword if necessary. Don Lope de Urrea enters to report that the partisans of Urgel have sacked Castellor and that a revolt is planned in Zaragoza this very night. All this will make Guzmán's duties easier, the Count says, departing to answer a summons from the King conveyed by Don Lope. Before he leaves, however, the Count learns from Don Lope that Manrique, instead of being dead, is rumored to be at the head of the rebels and has been seen in Zaragoza.

The scene changes to a convent. Leonor tells Jimena that she is resolute in her plans to enter the convent, for there is no happiness left for her now that the troubador is dead. Yet she fears that her oath to God will be a perfidious one, for in fact she still loves Manrique and always will. When the two women exit, Manrique, his helmet over his face, and Ruiz enter. Manrique is inconsolable, for he fears that his beloved already has taken the veil. Just then Guzmán and
Ferrando enter on their mission for the Count, but they fail to recognize Manrique. Within the convent church a chorus of nuns is heard, and soon a procession leaves the church. As Leonor walks by, Manrique raises the visor of his helmet. Recognizing him, Leonor faints. The Count's cohorts flee after the identity of Manrique becomes apparent.

The first scene of the third act is set in a hut near Zaragoza. Azucena sings a song describing a savage mob witnessing what must be the death at the stake of a terrified woman. Manrique, puzzled, asks Azucena to explain, but instead she chides him for leaving her, his mother, to follow an adventurer. Manrique's explanation that his desire was to make her happy is rejected, and Azucena tells him the story of the burning of her mother, who died crying for vengeance. She says that after her mother's horrible death she (Azucena) stole the old Count de Luna's child. She was about to burn him on her mother's pyre, she says, when she was moved to pity by the child's weeping. But then she seemed to hear anew her mother's cry for vengeance. Reaching out, she convulsively seized the child nearest her and plunged him into the flames. Instead of the Count's son, she killed her own child. Manrique, who had been reared by Azucena as her own, inquires of his own true identity. Azucena immediately repents of having told the story and assures him that she related the tale merely to mock his ambition and to test his love for her. Manrique assures her
that his love is unswerving. Ruiz enters to tell Manrique that all is in readiness for the Zaragoza expedition. Azucena laments his leaving without even bidding her farewell, and vows he shall never know that the story she told him was indeed true.

The scene changes to a convent cell where Leonor, kneeling in prayer, confesses that she cannot drive Manrique's image from her mind. Her prayers are interrupted, first by the troubador's song and then by the entrance of Manrique himself. He begs that she flee with him, but she refuses, saying she has taken the vows. When Manrique protests, Leonor admits that she still loves him. When she tells him to flee, he refuses, reminding her that she has sworn him eternal faith, a vow which cannot be broken.

The final scenes of the act occur on a street in front of the convent church. A soldier tells Ruiz that Urgel's forces are outside the walls, and though the gates of the city are guarded, Manrique's units should be able to take the city because there are Urgel partisans within the walls as well. Manrique, carrying the unconscious Leonor in his arms, leaves the church; as the alarm sounds, she regains her senses. The Count and his companions rush out to attack Manrique's forces. The curtain falls as Manrique, defending Leonor, fights with Nuno and Guillén.

Act Four's first scenes take place in an encampment. Guillén tells Nuno that the rebels, captained by Manrique,
await them in Castellor after having made good their escape from Zaragoza. Guillén is anxious to avenge the stain upon the honor of his family caused by Manrique's abduction of Leonor, who is now with the troubador. As the two talk, a hubbub is heard; Guzmán enters to report that a witch, believed to be a spy, has been captured. The soldiers drag in Azucena. Both Jimeno and Guzmán recognize her as the abductress of Núñez's brother. To make matters worse, Azucena inadvertently admits that she is Manrique's mother. The gloating Count orders her to be taken to prison and then makes preparations for the march to Castellor.

The scene changes to Leonor's room in Castellor. She regrets her decision to go with Manrique, though she admits she still loves him and cannot earnestly serve God. Manrique enters. He says he is unable to forget his mother's story and tells of a dream he has just had, a dream in which he saw Leonor struck by a bolt of lightning and torn from him. Also in the dream was a fearsome apparition which demanded vengeance of Manrique. Ruiz enters and announces that Núñez and Guillén are marching on Castellor. He reports further that Manrique's enemies have captured a gypsy woman. Manrique knows that Ruiz means Azucena, and he orders the attack. He then confesses to Leonor that he is the gypsy's son. She begs him not to go, but he is adamant, saying that he must avenge his mother. Leonor asks to go with Manrique, but he refuses. As a trumpet sounds, Leonor begs God to be with the troubador.
Manrique is captured in the battle and imprisoned with Azucena in the Aljafería palace. Act Five, set at night, opens on a scene near the walls of the palace. Leonor receives from Ruiz a silver vial she had requested him to purchase for her. Her plan is to take the poison contained therein, then go to the Count to beg for Manrique's freedom in exchange for her pledge to become the Count's wife. Offstage, a single voice chants a prayer for one who is about to die. Leonor swallows the poison, then hears the troubador singing. She is angry because the words of the song indicate that he, too, wishes to die, but she cannot swerve from her plan now.

The scene changes to a room in the palace. The Count happily tells Guillén that Manrique is soon to die, while Guillén is eager to find Leonor and kill her in order to purge the stain on his honor. Nuño is pleased that by killing Manrique he also will avenge Leonor's disdain toward him. Don Lope reluctantly transmits the Count's sentence of death for the troubador. Leonor enters and begs at the Count's feet that he spare Manrique's life. When she promises to be his, the Count relents. Leonor is given permission to see Manrique, promising to tell him to forget her and to repent of his treason.

The final scenes of the play take place in a prison cell. Azucena says that her strength is failing; she is terrified at the prospect of dying as her mother did. She
falls asleep thinking of her freedom in her beloved mountains. Leonor comes to tell Manrique that he is free, but he is horrified at the thought of her pleading with Nuno for him. She assures Manrique that she can never belong to the Count and urges him to escape. However, Leonor says, Azucena must remain behind. Manrique refuses to go. The poison now begins to take effect, and Manrique realizes what has happened. Now he yearns to die. Leonor dies in his arms. Nuno, Guillen and soldiers enter the cell. The Count realizes what Leonor has done and orders Manrique to be taken to the executioner's block. He compels Azucena to watch the execution. When the ax has fallen, she tells the Count that Manrique was his brother, the long-lost Don Juan. "Now you are avenged," she cries out to her dead mother, and falls lifeless to the ground.

Verdi's *Il trovatore*, an opera in four acts, was premiered Jan. 19, 1853, in Rome. Its cast of characters includes

Count di Luna, baritone,

Manrico, a captain serving under the Prince of Biscay in a revolt against the Queen, tenor,

---

2 The following synopsis is derived from an uncredited English translation of the *Il trovatore* libretto published by Crown Publishers, New York, 1939, in *The Authentic Librettos of the Italian Operas*. 
Leonora, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, soprano,
Ines, servant of Leonora, soprano,
Azucena, a gypsy, mezzo-soprano,
Ferrando, a captain serving under the Count di Luna, bass,
Servants, soldiers, gypsies, nuns.

The opera takes place in Aragon and Biscay during the
fifteenth century. The first act occurs in the palace of
Aliferia. Ferrando, at the behest of assembled soldiers
and servants, tells the story of the old Count di Luna
and his two sons. One morning an old gypsy woman was found
bending over the bed of the older son, Garzia, watching him.
The woman was chased away, but the boy soon became ill.
The woman was seized and, despite protestations that she
was merely casting the child's horoscope, burned at the
stake. Her daughter then seized the boy and burned him on
the still-fresh embers of her mother's funeral pyre. Inten-
sive searches for the daughter proved fruitless.

The act's second scene is set in the palace gardens.
Leonora tells Ines of her great love for the mysterious
troubador whom she first saw when placing a wreath of
victory on his brow at a recent tournament. When a civil
war broke out, the knight disappeared, only to reappear
one moonlit night in the palace gardens, playing the lute
and singing at Leonora's window. Ines cautions Leonora to
forget the troubador, but Leonora says she would as soon
die if she cannot have him. The two women exit, and the Count di Luna appears. He tells of his great love for Leonora, only to be interrupted by the strumming of a lute and the sound of the troubador's voice. Seeing Leonora's approach, the Count wraps himself in his cloak, causing her to mistake him for the troubador. Leonora speaks of her love. Manrico, overhearing, thinks she has been unfaithful. Just then, the moon emerges from some clouds and Leonora realizes her error. Manrico enters, and she begs forgiveness of him, saying she loves only him. Manrico forgives her. The Count demands that Manrico identify himself, and when Manrico has done so, angrily says he will kill the troubador. Leonora faints as the two men, swords unsheathed, exit.

The first scene of Act Two is set in a ruined hut in Biscay. After a band of gypsies sings a song in praise of the beauties of gypsy women and the delights of work and a glass of wine, Azucena's voice is heard, describing what obviously is the execution of a woman at the stake. That completed, she turns to Manrico and says, "Avenge me!" Puzzled, Manrico asks the gypsy to recount the rest of the story. Her mother, Azucena says, was accused of bewitching the son of a Count and was condemned to death at the stake. Her final words to her daughter were a demand for vengeance. It was on this very spot that she died, Azucena says. Manrico asks if Azucena carried out her mother's wishes. She abducted the Count's younger son, Azucena replies, and
brought him to this spot, where the flames of her mother's pyre still were burning. The child's weeping saddened her momentarily; but when she recalled the fearful vision of her mother's death, she reached out, clasped a victim, and threw it in the fire. In her delirium, she in that way killed her own son. "Then who am I?" Manrico asks. Correcting herself quickly, Azucena says he is her son, explaining that the horrible thoughts of her mother's death had momentarily disordered her mind. She chides Manrico for his doubts, reminding him that she went to him on the battlefield at Petilla to tend his wounds and bring him back to life. Angrily, Azucena goes on to say that the Count di Luna was to blame for this, the same Count whose life Manrico spared in the duel. Manrico says he had been ready to strike, but some unexplainable force prevented him from delivering the fatal blow, and a voice from heaven warned him not to kill the Count. If such an opportunity again presents itself, Azucena says, Manrico is not to let it pass. He swears that he will not. A messenger enters to tell Manrico that Castellor has fallen to Urgel's troops and that Leonora, thinking Manrico dead, this very night will take her vows in a convent near Castellor. Azucena frantically tries to force Manrico to remain with her, but he ignores her and departs.

The second scene of Act Two is set in a cloister in the convent. The Count and his followers enter, and the
Count realizes that he has come in time, for Leonora has not yet taken her vows. He praises Leonora's beauty. The sound of a bell warns the Count that the rites are about to commence, and he orders his retinue to hide in the shadows of some nearby trees. A nuns' chorus is heard within. Soon Leonora, Ines and their retinue enter. Leonora bemoans the sad life she has had and voices her willingness to turn to God. Soon, she says, she will rejoin the supposedly dead Manrico in heaven. Suddenly the Count appears and orders Leonora to halt. The altar awaiting her is that of marriage, he says, seizing Leonora. Manrico appears and places himself between Leonora and the Count. Recovering from his shock of seeing Manrico alive, the Count warns his enemy to flee. But just then Ruiz and followers enter with news that Urgel's troops have been victorious. As Manrico is about to lead the still-dazed Leonora away, the Count draws his sword; but Ruiz and the soldiers surround di Luna and disarm him. Helpless and raging, the Count watches as Manrico leads Leonora away.

Act Three's first scene takes place in an encampment, where the Count's soldiers boast of how brave they will be in the upcoming fight and relish the prospect of booty. Ferrando joins in the general celebration. The Count enters, still stung by the humiliation he suffered by Manrico's abduction of Leonora. He swears the situation will be corrected in the battle tomorrow. A disturbance is heard,
and Ferrando enters to report that a gypsy woman, suspected of being a spy, has been captured. Azucena is dragged in. Di Luna reveals his identity, and the look of horror on the woman's face makes Ferrando realize that he has seen her before. Accidently Azucena reveals that Manrico is her son. Now the Count realizes that he can avenge both his brother's death and Manrico's insult. Azucena is dragged away.

The second scene of the act occurs in a hall in Castellor. Manrico orders Ruiz to begin preparations for the siege expected tomorrow and attempts to calm Leonora by saying his own troops will be victorious. The sounds of an organ in the nearby chapel remind the two that they are about to say their marriage vows. Just then Ruiz rushes in to tell of the capture and impending execution of Azucena. Manrico tells Leonora that he is the woman's son and advises Ruiz that an attempt will be made to rescue her. Vowing to save Azucena or die, Manrico hastens to be with his troops.

The final act's first scene is set in a wing of the Aliferia palace, in which Manrico, captured by the Count's troops, and Azucena are confined. Leonora hopes to be able to see Manrico in his cell. She tells of her continuing love for the troubador. From offstage is heard the tolling of a bell and the voices of a male chorus begging compassion for a soul about to die. Then Manrico's voice is heard, voicing his wish to die and begging the unseen Leonora not
to forget him. Leonora is prepared to carry out a plan of her own, saying she will save Manrico's life or die with him. The Count and followers enter, and the Count orders the execution of Manrico and Azucena at daybreak. Leonora steps from her hiding place and begs the Count's compassion, offering herself in exchange for the troubador's freedom. The Count relents. Unnoticed, Leonora swallows poison concealed in a ring.

The dungeon cell of Manrico and Azucena is the setting for the opera's final scene. The gypsy yearns for her freedom and sees again a vision of the horrible death her mother suffered. Manrico attempts to comfort her, pleading with her to sleep. She yearns to return to her beloved mountains. At last she falls into an uneasy slumber. Leonora enters and tells Manrico to flee. She cannot go, she says, so Manrico refuses to leave. He is angry that Leonora has bargained with the Count to save his life, and curses her. When she falls to the ground, the troubador realizes the full extent of Leonora's sacrifice. The Count enters in time to witness Leonora's death in Manrico's arms. He orders his enemy to be taken to the block and rouses Azucena to watch the execution. When Manrico is dead, Azucena tells di Luna that Manrico was his brother.

Antonio García Gutierrez was in his mid-twenties when he wrote El trovador, not his first play, for there had been even earlier attempts, two comedies and two tragedies which he
brought with him to Madrid in 1833 after abandoning the study of medicine. However, El trovador was the drama which launched him, just as it was the drama which represented the apogee of the short-lived Romantic renaissance in Spain in the mid-1830s. It was a fantastic success, not only in Madrid but in the provinces. It was quintessential Romanticism: aflame with unbridled emotions and implications of revolt against convention; colorful with picturesque characters; flagrantly violating the Classical unities of action, time, and place; offering a mysterious hero to wonder about and lurid melodramatic effects to shock and amaze. In other words, El trovador was the antithesis of what the Spanish Neo-classicists deemed "acceptable" for presentation upon the stage.

García Gutiérrez' story is the familiar one of a youth directed by his father down a corridor he did not wish to follow. Familiarly, he revolted and turned to his Muse. Before the El trovador success, he translated plays by Scribe and Alexander Dumas, and came in contact with the Romantic revolt which had swept Europe years before. El trovador was written in a period of five months and was accepted for presentation in Madrid. However, an apuntador, who reads parts to the actors, disliked the new play and worked against García Gutiérrez, with the result that the production was canceled. Discouraged, the young dramatist joined the army. But José Espronceda, a poet of Romantic persuasion, read the play, admired it, and worked to have it presented. Its success
was unqualified; there were fourteen performances in Madrid in as many days, something almost unheard of at that time.³ García Gutiérrez left his army post without official leave in order to attend the première. Needless to say, he abandoned his army career after the El trovador success.

In contrast to García Gutiérrez, Giuseppe Verdi had already tasted success when he composed Il trovatore. His name was well known across Italy, and the rest of Europe as well was coming to know the talents of the peasant's son from Busseto. Seventeen operas had preceded Il trovatore, the most recent Rigoletto. Verdi was in the bloom of maturity, at the beginning of a decade which saw the creation of Stiffelio (now forgotten), Rigoletto, Il trovatore, La traviata, I vespri siciliani, Simon Boccanegra, and Un ballo in maschera, in that order, a momentous decade, indeed.

Verdi first became interested in García Gutiérrez' play as a possible source for an opera in 1849, when he suggested to the Neapolitan poet Salvatore Cammarano a libretto on either El trovador or Victor Hugo's Le Roi s'amuse. The former, Verdi said, "seems to me very fine, rich in ideas and strong situations. I should like to have two female roles. First the gypsy, a woman of strange character, after whom I want to name the opera. The other role would be for a supporting singer."⁴ As it turned out, Le Roi s'amuse was

composed first, under the now well-known title of Rigoletto, with Francesco Maria Piave supplying the libretto.

El trovador's first act no doubt proved a nightmare to Cammarano, for its first scene is made up almost entirely of narration, first Jimeno's account of the abduction of the child and the execution of the gypsy woman, then Guzmán's report of the episode in the garden. Such could not be the case in the opera, so Cammarano compromised: the abduction narration would remain, albeit truncated, but the garden narration would form the opera's Act I Scene 2. Nothing in the thrust of the play would be lost, a long narration would be disposed of, and a visually interesting scene would be available. Cammarano excised the play's Don Guillén, thereby doing away with Garcia Gutierrez' subplot of pundonor, or honor of the family. But in doing so, the librettist did not harm the development of his own argument, for the honor subplot plays a miniscule part in the play. Furthermore, Cammarano transplants Leonor's maid from the palace bedroom of the play to the opera's garden and strengthens her characterization by permitting her to warn Leonora about the consequences of loving the troubador.

Still, the narration of Ferrando in the opera is a long one, albeit skillfully handled by Verdi in Abbieta zingara. Many facts important to future developments of the drama are buried within this narration where they can easily be missed if the singer is weak in enunciation. Cammarano has made
Ferrando a captain under the Count di Luna, whereas in the play he was merely a servant, and one of three at that. No doubt the name "Ferrando" was kept because it was more Italianate than either "Guzmán" or "Jimeno." Before Ferrando begins his narration, he tells the assembled soldiers and servants to be wary of the approach of the Count, whose custom it is to spend the night under the window of his beloved's room. Thus, Cammarano quickly introduces the sub-plot of the Manrico-Leonora-Count di Luna triangle, whereas García Gutiérrez delays its introduction until after the abduction narration.

It is interesting to note that in the opera it is the second-born son who is abducted, not the first-born as in the play. This change smacks of Verdi's hand, for the composer was an active participant in the preparation of all his librettos, Il trovatore being no exception. It is likely that Verdi insisted on this change because he did not want his baritone character to be younger than his tenor. Still another intriguing change is the name of the abducted son. In the play he is Juan; in the opera, Garzia. Cammarano probably wanted a name to fit his rhyme scheme, in which all names are accented on the penultimate syllable (Man-RI-co, Le-o-NOR-a, Il-CON-de, Fer-RAN-do). But where did he get the name "Garzia"? García is a Spanish surname. It is entirely possible that Cammarano remembered the name of the play's author and, not knowing that he had two surnames as
is often the Spanish custom, chose García, believing it to be the dramatist's Christian name.

Cammarano retains some of the expressions of amazement voiced by the servants reacting to Jimeno's relation of the abduction in the play. The play's Ferrando says he has seen the gypsy's soul disguised as a crow, or a screech owl. In the opera, the chorus comments on the gypsy's wandering the earth in various guises, including those of bird, owl, and crow. The operatic Ferrando reports that a man who saw the dead gypsy died in fear. The play's Ferrando says the soul entered his room one night and began to sip oil from his lamp. The thing finally was chased away when he screamed. Cammarano explains why the old gypsy was in the room of the count's son (she was casting his horoscope), but García Gutiérrez does not explain her presence.

Reading through the first acts of both play and opera, one gains the impression that the Manrique-Leonor love plot will be the overriding concern of the drama. Such is not the case at all, for in reality Azucena's desire to avenge the death of her mother is the theme. But García Gutiérrez does not actively introduce this motif until the third act, and Cammarano until the second act. Verdi must have recognized this drawback, for the composer saw Azucena as the most important character in the drama. A carping letter he sent to Cammarano during the composition of the first draft of the libretto said, "It seems to me that this woman's two
great passions, filial love and maternal love, are no longer present with all their original force."\(^5\)

The changes Cammarano made in Act I are only the beginning of the extensive modifications that he was to bring about, with Verdi undoubtedly supervising every step. The play's Jimena, for example, merely asks questions of Leonor: Why do you hate the Count? Will Manrique doubt your love? Ines, on the other hand, warns Leonora that it is a dangerous flame she is nurturing in loving Manrico and counsels her to forget the troubador.

In the play, we are never told how Leonor first came to know Manrique. But Cammarano feels it necessary to explain this, borrowing from the play the idea that a tournament had been held. In the play, of course, it was the Count whom Leonor had seen and presumably admired.

The historical background is ignored in both play and opera. Both mention the Count of Urgel, but one finds no hint that this man was indeed an historical character, one of many claimants to the throne of Aragon after the death, in 1410, of Martin I of Aragon. Urgel supported his claims with arms and instigated the murder of the Archbishop of Zaragoza in 1411. After electors met and chose Ferdinand I of Castille as king in 1413, Urgel was forced to surrender. He was imprisoned for life.

\(^{5}\text{Ibid.}, p. 251.\)
Di Luna's entrance in the opera and his expression of love for Leonora are not in the play, of course, because what we are seeing in the opera is the scene only described by Guzmán in the play. Thus the Count's words are of Cammarano's invention. Also original with Cammarano are the words of the troubador's song (Deserto sulla terra, one of the fine tenor arias in which Il trovatore abounds). This is the first example of what has been called the inherent musicality of García Gutiérrez' play; Manrique's and Azucena's songs, the chorus of nuns, and the voice asking prayers for the doomed Manrique in Act V seem almost to have been written with the thought that they could easily be incorporated into an opera. The brief encounter between Leonora and the count is not in the play, for the reason stated above; but when Manrico confronts Leonora after overhearing her words to the Count, Cammarano returns to the drama for Leonora's explanation and for the chastened Manrico's forgiveness and pledge of love.

In the play, the Count taunts Manrique with the supposed wretchedness of his birth, which the operatic di Luna does not do. In both play and opera, Manrique/Manrico are disguised when the Count enters, and both unmask when the Count demands it. In the play, the Count orders Leonor to leave before the start of the final scene with Manrique. In the opera, Leonora witnesses the entire scene, begs the Count to strike her down instead of Manrico, then faints when
the two men exit to fight their duel. Leonora's presence adds a dramatic interest to the scene not present in the play.

The operatic troubador and count fight only one duel, the one which we assume will come after the curtain falls on the first act. The characters in the play fight two: one in the garden described by Guzmán, which was hardly a duel at all, for Manrique quickly disarmed the Count; and one to which the participants are rushing at the end of the first act.

A major problem which Cammarano faced in drawing up his libretto was that of compression, reducing García Gutiérrez' five acts to a more manageable form. It cannot be denied that Cammarano succeeded admirably. Without question, he tightened up the action, deleted subplots which did not contribute to the grand design of the drama, and sharpened our interest in the main theme of _II trovatore_, that of vengeance. It is in the play's second act that Cammarano used his pruning shears most ruthlessly, deleting the entire act. This is not to say that what transpires in the act is not important to the development of the Manrique-Leonor subplot. What Cammarano has done is to transplant the few nuggets of vital information in the play's second act into the opera's Act II, Scene 2. A careful comparison of the two should increase one's respect for Cammarano, if not as a poet, at least as a technician.
Thus we will learn in the opera's Act II, Scene 2 of Manrico's supposed death, of Leonora's plans to enter the convent, and of the Count's desires to thwart those plans. Furthermore, Manrique's unexpected appearance to Leonor is carried over into the opera, but with an entirely different significance: in the play, Leonor has assumed her vows; in the opera, she never does.

A great deal of the play's second act never appears in the opera. For example, there is no mention of the assassination of the Archbishop. Of course, there is no Guillén, and his presence is never missed. Guillén is García Gutiérrez' weakest character, a simple-minded piece of cardboard posturing in an absurd tableau vivant. Little more can be said for the other characters in the play, with the exception of Azucena, but Guillén is the nadir. There is no Don Lope in the opera; his duties in the play are merely to bring the audience up to date on events already transpired.

Cammarano has made even more changes. The operatic di Luna will go to the convent himself, rather than order his servants to do so. The operatic Leonora is not concerned that her vows will displease God because she loves another more. She will, however, find comfort in the fact that after days of penitence, she will join the supposedly dead Manrico in heaven.
As the play's Act II ends, we have another example of its inherent musicality, the chorus of nuns. Verdi, of course, is not one to allow such an opportunity to pass him by, and writes such a chorus for his Act II, Scene 2.

García Gutiérrez directs that the singing of the nuns should not stop until a moment after the conclusion of the act. Even in those early days of his career, the playwright knew how to achieve dramatic effect.

In January, 1851, Cammarano sent to Verdi, then in Paris, the synopsis for the _Il trovatore_ libretto. The composer was displeased with Cammarano's efforts, and reworked the sketch from beginning to end. He corresponded with the poet in April: "I have read your sketch. As a gifted and most exceptional man, you will not be offended if I humbly take the liberty of saying it would be better to give up this subject if we cannot manage to retain all the boldness and novelty of the Spanish play." Verdi offered his own suggested outline, chiding Cammarano by saying that his (Verdi's) own initial suspicions were confirmed: Cammarano did not like the play. Verdi was more than willing to go on to another project, in this case Dumas fils' _La Dame aux camélias_. Fortunately, Cammarano did not give up, but set to work again with Verdi's suggestions before him. And just as fortunately, Verdi did not forget the Dumas play either. Two months after the premiere of _Il trovatore_,

---

6 _Ibid._, p. 248.
Verdi's adaptation of the Dumas work would have its own première, with a libretto by Piave. It was *La traviata*. Much of it was composed while Verdi struggled with *II trovatore*, a miraculous feat when one appreciates the vast differences in the two operas.

*II trovatore's second act* offers several examples of how Cammarano and Verdi hewed to the original play, as well as examples of how they broke away from it to create a drama that was uniquely theirs while retaining aspects of the original.

Azucena's song at the beginning of the play's third act is a situation ready-made for Verdi. Cammarano had only to add a few extra lines to what García Gutiérrez had given his own Azucena to sing. In the play she says: "The wild crowd howls around the fire; now, seeing the victim [come] near, it utters shouts of fury. There she comes, her face pallid; her looks of terror flash in the sinister splendor of the tremulous flame." Azucena, in the opera's *Stride la vampa*, sings: "The flames crackle, the wild crowd rushes to that fire in seeming gladness; cries of joy echoing on all sides. Surrounded by guards, the woman advances. Dark flames rise into the heavens. Still the victim comes on, raggedly dressed and shoeless. A fierce cry arises and re-echoes... Dark flames rise into the heavens."
Immediately after Azucena's song, Cammarano plunges into the core of the vengeance theme, causing his Azucena to call upon Manrico to avenge her. The play's Azucena never makes such a request, even though, as in the opera, her plans are to use Manrique as the instrument of her own vengeance. Manrique will get some intimation of his role in the fourth act of the play, when he has a dream in which a mysterious phantom demands vengeance of him. But how much more logical is the solution chosen by Cammarano to let Manrico know of Azucena's plans for him. Manrico, of course, does not understand the import of Azucena's demand for vengeance, which adds a dimension of Siegfried-like naivety to the troubador that is not in the play, and also helps create a sympathy toward Manrico which we cannot feel toward his counterpart.

Of necessity, Cammarano has condensed Azucena's narration of her mother's execution, but the salient points remain. Remaining, too, is Azucena's explanation of how she burned her own infant instead of the Count's, the fateful act upon which the whole drama hinges. If one cannot accept Azucena's explanation, the argument of both play and drama is lost; for in truth Azucena, stunned and confused by the vision of her mother's death, did burn her own son. It is perhaps less convincingly presented in the play, for several days have elapsed between the time of the mother's execution and Azucena's own rash act, and Azucena's explanation that
"thoughtless and frantic" and "possessed by a despairing fury" she mistakenly seized the wrong child is not wholly convincing. How much more logical is Cammarano's solution, to have Azucena carry out her act of vengeance only hours after her mother's death and upon the smouldering embers of her mother's pyre. Nevertheless, if one can accept Azucena's story, despite the unlikelihood of an event of this sort, the subsequent events of both play and drama are more readily assimilated, and the depth of the tragedy which García Gutiérrez meant to convey can be grasped, if not appreciated. The Romanticism of the play is a mitigating factor, but not necessarily a vindicating one. It is apparent that Cammarano recognized the weakness of the situation, for he gives implicit instructions on how Azucena is to reply, "You are my son," when Manrico asks, "Who am I?". His directions are: "Hastily, as if correcting an involuntary admission." García Gutiérrez offers no such help to his own Azucena.

The operatic Azucena's statement that she went to tend Manrico on the battlefield at Petilla is nowhere present in the play. This can only be an addition on the part of Verdi, who saw Azucena as a character matching in importance Manrico, Leonora and the Count, and who, as has been noted, stressed to his librettist the importance of Azucena's maternal and filial love.
Likewise unique to the opera are Manrico's description of his duel with the Count, found in the famous tenor aria "Mal reggendo," and his explanation of why he spared the Count's life. The play's Azucena never tells Manrique to kill the Count should another opportunity present itself. But in the play, at the conclusion of Scene 3 of the third act, Azucena in a soliloquy admits in so many words that Manrique is indeed the Count's brother. She will not tell Manrique this, however, because she fears he will abandon her in her old age. The operatic Azucena makes no such confession, so it is possible that a listener, not understanding the significance of Azucena's consternation when Manrico demands to know his true identity, does not realize the true identity of the hero.

Cammarano and Verdi create the magnificent Gypsy (Anvil) Chorus at the beginning of their second act merely by adding a band of gypsies to García Gutiérrez's scene. The chorus probably is the most universally known extract from the opera.

The scene in the convent cell between Manrique and Leonor is, of course, deleted from the opera. The operatic Leonora has not taken her vows and never does, probably because Verdi was sensitive to the feelings of his Catholic Italian audiences. This is not to say that García Gutiérrez did not feel the same way toward his Catholic Spanish auditors,
but rather that the eager young playwright was more concerned about Romantic effects than Catholic sensibilities.

While the Count appears in the final scene of both the opera and play, his mission in each is different. The procession in the opera is taken from the play's concluding scene of Act II, with the nun's chorus remaining intact. Ruiz, though still little more than a pipeline of information, wins a promotion in the opera, becoming Manrico's "aide," while in the play he is merely a "servant." Finally, one notes disparity in the conclusions of the two acts: in the play, Manrique is fighting for his life, surrounded by his enemies, and attempting to bring Leonor to safety; in the opera, Manrico, safe among his own troops, blithely walks away with Leonora while the Count looks on in helpless rage. It is also noteworthy that Manrico has defaulted on his pledge to Azucena that he would kill the Count at the next opportunity.

With a few verses of the third act and all of the fourth act yet to be written, Cammarano died in July, 1852, in Naples. Verdi was thunderstruck, having read the news in a theatrical journal. To complete the _Il trovatore_ libretto, Verdi engaged a young Neapolitan poet, Leone Emanuele Bardare. From the third act on, _Il trovatore_ follows more closely the pattern provided by García Gutiérrez, including a great deal of duplicate dialogue. The similarities in dialogue may well be Bardare's, but the homogeneity of plot most certainly is not, for Cammarano was working from a synopsis prepared by Verdi,
and it is unlikely that the composer allowed his new librettist to wander from it.

The play's opening scene of Act IV, the encampment, gives Verdi an opportunity for yet another chorus. But the words which the soldiers sing at the beginning of the opera's Act III are entirely of Cammarano's invention, though the idea of the siege of Castellor is from the play. The anger of the operatic di Luna is not shared by his counterpart in the play; it is Guillén who rages about the abduction of Leonor.

Azucena, in both play and opera, is suspected of being a spy and is dragged in with her hands bound. In both, the Count asks her where she is going. In the play she replies, "I do not know. . . about the world; a gypsy goes everywhere, and all the world is her home." In the opera: "It is the custom of a gypsy woman to wander like a vagabond, without plan, heaven her roof, the world her country." In both play and opera, Azucena tells the Count she is from Biscay and then says:

(Play): For a long time I have lived among high crests, where, poor and miserable, I considered myself happy. I had a son, and he left me abandoned; I go about the world looking for him, for I have no other hope. I love him so much! He is the consolation of my soul. . . and the only support of my unhappy old age.

(Opera): My days were spent in poverty, but I was content with my state. One son I had, but he, the ingrate, left me. Now I wander about looking for that son, for that son who cost my heart horrible suffering.
In the play, Azucena learns the Count's identity when he warns her not to lie because, "... you are speaking to the Count de Luna." In the opera, the Count's route to self-identification is a bit more circuitous; when Azucena tells him she has lived in the mountains of Biscay many years, he asks her if she remembers a boy being stolen from the castle of a count, and then he tells her that he is the brother of the abducted one. In both play and opera, the Count's confederates are certain at this point that they recognize Azucena as the daughter of the gypsy who abducted the Count's brother. In both, the Count orders the woman's bonds to be tightened, causing Azucena to blurt out: (Play) "... Manrique, my son, come to set me free." (Opera) "And you do not come, O Manrico, O my son? You do not help your unhappy mother!"

In the play, Azucena is dragged away pleading for mercy and protesting that it was not she who burned the Count's brother. In the opera, she tells the Count, "Tremble, son of an iniquitous progenitor, and worse than he. God protects the weak, and God will punish you!" The Count scoffs, gleeful that by capturing Azucena he can strike back at Manrico in a way the latter has not foreseen. "Joy floods my heart," the Count says. "The ashes of my brother will be avenged." The concept of the Count as avenger of his brother is never touched upon in the play, an oversight on the part of García Gutiérrez which can only be attributed to his
inexperience. How logical it seems, as presented by Cammarano and Verdi, that the Count should react in this fashion when he learns the supposed relationship between Azucena and his mortal enemy. Confidently he feels he can rid himself of Manrico and avenge his brother's death in one stroke, all the while never realizing that Azucena is plotting her own vengeance against him. It is a superbly ironic point.

The long dream relation sequence of the play's Act IV, Scene 6, is omitted in the opera, not only because it would entail a long narrative for Manrico but because it really is not necessary. The purpose of the dream was to inform Manrique, though obliquely, that he was to be the instrument of Azucena's vengeance, a fact of which Manrico already is aware, though perhaps unconsciously. Neither dramatist nor librettist ever makes the troubador fully aware that he is to fulfill this role. To have done so would have deprived the drama of much of its irony. The play's Leonor remains her vacillating self at the beginning of Act IV, Scene 5, chastizing herself for abandoning the altar, and then immediately saying she could never have fulfilled her duties and her pledge as a nun. Is Leonor becoming mad? She will kill herself in the next act, confident that her suicide will lead to Manrique's freedom, blithely ignoring the fact that Manrique would not wish to live apart from her. Her actions hint of madness; more specifically, her actions hint of a playwright aware of the ambiguities he has written into the
character of Leonor and anxious to create a madwoman before
the play has run its course. Cammarano and Verdi have not
attempted to correct these ambiguities: soften them, yes;
amend them, no. Their Leonora will be a suicide, too.

When Ruiz arrives with the news of Azucena's capture,
Manrique, admitting to Leonor that the gypsy is his mother,
is concerned that Leonor will deprecate him because of his
low birth. Manrico voices no such concern. Leonor, after
Manrique has said he must attempt to rescue Azucena, warns
the troubador that she has presentiments of his death.
Leonora voices no such statement. Leonor offers to go with
Manrique, but Leonora does not. Manrique says that to die
for one's mother is to die an enviable death. Manrico, in
the famous aria Di quella pira, says he will save Azucena
or die in the attempt.

Verdi's mother died on June 30, 1851, during a time
when the composer was, if not actually writing down the
music for Il trovatore, at least permitting it to gestate
in his brain. Did her death color Verdi's music for Azucena?
He could hardly have failed to draw a comparison between his
own mother, whom he loved deeply, and Azucena. The poignant
music of the Azucena-Manrico duet in the fifth act could very
well be an unconscious expression of Verdi's love for his
own mother.

Even more poignant is the music for Manrico, Leonora,
and the chorus of monks in the act's first scene, the so-called
miserere. It is the most compelling scene of the opera, and one of the greatest Verdi ever wrote, rivaling in emotional depth the final scene of *Aida*. A critic who witnessed the Rome premiere of *Il trovatore* reported that the scene so deeply affected several women that they were forced to leave the auditorium. 7 The inspiration for the scene, of course, is García Gutiérrez'; Verdi added only the tolling of the death bell. Bardare and Verdi have retained the essence of Manrique's speech from this scene of the play: "Death comes slowly, it is deaf to my clamor," he says. "Death comes slowly to one who desires to die . . . Don't weep if you [Leonor] learn that they kill me as a traitor, for loving you is my crime, and in love there is no reproach. . . ." In the opera this differs only slightly: "How death always delays its coming for the one who desires to die. . . . With my blood I atone for the love I had for you [Leonora]. Do not forget me." In the play, a single voice is heard praying for Manrique's soul; the opera, of course, uses a male chorus. Leonora does not berate Manrico because he desires to die. Leonor's attitude, on the other hand, is one of self-pity and self-righteous martyrdom.

The inspiration for the words of Leonora's aria *D'amor sull' ali rosee*, which precedes the miserere scene, seems to originate in a brief snatch of dialogue from the play's fourth

7 Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
act, when Manrique is telling Leonor of his dream. In the
dream, he says, he and Leonor were seated on the shores of
a lake. He was singing to her, and the wind, "murmuring on
the water, repeated my song and your sighs." In the aria,
Leonora asks the breezes to carry her sighs to Manrico,
imprisoned in the tower above her.

Bardare and Verdi, because of the demands for com-
pression imposed on them by the operatic style, have
shortened the Leonora-di Luna scene to the point of incredi-
ibility. Leonora's pleadings will serve no purpose, the Count
says; no price will purchase Manrico's freedom. But Leonora
will sacrifice herself, if only the Count will free Manrico.
"Do you swear it? " the Count asks. She does, and the Count
relents. García Gutierrez, on the other hand, allows the
scene to develop at a more leisurely pace, with far greater
logic in both the supplications of Leonor and the bit-by-bit
yielding of the Count.

The operatic scene between Manrico and Azucena in the
dungeon is taken almost exactly from the play, though, of
course, it is shortened considerably. In both play and
opera, Azucena is made to repeat the gruesome details of
her mother's death, a needless redundancy. The fault, of
course, is García Gutierrez', for he seems to be intrigued
by the horrible details he has created. Both Azucenas
express a desire to be free again in the mountains of
Biscay, and both Manrique and Manrico lull the gypsy to sleep with a lullaby.

When Leonora enters the cell to give Manrico his freedom, the latter is not concerned about the fate of Azucena as his counterpart in the play is. Such an oversight on the part of Bardare and Verdi is hard to comprehend. Manrique does not curse Leonor, as Manrico does. In the play, Leonor dies before the arrival of the Count, thus permitting Manrique a soliloquy. Why did not Bardare and Verdi choose the same course, giving Manrico a "big" aria in which to mourn Leonora's death before the Count's arrival? Undoubtedly it was the experienced Verdi's sense of stagecraft which warned him not to interrupt the rapidly approaching climax of the drama at this point with an unnecessary aria.

Leonora's last words are a prayer to God to forgive her; Leonor's are an adiós to Manrique. Again, this seems to be a concession on the part of Verdi to his Catholic audiences. In both the play and the opera, as the troubador is led to his death, he bids farewell to Azucena with the word "mother." In the play, Azucena awakens and believes at first that Manrique has left without taking her. The operatic Azucena voices no such concern.  

---

8 For the Paris premiere on Jan. 12, 1857, Verdi has Azucena rousing from her slumbers, hearing the notes of the miserere, and crying out, "Oh Heaven! The death knell! Where is my son?" From afar she hears Manrico say, "God bless you, mother." The Paris production also had a specially prepared ballet, inserted after the Soldiers' Chorus in Act III.
Azucena's final words in the play, "Now you are avenged," might be cause for confusion, for Azucena does not indicate to whom the words are spoken. Bardare and Verdi make sure that the audience knows exactly to whom the words are addressed. The operatic Azucena does not die, as does her counterpart in the drama, so presumably the Count will be free to execute her later. In the play the Count's reaction to the news that he has killed his brother is to say, "My brother! Malediction!" and to fling himself to the ground. Bardare and Verdi do not let a dramatic opportunity like this go to waste with meaningless words. To their Count they give the drama's final words: "And still I live!"

When Verdi used subtitles for the four acts of *Il trovatore*, he was merely following a precedent set by the Spanish playwright, who in turn was influenced by Hugo. In order, the opera's four acts are subtitled "The Duel," "The Gypsy," "The Gypsy's Son," and "The Punishment." The play's five acts are "The Duel," "The Convent," "The Gypsy," "The Revelation," and "The Punishment."
CHAPTER III

DON ALVARO O LA FUERZA DEL SINO
AND LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

The Duke of Rivas' five-act drama Don Alvaro o la fuerza
del sino was first performed March 22, 1835, in Madrid.¹

Its cast of characters includes

- Don Alvaro,
- The Marquis of Calatrava,
- Don Carlos de Vargas and Don Alfonso de Vargas, sons
  of the Marquis,
- Doña Leonor de Vargas, daughter of the Marquis,
- The Father Superior of the Convent of the Angels,
- Brother Melitón, doorkeeper of the convent,
- Curra, Leonor's maid,
- Pereda, a student,
- Preciosilla, a gypsy,
- Tio Trabuco, a muleteer,
- Several inhabitants of Seville, various residents of
  Hornachuelos, Spanish soldiers, muleteers, people of Veletri,
  Italy.

¹The following synopsis is from Don Alvaro o la fuerza
del sino in Representative Spanish Authors, Vol. II, edited
by Walter T. Pattison (New York, 1965). Quotations have been
translated into English for the convenience of the reader.
The action, set about the middle of the eighteenth century, takes place in Spain and Italy. Act I opens near the entrance to the Triana bridge in Seville. Various local inhabitants, including Preciosilla, a gypsy fortune teller, are discussing events of the day. Their conversation turns to the mysterious Don Alvaro, who loves Doña Leonor. Nothing is known about the man, although there is speculation he may be a wealthy visitor from the New World. Unexpectedly, Don Alvaro appears and, without saying a word, crosses the bridge, obviously headed for the country home of the Marquis of Calatrava, where Leonor has been taken by her father. A priest, who has joined the group of citizens, realizes that he must warn the Marquis about Don Alvaro's approach, for the Marquis is adamantly opposed to his daughter's seeing the mysterious indiano.

The scene changes to a large room in the Marquis' country home. Its shabby furnishings are evidence that the Vargas family is in severe financial straits. Leonor, unknown to her father, is planning to elope with Don Alvaro this very night, accompanied by her maid, Curra, and Curra's own inamorato. The Marquis tells Leonor of his great love for her. Her brothers, he says, will be home soon; Carlos, the older, from his army regiment in Barcelona, Alfonso from his university studies at Salamanca (both have reputations as swordsmen). But the Marquis' tender words serve only to aggravate Leonor's distress; for she is not sure that
plans are the best idea. After the Marquis leaves, Curra tries to convince Leonor to go ahead, saying the Marquis and his sons will relent when Leonor and Don Alvaro return with a son nine months hence. Don Alvaro enters through a window and is surprised to find Leonor reluctant to go with him. Only an outpouring of words expressing his love for her convinces Leonor to go with him. A disturbance outside alerts the couple; before they can flee, the Marquis and two servants enter the room. Don Alvaro, taking out a pistol, tells the Marquis that he will not submit to arrest and that only the Marquis can take his life. Don Alvaro swears that Leonor is innocent of any crime. On his knees before the Marquis, he throws away the cocked pistol, but it fires as it strikes the ground, and the bullet fatally wounds the old man. The dying Marquis' last words are a curse on his daughter.

The second act opens in an inn in the village of Hornachuelos, a year later. Leonor, disguised as a man, comes to the inn on her way to a nearby convent. She and Don Alvaro had become separated on the night of their planned elopement, and she believes her loved one to be dead. Among the travelers at the inn is the student Pereda, a friend of Alfonso de Vargas, who reports that Don Alvaro, instead of being dead as Leonor feared, has returned to the Americas, Alfonso in hot pursuit. Leonor overhears Pereda's tale and flees from the inn, still unnoticed. Pereda's
attempts to milk from the muleteer Trabuco, who brought Leonor to the inn, additional facts about the stranger are fruitless.

The scene changes to an open place in front of the convent near Hornachuelos. Leonor reviews in her mind what she has just heard the student report. She censures Don Alvaro for abandoning her and mourns her father's death. Considering the latter's blood on her hands, she begs the Virgin for compassion. As the sounds of an organ and chorus of friars are heard from within the convent church, Leonor resolutely approaches the convent gate. It is Brother Meliton who answers her summons and who goes to get the Father Superior. To the latter, Leonor identifies herself, her arrival having been made known earlier through a letter from a priest. Leonor begs that she be permitted to live out her life in a hermitage near the convent, just as another woman had done many years before. She assures the Father Superior that her motives are sincere. Certain of that, the Father Superior approves her request. No one except him will be permitted to approach the grotto, he says, and then only to bring her food. Only in times of extreme danger or at the hour of her death is Leonor to ring a bell which is provided for her.

Act III, set in Italy, opens in an encampment near Veletri, where Spanish soldiers are fighting on the side of the King of Naples against German invaders. Spanish
soldiers involve Don Carlos in a card game and attempt to cheat him. He learns of their tricks and unsheathes his sword.

The scene changes to a nearby clearing. Don Alvaro soliloquizes on the cruelty of fate and the harshness of life. He begs compassion of Leonor, whom he believes is dead. He says he is attempting to save his parents' lives, but must keep his identity secret to do so. The sound of shouts interrupts his thoughts, and he rushes to the aid of Don Carlos, helping drive away the cardsharps with whom the Spaniard is battling. Vargas thanks Don Alvaro for his help. The two men identify themselves with false names, and then part as friends.

The scene changes to a battlefield near Veletri. Officers watch a battle taking place in the distance and report that Don Alvaro has fallen wounded. Don Carlos rallies the flagging Spanish troops and leads them to victory, at the same time rescuing Don Alvaro.

The act's final scenes occur in an officer's quarters, to which Don Alvaro is brought on a stretcher. Believing himself mortally wounded, Don Alvaro asks Don Carlos to take custody of a key and, in the event of his death, burn a packet of papers contained in a small box within the bag Don Alvaro carries. No one is to read the papers, Don Alvaro warns. Don Carlos gives his word. The request stirs Don Carlos' curiosity. He recalls Don Alvaro's consternation
moments before when told he would receive the Order of Calatrava for bravery in battle. Now Don Carlos wonders if this strange man might be the murderer of his father. He has given his word not to look at the papers, but opening the bag he sees a portrait of Leonor and knows that his suspicions are confirmed. A surgeon reports that Don Alvaro will live, news which Don Carlos greets with enthusiasm.

Act IV begins in the encampment near Veletri. Don Carlos confronts Don Alvaro with the fact that he knows the latter's identity. Don Alvaro says it was fate which brought about the Marquis' death and attempts to explain his own innocence. Learning from Don Carlos that Leonor is still alive, he attempts to offer his friendship to Vargas. But the latter, driven by a desire for vengeance, refuses, and the two depart to fight their duel.

The scene changes to the Veletri plaza. Soldiers read an order from the King of Naples decreeing that those who participate in duels will be punished by death. Don Alvaro is led in by a group of grenadiers, and the soldiers are surprised to learn that he has been arrested for dueling, having killed Don Carlos. They regret that the popular Don Alvaro will be the first to lose his life under the King's new edict. Later, held captive in a guardroom, Don Alvaro hears an officer tell him that Spanish soldiers, who respect his bravery, have arranged to stage a false disturbance that night so that Don Alvaro can escape in the
confusion. Don Alvaro is reluctant to do so at first; but when the disorder commences, he takes a sword and flees, swearing that he will renounce the world and spend the rest of his life as a monk.

The final act takes place four years later. Don Alvaro lives now in the convent near Hornachuelos, where his kindness has made him a favorite of those who go to the convent to beg food. Yet he remains an object of mystery to the brothers at the convent, particularly to Melitón, who wonders if Don Alvaro might indeed be the devil in human form because of his strange behavior. As the scene opens, Melitón is distributing food to the poor, chastening them because they ask for more and growing angry when he is told that Brother Rafael (Don Alvaro) is kind to them. The Father Superior criticizes the friar for his lack of patience, and the two discuss Father Rafael, agreeing that he is a singular man. Don Alfonso, disguised, enters in search of Father Rafael.

The scene changes to Don Alvaro's cell. Melitón brings to the cell Alfonso, who has come to cleanse the family honor through vengeance. When the visitor takes off his disguise, Don Alvaro knows instantly who he is. The indiano resists all of Don Alfonso's insults, until the latter taunts him with the fact of his mixed blood, calls him a coward, and strikes him in the face. Furious, Don Alvaro then accepts the challenge to a duel, and the two men rush from the room. Melitón, seeing the combatants race past, says
he smells sulfur in the air and hastens to warn the Father Superior.

The act's final scenes take place in a small valley near the convent. Nearby is the entrance to Leonor's grotto. It is dusk; lightning and thunder fill the skies. Before the two men begin their combat, Don Alfonso tells Don Alvaro what he has learned of the latter in Peru. Don Alvaro, it turns out, is the son of a Spanish viceroy, who attempted to overthrow Spanish rule and set up his own empire, and of an Incan princess. Both were jailed, and Don Alvaro was born in prison. Now the Spanish king has pardoned Don Alvaro's parents, a fact unknown to him. For an instant Don Alvaro sees destiny relenting. But Don Alfonso, sworn to kill both Don Alvaro and Leonor, again insults the indiano's mixed blood, and the two men fight, Don Alfonso falling mortally wounded. When the dying man begs for confession, Don Alvaro rushes to the hermitage door to ask the penitent (of course, he does not know that it is Leonor) to hear Don Alfonso's confession. Leonor refuses and opens the door to command the interloper to leave. At once she recognizes Don Alvaro, and the latter is stunned when he sees his beloved. Leonor then sees her dying brother and hastens to him. With one last effort, Don Alfonso stabs his sister and both die. Alerted by Leonor's ringing of the bell, a procession of friars enters, led by the Father Superior. Don Alvaro, driven to madness, climbs a nearby...
Giuseppe Verdi's *La forza del destino*, an opera in four acts, was staged for the first time in its original version Nov. 10, 1862, at St. Petersburg. The revised version was performed initially Feb. 27, 1869, at Milan. The cast of characters includes

Don Alvaro, tenor,
The Marquis of Calatrava, bass,
Don Carlo di Vargas, son of the marquis, baritone,
Leonora di Vargas, daughter of the marquis, soprano,
Father Superior, bass,
Brother Melitone, baritone,
Trabuco, a peddler, tenor,
Preziosilla, a gypsy, mezzo-soprano,
Curra, Leonora's maid, mezzo-soprano,
A surgeon, baritone,
Muleteers, peasants, soldiers, friars, vivandières, camp followers, beggars, peddlers.

The scene is laid in Spain and Italy, about the middle of the eighteenth century. The first act is set in the house of the Marquis of Calatrava in Seville. Leonora has planned to elope with her beloved, Don Alvaro, but at the last moment she is conscience-stricken, moved by the words of love voiced by her father. Don Alvaro arrives and

---

2The following synopsis is derived from an uncredited English translation of the *La forza del destino* libretto published by Crown Publishers, New York, 1939, in *The Authentic Librettos of the Italian Operas.*
convinces Leonora to flee with him that very night instead of waiting for morning. The Marquis, accompanied by two servants, enters unexpectedly. Don Alvaro yields to the Marquis and throws away his pistol as a token of surrender. The weapon, however, goes off as it strikes the floor, and the bullet fatally wounds the old man, who dies, cursing his daughter.

The first scene of Act II occurs in a tavern in the village of Hornachuelos, a year after the events of the first act. Don Carlo, disguised as the student Pereda, has come to the inn in search of the two fugitives. A happy crowd of peasants and muleteers is singing and dancing. Preziosilla entertains the throng with a gay song about the glories of war. A band of pilgrims passing by outside injects a note of solemnity. Don Carlo tells the story of his father's death and of his search for Don Alvaro and Leonora. The latter, disguised as a man, has stopped at the inn on her way to a convent outside Hornachuelos. Now she hears "Pereda's" story and decides to flee. Don Carlo has no success in learning the identity of the stranger (Leonora), whom Trabuco has brought to the inn.

The second scene takes place outside the convent. Leonora prays to the Virgin for protection, while off-stage a chorus of friars chants a Latin prayer. Leonora's knock at the convent door is answered by Melitone, who summons the Father Superior. Leonora begs to be allowed to
spend the rest of her days in a hermitage near the convent, to which the Father Superior assents. Her identity will remain unknown to all except him, and any who approaches her grotto risks excommunication.

A wood near Velletri, Italy, is the setting for the first scene of Act III. Spanish soldiers are fighting German invaders on the side of the King of Naples. Don Alvaro, believing Leonora dead, begs her to look with compassion upon him. He hears a commotion offstage and rushes away, returning soon with Don Carlo, whom he has just rescued from certain death at the hands of a group of dishonest card players. Each gives the other a false name, and the two swear eternal friendship. The scene changes quickly to a battlefield, where Don Alvaro is wounded and Don Carlo, rallying the Spanish troops, rescues his friend. The wounded man entrusts to Don Carlo a key and tells him to destroy a packet of letters in his traveling bag if he (Don Alvaro) should die. Don Carlo begins to suspect that this stranger may be the murderer of his father; but because he has given his word not to read the letters, he does not open them. Instead, looking through the bag, he comes upon a portrait of Leonora and realizes Don Alvaro's true identity. A surgeon reports that Don Alvaro will live.

In Scene 2, Don Carlo confronts the now-recovered Don Alvaro with knowledge of his true identity and challenges him to a duel. Just as the combat begins, the two men are
separated by soldiers before blood is drawn. Don Alvaro, distraught, vows to enter a monastery to expiate his past.

The act's final scene is a military camp. Soldiers relax as a chorus of camp followers sings of the joy war can bring a soldier. Preziosilla tells fortunes and Trabuco sells his wares. The general festivities are interrupted by Melitone, who warns of the fate awaiting those who wench and drink. He is chased away, and Preziosilla leads the chorus in the _Rapatlan_, a paean to soldiers who fight to defend their country.

Four years have passed as Act IV opens. The scene is the convent near Hornachuelos. Don Alvaro, in the guise of Padre Raffaello, now lives in the convent. As the scene opens, Melitone is distributing soup to the poor, who taunt him over his lack of patience and compare him unfavorably with Padre Raffaello in that respect. The Father Superior chides Melitone for his short temper, and the two discuss Padre Raffaello. Both agree that he is indeed a holy man, but a man of strange quirks. Don Carlo enters and demands to see Padre Raffaello. When Don Alvaro answers the summons, he immediately recognizes his enemy but says he has learned Christian forebearance and will not be roused to anger. However, Don Carlo taunts Don Alvaro with the fact of his mixed blood and, as a last resort, strikes him in the face. The two men exit hastily, vowing to kill one another.
The opera's last scene is set in a small valley near the convent. Leonora, appearing from her grotto, says she still loves Don Alvaro and begs that her unhappy life be ended soon. She rushes back into the cave as the sound of a clash of swords is heard offstage, and then the cry of a mortally wounded Don Carlo for confession. Don Alvaro enters and rushes to the grotto entrance, begging that the hermit (he does not know that it is Leonora) hear the dying man's confession. Finally, Leonora appears but only after sounding the alarm bell. The two are stunned by their recognition of one another. When Don Alvaro tells what has just happened, Leonora hastens to be with her brother. Don Alvaro hears a cry as Don Carlo carries out his final act of vengeance. The mortally wounded Leonora, supported by the Father Superior, returns and tells Don Alvaro that he, through her death, will have pardon. He kneels at her feet as she dies.

Soon after the unification of his homeland in 1861, Verdi, at the insistence of Camillo Benso di Cavour, statesman and leader in the drive for a united Italy, stood for and was elected to Parliament. While serving, he signed a contract with the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg to write an opera for the 1861-62 season. The composer's original idea was to do a Ruy Blas, based on the Hugo play. But by the time the reluctant Russian authorities had finally authorized such a project (the story paints the
aristocracy as vile and the people as noble), Verdi had lost
interest in it. He turned back to Spain for a play by now
twenty-six years old, the Duque de Rivas' Don Alvaro o la
fuerza del sino.

"The play is powerful, unusual and extremely vast,"
the composer wrote a friend. "I like it immensely."\(^3\) Like-
wise: "I don't know whether the public will see it as I do,
but one thing is certain; it [the play] is something out of
the ordinary."\(^4\)

To do the libretto, Verdi turned to Francesco Maria
Piave, who had collaborated with the composer on eight
other operas.\(^5\) The history of their collaboration had not
been an entirely tranquil one, for Verdi recognized Piave's
shortcomings as a librettist and was quick to criticize the
Venetian poet whenever his verses were not to the composer's
liking, which was frequently. But Piave was malleable and
slow to anger, and it is to his credit that he docilely made
the changes Verdi demanded without displays of dilettantism.

When Verdi reached St. Petersburg in December, 1861,
for the La forza del destino premiere, he learned that the

\(^3\) Osborne, op. cit., p. 332.
\(^4\) Gatti, op. cit., p. 177.
\(^5\) Ernani, based on the Hugo drama Hernani; I due Foscari,
based on Byron's blank verse play The Two Foscari; Macbeth,
based on Shakespeare's play; Il corsaro, based on Byron's
poem The Corsair; Stiffelio, based on the play Le Pasteur by
Souvestre and Bourgeois; Rigoletto; La traviata, and Simon
Boccanegra.
primadonna had been taken ill. Since there was no acceptable substitute, he persuaded the management to delay the presentation of the opera until the following autumn. The work, at that time called Don Alvaro, scored a rousing success at its Nov. 10, 1862, premiere in the Russian capital. However, when brought to Rome for its first performance there in the middle of February, 1863, La forza del destino was accorded only moderate success. The Madrid premiere took place on Feb. 22, 1863, with both the composer and playwright in the audience. Subsequent performances took place in New York, Vienna, Buenos Aires, and London. But the fact that no new performances of the work were given in Italy is indicative of Verdi's dissatisfaction with the work in its original form. Before allowing the work to be seen at La Scala in Milan, Verdi altered the libretto to a form that more pleased him.

The final act of the St. Petersburg version ends as the play ends, with Don Alvaro's suicide. The Verdi who composed I trovatore might have been satisfied with this ending; the Verdi of the sixties decade was not. In October, 1863, he wrote to Piave: "We've got to think about this ending and find some way to avoid all those dead bodies." The problem was discussed sporadically by composer and librettist, Verdi meanwhile busying himself with the

---

6 Osborne, op. cit., p. 341.
composition of Don Carlo. The completion of that task in 1867 freed the composer to think about the La forza del destino revision. In the meantime, however, Piave had suffered a paralytic stroke, so Verdi turned over the La forza del destino alteration to Antonio Ghislanzoni, a poet, playwright, novelist, and editor. Ghislanzoni suggested the final act redemption of Don Alvaro, and Verdi accepted it. Yet another important change took place when the last two scenes of the third act were transposed, causing the act to end with the Rataplan scene instead of that between Don Alvaro and Don Carlo. A third important change was the overture. The St. Petersburg La forza del destino began with a miniscule prelude; for La Scala Verdi wrote an eight-minute overture which has become the opera's most famous extract. Finally, some numbers from the original version were deleted and there was some general re-editing. The revised version had its Milan premiere Feb. 27, 1869, and was greeted with almost unanimous approval.

La forza del destino probably falls about midway on the popularity scale of Verdi operas, closer to the top than to the bottom. With the exceptions of Leonora's second act Madre, madre, pietosa vergine and fourth act Pace, pace, mio Dio, both prayers, there is no "big" aria in the pages of La forza del destino, undoubtedly one reason for its less than universal popularity. On the other hand, Verdi's choral writing is exemplary. Never before in his work was
such importance given to the chorus. That such is the case seems wholly logical to one who has read the Spanish play, for the duke's scenes involving the common people are numerous and abound with a yeasty zest of life, humor, and good spirit. His muleteers, tavern keepers, dandies, and peasants are drawn without a scintilla of the artificiality and exaggerated bathos that mark Don Alvaro, Leonor, and the Vargas brothers, undoubtedly because he was portraying people he knew. Dyneley Hussey writes about La forza del destino: "The choruses . . . have an individuality that rarely makes itself felt in the earlier Verdi operas. . . . Those earlier choruses are, from the dramatic point of view, no more than part of the scenic background before which the chief characters move. Musically they serve merely to provide a contrast to the solos and a means of making a resounding climax in the finale. In Forza the crowd has a life and character of its own."\(^7\) If such is the case, it is the Spanish playwright who must be given much of the credit.

Verdi chose not to begin his opera, as the duke did his play, with a crowd scene, undoubtedly realizing that to do so would dangerously elongate an already long libretto. So the first four scenes of the play are excised and only the character of Preciosilla is retained, to appear in the opera's second and third acts. After the brief opening

scenes of the play, she is never seen again. Verdi, of course, could not afford to be as lavish as the duke in the invention and discarding of speaking roles, for each individual character Verdi created would require an additional soloist. Thus we begin the opera's first act without any intimation that Don Alvaro is a mysterious personage who piques the curiosity of the Sevillans, that he is certainly a wealthy man, and that he may be an Incan prince or some such. This is pure indulgence in Romanticism on the part of the playwright, and its deletion from the opera is no great loss.

The opera's first act and the final four scenes of the play's corresponding act parallel one another closely, even to the similarities in stage dressing. The shabby condition of the marquis' home, the damask hangings, even a guitar and flower vase on the table, are taken intact from the play to the opera. Many bits of libretto dialogue seem merely to be Italian translations of the Spanish. One can see Verdi's influence at work here. In a letter to Piave complaining about some of the verses for the first act, Verdi ranted: "For God's sake, my dear Piave, let's think about this carefully. We can't go on like this: it's absolutely impossible with this drama. The style must be tightened up. The poetry can and must say all that the prose says, and in half the words..."8

---

8Osborne, op. cit., p. 332.
In both the play and the opera, Leonor/Leonora seeks to hide from the Marquis the fact that she is about to elope with Don Alvaro. In both, the woman's conscience pushes her to the verge of revealing the secret to her father. In neither, of course, does she do so. In both, the maid Curra is excited about the prospects of the elopement, for she views the enterprise as a merry lark. In the play, her own beloved awaits her and the two of them are to go with Leonor and Don Alvaro. Curra has no sweetheart in the opera, possibly as a result of the "tightening up" demanded by Verdi. The operatic Leonora grieves that the elopement will separate her from her family and homeland, a sentiment merely hinted at in the play. These words of Leonora's are taken from a libretto for a proposed opera on Shakespeare's King Lear, prepared years earlier by Antonio Somma. Through much of his life Verdi toyed with the idea of writing the opera, but for various reasons never did. Leonora's words are fragments of an aria by King Lear's Cordelia, who says: "... a pilgrim and orphan far from my native skies. ... I have only tears for you. Sweet England, farewell."9 Leonora's words are: "... a pilgrim and orphan far from my native land ... I leave you, alas, with tears. My sweet country, farewell."

Don Alvaro's entrance in both play and opera is similar, as is the clothing he wears. In both, he apologizes for his

---

9Ibid., p. 82.
delay without explaining what caused it. In both, Leonor/Leonora has a momentary change of heart about the elopement plans, even after Don Alvaro says he has horses ready and a priest awaiting the couple's arrival. In both, Don Alvaro is willing to abandon his plans to please his beloved. In the play he says, "May God not permit that in such a moment, through weakness, you follow my footsteps and become my wife. I renounce your word and your oath; the nuptial vows would be axes of death for the two of us. . . ." In the opera he says, "Heaven forbid that you should follow me, through weakness. I absolve you of your vows. The nuptial ties would be the stroke of death for us. . . ." In both the play and the opera, Don Alvaro's speech causes the heroine to recant.

In the play, strangers approaching the house on horseback alert Leonor and Don Alvaro to the fact that their plans are about to be found out. In the opera, it is merely the Marquis' arrival at the door which serves to warn the couple. In both the play and the opera, Don Alvaro brandishes a pistol but he says he will use it on himself, not on the Marquis. The words of the old man upon entering the room are the same in both play and opera: "Vile seducer! Infamous daughter!" In both, Don Alvaro tells the Marquis to strike him rather than Leonor/Leonora, for the guilt is Don Alvaro's. In both, the Marquis refuses, saying: (play) "Your supplicatory attitude manifests the baseness of your character."; (opera) "Your conduct proves your origin to be too low." In both,
Don Alvaro then takes out his pistol and tells the Marquis that only he has the right to deal the death blow. In both, the Marquis replies that Don Alvaro will die at the executioner's hand. This prompts the following reply from Don Alvaro:

(Play) Your daughter is innocent . . . as pure as the breath of angels surrounding the throne of the Most High. Let the suspicion that my presence here at such an hour gives birth to end with my death. . . . Yes, I must die . . . but at your hands. (He kneels before the Marquis) Resigned, I await the blow . . . now you have me disarmed . . .

(Opera) Your daughter is as pure as the angels . . . I alone am guilty. Let the doubt which my rashness has raised be dispelled with my life. Behold, I am unarmed.

In both the play and the opera, the pistol fires as Don Alvaro throws it to the floor, fatally wounding the Marquis. The latter's final words in both the play and the opera are similar: (play) "... Take me out of here . . . where I may die without this vile one [Leonor] contaminating me with such a name [Father] . . . I curse you!"; (opera) "Begone! The sight of you [Leonora] contaminates my death. . . . I curse you!"

We have only a fleeting hint in both the play and the opera as to the identity of Don Alvaro as the first act comes to an end. The gossiping Sevillans of the play shed no certain light on his identity, and only Don Alvaro's cryptic words to Leonor/Leonora in the first act provide any sort of clue. The play and opera passages are similar: (play) "And when the new sun in the east, protector of my sovereign race, eternal deity of the Indies, shows the regal pomp of its throne, monarch of
light, father of the day, I will be your husband, and you my wife."; (opera) "And when the sun, the god of India, master of my regal race, floods the earth with its splendor, it will find us united, my beloved."

The opera's second act offers the first of La forza del destino's several great choruses. Indeed, the scene in the Hornachuelos inn belongs almost entirely to the chorus, just as in the play it is a scene of minor, colorful characters. Piave's libretto makes several striking changes in the duke's dramatis personae without altering the flow of the plot. Preziosilla makes her first appearance, retaining her avocation as fortune teller. But the librettist adds a new dimension to her characterization: that of camp follower and propagandist for war. "Hurry to Italy as soldiers," she tells the crowd of peasants and muleteers gathered in the inn, "for war has broken out against the Germans." Preziosilla's delightful song with chorus, Al suon del tamburo, is a blatant paean for war. "War is beautiful," she says, "long live war." Instead of the play's two Vargas brothers, the opera offers only one, Don Carlo. While this change may focus the attention more sharply on the theme of a Vargas compelled by family honor to kill his sister, it likewise weakens somewhat the depth of the tragedy the playwright was attempting to present, Don Alvaro's subsequent slaying of the two brothers. However, one can sympathize with Verdi's efforts to obviate the need for yet another "dead body," and also understand that two brothers
would have created the problem of two solo baritone roles.
In the opera, it is Don Carlo who comes to the inn, disguised as the student Pereda, not Don Carlos' friend Pereda as in the play. But in Don Carlo's narrative Son Pereda, Piave borrows liberally from a similar passage in the play in which the real Pereda reports on the Vargas brothers' unsuccessful search for their sister and her lover. Although the opera's Don Carlo never reveals his true identity in this scene, Leonora recognizes him; and Preziosilla guesses correctly that "Pereda" isn't really who he claims to be. In the play, Leonor never makes an appearance during the inn scene; but Leonora does, though in male disguise and never spotted by any of the guests. She even adds her voice to the magnificent chorus of pilgrims, begging God to protect her from her brother's vengeance while the choruses of pilgrims and inn guests offer their praise to God.

Piave retains the characters with which the duke populated his second act's first scenes--the innkeeper and his wife, the alcalde (village mayor), the muleteer Trabuco, various other muleteers-- but he assigns solo roles only to the alcalde and Trabuco. He retains almost intact the brief scene in which the student (Pereda/Don Carlo) pumps Trabuco for information concerning the mysterious traveler (Leonor/Leonora) whom Trabuco has brought to the inn. For example:

(Play)
Student: Is the traveler rooster or hen?
Trabuco: As far as travelers are concerned, I think of nothing but the money, because it's neither female nor male . . .
Student: Tell me, this person, how did he ride the mule, sidesaddle or astride?
Trabuco: . . . On his head!
Student: And tell me, from whence did you leave this morning?
Trabuco: All I know is that sooner or later I'm going to heaven.
Student: Why?
Trabuco: Because you've got me in purgatory here.

(Opera)
Don Carlo: By the way, is the person rooster or hen?
Trabuco: With strangers all I think about is the money . . .
Don Carlo: Was he sidesaddle or astride . . .?
Trabuco: What a pest!
Don Carlo: Whence came he?
Trabuco: I know, sooner or later, I'll go to Paradise.
Don Carlo: Why?
Trabuco: Because you make me suffer purgatory here.

The procession of pilgrims is unique to the opera, inspired by a brief remark by the alcalde to the effect that a festival, attracting many strangers, was underway at the nearby convent.

The scene at the convent is strikingly similar in both the play and the opera, not only in stage decoration but in development of the plot as well. Again we have an example, as in El trovador, of a dramatist unconsciously imbuing his work with operatic qualities, in this instance the use of an organ and a chorus of friars offstage. How simple it was for Verdi to transpose this to his opera, blending the theme of Leonora's lovely prayer, Madre, madre, pietosa vergine, with the Latin chant of the male chorus. In both the play and the opera, the heroine's plans are the same: to take refuge in a hermit's cave near the convent in order to atone for her sins. Both Leonor and Leonora think that Don Alvaro has returned to the Americas, having heard this reported by the student at the
Hornachuelos inn. Knowing this, both are even more adamant in their plans to seek lifelong solitude and contrition.

The play's brief scene between Leonor and Brother Melitón is retained almost word for word in the opera. When the Father Superior arrives, Melitón/Melitone is invited to leave. He grouses that he is not permitted to be a party to any of the convent secrets. When the Father Superior asks him to repeat his remark, Melitón/Melitone says he was merely complaining about how heavy the door was.

The figure of Melitone represents the first opera buffa (comic opera) character that Verdi had attempted since his second opera, _Un giorno di regno_, twenty-one years before. That opera had been a dismal failure and had almost convinced the composer that he should never write another opera. Thus, Melitone represents a bridge between the early comic opera and that character which many consider to be Verdi's supreme creation, Falstaff, in the 1893 opera of that name. Melitone gave the composer a well of experience upon which to draw in creating his masterful Shakespearian buffo. And Melitone, as Verdi created him, is almost exactly the same Melitón that the duque de Rivas engendered: a grumbling, heart-of-gold buffoon, more human and less godly than he should be, an omnipresent bur under the Father Superior's cassock, and a welcome pinch of comic relief in a dark, turgid play. As Verdi mulled the revision of his St. Petersburg _La forza del destino_, his publisher, Tito Ricordi, suggested that the composer delete Melitone. Very wisely, Verdi turned down the suggestion.
Leonor/Leonora's scene with the Father Superior is similar in development, but again with a great deal of abridgement on the part of Piave. In both, the woman appeals to the convent superior to be allowed to spend the rest of her life in the hermitage. In both, the heroine has heard about another woman who lived out her life in the same grotto, and it is this example of atonement that she wishes to emulate. In both, Leonor/Leonora rejects the notion of taking holy orders, telling the Father Superior: (play) "If you do not take me in, I will ask pity of the wild beasts that inhabit these crags, food of these mountains, a dwelling place of these precipices."; (opera) "If you reject the penitent, I will ask aid of these rocks, shelter of these mountains, food of the woods."

In both play and opera, the Father Superior grants Leonor/Leonora the asylum she desires, promising that only he will know her true identity. The play's second act ends with the convent superior leading Leonor to the church after rousing Meliton from his sleep in order to open the door. But Verdi brings this act of great choruses to a finish the same way he opened it: with a chorus. After Leonora and the Father Superior have entered the church, a procession of friars bearing lighted tapers exits from it. The organ blends with the orchestra in the processional music. The Father Superior warns the friars not to attempt to approach the cave where the penitent will be. The voice of Leonora fuses with that of the male chorus, begging the protection of the Virgin, as the act ends.
In these final bars of the second act there is an example of how Piave borrowed an idea from the drama in order to flesh out his libretto. In the play, the Father Superior tells Leonor that three criminals once dared to approach the grotto while Leonor's predecessor was living there. Suddenly a tremendous thunderstorm exploded and a flash of lightning struck two of the men, killing them. The third man, repentant, died later in the convent. In the opera, the Father Superior warns the friars that no man should dare approach the grotto where Leonora will be. The chorus, in assent, replies, "May a thunderbolt reduce to ashes the impious mortal who dares attempt it; may all the elements be loosed upon him, and his impure ashes be scattered by the wind."

Piave does away almost entirely with the lengthy card playing scene with which the duke opens his third act. The librettist's gamblers, offstage, speak only four lines, and we have no indication that Don Carlo is one of them. These four lines out of the way, the librettist moves immediately into Don Alvaro's soliloquy. Piave has substantially altered the thrust of the play's soliloquy, so a reasonably detailed comparison of the two is in order. We will examine the duke's version first.

The soliloquy is divided roughly into five parts, composed of one hundred and four lines, to wit:

Part One, Don Alvaro's indictment of life (forty lines)

"What an insufferable burden life is for the wretched mortal
born under a terrible sign," he complains. And: "[A man] lives peacefully, joyfully amid applause and honors, and drains the delicious chalice of innocent love; at the very time he is most strong and courageous, death tramples his happiness, crushes his good fortune; yet I, unhappy, seeking death, cannot find it." The words are an intensely romantic outpouring of an unreconciled fatalist. Part Two, new facts about Don Alvaro's identity (twenty lines)---We learn that Don Alvaro was born in a prison and grew up in the wilderness. Attempting to hide his name, he has come to Spain to help his parents, obviously members of some nobility, who apparently remain in prison.

Part Three, the unfairness of destiny (ten lines)---"Destiny gave me one happy day, no more," Don Alvaro says, referring to his liaison with Leonor. But destiny's motives were cruel and calculating, "just as a jailer places a light in the gloomy prison cell, with the evil intention of allowing the prisoner to see for one brief moment the horror that surrounds him in his frightful dwelling place."

Part Four, a plea to the supposedly dead Leonor (twenty lines)---Don Alvaro begs for Leonor's pity and aid, and says he has come to Italy to fight only so that he can be killed in battle.

Part Five, conclusion (fourteen lines)---Don Alvaro reiterates his desire to die in battle. "They call me the glory of Spain," he says, "and they do not know that my ardor
is only a lack of valor, since I seek death anxiously for want of courage to resist the fury of the stars."

Now let us see what Piave has done with this soliloquy, keeping in mind that Verdi was supervising his librettist at every step. We will analyze the operatic treatment in the framework of the subdivisions discussed above for purposes of comparison.

Part One, Don Alvaro's indictment of life--One line suffices here: "Life is a hell for unhappy mortals. I desire to die."

Part Two, new facts about Don Alvaro's identity--We learn more information here than in the play, and in fewer lines (nine). Don Alvaro's father sought to free his land from foreign rule but failed. Don Alvaro was born in prison and reared in the desert. Don Alvaro lives now only because his "royal birth" is still secret.

Part Three, the unfairness of destiny--Not a word of this section is taken into the opera.

Part Four, a plea to the supposedly dead Leonor--This is the tenor aria Oh, tu che in seno. Don Alvaro, convinced that Leonora is dead, begs her compassion and asks for strength to bear up under his woes, even as he seeks death in battle.

Part Five, conclusion--None of this section appears in the opera.

10 This is because this brief narration will be our final clue as to Don Alvaro's background.
Thus, we see that Piave has tempered the Romanticism of his protagonist, softened greatly the harshness of "the force of destiny" which supposedly persecutes Don Alvaro, and given new emphasis to Don Alvaro's feelings for Leonora, the latter because it was more suitable subject matter for a tenor aria than any other portion of the soliloquy.

The scene between Don Alvaro and Don Carlos is strikingly similar in both play and opera: Alvaro saves Carlos' life in an offstage sword battle with the cardsharps, each gives the other a false name, and both part as friends. In both the play and the opera, Don Alvaro says Don Carlos owes his life "to chance." The Veletri battle scenes in both are similar, i.e., taking place offstage while concerned witnesses describe the action to the audience (in the play, three Spanish officers do this; in the opera, the surgeon, who will have speaking lines later in the act). Further similarities: Don Alvaro is wounded by a bullet in the chest; Don Carlos rallies the Spanish troops from certain defeat, leads them to victory over the Germans, and rescues Don Alvaro; Don Alvaro is angry that his life has been spared and asks to be allowed to die; Don Carlos says the king will decorate Don Alvaro with the Order of Calatrava, a statement that provokes a manifestation of horror on the part of Don Alvaro; Don Alvaro tells Don Carlos about the key and the packet of letters Don Carlos is to burn, without looking at them, in the event of Don Alvaro's death. The operatic scene ends with a fine tenor-baritone duet,
Don Alvaro saying that now he can die happily knowing that
Don Carlo will do as he asks, Don Carlo telling his friend
to put his trust in God.

Don Carlos' long soliloquy of the play is retained almost
intact by Piave, but of course with abridgement. It will be
useful here to compare the two scenes on an almost line-by-
line basis in order to ascertain how Piave worked with the
material at hand, condensing it to a form which the composer
could handle easily. In most instances the words of Don
Carlos will be paraphrased. In only one case, where quotation
marks are used, will the words be a direct translation:

Don Alvaro is a brave man; it is a shame that he must
die.--Play, two lines; opera, two and a half lines.

It is unfortunate that I cannot save him, since he saved
my life.--Play, six lines; opera, deleted.

I have never seen a man as adroit in the use of weapons
as Don Alvaro.--Play, four lines; opera, deleted.

Yet he is a strange man with singular traits.--Play, four
lines; opera, half a line.

He trembled at the name Calatrava. Does he know that the
name is disgraced?--Play, six lines; opera, two lines.

Can this be the man who dishonored my family name?--Play,
six lines; opera, two lines.

In my hands, and still he lives!--Play, half a line;
opera, one line.
Would it be right for me to kill him now? What if I am mistaken?—Play, eight and a half lines; opera, half a line.

The key will allow me to learn the truth.—Play, two lines; opera, half a line.

(Don Carlos opens the bag, in the play withdrawing a box, in the opera a sealed packet.)

(Play): "Come out, mysterious box, fatal urn of destiny.11 . . . The fear caused by the suspicion that I am about to find in you fragments of my honor prevents me from opening you." (Suddenly resolved) "But no, for in you [I am] about to find a pathway that will carry me to vengeance." (He opens the box and takes out a sealed packet.)

What am I doing? I gave my word to Don Alvaro not to open this packet. And did he not save my life? But then, I saved his life too. And if he is the murderer of my father, would not my action in opening the packet be justified? No, I am a man of honor who has given his word. I cannot stain my honor with a new disgrace.—Play, thirty lines; opera, seventeen lines.

Perhaps there is another clue to Don Alvaro's identity in the box.—Play, four lines; opera, two lines.

(Don Carlos finds a small object which obviously is a portrait.)

11 In the opera, Don Carlo says as he throws away the packet of letters: "Fatal urn of my destiny, away, in vain you tempt me . . . ." Piave's retention of the word "urn" to describe a packet of letters seems unfortunate.
Don Alvaro made no mention of this, so by examining it more closely I will not be breaking my word to him. --Play, ten lines; opera, two lines.

(The portrait is of Leonor/Leonora.)

My suspicions are correct. I shall have my vengeance.--Play, twenty lines; opera, three lines.

Both the Duque de Rivas and Piave set the stage for the Don Alvaro-Don Carlos duel with a protracted scene between the two men. Piave's poetry could be transposed into the play without disturbing in the least the flow of the duke's plot. In both play and opera, Don Carlos goes to great lengths to make sure that Don Alvaro is well enough to handle a sword. In both, Don Alvaro assures Don Carlos of the nobility of his own birth, but again does not choose to explain this tantalizing mystery. In both, Don Carlos tells his enemy that Leonor is alive, something Don Alvaro had not known. In both, Don Alvaro is willing to strike a friendship with Don Carlos, but the latter truculently refuses, impelled to do so by an egregious pride which demands vengeance.

"A sea of blood roars between us," says Don Carlos in the play. "Can I call brother the one who killed my father and my honor? . . . If you do not kill me, I will seek out [Leonor], and with the same sword, tinted with your blood, into her heart . . ."

"A river of blood has risen between us," says Don Carlo. "How can I call brother the one who destroyed my hopes?"
... If I do not fall, Leonora shall perish! I will plunge into her heart this sword, dyed with your blood!"

It is only in the duel scene that the play and the opera diverge. Don Carlos dies at Don Alvaro's hands; Don Carlo is saved by the propitious arrival of camp sentries (and by a composer who did not want to write a role for another baritone). Each scene ends, however, with Don Alvaro vowing to renounce the world by becoming a monk or hermit.

The final scene of the opera's third act has no counterpart in the play, and only the appearance of three characters --Preziosilla, Melitone, and Trabuco--reminds one that the duke's play served as the source for Verdi's opera. Preziosilla retains her occupation as fortune teller, as in the play's first act, and her avocation as war propagandist, as created by Piave. The final chorus, Rataplan, is Preziosilla's stirring panegyric to soldiers and the battles they fight; likewise it is undoubtedly one of the finest choruses Verdi ever wrote. Trabuco, the mule driver of the play, becomes a peddler in the opera, purchasing trinkets from soldiers and street people on one side of the stage and selling them at inflated prices to persons on the other side. Melitone appears, brusquely interrupting a scene of general merrymaking to warn, in his famous opera buffa sermon, of the dangers of such riotous living and mockery of the Sabbath. The general shape and movement of this scene and even part of the stage directions are taken directly from
a Schiller play, *Wallenstein's Lager*, which Verdi is known to have admired. Indeed, the composer pointed out the Schiller play to Cammarano in 1849 as a possible libretto source.

The opening scene of the opera's fourth act keeps intact the substance of Meliton's bickering with the poor people, with suitable abridgement. It is a witty scene, to which Verdi has fitted appropriate music. The libretto closely follows the play. For example:

(Play)
Woman: I am going to take four servings, because I have six little ones.
Meliton: And why do you have six little ones?...
Woman: Because God has given them to me...
Meliton: Yes... God... God... You wouldn't have them if you were to pass the nights, like I, reciting rosaries or scourging yourself.

(Opera)
Woman: Four [servings] for me... for I have six children.
Melitone: Why do you have six?
Woman: Because God sent them to me.
Melitone: Yes, yes, God--you wouldn't have them if, like me, you scourged your back with a sharp scourge, and spent the night reciting rosaries and misereres.

The operatic Melitone enjoys a pinch of snuff after he has chased out the beggars, a habit to which his counterpart in the play is not addicted. However, both react with less than Christian charity when the beggars say they prefer the kind Padre Rafael/Raffaello.

The substance of the conversation between the Father Superior and his doorkeeper in both the play and the opera

is similar. The monk reports that he has jokingly referred to Padre Rafael's looks as being those of a "wild Indian," a remark which caused indignation on the part of the mysterious padre. Piave also retains the legend of the devil assuming friar's dress to live in the convent, a tale recounted by Melitón.

The scene between Don Alvaro and Don Alfonso/Don Carlo is similar in play and opera, although the setting is different. Alfonso/Carlo finally awakens Don Alvaro's will to fight by casting aspersions on his birth and mixed blood, and ultimately by striking him in the face. A long soliloquy by Melitón, who has just seen the two furious men rush past, is deleted in the opera.

Piave and Verdi have created an appearance by Leonora at the beginning of the final scene where none existed in the play. Leonora appears from within her cave to sing the lovely Pace, pace, mio Dio, in which she says she still loves Don Alvaro and begs that God allow her to die so that her soul may at last find peace, a plea not unlike that of the Il trovatore heroine. The reason for this extra appearance by Leonor is obvious: she has not appeared since the second act, and the opera could not be allowed to conclude without a final aria for the soprano. Since the duke's play was not written with operatic treatment in mind, an excuse, as it were, for the final soprano aria had to be found. However, its placement in the opera is logical, and it spares us from
having to listen to a supposedly dying soprano grapple with high notes that only a singer in the bloom of health could achieve.

The violence of the play's final scenes (the duel and the stabbing of the heroine) occurs offstage in the opera. Hence we learn nothing further in the opera about Don Alvaro's identity, facts which Don Alfonso reports to the indiano before the two fight. Although the libretto diminishes the importance of Don Alvaro's background in the overall scheme of the argument, it must be said that Piave does away with a superbly ironic twist of fate when he deletes the Alfonso narration. In the opera, Don Alvaro's father was a native of the land over which he ruled and, seeking to free his country from foreign rule (presumably Spanish), provoked an uprising and was imprisoned. Don Alvaro, it is to be assumed, is in Spain to seek pardon for his parents. In the play, however, Don Alvaro's father was a Spanish viceroy who attempted to set up his own dominion. Failing, he was imprisoned. Now Don Alfonso reports, the King of Spain has pardoned Don Alvaro's parents, the very purpose for which Don Alvaro came to Spain. But Don Alvaro is soon to die, i.e. la fuerza del sino pursues its hapless victim even to his grave. Piave has done away with all this, obfuscating the motives which drove Don Alvaro throughout the drama. Furthermore, the operatic Don Alvaro, though he does not die at the end of the drama, presumably will allow his parents to continue to exist in
some New World prison. The dangling loose ends of plotting are a major shortcoming of this Verdi opera.

The changes Verdi wrought in the finale of his opera, and the reasons for them, have been discussed. A final change not touched upon is that involving the Father Superior. In the St. Petersburg version, a group of friars appeared, along with the Father Superior, to witness Don Alvaro's frantic suicide, just as in the play. In the Milan version, however, only the Father Superior appears to answer the summons of Leonora's bell. He then tells Don Alvaro that Leonora's death as a martyr will teach him piety and faith. The final words in both the play and the opera belong to the Father Superior: "Compassion, God! Compassion!" in the play, witnessing the suicide of Don Alvaro; "Ascended to Heaven!" in the opera, referring to Leonora.
CHAPTER IV

SIMON BOCANEGRA AND SIMON BOCCANEGRA

Antonio García Gutiérrez' Simón Bocanegra, a play in four acts and a prologue, was premiered Jan. 17, 1843, in Madrid.¹ The cast of characters includes

Simón Bocanegra, a corsair in the service of the republic of Genoa; later doge of Genoa,

Jacobo Fiesco (also known as Andrea), a Genoese nobleman,

Lorenzino Buchetto, a Genoese merchant,

Paolo Albani, a goldsmith; later a favorite in the service of Simón Bocanegra,

Piettro, a seaman; later a courtier in the service of Simón Bocanegra,

Gabriel Adorno, a Genoese nobleman and conspirator against Simón Bocanegra,

Maria Bocanegra (also known as Susana Grimaldi), daughter of Simón Bocanegra,

Julieta, servant of Maria,

Lázaro, servant of Fiesco,

Rafael, Fiano, Zampieri, seamen,

Artisans, senators, seamen, soldiers, conspirators.

¹The following synopsis is derived from an 1858 edition of Simón Bocanegra published by Imprenta de don Cipriano López, Madrid. Quotations have been translated into English for the convenience of the reader.
The play opens with a prologue, set in a large plaza in Genoa in 1338. Patricians and plebeians of the city soon will elect a doge, and Paolo, coveting wealth and power for himself, seeks to bring about the elevation of the popular corsair, Simón Bocanegra, to that position. Paolo and Piettro attempt to persuade a crowd of seamen and artisans that Simón, a plebeian himself, should become doge instead of the patrician Lorenzino Buchetto. The influence of the powerful Jacobo Fiesco in support of Buchetto can be nullified, Paolo argues, because Fiesco, knowing what is good for his own interests, will keep quiet. The crowd disperses, and Fiesco and Buchetto enter. Fiesco's daughter, Mariana, the mother of Simón's illegitimate daughter, has just died, and Fiesco seeks vengeance against Simón. He enlists Buchetto's assistance. Simón appears, not knowing of Mariana's death, and tells Fiesco of his great love for Mariana. The nobleman, saying he can neither forgive nor forget what Simón has done, says he will pardon Simón on one condition: that Simón give to him the daughter born of the illicit union. That is impossible, Simón confesses, for the child has mysteriously disappeared from the hut of an old woman with whom she had been left for safekeeping. Simón, suspicious of the silence within Fiesco's palace, enters and finds Mariana upon her bier. Overcome with grief, he leaves the palace just as Paolo, Piettro, and others rush up to tell Simón he has been elected doge.
The remaining four acts of the play are set in the year 1362. A conspiracy, its purpose to oust Simón from leadership, has been formed, for the doge has, in the opinion of some, proved himself to be a harsh tyrant during his twenty-four years of rule. Act I takes place in the palace of the Grimaldis near Genoa. Gabriel Adorno is in love with Susana, the countess of Grimaldi, and she with him. Susana, who in fact is Simón's daughter María, is the ward of a man named Andrea, who in fact is Jacobo Fiesco, forced to assume another identity for fear of reprisal at the hand of Simón. Fiesco is unaware of the true identity of Susana. Gabriel is an implacable foe of the Doge, for the latter has been responsible for the death of Gabriel's father. Susana suspects correctly that Gabriel and "Andrea" are conspiring against Simón. Piettro enters to announce the impending arrival of Simón. Susana is well aware of the motive for this visit: the Doge comes to plead the case of his favorite, Paolo, who loves Susana. He will be wasting his time, Susana assures Gabriel. She bids her beloved to hasten to Fiesco to ask his permission to marry her. Gabriel tells Fiesco of the love he has for Susana, prompting the nobleman to relate the true story of Susana. She is not the Grimaldi countess she pretends to be, Fiesco says, but rather a foundling who appeared at a convent in Pisa the same day that the true countess, living in exile at the convent, died. When Simón sought to confiscate the exiled Grimaldis' wealth, Susana
posed as the heiress in order to deny Simón the family treasury. Fiesco agrees to the marriage of Susana and Gabriel. Simón appears, bearing a pardon for the Grimaldi brothers. Susana makes it clear that this magnanimous act will not persuade her to love Paolo. But because he has pardoned the Grimaldis, Susana tells Simón enough of her story to make him realize that she is his long-lost daughter. He is about to tell Susana his suspicions when Paolo arrives. The favorite, informed of Susana's scorn for him, enlists Piettro in a plan to abduct Susana. Gabriel and Fiesco map final strategy for an attempted overthrow of the Doge on the following day, and Gabriel, taking Susana with him, leaves to seek more help. Moments later the young nobleman, his face covered with blood, stumbles back into the palace to report that a masked man has abducted Susana. Both Simón and Paolo deny complicity, but the Doge, aware of the desires of his favorite, warns Paolo he will pay with his life if he lies.

The second act takes place in Lorenzino Buchetto's palace in Genoa. A few hours have passed. Buchetto, a party to the conspiracy against Simón, receives a message from Fiesco reporting that the insurrection is to be carried out earlier than anticipated. Buchetto allows Piettro, Susana's abductor, to bring her to his palace after Piettro hints that he knows an uprising is being hatched. However, Simón arrives, directed to Buchetto's home by Paolo, who
fears for his own skin, and finds Susana there. He eschews punishment for both Paolo and Buchetto. Speaking with the young woman, Simón tells the story of his affair with Mariana Fiesco and of their child. Susana recalls that, living in the Pisa convent, she was called Maria. This is enough to convince each of his recognition of the other. Susana agrees to come to the ducal palace to live, promising that her true identity will be kept secret. Simón, before leaving, makes it clear to Buchetto that he (the Doge) knows of the plans for the insurrection. When Gabriel and Fiesco arrive, Buchetto attempts to dissuade them from their scheme, saying their numbers are few and Simón knows everything. Susana tells Gabriel and Fiesco that she is going to the Doge's palace. Gabriel is crushed, and Fiesco says the only hope remaining for the young man is vengeance against Bocanegra.

Act III is set in the Doge's palace. Paolo again presses Simón to grant him Susana's hand, but the Doge says that will be impossible. Paolo suspects that the Doge himself loves Susana. Simón readily admits this, but says it is a love which Paolo cannot imagine. Thwarted, Paolo swears he will have vengeance on Simón. Fiesco and Gabriel, disguised, are brought in through a secret passageway. Paolo, saying that he is aware not only of the insurrection plans but also of "Andrea's" identity, offers to be of service to the conspirators. Fiesco suspects a trick and rejects the offer. Paolo attempts a new tack with Gabriel, offering to help him
avenge imagined wrongs perpetrated by Simón and involving Susana. At Susana's approach, Paolo hides. Susana, confronted by Gabriel, admits she loves Simón, but she is unable to explain further, even when Gabriel threatens to leave. Susana hides Gabriel on the balcony just before Simón enters. She tells the latter of her love for Gabriel, startling news for Simón, because Gabriel is known to be one of the plotters and the death penalty awaits him. Susana pleads for Gabriel's life, saying she will share whatever fate awaits him. Simón relents perceptibly, promising to forgive Gabriel if he abjures his conspiracy. Simón, weighted down by the problems facing him, falls asleep at a table. Gabriel steals from his hiding place and is about to stab Simón when Susana appears and stays his hand. Simón is stunned by the revelation that Gabriel has attempted to kill him. He sees the act as punishment for his own involvement in the murder of Gabriel's father. Involuntarily, he admits his kinship to Susana. Gabriel is shocked by this news. He admits to Simón that he was using the death of his own father as a pretext to avenge his jealousy of Susana. A tumult is heard outside the palace as the insurrection begins. Gabriel swears he will protect Simón and receives in return a promise from the Doge that Susana will be his.

Act IV takes place in the same palace room; only a few moments have elapsed. Paolo arouses Fiesco to anger by dwelling on the shame caused by Simón's affair with Mariana
Fiesco. The nobleman, still unaware of Susana's true identity, promises Paolo that she will be his if Simón dies. Gabriel has quieted the mob, and now Paolo hears Simón's name being proclaimed. Simón and his retinue enter, and the Doge proclaims rewards for his partisans and punishment for those involved in the uprising. He tells Gabriel that Susana, now called by her true name of Maria, awaits him in the chapel. All leave except Piettro, who is detained by Paolo, the latter having been in hiding. Simón must die, Paolo says. Piettro is to place poison in a precious emerald cup, from which only Simón drinks, when the Doge is toasting the happiness of Gabriel and María. Paolo watches the ceremony take place, then calls Fiesco and his followers from their hiding place in the secret passageway. But few have come, and Paolo and Fiesco agree that it would be best to abandon their plans now. No matter, Paolo says, for Simón has just been poisoned. Fiesco, angry because he had desired Simón to be overthrown before being killed, says he will not take a part in this murder. He orders Paolo to flee and then tells his servant, Lázaro, to follow Paolo and kill him. The Doge enters, feeling the effects of the poison and aware of what has happened. He orders the balcony windows to be thrown open so that he can look upon the crowd below. He yearns to return to the sea again but knows that this is impossible, for soon he will die. One by one, the lights in the plaza below begin to go out. When Fiesco approaches to
gloat over his death, Simón recognizes the nobleman's voice. However, when the dying man reveals that María is in fact Fiesco's granddaughter, the saddened nobleman kneels at Simón's feet and begs forgiveness. With his last breath, Simón blesses María and Gabriel, and proclaims Gabriel doge of Genoa.

Verdi's Simon Boccanegra was premiered March 12, 1857, at the Teatro Fenice in Venice. The libretto was by Francesco Maria Piave, with minor revision by Giuseppe Montanelli. The revised Simon Boccanegra was first performed March 24, 1881, at La Scala in Milan. Its libretto was by Arrigo Boito.²

The cast includes

Simon Boccanegra, corsair in the service of the republic of Genoa, later doge of Genoa, baritone,

Jacopo Fiesco (also known as Andrea), a Genoese nobleman, bass,

Paolo Albiani, a goldsmith, later a favorite courtier of Boccanegra, bass,

Pietro, a commoner; later a courtier, baritone,

Gabriele Adorno, a Genoese nobleman, tenor,

²The following synopsis is derived from an English translation of the Simon Boccanegra libretto published by Fred. Rullman, Inc., New York. The English translation is by Frances Winwar, copyright 1931.
Maria Boccanegra (also known as Amelia Grimaldi), daughter of Simon Boccanegra, soprano, Seamen, commoners, soldiers, senators.

The opera opens with a prologue, set in a square in Genoa. Paolo and Pietro plot to raise Simon Boccanegra to the doge's throne. Simon, a corsair, has done much to extend Genoa's dominion over the seas. He loves Maria, the daughter of the nobleman Fiesco, and from his love was born a daughter, also named Maria. Simon arrives to see his beloved, but learns from Paolo that she is being held virtual prisoner by her father in his palace. Simon, realizing that once elected doge not even Fiesco will be able to keep Maria from him, consents to Paolo's plan and promises the goldsmith a share in his rule. Fiesco confronts Simon and haughtily refuses the blessing Simon asks of him. Fiesco's hatred will be placated only if Simon gives up the daughter born of the illicit union. Simon is unable to comply, saying the child wandered away when her old nurse died and has not been seen since. The two men part enemies. Simon enters Fiesco's palace and learns the cause of Fiesco's belligerency: Maria is dead. Horrified, he staggers from the palace into the arms of an exultant mob proclaiming him doge of Genoa.

Act I takes place in a garden at the Grimaldi palace on the outskirts of Genoa. Twenty-five years have elapsed since the action of the prologue. Maria Boccanegra has been living under the assumed name of Amelia Grimaldi and is a
ward of Fiesco, who has changed his name to Andrea to avoid reprisals by the Doge. Fiesco, however, does not know Amelia's true identity. Amelia is aware that Gabriele is plotting the overthrow of Simon. In love with the young Adorno, she attempts to dissuade him. Pietro enters unexpectedly to announce the impending arrival of Simon. Amelia knows that he comes to force her into marriage with his favorite, Paolo, and she tells Gabriele to go to "Andrea" to ask for her hand. Gabriele tells Fiesco of his feelings for the girl, but the older man says Amelia has a secret which might obstruct Gabriele's desires. Instead of being a Grimaldi heiress, she in fact is a foundling, raised in a convent as Amelia Grimaldi after the latter's death in the same convent. When Simon attempted to expropriate the exiled Grimaldis' wealth, Amelia carried out her ruse and squelched the Doge's plans. Gabriele reaffirms his love, and Fiesco gives his blessing. Simon enters, carrying with him a pardon for the Grimaldi brothers, which he hands to Amelia. She tells the Doge she does not and cannot love Paolo, and admits that she is not a Grimaldi, but an orphan. She recalls her childhood with an old woman in a cottage near Pisa. Before the woman died, she gave Amelia a locket containing a portrait of her real mother. Furthermore, Amelia recalls a seafaring man who came to visit her on occasion. Simon, suspecting the truth, produces his own portrait of Maria Fiesco. The portraits are identical. The Doge tells Paolo to abandon
all hope of having Amelia for his own but does not explain
to him the reason. Angered, Paolo plots with Pietro to
abduct Amelia.

The second scene of the first act occurs in the council
chamber in Genoa. Boccanegra has received a letter from
Petrarch urging that Venice and Genoa strive to live together
in peace. But the councillors reject the appeal, calling
instead for immediate war against the Venetians. Simon
disagrees, saying both city-states are part of the same
fatherland. A tumult is heard outside the chamber; it is a
mob, led by Gabriele, demanding the Doge's death. Paolo,
frightened, attempts to flee, but a rebuke from Simon cuts
him short. The Doge asks the mob to enter, saying he will
hear the complaints. Gabriele and Fiesco enter, and Gabriele
says he has just killed a man named Lorenzino, who was
attempting to abduct Amelia. Before dying, Gabriele says,
Lorenzino implicated a man of great power as being respon-
sible for the abduction. Gabriele now implies that man was
Simon. He moves to strike the Doge, but Amelia enters and
steps between the two men. She begs Simon to forgive Gabriele,
saying she was seized by three ruffians. Patricians and
plebeians accuse each other of being responsible, and a fight
seems imminent, but Simon intervenes and pleads for peace
between the two factions. Gabriele surrenders his sword to
the Doge, who, realizing now why Paolo attempted to flee the
council chamber earlier, dissembles knowledge of his awareness
that his courtier is responsible for the abduction. He makes Paolo repeat a curse upon the head of the one responsible.

Act II takes place in the Doge's quarters within the palace. Paolo, voicing his hatred of Simon and aware that his own life is in danger, empties a phial of poison into Simon's drinking water. When Gabriele and Fiesco are led from the dungeon into the room through a secret passageway, Paolo attempts to strike a deal with the older man to kill the Doge while he is sleeping. Fiesco refuses. Paolo then tells Gabriele that Amelia is Simon's mistress. When Paolo has left, Gabriele broods upon this new information, vowing he will kill Simon. When Amelia appears, Gabriele confronts her with the accusation involving Simon. She cannot deny that she loves Simon, nor can she reveal the real reason for her love. She swears, however, that her love for Simon is a pure one and confesses that she also loves Gabriele. Amelia conceals Gabriele on the balcony when Simon's approach is heard. She then repeats to her father her confession of love for Gabriele. Despite the fact that the young man is his sworn enemy, Simon says, he will pardon him if he gives up his role in the plot. Reluctantly, Amelia leaves the room on Simon's orders. The Doge drinks some of the poisoned water and falls asleep at a table. Gabriele re-appears and is about to stab Boccanegra when Amelia rushes in to stay his hand. Simon awakens and accuses Gabriele of
stealing his most priceless treasure, his daughter. Gabriele, unaware of the relationship, begs forgiveness of both Amelia and Simon. When a commotion is heard outside signaling the patrician uprising, Gabriele offers his services to Simon as a messenger of peace. Simon consents to the marriage of Gabriele and Amelia.

Act III is set within the ducal palace. The patricians have been defeated and Fiesco has been set free from prison. Paolo, who fought on the side of the rebels, enters on the way to his execution, condemned by Simon. He tells Fiesco that Simon has been poisoned and curses when he hears the sound of wedding music. It is he, Paolo, who abducted Amelia, he tells Fiesco. The Doge enters, his body racked by the poison, and orders that the lights in the plaza below be extinguished in respect for those who died in the rebellion. He yearns to be at sea again. Fiesco approaches, gloating that Simon is dying now. Simon recalls the pledge Fiesco once made, to forgive him if Simon's daughter was restored to him. He will do that now, Simon says, because Amelia is that daughter. Fiesco is stung with remorse and begs forgiveness of Simon. When Amelia and Gabriele enter, Simon reveals Fiesco's identity as the father of Simon's beloved. He blesses the newly married couple and proclaims Gabriele doge of Genoa. The last lights of the city are extinguished.
In March, 1856, Verdi agreed to write a new opera for the Fenice Theater in Venice for the 1856-57 season. It was an active period in his life—indeed, between the years of 1842, when *Nabuco* was performed, and 1871, the year of *Aida*, the composer was constantly occupied, so much so that it is difficult to comprehend how he created so much enduring music. The year of the *Simon Boccanegra* commission was a particularly active one. Verdi was superintending the first Paris production of *Il trovatore* and composing new music for that venture; he was revising an earlier failure, *Stiffelio*; his mind was occupied anew with the possibility of composing a *King Lear* to Somma's libretto; he was involved in a lawsuit against the management of the Italian Theater in Paris concerning property rights on *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*. But still he took on the Fenice Theater commission. *Simon Boccanegra* was his choice for Venice, and he assigned Piave the duty of libretto preparation. Despite journeys to Paris and London, Verdi, as was his custom, prepared a skeletal prose version of the libretto, to which the poet added the flesh of verses. And just as typically, Verdi was not satisfied with the completed libretto. With less than three months remaining before the scheduled premiere, he asked Giuseppe Montanelli, a politician and former professor of law living in exile in Paris, to rewrite certain of Piave's scenes. How frantic the months of February and March, 1857, must have been! Verdi arrived in Venice in mid-February to
rehearse Simon Boccanegra still without having composed the final act and with none of the orchestration done. Somehow, the premiere took place on schedule. The reception accorded the new opera can be gauged from a letter Verdi wrote to a friend soon after the premiere: "Boccanegra was almost a greater fiasco in Venice than Traviata. I thought I had done something fairly good, but now it seems I was mistaken. The opera, however, found critical favor."³

The libretto garnered especial scorn, with some insinuations that the composer had written it all himself. However, Verdi, so quick to criticize Piave in the privacy of a letter, was just as prompt in going to his defense in a letter to yet another friend: "A libretto that bears the name of Piave is judged in advance as very bad poetry; and frankly I would be delighted if I were good enough to write lines like

Vieni a mirar la cerula . . .
De la faci festanti al barlume,

and many, many others, here and there throughout the book. I confess my ignorance, I am not good enough for that."⁴

Two observations can be made here. Verdi cites two lines of poetry from different parts of the libretto, the first line being from Act I, the second from Act III. Hence,

³Osborne, op. cit., p. 296.
⁴Gatti, op. cit., p. 152.
the lines are completely out of context. Furthermore, Verdi praises the beauty of "many, many" lines "here and there" in the libretto. Damning by generous praise, indeed!

Musically, Simon Boccanegra speaks of the new maturity of the composer, a maturity which brushes aside the lush melodiousness of a Rigoletto or Il trovatore, a melody for melody's sake, in favor of music which underscores and enhances not only the action being seen upon the stage but also the emotions each character experiences. Verdi would reach his peak of musical expression in Otello and Falstaff, his final two operas. It is in such operas as Simon Boccanegra and La forza del destino that he intensified his ascent to that peak. Simon Boccanegra, of course, is not devoid of melody, but it is not present to the extent of Verdi's earlier operas.

What of the material with which Verdi had to work, the original Spanish play? Can it be said truthfully that Simon Boccanegra is the stuff of which great operas are made? All evidence seems to point to a negative answer. The play, despite the musicality of its verses, is almost unrelievedly static. Very little "musical" happens. There is an insurrection, but it occurs offstage. The villain of the piece is murdered--offstage. The protagonist is given poison--offstage. Two major characters appear throughout much of the play under assumed names. The machinations of Simon's enemies are intimidating in their complexity. The Doge, ostensibly a man of action, moves almost diffidently throughout the course of
the drama. Action gives way to character studies. Two scenes alone hold inherent musicality, and both are taken almost intact into the opera: Simón's discovery of the dead Mariana and the arrival of news of his elevation to doge in the prologue; and the touching scene in which the lights are extinguished as Simón dies in the fourth act.

Verdi, despite the failure of *Simon Boccanegra* to achieve any measure of success, remained fond of his Genoese child, so it was with some alacrity that he agreed to his publisher's wishes in 1880 to take another look at the score. He recognized its main drawback, a paucity of action, and his ever-active brain set about finding ways to amend the situation. He wrote to Giulio Ricordi:

> The score as it stands is impossible. It is too sad, too desolate. There is no need to touch anything in the first or last acts, and nothing but a few odd notes in the third. But the whole of the second act must be revised and given more relief, variety and animation. . . . Who could revise it? I have said that in general it needs something to give life and variety to the drama's excessive gloom. But what? A hunting scene? Not suitable for the stage. A festival? Too ordinary. A battle with African pirates? Not very entertaining. Preparations for war against Pisa or Venice? In that connection, I remember two magnificent letters of Petrarch's, one to Boccanegra, the other to the doge of Venice, warning them against a fratricidal war, and reminding them that both were sons of the same mother, Italy, and so on. This idea of an Italian fatherland at that time was quite sublime! All this is political and undramatic, but a clever man could surely turn it into drama. For instance, Boccanegra, struck by this thought, intends to take the poet's advice. He calls a meeting of the senate or privy council, and expounds the

---

5 Verdi says second act but he means Act I. He refers to the Prologue as "the first act."
idea of Petrarch's letter. Great indignation, quarrels, even accusations of treachery against the doge, and so on. The argument is interrupted by the business of Amelia's abduction."

The "clever man" to revise the Simon Boccanegra libretto was readily at hand: Arrigo Boito, a famous composer in his own right, who at that time was preparing the Otello libretto for Verdi. In his student years and immediately thereafter, Boito had expressed contempt for the music Verdi and his imitators were then writing, arguing that Italian art must emancipate itself from the dictates of the past in order to create new forms. In 1863, when Boito was twenty-one, he offered a toast to the young composer Franco Faccio and said, "Perhaps he is already born, modest and pure, [the man] who will resurrect art on its altar, that altar now stained like the wall of a brothel," i.e., with urine. Boito did not name Verdi as a defiler of Italian art, but the implication seemed clear. Coincidentally, Verdi had already begun to turn from his methods of old to seek new means of musical expression, particularly in orchestral and harmonic techniques. It was not until 1879 that Giulio Ricordi brought about a reconciliation of Boito and Verdi by suggestion the two collaborate on an Otello libretto. Three days later, Boito presented the composer an Otello outline in prose. Verdi praised it and told Boito to proceed with the

---

6 Osborne, op. cit., p. 405.
7 Martin, op. cit., p. 404.
versification. But the dilatory Verdi refused to be pinned down on just when he would set about composing. So Ricordi, realizing he was not about to get a new opera from Verdi any time soon, suggested the *Simon Boccanegra* revision, a partnership of Verdi and Boito.

It was the original opera's Act I, hewing closely as it did to the play's corresponding act, that gave the two artists their greatest struggle. Verdi's suggestion of incorporating the Petrarch letter was accepted by Boito. Verdi wrote his librettist about the offending act:

> Having, unfortunately, to renounce this act, we must agree on the council chamber scene which, as written by you, I have no doubt will be effective. Your criticisms are justified, but, immersed in more important work and thinking of *Otello*, you are aiming here at an unattainable perfection. I do not aim so high so am more optimistic than you, and by no means in despair. I admit the table is shaky, but if we adjust the legs a little, I think it will stand up. I also admit that none of the characters will make anyone exclaim, "How well delineated!"; but this is always very rare. Nevertheless, it seems to me there is something worth salvaging in the characters of Fiesco and Simon.

Boito rewrote the scene and Verdi commented:

> This scene in the council chamber is most beautiful, full of movement, of local color, with your usual very elegant and forceful verses. I agree about the verses to be altered at the beginning of the third act,\(^9\) and the poisoning of the doge in that way will do very well. But to my misfortune the piece is vast in the extreme, difficult to set to music, and I don't know whether, now that I am no longer *dans le mouvement*, I shall be able to get

---

\(^8\) Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

\(^9\) Verdi actually means Act II; Paolo's soliloquy is the verse to which he refers.
back into practice in time to do this, and patch up all the rest. . . .10

What Verdi and Boito have done in this council chamber scene is to add to the characterization of Boccanegra a dimension that was not present in the play, that of a leader successfully using the force of his personality not only to effect peace between the two warring city-states but also to achieve harmony among antipodal factions within his own jurisdiction. He says to the plebeians and patricians within the chamber: "While all about you spreads the freedom of the sea, upon your sacred hearths you spill each other's blood! I weep for you. . . . In vain for love I plead."

Furthermore, the scene is intensely operatic; it offers something to "see" and action to experience. An incipient revolt is crushed by the will of one man. A villain is mercilessly exposed, entwined within a net of his own making, and made to curse himself, likewise through the force of Simon's will. Compare now the play's second act: Simón finds Susana at Buchetto's home and then permits Paolo, her abductor, and Buchetto, the accomplice, to go free without any token of punishment.

Boito, no doubt with Otello's Iago still fresh in his mind, is responsible for deepening the characterization of Paolo. The self-damnation is the librettist's contribution, as is Paolo's bitter soliloquy which opens Act Two. It is

10 Osborne, op. cit., p. 297.
Paolo himself who, in the opera, poisons the Doge's drinking water, stung not only by Boccanegra's discovery of Paolo's role in the abduction but also by the shame of the Doge's climactic command in the council chamber scene, the call for self-damnation. Thus Boito reinforces Paolo's motivation for his act of murder. But the play is another matter. Paolo, angered because the Doge no longer will serve as his advocate before Susana, vows revenge. Rather than perpetrate the murder himself, however, he sends the sycophantic Piettro to poison the Doge's drinking cup. In neither play nor opera is Paolo's punishment handled in an entirely believable manner. In the play, Paolo, fleeing the ducal palace on Fiesco's orders, presumably will be slain by Fiesco's servant. In the opera, the final act has hardly begun before Paolo, condemned by Boccanegra for his role in the abortive uprising, is led away to execution. The fact that this scene comes as early in the act as it does causes it to lose whatever dramatic significance it might otherwise have had.

Verdi and Boito made very few changes in the prologue as they went about their revision. And because Piave did not venture far from the dramatic content of the play's prologue, what is seen on the opera stage resembles closely what occurs in the drama. The machinations of Paolo and Piettro to secure the election of Simon as doge are shortened considerably in the libretto. Likewise abridged, and almost to the point of incredibility, is the scene in which Paolo
convinces Simon that by becoming doge he will be able to have Maria Fiesco as his own. But such is the operatic "style". In both play and opera, Paolo and Piettro play upon plebeian superstitions in their attempt to turn the townfolk against Fiesco and the patrician candidate for doge, Lorenzino. It is not Fiesco who lives in the palace, they say, but rather the devil himself, for hasn't a mysterious light been seen flashing in the gloomy darkness of the palace. Just then, as if to reinforce the statement, a flickering light is seen within the palace. What the plebeian cannot know is that the torch has been lighted at the death of Fiesco's daughter. The Fiesco-Boccanegra scene is carried over into the opera almost intact, of course with the necessary abridgement. Piave and Verdi have added brief choruses, one for men and one for women, in which the death of Fiesco's daughter is mourned. In both play and opera, the corsair enters the palace and appears moments later on the balcony, from whence he will go to make his discovery of Mariana/Maria's body. His cry of "Maria!" in the opera is followed by a line for Fiesco not present in the play: "The hour of your [Boccanegra's] punishment strikes . . ." Likewise, the operatic Fiesco, on seeing the mob bring news of Simon's elevation, says, "Simon the doge? Hell burns within my breast!", a line of Piave's invention.

The character of Boccanegra in both play and opera is an amalgam of the historical Simon and of his brother Egidio,
the fictional Simon having been saddled with his brother's seafaring occupation. The real Simon, like his dramatic counterpart, seems to have accepted the ducal title with a certain reluctance. Once in power, he attempted to keep peace between the Guelph and Ghibelline families and in doing so found himself obliged to battle patrician factions on several occasions. After five years of skirmishes and intrigues, Simon resigned and took his family into voluntary exile in Pisa. Ten years later, learning that the patricians planned to take over Genoa with the assistance of the Milanese family of Visconti, Simon returned to lead the Genoese in a successful struggle against the nobles. Named doge in 1356, he banished the insurrection leaders and established a period of prosperity and peace in his city-state. Ultimately his enemies triumphed; Simon was given poisoned wine at a banquet in March, 1363, and died in great agony.

The play's first act and Scene One of the opera's first act are strikingly similar in their opening lines but diverge markedly as each draws to its conclusion. The changes here are the original ones made by Verdi and Piave. Where García Gutiérrez opens his act with the scene between Gabriel and Susana, Piave and Verdi delay this confrontation with a long act-opening aria (Come in quest'ora bruna) for Amelia in which she briefly sets the stage for what is to follow by her admission that she is an unknown orphan rather than the titled Grimaldi she pretends to be. Gabriele's entrance is
made following lines sung offstage. The corresponding scenes between the two lovers are quite similar; Piave has even retained much of the original dialogue. When Susana tells Gabriel she suspects he is conspiring against the Doge, the young man is quick to say: "Beware, for these walls have ears. . . . The winds will swiftly carry your words over the sea to the tyrant."\(^{11}\) In the opera, Gabriele tells Amelia: "Hush, the wind might bear such words to the tyrant's ears! The walls speak . . . ."

The Gabriel-Fiesco scene in the play is retained in essence in the opera with the inevitable abridgement. Piave did not alter Fiesco's story about Susana's masquerade, nor does Gabriele react differently from his dramatic counterpart in saying he continues to love the orphan. It is only after Simon Boccanegra's entrance that play and opera diverge. In both, the Doge has come to lead Paolo's case, and in both he bears the pardon for the exiled Grimaldis. But in the play, Susana's few words about events of her childhood are more than enough to convince Simón that she is his long-missing daughter. Although Simón is interrupted at this critical moment by the arrival of Paolo, there can be no doubt that he recognizes Susana. Thus, the scene in Act Two in which Simón identifies himself to Susana is an anticlimactic one, robbed of any dramatic intensity by what has

\(^{11}\)The imagery of wind carrying words or thoughts was used earlier by García Gutiérrez in El trovador, and was incorporated in the Il trovatore libretto by Cammarano.
already occurred in Act One. Verdi and his librettist chose to make Simon and Amelia's first meeting the one in which the identification would be made, expanding the action by means of the melodramatic business of the locket portraits in order to make the identification a mutual one. That the two artists tightened up the action of the drama cannot be argued; that they chose a preposterously contrived means to an end should be judged on nineteenth-century melodramatic criteria, not standards of the twentieth century.

Only fragments from the play's short second act survive in the opera. Amelia, abducted at the end of the first scene of the opera's first act, has in the meantime been set free by Gabriele when he killed Lorenzino. In the play's second act, she is set free when Simón comes to Lorenzino's palace. Lorenzino, a speaking character in the play, is excised in the opera, though his role as plotter against Boccanegra remains. In the play, Simón and Susana's reconciliation takes up much of the action of the second act. In the opera, this has already occurred before the council chamber scene. The corresponding acts end with Susana/Amelia remaining in the ducal palace with her father. In the opera, Gabriele and Fiesco are imprisoned for their roles in the abortive uprising. In the play, they remain free and continue their intrigues against Simón. In neither play nor opera does the Doge reveal the identity of Susana/Amelia.
The opera's Act Two begins with a scene unique to itself: Paolo's poisoning of Simon's drinking water. In the original version, just as in the play, this act was carried out offstage by Piettro. Likewise unique to the opera is Paolo's soliloquy which opens the act. Both soliloquy and onstage poisoning are products of the Boito-Verdi collaboration. How cleverly the librettist has intensified the villainy of Paolo; more important, how successfully he has provided Paolo with sufficient motivation for his act of murder. The play's Paolo is driven to his desperate act merely by Simon's refusal to reward him with Susana's hand. The operatic Paolo, as he reports in the soliloquy, is thrice motivated: by his anger at the Doge for the ignominious self-damnation in the council chamber, for the very real fear that his own life is in danger, and, least importantly, because he has failed to win Amelia. The poisoning of the water follows logically.

The end of the Paolo scene marks the limit of Boito's major influence upon the Simon Boccanegra libretto. From there to the end the opera hews closely to the play. Thus, both Paolos attempt to plant within Gabriel's mind the seed of hatred for Simon based on an imagined illicit love affair involving Susana/Amelia. In both the play and the opera, 

12 But not upon the music. Boito prevailed upon Verdi to make certain changes in the third act score; the composer did, but only reluctantly.
Simon's daughter denies that her love of Simon is carnal but refuses to explain further. In both, Gabriel's attempt to murder the sleeping Doge is thwarted by Susana/Amelia. In both, Simon inadvertently admits his kinship to Gabriel's beloved, causing the young man to abandon his role in the insurrection and to ally himself with the Doge.

Verdi, who saw "something worth salvaging" in the character of Fiesco, did little to change the concept of this personality as realized by García Gutiérrez. Concentrating on more forceful characterization for Boccanegra and Paolo, the composer and his librettists present a Fiesco almost unchanged from the Spanish drama. Actually, the character needs little redefinition; for as conceived by García Gutiérrez, he is more than able to stand without support. Fiesco's motivations for revenge against the Doge are reasonable; and his almost mindless pursuit of vengeance, even when he knows the odds are strongly against him, seems an entirely logical course for one who feels himself trapped and betrayed by what he considers to be a basically evil Simón Bocanegra. The tragedy of Fiesco is that he, by promising Susana's hand to Paolo if the latter will kill Simón, is responsible in large measure for the Doge's eventual death. Hence, Fiesco's remorse over Bocanegra's fate is sharpened by the never-spoken realization that he bears much of the burden of blame, as well as by the fact that his original rancor toward the Doge was fallacious. Verdi and
his librettists, by strengthening the character of Paolo, have in one sense weakened that of Fiesco; for at no time in the opera does Fiesco make the same proposition to Paolo that he does in the play, hastening the murder of the Doge. The play's Fiesco is a superbly drawn character, a fitting component of a drama whose emphasis is cerebral rather than visceral. Susana, too, gives evidence of García Gutiérrez' growing skills in character portrayal. Rather than the mindless puppet that was Leonor in \textit{El trovador}, Susana has a breadth and depth that make her actions totally believable. She would defy her own father to have the man she loves, risking death at the Doge's hands for him. Yet she refuses to forfeit her love for her father. The opera presents an Amelia strikingly similar to her counterpart in the play.

The final acts of the play and the opera are similar in development, with only the scene of Paolo's being led away to execution unique to the opera. In the opera, of course, Simon has already been poisoned, so the play's scene between Paolo and Piettro is excised. Likewise, there is no operatic confrontation between Paolo and Fiesco. In both play and opera, the wedding of Maria and Gabriel takes place offstage. Verdi could have brought color and relief to his score by calling for an onstage wedding scene, but undoubtedly he eschewed this course for fear of making the score too long. The scene between Boccanegra and Fiesco is similar in the two versions, again with Piave's
retention of much of the essence of the play's dialogue. For example, Fiesco says to Bocanegra in the play, "You are no longer doge. . . . Today . . . the secret hand of a just God writes your sentence. . . . Your star will be extinguished from among those stars that could not eclipse your fortune, and from your shoulders will fall the stained purple. . . ." Piave's Fiesco says, "The hand of destiny has written on these walls your sentence of death. The bright rays of your star are eclipsed, and your purple falls away in tatters. . . ."

Verdi has retained García Gutiérrez' emotional device to accompany the Doge's death: the extinguishing of the city lights outside the ducal palace window. In the opera, the lights go out on command of Simon; in the play, they go out of their own accord. Somehow this example of stagecraft seems appropriate for both the opera and the play, for the names of playwright and composer would have achieved immortality had neither written his Boccanegra. The play met with initial success, but eventually it disappeared from the stage and is not now found even in anthologies of the playwright's works. Verdi's opera has never attained any measure of success, despite the acclaim given the revised version at its premiere. A performance of the opera is a rarity; it has been recorded in its entirety, however. Verdi said of his opera immediately
following the successful premiere of the revision:
"... old Boccanegra's broken legs seemed to me to be
pretty successfully mended ..."\textsuperscript{13} Time has not yet
proved the composer to be correct.

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{13}Gatti, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 279.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the three operas of Giuseppe Verdi based on Spanish Romantic dramas range from zenith to nadir in terms of public popularity. Il trovatore, along with Rigoletto, La traviata, and Aida, must be judged one of the composer's most popular works. Simon Boccanegra, on the other hand, has found little public favor. An examination of the complete Verdi operas in their chronological order perhaps will help to explain the reason for this disparity. Il trovatore, Rigoletto, and La traviata were composed, as it were, in one gasp, in a four-year span of white-hot creativity which the composer never again equaled. It is not too far-fetched to consider these three operas as one mammoth work, because the composer was allowing Il trovatore to gestate in his mind even as he composed Rigoletto. Likewise, his mind was occupied with La traviata while he composed Il trovatore, and much of the former's music was set down on paper even as the composition of Il trovatore proceeded. Simon Boccanegra, on the other hand, was composed after a two-year hiatus following I vespri siciliani, when Verdi was distracted by other projects. La forza del destino marked the end of a three-year
drought in operatic composition, following the 1859 _Un ballo in maschera._ After _La forza del destino,_ it would be more than four years before Verdi produced another opera, _Don Carlo,_ in 1867.

Thus, an obvious question arises: had Verdi composed _La forza del destino,_ or even _Simon Boccanegra,_ in 1852 instead of _Il trovatore,_ would either of the two have become the popular masterpiece that _Il trovatore_ is today? The temptation is to say "yes," basing one's answer on the theory that Verdi, seized by an almost demoniacal creativity, could not possibly have written anything "bad" in the first three years of the 1850s decade. But to answer in the affirmative is to overlook the most important point: the relative merit of the three Spanish dramas anent their musical adaptability. _Simón Bocanegra,_ despite its magnificent verses and its somber albeit cumbersome majesty, is not a drama that could have appealed to Verdi in 1849. Had he been offered a synopsis of the play, he probably would have rejected it. _El trovador,_ on the other hand, matched perfectly the mood of the composer in 1849. He was thirty-six at the time, flushed with the success of more than a dozen operas, the most recent being the chauvinistic _La battaglia di Legnano_ (January, 1849). Verdi was confident of his talents and more than receptive to the ambience that favored _El trovador._ But most important, _El trovador_ was an intensely musical play. It abounded with situations that demanded to be set to music. Its characters, particularly
Azucena, lent themselves perfectly to musical transformation. The aura of the play, ripe with its Romantic excesses, could only engender music of like qualities from a composer in the throes of an intense musical creativity of Romantic proportions. *El trovador* was the right work for the right composer at the right time.

It is possible that had Verdi been given a libretto based on *La fuerza del sino* in the early 1850s, instead of one based on *El trovador*, the resulting opera would have become one of the composer's three or four most popular. This is because Rivas' play redounds, blow for Romantic blow, with the extremes of *El trovador*, and comes close to matching it in musical appropriateness, judged on criteria of the mid-nineteenth century. But it lacks one vital component which *El trovador* had: Azucena, the character toward which Verdi felt the greatest empathy. How extensively Azucena's presence influenced the *Il trovatore* score can only be surmised; it is not unreasonable to say that that influence must have been great. *La forza del destino*, however, came later in Verdi's career, and the revision even later, when Romanticism held less of a sway over the composer and when he was seeking new, more restrained forms of musical expression. It was this Verdi who, appalled at the number of dead bodies on the stage, rewrote the final scene of his opera. It is unlikely that the Verdi of the early 1850s would have made this alteration.
Perhaps it is too early to render any definitive judgment on *Simon Boccanegra*. Just as recent revivals of *Don Carlo* have shown that difficult, inaccessible masterpiece to contain more beauties than heretofore imagined, perhaps future production of *Simon Boccanegra* will bring unaccustomed popularity, or at least understanding, to Verdi's 1857 work. Even among commentators on Verdi's music there is disagreement on the merits of the *Simon Boccanegra* score. Osborne finds the orchestral color is "almost unrelievedly gloomy,"\(^1\) while Martin judges the orchestral sounds "some of the best" that Verdi created,\(^2\) and Hussey is struck by the "somber magnificence"\(^3\) of the music. These adjectives--somber, gloomy--likewise could be applied to the libretto, and by extension to the Spanish play. Gloom and somberness do not necessarily preclude success or understanding for a stage work; indeed, *I trovatore*, and to a lesser extent *La forza del destino*, as well as their Spanish counterparts, abound in these qualities. It merely remains to say that in *Simon Boccanegra* Verdi was unable to temper the prevailing gloom with the inspired melodic strokes he brought not only to the two preceeding operas based on Spanish themes but also to the great

---

1 Osborne, *op. cit.* , p. 304.
2 Martin, *op. cit.* , p. 516.
3 Hussey, *op. cit.* , p. 105.
masterpieces of Aida and Otello, both dealing with tragic themes. Perhaps such a task would have been impossible for any composer who chose to set to music the pages of the dark, pensive, brooding, yet strangely appealing creation that is Simón Bocanegra.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Barja, Cesar, Literatura Española: Libros y autores modernos (siglos XVIII y XIX), Los Angeles, Campbell's Book Store, 1933.

Cilley, Melissa Annis, El teatro español, Madrid, Blass, S. A., 1934.


Díaz de Escovar, Narciso y Francisco de P. Lasso de la Vega, Historia del teatro español, Barcelona, Montaner y Simón, Editores, 1924.


Polito, Antonio R., *Spanish Theater: A Survey from the Middle Ages to the XX Century*, Salt Lake City, Department of Languages, University of Utah, 1967.


**Plays**


**Librettos**

