Genre and content in mid-century Verdi: 'Addio, del passato' (*La traviata*, Act III)

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In the attempt to construct the 'story' of post-Rossinian Italian opera it has been standard practice to identify as the central plot the dissolution of traditional structural types and genres. The charting of those musical 'facts' that illustrate this dissolution is a familiar musicological endeavour, and there remains a persistent temptation not merely to notice the ever-weakening pull of convention but also to identify it with the notion of 'historical progress': a move towards the mature virtues of dramatic complexity, idiosyncrasy and flexibility. Considerations of established conventions and their modifications tend to encourage anti-generic evaluative positions, judgements which are then bolstered by appealing to influential aesthetic systems. Thus Benedetto Croce: 'Every true work of art has violated some established kind and upset the ideas of the critics'.[1] Or Theodor Adorno: 'Actually, there may never have been an important work that corresponded to its genre in all respects'.[2] Or Hans Robert Jauss: 'The more stereotypically a text repeats the generic, the more inferior is its artistic character and its degree of historicity [. . .]. A masterwork is definable in terms of an alteration of the horizon of the genre that is as unexpected as it is enriching'.[3] So bewitching is this image of genre dissolution that artistic production is often assessed by the degree to which it rebels against the *idées reçues* of tradition or encourages the momentum of the 'historically inevitable'.

For historians of Italian Romantic opera – who tend to be positively engaged with the schemata of the *primo ottocento* – the issue has been compounded by a German-based musicological practice: ever mindful of what Carl Dahlhaus called the 'gap between utility value and art character'[4] in the music of the nineteenth century; ever vigilant to steer clear of *Trivialmusik*, *Kitsch*, *gut komponierte schlechte Musik* or music that in one way or another seems

[1] B. Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* [1902], rev. edn, trans. Douglas Ainslie (New York, 1922), 37.
[2] T. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* [1970], ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. C. Lenhardt (London, 1984), 285.
[3] H. R. Jauss, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature' [1972], in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis, 1982), 89, 94.
[4] 'New Music and the Problem of Musical Genre' [1969], trans. Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton, in C. Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music* (Cambridge, 1987), 40.

too eager to please or to run foul of the doctrine of originality.[5] Verdi scholars
(who deal with music that remained essentially 'functional' and socially attentive
in ways increasingly viewed with suspicion by the composer's German and
Austrian contemporaries) may still sense the Brahms- and Wagner-nourished
wince at the seemingly naked crudities of 'La donna è mobile', 'Di quella pira'
or 'Addio, del passato'. One thus needs to confront head-on the problem of
the *maestro*'s 'hand-organ' music and elementary accompaniments, all composed
during the years in which Wagner 'advanced' from *Lohengrin* to *Das Rheingold*.
Perhaps because the traditions of 'objective' or 'scientific' Verdi investigation
trace their origins both to Germanic and British musicology and to the anti-
generic followers of Benedetto Croce, the most natural course has been to see
the history of *ottocento* opera as a gradual weaning from schematic constructions
of 'la semplice e bella melodia italiana' (to use Giuseppe Carpani's 1824 phrase),[6]
the devotion to which, according to certain perspectives, remained naggingly
present – a reactionary force – through much of the century. One might view
warily, however, the axioms of a methodology that tends to legitimise early
and middle *ottocento* opera on the basis of its increasing progress in becoming
something other than itself.[7]

   Historians of *ottocento* opera face a dilemma in confronting its most standard
procedures. On the one hand, it is obvious that a set of conventions lies at the
heart of these works. To consider the repertory is to place the types themselves
on centre stage. They are essential to the enterprise and ought not to be regarded
as embarrassments. On the other hand, nobody would wish to minimise the

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[5] These concepts have been laid out with great care by Carl Dahlhaus. Particularly useful
   is his *Analysis and Value Judgment* [1970], trans. Siegmund Levarie (New York, 1983),
   18–19 and 34–8. See also Dahlhaus, 'Über gut komponierte schlechte Musik', *Neue
   Zeitschrift für Musik*, 135 (1974), 28. Far more venomously, Adorno takes pleasure in
   addressing the subject of kitsch, and Mediterranean cultures seem often to be the direct
   target: 'The most powerful objection that one can raise to French art [. . .] is that it has
   no word for kitsch' (*Aesthetic Theory*, 434). Nineteenth-century Italian music, for
   Adorno, is apparently so discredited *ipso facto* that he need not even bring up the topic
   in a serious way. The central point is that according to this nineteenth-century,
   preponderantly Germanic paradigm 'functional music remained excluded from the concept
   of art' (Dahlhaus, 'New Music', 30.)
[6] G. Carpani, *Le rossiniane ossia Lettere musico-teatrali* (Padua, 1824), 24; as cited in Renato
   Di Benedetto, 'Poetiche e polemiche', *Teorie e techniche: immagini e fantasmi*, vol. VI
   of *Storia dell'opera italiana*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Turin, 1988),
   55. See also Scott Balthazar, 'Rossini and the Development of the Mid-Century Lyric
   Form', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 41 (1988), who cites Carpani's
   allegiance to 'cantilena, e cantilena sempre, e cantilena bella, e cantilena nuova, e cantilena
   magica, e cantilena rara' (102).
[7] There have been some notable exceptions, primarily within the nationalistically tilted
   Italian journalistic or literary traditions. The classic argument favouring the more
   conventional middle Verdi over the later, supposedly over-intellectual Verdi of *Otello*
   and *Falstaff* may be found in Bruno Barilli's *Il paese del melodramma*: 'In my opinion
   [Verdi] actually reached the highest peak of beauty, with a completely southern
   immediacy, in *Il trovatore*' (1929; rpt. Florence, 1963), 105. The most eloquent and subtle
   modern statement of this position is Gabriele Baldini's *Abitare la battaglia* [1970], trans.
   Roger Parker as *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi* (Cambridge, 1980). For a summary of Verdi
   scholarship with regard to the composer's development, see the present author's *Giuseppe
   Verdi: Falstaff* (Cambridge, 1983), 138–44.

tendency of composers (often urged on by such progressive voices as Mazzini's in the 1836 *Filosofia della musica*) increasingly to modify, reshape or deform those conventions in the interests of a heightened, more 'instantaneous' or *ad hoc* dramatic effect.[8] The narrative of *ottocento* opera may indeed be read as a chronicle of composers ineluctably moving away from an earlier sense of theatrical time and 'pure' Italian practices in favour of more international, modern or pan-European methods. Diachronically considered, the schemata did in fact dissolve. But at no point in the first stages of this dissolution – the preparatory stages prior to the Boito-influenced 1860s – does any successful composer seem to have embarked on a conscious, systematic programme of structural reform. In fact, this was precisely the situation that goaded the young Boito into journalistic action.[9] With very few exceptions, even as pre-1860 composers modified the conventions, they treated them with caution, as things vital to the system, things with their own expressive connotations. At no point were they seriously threatened. For the historian, the issue prior to 1860 is one of a largely unintentional preparation for the later, more self-conscious dissolution of conventions.

Verdi's role in all this is central. But, as has been widely remarked, his 'advances' in the 1840s and early 1850s are more spotty and inconsistent than is convenient for our image of him as a structural progressive. In *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* 'forward-looking' structures nestle all too happily with formulaic or 'primitive' pieces. (The easy conclusion – that the 'hand-organ' pieces are the grudging concessions of an incipient individualistic master to a backward public – is suspect. As an initial step it condemns the basic premises of the Italian musical theatre of the period.) Therefore it seems appropriate to turn our attention to Verdi's conception of the dramatic function of the conventions, particularly in his mid-century works, in which they seem to operate with maximum strength. To what ends does he select a convention in any given dramatic situation? Why does he treat a schema normatively in some instances but deform it or blend it with others elsewhere?

Questions of this sort tend to involve the discipline of genre theory, but the problem of how to define 'genre' in Verdi is not easy. The initial difficulties are terminological: one should not expect an immediate consensus on what constitutes a genre in Italian opera. The most restrictive (and least useful) position might be to insist that the concept is limited to the larger categories of overall subject matter, dramatic style and emotional register. In this formulation the only 'pure' Italian genres would be tragic operas, comic (or *buffa*) operas and

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[8] The main compositional line to follow begins primarily with Mercadante's supposed reforms of the 1830s, as described, for example, in his 1838 letter to Florimo: 'I have continued the revolution begun with *Il giuramento* – varied the forms, abolished trivial cabalettas; concision, less repetition; more novelty in the cadences; due regard paid to the dramatic side; the orchestra rich but without swamping the voices [. . .]'. See Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi* (London, 1973–81), II, 6. The line continues through an inventory of non-normative procedures to be found in Donizetti, Pacini and Verdi, and finally reaches the radically changing styles of the 1860s (neatly complemented by the Boitian reform manifestos), the 1870s and the 1880s.

[9] See Budden, II, 13–17.

perhaps *opera semiseria*. Others, more willing to include a hierarchical system of normative patterns, might identify certain common textual and musical structures as separate and identifiable genres: overtures, arias, duets, ensembles, finales and the like. The question of terminology becomes more problematic when one considers the internal subdivisions of these structures. Is the *cabaletta* a genre? a sub-genre? merely a standard procedure or fixed form? What about a *romanza*? or such character pieces as the *canzona, brindisi, preghiera* or *racconto*? What about the 'texture' of recitative? or a *tempo di mezzo*? or a *parola scenica*? How far down the hierarchy of generalisations may the term 'genre' legitimately extend?[10]

I suspect that there are no 'correct' answers to these questions. The crux of the matter, however, is the general sense that the term 'genre' ought to be reserved for something beyond abstract technique or structure. Within *ottocento* opera the issue often at stake is the slippery one of differing descriptions of the same phenomenon. For example, in discussions of Italian operatic procedures the terms 'stereotype' and 'formula' are often selected for their negative connotations. To insist rather on the terms 'convention', 'schema', 'structure', 'fixed form' or 'type' is normally to assume a more neutral or 'scientific' position, to confine oneself to the 'objective facts' of the form without commenting on whatever tacit social or contextual content that form might also convey. To select the term 'genre' when dealing with things that might also be treated as 'forms' or 'conventions' suggests something different. It invites one to explore that tacit content. A 'form' might have generic components insofar as its very selection conveys an expressive, dramatic or social implication beyond the particularities of its structural elements. (In certain cases the generic components of a structure or procedure can become so dominant as to define the result more precisely than any merely 'formal' aspect – as with a 'mad-scene', *racconto, brindisi, preghiera* or *canzona*.) To refer to a convention – say, an aria with *adagio* and *cabaletta* – as a 'genre' is neither to deny its formal components nor to minimise their importance in defining the convention; rather, the term 'genre' invites the reader to ask harder questions about the implied content of the entire family to which it belongs and the reasons for the composer's selection of a member of this family at a given dramatic moment.

In this more inclusive sense a genre is something definable only by appeal to a complex of characteristics, a 'grouping' of works that is based – as Wellek and Warren put it, touching on an observation traceable to Shaftesbury and

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[10] Curiously, Carl Dahlhaus, in his recent 'Drammaturgia dell'opera italiana' (in *Teorie e techniche* [see n. 6], 77–162), appears to take the most restrictive position. Under the general rubric 'Questioni di genere' he considers three issues: 'L'opera come romanzo'; 'Tragedia e lieto fine'; and 'Commedia con musica e commedia in musica'. Dahlhaus deals with certain aspects of the formal structures in a sub-section entitled 'Strutture temporali' as well as in a more general section with the title 'Forme e contenuti'. The problematic issue of operatic form and genre has also been addressed by Stefan Kunze, 'Überlegungen zum Begriff der "Gattung" in der Musik', in *Gattung und Werk in der Musikgeschichte Norddeutschlands und Skandinaviens*, Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft, 26, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher and Heinrich W. Schwab (Kassel, 1982), 50–1.

Goethe – on both an 'outer' and an 'inner' form; that is, on both aspects of recognisable structure or technical practice and aspects of 'attitude, tone, [and] purpose – more crudely, subject and audience'.[11] The complex dialectic between these 'outer' and 'inner' aspects may be observed in Dahlhaus's writings on musical genre, which all current discussions of the subject must consider.[12] Crucial to Dahlhaus's definition is the joining of a purely technical procedure (compositional technique prior to c. 1700, passing gradually to 'form' in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) with issues of purpose (at first, text along with a social, liturgical or entertainment function, all of this giving way to scoring and 'aesthetic-social character' in the age of autonomous music). Any compositional procedure, such as the fugue, that manifests only the former (Wellek and Warren's 'outer') aspect is – according to Dahlhaus – too 'under-determined' to be considered a genre.[13] Because a genre's efficacy depends on its ability to mediate between composer and audience, genre studies seem inextricably linked to the intangibles of attitude, intention and reasonable response: that is, to 'softer', more hermeneutic and less purely positivistic musicological enquiries. Investigations of generic structures commonly move back and forth between both sides of the communication process – between the attempt to reconstruct the author's or composer's concept of the genre and the attempt to reconstruct the audience's 'horizon of expectations' (to borrow a phrase from Jauss's reception theory) with which the individual work of art interacts (and which it perhaps alters) by the employment and possible deformation of generic devices.[14]

With regard to early and middle Verdi it is helpful to distinguish at least two strata of genres. First come topical or 'literary' genres that concern subject matter, consistency of general treatment and what is frequently described as

[11] René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd edn (New York, 1977), 231. For the Shaftesbury–Goethe connection (transmitted principally by Karl Viëtor in the 1920s and 1930s) see also Claudio Guillén, 'On the Uses of Literary Genre', in *Literature as System: Essays toward the Theory of Literary History* (Princeton, 1971), 107–34, and Jauss (n. 3).

[12] Considerations of genre run throughout Dahlhaus's works. Particularly helpful are: 'New Music and the Problem of Musical Genre'; 'Was ist eine musikalische Gattung?', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 135 (1974), 620–5; and 'Zur Problematik der musikalischen Gattungen im 19. Jahrhundert', in *Gattungen der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen: Gedenkschrift Leo Schrade*, ed. Wulf Arlt, Ernst Lichtenhahn and Hans Oesch (Bern, 1973), 840–95. A summary of Dahlhaus's thought on genre (immediately followed, however, by a rather puzzling set of objections) may be found in Jeffrey Kallberg, 'The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor', *19th-Century Music*, 11 (1988), 238–61.

[13] Dahlhaus, 'Gattung', 621.

[14] 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory' [1970], in Jauss (see n. 3), 3–45. See also Kallberg (n. 12), 243–6. Readers unacquainted with the perplexities encountered within the concept of musical genre are invited to peer into the abyss suggested by Wulf Arlt's attempt to define the term. According to Arlt a musical genre (*Gattung*) is 'eine Merkmalskonstellation, bei der es primär um den Zusammenhang zwischen *musikalischer Struktur* und *Funktion* (sowie gegebenenfalls um einen bestimmten *Zweck*) in einem an Konventionen faßbaren *Erwartungshorizont* geht, der mit einer *abgrenzbaren* (historischen) *Begrifflichkeit* verbunden ist.' 'Gattung – Probleme mit einem Interpretationsmodell der Musikgeschichtsschreibung', in *Gattung und Werk* (see n. 10), 18–19.

the *tinta* or characteristic emotional colour of a work. Second are certain commonly encountered structural types. Perhaps the most useful starting point is a recognition of the difference in Verdi's attitudes towards the two strata in his mid-century operas. Within the first stratum, as Piero Weiss has reminded us, one can scarcely ignore Verdi's Shakespeare-driven desire to dissolve the neo-Classical unities.[15] By pursuing 'the fusion of genres' in the 1840s and early 1850s (Verdi, along with most of the operatic critics of his time, appears to have understood the concept of *genere* within this 'literary' first stratum),[16] the composer was labouring to erect an image of himself as a Romantic progressive. In order to heighten the dramatic effect, he exhorted more than one librettist to produce strong contrasts, novelty and originality by intermingling the various tone and topical genres – *tragico, comico, fantastico, sublime, triviale, grottesco, terribile* and so on.

On the other hand, when he confronted musical and structural genres, Verdi's position was less clear-cut. As with his works from the 1880s and 1890s, the central difficulty in discussing Verdi's earlier output lies in the seeming contradiction between what he wrote in letters and what he did in practice. As Julian Budden puts it, 'Not only did [Verdi] deliberately abstain from propounding an artistic theory of his own; his surviving *obiter dicta* seem designed to confuse a later generation [by] being both mutually inconsistent and at variance with his own practice'.[17] No sensitive observer could ignore some startlingly eccentric moments in the mid-century works – the adoption of a quirky poetic form, the pointed omission of certain sub-sections of standard forms (as in the 'strettaless finales' of *Luisa Miller*, Act I and *Il trovatore*, Act II) or the creation of such striking, non-traditional moments as the Rigoletto–Sparafucile 'dialogue duet'.[18] Nor may one overlook some of the structurally revolutionary posturing

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[15] P. Weiss, 'Verdi and the Fusion of Genres', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 35 (1982), 138–56.

[16] See, for example, the characteristic early-Verdian sentiments found in the letters cited by Weiss, 'Verdi and the Fusion of Genres': a letter to Cammarano on 24 March 1849 ('This mixture of the comic and the terrible [à la Shakespeare] will, I believe, do well and also serve to distract and to relieve the monotony of so many serious scenes' [144]); and to Piave on 28 April 1850 ('As for the genre, I don't care whether it is grand, passionate, fantastic, so long as it is beautiful' [151]).

[17] Budden (see n. 8), II, 55. For the contradictions between the later Verdi's remarks and his compositional style, see also the present author's *Giuseppe Verdi: Otello* (Cambridge, 1987), esp. 48–9.

[18] The structural terms quoted here are those of Harold S. Powers (a 'dialogue duet' is one built from a single poetic metre, often set in a *parlante* texture). Powers's extensive study of the architecture of Verdi's operas will appear in his forthcoming *Verdian Musical Dramaturgy*. As is clear from his '*Simon Boccanegra* I.10–12: A Generic-Genetic Analysis of the Council Chamber Scene', *19th-Century Music* (forthcoming), as well as from ' "La solita forma" and The Uses of Convention', *Acta musicologica*, 59 (1987), 65–90, Powers is concerned with conventional models and their adaptations or alterations in Verdi. This is the 'generic' component alluded to in the title of the *Boccanegra* paper, and I am grateful to Professor Powers for sharing a copy with me.

that may be found in a few often-quoted letters.[19] Nevertheless, it is clear that his treatment of traditional structural types frequently lacks this 'reformist' frame of mind. Although one would not wish to minimise Verdi's drive towards oddity, one may still claim that much of his music around mid-century is schematically clearer, more square-cut and formulaically blocked than is the operatic music of twenty or thirty years before.[20] It would appear that in these works he was intent on devising a method of heightening the temperature of the drama by severely controlling – even limiting – his structural, melodic and accompanimental options. Or, to use a different metaphor, Verdi sought to increase the pressure of dramatic release through the constriction of its outlets. This hardly seems the compositional strategy one would expect from a composer actively engaged in a mission to dissolve the compositional genres of Italian opera.

If this is the case, Verdi's mid-century deformations of structural norms are not dissatisfied rejections. In fact, they seem to be the opposite: part of a carefully considered strategy to enhance the expressive potential of those norms. He invoked the conventions repeatedly, set them in place, stressed their convention-ality and then, when appropriate, deformed them 'affirmatively' in order to make them speak with resonant clarity, to harness their affective (or generic) connotations. This is particularly evident in the operas before *Les Vêpres sici-liennes*, for prior to 1855 Verdi was working with a restricted number of conven-tions. With *Vêpres* the situation becomes more complex, as Verdi embraces other, non-Italian practices (including 'new' French structures and significantly enriched accompaniments) and strives to hold them in a precarious balance with those of the prior operas.[21] From this point onwards the effect became increasingly one of a self-conscious dissolution of genres through their

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[19] The most celebrated are the pre-*Trovatore* exhortations to the classicist and 'conservative' librettist Salvatore Cammarano and the related letter to their mutual friend Cesare De Sanctis. See Budden (n. 8), II, 61. While *Il trovatore* abounds in bizarre touches and eccentricities, its fundamental adherence to the basic system of Italian libretto- and opera-making is beyond doubt. See also Verdi's extraordinary remark to Cammarano on 28 February 1850 about the proposed *King Lear*, 'We must not make of *King Lear* a drama containing the forms that have been in use more or less up to the present, but [. . .] we must treat it in a totally new, spacious manner, without regard for conventions of any kind' (trans. from Weiss [see n. 15], 150). As with *Il trovatore*, the *Lear* libretto is nowhere near as revolutionary as Verdi's letter might lead one to expect. See Gary Schmidgall, 'Verdi's *King Lear* Project', *19th-Century Music*, 9 (1985), 83–101.

[20] The 'conservative' aspect of Verdi's early style has been noted by Budden (see n. 8), I, 14: '[Early] Verdi invariably follows Bellini's more periodic style of melody in all his first movements'. After having undertaken an intensive study of the standard patterns of the *primo ottocento*, Scott Balthazar (see n. 6) has confirmed the conclusion: 'Rossini wrote a wide variety of different melodic types, while Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi (early in his career) limited themselves to a narrower range of possibilities centred on the mid-century lyric form' (124).

[21] For the impact of French traditions on Verdi's post-*Traviata* style see Joseph Kerman, 'Lyric Form and Flexibility in *Simon Boccanegra*', *Studi verdiani*, 1 (1982), 47–62, and Budden (n. 8), II, 33–56.

overextension. The breaking-point, as I have suggested elsewhere, comes with *Otello*.[22]

Thus what is needed is a fuller treatment of the early and middle works within the concept of the generic – detailing the events of an unusual (or a standard) procedure and addressing the dramatic reasons for the degree of deviation or non-deviation selected. An initial postulate for such an enquiry is that, within the illusion presented to us by *ottocento* opera, structural conventions stand for the artificial, operatic world in which the characters move and act. To embrace the conventional is normally a sign of affirming the axioms underpinning that world. To depart from the conventions – the rules or social code of expected operatic behaviour – can suggest a variety of things: an impulsive and fleeting 'extra-social' frankness; an inability, characteristically under emotional stress or confusion, to perform one's social (structural) role; the momentary or permanent assumption of a social stance different from that of other characters; the espousal of norms from an underground or separate society, such as one of bandits, gypsies, witches and the like.

The procedure may be briefly illustrated by touching on two extreme examples, one emphatically normative, the other quite the opposite. In *Il trovatore*, Manrico's 'Di quella pira' seems an unusually extroverted celebration of 'cabaletta-ness' at its most simple and elemental. Its effect doubtless relies in large measure on the inflexibility of the sub-genre as previously treated by Verdi. For Manrico the sudden, impulsive locking into convention suggests the instantaneousness of the operatic character's reaction to having learned of his mother's capture and the plan to burn her at the stake. Considered within the premises of Verdi's operatic 'game', Manrico's unreflective embrace of the *cabaletta* in its most naive structure could hardly be more appropriate. By striking this posture or fixed tableau of the operatic-conventional world *tutta forza*, he projects his instant – and proper – response to the demands of the honour–shame system that underpins the plot and now demands a response to extreme provocation. The critique of abstract form and the drive towards formal 'progress' are irrelevant. The 'formulaic' structural point is dramatic: for Manrico, anything less than the immediate delivery of this society-affirming gesture would be unthinkable.

The opposite situation appears in the Rigoletto–Sparafucile 'dialogue duet'. Although the duet has a clear, 'rounded' shape of its own (determined by the accompaniment, not by the voices or the traditions of standard duets), the startlingly non-generic aspects of this piece, noted by Abramo Basevi in 1859,[23] convey the illicit, 'extra-social' nature of the conversation it contains. Rigoletto's encounter with the professional assassin who lurks in the dark unfolds beyond the boundaries of normal operatic discourse, in a zone of chilling freedom from social restraint, a zone in which accepted conventions no longer apply. The release from genre here represents not a dissatisfaction with standard duet-forms, but a dramatically strategic withdrawal from those things that – within the

[22] Hepokoski (see n. 17), 139–62.
[23] A. Basevi, *Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi* (Florence, 1859), 191.

context of the theatrical illusion – bind society together.[24] Similarly, Rigoletto's private ascent from this underground, his 'Pari siamo' monologue, is relatively unconventional, and the sudden intrusion of the *tempo d'attacco* with his entrance into the house and the appearance of Gilda ('Figlia! ... Mio padre!') rejoins the textures of structural convention along with the society that they represent.[25]

To illustrate how such an enquiry might proceed on a more detailed level, I should like to examine one of the most familiar pieces in the operatic canon, Violetta's 'Addio, del passato', from the third act of *La traviata* – a particularly clear instance of Verdian mid-century generic mixture. My goal is to explore levels of generic interaction within this seemingly elementary piece. This will involve such things as textual structures, poetic-metrical conventions, timbre within the accompaniment, the possibility of a *topos* for the melody, and the employment of musical genres and other compositional techniques for the sake of their affective content. My larger intent is to advance the proposition that such considerations can often lead us further into a piece than can conventional formal analysis. In the final section I shall suggest that these observations help us reconstruct the aesthetic underlying Verdi's operas of this period.

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It is best to begin with fundamental matters: the solo's place in the opera and the poetic 'grain' of its text. The tradition of a final-act aria for soprano provides an intense spotlighting of the heroine's essence. Such a piece normally involves a climactic, revelatory utterance, not infrequently delivered *in extremis*. The reception convention under which this placement is understood is that now, as social pretences fall away, one may see 'the truth' of the character the *prima donna* is portraying. For this reason textual structure and content are as important as their eventual musical treatment:

[24] As noted in William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas* (Cambridge, 1982), 350, and Gary Tomlinson, 'Opera and *Drame*: Hugo, Donizetti, and Verdi', *Music and Drama*, Studies in the History of Music, 2 (New York, 1988), 171–92, Verdi's procedural model for the Rigoletto–Sparafucile encounter seems to have been the unusual Rustighello–Astolfo 'dialogue duet' in the first act of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833). Here, too, the structural point was probably an 'illicit' one: both of these minor characters stumble on each other in the streets of Ferrara as they carry out secret orders, the former from Duke Alfonso (involving the future murder of Gennaro), the latter from Lucrezia. Essentially the same argument may be adduced in Verdi's next two non-normative 'dialogue duets', both from the 1857 *Simon Boccanegra*: Pietro and Paolo's brief *scena e duettino* ('Che disse? A me negolla') that precedes the first act finale – the unfolding of the stealthy plans to abduct Amelia; and (even more clearly modelled on the Rigoletto–Sparafucile encounter) the Paolo–Fiesco duet ('Prigioniero in qual loco mi trovo?') from the second act – in which the villainous Paolo tries to tempt Fiesco, now a prisoner, into murdering the Doge in his sleep. These and later instances of such duets are studied in Powers's forthcoming *Verdian Musical Dramaturgy* (see n. 18).

[25] The most obvious model for 'Pari siamo' is the celebrated 'dagger' monologue 'Mi si affaccia un pugnal?!' from *Macbeth*. Again, the reasoning behind the unusual expansion of a standard convention seems similar, and in both instances Verdi seems to have been striving for the operatic equivalent of a Shakespearean soliloquy.

> Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti,
> Le rose del volto già sono pallenti,
> L'amore d'Alfredo perfino mi manca,
> Conforto, sostegno, dell'anima stanca . . .
> Ah! della traviata sorridi al desìo;
> A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio!
>   Or tutto finì.
>
>
> Le gioie, i dolori tra poco avran fine,
> La tomba ai mortali di tutto è confine!
> Non lagrima o fiore avrà la mia fossa,
> Non croce col nome che copra quest'ossa!
> Ah! della traviata sorridi al desìo;
> A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio!
>   Or tutto finì.

[Farewell, beautiful shining dreams of the past, / My face's roses are already fading; / I am even without Alfredo's love, / The comfort and support of my tired soul . . . / Ah! Smile upon the desire of the woman who erred; / Oh, pardon her, receive her, O God! / Now all is ended. / Joys and sorrows will soon end, / The tomb is the end-point of everything for mortals! / My grave will have neither tear nor flower, / No name-inscribed cross to cover these bones! / Ah! Smile upon the desire of the woman who erred; / Oh, pardon her, receive her, O God! / Now all is ended.]

Clearly a two-stanza-with-refrain structure (the genre is that of French *couplets* with an unusually sombre tone, the larger implications of which will be pursued presently), the text first sets up a metrical pattern and then proceeds to abandon it. Each stanza begins with a *sestina* (built from long lines in *doppio senario* metre and rhymed in self-enclosing blocks, *aa bb cc*) that leads to a concluding half-line of *senario tronco*. Although metrical mixture within lyric verse is not frequent in the earlier Verdi operas, it is by no means unprecedented. Particularly in the period of the late 1840s and early 1850s, Verdi requested it from his librettists (here Francesco Maria Piave) for certain strong or bizarre effects. The composer's favoured asymmetrical pattern at this stage of his career is that of 'Addio, del passato': a set of longer lines is interrupted or concluded by a shorter line. Apparently Verdi believed that the pattern was sufficiently strange that it needed to be immediately repeated, and he seems to have confined its use at this time to texts with two stanzas. One function of such a structure (which derives its impact from a sudden veering from the expected regularity of standard textual patterns) was merely to provide a spot of eccentricity within 'picturesque' moments:[26] it can furnish a final twist or exclamation point. Examples from *Il trovatore* include Manrico's Act I *romanza*, 'Deserto sulla terra',

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[26] Cf. Paolo Fabbri's remarks in 'Istituti metrici e formali', in *Teorie e techniche* (n. 6), 219–20, which touch on Verdi's gift for 'making eccentric [poetic] structures blossom even in non-picturesque moments, as in "Addio, del passato" [. . .] and "Di Provenza" '.

his Act IV farewell to Leonora, 'Ah, che la morte ognora', and the Act II Coro di Zingari.[27]

But such shortened final lines may also convey a dramatic point. This is either a despairing truncation of an otherwise conventional utterance or a concluding statement beyond the normative form, delivered as an aside or personal exclamation, an irresistible excess uttered past the boundaries of convention. An earlier example of the first type is Rodolfo's 'Quando le sere al placido' from *Luisa Miller*. This presents two (normally eight-line) *settenario* stanzas, each of whose 'conventional' lyricism is aborted after the sixth line with a sudden *quinario* exclamation ('Ah! ... mi tradì!'): the dramatic point of the break from tradition could not be clearer. The second type may be seen in Germont's 'Di Provenza il mar, il suol – chi dal cor ti cancellò?' from *La traviata*. Two four-line stanzas in *doppio ottonario* are each followed by an appended exclamation, a brief, refrain-like gesture in *quinario tronco*, 'Dio mi guidò' and 'Dio m'esaudì'. With such a pointed aside Germont momentarily abandons the images that dominate the stanza proper – the demands of home, family and honour – in order ('spontaneously') to touch the substratum on which he perceives that they rest – divine law.

The structure of 'Addio, del passato' is remarkably similar to that of Germont's solo. (One wonders whether there are further grounds for comparison here: at the point of death Violetta adopts the mode of expression of Alfredo's father – the voice of conscience, natural simplicity and so on. Was such an echo intended?) In this instance the shortened line, 'Or tutto finì', is an exclamation beyond the two refrain lines. Such structure suggests an emotional superfluity flowing over the normal *sestina*. The exclamation serves not only as a summary of Violetta's situation but also as a literary conceit, a mark of conclusion for each stanza – 'or tutto finì'. In each of the cases cited above, the norms of fixed textual procedures are used as foils. Far from conveying an impatience with the conventions, Piave's and Verdi's dramatic gestures depend upon the listener's sensing of those norms as strongly as possible.

As we turn to the musical setting, we should first note what for many of its first listeners must have been its most obvious generic feature. 'Addio, del passato' participates in a tradition of solo pieces for lonely or 'isolated' soprano with a double-reed accompaniment – the English horn or oboe – that functions as a complement to the soloist's psychological estrangement. One well-known predecessor is Anna's F-major 'Al dolce guidami' from the conclusion of *Anna Bolena* – the rejected queen's 'mad-scene' aria (non-strophic, but introduced by a poignant English horn – Ex. 1a – which is then intermixed through the aria itself), sung from the Tower before her execution. The clearest representatives of the *topos*, however, dwell in a minor key. F minor is a favoured

[27] Related instances are the alternations of *doppi senari* and *senari tronchi* in the 'Coro di ribelli montanari e banditi' that opens the first act of *Ernani* ('Evviva! ... beviamo! – Nel vino cerchiamo / Almeno un piacer!') and, perhaps, the alternating *settenari* and *endecasillabi* in Ferrando's *racconto* ('Di due figli vivea padre beato / Il buon Conte di Luna') in the first act of *Il trovatore*.

tonality, probably in order to use the English horn to best advantage, and many pieces feature a contrasting, parallel-major concluding section (often a refrain). Such is the case, for instance, with Isabelle's imploring *cavatine* 'Robert, toi que j'aime' from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* (Ex. 1b: the song proceeds in three varied stanzas with refrain) and Marie's minor–major *romance* 'Il faut partir' from Donizetti's *La fille du régiment* (Ex. 1c: two stanzas with refrain) – her sad farewell to the soldiers after she learns of her noble birth. The family resemblance between these two pieces extends to their major-mode refrains, 'Grâce pour toi même et grâce pour moi' in the former and 'Ah! par pitié, cachez vos larmes' in the latter (Ex. 2a and 2b). Particularly striking is the similarity of the Donizettian refrain (Ex. 2b) to that of Violetta's 'Ah! fors'è lui' in Act I of *La traviata* (Ex. 2c) – another F-minor–major piece, but one without the double-reed accompaniment.[28] (As will be demonstrated later, Violetta's two principal 'slow' solo pieces, 'Ah! fors'è lui' and 'Addio, del passato', are closely linked. For the moment we might notice only that they share elements of the same *topos*. Considering 'Il faut partir' as a particularly apt model, it is as if the Donizetti piece's melodic contours, F-minor–major tonality and general refrain effect went to 'Ah! fors'è lui', while its characteristic 'generic' timbres went to 'Addio, del passato' – although, as always in the attempt to interrelate individual examples of *topoi*, the possibility remains that the examples are merely drawing on a common pool of standard gestures.)[29]
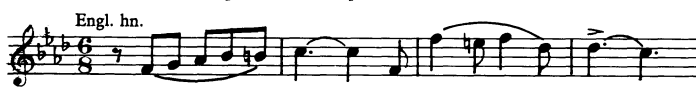

(a) Donizetti, *Anna Bolena*, 'Al dolce guidami'.

(b) Meyerbeer, *Robert le diable*, 'Robert, toi que j'aime'.
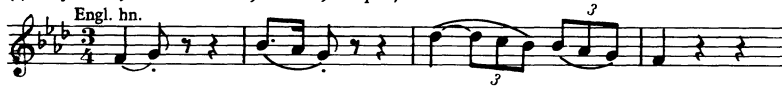
(c) Donizetti, *La Fille du régiment*, 'Il faut partir'.

Ex. 1

[28] This has also been noticed by Ashbrook (see n. 24), 691. Cf. also Maria's F-minor *preghiera*, 'Havvi un Dio', from Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*.

[29] To a lesser extent the refrain (Ex. 2a) of 'Robert, toi que j'aime' also foreshadows that of 'Ah! fors'è lui' (Ex. 2c). But as delivered in the third stanza, Meyerbeer's refrain seems to have been the model for yet another portion of *La traviata*. Basevi (see n. 23) put his finger on the point: '[In Act II of *La traviata*] when we arrive at the key of F, with the words "Amami, Alfredo", the rhythm becomes regular. Certainly at this point Verdi had in mind the famous phrase from Isabelle's aria in *Robert le diable*, at the words, "Grâce, grâce pour toi même", etc., which bring with them, when they are repeated for the third time, a *fortissimo* that gives one shivers' (236). Verdi's *La traviata*, that is, has several of the effects of these earlier strophic songs 'on its mind', and it probably cannot be properly explained without reference to them.

(a) Meyerbeer, *Robert le diable*, 'Robert, toi que j'aime'.

Isabelle

Grâ - ce, grâ - ce pour toi mê-me, pour toi mê - me.

(b) Donizetti, *La Fille du régiment*, 'Il faut partir'.

Marie

Ah! par pi - tié, par pi - tié cachez vos lar - mes.

(c) Verdi, *La traviata*, 'Ah! fors'è lui'.

Violetta

A quel - l'a - mor, quel - l'a - mor ch'è pal - pi - to

Ex. 2

As might be expected, this isolated soprano/double-reed convention turns up in Verdi in similar dramatic situations. Among the clearest examples are Abigaille's death scene, 'Su me ... morente ... esanime', from *Nabucco* and Lina's appeal to her husband, 'Egli un patto proponeva', from *Stiffelio*; related but perhaps less emphatic instances are by no means uncommon.[30] In one of the clearest and most immediate forerunners of 'Addio, del passato', the victimised Gilda's 'Tutte le feste al tempio' from *Rigoletto* – a narrative of her deception by the Duke and her abduction by his followers – one also finds the timbre-tonal formula applied to a strophic song. And 'Addio, del passato' itself is followed in later operas by a remarkable series of similarly lonely, inward-looking soprano solo/English-horn or oboe pieces. Most of them are strophic songs with refrains, and all of them begin (or at least have a 'non-refrain' section) in the minor mode: Verdi recomposes the generic idea with ever more subtle variants. One finds it, for example, in Amelia's 'Orfanella, il tetto umile' from *Simon Boccanegra* (isolation as an orphan: here the oboe introduction seems clearly modelled on the melody of 'Il faut partir'); in Hélène's 'Ami le coeur d'Hélène' from *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (isolation as a prisoner condemned to death); in Amelia's 'Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa' from *Un ballo in maschera* (isolation

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[30] Examples include: Odabella's major-mode *romanza* 'Oh! nel fuggente nuvolo' from *Attila* and the English-horn 'spots' in Lady Macbeth's Sleepwalking Scene (a persistent, ominous ♭6–5 in major; cf. the English-horn colour in the Act I Macbeth–Lady Duet). Earlier, in *Giovanna d'Arco*, we find elements of the same English-horn formula applied to a tenor *romanza* with Carlo's 'Quale più fido amico' (here combined with solo cello, as in Abigaille's death scene from *Nabucco*, Odabella's *romanza* from *Attila* and, much later, Rigoletto's second-act plea, 'Miei signori', in D flat major). See Budden (n. 8), I, 357 and 385, on the association of oboe melodies with grief.

through guilt and humiliation – here a comparison with the varied strophic structure of 'Robert, toi que j'aime' proves instructive); in Elisabeth's consolation to the just-dismissed Comtesse d'Aremberg, 'O ma chère compagne, ne pleurez pas', from *Don Carlos* (the isolation is that of the character addressed: once again it is the 'Il faut partir' oboe melody that seems to be reworked); in Aida's 'O patria mia' (separation from the homeland: in this instance compare the key and melodic contours of Donizetti's 'Al dolce guidami'); and finally in Desdemona's Willow Song from *Otello* (a tale of rejection, abandonment and death).

As we begin to focus on the musical detail of 'Addio, del passato', it is clear that few listeners, particularly after the experience of the first two acts, could miss the most evident character of the melody-and-accompaniment type. In its hypnotically periodic triple rhythms, its pushing towards strong beats and its melodic turning figures, it seems to evoke a slow dance (one suspects that this is the reason for the *senario* metre, with its mechanically regular accents). It may even be that, notwithstanding the 6/8 time signature, the rhythms and melodic contours are meant to suggest those of a waltz, albeit a faded or muffled one, throbbing like a bleak minor-mode echo of the frivolity of Act I. Whether or not one wishes to interpret the melodic *topos* as that of a waltz, the larger dramatic point of overlaying this aria with the *tinta* of a dance is obvious. Even at the point of death Violetta remains Violetta. Her life within the opera has been that of surface exhilaration, the swirling of skirts in the turning waltz. The musical image central to 'Addio, del passato' is that of a collapsed or distorted death-dance, and its dramatic aim is in a few strokes unerringly to touch her soul. Important here, and alternating with the archetypal turning figure in the melody (which remains frozen at two pitch levels), are the 'lame' accents on the second beats (Ex. 3). These are extravagant accents within a dance, and with their stresses on unaccented syllables they also run counter to the traditions of setting *doppio senario* verse. The unusual or 'incorrect' setting carries a signal of disorder, strain and weariness. Although the accents are central to the content of the solo piece, as 'non-beautiful' distortions one almost never hears them in performance. Yet, like so many of Verdi's little-heeded (and peculiar) dynamic and accent markings, they remind us once again of his readiness to sacrifice canonical (that is, Italianate neo-Classical) conceptions of beauty for what he believed to be the awkward detail of 'truth'.

Ex. 3

To proceed to issues of structure (whose generic component could be conceived as the piece's quality of 'aria-ness'): as a spotlighted solo piece preceded by a full prelude and *scena*, both of which serve to enhance the form-ality and importance of the aria to follow, and both of whose echoes reverb-erate into the Andante mosso itself, 'Addio, del passato' invites its listeners to hear a peculiar deformation of a grand-aria Adagio governed by the 'lyric-form' design. (As is well known, the standard lyric form may take either of two general melodic designs, a a′ b a″ or a a′ b c, and the most important dramatic feature of each is that it is end-accented, tending towards the summation contained in its conclusion.)[31] By mid-century the generic effectiveness of lyric form was at its height: Verdi had crystallised it into a schematic, largely predictable design. Many features of 'Addio, del passato' suggest that the piece is grounded in the expectation of this struc-ture: the solo's position and prominence in the opera, its lengthy introductory material, slow tempo and serious tone, its repeated opening phrase and its motion towards a musically and textually revelatory conclusion – the A-major apotheosis (Violetta's confessional acknowledgment of herself as *la traviata*, a gesture sufficiently powerful to provide the opera with its title).[32]

The actual structure of 'Addio, del passato', however, proves different. It is delivered in two stanzas, each shaped into the design a a′ b b′ x: refrain (x: represents a connecting link whose function is to set up the subsequent refrain, which, in this instance, begins as a major-mode variant of a). The solo, that is, tracks the normative course of what the corresponding nineteenth-century French operatic tradition – Boieldieu, Meyerbeer, Auber, Halévy, Donizetti (in certain operas) and so on – would have termed *couplets*. (The term literally means merely 'stanzas', although most strophic songs labelled

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[31] See especially the descriptions of the structure in Kerman (n. 21) and Balthazar (n. 6). Balthazar's distinguishing of the three 'functional divisions' of the form – the 'thematic block' (a a′), the 'medial section' (b) and the 'closing section' (a″ or c) – is particularly useful in tracing modifications, expansions or other variants of lyric-form procedures. Verdi's treatments of the a a′ b c structures are especially noteworthy. Most commonly the expressive content involves the yielding of a formal, more standard posture (the initial a a′ or a a′ b) to a more telling or direct representation of the emotion driving the singer. Recognising the generic trajectory is important in determining the dramatic intent of any piece following this scheme.

[32] Cf. Dahlhaus, 'Mahler: Second Symphony, finale', in *Analysis* (n. 5): 'Therefore one may establish in analysis the rule that a movement is to be interpreted, within sensible limits, as a variant of the form characteristic of the genre, and not as exemplifying another schema unusual for the genre' (82–3). See also Jauss's concept of the 'generic dominant' in 'Theory of Genres' (n. 3) and E. D. Hirsch's treatment of 'intrinsic genre', *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967), 78–89.

as *couplets* also feature a highlighted refrain.)[33] As *couplets*, 'Addio, del passato' may be seen as an instance of Verdi's early exploration of the expressive potential of French strophic song, a concern that had begun in *Il corsaro* (1848) and would continue to develop as a prominent feature of his works after *La traviata*.[34]

We can be more specific. 'Addio, del passato' may be considered as *couplets* written in the *romance* tone – and indeed, for some commentators of the period, the distinction between *couplets* and *romances* was primarily one of mood and dramatic attitude, not structure. Fétis considered each 'a sort of little air [. . . that] belongs originally to the French opera', but the air 'is called a *couplet*, when its character is gay, and a *romance* when it is melancholy'.[35] Doubtless it was a distinction of this sort that prompted Basevi's remark that 'Addio, del passato' is 'repeated in the manner of a *romanza*'.[36] This plunges us at once into a terminological problem, and to follow the ramifications of the 'structural' and 'generic' distinctions between *couplets* and *romances* in nineteenth-century French and Italian operas would lead us far away from our immediate concern here. For the present we might be advised to avoid definitions that are too restrictive. In nineteenth-century practice, surely because of the subjective issues of character and connotation as well as the inevitability of ambiguous cases with regard to content, there seems to have been a rather easy interchange

[33] Within this tradition the term *couplets* may be defined as a light, picturesque or sharply characterised song in two or three stanzas, written in the French manner. The most important features of this 'French manner' are a simple, naïve or colloquially 'natural' style and – most notably – a sub-division of each stanza into two parts: a preparatory first part, often beginning with repeated phrases, that ends with a connecting link (x:, frequently ending with a dominant chord sustained by a fermata) whose task is to set up the more emphatic, concluding 'punch-line' refrain. Of the two parts of each stanza, the first is the less 'stable' and may be subject to recomposition in subsequent stanzas (especially in the third of a three-stanza song). Occasionally, however, one may find textual or musical alterations in the second section as well, thus depriving that section of a strict 'refrain' status.

   Some French examples of standard *couplets* include Alice's 'Quand je quittai la Normandie' from *Robert le diable*, the 'Couplets militaires des Soldats Huguenots' ('Prenant son sabre de bataille') from *Les Huguenots* and Oscar's 'Aux cieux elle sait lire' from Auber's *Gustave ou Le Bal masqué*. Examples of Verdi's understanding of the genre at its most elemental include the song 'Lo spazzacamino' from the 1845 collection *Sei Romanze* (the composer's first published example of the most characteristic type of *couplets*), Hélène's Sicilienne, 'Merci, jeunes amis' from *Les Vêpres siciliennes* and Oscar's 'Volta la terrea' from *Un ballo in maschera*.

[34] In *Il corsaro*, Medora's *romanza*, 'Non so le tetre immagini', Verdi's first strophic solo piece within an opera, lacks a refrain: see Budden (n. 8), I, 372. To elaborate here the several refrain and non-refrain variants of the *couplets* and *romanze* in the works of Verdi and his predecessors would take us far afield. It must suffice to mention that operatic strophic songs subdivide into several overlapping sub-categories of structure, 'tone' and content (see, e.g., n. 37 on the *romanza*). I am currently investigating this topic, and its detailed consideration will have to be deferred to a separate, forthcoming study. For some free variants of *couplets* in late Verdi, however, see Hepokoski (n. 17), 142, 151–2.

[35] *La Musique mise à la portée de tout le monde* [1830], 3rd edn (Paris, 1847), 210–11. The translation is from the 1844 *Music Explained to the World* (London: H. G. Clark), 163–4.

[36] Basevi (see n. 23), 238.

between the terms *couplets* and *romance*.[37] This helps to explain Basevi's reference to *couplets* within his remarks about the 'French' character of *La traviata*:

[In this opera] Verdi began a third *manner*, which in several places approaches the French genre of the *opéra comique*. Although this musical genre has not been the subject of much experiment in the Italian theatre, it is not unknown in the private salon. [. . .] With *La traviata* Verdi brought chamber music to the stage – and very successfully, for the subject matter lends itself well to this. In this work one finds more simplicity than in the author's previous works, especially in the orchestra. [. . .] One finds a few of those arias that are repeated in the manner of *couplets*, and, finally, the principal melodies are usually articulated in brief binary or ternary phrases [*piccoli tempi binarj e ternarj*]: generally speaking, they lack that full development that Italian genius requires.[38]

The only solo pieces in *La traviata* that would qualify as *couplets* are ones that Basevi more specifically describes as *romanze*: 'Ah! fors'è lui' ('treated as a *romanza*, being repeated twice'), Germont's 'Di Provenza il mar, il suol' (which 'unfolds in the manner of a *romanza* that repeats') and, as mentioned above, 'Addio, del passato'.[39] Although Basevi's use of the term *romanza* elsewhere is inconsistent, one may conclude that at least for these cases in *La traviata* he made no structural distinctions between a *romanza* (in each case here, with refrain) and *couplets*. In summary: the most precise description of the genre

[37] In nineteenth-century French opera the term '*couplets*' seems to be applicable to any end-accented strophic song; but it can apparently be overridden by a character- or style-designation if the song conveys a recognisably 'generic' mood or function. The replacement term '*ballade*' is common (especially for legends or other tales in narrative stanzas), as is *romance*, which also often has a semi-narrative component (that is, an intermixture of the narrative and the lyrical) and is especially appropriate for melancholy farewells or ingenuous expressions of love, particularly ones about the virtues of a distant or scarcely glimpsed beloved. One of the potential 'differences' of structure between *romances* and normative *couplets* is that strict refrain-texts are far less necessary in the former (refrains are thus not defining features of *romances*), although the presence of a strict refrain within a *romance* probably signals a simpler or 'lower' variant of the genre. Other 'substitute' terms, such as *chanson, boléro, pastorale, complainte, sérénade* and so on, crop up from time to time. As mentioned in n. 34, elaboration of the details will be deferred to a separate study. For some German versions of the *ballade*, see Carolyn Abbate, 'Erik's Dream and Tannhäuser's Journey', in *Reading Opera*, ed. Arthur Groos and Roger Parker (Princeton, 1988), 129–67.

  Complicating the issue within Italian opera is Donizetti's and Verdi's practice of labelling a non-strophic set piece (or Adagio) that lacks a complementary cabaletta as a *romanza*. See Martin Chusid, 'The Organization of Scenes with Arias: Verdi's Cavatinas and Romanzas', *Atti del 1⁰ Congresso internazionale di studi verdiani* (Parma, 1969), 59–66, and Budden (n. 8), I, 16, 187. Such Italianate *romanze* may be offshoots of the French strophic *romance*, although the issue has not yet received thorough exploration. In any event, when investigating Verdi's dramatic structures we are occasionally presented with the confusing situation in which certain solo pieces that the composer does not label as *romanze* (such as Leonora's 'Tacea la notte placida' from *Il trovatore* – probably not labelled as such because of the subsequent cabaletta) seem clear instances of the French *romance* genre invading the Adagio of a *cavatina*, while other pieces labelled as *romanze* because of their single-movement or 'inset' status (such as the Doge's 'O vecchio cor, che batti' from *I due Foscari* – an otherwise standard lyric-form piece) seem only marginally related to the French strophic *romance*.

[38] Basevi (see n. 23), 230–1.

[39] Basevi, 234, 236.

of 'Addio, del passato' would seem to be either 'strophic (French) *romance*
with refrain' or '*romance-couplets*'.

Of the affective or 'inner' content of the genre, we may observe, first and
most obviously, that its emphatically French connotations contribute to the
couleur locale of *La traviata*. More significantly, the dramatic point is that,
following the French tradition for strophic songs in general, more or less straight-
forward *couplets* in Verdi belong to a genre appropriate for lighter music, for
inset songs or for a colloquial, 'natural' or naïve discourse of (or to) characters
of lesser or common blood: for Oscar the page in *Un ballo in maschera*, for
example, or Preziosilla in *La forza del destino*, Eboli in *Don Carlos* (a princess,
to be sure, but her 'Chanson du voile' is delivered as part of a relaxed 'pastime'
in the company of ladies-in-waiting, pages and so on), even Barbara the maid
(described in Desdemona's Willow Song) in *Otello*. Strophic songs, especially
those with refrains, tend to be class-identifiers, or at least 'attitude' identifiers.[40]
It is important to realise, then, that Violetta is here a *prima donna* for whom
a 'grand aria' would be inappropriate. Doubtless this is part of the intended
realism of the solo – and of the opera; it was surely an aspect sensed by Basevi
when he wrote, 'Verdi was unique in Italy in expressing seriously the emotions
of characters in our modern and *prosaic* society, as in *La traviata. La sonnam-
bula, Linda*, etc., are similar subjects, but not *prosaic* ones'.[41] From one perspec-
tive, we might recognise Violetta's *couplets* as something *déclassé* or socially
tawdry. A 'higher' (and more operatically normative) mode of expression has
been made unavailable to her. She is deprived of grand gestures: although she
does presume to enter the formal, elegant expectations of an Adagio in 'lyric-
form' structure, she does so only from a lower social (and moral) position.

This point is made through genre. 'Prosaic' *couplets* strain to become a more
formal aria in their manner of delivery, their seriousness of tone and so on.
The generic message is one of disguise; of one thing posing as another. All
this is readily interpretable as a metaphor for Violetta's social masquerade, with
her continued re-entries into glittering society (and into respectable society
as well) from a lower level. From another perspective such a compositional
strategy also suggests that everything merely 'artistic' has been stripped away.
The natural or popular song type suggests a rejection of artifice, a deathbed
revelation of something more direct, elemental and naïvely honest – all of which
touches on the convention of the final-act, *in extremis* solo piece for the *prima*

[40]   See the text of Verdi's 1845 *couplets*, 'Lo spazzacamino': 'Sono d'aspetto brutto e nero,
      / Tingo ognun che mi vien presso; / Sono d'abiti mal messo, / Sempre scalzo intorno
      io vo.' Within opera the social aspect of the genre is particularly striking when a nobleman
      disguises himself as a commoner and proceeds to sing a strophic song as part of the disguise,
      as in Léopold's 'Loin de son amie' from *La Juive* or – even more clearly – Riccardo's
      'Di' tu se fedele' from *Un ballo in maschera*. Occasionally nobles can deliver French
      romances, as in Raoul's 'Plus blanche que la blanche hermine' (*Les Huguenots*) and, for
      that matter, Leonora's 'Tacea la notte placida' (*Il trovatore*). These cases stress the generic
      situation (semi-narration: see n. 37) or the heartfelt 'naturalness' of the character singing;
      moreover, on stage they are often relatively informal utterances to non-aristocratic
      comrades-in-arms, ladies-in-waiting and so on.
[41]   Basevi (see n. 23), 300.

donna. Verdi's deformation of the expected lyric form – in this case to suggest Violetta's inability to attain the normative aria-genre – does not proceed from a dissatisfaction with the rigidity of the conventions. Rather, it is an effort to urge them to speak all the more eloquently in their unattainability. It is a clear instance of 'affirmative deformation', embracing a convention (here the lyric-form aria) all the more strongly by keeping its normative realisation silent.

One might further observe that Violetta's famous Adagio in Act I, her other principal solo piece, 'Ah! fors'è lui', is also a lyric-form-grounded piece inter-mixed with features of *romance-couplets*. Within each of the two strophes the a a′ b: refrain musical design inclines somewhat more towards the standard lyric-form structure than does 'Addio, del passato' (and it is followed, more conventionally, by a *tempo di mezzo* and *cabaletta*). Violetta's mask is more successful in Act I. Still, the presence of a refrain conclusion preceded by a fermata reveals each stanza's attractions to the *couplet*. This means that in both Acts I and III, at the two points that belong exclusively to Violetta, she resorts to similar, colloquial structures (and to similar melody-types). In this sense 'Addio, del passato' can be heard as a third-act transformation of the earlier piece. Both move from the minor to the parallel major in the refrain, although, significantly, 'Addio, del passato' eventually collapses back into the minor.

The relationship between 'Ah! fors'è lui' and 'Addio, del passato' – already mentioned with regard to what may be their common parentage in such pieces as Donizetti's 'Il faut partir' – becomes even clearer when one considers Verdi's initial sketch (the melody of which is reproduced in Ex. 4)[42] for a strophe of the former piece, apparently jotted down early in the planning for the opera, probably in November or early December 1852, perhaps even before he received a completed version of the text from Piave.[43] This untexted 'Ah! fors'è lui' follows the lyric-form structural plan a a b c. The final section, c (probably conceived as a refrain, as the preceding fermata suggests), is expansive and begins in a contrasting major mode – here the relative, not the parallel, major. In the sketch version the c-section cannot long sustain this major mode, and the music soon falls back to the relative minor. At the end the fatalistic cadence on a high-register tonic (e'') is led into by a broad, lamenting, one-and-a-half-octave stepwise descent from the climactic b''. Even though 'Ah fors'è lui' was later revised to end in the parallel major with an echo of Alfredo's prior phrase, 'Di quell'amor' (whose motivic seed, in 'La donna è mobile' rhythm, or 'E' il sol dell'anima' rhythm, appears in embryo in the sketch), most of the sketch's refrain characteristics were transferred to the refrain of 'Addio, del passato'. There, too, one finds the bright (now parallel) major whose promise is extinguished through a lamenting stepwise descent from the piece's high point,

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[42] The sketch is reproduced in facsimile by Carlo Gatti, *Verdi nelle immagini* (Milan, 1941), 65. A transcription of the music (though lacking two *fermate*, one of which – prior to the 'refrain' – helps to identify the intended genre) may be found in Budden (see n. 8), II, 127.

[43] The correspondence on which my dating of the sketch is based may be found in Marcello Conati, *La bottega della musica: Verdi e la Fenice* (Milan, 1983), 267–332.

a'', followed by a concluding shift to the tonic in a higher register – in this
case, a'' once again.

Ex. 4: Melody of Verdi's sketch for 'Ah! fors'è lui'

Thus the connections between the two pieces involve more than formal pat-
terning and implied generic content. One may also note that the Act I sketch
begins with a later-suppressed anacrusis on b'. This produces an unusual rhyth-
mic pattern in the opening a a phrases that accommodates easily no poetic-
metrical scheme. (This also provides more evidence that it was conceived prior
to obtaining a text.) Certainly the eventual *settenario* opening, 'Ah! fors'è lui
che l'anima', does not fit well; in fact, the opening rhythm seems more suited
to the *doppio senario* 'Addio, del passato – Bei sogni ridenti'. In addition, the
haunting 6–5 sonority that pervades 'Ah! fors'è lui' may be echoed in the oboe's
brief introduction to 'Addio, del passato'. It is even possible that the structural
pitches of the oboe's introduction to the latter piece, a minor mode 6–5–3–[2]–1,
were intended to recall, however subliminally, the head-motive of the earlier
aria.

In sum, several features link 'Ah! fors'è lui' and 'Addio, del passato'. The
two pieces frame the opera to create symmetrical points of reference: one
cannot adequately discuss either without considering its relationship to the
other. At this point it is helpful to recall Verdi's initial title for the opera:
Amore e morte.[44] Whether intended or not, the sense of the earlier title is

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[44] *Amore e morte* was the title of the original scenario prepared by Piave in mid-October
1852. See Conati, *La bottega*, 302–4.

unmistakably projected in these two solo pieces: Love in Act I and Death in Act III. The type of concealed content considered here in 'Addio, del passato' is at the heart of the early-1850 Verdian style: a foreground presentation of a technically naïve simplicity, or perhaps of the purity of a clean-edged melodic line, is imbued with inner affective content. The 'minimal' aspect of Verdi's compositional choices belies a broad range of melodic, poetic, generic and structural effects interwoven with recurring musical gestures to produce a result both incisive and immediate – one that will engage several levels of understanding.

Basevi's discussion of this piece, already evoked, focuses on a matter quite different from that of ascertaining its 'structural' genre:

One may count the *aria* 'Addio, del passato' among the most expressive. Here that rather appropriate bitterness is found in which one sees all one's beautiful hopes disappear. The rhythm is indeed most apt, for it imitates poor Violetta's sorrow [*affanno*, also carrying the sense of 'shortness of breath']. And those interruptions of the song, where the oboe takes over, could not be more effective.[45]

Basevi is concerned with another type of content here. He admires the gestures of 'Addio, del passato' on the grounds that they are clinically descriptive: the underlying implication is that one point of the music is to chart the moment-by-moment physical condition of the heroine. One may suppose that Basevi considered it self-evident that the opening accompaniment – which we have suggested might also be a distorted allusion to a dance – was to be heard as an evocation of Violetta's sorrowful condition, or heavy, irregular breathing. The oboe interpolations after the words 'anima stanca', in the connecting link to the refrain (traditionally a relatively free section within a *couplet*) and within the refrain itself, touchingly suggest that the consumptive Violetta is acutely short of breath and strength. Her melodic continuity fails, and the plangent oboe serves as a temporary substitute during a pause for recovery. Basevi might also urge us to hear the onset of the major-mode refrain (the a melody transformed into the parallel major) as the sudden rush of seeming health and vigour within the dying consumptive – a clinical symptom known all too well to Verdi's mid-nineteenth-century audience – only to have this 'false glow' snuffed out with an unorthodox relapse into the minor (at the precise moment when Violetta's health and breath fail once again, and the oboe is obliged to take over).[46]

The 'medical' point, which might initially seem simplistic, resonates all the more when one considers the compositional history of 'Addio, del passato'. When Verdi first wrote the piece in skeleton-score format (essentially the voice with occasional bass support) into the autograph score of *La traviata*, it was different from the final version. Far more difficult demands were placed on the singer; much of the melody of the climactic refrain was different; and, above

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[45] Basevi (see n. 23), 237–8.
[46] The point has also been made more recently by Denis Arnold, '*La Traviata*: From Real Life to Opera', *La traviata: Giuseppe Verdi* (English National Opera Guide No. 5), ed. Nicholas John (London, 1981), 27. See also Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, *Giacomo Puccini: La bohème* (Cambridge, 1986), 74–7.

all, it lacked those oboe interruptions that six years later seemed so revealing to Basevi.

Ex. 5 is a transcription of the melody and probable bass support that Verdi wrote into the autograph score for the first stanza of the aria, probably in mid-February 1853, shortly before he returned to fill in the harmonies and fully orchestrate the piece.[47] I have produced this 'first version' – actually a middle stage of the compositional process, but the earliest that is currently recoverable – through a restoration of erasures and deletions in the manuscript score, now located in the Archivio Storico of G. Ricordi & C. in Milan.[48] There are eight notable divergences between this early version and the final one:

1. In Ex. 5, measure 1, there is a longer pause between the pivotal word 'morta' (the end of the preceding recitative) and the onset of the oboe introduction.
2. The oboe introduction does not yet have the twisting, waltz-like contours of the final version. This early version is, in a sense, less 'situation-specific' – or, perhaps, there may be fatalistic echoes in it of a melody heard just before in the scene (played on two solo violins and associated with the memory of Alfredo, measures 10–13 and 15–16 after Rehearsal No. 1).
3. The accompaniment does not yet have its *affanno* (or distorted dance) rhythms, although it is difficult to be certain, since Verdi's skeleton score does not always provide all the details eventually realised and orchestrated.
4. The connecting link to the refrain at the end of the b section, on fols. 241–241ᵛ, is fully texted for Violetta. There are no interruptions for the oboe. (One might also notice that this passage contains one fewer measure than the final version. Verdi eventually added a repetition of the 'sostegno' idea on the final measures of fol. 241: see Ex. 6a.)
5. The refrain begins with a change of key signature into three sharps. In the final version the temporary 'false glow' is accomplished through accidentals.
6. In the fourth measure of the refrain (fol. 242, measure 1) one finds a sudden – and surprising – leap to $g^{\sharp\prime\prime}$–$f^{\sharp\prime\prime}$ on the word 'desìo'. This leap to the leading tone (the final version moves *con forza* only to e'') causes a breach in the smooth, tonic-and-dominant contours of the piece, and it impresses us as an extraordinary, perhaps even purposely awkward gesture. From the 'risk' of this melodic $g^{\sharp\prime\prime}$ a curious descent follows – curious, for instance, in its stressing of d'', an augmented fourth lower, in the next measure. The affective point of this unusual melodic procedure must have been emotional extremity

within the 'false glow' of major: 'Della traviata sorridi al desìo' – an extravagant outpouring on the word 'desìo'.

7. This refrain melody proceeds immediately (fol. 242, 'Lei deh perdona') with an explicit continuation of the 'lame-dance' iambic accentual pattern, thus linking a larger portion of this major-mode apotheosis with the minor-mode beginning of the song.

8. The refrain's collapse into the minor, beginning on fol. 242ᵛ, is fully texted. There are as yet no 'clinical' oboe interruptions. (Note also the original text, 'Tutto morì' ['Everything has died'] on fol. 242ᵛ.)

For the sake of completeness we should note that a complex of intermediate readings – one cannot speak simply of a 'second' version – is also recoverable from the autograph-score erasures.⁴⁹ The most significant variants are shown in Ex. 6a and 6b. However hastily Verdi might have composed *La traviata* as a whole, he took special pains with this piece. These intermediate readings include at least some of the oboe interpolations – the breaks in Violetta's melodic line provide room for them (Ex. 6a, Version 2, middle staff) – and it may be that Verdi also altered the motivic shape of the oboe introduction at this point. The intermediate readings also reveal a major-mode refrain melody different from either that of the first or the final version (Ex. 6b, middle staff). Here we find a more gentle descent from that unusual $g^{♯''}$ – a linear smoothing-out of the earlier melodic tritone. This 'second' version of the refrain melody, in fact, is essentially the one that Verdi wrote as the skeleton score for the second stanza of the solo piece, on fols. 243ᵛ–247 (a version that still lacked the oboe interpolations) – the relevant portion of this 'second-stanza' version is shown in Ex. 7.⁵⁰ Eventually – all this happened either at Sant'Agata in middle February

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⁴⁹ The intermediate readings were pointed out to me by David Rosen, who has also worked with the autograph score of *La traviata*, in particular with the early versions of 'Addio, del passato'.

⁵⁰ Separating the erased superimposed layers with absolute confidence is impossible, but Exx. 5, 6 and 7 seem the likeliest solutions. Some of the reasoning behind the choices is as follows. Verdi seems to have decided to alter the refrain melody from the first version (Ex. 5) to the second version (Ex. 6b, Version 2) at the moment that he was writing the first strophe into the autograph score. (The task of producing the skeleton-score layer was probably simply that of copying a pre-existing continuity draft and making whatever modifications seemed appropriate.) Immediately after the first strophe had been written (or merely copied), Verdi seems to have wanted to alter the refrain melody to that found in Ex. 6b, Version 2. He then erased Version 1 in the first strophe and entered his alteration. Proceeding to the second strophe, he wrote the refrain in a clean copy of Version 2, but with very slight alterations, and still without the oboe interpolations (Ex. 7). (It is also possible that some of the minor discrepancies between Ex. 6b, Version 2 and Ex. 7 are the residue of Verdi's tinkerings with the first version before he had devised this new, 'second' melody. If so, the first and second strophes of the skeleton score would have corresponded more exactly.) At a later point he revised and standardised the two strophes. A number of conclusions follow: (1) it seems likely that the 'first' refrain melody (Ex. 5) is closer to the one found on his (now unavailable) continuity draft, which could have been composed several weeks before mid-February 1853; (2) the 'second' refrain melody (Ex. 6b, Version 2) must have been conceived at the moment of writing the skeleton score, as must therefore be the case with the 'second-stanza' version found in Ex. 7; and (3) the decision to add the oboe interpolations occurred some time after writing the skeleton score of the second stanza – probably during the process of orchestration.

Ex. 5: Verdi's skeleton-score draft of 'Addio, del passato', first stanza

1853 or during the orchestration process at the Venetian rehearsals in late February and early March – Verdi arrived at the version that we now know.

Ex. 6a: Differing versions of the connecting 'Link' (x:) of 'Addio, del passato'

Why did Verdi make these changes? My thoughts revolved initially around the standard centre-points: issues of abstract structure, voice-leading, melodic contour, textual appropriateness and the positing of Verdi's sudden discovery of the delicious appoggiatura chords of 'desìo' and 'A lei'. Arguments could certainly be made along these lines, and the natural impulse would be to praise the final version at the expense of the earlier, thus demonstrating Verdi's growing 'compositional mastery', and thus embracing the clichés of revision analysis. Some of these things may be relevant (the lines of discussion are self-evident),

Ex. 6b: Differing versions of the refrain of 'Addio, del passato'

Ex. 7: Melody of Verdi's skeleton-score draft of 'Addio, del passato', second stanza

but I am increasingly convinced that the most likely explanation – particularly for the oboe interpolations – is a practical one, something considerably less arcane. The first version is enormously taxing for the voice, especially when one considers the fully texted ends of the initial section and refrain. To ask a singer to perform all of this in a slow tempo for two stanzas, after having sung Violetta in Acts I and II, was probably too much. Verdi may have received some advice on this point: it seems reasonable to suppose that the actual 'first singer' of all the versions must have been Giuseppina Strepponi, herself having retired from a singing career with an overtaxed, overstrained voice – the same Giuseppina who had written proudly to Verdi during the January days of the rehearsals for the *Trovatore* premiere (only a month and a half before Verdi would write the skeleton score of 'Addio, del passato') about 'il NOSTRO

Trovatore' ('OUR *Trovatore*').[51] Could Verdi have been heeding her sugges-
tions? Or perhaps the revisions occurred at the late-February and early-March
1853 rehearsals with the Venetian Violetta, Fanny Salvini-Donatelli.

With the easing of the vocal part seems to have come the idea of the oboe
interpolations, along with some melodic and harmonic revisions; the piece fell
into place. In other words, Verdi's compositional solution – involving the inser-
tion of vocal pauses to relieve a taxing part – parallels the dramatic effect perceived
by Basevi: the *oboe patetico* as the image of vocal-melodic (and major-mode)
truncation when the breath and strength fail. If this reasoning is correct, Verdi
seems to have grounded dramatic illusion in physical performance-reality. One
suspects that such considerations are palpably obvious to performers (and
audiences), and they are doubtless at the heart of much of Verdi; but, as yet,
they have been little pursued in the scholarly literature.

Finally, it is also worth stressing that in his decision to ease the vocal demands
of 'Addio, del passato' Verdi did not simply delete the second stanza. The
presence of two stanzas with refrain – the defining feature of the *couplets* –
drives to the generic essence of the piece, and it was not to be tampered with.
The common practice of cutting the second stanza is aesthetically indefensible.

<div align="center">3</div>

Both the generic content and the evidence of Verdi's reworking of 'Addio,
del passato' invite us to reconsider its seeming naïveté, textural transparency
and 'hand-organ' simplicity, for these things conceal a network of affective asso-
ciations evoked for larger dramatic purposes. If we seek to uncover the dominant
aesthetic of middle-period Verdi, we need to realise that the central composi-
tional problem with which Verdi grappled during these *Rigoletto/Trovatore/
Traviata* years was the creation of a sharp-edged, elemental music that was
as simple and 'artless' as possible, precisely in order to keep the music from
calling attention to its own elaboration. Although Verdi never presented his
aesthetic in a formal, summary fashion – he was no polemicist – the gist can
be inferred from his astonishingly consistent browbeating of singers and libret-
tists; from his criticisms of other composers; from his cool response to others'
acceptance of French decorative conventions; from his later reaction to the
Wagner operas as well as to the onset of 'progressive' opera in Italy; and from
his advocacy of what he was to call '*Dramma*' during the *Otello* and *Falstaff*
years. According to this conception the four principal elements of opera – text,
music, vocal display and stage picture (the acting, accessories, sets and costumes)
– were to be kept in a relative balance, and all four were subordinate to the
higher aim of creating *Dramma*. In brief, *Dramma* was the constant, compelling
engagement of the spectator with the portrayed events, the experience of a total,
unyielding absorption into something beyond the individual elements that

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[51] Strepponi to Verdi, 3 January 1852, in Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan, 1959),
II, 203–4.

constituted the medium. Anything that jeopardised this ensnaring of the specta-
tor was discarded as *freddo*, self-indulgent or ludicrous.

This means that to have striven to create a work of art that invites the spectator
to admire or become involved in only one element of the total experience –
the 'individualised' compositional mastery, the cleverness or finesse of the text,
the vocal artistry *per se* or the magnificence of the sets and costumes – would
have been to commit an aesthetic blunder. Instead, the music of Verdi's maturity
insisted on a stripping-down of musical and textual complications in search
of spare, concentrated and economical gestures. Achieving maximal results with
minimal means seems to have been Verdi's ruling principle: the best theatrical
music was transparent, something by which one was powerfully affected, but
through which one glided to the truer theatrical experience of *Dramma*. Thus
much of the burden of expression in the earlier and middle works had to reside
in the pre-existing affective content of the structural genre system: this was
a solution that freed Verdi from the necessity of elaborating his musical fore-
grounds (a compositional preoccupation that characteristically emerges as one
of the compensations for a decline in the power of genres and types). Therefore
general attitudes and approaches, along with methods of structural analysis,
which have evolved to enhance our perception of German and Austrian 'auton-
omous' music seem unlikely to bring us to the central point of this music,
to what Alfred Einstein once wonderingly called its 'secret'.[52] One is better
advised to seek Verdi on his own ground, producing musical strategies within
a context defined largely through the manipulations of recognised formulas,
a context of which there is little reason to believe that he disapproved.

Thus the paradox: Verdi's formal experiments at mid-century do not directly
address the larger issue of 'form' at all. Their immediately practical task – working
in friendly partnership with the most stereotypical or formulaic solutions –
is to create effective *Dramma*. 'Form', or the current historical state of any
given genre, was too abstract an issue to merit serious, separate consideration
in the concrete world of operatic creation. When alteration of a convention
served a specific dramatic purpose, it was adopted; when it did not, it was
not. The 'secret' of early and middle Verdi will remain untouched unless we
address directly the art of the generic and take pleasure in the conventions
along with the composer. The aesthetic development of early and middle Verdi
will remain a puzzle until we recognise that genres speak loudest when they
are deformed affirmatively, that is, when they are embraced all the more
fervently.

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[52] 'There must be more to [Verdi's "popular" works of the late 1840s and early 1850s] than
we believed; the master who could create such an opera [as *Falstaff*] did not write *Trovatore*
as mere hand organ music. [. . .] Verdi's secret (I am not now speaking of the so-called
secrets of form) lies as deep as Wagner's.' Alfred Einstein, 'Opus Ultimum' [1937], in
Essays on Music, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York, 1956), 87.