

VERDI'S
MIDDLE
PERIOD

1849 – 1859

*Source Studies,
Analysis, and
Performance Practice*

Edited by

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To Floyd Herzog and the people of Belfast

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potentially carrying translatable meaning and thus speaking with potential moral force: "Di quell'amor" is a descending melody; Alfredo's love for a prostitute is base; the melody is, therefore, expressive and, therefore, *correct*. At points such as this, we will want to turn away: this is surely not "our" Basevi, not the "authentic" one, not the bearer of history, the carrier of audience expectations. "How pale he glares! His form and cause conjoined." Let's bring him back into our world of patterns and forms, where Verdian meaning can be expressed in charts and graphs, where descending melodies are motivic shapes that gain meaning—perhaps even moral force—when compared with other shapes, other abstract patterns. Let's see Basevi moving purposefully down the garden path toward us, not galloping all over the countryside in search of strange beasts. The shock of the old is to be avoided. "Why, look you there! Look how it steals away!"

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Ottocento Opera as Cultural Drama: Generic Mixtures in *Il trovatore*

JAMES HEPOKOSKI

There must be more to [Verdi's mid-century works] 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

A persistent difficulty facing analysts of Verdi's music of the period around *Il trovatore* (1853) is that of the disparity between its blunt simplicity and the enormous expressive power that it seems to unlock. How is it possible to explore deeper currents in what strikes us as so unassumingly direct? Verdi's musical procedures, along with those of his predecessors, have been much studied over the past three decades, and with considerable success: strong advances have been made along these lines. Still, some might wonder whether Einstein's implicit challenge from 1937—that of seeking a "secret" buried in the seemingly "mere hand organ music"—has been given an adequate response.¹

In an earlier essay I suggested that one of Verdi's secrets might have lain in his ability to dramatize and mix the Mediterranean operatic genres in place at the time.² Among these genres (some of which will be reconsidered below) were the Italian lyric-form-based aria, duet, and ensemble and the non-Italian (often French) strophic-song types, divisible into *couplets*, *romances*, ballades, and so on. In that essay I observed that lyric-form-based designs, strophic structures, and the like need not be considered only as neutral, content-free patterns of organization: their interest

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1. Einstein, "Opus Ultimum" [1937], in *Essays on Music*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: W. W. Norton, 1956), 87.

2. Hepokoski, "Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: 'Addio, del passato' (*La traviata*, Act III)," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1 (1989): 249–76.

extends beyond their functions as abstract forms. My contention was that as genres they carried social connotations that Verdi harnessed for specific dramatic purposes: in my view genres are to be distinguished from forms on just this point.³ The most pressing issues—hermeneutic ones (ones of interpretation, particularly of implicit intangibles)—were, first, to find empirically supportable grounds for inferring what some of those connotations might have been and, then, to demonstrate how they might be applied in the reading of a specific piece.

The present essay revisits this process in more detail and with expanded implications for further work. What follows is an exercise in interpretation that, after laying out some historical and generic concerns, focuses on the problems of reading three familiar excerpts from *Il trovatore* (1853)—not coincidentally the precise locus of Einstein's challenge. My larger aim is to suggest that instead of combing through Verdi's works only to locate features of unity and musical coherence, we might also search for signs of heterogeneity and inner tension. One may understand these operas both as formal structures and as cultural texts, sites within which differing traditions, genres, and social perspectives intermingle. I shall propose not only that such things are discernible but also that they could have provided part of the energy that animated Verdi's works and helped them to resonate with their original audiences.

The Operatic Stage as Cultural Drama

The impact of opera on nineteenth-century audiences was not circumscribed by the aesthetic principle alone: the aesthetic and the sociopolitical were intertwined and mutually reinforcing. To be sure, investigating how these things might have become entangled is no easy matter. My suggestions concerning the cultural implications of some of the standard operatic genres (lyric-form aria, strophic song) are predicated on a set of broad hypotheses; further research would doubtless call for further nuancing or emendation. Such constructs, however, provide the conceptual frame for my subsequent *Trovatore* readings.

At the center of these hypotheses is the conviction that the operatic stage provides us with a series of revealing intersections of music with the history of a world of accelerating modernization. It is not without reason that Eric Hobsbawm described the civic opera house of the mid and late 1800s as "that characteristic cathedral of bourgeois culture."⁴ Here at the opera, through the thin allegories of plot and the more elusive implications of musical practice, we are invited once again to confront some of the tensions of nineteenth-century cultural politics. Thus in princi-

3. For this distinction between form and genre, see *ibid.*, 251–53. ("To refer to a [formal] convention . . . 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 [expressive, contextual, or social] 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.")

4. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 31.

ple, although we are far from approaching this goal, we might aspire to read the whole of nineteenth-century opera as a narrative of the decade-by-decade transformation of a high-prestige, old-world entertainment into a sensational and multipaned looking glass capable of reinforcing the numerous, often conflicted preoccupations of middle-class group and personal identity.

In nineteenth-century Europe the spectacle of the opera—especially serious opera—was typically associated with established wealth, lavishness, and social privilege. These associations were rooted in the "grand" history of opera itself: in the cultural prestige and frequent aristocratic support that opera had always enjoyed, in the stunning self-display that animated the operatic enterprise, and in the economic power needed for mounting individual productions and sustaining the tradition. Within this spectacle the normative mode of discourse embraced the noble, the self-important, the decorous, and the pointedly stylized—all traits of its aristocratic lineage. This potent cultural residue had its own momentum that continued to sustain opera throughout the rapidly changing nineteenth century.

Broadly viewed, the story of the operatic types is one of the newer-world bourgeoisie's incremental appropriation of an ancien-régime art form. In short, a genre that had once helped to support one type of social authority was gradually pressed into the service of quite another type. Consequently, for much of opera's history one might expect to find certain old-world/newer-world tensions being played out through its plots and genres. While this had long been the case in comic or lighter opera—eighteenth-century *opera buffa* and *opéra comique* provide clear examples—the stakes were higher in the more prestigious varieties of serious opera.

Much more empirical and interpretive work needs to be done on the ways in which this ongoing problem was addressed—closer studies, whenever possible, of real audiences and actual listeners. Still, it seems clear that as the liberals and educated bourgeoisie increased their economic and cultural influence, the central problem of European operatic style lay in the fundamental opposition of two pressing aims. On the one hand, the newly emerging public was eager to retain the grandiosity and elevation of opera and its traditions, in order to appropriate the spectacle's potential in the celebration of its own values. On the other hand, while retaining the old splendor, the new public wished to infuse the past's grand structures with the simplicity, frankness, immediacy, self-emancipation, privateness, and "natural feeling" that it saw as its own distinctions.

To be sure, this broad narrative was played out at different rates and intensities in different times and places. This differentiated multiplicity renders any general observation about the matter perilous, open to challenge. The situations in Rome, Naples, Venice, or Milan in any given decade were not identical. And even if we might wish to emphasize certain features that these situations are likely to have shared as Italian operatic cities, by no means are they to be grouped casually with, say, those in Paris, Vienna, or London. Moreover, the interior currents of each situation swirled in many directions at once, giving rise to multiple, often conflicting meanings. A full accounting of this state of affairs remains to be accomplished. Our purposes here are more limited, and we need only acknowledge that

these issues must have taken on a special tension in a politically charged, Risorgimento Italy.

If the ever-changing institution of European opera can be understood as—though not reduced to—a social mechanism for the display of contested political and cultural authority, it is reasonable to suppose that the essential parts of this mechanism are inscribed on the operatic forms themselves. One might wish to take seriously Adorno's proposition that "form is a sedimentation of [sociocultural] content."⁵

Lyric Form and Strophic Song in Mid-Century Italy

In the earlier study mentioned above, I suggested that Verdi's mid-century operas thematize such tensions both in their plots and in the generic implications of their musical structures. Among the prominent indicators of this process was Verdi's grafting of more casual strophic structures—for the most part having French connotations—not merely onto an essentially *non*-strophic Italian practice, but onto a practice whose norms he had made even more palpable in the early 1840s. It may be that the compositional issue that most absorbed Verdi in the late 1840s and early 1850s was this mixing of Italian and French practices.

Verdi was not the first Italian composer to have been concerned with this intermixture. Moving toward a rapprochement with French styles and "modern" tastes had long been a mark of emerging maturity among Italian composers: the French aspects of certain operas of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti are well known. Even within their Italian operas one need only recall, for instance, the presence of strophic solo pieces in such works as Bellini's *Norma* or Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. My point, though, is different: some ten years into his career, having solidified a blunt, formulaic Italian idiom, Verdi—aided by his librettists—seems to have singled out French-Italian generic mixture as a special compositional problem. From at least the mid 1840s onward he ever more persistently filtered a wave of largely French strophic styles through his Italian practice. *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and, especially, *La traviata* represent significant phases of this process. The French element eventually surfaced unmistakably in Verdi's Parisian opera in 1855, *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, which, in addition to showcasing two arias in the grand French ternary structures, also contains the first undisguised French *couplets* in Verdi's operatic output—Hélène's *sicilienne*, "Merci, jeunes amies" and Henri's *mélodie*, "La brise souffle au loin," both at the opening of the fifth act.

Before proceeding further we should clarify our terms. By Italian forms I mean those dramatic/structural designs that have been studied in well-known work by Friedrich Lippmann, David Lawton, Philip Gossett, Robert Moreen, Harold S.

5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 7; cf. pp. 202, 209. See also Adorno, "Classes and Strata" and "Opera" in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* [1962], trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1976), 55–70, 71–84. Cf. n. 3 above.

Powers, Joseph Kerman, Scott Balthazar, Steven Huebner, and others.⁶ These include the standard operatic aria, duet, and ensemble patterns, most of whose constituent set pieces are grounded in the melodic design often described as "lyric form" or "the lyric prototype" (with musical phrases or sections usually schematized by an alphabetic sequence, such as *a a' b a''* *coda* or *a a' b c* *coda*—two frequently encountered options).⁷ In its simplest occurrences the lyric prototype comfortably sets the common double-quatrain song-texts found in Italian opera (eight lines of text disposed in four musical phrases of roughly equal length, with two lines allotted to each phrase). The necessary accommodations to handle either shorter texts (usually, with six lines) or longer ones (with, say, either ten or twelve lines) were not difficult to make: in general, some line repetition was required in the six-line case, and some musical expansion was called for in the ten- or twelve-line case.

The published work of the past three decades has demonstrated that the study of lyric-form designs is more complex than one might have initially predicted. Since the *a a' b a''* and *a a' b c* formulas are rudimentary, heuristic reductions, variants, and expressive deformations of the pattern abound. For this reason, any general description of the elements of lyric form almost immediately bogs down in the attempt to account for a host of much-discussed problematic cases, alternate types, foreshadowings in earlier repertoires, later variants, expansions, exceptions, and so on. Still, a consensus has emerged that Verdi's lyric-form patterns of the 1840s, for all of their possibilities for expressive deformation, tended to be blunter, more formulaic than those of his predecessors. For example, even as Scott Balthazar lobbied in 1988 on behalf of Rossini's early contribution to the development of the lyric-form design, he noted (in part summarizing the conclusions of other scholars) "an unmistakable trend [ca. 1820–50] in the direction of simplified, standardized melodic forms."⁸

6. These writings are too numerous to list completely here. Some of the principal ones of the past thirty years follow: Friedrich Lippmann, "Verdi e Bellini," *Atti I*, 184–96; David Lawton, "Tonality and Drama in Verdi's Early Operas" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973); Philip Gossett, "Verdi, Ghislanzoni and *Aida*: The Uses of Convention," *Critical Inquiry* 1 (1974): 291–334; Gossett, *Anna Bolena and the Artistic Maturity of Gaetano Donizetti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Robert Anthony Moreen, "Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1975); Harold S. Powers, "'La solita forma' and 'The Uses of Convention,'" *Acta musicologica* 59 (1987): 65–90; Powers, "Simon Boccanegra I.10–12: A Generic-Genetic Analysis of the Council Chamber Scene," *19th-Century Music* 13 (1989): 101–28; William Ashbrook and Harold Powers, *Puccini's "Turandot": The End of a Great Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Joseph Kerman, "Lyric Form and Flexibility in *Simon Boccanegra*," *Studi verdiani* 1 (1982): 47–62; Scott Balthazar, "Evolving Conventions in Italian Serious Opera: Scene Structure in the Works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, 1810–1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1985); Balthazar, "Rossini and the Development of the Mid-Century Lyric Form," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41 (1988): 102–25; Steven Huebner, "Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 117 (1992): 123–47.

7. Certain sections of the larger Italian forms—for example, the so-called *tempi d'attacco* that often precede the cantabile (adagio) movements of duets or ensembles—are not usually lyric-form based. Most of the principal lyrical sections are, however.

8. Balthazar, "Rossini," 108.

This is not the place to rehearse the intricate lyric-form discussions of the past. Rather, I would propose that we recast our understanding of these melodic patterns, and of the dramatic uses to which they were put, by highlighting certain features of them and reconceptualizing others. First, much evidence (mostly statistical) suggests that the Italian operatic genres are nonstrophic in their purest states, that is, when not mixed with French or other norms. This means that when one finds two *differently texted* cycles through a complete lyric-form melody in an Italian opera—say, within the cantabile portion (first movement) of a double aria—one might conclude that we are encountering an overlay of the strophic principle (two stanzas) onto that of a more normative, single-stanza cantabile.⁹ (For instance, I would view “Casta diva” from *Norma* and “Regnava nel silenzio” from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, both cantabiles built from double-stanza texts, as examples of these mixtures.)¹⁰

Second, lyric-form structures may often be broadly described by letter-schemes, but under no circumstances should they be limited by them. Steven Huebner has produced the most recent—and most convincing—discussion of the flexibility with which the structure’s underlying principles were treated in actual practice, and in so doing he has underscored the weaknesses of a merely “alphanumeric” description of lyric form. As Huebner pointed out, such a description frequently disregards important harmonic information. In addition, when a lyric form is not of the simpler *a a' b a''* type—especially among pre-Verdian composers—it is often counterproductive to try to determine the onset of a clearly articulated “c” limb. One may encounter situations in which the *b* section flows directly, without a clear harmonic break or interruption, into the final cadential activity. The result, which may be schematized as *a a' b- coda*, is probably most productively understood as a self-standing, third lyric-form type, which harbors the potential of shading into or suggesting aspects of the other types.¹¹ Attempts to grasp the *a a' b- coda* design as a

9. The term “differently texted” is crucial, since it distinguishes genuinely strophic songs (songs with more than one stanza of text) from the convention of the repeated cabaletta. (The cabaletta, the faster, concluding movement of a double aria, is typically repeated [renotated] literally—music *and* text—before plunging into a formal coda. Such a structure is repetitive but not strophic.)

10. In the case of “Regnava nel silenzio” Donizetti set the two textual stanzas to differing music (varied musical stanzas). Note, however, that the major-mode ending of the second stanza’s lyric form (“e l’onda pria si limpida . . .”) rounds with the minor-mode opening of the first’s.

I might add that scholars have used the term “stanza” in differing ways. By a poetic stanza (or strophe) I mean a closed poetic block intended be set to a complete melody (for example, a complete lyric form or its equivalent). As suggested above, such stanzas are often eight lines long (4 + 4, double quatrains), but six-, ten-, or twelve-line stanzas are not uncommon. “Double stanzas” in this repertory are inevitably structurally parallel stanzas, and for the composer they typically implied two cycles through the complete melody—although that option was not always chosen. (Some other writers have used the term “stanza” to refer to smaller units of text—for example, equating “stanza” with quatrain.)

11. These issues are discussed tellingly in Huebner, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera,” in which “Si, fa core e abbracciami” from the *Norma*-Adalgisa duet in Bellini’s *Norma* is cited as paradigmatic of the case of producing an obvious enough *b* section (which Huebner calls the “developmental area”), but then expanding it and “fusing it seamlessly with cadential function,” thus making the precise locating of any presupposed *c* area, at best, uncomfortable (p. 133).

special case of the *a a' b c coda* type can seem forced, and there is no reason to suppose that our reconstruction of lyric-form types need to be limited to only two patterns (*a a' b a'* and *a a' b c*). From a larger perspective, most lyric forms are classifiable as characteristically operatic or vocal subtypes of some sort of binary (*a a' b c*, *a a' b-*) or rounded binary (*a a' b a''*) structure¹²—which in turn puts them into a dialogue with many similar types of European structures, both operatic and nonoperatic, from the prior half-century or more.

Moreover, the compact design that we identify as lyric form (at least of the more common types) is perhaps more fundamentally recognized as tracking through a succession of three dramatic-psychological zones (*a a' / b / a''* or *a a' / b / c*, plus, in solo pieces, an immediate coda that in effect is a fourth zone). The inevitable progress through these expressive zones—a threading through an end-accented process, not merely a realization of a static form—is more basic than any adherence or nonadherence to a schematic arrangement, although reference to such designs or alphabetic letters can serve as a convenient shorthand. Once a composer has an operatic character enter the first zone, there is normally no turning back: the three-stage process is to be ceremonially played out and brought to its climactic end.¹³ Unless some extraordinary effect is sought, the composer commits that character to a passage through a formal, lyrically elevated psychological space.

With this in mind, it is possible to consider more closely the dramatic and expressive features of the zones, all the while attempting to synthesize and redirect material readily available in the standard studies of Italian forms, mentioned above. The summary below concerns the most normative Verdian cases (the *a a' b a'' coda* or *a a' b c coda* designs or implied generic backdrops). Exceptional cases, expansions, and expressive deformations are not dealt with here, nor is the binary situation in which *b* merges smoothly with cadential material (*a a' b- coda*). Since we are concerned here with articulating the norm, these cases, requiring individual interpretation, may for the present be set aside, although much of what is outlined below is also readily

12. Huebner, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera,” prefers to regard the “rounded binary” structure as a “ternary” one. (Within that conceptualization all *a a' b a''* lyric forms are thus ternary, and all *a a' b c* designs binary.) I shall return to the “binary”/“ternary” issue in my description below of the medial zones of lyric forms in order to suggest the retention of the “ternary” concept only for those (somewhat uncommon) *a a' b a''* designs in which *b* ends with an authentic cadence in the tonic.

13. The main exception is the compressed lyric-form variant (surfacing in the 1850s) that Kerman (“Lyric Form and Flexibility”) has schematized as *a a' c*—a pattern that, in effect, omits the medial zone (*b*). Some frequently cited examples are Renato’s “Alla vita che t’arride” and Amelia’s “Ma dall’arido stelo divulsa” from *Un ballo in maschera*. One pattern that helps us to understand the emergence of the shorter, *a a' c* design may be found in Prociada’s cabaletta, “Saint amour qui m’entraîne,” from *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, Act II. Here one finds a brief, six-line text set to an *a a' c / b / c* pattern (plus, eventually, coda): most interestingly, all six lines of text are “used up” in the initial zone, *a a' c*; the medial zone, *b*, revisits lines 1 and 2, and the final zone, the *c* melody again, reuses lines 5 and 6. In any event, the point is that a “c” extension has been interpolated into the first lyric-form zone. For a different way of interpreting the *a a' c* pattern, see Huebner, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera.”

extendable to them. Basing some of my terminology on that of Balthazar and Huebner, I refer to the three lyric-form zones in the standard cases as follows:

- (1) The *initial zone* (*initial phrase-pair*). Frequently prepared by an instrumental introduction, this zone (launching the first words of the text) is the equivalent of the alphabetic *a a'*, or the symmetrical "thematic block." Each *a* phrase typically sets two lines of text; the whole zone is normally 2 + 2 lines in length. (Exceptional texts—ones whose first block is longer than a quatrain, for instance—can invite exceptional treatment.) In some instances each *a* phrase is further subdivisible into two similar subphrases, one for each line of text ($a = \alpha + \alpha$), and in extreme cases even the α subphrases may be further subdivided into repetitive motivic material (as in the cabaletta "Di quella pira" from *Il trovatore*).

The initial zone normally unfolds as a straightforward parallel period (that is, as a period built from two phrases that begin similarly), although it may also be a single repeated or slightly varied phrase cadencing in the tonic (as in "Il balen del suo sorriso" from *Il trovatore*) or some other sort of balanced phrase-pair.¹⁴ On occasion, the second phrase is articulated on a different scale degree from the first (that is, as a sequence). Much less commonly (at least in Verdi), one might come across a balancing second phrase not melodically parallel with the first. This situation—always with the implication of two textual lines for each phrase—would be describable with the letters *ax* (in order to conserve the letter *b* exclusively for the subsequent, medial zone). Within an *ax*-type initial zone, if the two-line *a*-element is further subdivisible into a pair of more or less similar subphrases ($\alpha + \alpha'$), the initial zone might be most accurately described not as a "period" but as what Schoenberg called a "sentence" (two similar short modules plus a continuation, in this case representable as $\alpha + \alpha'x$ —or simply as $\alpha \alpha'x$ —the letters selected here in order to suggest the four lines' participation within a larger, lyric-binary design that would more normatively unfold as an *a a' b a''* or *a a' b c* structure).

Regardless of its internal rhetorical plan (in Verdi, usually that of a period), the initial zone typically ends with an authentic cadence either in the tonic or in a different, related key (typically V or iii in major, III in minor). Whatever the zone's rhetorical or harmonic plan, its function is to mark the onset of the lyrical, to strike the formal pose, to set the expressive terms of the utterance-at-hand. On occasion, its final line (usually line 4) or two may be expanded or repeated for added emphasis as this first section proceeds into

14. "Among the large number of 16-bar [lyric-form, four-phrase] melodies in *Ottocento* opera after 1820, beginnings are the least variegated. About three quarters of the melodies written by Donizetti, Bellini, and Verdi in the early and middle part of his career—and many by Rossini too—are launched by two four-bar phrases that stand in an antecedent-consequent relationship to one another to form a [parallel] period" (Huebner, "Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera," 124. For "balanced phrases," see 127.

the closing cadence (as in Lady Macbeth's cantabile, "Vieni! t'affretta! accendere").

- (2) The *medial zone*. This is the equivalent of *b* in the standard descriptions of the form; with standard, eight-line texts it typically sets lines 5 and 6.¹⁵ (For ten- or twelve-line texts, this zone may be extended to cover additional lines.) This zone serves to provide space for some sort of psychological moving-outward from the first zone. It often furnishes a marked harmonic, modal, textural, or thematic contrast to the initial zone: for example, major-mode lyric forms may introduce minor-mode mixture at this point (serving to prolong V of the tonic *minor*); or one may encounter brief tonicizations of nearly related keys (such as vi)—perhaps as part of a harmonic sequence.

In most cases, the medial zone furnishes an increasing harmonic intensification (for instance, prolonging a "holding pattern" on the dominant or moving toward a strongly emphasized dominant at the end); this accumulation of energy prepares the platform from which the third, climactic zone will be launched. In some instances its final moment may even be marked with a dramatic fermata pausing on the dominant (as in Lady Macbeth's cabaletta, "Or tutti sorgete!"). The crucial manner in which the tension built into such a medial zone empties into the next zone—the pivotal moment within the form—could be treated in a variety of ways for different expressive effects.

Less frequently, and less dramatically, the medial zone ends with a cadence in the tonic. Indeed, it may end with a perfect authentic cadence (as concludes the four-line medial zone in "Ernani! . . . Ernani, involami," m. 17), with the powerful suggestion that the harmonic and linear motion has been brought to full closure. More commonly, however, that potential closure is weakened in one way or another: it may be weakened, for example, through an imperfect authentic cadence (with the third scale degree, $\hat{3}$, in the upper voice, as in Elvira's complementary cabaletta, "Tutto sprezzo che d'Ernani," m. 26) or through a perfect authentic cadence subjected to an immediate melodic drop from $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{5}$ (as in Giovanna's "Sempre all'alba ed alla sera" from *Giovanna d'Arco*). In such cadential cases, the subsequent phrase (final zone) normally returns to the melody of the initial zone (*a'*) with something of a merely "additive" effect, and the overall sense of the whole becomes more perhaps more emphatically ternary than rounded binary.¹⁶

15. The norm, of course, allows for flexibility and exception. In his early operas Verdi often sought ways of lengthening lyric form settings to make them more architecturally expansive. In the cantabile/cabaletta pair, "Ernani! . . . Ernani, involami" and "Tutto sprezzo che d'Ernani," for instance, Verdi set the eight-line text as follows: *a* (1–2), *a'* (3–4), *b* (5–8!), *a* (7–8). In the former case, he also provided an extension to the final zone, to be described in the appropriate section below.

16. Huebner, "Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera," refers to such returns of the *a* material after a medial cadence in the tonic as "additive returns" (as opposed to the more common "integrated returns").

- (3) The *final zone*. Within *a' b a''* and *a' b c* lyric forms, this is a clearly articulated, emphatically cadential zone, driving toward a concluding perfect authentic cadence, often by means of an expanded cadential progression involving pre-dominant harmonies (I⁶, IV or ii⁶, and so on). The final zone is the equivalent of either *a''* or *c* in the standard descriptions, and it normally uses up the final two lines of the given text. (This would be lines 7 and 8 of the standard eight-line format. There are certainly exceptions, however: in short texts—fewer than eight lines—lines already presented in the medial zone usually have to be recirculated.)

In terms of its expressive content, this is the zone of the expansive, spotlighted conclusion, the moment of truth, the textual and emotional point of the song, the essence of the psychological situation. Consequently, if it returns to a variant of the melody of the initial zone (*a''*) the thought invites itself to be understood as rounded, contained, centered. On the other hand, if we encounter a new melody or marked change of texture here (*c*), the suggestion would seem to be that of a transcendence (or a dissolution) of the initial zone's formal pose—depending on the details, perhaps a shift into something deeper, more honest, more turbulent, or even more “natural.”

The climactic nature of the thought is obvious enough when the medial zone has prepared it with a strong dominant effect. In those rarer, “ternary” instances in which the medial zone cadences in the tonic (see above), the subsequent “additive” return to the opening melody, usually enriched with an expanded cadential progression, may strike one less as a conclusion finally produced than as an emphatic afterthought, a fiercely loyal, underscored confession of adherence to the sentiment with which the lyric form began.

For additional emphasis, or perhaps as a strategy to expand the naturally short-winded lyric form, this climactic final zone is occasionally recycled in a repetition, sometimes slightly varied.¹⁷ This repetition may be immediate (as in the expansive, twelve-line “Ah! sì, ben mio, coll'essere” from *Il trovatore*). Especially in earlier Verdi, however, the repetition may be preceded by an extra musical limb. Typically, this interpolation between the two statements of the final zone will have one of two functions:

- (a) particularly in those rare cases in which there still remains additional text to set, it may have the characteristics of a “new” medial zone (in effect, returning to the dominant function of *b* with new material, as in “Va, pensiero, sull'ale dorate” from *Nabucco*);¹⁸ or, more often,
- (b) when the full text has already been delivered, it typically gives the impression of having entered a “first coda-space” which is soon

17. Also possible, though apparently less common, is the restatement of both the medial zone and the final zone. Huebner, *ibid.*, 134–35, cites and discusses examples.

18. What triggers the unusual feature in the case of “Va, pensiero” is the presence of two eight-line textual stanzas, which Verdi chose to set musically not as a strophic structure but rather as an expanded lyric form. See the formal overview of this piece in n. 66 below.

pushed aside—often around the expected cadenza point—in order to return to an impulsive, ardent restatement of the climactic final zone (as in “Anch'io dischiuso un giorno” from *Nabucco*, “Ernani! . . . Ernani, involami” from *Ernani*, and “Dal più remoto esilio” from *I due Foscari*).¹⁹ In each case, the second presentation of the final zone will lead to the coda space proper.

- (4) The *coda space*. This normally begins after all of the textual lines have been sung and brought to a perfect authentic cadence. Hence it immediately follows the final zone in solo pieces; we should note, however, that if the lyric form in question is the *proposta* (initial solo statement) of a duet or ensemble, there is usually no coda and the music will proceed directly into the complementary *risposta* (or *risposte*). When the coda space exists, it nearly always involves emphatic line repetitions (typically of the last line or two of the lines delivered in the final zone) and it often includes a cadenza. An important zone of liberation from the more rigidly structured three preceding zones, the coda suggests a breaking into freer, less restrictive psychological space. It may therefore be used for special expressive effects. The *locus classicus* is the Count's “Il balen del suo sorriso” from *Il trovatore*, where an absolutely orthodox—perhaps even purposely stiff—lyric form of the rounded binary type (*a a' b a''*), once relieved of its obligatory structural mission, suddenly gives way to a more flexible, more spontaneous utterance in the coda.

But what about the social connotations of this genre? Since by the 1840s Verdian lyric-form structures had become (at least in his hands) common features of *Ottocento* opera, we might suspect that they could be taken to stand for the legitimacy of the established (though fictional) plot-world of the operas in which they appear. When a composer represented a character through these structures, the implication was that the character was behaving normally, as expected—that is, he or she was affirming the social axioms of the plot-world being represented on the stage. As it happens, for most of the *Primo Ottocento* these were axioms that bolstered such things as formality of utterance, honor and decorum, the postured, grand style, and so on.

Still, trying to discern the social content sedimented within lyric form is no simple matter. On the one hand, because in the earlier nineteenth century such lyric-form-based designs—at least in Italian operatic hands—had supported plots concerned primarily with the nobility, and because they were so often delivered with a self-assured formality and high decoration, these structures may often (again, only within the context of Italian opera) have carried a suggestion of the grand authority of court and/or aristocracy. On the other hand, once middle- or lower-class characters start to become

19. Often, the effect of this repetition, particularly when it enters at the moment of the expected cadenza, can be that of the interpolation of the final-zone restatement within a larger coda space proper. For a more complete list and a longer discussion from a slightly different analytical perspective, see Huebner, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera,” 135–37.

standard—not to mention such populist groups as the chorus delivering “Va, pensiero” in *Nabucco*—reading the multilayered connotations of lyric forms becomes especially difficult.

But the matter is yet more complex. The lyric design—often little more than a simple, rounded binary or ternary tune—was by no means a uniquely Italian phenomenon, nor was it limited to the nineteenth century. In his work on Beethoven and Haydn, for example, Dénes Bartha has maintained that the familiar *a a' b a''* and *a a' b c* melodic designs (which may be elaborated at various structural levels) were characteristic of, and essentially rooted in, eighteenth-century European popular songs and folk songs.²⁰ And clearly, at the “binary-form” phrase level such designs were also widely used in Austro-Germanic art music for effects that ranged broadly from the solemn/hymnic, to the heartfelt and “natural,” to the lighter, playful, or *völkisch*. Examples of both the *a a' b a''* and *a a' b c* types in this repertory are easy enough to cite. Within opera one might note, for example, that in Act II of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* Monostatos's “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden” (in two stanzas) is a rounded binary structure that may also be described as an *a a' b a''* lyric form (though without the characteristic *Ottocento* coda and display-cadenza); shortly following it, Sarastro's “In diesen heil'gen Hallen” (also in two stanzas) is shaped as a “lyric-form-like” binary design of the *a a' b c* or *a a' b-* type. Such examples are readily multiplied, and they are at least as abundant in the instrumental repertory, where they are often complicated by repeat-schemes and expanded medial and/or final zones: they occur, of course, as rounded binary or binary slow movement themes, rondo themes, concise minuet and trio themes, themes on which variations are built, and the like.²¹ Reconstructing the historical link between such

20. Bartha's term for it, “quatrain,” would be misleading if applied to *Ottocento* operatic melodies, since lyric-form patterns typically set eight lines of verse, not four. See Bartha, “Song Form and the Concept of ‘Quatrain,’” in *Haydn Studies: Proceedings of the International Haydn Conference, Washington, D.C. 1975*, ed. Jens Peter Larsen, Howard Serwer, and James Webster (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 353–55. Here Bartha also argues that “the Q-concept [quatrain-concept] can be applied on different levels, from the 8-bar period upward to extended structures consisting of 24, 32, or 48 measures.” For Bartha, Q is “a long-neglected type of Haydn's formal structure (which also appears in Mozart, Beethoven, and elsewhere).” See also Bartha, “On Beethoven's Thematic Structure,” in *The Creative World of Beethoven*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: Norton, 1970), 257–76 (in which Bartha had proposed a different term for the design, “quaternary stanza structure,” or QSS). Cf. also the discussion of Bartha and the “quatrain” in William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 107–8, where it is described as a vocally derived “two-period form in four phrases,” in which “the opening period (A A) may or may not modulate.”

Using the same term, “quatrain,” for different levels of structure (as does Bartha) may also be an invitation to confusion. At the level of the eight-bar (and sometimes sixteen-bar) unit, for example, current theorists would probably be more likely to use the Schoenbergian term “sentence.” At larger levels of structure, the more common option, one suspects, would be to shift to “binary” or “rounded binary” terminology, although the “sentence” concept can also apply to larger structural levels.

21. For example: the March of the Priests at the beginning of Act II of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*; the second-movement theme of his Symphony no. 39; the second-movement themes of Haydn's “Emperor” Quartet, op. 76, no. 3, and the “Surprise” Symphony, no. 94; Beethoven's

common European melodic designs and the characteristic style within *Ottocento* opera that we call “lyric form,” however, remains a task to be accomplished.

The immediate point is that this pattern became a culturally important lyrical type in the decades surrounding 1800. Most important (as Bartha's work has suggested), this type seems to have been particularly appropriate either for simpler, lighter tunes or for melodies that were intended to impress with their straightforwardness, unaffected sincerity, or popular/folklike spontaneity. At their most “expressive,” such melodies could seek to convey a “natural” (nonaristocratic/non-old-world) sentiment “rung forth without artificial ostentation from my full breast” [was mir aus der vollen Brust / ohne Kunstgepräg' erklungen], to quote from the sixth song of Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, which provides a simple rounded binary design (*ax b ax*)—in which *ax* might also be understood as a “sentence,” $\alpha \alpha' x$ —to accommodate its first three textual quatrains.

In short, even in their earliest pre-Verdian appearances these lyric-binary patterns were shot through with the connotations of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century “naturalness,” simplification, or even popularity. This is particularly true of their appearances within opera. From certain perspectives, no matter which operatic character sang them, lyric-binary melodies may already have been heard as more “modern” utterances, especially when compared with *da capo* or other, more complex operatic structures.

If so, then one of the core features of *Primo Ottocento* opera would be the elevation of this supposedly “natural” design within arias, duets, and ensembles to the position of high elegance, prestige, and formality. Composers of nineteenth-century Italian opera seem to have adopted these simpler, popular formats for melodic delivery (the pan-European binaries, *a a' b-*, *a a' b c*, *a a' b a''*, and so on), then devised methods of delivering or extending the patterns that could leverage the formats upward in grandeur and self-importance.

No issue could be more central to our understanding of Italian opera of this period than this intermixture of the popular/“modern” and the grand/“older-world,” but how and why this elevation might have occurred remains to be investigated. For the present, one may speculate that the means of generic elevation must have included such things as (1) the turning of lyric-binary melodies into stunning showpieces for virtuoso singers; (2) the wide range of delivery-styles with which the lyric format was outfitted, encompassing the simple and lyrical, the grandly declamatory, the ornately florid, and so on; (3) the addition of special-effect (often coloratura) codas and cadenzas; (4) the concatenation of multiple lyric forms into larger, more impressive structural formats (double aria, duet, ensemble); and conversely, (5) the notable reluctance within these larger formats to treat lyric forms strophically (except for informal or

Eroica finale theme; the rondo-themes of the finales of his Third and Fourth Piano Concertos, as well as that of the Violin Concerto; the “Ode to Joy” theme from the Ninth Symphony; the slow movement theme of Schubert's Fifth Symphony; the opening theme of the “Con moto tranquillo” (no. 7, the “Nocturne”) from Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and so on. Readers can doubtless supply numerous other examples.

“simple” effects, such as stage-songs, *romances*, and the like—which, typically, occurred in isolation from those larger formats).

Under such a welter of conflicting social connotations lyric-form structures in Verdian arias, duets, or ensembles may not be collapsed unproblematically into emblems of higher class-status. Interpreting individual cases demands care, and everything depends on a piece’s placement within an opera. Because of the frequency of its use, however, at least within Italy the three-zone lyric form must also have come to be widely recognized as a feature of Italian melodic shaping, a sign of mid-century *melodia italiana*. In this sense, Italian composers may have come to use this pattern as an automatically accepted factor, as “the way one wrote operatic melodies in Italy.” Thus one would be well advised, especially with regard to works composed before 1845, not to be overeager to interpret the presence of such structures: sometimes a norm is only a norm. Nevertheless, to the extent that within Italy a lyric form could imply an Italian procedure (perhaps by taking it for granted), it could also be understood as a potentially cultural or national statement. We may be invited to read such connotations when lyric forms are juxtaposed with other, competing structural principles. This juxtaposition occurs often in Verdi’s operas from the late 1840s onward—the period of an increasing encroachment of strophic structures into his style.

Within the narrow framework of *Primo Ottocento* convention, strophic designs, when contrasted with single-stanza lyric forms, seem to have implied a more self-evident social perspective of “naturalness” and simplicity. In these instances some of the latent connotations of the pan-European binary structure were now embraced more fervently. Because of their relative infrequency among the purely Italian conventions, in the period 1820–1860 the non-“elevated” stanzaic structures (comprising a variety of expressive subtypes) could suggest things non-Italian, newer-world, or even more “modern.”

Considerations along these lines surely lay behind Abramo Basevi’s description in 1859 of *La traviata* as initiating Verdi’s third manner or “French” style, a description that reminds us of the degree to which style carried cultural resonances. Basevi tells us that he was noticing “more simplicity” [*più semplicità*] manifested in an abundance of lighter, melodically attractive strophic structures: “We find many of those songs [*arie*] that are repeated [stanzaically] in the style of *couplets*; and, finally, the principal melodies for the most part unfold in small binary or ternary sections, not generally possessing all of that fullness [*sviluppo*] that the Italian genius requires.” Moreover, he indicated that this was the sort of music that “in many parts approaches the French genre of *opéra comique*”; it was “chamber music” that, “however uncommon it may be on the Italian stage is not unknown in private salons.” He was particularly attentive to the “domestic emotions” [*affetti domestici*] of *La traviata* along with the work’s informality and “lack of spectacle.”²²

22. Basevi, *Studio*, 230–31, and (for the emphasis on strophic structures), 225–40 *passim*.

Basevi could scarcely be clearer: while strophic songs are themselves rigorously formulaic (from one point of view they are as formal as the Italian single-stanza designs), at least within the context of grand Italian structure and manner of delivery, they were somewhat *déclassé*, an incursion of the lower, more popular style. And as Basevi tells us, when mixed with an intense melody or a highly charged delivery, as in *La traviata*, they could even suggest an incursion of the physical body—fleshly, erotic, or frankly sensual [*l’amore . . . voluttuoso, sensuale*—into a more ideal or chaste operatic world once dominated by the *angelica purezza* of a Bellini.²³

Strophic songs of the type considered here started to become commonplace in opera in mid-eighteenth-century France.²⁴ As Daniel Heartz has demonstrated with regard to the *romance*, one of the common subtypes, their first natural habitat was in the *opéra comique*.²⁵ In their expression of unaffected simplicity *couplets* probably appealed to certain leveling aspects of Enlightenment politics. Most important, as Carl Dahlhaus has recently insisted, through its eagerness to mix heterogeneous styles (low, middle, and elevated) the *opéra comique* “was a sign and expression of a current within musical theater that represented a further step toward the emancipation of the bourgeoisie.”²⁶ Strophic songs were not limited to the *opéra comique*: they appeared as stylistic accents in all types of nineteenth-century opera, as one element in a potpourri of mixed styles. It is precisely in this variously accented mix that the latent cultural drama of *Ottocento* opera may be sought.

I have dealt elsewhere with the mid-century tradition of employing strophic songs as a more emphatically “natural or popular song type” appropriate “for lighter music, for inset songs or for a colloquial ‘natural’ or naive discourse of (or to) characters of lesser or common blood.”²⁷ (We might also recall the parallel *Volkswiese* aesthetic of simplicity in the development of the Austro-Germanic strophic Lied in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.) To be sure, such

23. *Ibid.*, 231.

24. Strophic songs are most generally identifiable with the term *couplets*, meaning “stanzas,” although the term *couplet* also referred to the variable, pre-refrain section of each stanza. Strophic songs were often designated with other generic labels depending on content or tone, such as *romance*, ballade, and the like. Not infrequently, the scores of *romances* and other subtypes designated the stanzas as “Couplet 1,” “Couplet 2,” and so on. As a generic label, by the nineteenth century the term *couplets* seems to have had the connotation of a light, witty, or naive strophic song. Much of this information is laid out historically in Laura Probst, “The *Romance* and the *Couplet* in Selected Operas of Boieldieu and Isouard: A Preliminary Study of their Structure and Function” (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1989). Focusing on the structure and social-dramatic content of twenty-eight operatic strophic songs from the period 1810–1830, Probst’s essay has brought to light much evidence regarding this genre.

25. Daniel Heartz, “The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine and Monsigny,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1981–82): 149–78.

26. Carl Dahlhaus, “*Opéra comique* and German Opera,” in *Nineteenth-Century Music* [orig. in German, 1980], trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 64–75 (quotations from 64–65).

27. Hepokoski, “Genre and Content,” 263–67, which cites examples from Auber, Meyerbeer, Halévy, Verdi, and others.

observations concern synchronic connotations, which function regardless of the historical origins of stanzaic songs: obviously, the strophic principle is centuries old.

In the decades surrounding 1800 the individual stanza could be sculpted in a variety of ways. On some occasions it engendered little more than a compact binary structure—initial phrases plus, perhaps, a refrain. In other cases the individual stanzaic unit took on a “lyric-form-like” design, $a a' b-$, $a a' b c$, or $a a' b a'$. Such is the case, for instance, in the examples cited above from *Die Zauberflöte*: Monostatos’s “Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden” and Sarastro’s “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” (both in two stanzas). Also common, however, was a binary (less often, ternary) design whose final unit (c) was emphatically prepared and expanded into a high-profile, refrainlike melody. A familiar example may be found in Marzelline’s two-stanza “O wär’ ich schon mit dir vereint” from Beethoven’s (French-influenced) *Fidelio*. Here the scheme may be represented as $ax b: C$, in which ax comprises four lines, b : three lines (with the colon representing a strong dominant preparation and lead-in to the subsequent section), and C three lines (immediately repeated), functioning as a modally contrasting, separately melodic refrain within each stanza (“Die Hoffnung schon erfüllt die Brust,” and so on, whose *Poco più allegro* also enlivens the *Andante con moto* of the preceding sections).

Thus by the early nineteenth century one might distinguish between simple and more expanded formats. In the latter the new, separate melody enlarging the last element gives the impression of a rebeginning or second launch at the moment of the refrain (when a literal refrain exists). This expanded-stanza format, which is obviously related to the more basic binary design, may be found in the works of such composers as Boieldieu, Auber, Meyerbeer, and others in the first decades of the century, and, as we shall see, it seems to have made a strong impression on mid-century Verdi—not to mention other mid- and late-nineteenth-century composers.²⁸ The expanded format may be represented by the scheme, $a a' b . . x$: *refrain space*. Here $b . .$ is meant to suggest the possibility of enlarging the medial zone through additional phrases, and x : represents the setting up of the refrain space proper, a preparation typically marked by a caesura (indicated by the colon) that is often reinforced with a *ritardando* indication or *fermata*.²⁹

Unlike the melodic procedure within a lyric form, in this expanded format it is normal for each stanza to present two clearly articulated melodic sections. (Well-known models that might be helpful to keep in mind throughout these generalizations are Oscar’s “Volta la terrea” from *Un ballo in maschera* or, from a later decade, the more expansive Toreador Song, “Vôtre toast . . . je peux le rendre,” from Bizet’s *Carmen*.)³⁰

28. The expanded-stanza principle is also the source—via such routes as the parlor song, the hymn, nineteenth-century operetta, and the music hall—of the standard “verse-chorus” format underpinning the commercial popular song in the twentieth century. One might merely note here that the “choruses” (refrains) of Tin Pan Alley songs and their descendants are typically formatted in lyric-form designs, especially $a a' b a'$ (the “thirty-two bar chorus”).

29. This scheme slightly emends what I suggested in “Genre and Content,” 263.

30. Other well-known possibilities are Riccardo’s “Di’ tu se fedele” from *Un ballo in maschera*; Eboli’s Song of the Veil from *Don Carlos*; and “Mon coeur s’ouvre à ta voix” from Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila*.

This fracture into two different melodic parts, with a pronounced refrain preparation and relaunching into a spotlighted second part—not infrequently in a contrasting style, meter, tempo, or mode (the minor-major pattern being especially common)—is the essential feature of an expanded stanzaic melodic design, particularly from the 1830s onward. I refer to the first part as the verse section (or the *couplet* section);³¹ its text varies from stanza to stanza. The second melodic part is the refrain space, where a refrain will occur if there is one. (Both Oscar’s and Escamillo’s songs contain literal textual refrains: “E con Lucifero d’accordo ognor” and “Toréador, en garde!” Refrains may last just a line or two or they may unfurl a separate, extended melody.) Although not all strophic songs of the 1830s and succeeding decades feature literal, textual-musical refrains, virtually all contain a spotlighted refrain space.

Finally, as the song proceeds into subsequent stanzas, it may be subjected to variation or even partial recomposition. The first part of the stanza, the verse section, is most susceptible to variation; the concluding refrain space is usually more stable, although not always invariant. When a third stanza exists, it became common to alter the music of its verse section—indeed, to treat it quite freely—before returning to more familiar music from the refrain space. Examples of this tendency to vary second and/or third verse sections may be found in Raimbaud’s ballade, “Jadis régnait en Normandie” and Alice’s “Va, dit-elle, va mon enfant” from Meyerbeer’s *Robert le diable* and—in Verdi—in Amelia’s “Ma dall’arido stelo divulsa” from *Un ballo in maschera* and, much later, in Desdemona’s Willow Song from *Otello*.

The succession of psychological zones within an expanded-format stanzaic song easily overlaps with the Italian lyric-form design, especially that of the $a a' b c$ type. This ambiguity is a central feature of mid-century Verdi. I characterize the expressive zones of such operatic expanded-strophic songs as follows:

- (1a) The *initial zone* (*initial phrase-pair*). Like the thematic block in the initial zone of a lyric form, this normally begins (after an instrumental introduction) with a balanced phrase pair, $a a'$, constituting either a repeated phrase (or subphrase), a parallel period, or some related design. The setting of four lines ($a a' = 2 + 2$ lines) is also common here, although the initial zone may be submitted to proportional reduction ($a a' = 1 + 1$ lines) or to various types of expansions. In most cases, there is little to be found in this zone that is immediately predictive of a stanzaic-song design. As happens in lyric form, the zone may be extended through inner repetition.
- (1b) The *medial zone* (or, when expanded, the *free continuation zone*). Represented by the alphabetic $b . . .$, this zone is variable in length, ranging from nearly total suppression to considerable elaboration. When it is elaborated by means of multiple phrases or subphrases, it often contains phrase or subphrase pairs, although these occur unpredictably (perhaps $b b'$, $c c'$, perhaps $b c c' d d'$, and so on): a particularly pronounced example of such

31. See n. 24 above.

continuation-zone phrase pairings may be found in Eboli's Song of the Veil in *Don Carlos*.

In some cases the medial zone cadences in the tonic and leads at once into the refrain space. In this situation the refrain space may be heard as the final, "additive" element of a ternary structure—an appended maxim, moral, or focused point of summation. More often, however, the medial zone does not provide such a tonic close. In these more common cases the medial zone elides into:

- (1c) The *refrain preparation*. This is an emphatic windup, normally on the dominant, and it is typically more intense or elaborate than the end of the corresponding medial zone of a lyric form. The refrain preparation, *x*: in the letter-scheme, often leads to an expectant pause (caesura) designated by a literal or implied fermata. (Fermatas may also occur at the ends of medial zones within lyric-form patterns; they are especially characteristic, however, of strophic songs with expanded designs.) On occasion the fermata-effect is written into the music through slower note values or related procedures. The refrain preparation signals the approach of the contrasting idea that follows.
- (2a) The *refrain space*. Along with the often-elaborate refrain preparation (when it exists), this is the most characteristic feature of expanded strophic designs. The refrain space provides a second launching within the piece, usually on fresh musical or stylistic terms (again, a turn from minor to major is particularly characteristic, although the reverse is also possible); its contrast is greater than that found in a final zone of a standard *a' b c* lyric-form design. The refrain space, which may be of varying length and structure, is the song's climactic summary, its point or punch line. (See also the remarks on the "additive refrain space" above.)
- In its simplest form—the one with the least elevated cultural implications—the refrain text is either repeated from stanza to stanza or contains memorable, nearly invariant verbal hooks that are easily grasped. Strophic songs without refrain, however, do exist (as with Ferrando's ballade and Leonora's cantabile from *Il trovatore*, Act I, discussed below): literal refrain texts are not necessary to articulate a refrain space.
- (2b) The *coda space*, or the *response-lines*. At the ends of each stanza, strophic songs are often provided with a short reaction from bystanders: affirmation, surprise, amusement, horror, and so on. Occasionally the response is collapsed into the bystanders repeating with gusto a memorable refrain sentiment, and a separate coda may follow. (Insofar as they are stage constructions of reacting "others," the bystanders represent—and in part are surely intended to direct the response of—the members of the audience.)

The bulk of the evidence (much of which I have reviewed elsewhere)³²—suggests that when a nineteenth-century operatic composer used the strophic principle, he

32. Hepokoski, "Genre and Content."

could thereby evoke any of a number of related connotations, all of which, however, were set in relief to the generally more "elevated" or "formal" (non-stanzaic) operatic environment that surrounded it. One of the most common, of course, was a stage-song delivered "in quotation marks"—the operatic representation of the act of singing a (usually) light, informal, or wistful *chanson* or *canzone*. But not all strophic songs were stage-songs. When they were not, certain typical connotations still remained. Among the possibilities:

1. The embracing of the simple language or common speech of the people, often furnishing a *couleur locale* identified with the *Volk* of a region. In many instances, especially earlier in the century, a light, popular, or witty song had rustic connotations as opposed to more sophisticated, urban ones.³³
2. The identifying of oneself as socially unworthy to sing in the presumably more elevated, nonstrophic styles—as a subordinate, perhaps, or a supplicant. (The latter is the "Casta diva" case.) Even more characteristically, the strophic style can be simply a sign of belonging to the middle or lower classes (delivering "natural" melodies directly, without artifice). At times strophic songs are appropriated by the nobility as the musical aspect of a middle- or lower-class disguise (as in Riccardo's "Di' tu se fedele" from *Un ballo in maschera*).³⁴
3. A rejection, either momentarily or permanently, of aristocratic norms in favor of a *vita libera* outside the social power structures of the opera's plot-world. This *vita libera* is typically populated by brigands, pirates, conspirators, various types of comrades-in-arms, gypsies, witches, and the like.
4. The momentary relaxing of an aristocrat in more informal surroundings, a private sentiment uttered at ease, often addressed to subordinates.
5. A sudden onrush of bourgeois-sympathetic "natural" feeling, especially telling when a noble character abandons or overrides the standard poses of elevated operatic discourse. In this case (a frequent occurrence in mid-century opera) the "natural" utterance has a utopian component that can be read as an implicit critique of the stiffer, more traditional discourse that it replaces. Such a connotation is closely related to (6) below.
6. A direct outpouring of "natural" emotion, especially in spontaneous declarations of love, within which mere considerations of social status are to be understood as irrelevant. Often, though in varying degrees, the outpouring simultaneously suggests a more undisguised acceptance of music's role as expressive of (or driving toward) the physically erotic.

In short, one of the functions of the strophic types was to place an even higher bid for identification with the new operatic audience and its increasingly high-bourgeois, democratic, and natural sympathies. In much of mid-Ottocento opera the newer-world/bourgeois tendencies of strophic structures were set into tension

33. This is the principal conclusion in Probst, "The *Romance* and the *Couplet*."

34. Cf. the more extended discussion in Hepokoski, "Genre and Content," especially 266, including n. 40.

with the older-world (if not really “old-world”) flavor of the Italian, nonstrophic structures. One function of strophic songs was to establish a frame of reference for understanding the opera’s contents.

Such considerations would help to explain why strophic structures tend to appear toward the beginnings of acts, not at the ends. Early strophic songs helped to set the terms by which the audience was to apprehend the subsequent discourse. Thus the trajectories of entire acts—even entire operas—moved from more casual, French-influenced gestures to stiffer, more generically elevated Italian gestures. Early-act strophic songs—choruses, recounted tales, drinking songs, and so on—served to align the composer with the social views of crucial sectors of the audience and then to furnish the lens through which all of what followed could be observed.³⁵ And what usually followed were two things, unfolding simultaneously (each, perhaps, a metaphor for the other): the image of a threatened, older world in social or political crisis; and the passage through the aesthetic ceremony of “the opera” itself, a traditional spectacle then in the historical process of being inexorably appropriated by a new, modernizing public.

The following three examples from *Il trovatore* illustrate the sorts of readings that can follow when the foregoing interpretive hypotheses are practically applied. Connotations of three typical strophic types—ballade, *romance*, and demotic chorus—will be discussed more generally along the way.

Ballade: Ferrando, “Di due figli vivea padre beato”/“Abbieta zingara, fosca vegliarda!” (first movement of Act I, N. 1, Introduzione)

Although not identified as such by either composer or librettist, the genre here is the operatic ballade, a common opening gambit. This piece seems to be Verdi’s first unequivocal ballade,³⁶ and it occupies the cantabile portion of an Italian cantabile/*tempo di mezzolcabaletta* (double-aria) structure. In this case the absence of a generic designation for the piece from a mid-nineteenth-century source means little:

35. Cf. James Parakilas, “Political Representation and the Chorus in Nineteenth-Century Opera,” *19th-Century Music* 16 (1992): 181–202.

36. Closely related earlier instances are Massimiliano’s “Un ignoto, tre lune or saranno” from the Finale III of *I masnadieri* (1847); Stiffelio’s “Di qua varcando sul primo albore” from the Introduzione of *Stiffelio* (1850); and Gilda’s “Tutte le feste al tempio” from the Scena e Duetto in Act II of *Rigoletto* (1851). These songs relate experiences of personal misfortune, injustice, or the extraordinary; the first two are perhaps best classified with the more content-neutral term *racconto*. The third, while certainly a *racconto*, is also an expressive inversion of the “first glimpse” subtype of the *romance*, and it is mentioned further in the treatment below of “Tacea la notte placida.”

Although the Duke’s “Questa o quella per me pari sono” from the Introduzione of *Rigoletto* is often identified in commentaries as a “ballata,” it shares no generic affinity with the standard ballade. It is best considered either as a set of straightforward couplets (that is, as an entertainment piece) or, in what amounts to the same thing, as a *canzone* of the type expressing a playful indulgence in physical or social pleasures, as in the *brindisi* and a few other subgenres. In “Questa o quella” the textual content is given a negative or ironic edge of personal dissolution.

Ferrando’s narrative is only one element of a larger pattern subsumed under a more common title, *Introduzione*, and such larger patterns typically did not specify formal or generic labels for its subparts. When we seek out generic intermixtures in mid-century Verdi, we are often confronted with such “invasions” of a standard, unlabeled space within a double aria or cavatina (especially its cantabile first movement) by some sort of character piece or generically identifiable song type.

On what grounds may we claim “Di due figli”/“Abbieta zingara” as a ballade? The designations of “ballade” and “romance” (especially in the first decades of the century) were frequently interchanged: as Wolf Frobenius and Rainer Gstrein have shown, they seem to have been intersecting concepts for much of their history.³⁷ In turn this terminological looseness cautions us not to circumscribe the generic traditions more rigidly than they were grasped in Verdi’s time. While steering clear of the urge to overdefine, one may yet identify general tendencies of the strophic types—for example, the ballade or the romance. But no reconstruction should be regarded too strictly, and mixtures among the types were common.

The normative operatic ballade was constructed from a strophic text, with or without refrain, in which a narrator recounted longstanding regional lore, characteristically of a supernatural, knightly, legendary, or otherwise extraordinary content. As is widely known, the Romantic fascination with the folk- (and quasi-folk-) narrative ballade has a complex, pan-European history, ranging from some early English collections and Herder’s translations of folk ballads in 1778–79 through the ballads of such writers as Bürger, Goethe, Schiller, Uhland, Heine, Scott, Mickiewicz, and Hugo.³⁸ In Italy the strophic, Bürger-influenced “ballata romantica” or “romanza”—the terms were not solidly fixed—had been introduced in the 1820s by Giovanni Berchet.³⁹

French operatic ballades (the predecessors of Ferrando’s *Trovatore* tale) seem to have been less investigated. True to its folk origins, the text of an operatic ballade does not usually convey a personal experience. (If it does, it is probably better thought of as a *romance*.) Instead, the most characteristic operatic ballade, usually presented in two or three stanzas, is a timeworn recitation of local history or a

37. Wolf Frobenius, “Ballade (Neuzeit)” (17 pp.), and Rainer Gstrein, “Romanz/romance/Romanze” (21 pp.), in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, [1987]). Both articles are particularly attentive to Germanic understandings and adaptations of the terms.

38. Within literary and music history the topic of the strophic ballade is immense and nearly always has a “Northern ballad” cast. (One thinks at once of Schubert’s “Erk König,” Loewe’s *Ballades*, and so on.) By way of introduction to the nineteenth-century understanding of the ballade, see Frobenius, “Ballade (Neuzeit),” and James Parakilas, *Ballads without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade* (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus, 1992), 19–48. Parakilas’s bibliography, 315–22, includes such broader discussions as William J. Entwistle, *European Balladry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), long a standard source. For some operatic treatments of ballades and related genres see also Carolyn Abbate, “Erik’s Dream and Tannhäuser’s Journey,” *Reading Opera*, ed. Arthur Groos and Roger Parker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 129–67.

39. W. Theodor Elwert, *Versificazione italiana dalle origini ai giorni nostri* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1985), 139 (no. 89), and 160–61 (no. 106).

stage-song touching on legend, myth, or supernatural occurrences. As James Parakilas has noted about nonoperatic ballads, the strophic text centers on a single, unusual character “who provokes and receives justice. . . . [The character’s provocation is normally] a defiance of the [proper] nature of things, and the response is a reckoning for that act of defiance. . . . The acts of defiance are presented portentously in ballads, making it clear that a reckoning will ensue, if not always so clear what form it will take. . . . [A ballad’s] psychological structure [is that] . . . of a guilty conscience.”⁴⁰ In operatic ballades the reckoning is normally omitted; achieving retribution is often what drives the subsequent plot, as in *Il trovatore*.

Some examples of ballades from French opera—labeled as such in the early printed scores—include Jenny’s (and Dickson’s) “D’ici voyez ce beau domaine” from Boieldieu’s *La Dame blanche*, Act I (1825); Camilla’s “D’une haute naissance” from Hérold’s *Zampa*, Act I (1831); and the chorus’s “Le beau Pédrille” from Auber’s *Les Diamants de la couronne*, Act I (1841). Ballades may also be found in Donizetti’s works, such as Pierotto’s “Per sua madre andò una figlia” from *Linda di Chamounix*, Act I (1842). (On the other hand, Gondi’s “Per non istare in ozio,” from his *Maria di Rohan*, Act I (1843), though it is labeled a “ballata,” is probably better considered a subvariety of *romance*, since it describes a recent personal experience.) There are also some notable German examples: Emmy’s “Sieh, Mutter, dort den bleichen Mann” from Marschner’s *Der Vampyr*, Act II (1828), though it is labeled “Romanze”; and Senta’s Ballad from *The Flying Dutchman*, Act II (1843).⁴¹

The most direct model for Ferrando’s piece may have been Raimbaud’s three-stanza ballade, “Jadis régnait en Normandie,” from the first act of Meyerbeer’s *Robert le diable* (1831). The placement within the operas and the specific situations are similar. Both involve a minor official’s retelling of a frightening local legend to a group of sympathizers—a bonded, masculine group—who respond with fearful interjections. Moreover, the two pieces share musical features, as will be elaborated below. Perhaps in writing Ferrando’s ballade Verdi sought to recompose the earlier piece, to surpass it in a competitive operatic marketplace.⁴²

Ferrando’s ballade (see text 1 below) is laid out in an uncommon textual pattern: two twenty-line stanzas (unusually long), disposed as $2 \times ([4 + 4] + [(4 + 4 + 2) + 2])$ lines. At the end of each stanza the chorus has two lines parallel to Ferrando’s immediately preceding pair, the last of which is also a *verso tronco* (line ending with an accented syllable). Each of the stanzas consists of two contrasting sections, 8 + 12 lines. The first section, “Di due figli vivea padre beato” in the first stanza, displays an unorthodox alternation of *endecasillabi* and *settenari*, or eleven- and seven-syllable lines; the *rima alternata* scheme, *abab cdcd*, strengthens these metrical alternations. (The metrical oddities recall those in the *ballate romantiche* of Berchet, one of which,

labeled a “romanza,” was in fact entitled “Il trovatore.”)⁴³ As the first eight lines unfold, it becomes clear that they are preliminary to a more conventionally lyrical second section. Thus the text of the ballade presents us with an apparent beginning that proves instead to be a separate, transitional zone of preparation for a more formal statement. The second section—beginning “Abbietta zingara, fosca vegliarda!”—shifts to three quatrain-blocks of *doppio quinario* (each line has two five-syllable units separated by a caesura) and a different pattern of rhyme.

TEXT 1

FER.	Di due figli vivea padre beato Il buon Conte de Luna; Fida nutrice del secondo nato Dormia presso la cuna. Sul romper dell’aurora un bel mattino Ella dischiude i rai, E chi trova d’accanto a quel bambino? . . .	5
CORO	Chi? . . . favella . . . Chi mai?	
FER.	Abbietta zingara, – fosca vegliarda! . . . Cingeva i simboli – di maliarda! E sul fanciullo, – con viso arcigno, L’occhio affiggea – torvo, sanguigno! D’orror compresa, – è la nutrice! Acuto un grido, – all’aura scioglie; Ed ecco, in meno – che labbro il dice, I servi accorrono – in quelle soglie, E fra minacce, – urlì, e percosse la rea discacciano – ch’entrarvi osò.	10 15
CORO	Giusto quei petti – sdegno commosse! L’insana vecchia – lo provocò!	20
FER.	Asserì che tirar del fanciullino L’oroscopo volea . . . Bugiarda! Lenta febbre del meschino La salute struggea! Coverto di pallor, languido, affranto Ei tremava la sera, Il dì traeva in lamentevol pianto . . . Ammalato egl’era!	25

43. Elwert, *Versificazione italiana*, 139, 161. The stanzaic meter of Berchet’s “Il trovatore” (1822–24) is 7–7–7–5 (“Va per la selva bruna / Solingo il trovator / Domato dal rigor / Della fortuna”; cf. Manrico’s metrically similar “Deserto sulla terra” in Verdi’s *Il trovatore*. This parallel was first pointed out in Paolo Fabbri, “Istituti metrici e formali,” in *Teorie e tecniche, immagini e fantasmi*, vol. 6 of *Storia dell’opera italiana*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Turin: Edizioni di Torino, 1988), 218. See also the discussion of irregular meters in Hepokoski, “Genre and Content,” 258–59.

40. Parakilas, *Ballads without Words*, 35–37. (See n. 38 above.)

41. Carolyn Abbate, “Erik’s Dream,” focuses on these and other Germanic narratives.

42. Much of the opening of *Il trovatore* also reworks in obvious ways aspects of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, whose libretto was also by Cammarano.

	La fattuchiera – perseguitata	
	Fu presa, e al rogo – fu condannata:	30
	Ma rimanea – la maledetta	
	Figlia ministra – di ria vendetta!	
	Compì quest'empia – nefando eccesso . . .	
	Sparve il fanciullo, – e si rinvenne	
	Mal spenta brace, – nel sito istesso	35
	Ov'arsa un giorno, – la strega venne,	
	E d'un bambino . . . – ahimè! l'ossame	
	Bruciato a mezzo, – fumante ancor!	
CORO	Oh scellerata! – oh donna infame! . .	
	Del par m'investe – ira ed orror! ⁴⁴	40

The first section's mix of *endecasillabi* and *settenari* doubtless alludes to the standard poetic meters mixed irregularly in operatic *scena*-verse (recitative-verse), although here they alternate regularly. This allusion within a normatively static set piece reinforces the preparatory function of the first section.⁴⁵ In fact, the ballade is preceded by thirteen lines of actual *scena*-verse, "All'erta, all'erta!", only there, as expected, it is irregular and unshaped into consistent poetic blocks. Thus the ballade's first section, "Di due figli vivea padre beato," only rhymes and regularizes the metrics of the *scena*-verse. From this perspective, the first section is a half-lyricizing of the Italian *scena* principle—or, conversely, a partial realization of the onset of a lyrical, poetically regular ballade. The verse section inhabits an uneasy, shadowy space between two standard operatic textures. It looks both backward to the recitative out of which it has emerged and forward to the subsequent lyrical space, "Abbietta zingara," into which it will flow. The nervous stop-and-go quality of the music in the verse section (the *endecasillabi* delivered lyrically, the *settenari* collapsing the lyricism in compressed outbursts) further articulates the generic anxiety of the section, a metaphor for the unnaturalness of the tale being told.

Still, there can be no question that the ballade proper begins with "Di due figli vivea padre beato." It is launched with a standard trigger, the appeal to gather

44. See the appendix to this chapter for translations of this and subsequent extracts from *Il trovatore*. The translations are essentially those of William Weaver, *Seven Verdi Librettos* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975). Some changes have been made in the punctuation and line-organization to reflect those features of the libretto as found in David Lawton's new critical edition of the opera (1992), vol. 18A of WGV. That volume's text is based principally on Cammarano's manuscript libretto (prior to censorship).

45. Though an unusual procedure, alternating lines of different lyric, rhyming meters, particularly 11s and 7s, is not unprecedented in Verdi's operas, although previously it had been associated with demotic choruses. Alternating 11s and 7s, for example, occur in the three-stanza chorus, "Gerusalem . . . Gerusalem . . . la grande," at the opening of *I Lombardi*, Act III (1843, text by Solera; here the 7s are all *tronchi*) and in the six-line chorus, "Fra queste dense tenebre," from *La battaglia di Legnano*, Act III (1849, text by Cammarano). Cf. also the brindisi chorus at the opening of *Ernani*, Act I (1844, text by Piave), "Evviva! . . . beviamo! – Nel vino cerchiamo," which alternates double and single 6s.

a.

[initial phrase pair]
And.¹⁶ mosso
Ferrando

64

Di due fi - gli vi - ve a pa - dre be - a - to — Il buon con - te di

66

Lu - - - na; fi - da nu - tri - ce del se - con - do

69

na - to — Dor-mia pres-so la cu - - - na. Sul

b.

[refrain preparation]
Ferrando

77

-rai; e chi tro - va d'ac - can - to a quel bam - bi - no? Chi? fa -

80

- vel - la. Chi? chi mai? Ab - biet - ta zin - ga - ra,

Coro (+ 8^{va} sopra)

Allegretto
Ferrando
con mistero

84

fo - sca ve - gliar - da! Cin - ge - va i sim - bo - li

pp mezza voce

Example 1 Ferrando's ballade

around and listen, "Udite, udite," and the texture shifts to a highlighted solo voice (one that dispenses with the customary bar or two of accompanimental introduction). Moreover, the onset of the telling begins here—the passing from real dramatic time into narrative time—and the first section's music pays homage to the conventions of strophic-song opening zones: it begins with paired phrases (*a a'*, mm. 1–4, 5–8, here a single phrase treated to a sequential restatement), continues freely (and very briefly), and proceeds to a dominant refrain-preparation and caesura ("[Ella dischiude i] rai; / Chi? . . . Favella . . . Chi? Chi mai?," mm. 11–15) that includes the characteristic fermata at its end.

Example 1 shows the melodic lines of the initial phrase pair (1a) and refrain preparation and subsequent refrain-space (1b) of Ferrando's ballade; example 2 allows us to compare them with the parallel passages from the first stanza of Raimbaud's ballade from *Robert le diable*. In both pieces the shift from a major-mode

a. [initial phrase pair]
[Allegro molto moderato]
Raimbaud

Ja - dis ré - gnaît en Nor - man - di - e un prin - ce no - ble et va - leu - reux. Sa
fil - le Ber - the la jo - li - e dé - dai - gnaît tous les a - mou - reux.

b. [refrain preparation]
Raimbaud:

fiè - re, d'a - mour sen - tit son cœur é - mu, son cœur é - mu.
Fu - neste er - reur, fu - neste er - reur, fa - tal dé - li - re, car ce guer - rier, car ce guer - rier é - tait dit - on. . . un ha - bi - tant, un ha - bi - tant du sombre em - [pire]

Example 2 Raimbaud's ballade

beginning to a fatalistic minor-mode refrain is striking (the opposite is more common), and even Meyerbeer's refrain instruction, "d'une voix mystérieuse," is echoed in Verdi's "con mistero." Example 3, two excerpts from the recitative preceding Raimbaud's ballade, suggests that the "horror" *topos* of descending chromatics found in Verdi's refrain preparation (not included in ex. 1b) and elsewhere in *Il trovatore* also has a precedent in certain supernatural passages of *Robert le diable* (itself doubtless a reworking of earlier models).

Up to the end of the first section of Ferrando's piece, Verdi invited his listeners to construe "Di due figli" as an unusual recasting of the verse section of a French ballade, with the refrain preparation and fermata suggesting the impending onset of a refrain space. The following section, "Abbieta zingara," will be heard as occupying that refrain space, although it does not present a literal textual refrain. But at this

a. Robert Bertram (*a voix basse*)

Quoi! de la Nor - man - di - e? Vo - tre in - gra - te pa - tri - e.

[Hn., Bsn., Tr.]

[f] *fp* *p*

b. Raimbaud (*Robert tire son poignard*) Bertram (*bas à Robert*)

et qui par ses mé - faits s'e - xi - la du pa - ys. Y pen - sez - vous? _____

[Vle., Tr.] [Bsn.]

Example 3 Recitative preceding Raimbaud's ballade

point occurs the most unusual aspect of the piece: the music filling the refrain space, "Abbieta zingara," is itself expanded into a structure that is very nearly a standard, self-contained Italian *lyric form* (with a ten-line text for the soloist), *a' b' a''* with inner subdivisions.⁴⁶ Here we find, however, a few non-normative realizations (or lyric-form "deformations"), the most telling of which concern the treatment of the initial zone (first four lines). On one level of analysis, the initial zone of "Abbieta zingara" may be broadly described with the familiar *a a'* shorthand, but not to consider the rhetoric further would overlook important things. The first two lines of text (*a*, literally, lines 9–10 of the full text, as provided in text 1) consist of a short, E-minor module and its immediate repetition (thus producing the $\alpha + \alpha$ subphrase option within a lyric-form *a*-phrase). This two-line utterance is followed at once by a setting of the third and fourth lines (literally, lines 11–12, beginning "E sul fanciullo"), a varied musical restatement of the first two lines (*a'*), now shifted suddenly onto G major (III). Thus for the first four lines, $a a' = \alpha + \alpha, \alpha' + \alpha'$, in which *a'* is a varied sequential restatement of *a*. The energetically clipped α -modules, the jagged

46. Cf. n. 28 above.

rhythms, the heavy downbeats within triple time, the nervous, harmonically unprepared leap into the mediant—these are all features of the elemental *insistenza* and musical shock typical of *Il trovatore*. They not only contribute to the brittle tension of the narrative at hand, but they also help to align Ferrando's discourse with that of Azucena later in the opera.

Equally striking, though, is Verdi's decision not to close the initial zone harmonically—the nearly invariable practice of lyric-form melodies. Here the *a'* statement on III does not end with the expected perfect authentic cadence; rather, its concluding G-major chord is preceded only by an embellishing diminished-seventh chord (over a G-tonic pedal), and the melodic line ends a fourth below the expected tonic pitch, on $\hat{5}$ of the momentary G major (“con viso *arcigno*” and “torvo, *sanguigno!*”). Thus the initial zone—a structural space virtually defined through its authentic-cadential closure—is here left unclosed. From one point of view, Verdi may have wished to suggest the urgency of Ferrando's narrative, representing it as a hair-raising tale that resists even the temporary closure characteristic of initial zones: Ferrando's narrative passes lightly over one of its important moments of expected cadential punctuation, flowing “in one breath” into line 5 and the medial zone. From another point of view, as Ferrando begins “Abbieta zingara” (and thereby enters the refrain space of a larger, stanzaic design), the concept of Italian lyric form may not yet be grasped as its fundamental paradigm. When coupled with the lack of full closure at the end of the initial zone, the short, paired phrases (the α modules), whose reverberations continue into the medial zone, recall musical patterns perhaps more French than Italian. At least for the moment, “Abbieta zingara” has not been completely disentangled from the French norms that prevailed in the preceding verse section and that dominate the ballade as a whole.

Still, once past the deformation of its initial zone—and certainly as we approach and enter the final zone—the lyric-form basis of “Abbieta zingara” becomes increasingly clear. The medial zone, *b* (lines 13–16, beginning “D'orror compresa, – è la nutrice!”), expands outward from the first four lines and, ultimately, generates the dominant-chord tension (“I servi accorrono – in quelle soglie”) that sets up the next, most decisive structural downbeat. This downbeat, the spotlighted, two-line final zone (lines 17–18, “E fra minaccie, – urla e percosse”), returns pointedly to the opening melody, thus (retrospectively) stamping the whole of “Abbieta zingara” as a design most decisively in dialogue with (Italian) lyric-form principles. This final zone adopts the option of the melodic reprise for the four-line final zone (*a'*), and it proceeds to a normative expansion and emphatic cadence (“ch'entrarvi osò”). The chorus's concluding lines, “Giusto quei petti sdegno commosso” and so on (lines 19–20), function both as a filler of the lyric form's coda space (normally given over to repetitions of the lyric-form text) and as a return to the ballade genre's normative response-lines from the bystanders. In effect, the response lines recirculate into French norms, whereupon the twenty-line process is recycled, with a new text, through a second stanza.

In summary, Ferrando's ballade blends aspects of the French and the Italian styles. Although the overarching category is that of the strophic ballade, Verdi did

not adopt the genre *tout court*; instead, he grafted onto it the discursive norms of his own Italian practice. In this instance his solution was inherent in the structure of the text, which called for a pseudo-rebeginning of the piece at the refrain space (triggered by a *second* characteristic request for the telling of the tale in a dominant refrain preparation, “Chi? . . . Favella . . . Chi mai?” [Who? . . . Speak . . . Who was it?]). Because of its textual design, Verdi could then set what followed largely as an Italian structure up to the concluding, balladelike response lines.

Each of Ferrando's ballade stanzas reenacts the process by which an Italian recitative gradually sets up a lyric piece. Verdi reinforced this preparatory feature harmonically: the verse-section, “Di due figli,” is an expanded dominant (B major) to the E-minor downbeat at the refrain space, “Abbieta zingara.” The implicit generic trajectory of each stanza is French ballade (verse section) / Italian lyric form (refrain space) / French ballade (response lines), although, as suggested above, the French identifiers are simultaneously shot through with aspects of Italian (specifically Verdian) musical delivery and vice-versa. Finally, the entire piece functions as a cantabile, or first movement, inset into a larger, Italian double-aria frame, which occupies most of the even larger unit labeled as an “Introduzione.” Overall, we encounter a provocative commingling of generic styles.

The aim of this mixture may have been, first, to grasp a musical feature characteristic of the *oltramontani* (here the operatic ballade, in part a signifier of the “natural” spirit of the folk ballad) and, then, to deform it and bring the result to an Italian audience with different expectations. The recentering of a refrain space—normally French—along Italian norms illustrates some of the cultural tensions involved in Verdi's incorporation of non-Italian genres into his own operatic practice. One might suggest further that just as the Italian audiences (increasingly bourgeois, bourgeois-sympathetic, or nationalist/democratic, and still preoccupied with putting together an “Italy”) may have been accustomed to identifying their aspirations with demotic choruses of all sorts, so too, by calling on Ferrando to recenter a French refrain space along Italian lines, Verdi was constructing his music to enter into a dialogue with the operatic expectations of much of his audience. Notwithstanding the generic superimposition here, the touchstone of Verdi's operatic practice at this time still seems to have been its fundamental readability as culturally Italian. *Il trovatore* is probably the last Verdian opera of which this may be said.

Romance: Leonora, “Tacea la notte placida” (first movement of Act I, N. 2, Cavatina Leonora)

As the ballade genre had invaded the cantabile portion of a double aria in the preceding scene, here Cammarano and Verdi called on aspects of the strophic *romance* to serve the same function—although again, since the piece is part of a larger operatic structure it is unlabeled as such. Because of the variety of its subtypes, the *romance* is among the most difficult genres to define. Like ballades (into which genre some *romances* blend), *romances* are often solo narratives functioning as

plot-expositional or initiating gestures. In general, the ballade and many subtypes of *romance* belong to the more general category of *racconto* (narrative song), although not all *romances* are narrative. When one is, however—especially in the decades immediately preceding *Il trovatore*—it does not normally recount a community-shared story but rather expresses a strong, usually recent experience of an individual. In this case, Leonora's "Tacea la notte placida," the personalized *romance* mode allows the second scene to be heard as a new beginning from a different perspective. As the opera's real time gets underway, Ferrando's ballade and its ensuing cabaletta may be apprehended as timeless background information or emotional context.

Because of the slipperiness of its formal and expressive connotations in this repertory, the term *romance/romanza* needs to be examined more closely. At least as Verdi is likely to have encountered it, the *romance* genre was more flexible than that of the ballade. It is precisely in this flexibility that the difficulty in defining the term lies. Although the traditional French *romance* was normally strophic (disposed in more or less parallel musical stanzas, each typically unfolding some sort of simple or expanded binary pattern), mid-nineteenth-century composers—especially Italian composers—also used the term *romanza* for pieces written in different designs. At times the differences from the typical strophic *romance* were slight, as in Bellini's narrative *romanza* for voice and piano, "Torna, vezzosa Fillide," which unfolds as textually strophic but musically through-composed. At other times, though, Italian composers used the term *romanza* to characterize *nonstrophic* (single-stanza) pieces that were self-standing—inserted individual songs unpaired with a complementary cabaletta—and that were also apparently intended to represent a particularly direct, undisguised or "natural" sentiment.

In nineteenth-century Italian usage, then, a piece designated as a *romanza* could be either strophic or nonstrophic. It is precisely on this point that the complications ensue. In an influential essay from 1969 Martin Chusid showed that in Verdi's autograph opera scores the composer himself used the label *romanza* for thirteen set pieces (none of which was associated with a subsequent, concluding cabaletta), only three of which were strophic.⁴⁷ These three are (1) Medora's "Non so le tette immagini" from *Il corsaro* (1848; with each stanza designed as a straightforward lyric form, this is also Verdi's first strophic solo piece within his operas); (2) Manrico's "Deserto sulla terra" from *Il trovatore* (1853; each stanza is a proportionally reduced lyric form—a "lyric quatrain"—setting only four lines); and (3) Élisabeth's "O ma chère compagne" from *Don Carlos* (1867; very much a "typical" French strophic *romance*). The remaining ten are nonstrophic: they range from Riccardo's "Ciel, che feci! . . . di quel sangue" from *Oberto* and the Doge's "O vecchio cor, che batti" from *I due Foscari* to Don Carlos's "Je l'ai vue, et dans son sourire" [Io la vidi e al suo sorriso] from the opera of the same name. For most of the thirteen, it is difficult to avoid the impression that Verdi employed the label *romanza* primarily to

47. Chusid, "The Organization of Scenes with Arias: Verdi's Cavatinas and Romanzas," *Atti I*, 59–66. (Cf. my earlier discussion of the problems with the Verdian term *romanza* in "Genre and Content," 265, n. 37.)

indicate a slow-tempo, solo number that does not lead to a *tempo di mezzo* and cabaletta—that is, a spontaneous solo piece that exists unencumbered by a participation in a larger, more "elevated" number-structure.⁴⁸ Such a label would make sense: individual solo numbers needed to be identified in some way, and the principal alternatives—the broader term "aria" or "cavatina"—would be misleading, since they would imply that the song was the first movement of a multipartite, grand-aria complex. All of this suggests that for the young Verdi—and for other Italian composers—the term *romanza* was more associated with mood, tone, and independence from "grand" structural complication than it was with strophic structure.

More broadly, when a published score identified a nonstanzaic piece as a *romanza*, it could be cast in any number of forms. These included (1) expanded lyric form, with extended medial zone and coda (Bellini's *romanza* for voice and piano, "L'abbandono"); (2) brief, ternary adaptations of lyric form, in which the opening lines return as a quasi da capo at the end (Donizetti, for example, wrote at least three such nonstrophic *romances*: Fernand's "Ange si pur" [Spirto gentil] from *La Favorite*, Carlo's "Se tanto in ira agli uomini" from *Linda di Chamounix*, and Zayda's "Sol adoré de la patrie" from *Dom Sébastien*); and (3) simple binary structures with coda, indistinguishable from the standard, Italianate lyric form (as Sara's "All'afflitto è dolce il pianto" from Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* and several other *romanze* in the Donizetti and earlier Verdi operas). Again, in such cases expressive tone, not internal form, seems primary.

While such considerations complicate our understanding of the *romance* as a genre, our present concern lies not with the nonstanzaic *romance* adaptations (as they might be considered), but rather with the more central line, the strophic *romance*. This strophic genre comprises a wide range of subtypes that differ in the degree to which they blend the linear-narrative and the intimately lyrical. In some instances the narrative element is lacking altogether or is collapsed into the lyrical.⁴⁹ The features that stamp a *romance*, regardless of the degree of its narrative or strophic component, are the direct, unaffected sincerity of its sentiment and, consequently, the nature of its communicative appeal. At its core was the unadorned simplicity or "naturalness" of the emotion at hand. We recall, of course, that these were also the connotations of the pan-European lyric binary or rounded binary melody in the decades around 1800—and indeed, it may be that the slow- or moderate-tempo strophic *romance* is best considered an emphatically "naive" or expressive subset of that formal type.

48. Chusid did note, however, a number of other tendencies in these *romanze*: they are more often written for tenor than soprano; their texts are generally serious in tone, and many make emphatic use of the minor mode; of the nine *romanze* in minor, eight are designed to conclude in major, and several of these display a minor-major "bipartite frame" ("The Organization," 61–62). What Chusid identified as a bipartite minor-major frame may probably be understood as a design parallel to the typical unfolding of a single stanza of a French strophic *romance*.

49. Certain writers in mid-eighteenth-century France (e.g., Charles de Lusse in his *romance* collection of 1767) distinguished between the "romance historique" (narrative), the "romance tendre" (nonnarrative on the "galant" subject of love), and the "romance burlesque" (lighter, humorous, more vigorous). See Hertz, "The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance," 153.

These *romance* connotations were deep-rooted and, as has been demonstrated in separate work by Daniel Heartz and Rainer Gstrein, they went back at least to the mid-eighteenth-century *opéra comique*. Early French descriptions—whether concerned with poetry or poetry and music—consistently stressed a number of key points. In Rousseau's classic definition from 1768 (*Dictionnaire de musique*), "the subject [of a *romance*] is ordinarily some amorous tale, and often tragic. . . . [The text] should be simple, touching, and of a somewhat antique flavor. . . . No ornaments, nothing mannered, the melody gentle, natural, rustic. . . . It suffices that [the melody] be naive, that it does not obscure the words, that it makes them easily intelligible, and that it does not demand an extended vocal compass." Similar, often derivative descriptions persist into the nineteenth century. According to A. F. de Coupigny in 1813 (*Préface à Romances et poésies diverses*), the *romance* "lives on sensibility and grace"; typical examples have "something touching, naive, moving, pleasing, interesting [in their texts], to which is then joined the sweet charm of a simple melody, as if it had escaped from a soul that would not know how to contain the melancholy or tender sentiments with which it is filled." Or similarly, from Fétis in 1830 (*La musique mise à la portée de tout le monde*): a "little air," or a "small song . . . of a simple and melancholy character . . . and with a sweet and pure melody."⁵⁰

It may be in part true, as Thomas Bauman has written, that when the operatic *romance* was taken up in the nineteenth century "the genre's association with simple, unadorned performance was effaced as vocal ornamentation became more profuse (Mathilde's 'Sombre forêt' in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* of 1829), the orchestra's role became more prominent and colourful, and the chorus was incorporated."⁵¹ Nor would this be surprising: such things illustrated the mixture of *romance* norms with more complex operatic traditions, all of which is intertwined, as Dahlhaus has suggested, with the inexorable rise of a bourgeois operatic practice marked by such previously incongruous juxtapositions and superimpositions.⁵² Thus what we may be confronting in such pieces as "Sombre forêt" is, first, the ongoing social interpolation into serious opera of "simpler" genres and, then, paradoxically, the high-style decoration of that simplicity as a sign of maintaining

50. For these and similar quotations, see Gstrein, "Romanz/romance/Romanze" (Rousseau, de Coupigny, 9–10); Probst, "The *Romance* and the *Couplet*," especially 2–11 (Fétis), and Heartz, "The Beginning of the Operatic *Romance*," 153–57. Cf. also the overview in Thomas Bauman, "Romance," in *NGDO*, 4: 16–17.

51. Bauman, "Romance," 16. Bauman writes further (16–17) that "during the first half of the nineteenth century the genre lost its [original, eighteenth-century] distinctiveness of mood and structure," and in *Ottocento* opera it "came to designate any short slow aria such as might be entrusted to a comprimario as well as a principal singer." Cf. Gstrein, who insists that "in the course of the nineteenth century the significance of the word [*Romanze/romance*] became broader and more vague. . . . The grounds for naming an operatic vocal piece a *Romanze* became more multiple and arbitrary. As a matter of principle, many—especially French composers—called all of their operas' 'ear-pleasers' [Ohrwürmer] *romances*, as a Parisian correspondent of the [*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*] suggested [in 1827]" ("Romanz/romance/Romanze," 13).

52. See n. 26 above.

opera's traditional splendor and prestige. In my view, the genre's underlying claim of a direct, artless spontaneity by no means disappeared, although it was subjected to mixtures and occasional overlays of artifice. (I have already suggested above a similar—though much stronger—process of elevation and high decoration in the production of Italian lyric-form structures in the second, third, and fourth decades of the nineteenth century.)

Whatever the sentiment or degree of mixture with other styles, by being conceptualized as a *romance* a song invited its audience to attend to its relative "naturalness," to hear it not as an upper-class pose but as a piece whose claims of unpretentiousness pierced through more grand or decorous conventions to strike a bond with the sentiments of a new, increasingly powerful class. The crux of this appeal is captured in the 1813 phrase of de Coupigny, cited above: "as if it had escaped from a soul that would not know how to contain the melancholy or tender sentiments with which it is filled." The *romance*, that is, could be understood as an uncontainable emotional overflow of a private, and thereby potentially free, individual. Moreover, this overflow was marked by relative innocence or guilelessness ("would not *know* how to contain"), as if it were emerging fresh and as yet unblemished either by the corruptions of power or by the complications of a grander operatic tradition. In short, the *romance* could invite reception as a sign of the bourgeoisie, the class of liberators committed to challenging and ultimately overturning what they perceived as the stiffly aristocratic, premodern social perspective. This would have been a justifiable inference regardless of the class of the character delivering the song. When a *romance* was sung by an aristocrat, that character, momentarily unmasked, revealed that he or she was "one of us," at least in spirit. In such a moment the character was merged into an idealistic side of the pan-European liberal-humanist project—as Adorno described it, "the glorification of the individual rising against the spell of order . . . the protest of passion against conventional congealment."⁵³

Romance texts frequently touched on standard themes: spontaneous sentiments (first love, love of country, sudden desolation or farewell, isolation and loneliness), narrations of dreams or visions, heartfelt prayers (in Italy sometimes bearing the label of "preghiera"), sentimental evocations of exotic lands or the distant past, and so on.⁵⁴ Between 1820 and 1860 one standard subject of strophic *romance* was that

53. Adorno, "Classes and Strata," 80–81 (see n. 5 above).

54. Some of these textual themes are discussed in Gstrein, "Romanz/romance/Romanze." It may be helpful to list some additional examples of strophic pieces from the years 1825–50 labeled as *romances* in their early printed scores (and not mentioned elsewhere in the text of the present essay). By Auber: Zerlina's "Voyez sur cette roche" and Lorenzo's "Pour toujours, disait elle, je suis à toi" from *Fra Diavolo*; Angèle's "Le trouble et la frayeur" from *Le Domino noir*; Casilda's "Oui, devant moi, droit comme une statue" from *La Part du diable*. By Meyerbeer: Alice's "Va, dit-elle, va mon enfant" from *Robert le diable*. By Halévy: Rachel's "Il va venir" from *La Juive*. By Bellini: Nelly's "Dopo l'oscuro nembro" from *Adelson e Salvini*; Bianca and Eloisa's "Sorgi, o padre, e la figlia rimira" from *Bianca e Fernando*; Alaide's "Sventurato il cor che fida" (in which a second stanza is begun but immediately interrupted) from *La straniera*; Giulietta's "O quante volte" from *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*; Agnese's "Ah! non pensar che pieno" from *Beatrice di*

of the first glimpse of the beloved—a type with which Leonora’s “Tacea la notte placida” seems strongly in dialogue. In a “first glimpse” *romance* the principal male or female character recounts the initial encounter with his or her beloved, often an unknown or mysterious figure. The cultural point, one supposes, was that the natural dictates of the modern concept of romantic love (as a free contract between consenting individuals of equal status) morally supersede—but are about to come into conflict with—traditional courtship customs. During the period of Verdi’s early career one familiar “first glimpse” strophic *romance* was Raoul’s “Plus blanche que la blanche hermine” from the opening of *Les Huguenots* (1836; explicitly labeled as a “romance” in the printed score). Meyerbeer provided another example—this time in a duet (identified as a “romance à deux voix”)—in Fidés’s and Berthe’s joint appeal to Oberthal, “Un jour dans les flots de la Meuse,” from *Le Prophète* (1849). A similar *romance* within German opera is Adolar’s “Unter blüh’nden Mandelbäumen” from Weber’s *Euryanthe*, Act I (1823).

Clearly designated as *romances* in their published scores, such examples present little difficulty. But surely it was possible for a composer to call on the *romance* style—sometimes conveyed by the full strophic form itself—to occupy portions of double-arias, full-scale duets, or other grand structures. Such a situation would bypass the opportunity for explicit generic labeling of the *romance* (since the whole complex would be called “aria,” “cavatina,” “introduzione,” “finale,” “duetto,” or the like). It is precisely this possibility that complicates Italian operatic analysis.

Consider, for example, the “first glimpse” *romance* type. Is it clear that all operatic texts concerned with this topic (and set as slow songs) are available for consideration as *romances*? In its most certain manifestations, the “first glimpse” text-type is strophic, but nonstrophic occurrences of the topic may be found in Verdi before *Il trovatore*—after all, declaring that one is in love is anything but a rare event within an opera. Luisa’s single-stanza “Lo vidi, e’l primo palpito” from *Luisa Miller*, Act I (1849), for example, centers around the “first glimpse” topic, but the piece is structurally a cantabile, or slow first movement, within a larger complex that Verdi labeled only as the “Introduzione.” Are we justified in considering “Lo vidi” a *romanza* on the basis of text topic alone? To do so would suggest that such a subject is unavailable to normal cantabiles, which would be a difficult case to make. Still, when Verdi, many years later, composed another classic instance of the same subject and, again, cast it in a single stanza—Don Carlos’s “Je l’ai vue, et dans son sourire” (*Don Carlos*, 1867; the piece, moreover, proceeds in a standard lyric form)—he labeled it, along with its preceding material, as “Récit e Romance.” Here the song’s

Tenda; Giorgio’s “Cinta di fiori e col bel crin disciolto” and Elvira’s “A una fonte afflito e solo” from *I puritani*. By Donizetti: Elisabeth’s “Faut-il, hélas!” from *Elisabeth* (French score); Smeton’s “Deh! non voler costringere” from *Anna Bolena*; Lucrezia’s “Com’è bello! quale incanto” from *Lucrezia Borgia*; Marie’s “Il faut partir” (a particularly influential model for Verdi) and Tonio’s “Pour me rapprocher di Marie” from *La Fille du régiment*; Pierotto’s “Cari luoghi ov’io passai” from *Linda di Chamounix*. As mentioned earlier, several other pieces from this period are labeled “romances” or “romanza” but are not strophic: cf. nn. 47–48 above.

independence from any larger cavatina or aria structure invited such a generic designation, but its subject matter could hardly have been irrelevant.

The “unlabeled” generic situation is probably clearer in cases in which the cantabile of a larger structure is set as a song with two (or even three) stanzas. Since within the *Primo Ottocento* conventions the normative cantabile was nonstrophic, any cantabile disposed in multiple stanzas could immediately suggest a mixture with outside genres.⁵⁵ And indeed, in Verdi’s operas such stanzaic cantabiles became increasingly common from 1848 (*Il corsaro*) onward—that is, they emerge at the beginning of the period during which he often resided in Paris (1847–57). Verdi’s earliest adaptations of the fully strophic “first glimpse” *romance* within cantabiles—and hence unlabeled as *romances*—were notable deformations of it. In the first, Rodolfo’s two-stanza “Quando le sere al placido” from *Luisa Miller*, Act II (1849)—whose text touches lightly on the “first glimpse” theme—the expressive point is that the virginal quality of the first-love experience has been betrayed. This accounts for the liquidation of each stanza’s expected textual refrain space with the clipped words, “Ah! . . . mi tradì.” (In terms of musical style, however, each stanza proceeds as a conventional Italian lyric form, though with a collapsing final zone.) In the second instance, Gilda’s three-stanza “Tutte le feste al tempio” from *Rigoletto*, Act II (1851), the generic implications are more complex. On the one hand, this piece functions as an extended *proposta* within the cantabile of the Gilda-Rigoletto grand duet, an otherwise Italian structure. On the other, its *racconto* aspect plays on the possibility of being heard as a negative-image of a “first glimpse” *romance*. (Both Gilda and the *romance* subtype have been brutally deflowered by the dramatic and textual content.)

In contrast, Leonora’s “Tacea la notte placida,” the cantabile of the number that Verdi designated as “Cavatina Leonora,” is a classic instance of an unlabeled solo piece in dialogue with the two-stanza “first glimpse” *romance*-type.⁵⁶ Surely Cammarano’s and Verdi’s aim was to present Leonora as overwhelmed with private, personal sentiments. Like her predecessor, Lucia di Lammermoor, she is no longer assimilable into the old-world court and its hierarchy of set poses. This unwillingness to accept the dictates of pre-established propriety lies at the heart of Leonora as a nineteenth-century symbol. The preceding *scena* makes this point through Leonora’s non sequiturs. Though she is clearly part of the court circle at the Palace of Aliaferia, the intrusion of the mysterious *trovatore* has distracted her from considerations of social position and the concomitant standards of decorum. The preceding recitative informs us, for example, that not only is she neglecting the expectations of the court, she is even disregarding those who remind her of these duties: when Ines reminds her that

55. As noted earlier, there are several examples of this mixture—some of them quite celebrated—in the pre-Verdian repertory. See the discussion on pp. 150 and 152 above.

56. In the Bénédict score of the revised, French version of the opera, *Le Trouvère* (1857), Leonora’s cantabile (“La nuit calme et sereine”), was given a separate formal designation at the onset of its introduction: “couplets” (p. 23). As mentioned earlier, in its broadest sense this term, merely means “stanzas,” and by no means does it rule out the further subclassification of the piece as a *romance*. (See n. 24 above.)

"Di te la regal donna / Chiese, l'udisti" [The Queen asked about you, / You heard her], Leonora—in her first line of the opera—can respond only with a nonresponse, "Un'altra notte ancora / Senza vederlo" [Yet another night / Without seeing him].

Leonora's abandoning of social convention continues with the invasion of the cantabile, "Tacea la notte placida," by the *romance* genre. (Here the contrast with, say, the emphatically posed, square-cut lyric-form portion of Count de Luna's later cantabile, "Il balen del suo sorriso," could scarcely be greater. The count's melody is a model of decorous, aristocratic delivery—indeed, a slick and stereotyped one, at least up until its revealing coda.) Launched by the usual narrative trigger, "Ascolta!", the textual structure of "Tacea la notte placida" (text 2 below) may be represented as $2 \times (4 + 4 + 2)$ lines. There is no textual refrain, and the two ten-line stanzas are linked only with final, rhymed *tronco* lines ("cantò" / "sembrò"). Verdi's music cuts across the textual structure by setting each stanza in a $(4 + 2) + 4$, minor-major pattern, and it provides a number of signals that we are encountering more than a traditional lyric form. Although the first stanza's opening four lines $(2 + 2)$ may be construed as the standard initial zone of a lyric form (*a a'*), for instance, the zone is unusually melancholy (A-flat minor), atmospheric, and lyrically contoured (and perhaps evocative of Donizetti's two-stanza [*romance*-] cantabile for Lucia, "Regnava nel silenzio"). More important, the expected (but not quite accomplished) close of the initial zone flows directly into lines 5 and 6 ("Quando suonar per l'aere," and so on). Instead of suggesting the onset of a separate medial zone (*b*), lines 5 and 6 seem to continue the initial thought and mood past the nonclosed lines 1–4.

TEXT 2

LEO.	Tacea la notte placida	
	E bella in ciel sereno,	
	La luna il viso argenteo	
	Mostrava lieto e pieno;	
	Quando suonar per l'aere,	5
	Infino allor si muto . .	
	Dolci s'udiro e flebili	
	Gli accordi d'un liuto,	
	E versi melanconici	
	Un Trovator cantò.	10
	Versi di prece, ed umile	
	Qual d'uom che prega Iddio;	
	In quella ripeteasi	
	Un nome . . il nome mio . . .	
	Corsi al veron sollecita . . .	15
	Egli era, egli era desso!	
	Gioia provai che agl'angeli	
	Solo è provar concesso!	
	Al core, al guardo estatico	
	La terra un ciel sembrò!	20

Thus lines 1–6 are a single gesture setting up what follows. Melodically, they trace an ascent, *eb'* ("sereno"), *gb'* ("pieno"), *ab'-bb'-c'* ("muto"), an ascent strengthened by the omnipresence of the billowing-fourth motive ("sereno," "pieno," "l'aere"). Harmonically, the bass arpeggiation to the dominant—*Ab* ("sereno"), *cb* ("pieno"), and *eb* ("muto")—supports the anacrusis function of the first six lines. The introduction of the double-pause at the end of the sixth line (on each syllable of "muto") is the threshold to the spotlighted musical space that follows as a new beginning, one that also unclenches the minor-mode grip of the piece's opening and yields to an expansive, lyrical, parallel major.⁵⁷

At the moment of the double-pause and subsequent major-mode launch, the piece behaves more like a French *romance* stanza than an Italian lyric form. Under the French reading lines 1–6 constitute the verse section. Here the free continuation and refrain preparation are telescoped into a virtual simultaneity, lines 5–6, as if Verdi were suggesting that Leonora wishes to bring these preliminaries to a quick close, in order to hasten the textual presence of the *trovatore*—and the release into the major mode. Along these lines, it would be possible to read the stanza as representing an indecorous rush or slippage into physicality, one underscored by the tempo indication "animando un poco il tempo" at line 5 (above "Quando suonar per l'aere"), and it is worth noting that after the hesitant fermatas at the end of line 6, lines 7–10 ("Dolci s'udiro e flebili") are to be delivered "con espansione" at an even faster tempo, "un poco più animato." Thus the first six lines provide a phased accelerando into a more rapidly paced, erotically heightened conclusion.⁵⁸

From one point of view the major-mode lines 7–10 may be heard as an unusually emphatic final zone of an Italian lyric form (an expanded *c*). From another, they occupy the refrain space of a *romance*, even though a textual refrain is not present. With the return to the minor mode and the onset of a second stanza, the piece's *romance* aspect is confirmed. The second stanza is musically similar to the first except that the final line ("La terra un ciel sembrò") is altered to avoid closure, thus permitting, after an expectant pause, an extra, even more ecstatic reiteration of lines 9 and 10 ("Al cor, al guardo estatico / La terra un ciel sembrò"). At the point of this enhanced repetition—the piece's *telos*—the structure spills over the containment of the symmetrical-stanza principle. Once outside its boundaries, Leonora's music moves into a freer zone in which even the

57. Basevi, *Studio*, 207, singled out the sudden change of "movement and rhythm" at this point as the piece's central feature and compared it with a similar effect in a solo piece for soprano, "Funesti pensieri," from a cantata by Paër, *Eloisa ed Abelardo*. Basevi seems not to have considered the *romance* implications of the piece; cf., however, his remarks in n. 61 below.

58. The tempo indications given here are those found in the autograph score and conveyed in David Lawton's critical edition of the opera (1992), vol. 18A of *WGV*.

In most piano-vocal scores no braking of the pulse back to the original Andante ($\downarrow = 50$) is indicated for the entrance into the second stanza. It is probably implied, though, since at the parallel passages of that stanza we once again find the indications "animando un poco" and "Poco più animato." In his critical edition of the opera David Lawton adds the term "I tempo" in parentheses at the beginning of the second stanza: although not in the manuscript score, the tempo indication is found in the earliest extant orchestral parts.

fullness of the swelling orchestra below and the ecstatic cadenza can become elemental physical symbols.

On strictly formal grounds Verdi might have intended this unusual repetition to underpin further the refrain-space status of this concluding zone—that is, to signal a principle of (refrainlike) repetition that the piece did not provide on its own.⁵⁹ Whatever his reason, the climactic repetition disturbed one of its first listeners. In 1859 Basevi singled it out as a defect:

Always striving for effect, Verdi ends this Andante with a short phrase shaped into a crescendo; and not content with that, in the second stanza he repeats it and reinforces it with a string tremolo. In my view, this extra repetition is too obvious an addition, and it does not arise naturally out of the music that precedes it, as it ought to do.⁶⁰

Verdi might have heard similar criticisms well before 1859; in any event, in 1857, two years before Basevi's book was published, Verdi removed the extra repetition for the French version of the opera, *Le Trouvère*. Whatever our hypotheses regarding this alteration, it may be important to observe that the composer specified it when the piece was to be performed—at least in 1857—before the audiences most familiar with the *romance* genre.⁶¹

59. A similar strategy is employed in Leonora's cantabile from Act IV, "D'amor sull'ali rosee," in which the final two lines, "Ma deh! non dirgli improvvido," and so on, are submitted to a second, climactic statement. Although this piece contains only one stanza, generically it seems to be a typical (though unlabeled) *romance* of the "desolation/farewell" type—even the F-minor key in which it begins is characteristic (see Hepokoski, "Genre and Content," 259–60). Throughout the piece we may recognize the (French) principle of persistent phrase-pairing, as well as the division into an extended verse section (lines 1–8) containing the initial phrase pair (here, lines 1–2), an extended free continuation including several other phrase pairs, and an emphatic refrain preparation ("Ai sogni dell'amor!"), here without fermata. The new beginning, or refrain space, consists of lines 9–10, "Ma deh! non dirgli, improvvido, / Le pene del mio cor!" Its immediate, intensified repetition may be heard as reinforcing the refrain-space status of that final zone. "D'amor sull'ali rosee" is probably most productively understood as an example not of a purely Italian melodic design, but of an isolated stanza unfolding largely in the French manner. If so, then in her two cantabiles spanning the opera—the one from Act I, the other from Act IV—Leonora would remain stamped as a character informed powerfully by the "modern" *romance* sentiment.

60. Basevi, *Studio*, 207. Basevi cites the second stanza of the *romance* "Sombre forêt" from Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* as the model that Verdi should have followed to avoid the fault of empty repetition. In that piece Rossini had concluded the second stanza proper—musically a repetition of the first—with a different coda that repeated the final line of text. But Basevi seems to have missed the point. Rossini's piece contains what is more or less a standard coda space. Verdi's repetition is not so much a coda as it is a final, intense conclusion of the refrain space itself: a double highlighting of its punch line.

61. I have discussed this passage from a quite different perspective in "Compositional Emendations in Verdi's Autograph Scores: *Il trovatore*, *Un ballo in maschera*, and *Aida*," *Studi verdiani* 4 (1988): 91–94. Another factor in the shortening of the ending might have been the ability of Pauline Lauters (later Gueymard), the soprano who first sang the role of Léonore in the 1857 *Le Trouvère*. As Martin Chusid pointed out at the 1995 international conference, "Performing Verdi" (Verdi Festival, London, Covent Garden, 30 June–2 July 1995), Verdi was obliged to alter certain high notes at the end of the cantabile to suit her voice, in addition to

Finally, we might notice how parallel "Tacea la notte placida" is to Ferrando's preceding ballade. Both are initiating narratives in two stanzas; both are cantabiles followed by a *tempo di mezzo* and cabaletta (their Frenchness, that is, is a local feature of an overarching Italian design); and both feature a verse section ushering in a refrain space that releases the triple-beat accompaniment that is one of the most telling features stamping *Il trovatore*.⁶² Such things call attention to the parallel nature of the narratives, both of which include some of the same characters. In each case, however, this parallelism is unknown to the narrators at hand.⁶³

Demotic Chorus: "Vedi! le fosche notturne spoglie" [Anvil Chorus]/Azucena, "Stride la vampa! – la folla indomita" (Act II, N. 4, Coro di Zingari e Canzone)

Among the most familiar nineteenth-century operatic conventions, strophic-text demotic choruses are featured throughout Verdi's oeuvre: there are about twenty-two strophic choral texts in his operas before *Il trovatore*. (Counts may differ depending on what is considered a stanza.)⁶⁴ Particularly in the earlier works, though, Verdi frequently

changing some other passages in the opera for her. (Gueymard-Lauters later created the mezzo-soprano role of Eboli in the 1867 *Don Carlos*.) I am grateful to Professor Chusid for mentioning this once more to me in personal correspondence. His paper on this topic, "Towards a Better Understanding of Verdi's Revisions: The Female Leads in *Le Trouvère*," will appear in the forthcoming *Le fonti nella ricerca musicale: Studi per Claudio Sartori*, ed. Mariangela Doria and François Lesure (Lucca: Libreria Italiana Musicale, in press).

62. This accompaniment figure seems to me to be one of the most misunderstood features of the opera. It is anything but a throwaway gesture. Rather, Verdi placed it into the opera with calculated precision: it consistently appears as a swirling current into which the main characters fall, often after beginning their utterances with a different, sometimes more sophisticated accompaniment pattern. The triple-beat pattern thus serves as a fatalistic metaphor for the abandonment of the rational check, the slipping into the clutches of the physical, the psychological, or the pre-rational. It may be understood as a rhythmic symbol for that fire of passion in which, as Gabriele Baldini has argued, all of the characters are consumed; see *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi: From "Oberto" to "Un ballo in maschera"*, trans. Roger Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 209–30; originally in Italian as *Abitare la battaglia: La storia di Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan: Garzanti, 1970).

63. One might also notice that the opening of the verse section of "Tacea la notte placida" is intervallically similar to the beginning of the refrain space of Ferrando's earlier ballade, "Abietta zingara." Both melodies are launched in minor and emphasize the scale-steps $\hat{5}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}/\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$. It is difficult to know whether this resemblance is a significant melodic symbol or whether it is only a mere coincidence. (Verdian melodies that descend from $\hat{5}$, are anything but rare.) If one chooses to regard it as meaningful, yet another link between the two pieces could be forged (albeit from different sections of the structure of each). Cf. n. 70 below for another example and a possible interpretation.

64. In my view, the first such two texts are found in *Nabucco* (1842): the chorus of Hebrews, Levites, and Hebrew maidens, "Gli arredi festivi giù cadano infranti" at the opening of the opera (four parallel six-line stanzas); and "Va pensiero, sull'ale dorate" from the third act (Parte 3^a; two parallel eight-line stanzas). Verdi's next opera, *I Lombardi*, follows with four more strophic choruses: the narrative "Era Viclinda – gentil donzella," sung by the men of the citizens chorus in Act I; the women's *coro nell'harem*, "La bella straniera che l'alme inamora!" in Act II; the crusaders, womens, and pilgrims chorus, "Gerusalem . . . Gerusalem . . . la grande" at the

shied away from paralleling the text with strophic music. Still, musically strophic choruses of varying complexity do appear in the pre-*Trovatore* operas, though not often: the unusually texted “Le rube, gli stupri, gl’incendi, le morti” from *I masnadieri* is an example (four stanzas, musically patterned A B C A’). Although the larger musical structures might vary from case to case, Verdi tended to shape at least the first textual stanza, whenever possible, according to Italian lyric-form patterns.⁶⁵

Within the world of *Il trovatore* these gypsies, whom we meet first in this Anvil Chorus (opening the second act), represent the extreme “other” to the court encountered in the first act—whose social perspective Leonora (and, perhaps, much of the audience?) is in the process of rejecting. That this otherness is superficially represented through common musical strategies of orientalism and exoticism is obvious: more important is that this objectified, outcast group (“not us”) apparently comes to stand as a deep-background precondition of—or even a symbol for—newer-world (“natural”) social values. Here in Act II, prestige and privilege shift to their polar opposites: instead of Castile, we have Biscay in rebellion against it, embodied here by its lowest stratum of sympathizers (higher strata—Urgel and his followers, for example—exist only as dim suggestions); instead of the sumptuous palace courtyards, the crude, natural dwellings (“un diruto abituro”) at the base of a mountain, illuminated by elemental fires (“un gran fuoco”); instead of night intrigue, the promise of dawn; instead of inherited wealth and security, relative poverty; instead of the protection of power, the extolling of simple labor, either at

opening of Act III; and the patriotic chorus, “O Signore, dal tetto natio” from Act IV. And so on. See also the larger study of Verdi’s early choruses in Markus Engelhardt, *Die Chöre in den frühen Opern Giuseppe Verdis* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1988).

65. In the two-stanza chorus of exiled Hebrews, “Va pensiero, sull’ale dorate,” for instance, Verdi’s musical strategy is as follows. Each stanza consists of eight lines of *decasillabo* verse. The first stanza is set in a straightforward *a a’ b a’* lyric form in F-sharp major. (Here, one supposes, the structural formula is to be taken as an emblem of *italianità*, a residuum of *melodia italiana* that is invited to be understood as inextinguishable—and perhaps ennobling on terms different from that of the opera’s immediate plot-world.) Rather than giving the impression of initiating a second musical stanza, the first four lines of the second textual stanza (“Arpa d’or dei fatidici vati, / Perché muta dal salice pendì?” and so on) seem to be an expanded, intensified return to a musical medial zone (*b*). Within the traditional letter-scheme, the four lines may be represented as *x x*, in which each *x* is also something of a variant of the first stanza’s *b*. Where in the first stanza the medial zone had articulated a V of F-sharp, essentially sustaining the dominant chord, here in the second the V is strengthened into a stronger, though still momentary, tonicization of “C-sharp major.” The subsequent lines 5–6 (“O simile di Solima ai fati / Traggi un suono di crudo lamento”) prolong the medial zone further (*y*), now turning the C-sharp major into an explicit dominant of F-sharp *minor*. Restoring the major mode, stanza two’s lines 7–8 (“O t’ispiri il Signore un concerto / Che ne infonda al patire virtù!”) return in the manner of a lyric form to the final-zone melody (*a’*) of the first stanza, whereupon a fourth zone, the coda space with its line repetitions, ensues. The overall pattern is less two musical stanzas than it is a characteristically early-Verdian, expanded lyric form—expanded through the lengthened, varied repetition of the medial and final zones: *a a’ b a’ / x x y a’*, in which *x x y* (lines 1–6 of textual stanza two) represents the intensified revisiting of the medial zone (*b*) of the first stanza. See also the discussion above concerning repetitions of the final zone within a lyric form.

the anvils or in the nearby villages; instead of courtships and marriages commingled with state power, a “natural” love that ripens apart from these factors and binds society together (“Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? / La zingarella!”). Most important, this group of gypsies has nurtured the opera’s hero, Manrico, the *trovatore* and *sconosciuto guerrier* (unknown warrior)—who, although a brother to the power of the Castilian court (though he is unaware of that fact), is nonetheless committed to bringing it down and ushering in a new order, whose details remain unspecified. (It is not difficult to imagine, however, what politics audiences of the 1850s were invited to project onto all this).

Although the opera’s “N. 4,” the Coro di Zingari e Canzone, seems to contain two different pieces—the Anvil Chorus and Azucena’s “Stride la vampa”—the number is better understood as an integrated whole unfolding in three stanzas, the third of which has been subjected to special, expanded treatment. Immediately following the first two (“normal”) stanzas of the Anvil Chorus, the solo song, “Stride la vampa,” with its own two-stanza format, eventually leads back, after its own seeming conclusion, into the two-line, choral refrain familiar from the Coro di Zingari proper, “Chi del gitano i giorni abbella?,” and so on. The strophic pattern thus produced is (1) choral verse with choral refrain; (2) new choral verse with choral refrain; and (3) (two-stanza) solo song, brief *scena*, and choral refrain. In this sense Azucena’s song functions within the overall structure as the larger part of a markedly transformed verse section for the piece’s third stanza—that is, for that (variable) section of a strophic song that precedes the refrain. Thus the whole number is not merely strophic: at the end it also displays substrophes within a (third) strophe, thus intensifying this structural aspect of the piece:

TEXT 3

- ZINGARI Vedi, le fosche – notturne spoglie
De’ cieli sveste – l’immensa volta.
Sembra una vedova – che alfin si toglie
I bruni panni – ond’era involta!
All’opra, all’opra . . . – Dagli . . . Martella . . .
(danno di piglio ai ferri del mestiere)
Chi del gitano – i giorni abbella? *(I Cori batteranno a tempo i martelli sulle sulle*
incudini. I Bassi faranno il colpo in tempo: i
Tenori il contrattempo)
La zingarella!
- GLI UOMINI Versami un tratto: – lena e corraggio
(si fermano un poco dal lavoro e dicono alle donne)
Il corpo e l’anima – traggon dal bere.
(le donne mescono ad essi in rozze coppe)
- TUTTI Oh! guarda, guarda! – del sole un raggio
Brilla più vivido – nel tuo bicchiere!
All’opra, all’opra . . . – Dagli . . . Martella . . .
Chi del gitano – i giorni abbella?
La zingarella!

- (Azucena canta: gli Zingari le si fanno da lato)*
- AZU. Stride la vampa! – la folla indomita
 Corre a quel foco – lieta in sembianza!
 Urli di gioia – d'intorno echeggiano . . .
 Cinta di sgherri – donna s'avanza!
 Sinistra splende – su' volti orribili
 La tetra fiamma – che s'alza al ciel!
- Stride la vampa! – giunge la vittima
 Nero vestita, – discinta e scalza!
 Grido feroce – di morte levasi:
 L'eco il ripete – di balza in balza! . . .
 Sinistra splende – su' volti orribili
 La tetra fiamma – che s'alza al ciel!
- TUTTI Mesta è la tua canzon!
 AZU. Del pari mesta
 Che la storia funesta
 Da cui tragge argomento!
 Mi vendica! . . . mi vendica! . . .
- (a Manrico mormora sommessamente)*
- MAN. (L'arcana
 parola ognor!)
 UN Compagni, avanza il giorno:
 VECCHIO A procacciarci un pan, su, su, scendiam(o)
 ZINGARO Per le propinque ville.
 TUTTI Andiamo . . .
 Andiamo.
*(ripongono sollecitamente ne' sacchi i loro arnesi e
 discendono giù alla rinfusa per la china)*
 Chi del gitano – i giorni abbella?
 La zingarella! *(allontanandosi)*

The first two seven-line (choral) stanzas have the textual shape, $2 \times (4 + 1 + 2)$. Each stanza concludes with the same three lines, the last of which (“La zingarella!”) truncates the *doppio quinario* metrical pattern into a pointed, single *quinario*.⁶⁶ Strictly considered, all three concluding lines constitute a refrain—a repeated text—but it is only the last two that are to occupy the refrain space proper. This division is evident in the first stanza, where the final two lines are set off by interpolated stage directions calling upon the male gypsies to begin striking anvils as they sing “la cantilena seguente.” The preceding line, “All’opra! all’opra! Dàgli, martella,” is a preparation for the refrain proper, and its literal sense precipitates the activity of the refrain-to-come. With this exception, the verse section of each stanza, as is normal, contains a different text: the first stanza presents an image of the emerging dawn;

66. For a discussion of the function of truncated final lines in stanzaic blocks, see Hepokoski, “Genre and Content,” 258–59.

the second, “Versami un tratto; lena e coraggio,” evokes aspects of the traditional *brindisi*.

Verdi’s setting of these two stanzas is mostly French in its phrase pairing, however much the precipitate directness and accent of the melodies themselves might strike us as Italian. (The orchestral introduction had established this French reduplicative procedure in the pattern *a a (4 + 4) b b (2 + 2) c c (4 + 4)*.)⁶⁷ The Anvil Chorus is a characteristic example of Verdi’s Italian adaptations of French structural procedures at this stage of his career. Here the normal shapes of lyric form are avoided, except insofar as the lyric-form design overlaps with the French model. Instead we find a contracted French pattern: an initial phrase pair (“Vedi le fosche”); a refrain preparation (“All’opra! all’opra!”); and a spotlighted, punch-line refrain. Two features are especially notable. There is no free continuation zone after the initial phrase pairs because of the shortage of text (although we should notice the repeated instrumental figures following the fourth line); and while the dominant-chord refrain preparation, which appears here without fermata, articulates V of A minor, the ensuing refrain stretches outward to C major—a familiar Italian-operatic harmonic shift from a local V of vi chord to a local I.

Verdi’s treatment of key relations throughout the Anvil Chorus—indeed, throughout the entire number—is remarkable. Rather than presenting us with a governing tonic for the entire complex, he employed four common-tone-related local tonics as contrasting “tonal colors” to illuminate the number’s various phases. In the orchestral introduction and verse section we find E minor (mm. 1–12) and G major (mm. 13–20, extended further with the first four lines of text, mm. 21–28), and, in the refrain preparation (“All’opra! all’opra!”), V of A minor. The common tone among these is the much-discussed *Trovatore-sonorità* of B natural.⁶⁸ Subsequently, the implied A-minor color of the refrain preparation gives way to a bright shaft of C major at the refrain. Among other things, this sudden modal shift locally evokes features of the familiar minor-major strophic song.

It may be that none of the keys should be heard as a controlling tonic. To illustrate some of the complications: from the point of view of the C-major refrain the stanza begins off-tonic, and the initial E minor (with which it shares the pitches *g* and *e*) could be heard as a crazed or exotic color-variant of the C-tonic into which all three stanzas of the number grow. On the other hand, the whole number retains

67. We might also notice the similarity of certain melodic figures to those found in Ferrando’s ballade. The characteristic reiterating fourths in m. 2, for example, might recall those near the conclusion of the ballade’s refrain space, recounting, in the first stanza, the driving away of Azucena’s mother from the palace, “La rea discacciano che entrarvi osò.” Similarly, the opening two-beat figure of Act II compresses the essential *e’-b’ sonorità* found repeatedly at the melodic opening of Act I (e.g., in m. 7). Such sonorous recurrences, multiplied *in extenso*, constitute the web of interlocking cross-references establishing the *tinta* of *Il trovatore*. It would take considerable space—and patience—to enumerate them all. On the issue of recurring *sonorità* in this opera see especially Pierluigi Petrobelli, “Towards an Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*,” trans. William Drabkin, *Music Analysis* 1 (1982): 129–41. Cf. nn. 48 and 54.

68. *Ibid.*

a one-sharp key signature throughout.⁶⁹ Notationally, this might suggest a favoring of E minor as the number's overall "conceptual tonic." From the point of view of this E minor (which clearly harks back to much that occurred in the first act) each stanza stretches outward to escape into C major, the submediant. In other words, from this perspective each stanza strives to wrench free of the ostensibly controlling principle of order; each demonstrates the "throwing off" of the original tonic in order to embrace a liberating, more spacious major mode.

To force a decision about the piece's tonic misses the point: it may not be in any single key at all. In the decentering of a tonic into four different, but more or less equally weighted, tonal regions into and out of which one may slip at will—E minor, G major, V of A minor, and C major—one may experience a dispersion of tonal power. Tonic pluralism (so to speak) may be the central factor, and if so we ought not to impose a conceptual resolution onto it. In such a reallocation of tonal control from a single governing force to a set of shared, subforces one might further be tempted to see yet another nineteenth-century metaphor of the inevitable decentering of old-world social authority. Perhaps the multiple, contesting tonics of the Italian Romantic *melodramma* in general may harbor this latent metaphor.

To return to matters of stanzaic architecture: it is a general principle of strophic songs in this period that as they proceed from one stanza to the next, the verse section may be increasingly freely treated, while the refrain space tends to be less flexible. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, while second stanzas may present variants in their verse section, it is especially characteristic in third stanzas to find reconceived verse sections, which then return at their conclusions to the contents, perhaps slightly altered, of the refrain space. At the beginning of the second act of *Il trovatore*, then, it is not surprising that the verse section of this third stanza is treated freely. What is striking is that it is turned into a psychological analepsis (flashback) for Azucena—and into a song with its own two-stanza format. The gypsy-*canzone*, "Stride la vampa," is not only a strophic song with the simplest of textual structures—to be expected within the conventional musical representation of any underclass—but it is also one whose own stanzas echo the textual structure of the two preceding Anvil Chorus stanzas. Retaining the *doppio quinario* meter, the text of "Stride la vampa" unfolds in a $2 \times (4 + 2)$ pattern in which the final two lines are a refrain, "Sinistra splende – su' volti orribili / La tetra fiamma – che s'alza al ciel!" "Stride la vampa" is a complementary refrain song within a refrain song.

This interior *canzone* also has musical links to the Anvil Chorus proper: it is a motivic-swirling echo of much that we have just heard. Such treatment is appropriate in a third (altered) verse section, and it also helps to present Azucena as emerg-

69. Verdi's autograph score and the printed orchestral scores are consistent on this point. Some of the available vocal scores, however, remove the sharp from the signature immediately after Azucena's *canzone*—that is, with the return to the common time, *Assai moderato*, and the words "Mesta è la tua canzon" (e.g., the currently available Ricordi vocal score [Ristampa 1980], pl. no. 109460, bottom of p. 93). The removal of the sharp is clearly an interpretive intervention on the part of a later editor; obviously, that editor observed that in purely notational terms the sharp was superfluous from this point onward.

ing from a nonprivileged social group. The prescribed stage-image reinforces this aspect of Azucena: "[Azucena] canta: gli Zingari le si fanno allato." And in terms of musical image the opening rhythm of "Stride la vampa," $\text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, springs directly out of the refrain's "Chi del gitano" rhythm, representable as $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, which Verdi had just (twice) stamped into our memories. Similarly, the turn figure on "vampa" can recall the one heard at the end of the refrain, "La zingarella!" One might even argue that the refrain's C-tonic sonority re-emerges later in Azucena's *canzone* in her third line, "Urli di gioia – intorno echeggiano," on C major (as VI of E minor). Moreover, Azucena's E-minor tonic color and haunting melodic b^{\flat} bring back sonorities associated with the orchestral introduction to the verse section.⁷⁰

Although the text of "Stride la vampa" might have invited a French treatment in the strophic-song-with-refrain manner, Verdi submitted the whole to a blend of Italian and French structural principles. We may easily perceive the musical architecture of Italian lyric form within each of its two stanzas, only slightly altered into a still-compact *a a' b a a'* design. One may recognize, for example, the characteristic treatment of the lyric form's first three zones: lines 1–2 provide the initial zone, *a a'*, here presented as the typical parallel period (normally *a a'* should set four lines of text; thus, strictly considered, the lyric-form pattern has here been submitted to a proportional reduction, although two lines of *doppio quinario* meter could be "heard" as four lines of *quinario*);⁷¹ lines 3–4, beginning "Urli di gioia," the medial zone, outlining a neighbor-note motion in the bass, submediant to dominant; refrain lines 5–6, beginning with the typical return to a final zone *a* (again, as an antecedent) and branching out from it toward a more emphatic cadential phrase (serving as the consequent). It is the efficient return to *a* and *a'* for the final zone (thus producing a simple rounded binary pattern) that distinguishes this structure from the more easily identifiable, expanded-stanzaic convention: an expanded refrain space in the French manner would have presented a contrasting melodic idea—the most characteristic of the song—as a spotlighted punch line (which is why the French pattern blends more readily with the *a a' b c* type of lyric form). Moreover, Verdi avoids a conventionally French preparation in the moments pre-

70. With its minor-mode, melodic descent from $\hat{5}$, the *canzone* may reach even further back in its pitch-class and intervallic allusions to the "Abietta zingara" refrain space of Ferrando's ballade (also in E minor) and Leonora's [*romance*]-cantabile (see n. 64 above). Such features illustrate a central feature of the *Trovatore tinta*: obsessive returns to a limited collection of musical gestures, as if the same narrative or contextual situation were being recycled through the lives of all of its characters. Cf. also nn. 64 and 69 above.

71. It occasionally happens that brief melodic structures—setting only four lines of text, for example, not eight—unfold in what strike us as "lyric-form-like" designs (though unfolding, of course, within a smaller compass). Normally, when a lyric form's initial zone sets only two lines, instead of the usual four, we would speak of a proportional reduction of the form (in this case, a 50 percent reduction)—and one would be looking at a structure very close to Bartha's concept of "quatrain" (or Schoenberg's concept of a "sentence"): see n. 20 above. Indeed, such a claim would be reasonable in the present case. One should note, though, that when the two lines of a text thus set are written in a "double" poetic meter—such as the *doppio quinario*, 5 + 5 syllables, as is the case here—the proportional reduction aspect is more elusive. In such cases, the two "double" lines may be easily heard as four shorter single lines.

ceding the refrain space (on line 4, "Cinta di sgherri – donna s'avanza!"): no slowing of the tempo; no fermata; no prolonged reiteration or pedal-like holding of the dominant, whose appearance here is restricted to a brisk two measures ("s'avanza").

Still, non-Italian (or at least non-normative) aspects are not completely suppressed in the *canzone*. Apart from the simplicity of the melody, it is evident that all three zones of the Italian design are carried out in paired phrases. Within each stanza the three sets of pairs follow a principle of increasing divergence. In lines 1 and 2 the two musical phrases, antecedent and consequent, are nearly identical; in lines 3 and 4, the equivalent of a strophic-song continuation zone, they resemble each other a little less and receive a differing harmonic treatment; in the final phrase, lines 5 and 6 break through the pattern of simple repetition to articulate a punch-line cadence, followed by a varied, instrumental echo that leads directly to the second stanza. This procedure might suggest things more French than Italian, although the pattern is not found inevitably in French songs.

In sum, "Stride la vampa" is an Italian-French mix, a set of older-world/newer-world tensions, in which the Italian conventions (dominated by the lyric-form-like *a a' b a a'*) may ultimately have the upper hand. More broadly, the song is nested within a grander structure, a "larger" Anvil Chorus extending beyond its second stanza, as the first part of a varied third stanza. And that chorus—as a whole—is another Italian-French mix, but one tilted, as if in compensation, more toward the French or newer-world direction. It is into that larger structure that "Stride la vampa" empties upon its conclusion.

The music immediately following Azucena's song completes the verse section of the third stanza (within the "larger" structure) and leads to its refrain. At first, the previously regular poetry collapses into seven lines of *scena*-verse (11, 7, 7, 11, 11, 11, and 11 syllables). This introduction of recitative presents no obstacle to the interpretation proposed here: it would be a reasonable strategy for rebeginning a structure that has run aground with an emphatic interior close. Throughout the relatively free space of the *scena*-verse ("Mesta è la tua canzone," a set of response-lines to the preceding song), Verdi bolsters the continuity of the verse-section as a whole by stressing the descending interval *e'-b* first heard in the instrumental opening of the entire number (*e''-b'*), and, even more obviously, by rejoining the music of the orchestral refrain preparation as the chorus enters with the injunction, "Andiamo" (compare this with the text of the prior two stanzas, "All'opra! all'opra!").

Before long these *scena*-lines set up the refrain lines in *doppio quinario* and *quinario* ("Chi del gitano i giorni abbellà? / La zingarella!"), which function as an exit-refrain in *diminuendo* at the number's end. Rather than an ending proper, this is a dissolution into silence. In turn, this trailing off can suggest that the strophic-cyclical (potentially unending), popular or demotic song continues as a substratum of the opera's social perspective, even though the song itself recedes here to offstage inaudibility.

Forms/Genres as Expressive Choices

On one level, mid-*Ottocento* formulas have come to strike analysts of opera as familiar, readily describable things: this piece is a strophic song, that one is non-strophic; this one is shaped as an *a a' b a'' coda* design, that one as an *a a' b c coda* pattern; this one is binary, that one ternary; this one is a cantabile, that one a *ca-baletta*; this one follows a standard pattern, that one does not. It is relatively easy to provide frictionless descriptions of individual pieces. But it may be that the comfort of such descriptive language—its very familiarity—keeps us from asking deeper questions. Once we have described a structure in this way, what have we said about what it really is? Above all, what have we said about *why* it is what it is?

In the above discussions I have tried to suggest a few ways in which our inquiries might confront broader issues. I have proposed, for instance, that Verdi's (and his librettists') choices of "standard" formal procedures were dramatic and expressive choices, down to their smallest details; that his mode of laying out individual numbers involved more strands of generic implication than has been generally recognized; that these designs—lyric form, strophic song, double-aria, and the like—were not connotatively neutral templates (mere "forms") but patterns with complex, sometimes internally inconsistent cultural implications ("genres"); that, consequently, we might wish to devise ways of recovering and interpreting their latent content; and that one way of doing this is to remind ourselves of their extended, multilayered history.

To identify an operatic structure in Verdi and to describe its musical surfaces accurately is a necessary first step, and by no means an easy one, particularly when we are confronted with generic mixtures, as so often in *Il trovatore*. Once this step has been taken, however, we might ask at least two more difficult, though no less basic, questions: What is the historical content of the genre(s) at hand? And how (and why) did Verdi put that historicity to work within any individual piece? These are surely complex matters, and I can make no claims to have provided the answers to them. But if we wish to uncover the cultural drama embedded in *Ottocento* opera, the questions, for now, might be more important than the answers.

Appendix

TEXT 1

FER.	There lived a happy father of two sons The good Count de Luna; The second boy's faithful nurse Slept next to his cradle. As dawn was breaking one fine morning She opened her eyes, And whom did she find next to that baby? . . . Who? . . . Speak . . . Who was it?	5
CORO	A dark, despicable gypsy crone! . . . Wearing the symbols of a sorceress! And with a sullen face, over the boy, She cast her bloody, baleful eye! The nurse is seized with horror! She utters a sharp cry in the air; And, in less time than it takes to tell, The servants hasten into the room, And with shouts, blows, threats, They expel the wretch that dared enter.	10
FER.	Righteous scorn moves those hearts! The mad crone provoked it!	15
CORO	She claimed that she wanted to cast The boy's horoscope . . . The liar! A slow fever began to destroy The poor child's health! Covered with pallor, languid, broken, He trembled at night, He moaned piteously all day long . . . He was bewitched!	20
FER.	The witch was pursued, Seized and condemned to the stake: But her cursed daughter was left, Instrument of a horrible revenge! This criminal committed a terrible act . . . The child disappeared, and they found Still-glowing embers on the very same spot Where the witch had once been burned, And alas! . . . A child's skeleton, Half-burned, still smoking!	25
CORO	Ah, the wicked, infamous woman! . . . It fills me with both hatred and horror!	30
		35
		40

TEXT 2

LEO.	The serene night was silent And lovely in the calm sky, The moon happily revealed Its full and silvery face; When resounding in the air, Until then so quiet . . . Sweet and sad were heard The sounds of a lute, And a troubadour Sang melancholy verses.	5
	Verses beseeching, and humble, Like a man praying to God; And in them was repeated A name, my name . . . I ran eagerly to the balcony . . . There he was, it was he! I felt a joy that only the angels Are allowed to feel! To my heart, my ecstatic gaze, The earth seemed like heaven!	10
		15
		20

TEXT 3

GYPSES	See, the heavens' great vault Removes its gloomy, nighttime tatters. Like a widow who takes off at last The dark clothes that enfolded her! To work, to work . . . At it . . . Hammer . . . Who brightens the gypsy man's days?	(picking up their tools) (With their hammers, the chorus members strike the anvils in time. The basses strike them on the beat; the tenors off the beat)
	The gypsy maid!	
THE MEN	Pour me a draught: – strength and courage (They interrupt their work briefly, saying to the women)	
ALL	The body and soul draw from drinking. Oh, look, look! . . . A ray of the sun Sparkles brighter in your glass! To work, to work . . . At it . . . Hammer . . . Who brightens the gypsy man's days? The gypsy maid!	(The women pour wine)
		(Azucena sings; the gypsies come to her side)

- AZU. The flame crackles! The unrestrained mob
Runs to that fire, their faces happy!
Shouts of joy re-echo around . . .
Surrounded by killers, a woman comes forward!
Sinister, shining on the horrible faces
The ghastly flame rises toward heaven!
- The flame crackles! The victim arrives
Dressed in black, disheveled, barefoot!
A fierce shout of death is raised;
Its echo repeats it from hill to hill! . . .
Sinister, shining on the horrible faces
The ghastly flame rises toward heaven!
- ALL Your song's a sad one!
Just as sad
As the terrible story
That inspired it!
Avenge me! . . . Avenge me! . . . *(murmuring softly to Manrico)*
- MAN. (That mysterious
Word again!)
- AN OLD
GYPSY Companions, day is approaching:
To forage for our bread, let's go down
To the nearby villages.
- ALL Let's go . . .
Let's go. *(Hastily replacing their tools in their
sacks, they swarm down the slopes)*
- Who brightens the gypsy man's days? *(exiting)*
The gypsy maid!

6



"Something's Been Done to Make Room for Choruses": Choral Conception and Choral Construction in *Luisa Miller*

MARKUS ENGELHARDT

The attempt to establish points of demarcation in the development of Verdi's personal style, for differentiating his middle from his early works or his late from his middle works, can easily lead to considerable difficulties in terms of argumentation, even if the subject is limited to a single one—such as the relationship between the literary model and its realization as an opera libretto, or between the libretto and the musical setting, or between the dramatic structure and the form it takes as theatrical music, or such topics as scenic conception, instrumentation, harmonic principles, and so forth. These and other areas, considered individually or as a whole, are subject to quite varied influences. And these influences stem as much from the extramusical circumstances of that historical period as from the specific requirements of individual works and groups of works. Verdi constantly proved himself to be a man with a well-integrated artistic personality, and one who defined his principles early on; indeed, to a certain extent he seems always to have had them and essentially held true to them throughout a life lasting nearly a century. On the other hand, part and parcel of just such principles is that nothing must run contrary to the exigencies and inner laws of the individual situation. As a result, any generalization about Verdi's stylistic traits, any attempt to fix temporal points of change, is from the very outset difficult if not altogether impossible.

Justifying the concept of "early" works in Verdi is the fact that, among a number of other determinants, his operas up to 1848 (including *La battaglia di Legnano*) are in large part marked by the extramusical influences of the distinctive political developments in Italy at that time: the Risorgimento accompanied them and was mirrored in them, and, on the other hand, it provided many impulses for them. Even in Verdi's own view, as we know, the Solera libretto *Nabucodonosor* that had permitted his breakthrough as an opera composer was a work in which the collective, or group, was ascribed a position of unusually high value. With *Nabucco* (1842) Verdi conquered his public; in the composer of *Nabucco* the public created