

# Vincenzo Bellini

A Research and Information Guide

SECOND EDITION



Stephen A. Willier

ROUTLEDGE  


**VINCENZO BELLINI**

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## A RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GUIDE

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**STEPHEN A. WILLIER**  
*Temple University*

**ROUTLEDGE MUSIC BIBLIOGRAPHIES**

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*Chi non ama Vincenzo Bellini non ama la musica.*  
*Arrigo Boito*



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## Preface to the Second Edition and Acknowledgements

Since the first edition of this volume was completed, a number of important events have taken place in the world of Bellini scholarship, principally the publication of the proceedings of the two conferences held in November of 2001, in Paris (item 404) and in Catania (item 406). Not only were many significant Bellini studies added to the literature, but it also became clear that Bellini is now considered a composer worth studying on a serious level. Although several landmark Bellini studies had been made (e.g., by Cambi, Pastura, Lippmann, Maguire), this situation began in earnest in 1985 with several scholarly gatherings; the momentum Bellini scholarship had gained became fully evident in the 2001 celebrations of Bellini's life and creativity. These scholarly reports are not dry, abstract discussions, but represent a kind of resuscitation or rebirth of a composer whose life and music had in many instances been relegated to the sidelines. Currently (displaying not only what is being done but also what was lacking), the initial volumes in the first Bellini critical edition have begun to appear (see items 489 and 508); a critical edition of the correspondence is planned (see item 318); serious studies of Bellini's libretti and working methods have appeared; and a number of accomplished Bellini and *primo ottocento* scholars have emerged, their work, along with that of the existing experts, taking Bellini studies to a completely new level. To be especially noted is the work of Marco Beghelli, Alessandro Roccatagliata, Luca Zoppelli, among others. In short, Bellini is now accorded the kind of attention Giuseppe Verdi began to receive in the 1970s and that had been traditionally reserved mainly for Austro-Germanic composers. Thus, this research guide has been greatly enriched since it was first published a few short years ago. I intended the first guide to be a record of Bellini scholarship, and one thing the entries and their annotations made clear was that there had been many falsehoods, misconceptions, myths, legends, and mistakes in the published materials, starting with Bellini's great friend and champion, Francesco Florimo, whose mythmaking was, from various motives, deliberate. Many authors even seemed unaware of Bellini's correct birth and death dates, a situation symptomatic of other misinformation or gaps in knowledge. Obviously a critical edition of the correspondence surrounding Bellini, bearing in mind that Florimo both destroyed and rewrote some of it, is a necessary basis for reexamination of many established conceptions about the composer. A critical edition of Bellini's operas should prove a revelation about the composer's style and working methods, about which there

have been many almost mythic reports, starting with the “Letter to Agostino Gallo” (see item 145). One of the more pressing needs is an integrated life-and-works study with meaningful analyses of the music. Orrey’s volume (see item 270) was promising but too short by design. Weinstock’s volume (item 279) was somewhat of a gallimaufry, ultimately not very readable, and the latest entry, by Galatopoulos (see item 265) certainly does not provide much illumination of the music. A number of sources have provided worthwhile insights into how Bellini’s music might or should be examined, notably encyclopedia articles by Mary Ann Smart (see item 118) and Fabrizio della Seta (see item 106), but no integrated study has appeared, a prime example of which is R. Larry Todd’s magisterial volume on Mendelssohn.

Some 180 new entries, among the most illuminating and scholarly in the entire literature, have been added to this edition. There have been very few deletions. If this choice represents inclusion rather than exclusion, the annotations are meant to explain the relative worth of each volume in the sense that suspect or controversial sources have been so identified. This volume is a guide to research but it is also a history of Bellini scholarship. The entries in total add up to a picture of Bellini and in fact an account of changing music historical concepts of primo ottocento opera of the last two centuries. In one sense, this volume is not only a guide to research but also a study in reception history that says as much about the musical establishment as it does about Bellini and his contemporaries. Only by examining all types of sources can a scholar reach worthwhile, independent conclusions.

For this edition I would like to thank Dean Robert Stroker of the Boyer College of Music, Temple University, for his generous support and also the staff of the Bibliothèque de l’Opéra, Paris, where I have spent some of the most absorbing days of my life.

## Preface to the First Edition and Acknowledgements

The year 2001, during which this volume was essentially completed, was the bicentennial of Vincenzo Bellini's birth. The first half of the year was dominated in the operatic and musicological world by celebrations of Giuseppe Verdi, who had died a century earlier. By November 2001, however, Bellini was receiving his due. Special issues of journals devoted to "the swan of Catania" had appeared (e.g., *The Opera Quarterly* summer issue) and Bellini conferences were held in both Catania, his birthplace, and in Paris, where he died far from home at the age of thirty-three. In Catania an institute was founded, along the lines of the Verdi Institute in Parma and the Rossini Institute in Pesaro, that will publish a journal devoted to the composer (*Quaderno belliniano*) and a Commissione Epistolario e Documentazione "Vincenzo Bellini" plans to publish a much-needed critical edition of Bellini's letters. Furthermore, a critical edition of the composer's works, beginning with six volumes (five operas and one volume of instrumental music) is to be published by Casa Ricordi, Milan.

As with Verdi, Bellini's reputation has experienced a number of vicissitudes since his death, and even during his lifetime. There was a controversy brewing already in the 1830s between his partisans and those of Rossini, because Rossini was the model for Italian opera. Bellini was sometimes deemed "filosofico" by Italians (such as Gioachino Rossini) and even somewhat Germanic (by Robert Schumann no less), because of his great attention to text-setting and because he reflected upon his art and set down his method of composition in a number of letters, principally the "Letter to Agostino Gallo" (see item 145), although the authenticity of that document is in doubt.

Bellini enjoyed a period of great popularity around the middle of the nineteenth century, but his Italian reputation was at a low ebb between 1890 and 1920. This was only with the critics, however, never with the public. The centennial of his birth in 1901 produced many tributes but little scholarship of note apart from *Ommaggio a Bellini* until the appearance in 1915 of Ildebrando Pizzetti's landmark essay, followed two decades later by the study by Andrea della Corte and Guido Pannain. Pizzetti's assessment of Bellini's art, only the first of a number of subsequent publications on Bellini by the Italian composer, dispelled some of the criticisms about Bellini's harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration. Pizzetti saw Bellini as a pure melodist, an elegiac vocal composer, a viewpoint that became even more accepted when Verdi was being rediscovered in the 1920s and 1930s

and Bellini's music was compared with his. There was a notable revival of interest in Bellini's music in the 1930s, reflected in Alfredo Casella's 1935 article in the periodical *Quadrivio* and Igor Stravinsky's discussion of his work in his second lecture on musical poetics at Harvard during the academic year 1939–1940.

The transferral of Bellini's remains from Paris to Catania in 1876 and the Bellini centennial in 1935 also produced many laudatory writings but little scholarship. Italians and especially Sicilians adored their genius and spoke of him in the most heartfelt but empty poetic language. In the next two decades, however, important landmarks in Bellini research by Italians appeared: Luisa Cambi's *Epistolario* in 1943, including all known extant and authentic letters, and Francesco Pastura's authoritative *Bellini secondo la storia* in 1959, based on letters and other documentary evidence. Both are indispensable volumes that no subsequent Bellini scholar can proceed without. Cambi also produced a *Vita* and Pastura a collection of letters.

Attention to and performance of Bellini's music has ebbed and flowed in part due to the ability of singers to interpret his highly personal style in a meaningful way. His special vocal lines were created for legendary singers whom we can never hear: Giuditta Pasta, Giulia Grisi, Giovanni Battista Rubini, Maria Malibran, Antonio Tamburini, Luigi Lablache, and others. We do have, however, many accounts of their performing styles and, most importantly, the music itself, which is one of the many compelling reasons a Bellini critical edition is needed; because there are many textual corruptions in the printed scores.

A number of the great soprano and mezzo-soprano interpreters of Bellini's difficult music from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—the period we can now look back on as a golden era of bel canto singing in the twentieth century—are now deceased or retired. These include illustrious names such as Maria Callas, Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé, Marilyn Horne, Leyla Gencer, Elena Souliotis, Renata Scottò, Beverly Sills, and Fiorenza Cossotto. Fortunately, they and others (more recently Edita Gruberova and Mariella Devia) have left a valuable legacy of both studio and live recordings. From earlier in the century we have splendid interpretations of individual arias and scenes by artists such as Rosa Ponselle and Claudio Muzio, not to mention Gina Cigna's complete *Norma*.

In an era of mass musical production and planned obsolescence, Bellini's was a unique voice. He achieved great success with only his third opera, whereas it took Donizetti upwards of thirty. Unlike most of his contemporaries and other composers in all musical styles—Johannes Brahms being a notable exception—Bellini never held a post at a court, church, conservatory, or opera house, but made a living from commissions. He worked slowly, knew his worth, and demanded—and got—higher fees than his predecessors and contemporaries. To a degree his works were less formulaic than much of the work produced by his contemporaries Gioachino Rossini and Gaetano Donizetti, ingenious though they both were.

Bellini wrote ten operas, an average of only one each year from 1825 to 1835, compared to dozens by Donizetti. Part of this may be attributed to Bellini's short life, yet an even greater contributing factor is his deliberate working method in which declamation of the text took precedence over melodic formulas. He often

reserved the fioriture and high notes—all the trappings of vocal virtuosity—expressly to display outbursts of heightened emotions and drama, rendering these effects even more potent when they were used sparingly. Instead, he wrote melodies to be declaimed (notably in *Il pirata* and *La straniera*) or, as in the case of *Norma*, extensive sections of melodic recitative.

Bellini was trained in Naples by aged musicians such as Nicola Zingarelli, throwbacks to the simpler melodic style of Domenico Cimarosa and Giovanni Paisiello and deliberately anti-Rossinian. Bellini's music requires a sympathetic interpreter to make it come alive and we have had few of these: the great Normas of the twentieth century may still be counted on one hand.

If Rossini was the “savior” of Italian opera's international status with his great comic and serious hits of 1813 and 1816, Bellini was instrumental in maintaining this reputation in the late 1820s and early 1830s at a time when Rossini had retired from composing operas. His career represents a journey northward to the great opera capitals of the day: from Sicily to Naples, to Milan, to Venice, and finally to London and Paris. His early death prevented him from writing more than one work (*I puritani*) for the Théâtre-Italien in Paris. Had he lived longer, he would certainly have continued to write Italian operas for that theater and also would have achieved his goal—as did Rossini, Donizetti, and Verdi later—of writing a French opera for the Opéra. He apparently was considering several libretti by Scribe, including *Gustave III* (later set by Auber and in an Italian transformation by Verdi) and *Un duel sous Richelieu* (which gave Donizetti the subject for his opera *Maria di Rohan*). The prospects are tantalizing.

Raised with a basically Germanic outlook—which focuses on harmonic and contrapuntal complexity, the power of the orchestra, and Wagnerian principles of opera creation—opera critics in Europe and America have often criticized the works of nineteenth-century Italian opera composers, particularly those of Bellini, for deficiencies in these areas. In Bellini's case, in terms of musicodramatic effectiveness, many of these criticisms are manifestly unfounded. Bellini was a supreme melodist with faultless text setting. When this is understood and emphasized in analysis, his harmonic usage (which is sometimes rather bold), limited use of counterpoint, and orchestrational choices can be seen to work together to serve his musicodramatic ends: the expression of human emotions by the singing voice in which timbre also plays a central role. An analysis of Bellini's melodic construction has been undertaken principally by Friedrich Lippmann, to a lesser degree by Carl Dahlhaus, and, in the second edition of *New Grove*, by Mary Ann Smart.

Historically, whenever Bellini as a melodist is recognized—as by Pizzetti, for example—others have jumped in with the unfair criticism that he was “only” a melodist, a “supreme failing” of nineteenth-century Italian opera. It becomes a circular argument. Bellini's melody types are very individual; Verdi spoke of these “lunghe, lunghe melodie,” and his predecessor's prodigious melodic talent was not the only factor that impressed the later composer. One cannot, for example, imagine the power of the opening storm in Verdi's *Otello* without the example provided by *Il pirata*, premiered exactly sixty years earlier. Wagner himself,

although no champion of Italian opera when it served his ends, was inordinately fond of Bellini's *Norma*, incorporating ideas and structural devices from it into the conclusions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Götterdämmerung*, and even going so far as to compose an added aria for the bass, Oroveso. Wagner's concept of "unendliche Melodie" in general and the rising sequential pattern of the "Liebestod" (vis-à-vis the finale of *Norma*) specifically illustrate Wagner's admiration of and indebtedness to Bellini, which he also made clear in several prose writings.

Cambi and Pastura have already been noted for their landmark scholarly work on Bellini. The German scholar Friedrich Lippmann has written indispensable works on Bellini's melodic types, aria structures, and other facets of his art. The most recent Bellini anniversary, the sesquicentennial of his death in 1985, brought a new flurry of Bellini scholarship, mainly by Italians, evidence of which are the activities of Salvatore Enrico Failla in Catania. Exhibitions were held, catalogues published, and musical and literary sources surveyed and documented. With the work of Lippmann, Rosario Maria Adamo, Failla, and Fabrizio Della Seta, Bellini scholarship is now on square footing. Leslie Orrey, writing in 1972, felt that trends had shifted toward acceptance of scholarly attention to this repertoire; at that point, however, there was still much to be done, especially through an examination of autograph sources. Writing a few years before Orrey, Andrew Porter in 1967 gave a measured outlook on Bellini's reputation:

This is not an essay about the eloquence and beauty of Bellini's melody; nor a defense of his apt, skillful orchestration; nor a tribute to Felice Romani's masterly libretto. These things can be taken for granted now. If anything, Bellini is overpraised today, for his weaker operas are not sufficiently distinguished from the strong; and with the uneven pieces, pleasure in the general rediscovery of a style once despised can obscure perception of the specifically Bellinian achievements. (item 659)

A systematic, annotated bibliography of Bellini research is the clearest way of showing what directions Bellini research, performance, and criticism have taken and, more importantly, what lacunae need to be filled. There is a basic problem with documentation in that Bellini's letters were rearranged, suppressed, and part even forged by his great lifelong friend and executor, Francesco Florimo. The extent of this tampering, although known and previously mentioned in a number of sources (most eminently by Pastura), has only begun to be recognized and discussed more generally, in such works as John Rosselli's *The Life of Bellini* from 1996. Great caution and critical judgement is needed to untangle and verify authentic material. Rosselli has also done important archival work concerning Bellini's finances.

It must be said, however, that there is no decent treatment of Bellini's musical style in English; Orrey did not have the space (and one wishes he had for he displays some of provocative insights) and Weinstock makes too many musical errors and provides no synthesis of style or artistic growth. For one thing, he

discusses the operas in alphabetical rather than chronological order. Mary Ann Smart's article in the second edition of *New Grove* is an excellent start, providing many valuable insights and connections. Although not in English, the article in the latest *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* by Fabrizio Della Seta is a stimulating synthesis of Bellini's life and career. Thus we have two excellent, current treatments of the composer, although neither is by definition a full-length study. Della Seta, for example, presents Bellini's art in certain ways often overlooked by many writers. He notes that the connection within scenes in Bellini's operas becomes clear when one tries to remove certain parts or rearrange them; as opposed to manipulating component parts in Rossini's *Semiramide*, for example, one finds it nearly impossible. Bellini was also the first to give each opera a specific "tinta" and differentiate one work from another in this way, a concept we usually attribute to Verdi. For this idea, Della Seta points to an article in *L'Eco* of 20 February 1829, given in Cambi, *Epistolario*, p. 199.

One problem facing writers on Bellini has been lack of insight concerning the mechanics of the nineteenth-century Italian libretto. On this subject, Alessandro Roccatagliati has written valuable studies of the craft of Felice Romani and explored the connections of the libretto with the composers, the singers, and the theatrical productions involved in the creation of an opera. Much more needs to be done concerning performance practice—including issues of cadenzas, appoggiatura, and ornamentation—because Bellini's music does not sing or interpret itself. Some of these insights may be gleaned from recordings of great interpreters, notably Maria Callas, especially in terms of phrasing, but once again the need for a critical text is essential. Andrew Porter, who well could have done a masterly job with this topic, suggests that a monograph could profitably be written tracing the interconnections among key works of Bellini and his declared nemesis, Gaetano Donizetti. One such obvious connection is between *Anna Bolena* and *Beatrice di Tenda*, which to a great degree employ the same plot.

Concerning Bellini's life and character, there are a number of myths or misapprehensions that have been passed down too readily through generations of writers. While Bellini, like Franz Schubert, seems almost like a Hollywood model of a Romantic composer—a blond, blue-eyed Sicilian who died young in a foreign city—many have disparaged Bellini the man even while lauding his music. Many issues have proven controversial, among them his love affairs and often criticized treatment of the women who loved him, notably Maddalena Fumaroli and Giuditta Turina; his supposed effeminate nature and the connection of that to his "elegiac" musical style (we face the same situation with Frederic Chopin, a composer with whom Bellini is often linked, a musical connection that also needs to be examined in critical detail); Heine's characterization of him as "a sigh in dancing pumps"; Bellini's jealousy of and hostility toward his "rivals" such as Giovanni Pacini and Gaetano Donizetti; and his relationship with the slightly older mentor Rossini after Bellini went to Paris.

The operas of both Donizetti and Bellini are discussed often by music historians in terms of the "Code Rossini." A major problem for scholars of primo ottocento opera is that too little is known not only about Bellini's predecessors

such as Cimarosa and Paisiello, but also about his lesser contemporaries such as Mayr, Pacini, and Mercadante. Until more of these connections are made, our view of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and early Verdi may be off balance. This perspective, however, is inherent in our view of opera history, which is mostly based on masterworks and standard repertoire, although many would still argue that many of the works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and early Verdi actually belong to the category of “standard repertoire.”

It is hoped that this guide, which consists of a critically annotated *bibliographie raisonnée* with a certain amount of cross-referencing, will provide those interested with the means to address some of these and other issues. I believe the categories encompass all the necessary facets of Bellini’s life and music and the scholarship and reactions attendant upon them. The goal of this bibliography has been to be as inclusive as possible, although no claim can ever be made for completeness in a project of this kind. Thus, a number of popular, nonscholarly, even error-ridden accounts have been included in order to show the path of Bellini reception and scholarship (or sometimes lack thereof). This is not to say that such sources are meaningless and should be omitted, for they do provide a multitextured view of Bellini’s reputation. At times he has been held in such low esteem that even writers such as Alfred Einstein and Guglielmo Barblan (in the original *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* article) have provided incorrect birth and death dates. (Incorrect birth and death dates have proliferated throughout the Bellini literature. Even a monograph in Italian, published in Sicily no less and as recently as 2001, has him born on November 13.) Furthermore, when popular sources such as *Opera News* or *Opera* include viewpoints by authors such as Andrew Porter or William Ashbrook, there is no doubt of their value. Some of the entries have remained unannotated, but they are included for the sake of completeness and in the hope that those who are made aware of their existence may benefit from them. In many cases, titles provide a guide as to general content.

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# 1

## Bellini's Life and Career

### OUTLINE OF KEY EVENTS IN HIS LIFE

- 1767–68 Bellini's grandfather, Vincenzo Tobia Bellini (1744–1829), moved from Torricella, a small village in the Abruzzi, to Catania; he had studied in Naples at the Conservatory di San Onofrio a Capuana; became *maestro di cappella* at Catania Cathedral; was a pedagogue and composer.
- 1801 Vincenzo Bellini, the eldest of eleven children, born November 3 in Catania, Sicily, to Rosario Bellini (1776–1840) and Agata Ferlito (1779–1842); Rosario was a *maestro di cappella* and composer, although not as influential on the young Vincenzo as his grandfather.
- 1807–08 Wrote first compositions; an anonymous manuscript written after Bellini's death by a relative or acquaintance and now found in the Museo belliniano ("L'Anonimo" hereafter) exaggerates the young Bellini's musical prowess, stating, for example, that he sang an aria at eighteen months.
- 1808 Began to study composition with his grandfather: his first work is a "Gallus cantavit"; wrote a great deal of sacred music for churches, e.g., Versetti for Good Friday and "Salve regina" for chorus and orchestra, and ariettas and instrumental pieces for salons, e.g., "La farfalletta."
- 1819 In May the Catania City Council, as a result of a *supplica* addressed to them, granted Bellini support to study in Naples; left in June to study at the Naples San Sebastiano Conservatory (Real Collegio di Musica), first with Giovanni Furno, then Carlo Conti; he was there for eight years, the least-known period of his life, even though Francesco Florimo, his

lifelong closest friend, biographer, and protector of Bellini's reputation, was a schoolmate.

Instruction at the school was notably conservative, that is, anti-Rossinian. Bellini studied the theatrical works of Niccolò Jommelli, Giovanni Paisiello (*Nina, o sia La pazza per amore* was always a model), Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, Domenico Cimarosa, and other Neapolitan masters.

1820 Performed well in the annual examinations and earned a free place at the Conservatory.

1821 Undertook counterpoint studies with the aged Giacomo Tritto.

1822 Studied with the director of the Conservatory, septuagenarian Nicola Zingarelli (solfège, the Neapolitan school of opera, instrumental works of Mozart and Haydn); also studied aspects of singing with the great castrato Girolamo Crescentini.

Met Gaetano Donizetti and heard his opera, *La zingara*, then being given in Naples; Bellini admired and modeled himself after Donizetti until professional jealousy intruded.

Became infatuated with a young woman in Catania, Maddalena Fumaroli; gave her singing lessons and wrote songs for her.

1823 Composed Sinfonia in E-flat and a concerto for oboe.

1824 Due to success in annual examinations, Bellini was promoted to *primo maestrino* at the Conservatory; he was granted the privilege of visiting the Teatro San Carlo twice weekly. Either in 1824 or 1825 Bellini left the Conservatory and made an "emergency" visit to Sicily.

1825 Conservatory production given in the *teatrino* of Bellini's *Adelson e Salvini* with an all-male cast; repeated for several Sundays. Bellini reworked it subsequently for the Teatro del Fondo but this revision was not produced until 1992.

1826 Success of *Bianca e Fernando* at Teatro San Carlo, Naples, in May; the work had to be given as *Bianca e Gernando* because of the death of King Ferdinand I of Naples. *Adelson e Salvini*, seen by the most prestigious contemporary operatic impresario, Domenico Barbaja, had led to this commission. Maddalena Fumaroli's father failed to give permission for his daughter's marriage; Bellini received a *scrittura* from Domenico Barbaja for an opera at La Scala, Milan; little is known of Bellini's activities during the summer and autumn of this year, nor for the winter of 1826 to 1827.

In autumn, the site of the conservatory was moved to the rococo ex-convent of San Pietro a Majella, its present location.

1827 Departed from Naples on April 5, leaving behind the relationship with Maddalena Fumaroli; Bellini left his scores with his friend Florimo,

among them four of Rossini's Neapolitan operas, Spontini's *La vestale*, some of Mozart's symphonies, and volumes of chamber music.

Bellini arrived in Milan in April, where he had a contract from Domenico Barbaja; renewed contact with Saverio Mercadante, a friend and classmate from Naples, who helped him to find lodgings and introduced him to important musicians and poets, including Felice Romani; there he composed *Il pirata*, his third opera. It was a huge success, premiered on October 27 at La Scala. We know very little about his life from his arrival in Milan up to the date of the premiere.

*Il pirata* was his first work with Felice Romani, resident poet at La Scala, his exclusive librettist for every subsequent work except his last, *I puritani*; it was also the first of his operas to gain international stature, the ultimate criterion for which was a Parisian performance. Bellini remained mostly in Milan from 1827 to 1833, where he was invited into the most elegant homes and salons, such as those of Count Barbò, the Duchess Litta, and the Countess Belgioioso, whom he was later to encounter in Paris; he stayed with Francesco and Marianna Pollini, older musicians who practically adopted him.

- 1828 Early in the year *Il pirata* was given in Vienna, the first time a Bellini opera was heard outside of Italy; in April the second version of *Bianca e Fernando* was given successfully at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa using some new verses by Romani; Bellini composed two new arias for the Bianca, Adelaide Tosi. There he began a passionate love affair with Giuditta Turina (née Cantù), the wife of a wealthy silk merchant Ferdinando Turina, which lasted until 1833, when he left Italy forever.

Bellini's works began to be published by the firm of Ricordi in Milan.

- 1829 Very successful premiere of *La straniera* at La Scala in February, leading to controversy about its novel, unadorned, un-Rossinian style. Bellini was now called a "filosofico"; rejected setting *Cesare in Egitto* for Parma; spent March and April composing *Zaira*, which in May was a failure at the new Teatro Ducale in Parma. In August Bellini met Rossini in Milan, who was returning to Bologna after the premiere of *Guillaume Tell* in Paris.

For long periods at a time from 1829 to 1833, Bellini stayed at the country estates of the Cantù and Turina families, thus saving money and gaining more artistic freedom. Bellini also gave Giuditta his money to invest.

Ricordi published Bellini's *Sei ariette* and the Silver Medal of the Royal Order of Francesco Primo was conferred on the composer by the King of Naples, Francis I.

- 1830 At the beginning of the year Bellini went to Venice for a production of *Il pirata*; in May he suffered a violent attack of amoebic dysentery, the disease that eventually was to kill him; he spent the summer

recuperating at Lake Como. Due to the illness of Giovanni Pacini, Bellini was asked to provide a new opera for the Teatro La Fenice, Venice; success of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* using Romani's revision of his own libretto for Niccola Vaccai's *Giulietta e Romeo* (1825). *I Capuleti* was one of the last operas of any significance to call for a contralto hero, the part having been created for Giuditta Grisi.

Revival of *La straniera* in August at Bergamo, Donizetti's hometown, directed by Bellini; worked on the never-finished *Ernani* in the summer and autumn at Giuditta Turina's estate at Moltrasio near Lake Como where he had been recovering from his illness in the spring. *Ernani* was abandoned possibly because of fears of censorship or that it could not compete with Donizetti's successful *Anna Bolena*; several numbers from the work were used in subsequent operas. At Lake Como he met Giuditta Pasta, a singing-actress with a flawed voice but who was possessed of a striking histrionic ability, for whom he created the title roles in his next three operas. We know little about Bellini from the latter part of this year, except that he and Romani decided on *La sonnambula* as their next operatic subject.

1831 In March *La sonnambula* was premiered with great success at the Teatro Carcano, Milan, starring Giuditta Pasta. Bellini spent the summer with Giuditta Turina at Moltrasio on the western shore of Lake Como, specifically to write the role of Norma for Pasta; he seemed interested in marrying Pasta's daughter, Clelia. Other than this, we know little about Bellini's daily life between the premiere of *La sonnambula* in March and the premiere of *Norma* on December 26. At the opening of the 1831/32 Carnival season at La Scala, *Norma* had a relatively unsuccessful premiere, purportedly described by Bellini as "fiasco, fiasco, solenne fiasco," although the authenticity of this letter has been called into question; it is probably spurious. After the premiere, subsequent performances went smoothly.

1832 On January 5 Bellini left for a triumphal return to Naples and Sicily; accompanying him was Giuditta Turina. *Il fu ed il sarà*, to a libretto by Jacopo Ferretti, was heard privately in Rome on January 18 during a brief visit there by Bellini. No score exists; it was most probably a pasticcio of selections from Bellini's previous operas. He was honored in Naples with a performance of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at the San Carlo with King Ferdinando II in attendance.

Bellini continued to Sicily with Francesco Florimo and without Giuditta Turina. In Palermo in April, he posed for two likenesses, an oil painting by Giuseppe Patania and one in marble by Giuseppe Pollet. Returning to northern Italy in May, he directed rehearsals of *Norma* in Bergamo and Venice. In early September he returned to Milan and in November he and Romani determined that their next opera would be *Cristina di Svezia*, based on Alexandre Dumas's *Christine, ou*

*Stockholme, Fontainebleau et Rome*, but it was dropped in favor of *Beatrice di Tenda*, one of the first Italian operas based on events from Italian history. Pasta and Bellini had seen a ballet version of *Beatrice* at La Scala that autumn and decided it would be a worthy vehicle for the prima donna.

- 1833 In March his new opera for La Fenice, *Beatrice di Tenda*, was not accorded a positive reception. The libretto was late; the impresario Alessandro Lanari sent the police after Romani; recriminations and a break occurred between Bellini and his librettist. In the journalistic polemic that ensued in the *Gazzetta privilegiata di Venezia*, Romani placed the blame for the delayed premiere on Bellini and claimed that his artistic vitality had been undermined by “the three Giudittas”: Grisi, Pasta, and Turina.

Never to see Italy again, Bellini left Venice on March 28 for London with Giuseppe and Giuditta Pasta; he arrived in the English capital at the end of April and stayed until mid-August; on the way he stopped in Paris to meet with the director of the Opéra, Louis-Désiré Véron, from whom he hoped to receive a commission.

At the King's Theatre, London—where he had been invited by the manager, Pierre-François Laporte, to conduct and supervise performances of his works—*Il pirata*, *Norma*, and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* were somewhat successful with Pasta, Méric-Lalande, and Donzelli as leading singers; Malibran caused a sensation when she sang the title role in *La sonnambula* in English at Drury Lane Theatre. Other famous singers such as Laure Cinti-Damoreau, Rubini, and Tamburini also appeared in his works in London. Bellini took part in the social life of the city. (See *Musical Times* of September 1901 for information on Bellini in London.)

In May compromising letters Bellini had written to Giuditta Turina fell into her husband's hands. In September Bellini wrote to her saying that he no longer had ardent feelings for her.

Bellini returned to Paris in August, where *Il pirata* and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* were given successfully in the autumn at the Théâtre-Italien; established himself in the Bains Chinois, Boulevard des Italiens, near the Théâtre-Italien, close to Rossini, with whom he renewed his acquaintance. Unsuccessful negotiations with the Opéra took place; Bellini devoted quite a bit of time to Parisian social life, becoming close to Rossini and becoming acquainted with Chopin, Carafa, Paër, and others; met Heinrich Heine and also undoubtedly such luminaries as Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, George Sand, and Franz Liszt at the salon of Princess Belgioioso; also met Ferdinand Hiller and heard Beethoven symphonies, including the “Pastoral,” played at the Conservatoire.

1834 Received a definite commission from the Théâtre-Italien and began work on *I puritani* to a libretto by Count Carlo Pepoli, an Italian expatriate. Around the same time he received a commission from San Carlo, Naples, to write a new opera; he declined but remained in contact with the San Carlo's directors; finally it was decided he would write a new version of *I puritani*, for Maria Malibran, Duprez, and Porto.

Success of *La sonnambula* at Théâtre-Italien. Composed *Quattro sonetti* to words by Pepoli, a "Sapphic Ode," and some other songs, none of which is extant. Rossini urged him to work on his orchestration. Bellini and Romani resumed correspondence, but due to Bellini's death the following year, they never had the chance to work together again. Bellini experiences brief recurrence of gastric problems.

1835 Triumph of *I puritani* in January in Paris, with famous quartet of Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache (the only version of this opera to be published); wrote a second version of the opera for the San Carlo, Naples, to be sung by Maria Malibran and Gilbert Duprez, but the score did not reach Naples in time and it was not performed until 1985 in London. Bellini appointed a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur; engaged in many negotiations with the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, all of which came to nothing. He became terminally ill at the end of August with the amoebic dysentery he had first experienced in 1830; on September 23 he died alone at the country house of S. Levy in Puteaux, a suburb of Paris; Dr. Montallegri was the attending physician; on September 25 Dr. Delmas performed the autopsy, confirming the diagnosis of dysentery, complicated by an abscessed liver.

A Requiem Mass was given at the Church of the Invalides on October 2 with Paër, Cherubini, Carafa, and Rossini as pallbearers; François-Antoine Habeneck was principally in charge of the music. One item sung was a four-part "Lacrymosa" using the tenor melody from Act III of *I puritani* as the theme, performed *a cappella* by Rubini, Nicholas Ivanoff, Tamburini, and Lablache. Even though it rained continuously, the funeral was attended by the most noted musicians and artists in Paris. Bellini was buried at Père-Lachaise Cemetery. Rossini took care of sending Bellini's possessions to his family in Catania.

1876 After years of negotiations between French and Sicilian officials, Bellini's remains were removed from Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris to Catania Cathedral. The ceremonies were held in Paris on September 15 and the remains reached Catania on September 23, 1876, exactly forty-one years after Bellini died. Francesco Florimo was still alive for the occasion. Commemorative festivities were held in Catania and throughout Italy.

## COMPLETED OPERAS; CASTS OF PREMIERES

*Adelson e Salvini, opera semiseria* in three acts, libretto by Andrea Leone Tottola, after P. Delamarre; premiered at the San Sebastiano Conservatory, Naples, between February 10 and 15, 1825; second version in two acts, done either in 1826 or 1828–29 as *dramma semiserio*, unperformed until September 1992 in Catania at the Teatro Massimo Bellini.

Principal singers included an all-male cast from the Conservatory for the nineteenth-century production: Antonio Manza (Lord Adelson), Giacinto Maras (Nelly), and Leonardo Perugini (Salvini). In Catania in 1992 the cast included Fabio Previati (Adelson), Bradley Williams (Salvini), Alicia Nafé (Nelly), Aurio Tomicich (Bonifacio), and Roberto Coviello (Struley).

*Bianca e Fernando, melodramma* in two acts, libretto by Domenico Gilardoni, after *Bianca e Fernando alla tomba di Carlo IV* by Carlo Roti; premiered as *Bianca e Gernando* at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples, May 30, 1826; second version, libretto revised by Felice Romani, premiered as *Bianca e Fernando* at the Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa, April 7, 1828. Bellini replaced the short introduction with a full-scale overture, added four new numbers and made changes to all but two of the other numbers.

The 1826 opera was written for Adelaide Tosi, Giovanni David, and Luigi Lablache, but when the premiere was postponed the cast consisted of Henriette Méric-Lalande (Bianca), Giovanni Battista Rubini (Gernando), and Luigi Lablache (Filippo). In 1828 principal singers included Adelaide Tosi (Bianca), Giovanni David (Fernando), and Antonio Tamburini (Filippo).

*Il pirata, melodramma* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani, after Charles R. Maturin and Charles Nodier/L. J. S. Taylor, *Bertram, ou Le pirate*; premiered at La Scala, Milan, October 27, 1827.

Principal singers included Giovanni Battista Rubini (Gualtiero), Henriette Méric-Lalande (Imogene), and Antonio Tamburini (Ernesto).

*La straniera, melodramma* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after *L'Étrangère* by V.-C. Prévôt d'Arincourt and from *La straniera*, a dramatized version of the novel by the Baron Giovan Carlo Cosenza (1827); premiered at La Scala, Milan, February 14, 1829.

Principal singers included Henriette Méric-Lalande (Alaide), Stanislao Marconi (Il Signore di Montolino), Caroline Unger (Isoletta), Domenica Reina (Arturo), and Antonio Tamburini (Baron Valdeburgo).

*Zaira, tragedia lirica* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after Voltaire; premiered at the Teatro Ducale, Parma, May 16, 1829.

Principal singers included Henriette Méric-Lalande (Zaira), Teresa Cecconi (Nerestano), Carlo Trezzini (Corasmino), Luigi Lablache (Orosmane), and Mario Rinaudo (Lusignano).

*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *tragedia lirica* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after L. Scevola's *Giulietta e Romeo*; premiered at Teatro la Fenice, Venice, March 11, 1830.

Principal singers included Giuditta Grisi (Romeo), Rosalbina Carradori-Allan (Giulietta), Lorenzo Bonfigli (Tebaldo), Gaetano Antoldi (Capiello), and Rainieri Pocchini (Lorenzo).

*La sonnambula*, *melodramma* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe and J.-P. Aumer's ballet scenario set to music by F. Hérold; premiered at Teatro Carcano, Milan, March 6, 1831.

Principal singers included Giuditta Pasta (Amina), Giovanni Battista Rubini (Elvino), Elisa Taccani (Lisa), and Luciano Mariani (Il Conte Rodolfo).

*Norma*, *tragedia lirica* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after Alexandre Soumet's *Norma*; ou, *L'Infanticide* and his own libretto for Pacini's opera *La sacerdotessa d'Irmisul* (1820); premiered at La Scala, Milan, December 26, 1831.

Principal singers included Giuditta Pasta (Norma), Giulia Grisi (Adalgisa), Domenico Donzelli (Pollione), and Vincenzo Negrini (Oroveso).

*Beatrice di Tenda*, *tragedia lirica* in two acts, libretto by Felice Romani after C. Tebaldi-Fores; premiered at Teatro la Fenice, Venice, March 16, 1833.

Principal singers included Giuditta Pasta (Beatrice), Anna del Serre (Agnese), Alberico Curioni (Orombello), Orazio Cartagenova (Filippo), and Alessandro Giacchini (Anichino).

*I puritani*, *melodramma seria* in three acts, libretto by Count Carlo Pepoli after the drama *Têtes rondes et Cavaliers* by Jacques-Arsène-François-Polycarpe Ancelot and Joseph-Xavier Boniface [Saintine]; premiered at Théâtre-Italien, Paris, January 24, 1835.

Premiere sung by the "Puritani" quartet, Giulia Grisi (Elvira), Giovanni Battista Rubini (Arturo), Antonio Tamburini (Riccardo), and Luigi Lablache (Giorgio).

Naples version for Malibran, Duprez, and Porto (no contemporary performances; premiere not until December 14, 1985, in London).

## 2

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