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A Study of Six Selected Coloratura Soprano "Mad Scenes" in Nineteenth Century Opera.

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**A study of six selected coloratura soprano "mad scenes" in
nineteenth century opera**

Pipes, Charlotte Fakier, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1990

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A STUDY OF SIX SELECTED
COLORATURA SOPRANO "MAD SCENES"
IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY OPERA

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Charlotte Pipes

B.M., Louisiana State University, 1976

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A Study of Six Selected Coloratura Soprano "Mad Scenes"
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ABSTRACT

The coloratura "mad scene" was an outstanding feature found in several nineteenth-century operas. Significant in its display of the performer's talent, it requires the ultimate combination of vocal virtuosity and dramatic expression. Each scene exhibits the numerous individual musical characteristics of its specific composer. This study will seek to define and illustrate some of these characteristics as found in the following six scenes:

1. "Al dolce guidami," Anna Bolena (1830), Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848);
2. "Ah! Non credea mirarti," La Sonnambula (1831), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835).
3. "Qui la voce," I Puritani (1835), Bellini.
4. "Ardon gl'incensi," Lucia di Lammermoor (1835), Donizetti.
5. "Ombra leggiera," Dinorah (1859), Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864).
6. "Ah vos yeux, mes amis," Hamlet (1868), Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896).

The introductory chapter of this monograph surveys the musical, literary, and social influences which affected the development of the Romantic era mad scene. Particular attention is given to the effect of French "grand opera" and the Italian opera composer Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868) on the operas of Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Bellini, and Thomas.

Chapters two through seven examine each mad scene individually. The libretto, the dramatic action in the scene, and certain elements of musical style are examined for their contribution to the effectiveness of the scene.

The final chapter presents a comparative analysis of all six mad scenes to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the scenes. The effectiveness of the scenes is measured in terms of their providing material for a vivid portrayal of insanity.

This study concludes that the heroines of Anna Bolena and Lucia di Lammermoor seem the most believable in their madness. In these two operas, plot, libretto, and music contribute the elements needed by the performer to make the insanity of the character plausible. However, these elements are not sufficient in themselves to warrant believability. The final contribution to the success of the scene must be made by the performer relying heavily upon her own acting ability.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The coloratura "mad scene" was an outstanding feature found in several nineteenth-century operas. Significant in its display of the performer's talent, it requires the ultimate combination of vocal virtuosity and dramatic expression. Each scene exhibits the numerous individual musical characteristics of its specific composer. This study will seek to define and illustrate some of these characteristics as found in the following six scenes:

1. "Al dolce guidami," Anna Bolena (1830), Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848).
2. "Ah! Non credea mirarti," La Sonnambula (1831), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835).
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5. "Ombra leggiera," Dinorah (1859), Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864).
6. "Ah vos yeux, mes amis," Hamlet (1868), Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896).

The genre of the Romantic era mad scene developed as a result of musical, literary, and social influences of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Earlier opera

had been constructed out of separate numbers, musical pieces which were distinct from one another. In the Romantic period, gradual changes took place in the composition of operas. There developed a trend toward more continuity between sections, accomplished by lessening the musical differences between one number and the next. This resulted in the construction of longer scenes and created opportunities for sustained dramatic portrayal.

Musical Influences

The four composers whose operas were chosen for this study were subject to different musical influences, resulting in four separate and distinct styles of composition. However, it can be noted that certain significant influences were shared by these composers. Two of these influences were the Italian opera composer Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868), through his editorial and compositional assistance, and French grand opera in nineteenth-century Paris.

Meyerbeer and Thomas were heavily influenced by French opera in Paris. Their careers revolved around that city. It was the site of their operatic successes and the source of their exposure to the operas of other French composers. Meyerbeer became the leader in the establishment of "grand opera" in France and Thomas contributed to a later development in French opera, called "opéra-lyrique."

A bit harder to ascertain is the influence of French opera on the Italian composers Bellini and Donizetti. If

these two composers were indeed influenced by French grand opera, then some characteristics of this genre should be evident in their operas. These characteristics can be defined by examining a typical grand opera of this period, La Juive. With music by Jacques Halévy (1799-1862) and libretto by Eugene Scribe (1791-1861), this opera was produced in 1835, the same year as Bellini's I Puritani and Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor.

In overall structure, French grand opera contained a large proportion of ensembles and choruses, with the chorus often playing an integral part in the drama.¹ This is true of La Juive. The choir, in various forms, sings in every one of the five acts, either onstage or offstage. Significantly, certain solo lines are inserted in the chorus, to be sung by various members. These solo lines educate the listener by establishing certain aspects of the plot. The choruses most often are colorful, picturesque bands of country folk or townspeople singing folk-like melodies or rhythms. This rustic type of chorus, similar to the fishermen's chorus in La Muette di Portici (1828) and the chorus of the Swiss cantons in Guillaume Tell (1829), is a common feature of many French grand operas of this period. A prime example of this type of chorus in La Juive is shown in figure 1. It is the Act I "Choeur des Buveurs" (chorus of drinkers).

¹Donald J. Grout, A Short History of Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 310.

Figure 1. Example of rustic chorus common to French grand opera.

All-gro

Tenor I: Ah! quel heureux des-tin, oui be-ni -

Tenor II: Ah! quel heureux des-tin oui be-ni -

Bass I: Ah! quel heureux des-tin oui be-ni -

Bass II: Ah! quel heureux des-tin oui be-ni -

ssons, be-ni-ssons notre bon souve rain!

ssons, be-ni-ssons notre bon souve rain!

ssons, be-ne-ssons notre bon souve rain!

ssons, be-ne-ssons notre bon souve rain!

A second important feature of French grand opera was the emphasis on dance and spectacle, a continuation of the tradition of the huge stage presentations made popular by earlier French composers, such as Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). The continued production of these spectacles was influenced by the facility in which they were performed, the Paris Opéra, which housed a large stage area and provided complex state machinery.² There are two areas in the Halévy score which specifically denote choreography--in Act I, "Valse," and in Act III "Pantomime et Ballets." In addition, there are other areas which undoubtedly required significant choreography, such as the procession of penitents in the funeral march of the last act.

In the arias, a preference for a syllabic and/or declamatory vocal line can be seen in the predominance of syllabic passages over melismatic ones.³ Leopold's aria in Act I of La Juive is similar to many solo vocal lines in the score, as illustrated in figure 2. This is not to imply, however, that the vocal lines are completely devoid of embellishments. There are numerous areas where ornamentation does occur, but generally speaking, the emphasis in composition is not embellishment of the vocal line.

²Leon Plantinga, Romantic Music (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984), 170.

³Donald J. Grout, A Short History of Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 310.

Figure 2. Predominance of syllabic passages over melismatic ones.

The musical score consists of two systems, each with a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment. The first system is labeled with 'melismatic' and 'syllabic' passages. The lyrics are: 'Ri- E MAIS voici le jour. le jour de RE-tour oui, voici le jour, ô mai-'. The second system is also labeled with 'syllabic' passages. The lyrics are: 'TRESSE CHÉRI E PAR qui tout soubli — E, oui, voici le jour, ô mai TRESSE CHÉRI E, la'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand.

Another characteristic of French grand opera is the frequent presentation of important melodic material in the instruments rather than the voices, shown in figure 3.⁴

A final important feature of this opera is its great length--five acts. Works of such a large size were a common element of French opera since the time of Lully and this tradition was continued into the nineteenth-century grand operas. Of course, shorter operas were also composed in France, but they were usually written for other theaters, such as the Opéra Comique. The audiences of the Paris Opéra preferred the extended works of the grand opera composers.

⁴F. E. Kirby, Music in the Romantic Period (New York: Schirmer Books, 1986), 360.

Figure 3. Melodic interest confined to orchestral accompaniment.

Andante moderato

Eleazar: Si tra hi- son on pas- si- di- o-

SAIT se glisser PARMI nous, sur le par- jure ou sur l'im-

pi- e, grand Dieu, que tombe ton COURROUX! sur le par

jeu ou sur l'im- pi- e grand Dieu, que tombe ton COURROUX!

Poco Rall. A Tempo

Having listed some characteristics of French grand opera--large proportion of ensembles and rustic choruses, emphasis on dance and spectacle, preference for a syllabic and/or declamatory vocal line, presentation of important melodic material in the instruments, and extended length of the opera--the next task is to identify characteristics of French grand opera in the operas of Donizetti and Bellini.

Donizetti was an extremely prolific composer whose first international success occurred with the opera Anna Bolena (1830), written for the Teatro Carcano in Milan. In 1834, Donizetti accepted an invitation from Rossini to compose an opera for the Théâtre Italien in Paris. Donizetti journeyed there in January of 1835 and during that spring attended many performances at the Paris Opéra, one of which was Halévy's La Juive. After the Paris premiere of Donizetti's Marin Faliero (1835), he returned to Naples to compose his next opera for the Teatro San Carlo, Lucia di Lammermoor (1835). By comparing features of Anna Bolena and Lucia di Lammermoor it is possible to determine the extent of French grand opera influences on the operas of Donizetti.

The first such influence is apparent in the increased importance of the chorus in the post-Paris opera, Lucia di Lammermoor. The overture to Anna Bolena is traditional in that it comes to a complete close and is totally separate from the action to follow. The opening male chorus is of short duration and the singers are represented as courtiers and nobility who merely comment on actions which have taken

place prior to the present point in the drama. In contrast, the overture of the Lucia di Lammermoor is much shorter and leads directly into the opening scene of the opera. In this way, the overture seems to be merely an instrumental prelude to the dynamic entrance of the male chorus. And this chorus does not merely discuss the precedings. These men, dressed in rustic hunting gear, are similar to the picturesque, dynamic choruses of French grand opera. They not only set the stage for the action to follow--they are the action as they enter hastily to music marked "allegro giusto," illustrated in figure 4. They return after the opening cavatina of Enrico, Lucia's brother. Again, their action is vital to the plot, as they relate their findings and spur Enrico to action.

Further evidence of the increased importance of the chorus can be seen by comparing the musical construction of the two operas. Both contain several scenes with chorus. But it is the function of the chorus, both dramatically and musically, that differentiates the use of chorus in these two operas. Although the chorus in Anna Bolena introduces both acts, they serve merely as commentators and most often their vocal lines are musical support for the soaring vocal lines of the lead characters. The chorus of Lucia initiates its own action, and its music is often performed independently of the main characters.

An additional example of French grand opera influence in Donizetti's operas can be found in the longer length of

Figure 4. Lucia di Lammermoor, Act I, Chorus of Huntsmen.

Allegro giusto

Chorus of Huntsmen.

Tenors Il tuo dub-bio o-mai cer - tez -
Now we know our fear's well found.

Basses Il tuo dub-bio o-mai cer - tez -
Now we know our fear's well found.

Normanno Enrico Andantino.
O - di tu? Nar - ra - te.
Dost thou hear? What mean ye?

za. Oh gior no!
ed. We'll tell thee:

za. Oh gior no!
ed. We'll tell thee:

Andantino.
Havei piz.

his operas composed after 1835. The majority of his operas written before this year are in two acts, whereas most of those composed after Paris are in three and even four acts.

Finally, Donizetti himself alludes to assimilating French grand opera characteristics into his music. In a letter sent to his former teacher in Bergamo, Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845), Donizetti discusses the differences between composing for the French stage and the Italian. He

speaks of enlarging works to three and four acts, adding dances related to the action, and dispensing with the traditional repetition of words and chords at cadences.⁵

Vincenzo Bellini also was influenced by French grand opera. Although not as prolific a composer as Donizetti, he wrote many successful operas in his regrettably short career, such as Il Pirata (1827), La Sonnambula (1831), and Norma (1831). Like Donizetti, Bellini lived for a time in Paris, beginning in August of 1833. In February of the following year, Rossini offered him a contract to compose for the Théâtre Italien. A year later, Bellini completed for that theater his last opera, I Puritani (1835). During the year he composed I Puritani, Bellini was exposed to the operas of such composers as Daniel Auber (1782-1871) and Francois Boieldieu (1775-1834).⁶ As with Donizetti, the influence of French grand opera on Bellini can be found by comparing features of I Puritani to an opera written before his stay in Paris, such as La Sonnambula.

Immediately noticeable is the difference in overall construction of these two operas. There are comparatively fewer arias in the "Paris" opera I Puritani. This is in keeping with the French emphasis on ensembles and choruses.

In comparing the melody lines of the mad scene arias, those of I Puritani are more declamatory and contain much

⁵William Ashbrook, Donizetti and His Operas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 141.

⁶Leslie Orrey, Bellini, The Masters of Music Series (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1986), 120.

less ornamentation than La Sonnambula, especially in the opening andante section, as illustrated in figures 5 and 6.

A third difference between these two operas is the length of each work. I Puritani is in three acts and La Sonnambula, as well as all of his previous operas, is in two acts. That these two operas, with all their contrasts were written only three years apart, demonstrates the impact of major influences at work on the composer. This author believes the source of these influences was French grand opera.

In addition to French grand opera, the musical styles of Meyerbeer, Thomas, Donizetti, and Bellini were also affected by the Italian operas of Gioacchino Rossini. Although his last opera, Guillaume Tell (1829), helped to establish the style of grand opera, the majority of his operas reflect Italian origins and their influence on operatic composition should not be overlooked. Indeed, Rossini was the acknowledged master of Italian opera in the early nineteenth century. Young Italian composers, including Bellini and Donizetti, assimilated his style of vocal ornamentation and his sequencing of musical numbers. Rossini exerted a still more direct influence on Bellini and Donizetti when he became director of the Théâtre Italien in Paris in 1824. As stated above, Rossini invited the two younger composers to his theater, where he supervised

Figure 5. I Puritani, Act II, declamatory vocal line.

Andantino

Elvira: Qui la vo - ce sua - mi chia - ma - va... e poi spa - ri. Qui giu -
Here his soft voice called me and then he vanished

stent.

Figure 6. La Sonnambula, Act II, ornamented vocal line.

Andante cantabile

Amina.

Ah! non cre-dea mi - rar - - ti si pre - sto e-stin - to, o
Ah, must ye fade, sweet flow - - ers, For - sa - ken by sun - light and

fio - - re; pas - sa - - sti al par d'a - mo - - re, che un gior - no
show - - ers, As tran - sient as love's e - mo - - tion, That lives and

the production of their operas.⁷ This supervision included advice in the form of musical revisions of Bellini's I Puritani and Donizetti's Marino Faliero.⁸

Rossini's influence can also be found in the French operas of Meyerbeer and Thomas. For both of these composers, Rossini's effect can be assumed in a general way because of that composer's contribution to the genre of grand opera, a genre that affected the musical styles of both Meyerbeer and Thomas. More specifically, it was Rossini who produced the Paris premiere of Meyerbeer's first great success II Crociato in Egitto (1836).

Ambroise Thomas also was thoroughly acquainted with the operas of Rossini. While in Paris to complete his musical training, he was witness to the popularity of Rossini's Guillaume Tell (1829). Three subsequent years of study in Italy exposed him to Rossini's earlier operas in the Italian tradition. In one instance, Thomas's respect and admiration for Rossini led him to emulate one of the master's operas, L'Italiana in Algeri (1813), by composing the parody Le Caïd (1859).⁹

⁷Richard Osborne, Rossini, The Masters of Music Series (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1986), 85.

⁸William Ashbrook, Donizetti and His Operas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 369.

⁹Philip Robinson, "Thomas, Ambroise," in The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1980), 774.

Italian traits also exist in the operas of Meyerbeer and Thomas. Upon examining the mad scenes in Dinorah and Hamlet, two decidedly Italian characteristics are readily apparent. First, the prevalence of coloratura passages suggest an emphasis on solo virtuosity. Secondly, the orchestration has become secondary to the voice, the vocal line containing practically all important melodic material--a notable Italian characteristic. In the case of the mad scene in Dinorah, the accompaniment often merely doubles the vocal line. Its only function is to support the voice, as exemplified in figure 7. Meyerbeer was a composer who greatly admired Italian vocal technique and he advocated the study of Italian vocal style for all young opera composers. In his mature years as a composer, he believed that all aspiring opera composers should work in Italy first because only there could they learn to write correctly for the voice.¹⁰

Literary Influences

The Romantic era in literature and the arts began in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century. This movement was in many ways a reaction against the ideals of discipline and restraint that characterized the previous period. Works by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), Lord Byron (1788-1824), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Friedrich

¹⁰Siegmund Levarie, "Meyerbeer, Giacomo," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1980), 252.

Figure 7. *Dinorah*, Act II, orchestra part doubling vocal line.

Andantino quasi allegretto

Dinorah: Le vieux sorcier de la montagne, de la montagne -
The old wizard of the mountain

- par M'a dit, en re - gar - dant son main, en re - gar - dant son
said to me look at my hand

Schiller (1759-1805), and Johann Goethe (1749-1832) inspired the reader's imagination and encouraged emotionalism. Elements of this new literature included an emphasis on melancholy, primitivism, sentimentalism, exoticism, pseudo-medievalism, revolt against political authority, and reverence for nature.¹¹

Several of these elements found their way into nineteenth-century opera libretti. While natural settings, such as forests, caves, and primitive landscapes, had been used by countless previous composers as backgrounds for

¹¹Russell Noyes, *English Romantic Poetry and Prose*, "Introductory Survey, Major Aspects of English Romanticism," (N.Y.: Oxford University Press), xxvii.

musical drama, in the Romantic opera the setting is integral to the plot, as evidenced by such operas as Semiramide (1823) and Aida (1871).

Plots set in previous time periods and centered around political intrigues became increasingly popular. Notable examples are Bellini's Il Pirata (1827), Donizetti's La Favorite (1840), and later, Ernani (1844), and I Vespri Siciliani (1855) by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901).

One category of Romantic literature that heavily influenced opera was the "Gothic" style, in which a medieval or macabre setting suggested horror, or mystery.¹² Elements of this literature--ghosts, hallucinations, insanity, and exotic locales--soon attained prominence in nineteenth-century operas libretti. The six operas chosen for this study reflect a fascination with these features. A specific example of one of the Gothic features used extensively in nineteenth-century opera is the insanity of the female heroine. Also prominent is the mention of the supernatural in the libretti of La Sonnambula, Lucia di Lammermoor, Dinorah, and Hamlet.

Other elements of romantic literature are also present. Hamlet, I Puritani, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Anna Bolena all feature libretti dramatizing political turmoil and the struggle against established authority.

¹²William Benét, Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia, ed. by Carol Cohen, 3d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 397.

Two of these operas illustrate an additional literary influence. Among the numerous literary works which enjoyed popularity during the Romantic period were the plays and novels by authors from the British Isles, notably William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Sir Walter Scott (1717-1832). Many popular operas were based on their works. Some famous examples are Rossini's La Donna del Lago (1819), and Bizet's La Jolie Fille de Perth (1867), both operas based on works of Scott. Operas taken from dramas by Shakespeare include Verdi's Macbeth (1847), Otello (1887), and Falstaff (1893). Of the operas which are the subject of this monograph, the Thomas opera Hamlet is based on the Shakespeare play Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (1601), and Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor is based on Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor (1819).

Social Influences

Certainly one of the most important events affecting the arts in the Romantic period was the French Revolution (1789-1799). Europe became obsessed with the idea of freedom from repression. The heroines of the six operas chosen for this study were portrayed as hapless victims of subjugation. Each woman was prevented from exercising her free will. Due to this situation, she experienced anxiety which resulted in her mental collapse. Sleepwalking, paranoia, and schizophrenia, were portrayed as symptoms of mental illness precipitated by the evil of repression.

The subject matter of many French grand operas was dictated by the popular preference for operas that glorified the Revolution and Empire. This led to a style of opera which incorporated the grandiose elements of earlier opera with libretti that celebrated the rights of the individual. The support of Napoleon and Josephine given to the opera composer Gasparo Spontini (1774-1851) fostered the popularization of this colossal style, as seen in Spontini's La Vestale (1807).

The "rescue opera" was a genre of musical drama that rose to prominence during the French Revolution. Fostered by the violent, unsettled political climate of Europe in the early nineteenth century, these operas featured plots with last-minute escapes and rescues. An example of this type of opera is La Caverne (1793) by Jean Francois Lesueur (1760-1837) which featured a heroine held captive by bandits and ultimately rescued by her kinsmen. Although this genre of opera was influenced by events in France, plots featuring last-minute escapes or rescues became popular in other European countries. Fidelio (1805), by Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827), is an example of a German opera modeled on the French rescue opera.

A second important social influence on opera was a change in the constituency of the opera-going public. Previously, in France, the general public had patronized the Opéra Comique with its spoken dialogue and less intricate music. But increasingly, the middle classes patronized the

Paris Opéra. Music and plots of the opéras began to reflect the preferences of the new audiences. Grand opera composers accommodated the new bourgeoisie by incorporating opéra comique elements, such as comic characters and strophic songs, into the serious grand operas. Composers such as Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) wrote operas which were less complex and more accessible to the general public by inserting folk-songs, maintaining a slower harmonic rhythm, and making less frequent use of modulations.¹³ Being less knowledgeable about grand opera and music than previous more elite audiences, these new patrons preferred operas featuring fantastic and supernatural episodes. The result of this preference was a proliferation of operas incorporating exotic, bizarre scenes. The six operas studied in this monograph all exploit the theme of insanity, a subject that thrilled and intrigued these new audiences.

Further sociological influences can be found in the literature of the period. There appears to be an increase in the number of insane characters in the literature of the nineteenth century. There are several sociological reasons for this phenomenon. The era of history preceding the Romantic age was known as the "enlightenment" or the "age of reason," an age during which scientific inquiry and the investigation of the unknown were emphasized. Man sought to free himself from ignorance and superstition by utilizing

¹³Donald J. Grout, A Short History of Opera, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 310.

science and reason to explain previously unexplainable phenomenon. One area of research which continued into the Romantic era was the scientific study of the human mind. Medical doctors and philosophers began to study and analyze insanity. They sought to understand the causes of mental illness and effect a cure. The insane, who had earlier been viewed as animals or sub-humans, were now seen as sick human beings in need of care.

This growing interest in mental illness soon found its way into the literature of the period. Representations of mentally unstable characters abound in Romantic literature. Interestingly, there seem to be a greater number of "mad" female characters than "mad" male characters. This may be due to the fact that Romantic literature, dominated by male writers, was still influenced by a masculine perspective of women which was little changed from previous eras. Women were traditionally viewed as physically inferior to men. Not only were they perceived as frail and weak but genetically inferior to men, and so more susceptible to both physical and mental illness.¹⁴

Another reason for more representations of mad females was the readership. The general public found more acceptable the image of the poor, frail female lunatic. She was an object of pity and concern. The image of the lunatic male, however, was totally different. He was viewed as a

¹⁴Anne Mellor, Romanticism and Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 29.

wild, strong savage--a sub-human monster who should be forcibly restrained. So authors catered to these opinions by creating more mad ladies, who were seen as sympathetic characters.

Earlier Portrayals of Madness In Opera

Nineteenth-century portrayals of insanity on the operatic stage follow some earlier characterizations, which provide notable precedents for madness in romantic opera. It should be remembered that even the earliest operas were based on the portrayal of extreme emotional states. One early opera plot, the Orpheus legend, was utilized by many composers because it provided them with a highly emotional subject.¹⁵

This preference for plots involving heightened passion continued all during the seventeenth century. In certain operas by Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676), such as L'Egisto (1643) and Il Giasone (1649), a main character demonstrates severe emotional instability. In Il Giasone, Cavalli's most popular opera, the character of Medea demonstrates her mental instability in a turbulent incantation aria, "Dell'antro magico stridenti cardini."

In the eighteenth century the opera Orlando (1733) by George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) featured the title character driven to insanity. The plot, based on Orlando

¹⁵Stephen Willier, "Early Nineteenth-Century Opera and the Impact of the Gothic" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1987), 414.

Furioso by Lodovico Ariosto (1474-1533), centers around Orlando, who is robbed of his reason by Zoroastro, a possessor of supernatural powers. Later examples of operatic insanity can be found in Le Délire (1799) by Henri-Montan Berton (1767-1844) and Nina, Ou La Folle Par Amour (1786) by Nicolas Dalayrac (1753-1809).

Nina is especially significant in that it illustrates the influence of a popular French "opéra comique" plot on the formation of the nineteenth-century mad scene.¹⁶ The plot for Nina involved the subjugation of the young heroine Nina by a powerful male figure, her father. He separates Nina from her lover, Germeuil, a situation which eventually leads to her insanity. This plot was popular with several composers such as Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816), who wrote Nina; ossia, La pazza per amore (1789), and Louis-Luc Poiseau de Persuis (1769-1819), who composed Nina; ou, La Folle par Amour (1813). This plot can be viewed as an important step in the development of the nineteenth-century mad scenes which are the subject of this monograph.

¹⁶Ibid., 419.

CHAPTER II

ANNA BOLENA

Libretto

The source of the libretto of Anna Bolena has not been clearly identified, but it was most likely based on two plays. The earlier play, by Alessandro Pepoli, was entitled "Anna Bolena" (Venice, 1788). The later play, "Henry VIII" (Paris, 1791) was written by Marie-Joseph de Chenier. Both of these plays were based on events which occurred in 1536 during the reign of Henry VIII of England. From historical accounts, we know that Anne Boleyn was accused of adultery by Henry. Additionally, she was alleged to have had accomplices in her crime, among whom were her brother, Lord Rochefort, and a court musician named Smeton. Only Smeton admitted his guilt. On the basis of this confession alone, Anne and many of her co-conspirators were executed. It is still not clear if she was guilty or innocent.

Donizetti's librettist for the opera Anna Bolena was Felice Romani (1788-1865), one of the most famous librettists of his day. Romani chose to portray Anna as innocent of her crime, because he believed it would provide more possibilities for dramatic situations. He also expanded upon the character of Lord Riccardo Percy, the former husband of Anna. The character of Smeton, Anna's page, is scored for contralto.

Dramatic Action in the Scene

This mad scene, which is the finale of the opera, is set in the Tower of London. Attended by her ladies-in-waiting, Anna anticipates death. The stressful events leading to her imprisonment have unsettled Anna's mind. Her speech illustrates her insanity as she admonishes her ladies for weeping on this, her wedding day. She imagines she sees Percy and sings ecstatically of the love they once shared. Sir Hervey enters to order that the prisoners be assembled and led off to their executions. Lord Rochefort, Lord Percy, and Smeton enter, and Smeton begs Anna's forgiveness for his part in their conviction. The sounds of cannons and bells are heard outside the tower as the celebration of the King's wedding begins. Henry has married Giovanna Seymour. Anna prays that heaven will pardon the crimes of the King and his new Queen.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

Although the individual elements of the score have much in common with Donizetti's other works, an overview of the entire scene presents some unusual aspects. In synthesizing this finale, Donizetti has departed from traditional scene structure. Usually, this aria-finale would be constructed according to the standard format of recitative-cavatina-recitative-cabaletta. Donizetti, however, chooses to alter this musical convention in the mad scene in two important ways. First, he lengthens the music between cavatina and

cabaletta. He inserts another recitative and aria, shown in the tonal diagram as III and IV (see page 27), thereby creating a six-part structure. Next, he includes important dramatic action for other characters on the stage. These actions pull the dramatic focus away from the heroine, which would seem to weaken Anna's dominance of the scene, but Donizetti skillfully employs these other characters as a dramatic antithesis to Anna. Their sane, rational dialogue provides a contrasting background for the irrational speech of Anna, thereby emphasizing her insanity. Additionally, the dialogue of the other characters stimulates her insanity, reinforcing the portrayal of Anna as a manipulated woman.

Vocal Line

The accompaniment of Anna's recitative "Piangete voi" contains many areas of orchestral rests. Often, Anna's recitative is delivered a cappella, without accompaniment, as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8. Anna's unaccompanied recitative.

Andante

Anna: Piange-te vo-i? D'on-de tal pianto?
Why do you weep? What causes such tears?

TABLE I

Anna Bolena - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Anna "Piangete voi?" F Major Andante F Major			
II CAVATINA	Anna "Al dolce guidami"			
III RECITATIVE	Anna "Qual mesta suon?" Ab Major Maestoso	Hervey "Ite, e dal carcer loro"	Percy Rochefort "Anna"	"Si, io sono"
IV ARIA	Anna "Cielo, a'miei lunghi" G Major Lento	Smeton Percy Rochefort "L'estremo suo delirio"		
V RECITATIVE	Anna "Chi mi sveglia" Eb Major Allegro	Smeton Percy Rochefort Chorus "Acclamata dal popol"		
VI CABALETTA	Anna "Coppia iniqua" Moderato Eb Major	Smeton Percy Rochefort Chorus "Ciell Risparmia questo colpo"		

Figure 9 illustrates another area of unaccompanied recitative which is interrupted by a melisma on the words "infiorato l'alta" (adorn the altar with flowers). This melisma reflects Anna's excitement as she sings of her wedding to the King.

Figure 9. Melisma on "infiorato l'altar" followed by unaccompanied recitative.

The musical score for Figure 9 consists of two systems. The first system is marked 'Andante' and features a vocal line with a melisma on the words 'infiorato l'altar'. The lyrics are: 'wedding The King awaits me the altar is decorated with flowers'. The piano accompaniment is in the left hand. The second system is marked 'unaccompanied recitative' and features a vocal line with the lyrics: 'Da-temi tutto il mio can-dido am-man-to; il crin m'ornate del mio ser-to di'. The piano accompaniment is in the left hand and includes a section marked 'Allegro'.

The aria section "Al dolce guidami" features the first substantial areas of coloratura in the vocal line. Shown in figure 10, this ornamentation conveys Anna's joy as she sings to Percy of the love they shared in their youth. In this instance, it also conveys insanity, since Anna is singing to someone who is not actually present on the stage.

Figure 10. Coloratura vocal line.

Allegretto cantabile

Anna: Al dol-ce gui-da-mi ca-stel na-
Sweetly guide me to the castle
where I was born to the green trees to that brook

Orchestra

Anna's mental illness is demonstrated by her inability to sustain one train of thought for more than an instant. Several successive images rush through her mind as her recitative becomes a sequence of unrelated statements. Each of her statements is preceded by a melody in the accompaniment which depicts a single thought as it enters the heroine's mind. In figure 11a, the musical phrase in the accompaniment represents the character of Percy. This is proved by the fact that Anna's next words are of Percy, and this is the first time in the scene she mentions him. The audience hears the image of Percy at the exact moment that Anna "sees" him in her mind. As shown in figure 11b this musical phrase was also utilized by Donizetti as the second theme of the opera's overture.

Figure 11a. Musical theme representing the character of Percy.
 b. Source of theme in opera overture.



Anna imagines she sees Percy. She hears him angrily denouncing her. His harsh words are imitated in the orchestral accompaniment by the use of staccato eighth notes and contrasting volume levels, as shown in figure 12. A change in the accompaniment signals Percy's forgiveness. Anna says "Tu sorridi? Oh gioia!" (You smile? Oh joy!). This accompaniment is shown in figure 13.

The musical depiction of thoughts, followed by recitative in which the character verbalizes the same thoughts, was a sequence found often in operas of this period. Donizetti utilized this sequence to portray insanity by increasing the frequency of the heroine's random thoughts. Anna's ideas and subsequent recitatives are

Figure 12. Staccato eighth notes and contrasting volume levels to emulate Percy's anger.

Allegro

Anna: È vano... It is useless Ei vie - ne... He comes
credo a poco *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *cr.*
 60
 ei mi ac - cusa... He accuses me. ei mi sgrida... He scolds me.
ff *ff* *ff* *cr.*

Figure 13. Accompaniment to show change in Percy's mood.

Anna
 - se - ria e stre - ma... Tu sor - ri - di?... Oh gio - ja!... non
 utter misery You smile Oh joy
p *ff* *ff* *Musso*

numerous and short-lived. Furthermore, the music in these passages is disjunct and unrelated, like the heroine's illogical thoughts.

Donizetti sometimes allows an obbligato instrument to symbolize a character not present on the stage. In figure 14, the aria section "Al dolce guidami" begins with a solo

English horn, which provides an obbligato accompaniment to the vocal line throughout this section of the aria. The melancholy nature of the solo instrument seems to suggest the image of Percy, and Anna's next words are addressed to him, "Al dolce guidami castel natio" (gently lead me back to the castle of my youth). This portion of the scene can be made dramatically effective if the singer clearly acknowledges the entrance of the solo instrument as the voice of Percy.

Figure 14. English horn solo to suggest the image of Percy.

Allegretto

The musical score is for an "Allegretto" section. It features a vocal line with the lyrics "gio - ja!.. oh gio - - ja!.." and an English horn solo marked "English horn solo" and "sfz". The piano accompaniment is shown in the lower staves.

Individual Treatment

In addition to repeating music from other areas of the Anna Bolena score, Donizetti also quotes music from other sources. One example occurs in the mad scene. Anna's cantabile "Cielo a' miei lunghi spasimi" (heaven from my

long suffering), shown in figure 15, is a short aria based on a variation of the tune "Home, Sweet Home" (figure 16) attributed to Sir Henry Bishop (1786-1855). Donizetti sought to impart a mournful, nostalgic mood to Anna's prayer. He also wanted to create a serene, peaceful atmosphere to dramatically contrast with the violence to follow.

Figure 15. "Cielo a'miei lunghi spasimi."

Cantabile

Anna: Cie - lo, a'miei lun - ghi spa - si-mi con -
Heaven from my long suffering grant

- ce - di all'in - ri - po - so, e que - sti e - stre-mi pal - pi-ti sian
release at last and may these final heart-beats

peran - za al-men - A' mie - i lun - ghi spa - si-mi con -
at least be those of hope

Figure 16. Initial melody of "Home, Sweet Home."

1. 'Mid pleas-ures and pal - a - ces though we may roam, Be it
2. I gaze on the moon as I tread the drear wild, And
3. As ex - ile from home splen-dor dis - sies in vain; Oh,

ev - er so hum-ble, there's no place like home; A charm from the
feel that my moth-er now thinks of her child, As she looks on that
give me my low-ly thatched cot - tage a - gain; The birds sing - ing

Another interesting aspect of the scene is the deliberate ambiguity in treatment of the cabaletta "Coppia iniqua" (wicked couple). Anna's text is "nel sepolcro che aperto me aspetta col perdono sul labbro si scenda, ei m'acquisti clemenza e favore al cospetto d'un Dio de pietà" (Into the open tomb that awaits me may I descend with pardon on my lips; it obtains mercy and favor for me in the presence of a merciful God). Although her words are full of forgiveness, her melody denies that sentiment. Shown in figure 17, this vocal line portrays a heroine who is courageous and triumphant. The fiery, passionate vocal line illustrates Anna's spiritual victory over her situation. Of course, a melody in contrast to the sentiment of the text can be found in operas from every period of music. But the dramatic way in which Donizetti handles this device produces an extremely effective result. The melody and accompaniment seem deliberately designed to reveal Anna's hidden emotions. While the other characters on stage may hear and believe her words, we, the audience, are given a glimpse into the soul of the heroine.

Figure 17. Melody of vocal line contrasting with sentiment of text.



Figure 17--Continued.

-vo-re al..... co - spetto d'un Dio di pie - tà, favor, pietà,
in the presence of a merciful God

sì clemen - za e pie - tà,..... fa - vor,..... pie -

CHAPTER III

LA SONNAMBULA

Libretto

The earliest source for the libretto may be the French comedy by Pont de Vile (or de Visle).¹⁷ The story was written as a comédie-vaudeville by Eugene Scribe and Casimir Delavigne entitled "La Villageoise sonnambule, ou les deux fiancées" (1819). Scribe then collaborated with Jean-Pierre Aumer and Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Hérold on another ballet version, "La Sonnambule ou L'arrivée d'un nouveau seigneur" (1827). Bellini's librettist, Felice Romani, most probably used the Scribe, Aumer, Hérold version as his primary source for the plot of the opera La Sonnambula (1831).¹⁸

Several changes were made in converting the French story to an Italian opera. The location was moved from France to a Swiss village. The names of the entire cast were changed, Edmond became Elvino, and Thérèse became the heroine Amina.

Dramatic Action in the Scene

Most of the cast and chorus are onstage during the Act II mad scene. Amina is distressed by the constant jealousy

¹⁷Vincenzo Bellini, La Sonnambula, libretto by Felice Romani; English version by Natalia MacFarren (New York and London: G. Schirmer, 1929), vii.

¹⁸Herbert Weinstock, Vincenzo Bellini (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 326.

of her fiancé, Elvino. This anxiety causes a mental instability in her which manifests itself in somnambulism, or sleepwalking. During one of her sleepwalking episodes, Elvino discovers Amina in the bed of Count Rodolfo. Although she is innocent of any wrong-doing, Elvino angrily breaks off their engagement. This situation causes Amina further mental agony. Her mad scene takes place in the finale of the opera, during another episode of somnambulism. Elvino witnesses Amina sleepwalking and realizes his error. The chorus of villagers sings to awaken Amina and she is reunited with Elvino.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

Table II indicates the four-part structure of this scene. This aria is the dramatic climax of the opera and much action takes place, all of it mirrored in the music. This aria is interspersed with dialogue by other members of the cast and there are areas of transitory tonal centers.

Vocal Line

The vocal line illustrates a stylistic element of Bellini, the attack of the high note on a weak beat of the bar (figure 18). This area of the score also contains the most florid vocal line for the heroine in this entire scene. Bellini is utilizing coloratura to portray Amina's ecstasy.

TABLE II

La Sonnambula - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Amina "Oh! Se una volta sola" F Major Molto legato	Amina Count Rodolfo Theresa Elvino Chorus Further recitative Transitory tonal centers	
II CAVATINA	Amina "Ah! Non Credea mirarti" A Minor Andante cantabile	Amina "Portria novel vigore" C Major	
III RECITATIVE	Elvino Count Rodolfo Amina Transitory tonal centers	Chorus "Viva Amina!" E \flat Major Allegro brillante	Theresa Elvino Count Rodolfo Chorus "Vanne al tempio" Allegro
IV CABALETTA	Amina "Ah! Non giunge" Allegro moderato B \flat Major	Theresa Elvino Count Rodolfo Chorus "Vieni al tempio" Più vivo	Amina "Ah! Non giunge" Melody returns

Figure 18. Attack of a high note on a weak beat.

Allegro moderato

Amina: via - mo ci for - mia - mo un ciel d'a - mor, d'a -
 wan - der, We will form a heav'n of love, of
 mor, d'a - mor, d'a -
 love, of love, of
 col canto

Like many of his contemporaries, Bellini often employed broken, interrupted phrases in the vocal line to show strong emotion (figure 19). Amina has just been awakened from her sleep-walking episode. She realizes Elvino has forgiven her, and she bursts forth in an exuberant cabaletta.

Orchestra

In two significant areas of the scene, the orchestra initiates the melody of the subsequent vocal entrance. These two areas precede the principle songs of the heroine, the cavatina and the cabaletta.

Figure 19. Broken phrasing to suggest strong emotion.

Allegro moderato

brac - cia, o sem-pre in - sie - me, sem-pre u - ni - ti in u - na
brace me, my heart de - light - ed, In one hope now with thine u -

spe - - me, del - la ter - ra in cui vi - via - mo - - ei for -
nit - - ed, Hand in hand while on earth we wan - der, - We will

Mus.

The first instance is shown in figures 20a and 20b.

Figure 20a illustrates the orchestral rendition of the initial cavatina melody "Ah! Non credea mirarti." Figure 20b is the subsequent vocal entrance.

Figure 20a. Orchestra introducing the cavatina melody "Ah! Non credea mirarti."

Larghetto.

con grande espressione

Al. & Cl.

Strings Mus.

Recit.

Figure 20b. Initial vocal line from cavatina.

Andante cantabile

Amina.

Ah! non cre-da mi - rar - - ti si pre - sto e-stin - to; o
 Ah, must ye fade, sweet flow - - ers, For - sa - ken by sun - light and

Again, in Amina's final cabaletta "Ah! Non giunge," the orchestra introduces the melody. Figure 21a shows the orchestral introduction to the cabaletta and Figure 21b shows Amina's vocal entrance.

Figure 21a. Orchestral introduction to the cabaletta "Ah! Non giunge."

Allegro moderato. *pi. clar.?*

pp
 Strings & Wood.

Figure 21b. Amina's vocal entrance.

Amina.

Ah! non giun - ge u - man pen - sio - ro — al con -
 Oh, re - call not one earth - ly sor - row, — With the —

pp leggierissimo

There are several instances of music recalled from earlier scenes for use in the mad scene. This was a common element used by many composers to illustrate the wandering thoughts of the insane heroine. In *La Sonnambula*, Amina dreams of earlier events in the opera and we hear these events in the orchestral accompaniment. Such is the case when she sings of the engagement ring given to her by Elvino. In figure 22a, the orchestral introduction to her recitative about the ring utilizes music from Act I, shown in figures 22b and 22c. Other orchestral accompaniment borrowed from Act I occurs a few measures later in the mad scene. The accompaniment shown in figure 23a is taken from the Act I ceremony surrounding the signing of the wedding contract, shown in figure 23b.

Figure 22a. Amina sings of her engagement ring in Act II.

The musical score for Figure 22a is divided into two systems. The first system is an orchestral introduction in G major, marked 'Andante sostenuto.' It features a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The second system shows Amina's recitative, with the vocal line on a treble clef staff and piano accompaniment on a grand staff. The lyrics are: 'L'a-nel-lo mi-o... l'a-nel-lo... ei me l'ha tol-to... Ma non puo-ra- (The ring he gave me. I've lost it. he snatch'd it from me! But he cannot)'. The piano part includes a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking.

Figure 22b. Original statement of melody in orchestra in Act I.

Lento (Whilst the mother and witnesses are signing the contract, Elvino presents the

mi - na? thou, child? Elvino: Ah! tut-to-è il co - ro. treasures

p *ff* *Andante sostenuto. psciolle*

ring to Amina.) *pi. ari.* *Str. pizz.* *delice*

Figure 22c. Statement of melody in Elvino's vocal line in Act I.

Andante sostenuto

Str. pizz. Viole sustain Elvino: Pren - di: l'a-nel - ti do - no che un Dear - est, ac-cept the to - ken with

Figure 23a. Orchestral figure present in Act II mad scene.

Andante.

pir - mi l'im-ma-gin su - a. rob me of his dear im-age.

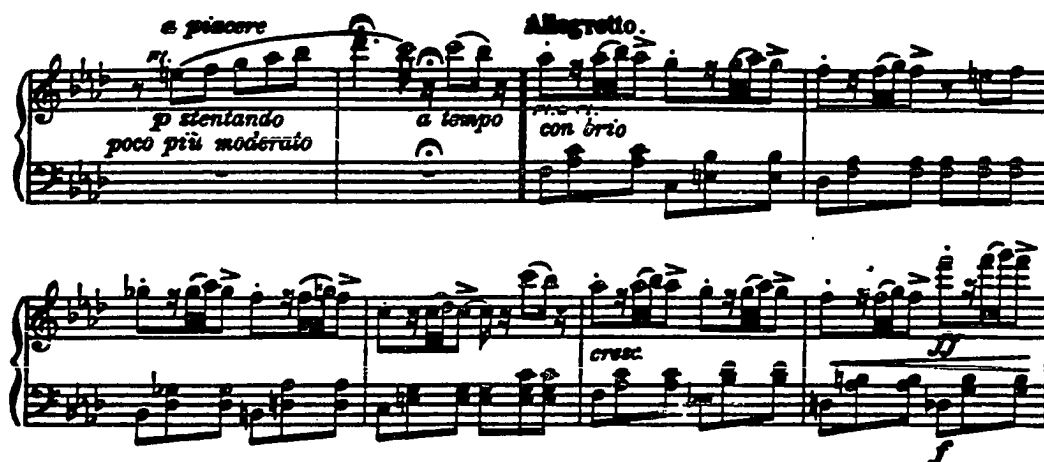
p *f*

Recit.

Amina: Scul - ta ei-la-è qui, qui... nel Grav-en in my heart, here for

p *pp*

Figure 23b. Similar orchestral figure found in Act I wedding contract scene.



Finally, the orchestral accompaniment for the chorus to awaken Amina in her mad scene is a reiteration of the accompaniment for the chorus in the beginning of that same act. In the initial statement of the melody, the villagers are proceeding to the Count's estate to win his support for Amina's innocence (figure 24a). The orchestra repeats this

Figure 24a. Music from opening chorus of Act II.



lively music when the chorus joyfully awakens the vindicated heroine, shown in figure 24b.

Figure 24b. Chorus awakens Amina from somnambulism.

The musical score for Figure 24b is divided into two main sections: the Chorus of Villagers and Amina (waking). The Chorus of Villagers section features a vocal line with the lyrics: "Vi-va A-mi-na! vi-va an-co-ra, vi-va an-co-ra, vi-va an-cor! Oh ciell! Hail, A-mi-na! wake to glad-ness, hail, A-mi-na, wake to joy! What sounds!" and a piano accompaniment marked *ff* *con tutta forza*. The Amina (waking) section features a vocal line with the lyrics: "Vi-va A-mi-na! vi-va an-co-ra, vi-va an-co-ra, vi-va an-cor! Hail, A-mi-na! wake to glad-ness, hail, A-mi-na, wake to joy!" and a piano accompaniment marked *ff* *con tutta forza*.

Individual Treatment

There are two sleepwalking scenes in La Sonnambula. Bellini creates a connection between them by including a similar rhythm in both scenes. As shown below, the rhythm of the orchestral accompaniment in the Act II mad scene (figure 25a) is very similar to the rhythm used by Bellini in Amina's Act I sleepwalking scene (figure 25b).

An additional feature of this scene is the many instances of extra-musical notation. Much of the staging is written in the score. This enhances the performer's portrayal of the character by assisting the singer in the accurate coordination of expression and music.

Figure 25a. Amina's sleepwalking scene from Act II.

Allegro moderato

Cl. Amina: Al tem - pio ei mo - ve...
To church all are hastening.

Fl. & Cl. Ah! l'ho per - du - - to...
Oh, I have lost him! *c* And

Figure 25b. Amina's sleepwalking scene from Act I.

Allegro moderato

Amina (dreams she is going through the marriage-ceremony).

Oh! co - rue lie-to è il po - po-lo, che al tem - pio ne fa
To church they are es - cort - ing us, Kind fac - - es'round us

Count.

soor-ta! In sogno ancor quel l'a - nima è nel suo be-neas-sor - ta.
hov-er. Tho'dreaming, her ev-ry thought is devot-ed to her lov - er.

This aria is not technically a "mad scene," although it is usually classified as such in operatic repertoire.¹⁹ Amina's somnambulism in Act I is a result of Elvino's obsessive jealousy. Her Act II sleepwalking scene is precipitated by her broken engagement. She is not truly insane, as compared to the other characters studied in this monograph, but her character is grouped with these other heroines because somnambulism was generally acknowledged as abnormal behavior, indicative of an unsettled mind.

¹⁹Leslie Orrey, Opera, A Concise History (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 132.

CHAPTER IV

I PURITANI

Libretto

The plot of I Puritani is a mixture of elements from two sources. The first earlier source is a novel by Scott entitled "Old Mortality" (1816). Two major features of the opera are drawn from the novel, the love triangle of a woman and two men of opposing political views, and the temporary mental instability of the woman caused by the stress of her situation. But in the novel this brief insanity is only a minor episode.²⁰ Thus, Bellini's opera only slightly resembles the novel.

The opera more closely resembles its second, later source, a play with music entitled "Têtes Rondes et Cavaliers" by Jacques-Arsene Ancelot and Joseph-Xavier Boniface, produced in Paris in 1833. There are many similarities between this play and Bellini's opera. Both were set in Plymouth and took place during the Commonwealth. Both began the drama at a fortress near Plymouth, held by Puritans, followers of Cromwell. In the play, Lucy, daughter of Lord Walton, a Puritan, loved Lord Arthur Clifford, a Royalist. The love triangle was completed by Henri Mulgrave, a Puritan army captain also in love with

²⁰Jerome Mitchell, The Walter Scott Operas (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1977), 60.

Lucy. During a visit inside the fortress, Lord Arthur realized a prisoner being held there was Henriette de France, the widow of Charles I and an enemy of the Puritans. To save her life, Lord Arthur engineered the Queen's escape from the fortress. Henri convinced Lucy that Arthur had abandoned her and eloped with Henriette. Lucy became extremely irrational but recovered when Arthur returned to see her. Arthur was captured by Puritans and sentenced to death whereupon Lucy pleaded with Cromwell and Henri on Arthur's behalf. Henri had a last-minute change of heart, Arthur was spared, and Lucy was allowed to join him in exile.

The Bellini opera resembles this play in many ways. Lucy becomes the character of Elvira. Her financé, Arthur Clifford, becomes Lord Arturo Talbot, and his Puritan rival, Henri Mulgrave, is now Sir Riccardo Forth. A similar sequence of events occur for the same political reasons. The most striking departure from the play are the scenes concerning Elvira's temporary insanity. In the play, Lucy had regained her reason when she saw Clifford again. In the opera, Elvira does not regain her sanity when she meets again with Arturo. In fact, it is her irrational and dangerous state of mind that causes Arturo to linger, even when he hears soldiers approaching. In his concern for her welfare, he refuses to leave her unprotected and is captured by the Puritans. The return of Elvira's sanity is accomplished by a "deus ex machina." A messenger suddenly

arrives at the fortress bearing the news that Cromwell's Puritan forces have defeated the Royalists. As a result of this final, decisive victory, Cromwell has ordered the release of all political prisoners. For Elvira, the sudden shock of joy at Arturo's liberation is the catalyst of her recovery. She immediately regains her sanity in the final pages of the score.

Bellini's librettist for I Puritani was Carlo Pepoli (1801-1860), a poet whose family had been prominent in Bologna for centuries. A political refugee from the Austrian occupation of Italy, Pepoli was in exile from that country for having served in a provisional revolutionary government. He had written nothing for the theater until 1834, when he met Bellini in Paris.²¹

Dramatic Action in the Scene

Elvira's mad scene takes place in Act II. There are only two characters onstage with Elvira during the scene. They are Sir Giorgio Walton, Elvira's uncle, who is sympathetic to her plight, and Sir Riccardo Forth, the Puritan soldier in love with Elvira. Giorgio and Riccardo are alone onstage immediately prior to Elvira's entrance. Giorgio is lamenting Elvira's insanity and Riccardo is threatening vengeance against his rival, Arturo. During the scene, both Giorgio and Riccardo converse with Elvira and try, unsuccessfully, to bring her back to reality. First

²¹Herbert Weinstock, Vincenzo Bellini, His Life and His Operas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 161.

she sings sadly of her situation, then she rejoices as she imagines Arturo has returned. She dances and sings with her absent lover. Her swiftly changing moods, mirrored in the music, attest to her mental instability. She becomes angry, then despairing, and finally joyful again as she sings a love song to Arturo.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

The sections of the mad scene follow a traditional double-aria framework. The most unusual aspect of the structure is the inordinate length of the recitative preceding the cabaletta. This recitative, shown in Table III, is unusually complex. There are numerous solo and duo passages written for Riccardo and Giorgio. These two characters also sing duo and trio passages with the heroine. Several tempo changes occur, as well as the reiteration of a melodic phrase from the first recitative.

Riccardo and Giorgio do not merely observe her distress and comment on it, as is often the case with operas of this period. Bellini's observers are also active participants in the scene. They try to communicate with Elvira, to bring her back to reality. In figure 26, when Elvira asks Giorgio who he is, he responds "non me ravvisi" (don't you recognize me?). Later in the scene, Riccardo tries to focus Elvira's attention. She says to him "M'odi e dimmi: amasti mai?" (tell me, did you ever love?). He replies "gli ocche affissa sul mio volto, ben me guarda a lo verdrai" (Fix your

TABLE III

I Puritani - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Elvira "Oh rendetemi la speme" Eb Major Andantino	Giorgio Riccardo "Oh! Com' e grave"	
II ARIA	Elvira "Qui la voce"	Elvira "Rendetemi la speme" Recitative melody returns	Giorgia Riccardo "Quanto amor"
III RECITATIVE	Elvira "Ah tu sorridi" Bb Major Allegro giusto	Elvira "M'odi e dimmi" Eb Major Andantino	Elvira "Ah, toglietemi la vita" Recitative I melody returns
	Riccardo Giorgio "Or chi il pianto frenar puoi"	Riccardo Giorgia "Clemente il ciel ti fia"	Elvira Riccardo Giorgio Trio Allegro moderato
IV CABALETTA	Elvira "Vien diletto" Ab Major Allegro moderato	Riccardo Giorgio "Possa tu"	Elvira "Vien diletto" Cabaletta melody returns
			Riccardo Giorgio "Ah! Ricovarti omai"

Figure 26. Giorgio tries to reason with Elvira.

Andantino

(a Giorgio) (Riccardo)

Elvira: Chi sei tu? Who are you? Sì...

Non mi ravvi-si?... non mi rav-vi-si?... Don't you recognize me?

col canto

eyes upon my face, look at me and you will see). These lines are shown in figure 27. The participation of Riccardo and Giorgio constantly changes the texture of the scene from solo to duo to trio and back again, providing more variety.

Vocal Line

The initial vocal phrase of the recitative illustrates a trait of Bellini's vocal lines that distinguishes him from his contemporaries, his preference for unusually long melodic lines (figure 28). The vocalist cannot breath until after the first statement of "lasciate." Singers who study Bellini's roles must therefore be capable of sustaining exceptionally long melodies.

Figure 28 also demonstrates another stylistic element of Bellini stated above, the attack of a high note on a weak beat of the bar.²² Here, it is used to emphasize the word

²²Leslie Orrey, Bellini, The Master Musicians Series (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1973), 127.

Figure 27. Riccardo tries to focus Elvira's attention.

Allegro giusto

Elvira Riccardo

M'e - di; e dim - mi: a - ma - sti mai? Gli occhi af.
Listen and tell me have you ever loved Fix your

- fie - sa sul mio vol - to, ben mi guar - da, e lo ve -
eyes upon my face Look at me and you will see

Elvira

- Grai... Ah! se pian - gi... ancor tu sa -
if you weep then you still know

"speme" (hope). The hope Elvira seeks is the love of Arturo, whom she believes has abandoned her.

There are several instances of broken, interrupted phrases in the vocal line. As in *La Sonnambula*, Bellini employs this type of phrasing to show strong emotion (figure 29). Elvira imagines that Arturo has forgiven her. He stands before her, smiling. Her joy and breathless excitement are mirrored in the music.

Figure 28. Long melodic phrase in vocal line. Brackets indicate attack of a high note on the weak beat of the bar.

ELVIRA (di dentro)

O ren-de-temi la spe-me..... o la -
 Give hope back to me

INDANTINO *pp*

-scia-te, lascia-temi mo-ri... o ren-
 or let me die

-de-temi la spe-me..... o la - scia-te, lascia-temi mo-

The areas of most ornamentation occur on the words "vien all'amore" (come to your love), and "riede, all'amor" (return to your love). Elvira is referring to her self as the "love." The most prominent aspect of this coloratura are the descending scales, giving the effect of ecstatic, uncontrollable joy, surging ever higher (figure 30).

Figure 29. Broken phrases in the vocal to indicate strong emotion.

Elvira

(conculata) a piacere *a piacere*

si... mio padre... E Ar-tu-ro? E l'a-more? Parla... parla...
yes my father and Arturo how is my love. speak

27 *ALLLEGRO GIUSTO* Ah! tu sor ri-di...
you smile

cangihi il pian - to!
and you dry your tears

- me ne, a l-men mi guidi...
to my marriage you are leading me

As seen in Figure 31, these descending scales become increasingly chromatic, perhaps signalling the heroine's increasing madness. Although the cabaletta is traditionally

Figure 30. Coloratura vocal line in cabaletta.

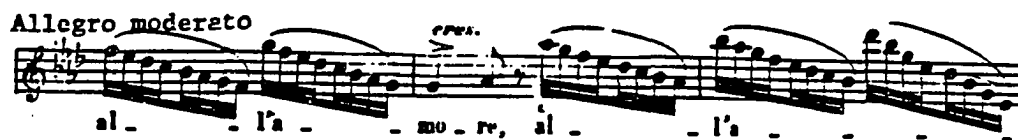


Figure 31. Increasingly chromatic vocal line to show increasing madness.



the area of most ornamentation, Bellini utilizes the ornamentation to enhance the dramatic effect of the scene. For a character in such distress to sing so joyfully aids in the depiction of insanity.

Bellini, like his contemporaries, often employed melody, rhythm, and harmony to depict the thought processes of his characters. This is certainly true of the cast involved in the I Puritani mad scene. To signify that Riccardo and Giorgio share the same sentiments, Bellini often supplies them with similar vocal lines (figure 32). The two men sing in a harmonically stable pattern of thirds, moving in similar rhythms and identical note values.

Figure 33 illustrates the way in which Bellini composed melody and rhythm to depict the psychological contrasts between the men and Elvira. When the three characters sing

Figure 32. Similar rhythms and stable harmonies to show similar emotions.

Largo

Riccardo: (Orchiil pian.to fre.nar può! Chi fre.nar,frenar lo può!)
 Riccardo: Now who can hold back his tears

Giorgio: (Orchiil pian.to fre.nar può! Chi fre.nar,frenar lo può!)

as a trio, Giorgio and Riccardo are often given unison melodies and rhythms to show their mental stability. Elvira is given a contrasting vocal line and rhythm to illustrate her contrasting mental condition.

Figure 33. Contrasting melody and rhythm to show contrasting mental condition.

Allegro moderato

Elvira: al return to your love - la - mor,..... rie -

Riccardo: Ah! now you must return to your room - tio -

Giorgio: Ah! Ri - en - vrar - tio -

- di al - la - mo - re, al - la - mo - re, al - la -
 - mai l'ad - di - ce, sten - de
 - mai l'ad - di - ce, sten - de

Orchestra

In several instances, the orchestra part signifies the emotional changes taking place in the mind of Elvira. Shown above in figure 29, Elvira believes her lover Arturo has returned. Her joy is mirrored in the orchestra, which changes into a faster tempo, featuring a dance-like meter.

Preceding Elvira's aria section "Qui la voce," Bellini supplies the orchestra with a variation of the vocal melody (figure 34, second measure). Thus, the orchestra introduces the solo vocal melody, a common occurrence in Bellini's operas.

Figure 34. Orchestral introduction of vocal line.

Andantino

The musical score for Figure 34 is written for piano and voice. It begins with a tempo marking of 'Andantino'. The piano part starts with a 'stent.' (stentato) marking, followed by an 'in tempo' marking. The vocal line enters with the lyrics 'Elvira: Qui la voce sua so- Here his soft voice'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'stent.'.

Elvira: Qui la voce sua so-
Here his soft voice

- a - ve mi chia - ma - va... e poi spa - ri. Qui giu-
called me and then he vanished

In the final section of the scene, Elvira counsels her invisible lover not to fear her father "non temer del padre mio." Then she happily envisions herself with Arturo under the moonlight. Her exuberance appears first in the orchestra (figure 35) mirrored in the modulation and tempo change into a lighthearted melody. These measures are the orchestral introduction to the cabaletta. In figure 36, Elvira's ensuing vocal line is taken from the orchestral melody in figure 35.

Figure 35. Change in mood paralleled by change in accompaniment.

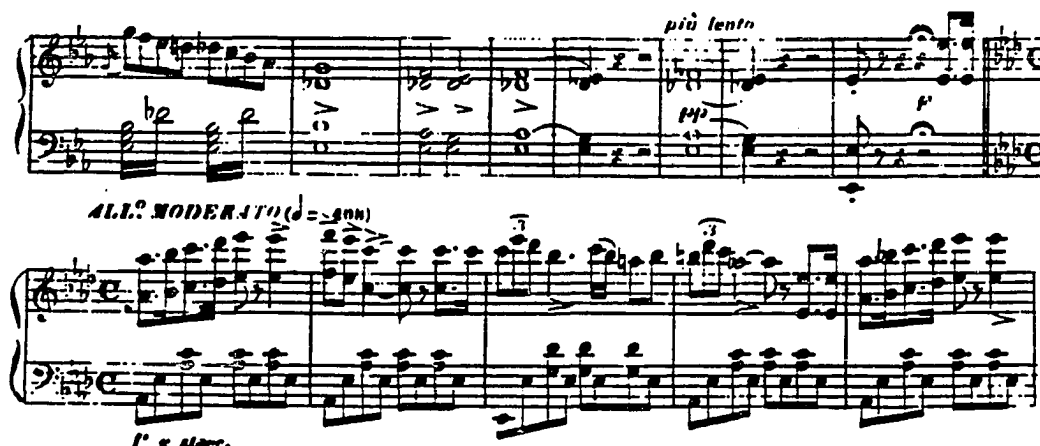


Figure 36. Vocal line in imitation of preceding orchestral melody.

Allegro moderato

The image shows a vocal line for Elvira. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The melody is in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and common time (C). The lyrics are written below the staff. The tempo change is indicated by a double bar line and the new tempo marking.

Elvira: Viendi let tu in ciel la
Come beloved the

lu-na: tutto la - ce intorno, intor-no: finché spunti in cielo il giorno, vien.....
moon is in the sky and all is quiet around us until daybreak

Individual Treatment

Traditionally, the recitative differed from the aria by being more declamatory in style and less lyrical. Bellini sought to blur the distinction between these styles by frequently inserting lyrical passages into his recitative.²³ Often these two sections are almost indistinguishable. Such is the case in this mad scene. It is difficult to determine where recitative ends and aria begins. The initial phrases of Elvira's cavatina "Qui la voce" illustrates this quite clearly. The cavatina should be preceded by a recitative, but Elvira's "O rendetemi la speme" (figure 28) sounds lyrical and flowing. It is very similar in style to the cavatina melody "Qui la voce" (figure 34). The most striking difference between these two examples is the nature of the accompaniment. The accompaniment for the cavatina is more rhythmic, as befits an aria, as opposed to the tremolo accompaniment of the recitative, which allows for the rubato performance usually associated with recitative.

The end of the cavatina is also difficult to determine. There seems to be a resolution (figure 37), followed by an area of recitative (figure 38). However, this recitative is followed by another area of arioso phrases set to substantial orchestral accompaniment. Finally, there is a

²³Friedrich Lippman, "Bellini, Vincenzo," in The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1980), 452.

Figure 37. Apparent end of cavatina.

Andante

Elyira:

-rir. o ren-de-te, qui la spè-me,..... o la.
Give me back Hope or

-scia-te, la scia-temi mu-rir.
let me die

Riccardo: Quanto amor è mai raccol-to in quel vol-to, in quel do-
How much love is gathered in that face

Giorgio: Quanto amor è mai raccol-to in quel vol-to, in quel do-

reiteration of the initial vocal line, set to a different text (figure 39). This return seems to imply a ternary structure, a structure which is usually reserved for arias. Its appearance here in a recitative is peculiar. This unusual structure illustrates the innovative mind of the young composer. Although well-schooled in the musical tradition of his predecessors, Bellini's operas contain remarkably advanced structures.

Figure 38. Area of recitative following cavatina.

(a Giorgio) (riconoscendolo)

Elvira: Chi sei tu? Sì...

Giorgio: Non mi ravvisi?... non mi ravvisi?...

col canto

con allegrezza) (consolata) a piacere a piacere

Sì... mio padre... E Ar-tu-ro? E l'a-more? Parla... parla...

Figure 39. Recitative phrase using melody of opening recitative.

Elvira: (con tutta la disperazione del dolore) *pp*

mai... ah mai più ti ri-ve-drò! Ah to-glie - temi la vi - ta..... o ren-
 sil
 si!

de - te, rende - temi il mio amor! ah to-glie - temi la vi - ta..... o ren-
 Riccardo: Ah! si fa mia la sua fe - ri - ta, mi
 Yes she makes her injury mine
 Giorgio: Ah! si fa mia la sua fe - ri - ta, mi

(resta abbattuta ed immobile)

de - te, rende - temi il mio a-mor!
 squarcia il cor. Si fa mia la sua fe - ri - ta, mi di_spe-rae squarcia il
 breaks my heart Yes she makes me despair
 squarcia il cor. Si fa mia la sua fe - ri - ta, mi di_spe-rae squarcia il

CHAPTER V

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Libretto

The source of the libretto, Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor (1819), was itself based on events which are said to have occurred in Scotland in 1668. According to tradition, Janet Dalrymple, daughter of William Dalrymple, Viscount of Stair, was engaged to marry Lord Rutherford. But her parents objected to the marriage because Lord Rutherford was poor. They forced Janet to break off the engagement to Rutherford and instead, marry David Dunbar, Lord of Baldoon. The ceremony took place on August 12, 1668. What happened that night varies greatly according to different versions of the story. However, most tales agree on the following sequence of events. During the wedding night, guests and family were awakened by screams emanating from the bridal chamber. The door, which was locked from the inside, had to be broken down. What they discovered astounded them all. Janet was hiding in the corner of the chimney, babbling, almost incoherent, and Dunbar was lying on the floor in a pool of blood. The only intelligible words from Janet were "Tak' your bonny bridegroom." What had occurred prior to the family's forced entry became the subject of much conjecture. Some said that it was Janet who stabbed David. Others believed that her former lover, Lord

Rutherford, had been hiding in the room and avenged himself on the bridegroom. The truth was never revealed. According to legend, Janet died a month later on September 12, never regaining her sanity. Dunbar survived, but refused to ever discuss what actually occurred. He died in March 1682 and took the secret to his grave. Rutherford died a few years later, having never married.²⁴

Scott's novel differs from this traditional account in several ways. His Janet and Rutherford become Lucy Ashton and Edgar of Ravenswood. Although the core of the legend was the ill-fated love of Janet and Rutherford, Scott's novel concentrates on the political rivalry between the families of the lovers, the houses of Ashton and Ravenswood. Scott even advances the plot from its original time, in 1668 to around 1710. He portrays the Civil War of 1689 between the Torys and the Whigs as the source of the enmity between the Ravenswoods and the Ashtons. Edgar of Ravenswood is Tory while the Ashtons are Whigs. Because of Scott's focus on the political elements in the story, Lucy and Edgar are not the leading figures in the novel. Scott's primary antagonists are Lucy's parents, Lord and Lady Ashton, originally Lord and Lady Stair. The political maneuvering of the ambitious Lady Ashton is the primary catalyst in the

²⁴Ellen Bleiler, Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor," The Dover Opera Libretto Series (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1986), vii.

plot of the novel.²⁵ It is she who forces Lucy to break her engagement to Edgar in favor of a political alliance with Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, David Dunbar in the legend. Lady Ashton also refuses to allow contact between Lucy and Edgar. She convinces her daughter that Edgar has forgotten his former fiancée. Lady Ashton's manipulation of her daughter is both psychological, and in the wedding ceremony, physical. Lucy's despair is manifested by her physical inability to approach the table and affix her signature to the wedding document. She simply freezes. It is strong-willed Lady Ashton who guides the girls faltering steps to the table and helps her to maneuver the pen.

Scott's deviation from the original story were necessary, in his opinion, to transfer the legend into a novel.²⁶ Similarly, Donizetti and his librettist significantly altered Scott's version when they transformed the literary work into a musical drama. The librettist for the opera Lucia di Lammermoor was Salvatore Cammarano (1801-1852), a member of a distinguished theatrical family, well-known in Naples.²⁷ He had trained as a scenic artist and later produced stage dramas before turning to writing opera libretti. He was employed by the management of the theater

²⁵Jerome Mitchell, The Walter Scott Operas (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1977), 6.

²⁶Ellen H. Bleiler, Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor," The Dover Opera Libretto Series (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 30.

²⁷J. N. Black, "Cammarano's Notes for the Staging of Lucia di Lammermoor," Journal of the Donizetti Society 4 (1980): 29.

of San Carlo in Naples where Lucia premiered in 1835. His official title at the theater was "Poeta e concertatore." Among his many duties were writing libretti and staging the opera productions.

The intricate details of plot and character development found in a novel must be reduced when that novel is brought to the stage. For Donizetti and Cammarano, the essential element of the story was the romance between Lucy and Edgar. The choice of which elements of the novel to retain was decided by focusing on their relationship. Other elements of the novel that did not strongly affect their relationship were excluded.²⁸ This elimination process still left the librettist with an inordinately large ensemble and a musical drama much longer than the traditional opera. To lessen the overall number of characters, he employed the interesting method of combining the attributes of several characters into one. Such is the case in the character of Enrico Achton, Lucia's brother in the opera. The actions and speech of Enrico can be traced to four characters in the novel, Lord and Lady Ashton, and Sholto and Henry, her brothers.

The most striking difference between the novel of Scott and Donizetti's opera is the celebrated mad scene. Cammarano's earlier experience with the stage is illustrated by his expansion of the mad scene. In Scott's novel, Lucy

²⁸Jerome Mitchell, The Walter Scott Operas (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1977), 144.

has no mad scene. She does not return to the wedding festivities. Cammarano saw the dramatic potential of the situation and in collaboration with Donizetti created one of the most celebrated mad scenes in the repertoire.

Dramatic Action in the Scene

The mad scene is set in the great hall of the Ashton home, where the wedding guests are assembled to celebrate the nuptials of Lucia and Arturo. Their merriment is interrupted by the sudden entrance of Raimondo Bidebent, the domestic chaplain, who is tutor and confidant to Lucia. He explains that Lucia has gone insane and murdered her bridegroom. Lucia then enters the scene. She sings of her lost lover, Edgardo. Lord Enrico Ashton, Lucia's brother, rushes in and realizes she is completely mad. There is a trio for Lucia, Enrico, and Raimondo, with chorus. This is followed by a contrasting solo for Lucia, then a stretto for all three soloists and chorus.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

It can be seen from examining Table IV that the basic construction of the mad scene follows a traditional format. There is the standard double-aria frame of cavatina and cabaletta, each prefaced by a section of recitative. Donizetti has chosen to include several modulations and tempo changes in this scene, all of them employed to serve

TABLE IV

Lucia di Lammermoor - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Chorus "Oh giusto cielo" C Minor Andante	Lucia "Il dolce suono"	Lucia "Ohimè, sorge il Ab Minor Allegro vivace	Lucia "Sparsa e di rose" Eb Major Andante
II CAVATINA	Lucia "Alfin son tua" Eb Major Andante	Normanno Raimondo Chorus "Abbi in si crudo stato" Eb Minor	Lucia "Del ciel clemente" E Major Cavatina melody returns	
III RECITATIVE	Raimondo Enrico Chorus "S'avvanza Enrico" Cb Major Allegro	Extended recitative with interpolated arioso phrases	Trio: Lucia Enrico Raimondo Allegro mosso	
IV CABALETTA	Lucia "Spargi d'amaro pianto" Eb Major Moderato	Enrico Raimondo Chorus Più mosso	Lucia "Spargi d'amargo pianto" Cabaletta melody returns	Stretto Lucia Enrico Raimondo Chorus Più allegro

the drama. This is demonstrated in the first recitative section. Lucia's andante entrance in a C minor tonality emphasizes the tragedy of her situation. Her reverie is interrupted by the terrifying vision of a ghost, mirrored in the music by a sudden A-flat minor allegro vivace on the words "Ohimè, sorge il tremendo fantasma". The ghost then disappears and her terror subsides. The music, following her mood, modulates to E-flat major and the tempo returns to andante.

An additional feature of the overall construction of the scene is the unusual length of the opening recitative section as compared to the length of the aria. In a traditional format, the recitative functions as a short introduction to the more extensive aria. However, Donizetti reverses that structure in sections I and II of the mad scene. Lucia's cavatina of 32 measures is preceded by a recitative which is 132 measures in length. The extended recitative is Lucia's first appearance to the audience after the murder and the performer must clearly establish her insanity at this point. Donizetti's lengthy recitative provides ample opportunity for the character to do so.

Vocal Line

One outstanding musical feature of the vocal line is the quantity of coloratura--melismatic singing requiring vocal agility. Donizetti, like many composers before him, employed coloratura to express heightened emotion. In the case of Lucia, the extreme emotion expressed by the heroine

from heaven). There are several descending melodic lines here, musically depicting joy and forgiveness raining down upon the lovers from heaven.

Figure 41. Melisma on "a piè dell'ara."

Andante

Recit.

- ra! us! Qui ri-co-vria-mo. Edgardo, a piè del-
Here we will seek for shelter, be-side the

l'a - ra. Sparsa di ro-se!
al - tar. 'Tis strewn with roses!

Figure 42. Increase in coloratura to depict heightened emotion.

Larghetto

Lucia: rā, del ciel ele-men-te, ele-men-te un ri-so la-vi-ta a noi sa-
cloud, smil-ing be-fore-us, smil-ing be-fore-us, bright down the fu-ture, without a -

rā, la vi-ta a noi sa-rā.
cloud, Ah, yes, with-out a cloud,

a noi sa-rā, sa-
ay, smil-ing with-out a -

Donizetti often utilized broken, interrupted phrases in the vocal line to illustrate Lucia's fragmented thoughts. This is shown in figure 43, when Lucia haltingly addresses her lover, Edgardo. Donizetti also utilized broken phrasing

to indicate extreme anxiety, as shown in figure 44. Here, Lucia imagines she sees a ghost and gasps in horror. The sporadic vocal line Donizetti has composed here is very effective in the way it allows the vocalist to portray Lucia's terror convincingly.

Figure 43. Broken phrasing to portray fragmented thoughts.

Andante

Lucia: Il dol-ce suo-no mi col-pi di sua vo-ce! Ah! quel-la
I hear the breathing of his voice low and ten-der, That voice re-

vo-ce m'è qui nel cor di - sce - - sa! Ed-gar-do! io ti non
soundeth with-in my heart for ev - - er. Oh Edgar, why were we

re - sa, Ed-gar-do! ah! Ed-gar-do mi - o! sì, ti son
part - ed? oh Ed-gar, say, why didst thou leave me? Let me not

Figure 44. Broken phrasing to denote anxiety.

Allegro vivace

Lucia: Ohi-mè! sor-ge il tre - men - - do fan -
Ah me! Look where the spec - - tre a -

tas-ma e ne se - pa - ra! Ohi -
ris-es! Stand - ing be - tween us! A -

me! ohi - mè! Ed - gar - - do! Ed -
las, a - lus, oh Ed - - gar, I've

gar - do! ah! il fan - tas-ma!
lost thee, ah, see, the spec-tre,

f (terrified)

Orchestra

A significant element of Donizetti's operatic style was his practice of assigning important melodic material to the orchestra. This practice was contrary to the traditional Italian style of opera which concentrated melodic interest in the vocal line. Donizetti's early musical training with the German composer Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845) may have contributed to this distinctive element in his style.²⁹ One instance of this practice may be seen in figure 45, where Lucia's declamatory vocal line contrasts with the lyrical melody in the orchestra. Figure 45 also illustrates another interesting aspect of this scene, the appearance in the orchestration of "musical glasses" immediately before

Figure 45. Melodic interest in the orchestral accompaniment.

Andante

Fl. *p* Cl. sustain. Strings pizz.

Lucia: Il dol-ce suo-no mi col-pi di sua vo-ce! Ah! quel-la
I hear the breathing of his voice low and ten-der, That voice re-

Cor. Fag. and Cor.

²⁹John Allitt, Donizetti and the Tradition of Romantic Love (Bergamo: The Donizetti Society, 1975), 259.

Lucia's vocal entrance. While its use illustrates Donizetti's attention to orchestral detail, its employment also indicates another point--the contemporary belief in a connection between musical glasses and insanity.³⁰ Popular belief held that the player of such an instrument would eventually go insane. Others maintained that listening to the sound produced by this instrument over extended periods of time would also have a similar effect. The employment of musical glasses at this point in the score serves to convey Lucia's mental condition to the audience before she even utters a sound. The melodic line to be played on musical glasses is now scored for flute, the instrument on which this part is most commonly played today.

Donizetti often utilized music from earlier areas of the score for dramatic effect. The orchestral melody shown in figure 46a is the melody to the Act I duet for Lucia and Edgardo, shown in figure 46b. Donizetti places Edgardo's

Figure 46a. Instrumental melody for Act III mad scene.



³⁰John Hyatt King, "Musical Glasses" in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1980), 823.

vocal line into the mad scene to illustrate that Lucia hears Edgardo singing to her. We, also "hear" him singing, through the orchestra.

Figure 46b. Vocal melody from Act I love duet.

Moderato assai

Edgardo: Ver-ran-nos te sul-la-u-re i miei so-spi-ri ar-den -
When twi-light shad-ows low - er, My ar-dent pray'rs as-cend -

ti, u-drai nel mar che mor-mo-ra l'o-co do' miei la-men -
ing. Will ask that joy on thee may show'r, Our days of sor-row end -

Still later, Lucia imagines that her wedding ceremony with Edgardo is about to begin. The violins play a figure that sounds similar to the earlier, actual wedding ceremony with Arturo. Figure 47a shows the violin melody from the Act III mad scene and figure 47b shows the violoncello melody from the actual wedding scene in Act II.

Figure 47a. Act III, violin melody from mad scene.

Andante

Figure 47b. Act II, violoncello melody from the Act II wedding.

Andante

Lucia sometimes echoes orchestral melodies found within this scene. The lyrical melody shown in figure 48a occurs first in the orchestra. In figure 48b, the orchestral melody is utilized by the heroine. The first statement of the melody is heard by Lucia as being sung to her by Edgardo. In figure 48b, she sings the melody back to him.

Figure 48a. First statement of the melody in the orchestra.

Larghetto



Figure 48b. Lucia's vocal line taken from preceding orchestral music.

Larghetto.

a piacere *a tempo*

Lucia: lie - - to gior-no! oh lie - to! Al - fin son tu - - a,
 any of rap-ture, oh rap-ture! At last I'm thine, love,

al - fin sei mi - o, a me ti do - - na, a
 at last thou'rt mine, love, Heav'n smiles up - on us, And

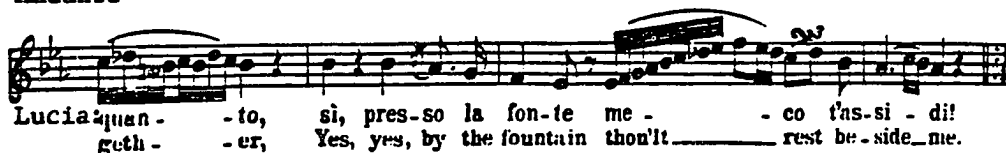
Individual Treatment

Donizetti chose to construct the mad scene for Lucia in the standard grand aria pattern of recitative-cavatina-recitative-cabaletta. However, within this traditional framework, the recitative sections deviate from the

declamatory style of the standard recitative. Both of the recitatives in this scene contain areas which feature melismatic vocal lines. One of these areas is shown in figure 49.

Figure 49. Melismatic vocal line in first recitative.

Andante



The section preceding the cabaletta also contains measures atypical for recitative composition. Shown in figure 50a, a lyrical trio for Lucia, Enrico, and Raimondo occurs where there would normally be a solo recitative for the heroine. This trio is joined by the chorus, as shown in figure 50b.

Figure 50a. Trio substituted for solo recitative.

Allegro mosso

Lucia: t'a-mo an-cor-Ed-gar-du mi-o, sì, te lo giu-ro, o-gnor t'a-ev-er I'm thine! Turn to me, Ed-gar, Say thou be-lievt me, I love thee

Enrico: Ah! di-le-i, Si-gnor, pie-tà! Ah sì, di Heav'n, have pit-y up-on her woe! Oh heav'n, have

Raimondo: Pie-tu di lei, Oh heav'n, pit-y

These two features, melismatic recitative and ensembles inserted into arias, are not unique to this opera. Both of these elements can be found in other operas of the period. However, in Lucia, these elements serve a definite dramatic function. Recitative is most often written as conversation. Inserting melismas into Lucia's conversation interrupts the normal flow of speech. The resulting discontinuity signals her unusual mental state and aids the impression of insanity. The appearance of ensembles within her aria also

Figure 50b. Trio and chorus in mad scene recitative.

Allegro mosso

Lucia: no, non fug-gir! ah per - don! ah per -
Oh, let me fly, Ed - gar, mine, where art -

Enrico: In - fe - li - ce! ah pie - ta, Si
Maid un - happy! Heav'n be - hold and

Raimondo: In - fe - li - ce! ah pie - ta, Si
Maid un - happy! Heav'n be - hold and

Chorus: In - fe - li - ce! ah pie - ta, Si
Maid un - happy! Heav'n be - hold and

strengthens the drama by providing dramatic contrast within the scene. The sane characters of Enrico, Raimondo, and the

chorus provide an excellent background for the singing of the unstable Lucia. The audience identifies with the sane members of the cast. The cast's reactions to Lucia reinforce our own feelings towards her.

CHAPTER VI

DINORAH

Libretto

The plot of Dinorah, ou Le Pardon de Ploërmel (1859) contains elements from many sources. Two stories by Emile Souvestre entitled "Le Kacouss de l'armor" and "La Chasse aux tresor" provide the location of the opera, Brittany, the name of the title character, Dinorah, and the idea of a prevented marriage. However, in these sources, Dinorah was not mad. She discovered that her lover was a thief and she was therefore quite content with the foiled wedding. Other elements derived from these sources include a treasure hunt by two men, Claude and Jean-Marie. The treasure is protected by a curse--the first person to touch it will die. Jean-Marie has a mentally retarded sister, Marthe, and Claude persuades Jean-Marie to enlist Marthe's aid in procuring the treasure. Although the treasure hunt is similar to the action in the opera, the madness of Marthe is congenital, not caused by anxiety. The element of Dinorah's madness may be from two other literary sources, both of them novels by Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), Tristram Shandy and A Sentimental Journey. Both contain the character of Maria, a beautiful, but insane young woman. Like Dinorah, her madness results from a prevented wedding and she also

possesses a little white goat, to which Dinorah sings an aria in the opera. It is highly likely that the Sterne works were the source for these last two elements, since Sterne's novels were very popular in France, Tristram Shandy having been available in French translation since 1785.³¹

Dramatic Action in the Scene

In Meyerbeer's opera, the character Dinorah is engaged to marry the goatherd Hoël. Dinorah is abandoned by Hoël on their wedding day. She loses her reason and, accompanied by her little goat, wanders in the countryside searching for Hoël. Meanwhile, the penniless Hoël searches for a hidden treasure, not wishing to subject Dinorah to a life of poverty. The mad scene, set in Act II, takes place in the forest at night. Dinorah is alone on the stage during the entire aria. She enters searching for Hoël, stops, and sings a folk-song about the local legend of the old wizard of the mountain, "Le vieux sorcier de la montagne." She sings and dances with her shadow in the second musical section of the scene, "Ombre légère." As further evidence of her insanity, she requests the shadow to sing along with her. She then sings both parts in an elaborate duet and pantomimes her wedding to Hoël.

³¹Joe K. Law "Meyerbeer's Variations on a Theme by Laurence Sterne; Or, Why a Goat?" Opera Journal 22 (December 1989): 5-8.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

The diagram of the scene shows the basic outline of a traditional two-part structure. Section II, "Le vieux sorcier," is positioned where a cavatina would normally occur. Section IV, "Ombra légère," takes the place of the cabaletta. An interesting variation here is the interruption of the cabaletta (IV) by the insertion of the arioso "Sais-tu bien" (V) and a subsequent recitative (VI). However, the scene returns to standard form in Section VII when the "Ombra légère" melody repeats, as would a standard cabaletta melody.

Vocal Line

Meyerbeer's vocal line for Dinorah in the mad scene shows the influence of French vocal music on his work. Shown in figures 52b, 53b, 55 and 56, the vocal line is predominantly syllabic.

Orchestra

Like many of his predecessors, Meyerbeer often quoted music found earlier in the score. The orchestral introduction to the mad scene is a repetition of the opening measures of the overture to Act I. This introduction is used later in the same act for the lullaby to the goat, "Dor, petite; dors tranquille." Measures 11-14 of the overture and the introduction to the mad scene are shown in figures 51a and 51b.

TABLE V

Dinorah - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Dinorah "Me Voici" D Major	"Je ne vois personne" F Major
II ROMANCE	"Le vieux sorcier" E Minor Andantino quasi allegretto	"Le roitelet tout" Melody returns
III RECITATIVE	"Dieu! Comme cette nuit est lente" Spoken	
IV GRAND AIR	"Ombre légère" D \flat Major Allegretto ben moderato	"Ombre légère" Melody repeats
V ARIOSO	"Sais-tu bien" A Major Andantino quasi allegretto	
VI RECITATIVE	"Mais tu prends la fuite" D Minor	
VII ARIA	"Ombre légère" D \flat Major Melody repeats	
VIII RECITATIVE	"Ah! Voila Hoël" Spoken	

Figure 51a. Measures 11-14 of the overture to Act I.

11 12

Leggiero.

1 *ppp*

13 14

Figure 51b. Orchestral introduction to the mad scene.

Allegro con moto animato. (♩ = 72)

(Dinorah arrive en courant)

pp

Récitatif.

Dinorah: Me voi, ei!.. me voi, ei! Ho - il doit m'attendre i.

Also found in the overture are hints of "Ombre légère," the grand air of the mad scene. Figure 52a illustrates a

passage from the overture to Act I and Figure 52b shows the opening vocal line to the aria "Ombre légère." Both figures are shown below.

Figure 52a. Passage from the overture to Act I.

8

p

Dolce e leggiero.

p

Cresc.

Figure 52b. Opening vocal line to "Ombre légère."

Allegretto ben moderato

légèrement

Dinorah: Ombre lé - gè - re Qui suis mes

dolce.

pas, Ne t'en va pas! Non, non, non! Fée ou chi - mère Qui n'est si

There are also several examples in the score of orchestral introductions of the vocal line, a common compositional device of the time. These orchestral introductions of the vocal melody can be very useful to the performer. The singer can give the appearance of hearing the melody in her mind first, and then giving voice to that melody, thus enhancing the guise of insanity. In the introduction to the romance, "Le vieux sorcier de la montagne," in figure 53a, the orchestra plays an accompaniment figure which is similar to the heroine's opening melodic line, shown in figure 53b. Also, before

Figure 53a. Orchestral introduction to romance.



Figure 53b. Opening melodic line to romance.



the grand air "Ombre légère," the orchestral introduction contains the opening vocal melody.

Figure 54a. Orchestral introduction containing vocal melody to "Ombre légère."

Allegretto ben moderato ($\text{♩} = 52$)
(l'air est dans une ombre)

- son! *dolce*

Figure 54b. Dinorah's vocal entrance in "Ombre légère."

Allegretto ben moderato

légèrement

Ombre lé - gè - re Qui suis moi

dolce

pas! Non, non, non! Fée ou chi - niè - re Qui n'est si

Individual Treatment

Many times in the mad scene, the vocal line is doubled in the orchestra, in keeping with Meyerbeer's emphasis on the pure solo.³² His accompaniments rarely compete with the vocal line. This stylistic element may be viewed as an Italian influence in his music. Examples of this element in the mad scene can be found in figures 55 and 56.

Figure 55. Orchestral doubling of vocal line in the romance.

Andantino quasi allegretto

Dinorah

- que M'a dit, en re - gar - dant un min, en re - gar - dant ma

Figure 56. Orchestral doubling of vocal line in the grand air.

Allegretto ben moderato

Dinorah

Non, Non, non! Fie ou chi - ne. Qui n'est si

³²Heinz Becker, "Meyerbeer, Giacomo," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D.C.: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, Inc., 1980), 253.

This score also features extensive use of extra-musical notation. In a portion of the mad scene, Dinorah performs a "duet" with her shadow. There are several instructions written in the score to cue the vocalist when to sing as the shadow or as Dinorah. This vocal line is illustrated in figure 57.

Figure 57. Extra-musical notation for duet between Dinorah and the shadow.

The musical score for Figure 57 is divided into two systems. The first system features a vocal line with the following lyrics and extra-musical notation: *(réponse de l'ombre)* *pp* *bien!* *(à l'ombre)* *pp* *Ah!* *ré-ponds!* *(l'ombre)* *pp* *Ah!* *(à l'ombre)* *f* *ré-ponds!* *(l'ombre)* *pp* *Ah! —*. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The second system continues the vocal line with the following lyrics and extra-musical notation: *(à l'ombre.)* *f* *un bien* *(l'ombre.)* *pp* *ré-ponds!* *(à l'ombre.)* *f* *ré-ponds!* *(l'ombre.)* *pp* *ré-ponds!* *(s'adressant à l'ombre.)* *f* *ré-ponds!*. The piano accompaniment continues on two staves.

This area of the score illustrates an unusual employment of coloratura to depict insanity, in that it implies a duet. This passage is most certainly effective in illustrating the heroine's abnormal mental processes. Whereas other composers in this study have utilized

obbligato instruments to imply the presence of another person, Meyerbeer's form of "duet" is a refreshing change.

CHAPTER VII

HAMLET

Libretto

The libretto for Hamlet (1868) was written by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier. Their libretto is based on Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (1600) by Shakespeare. The mad scene takes place in Act IV of the play. Hamlet departs for England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Ophélie is emotionally distraught over the death of her father Polonius. She loves Hamlet but is rejected by him. This breaks her tenuous hold on reality and she goes insane. She wanders aimlessly through the palace, sings songs about a dead lover, and distributes flowers to those around her. She exits and later, news arrives of her drowning.

In the Thomas opera Hamlet, the importance of her role is greatly enlarged and she becomes a leading character with much significant music. Her entrance in the mad scene is preceded by a ballet with chorus. Hamlet has spared Ophélie's father, Polonius, but he now directs his hatred for Polonius to Ophélie and spurns her love. This rejection drives her mad. She wanders among the chorus singing a folk-song about a water nymph who sleeps beneath the surface of the lake. She hands out flowers to her companions. The chorus exits and hums her folk-song melody offstage.

Ophélie is drawn to the water's edge by the music. She wades in slowly and drowns.

The most striking deviation from the plot of the Shakespeare play occurs in the final resolution of the opera. In the play, Hamlet fatally wounds Laertes, the Queen is poisoned, Hamlet slays the King and then dies himself. In the opera, Hamlet slays the King, the Queen is sent to a convent, and Hamlet is proclaimed the new King of Denmark. This radical departure from the original plot was necessary to satisfy the public preference for "happy endings" in France during this period.³³ This practice had been applied to Shakespeare stage plays since the late seventeenth century and Paris Opéra audiences continued this preference well into the nineteenth century. Another source for this ending may have been a version of Hamlet written by Alexandre Dumas père and Paul Meurice, in which Hamlet also lives.

Dramatic Action in the Scene

In Act III, Hamlet secures proof of the conspiracy surrounding the murder of his father. He confronts his mother, Gertrude. The ghost of his father, visible only to Hamlet, appears and cautions him to spare his mother. Gertrude, unable to perceive the ghost, assumes that Hamlet has gone insane. The act ends with Gertrude expressing her

³³Morton Jay Achter, "Félicien David, Ambroise Thomas and French Opéra Lyrique" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1972), 269.

sorrow and terror. Ophélie's mad scene takes place in the following act. Her aria is preceded by an elaborate ballet entitled "La Fête du Printemps." Ophélie enters immediately after this dance. She and the chorus are the only characters on stage during the mad scene. When she enters the scene, the chorus comments on her deranged expression, but they do not sing during the major portion of her aria. The final chorus music is hummed offstage to imply that only Ophélie, because of her insanity, can hear this music. The act concludes with her demise.

Elements of Musical Style

Scene Structure

To portray Ophélie's disoriented mental state, Thomas chose to assemble her mad scene from four unrelated sections of music. Just as these sections do not follow a logical stylistic sequence, so do Ophélie's words follow no rational thought process. Shown in the scene diagram, the four sections consist of a mournful song in F major, a joyful waltz in B-flat major to music only Ophélie can hear, a ballade in E minor about a deceased water nymph, and an allegro coda in B major in which Ophélie alternately laughs and cries.

Vocal Line

Thomas often composed vocal melodies in his arias which were very similar to recitative style, in that they were

TABLE VI
Hamlet - Diagram of the Scene

I RECITATIVE	Chorus "Mais quelle est cette belle" E Major Andante	Ophélie "A vos jeux mes amis"		
II AIR	Ophélie "Un doux serment nous lie" F Major Andante			
III WALTZ	"Partagez vous mes fleurs!" B♭ Major Allegretto			
IV BALLADE	"Pale et blonde" E Minor Andantino con moto	Contrasting mood B Minor Allegretto	"La sirene passe" E Minor Andantino con motto Ballade melody returns	Contrasting mood B Minor Allegretto Melody returns
V CODA	"Ah! Cher epoux!" B Major Allegro moderato Swiftly contrasting moods			
VI SORTIE DU BALLET	Chorus "Sa raison a fui sans retour" Allegretto Exit of Chorus			
VII FINALE	Chorus hums ballade melody offstage E Minor Andantino	Ophélie "Le voila! Je crois l'entendre!"	Ophélie "Doute de la lumiere" E Major	

often syllabic and focused on declaiming the text rather than exhibiting the lyrical properties of the voice. An example of this style can be found in the first aria section of the mad scene, shown in figure 58.

Figure 58. Declamatory style used in aria.

Andante

Ophélie: l'indes secret nous le - e. Il m'a donné son cœur
 Secretement nous le - e. Il m'a donné son cœur
 Secretement nous le - e. Il m'a donné son cœur

change du bien... Et si quelqu'un vous dit qu'il me fait et m'oublie
 change du bien... Et si quelqu'un vous dit qu'il me fait et m'oublie
 change du bien... Et si quelqu'un vous dit qu'il me fait et m'oublie

The third section of the mad scene, the ballade, contains several areas of vocal coloratura. These areas contrast sharply with the tranquil vocal lines surrounding them. The sudden coloratura sections appear to be uncontrollable outbursts from the deranged mind of the heroine. Each of these eruptions is preceded by a slow lyrical vocal melody which provides excellent contrast for

the vocal bravura that follows. Shown in figure 59, Ophélie's ballade about the deceased water nymph is very lyrical and serene. This calm is suddenly interrupted by Ophélie's maniacal laughter.

Figure 59. Coloratura used to illustrate contrasting emotional states.

The musical score for Ophélie's ballade is divided into two main sections. The first section, marked 'Andantino con moto', features a lyrical and serene melody. The second section, marked 'Allegretto. (in la and de elev)', features a more rapid and maniacal melody. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are marked with 'Ophélie' and 'Allegretto. Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!'. The piano accompaniment includes markings such as 'dim.', 'rit.', 'p', 'a tempo', and 'a tempo. dim. p'.

To illustrate Ophélie's increasing mental instability and imminent collapse, Thomas condenses the contrasting areas of laughter and tears to shorter phrases. Previously in the scene, entire pages illustrated only one single mood. Now, towards the end of the scene, three mood swings take place on one page of the score, as indicated by arrows shown in figure 60. This acceleration of Ophélie's mental

breakdown is very effective in dramatically providing a segue to her suicide. It is clear to the audience that there is only one destiny for this heroine. The credibility of this aria is enhanced by the composer's construction of the scene using dissimilar sections. The aberrant thought processes of the heroine are vividly depicted in the music. To the audience, Ophélie seems totally deranged.

Figure 60. Acceleration of mood changes to show imminent mental collapse.

→ (singing) (pleased)
 All:ando
 Ophélie: ah! ah! ah! cher à - moux! ah!
 My faith-ful love! ah!

→ (laughing) (quiet)
 cher à - moux! ah! ah!
 dear-est heart! ah!

→ (sobbing) (augmented)
 nous a ven! ah! ten - dre ser
 love of love ah. love of

→ (sobbing) (augmented)
 Ah! Ah! cru
 Ah! Ah!

An interesting feature of the vocal line is the appearance of music already presented in earlier acts. Music recalled from the Act I love duet occurs near the end

of the mad scene, shortly before Ophélie drowns herself. In figure 61a she sings Hamlet's words from Act I and utilizes a similar melodic line. Figure 61b is from Hamlet's original vocal line in the love duet.

Figure 61a. Ophélie's mad scene variation of Hamlet's line.



Figure 61b. Hamlet's original phrase from Act I duet.



Orchestra

In many areas of the score, especially when the vocal line is declamatory in nature, the principal melodic interest of the phrase is found in the accompaniment rather than the vocal line (figure 58). This is also true of the second section of the mad scene, the phantom waltz (figure 62). Ophélie's vocal line provides a counterpoint to the lilting waltz melody in the orchestra. This compositional device enhances the drama by showing that the waltz is only audible to Ophélie, and not to the other characters on the

stage. The orchestra is performing what only she can hear. We know that the waltz melody is audible to her because later she sings it. Gladdened by her "inner music," she merrily hands out flowers to her companions.

Figure 62. Melodic interest in orchestral accompaniment.

Allegro *(poily)*
(palmes)

Ophélie: Par la gez - vous mes fleurs!
Show their flow'rs with you!

(to a young girl)
(à une jeune fille)

A toi cette humble
by thee. this lowly

Just as he did with the vocal line, Thomas sometimes reiterates musical material from previous acts in the orchestra part. Ophélie's entrance onto the stage is accompanied by a theme in the orchestra which greatly resembles the theme from the beginning of her Act I love duet with Hamlet. This music illustrates her memories of

their earlier affection. Both themes are shown below, figures 63a and 63b.

Figure 63a. Theme for Ophélie's entrance in Act IV.



Figure 63b. Theme for Act I love duet.



Individual Treatment

One of the most common features of French Opéra was the emphasis on ballet. Since the opera Hamlet was composed for performance at the Paris Opéra, the inclusion of a ballet

into the drama is not in itself significant. But Thomas utilizes the ballet not only as spectacle, but to provide a relief from tension. The dramatic effect of the ballet results from its strategic position between two highly emotional scenes, Hamlet's confrontation with his mother and Ophélie's mad scene. Thomas placed the festive, pastoral ballet at this point in the drama to provide a contrast in mood and a lessening of the tension on stage.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these six mad scenes has been undertaken with the goal of providing bases for making interpretive decisions in performance. Now we reach the final phase of this investigation, which is to present a comparative analysis of all six mad scenes to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the scenes in terms of their providing material for a vivid portrayal of insanity. To measure equitably this effectiveness among all six scenes, certain criteria of effectiveness must be established.

There are basically three areas that contribute to the effectiveness of these scenes and, therefore, the believability of the performance. They are the plot, the libretto, and the music. The plot itself is the first element. The audience must be convinced that the insanity of the heroine results from the events presented in the plot. The premise or reason for the insanity should be believable. The second area of effectiveness concerns the librettist's contribution to the scene. The conversation of the heroine must be carefully constructed to imply her insanity. She should exhibit certain extremes in her behavior, extremes not witnessed in the behavior of a normal person. Her emotions may vary for no apparent reason. These vacillations should not be caused by outside

influences, as in a rational person, but should instead be caused by internal mechanisms, known only to the heroine. Finally, there is the musical support of the scene, as supplied by the composer. The vocal line of the heroine and the orchestral accompaniment must be constructed to provide the musical material necessary for a vivid portrayal of insanity. Having established these three criteria, this author will now discuss the incidence of these criteria in the six mad scenes surveyed.

ANNA BOLENA

Plot

The fact that this plot is based on actual events certainly enhances the credibility of Donizetti's opera. Victims of political intrigue are a part of the history of every country. The audience does not have to make a significant effort to believe the events being presented on the stage.

The insanity of Anna is, however, an addition to the historical accounts. But this supplement to the actual events is not entirely unbelievable. The heroine undergoes a considerable emotional upheaval, from Queen of England to a prisoner convicted for treason. Such a reversal of fortunes would surely have some effect on the human mind. The victim is presented as she awaits death. Most audiences would have little difficulty in believing that such a stressful situation could result in signs of mental instability in the heroine.

Libretto

Romani's libretto for the mad scene is well crafted. He chooses to show the progression of madness in Anna. He clearly establishes her insanity immediately upon her entrance. During the course of the scene, Anna fluctuates between insanity and lucidity, clearly evident in her words. Her vacillations are believable because Anna is presented as a queen, regal and proud. A woman of such position would not easily retreat into lunacy. Her fluctuations between sanity and insanity can be interpreted as an internal struggle of will. She emerges from this battle victorious, as she regains her dignity in the final moments of the opera. Her last mortal act is to bless those who have condemned her to death.

Music

In several areas of the score, Donizetti precedes Anna's utterances with music designed to illustrate her thoughts. We hear her thoughts through the orchestra at the instant she conceives them. A moment later she sings, and verbalizes these sentiments. As this sequence is a common process in most people, Anna's credibility on the stage is greatly enhanced.

The cabaletta of this aria, "Coppia iniqua," presents a musically striking coda to this scene. The melody evokes fierce anger, but the text expresses the opposite

affection.³⁴ Since Donizetti was so adept at musically illustrating a text, one assumes that the composer deliberately contrived this dichotomous situation. Having the music and words present opposite affections is a dramatically affective way to underline the heroine's separation from reality.

Another example of Donizetti's emphasis on the drama can be seen by comparing the original version of this cabaletta with the final form.³⁵ The original version contains more coloratura, emphasizing the vocal virtuosity of the performer. In the revised version, the cadences are simplified, so as to sustain the dramatic intensity of the scene. By substituting this revision, Donizetti exhibits a compositional focus on the drama of the situation, rather than the vocal potential of the singer.

LA SONNAMBULA

Plot

The premise for Amina's insanity is weak. Amina's affliction is not the insanity exhibited by the other characters in this monograph. She does, however, engage in an abnormal activity, somnambulism. This is indicative of some irregularity within the person of Amina, implying mental instability. The idea that simple rejection can engender insanity seems a bit contrived. Also, her dramatic

³⁴Philip Gossett, Anna Bolena and Artistic Maturity of Gaetano Donizetti (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 32.

³⁵Ibid., 36.

"recovery" when awakened in the final scene is not realistic.

Libretto

Dramatically, the scene does not contain the wild contrasts of emotions that are an important ingredient in other mad scenes. There are no extremes of sentiment which suddenly switch for no apparent reason. The contrast of emotions between her cavatina and cabaletta are not irrational, but easily explainable. She simply awakens, Elvino begs her forgiveness, and the story ends happily. This type of "lieto fine" (happy ending) is not realistic and lessens the credibility of this scene.

Music

Given the lack of emotional depth inherent in this scene, it is not surprising that Bellini's music does little to suggest insanity. To do so would contrast with the text and the sentiments expressed by the heroine. Instead, the composer's music creates an atmosphere of wistful melancholy to emphasize the dream state of the heroine. Her melodic lines, long and flowing, admirably express her longing to be reunited with her lover. Her only contrast in music occurs in the exuberant phrases of the cabaletta. The reason for the contrast, reunion with Elvino, is understandable. Therefore, the contrast in music at this point, does not illustrate the workings of an abnormal mind.

I PURITANI

Plot

The story of this opera is based on political conflicts that are part of British history. The struggles between followers of Cromwell and the supporters of the Stuart Restoration are well documented. Thus, the politically inspired events which take place in the opera have a certain degree of credibility.

The premise for Elvira's insanity is another matter entirely. Like the other heroines in this study, Elvira in I Puritani has been separated from her lover by circumstances beyond her control. She has become mentally unstable as a result. Her reaction is far more disturbing than Amina's sleepwalking. Elvira sees visions, wanders about in a state of delirium, and longs for death. This sad situation would have been credible in the nineteenth century when acceptance of female dependence on male affection was more common.³⁶ The credibility of Elvira's madness was also influenced by the representations of mad women in the literature of the Romantic era. Elvira was similar to the character of "Crazy Jane," popularized in a 1793 ballad by Matthew "Monk" Lewis (1775-1818).³⁷ Jane's insanity was a result of being abandoned by her lover and her story became

³⁶Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 13.

³⁷Ibid., 11.

extremely popular through the work of many artists of the period. Elvira was an operatic version of Jane.

Libretto

Pepoli has Elvira sing offstage prior to her entrance. This unusual entrance is effective because it conditions the audience to expect abnormal behavior from Elvira. Her mad scene is really constructed as a trio, because of the constant interjections of Giorgio and Riccardo, who seek to interact with Elvira. The performer of this role must maintain her autonomy from these two characters in order to portray insanity successfully. Elvira must appear to exist on another level apart from Giorgio and Riccardo. Pepoli aides the performer in this endeavor. His Elvira is often oblivious to the presence of the other two men. When she does notice them, she mistakenly identifies them as other people. As final evidence of her insanity, she suddenly bursts forth with a joyful cabaletta. There are four rapid contrasts in mood for this character in one scene and all of them take place for reasons which are not apparent to the observer.

Music

Bellini admirably mirrors Elvira's melancholy by composing for her entrance soaring, sweeping vocal lines containing many large intervals. The slow tempo further illustrates her despair. Her music changes just as suddenly as her moods. When she imagines Arturo, her vocal phrases

become suddenly shorter and less lyrical, matching the sudden excitement expressed by her words. For one of Elvira's mood swings, Bellini inserts several measures of music before her next vocal entrance. This orchestral interlude portrays the next emotional state of the heroine. It enables the performer to make the transition into the next emotion, and then give voice to her new thoughts.

A final musical illustration of Elvira's mental state occurs in the cabaletta "Vien, diletto, e in ciel la luna" (Come, beloved, the moon is in heaven). Again, Elvira pleads to be reunited with Arturo. The text could have been set to music similar to the opening cavatina, slow and mournful. Instead, Bellini chose to interpret these words in a joyful tone. The music for this text is exuberant and gleeful, certainly not a reasonable response from so tragic a character. Granted, the cabaletta section of an aria usually involved repeated sections and a steady, often energetic tempo, and Bellini does indeed utilize these elements in "Vien, diletto." But his decision to portray a joyful mood at this point is an effective dramatic choice because this emotion is an unexpected reaction by Elvira.

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Plot

The fact that this opera is based on actual events certainly lends credibility to the insanity of the heroine. Although details of the original occurrence remain sketchy, one element of that evening is agreed upon--an event took

place in the bridal chamber which resulted in the incurable insanity of the bride. Cammarano exploits this element to its fullest advantage by having the heroine return to the wedding festivities after the murder. Her exhibition of insanity, displayed for the assembled guests, makes for dramatic tension of the highest order.

Adding to the success of the scene is the fact that Scott endeavored to portray a specific mental disorder, as defined by early nineteenth-century medical theory.³⁸ The violent act committed by the heroine is symptomatic of a stage of insanity then called "Phrensie." Scott's attention to details such as this result in a clearly drawn character whose actions are precise and meaningful.

Libretto

Cammarano's text admirably portrays the delirium of Lucia. Her entrance is structured carefully to heighten her credibility. The act begins with the joyful post-wedding festivities, which are interrupted by Raimondo, who informs the assembled guests of the gruesome murder and the insanity of the bride. Lucia then enters and from her first words it is evident to all that she has lost her reason. She sees visions, hears phantom music, and pantomimes a wedding ceremony.

³⁸Herbert Michael Buck, "Insanity, Character Roles, and Authorial Milieu: A Study of Madness in Selected Waverley Novels" (Ph.D. diss., Miami University 1987), 130.

Music

Donizetti's most successful devices in the portrayal of insanity are the many instances of music recalled from earlier scenes. Time and again, Lucia reacts to music only she can hear. Significantly, this music surrounds earlier moments in her life. For Lucia, time has stopped, reality has ceased to exist. The cabaletta is especially moving as she sings joyfully of meeting her lover in heaven. The music is spirited and the delivery should be jubilant, even though the text is concerned with death. This juxtaposition of text and music is highly indicative of her unstable mind.

Adding to the plausibility of the characterization is the lack of resolution. There is no "happy ending," no "deus ex machina" for this heroine. These resolutions often lack credibility. Lucia dies in the opera as her counterpart died in history, hopelessly insane.

DINORAH

Plot

This opera provides a very weak basis for Dinorah's insanity, abandonment by a lover. Like Elvira, in I Puritani, Dinorah's insanity would have been more acceptable to nineteenth-century audiences than the audiences of today. Aside from her sleepwalking scene in Act I, her character displays little evidence of mental instability prior to her rejection by Hoël.

Libretto

Barbier and Carré chose to present Dinorah as entirely alone on the stage. She speaks to herself, sings to herself and dances alone in the moonlight. There is no violence here, no dramatic tension. What the librettists hoped to arouse in the viewer was sympathy for the abandoned Dinorah. She is a harmless lunatic, deserving of pity. She sings a folk-song, as a child often does when alone at play. Especially touching is the "shadow duet." She dances and sings with her shadow, instructing it to follow her steps and repeat her song. She then sings the responses of the shadow. Again, this evokes a scene from childhood, when one played with imaginary friends and supplied their dialogue.

Music

Meyerbeer's music for Dinorah is in keeping with her childlike quality. There are no soaring, agitated, vocal fireworks. Her melodies are most often simple tunes, lilting and dance-like, with much repetition. The areas of most coloratura occur in conjunction with the shadow duet, where brief, rapid melismas are needed to represent the swift interplay of "dialogue" between Dinorah and her shadow. It must be said to Meyerbeer's credit that the coloratura passages are not just written as vocal bravura, but are integrated into the score when dramatically effective.

HAMLET

Plot

In Shakespeare's original story, Ophélie is driven to insanity by two events, the death of her father, Polonius, and the rejection of her love by Hamlet. She is presented as a fragile creature, emotionally dependent upon others. She experiences a sudden loss of security when her father dies. In attempting to regain emotional stability, she turns to Hamlet. From him she experiences only rejection and further loss of security. Her mental collapse is credible on these two points alone. She goes insane and commits involuntary suicide, unaware of her actions. Her death is not a violent act. She merely kills the body because, for her, the soul has ceased to live.

Libretto

The madness of Ophélie, as presented by Carré and Barbier, loses a certain amount of credibility. Their Hamlet does not slay Polonius, which deletes a major reason for Ophélie's insanity. The heroine's sole reason for madness now becomes her rejection by Hamlet.

Music

The music of Thomas carries most of the burden for credibility in this scene. His portrayal of madness utilizes the juxtaposition of unrelated musical sections. The heroine sings a waltz melody that only she can hear. She then intones a ballad about the spirit of a girl who

drowned in the lake. This song contains several allusions to her present situation. This sad tune is followed by an outburst of joyful coloratura. Thomas seems to be portraying Ophélie as a schizophrenic. He has placed these melodies in this alignment for a reason--to illustrate the disjunct thought processes of an irrational mind.

Conclusion

It is the opinion of this author that the heroines of Anna Bolena and Lucia di Lammermoor seem the most believable in their madness. In these two operas, plot, libretto, and music contribute the elements needed by the performer to make the insanity of the character plausible. Part of the credibility of the scenes stem from the fact that the opera plots are based on historical events. Viewing a drama based on actual events often stimulates the interest of the audience. Although the insanity of Anne Boleyn and Janet Dalrymple is not medically documented, it is entirely plausible that the events to which they were subjected would have precipitated in them some degree of mental instability. Anne was falsely convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Janet was betrayed by her family and forced to marry a man she did not love. When these two real-life persons are portrayed on the operatic stage, it takes only a small leap of faith for the audience to accept the mental instability of Anna and Lucia.

The second element contributing to the success of the scene is the strength of the libretti. The sentences of the

heroine must be carefully constructed to indicate her abnormal mental state. Anna Bolena and Lucia di Lammermoor contain libretti written by two of the most successful theater poets of the age, Felice Romani and Salvatore Cammarano. Both librettists supply recitative for the heroine which indicates her mental instability immediately upon her entrance into the mad scene. Anna is being held in the Tower of London, awaiting execution. However, in her first words to her companions, she inquires of them the reason for their tears. She tells them it is the day of her wedding to the King. Lucia's first words also indicate her mental state, as she sings to her former lover, Edgardo, and imagines he is actually there with her. Both Anna and Lucia enter into dialogues with imaginary characters and vacillate between contrasting emotional states for no apparent reason. Both scenes contain significant dramatic action for the other members of the cast, adding to the tension of the scene. In Anna Bolena, the other characters condemned to death with Anna enter the scene. Among them is Smeton, Anna's page, who begs Anna's forgiveness for his false testimony against her. In Lucia di Lammermoor, Lucia's brother, Enrico, undergoes a complete character reversal during her mad scene. The principle antagonist of the plot, Enrico enters the scene bent on punishing his sister, but halts when he realizes her condition. In a complete change of character, he expresses remorse for his action and guilt for contributing to Lucia's condition. Mad scenes such as

these, with significant action, are dramatically more effective than those which feature only the soloist, because these scenes sustain the momentum of the drama.

The final contribution to the success of the scene must be made by the composer, and the composer for both Anna Bolena and Lucia di Lammermoor was Gaetano Donizetti. Although the representation of insanity on the operatic stage was an unusual endeavor, most often the composers in this survey employed elements which were common to their musical style. The talent of these composers is exhibited by the fact that they could manipulate their normal compositional procedures to portray abnormal personalities. This talent is especially visible in the operas of Donizetti. Of the elements mentioned in this survey, there are few examples of extraordinary stylistic practices employed by this composer to portray the insanity of Anna or Lucia. Both scenes contain vocal lines that feature coloratura passages and broken phrasing, two elements common to the composer's style. However, Donizetti composes the broken phrases to sound like horrified gasps from the terrified Lucia when she imagines a ghost. Anna's joyful coloratura during the moments immediately prior to her execution also lends believability to her loss of reason.

Both scenes feature another common element of Donizetti's operatic style, his practice of assigning important melodic material to the orchestra. However, in the mad scene, Donizetti manipulates the orchestral material

to assist the performer in her portrayal of insanity. In Anna Bolena, the composer not only recalls earlier music from the score, signifying Anna's memories, but he increases the frequency of her thoughts. These passages of music are disjunct and unrelated, like the heroine's illogical thoughts. In Lucia di Lammermoor, Donizetti not only assigns important melodic material to the orchestra, he also experiments with an unusual instrument. The representation of the heroine's memories are scored for musical glasses as a clear indication to the audience of her mental state.

Although the elements of plot, libretto, and music examined in this study contribute significantly to the portrayal of insanity, they are not sufficient in themselves to warrant believability. As stated above, most of the compositional techniques found in the mad scenes were frequent practices of these composers. The final contribution to the success of the scene must be made by the performer, relying heavily upon her own acting ability.

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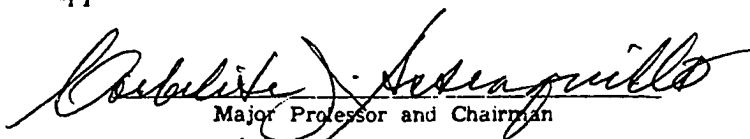
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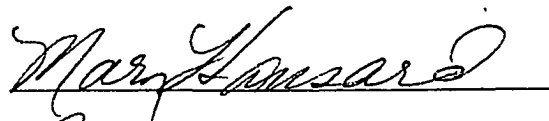
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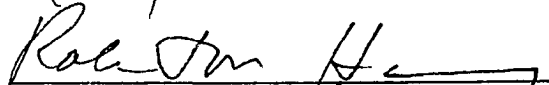

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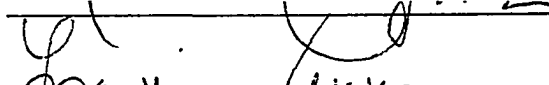
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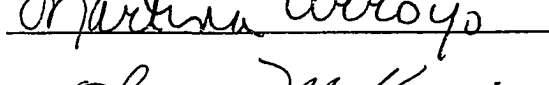
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