

weder kann Strepponis Beziehung zu Verdi schon während des *Nabucodonosor* belegt werden noch tritt Abigaille als Sklavin auf – die sie jedoch de facto ist, im Gegensatz zur Königstochter Aida. Zudem hat Stolz ja nicht die Aida kreiert, auch wenn sie die Titelpartie in der Mailänder Erstaufführung übernommen hat, die von Verdi – im Unterschied zur Uraufführung in Kairo – überwacht wurde. Doch Ellsmore selbst weist darauf hin, dass Verdi lange schwankte, Stolz als Amneris oder Aida zu besetzen, so dass er diese Rolle gar nicht ausdrücklich für sie konzipieren konnte.

Mit Teresa Stolz widmet sich Ellsmore dieser «new siren» des alternen Verdi. Sie beschönigt die *ménage à trois* nicht als Liebelei, sondern analysiert sie ohne voyeuristisch-pikante Details als Demütigung Strepponis, aber auch als Vitalisierung Verdis. Nur wenige bisher zugängliche Zeugnisse belegen den intimen Grad dieser 30 Jahre währenden Verbindung, und für Gerüchte beschränkt sich Ellsmore auf Oral-History-Zeugen wie Luigi Illica. In der Beurteilung von Stolz interessiert sich die Autorin weniger für den erotischen als den beruflichen Nutzen, den sie Verdi bot. Die gut vernetzte Stolz belieferte den «Alten von Sant’Agata» mit Neuigkeiten und Kritiken aus dem Theaterleben.

Überraschend neue Erkenntnisse bietet Ellsmores sorgfältig recherchierte und mit einigen entlegenen Quellen aufwartende Studie nicht, wohl aber einen gut ausgewogenen Blick aus der Gender-Perspektive auf patriarchale Strukturen und normative Konzepte der Verdi-Zeit, bei dem man sich allenfalls noch einige schärfere Analysen gewünscht hätte: Vokale Details als Paradigmen von Rollenmustern zu lesen, lohnt sich. Doch der private Mythos von Verdi als «Feminist» wird überzeugend dekonstruiert.

Kerstin Schüssler-Bach

Paolo GALLARATI, *Verdi ritrovato: Rigoletto, Il trovatore, La traviata*, Milano, il Saggiatore, 2016, 587 pp.

The operas comprising Verdi’s trilogy of the early 1850s—*Rigoletto, Il trovatore, La traviata*—were the most popular works of his lifetime and continue to enthrall audiences across the world almost two centuries later. While individually they have attracted much critical attention, Paolo Gallarati’s lengthy volume is a welcome consideration of these three operas as a discrete body of work that nonetheless reveals ‘le differenze, più che le affinità’ of the scores (143). Dedicating his book ‘agli italiani’, Gallarati’s aim

is to reconnect the Italian readership with the significance of these works in 'la formazione della nostra identità artistica, culturale e civile' (11).

The book is divided into two parts. Gallarati begins by exploring the performance history of the works in both historical and modern contexts, and the way in which Verdi's vision, identifiable not only through musical notation but also extensive stage directions, so often becomes diffused or even lost during the production process. Verdi himself frequently complained of this obfuscation of his meaning; Gallarati suggests that in some respects the arrival of *Regietheater* has exacerbated the situation yet further, given that 'è molto più facile applicare all'opera dall'esterno un'idea preconizzata che cercare di comprendere il testo e prestare attenzione alla miriade dei suoi significati, rendendoli visibili, in forma esplicita o allusiva (cosa che richiede una rara dose di acuzia) in una messinscena che sia insieme fedele e nuova, e quindi sorprendente ma anche immediatamente comprensibile, come deve essere il teatro' (44). The succeeding chapters of the book are clearly designed to facilitate precisely that latter kind of directorial strategy: one that arises primarily from a respectful and detailed attention to the score.

Gallarati thus traces the gradual emergence of theatrical romanticism in Italian opera from the 1820s onward, first through the works of Bellini, Donizetti and Mercadante, and then through Verdi's. Here, the components that formed the essence of mid-nineteenth-century Italian *melodramma* (musical and dramatic form, staging and direction) and its determining influences are identified and examined. The second, longer part of the book adopts a scene-by-scene analysis of each opera in the trilogy from both musical and dramatic perspectives. It is a form of critical investigation that constitutes in itself an imagined 'performance' of the works. Gallarati's reverence for Verdi is present on every page, and he works assiduously to find rationales for aspects of the scores that have otherwise aroused reservations. The limited musical invention in Gilda's death-scene at the end of *Rigoletto*, for instance, is attributed to the notion that she is the only Vedian heroine propelled entirely by desire and not by any higher ideal, and thus fails to meet Verdi's need for 'grandi valori che diano un senso al sacrificio': indeed, Gilda 'non è un'eroina: getta via la sua vita per una passione incontrollata' (287), therefore making 'la visione paradisiaca' of her final moments 'illusoria e un poco manierata' (288). Such interpretations might of course be disputed, but other insights are memorable: such as the

definition of *Rigoletto* as ‘painterly’ (‘pittorico’) and of *Il trovatore* as ‘sculptural’ (‘scultoreo’) (522), or the musings on the workings of time—past, present and future—in *La traviata* (519).

For Gallarati, the trilogy reveals Verdi as an artist of the highest magnitude: the composer is positioned alongside ‘Dante, Giotto, Masaccio, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Caravaggio e così via’ (526), sharing the same directness and ‘concretezza’ of creative vision. Verdi is thus monumentalised, and yet that very state seems to conflict with his own emphasis on immediacy and spontaneity as the necessary well-spring of artistic endeavour. And it begs the question: to what extent might such dense, detailed readings of the operas close off other perspectives and inhibit the inevitable desire of contemporary theatre-makers to bring, as Verdi did himself, their own sense of the ‘new’ to the stage, rather than merely reproduce the old? Might Verdi not be rediscovered (‘ritrovato’) more fully through adopting the spirit of his own approaches than by following the letter of his instructions?

Nonetheless, Gallarati’s informative homage to Verdi’s trilogy makes a powerful case for its place as iconic in the history of Italian culture, and undoubtedly will prove to be of much value and interest to scholars, opera practitioners and the general reader alike.

Susan Rutherford

Giovanni GUAZZONE, *Un ballo... in maschera? Giuseppe Verdi – Antonio Somma & Gustave III ou Le bal masqué. Il libretto di Eugène Scribe. Da cui è tratta l’Opera di Verdi. I luoghi, i tempi, le curiosità, i libretti d’opera completi e commentati*, Carmignano di Brenta, Munari, 2016, 215 pp.

Giovanni GUAZZONE, *La traviata non traviata. Violetta Valéry. Verdi – Piave, La traviata. I luoghi, i tempi, le curiosità, il libretto d’opera completo e commentato & La dame aux camélias. Il testo completo del dramma teatrale di Alexandre Dumas, fils. Da cui è tratta l’Opera di Verdi*, Carmignano di Brenta, Munari, 2017, 260 pp.

Die beiden Bände sind nach demselben Muster gestaltet wie die Publikationen desselben Autors zu *Macbeth*, *Otello*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* und *Il trovatore*. Die kritischen Anmerkungen von Michele Girardi¹ gelten also auch für diese Bände; auf eine erneute Rezension wurde deshalb verzichtet.

¹ Cfr. *verdiperspektiven* II, 2017, pp. 212-214.