

LE MIE MEMORIE ARTISTICHE

Giovanni Pacini

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DI
GIOVANNI PACINI

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PREFACE

Pacini's autobiography *Le mie memorie artistiche* has been published in several editions. For the present translation the original text has been used, consisting of 148 pages and published in 1865 by G.G. Guidi. In 1872 E. Sinimberghi in Rome published *Le mie memorie artistiche di Giovanni Pacini, continuate dall'avvocato Filippo Cicconetti*. The edition usually referred to was published in 1875 by Le Monnier in Florence under the title *Le mie memorie artistiche: edite ed inedite*, edited by Ferdinando Magnani. The first 127 pages contain the complete text of the original edition of 1865 – albeit with a different page numbering – extended with the section 'inedite' of 96 pages, containing notes Pacini made after publication of the 1865-edition, beginning with three 'omissioni'. This 1875-edition covers the years as from 1864 and describes Pacini's involvement with performances of some of his operas in several minor Italian theatres. His intensive supervision at the first performances in 1867 of *Don Diego di Mendoza* and *Berta di Varnol* was described as well, as were the executions of several of his cantatas, among which the cantata Pacini wrote for the unveiling of the Rossini-monument in Pesaro, his oratorios, masses and instrumental works. Furthermore he wrote about the countless initiatives he developed, such as the repatriation of Bellini's remains to Catania and the erection of a monument in Arezzo in honour of the great poet Guido Monaco, much adored by him. Besides proposals to improve the quality of musical education at the school of music founded by him in Lucca, Pacini dealt with the musical life in Italy in general and made comparisons with the musical developments abroad. The edition of 1875 concludes with some letters of Rossini and Mercadante to Pacini and obituaries in prose and poetry, published in newspapers and periodicals. Moreover, it contains an extract from Cicconetti's book with a detailed account of the composers last days and death, a reflection on the style of his compositions and the prestige and admiration bestowed him during his life. The kaleidoscopic enumeration of facts, singers, musicians and the many names of other individuals who may only be known to certain contemporaries and in his own social circle, make Pacini's last notes perhaps less interesting to the general reader, although they give all the more expression to his extraordinary strength of mind, his indefatigable zeal and the respect shown to him as one of the major composers of the era.

Pacini may have been a skilled composer who has met, besides misfortunes, many significant successes, he certainly cannot be considered a good writer. It might take the reader some effort to hold the chronology of his story and the facts are not always accurately presented. The names of singers and other persons are frequently spelled incorrectly, even in the titles of his own operas, like Caraffa (Carafa), Mayer (Mayr), Mambelli (Mombelli), Casacello (Casaccia), Smith (Schmidt), Glosopp (Glossop), Bartolotti (Bortolotti), Valle (Valli), Kennet (Kenneth), La Terza (Laterza), *Ivanohe*, *Furio Cammillo*, *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, *Linda di Bruxelles*. Even the name of his best friend Somma was spelled Sommo. This may well have been caused by Pacini's discouraging handwriting in his last years, showing problems with the hand-eye coordination, resulting in printing errors and inadequate editorship on top of that. Nevertheless, *Le mie memorie artistiche* gives us a lively insight in the period, the opera culture and the theatrical world dominated by impresarios, in which the position of the composer in general was subordinate to the singers. Famous opera singers, in our day no more than vaguely known names from the past, become people of flesh and blood with all their odd habits.

In the present translation the text image, the style of writing and the composer's own system of punctuation have largely been kept in line with the original. Incorrect spellings have remained unaltered and are rectified in the notes and the list of works. It goes without saying that the illustrations do not form part of the original text. Pacini's own footnotes are in bold. All other footnotes have only been added, where deemed necessary, to clarify the circumstances or individuals mentioned by Pacini. The reader should realize that Pacini wrote his *Memorie* for his Italian contemporaries who themselves had lived through these post-Napoleonic years until the unification of Italy and who therefore had less need for a detailed explanation of events. After all, the author could not have foreseen that his book would still be read one hundred and fifty years later.

Giovanni Pacini was of average length and had a slim and elegant figure; he did not have an explicitly handsome, but expressive face with a vivid glance. Usually described as an amiable, courteous person and easy to get along with, the art to win someone's sympathy was not his best quality, although he had no lack of friends. The cutthroat competition among the composers of his time, who all had to eat from the same rack, caused him much enmity – indifference, malicious slander

and lies – the overall fate of many artists in the world of opera. As a matter of fact Pacini was the only one of his contemporaries who could keep up with Rossini's popularity. Both *Il barone di Dolsheim* (1818) and *Il falegname di Livonia* (1819) scored 47 performances at La Scala in their first year. Especially Bellini's hostile attitude and paranoia toward Pacini is remarkable, as appears from a letter Bellini wrote to his friend Francesco Florimo on 2 January 1828 after the triumph of *Il pirata*: "Mr Pacini is not satisfied with inventing intrigues everywhere, but he also manipulates here... even overwriting the score of *Il pirata* as well, and still worse, as everyone knows...". In this respect please refer to Alexander Weathersson's article "Nell'orror di mie sciagure: Pacini, parody and *Il pirata*", to which we should add that Pacini's *I cavalieri di Valenza* outnumbered *Il pirata* with 25 versus 15 performances at La Scala in 1827/28. However, in his *Memorie* Pacini repeatedly expresses his admiration for the 'divine' Bellini and, as a matter of fact, it was Pacini who proposed Barbaia to engage Bellini as *maestro d'obbligo* at the Teatro alla Scala in 1827, which raises the question who was jealous of whom. Having listened to "Io son la rea" from Pacini's *La vestale* of 1823, a year when Bellini was still a student, one will be astonished to hear the kind of lyric *cantilena* and expressive pathos which established Bellini's fame in later years.

Le mie memorie artistiche provides us only with a limited insight in his personality and character. He gives us the impression of a man who is very modest about his artistic abilities and who continuously trivialized the role he played as a prominent composer. This might be a consciously adopted attitude, customary in the formal style of writing of the era. The humble ceremonies in describing his meetings with and tributes by monarchs and other highly placed persons, should be seen in this light as well. The question arises, whether his repeatedly expressing an excess of modesty about his talent, emphasizing his doubts about the course to follow and describing the setbacks in his career, has not done more harm than necessary to his public image. It is not inconceivable that a more positive self-image would have benefited his fame, with a greater public awareness to our own time as a result.

As from the early fifties Pacini took a stand with bitterness against the irreversible changes in the musical landscape of Italy, with the growing realization of his own marginalization inside the theatrical arena; a marginalization which he attributed to external circumstances, without being able to accept the idea that he himself, in one way or another had fallen back, not understanding the changes and their deeper essence. *Un mondo perduto* in his opinion; replaced by a different society, of which the *modus vivendi* is characterized by egoism, careerism and superficiality; a weakness that applies to almost everyone: singers who are no longer able to commit themselves to the art; impresarios who have become shameless and dishonest. The unification of Italy also inevitably meant the end of the patronage of the arts, evoking in Pacini nostalgic memories to the court of Carlo Lodovico of Bourbon-Parma, his benefactor of olden times. Even composers did not escape his opinion: "To become famous they have denied the real art to match the taste of an increasingly less sophisticated public". Reading his credo after his meeting with Halévy, it makes abundantly clear, that Pacini almost considered the by then fashionable *grand opera* with disgust. He detested modernism from abroad, especially from France, from the bottom of his heart. As he wrote to Somma in 1865: "The Italians will always dominate all other nations! Long live the melody, the only motive of every emotion!"

Pacini can be remembered as one of the most prolific composers in the history of opera, thanks to his ability to work fast, certainly helped by the fact that the text inspired him effortlessly to melodic ideas. As much as has been written about his contemporaries Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, a comprehensive scientific study on Pacini is lacking so far. Until the music historians have reconstructed his life and works on the basis of letters, scores and archival sources, we are unable to lay a claim on knowing Pacini, because much that was written about this composer is purely uncritical quoting of what he himself wanted the reader of his *Memorie* to believe. Since he was destined to be considered a 'neglected' or 'obscure' composer, this prominent figure in the development of the nineteenth century Italian opera has simply been preferred to be disregarded for more than a century, in favour of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi. As far as the name Pacini is concerned, the obvious label 'obscure' must surely be used with the necessary restraint. A composer with eighty one operas to his credit, of which two were unfinished and seven unperformed, who for a period of twenty years was overshadowed by Rossini only and who actively outlived Bellini and Donizetti for a couple of decades, who was in favour with monarchs and enjoyed friendly relations with the highest nobility, scholars and men of letters, definitely does not represent a recipe for obscurity; but history does what it does – as hard as it is sometimes. In the end, the present rediscovery of his works will eventually give Pacini his rightful place among the great Italian opera composers of the nineteenth century.

DECLARATION

Invited by the respectable *G.G. Guidi* to participate in the circle of collaborators who as from now will contribute to the journal “BOCCHERINI” and by the suggestion of the learned Prof. *Abramo Basevi* to choose as theme my VITA ARTISTICA, I hesitated to be honest (knowing how little I am worth) to comply with the many honourable requests I received. However, since I always feel a particular aversion to the negative word NO, the answer became YES! So I set to work and without any pretention I shall describe how I did my preparatory studies, what goals I had in mind and I shall tell some little anecdotes from my artistic career.

I do not know to what extent this may benefit the musical history of our century; however, I will comply with the sympathetic wish of those who may lay a claim on my sincere respect, following the example which was done already in France and Germany, as well as in Italy by many exceptional people, including the great genius Nicolò Paganini.

GIOVANNI PACINI



Pacini's birthplace, 12 Piazza Sant'Antonio, Catania

CHAPTER I

Towards the middle of the year 1808 my father *Luigi*¹ finally decided (after having fruitlessly attempted to have me learn the art of Terpsichore, towards which I had a resolute aversion²), to send me to Bologna with the intention to have me become a singer, under the teaching of the famous maestro *Marchesi*³. I must admit that, at the end of the first year, I felt strongly attracted to the art and, (under the teacher's orders) I never failed during the lessons to assist my colleagues in learning the tablature of the harpsichord⁴, the ciphered bass accompaniment, the counterpoint, etc. As such I was initiated, like a parrot, in playing the harpsichord. After having made myself familiar with the principles of music notation in a short time, without even knowing how to harmonize the diatonic scale, I set myself to compose a Kyrie, unnoticed by my teacher. In order not to have to replenish the sparse oil provided to go to bed, I was forced to take away the lamp which was burning every night in the hall in honour of the Virgin, so that I could keep awake to continue my work⁵. On a certain morning at the crack of dawn, my teacher entered my little room to hand me a letter of my loving mother; he took a glance at the spinet and saw my badly succeeded firstling. After having gone through this writing he was highly astonished and, after some interrogation he took my failure along. During the classes he pointed out to me what errors I had made (which I did not understand at all ...!), made several corrections in it and said to me slightly smiling: I will write to your father. He wrote to him indeed and told him what had happened. – My father replied: What would be best for him?

Marchesi then put me to the study of accompaniment practice, the introductory theory of harmony and subsequently the counterpoint. In the beginning of the next year my teacher thought it necessary that I left for Milan to entrust me to the care of the famous padre *Mattei*⁶, who was very dedicated to me. Before explaining in what way I thought to complete my musical development I will tell some little facts which occurred in the course of that year. I was in the possession of a fine soprano voice and so there was hardly a

¹ *Pacini Luigi* passed through a brilliant career, initially as a tenor, later as a buffo.

Giovanni Vincenzo Benedetto Pacini was born in Catania on 12 Piazza Sant'Antonio on 11 February 1796. His parents were Isabella Paulillo from Gaeta and the tenor Luigi Pacini, born in Pistoia.

² I so fiercely disliked dancing that, when one morning the teacher stuck me between two tables (used to let the pupils make knee bends) and he had turned in order to instruct the other boys, I shoved away the first table that tormented me with a jerk, fled the school and ran through the whole city of Genoa in tricot and on ballet shoes, and that in midwinter. After my father had found out what happened he gave me a good lesson that did not please me at all, but in the end he abandoned all thoughts to oppose me any further.

³ Luigi Marchesi (1754-1829). Soprano castrato. Made his debut in 1774 in Rome in a revival of Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. After having performed in Vienna, St. Petersburg and London he enjoyed so much fame that he was considered the greatest singer of his time. In 1796 he refused to sing at Napoleon's arrival in Milan, after which he was honoured as a national hero in Italy.

⁴ Pianoforti were very scarce in those years.

⁵ That was when *Galli Filippo*, not succeeded as a tenor, turned to maestro *Marchesi*, who told him: 'But, my dear, you have the voice register of a baritone and certainly not that of a tenor'. To which *Galli* followed the advice and then became the famous artist everyone knows.

Filippo Galli (1783-1853) started his career as a marginal tenor in 1801. After being retrained as a bass he sang in premieres of the Rossini operas: *L'inganno felice*, *La pietra del paragone*, *L'italiana in Algeri*, *Il turco in Italia*, *La gazza ladra*, *Maometto II* and *Semiramide*. He created the role of Enrico in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. His brother Vincenzo (1798-1858), more specialised in the buffo repertoire, sang many years as a bass at La Scala, in London and Vienna.

⁶ Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825). Music teacher and composer. Brother of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor. He particularly composed church music and was a teacher at the Liceo musicale in Bologna, where Rossini and Donizetti were among his students.

service in the churches of Bologna without my contribution. It was during lent of 1809 that in the Teatro del Corso a *grand'opera in musica* was established, for which occasion the celebrated maestro *Pavesi*⁷ (a true example of gentleness, which is why he was nicknamed San Giovanni Bocca d'Oro) was engaged to compose his opera «Gedeone»⁸, in which the famous *Manfredini*⁹ made her debut. They needed a young man who could perform the role of an angel. Everybody, the maestro, impresario, singers, the management, decided upon me and I started studying my part; but in my youngish playfulness I transposed the text in the Bolognese street dialect. The orchestral rehearsals started, during which I did not disappoint the general choice for me and I happily accepted the applause and pats on the back from that dear maestro who was very fond of me, which even resulted in ties of friendship with my family. The first performance came – the theatre was not large enough to place the flocking crowd – the artists had changed dresses; I was wearing my dress of the angel. – I was guided to the top of the stage, called the machinist gallery. I was advised not to be scared, because the steel wires which would carry me were most secure, so I therefore could go up with full courage to play my small role. – The overture was followed by a chorus; then came a recitative of the tenor (Gedeone), at the end of which the angel should appear to announce that God would ensure the victory to the malicious Madianita. Just at the moment of my appearance, fate decreed that the steel wires on which I hung entangled in the ropes of the curtain. This caused a delay of my entrance. Meanwhile the audience began to get impatient!! The confusion (which always arises under such circumstances) was also noticed on the stage. One technician shouted to an other to cut the wires! On hearing these words I got frightened and gave a cry. At the end, after struggling with the ropes and steel wires, *puff!*, I appeared in view of the audience, more dead than alive by fright and cold. Trembling I started my recitative at which, instead of the words “Non temer Gedeone” in the Italian text, I pronounced these as *Non temer Zabaion!* You can imagine how many among the *esteemed audience* and the *illustrious members of the garrison* burst out laughing and whistling!! That night the famous maestro *Pavesi* did not feel happy so that, every time we later met each other in the town, he addressed me with the friendly remark (which I reminded in his most melodic compositions): ‘*Do you still remember that because of you I was hissed at?*’ ... To tell the truth, this reproach did embitter me quite a lot, because I owed to him to a large extent that I could finish my musical education in Venice under the excellent maestro *Bonaventura Furlanetto*¹⁰, who accepted me as a student, assisted also by the willingness and recommendations of the honourable *Giovanni Battista Perrucchini*¹¹.

Furlanetto was the top! – He was communicative to an extent I have truly not encountered with many other famous teachers – bright ideas, in-depth

⁷ Stefano Pavesi (1779-1850). Dramatic composer. During the Revolution Pavesi was transferred in 1799 as a prisoner to Marseille and from there to Dijon, where he played in a regimental band which took part in the Marengo campaign. He began his career as an opera composer in 1802 and wrote most of his works for Venice.

⁸ The complete title of Pavesi's opera is: *Il trionfo di Gedeone*. The first performance took place in the Teatro del Corso in Bologna in March 1810.

⁹ Elisabetta (Elisa) Antonia Manfredini-Guarmani (1780-after 1825). Soprano, daughter of the *maestro di cappella* and music theoretician Vincenzo Manfredini, granddaughter of the composer Francesco Manfredini and niece of the soprano castrato Giuseppe Manfredini. She started her career in 1809 en cooperated closely with Rossini, who wrote for her the leading female parts in *Ciro in Babilonia*, *Tancredi* and *Adelaide di Borgogna*.

¹⁰ Bonaventura Furlanetto (1738-1817). Venetian music teacher and composer of cantatas and oratorios on biblical subjects.

¹¹ Giovanni Battista Perrucchini (1784-1870). Venetian magistrate and music lover. He was a brilliant pianist in the salons and set to music verses of different poets.

study material and with an amiability towards his students for which he enjoyed a great prestige. His lessons sometimes lasted not one hour, but rather two, three or four hours. He treated us as a father treats his sons! The few things I know I owe to him.

CHAPTER II

By the end of the year 1812 (around the time I had finished my studies) *Rossini* was the great innovator who already enjoyed an enormous fame, preceded by great men as *Paisiello*, *Cimarosa*, *Guglielmi* etc. etc., in addition by *Mayr*, *Paër*, *Generali*¹², *Morlacchi*, *Spontini*, *Fioravanti*, *Cherubini*, by *Coccia*, *Pavesi*, *Marinelli*, *Melara*, by *Farinelli*, *Niccolini*, *Paini*, *Orlandi*, *Mosca*, all belonging to the melodramatic top in that era. The critics, or rather the envious and the ignorant, not to mention the haughty important doers (which do not tolerate any progress in the science of harmony), will not refrain from putting their snake teeth in a new Sun, which rises with radiant light in honour of our Italy and the art. It is true that the predecessors and the contemporaries of the great Pesarese had already begun to follow the new way, but *Rossini* reserved the right to accomplish the work.

In 1811 the *Pesarese* had produced «*Demetrio e Polibio*», explicitly composed for the dear singers *Ester* and *Annetta Mambelli*¹³ and for their father, a fairly good tenor. Then came «*La scala di seta*», «*L'inganno felice*» etc., followed by «*La pietra del paragone*» in the Teatro alla Scala and by «*Tancredi*» in the Teatro la Fenice of Venice. The last mentioned work was preceded by «*Il signor Bruschino*», performed on the stage of San Moisè. – The reader will not be displeased by knowing in what way *Rossini* took revenge on the impresario of that theatre, a certain mister *Cera*, who promised him a reward after the success of «*L'inganno felice*» and who did not keep his promise. This was as follows. The story of «*Bruschino*» was created by the famous buffo *Raffanelli*¹⁴ and the poet *Foppa* had put it in verses. The Swan of Pesaro feigned illness and let know that he lacked inspiration. The old *Raffanelli* visited the maestro many times, who always told the same story and asked his above mentioned friend the artist to provide him with melodies in order to get started and finish the work. – *Raffanelli*, who also wanted to give the impression to be a composer, agreed and sang whatever was inspired by his fantasy. *Rossini* applauded him, called him the new Orfeo, wrote it down and in that way this misshapen hotchpotch called «*Bruschino*» came into being.

At the first performance *Rossini*, well knowing what fate would fall to him, brought two little *pulcinelli*¹⁵ into action as a joke, one of them was a fatty contrary to the other, which took up their position near the harpsichord on both sides of the music stand. The opera began with a peculiar overture, sounding as

¹² *Generali* was the creator of the Crescendo.

¹³ Incorrectly spelled by Pacini as Mambelli. Ester and Anna Mombelli, respectively born in 1794 and 1795, were daughters of the tenor Domenico Mombelli. Father and daughters formed with a bass a travelling opera company which gave performances in Lisbon, Padua en Milan from 1806-11. The three sang in the premiere of *Rossini's Demetrio e Polibio*, on a libretto by mother Vincenza Mombelli, in the Teatro Valle in Rome.

¹⁴ Luigi Raffanelli (1752-1821). Sang as a buffo bass from 1771 until 1814 in various Italian theatres, Paris, London and Vienna. In 1810 he created the role of Tobia Mill in the first performance of *Rossini's* first opera *La cambiale di matrimonio*, followed by *L'inganno felice*, *Il signor Bruschino* a.o.

¹⁵ Pulcinella originates from the *commedia dell'arte*, in appearance and character comparable to the English figure Punch.

if all stringed instruments drummed on the little lampshades of the orchestra (as it where a signal to the first violinist to start the performance). Then the introduction followed and subsequently the other pieces. The audience kept silent and laughed a bit at the novelty; but then the crescendo of whistling became as loud as the most thunderous crescendo the famous author could imagine. Every time the audience displayed their aversion, *Rossini* gave a little slap to the two pulcinelli, which made them turn around on their places after a most humble bow. The indignation of the audience reached its limit, but as a true stoic the illustrious maestro peacefully let the insults com over him.

For the next carnival¹⁶ *Rossini* had to stage «Tancredi» in La Fenice. The whole of Venice had taken an oath on it to pull his new work to pieces. The first performance began. The theatre was packed and the first violinist got the sign to start¹⁷ The entire audience was waiting for *Rossini's* appearance at the harpsichord to give him the first catcalls; however, the composer had hid himself under the stage, close to the little door to the orchestra. The attendees began to fall silent when the maestro did not turn up. The overture commenced and the audience listened to the largo with extraordinary interest. And when the motif the the allegro sounded, they listened with increasing attention and pleasure. At the end of the crescendo, new in form and idea, the crowd stood up as one man and applauded with enthusiastic exclamations towards the author, who hastened to the harpsichord just then and saluted the audience. – The success of «Tancredi» is a memorable fact in the story of life of this great genius.

At that time I felt overwhelmed by so many wonderful talent, particularly by those whom as magicians enchanted everyone's mind and heart with their creations. – I had gone through some scores of *Paisiello*, *Cimarosa*, *Mayr* and *Paër*; I had only heard «Adelina» by *Generali*, «Arrighetto» by *Coccia* and some works by *Pavesi*. Finally I was fortunate enough to take part in some rehearsals of certain operas by *Rossini* at the harpsichord, which as could be expected, brought about the biggest thrill one could imagine. I had neither the opportunity to admire the major works of the German school, nor the French compositions. Young, barely graduated and sixteen years of age, I presented myself in the autumn of 1813 in the Teatro di Santa Radegonda, modernized just recently, with a *farsa*¹⁸ entitled «Annetta e Lucindo». As a first aptitude test I was given an encouraging applause, from which I drew the necessary support and then I managed to buy some cheap copies of the best scores of *Haydn* and *Mozart*, which enabled me to study with pleasure the aesthetics of these two great composers.

However, the political instability in that year was so (the war between the French and the Germans was in full swing¹⁹) that I was forced to visit my father, engaged at the theatre of Pisa for the next carnival season, so that I had to interrupt my most essential studies. – That season I wrote for this theatre a

¹⁶ The carnival season was the most important period of most opera theatres. Santo Stefano (26 December) was traditionally the opening night and the season ran until the beginning of lent (quaresima). During the carnival season the theatres invariably presented new operas, including many *farse*; young composers were keen to get commissions for new operas.

¹⁷ At that time there was no conductor in the same function as nowadays. The first violinist ran the performance from a *violino principale* score, to which the major vocal lines and instrumental solos were added. In Italy regular conductors came into action in opera performances only after 1850, a system already in use in Paris in *Rossini's* years.

¹⁸ The *farsa* (also called *farsetta*) is a type of opera, musically derived from the two-act *dramma giocoso*, mainly associated with Venice of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, where it was usually staged in the Teatro San Moisè during carnival. Most *farse* were light one-act works to which sometimes a short ballet was added.

¹⁹ At the Italian front during the Napoleonic war of 1813 fifty thousand Italians, leaded by the viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais, were engaged in a battle against the Austrian troops.

little farsa under the title «L'escavazione del tesoro²⁰», which brought in fifty francs (as a total allowance) after the third performance. My miserable second work was favourably received, but rather as a kindness to the schoolboy than for its real merit. – As mentioned before, Italy was in a war situation, so that my father could not return to Milan, where he was the last remaining family member. He decided to stay in Florence since this was the town where the famous *Marcolini*²¹, the excellent singer *Zamboni*²² and the celebrated choreographer *Pansieri* lived. – Under these circumstances the event occurred that these artists decided to form a company to stage opera and ballet performances in the Pergola theatre in the spring season of 1814. At its first performance the company chose the opera «L'italiana in Algeri», received with extraordinary pleasure, just as the ballet 'L'incendio di Troia' was very successful. I was responsible for composing an opera buffa, which was indeed realized. However, the score of «L'ambizione delusa», the work I presented that season, did not turn out very well. My thoughts travelled all over the realm of music. I had to form some idea to achieve the aim I was yearning for. For me *Rossini* was always a source of indescribable admiration; but I was perfectly aware of being merely a slavish imitator by following him. – When the war in Italy had ended, the connections were restored and so I was able to return to Milan again. Discouraged by the failure of «L'ambizione delusa» I concentrated on teaching singing and piano lessons.

In the meantime the opportunity came to devote myself to a new work for the Teatro Filodrammatico (which was very popular at that time thanks to the large number of opera lovers this overcrowded and vast city contained): under the title «Gli sponsali dei silfi». My fourth work was more inspired by *Cimarosa* than by *Rossini*.

The opera was very much appreciated (perhaps because the entrance was free). I could breathe more freely now. – It so happened that a respectable Frenchman, named *Flory*, an intelligent music lover, was looking for a young musician who could come to his home every evening to accompany scores of *Gluck*. I was the lucky one! – To be honest, I did not give it a moment's thought that by accepting such an assignment I would expose myself to a high risk, since the works of this great genius were totally unknown to me. But as they say: *audaces fortuna juvat*²³, and that's why I owed it to my lack of fear that this honour instilled in me that I was making progress in the art. It is beyond words to express the admiration which the creator of «*Alceste*», «*Ifigenia*» and «*Armida*» aroused in me. I found in this classical composer what to a large extent was in line with my understanding. *Cimarosa's* «*Gli Orazi e i Curiazi*» and «*Il matrimonio segreto*», the operas of *Mayr*, *Paër* and *Generali* had enlightened my mind, as the equally superb *Haydn* with «*La creazione*», with «*Le quattro stagioni*» in his «*Arianna*»; *Mozart* with «*Don Giovanni*» and «*Le*

²⁰ The erudite gentleman *Fétis*, who honoured me by listing me under the Italian composers in his *Dizionario biografico*, wrote 'evacuazione' instead of 'escavazione'! The error is so enormous that it could not but contribute to the failure of this work. I required a correction, just as I asked to rectify the error with respect to my place of birth, because I was born in Catania and not in Siracusa.

Pacini here mistakes *Fétis* for Francesco Regli, the compiler of the *Dizionario biografico*. François-Joseph *Fétis* (1784-1871) was a prominent Belgian composer, music educator, musicologist, violinist, harpsicord player and music critic of the *Revue musicale*. *Fétis* was the editor van de *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*.

²¹ Marietta *Marcolini* (ca. 1780-?). Famous contralto who created main parts in five of *Rossini's* operas, among which *Isabella* in *L'italiana in Algeri*.

²² *Luigi Zamboni* (1767-1837). The first Figaro in *Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia*. His career as a buffo bass lasted until 1825, after which he ran an Italian opera company in St. Petersburg with many *Rossini* operas in its repertoire.

²³ *Audaces fortuna juvat*: Fortune is with the audacious. (Verg. *Aen.* 10,284).

nozze di Figaro» etc. had done. For me *Gluck* personified the truth I was looking for. Since that time I devoted myself with increasing affection to the study of all classics, but I still did not manage to discover any system in it. – In the Teatro Re in Milan I staged three short operas in the same carnival season: the first was «Dalla beffa al disinganno», the second «Il matrimonio per procura» and the third «Il carnevale di Milano».

All three librettos were by the famous *Anelli*²⁴. The first is merely a satire on the poet of the *Basvilliana*²⁵ and the man of letters *Acerbi*²⁶, so that after three performances, to which the audience was more inclined to come to the theatre for the text than for the music, there was nothing but talk in Milan about the mockery targeted at the famous *Monti* and the above mentioned *Acerbi*, until the royal government imposed a ban. The touchy *Anelli* wrote the other two librettos, based on the same theme, but these did not have the same consequence.

Thereafter I composed «Piglia il mondo come viene», which was performed in Venice just as my other productions: «Il seguito di Ser Marcantonio» in the Teatro San Moisè (which fell like a hot brick) and then «L'ingenua» in the Teatro di San Benedetto; I kept on drifting! With «Adelaide e Comingio» composed for carnival of 1815-16 in the Teatro Re in Milan (an opera that was executed to perfection by the celebrated prima donna *Brizzi*, the tenor *Domenico Ronconi*²⁷ and by my father²⁸ in the buffo role) I began to follow a more defined path. I paid attention to the expressiveness and a simplified melodic harmony and here and there I also left out excessive flourishes.

I got the contract to compose «Adelaide e Comingio» in the month of August. One evening, when I took a walk with my close and dear friend *Luigi Frontini* (whom I taught singing lessons), the moon was shining with a silvery glow. This melancholic luminary undoubtedly brings about feelings of gloom in a youthful heart, sometimes leading to a flow of ideas not related to age. We were on the Piazza del Duomo in Milan. The moon reflected on the large monument that can be regarded with good reason as a pile of marble, all the more since this peculiar cathedral is abundantly adorned with it. Moved by a feeling of deep sadness I spoke the following words to my friend:

‘If my «Adelaide e Comingio» does not bring the success that will give me hope for a better future, I have decided to confine myself in a monastery. There I will think over my future, improve my skills in playing the organ and so bring

²⁴ Angelo Anelli (1761-1820). Writer and a much sought-after librettist. Anelli wrote during that time also the libretto for *L'italiana in Algeri*.

²⁵ Nicolas-Jean-Hugon de Basseville (1753-1793). French diplomat, murdered on 13 January 1793 by a Roman mob. On the occasion of this event Vincenzo Monti (1754-1828) wrote the *Cantica in morte di Ugo di Basseville* (1793), known as the anti-revolutionary epic poem *Bassvilliana* (unfinished).

²⁶ Giuseppe Acerbi (1773-1846). Became known as an explorer, biologist, archeologist, diplomat, writer and musician. Acerbi met Napoleon as a delegate to the Repubblica Cisalpina and participated in the expedition of Champollion to Egypt. He especially had an ambiguous reputation for his ties with the Austrian occupiers. Acerbi was editor of the literary periodical *La biblioteca italiana*, funded directly from Vienna and considered as an instrument of Austrian suppression. Composed some terzettos for voice and pianoforte, quartets with clarinet en duets for flute.

²⁷ Domenico Ronconi (1772-1839). Celebrated tenor and father of the baritone Giorgio Ronconi, the first Nabucco. He was the vocal teacher of the soprano Erminia Frezzolini en de contralto Caroline Unger (in Italy spelled Ungher).

²⁸ Luigi Pacini (1767-1837) sang in various first performances of his son Giovanni's operas: Il Maresciallo di Benavides in *Adelaide e Comingio* (1817), Brandt in *Il barone di Dolsheim* (1818), Michelone in *La sposa fedele* (1819), Magistrato in *Il falegname di Livonia* (1819), Mustafa in *La schiava di Bagdad* (1820). He created the role of Geronio in *Il turco in Italia* en Parmenione in *L'occasione fa il ladro*, both by Rossini.

this tormented life to an end. The only bitterness I will feel is to leave my family, mostly my dear mother who loves me so much; not that I want to part from you Luigi!

However, God had quite different plans with me.

CHAPTER III

Rossini's fame increased. – I had to compete with this colossus more and more, as there was no other way to stop him. All his predecessors and contemporaries had lost their original popularity to a great extent. – In the spring of 1817 I was contracted by the cautious as well as sincere impresario maestro *Adolfo Bassi* for the theatre in Trieste, where I staged «La sacerdotessa d'Irminsul», on a text by the famous cav. *Felice Romani*²⁹, an opera that was executed by the adulated *Bonini*, the celebrity *Velluti*³⁰, the tenor *Bolognesi* and the baritone *Zucchelli*. – The success was simply brilliant. I shall not withhold that the impresario *Bassi*, who gave me lodging in his house and who always saw me among friends rather than working on my composition, was so wise to lock me up in my room, situated on the first floor and looking out onto a small courtyard which led to the public road. The friends gave me the agreed sign and I tied a sheet to the iron groove of the window and climbed down. In the same way I easily climbed back. One morning before returning home, *Bassi* opened my room, of which he had the key, and saw the open window and the sheet hanging down! Since then he abandoned the idea to lock me up again and I thought of making things right by telling my friends that, if they really cared for me, they should leave me alone a couple of days. They indeed did so and I can say that «La sacerdotessa d'Irminsul» (applauded in all theaters of Italy thanks to *Rosa Morandi*, *Pisaroni* and *Tacchinardi*³¹) was composed in twenty-eight days. This fortunate success brought me another honourable contract for the season of the Fiera del Santo in Padua. On that occasion I had the fortune to hear the famous *Pacchiarotti*³² in his home. One cannot image the sensation that came over me when I heard this excellent singer in the scene "Ombra adorata, aspettami" from «*Giulietta e Romeo*» from the great *Zingarelli*. With a voice not naturally beautiful and that had lost its sparkle as a result of his advanced age, I was merely moved to tears by the phrasing and the expression

²⁹ Felice Romani (1788-1865). Poet and librettist of some operas of Donizetti and of almost all operas of Bellini. He is considered as the greatest librettist from the period after Metastasio until the coming of Boito. His subject were taken from the world literature and from plays popular in French theatres.

³⁰ Giovanni Battista (Giambattista) Velluti (1780-1861) was the last one of the great opera castratos. He was castrated by a local doctor at the age of eight as a treatment of a cold with fever, so that a military career desired by his father was replaced by a musical education. Velluti had a reputation for his phenomenal vocal technique as well as for his curious sexual escapades... and was close friends with Luigi cardinal Chiaramonte, the future pope Pius VII. Among the roles especially written for him are Arsace in Rossini's *Aureliano in Palmira* and Armando in Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto*.

³¹ Nicola Tacchinardi (1772-1858). Cellist and tenor. He sang in the first performances of Meyerbeer's *Margherita d'Anjou* and *Il crociato in Egitto*. He concentrated on teaching vocal training since 1831, among others to his daughter Fanny Tacchinardi Persiani, the first Lucia.

³² Misspelled as Pacchiarotti by Pacini. Gaspere Pacchierotti (1740-1821), mezzo-soprano castrato, one of the greatest singers of his time. Made his debut in 1759 in Galuppi's opera *Le nozze di Dorina* and made his last public appearance in 1817. He sang the leading part Asterio in Antonio Salieri's *Europa riconosciuta* at the inauguration of the Teatro alla Scala on 3 August 1778. After being compelled to sing in honour of Napoleon in the Teatro Nuovo in Padua in 1797, he was imprisoned because of the compromising content of an intercepted letter to his colleague Angelica Catalani on a charge of patriotism.

merely. Oh! Where have all these singers gone that were able to elicit a shout of admiration only with a simple recitative. Where has the sound gone that touches deep into one's soul? But I shall speak about that matter in due course. At that occasion I also got to know the wellknown translator of slavie hymns cav. *Ferdinando Pellegrini* and I slowly built a deep friendship with this renowned man during this period.

The performing artists of my new work were *Emilia Bonini* and the debutante *Angeloni* from Venice (who aroused high expectations but was struck by a serious disease after some time), the first tenors *Domenico Ronconi* and *Giuseppe Pasta*³³ and the bass *Frances Del Medico*. – The first opera performed that season was «*Elisabetta*» by the divine man from Pesaro; the next one was my «*Atala*». The passionate exclamations after the first performance were exceptional. I was rightfully worried about the reception of my new product, but I scored a new triumph which persuaded me more and more to continue my path, not to turn entirely away from the influence of the earlier mentioned “magician” *Rossini*, who ravished the entire Italian public and that beyond the Alps with good reason, and who encouraged me to take up the challenge. – «*Adelaide e Comingio*», «*La sacerdotessa d'Irminsul*» and «*Atala*» had the honour to be produced in all theaters of our peninsula, with exception however of the largest stages, the royal theaters of Naples, the Teatro Carignano of Turin, the Scala of Milan and La Fenice in Venice, and that's just because I did not yet have the reputation of *maestro del cartello*³⁴. However, since I was climbing that staircase, was that the reason I was barred from these ancient temples, dedicated to these few high priests of Apollo? In those years it was essential to pass through a long apprenticeship before attaining one's desired goal. Today it no longer works that way: but imagine what will happen? ... The flight of Icarus!

After the memorable success I achieved in the large theatre of Padua, I returned to Milan where my family had settled. Continuously concentrating on the study of the classical composers, I did not neglect to enrich my poor mind with all that is indispensable for one who wants to practice the noble art of music.

My father had finished his engagement with the Teatro alla Scala, where he had sung his eleventh season. In the next fall the buffo *De Grecis* was contracted, but as he had fallen on the stage at the first general rehearsal of the new opera of maestro *Gyrowetz*³⁵ entitled «*Il finto Stanislao*», and had bruises in his face, he was not able to fulfil his obligations, to which, the morning on which the aforementioned *De Grecis* had the misfortune, the impresario *Benedetto Ricci* from Lucca turned to my father and told him what had happened. He added: ‘You know how popular you have always been with the Milanese public and you know that we often said:

Se tempesta si scaglia a noi di guai,
Pacini a rimediar non manca mai³⁶,

so I expect that you accept my order to be present on stage in the new opera of *Gyrowetz*’ within three days’. After some time to think the matter over, my

³³ Giuseppe Pasta, tenor. Married the soprano Giuditta Negri, who became known as the *prima donna assoluta* Giuditta Pasta, in 1816. Faced with voice problems he became Giuditta's manager in 1822.

³⁴ Maestro (or cantante) del cartello. The success and the reputation of a composer or a singer could be regarded to a significant extent whether or not his name was prominently listed on the playbills. This term was more or less an official predicate, somewhat comparable to the German *Kammersänger*.

³⁵ Adalbert Gyrowetz (1763-1850). Bohemian composer of operas, symphonies and chamber music. Felice Romani's libretto for his opera *Il finto Stanislao* (Milan 1818) was based on the play *Le faux Stanislas* by Alexandre Vincent Pineu-Duval. Giuseppe Verdi used the same libretto in 1840 for his *Un giorno di regno*.

³⁶ “When you are off balance when storms hit, Pacini will always come to your rescue”.

father replied: ‘With pleasure, but on condition that my son is contracted to perform one of his works this season’. Ricci³⁷ tried to get out of it, but it was a *conditio sine qua non*, so the impresario felt forced to go to the Governor to notify him about the incident. The authorities did not object at all, since the so-called *maestro di cartello*, the aforementioned *Gyrowetz*, was approved by the censorship, whereas H.E. the Governor moreover considered that the public would be grateful to the impresario for the new opera, allowing him to perform without the obligations of a contract. And that’s how it was done. I wrote «Il barone di Dolsheim», received favourably although the audience was not too kindly disposed towards me. I do not lie because I could mention a very respectable person, still alive and a resident of Lucca, who agreed on a plan with other young people to catcall me. But the overture brought the audience in a good mood and the introduction “Brave truppe, son contento”, sang by the famous *Remorini*; the cavatina “Cara adorata immagine” (then in a new form in one stanza), executed by the great *Camporesi*; the duet “Qual linguaggio, qual baldanza!” and in addition “In quel cor confido e spero” secured me with two new contracts from this large theatre.

I composed the opera «La sposa fedele» for the next carnival at the Teatro San Benedetto in Venice, which likewise had a favourable reception. I gradually found new forms for the cabalettas and I simplified the melodies. The two contracts offered to me by the impresario Ricci gave me the opportunity to compose for the Scala «Il falegname di Livonia» in the spring of 1819 and «Vallace» for the coming carnival. The first opera was received with appreciation; the second was even welcomed with great approval. Before my «Vallace» *Rossini* wrote his «Bianca e Faliero», which was received at its first performance with unmistakable signs of disapproval, much to dissatisfaction of that great genius. But why?... If I were more successful than he, I had to admit that the mere quintet of «Bianca e Falliero» is worth more than the whole of my opera mentioned above³⁸. In the autumn of 1820 I composed «La schiava di Bagdad» for the Teatro Carignano in Turin, which was favourably received as well – after the splendid success I scored with my «Sposa fedele» – thanks to the talents of the celebrated *Pasta*³⁹ (still at the beginning of her career), of the tenor *Monelli*, the baritone *Pio Botticelli* and of my father. At that occasion I had the tremendous honour to perform with great humility for H.M. *Carlo*

³⁷ Ricci had delegated his authority to other no less famous and upright partners, among which *Barbaia*, called the king of impresarios, *Balocchino* and *Villa*. As far as these gentlemen are concerned, words say enough: what is stipulated in the contracts does not apply now. Whoever has put his signature can decide or adjust easily. Where can we still find honest and responsible impresarios? ... Who is to blame? ... Not difficult to guess by the reader!

³⁸ *Rossini's* life and this occurrence are described in the *Dizionario biografico* by cav. *Regli*.

Pacini here referred to the quartet (not the quintet as he wrote) ‘Cielo, il mio labbro ispira’ from the second act. Stendhal also dedicated praising words to this quartet in his *Vie de Rossini* (1854, p. 300): “Il n’y eut qu’un morceau neuf dans *Bianca e Faliero*, le quartetto: mais ce morceau et le trait de clarinette surtout, sont au nombre des plus belles inspirations qu’aucun maître ait jamais eues. Je le dis hardiment, et ci se n’est avec vérité, du moins avec une pleine conviction, il n’y a rien dans *Otello* ou dans la *Gazza ladra* de comparable à ce quartetto; c’est un moment de génie qui dure dix minutes.”

³⁹ Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865). This legendary singer was together with Maria Malibran the most celebrated soprano of the nineteenth century. She made her debut in 1815 as an alto in *Le tre Eleonore* of Giuseppe Scappa and sang an extensive repertoire all over Italy and in Paris. In 1829 she changed to the soprano register and debuted as such in Vienna in *Rossini's Semiramide*. Her voice can be defined as *soprano sfogato*; as a matter of fact she was a mezzo-soprano. La Pasta established permanent fame with opera’s that were especially written for her: Bellini’s *La sonnambula*, *Norma*, *Beatrice di Tenda* and Donizetti’s *Anna Bolena* en *Ugo, conte di Parigi*. She sang the role of Zoraide in the first performance of Pacini’s opera *La schiava di Bagdad* (1820) and the title role in his *Niobe* (1826) (both of these still as an alto). Giuditta Pasta gave her farewell concert in the Royal Opera House in 1851.

Alberto⁴⁰, then prince of Carignano, the duet for soprano and baritone from the second act of my «Sposa fedele», by the request of His Majesty, who gave me a snuffbox of the finest turtle leather with twenty-five gold Napoleons in it. «Il barone di Dolsheim» brought in one hundred zecchini, «La sposa fedele» three hundred bavare, «Il falegname di Livonia» two hundred zecchini, «Vallace» seven hundred pezze; **Rossini** was paid five hundred zecchini for his «Bianca e Falliero»! These were the largest amounts I got paid then! And now? ... Let me keep it to myself!

After Turin I set out for Rome, where I composed in only twenty-four days «La gioventù d'Enrico V» for the carnival season of 1821 in the Teatro Valle. Upon arrival in the Eternal City I was brought to the Teatro Valle in the same evening of December 2, 1820, where «Il matrimonio segreto» was given, during which the prima donna introduced the cavatina “Oh se fia che a me ritorni” from my «Sposa fedele». This piece (although it was neither here nor there in this major work of the immortal *Cimarosa*) was passionately received. I was given a positive reception by the Roman population immediately and that same night I had the honour to be introduced to a lady of noble blood who took the highest position among the many persons addressed as Highness. My brother-in-law *Giorgi* gave me the advise to pay tribute to cardinal *Gonsalvi*⁴¹ the morning after I arrived. I did not fail to show how sensible I found his advise. The eminent statesman lived in Monte Cavallo. Some moments after my announcement I was received by the cardinal. I was very much impressed by his presence. He had a good posture, very dense eyelashes and his way of speaking was to the point. He offered me a seat after which I uttered some modest words of respect and he turned to me with these words: ‘Tell me, young maestro, do you know the music of *Paisiello* and *Cimarosa*?... – ‘I do, Your Eminence’, I replied. – ‘Well then (added His Eminence), which one of the two composers is more brilliant in your opinion?’ – ‘Both, Your Eminence (I replied) they are of equal genius’. – ‘No, no, (came the answer of the cardinal), I insist that you tell me which one you prefer. – To be honest I would tremble with fear to say what I was thinking, because this might influence the fact that I would acquire or lose His Eminence’s favour! – Finally I said freely that the music of *Cimarosa* pleased me most. After I had said so, the cardinal stood up ipso facto, and while taking my hand (which almost shocked me!) he accompanied me to his music archive with all works of *Cimarosa*. – ‘Kneel down maestro!’, he said ‘as you admire the music of this great genius and when you follow his example, you will be able to compose something of the kind in due course! – I accepted his wish with gratitude, but I did think that in case I would have given preference to *Paisiello*, I surely would have had to leave immediately. As from that day His Eminence was extremely well-disposed towards me.

As already said, the opera I wrote to be performed in Rome is entitled «La gioventù d'Enrico V». Its first night, on 26 December 1820, the season was

⁴⁰ Carlo Alberto (1798-1849), prince of Savoia-Garignano. After a brief service in the French army he returned to Piemonte in 1814, after the fall of Napoleon. Carlo Alberto’s liberal ideas developed in France, his anti-Austrian inclination and contacts with the carboneria, preparing a revolt, made him one of the key figures of the Risorgimento. Just after he had met Pacini he was nominated as a temporary regent by his uncle, the abdicating king Vittorio Emanuele I of Sardinia, in the absence of his younger brother Carlo Felice, who then stayed in Modena. Back in Turin Carlo Felice reversed all reforms introduced by Carlo Alberto and forced him to take refuge. In 1831 he succeeded Carlo Felice as king of Sardinia; in 1849, after the defeat of his army at Novara, he abdicated in favour of his son, the later king Vittorio Emanuele II.

⁴¹ Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824). Cardinal-secretary of state. Negotiated with Napoleon in 1801 which resulted in the concordat to the effect that the Roman catholic church was affirmed as state religion in France. He represented Pius VII at the Congress of Vienna, where he induced the victorious powers to restore the Papal States, with exception of Avignon.

opened at the same time in the Teatro Argentina as in the Teatro Tordinona⁴². – *Mercadante* brought in the Argentina his «*Scipione in Cartagine*». Everyone from the highest circles attended the performance of his dramatic opera. My audience only consisted of ordinary people, for instance shopkeepers, so-called *orzaroli*⁴³. The overture was applauded. The introduction with the cavatina of the baritone was received with approval, as was the cavatina of the tenor. Next came a duet in one stanza for the baritone and the tenor that was exuberantly welcomed and rewarded with curtain calls for the performers and the composer. The subsequent cavatina of the soprano was received with shouts of *brava* and followed by the one of the buffo, accompanied by a little ballet by Capitano Coop and the prima donna Bettina. The audience greeted the new work with wild enthusiasm and shouted: ‘Terrific maestro to include a ballet as well! Evviva, evviva! One can easily imagine that my artistic product of twenty-four days made me feel good.

The company consisted of fantastic artists. The prima donna *Casaglia*, called the Swedish, was an excellently trained singer with a silvery and lithe voice, and with the tenor *Sbigoli*, the renowned baritone *Zucchelli* and the wonderful buffo Tacci, they really formed an enviable four. – The favourable reception of my work cited above resulted in my engagement at the Teatro Argentina for the coming year.

CHAPTER IV

The same season in which I produced «*La gioventù d’Enrico V*», *Rossini* composed «*Matilde di Chabran*» for the Teatro Tordinona. Before him maestro *Grazioli* presented «*Il pellegrino bianco*» which was very much liked, as was also the case with «*Matilde di Chabran*», that soon circulated among all theaters. I shall not continuously come back to what cav. *Regli* wrote in my biography about what occurred between me and the maestro from Pesaro; I will only say that I consider myself fortunate to have cooperated as a companion to the supreme master⁴⁴. – During the last carnival days *Rossini* proposed the plan to hold a masked procession with some friends (among which I certainly held the first place). We put on make up and dressed like ancient scholars, that is with black toga and wig and some black and red marks on our faces. We studied a chorus from «*Il pellegrino bianco*», which had aroused great enthusiasm by the Roman population. Dressed up in that way we strode in the Corso with music paper in our hands, sang the chorus mentioned before at the top of our lungs and stopped in front of café Ruspoli. The curious crowd was getting larger and larger. Suddenly a big number of our “supporters” (I leave the truth somewhere in between), who seized our masquerade to ridicule maestro *Grazioli* and his music, began to insult us and subjected to us all kinds of things in a menacing tone, which did not please us at all, so that we broke up cautiously. That was the end of our masquerade. We got off with a scare and that evening a good meal made us forget all danger.

⁴² The first performance of *La gioventù d’Enrico V* on 26 December 1820 did not take place at the Teatro Tordinona – then named Teatro Apollo – but in the smaller Teatro Valle, built in 1727 and still in use.

⁴³ Sellers of comestibles, flour products, etc.

⁴⁴ See the *Dizionario biografico* of cav. *Regli*, page 370.

The collaboration consisted of Pacini’s composing, by *Rossini*’s request, of three pieces for *Matilde di Shabran*.

In that same theatre season princess *Paolina Borghesi*⁴⁵ invited (as she was used to do every year on Fridays) the highest Roman nobility and the greatest artists and literary celebrities in such a manner that she could consider her palace the new Olympus, where Venus did the honours⁴⁶. There was no lack of music with its noble task to brighten this salon of grace, arts and sciences. That was the reason why so many famous composers and singers were in Rome, who all had been invited by the noble lady. *Rossini*, *Caraffa* (who composed a comic opera for the Teatro Tordinona as well that year⁴⁷), *Mercadante*, the present writer, and many others were among the privileged. – One evening, while the party was assembled, one of my colleagues was announced at the door of the salon in a less than decent black coat full of dirty spots. Her Highness the princess, who saw the new arrival appear at the door in this improper garment, rose from her chair, went towards him quickly and said: ‘*Mon cher, vous avez des taches dans votre habit!*’ The dauntless maestro replied: ‘This the only one I have ... I assume that Your Highness can replace it’. The princess laughed heartily and the next day she presented to him a cut of extra fine cloth, not only sufficient for a coat, but also for a waistcoat and trousers. – That evening, *Rossini* sang the famous cavatina from «*Il barbiere di Siviglia*»: “Largo al factotum della città” and he could easily say: ‘I am not only the factotum of Rome, but of the whole world, for disguised as Caesar I could repeat his *veni, vidi, vici*’. – After there was a burst of applause for *Rossini* for the really unique way in which he sang his cavatina, it was my turn and I sang the cavatina from «*La schiava di Bagdad*»: “Chi vuol papucce, papucce belle”. The famous *Mombelli*, *Zucchelli* and *Tacci* stayed as the last guests that evening.

Before continuing my story I have to go back some years in order to draw the reader’s attention to a remarkable anecdote, when I was in Venice to stage «*Il seguito di Ser Marcantonio*»⁴⁸ in San Moisè. That season four maestros were contracted to demonstrate their talents, *Pavesi*, *Farinelli*, *Paini* and I. I do no longer remember the titles of the operas of the first two authors⁴⁹; I do

⁴⁵ Paolina Borghese (1780-1825) was the second sister, Marie Pauline, of Napoleon Bonaparte. After the death of her husband, Charles Leclerc, a general in the French army, she remarried in 1806 prince Camillo Borghese, who was let down by her shortly thereafter. In 1814 she accompanied Napoleon to Elba. When she met Pacini in 1821 she lived in Rome, as duchess of Parma and Guastalla, in a villa nearby the Porta Pia. In 1822 she moved to a newly built villa in Viareggio to be closer to her lover Giovanni Pacini. The sculptor Antonio Canova immortalized her as a nude Venus.

⁴⁶ On that occasion I had the fortune to get acquainted with many sublime men, among them the famous *Canova*, a man of unpretentious customs, of a very gentle disposition and more modest than one can imagine. It is undeniably true that all great persons are averse to arrogance. Also present was a model of a living legend, *Manzoni* (not to mention many others, as *Cantù*), just as *Canova* gentle and courteous and whose amiable contact kept fascinating.

The incompetent only boast and so make themselves believe they mean something to others!!!!

Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), writer of poems, novels and essays. He is considered the greatest man of letters of nineteenth century Italy. In the year of Pacini’s visit to Paolina Borghese, Manzoni was still working on his major work, the novel *I promessi sposi*, published in 1823. Verdi composed his Requiem in memory of Manzoni.

Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), historian. He started his career as a teacher and began his literary activities in 1832. Placed under the suspicion of anti-Austrian tendencies in his historical work *Sulla storia lombarda del secolo XVII*, Cantù was imprisoned for several years. There he wrote his popular novel *Margherita Pusterla* (with a toothpick and ash from the fireplace). Pacini’s opera *Margherita Pusterla* of 1856 is based on this novel.

⁴⁷ The correct spelling is Carafa. Michele Enrico Carafa de Colobrano (1782-1872). His opera buffa *La capriccioso ed il soldato o sia Un momento di lezione* had its premiere at the Teatro Apollo-Tordinona in Rome on 26 December 1821.

⁴⁸ Also known as *Bettina vedova*. The described event took place in 1815.

⁴⁹ Giuseppe Farinelli (1769-1836) composed *La donna di Bessarabia*. First performance in San Moisè, Januari 1817. Stefano Pavesi did not write a new work in 1817. His last operas were *Agatina o La virtù premiata* (1814) and *Celanira* (1815). His next opera was *Arminio ossia L’eroe germano* of 1821. It is

remember that the season was opened with «L'italiana in Algeri» (which also concluded the series), and that *Paini* wrote «La figlia dell'aria». One could say that we suffered an equal fiasco. The enterprise, managed by the husband of the famous *Marcolini*, had not been doing well at all. *Don Fedele* (as the impresario was called), who could not but grant his wife the benefit evening, asked us to see him one morning and requested to write a composition for this occasion. None of us refused. The *farsetta* got the title «Il mazzetto di fiori». We drew straws to decide which piece each of us would compose. *Farinelli* drew the overture, I had the introduction, *Pavesi* the cavatina and *Paini* the final duet. After we had finished the «Mazzetto di fiori» and it was rehearsed, the people poured into the theatre. We asked the impresario for seats high up, so that we were able to follow our contributions properly. We had agreed to meet each other in café Florian after we had heard the result of each of our compositions. So it was done. The overture began; it did not rouse much interest, (to be honest, maestro *Farinelli*⁵⁰, if he was highly valued as a singer because he had a real Italianate sound, he certainly was a poor composer). Having heard his piece there were clearly audible comments in the audience: 'I wait for you outside'. Next came the introduction, a cavatina by the buffo. My composition was also received with disapproval. So I left the theatre to find my colleague *Farinelli* and told him what had happened. After me the result for San Giovanni Bocca d'oro (*Pavesi*) worked out even worse and he followed us out. The whistling increased excessively at the final duet and so the poor *Paini*, who had deserved some applause with his «Figlia dell'aria», could not pride himself on having a better result than we had. Now came the best! The annoyed audience left the theatre and called: 'Is that a bouquet of flowers?'⁵¹ Oh, what rubbish that was! The scoundrels! And repeating this painful salutation, a large part of the public entered café Florian where we had gathered. On hearing this litany, we silently looked to each other. When the friends perceived us they ridiculed us until they all left; and we, humbled by so much glorification, bowed our heads! – That was the result of our «Mazzetto di fiori», presented by the audience of the Teatro di San Moisè to the famous *Marcolini* for her benefit evening!!!

Now I will continue the sequence of my memories. – As soon as I had entered into the obligation to write the opera for the coming carnival of 1821-22 for the large Teatro Argentina, I left Rome only to go to Lucca and stage my «Sacerdotessa d'Irminsul» during the Santa Croce season where my work (already passed in triumph through the theaters of Italy) was enthusiastically received, the more as it was perfectly executed by the celebrated singers *Emilia Bonini* and *Carolina Bassi*, the famous *Niccola Tacchinardi* and the excellent baritone *Goffredo Zuccoli*. The success of my opera was so enormous that H.M. *Maria Luisa* of Bourbon⁵² wanted to appoint me, as a deed of kindhearted benevolence, as her Maestro di Camera e Cappella. For that reason I later settled in Viareggio and considered Lucca as my second homeland⁵³. After that,

not unlikely that in 1817 one of his last operas was performed. Ferdinando Paini's *La figlia dell'aria* premiered in 1815.

⁵⁰ Pacini here referred to the name similarity between the famous castrato Carlo Broschi (1705-1782), who became known under the name Farinelli, and the composer Giuseppe Francesco Finco, who took the last name Farinelli in admiration for the singer, who had assisted him in his musical education and by way of gratitude for his protection.

⁵¹ Translation of *Il mazzetto di fiori*.

⁵² Maria Luisa di Borbone (1782-1824), daughter of the Spanish king Carlos IV. As ex-queen of Etruria she acquired, by disposition of the Congress of Vienna in 1817, the Duchy of Lucca with the honorary title of queen. She was succeeded by her son Carlo Lodovico, duke of Lucca from 1824-1847.

⁵³ Pacini literally wrote: "... e adottai Lucca per mia seconda patria." After the Restoration Italy was no longer united and the political division became as follows: the Kingdom Sardinia-Genoa, Tuscany, Modena and Parma (Austrian vassal states actually), the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia (placed under direct Austrian sovereignty), the Papal States, The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (reigned by the

I returned to Rome, where I wrote during the month of my stay, besides the work on my new opera «Cesare in Egitto», some pieces for harp and pianoforte for the highly esteemed Lady, as well as a small album with romances. In Milan I had already composed some duets in the year 1815, terzettos and quartets for pianoforte, flute, oboe and bassoon, ordered by the good amateur flute player Mr *Giov. Balabio*. In this city I composed a mass that same year, executed in the Madonna del Castello, in which the famous *Filippo Galli* fulfilled the major part to full satisfaction of the numerous listeners. – It was now time to present my new score «Cesare in Egitto». The libretto was written by the erudite poet *Ferretti*⁵⁴, a man of unusual brilliance, good-natured and always in an irrefutable good mood (despite his poor health). He was the director of the tabacco trade and surrounded by cigars he called upon his willing muse, who was remarkable, if not sublime. It so happened that he, overburdened by the large number of assignments he had accepted, wanted to send a greetings card to a composer on the occasion of New Year's Eve or Assumption, but addressed it to the boys of the coffee house or the messengers of the theatre, and included a duet or a terzetto from an opera buffa or seria, so that he, when aware of the error, exclaimed: 'What do you expect, my friend? ... that bloody shop,

Fra i cigari, lo sale e nicotina,
un asino mi fa sera e mattina'.⁵⁵

I repeat, he was a very kind and witty man.

The result of my «Cesare in Egitto» was very favourable. The most popular parts were the cavatina of the protagonist (*Donzelli*) "Ma dov'è? Perché fuggi a'miei sguardi?", the romance of Cleopatra (*Mombelli*) "Non mi vantar gli allori" and the duet between Cleopatra and Cesare in the second act. Also the terzetto in the first act, beautifully sung by *Mombelli*, *Donzelli* and *Sbigoli*, was very successful, just as the quintet in the second act, which was the cause (this I say regretfully) of the death of the above mentioned tenor *Sbigoli*: he had to sing the same phrase as was sung by *Donzelli* just before, and because of his eagerness to get the same applause from the audience as *Donzelli*, he strained his voice so severely which caused him to bleed profusely, with the result that shortly thereafter his wife and son were left behind heart broken⁵⁶. – In this

Bourbon dynasty), the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of San Marino. The Principality of Lucca and Piombino was converted into the Duchy of Lucca by the Congress of Vienna, placed under Bourbon administration. In 1847 the Duchy of Lucca merged with Tuscany. In all these states the returned and new rulers took firm steps to a regime of reaction and suppression. Pacini moved from the Papal States to the Duchy of Lucca in 1822.

⁵⁴ Jacopo Ferretti (1784-1852). Extremely prolific writer and poet. He wrote well over seventy librettos, among others for Rossini (his libretto for *La cenerentola* was his first success), Donizetti and Mercadante. During the greater part of his active life he had the monopoly of the papal tabacco industry and trade and wrote his literary works in his spare time.

⁵⁵ "All day between cigars, salt and nicotine, makes me feel like a donkey!"

⁵⁶ Americo Sbigoli (17..-1822) performed the role of Rolomeo Dionisio in *Cesare in Egitto* as a second tenor. Pacini wrote about the unfortunate event that caused Sbigoli's death: "... sforzava siffattamente la voce che gli produsse un getto di sangue, ..." (orig. p. 34). There has been some misunderstanding about the exact cause of his sudden death. Ashbrook has put it as follows "... had the misfortune of bursting a blood vessel in his throat, ..." (*Donizetti and his operas*, p. 23); Steiner-Isenmann described it as: "Die übermenschliche Anstrengung ließ eine Ader platzen (the superhuman effort made burst a vein)." (*Gaetano Donizetti: sein Leben und seine Opern*, p. 51). Other sources speak of bursting of a carotid. Anyway, Sbigoli died within a few days and left behind his pregnant wife and four young children. A benefit concert in the Argentina on 15 February yielded the distressed family six thousand liras. Donizetti was in great trouble by Sbigoli's death when preparing the premiere of his *Zoraida di Granata*. This performance, in which Sbigoli would sing the part of Abenamet, was planned mid January 1822 in the same Teatro Argentina. An other second tenor was not available on short term, so that Donizetti was forced to rewrite the role as a *musico* role for the contralto Adelaide Mazzanti and

composition I also worked in accordance with my usual system of melodic simplicity, variability in the cabalettas and unsophisticated instrumentation. For the terzetto in the first act I invented a largo in a form unusual at that time, in the sense that it was my idea to let the soprano sing first, repeated as a canon by two tenors in a lower octave (one after the other), whereas the soprano put in elegant variations, yielding a very nice effect. After my opera was performed, *Donizetti* was very successful with «Zoraida di Granata» and in that occasion two scores came into existence, a Pacinian and the other one Donizettian; however, we shook hands and as from then we appreciated and respected each other as good colleagues.

CHAPTER V

Donizetti was facing more misfortune in the beginning of his career than myself, because, although «Zoraida di Granata» and «L'esule di Roma», were favourably welcomed, as were «Gli esiliati in Siberia» and a number of his other works as well, the starting point of his splendid career was nevertheless not until «Anna Bolena», composed for *La Pasta*, *Rubini*⁵⁷ en *Tamburini* for the carnival season of 1930-31 in the Teatro Carcano, where also *Bellini's* heavenly «La Sonnambula» saw the light. These two celebrated composers, whose fame was growing with good reason, were strongly different in character. The first one (*Donizetti*) had a very fruitful talent and he was versatile in every area of composition. The second (*Bellini*) had an oversensitive mind. When *Rossini* rightly bears the title of the *Dante* of music, *Donizetti* should be considered (as the *avvocato Cicconetti*⁵⁸ used to say) as the *Ariosto* of the divine art of music, and *Bellini*, in my opinion, as the *Tasso*.

In the spring of 1822, when a small cargo ship, owned by H.M. the duchess of Lucca, was at the Fiumicino harbour, the captain offered me to travel with him. I accepted the invitation and disembarked at Viareggio, an ever growing town, where I went live with much pleasure. I had a small house built there with the little money I had put aside, and as soon as the building was finished I let my family come over, whom naturally were very dear to me, especially my beloved mother, a real angel of conjugal and maternal love.⁵⁹

postpone the first night until 22 January. Moreover, the opera was performed with three cuts and was revised soon after. Nevertheless it was *Donizetti's* first great success.

⁵⁷ The tenor Giovanni Battista Rubini (1794-1854) and the bass Antonio Tamburini (1800-1876) may be counted among the greatest singers of the belcanto era and achieved immortal fame as first performers of numerous roles in operas of Bellini, Coccia, Donizetti, Mercadante and Pacini. It is generally assumed that Rubini, who started his musical career as a violinist at the age of twelve in the Teatro Riccardi in Bergamo, is unparalleled up to our days. He was titled 'king of the high F's' after the first performance of Bellini's *I Puritani*. During *Donizetti's* dying days in 1848 Rubini sang with a nurse the duet 'Verrano a te sull'aure' from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, without leading to any recognition of his own piece by the composer. Rubini created the tenor parts in Pacini's *Niobe*, *Il talismano* and *Giovanna d'Arco*. Tamburini was heard in the premiere of *Il talismano* together with his wife Marietta Gioia-Tamburini.

⁵⁸ Filippo Cicconetti, author of *Vita di Vincenzo Bellini* (1835) and *Vita di Gaetano Donizetti* (1864).

⁵⁹ The house was situated alongside the Canale Burlamacca, now 7 Piazza Pacini, which survived the heavy bombardments of 14 June 1944, when German bombers wanted to destroy the Italian warships in the harbour nearby and reduced the entire neighbourhood to ruins. However, as a result of a little historical and cultural sense, the house did not escape from the wrecking ball to make room for a modern six-storey apartment building. In this house Pacini wrote his most important works, e.g. *Saffo*.



Pacini's house in Viareggio

After having organized all this, I spent the rest of the year in Pisa or Lucca. In Pisa I got acquainted with the dear and respectable doctor *Guadagno* and professor *Rosini*, as well as with *Vaccà* and various other great talents. – During carnival of 1823 I went to Milan where my «*La Vestale*» would be performed in La Scala. During that season the renowned *Mercadante* composed his «*Amleto*» for the same theatre. – My work was equally successful as my preceding operas. In this opera I paid more attention to the instrumentation and the introduction, consisting of a chorus of Vestals, followed by the cavatina of the high priest (*Lablache*⁶⁰) which, thanks to the freshness of the melodious cabaletta “*Sempre così felici saran di Roma i giorni*”, was highly praised by the intelligentsia and the connoisseurs likewise. *La Beloc*, although no longer in full possession of her vocal means, was still an artist of great stature. – *La Fabbrica* (Licinio) had a supple and touching voice, I can definitely say that. Aside from having a charming figure, she was witty and sang perfectly. The tenor *Monelli*, rejected by the audience earlier, roused great enthusiasm with his aria in the second act “*Non altro che Giulia ai numi richiede*”. During the summer I returned to Lucca where I composed «*Temistocle*» for great artists as *Ferlotti*, *Pisaroni*, *Tacchinardi* etc. During that season there «*Didone*» of *Mercadante* was also performed, which was more appreciated than my work. That same performance was repeated in Livorno next autumn by the clever impresario *Lanari* and there precisely the opposite of the success in Lucca happened: «*Temistocle*» won the honours instead of «*Didone*». There is no accounting for taste! ... Inconsistencies of the theatre!!!

The next carnival season I took a rest. In the spring of 1824 I was contracted again for Milan by the impresario of the Teatro alla Scala where «*Isabella ed Enrico*» first saw the light, an insignificant work, the success of which was in proportion to the quality of my composition. During calm periods I occupied myself with the study of the operas of the French masters from the

⁶⁰ Luigi Lablache (1794-1858), sang as a boy alto the solos in Mozarts Requiem at Haydns funeral in 1809. Lablache was a bass singer of great reputation during the belcanto era and established his name in operas of Rossini, Donizetti – he was the first Don Pasquale – and Mercadante. Lablache created the leading bass parts in nine operas of Pacini. He performed the solos for bass in Mozarts Requiem at the funerals of Beethoven and Chopin.

time in which our *Rinuccini*⁶¹, accompanied by *Maria de'Medici*, travelled to the capital at the Seine, where he introduced the principles of the music drama. I especially studied the operas by the famous *Lully*, then those by *Rameau*, *Mondonville*, *Berton*, *Mouret* etc. etc., thereafter came *Philidor*, *Monsigny*, *Grétry* and finally compositions by *Méhul*, *Boieldieu* and others. I shall not treat at length the compositions of these famous masters, since all are, in the light of the age in which they lived, praiseworthy. I will only say that my greatest admiration went to *Méhul* and *Boieldieu*, because their compositions are more melodious and powerful than those of the others, as far as their language allows. And when it comes to this, I take the liberty to remark that no other country can ever deprive us of the primate as regards inspiration, since our charming language and consequently our poetry, aimed at the rhythm and smoothness of the verses, are the major principles of our melodic phrasing. The Germans and English cannot surpass us because of the harshness of their pronunciation; not even the French, despite the richness of their language, in view of the irregularity of verse form, the lack of means of expression, the diphthongs and certain letters that should be pronounced with nasal sounds at the end of a word. It is true that the Germans and the French are our masters in the field of declamation, but the pure declamatory music is no longer music, because it is degenerated, deprived of its original value: the melody. *Haydn* himself, the great German, has frequently said so; and *Carpani*⁶² confirms it in his *Haydine*. What would a poet be without ideas? A simple versifier. And a composer without melodies? A maker of harmonies or perhaps just a writer of notes. But I notice that I have entered into an area that should have avoided. So I turn around and go back.

After my semi-fiasco of «*Isabella ed Enrico*» I returned to my family where, a few days later, I was approached with the proposal to compose the *opera d'obbligo*⁶³ for the royal theatre San Carlo in Naples. This theatre, and that of La Fenice in Venice were the only two of first rank in which I had not yet presented one of my productions so far. I could hardly believe, therefore, that I would get the opportunity to try my fortune on the greatest of the Napolitan stages, the battle ground of so many celebrated men, among them the latest to abandon his powerful position was the giant from Pesaro. In the same year the famous impresario *Barbaia* also quit the management of the Royal Theatres of that enchanting city:

“Cui il sorriso d’Iddio indora il cielo”.⁶⁴

*Glosopp*⁶⁵ was the successor of the ‘king of impresarios’. This is what the aforesaid *Barbaia* used to be called, because he certainly deserved such a distinctive title for his splendid productions, his honesty, his excellent character and the great competence he had for conducting this demanding company. But even before the year was over, *Glosopp* left his responsibility anew to his predecessor; this will be explained later.

⁶¹ Ottavio Rinuccini (1562-1621). Wrote the text of Jacopo Peri’s *Dafne*, considered the very first opera. He also cooperated with Claudio Monteverdi.

⁶² Giuseppe Carpani (1752-1825). Author of *Le Haydine, ovvero Lettere sulla vita e le opere del celebre maestro Giuseppe Haydn*. Padova, 1823.

⁶³ Opera d’obbligo. A new opera written for a certain theatre under a contract by which the theatre obtained the exclusive rights of the first performances of that work, with the obligation towards the composer to stage the same. The opposite is the ‘opera in ripieno’, an opera premiered before in the same theatre or elsewhere.

⁶⁴ “Whose sky is granted a golden lustre by the smile of God”.

⁶⁵ Joseph Glossop (1755-1836) has simultaneously been the impresario of the Teatro San Carlo and the Teatro alla Scala for some time. He unexpectedly quit both posts to work at the Royal Coburg Theatre (continued as The Old Vic Theatre Company in 1929).

It was my friend *Gaetano Pirola* from Milan who proposed the contract to me. It took us very few words to reach an agreement and I departed for Naples. – The libretto which I set to music was «*Alessandro nelle Indie*», a subject already treated by the emperor of poets⁶⁶, whose work was basically made use of by the versifier *Smith* when he amplified it for the modern stage⁶⁷. I set to work. It was an arduous task, since I had to present myself to a most demanding public, accustomed to applaud the great works of *Cimarosa*, *Paisiello*, *Guglielmi*, *Zingarelli* and *Mayer* and lastly, not to mention others, of *Rossini*. – I thought that under that gracious sky, where the sun shone so radiantly and where myriads upon myriads of stars continuously arched over the serene nights; I thought, I repeat, that the overpowering taste of all those numerous people must be the melody, and that thought was confirmed by continuously hearing very sweet songs, truly original and moving, and flourishing in a marvelous fashion. I concentrated therefore on finding ideas that were pure and simple, not neglecting however to take care of the concerted and instrumental part, in which I was gradually making progress by studying the effects of the various families of instruments, and a growing appreciation of the great German composers. The company that performed «*Alessandro nelle Indie*» consisted of the ladies *Adelaide Tosi*⁶⁸ and *Caterina Liparini*, as well as the famous *Nozzari*, known as the ‘father of tenors’, and of the bass *Moncada*. The rehearsals began. The performers maintained a discouraging silence. Only the celebrated *Crescentini*, who held the post of *maestro di bel canto* at the Royal Conservatory (and who watched over *Tosi*, recommended to him by a distinguished person), encouraged me and assured me that I would get applause, since my earlier mentioned work contained wonderful melodies! The orchestra was directed by that emperor of conductors, *Giuseppe Festa*⁶⁹, although a friend of my father (who in that same season was singing as a *buffo italiano*⁷⁰ at the royal Teatro del Fondo), maintained the same silent attitude as the artists, though he did not neglect to ensure that the performance was perfect. To tell the truth, it was only then that I learned how the singers ought to be accompanied, so that 30 violins, 8 violas, 8 cellos and 12 double basses would sound like a single instrument. – Then came the first fatal night! The theatre was packed, since a judgement would be pronounced upon a new opera of a young composer. I was amazed (at least at that time) at the behaviour of the

⁶⁶ The ‘cesareo poeta’ Pacini here referred to is Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782). His libretto *Alessandro nell’Indie* from 1729 had already been set to music in the eighteenth century by numerous composers, among which Galuppi, Paisiello, Cimarosa and Cherubini.

⁶⁷ *Smith* was a man of some talent, but poverty was so much his constant companion, that he gave off an inexpressible melancholy, if only by his personality. He would often repeat, when presenting himself at the door of the room where I was: “I am deprived of gold and silver, and copper is not to be seen either”. In the end he was, in the true sense of the term, a real Don Eutichio!!!

‘Smith’, as cited in Pacini’s text, is the librettist Giovanni Schmidt (1775-after 1840), together with Andrea Leone Tottola attached as a poet to the royal theatres of Naples. Although Tottola is usually referred to as the librettist of Pacini’s *Alessandro nell’Indie*, it is evident that Schmidt has been rewriting the text for this occasion. Don Eutichio is a character from *I falsi monetari ovvero Don Eutichio e Sinforosa: melodramma giocoso*. Music by Lauro Rossi, libretto Jacopo Ferretti. 1834, revised in 1844

⁶⁸ *Adelaide Tosi*, a celebrated singer, the daughter of one of the most prominent and respected lawyers of Milan, later became countess Palli.

⁶⁹ *Festa* had such merit that all composers, without exception, bowed down for him. He attended all piano rehearsals, and once he had understood the ideas of the maker, he studied how to draw such effects from them that even the composer had never imagined. *Mayr*, when he put his *Medea* upon the stage of this large theatre, wept for tenderness: and he who is recording these memoirs, found himself experiencing indescribable emotions many times. Few indeed are the conductors nowadays who may be compared with *Festa*! *Mariani* first and foremost: then *Bassi*, *De-Carlo*, *Ferrarini*, *Vannuccini*, and a very few others.

⁷⁰ A *basso buffo* sang in Italian, as opposed to the Neapolitan dialect.

audience. One could say that one was truly in a court theatre. The spectacle began. A perfect silence reigned throughout the performance! ... Not a single applause for the artists, and in consequence neither for the poor composer as well. At the end of the opera a subdued hissing was heard throughout this vast auditorium. The reader might feel the state I was in! I had passed the entire evening feeling I was pilloried (since it was still the custom that the composer had to be seated at the harpsichord⁷¹ with no other task than turn pages for the cello and the double bass), between hope and fear, having been warned that the public of San Carlo never applauded at the first hearing of a new piece of music, and being assured that even the giant from Pesaro had suffered the same fate with his masterpieces, beginning with «*Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra*»⁷². But the hissing at the end of the performance had scared me! That night I could not sleep and I reproached myself for having the bad idea to accept a contract, whereas for the last eight years and more that exceptional genius *Rossini* had been creating so many sublime compositions there. But what could I do? ... Did I have to withdraw, even when it were not easy to do so: as anyone who has experienced the nerves of a first night will understand. My God! What hours of agony those are for a poor composer of music!! – But enough of that. Now we are at the second performance. While the artists were getting dressed I was pacing up and down the stage like an idiot. And suddenly, there was the theatre *attitante*⁷³ to advise me that His Majesty the King would come to the performance that evening. To be honest, I did not know whether or not I ought to congratulate myself upon hearing this news. I questioned the aforesaid attitante (who was a certain Mr *Gioia* at that time) on the matter and he told me very dryly: 'Maestro, this night there will be no hisses'. Ah I replied, well that's something. – Little by little, the people were flowing into the vast auditorium. The King had only just entered his box when the opera commenced. H.M. *Ferdinando IV*⁷⁴, with his two-pointed hat (which out of habit he ever kept in hand in order not to be bothered by the footlights, and to mark the beat, being a very great lover of music), set about listening. A short prelude was followed by an introductory chorus and then *Tosi's* cavatina. Her voice pleased the King very much and the way she declaimed the recitative, did H.M. exclaim a sonorous *brava!* The entire auditorium repeated in similar fashion *brava!* A greater silence than ever fell. – During the cavatina the *brava!* and the *bene!* were repeated several times by the King and the public. The prelude of the cabaletta followed, executed in unequalled manner by the orchestra; its rather nice and elegant motif (which later became very popular) pleased, so that the attention of the auditors redoubled. The singer became animated and a thunderous *brava!* and *bravo maestro!* was heard from all at the end of the verse. After some bars for the chorus the motif of the cabaletta (until then

⁷¹ A practice that lasted until 1839 and which I abolished when I gave *Saffo* upon that stage.

⁷² When *Rossini* rehearsed this work with a concertato piece in the second act, called *alla Palestrina*, followed by an allegro preceded by a blow on the big drum, it happened that one of the noble gentlemen, attached to the inspection of the royal theatres, had fallen asleep during the passage in question. When he suddenly woke up with a start by the blow of the non-harmonic instrument, he asked the maestro what was the matter. 'Nothing! It was a blow on the big drum I put in the right place to awake those bl... bast... who had fallen asleep.' Everybody laughed heartily at this very witty answer of the maestro.

⁷³ The *attitante* is a person attached to the management of the Royal Theatres, whose task it is to go to the Royal Palace to find out if the King or other members of the Royal Family are going to attend the performance.

⁷⁴ *Ferdinando* (1751-1825), a Spanish Bourbon, was king of the Two Sicilies from 1816-25 as *Ferdinando I*. Before that he was king of Naples (1759-1799, 1799-1805, 1815-1816) as *Ferdinando IV* and king of Sicily (1759-1816) as *Ferdinando III*. *Ferdinando* inherited the kingdoms Naples and Sicily from his father, when the later became king *Carlos III* of Spain. King *Ferdinando I* passed away three months after the first performance of *Alessandro nelle Indie*.

imagined by me in a shorter version) was taken up again, and at the end of the second verse H.M. gave the sign for applause, and the whole audience emitted a cry of real enthusiasm. At such a metamorphic and unexpected surprise I thought that I was dreaming. I was unable to hide my emotions. The first double bass, maestro *Mara*, a musician of infinite merit, who had comforted so many celebrated composers before, said to me: 'You will stay among us for a long time. You have won a huge battle! Enjoy it'. Good, good God! I exclaimed, this way I will assure the future of my parents and my whole family, then existing of that angel of a mother, my good father (who due to his kindheartedness was always short of money, because what he had earned he spent to assist his fellow men in a truly unique and generous way), of my brother *Francesco*, my sister *Claudia* – my other sister *Giuseppina* was married to Mr *Gaetano Giorgi* from Rome, and an aunt, besides a dedicated servant who had saved my life. – In short, the opera went from good to better, for the aforementioned *Tosi*, *Liparini* and *Nozzari* accomplished miracles of value. The success in the end was such that my «Alessandro nelle Indie» was performed upon that most demanding stage for a good 70 evenings in succession⁷⁵.

CHAPTER VI

The morning after the first performance of «Alessandro nelle Indie» I was advised by the Duca di *Noia*, then superintendent of the Royal Theatres, that I was obliged to go and thank H.M., which I did not fail to do. I went to Portici, where the aforesaid H.M. resided during the summer season. I let myself be announced. After a few moments I was invited in. The salon in which the King received me was almost dark. – I entered as softly as I could, but as I did, two large dogs came barking towards me! I was scared to death! The King in his great voice shouted: *Tene ca, Lupo!* The dogs quietened down and Ferdinando resuming said: *Ne mastro, te ne spaventato? non è gnente!*⁷⁶ – I could breathe again and taking courage I replied that I had taken the liberty to come and thank him for the great condescension he had shown with his presence and with applauding my work. 'Bravo! bravo! (added the King), you have composed beautiful music: it has highly pleased me and I shall come to the theatre often. You are Sicilian, are you not?' – Your Majesty, yes, I replied. – 'Bravo! I am very pleased. *La Tosi* is an excellent singer, she has a beautiful voice and articulates her words well'. Then H.M. showed me out. With no little pride I told my father what had happened. He (poor man!) had been my companion in sadness, and now he was my companion in this time of joy. After having assisted several evenings at the continuous triumph of «Alessandro nelle Indie», I returned to Viareggio, where my mother and the other members of my family already lived in my small house.

My father finished his engagement with impresario *Glosopp* on 25 March 1825 and joined me in Viareggio. I had met a *former relationship*, which I was forced to break off under certain circumstances (which did not harm my name

⁷⁵ Here Pacini seems to exaggerate a little. Thomas G. Kaufman kept it at no more than 38 performances during the year 1824-25, then a record for the Teatro San Carlo, and in that same theatre surpassed by *I Lombardi*, not before 1847-48, with 39 performances. To give an idea how telling the first series of 38 performances was: next were Mercadante's *Orazi e Curiazi* in 1846 with 25 performances including the first night, followed by *Lucia di Lammermoor* with 22, *Saffo* with 21 and *Roberto Devereux* with 19 (published in the booklet of the cd-recording of *Alessandro nell'Indie*, Opera Rara, ORC 35, based on information provided by Kaufman).

⁷⁶ Well maestro, did it frighten you? that's nothing!

at all). But a matter like this could only be solved by taking a wife⁷⁷. One morning at the end of May I said to my father: – Do you want to accompany me to Naples? – What will we be doing there? (he replied). – I am going to get a wife. – A wife (he added), are you mad? – No, I am serious. The reason for my decision became clear to him and three days later my plan was put into action. I went on a journey accompanied by my father. He kept asking me who is the young woman chosen by me as my companion. I laughed at such interrogation and replied: – The first one I encounter upon arrival in Naples, and if she pleases me, she will be my wife. – Oh! oh! (he interrupted me), you are mad indeed. – No, I am not joking; I am telling the truth, as you well know, that during the time I was in Naples, I more than once visited the house of H.E. the duke of *Noia* and some of his respectable family. – Well, if this is the case (my father replied), I suspect this will be an excellent marriage. – So much the better! If I approve of the young woman, you will be content as well. – When arrived in Rome we stayed some days with my sister *Giuseppina*, who had become the wife of *Gaetano Giorgi*, a very talented man and extremely rich at that, but who forfeited an inheritance of 300 thousand scudi as a result of poor judgment. During our stay in the eternal city, my father wrote to his friend *Niccola Castelli* in Naples, father of the young lady, that he had the intention to see me married and that his daughter could be my wife indeed. He clarified his own thoughts about the matter to his friend, and added that if he agreed, they would meet in Aversa. And so it happened: when I saw the young *Adelaide* (that was the name of my first angelic wife) to my great delight, I married her within eight days! That's what we call marching with the drums beating. After the wedding we moved to Portici to live in a house of my wife's parents.

Barbaia proposed me to write two operas, a one-act work to be performed in the month of July, and the other one in three acts. The price we agreed upon for both operas came to no less than 1200 ducati! It goes without saying that I easily accepted the contract. My father returned to his family and I composed «*Amazilia*», staged in the evening of 18 July of the previously mentioned year 1825, and subsequently «*L'ultimo giorno di Pompei*», performed in November on the name day of H.M. the Queen. «*Amazilia*», executed by the famous *Fodor*, *Giovanni David* and *Lablache* pleased very much; but «*L'ultimo giorno di Pompei*» became the greatest triumph of my first artistic period. I will set all modesty aside by simply exposing the truth. The whole of Naples got enthusiastic by this work and it provided me with a laurel wreath that was quite difficult to obtain from that musical population. I received a congratulatory letter by order of H.M. King *Francesco*⁷⁸ and I was appointed corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. *Barbaia*, upon this truly sensational success (after which he was appointed in Milan and other capitals as well), offered me a contract for nine years as director of his theatres, at stipulations and conditions similar to those the great Pesarese had obtained. – I accepted.

I had the obligation to compose two operas a year; to carry out the performances of same⁷⁹, and be part of the board of directors in the absence of

⁷⁷ Pacini somewhat mysteriously refers to his relationship with princess Paolina Borghese Bonaparte from 1821-25. He lived with her in the Villa Paolina in Viareggio, from 1822 until he married Adelaide Castelli in 1825.

⁷⁸ King Francesco I of Bourbon (1777-1830), the eldest son of Ferdinando I, became king of the Two Sicilies after his father's death on 4 January 1825. Francesco I died in November 1830.

⁷⁹ [...] porre in iscena i spettacoli. The composer's contributions were not limited to the musical part, extensive though it is: the composition, the rehearsals, supervising the work of the copiers, revisions of the score and the obligation to attend to the first three performances, initially at the harpsichord to accompany the recitatives, later standing next to the orchestra to mark the starts of the vocal soloists and give dynamic instructions (sometimes with a baton). He was involved in all aspects of the performance of his new opera, as well as the librettist, including the staging.

the impresario. I was paid, as I said, the same compensation as my famous predecessor, consisting of 200 ducati a month, board and lodging, free travelling and a benefit evening every year. In my «L'ultimo giorno di Pompei» (I ask the reader to excuse me for having to tell something about the aforesaid composition), I paid much attention to the concertato pieces, and I was looking to some new form, which I believe to have put into practice indeed in the quintet of the first act: “Se i Numi fausti, sperar mi lice”; in the prayer of the second act, all of it in one tempo with a single orchestral movement, repeated by the various stringed instruments, interwoven with woodwind in harmony with brass; and in the first tempo of the duet between Ottavia and Sallustio. I was working on new cabalettas that would become most popular, to mention: “Basti ad esprimere il mio contento” (in which the famous conductor *Festa* put an effect, not imagined by me, of *piano* and *forte* halfway through a bar, which elicited a cry to the audience), as well as the quintet cited before: “Se i Numi fausti, sperar mi lice”, the duet “Nume, tu mitiga il nostro affano” and “Del figlio mio dolente”. Finally I put more coherence in the colour of the composition; but, I confess, in some parts of the score the Rossinian style is noticeable. – *La Tosi, Giovanni David, Lablache*, the other tenor *Ciccimara*, the profound bass *Benedetti* and the two sisters *Marzocchi* were the performers of my fortunate work. Every word of praise I would devote to all these valuable interpreters is owed completely to their own merit. That was quite a company! The same applies to the musicians of the orchestra who met no small criteria indeed! – A splendid stage machinery! – Cav. *Niccolini* devised the scenery of the drama, and the poet *Tottola* wrote the verses. – I also owe this real success for a great deal to its climaxes, staged for the first time. The spectacle did not work too well at the general rehearsal, especially the Triumphal scene and that of the Vesuvius. For that reason *Barbaia*, who was driven to the wall many times, had to throw some displeasing words to me, to which I answered: ‘Who do you think you are talking to, murderer! (this was one of the honourable titles he used to address those whom he really liked, as well as villain, liar and so on, to which I replied with epithets of the same similarity!). ‘Is it my fault that the mechanism does not work well? Get angry at those who deserve it, not at me, you mutt!’ He calmed down nail-biting. After the first night, which was very successful, he flung his arms around my neck, and since then our friendship was sacred and I always retained warm feelings and a respect beyond words.

Upon having achieved this triumph I wanted to bring my beloved companion to Viareggio, so that she could be introduced to my family. It happened early in January, when I had to return to Naples in order to carry out the new contract, that my wife, who was expecting and near her term, had to stay with my family where she gave the light to a girl who I named *Paolina*. I was back in Naples, however *Barbaia*, who had acquired the management of the Teatro alla Scala, together with Mr *Gio. Batta Villa*, sent me to Milan, where he performed my «La gelosia corretta» in spring, an opera buffa which did not disappoint. After that I returned to Naples. – I composed «Niobe» for the gala night of the Queen. – When I had returned from Milan, *Barbaia* had left for Paris to contract the celebrated *Pasta*. Meanwhile, noticing that no money was brought in, I put «L'ultimo giorno di Pompei» on stage again, with permission of the administrator Mr *Cesare Politi*, son-in-law of the aforesaid *Barbaia*, with *La Lande*⁸⁰ instead of *Tosi*, who had terminated her engagement; and this opera produced the effect of a talisman. – The public flocked into the theatre and

⁸⁰ The singer la Lande, Pacini mentioned here, was the French Henriette Méric-Lalande (1798-1867), celebrated interpreter of the soprano parts in operas by Bellini, Donizetti, Pacini en Rossini, among others. She performed the leading parts in premieres of four Bellini operas at La Scala, where she created Lucrezia Borgia in 1833. Written onwards in this text as Lalande.

somehow I took care of the cashbox of the enterprise. *Barbaia* however, upon his return, gave me a good scolding with his customary stopgap of murderer, because I had done something that he had not given an order for; hereupon I replied, in the same tone and with the same music, pointing out that he found money instead of *nails*! Thereupon he repeated with a laugh: *Very good, rascal*, ordered a plate of vermicelli and we made peace.



The Eruption of Vesuvius from Pacini's *The Last Day of Pompeii* in *Raccolta di varie decorazioni sceniche inventate ed eseguite per il R. Teatro alla Scala di Milano* (Collection of Various Scenic Decorations Designed and Executed for the Royal Theater at La Scala, Milan), about 1827–32, Carlo Sanquirico (Italian, active 1820s–1830s) after Alessandro Sanquirico (Italian, 1777–1849). Hand-colored aquatint. The Getty Research Institute, 93-B15110

Giovanni Pacini's operatic extravaganza *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei* (*The Last Day of Pompeii*), premiered in Naples in 1825. While its title resembles that of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's epic novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), the plot was entirely different, though it naturally climaxed with the eruption of Vesuvius.

No expense was spared in simulating the volcanic event and the destruction of Pompeii in the final scene of the opera. Accounts of the original production, in Teatro San Carlo on November 19, 1825, describe how, as the music thundered, parts of the scenery shook violently; massive columns collapsed and broke apart, causing huge pieces of the vaulting to crash down. For the effects of fire, lava, and ash, a complex lighting system was developed, and large quantities of highly flammable powder were ignited at every performance. The opera became exceptionally popular and traveled to Milan (as seen here), Rome, Vienna, Paris, Venice, and London.

CHAPTER VII

The autumn season of the Teatro San Carlo opened with «Medea» of the great *Mayr*, an opera that had met great approval at its premiere on the same stage with the famous *Colbran*⁸¹ in the title role. *La Pasta*, recommended to the Court of Naples, came over from Paris where she had caused a lot of sensation. In comparison this was of some disadvantage to her. After the «Medea» I performed «Niobe», a truly appropriate opera for that huge stage. The aforesaid *La Pasta*, *La Ungher*, *Rubini*, *Lablache* en *Ciccimarra* supported my new successful work. After some rehearsals at the cymbal⁸² all artists expressed their satisfaction with their parts. Only *Rubini*, when he was handed over the part of the cavatina, showed to be a little displeased and he consequently even declared that he neither was able nor would he sing this piece, because, as he said, I had written it for an instrument and surely not for a human throat! I laughed and said to him: ‘You shall sing it, you will bring the house down and you are going to be the idol of the people of Naples, and your fame will increase enormously’⁸³. – No, honestly not, answered the artist, and repeated to *Barbaia* what he had said to me; he began to raise objections to me and to *Barbaia*, saying jokingly to both of us that we had longer ears than Midas!⁸⁴ Yes, no, no, yes, the three of us repeated, and when finally the Sicilian fury went to our heads, I said to *Rubini*: ‘If you don’t sing this, I will let the orchestra play it; but I do not change it as a man of honour’, and I turned my back towards him. – The fatal first night came on 19 November 1826, moreover the anniversary of «L’ultimo giorno di Pompei». The theatre was packed. The whole Royal Court had come in full gala. The auditorium was splendidly illuminated, as was always the case on name days of Their Majesties, and one shall have to admit that not any theatre can compete with San Carlo in Naples when it comes to glory and elegance. – My work indicated above, «Niobe», began with the dream of Anfione (*Lablache*). The entire audience, including the Royal Court, predisposed towards me, listened intently. The artist sang it wonderfully and there were shouts of *bravo!*, and the same happened to the cabaletta “Se padre felice, consorte beato”. Then came a chorus of maids of Niobe, followed by a kind of cavatina of the famous *Pasta*, at the end leading to a duet with *Ungher*. The first tempo “Invan tuoi pregi ostenti” was excellently sung by the celebrated artist previously mentioned, and elicited many *brava!* from the Court and the audience. There was an increasing approval for the largo of the little duet; and at the end of the stretta (a cabaletta, somewhat renewed in idea and form), the

⁸¹ Isabella Colbran (1785-1845), Spanish soprano, who belonged, together with Maria Malibran, Giulia Grisi en Giuditta Pasta, to the legendary divas of the belcanto era. For many years she has been the prima donna of the San Carlo and had an affair with Domenico Barbaia till Rossini came to Naples. Rossini especially wrote ten operas for the vocal capacity of her voice (a dramatic coloratura soprano) and was married to Colbran from 1822 until 1837. Colbran created Medea in the first performance of *Medea in Corinto* in 1813, the successful opera of Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845), the most important teacher of Gaetano Donizetti.

⁸² Pacini here wrote “Dopo alcune prove di cembalo [...]”. This could well have been a pianoforte. That a harpsichord or cymbal was traditionally placed in the orchestra in Naples until 1839, usually without an actual function, has been explained by Pacini in his footnote number 71.

⁸³ *Rubini*, this extraordinary singer, was highly appreciated during the time I speak of. My prediction proved correct: with the cavatina from *Niobe*: ‘I tuoi frequenti palpiti’ and additionally with *Il Pirata* of the divine Bellini, his fame grew so much, that finally it brought in a capital of three million (pardon me for the trifling sum!) and his name as a singer became immortal.

⁸⁴ Greek mythology. Midas, king of Phrygia, declared in a trial that the flute playing of Pan gave him greater satisfaction than Apollo. The umpire Tmolus, the mountain-god, judged with the words ‘You are not worth having human ears’ and gave Midas the ears of a donkey.

King gave the sign for applause and all people broke out in ovations, as a result of which the singers were called back twice – something that never happened before at a gala night! – for a curtain call. And listen to this... A festive chorus with ballet followed the aforesaid duet and then *Rubini's* cavatina came. Having witnessed the triumph of his colleagues, the artist did not want to be the inferior to them. He sang the first tempo, consisting of some bars of largo, like an angel! The public remained enchanted, the reason why became clear by signs of the most vivid approval. The largo that came next was followed by the prelude of the cabaletta, executed by the orchestra in a marvelous fashion. The audience was no longer calm in their seats. A compelling silence was imposed. *Rubini* sang, as only he could sing, my fortunate inspiration “I tuoi frequenti palpiti”, which caused a general cry, repeated by all of the numerous audience, who turned to the King's box with the exclamation: ‘*E se tu non batti, battimo noi*’⁸⁵. Then the complete Court applauded, and as many as three times the performers were obliged to thank the audience. Then the monumental finale came, prepared by me quite elaborately. Here the act ended; and, starting out to the stage and having just reached the end of the little stairs that brought me there from the orchestra, I found *Rubini* who ingenuously said: ‘Excuse me maestro, I truly was a great numbskull to refuse to sing the cavatina’. To which I replied: ‘In view of the high estimation I have always had for you, I cannot disagree with you’. That's the way singers are! They never know their own strength. – *Rubini*, as said before, then became the world's greatest tenor. This work also enjoyed the honour of triumph, and I received once again a congratulatory letter from the King and several other expressions of homage. – The next day I paid a visit to the famous *Zingarelli*, whom I had the fortune to be acquainted with since 1824, and who wanted to lead me to the refectory of the students. When these youngsters, who had assisted at the first performance of «*Niobe*», saw me, they burst out in acclaims, throwing plates, bottles and whatever they came across, in the air. Among these were my townsman *Bellini*, *Petrella*⁸⁶ and *Luigi Ricci*, the author of so many valuable and charming comic works (coming to my mind are «*Un' avventura di Scaramuccia*», «*Crispino*» and «*Comare*» and many others in the buffo genre, all related to his natural character⁸⁷) and still other works that would achieve an increasing reputation. I was grateful for such an expression of affection of which I have always kept a vivid memory.

In the beginning of December my Sultan (*Barbaia*) let me go to Milan to prepare the program of carnival, and to perform the honourable task to compose the contractually obliged opera of the season. Having arrived in the capital of Lombardy, we agreed upon the beautiful and skilful prima donna *Favelli*, the alto *Brigida Lorenzani*, a very deserving singer, the celebrated tenor *Giovanni David*, as well as the other excellent first tenor *Piermarini* and the basses *Vincenzo Galli* and *Giuseppe Poggiali*. The season was opened with my «*Alessandro nelle Indie*», which reasonably pleased and in which *David* fell out of grace, since the Milanese, perhaps being tired of having heard him so many seasons in succession, laughed at him every time he made a cadenza and sang a cabaletta; for that reason, the aforesaid artist, guessing that it was the music that did not please, advised me to write a new cabaletta for his cavatina. I consented readily, but the result was practically similar to the preceding one. He asked me again for a third one to which I agreed, but this one turned out to

⁸⁵ When you don't clap, we do.

The court etiquette stipulated to never applaud for the singers who were a member of the Regia Cappella, so that *Rubini* and *Lablache*, both belonging to this honourable category, had no applause most of the time. However, in cases like this the Court could deviate from the rules.

⁸⁶ *Petrella* is now rightly the brilliant star of the melodramatic theatre.

⁸⁷ *Ricci* praiseworthily held the position of director of the Cappella del Duomo in Trieste, as well as that of the Istituto musicale and the theatre. He had, in addition to his ingenuity and capacities, a generous heart and an unequalled respectability in exercising his functions.

be worse than the first and the second, so that I replaced it by a fourth and a fifth! All were of no avail! In the end «Ricciardo e Zoraida» of *Rossini* was staged, the opera in which the aforesaid *David* aroused great enthusiasm in Naples. However, not even this sublime music caused any appreciation for the artist to an increasing extent; on the contrary, the matter became so seriously, that the contempt of the public reached the point that the poor *David* appeared on stage with fear and trembling every time. Meanwhile I found myself in a far from pleasant situation, because I had to compose the opera d'obbligo, in which the frequently mentioned artist would have the leading part, while his circumstances were not exactly favourable. I pondered to find a way to bring a singer of such merit back in the favour of the respectable audience of that large theatre, having been cherished a long time by the same public who almost insulted him now⁸⁸. I realised that the public disapproved of *David* in the agile passages and particularly when he made use of the so-called falsetto. All right, I said to myself, I shall help my friend. I went to his home and said to him: 'My dear Giovanni, do you believe I am your sincere admirer? Well then, you should sing in my new work quite differently by abandoning the agility and the falsetto'. The artist was astonished, but when the music was distributed, he immersed himself with excessive joy at studying the part of Agobar I composed for him in «Gli arabi nelle Gallie». This opera had a most splendid success. Besides the general satisfaction, the Milanese people did not stop talking about *David*, who was completely in favour again: *Avì vist? ghem insegnà nù a cantà?* I was very happy that I owed the fortunate result of my composition to this public, since it was only by their mercy that the work, after the initial disapproval and especially the insults towards the tenor, was so enthusiastically received.

When the season was ended I obeyed to the order of *Barbaia* to depart for Vienna immediately, where he had obtained the management of the Italian theatre, joining the greater part of the artists of the Scala to put on stage «*Amazilia*», «*La gelosia corretta*», «*L'ultimo giorno di Pompei*» and «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*», besides Rossinian repertory. – The company consisted of the prima donnas *Lalande*, *Tosi*, *Dardanelli*, the tenors *David*, *Donzelli*, *Monelli* and *Ciccimarra*, the basses *Lablache* and *Ambrosi* and the buffos *Pacini*, etc. etc.

CHAPTER VIII

When the moment of our departure to Vienna had come, I asked *David* if he was able to speak some German, and he replied without hesitation: 'Diavolo! I have been there three times already and you think I cannot speak it?' So much the better, I responded, because I don't know a damn word of it. – We departed. – I will refrain from telling many little stories of adventures I encountered during the journey – and there were many! – I will only say that it took us fifteen days from Milan to Vienna: if we would have travelled by stagecoach it would have lasted only six days, and that because *David* and his family every moment wanted to stop for a rest! So it happened, that *Barbaia*, departing from Naples five days after we did from Milan, arrived in the Austrian capital before us, which was the cause of quite a lot of shouting and scolding from our Sultan. – Before I continue, I will permit myself to tell the reader something in respect of *David's* assertion that he could speak German. We had passed Pontebba and

⁸⁸ *David* was resoundingly successful in *Don Giovanni* of *Mozart*, *Sargino* of *Paër* and in *Gianni di Parigi* of *Morlacchi* in preceding seasons.

entered Tarvis. – Upon arrival at a junction, at the inn where we made a stop, I saw two beautiful girls who only spoke their mother tongue. So I said to our friend: ‘Now it is your turn’, and he began without reasoning: *Guten Morgen, zi Keller*, and he spoke these few words before making gestures to the maidservants to bring us to our rooms. We climbed the stairs and hoped for the best! When entering the rooms, I asked which was mine and my friend answered ‘the choice is yours’. I took the nearest room: – When I looked to the bed I saw a big pillow covering it in length and width. I asked *David* what is the use of that, and he replied: ‘It is a sheet and a blanket’. ‘What, what! – I replied – I want a clean sheet, I don’t want that stuff that has already been used by a hundred people on my belly. So I ask you, my friend, to order what I desire.’ And *David* repeated: *zi Keller*, and took a sheet which was spread over the mattress, after making clear with gestures what he wanted. Then I understood that *David* was completely ignorant of the language of *Metastasio*, which, if I am not mistaken, is called the language of horses rather than humans. – We finally arrived in Vienna. *Balocchino*, the manager of that theatre (in partnership with *Barbaia*), had already opened the season with two operas of *Rossini*: «*Matilde di Chabran*» and «*Zelmira*», a colossal opera full of harmonic beauty and indescribably passionate melodies; I cannot understand why such magnificent work could sink into oblivion, whereas others, considerably less worthy, are celebrated and in vogue. But justice and truth are not always in harmony. – A few days after my arrival «*Amazilia*»⁸⁹ was performed, extended by me to two acts for this theatre by adding a duet between the prima donna and bass and a large scene for the tenor. The opera was received well by this cold but intelligent audience. So I staged «*La gelosia corretta*»; then «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*» and finally «*L’ultimo giorno di Pompei*», which brought in 1900 bavare at my benefit night! All my aforementioned works were received with great acclaim, although there was certainly some criticism (sometimes unjustified), because they undoubtedly wanted to discredit the Italian composers, not failing to declare that perhaps, as I was concerned, the German journals were not completely wrong.

In Vienna I saw again the famous maestros *Weigl* and *Gyrowetz*, with whom I had dealt on an earlier occasion. I had the honour to be introduced to H.H. prince *Metternich*, a man of true amiability and gentleness. In that time the aforepraised H.H. was courting the daughter of the baroness *Laickam*, who was soon to become his wife⁹⁰. Every evening the theatre was closed, and many times after the performance (since in Vienna as a rule public amusement ended no later than 10 o’clock in the evening) there was music at the palace of the baroness mentioned before. The young baroness *Laickam* sang like a little angel. Also present was H.R.H. the prince of Brunswick, a passionate music lover, and also my supreme benefactor *Carlo Lodovico*⁹¹ as well as many other monarchs. Before the spring season had ended, I had to return to Naples to compose my «*Margherita regina d’Inghilterra*», which

Non cadde no, precipitò di sella⁹².

⁸⁹ A review of the Viennese performance of *Amazilia* is published in *The London literary gazette and journal of belles lettres, arts, sciences etc. for the year 1828* (books.google).

⁹⁰ Prince Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar von Metternich (1773-1859), diplomat and chairman of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, married baroness Antoinette von Leykam, countess of Beylstein in 1826. She deceased in 1829.

⁹¹ Carlo Lodovico di Borbone-Parma (1799-1883), was duke of Lucca from 1824 to 1847. After the French occupation, the House of Bourbon was not restored in the dukedom Parma, assigned to Napoleon’s wife Marie Louise of Austria. The Bourbons were compensated by the Congress of Vienna with the dukedom Lucca, where Carlo Lodovico succeeded his mother Maria Luisa di Borbone after her death.

⁹² “... did not fall, no, but was forcefully expelled from the saddle”

After that I assisted at the rehearsals of «*Bianca e Fernando*», the second product of the dear *Bellini*, which scored a success, if not a certain happy enthusiasm, so that I proposed *Barbaia*, and I am proud of it, to accept my famous townsman as a maestro d'obbligo at the Teatro alla Scala, and who then indeed composed for the autumn season of that illustrious stage «*Il pirata*», which was passionately successful, as everybody knows, notwithstanding the fact that my «*L'ultimo giorno di Pompei*», given as the first performance of the season, caused such a rush that the theatre was forced to refuse a certain amount of the crowd every evening. Meanwhile I was offered the contract for the autumn season at the Gran Teatro in Trieste. I asked *Barbaia*'s permission, to which he consented. I composed for that stage «*I crociati a Tolemaide*», which was very successful. – The famous ladies *Camporesi* and *Mariani*, the capable tenor *Piermarini* and the bass *Mariani* supported my work to full satisfaction. – So far, I have told nothing with respect to my latest compositions, namely «*La gelosia corretta*», «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*» and «*I crociati a Tolemaide*». Therefore, I will tell in plain truth how I always used the same system, however with abandoning the crescendo, and I was repeatedly in search of a new form and balance of the pieces, things I did not find easily. But allow me to observe that, as many my contemporaries were in those days, all followed the same school, the same fashion, and were in consequence imitators, just like me, of the Great Star. – But, good God! What was one to do if there was no other way of sustaining oneself? Therefore, if I was a follower of the supreme Pesarese, the others were my equals; they may have been more fortunate in finding melodies, more accurate in their instrumentation, more educated; but the realization and the structure of the pieces was similar to mine. I do not just say that to excuse myself, but in view of the truth only, to which I moreover would add that our predecessors, the famous *Guglielmi*, *Cimarosa* *Paisiello*, etc. etc., who have enriched the art with so many masterworks, all followed the path which then was the trend, in form and composition of the ensemble pieces, as well as in arias, duets and so on.

In the visual arts and in the literature every era has its own style, for which everyone believes to possess the blueprint. Moreover, in my opinion, the creation of new forms depends more on the author of the libretto than on the composer of the music. I would observe, that «*Norma*» and «*La sonnambula*», sublime works of the Genius of Catania, contain passages ingeniously written by the illustrious *Romani*, which strongly differ from many of his other librettos, so that the purely musical formulas differ from those the same *Bellini* used in «*Il pirata*», «*Beatrice*» and in his other works. *Rossini* applied in his great musical poem «*Guglielmo Tell*» a quite different structure than he did in the pieces of «*Il barbiere di Siviglia*», in «*Mosè*» etc., and this can also be seen in «*Don Sebastiano*» by the Swan of Bergamo. Why? Because the text used in these compositions of the great Pesarese and *Donizetti* was not based on Italian poetry, but rather on the French way of phrasing. In conclusion, I permit myself to observe that in view of the difference of style and the way of versifying, our sweet poetry is rather different from that of the modern Lutetia⁹³.

From Trieste I set out for Milan again, where at the end of carnival my «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*» was produced with the tenor *David*, *Lalande*, *Ungher* and *Biondini*. The opera was equally successful as it had been the previous year. Next spring I introduced «*I cavalieri di Valenza*» on the same stage, on a libretto by *Gaetano Rossi*, the *Rossi* who has put more than a hundred melodramas on the Italian stages, and whose works had the honour to be set to music by *Mayr*,

(Torquato Tasso: *Gerusalemme liberata*, canto XIX).

⁹³ Lutetia is the Roman name of the Celtic settlement on which Paris was founded, mentioned by Julius Caesar in his *Commentarii de bello Gallico*.

Pavesi, Meyerbeer, Niccolini, Generali etc. and also by *Rossini*, for whom he wrote, besides «*Tancredi*», «*Semiramide*». *Rossi* was not a good versifier, but had a sense for effect and his librettos always contained elements of great scenic importance. He used to say: «*Mi non son poeta* (he was from Verona) *ma parolaio*»⁹⁴. He had a cheerful disposition and was an exceptional human being. In the time I was busy composing «*I cavalieri di Valenza*», a grave occurrence came over me. My dear companion was, three days after a successful delivery, seized by an attack of fever, and was taken away from me! I was left with two little girls, *Paolina* and *Amazilia*, and a boy named *Lodovico*, who was snatched from me by death after a short time. My sorrow was extremely deep, since in *Adelaide Castelli* I lost an angel of goodness. The reader will certainly be able to imagine the state of depression I fell in; however, I found the strength to finish the work in which I already was making progress, splendidly performed afterwards by *Lalande, Ungher*, the tenor *Winter* and the bass *Biondini*. The result was fairly good. – I asked *Barbaia* for a two months leave to go to my family. Back in Viareggio I was glad to embrace my good parents, my brother *Francesco*, my two dear little girls and my *Lodovico*, who I lost in the time I was there. Only a father can understand the grief that brings the loss of his son!! But this was not the only sadness I was to endure. – I went back to Naples, but I did not pick up my pen until the spring of 1829 to compose «*Il talismano*» for the same theatre⁹⁵ where «*Il barone di Dolsheim*», «*Il falegname di Livonia*», «*Vallace*», «*La Vestale*», «*Isabella ed Enrico*», «*La gelosia corretta*», «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*» and lately «*I cavalieri di Valenza*» were introduced.

CHAPTER IX

The libretto of «*Il talismano*» was written by the erudite mathematician professor *Gaetano Barbieri*, a man of exceptional genius, a very charming conversationalist and one of scrupulous honesty, however, the algebraic formulas and the geometric figures do not go well with poetics. Firstly in calculation, secondly in inspiration. I can remark that in this work I made some progress in the declamatoric form and I tried to empathize with the subject matter to bring some uniformity in the style of the composition, which is not easy to achieve: that is rather the greatest difficulty an author of theatrical works comes across. I have already treated my idea on that matter more amply in a lecture I had the honour to give in October last year in the Sala del Buonomore in the presence of the academic staff and the teachers of the Royal Institute of Music in Florence, reason why I will neglect to enlarge on this subject in these poor memories. – «*Il talismano*» had a favourable success. *Rubini* scored a triumph in this opera, equal to the one he obtained in «*Il pirata*». The excellent *Emilia Bonini*, the famous *Tamburini* and his wife, daughter of the notorious choreographer *Gioia*, and the first-rate bass *Frezzolini*, competed for the success of my new work. – In autumn I composed «*I fidanzati*» for Naples, an opera which was received with real enthusiasm. I continued the system of composition along the same lines as the previous opera and, to tell the truth, some cabalettas succeeded wonderfully, and I believe a terzetto had some merit, because it truly fitted the dramatic concept in a somewhat new form. The scene in question gave me the idea. The libretto

⁹⁴ “I am not a poet, but just a merchant in words”.

⁹⁵ The Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

belonged to the poet *Gilardoni*⁹⁶, young and not untalented, who disappeared from the theatres too soon as a result of his bad health, which snatched him away from his friends and a loving wife. The famous singers *Tosi*, *Boccabadati* and *Lablache* performed my new product in a manner superior to any eulogy. – Prior to my departure from Milan, I had accepted (with the usual permission of my Sultan) the contract for the carnival season of 1830 in Turin and Venice. The illustrious *Felice Romani* should provide me with the librettos. The first one (which I saw in parts, to be used for the Teatro Regio in the capital of the Dora⁹⁷) was entitled «Annibale in Torino». The subject of the second was still to be determined. However, since the aforementioned famous poet was stricken by a disease, I lost the two contracts, which was a personal damage to me, but proved to be advantageous to the art, because, during the time that the matter between me and the aforesaid companies was still pending, instead of me *Bellini* was contracted for Venice, where he composed his «Capuleti e i Montecchi». *Barbaia*, who was in need of a composer for the Scala in Milan, thought it right not to withdraw the assignment he agreed to and had me sent there to perform an other opera on that same stage. Professor *Barbieri*, who wrote «Il talismano» for me, also composed the verses for «Giovanna d'Arco». It will not conceal that a gallant adventure, which made me lose my head, kept me from working⁹⁸. The theatrical season was nearing its end and one entire act was still lacking! The impresario, seeing that I had little intention to fulfill the obligation I accepted, and after having urged me more than once kindly, informed the direction of the theatre about the matter: who, without losing time, reported to the director of police Count *Torresani*⁹⁹, who summoned me to appear, and he made me understand most gently that in case I should not have finished the score within eight days, Santa Margherita¹⁰⁰ would wait for me!! It was abundantly clear to me which way the wind was blowing, so I did not intend to take the opportunity to put this inviting offer into practice! – The feelings of the Milanese public, that had demonstrated me so much benevolence, ran high when the news about me was circulating and devised a plan to hiss me at any cost. The matter had become seriously, since in cases like this envy and slander come in. But what could I do? I had to resign and prepare myself for the great battle! My work was delivered within the required time, even though, as is said, there was not too much laughing matter when *certain very respectable persons* spoke to me in an admonitory tone. But in spite of my

⁹⁶ Domenico Gilardoni (1798-1831), poet and librettist, succeeded Andrea Leone Tottola as the official poet of the Teatro San Carlo. He is especially associated with Donizetti, for whom he wrote the librettos of twelve operas. His collaboration with Pacini remained limited to *I fidanzati*.

⁹⁷ The Dora is one of the four rivers that flow through Turin.

⁹⁸ It was a wellknown fact that from 1828 until 1831 Pacini had a love affair with the Russian countess Julia Samoyloff (1803-1875). Although he did not mention her name, we can assume that the matter described here concerns his relationship with Samoylova. The Russian painter Karl Bryulov, who was said to have an affair with her as well during these years, immortalized her in several portraits, also together with Amabilia and Giovannina Pacini, who were educated by her as foster daughters. Samoylova appears on Bryulov's famous painting "The last day of Pompei" (1830-1831). Bryulov is considered the founder of the Russian romanticism in painting and his many portraits of Samoylova are among his most famous works. Bellini, Donizetti, Pacini and Rossini were among the regular visitors of Julia Samoyloff's salon.

⁹⁹ Carlo Giusto Torresani Lanzfeld, barone di Camponero (1779-1852), an Austrian official and as from 1822 the director of police in Milan. In 1833 he foiled the conspiracy of La Giovine Italia in Lombardy and suppressed the patriotic demonstrations in the early months of 1848 in a hard way. Torresani was also responsible for the censorship. Opera librettos were examined on blasphemous expressions and politically unwelcome utterances.

¹⁰⁰ Santa Margherita was a prison in the centre of Milan, serving as a place where political delinquents were confined in that era. One of these was the literator Silvio Pellico, a patriot and suspected of being a member of the Carbonari and of political activism, who wrote *Le mie prigioni* during his ten years of captivity, from 1820 until his release in 1830.

promptness «Giovanna d'Arco» only went on stage on the last four evenings of the season. Here we are at the first performance. The theatre was packed. The practice was, that when a maestro had encouraged himself, he presented himself by going to the cymbal to greet the applause. I had always been given such homage, but that evening I was received with a not too flattering and encouraging salutation.

‘From life to the grave is just a small step!’

And I: ‘Applause and hissing make the same racket’.

After a short prelude the curtain rises. A dream of Giovanna (*Lalande*) is listened to in silence. A chorus and a recitative is followed by the cavatina of the protagonist, consisting of a martial allegro in *primo tempo* in $\frac{3}{4}$, for which the famous singer is loudly applauded. The strongly heroic stretta in powerful phrases and in only sixteenth note bars, was excessively pleasing, reflected by the wish to have it repeated, but was not allowed because this was prohibited by regulations. There was a prolonged applause for the singer, just as there was no end to the ps! ps! ps! psst...s...s... when some friend or benevolent person pronounced the maestro's name. Next came the cavatina of Lionello (*Rubini*). This caused the same demonstrations as before. And listen to this...

The cavatina was followed by a duet between Giovanna and Lionello, at the beginning of which Lionello moves forward to fight with Giovanna who went after him. When stabbing the armour-dressed Giovanna with the tip of his sword, he tore her trousers! Oh my goodness!! Good night! Whom ever saw it, saw it... laughing, hissing; hissing, laughing, ps! psst...s...s..., so that part of the duet is sung amidst a lot of commotion, so to say:

Che mi cadde sulla testa, tal di fischi una tempesta;
Che crollata, fracassata, qual da fulmine restò.¹⁰¹

Finally the audience calmed down and the piece got some approval. The cavatina of Carlo (*Tamburini*) blew neither hot nor cold: the final was heard in silence, but when the curtain fell, again the same pss... ss...s... The second act begins with an aria of Lionello preceded by a chorus. *Rubini* sang the piece like an angel, for which he was exuberantly applauded with three curtain calls!... but for the poor composer there was just hissing!! A concertato piece followed, that terminated with a simple melody of the baritone, executed by *Tamburini* as from heaven. The opera ended with the *rondeau* of Giovanna which produced frenetic exclamations and shoutings for all artists, but for the composer of «Giovanna d'Arco» there was still the same contempt. The three other nights (which concluded the season) the success still increased: however, Pacini always received the same treatment! That's the way a theatre is! – Was the public wrong or right? Right, as we know now! – Aren't we the poor composers after all!

Siam navi all'onde argenti, lasciate in abbandono.
Impetuosi venti i nostri affetti sono:
Ogni diletto è scoglio, tutta la vita è mar.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ “A storm of hissing comes down on my head; collapsing and crushing all that remained after the thunderbolt”.

¹⁰² “We are ships on waves of algae, desolate and lonely. We love boisterous winds: every cliff is a lover, the whole life is a sea”. Text by Metastasio, lyrics of the song *Le volate* by Vaccai.

Young maestros, don't get worried: defy the waves of the tempestuous sea with courage: but always keep in mind to fulfill your obligations, and never give rise to gossip about yourselves; remember

Che le donne son donne!
S'intende, e già si sa: ma cento belle
Non valgan quanto val la vostra pelle!¹⁰³

After the result of the unfortunate «Giovanna» I asked my frequently mentioned Sultan a one year leave, which I partially spent with my family and partly in the vicinity of Milan¹⁰⁴. Next summer I travelled to Paris on a request to perform my opera «L'ultimo giorno di Pompei»¹⁰⁵ in the Italian theatre of that city. However, the three days of July, resulting in the fall of Charles X and the accession to the throne of Louis Philippe, delayed the opening of that theatre, reason why I had to leave the capital of France (since I had an other contract with the impresario of Rome) without having carried out the obligations I had entered into. During the time I stayed in Paris, I renewed the acquaintance with the great *Paër*, a man of a rare spiritual development and with an amusing conversation. The operas of this famous composer, among which «Camilla» and «Agnese»¹⁰⁶, had aroused my esteem and admiration, since I had found in his works a good taste, profusion of ideas, pure melodies and simple but effectual instrumentation. The final of «Agnese» is a true milestone of the opera literature! I would advise young people (if my voice might have any authority) to study the works of such an exceptional talent, comparable to *Mayr*, *Cherubini* en *Generali*. These four celebrities were the link between the past and the present century, but also between the German and the Italian schools. Coming back to the famous maestro *Paër*, I can add that he frequented the salon of H.E. princess *Bagration*¹⁰⁷ (to which I also had the honour to be admitted), and some music was made in the evening *en petite société*. Some light pieces were sung. Our *quaresimale*¹⁰⁸ was the duet by *Cimarosa* «Se flato in corpo avete». *Paër*, noticing that he had no *flato* actually, due to his age, whispered in my ear: 'Unfortunately I feel that I have neither a fart, nor the resources for it! The revolutions merely inflict damage to our art!' One evening, when I came back on what he had said to me, he told me the following story with the humour for which he had a special gift: 'Dear Pacini, listen and tell me whether I am right or wrong to lament about my state. When I

¹⁰³ "Women are women!, we agree on that: and yet one knows: a hundred beauties are not as much worth as your own skin".

¹⁰⁴ Julia Samoyloff lived in a villa in Como... that's why.

¹⁰⁵ This opera was performed by *Lalande*, *David* and *Lablache*. My work was seriously criticized by the French journalists and especially by the *Revue musicale* edited by Mr *Fétis*. I ought to have demoralized myself by reading the little flattering eulogy of the aforesaid critic, but although I can respect some proper observations, he on the other hand aimed in respect of content rather to the nationality than to the art, what makes me sometimes say to myself: "Non ti smarrir per via, ma segui e spera". (Don't lose your way, but continue and hope).

¹⁰⁶ The opera *Agnese* of 1809, the most successful work of Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839), has fundamentally influenced the new generation of opera composers and in a way served as a model for *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *I Puritani*. Stendhal expressed his appreciation for the work, but he had an aversion to the rough, too realistic way the sad state of the human madness was represented.

¹⁰⁷ Undoubtedly, this is the Russian princess Katharina Pawlowna Bagration (1783-1857). An amorous affair with Klemens von Metternich provided her with a daughter, Marie-Clementine (born 1803). Princess Bagration was one of the women who played a key role during the Congress of Vienna; she was the focal point of the dances, and was in favour of many monarchs and diplomats.

¹⁰⁸ *Quaresimale*: contribution to the time of fasting.

had the honour to be invited to the court of Napoleon I, I was assigned a salary of 25 thousand francs a year. After the dethronement of the great Captain and the return of the legitimate sovereign Louis XVIII, my stipend was reduced 7 thousand lire! I didn't breathe a word, because the point was after all to serve a descendant of the kings of France! Then came Charles X; well then, believe it or not, for economic reasons my salary was cut back with 10 thousand lire! Should it continue in the same pace now Louis Philippe reigns, there will probably be more cuts, and in such a way I will end up in atrophy.' That made me laugh. – 'What! You are laughing?' the great maestro added, 'my dear Pacini,

E se non piangi, di che pianger suoli?' ¹⁰⁹

He was right. One could surely make comments in this regard, but we continue. – The count of *Flaüt*¹¹⁰, a distinguished music lover, was our tenor, countess *Giulia Samoyloff*, patroness of the fine arts, generous lady, benefactress of my daughter *Amazilia*, was the prima donna. So the quartet was complete. But what should I say! The sublime piece of the Pesarese was often sung

**Mi manca la voce, mi sento morire;
Si fiero martire, chi può tollerar? ¹¹¹**

The illustrious mistress was amiable and respectable, as well as indulgent.

CHAPTER X

During carnival 1831 I had to return to Naples, because I was offered the contract by the impresario of Rome, Mr *Iacovacci*¹¹², to compose the opera on occasion of the reopening of the Teatro Apollo, or Tordinona¹¹³, magnificently restored by the duke *Torlonia*. I asked *Barbaia* further permission, which was granted until the end of 1832. *Ferretti* was my partner again, and he presented me «*Il corsaro*», a part of the sublime poem of the immortal *Byron*. The artists destined to perform my new work were *Mariani*, a singer of rare vocal means, *Carobbi*, débutante with a beautiful voice, the artist *Marietta Albini*, the tenor *Gentili*, full of spirit and a perfect actor, and the excellent bass *Alberto Torre*¹¹⁴. Opening night at the theatre was not before 12 January, because the decorations of the auditorium were not finished earlier. The public flowed into the theatre

¹⁰⁹ "And if you don't cry, about what will you cry then?" Dante, *Inferno*, canto XXXIII.

¹¹⁰ This person named Flaüt cannot be identified. His name is possibly incorrectly spelled by Pacini.

¹¹¹ "My voice is breaking, I feel I am going to die; who can tolerate such a proud martyr". From Tottola's libretto for Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*, quartet 2nd act, 3rd scene. Pacini's relationship with Samoylova had then practically come to an end.

¹¹² In honour of the true impresario *Iacovacci*, he deserves to be classified in the group *Barbaia*, *Balocchino*, *Villa* en *Alessandro Lanari*. Competent he may be in dealing with all sorts of affairs, he is as well honest and conscientious in fulfilling the obligations assumed. In the end he is the only one who can truly call himself Emperor of the theatre impresarios.

¹¹³ Tordinona refers to the medieval fortress Torre dell'Annona of the Orsinis at the Lungotevere, popularly called Tor di Nona. This fortress was reconstructed as a theatre in 1667 and transformed into the Teatro Apollo-Tordinona, the largest opera theatre of Rome, in 1795. In 1831, its owner, count Alessandro Torlonia, restored the theatre. Due to the repeated floodings of the Tiber, the building had to be demolished in 1888, to make room for quays alongside the river.

¹¹⁴ This must have been the bass Alberto Torri. Some sources mention Filippo Galli as the performer of the part of Giovanni (the only bass in this opera) in the first performances of *Il Corsaro*. In the absence of certainty in this regard, we will follow Pacini's statement of Alberto Torri.

as early as five o'clock, although the spectacle only began at 10, and ended at 2 o'clock in the morning. One can easily understand therefore, that the impatience, the fatigue and the boredom took possession of the public. Those not initiated into the mysteries of the stage and the disorder that takes over a first performance cannot imagine the idea! It says enough that when the clock struck 9, the machinists still had to mount two scenes, which the painter had not been able to finish so far! Thank heavens the opera finally began. In order not to annoy the reader I will not list the details of the pieces of which my work consists; I will only tell that, although at the first night I could not pride myself with a sensational success¹¹⁵, I still could enjoy my fortune in the next performances. The cavatina of *Mariani* (Corrado), that of the tenor *Gentili* (Seid), the aria of *Carobbi* (Medora), the duet between Seid and Gulnara (*Albini*), the quintet of the second act¹¹⁶ (this piece had the honour to be repeated all nights), as well as the final duet between Medora and Gulnara, were the pieces that served as basis of the triumph.

The next carnival of 1832 I composed «Ivanhoe» for the large Teatro la Fenice in Venice, which caused a great enthusiasm. I must say that my glory can be credited to having the famous *Carradori* and *Giuditta Grisi* as interpreters, as well as the tenor *Reina*, an animated singer and excellent actor, and the celebrated *Coselli*. A chorus from the aforesaid opera was becoming so popular in this enchanting city, that it can still be heard by the guys of the lagoon during the days of carnival. After the success achieved I returned to my family, where I occupied myself during my stay with a small comic opera entitled «Il convitato di pietra», executed by my sister *Claudia*, my brother-in-law, my brother *Francesco*, my father, and the young *Bilet* from Viareggio in the little private theatre of Casa Belluomini. During the same time I went through instrumental works of *Beethoven*, *Haydn*, *Mozart*..., which yielded me the necessary benefits. This is a study that takes place in the intriguing labyrinth in which the science of harmony wriggles and illuminates the insight of the observer in a prodigious way: because, no matter how often these classical compositions are played, they are not more than a continuous sequence of artificialities that put few and simple melodies in new clothes: as the words of Horace

Denique sit, quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum.¹¹⁷

clearly shows. In the works of *Beethoven* are, in my opinion, majestic and sublime formulas; in those of *Haydn* the melodic agreeableness is smoothly mixed with artificiality; in *Mozart* the genius guided by inspiration: as a result of which these three great composers, preceded by *Boccherini* in the so-called style of instrumental chamber music, united all that beauty that in the art of *Apollo* has been left to us as heritage of *Michelangiolo*, *Guido Reni* and *Sanzio*, not to mention others.

At the end of October *Barbaia* called me back to Naples. On 12 January my «Gli elvezi» was performed, composed for the gala night of the King¹¹⁸. The

¹¹⁵ The uproar in the audience during the first performance was to such an extent, that countess Julia Samoyloff fainted in her box and had to be carried away. This event was mentioned in a letter from Felix Mendelssohn, who attended the performance on January 15, 1831. (Kimbell, *Verdi in the age of Italian romanticism*, p. 59).

¹¹⁶ In this concertato piece I realized for the first time the proper effect, the right order of the parts, and several new ideas, such as variety of expression etc., which could be applied depending on the qualities of the individual characters.

¹¹⁷ "In the end, make it as you will, as long as it is simple and one". (Horace: *Epistola ad Pisones*).

¹¹⁸ The opera *Gli elvezi*, premiered 12 Januari, 1833 in the Teatro San Carlo, is also known under the title *Corrado di Tochemburgo*. This was a gala night for king Ferdinando II, who succeeded Francesco I as king of the Two Sicilies in 1830.

lovely as well as wonderful *Ronzi-De Begnis*, the dear tenor *Ivanoff* (then a beginner and later very famous) and also papa *Lablache* (that's the way everyone called this great artist with his mighty voice, noble feelings, an excellent singer, erudite man, best friend and father of his family) formed the select triade to sustain my weak composition. A single duet may deserve some merit in view of the elegance of the phrases of the largo and the charm of the cabaletta. – On 30 May I produced another opera with the title: «*Fernando Duca di Valenza*», which I however consider of no value at all. The libretto was the work of the Venetian cav. *Paolo Pola*, a man of letters and worthy of every estimation. His daughter, Countess *Polcastro*, a most spirited and cultured lady, invited in her palace in Venice the flower of society, at which she sang and danced: however, after the events of 1848 she retreated to her estate of Brenta and left that enchanting city, in which the also highly talented Mrs *Pappadopoli* shared the honours with the aforesaid illustrious lady.

After «*Fernando Duca di Valenza*», Mr *Cirino*¹¹⁹ from Palermo, a distinguished and deserving young man, handed me «*Irene di Messina*», which I provided with notes, and was staged in the same Teatro San Carlo in the month of November. The unique genius *Maria Malibran* performed the title role in a way that astounded both composer and public. This superior woman, so abundantly talented, made such a deep impression on me when I heard her for the first time in «*La gazza ladra*», that I had to pull myself away from the auditorium of San Carlo, and this caused a second spectacle from my box! Never, I truthfully confess, I experienced an equal emotion when hearing a singer. She was extraordinary in everything. With an inexpressible amiable character; she did not distinguish between rich and poor, between peer and plebeian; she was comfortable in five languages: Spanish, Italian, English, French and German; educated in history and *belles lettres*, in drawing and painting; in short, in all that one can expect from a cultured person. – It was said that her life was free and easy, and that she drank excessively at the table, but I, who was privileged to associate with the famous lady more than six months, since I lived also in the same villa of *Barbaia* and had dinner at the same table, can assure that the malevolence of which people availed themselves is undeserved. Her ordinary dinner was very sober: she only liked to drink a glass of champagne in the nights she had sung, which does not seem typical of a little plain woman to me! She was a true Amazon! She mounted with a dexterity and perfection to measure up to the most skilled horseman; she handled the fencing foil as the most experienced swordsman; to put it briefly, she was a universal genius! I will be forgiven for telling at length about the particularities of a woman of whom one can rightfully repeat:

La feo natura e poi ruppe il modello.¹²⁰

This great artist supported, together with *David* and *Lablache* my fragile structure, that was received fairly favourable, although I had wished better, but that could not be achieved with my poor talent, even though I must say that many pieces could have been received more favourable. I began to realize that I had to withdraw from the arena. – *Bellini*, the divine *Bellini*, and *Donizetti* had surpassed me.

CHAPTER XI

¹¹⁹ This has probably been Nicola Cirino (Nicosia 1802-Palermo 1851), magistrate and poet.

¹²⁰ Nature created her and then destroyed the model. Or: an unparalleled beauty. Pacini's variant of the aphorism of Ludovico Ariosto 'Natura il fece, e poi ruppe la stampa'.

In 1833, when my engagement with *Barbaia* had ended, the management of Teatro la Fenice in Venice, then under the responsibility of Mr marquis *Brignole* from Genoa, offered me the contract to compose the opera d'obbligo for the carnival season of 1834. The old 'merchant in words' *Gaetano Rossi* chose as libretto the subject «Carlo di Borgogna», which I annotated. That's all there was to it! ... Only the cavatina written for *Giuditta Grisi* pleased very much; the remainder of the composition was a miserable failure. After this last one of my experiments I withdrew to Viareggio. – This was the end of my first career.

Che principiò ridente, ma terminò languente!¹²¹

To be honest, I could never completely achieve my objectives. Still young of age, applauded, cherished, celebrated on all Italian and foreign stages, I was not overly proud of myself and of my art, even though by all means I should be. I did not manage to fully develop my talents, directed to create personal character and local colour to the composition: as, I think, one could have noticed from some of the pieces of «La sacerdotessa d'Irminsul», «L'ultimo giorno di Pompei» and more particularly «Gli arabi nelle Gallie» and «I fidanzati». Therefore, I had to admit that I still cared enough to have some hope for lasting fame. In this first period I was given the name *maestro delle cabalette*, because in general they had some value as far as spontaneity, elegance and structure are concerned, in the sense that everyone was of the opinion that a certain idea of melodic innovation could be expected of me, which is, as was said, just the reward of the talent, and nothing more. To some extent they were wrong. My cabalettas did not rise as clear water from a pure well, but were precisely the result of a certain consideration, a studied proposal to give varied accents to the metres of the verse, in order not to revert to melodies that might resemble earlier ideas; something that can be verified quite easily, particularly in the first bar. I will list an example of the way the great *Rossini* and I treated to five-syllable verse with the accent on the second to last syllable.



¹²¹ "... which started laughing, but ended languishing!"



I nearly always put the same system into practice for all other metres, resulting, in the same *tempo*, more uniformity of idea between the first part of the theme and the second. – My instrumentation has never been sufficiently accurate, and although it was lively and brilliant many times, it did not arise as a result of reflection, but rather by that natural taste given to me by God. I often neglected the quartet of stringed instruments, or took much care of the effects I could have achieved from the various other groups of instruments. I always have had an eye for the vocal part indeed, more than anything else, and above all, I tried to examine the vocal possibilities of the individual singers to whom I entrusted my compositions, with appropriate music adapted to their organs, in order to increase the probability of success. I believe that, as a good tailor knows how to make and adapt a suit for a man by concealing his natural imperfections, an experienced maestro should not neglect as well to study the means of an artist, and most importantly, never deviate from the rules that the art dictates on the tessitura of the different vocal registers, to prevent these from overstraining in such a way, that the instruments become useless after a short time. That would be an unforgivable error to the detriment of the art and to the company in question.

The love for the art, which I confessed with all my weaknesses and still confess, has never allowed me a short break. I generously envied my rivals and admired them. I said to myself: They are applauded now, and I will occupy myself, however possible, with the education of the youth in a more suitable and clear manner, so that the intellect of the pupils will not be obscured by sheer bookish and unconvincing principles. Subsequently I got the idea to open a music school in Viareggio. The project was started and I asked my prominent Maecenas *Carlo Lodovico* to honour it with his name, which was conceded to me. A number of young men and women from all our towns and other states were entrusted to me. I had a summary printed of the History of music and a Treatise on counterpoint to serve as teaching aids for the students. I also composed a Treatise on elementary principles and theory and practice of harmony, introducing the system of Melo-Plasto¹²², with which the students became accustomed to a perfect intonation and gradually taught them to think logically about all the rules of the musical language, and in the shortest possible time; a method partly adopted from Mr *Galini*¹²³, with a few changes and additions to achieve a better understanding in the young minds, with increasing difficulty in changing scales, intervals and solfeggio for two voices. To be

¹²² Meloplasto: didactical aid, partly developed by Pacini, for the study of musical solfège, consisting of a tablet with empty staves, on which the notes could be placed with movable elements. Pacini wrote a teaching method entitled *Principj elementari di musica e metodo per l'insegnamento del Meloplasto*. Lucca, Tipografia Baroni, 1849.

¹²³ Pierre Galin (1786-1822), a French mathematician and musician. This combination led to the invention of a new method for musical education, named 'méloplaste', mainly based on the division of the study of notes and that of bars.

honest, I don't know why a similar system has not been introduced to us, as is the case in France. Besides the Liceo musicale I got the idea to organize a *banda*, entirely composed of people from Viareggio, mostly artisans, of which I subsequently formed a small orchestra. Later, after two years, I had a theatre¹²⁴ built, where the youngsters I took care of could pass a test of their talents.



Teatro Pacini in Viareggio

The Liceo had a boardinghouse. The males lived in a location separate from the females. A prefect supervised the young people. Teachers of Italian, arithmetic, geography and history were added to the musical education. In the end, even the necessary primary schooling which included the religious, moral and informative education was not lacking.

CHAPTER XII

Even though the theatre was built in ninety working days, it is not believed to be badly constructed. It is a design by Mr *Bernardo Giacometti* of Viareggio; fairly elegant, comfortable and it has a modern form; there are two rows of boxes and a beautiful gallery that forms the third row. The auditorium can contain eight hundred people and (what is more important) sounds as good as one could desire. – In 1835 I opened the theatre, in the summer season, with an opera. «Il talismano» was the score represented by my students, including

¹²⁴ This theatre was situated at the Via San Francesco. It was described as follows in 1893: “The façade in Ionic order, is elegant. The auditorium has three rows of boxes with white plaster decorations and a gilded ornamental frame. The stage curtain is beautifully worked and reminds of that of the Pergola-theatre in Florence”. The theatre was initially called ‘Teatro di Viareggio’ in Pacini’s *Le mie memorie*, but was renamed later Teatro Pacini on Carlo Lodovico’s recommendation. In 1841 the local authorities acquired the building, which was devastated, just as the Liceo musicale in the Via Ugo Foscolo, by the German bombardments on June 14, 1944. As from 1873 the carnival balls were held at the Teatro Pacini and the Regio Casino during the famous ‘corsi mascherati’ of Viareggio.

the young *Marco Arati*¹²⁵ from Parma, gifted with a beautiful bass voice; the tenor *Vincenzo Marchetti*, whose career ended completely by his own fault, even though he had such brilliant prospects, since he possessed a well-balanced, voluminous and lithe organ, as well as much natural talent. But what can we do if one treats the gifts given by God disparagingly?... Now he often repeats the Confiteor! – The young lady *Broglia* from Macerata made her debut together with the two mentioned above, including the other nice young woman *Luisa Lencioni* from Viareggio. The chorus consisted entirely of students, as well as the orchestra, directed by Dr *Francesco Del Prete*, who was a passionate master of violin for a long time, and a promotor of all sorts of musical events in this growing town. The success was as favourable as one could desire. A lot of people came flocking in from the neighbouring villages, so that the theatre was packed every night. That season I furthermore produced «Cesare in Egitto», which pleased as well, with an other tenor Mr *Quarantotti*¹²⁶, later known under the name *Corelli* (who was highly regarded in England, Spain, etc., as well as in Italy) and with Mr *Sannini* from Pescia. In the next carnival period I produced a comic opera with the title «La secchia rapita», set to music by the young student Mr *Sellerié*, now director of the conservatory of Montpellier. I let the students also practice in writing prose to develop their understanding of the structure of a story. The next year I prepared «Ivanhoe» and «L'elisir d'amore», with the young *Bartolini*¹²⁷, *Marchetti* and the student *Agostino Papini* from Pescia, an excellent *Dulcamara*! Miss *Bartolini* was afterwards applauded in many theatres of Italy and abroad, and at present she lives comfortably in Lucca of the proceeds of her talent. Oh! The municipality should not neglect the musical education, the source of so much prosperity. *La Bartolini* was just a poor daughter of a lady selling goods at the squares' market. Without the charitable people who took care of her, she certainly would not have honoured her native country, neither would she have an easy life now. This is just an example. The lower class has a seed of those gifts that God, with all his justice, not generously gives to rich people (apart from a few exceptions).

In that year the Teatro di Viareggio was honoured with the presence of H.M. the Queen-Mother¹²⁸ of Naples, together with her clement nephew *Carlo Lodovico* (who condescended many times to be present at the experiments of the students, patting the back of the most deserving as a mark of honour), for which occasion I composed a small cantata. The sovereign, convinced that such education could lend prestige to Lucca, asked me to draw up a plan, which I started to develop immediately. It got the ducal approval and so I was called that same year to the native town of the just as much unfortunate as great *Boccherini*, to lead the church choir and the new musical education. The erudite maestros *Massimiliano Quilici*, *Eugenio Galli*, *Alessandro Rustici*, *Rodolfi*, and furthermore the never enough lamented *Michele Puccini*¹²⁹, as well as all those

¹²⁵ Marco Arati later appeared in seven first performances of Pacini's operas, starting with *La fidanzata corsa* (1842). He sang the leading parts in premieres of e.g. Donizetti (*Gabriela di Vergy*, *Poliuto*, *Caterina Cornaro*), Mercadante and Verdi's *Alzira* and *Luisa Miller* (Wurm).

¹²⁶ Quarantotti (transl. forty eight), who changed his name into Corelli, is probably the *tenore comprimario* Leone Corelli, the Arminio at the first performance of Verdi's *I masnadieri* in London (1847). He appeared as Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at the first performance in Italy (Teatro alla Scala, 1843).

¹²⁷ This was most likely Clementina Bartolini (180?-187?), of whom could be determined that she sang in *Il pirata* by Bellini, *Carattaco* by Angelo Catelani, *Il bravo* by Mercadante and in Pacini's *Lorenzino de' Medici*.

¹²⁸ Maria Isabella of Spain, daughter of the Spanish king Carlos IV of Bourbon and the second wife of king Francesco I of the Two Sicilies.

¹²⁹ Michele Puccini (1813-1864), composer and Giacomo Puccini's father. He studied with Donizetti and Mercadante in Naples and was a teacher at the Istituto musicale Pacini in Lucca, of which he became director in 1862.

highly qualified musicians of the orchestra, formed the teaching staff. When everything was established with full approval of the sovereign and the population, I devoted myself with love to my teaching activities. The young maestros started their studies in Viareggio and completed them in Lucca. Among these I can mention with the greatest pleasure *Francesco Colombi*, who is now practicing the profession beyond all praise, and who could have occupied a honourable place among the present composers, since he displays qualities of genius, taste and knowledge. I also mention *Lucantoni*, presently in Paris, where he is rightfully held in high regard as an excellent vocal and piano teacher. From the aforementioned institute also emanated the competent maestros *Lucarini*, at present teacher at the seminary San Michele, *Felice Catalani* and numerous others.

As from the moment H.R.H. deigned to appoint me to the most honourable post of director of the Royal Cappella, I had to occupy myself with sacred composition, which I had cultivated next to none so far, although until now I had composed three *Masses*; one in 1815, as already mentioned, executed in the Madonna del Castello in Milan, the other one in 1827 for eight *reali*, dedicated to H.H. Gregorius XVI, and which provided me the honour to be decorated with the *Ordine dell'aurata milizia*¹³⁰, and another in 1835, composed in Viareggio for the young students, and finally a *Vesper*. Furthermore I wrote many works of this kind, partly in a truly serious style, specifically mentioning the *Messa di Requiem*¹³¹, dedicated to my native country and published by the praiseworthy *Giov. Ricordi* of Milan: another, also in fine print by the equally praiseworthy *Francesco Lucca*, and unpublished works for 4 and 8 voices, besides different works in a more free style, many of which ordered by the very reverend Don *Francesco Guerra* of Lucca, meritorious practitioner of the noble art of music: two *Miserere*, one accompanied by solo violins and violoncellos, which I dedicated to H.E. the very reverend Msgr *Amici*, delegated to Bologna in 1837 and executed that year in the government palace with much success (at least according to what was published in the papers), and which had the honour to be submitted to an in-depth analysis by the erudite avv. Mr *Busi*, who exposed the merits and shortcomings with great erudition; another for solo voices printed in Milan: finally a *De profundis*, also dedicated to Monsignor *Amici* and published by Mr *Lucca*, and other *Masses* for three and four parts, accompanied by solo organ and double bass, and a quantity of *Vespri* for four and eight parts choir and full orchestra, like the aforesaid *Masses*.

When the year 1839 came, the impresario of Rome, the Mr *Iacovacci* mentioned earlier, offered me a contract again to compose the opera d'obbligo for carnival 1840 at the Teatro Tordinona. Almost six years had past since my first career as a composer came to an end. Insignificant people such as myself live and die with memories of the contemporaries, which made me indecisive to accept or not. Finally I decided for the affirmative answer. The subject «Furio Cammillo», suggested by my good friend *Ferretti*, seemed appropriate to me. The famous *Ungher*, *Donzelli* and *Fornasari* were the artist to whom I entrusted this first work of the second period. During my time of retirement I had been thinking about what to do next, about how the taste of the audience would develop, and the way I should continue. As from 1829 *Rossini* had ceased to engage the musical world with new masterworks. *Bellini*, the touching *Bellini* was snatched away from the art in 1835, ending his days in a foreign country

¹³⁰ Papal order, established by pope Gregory XVI to reinstate the Order of Saint Sylvester – Ordo Sanctus Silvestris Papae e Militia Aurarta –, named after pope Silvester I (314-335) and fallen in disuse.

¹³¹ The learned and praiseworthy maestro *Boucheron* rightfully criticized my work.

where he still rests. Italy should now think about transferring home the remains of the man who made her experience so much sweet, indelible emotions with his divine sounds! Let us think about that, and let us all think about this holy idea, of which I hope my beloved Catania will take the initiative. The versatile *Donizetti* and the serious *Mercadante* were the only ones to dominate the stages, since *Verdi* had hardly appeared at the horizon in the aforesaid year 1839 with his «Oberto di San Bonifazio». The others, like *Coccia*, *Ricci*, *Lauro Rossi* rarely brought their works on our stages. All this reminded me seriously of the steps I should take again. It was necessary to give some hope for a long life to my productions by knowing what aesthetic direction I had earlier been searching for, but which I had not been able to find. I set to work with the determination to distance myself from the roads followed in the first part of my career, and I searched for characteristic images deriving from various folk songs in the traditional sense, in order to provide my works with the truth which is so difficult to find in our art. The attempt with «Furio Cammillo» was not completely successful, but it seemed a step in the right direction. The result did not correspond to my expectations, but was not at all discouraging, the more so since some pieces produced much effect: among them the introduction, sung very well by the wonderful artist *Fornasari*; the cavatina of *Ungher*; the duet between *Ungher* and *Fornasari*, and the final of the first act.

CHAPTER XIII

Upon my return in Lucca in the month of June, I was asked to confirm whether I wanted to go back to Naples, where a new libretto written by *Cammarano* was ready for me. I accepted and said to myself: That's the way it is, now that I have returned to defy the *always uncertain fortune of the theatre*, I must continue with courage. My friend *Samengo*, formerly a famous dancer and choreographer, married to the famous ballerina *Amalia Brugnoli*, instructed at the French school of Mr *Coralý*, who could quote the poet:

“Qual piuma che leggiera al cielo sorvola”,¹³²

sent me the contract. *Cammarano* provided me with the scenario of «Saffo», together with the text of the introduction, as well as the duet between Saffo and Faone. Reading and rereading the history of the people bearing the torch of all knowledge of mankind, I tried to find out what music might have been used by that heroic nation and his sons *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, *Aeschylos*, *Aristophanes*, *Homeros*, *Tyrtaios*, en *Aristides*, who gave in his musical treatise an exact idea of the principles valid during that time. Particularly when he talks about rhythm, I could conclude that the Greek attributed a broader meaning to the word music, embracing not only the art that excites whatever feeling by means of sound, but also poetry, the fine arts, rhetoric, philosophy, and that science the Romans called *politior humanitas*, and by looking to the way they (the Greek) used the Doric, Ionic, Phrygic, Aeolic, Lydian principles, and their derivatives hypodoric, hyperdoric, etc., I formed a notion of their system. Always keeping in mind what *Aristides* says about the quality of the three categories diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic, the first being noble and

¹³² “How light as a feather she glides through the air”.

austere, the second mild and melancholic, the third gentle and exciting, I tried to come close to their *melopeia*¹³³.

I set to work with so much pleasure that cannot be explained; however, having made progress with the composition, I became demoralized when I was about to leave for Naples, since I had the firm intention to have the poet make changes in the libretto, otherwise I could not realize what would deserve my full approval. Nevertheless, I arrived in Naples at the end of September. I met my famous friend the poet and presented my idea. He was surprised. I was summoned to the presence of the impresario Mr *Flauto*, together with the aforementioned *Cammarano*. Again I unfolded my idea. Both Mr *Flauto* as well as my friend *Samengo* told me that there were no objections, provided that *Cammarano* agreed to it. The latter added that he was prepared to meet me half way, if he only could hear the two pieces I already set to music. I did not refuse because he was within his rights. We went to my house, I sat myself at the pianoforte and sang for him the introduction. Suddenly I saw the author of «Saffo» getting pale and moved on hearing “Di sua voce il suon giungea”. He did not allow me to finish, flung his arms around my neck and exclaimed: ‘Dear maestro, for goodness’ sake go on with the work; you will give Italy a masterpiece. I, to be honest, was not convinced, since his remark sounded somewhat nonchalant; but I heard a voice inside that repeated: Go on, go on! – I neither can nor need to tell what kind of things I have been through with this work. My countrymen have judged it and their applause is worth more than the thousand crowns that would have been paid to me abroad!

New as I was voor Naples – I can say that, because a whole generation had passed since my name was heard in that vast auditorium of San Carlo – I went to the theatre on the first evening that the performance of «Saffo» took place, accompanied by my friend *Mira* – exceptional that, out of the friends from the past, he remained faithful to me – by *Marco Arati* and *Carlo Giannini*. I was trembling all over and could hardly speak! The three friends took my hand firmly and kept silent. Apart from the little confidence I had in myself, I was also worried about the attitude of the public as to the antecedents of the performers chosen for my new product. Particularly the good baritone *Cartagenova* had become the object of snide remarks from the audience. They did not want to hear him, and I realized that precisely the first piece had to be sung by this so unpopular but excellent artist! But here *Cartagenova*, with his impressive figure, entered, executed the piece heavenly and the audience did him justice and honoured him with two curtain calls; an honour that was rendered to me as well. Then came the duet between Saffo and Faone, entitled *scena drammatica* by me. The piece was excellently performed by the passionate *Pixis* and by *Fraschini*. Again ovations for the artists and the author. The melody of the maid servants, which precedes Climene’s cavatina, moved the audience. The largo of this cavatina and the cabaletta stirred up enthusiasm, followed by new ovations. The duet of Saffo and Climene, with the largo in a special approach, produced the greatest effect; new exclamations as a reward. Now the *finale*¹³⁴ came. I cannot say how high my emotions ran by the enthusiasm this brought about. At the stretta that followed, when the priests blew up at Saffo, a collective cry rose from the audience. I fainted on the stage! – Oh! allow me, gentle reader, to tell you that the poor composer felt himself surrounded with thorns as well as joy, when the enthusiasm of the public

¹³³ Melopeia: the art of creating melodies.

¹³⁴ The *finale* mentioned here is not the end of the opera, but the end of the first act (in a three or four act work the end of the second act), in fact the climax of the opera. This was the central dramatic incident, that usually took the shape of a terrible confrontation or clash of incompatible interests. This final was meant to be a blood-curdling turning point of the action, in which the interpreters presented their personal arguments on the current situation, commented by the chorus.

reached that point. – From the result of the first act one may conclude what happened during the rest of my work. The second night I was accompanied to my home with torches. Naples celebrated me again, as it had celebrated me in 1825 when I staged «L'ultimo giorno di Pompei». I can add to my story the fact that I composed this opera in only 28 days and that the last scene of Saffo, meaning the funeral chorus, recitative, aria, tempo di mezzo¹³⁵ and cabaletta had been created in two hours!!! Please excuse me for being guilty of excessive arrogance. – Also allow me to mention that during this last stay in Naples I had the honour to get acquainted with the duchess of Ascoli, a high spirited woman with a warm esteem for the fine arts, especially for music. The poet *Regaldi* frequented this noble and distinguished lady.

In the autumn of 1840 I was no longer considered a composer of easy cabalettas in the public opinion, but rather of elaborate works and of well-thought-out creations. – In the autumn of 1841 I produced «L'uomo del mistero» in the Teatro del Fondo, by request of my old friend and impresario *Domenico Barbaia*, who then managed that theatre with a decorum as never before. The result was favourable and the execution was perfect, thanks to the dear *Giuseppina David*, daughter of the famous tenor, and the excellent actors *Casacello* and *Fioravanti*¹³⁶. In that same season I also composed «La fidanzata corsa» for the stage of San Carlo. – My little house was frequented by many distinguished and cultured young people, among them, apart from my faithful friend *Luigi Mira*, the dear and learned *Gaetano Sommo*¹³⁷, with whom I ended up in an inextricable brotherhood after «Saffo», just as with many others deserving all esteem, particularly the illustrious avv. *Tarantini*, who handed me at carnival 1943 the libretto of «Maria d'Inghilterra» for the royal Teatro Carolino in Palermo. In the midst of the noisiness of that company so dear to me, I managed to finish «La fidanzata corsa» with which, I truly confess, I had the firm intention to write a work that might not be totally unworthy of the Italian stages. I do not have to take it upon myself to pass judgement on the products of my poor mind upon which I am not able to pronounce: I will only mention it in case the success was equal, if not better, to that of «Saffo». The celebrated singer *Tadolini* – for me of a rare class as far as beauty and extent of her voice are concerned, as well as the skill of her singing, and her being indefatigable in neglecting appointments – surpassed my wildest expectations, as well as any requirements of the audience. *Coletti*, the famous *Coletti*, could not be excelled by an other artist in the part entrusted to him. – Also Paris, when my successful work was performed in the Italian theatre, proclaimed the aforesaid *Coletti* grand, incomparable. – The dear tenor *Basadonna*, who caused quite a stir with his most pleasant singing, and the wonderful *Fraschini*, as well as *Marco Arati*, educated by me in the art, brought the Neapolitan public to unusual enthusiasm.

I left Naples to set out for Venice, contracted by the impresario of the large Teatro la Fenice, Mr *Lattes*, a man who deserves the highest praise for his honesty of character (a rather negative quality for one who wants to exercise this profession) and supreme courtesy, where I put on stage «Il duca d'Alba»,

¹³⁵ The outline of 'numbers' was built according to a fixed structure. The presentation of the dramatic event took place in the recitative, followed by a lyrical piece, which provided the composer with material for a slow aria in cantabile-style. Next came the *tempo di mezzo*, a transition from reflection to determination, from retrospection to expectation, leading to the cabaletta, a splendid climax of the scene, which drove the action forward to the next scene with an explosion of physical energy.

¹³⁶ The Casacello mentioned must have been the buffo Carlo Casaccia, a basso-buffo Napolitano, without whom an opera in the Teatro Nuovo was not imaginable. Besides, the buffo tenor Giuseppe Fioravanti came into action, engaged at the Teatro Nuovo as well. He was known as a buffo Toscano. Both were descendents of a well-known family of opera singers, which already established its reputation in the eighteenth century.

¹³⁷ Correctly spelled: Somma.

besides «Saffo» (with which I had not counted on success, because wherever she presented herself, the unfortunate daughter of Lesbos already gained the Olympic laurel wreath). The erudite poet *Peruzzini*, dignified successor of the famous *Felice Romani*, undertook the task to write the libretto for me; however, after having finished the first act, he put me, as is said, with my feet firmly on the ground, with the excuse not to be able to continue for health reasons. So I had no better options left than to write the second act myself, and also put it into verse a little. However, having no confidence in myself, and being privileged at that time to get to know the count and countess *Valmarana*, a respectable family, cultured and with distinguished manners, to whose circle also belonged *F.M. Piave*, then becoming my close friend, and whom I asked to examine what I had written and to bring up the modifications he deemed necessary. However, he did not want to comply with my request, with the excuse that he had never written a quatrain in his whole life, and he had no idea how to write a libretto. My insistence overcame his reluctance, and I am proud of that, since this was the reason that the above mentioned *Piave* was tempted to dedicate himself to the career that, willingly or not, secured him a more comfortable and honourable life, and rightly was chosen many times as his collaborator by the famous *Verdi*, as well as by other valuable composers, among whom also the writer rates himself. «*Il duca d'Alba*» had a moderate success. That same season the good young maestro *Ferrari* (who succumbed to a fatal disease too early!) produced his «*Candiano*», which was received with vivid applause. To honour the memory of *Ferrari* I need to say, that he had not only a powerful imagination, but also possessed such workable ideas, good taste, knowledge of the art and elevated feelings to lament the loss, since in him Italy could hope for renewed glory. – *La Goldberg*, now called *Marini*, better and more beautiful than ever before, supported the aforesaid three operas¹³⁸ to full satisfaction of the demanding but fair Venetian public. And to be honest, in my «*Saffo*» she could only be blamed for having been gifted by Mother Nature with the most delighting and attractive appeal: so that, when I should have been *Faone*, I would never have subordinated her to *Climene*, although in the person of Mrs *Ida Bertrand*, apart from her artistic merits, one could as well conclude a not common beauty. Please forgive me the weakness of this digression! The excellent tenor *De-Val*, the celebrated baritone *Coletti* and the famous *Moriani* formed the principal pillars of the operas performed in the carnival and lent period. *Moriani* appeared in my «*Duca d'Alba*».

Sunt mala mixta benis, sunt bona mixta malis!¹³⁹

and the sweet and bitter of the Venosese¹⁴⁰ had never been more verified for me than in this season... Let's talk about something else.

The prince of *Cutò*, intended to add splendour to his native soil, wanted to assume the management of the Teatro Carolino in Palermo, and under these circumstances I had the honour to be ordered to compose a new work for this stage at carnival 1843. The already memorized friend Mr avv. *Tarantini* supplied me with the libretto of «*Maria regina d'Inghilterra*», which I got ready within short time for the famous artists Mrs *Marini* (endowed with a most pleasant voice and way of singing), *Merli-Clerici* (currently princess of *Cutò*), for the famous *Ivanoff*, as well as for the distinguished baritone *Superchi*.

¹³⁸ Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari (1763-1842). His last opera *Pietro Candiano IV* premiered in the Teatro la Fenice on January 18, 1842, one month before Pacini's *Il duca d'Alba*. The three operas Pacini referred to, and in which Fanny Goldberg appeared, are *Il duca d'Alba*, *Saffo* and *Pietro Candiano IV*.

¹³⁹ "Fortune and misfortune alternate" . (Horace).

¹⁴⁰ 'Venosino' is spoken in Venosa (Basilicata, Italy), the native town of the poet Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, born 65 B.C.)

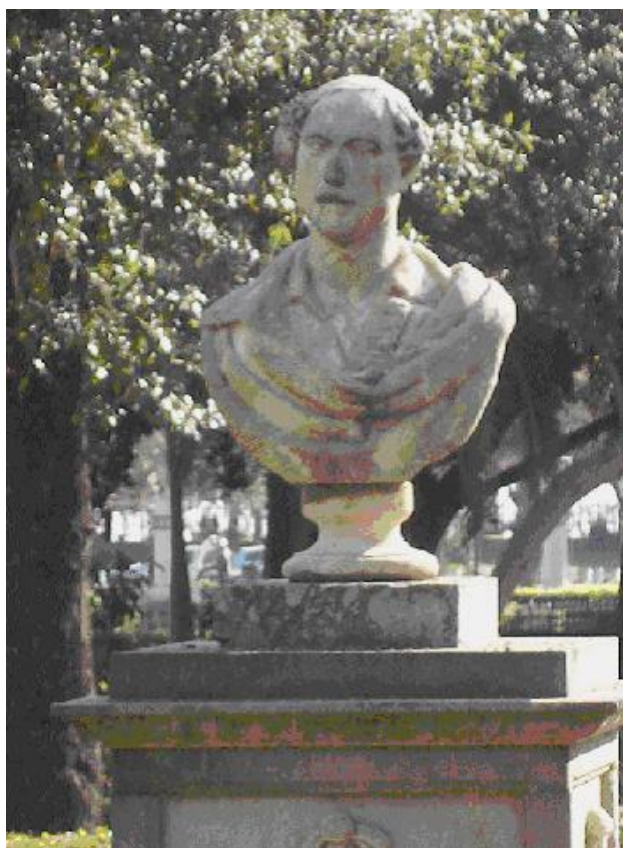
«Maria regina d’Inghilterra» produced such enthusiasm that it became the cause of unpleasant consequences for many of my friends, among whom I permit myself to mention the honourable *Benedetto Castiglia*, *Bertolami*, *Errante* etc. etc., that because a chorus of popular uproar erupted in the second act. *Marini*, *Ivanoff*, *Merli-Clerici* and *Superchi* brought the audience to fanatic demonstrations, so that I was carried in triumph from the Teatro Carolino to the palace of the prince of *Cutò* at the sea gate, which was put at my disposal, and the districts I passed were all enchantingly illuminated until one hour after midnight.

Hardly terminated my obligations in Palermo, where I had to accept a new contract for the next autumn, I left for Naples. Meanwhile *Barbaia* had asked me for an other comic opera for the Teatro Nuovo. I composed «Luisetta» (text also by the more than once cited avv. *Tarantini*), which had a very favourable reception with the wonderful *La Rebussini*, *La Silvestri*, *Casacello* and *Fioravanti*. It was the first time that flowers were thrown to a composer in a theatre of Naples. Since I was committed, as told, to a new engagement with the management of the theatre of Palermo, after having devoted myself several months to my tasks as director of the royal Cappella, I returned to that city in the month of October. The success of «Maria regina d’Inghilterra» made me seriously think of a work that would bring me, at least partly, the appreciation that my beloved brothers of my native country had earlier granted me so largely. The erudite gentleman Mr avv. *Benedetto Castiglia* wanted to honour me with his confidence to put «Medea» in verses for me. The myth of the woman from Colchis had excited my horror and compassion! The force of that powerful feeling which is called love, and by others human madness, converted into a terrible passion that leads to criminally low levels, represented so good and realistic by the famous *Pelzet* in the masterwork of the duca di *Ventignano*¹⁴¹ had, as I said, shocked my heart: so that since a long time I had a strong desire to put this originally sublime product of the Greek theatre in music. Apart from that, I considered that *Cherubini*, *Mayr* and other great minds have treated this magnificent subject, which forced the thought upon me that one might suggest a lack of respect for the famous predecessors in me; on the other hand, since the others had given me the example, I held on firmly to my intention.

CHAPTER XIV

Upon arrival in Palermo prince *Diego Pignatelli* proposed, as an act of utmost gentleness, for me to stay in his magnificent villa at Bagheria. I will refrain from telling in what way the generous prince welcomed me, since describing it too much on this point would give away to the attentions I was showered with. I set to work with the fixed idea to achieve the goal that produces harmony, or in other words, the arrangement of the parts to the whole. Nothing, nothing was neglected to disappoint my firm desire. The way the author had put the libretto in verses, rich of ideas, powerful and certainly not gentle, had tortured my mind tremendously. Then the time came to put my new work on stage. The company consisted of the excellent prima donna Mrs *Bartolotti*, a young woman full of enthusiasm, intelligence and with vocal means that were, if not predominant, certainly homogeneous and flexible.

¹⁴¹ Cesare del Valle, duke of Ventignano (1777-1860), writer of tragedies and author of the play *Medea*. He wrote the libretto of Rossini’s *Maometto II*.



Bust in the Villa Giulia, Palermo

In the beginning of the season she had already found favour with the not easy to please Palermitan public in my «La fidanzata corsa» which, like in Naples, caused a sensation there. *Bartolotti* had competition from the tenor *Giovanni Pancani*, very passionate as well, and the first class baritone *Valle*¹⁴². The prejudice in my favour of my Palermitan brothers rose to a degree that was beyond any comprehension. «Saffo», «Maria regina d’Inghilterra» and «La fidanzata corsa» formed a front of almost antique pyramids to pull down my new building. Finally *Medea* appeared! The first night the audience, flocked in extraordinary crowd, remained as we say in dazzlement, because the enthusiasm and the emotions, as well as the novelty of the musical concept did not make them sufficiently comprehend whether or not my new product was worth applauding. The next day the opinions were divided: but after the second performance «*Medea*» was unanimously proclaimed my masterwork by everyone. A bust in marble was erected for me at the royal Villa Giulia next to the one of my great townsman *Bellini*. That caused sensations in me as I had never experienced before. Oh! Why are such moments of rapture so fleeting, and those that distress the heart so enduring?... but I philosophize no longer and return to my own field: I will only ask the gentle and benevolent readers to forgive me, since I raise this matter, that I feel compelled to tell something that I should suppress out of every principle of modesty. Nevertheless, if I narrate in all honesty the defeats I suffered on the battlefield, I will be excused if, in accordance with the facts, I tell of a single triumph.

¹⁴² No information is found on the soprano Bartolotti and the baritone Valle. All sources consulted mention that it was Geltrude Bortolotti (dates unknown) who created the role of Medea in 1843 and Luigi Valli (180?-187?) as creator of the Creonte part.

After the successes I achieved in Naples and Palermo I returned to Lucca to attend to the obligations assumed. My supreme Maecenas already condescended with the delicate idea on San Giovanni's day of 1840 to decorate me with the knighthood in the Order of San Lodovico, as a token of his regal appreciation for what I had realized for the development of his musical institutes in this small but flourishing Duchy. In the summer of 1842 already, I put «Saffo» on stage in the Teatro del Giglio of my second home, with *Gabussi*, *Buccini*, *Ivanoff* and *Sebastiano Ronconi*, the success of which can well be imagined in view of the sublime talent of that gentle flower that seemed to be grown up and educated under the bright sky of Greece, as far as this is the truth the poetess from Mytilene represents. *Gabussi*, *Buccini*, *Ivanoff* and *Sebastiano Ronconi* are artists above all praise. Therefore, the success of «Saffo» in the preceding year 1842 was such, that the diligent impresario *Alessandro Lanari* wanted to stage «La fidanzata corsa» the next season, already performed in Florence (with little success!) with the incomparable *De-Giuli*, *Roppa* and *De-Bassini*. That year the supreme sovereign *Carlo Lodovico* wanted me to be part of the Royal Deputation for the Theatres. It happened that one of my respectable colleagues, when I was conducting the orchestra, permitted the repetition (which was forbidden by standing regulations) of the cabaletta of the duet in the first act of the above cited opera, perfectly executed by *De-Giuli* and *Roppa*. This caused some disorder in the theatre on the part of a few admirers of the prima ballerina, because they wanted to see the adapted variations from *La Sylphide* that same evening. My colleague insisted and would not allow it. The next morning someone suggested that it was me who disturbed the order! However, apart from not being responsible for the supervision and, as said, I had assumed to conduct the orchestra, visible to the public, it seemed to me that such an accusation is totally unjust, because the legs cannot arouse envy at a composer, but on the contrary respect, and mindful of the saying by the author of the *Cronache di Pindo*¹⁴³:

Capitela una volta, o teste strambe,
che il talento maggior sta nelle gambe,

I respectfully take off my hat... admire... and... and... venerate! However, under the public's scourge I had to endure a few but audible hisses during a quarter of the evening, immediately suffocated by loud cheers and by waving of handkerchiefs by the most friendly ladies and gentlemen, who in my honour excitedly testified their affection; an affection that would never be erased from my memory. The people of Lucca have full right to my recognition and I will keep this feeling alive, forever.

A new contract bound me to the direction of the royal Teatro alla Scala for the carnival of 1844, where my «L'ebrea», on verses by my townsman *Sacchero*, was presented between dark and light!¹⁴⁴ – I feel aversion, I repeat, to dish up prolixly in telling about my artistic adventures, and had I not made the promise to a very respectable person, if would have said farewell to the other twenty years that remained to me, and I would have repeated: 'That's it and good night'¹⁴⁵; but a voice said to me:

¹⁴³ Angelo Anelli's humorous and satirical poem from 1811. Anelli wrote the verses of four of Pacini's operas. Translation: "Just try to understand, blockheads, that most of the talent is in the legs".

¹⁴⁴ ... 'fra il fosco e il chiaro!'. These words form part of Don Magnifico's text from the first act, second scene of *La Cenerentola*: "Mi sognai fra il fosco e il chiaro un bellissimo somaro". Perhaps, on writing this lament, Pacini remembered his melancholic mood, when he presented himself for the first time at La Scala with a new opera after fourteen years, which brought back memories of his affair with Julia Samoyloff at the time of *Giovanna d'Arco* (1830).

¹⁴⁵ 'Chi s'è visto, s'è visto' is a fixed expression, which, depending on the circumstances in question, can apply to variable situations. Stands for something like 'what's done is done' or 'that was it'.

Rammentati, Giovanni, che il fatal sì dicesti!
Non valgono i pretesti... Ritorna al tuo mestier.¹⁴⁶

So, chin up and start from scratch! – «L'ebrea», as mentioned in passing, was brought into the world by me for the carnival season. Upon my arrival in Milan I chose from the artists under contract *De-Giuli*, *Alboni*, *Ivanoff*, the baritone *Ferlotti* and the bass *Marini*. However, when a new star ascended from the heavens, which, as was predicted, would bring new light to the Italian stages, my plans were thwarted, because all friend whispered in my ear: 'Be sure of what you are doing! We don't want you to write the opera for the newcomer'. In all honesty, having already heard this new star in «Norma», I was not convinced to have to meet the friend's wish. But the next day, considering that my ears – although long! – might have deceived me, so that I had my doubts about the intonation and the artistic qualities of the celebrated Priestess, I agreed. It was incredible! We needed thirty five piano rehearsals of «L'ebrea», and during a month two maestros were continuously trying to find a way how to get the part into her brain. Finally it went on stage. I need to tell that as the first opera of the season «Maria regina d'Inghilterra» was given, which did not displease at all as a result of the good achievements of the kind and excellent prima donna *Moltini* and the other singers mentioned above. Then came the first night of «L'ebrea». There was quite some singing out of tune. The saying is: Who sings, is out of tune; but *Lablache* said: Who is out of tune, doesn't sing. In spite of that, and also in spite of the poor memory of the new soprano¹⁴⁷, I received wonderful applause. *Ivanoff* fully and rightly deserved the acclaim of the entire public in the aria of the third act. – In this opera I put everything I had learned into practice and I always set myself the same objective, namely the elevation of the art. The style I acquired since «Saffo» was not affected by alteration, and I always had an eye for a passionate tendency, – a characteristic that already emerged in my early years – developed thanks to reading classics of every school. – After «L'ebrea», «Linda» was performed in Milan, with *Tadolini* and *Colini*, besides *Ivanoff*, who aroused well-deserved enthusiasm. In this opera, just like in «Lucia», *Donizetti* brought in all of his strenght of mind!... all his ingenuity! Passionate melodies, regular structure, instrumental accuracy, and not deafening, are the merits of this enduring work that wreathes the head of the one, who

Col primo e secondo, terzo siede.¹⁴⁸

CHAPTER XV

My old friend *Lanari* agreed on two contracts, one to write the opera d'obbligo for carnival 1845 for the large Teatro la Fenice in Venice, the other one for the spring season of the same year for the royal Teatro alla Pergola in Florence. It was all arranged in a few words and without contracts, but with a

¹⁴⁶ "Remember your destiny anyway, Giovanni; pretexts are useless; return to your work". Probably a verse from an opera libretto.

¹⁴⁷ The part of Rachele in *L'ebrea* was performed by Antonia Montenegro. Bellini's *Norma* was also programmed in the carnival season of 1844, with the badly intoning Montenegro, then making her Scala debut, in the title role. *Norma* had not been performed there since 1838 and returned with 25 performances that current year. *L'ebrea* was only staged three times.

¹⁴⁸ With this remark Pacini classified himself in the fourth place, after Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini.

simple letter, as gentlemen tended to do in the past. *Cammarano* and *Piave* were my partners. The first one made «Buondelmonte» ready for me, and the second «Lorenzino de'Medici». The result of these two works is too well-known to deal with it at length, since, with «Saffo» and «Medea», they were and are still being performed in all theatres of our peninsula and in others abroad. *La Gazzaniga*, that dear and privileged singer, was the first Beatrice. The great *Barbieri-Nini*, whom I qualified as the *prima donna di baule*¹⁴⁹ sang the part of Luisa Strozzi. I allow myself say that during my stay in Vicenza I suffered a painful disease and for that reason I was not even able to assist in all rehearsals of my «Lorenzino de'Medici. Apart from that, during that same season I had the opportunity to go to Venice, where my «Medea» was staged in the Teatro Eretenio¹⁵⁰, executed laudably by the capable *Tavola*, the tenor *Miraglia* and the baritone *Gorini*; at which also my adorable daughter had a full triumph. It was at that occasion that I had the honour to get acquainted to other respectable people, besides count *Trizzino*, who had the kindness to give me several proofs of undeserved esteem. I received a present from the old impresario *Perottini*, a beautiful silverclasped case to be used for travelling.

Back in Venice after eight days of absence, and seriously thinking about the prospects of the company, which were, to be honest, not too rosy (in view of the less joyful result of the performances given so far), I set myself the goal to dispel the storm that threatened to hit me as well. It was necessary to find a way to put the public in a good mood. So I got the idea to ask one of the Castalia sisters¹⁵¹ for help. Therefore I engaged the famous scenographer *Venier* to hold out a fraternal hand by designing a scenery that would baffle the eyes of the spectators. – I explained my idea to him. With his great talent he immediately understood my intention, and put it into effect. The first night «Lorenzino» went on stage, the curtain rose after a short prelude, and the audience burst out in a general shout of approval and called *Venier* at the proscenium at least three times to honour him. Then an introductory chorus followed, which was very pleasing because of its gaiety, and which did not only confirm the old adage

Chi ben comincia è alla metà dell'opera,¹⁵²

but also brought me into the harbour under full sail.

The fortunate reception of «Lorenzino» secured me that same year, besides the contract for carnival 1848, as I will tell next, the great honour to be chosen by the illustrious academy of the Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza, to set to

¹⁴⁹ *Prima donna di baule* refers to *aria di baule*, a tour-de-force aria of a singer, usually sung in other operas as well. The purpose was to give the singer the opportunity to demonstrate her or his most appealing qualities, both vocally and dramatically. Marianna Barbieri-Nini was a dramatic soprano, renowned for her voluminous voice. Besides Pacini's *Lorenzino de'Medici* and *Merope*, she formed part of the first cast of Verdi's *I due Foscari* (Lucrezia), *Il Corsaro* (Gulnara) and she was the first Lady Macbeth in 1847.

¹⁵⁰ Venice is here understood to mean the region Veneto, part of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia (regno Lombardo-Veneto). The town of Vicenza, 45 miles from Venice was situated in this region. The performance of *Medea* described here, undoubtedly concerns the first one in a revised version on 22 January 1845 in the Teatro Eretenio. Later revisions were made by the composer for La Fenice (1850) en San Carlo (1853). The daughter Pacini referred to must have sung in the chorus at Vicenza, since the only female roles left, Cassandra and Licisca, had been performed by Luigia Tavola en Erminia Profondo. This must have been his second daughter Amazilia, born 1827?, who might not have been older than nineteen. Amazilia wrote in an undated letter to her father that she had studied an aria from *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei* (Fondo Giovanni Pacini, letter No. 15-2). Anyway, nothing is known about of singing career of Amazilia.

¹⁵¹ Castalia: a well dedicated to Apollo and the nine Muses, nearby the Mount Parnassus, close to Delphi. Visitors of the oracle washed their hair in the well in order to profit from its predicting power.

¹⁵² The first blow is half the battle.

music the Choruses of the famous tragedy by *Sophocles*, *Oedipus*¹⁵³, translated by the renowned *Bellotti* and put into verses by the highly regarded erudite count *Cabianca*. The honourable baron *Tecchio*, who now holds a high position by virtue of his merits, as well as the lately deceased avv. *Pasini*, expressed their courtesy by many demonstrations of esteem. To be honest, I wanted to decline the order, since Handel had already presented the Choruses of the above cited tragedy¹⁵⁴ to the musical world; however, the request was made in such an official way, that I could not refuse. For the instrumental part I took the liberty to bring into action: thirty violins, nine cellos, eight double basses, three harps, six flutes, four oboes, two clarinets, four bassoons, as well as four horns, two trumpets, four drums, a bombardon, a timpantono¹⁵⁵ and a timpano. The stringed and woodwind instruments were used for the chorus, and the chimes accompanied Eupompus, whom I wanted to give a prophetic character. The chorus consisted of eighty voices, namely fifteen sopranos, fifteen altos, twenty-five tenors and twenty-five basses. The famous artist *Gustavo Modena*, still mourned for in Italy, executed the part of the unfortunate king with such reality, that he generally was to be proclaimed the greatest. The grave dignity of the character aroused the strongest emotions (as the learned abbot *Antonio Magrini* wrote in his *Illustrazioni sul Teatro Olimpico*, published at Padua in 1847), which only applied to the ones like the famous Cieco d'Adria¹⁵⁶ who were introduced to the most concealed beauty of antique style, which has a sentiment rather different from ours. The divine singer *Ciaffei* executed the part of Eupompus, recited the verses of the learned *Belotti* and sang the melodies of *Cabianca* in a truly wonderful way. The celebrated *Angelo Mariani*, a man full of spirit, full of fervour, full of music, conducted the orchestra, and some of the most distinguished musicians from various Italian cities competed with him: for this reason the execution was of such perfection, that I can truly say that I have never heard anything of the likes. The select audience, consisting of all the scientists who honoured Venice for the Congress of 1847¹⁵⁷, and many crowned heads and nobility, received my Choruses with vivid applause, of which two were repeated. This academic company associated with me in a noble way, and I was glad to have accepted this difficult order, even more so since the wise *Frederick William*, magnificent promoter of the sciences, dignified successor of *Frederick the Great* (who had the idea to stage many other tragedies by *Sophocles*), deigned to ask me some questions about my composition, and at that occasion I was embarrassed by his royal generosity to honour me with the gold medal for artistic merits, as well as the cross of the Red Eagle IVth class. The celebrated *Spontini*, whom I had the honour to meet and to appreciate for his infinite quality of mind and heart, played the aforesaid H.M. my Choruses.

The year 1848 was a memorable period! I was already in Venice working on my new composition entitled «Allan Cameron», when the famous Five Days

¹⁵³ *Sinfonia e Cori per la tragedia di Sofocle 'Edipo Re'*. The first modern execution was on 15 October 2008 by the Orchestra del Teatro Olimpico (Vicenza), Schola S. Rocco, Emanuele D'Aguanno, tenor. Direction: Francesco Erle. Fragmentary live recording on YouTube.

¹⁵⁴ No opera, oratorium or otherwise by Handel on the subject Oedipus is known.

¹⁵⁵ The bombardon is a bass pitched brass wind instrument, fallen into disuse, related to the helicon and the sousaphone. The instrument was carried around the body and was primarily used in brass bands. The bombardon can be considered an early version of the ophicleide and the tuba.

The timpantono, comparable to the modern timpani, was invented by Giovanni Battista De Lorenzi from Vicenza, for which he was granted an Austrian patent on 10 July 1847. By means of pedals metal hoops were pressed to the skin to proportionally reduce its tension. The first orchestral use of the timpantono was supposedly in Pacini's *Edipo Re* on 15 September 1847.

¹⁵⁶ Luigi Groto (1541-1585), born blind in Adria, hence his nickname Il cieco d'Adria. Author of tragedies and translator of classical works.

¹⁵⁷ IX Congresso degli Scienziati Italiani, Venice, September 1847.

of Milan¹⁵⁸ took place. The Venetian people were in great agitation between hope and fear. Little skirmishes occurred between the population and Austrian soldiers. Some were thrown in the canal, others were wounded! Suddenly the governor proclaimed the Constitution. The crowd ran to free *Manin* and *Tommasèo* from prison and brought them in triumph to the Piazza San Marco. I stayed in the inn Regina d'Inghilterra, accompanied by my dear friends the brothers *Benvenuti*. One of them, named Francesco, said to me: '*Listen! You should take care of forming a battalion of the district San Marco*'. Being somewhat familiar with the military art (since, among my other decorations, I can also count the one of major of the Guardia Urbana of Viareggio), I had put a little table in the courtyard of the inn where I stayed, and arranged all the necessities to sign up volunteers who flowed in a great number. I formed the companies and occupied myself with the instruction: however, what could we do without firearms and battle weapons? The arsenal only stored battle axes and broadswords from the old Republic. Enough! And as well as be possible I arranged the battalion. That same evening I got the instruction to go to the Government Palace in order to stay guard together with the Croats¹⁵⁹. I set off with sixty of my men, among whom a good friend who spoke Slavonic; and that was a lucky thing for me, because with his help I could make myself clear to the officer of the guard who only spoke his own language. I invited the officer, who had the rank of captain, to drink a punch with us, which he accepted with great pleasure, and he let us know through our interpreter that he was extremely glad that we would have the Constitution, since they (the Croats) wanted to be our brothers! I also allowed wine to be distributed among all soldiers. Count *Strasoldo* and the general count *Zicci* (who later stood trial), good acquaintances of me, entered the room where I was thanked for the honour rendered to protect them, and told us freely that they, as well as their entire families, had not been able to sleep for several nights. Eh! – I said to my companions – till now everything's running smoothly, let's see what will happen next!! It was about one hour after midnight when the son of count C..., who was among those who formed the small detachment, came to warn me that several gondolas were seen on the lagoon and that one of these had already approached the Palace of the Governor and was heading towards the quayside, where he saw big stuff being carried away, and said to me: '*Ze la cassa del Governo che xe porta via!*'¹⁶⁰ I was given the instruction to let nobody enter or leave the palace until daybreak. Consequently I had broken the *mot d'ordre*! Upon hearing this advise I ran away immediately and closely observed the lagoon, but I saw no living soul. Even so, it was not restful, so that I took the decision to climb the stairs that led to the apartment of the Governor, and upon knocking at the door the chamberlain opened. I asked if H.E. had retired; he replied: 'Just this very moment'. – In that case I kindly ask you to tell him that I would personally have

¹⁵⁸ During the Five Days of Milan, from 18 until 22 March 1848, the population rebelled against the Austrian occupation. There was heavy fighting in the streets, barricades were set up, there was firing from rooftops and windows. A provisional government was formed with mayor Gabrio Casati as president and Carlo Cattaneo as head of the war council. The Austrian field marshal Radetzky retreated with his troops within the Quadrilatero, a fortified zone between the towns Verona, Legnano, Mantua en Peschiera del Garda. The Piemontese army, which joined the revolt, was defeated after one year on 23 March 1849 near Novara, upon which king Carlo Alberto resigned in favour of his son, the later Vittorio Emanuele II, the first king of unified Italy.

¹⁵⁹ This incident occurred on 22 March 1848. After the tumult in Milan and the retreat of the Austrian army, Daniele Manin occupied the Venetian arsenal with a group of citizens and declared the independence. He led the provisional government of the shortlived Repubblica di San Marco, which existed no longer that 17 months. The independence was put to an end by Radetzky's troops on 4 May 1849, after a blockade of the city and an offensive onto the Venetian fortress Maghera. The republic was abolished after negotiations between Manin and the Habsburgs on 27 August 1849.

¹⁶⁰ 'They are carrying away the cash of the Government!'

the honour to wish him a good night. – Having hardly spoken these words, H.E. gently came to me and thanked me for this courteous gesture. I returned to the guard corps quietly. At six o'clock in the morning an other detachment from the district S. Maria in Zobenigo came to relieve us. After a few hours of sleep some friends from the inn informed me that in the evening of next day the theatre would be reopened with my new opera, which had already been rehearsed but not performed because of the occurrences, and that only *La ronda della Guardia Civica* had to be composed, to be executed that same evening between the acts of the opera. My dear friend *Federigo Schmit* wrote the verses which were set to music by me. No sooner said than done: everything was arranged. So the next day a great festivity was held in the theatre, to which the Governor publicly participated with the tricolour. – The opera was excessively applauded that evening, but certainly nobody could follow a syllable of it, because the *evviva* for Italy did not stop at every phrase, every scene, every tempo, and at the end of every piece. After that the *Ronda della Guardia Civica* was sung and repeated three times on the public's demand. I also joined the chorus, and the famous *De-Lagrange*, the tenor *Mirate* and the great *Varesi* shared in my triumph. However, after the calm came the storm:

S'odon le strida andar fino alle stelle,
Voci alte e floche, e suon di man con elle.¹⁶¹

Those were the facts. The next day, farewell Constitution! The republic was proclaimed: and, to tell the truth, it seemed better to me to pack my things and return to my family.

CHAPTER XVI

Since I do not want to withhold anything as to what happened to me in my second period, it is essential that I go back to autumn 1845, when I composed «*Stella di Napoli*»¹⁶² for the Teatro San Carlo, an opera that was very satisfying, perfectly executed by *Tadolini*, *Buccini*, *Fraschini* and *Coletti*. The next autumn I performed «*Merope*» in the same theatre with *Barbieri*, *Fraschini* and the baritone *Gionfrida*. The librettos of these works originated from the respectable mind of *Cammarano*. When I was involved with the composition of «*Merope*», inspired by the sublime tragedy of the great man from Asti¹⁶³, dignified follower of *Euripides*, *Aeschylus* and *Sophocles*, my thought was not to completely turn away (as far as the Italian art of music permits so, I repeat once again: without melody only chords are created), not to turn away, I said, from every formula that emanates from action and that expresses the various passions and the various characters of the figures. The passionate chant I destined to *Merope*; energetic and animated chant to *Egisto*, and to *Polifonte* a repressed, restrained chant. In that way I was busy flattering myself in order to be praised; but the effect did not correspond with my hope, and the opera was no longer

¹⁶¹ “They hear the screaming going up to the stars, loud and raucous voices, and sounds of fighting as well”. (Dante, *La divina commedia*).

¹⁶² This opera was produced in many theatres, and always yielded success. The famous *Galletti* considered it as one of the favorites of his repertoire.

¹⁶³ Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803), author of tragedies. Many of his dramas were inspired by the Greek model. He wrote his tragedy *Merope* in 1782.

reproduced¹⁶⁴. Only the *rondeau finale*, divinely executed by the famous *Barbieri*, aroused great enthusiasm.

During the carnival of 1846 I produced «*La regina di Cipro*» on the stage of the royal theatre of Turin, for the incomparable *Frezzolini*, the tenor *Ferretti* and for the not less famous *Badiali*. I experience this new triumph as a burden, since I am rather reluctant to talk about my victories. I will just mention briefly that *La Frezzolini*, this nice and great singer, entranced me and with me, she entranced the entire Turinese public, who crowded the theatre to hear this fascinating artist. *Badiali* was the right representative of the Venetian Republic (the sly Mocenigo), so that the two artists were endlessly applauded. The great tenor *Ferretti* was not in good form. The opera was produced forthwith at Ferrara in spring, with the aforesaid *Frezzolini*, with the passionate singer *Guasco* and the same *Badiali*. During the next autumn it was represented at the San Carlo in Naples with the same queen of singing and of Cyprus¹⁶⁵ and with the wonderful tenor *Fraschini*, together with the excellent baritone *Balzar*¹⁶⁶. I was only asked to the city mentioned above to stage the fortunate daughter of Venice. In the same autumn *Mercadante* produced his «*Orazi e Curiazi*», a colossal work proven worthy of his great name and pen. Although the aforepraised major composer (recently struck by something terrible!) has not acquired the same popularity as some other more fortunate contemporary¹⁶⁷ did with his operas, he is surely and rightly counted among the greatest who honour the art. «*Il giuramento*», «*Il bravo*», «*La Vestale*» are creations in majestic forms, sublime, expressed in a civilized style and with well thought-out harmonies, schoolgoing with our great predecessors: for that reason I compare him to the famous *Monti*, who among the poets of our century, takes the prominent seat of son of the Parnassus for his monumental images and the purity of language. – In my «*La regina di Cipro*»¹⁶⁸ I completely abandoned the declamatory style, and returned, if not entirely at least partly, to my earlier manner; which procured me the praise of the illustrious as well as learned avv. *Brofferio*. Did I do the wrong thing?

L'uomo ritorna sempre col pensiero
A quel primiero amor che lo ferì
Si lusinghiero.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ This opera was published by Mr *Fabbricatore* of Naples in a reduction for voice and piano, enabling music lovers to judge whether the result is the consequence of mediocrity, or whether it might have deserved another fate. – The company of the praiseworthy Mr *Ricordi* published extracts for voice and piano of my operas: *Il barone di Dolsheim*, *La Vestale*, *Amazilia*, *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, *I cavalieri di Valenza*, *Gli arabi nelle Gallie*, *I fidanzati*, *Ivanohe*, *Il corsaro*, *Saffo*, *Malvina di Scozia* and *Il duca d'Alba*. – The other, not less praiseworthy establishment of Mr *Lucca* of Milan published in the same way: *Maria regina d'Inghilterra*, *Medea*, *Buondelmonte* and *Il saltimbanco*.

¹⁶⁵ Caterina Cornaro (1454-1510) from Venice was unvoluntarily given in marriage to Giacomo II di Lusignano, king of Cyprus. After a slow poisoning of Lusignano by the Venetian intrigant Mocenigo, Caterina succeeded him as queen of Cyprus (1474-1489); she was then chased away by the Venetians. Pacini's *La regina di Cipro* followed the libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges for Halévy's *La reine de Chypre* (1841) en that of Donizetti's *Caterina Cornaro ossia La regina di Cipro* (Naples 1844).

¹⁶⁶ In that same year Balzar passed away in Naples. This meant a great loss to the Italian stages.

¹⁶⁷ As from 1863 Mercadante was practically blind. Pacini may have meant Giuseppe Verdi with 'qualche altro più fortunato coetaneo'.

¹⁶⁸ After the favourable reception of *La regina di Cipro*, the brothers *Favale* offered me a contract to compose a new opera for carnival of 1847, a season for which *Frezzolini* signed a contract as well, upon which she deserted to Russia. I composed *Ester d'Engaddi*. A dark veil covered the poor daughter of Israel!

¹⁶⁹ "Man always comes back with his mind on his first love that so delightfully wounded him".

The occurrences of 1848 made me remain silent until carnival of 1850, which brought me again to Venice to stage «Medea», represented by the artist named *Adelaide Cortesi*, who was stolen from us for some time by the gold of the sons of Washington¹⁷⁰, who celebrated her as one of the greatest prides of our melodramatic theatre. «Medea» was appreciated very much on the principal stage of the queen of the Adria.

In 1849 I lost my second wife *Marietta Albini*¹⁷¹, who left me a daughter. After the subversion of the republican government had taken place in Tuscany¹⁷², I was asked to carry out my duties of *Gonfaloniere*¹⁷³ at Viareggio, which I continued until the end of 1853. When the Grand Duke was returned into his states, I was appointed director of the school of music in Florence, then attached to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, whereas the sovereign had the benevolence to decorate me with the Cross of San Stefano with the title commander of honour letter D. My first thought was to reorganize the education entrusted to me, for which I intended to draw up a plan to raise the instruction to that worthy level that was appropriate to the new Athens. My efforts, my persistences were in vain. After three years of expectations I requested my retirement, which was allowed in accordance with the law, with the honourable title of honorary director and with the decoration of knight in the Order of San Giuseppe. The daily life little by little transformed into the primary natural need of mankind. Getting to find myself on my own with a little girl, and growing accustomed to family life, I got the idea to find a life companion again. And so I did, and I was fortunate. My third marriage refutes the false assertion of the poet that says:

Non è ver che sia la moglie il peggior di tutti i mali;
È pazzia sol pei mortali, che son stanchi di goder.¹⁷⁴

My third life partner *Marianna*, born *Scoti*, belies the malicious judgement of the poet, but I can assure that she is the opposite woman:

Dolce conforto della nostra vita,
Compagna indivisibile ed aita.¹⁷⁵

My three marriages form the harmonic triad: by which, as everyone knows, 3 times 3 makes nine, and consequently I had, besides the complement of the octave, also the ninth, so that, starting from the dominant with preparation and resolution, I could form a ninth chord on the tonic. That means that one should have some understanding of the principles of harmony! Of the nine tones still only five remain; these are: *Amazilia*, the widow *Manara*, from my first marriage; *Giulia*, married to doctor *Fantozzi* from the second; and from the

¹⁷⁰ Adelaide Cortesi (1828-1899), 'prima donna assoluta' at La Scala at the end of the forties. She made her debut in Florence 1847 in Donizetti's *Gemma di Vergy*. Cortesi caused a furore in 1859 at the Academy of Music in New York, where she performed in *La traviata*, *Poliuto*, *Norma*, *Il trovatore* and *Lucrezia Borgia*.

¹⁷¹ Pacini's first wife Adelaide Castelli died in 1828. Marietta Albini created the role of Gulnara at the first performance of his *Il corsaro* in Rome on 15 January 1831. The wedding date is unknown, however, it seems plausible that they married shortly after this premiere.

¹⁷² On 5 May 1849 Austrian armed forces invaded Tuscany with 18.000 soldiers, in order to get the rebelling towns Pisa, Lucca, Livorno and Florence under control. The grand duke of Tuscany Leopoldo II took refuge to Gaeta and put himself under the protection of the king of the Two Sicilies. He returned from exile after some months and disembarked at Viareggio.

¹⁷³ Gonfaloniere: flagbearer.

¹⁷⁴ "It is untrue that a wife is worse than all evil; that is sheer madness of mortals that are weary of enjoying life". (Metastasio). Pacini replaced 'morte' by 'moglie'.

¹⁷⁵ "Sweet solace in our lives, inseparable companion and help".

third marriage *Isabella, Luigi*, the only male, and *Paolina*¹⁷⁶. Of the other four I remember with sorrow

Che l'anime volaro in grembo a Dio!¹⁷⁷

But what have I done?... Instead of continuing my artistic memoirs, I was telling things that belong to my family life! I ask forgiveness and turn back promptly.

CHAPTER XVII

At carnival 1851 the royal theatres of Naples¹⁷⁸ were managed at the expense of the Government, with the respectable and honest councillor cav. *Colombo* as administrator. I composed «*Malvina di Scozia*», executed by *Cortesi, Borghi-Mamo* and the great *De-Bassini*. He was displeased with me because I told him that not all operas could be adapted to a certain artist (I don't believe to have said a wrong thing, referring to my «*La fidanzata corsa*», in which the range of the baritone part did not correspond totally with his vocal register). He remained angry with me and said that he would never sing a note composed by me again. – Knowing this and upon my arrival in Naples, I intended not to give cause to take back my words to the aforementioned famous artist and disposed myself to the work without taking him into consideration. However, one morning we met each other in the street, and in the presence of a mutual friend he denied what he had said to me and that it was just a fabrication. With great pleasure I held out a hand to him and I was glad to entrust my new composition to such a capable interpreter, who sang and acted the part of Arturo as a great artist. The libretto of «*Malvina*» is also the work of the deplored *Cammarano*. The subject is identical to «*Ines de Castro*»¹⁷⁹ which, under its original title, did not pass the censorship. With the triad listed above, that is *Cortesi, Borghi-Mamo, De-Bassini*, added by *Marco Arati*, I could take comfort in a happy success.

During this same year, in which various of my operas were performed at the theatre of Rio de Janeiro with great success, H.M. the emperor *Don Pedro* deigned to decorate me with the knighthood of the Rose. Shortly after, I was contracted for a cantata for the name day of the laudable H.M., which I set to music on words from the learned marquis *De-Lauzieres*. When the work was finished I sent it to the Brazilian consul at Genoa, as I was asked to do; unfortunately however (as quite often happened to me!), I never heard back

¹⁷⁶ Based on the text and additional research, Pacini's family can be made up as follows: 1. Adelaide Castelli (married 1825-1828): *Paolina* (deceased), *Amazilia*, *Lodovico* (deceased), *Giovannina* (deceased); 2. Marietta Albini (married 1832?-1849): *Giulia*; 3. Marianna Scoti (married 1853-1867): *Isabella*, *Luigi*, *Paolina*. The names are known of three out of four children who died during Pacini's life; one child was kept concealed, perhaps deliberately. *Amazilia* and *Giovannina* have both been pupils of countess *Giulia Samoyloff*. It is remarkable that three of his daughters were namesakes of his former lovers *Paolina Borghese* and *Giulia Samoyloff*.

¹⁷⁷ "... that their souls went up to the bosom of God!"

¹⁷⁸ Teatro San Carlo (1737, renovation 1767), Teatro Nuovo (1724) and Teatro del Fondo (1777, named Teatro Mercadante as from 1870).

¹⁷⁹ *Ines de Castro* (Teatro San Carlo, 1835), opera by Giuseppe Persiani (1799-1869) on a text by Salvatore Cammarano. Title, text and names of characters were rewritten by Cammarano into *Malvina di Scozia* after rejection by the censor, probably because Alfonso IV, the fourteenth-century king of the friendly nation Portugal was presented as one of the characters in *Ines de Castro*. Under Ferdinando II censorship was stringently applied, as also appears from the problems with Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* in 1834.

from them any more and so I lost money and time. The saying is: Who works has got one shirt: who doesn't has got two. Oh! blessed fortune.

From 1852 until 53 the tenor *Werger* was appointed impresario of the Teatro Carolino in Palermo, and besides staging again «Maria regina d'Inghilterra» he offered me to compose a new work for that theatre. The aforesaid *Werger*, knowing what impression the famous *Ivanoff* had made in Palermo, expected me to act as intermediary to conclude the agreement, in order to meet the expectation of the people. I thought it was better to consult my friend *Rossini* on that matter, who loved *Ivanoff* as one loves his son, and that feeling was mutual. Everything was arranged. I went to that lovely city which had shown me, totally undeserved, so much honour. But one should say:

Fortuna prende multiforme aspetto.¹⁸⁰

The revival of «Maria regina d'Inghilterra» did no longer bring the house down. I had accepted the assignment to compose the opera d'obbligo at La Scala for the next carnival of 1853, so that I had to leave Palermo at the end of the month of November to fulfil the contract that committed me to the gentlemen *Pirola* and *Cattaneo* of Milan. When I had left, *Ivanoff* demanded to terminate his contract, and according to the public's opinion this was within his rights. I had to return to Palermo at last, because «Rodrigo di Valenza» would almost be staged; however, as it turned out, *Werger* had cancelled the contract with *Ivanoff*, for whom I had written the part of Rodrigo, without informing me, and had engaged an other tenor who, although deserving, was not able to meet the requirements of my composition. For that reason I decided not to fulfil my obligations. I returned to Milan where I composed the unfortunate «*Il Cid*» of which, as a result of the sad occurrences in that city on the sixth of February, I could not even attend the first night, since the theatres were closed at high command and did not reopen until the end of March¹⁸¹; therefore I left Milan after having assisted at the dress rehearsal. – An alleged good spirit, truly generous, sent me a large envelope from Milan, which costed me three lire!, including the printed libretto of my aforesaid opera with the epitaph '*Parce sepolto*', and I replied '*Requiem aeternam dona ei domine*', with the intention to pray for the soul of the benefactor who had been so concerned about me. It was under that circumstance that I was lucky to get acquainted with the learned maestro *Girolamo Alessandro Biaggi*¹⁸², a man of supreme mind and full of love for the noble art of music. Many of his erudite articles appearing in various journals, particularly in *Italia Musicale*, clearly give evidence of his reputation. Especially his address *Della Musica religiosa e questioni inerenti*, published by Mr *Francesco Lucca* from Milan in 1856, made him rightly acquire the high estimation he surely deserved. I don't know whether Mr *Fétis* had read the text mentioned above; in the affirmative case I would be assured, just since he is a French critic, that he would be convinced that also in Italy we have men who are able to think logically and to defy those who believe to dictate too easily. The aforepraised maestro lives in Florence nowadays and occupies himself with writing other colossal works, which will soon be presented (at least we hope) to the public opinion. We also hope that the city Queen of Flowers can crown her chosen one Son of Armonia.

¹⁸⁰ "Fortune has multiform aspects".

¹⁸¹ On 6 February 1853 a raging revolt broke out among the Milanese population against the Austrians, put down mercilessly by Austrian and Croatian soldiers. The city gates and theatres were closed. The Teatro alla Scala reopened on 12 March with the first performance of Pacini's *Il Cid*. The composer was not able to attend that evening because of obligations in Palermo.

¹⁸² Girolamo Alessandro Biaggi (1819-1897). Composer and music critic. Besides a requiem and some romances he composed two operas: *Don Desiderio disperato per eccesso di buon cuore* (Milan 1839) and *Martino della Scala* (Messina 1856) for which he wrote the verses as well.

During autumn of the same year I went to Naples to compose a new opera for San Carlo entitled «Romilda di Provenza». In the preceding year 1852 the famous artist *De-Giuli* had won such approval on that illustrious stage, which certainly merited her talent. Therefore she was contracted again by that theatre until the end of March 1854. The no less capable *Penco*, who made her debut with «Il trovatore» in which she infinitely pleased, was contracted as well. Having stipulated that I could choose the artists and being under the impression that *Penco* was already engaged with an opera of the famous *Verdi*, I said to myself: it would be misunderstood if I did not entrust «Romilda» to *De-Giuli*. I have always had an eye for the touchiness of the artists! After the «Il trovatore» with *Penco*, *De-Giuli* appeared in «I Lombardi». Her success was not too flattering, caused by the fact that usually two parties arise when there are two prima donnas in a theatre, and one of them is considered superior to the other as a result of a novelty, as was just the case with the above *De-Giuli* and *Penco*. The first one had already been known to the public for a year; the second made a fresh impression. And so the novelty of the first score (which, as said, pleased infinitely) harmed the effect of the second. – After the cold reception of *De-Giuli* by the public, she was courteous enough to write me a kind note and returned the score of my new opera, explaining that she did not want to be the cause of the fiasco of my work. I very much appreciated such a tactful conduct: but, although many of my friends would have advised me to accept the cancellation spontaneously made by the artist, I did not consent, because the thought to have contributed to the damage of such a dear and respected name in the art, would have embittered me too much. By doing so I damaged myself, since «Romilda», after a real success in the first act by the achievements of *Borghi-Mamo*, *Fraschini* and especially by the great artist *Ferri*, failed in the second and third act. The public wants to be respected and they are right. However, remembering the motto of Rhadamanthus “*Quod quisque fecit, patitur*”¹⁸³ I prefer to cause myself harm rather than taking the wrong action.

«La punizione» was the opera I set on stage at carnival 1854 in the Teatro la Fenice of Venice, conducted by the splendid impresarios the brothers *Marzi*. The great *Albertini*, a singer whose sound goes down smoothly into the soul, performed miracles in my new work and, to be honest, she only sustained the success of the opera.

I had prepared another work for that season, entitled «La donna dell'isole», on a libretto by my friend *Piave*; but the figure of Cora, to be performed by *Albertini*, represented a woman of an advanced age, embittered by life, and moreover with an already adult son, *Clemente Cleveland*, to be performed by the tenor *Mirate*, made me realize that such an attractive young artist would perhaps make my eyes protrude if I insisted on letting her represent this character. Therefore I changed my mind and preferred other work¹⁸⁴ instead of falling out of favour with the enchanting Siren. After Venice I returned to Viareggio, and from there I left toward the end of November to travel to Paris, by invitation of the colonel Mr *Ragani*, who had assumed the position of impresario of the Italian theatre, in order to stage «Gli arabi nelle Gallie», which H.M. emperor *Napoleon III* remembered to have heard in his youth in Rome, and from which he often hummed the melody of the duet:

¹⁸³ “Whatever each man did, he suffers”. (Seneca: *Hercules furens*, 735-6). Rhadamanthus is the son of Zeus and Europa in Greek mythology. He was a fair ruler of Crete and had to flee from his brother Minos. Zeus appointed him judge of the underworld.

¹⁸⁴ As a matter of fact Augusta Albertini, the only prima donna then available for this opera, refused to sing the role of Cora (somewhat similar to Azucena), as appears from correspondence between Pacini and Piave and Bianca Maria Antolini's research, published in “Intorno a Giovanni Pacini”, edited by Marco Capra. Edizioni ETS, 2003. The project was abandoned and replaced by *La punizione*.

**Di quelle trombe al suono
Mi balza il cor nel petto, ec.**

Perhaps more than the music his appreciation applied to the words of the greatest Captain of history¹⁸⁵. – During the period I was in Naples, my friend *Berrettoni*, the one who proposed me the contract for Paris, thanks to the highly valued patronage of H.H. prince *Giuseppe Poniatowski*, asked me for information on *Borghi-Mamo*, who was rightly praised by me for her exceptional talents.

I proposed *Penco* to the impresario of that theatre; however, since in that year the enchanting *Angelina Bosio*¹⁸⁶, the celebrity of whom the unrelenting scythe deprived us after some time, was engaged, only the first contract was effectuated. *Borghi-Mamo* totally fulfilled my recommendation on that impressive stage. «*Gli arabi nelle Gallie*», to which I added seven new pieces, executed by the artists *Bosio* (Ezilda), *Borghi-Mamo* (Leodato), *Baucardè* (Agobar) and *Gassier* (Gondair) was very favourably received; and I had the firm intention to gain, besides honour, much profit from my renewed work. But man proposes and God disposes. *Borghi Mamo*, who was pregnant (something that never happened again to a warrior from the Auvergne¹⁸⁷), gave birth, so that the performances of the «*Gli arabi*» were interrupted. After the third performance I had the great honour to be received by H.M. the Emperor, who with his amiability, gentleness and realistic character, natural qualities of this superior mind, addressing me with condescending yet very flattering words, and gave me as a gift a magnificent tobacco box set with diamonds, with his illustrious name in the middle.

At the first performance of my «*Arabi*» I also met H.M. king *Girolamo*¹⁸⁸, whom I had the high honour to get to know in Rome at the end of 1820 (together with other monarchs of the *Bonaparte* family who lived in the Eternal City), and after the second act he let me come to his box and scolded me as follows: ‘*Mauvais sujet que vous êtes! Comment! ... Vous savez que je suis ici et vous ne venez pas me voir?*’ I replied – as I had to – that I was imbued by the memory I conserved of him, but that I had not dared to ... upon which he interrupted me and deigned to add that he expected me in his palace the next day, congratulating me meanwhile most vividly with the success of my opera, not without remarking the special honour bestowed upon me by the Emperor, and how the latter had anxiously been looking forward to hear my music and in particular the famous duet to come (as H.M. king *Girolamo* said)) “*Di quelle trombe al suono*”. He let me out and the next day I went to his palace. He welcomed me with excessive goodness, so that I dared to offer him the dedication of my aforecited opera, which he happily accepted.

During my stay in that almost by enchantment renovated metropole, I had the honour to know the famous *Halevy* and the highly esteemed *Adam*, men of which France rightly still mourns their loss with grief. They were two

¹⁸⁵ “Upon hearing that trumpet sound, my heart beats faster, etc”. These are the words of Agobar, commander of the Arabs, in the duet with Ezilda from *Gli arabi nelle Gallie*, second act.

¹⁸⁶ Angiolina Bosio (1830-1859) made her debut in 1846 as Lucrezia in *I due Foscari*. She sang in Paris en North-America and performed Gilda in the first London performance of *Rigoletto*. Bosio died suddenly in St. Petersburg.

¹⁸⁷ De mezzo-soprano Adelaide Borghi-Mamo performed the musico-role of Leodato, prince of the Auvergne and general of Charles Martel in the battle against the Moors (Poitiers 732).

¹⁸⁸ Jérôme Bonaparte (1784-1860), the youngest brother of Napoleon I, was appointed king of the newly formed kingdom of Westphalia in 1807, until his kingdom was dissolved by the allied countries in 1813. After the enthronement of his nephew Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) in 1852, Jérôme was recognized as the heir presumptive to the throne until the birth of the crown prince Napoléon Eugène. As a possible successor of the new emperor he was appointed president of the Senate.

dear people as well. In line with their talents and indisputable merits they largely possessed amiability and good manners. I keep permanent memories of their proofs of real cordiality with which I was honoured. – One day *Halevy* asked me the reason why I would not compose a work for the Grand Opéra. I replied that my shoulders were too weak to bear a weight like this, and moreover that I, as a matter of principle, I would not invade the camps that belong to others. In doing so I wanted to make clear to him in a certain way that, although I highly appreciate other people's talents, I nevertheless would not be favourably disposed towards others coming to Italy to take our places. Nowadays however, thanks to our fanatics of the music of the future and with the inclination to praise everything that reaches us from across the Alps and from overseas without distinction, they try to snap off the flowers produced by our fertile soil. But the effort is futile. The music, I repeat, without melody has no connection with ideas and will always just be a pack of notes and nothing more. With that statement I neither intend to say that the French composers do not have their great merits, nor will it be believed that I condemn them to ostracism! God forbid! I simply wanted to emphasize that the fanaticism is not exaggerated, forgetting how much every good son owes his mother. But let us abandon this subject which is rather misplaced. – Apart from the two aforesaid maestros I met the celebrated *Auber*, the famous author of «*La muette de Portici*», whose masterwork is so deeply inspired by the source of that beauty which has its origin only in our Italy. The scholarly *Delecluze*, a man who always lived among artists, highly cultured and blessed with an excellent taste for the art of music, honoured me largely with his benevolence. The erudite Mr *De-Lauzieres* remodernized the libretto of «*Gli arabi*» for me.

Upon termination of my engagement I left Paris, satisfied in every respect, even though it was my deepest desire that a third memorable occurrence (and that was the childbirth of *Borghi*) had not taken place to disturb my golden dreams.

CHAPTER XVIII

After Paris Mr *Servadio* (who established the Società Picena with the firm intention to benefit the art of which he is a worthy patron) invited me to Forlì in spring and to Ancona in summer, to stage my «*Medea*», with the same sublime melodramatic lady who had already performed the same with so much acclaim in Venice at carnival of 1850. – In this opera the famous *Mongini*¹⁸⁹ was a worthy companion of *La Cortesi*. It is certainly not my intention to belittle the merits of so many other tenors who sang the part of Giasone, but he is undoubtedly incomparable in how he imagined himself in the spirit of the character as conceived by the poet and the composer of the music. The conscientious artist creates to role, not the other way round.

The distinctive poet *Bolognese* prepared for me «*Margherita Pusterla*» for the carnival season of 1856 in the Teatro San Carlo. The renowned soprano *Medori*, the tenor *Mirate*, the contralto Mrs *Paganini* and the baritone *Coletti*, besides many others in minor parts, realized my eightieth¹⁹⁰ work. *La Medori* was sublime, but fortune did not smile upon the poor Margherita, who did not give in to the vicious desires of Luchino and therefore resigned herself to the fate that hung over her head. In this opera I tried to bring local colour to the

¹⁸⁹ The tenor Pietro Mongini (1828-1874) created Radames in *Aida* in 1871.

¹⁹⁰ Pacini's numbering deviates from ours. In 1856 sixty-four operas were performed. The unfinished, unperformed and doubtful operas included, this totals seventy-nine.

music, and especially in some choral parts, by forming an idea of the chants of the fourteenth century. Moreover I imagined, besides the mysterious sound of the melody, to imitate a true echo in the scene that represents the night of San Giovanni, not with the instruments brought into action so far, but with voices; to that effect I imagined, on various points where Alpinolo (contralto) was heard, to use an other contralto voice; where Ramengo (bass) sang, an other bass. I hoped to achieve a spectacular effect with this idea,

Ma feci i conti senz'attender l'oste!¹⁹¹

In spring Mr *Iacovacci* called me to Rome to stage «*Medea*», in which *Cortesi* also rightly deserved the credit from the public in view of her great achievement. After the success of the opera mentioned above, *Iacovacci* offered me other contracts, to stage «*La punizione*» at carnival 1857 with *Albertini* and the dear singer *Baucardè*, her husband, and to compose two new operas. We reached the agreement with a few words. During the summer of that same year 1857 I was called to Bologna to stage «*Bondelmonte*» in the Teatro Comunale, performed by the excellent singer and actress *Salvini Donatelli*, whose talent still towers above the few who honour the Italian stages. She had already performed the part of Bice¹⁹² with general acclaim in a lot of other theatres, just as the one of Editta in my «*Allan Cameron*» during spring of 1851, under the old impresario *Pietro Camurri*, who belongs to the class that leaves an honourable memory. On that occasion the senator of Bologna invited me to compose the cantata for H.H. Pius IX, executed at the Archiginnasio when the Pontifex honoured this seat of science with his presence. The famous tenor *Poggi* was the worthy interpreter of my festive short work. That yielded me, besides a gold medal which the Pope was so kind as to present to me personally, a splendid gift from the Senate, consisting of an anchor watch with chain of great value. Moreover, I was honoured with the decoration of knight of St. Gregory the Great. The veteran *Donzelli*, who still conserved an enviably powerful and fresh voice and serves as an example for young singers, was made knight in the Order of St. Sylvester at that occasion, an honour that was also conceded to the above mentioned famous *Poggi*.

During the subsequent autumn I produced «*Il saltimbanco*» at the Teatro Argentina in Rome. The distinguished singer *Kennet*, admired for her beautiful voice, skilled coloratura, spirit and sensivity, was a Lena beyond any eulogy. She was accompanied by the incomparable baritone *Bartolini*. The tenor with his powerful voice *Bertolini* and the distinguished bass *La Terza* formed the principal figures of my extremely successful theatrical work, which made me travel all over Italy to reproduce the same in Viterbo, Treviso, Florence, Parma, Turin and Venice, followed by performances in Palermo, Naples, Lisbon, Madrid, Barcelona, Havana, etc. etc.

In summer 1858 my great oratorio «*La distruzione di Gerusalemme*» was executed in Florence in the *Salone dei Cinquecento*, to the benefit of the *Società di mutuo soccorso*. The T.R.H. provided their assistance to the execution, which was superior to any praise as far as the orchestra is concerned, no less than it was for the vocal parts. The renowned *Kennet*, the famous *Squarcia*, the great *Limberty* and the entire choir corps, composed of exquisite dilettantes and professional singers, left the numerous exclusive audience nothing to desire. I will refrain from going into the merits of the composition: I will only mention that I did not neglect to study the subject matter and the characters of the

¹⁹¹ "But I reckoned without the host!"

¹⁹² With the role of Bice, Pacini meant the main character Beatrice in his *Bondelmonte*.

dramatis personae, in order to give every nation its own musical rhythm, since the language of the Assyrians differs from that of the Romans, and Hebrew differs from the first and the second. The verses of the scenes is the work of the learned abbot *Fioretti*, highly praiseworthy, as Mr *Vincenzo Meini* mentioned in the analysis he was so kind as to write on the aforesaid work. I do not hesitate to make clear that, following the right reflections of the courteous critic, I made changes in the music of the curse that Flavio hurled to the head of Eleazzaro and to the hired assassins in the third scene of the second part, besides other small improvements, in the hope that one day this work will not be completely erased from the memory of mankind. «La distruzione di Gerusalemme» had the honour of a second execution in which two pieces had to be repeated.

My friend *Lanari* called me to Bologna in autumn, to stage «Linda di Bruxelles»¹⁹³. In this score the great young singer Mrs *Fricci* confirmed the success she already had in «Semiramide». – During carnival 1859, as mentioned before, I had to stage the fortunate «Il saltimbanco» in Florence, Turin, Parma and Venice. The noble president of that theatre offered me the contract for the opera d'obbligo for carnival 1860, but the political events suspended the performance of my work, so that «Berta» (libretto by *Piave*) will be executed only when heaven permits so¹⁹⁴. – Autumn 1860 brought me to Rome, where my opera «Gianni di Nisida», with the wonderful *Ponti* and *Barlani-Dini*, together with the famous *Bettini* and *Squarcia* and the stupendous bass *La Terza*, was passionately received. The success was confirmed during next spring in the same theatre, despite the absence of the famous artists *Bettini*, *Squarcia* and the superb *Barlani-Dini*, who were replaced by the elegant tenor *Bignardi*, the perfect baritone *Buti* and *Tati*. My composition was also enthusiastically received during the Lugo fair, with the two singers mentioned earlier, namely Mrs *Ponti*, really unsurpassable in this work, and *Barlani-Dini*. This was not what happened however, with carnival 1861 at the Teatro alla Pergola: after which some *benevolent and considerate friend* took the trouble to inform the direction of Modena and of Genoa, with whom I had a binding contract, about this immediately! Whatever does envy often bring about? – The slander. – And what is slander? – Ask Don Basilio. – But why? A thousand thanks to those who have taken notice of my «Gianni di Nisida», and *Salutem inimicis nostris*!

During that season I produced for the same theatre in Rome «Il mulattiere di Toledo»¹⁹⁵, expressly composed for the artists mentioned above, to whom the marvelous buffo *Fioravanti* was added, who rightly takes a prominent place among the important comedians of the melodramatic theatre. I took a rest for the remaining part of the year. After having signed the contract with Mr *Merelli*, impresario of the royal Teatro alla Scala, to perform a new opera on this illustrious stage during the next carnival, I was busy preparing «La Carmelita», a subject based on *Don Giovanni di Marrana*¹⁹⁶, a tragedy by Mr *Dumas* and adapted for our stages by my frequently recalled friend *Piave*. However, if fortune leaves one in the lurch, each good will is useless. I occupied myself with the work with pleasure: in fact I deviated as never before from the other works I composed so far, following the artistic conscience that belongs to a man of a ripe age. The opera «Berta», not performed as well, is the sister of «La Carmelita»; but whereas the first still keeps her virginity intact, it is because her father has stipulated a condition to the effectuation of marriage. – To be honest, what happened to me in Milan at carnival 1863 I had never encountered

¹⁹³ The correct title is *Lidia di Bruxelles*.

¹⁹⁴ *Berta di Varnol* moved to the San Carlo in Naples. First performance 6 April 1867.

¹⁹⁵ The sources consulted all indicate that *Il mulattiere di Toledo* was first performed in the Teatro Apollo, although Pacini clearly indicated that he wrote this opera for the same theatre as he did for *Gianni di Nisida*, the Teatro Argentina.

¹⁹⁶ *Don Juan de Marana, ou la chute d'un ange* (1836), a play by Alexandre Dumas père.

before. Poor art! poor artists! Is that the way contracts are respected and justice is applied? Wherever are confidence and trust? To what purpose are letters of respectable persons addressed to the direction of a theatre!... This is incredible! Therefore I lost money, time and work. Well, if this happened in a first-class theatre, whatever would happen in a theatre of less prestige? Think whatever you like. It is a matter of paramount importance for much more than the obvious reasons.¹⁹⁷

That same year I had the honour to join the commission charged with the comparative examinations for the function of director and teacher of counterpoint at the Royal Conservatory of Palermo. My respectable colleagues were the honourable cav. L.F. *Casamorata* and professor A. *Basevi*. Prior to that, I received the high distinction to be decorated by H.M. the King as Officer in the Order of Saint Maurice¹⁹⁸.

CHAPTER XIX

Since I had to tell in my poor memories about the compositions that I have given life, I will also mention those lifeless creatures that have been left imprisoned on the shelves of my little music archive. So, besides «*La donna delle isole*», «*Berta*» and «*La Carmelita*», there is a quantity to accompany the three left to their fate: «*Gusmano d'Almeida*»¹⁹⁹, composed for the Teatro la Fenice at carnival 1831, which was substituted by «*Ivanohe*» for the single reason that I could not dispose of the excellent tenor *Reina*, who was received so enthusiastically by that respectable audience in the previous operas²⁰⁰, that I believed to be on the safe side not to assign «*Gusmano*», in which he had the leading part, to him. My idea yielded a mutual benefit, since *Reina* had a very fortunate success in the role of Briano in the aforesaid opera «*Ivanohe*». – «*Gusmano*» is joined by «*Niccolò de'Lapi*», «*Elnava*»²⁰¹, «*Don Pomponio*» (my firstling) and «*Gl'illinesi*». To my unpublished creations I add the Cantatas composed on various occasions. First: «*L'omaggio più grato*» for the theatre of Pavia in 1819 on the occasion of the completion of the work connecting the Ticino with the Po. The performers were *Carolina Contini* and the tenor *Antonio Baroni*: the verses were the work of the author of the *Cronache di Pindo*, Mr *Angelo Anelli*, whose name certainly honours the Italian letters. Second: «*Il pure omaggio*» for the Teatro Grande in Trieste, composed in 1822 for the name day of H.M. the Austrian Emperor; the famous *Bonini* performed the part of *Astrea*, the excellent baritone *Bottari* that of *Prometeo*, and the tenor *Passanti Mercurio* (may God liberate us!). Third: a Cantata in 1825 for the

¹⁹⁷ Due to serious financial problems Bartolomeo Merelli decided to alter the program for the carnival season of 1863 to the effect that the announced new operas *Carmelita* and Perelli's *Chiaro di Montalto* were replaced by the box-office successes Rossini's *Otello*, Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Faust* by Gounod, without notification to the two composers. After having offered *Carmelita* to other theatres without result, the opera was rewritten with slight modifications as *Don Diego di Mendoza*. In fact this was Merelli's last season at La Scala. Source: "Intorno a Giovanni Pacini".

¹⁹⁸ The 'Ordine dei Santi Maurizio e Lazzaro' originates from the period of the First Crusade and was from its inception concerned with the relief of leprosy. This order of chivalry had a military and strictly catholic character. In 1946 the order was replaced by the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.

¹⁹⁹ The libretto of *Gusmano d'Almeida* is entitled to the very erudite professor *Romanelli*; that of *Niccolò de'Lapi* to cav. *Perrini* from Lucca; *Elnava* to *Piave*; *Don Pomponio* to Dr *Paganini* from Oleggio, a good and respectable man who became a dear friend of my father.

²⁰⁰ *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* and then *La straniera* were the productions preceding *Ivanohe*.

²⁰¹ *L'assedio di Leida (Elnava)* was not performed as a result of a disagreement between Pacini and Piave on the text of the introduction which, in Pacini's opinion, was politically too explosive.

name day of the King of Naples *Francesco I*. Fourth: another one in 1830 for the marriage of H.M. *Maria Cristina* of Naples with the King of Spain. Fifth: then one for the accession to the throne of H.M. the Emperor of France. Sixth: another one for the wedding of H.R.H. prince *Ferdinando* with H.R.H. *Anna Maria* of Saxony. Finally, in 1848 I composed a Cantata, executed in the Capitol, executed by all amateurs and professional musicians associated with the Roman Philharmonic; the verses were composed by the distinguished Mr *Dall'Olio*, commissioned by H.E. duke *Sforza Cesarini*.

To the cantatas I add the following oratorios: – «*Il trionfo di Giuditta*» dedicated to my native country, which honourably provided me, although not yet put into effect, by I do not know whose fault, by degree of the Catanese Senate, with a medal worth 300 ducats, which mark of honour I felt obliged to refuse, requesting that lofty magistrate to put a corresponding amount to the disposal of the recently established nursery schools. The truly spontaneous verses are the work of my esteemed townsman and friend Mr *Raffaele Abate* – «*Il trionfo della religione*», executed in Longiano in 1838 on the occasion of the festivities of the SS. Crocifisso. – «*Sant'Agnese*» of 1857, dedicated to the high pontifex *Pius IX*, on a text by Mr *Principalli* of Rome.

I had never composed quartets for stringed instruments, but the impetus given to the chamber music by the illustrious professor *A. Basevi* (a true Maecenas and promoter of musicology) with assistance of the praiseworthy Mr *Guidi*, gave me the idea to occupy myself with this kind of composition. I threw myself into it with great pleasure, I can truly say so, and I can count six quartets so far. The first one I dedicated to my dearest companion; the second to the famous professor cav. *F. Giorgetti*; the third to the Società del Quartetto in Florence; the fourth to the aforepraised professor *Basevi*²⁰²; the fifth I dedicated to the learned maestro *Taglioni* of Naples; the sixth to my dear friend and colleague cav. *Angiolo Mariani*, honour and real glory of the art. I have in mind to compose six more works in this same genre (if God gives me time to live) to dedicate to other illustrious colleagues. I also composed an octet for three violins, oboe, bassoon, horn, violoncello and double bass, which I offered to the excellent young maestro *Giosuè Maraviglia*. – My latest work is the *Sinfonia Dante*, printed by Mr *G.G. Guidi*. This instrumental work, of which the noble Florentine municipality was so kind as to accept the dedication, required a mental process of more than three months. The execution will take place next year during the great centenary celebration in the Flower City as a tribute to the greatest poet and scholar the world has known. In that way my limited talent corresponded to that comprehensive idea invented and suggested to me by the frequently mentioned professor *Basevi*. But I worry about that and for good reason, because composing descriptive music without the help of the first-born sister is very, immensely difficult. I had too much trust in myself and even regretted to have embarked upon this project. However, it is useless crying over spilt milk. Anyway, I shall beg my Italian brothers benevolent forgiveness and ask them to welcome my attempt as a tribute offered to Him

Che sovra gli altri com'Aquila vola.²⁰³

²⁰² The second quartet was published by the gentlemen *Giudici* and *Strada* from Turin; the fourth by *G.G. Guidi* from Florence.

²⁰³ "Who flies like an Eagle above anyone else".

CONCLUSION

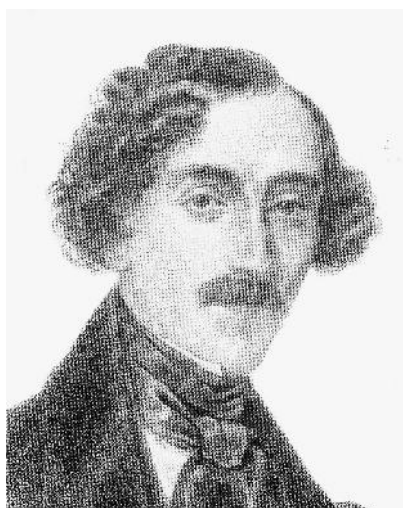
I have told of my studies; I have written about my course which was always heading towards serving the art, rather than considering it as a merchandise. I don't know, to be honest, whether I would deserve the memory of my compatriots with it. It was certainly not my fault that I could not attain the goal I craved for, since I did not omit to develop myself increasingly along the gradually progressing path of the great geniuses by continuously drinking from the source of a *Marcello*, a *Palestrina* and a *Pergolesi*, father, sovereign of the passionate melodic inspiration. *Durante*, *Leo*, *Bach*, I admired them, as I admired the masterworks of that great genius, named *Haydn* who, thanks to his supreme artistic mastership, was able to create a most natural melody, obtaining a tree with a wealth of fruit from one little flower, to glorify the creation. In *Mozart* I venerated the first one to unify the German with the Italian schools; in *Gluck* the inventor of the lyrical tragedy. I also studied the operas of *Weber* and *Meyerbeer*, in which I noticed a close uniformity in style. The great genius of the Berlin composer finds expression, more than in his other works, in «Gli ugonotti», but I find more melodic spontaneity, richer harmonies and quicker ideas in «Roberto il Diavolo». I delightfully observed the simplicity of *Paisiello*, the lively genius of *Cimarosa*, the well-thought way of composing of *Guglielmi*. Then I deepened my knowledge of *Mayr*, *Paër*, *Generali*: the first furnished with a great knowledge of harmony, creator of vocal art derived from the pure Italian school; the second with a fruitful fantasy and also gifted with a great melodic talent; in the third composer I found the first steps to reform, which started with his «Adelina» and subsequently was completed by the divine man from Pesaro. In *Spontini* my attention was drawn to his lofty ideas; in *Morlacchi* the spontaneous vocal pieces, also characteristic for *Pavesi*, adorned with the purest harmony. In *Rossini* I am ravished by his intense genius, his vastness of mind, superior taste and knowledge, which evokes an image in my mind of a small well, converting little by little into a stream, then a river and in the end into the vast ocean. In the instrumental music I chose the superterrestrial *Beethoven* as the greatest, and in the chamber music *Hummel*, *Spohr*, *Mendelssohn* and in particular *Onslow*. Eventually, all of them passed the milestones of their time and school. To study their works is indispensable for one who does not want to be an unworthy son of the art at all.

But I must confess, benevolent reader, that I have been too extensive: therefore I conclude these insignificant stories, pretending to apologize without asking for mercy, with truth as the only merit.

Sessant'anni di storia ti contai
Fiaschi, trionfi, pianti ed altri guai.²⁰⁴

END

²⁰⁴ "I have told you sixty years of stories, fiascos, triumphs, tears and other inconveniences".



Portraits of Giovanni Pacini



Monument in Parco Villa Pacini in Catania, by the sculptor Duprè. The original bust was removed from its pedestal by unknown vandals in the eighties of the twentieth century and probably destroyed. The present bust is the work of the Catanese sculptor Salvo Giordano