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Travelling opera troupes in the United States, 1825–1860. (Volumes I and II)

Preston, Katherine K., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1989

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TRAVELLING OPERA TROUPES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1825-1860

Volume One

by

Katherine K. Preston

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1989

Katherine K. Preston

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

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Abstract

TRAVELLING OPERA TROUPES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1825-1860

by

Katherine K. Preston

Adviser: H. Wiley Hitchcock

The story of opera performance in North America during the colonial and revolutionary periods has been well documented. The history of opera in the United States during the nineteenth century, however, has been limited almost entirely to events that occurred during the final twenty-five years; the other seventy-five years of the century have been for the most part neglected. The lack of in-depth scholarship on this subject has led some historians to believe that opera was an unimportant and inconsequential part of American musical culture--especially during the antebellum period. The purpose of this study is to dispel that belief, and to demonstrate the importance of the genre as a form of entertainment that appealed to Americans of all social classes.

This dissertation is straightforward in organization. A Prologue provides background information on American and British theatre practices in the early nineteenth century. Chapters 1, 3, and 5 are survey chapters about specific types of troupes: vocal-star, Italian, and English opera companies, respectively. No individual

troupes are examined in copious detail in these chapters; the point is to demonstrate the ubiquity and pervasiveness of itinerant opera performers in the United States during the period and to provide the context for the other three chapters. Chapters 2, 4, and 6, in turn, are detailed examinations of particular seasons by specific companies chosen as prototypes of the three kinds of troupes active at different times. All of the chapters have as focal points the successes and failures of the various troupes; their personnel, itineraries, modes of travel, repertories, and performance practices; and the makeup of the audiences in attendence at their performances. A short Epilogue serves as a conclusion.

Our knowledge of the history of music in America of this period is still too incomplete for anyone to write the definitive history of any one genre. This study fills a large gap in our understanding of musical culture in the United States during the period 1825-1860. It also makes available to scholars of American music, history, and culture a large body of information that can be expanded and built upon.

PREFACE

The story of opera performance in North America during the colonial and revolutionary periods has been well documented by Oscar Sonneck in his indispensable work Early Opera in America.[1] The story of opera in the United States during the nineteenth century, however, has been limited almost entirely to events that occurred during the final twenty-five years; John Cone's study of the James Mapleson Company is one of the earliest (in subject matter), and it commences with the arrival of that impresario in America in 1878.[2] The other seventy-five years of the century have been for the most part neglected; investigations of antebellum opera productions (in particular) have been limited to chapters in surveys of music in the United States (such as Charles Hamm's valuable chapter on Italian opera as popular song in his book Yesterdays) and to studies of opera production in particular cities (Peter Wolz's dissertation on the history of opera in Cincinnati, for example) or geographical areas (Ronald Davis's study of opera in the West).[3] The lack of in-depth scholarship on this subject has led some historians to believe that opera was an unimportant and inconsequential part of American musical culture--especially during the antebellum period. The purpose of this study is to dispel that belief.

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1. Oscar Sonneck, Early Opera in America (New York: G. Schirmer, 1915).

2. John Frederick Cone, First Rival of the Metropolitan Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

3. Charles Hamm, Yesterdays. Popular Song in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979); Peter Wolz, "Opera in Cincinnati Before 1920" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1983); Ronald Davis, A History of Opera in the American West (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

The history of opera in nineteenth century America--especially during the antebellum period--is inextricably intertwined with the history of American theatre, for opera, as musical theatre, was a normal part of the American theatrical venue of the time. As a consequence, I have relied for much of my material on sources that normally fall within the purview of theatre historians: playbills, promptbooks, theatrical periodicals (of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), memoirs, and theses, dissertations, and books on the history of the theatre in specific American cities and regions. Musical materials have included similar secondary and primary sources: regional studies, contemporary music periodicals, reviews, memoirs, concert and operatic programs, biographical source materials, librettos and scores of the operas, and operatic sheet music publications. For background material and for information about the American audience I have examined newspaper articles and advertisements, personal letters, diaries, letters to the editors of periodicals and newspapers, memoirs, and photographs. My plan was to mine information from the numerous and varied secondary studies, add a significant amount of primary-source plunder of my own, and use this material to fashion an overall picture of the place of opera and opera performance within American culture of the antebellum period.

This dissertation is fairly straightforward in organization. The Prologue sets the scene by providing background information on American and British theatre practices in the early nineteenth century. Chapters 1, 3, and 5 are survey chapters about specific types of troupes: vocal-star, Italian, and English opera companies, respectively. No individual troupes are examined in copious detail in these chapters; the point is

to demonstrate the ubiquity and pervasiveness of itinerant opera performers in the United States during the period and to provide the context for the other three chapters. Chapters 2, 4, and 6, in turn, are detailed examinations of particular seasons by specific companies chosen as prototypes of the three kinds of troupes active at different times. A short Epilogue serves as a conclusion.

I have deliberately excluded French and German opera companies from this study. The French troupes were very important, especially early in the antebellum period; John Davis's French Opera Company of New Orleans, in fact, was the second troupe to visit the East Coast. The only other scholarly study of itinerant opera companies in the United States, however, focuses on precisely this troupe: Sylvie Chevalley's article on the tours of the New Orleans company from 1827-1833 covers the subject of French troupes fairly well; her coverage is particularly valuable because itinerant French companies ceased to be important in the United States after the mid-1840s.[4] I excluded the German companies for a much simpler reason: most (if not all) of them were short-lived resident troupes (primarily in New York); they were not itinerant companies.

Because I chose to delve into an area as unexplored as this one, and because I designed a project that would rely on secondary sources, I relinquished at the outset any attempt (or intention) to write the definitive history of opera performance in the antebellum United States.

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4. See Sylvie Chevalley, "Le Théâtre d'Orléans en Tournée dans les Villes du Nord 1827-1833," in Comptes Rendus de l'athenee Louisianais (New Orleans, 1955), 27-71.

I believe that our knowledge of the history of music in America of this period is still too incomplete for anyone to write the definitive history of any one genre. But although this study is far from the last word on the history of opera performance in the antebellum United States, it does make available to scholars of American music, history, and culture a large body of information that can be expanded and built upon. Our general knowledge of the history of music in nineteenth century America can be compared to the partially drawn map of an unexplored region. As a contribution, this work might be thought of as a mass of detail that is ready to be sketched onto that figurative map--detail that can be used to fill in one of the numerous blank areas that (like the terra incognita sections of seventeenth-century maps of our unexplored continent) are labeled "Here There be Tygers."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is impossible to undertake and complete a project of this scope without the help of many institutions and individuals, all of whom deserve my sincere gratitude. I was in residence at the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. as a Predoctoral Fellow from 1985 through 1988, and this tenure greatly facilitated my completion of the dissertation. In particular, John Hasse and Cynthia Hoover of the Division of Musical History provided encouragement and moral support; in addition, Jim Rose of the Museum's Library was always willing to process yet another in a seemingly endless series of interlibrary loan requests. I also benefited from and had my intellectual horizons expanded by working in close proximity with my fellow Fellows--young (and not-so-young) scholars in a variety of disciplines, all engaged in research and writing on interesting and useful projects.

I was privileged to be in residence as a Peterson Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts on two separate occasions. A full month's tenure at that remarkable archive during the summer of 1985 proved to be an insufficient amount of time, and I had to return for another full month in 1986 before exhausting the relevant materials. The entire genial staff of the Society deserves my thanks; in particular, however, I am grateful for the friendship and help of Georgia Barnhill, Curator of the Graphic Arts Collection. I

also spent a fruitful month as a Fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago. In addition, I received dissertation-related financial and travel support from the Sinfonia Foundation, the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies, and the Ph.D Alumni Association of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

The staffs of the Music, Rare Books, and Newspapers and Current Periodicals Divisions of the Library of Congress put up with my constant presence (and countless call-slips) for several years. I am grateful for their help. In particular, my thanks to the resident genius of the Music Division, Wayne Shirley, for his suggestions, good humor, encouragement, and moral support, and to the Reader Services Division of the Library for the study desk I occupied for two years in an alcove above the Main Reading Room of the Jefferson Building. The staffs of numerous other libraries and archives, including the Theatre Department of the Philadelphia Free Library, Manuscripts Division of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Music Department of the Boston Public Library, Harvard Theatre Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library, and many other repositories in San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Washington all deserve my thanks.

To my advisor, H. Wiley Hitchcock, I am grateful for hours spent carefully reading and editing my manuscript and--in particular--for words of encouragement and enthusiasm that helped to keep me going. Lawrence Levine gave freely of his time, advice, and friendship before I asked him to be on my committee, and his interest and enthusiasm were

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I bent the ear of many a friend and colleague during the course of this project. In particular, my thanks to William Brooks for pointing me in the direction of Maurice Strakosch, Max Maretzek, and 19th-century opera production when I was casting about for a dissertation topic. Bill gave me copies of the research notes to articles he wrote on several nineteenth-century figures (Strakosch, Maretzek, Lind, and others) for the New Grove Dictionary of American Music, and he also read and commented on several of the chapters. He was always sympathetic, supportive, and forthcoming with good advice when I needed it. His enthusiasm for and curiosity about the history of music in nineteenth-century America has long been a source of inspiration to me. Harlan Jennings of Michigan, Robert Commanday of California, and Thomas Kaufman of New Jersey all generously lent me copies of research notes for their own opera-related projects; this material has been invaluable. I constantly marvel at my luck to be in a discipline in which scholars--even near-strangers--support and trust each other to such an extent. To Allen Lott, whose work on travelling virtuoso pianists is closely related to my own research, my thanks for encouragement and occasional nuggets of information passed along. Betsy Sanford was always willing to read copy and to act as a sounding board; I sincerely appreciate her enthusiasm and encouragement--especially for a subject that is leagues away from her

normal discourse.

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To my students and colleagues at the College of William and Mary (where I have the great fortune to be a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music), my thanks for patience and forbearance. In particular Dale Cockrell, William DeFotis, and Edgar Williams--who are friends as well as colleagues--all offered help and expressed support, sympathy, bemusement, and growing consternation, especially when--as my deadline approached and I had to overcome a balky printer, cumbersome software, and discs with mysteriously missing blocks of text--I became ever-more singleminded and agitated (some would say near-frantic). Loretta Early of the College Computer Center was more than generous with her time, and Donna Wilson, manager of the computer room in the Educational Media Center, gave me unlimited time on one of the laser printers in her domain. Two other friends also generously helped with computers: John Holdway generated two maps and did some trouble-shooting, and Johanna Pfund spent hours (and hours and hours!) helping me to convert my files from one word-processing program to another in order to print the document on a laser printer.

My bicycling buddies and good friends--in particular John Holdway, Susan Hartman, and Jeff Travis--helped to keep me sane (and healthy) during the last four years by dragging me away from my computer and making me forget about nineteenth-century opera companies (albeit briefly) while traversing the roads of rural and suburban Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D. C. (and, on several longer trips, in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Quebec). I appreciate their patience with my impossibly busy schedule.

Finally, my husband Daniel--who is the most musically-knowledgeable American historian I know--went far beyond the call of duty in keeping our lives together, especially during the finishing stages of this project. This work is dedicated to him.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	New Grove Dictionary of American Music
AMR	American Musical Review
BMT	Boston Musical Times
BMG	Boston Musical Gazette
CSf	San Francisco Public Library
CSfCP	Society of California Pioneers
DLC	Library of Congress
FTP	Lengyel, Cornel, editor. History of Music in San Francisco Series. Volume 1, Music of the Gold Rush Era. (WPA Northern California. San Francisco. History of Music Project). January 1839. Federal Theatre Project Archives, George Mason University.
FTP	Estavan, Lawrence, editor. San Francisco Theatre Research. History of Opera in San Francisco (Volume 7). WPA Project 8386.
GA/MWA	Graphic Arts Collection, American Antiquarian Society.
HTC	Harvard Theatre Collection
ICHi	Chicago Historical Society
ICN	Newberry Library, Chicago
MB	Boston Public Library
MDHi	Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland
MG	Musical Gazette
MR	Musical Review
MR&CA	Musical Review & Choral Advocate
MW	Musical World
MWA	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts
NG	New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

NHi	New York Historical Society
NN	New York Public Library
NYMR	New York Musical Review
NYMR&G	New York Musical Review & Gazette
PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania
PP	Free Library of Philadelphia
PPL	Library Company of Philadelphia

PROLOGUE

> England and America carry on, undoubtedly, a most thriving and multifarious traffick. Not only do they exchange cotton, tobacco, turpentine, laces, silks, cloths, cutlery, fashions, frippery, and a thousand other et ceteras . . . but a more intellectual barter of authors, travellers, artists, and actors, is most spirited and unceasingly kept up. In the latter department the United States are insatiable in their demands. They have absorbed nearly all the talent of Great Britain. (New York Mirror, 10 December 1836, 190)

The history of touring opera troupes in the United States begins in the 1820s, with the appearance first of Manuel García's Italian Opera Company in 1825 and, two years later, with the first East Coast tour of John Davis's French Opera Company of New Orleans. These two troupes, however, were only the vanguard of a whole host of opera companies of different types and sizes, which were to have a significant role in the development of American musical culture during the antebellum period. The touring opera company was, above all, a type of theatrical troupe; as a consequence, a study of their activities during the antebellum period must have as its foundation an understanding of the theatrical system of which they were a part.

It is of paramount importance to understand that to American theatre-goers of the early nineteenth century music was a normal and important part of all dramatic productions. As a matter of course theatres employed orchestras, singing actors and actresses, and musical directors--and relied heavily on them for their productions. A standard theatrical bill of fare from either the late eighteenth or the early

nineteenth century typically consisted of an instrumental overture (often from an opera), a full-length dramatic piece with added songs and dances (either interpolated into the action or performed between the acts), and an afterpiece (a farce, burletta, one-act opera, dance, pantomime, or masque) that often was musical in nature. In addition, dances or musical compositions were frequently performed before and after either the dramatic work or the afterpiece.[1] The musical interpolations into "straight" dramatic works were far more than superfluous window-dressing. Theatre historian Julian Mates cites as one sample a production (in the mid-eighteenth century) of Shakespeare's The Tempest that contained no fewer than thirty-two interpolated songs and duets. (Mates, 25) So pervasive was music on the stage, in fact, that by the late eighteenth century it was difficult for American or British audiences to differentiate between English operas (with spoken dialogue) and "straight" drama.[2]

English comic and ballad operas were themselves an important part of the standard theatrical repertory in both Britain and America, and they became increasingly so as the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth. (Mates, 24) By then, scholars estimate, almost fifty percent of the theatrical works performed in the United States were musical in nature. (Mates, 22) Both resident and itinerant dramatic troupes included in their standard repertories a large number of

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1. Julian Mates, America's Musical Stage. Two Hundred Years of Musical Theatre (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 24.

2. Charles Hamm, Yesterdays. Popular Song in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 81.

operatic works--such as Love in a Village and Thomas and Sally (by Thomas Arne), The Padlock and The Quaker (Charles Dibdin), The Poor Soldier, Rosina, and The Woodman (William Shield), No Song, No Supper and The Haunted Tower (Stephen Storace), and The Duenna (Thomas Linley). By 1820 these same companies had incorporated into their repertories for the first time Italian operas, adapted for the English stage by British composers like Henry Rowley Bishop. "Adapting" meant making these operas closer in musical style to English comic operas. Bishop's versions of Mozart's Don Giovanni (as The Libertine) and Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville) were first performed in the United States by the stock company of New York's Park Theatre on 7 November 1817 and 3 May 1819, respectively.[3] Subsequently these two works (and many others similarly adapted) entered the American theatrical repertory, where some of them remained well into the middle of the nineteenth century.[4] To American audiences, then, opera--as first performed by García's Italian and Davis's French companies in the mid- to late-1820s--was significantly different from other theatrical repertory primarily because of the language. The fact that

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3. Maria F. Rich, Victor Fell Yellin/H. Wiley Hitchcock, "Opera." The New Grove Dictionary of American Music, H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, editors. 4 volumes. (London and New York: Macmillan Press, 1986), hereafter referred to as AG.

4. For his excellent study of antebellum American theatre and culture, historian David Grimsted compiled several lists (using figures from secondary sources) of the most-frequently performed theatrical works in Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, and St. Louis during the period 1831-1851. Of the top twenty-two titles on his list of "Feature Plays," six (or almost 37 percent) are operas. Furthermore, as Grimsted points out, "opera's position on these lists is a little low because [one of the secondary studies] for New Orleans excludes operatic performances." Since New Orleans was a major operatic center in antebellum America, this omission is significant. See David Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled. American Theatre and Culture, 1800-1850 (Chicago: University Press, 1968), 108, 254-255.

all the action of the drama (including the dialogue) was set to music was more of an exaggeration of an already-popular style (drama suffused with music) than the introduction of an entirely new genre.[5]

The introduction into the American theatrical repertory of operas by Rossini and Mozart coincided--serendipitously--with the first appearances in this country of visiting British singers of true stellar rank. Most notable among these were Charles Incledon (1757-1826) of Vauxhall and Covent Garden, and Thomas Philipps (d. 1841) of Dublin. Both men arrived in the United States in 1817 and both performed (in separate, consecutive engagements) at the Park Theatre in New York shortly thereafter; each subsequently appeared in opera and concert performances in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. Incledon, at the time the most renowned of English vocalists, toured the East Coast of the United States fairly extensively from October 1817 through August 1818.[6] Philipps returned to Dublin sometime after the autumn of 1819; he made a second visit to the United States from October

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5. The production of opera by dramatic companies continued throughout the period 1825-60, despite the increasing numbers of itinerant opera troupes better equipped to handle the repertory. Although this was especially true of theatres located in cities on the frontier (to which opera troupes, at least at first, did not travel), opera also remained in the stock repertories of theatres in cities like New York and New Orleans (places visited regularly by itinerant troupes). The performance of opera by theatrical stock companies, however, does not fall within the boundaries of this study (except for performances that were in conjunction with vocal stars); this tradition, as a consequence, will not be discussed except in passing. It is important to note, however, that American theatrical companies did continue to stage opera during the entire antebellum period.

6. Joseph N. Ireland, Records of the New York Stage from 1750 to 1860. Two volumes (New York, 1866-67; reprint New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 329.

1821 through June 1823.[7] In part through their choice of concert repertory, these two singers (along with other vocalists who--as we shall see--performed in opera and on the concert circuit during the 1820s and 1830s) helped to create in American audiences a taste for Italian melody. Philipps was the more successful of the two, for he was younger, a better actor, and closer to his prime than Incledon; by late 1819 (when he performed in the Park Theatre's première of The Barber of Seville) he had become the "supreme public idol" of New York audiences.[8] Incledon and Philipps were not the first touring vocal stars to visit this country, but they were among the best of the early singers who came to America to perform both in playhouses and on the concert circuit. As visiting theatrical stars, they were but a small part of a multitude of British dramatic stars (including Edmund and Charles Kean, William Charles Macready, Junius Brutus Booth, and Charles and Fanny Kemble) who had shown up in increasing numbers on the American theatrical circuit by the early 1820s. The appearance of these big-name itinerant performers in the United States is relevant to our study of travelling opera companies because it illustrates two important--and closely related--aspects of the American theatre during the early years of the antebellum period: first, the continued dependence of Americans on the theatrical

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7. George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage. 15 volumes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927-31; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1970), III:14, 64; Ireland, I:331.

8. Vera Brodsky Lawrence, Strong on Music. Volume I: Resonances. 1835-1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 15n. According to the New York Mirror, he also was popular because he had the foresight (or good fortune) to program in his concerts the still relatively unknown--but soon-to-be exceedingly popular--songs of Thomas Moore. Mirror, 3 January 1835. See also Ireland, I:330; Odell, II:499; Hamm, Yesterdays, 70.

culture (including the repertory) of Great Britain--a dependence that would not begin to break down until the late 1840s; and second, the increasing dominance of American theatrical culture by British and European stars--whose performances in this country were made possible by the so-called "star system."

Well into the middle of the nineteenth century, American theatres continued to operate as they had during the colonial, post-Revolutionary, and Federal periods: as cultural outposts of London. "Our theatre came to us from England," wrote theatre historian Alfred Bernheim about the eighteenth-century American stage: "Not merely ideologically but materially as well, in the shape of plays, actors, managers, and even of costumes and sets. Everything was imported except the buildings which housed the performances."[9] By the early years of the nineteenth century, many British actors, actresses, theatre musicians, and managers had emigrated to the United States, and most of the sets, costumes, and scenery were also manufactured here. Well into the 1840s, however (and, in some respects, much later), little had changed culturally. American theatres, although admittedly much more distant, still operated as minor outposts of the London cultural sphere, somewhat on a par with the provincial theatres of Manchester, Leeds, Dublin, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. And although there was a constant--and increasing--influx of German, Italian, and French musicians into the United States in the 1820s and 1830s, in these early decades (and well

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9. Alfred L. Bernheim, The Business of the Theatre. An Economic History of the American Theatre, 1750-1932 (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc, [1832]), 5.

into the 1840s) a majority of the singers and singer/actors who appeared in the United States, on both the dramatic and the concert stages, were from Great Britain. American managers kept close tabs on theatrical and musical failures and successes on the London boards, and like all provincial managers, they eschewed the former and quickly imitated the latter. As American cities grew in the first years of the nineteenth century, and as local theatres became more thoroughly established and profitable, English dramatic and vocal stars (who regularly toured in the provinces of the British Isles) began increasingly to look further west, across the Atlantic, for work.

The first actor of international reputation to appear in an American theatre was George Frederick Cooke, who was engaged at New York's Park Theatre in late 1810. (Odell, II:348) Cooke was not the first "star" to be imported to these shores, for the star system had been evolving gradually in American theatres from the late 1790s. (Odell, II:348) Stephen Price, a theatrical speculator and the manager of the Park, was responsible both for Cooke's visit, and for the visits by numerous other famous British and European stars over the course of the next thirty years.[10] To Price, then, goes a majority of the credit--and the blame--for importing to the United States the star system, a managerial system which, by 1810, had been in operation in Great Britain for some time. (Odell, II:309)

Under this system, dramatic or vocal "stars"--including some of

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10. Price died in 1840. See Odell, IV:351.

the most prominent, popular, and talented performers of England, Europe, and (slightly later) the United States--were free agents. They were attached to no particular company, and hence were free to travel around the theatrical circuit and make their own contracts for short- or long-term (but non-permanent) engagements with theatre managers.[11] As visiting performers, they typically assumed the major roles in plays or operas; the actors and actresses of the theatre's stock company filled in the supporting roles. Dramatic stars generally toured alone, or occasionally in pairs. Vocal stars, however, more often toured as pairs, trios, or sometimes quartets--in order to better insure that all the principal roles in the operas they performed were adequately covered.

Stock companies of the local theatres were self-sufficient and capable of mounting plays or operas by themselves (which they did during the periods when no stars were visiting). But as the century wore on, the stream of "stars" (and would-be "stars") traversing the American theatrical circuit became almost unceasing. As a result, by the 1830s and 1840s, stock companies on the East Coast or in New Orleans rarely

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11. In the 1830s and 1840s there were two dominant theatrical centers in the United States, New York and New Orleans. Both cities had their own spheres of influence (for New Orleans, Mobile and Baton Rouge--and slightly later, Nashville and St. Louis; for New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore), and itinerant performers visited each. In the late 1830s the two circuits still were fairly independent of each other. It was not until the early 1840s that travelling actors and singers began to include both cities on their tours on a regular basis, and not until the 1850s that visits to each became expected; it was not until the later decades that the establishment of a transportation network and the growth of viable theatres in the towns and cities along the Ohio/Mississippi River network made such long-distance tours economically feasible.

performed without the services (and the drawing-power) of a big-name actor, actress, or singer.

The star system met with little resistance when it was first introduced into this country, primarily because it already was well established in Great Britain. Unfortunately, however, the system eventually caused the bankruptcy of many managers and the break-up of stock companies; after the Civil War it was replaced by the so-called "combination system."[12] A detailed examination of the star system and its deleterious effects on American dramatics is not central to this study. It is important, however, to understand that during the antebellum period there existed in the United States a theatrical system that allowed--even encouraged--performances by itinerant musical and dramatic stars. For under that system, world-class performers (who, had they been required to join a local theatrical or operatic company in order to perform in the United States, would have had little incentive to come here) were free to visit and perform in America for as long or as short a period as they wished.

The star system was a flexible one, and over the years it gradually changed to meet the altered needs and tastes of the theatrical and musical audience. Through the 1820s American audiences were satisfied with operatic fare that consisted almost entirely of English comic operas and translations of a handful of Italian-, French-, and

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12. Under the combination system, entire companies--instead of stars--toured the theatrical circuit. Travelling opera troupes, especially those companies that were self-sufficient (such as the large Italian troupes of the 1840s and 1850s), were precursors of the combination system. See Bernheim, 29.

German-language works. But beginning in the 1830s, Americans increasingly developed a taste for foreign-language operas. And performances of these (more technically demanding) operas by the combination of vocal-stars and stock companies became less adequate and acceptable. As a consequence, by the mid- and late-1840s American theatres found themselves hosting larger numbers of visiting opera companies, and fewer individual vocal stars or vocal-star troupes. By the early 1850s, in fact, vocal-star troupes had disappeared almost entirely from the American theatrical circuit (especially in the eastern half of the country); they had been replaced by itinerant English, French, and Italian opera companies.

The transformation from vocal-star troupes to full-fledged travelling opera companies was gradual. For a long time and in many areas, in fact, the two kinds of companies (especially those opera troupes whose repertory was in English) overlapped. But by the early 1850s the change was fairly complete, and a theatrical system that had accommodated a constantly changing stream of visiting operatic stars early in the antebellum period had shifted to the accommodation instead of a constantly changing stream of operatic companies.

CHAPTER 1: VOCAL-STAR TROUPES

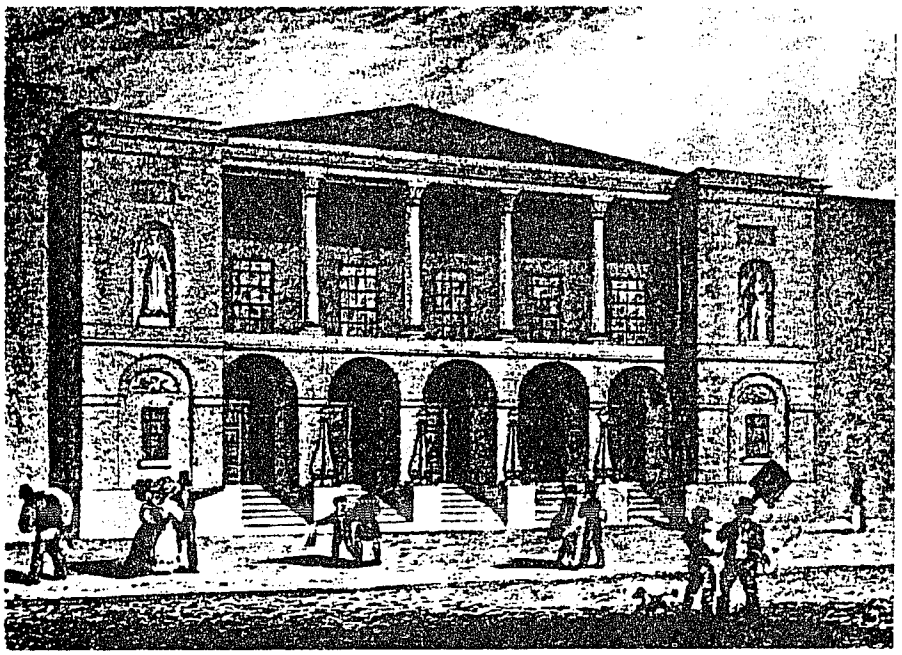
During the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s numerous British vocal stars, following in the footsteps of Charles Incledon and Thomas Philipps, made the trek from the stages of England to the theatres of the East Coast of the United States. Some of these imported singers performed in America for several years before returning home, while others spent the rest of their lives in their adopted country; some were first-rank stars and toured as such, while others worked, at different times in their careers, as both stars and members of stock companies. Today most of these singers--even the most popular and successful--have been forgotten. But during the antebellum period they not only were celebrities, they played a crucial role in the success of the full-fledged opera troupes (Italian as well as English) that appeared and flourished in the 1840s and 1850s. This role was so significant, in fact, that any study of itinerant opera companies must commence with a thorough discussion of vocal stars and their activities--despite the fact that they were individuals rather than companies. Chapter 2 of this dissertation is a detailed examination of a tour by one such vocal-star troupe; this chapter, which is a summary of the activities of vocal-star singers in general, may be considered the context into which that chapter fits.

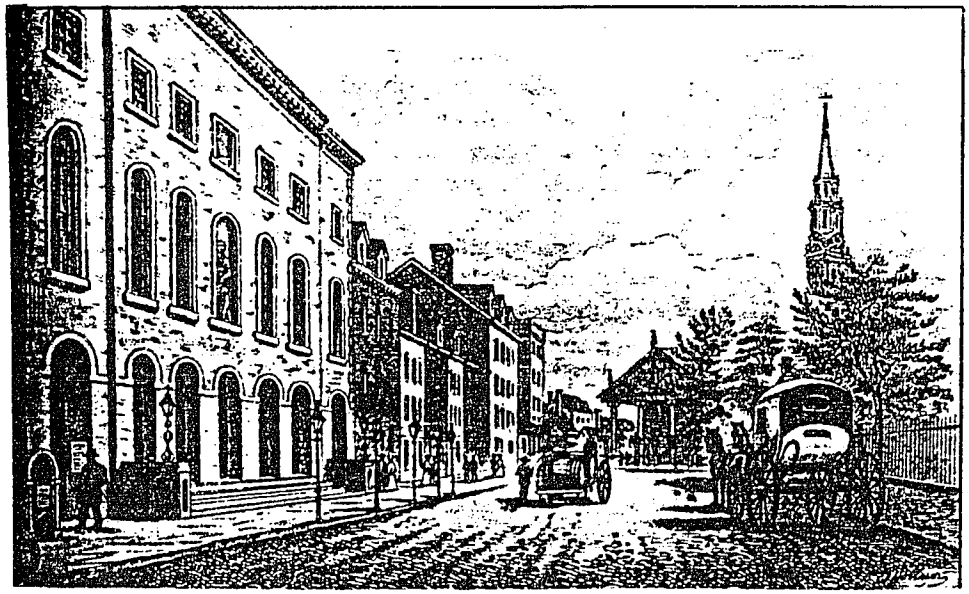
In the period during which Inclecon and Philipps visited America--the late 1810s and early 1820s--many of the best singers active on the

East Coast of the United States were closely affiliated with the stock companies of legitimate theatres in New York and Philadelphia; many, in fact, had been recruited by the managers or agents of those theatres. Because of the large amount of music in the standard repertory, theatrical managers often were eager to hire talented singer/actors for their companies. Managers, however, were more interested in actors who could sing than in singers who could act. "Let your singer be a gentleman and capable of playing the parts of opera," the agent of Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre was instructed prior to a recruiting trip to London in 1827. "A good singer who will maintain with respectability his parts in opera will have much to do next season." Even so, he was cautioned, "high musical attainments are not so essential as expression, feeling, and vivacity."[1] In the early 1820s it was somewhat difficult to convince an actor or a singer to cross the Atlantic--and the more successful the performer, the less inclined was he or she to undertake the lengthy and dangerous crossing. It did not help matters that at the time theatrical conditions in the United States were little known among the players of Great Britain. London colleagues of the actor Francis Courtney Wemyss, for example, teased him about his impending retirement "into banishment" after he signed on as a member of the Chestnut Street Theatre company in Philadelphia in 1822. (Wemyss, 64, 67) But some actors believed that the advantages offered by the New World outweighed the obvious disadvantages. First and foremost was the lure of quick fortune that (reportedly) could be made in the land of the unsophisticated Yankee.

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1. Francis Wemyss, Twenty-Six Years of the Life of an Actor and Manager (New York: Burgess, Stringer & Co., 1847), 125.





Top: New Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, built in 1822 and in use until May 1855. From a drawing by R. Goodacre, 1831.
Bottom: The Park Theatre in New York City, looking west. From a drawing by S. Collyer, 1831.

It was a commonly held belief among Americans that foreign performers came to the United States for the sole purpose of "acquiring rapidly a fortune," and to a certain extent this was true.[2] Many a performer's dreams of exorbitant financial reward did indeed materialize. The vocal stars Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, as we shall see in Chapter 2, were quite successful monetarily, and the singer Thomas Phillips was sufficiently pleased with the gains from his first visit to return for a second. In addition to the desire for quick riches, however, was a related craving for easy professional success. Some ambitious actors (especially footloose young performers, or those who had not reached the first rank in London) considered the new and expanding dramatic market of the United States a golden opportunity, and believed that theatrical triumph would be not only easy but a foregone conclusion. Francis Wemyss, for example, considered his chances for success much higher in the New World than they had been in England. "My plain calculation," he later wrote, "was having been considered a respectable actor in my own country, surrounded by competitors of every grade, I may be considered something more than respectable in America." (Wemyss, 67) Wemyss, however--whose beliefs probably were shared by many other performers--realized upon arrival in Philadelphia that he had underestimated both the calibre of actors in the United States and the sophistication of American audiences. He discovered that at the Chestnut Street house "every part was filled by an actor fully competent

2. Quote from a satire titled "The Way to Give Concerts in America," Musical Review (hereafter referred to as MR), 27 October 1838, 243-245.

to sustain the reputation of the theatre"; furthermore, the company itself was made up of "veteran actors, who understood their profession, and whose exertions were fully appreciated by a discriminating audience." Wemyss quickly concluded, he wrote, that "I had a harder task before me, to insure success, than I [had] hitherto suffered myself to suppose." (Wemyss, 74-75)

As the theatrical traffic between Great Britain and the United States increased throughout the 1820s, the reputation of American theatres steadily improved. Reports sent back to England by visiting actors that the United States was not a theatrical wilderness helped to enhance the reputation of dramatic life in North America. This improvement--coupled with an increased level of prosperity in American theatres--helped to convince a larger number of higher-calibre actors and singers to give the United States a try. By the middle and late 1820s, in fact, American theatres were attracting a more talented class of singers--some of them stars, many of them stock-company performers.

It was not unusual for singers who later toured the United States as stars to commence their American careers as members of stock companies. One such performer was a Mrs. Sharpe, a well-known contralto active in this country during the 1820s and 1830s, who started her American career in 1825 as a member of the stock company at New York's Park Theatre.[3] Equally versatile in dramatic and musical roles, Sharpe was "as useful a stock actress as ever graced the Park boards." (Odell,

3. The nature of Sharpe's voice is described in the New York Mirror (hereafter referred to as the Mirror), July 1832, 22.

III:180) She performed with the Park Theatre company for five years, playing dramatic parts in both comedies and tragedies (in such works as The Rivals, The School for Scandal, The Beaux' Stratagem, William Tell, and Hamlet as well as in many other less familiar plays) and vocal roles when the troupe mounted operas (in, for example, Shield's Rosina and The Poor Soldier, and Weber's Oberon). (Odell, III:445, 447, 603, 605; 180; 232; 383) When the Park management engaged true vocal stars for opera appearances, Sharpe sang secondary roles. In 1828, for example, she performed in The Marriage of Figaro, Oberon, and Henry Bishop's Native Land during Elizabeth Austin's engagement; in 1829 she supported that same star in Boieldieu's The Caliph of Bagdad; and in 1831 she appeared with Elizabeth Hughes in Thomas Arne's Artaxerxes. (Ireland, I:464; Odell, III:381-2; 444; 546) Sharpe left the ranks of the Park company after the 1830 season, and thereafter traversed the American theatrical circuit as a secondary star--usually singing in support of the other, more talented, vocal stars with whom she travelled and performed. Even as a seconda donna, however, she enjoyed a great deal of success, for she continued singing here until 1839. (Odell, IV:338)

Although the pattern of Sharpe's career was not particularly unusual for a vocal star, it was not uncommon for the progression to be in the opposite direction. There always was a fair number of singers who moved back and forth from the ranks of stock companies to the ranks of the stars--the exceptions being, of course, the stars who were indisputably first-rate. A perfect example of a singer who commenced her American career as a star and who later "retired" to a stock company is Mrs. Edward Knight (1804-1861). Knight (née Mary Ann Povey), a



Sheet-music engraving of Mrs. Sharpe and the actor-manager Edmund Simpson in The Brigand. This melodrama was first presented at the Park Theatre in March 1830 while Sharpe was a member of the stock company there.

veteran of the Drury Lane stage, made her New York debut as a vocal star in the fall of 1826, and for over a year (until her popularity was eclipsed by the appearance of Elizabeth Austin) she reigned as the operatic favorite of East Coast audiences.[4] Knight's popularity in the United States suggests that in the 1820s the American concept of vocal beauty continued to be more heavily influenced by the musical demands of Thomas Moore than by those of Italian bel canto composers. Her voice, according to a critic for the New York Mirror, could be likened "to a plaintive Scotch melody--simple and unostentatious, the touching beauty of whose tones, however, cling to our memory, and will not pass away." (20 October 1827, quoted in Odell, III:304) Theatre historian Joseph Ireland likewise suggests that Knight's voice was better suited to ballad-singing than to opera. "Had [Knight] first appeared in 1866," explained Ireland (writing that year),

> probably she would never have been regarded as a great singer, but the public taste forty years ago had not its present cultivation, nor its present fastidiousness, and consequently Mrs. Knight for a while stood at the very summit of popular regard, and her songs were certainly given with a spirit and expressiveness at that time entirely unrivaled. (Ireland, I:511-12)

Knight's success during the mid-1820s is in part an indication of how much and how quickly audience taste changed over the course of the next several decades, for although she was soon replaced by the more florid Austin as the country's ranking soprano, she nevertheless remained a

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4. John Kendall gives her Christian name as Eliza, but according to both Ireland and Vera Lawrence, it was Mary Ann. See John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952; reprint New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 49; Lawrence, 44; and Ireland, I:511.

popular singer. She toured the United States successfully as a star for almost fifteen years, performing up and down the Northeast coast as well as in Charleston, Augusta, Mobile, and New Orleans. In the early 1840s, however, she joined the stock company at the Park Theatre, and remained with that troupe until 1848.[5] She returned to England in 1849 and retired from the stage. (Ireland, I:511; Odell, III:240, 304)

There were numerous singers similar to Mrs. Sharpe and Mary Ann Knight active in the United States in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Although neither of these women was of true stellar quality, both of them were better-than-average stock-company singers. Their presence and success in North America indicates an overall improvement in the quality of opera performances at the best theatres in the country. Furthermore, these singers, and their many colleagues, helped to raise performance standards in places besides New York or Philadelphia by touring the country and performing with stock companies that were less strong than the troupes of the Park or the Chestnut Street theatres.

As performance quality gradually improved in American theatres in the 1820s, so did the expectations of American audiences. And heightened audience expectations, in turn, added to the pressure on theatre managers to recruit even better singers. Partly in response to this pressure, Francis Wemyss (the former actor who now was serving as

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5. Henry A. Kmen. Music in New Orleans. The Formative Years, 1791-1841. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 128, 148; Kendall, 49, 61-62, 79-80, 88, 98, 105.

acting and stage manager for William Warren's Chestnut Street Theatre) achieved a major theatrical coup in 1827 by luring to the United States a singer of true stellar rank, Elizabeth Austin. Mrs. Austin (ca. 1800-after 1835), as she was known, was the first English prima donna who really captured the imagination of Americans, and the first vocal star to maintain her status as the "queen of song" in the United States for more than one year. It is significant that she was an excellent singer but a mediocre actress.[6]

In August 1827 Austin, a popular singer at Drury Lane, Vauxhall, and the English Opera House, signed a contract in London with Wemyss, who was there on a recruiting trip. (Wemyss, 123) She arrived in the United States late the following November, accompanied by her own musical director and agent, F. H. F. Berkeley. She made her American debut in Philadelphia as Rosetta in Thomas Arne's Love in a Village on 10 December 1827; her New York debut was a month later, on 2 January 1828.[7] As would be typical of many vocal-stars in the 1820s and 1830s, Austin had a contract (with Warren and Wemyss) that stipulated a guaranteed number of performances: in her case a month-long engagement of three per week at the Chestnut Street Theatre, and an engagement of undisclosed length at Warren's Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore. At the conclusion of her original engagement, she was free to make her own

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6. William Brooks, "Elizabeth Austin," AG.

7. The theatre historian T. Allston Brown says that her debut was at the Walnut Street Theatre, and Wemyss, in his Chronology, erroneously gives the date as 18 December. See T. Allston Brown, History of the American Stage (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1870) and Francis C. Wemyss, Chronology of the American Stage, 1752-1852 (New York: Taylor & Co., 1852), 21.

arrangements for performances elsewhere, which she did. (Wemyss, 130)

Elizabeth Austin's success in the United States was pronounced. Possessing a soprano voice of "perfect bird-like softness, sweetness, and wonderful flexibility," with a range "of nearly three octaves, and . . . [of] remarkable purity and sweetness," she was more accomplished in the Italian school than any English vocalist who had yet visited the United States.[8] She replaced Mary Ann Knight as America's reigning prima donna almost overnight.

Elizabeth Austin performed in the United States for over seven years. During that time, in true vocal-star fashion, she toured all over the eastern half of the country, performing in concerts in small towns and in operas with the stock companies of theatres in larger cities. Berkeley served as her agent, making all the necessary arrangements with the managers of the various theatres in which she appeared. Occasionally she performed as the single featured star in operas mounted by stock companies. More often, however, she teamed up with other popular singers to form a vocal-star troupe of two, three, or four stars, which travelled as an ensemble and performed with local stock companies. During her tenure in the United States, Austin toured in a succession of such troupes, made up of popular singers like Charles Edward Horn, Mrs. Sharpe, Mary Ann Knight, Elizabeth Feron, John

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8. First quotation from Mirror, September 1831, from research notes of William Brooks; second from Ireland, I:546; see also Hamm Yesterdays, 71. For some of my information on Elizabeth Austin I am much indebted to William Brooks, who generously gave me his research notes to his article on her in AG.



MRS. AUSTIN. FROM A LITHOGRAPH AFTER THE PAINTING BY H. P. BRIGGS, R. A. (FROM THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS J. MCKEE, ESQ.)



Top: Engraving of Elizabeth Austin.
Bottom: Elizabeth Austin and John Jones in Cinderella, Park Theatre, 1831.

Sinclair, Elizabeth Hughes, John Jones, and Thomas Reynoldson. Although scanty information makes a reconstruction of her journeys around North America difficult, it is clear that she performed principally in the Northeast, with the stock companies of theatres in New York, Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, and made at least one trip to the South, performing for two months with the tenor John Sinclair at the Camp Street Theatre in New Orleans in January and February 1834. (Kendall, 80; Kmen, 129-130.)

Mrs. Austin sang in many of the same English-language operas that had been seen on American stages for years--such as The Beggar's Opera (Gay), Love in a Village (Arne), The Duenna (Linley), Guy Mannering (Bishop), Rob Roy, Lionel and Clarissa (Dibdin), and No Song, No Supper (Storace). But she also starred in the American premières of a significant number of works, including Arne's Artaxerxes (Philadelphia: 28 December 1827), and in the English versions of Auber's Fra Diavolo (New York, 20 June 1833), and Boieldieu's The White Lady (23 April 1828) and The Caliph of Bagdad (New York: 14 October 1829).[9]

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9. Ireland, I:546, Odell, III:624. The North American première of Fra Diavolo (in French) was in Philadelphia on 16 September 1831 by the New Orleans French Opera Company; this company sang the opera in New York one month later, 17 October 1831. The version in which Austin performed was an English adaptation by the English singer/actor/adaptor Thomas Reynoldson, who also acted in the première. See John Belsom, "Reception of Major Operatic Premières in New Orleans During the Nineteenth Century" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1955), 24; Odell, III:590, 624; Lawrence, 15n, 25n. The American première of La dame blanche took place (in French) in New Orleans on 6 February 1827; the New York première (by the New Orleans French Opera Company) was on 24 August 1827. The English version in which Austin appeared in 1828 was announced as the Drury Lane version; according to Mattfeld, it had different characters than Boieldieu's opera, but was based on the same story. Also according to Mattfeld, the real New York première of the English version was on 21 May 1832; Austin appeared in that performance as well. See Belsom, 13; Odell, III:316, 557; and Julius Mattfeld, A Hundred Years of Grand Opera in New York 1825-1925 (New York: New York Public Library, 1927; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1976), 47. The U. S. première of Le Calife de Bagdad (in French) was in New Orleans 25 December 1805; New York's first hearing had to wait over twenty years, until 27 August 1827. The English version in which Austin performed in 1829 was an adaptation by J. T. Dibdin. See Kmen, 63; Mattfeld, 44; Sylvie

Furthermore, she helped to popularize many other European operas, including The Marriage of Figaro and The Magic Flute (Mozart), Masaniello and Gustavus III (Auber), The Maid of Judah (with music by Rossini) and The Barber of Seville (Rossini), and Der Freischütz (von Weber). The work with which Austin was most closely identified, however, was Michael Rophino Lacy's Cinderella, or the Fairy Godmother and the Little Glass Slipper, an adaptation by Lacy of Rossini's La Cenerentola (which included music from three of his other operas--Armida, Maometto II, and William Tell). She sang in the U. S. première of this opera at the Park Theatre on 24 January 1831, and performed in it countless times during her subsequent American tours. The work was mounted so often, in fact, that by 1834 the critic of the American Musical Journal described it as the "much worn, but ever attractive opera of Cinderella"; according to Charles Hamm, it was destined to become "one of the most popular works of musical theatre in the history of the American stage." [10]

Sylvie Chevalley, "Le Théâtre d'Orléans en Tournée dans les Villes du Nord, 1827-1833," Comptes Rendus de l'Athenee Louisianais (New Orleans, 1955), 32; and Odell, III:444. Odell claims that Austin performed in the North American première of Weber's Oberon, but Lawrence suggests that this was not the case. See Odell III:382 and Lawrence, 154. For information on Austin's repertory, see "Mrs. Austin," American Musical Journal (hereafter referred to as AMJ), April 1835, 114-115.

10. AMJ, October 1834, 18; Hamm, Yesterdays, 71-72. According to theatre historian Weldon Durham, Cinderella was produced fifty times its first season at the Park Theatre, eighty times during the subsequent (1831-32) season, and "regularly for years thereafter." See Weldon B. Durham, "Park Theatre Company," in American Theatre Companies, 1749-1887, Weldon B. Durham, editor (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), hereafter referred to as ATC, 398. For more information about Lacy's version of Cinderella, see Chapter 6.

All of the foreign-language operas in which Austin and other vocal stars appeared--like Cinderella--were translated and adapted for the English stage. Recitative was changed into dialogue, more difficult ensemble numbers eliminated, and many of the complex arias turned into strophic songs; these works essentially became English comic operas. Some "adapted" operas included a great deal of extra musical material (either newly composed or borrowed from other operas), which turned them into musical pastiches (see, for example, the playbill for Lacy's Cinderella on page 28). Critics sometimes complained about the nature of the adaptations, especially when favorite arias or concerted pieces were removed, or when a work was "adapted" almost beyond recognition. A reviewer for the Mirror, for example, described a version of Auber's La Fiancée (as performed by Mrs. Sharpe at the Park Theatre in 1832) as "sadly mutilated" and "shorn of much of its original beauty"; another critic complained that the "adapted" version of Fra Diavolo as performed by Austin at the Park Theatre was "stuffed with the stolen pieces of a dozen other [operas] . . . among them a duett from 'Tancredi'--an Aria from 'Jean de Paris,'--an English ballad,--a buffa aria from 'La Gazza Ladra,'--and a bravura from 'Robert le Diable'."[11] Some critics, on the other hand, defended the practice of adapting works. A reporter for the New York Mirror, presumably writing about the same version of Fra Diavolo ("with additions by Rossini, &c.") so disparaged by his colleague at the Spirit (quoted above), commented at length on the

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11. Mirror, July 1832, 22; Spirit of the Times (hereafter referred to as Spirit), 22 June 1833.

issue. "Hypercriticism may affect to call in question the propriety of strengthening the work of one master by additions from others," he wrote,

> but, in our poor thinking, all translations are fair subjects for improvement, for it is self-evident, that, as many parts of an opera which might please a French audience, would not be effective if literally given to Englishmen or Americans, so it is fair to strengthen the weak part from other sources. The Italians constantly do this . . . the Germans likewise do it. In Boieldieu's "Le Calife de Bagdad," the "great tenor song," as sung in Paris and all through France, is by the Italian composer Martini: in short, why we, who have not much claim to a regular or severe school of dramatic music, are to cavil at that which other nations admit, we cannot very well comprehend. Indeed we laugh at the idea, and profess ourselves ready to doff our hats to any gentleman who will serve us up so rich and melodious a dish of harmony as that found in "Fra Diavolo," without being over nice as to its ingredients. (Mirror, 6 July 1833, 3)

Although there is a fair amount of such controversy to be found in the musical and theatrical press of the time, adapted operas as performed by vocal stars and stock companies often were accepted at face value. In an article about Elizabeth Austin that appeared in a contemporary journal, the author matter-of-factly stated that "during her different engagements she has produced the 'Caliph of Bagdad,' Boieldieu's splendid opera, translated purposely for her; 'Cinderella,' as adapted by Lacy . . . taken from the original score, and got up expressly for her; and Boieldieu's 'White Lady'"; in the same issue the critic noted that The Beggar's Opera, "completely revised and re-scored" would soon be mounted at the Park Theatre. (AMJ, April 1835, 115; 116) Indeed, the fact that an opera was presented in a translated or adapted version was frequently not even mentioned in contemporary reviews. During one of Austin's engagements at the Park Theatre, for example, the

Euterpiad reported simply that "The Tempest and John of Paris, the Barber of Seville, and the Caliph of Bagdad, have followed in succession, and were all got up with a care and attention which do honour to the management." (Euterpiad, 1 October 1830, 102) That the operas were performed in English was taken for granted. However, although it was possible for companies to perform drastically altered versions of operas without eliciting comment by the musical press, this does not necessarily indicate acquiescence by knowledgeable members of the audience. Joseph Sill, a Philadelphia merchant and a native Londoner, complained bitterly about a performance by John Sinclair and Elizabeth Hughes of The Beggar's Opera in 1832. Both singers, he wrote in his diary, "were in good voice & sung delightfully--but the Opera was miserably curtail'd: Gay would scarcely have known the mutilated farce of the night, as the intended representation of his own wit & humour."[12]

Musical interpolations were treated similarly. Often the additions were not noted at all in reviews--although the occasional mention, coupled with the frequent enumeration of added songs on playbills--indicates that they were a normal part of contemporary performance practice. A playbill for an 1831 performance of John of Paris in Baltimore, for example, points out that "in addition to the music of the Opera," the prima donna would sing "'Cupid Hear Me'; 'The Arab Steed'; and 'Strike for Tyrol and Liberty' (from the opera William Tell)"; another, from a performance of Cinderella in 1833 points out that "in the course of the opera [the vocal star] Miss Hughes will sing

12. Joseph Sill Diaries, volume 1, January 1832. Manuscript Division, PHi.

Theatre.

For the Benefit of

MRS. AUSTIN

AND HER

LAST APPEARANCE

The celebrated Romantic Opera of

DON GIOVANNI;

OR,

The Spectre.

The Music by Mozart.

Will this Evening be produced

With New Scenery, &c.

The Public is most respectfully informed that in consequence of the unprecedented success of the New Opera and the enthusiastic applause with which

CINDERELLA

Has been nightly received by crowded houses, this splendid piece will this Evening be repeated, for the 16th time.

The Orchestra and Chorus

Have both been encreased and no expense or pains spared to render the

SPLENDID OPERA

OF

CINDERELLA,

Worthy of the Patronage of the Public.

The Overture will commence precisely at 7 o'clock.

On Monday Evening, March 7, 1831.

Will be performed, 16th time, the new comic Opera of

CINDERELLA;

OR,

The Fairy and the Little Glass Slipper.

The Music composed - - - - by Rossini.

Containing selections from

"Cenerentola," "Armida," "Maometto Secondo," and "Guillaume Tell."

The whole arranged and adapted to the English Stage, by Rophino Lacy.

The Piece produced under the direction of MR. BARRY Stage Manager.

Leader of the Orchestra,	Mr. De Luce
Chorus Master,	Metz
with new Scenery,	by Mr. Evers
Dresses,	by Mead.
Machinery,	by Dunn
Properties,	by Chambers.
Felix, (Prince of Salerno,)	Mr. Jones
Baron Pumpolino, (of Montefiesco.)	Placide
Alidoro, (The Prince's Tutor,)	Richings
Dandini, (The Prince's Valet.)	Thorne
Pedro, (Servant to the Baron.)	T. Placide

Hunters and Attendants, Messrs. Blakeley, Povey, Field, Collet, Hayden, Thornton, Pearson, Nott, Bissett, Ford, Singleton, Weight &c.

CINDERELLA,	Daughters of the Baron.	Mrs. AUSTIN
Clorinda,		Blake.
Thisbe,		Vernon.
Fairy Queen.		Mrs. Wallack

Playbill from a performance of the Rossini/Lacy opera Cinderella, at the Park Theatre in New York, 7 March 1831.

'Away to the Mountain's Brow' and 'Savourneen Deelish'."[13] Occasionally reviewers took umbrage at the additions, as did one critic in 1831, who complained that "incessant interpolations" are "intrusions" that disturb "the peace of dialogue and cue . . . destroying the fine concert of general effect." (Euterpiad, 1 February 1831, 203) Just as frequently, however, interpolations were treated as the ordinary occurrences that they were. In 1829, for example, Elizabeth Austin was reported (without comment) to have introduced into The Beggar's Opera the songs "We're a Noddin'" and "The Genius of Freedom," which featured "a trumpet obbligato" by Norton"; several years later the American Musical Journal reported that the same singer performed Bellini's "Dalla gioja" during Cinderella, which interpolation was "encored most enthusiastically . . . in a decided and unanimous demand for repetition."[14] The interpolations that tended to rouse the critics' ire were songs that were less "elevated" than the Bellini aria introduced by Austin. A reviewer in the Euterpiad, for example, took Mary Ann Knight severely to task for

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13. Playbill, 15 October 1831, Holliday Street Theatre. Playbill Collection, Box 44 (Baltimore), Harvard Theatre Collection (hereafter referred to as HTC); playbill, (Philadelphia) Chestnut Street Theatre, 25 May 1833, PPL. From sheet music in the collection of the Music Division of the Library of Congress we learn that "Cupid Hear Me," arranged by one T. Cooke, was from an opera by an unknown composer named Balduci (a badly misspelled Boieldieu?); "The Arab Steed" and "Savourneen Deelish" were traditional tunes published as broadsides; and "Away to the Mountain's Brow" was by the English composer George Alexander Lee (1802-1851). "Strike for Tyrol and Liberty," a song from Henry Bishop's Opera Hofer, the Tell of the Tyrol, was set to the well known melody from the overture to Rossini's William Tell.

14. Charles Durang, The Philadelphia Stage from 1749 to 1855, II:54, 12 July 1857, 4:2, in Brooks notes; AMJ, April 1835, 116. "We're a Noddin'," called a "favorite glee," was included in the Boston Glee Book compiled by Lowell Mason and George Webb (Boston: J. H. Wilkins, 1838). The English trumpet virtuoso John Thompson Norton was hired for the orchestra of the Chestnut St. Theatre by Francis Wemyss; according to Wemyss, he was engaged as a consequence of the Austin contract, possibly because of the trumpet part in Artaxerxes, which received its American première that year in Philadelphia. The Artaxerxes connection is William Brooks's theory; see also Wemyss, 131.

introducing into a performance of The Marriage of Figaro ballads and other "drum and fife-like compositions" by such composers as Alexander Lee. "'The Bonnets of Blue'--'The Blue Bonnets'--the 'Charlie's Over the Water'--and 'Over the Waters with Charlie'" he argued, "are [not] otherwise than trash, fit only to amuse gentlemen and ladies of colour in the gallery."[15] Other (and more spontaneous) liberties taken with the text likewise elicited criticism--and, more important, offer similar glimpses into the composition of the audience itself. In an 1832 review of a performance of the Lacy/Rossini Cinderella in Philadelphia, a critic sharply (and ironically) reprimanded one of the stock company actors for making "a dialogue of his own, with no respect or regard to that written by Mr. Rophino Lacy." The actor's improvised lines, the critic continued, were no more than "a tissue of witless unmeaning epithets . . . [which were] duly appreciated by the colored gentlemen in the gallery." (Mirror, 14 January 1832, 219)

This presence of "gentlemen and ladies of colour" at opera productions is a startling revelation if one is accustomed to thinking of attendance at opera during the nineteenth century as an activity limited to the wealthy and the socially elite. But the American theatre of the antebellum period was not the exclusive resort of that segment of the population. On the contrary, the theatre functioned as a democratizing institution; in the words of actor and manager Lewis Hallam, theatres were egalitarian because they could "draw all [the]

15. Euterpiad, 1 October 1830, 103. The disparaged songs, "Over the Water to Charlie" and "Bluebonnets," were both broadside tunes.

ranks of the people together."[16] This was possible because "all the ranks" of society were not obliged to associate with each other while enjoying theatrical performances. Most American theatres of the early nineteenth century were physically divided into three separate sections--the boxes, the pit, and the gallery.[17] Furthermore, the cost of admission to each of the sections was different, and sometimes there were even separate entrances. The New National Theatre that opened in Philadelphia in 1840, for example, included in its advertisements the announcement that "Separate entrances have been arranged to different sections [of the house] to avoid the mingling of the classes."[18] Because each section of the theatre was occupied by a different segment of the population, the audience was consistently divided along fairly clear economic and class lines. Nevertheless, all segments of the population attended theatrical productions on a regular basis.

The gallery, then as now, was the highest balcony in the theatre; there, as noted, sat the "colored," who were proscribed from sitting in any other part of the house. Southern blacks had the gallery to themselves; the St. Charles Theatre, for example, reserved one entire section for free blacks and another for slaves, indicating

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16. This phrase was used by managers and actors John Henry and Lewis Hallam in an 1810 petition to the Massachusetts General Assembly to repeal the law against theatres, quoted in Grimsted, 52.

17. Some theatres built after 1840 had a two- rather than a three-part division of the house (by the omission of the gallery, or the transformation of the pit into a more-genteel "parquet"), but the triple division remained the most common arrangement of American theatres throughout the entire period. See Grimsted, 52.

18. Quoted in John Curtis, "One Hundred Years of Grand Opera in Philadelphia," 7 volumes typescript. Manuscript Division, PHi, 273.

clearly that individuals of this race formed an important part of the New Orleans theatre audience. (Kmen, 138) In the North, some theatres also featured "colored galleries," while in others blacks shared this area--which was the cheapest section of the house--with apprentices, servants, and others who were young, rowdy, or of limited economic means.[19] The pit, which corresponds with the orchestra section of a modern theatre, was the next-ranked in price of admission; it attracted primarily the "middling classes" and "honest folks"--although only of the male gender. The same New National Theatre announcement quoted above stated explicitly, "No females allowed in the pit"; furthermore, Thomas Chamberlain, a New York theatre-goer (and recent immigrant from England) noted in his diary, "it is not the custom [here] for females to go in the pit."[20] Since the stage could best be seen from this section, the more serious theatre-goers joined the "unclassified miscellany" seated on the rough benches in the pit. (Grimsted, 52-55) In Walt Whitman's words, this segment of the audience consisted of the "alert, well-dress'd, full-blooded young and middle-aged men, the best average of American born mechanics"; another writer, in less grandiloquent terms (and writing several decades earlier than Whitman) described the denizens of the pit as "a mixed multitude of the lower orders of all

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19. In the mid-1840s the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia instituted a "colored gallery" in an attempt to attract lower-class audiences; at New York's Park Theatre during that same decade (according to theatre historian Weldon Durham), "half the gallery was filled with boys, servants, and sailors, half with seating for blacks." See Mari Kathleen Fielder, "[Old] Chestnut Street Theatre Stock Company," 198, and Weldon Durham, "Park Theatre Company," 397, both in ATC. See also Grimsted, 52-53.

20. Curtis, 273; Thomas Chamberlain Diary, vol. 1 (1835-1840), 14 September (1835?). Manuscript Division, New York Public Library (the repository referred to as NN).

sorts, sizes, ages and deportments."[21] The most expensive seats in the house, the boxes, were located above the pit, arranged in several tiers around the circumference of the theatre's interior. Boxes offered privacy, prestige, and comfort. Generally they were reserved for the socially elite of the community, but they also functioned as the only section in which a woman who wished to retain her respectability could sit--especially prior to the 1840s, when some theatres transformed their pits into "parquets," thereby opening up another section to females.[22] Until the early 1850s, the third tier of boxes in most theatres (the one located just below the gallery) was given over to prostitutes, hence its common designation during the period as the "notorious third tier."

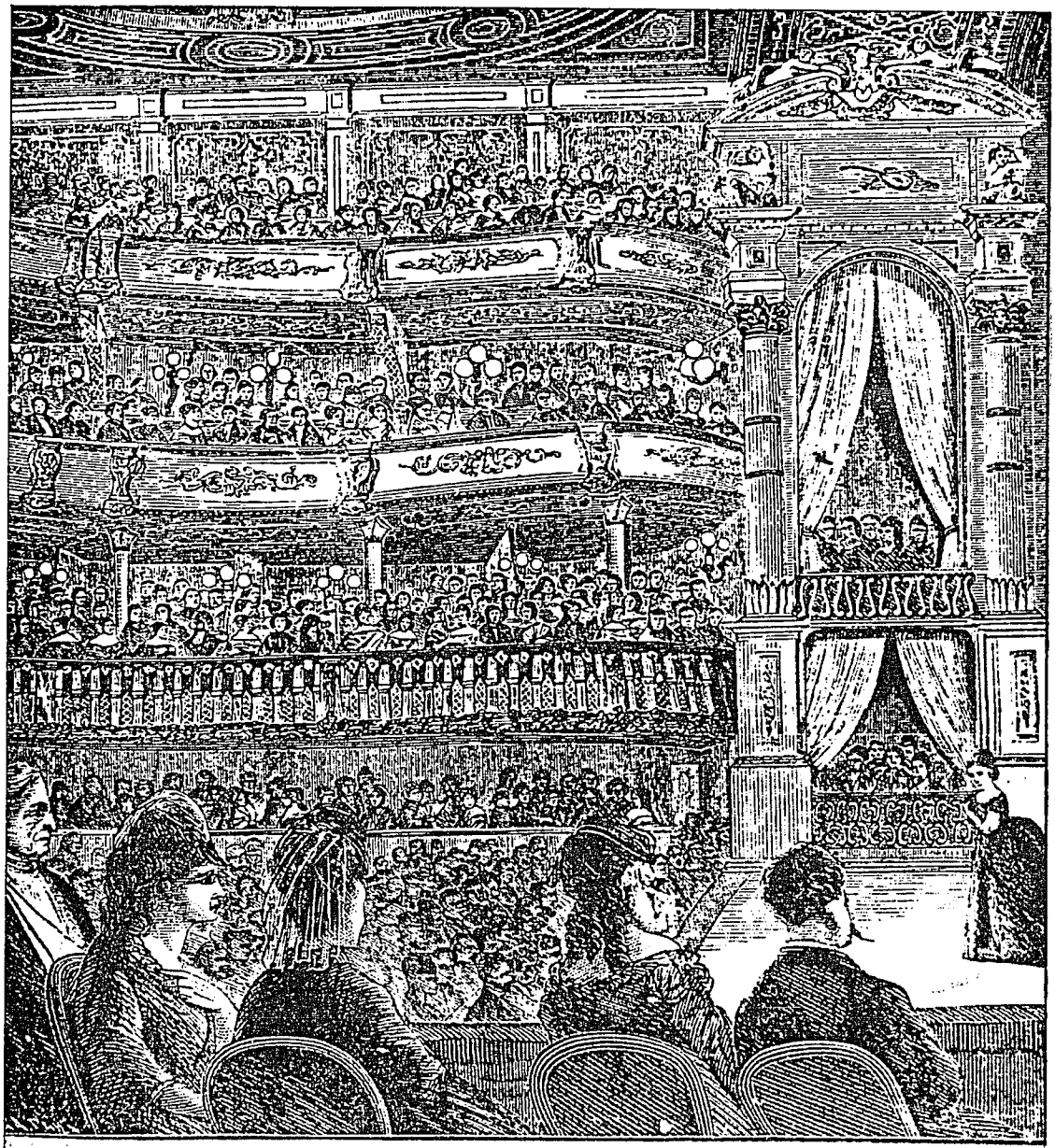
Contemporary reviewers of opera almost never mention any portion of the audience beyond the clichéd "fashionable and elite." By definition, however, any house described as "crammed," "overflowing," "crowded from top to bottom," or "filled to its utmost capacity" had to include significant numbers of non-wealthy and non-elite auditors--all those individuals who occupied either the gallery or the pit.[23] According to historian David Grimsted, the numbers of people in the pit

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21. Whitman, "The Old Bowery," quoted in Grimsted, 55; Ladies' Port-Folio, 1820, quoted by Grimsted, 53.

22. Grimsted, 55. According to Joseph Sill, the management of the Chestnut Street Theatre created a "Parquette" in 1847. The new section featured "backs & arms to the Seats, which renders that part of the house very pleasant, as it is by far the best place for seeing & hearing." He further commented on the fact that "Ladies occupied both the Boxes and the Parquette," lending to the theatre a "gay & handsome appearance." As we will see in Chapter 3, the Astor Place Opera House, which opened in New York in 1847, also had such a section. See Sill, 8 April 1847.

23. First two quotes from Spirit, 2 April 1836; third one from the AMJ, October 1835, 260; fourth from Gentleman's Vade-Mecum, 7 May 1836.



THEATRES AND HALLS OF AMERICA.

No. 11.—Interior of the Reconstructed Chestnut-street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.

Interior of the New Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, showing the division of the theatre into separate sections.

and gallery--in comparison with those occupying boxes--did not change significantly from performance to performance. "The proportion of pit and gallery attendance to that in the boxes of Boston's National Theatre or Philadelphia's Chestnut Theatre," he wrote in his study of antebellum American theatre and culture, "remained fairly constant whether Hamlet or The Six Degrees of Crime was the attraction." (Grimsted, 57) As this study will show, Grimsted could easily have used as his theatrical examples Cinderella and The Beggar's Opera--or, for that matter, Cinderella and The Six Degrees of Crime or The Beggar's Opera and Hamlet. All of these works, in addition to ballet, pantomime, melodrama, farce, minstrelsy, and acrobatics, were part and parcel of the antebellum American theatre.

The denizens of the pit and the gallery are mentioned so rarely in contemporary opera reviews that they are (at least from the vantage point of the twentieth century) invisible members of the audience. Lower- and middle-class theatre-goers were ignored by contemporary journalists because they were not important or influential persons; one has to search long and hard for the occasional acknowledgement of their presence. Hence the importance of the disparaging remarks about the tastes of the "colored" inhabitants of the gallery, or the observation by one critic in 1828 that for a performance by Elizabeth Austin in Philadelphia "the pit was well filled but the boxes were thin," or the admission in print that opera was enjoyed by all segments of the theatre-going public. (Theatrical Censor and Musical Review, 11 November 1828) One such rare comment was penned by the reviewer of an

1829 performance of The Marriage of Figaro at the Park Theatre. This critic, after mentioning the usual "full and fashionable audience," added that Figaro, "as an opera . . . is without a rival in the English language," for it is "equally fitted to all tastes, whether the box, pit, or gallery." (Mirror, 4 April 1829)

In the early 1830s ever-increasing numbers of vocal stars appeared on the stages of the United States, in part because of Elizabeth Austin's phenomenal success. According to Francis Wemyss, the soprano's reception here "induced others, of higher talent, to cross the Atlantic in search of fame." (Wemyss, 258) Austin's popularity in this country remained unthreatened and undiminished for a full six years--until, in fact, the arrival of one of those "others, of higher talent," in the person of Mary Ann Paton Wood. In 1833 Wood (1802-1864), a Scottish soprano, was in the midst of a triumphant career at both Covent Garden and the Italian Opera in London when she left to come to the United States. At the time, she was acclaimed as the finest and most celebrated female vocalist in England.[24] Wood travelled and performed with her husband Joseph (1801-1890), who was an excellent actor, a passable tenor, and a shrewd manager.[25] Soon after their arrival in the United States, Mary Ann Wood eclipsed Austin in both popularity and fame.

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24. Hamm, Yesterdays, 71; Odell, III:657-58. Paton made her London stage debut as Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro in October 1822; that same year she also appeared as Rosina in The Barber of Seville, Polly in The Beggar's Opera, and Mandane in Artaxerxes. In 1824 she enjoyed a great deal of success in Der Freischütz, and two years later created the role of Reiza in Oberon. See William Husk, "Mary Ann Paton," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2nd edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904).

25. William Brooks, "Wood, Joseph," AG. Some of my information about both of the Woods is from research notes assembled by William Brooks (copies of which he generously gave to me) for his article on them in AG.

Much of the Woods' success in this country was a result of the foundation laid down by Elizabeth Austin, who had "laboured hard, and successfully too, to establish a taste for English opera." (Wemyss, 258) A critic in the Mirror commented, "we are more indebted to Mrs. Austin for the great improvement in our musical taste than to any other professional lady whatever." (Mirror, 28 September 1833, 103) But Austin's period of influence in the United States was nearing an end by 1833 (she would return to England in May 1835 and retire from the stage) and the torch was about to be passed to the Woods--who contributed mightily to the tradition of opera performance in this country. As Wemyss wrote,

> To Mr. and Mrs. Wood belongs the credit of establishing what Mrs. Austin and Mr. Berkeley commenced--a taste for English opera. They made the citizens of these United States [fall] in love with music. (Wemyss, 236)

The English opera to which Wemyss referred, of course, included "Englished" operas; as we have seen with Austin, British vocal stars sang as much Italian as English melody. And the Woods contributed to this trend towards the performance of Italian music, for during their tenure in the United States they introduced to American audiences even more Italian operas (in particular works by Bellini).

The new singers made their joint American debut in New York on 9 September 1833, and as if in deliberate challenge to the reigning American prima donna, Mary Ann Wood chose for her first role one that Elizabeth Austin had claimed for her own--Cinderella, in the





Joseph and Mary Ann Paton Wood.

Rossini/Lacy opera.[26] The rest of the Woods' repertory was similar to that of Mrs. Austin, but their inclusion of additional Italian operas and their heavier reliance upon the Italian works in their repertory is further indication of the growing taste for Italian melody among Americans. Particularly notable were the Woods's North American premières of Bellini's La Sonnambula (New York, 13 November 1835) and Norma (11 January 1841). [27] Both operas were destined to become long-term American favorites in both Italian and in English, but Sonnambula quickly became the most successful opera on the American stage since Cinderella; eventually it would prove to be one of the most enduringly popular operas in the United States during the entire first half of the nineteenth century.[28] A review of one of the Woods's performances of this opera in Philadelphia in 1836 gives an idea of the work's popularity. "The Sonnambula," wrote the critic,

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26. By rights the role of Cinderella "belonged" more to Mary Ann Paton than to Elizabeth Austin, for Lacy had the former singer in mind when he created his adaptation. Paton introduced the role in the London première of Lacy's version on 13 April 1830. For information on Lacy's Cinderella, I am indebted to John Graziano for the loan of an unpublished paper titled "Cinderella, or the Fairy and the Little Glass Slipper," read before a meeting of the Sonneck Society for American Music in Keele, England, July 1983.

27. Although the performance of La Sonnambula was the North American première of the work, the performance of Norma was the première only of the English version, this one a translation (not an adaptation) by Joseph Reese Fry, brother of the composer William Henry Fry. The première of the original version of Norma had taken place in New Orleans five years earlier, on 1 April 1836. See Belsom, 32.

28. Hamm, Yesterdays, 74; see also Chapters 5 and 6 for information on the continued popularity of these operas through the 1850s. One measure of La Sonnambula's popularity is the fact that it was the first opera to be performed in Chicago (on 29 July 1850, in English, by the Manvers English Company) and in San Francisco (on 12 February 1851, in Italian, by the Pellegrini Italian Opera Company). See Karleton Hackett, The Beginnings of Grand Opera in Chicago (Chicago: Laurentian Publishers, 1913), 16-17; Edmund McAdoo Gagey, The San Francisco Stage, a History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 32; and Lawrence Estavan, editor, "History of Opera in San Francisco," volume 7 of the History of Music in San Francisco Series, Cornel Langyel, general editor. (Works Progress Administration, Northern California. San Francisco. History of Music Project. January 1939), 87.

> is, as usual, doing a tremendous business at the Arch Street Theatre, the house being filled to its utmost capacity whenever that opera is performed. The two first tiers are nightly so completely crowded with ladies that the male sex are almost banished to the pit and to the lobbies. (Gentlemen's Vade-Mecum, 7 May 1836)

Comments of the Philadelphia merchant Joseph Sill also reflect the attitude of many Americans towards Bellini's opera--especially those of the middle class, who could afford frequent trips to the theatre. "In the evening," he wrote in his diary, "I went to the Chestnut St. Theatre to see Mr. & Mrs Wood in the Sonnambula,"

> They were both welcomed by a very full & fashionable house in a very enthusiastic manner. . . . The Opera throughout was well perform'd-- It is very delightful in both the plot and music, and never tires in repetition. I have seen it, I suppose, twenty times, and could see it twenty times more.[29]

The Woods' incorporation of more Italian works was spurred in part by a sudden (and short-lived) flurry of competition from Italian companies on the East Coast, singing Italian opera in Italian. The Montresor and Rivafinoli Italian opera companies performed in New York and Philadelphia during 1832, 1833, and 1834, and the Porto Sacchi troupe was active in New York from late 1834 through Spring 1835 (for more information on the Italian troupes, see Chapter 3). As soon as the Italians disappeared, however, English opera once again regained its

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29. Sill, 26 October 1840. Seven years later, Sill still enjoyed the opera. In April 1847, after a performance of the work, he wrote that the vocal stars James Frazer, Anne Seguin, and Edward Seguin "played & sung very effectively & the opera was well done--the repetition of it always affords me pleasure." Sill, 8 April 1847.

fashionable allure. "The departure of the Italian company from our city," wrote a critic for the New York Mirror,

> has had a very sensible influence upon the success of the English opera at the Park, and we hardly need say a favourable one. Our musical dilettanti, who had lounged away some seasons in the privileged circle of the Opera House . . . were at first reluctant to desert the beautiful temple which they had themselves erected to la belle science for the common and unfashionable boxes of a theatre. . . . But the restraint has at last worn off, the Park has now become the rage, and upon each successive opera-night [it] is filled with lovely women, as gay and brilliant as ever. (Mirror, 28 November 1835, 174)

The critic for the Spirit agreed. "The fashionables and dilettanti," he wrote, "are returning to their first love, and are seen night after night flocking to the Park. English Opera now 'reigns lord of the ascendant,' and long may it flourish." (Spirit, 21 November 1835)

The return of the "fashionables and dilettanti" to the Park was undoubtedly cause for great rejoicing by the management, but the house had hardly been empty during their absence. Odell reports that despite competition from "the new fashionable toy of the Italian Opera in its fine new home," the Woods had attracted very strong houses, especially for their benefit performances. (Odell, III:673-674) And the Spirit's critic, reporting on the return of the wealthy to the boxes of the Park, also made note of the singers' wide appeal. "The present engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Wood," he wrote,

> has been exceedingly profitable to all concerned. They have for some time been playing four nights per week, and their attraction, instead of retrograding, seems actually to have increased with each performance. English opera is so much the rage among our fashionables, as well as other classes of society, that the unfortunate Italians and their beautiful house are apparently forgotten. (Italics added.) (Spirit, 14 November 1835)

If the Woods's success prior to 1835 had been impaired by the presence of the Italian companies (as the Mirror seems to suggest), their box-office receipts elsewhere clearly indicate that this temporary setback was felt only in New York. In his history of the Chestnut Street Theatre, Reese James reported that for their first engagement in Philadelphia the Woods attracted audiences well above normal--comparable in size, in fact, to the audiences that packed the house for performances by the extremely popular dramatic stars Fanny and Charles Kemble, whose engagement followed that of the Woods in October 1833. The receipts for their second engagement in February 1834 were also larger than usual.[30] And Clapp provided two lists of the Woods' receipts, from December 1834-January 1835 and December 1835-January 1836, which indicate clearly that the vocal stars were a resounding success with the Boston public; Weldon Durham, in fact, claims that the "greatest success" at the Tremont St. Theatre during the years 1833-1836 were the "starring appearances" by the Woods in English opera.[31]

Mary Ann Wood thrilled American audiences as much by her acting as by her vocal ability, and in this she far outstripped Elizabeth Austin. "Somebody said that the New York audiences have at last been astonished," wrote a critic in the Spirit shortly after the Woods' debut

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30. Reese D. James, Old Drury of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932, reprinted New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 568, 572-74, 588, 91, cited in Brooks's, notes.

31. William W. Clapp, jr. A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1853; reprint New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 326, 331; Weldon Durham, "Tremont Theatre Company," in ATC, 484.

at the Park. "The praise was applied to her singing; but it properly belongs equally to her acting." (Spirit, 28 September 1833) A reporter for the Knickerbocker concurred in this assessment. "As an actress," he wrote, "her powers are sufficient to entitle her to a proud rank in the histrionic art. We can safely say, that we have never beheld a great singer possessing such attractions as an actress." (Knickerbocker Magazine, November 1840, quoted in Odell, IV:446) Philadelphia diarist Joseph Sill, writing about Wood's performance in La Sonnambula, likewise attested to her dramatic skill. "In the last [scene] when the Sleep Walker crosses the plank Bridge, & it cracks under her," he wrote in his diary, "the effect is awful, and it created a thrill within me which I shall never forget." (Sill, 13 February 1836)

Although Wood's skill as an actress elicited much praise, her rank as America's reigning prima donna during the mid- and late-1830s was due principally to her musical ability. "Mrs. Wood," wrote a critic for the Mirror, "possesses one of the most extraordinary voices we ever remember to have heard"; according to William Husk, it was "powerful, sweet-toned, and brilliant," and ranged from a to d''' or e'''. (Mirror, 21 September 1833, quoted in Odell, III:657) The critic for the Knickerbocker made the obligatory nineteenth-century comparison, likening her voice to that of a singing bird, and William Clapp described it as

> of extraordinary compass, excellent quality and great power . . . [with] remarkable cultivation and scientific attainment [and with] that command of feeling and expression which touches and moves the mass. (Knickerbocker, Odell IV: 446; Clapp, 317)

In 1881 one of Wood's erstwhile competitors, the soprano Mary Ann Horton, remembered Wood's talents with admiration. "She could sing everything," Horton said in an interview,

> from the simplest English ballads to grand opera. Her voice was full, round and rich. The only artist I have heard in recent years who could approach her as a singer was [Euphrosine] Parepa, and Parepa could not compare with Mrs. Wood as an actress.[32]

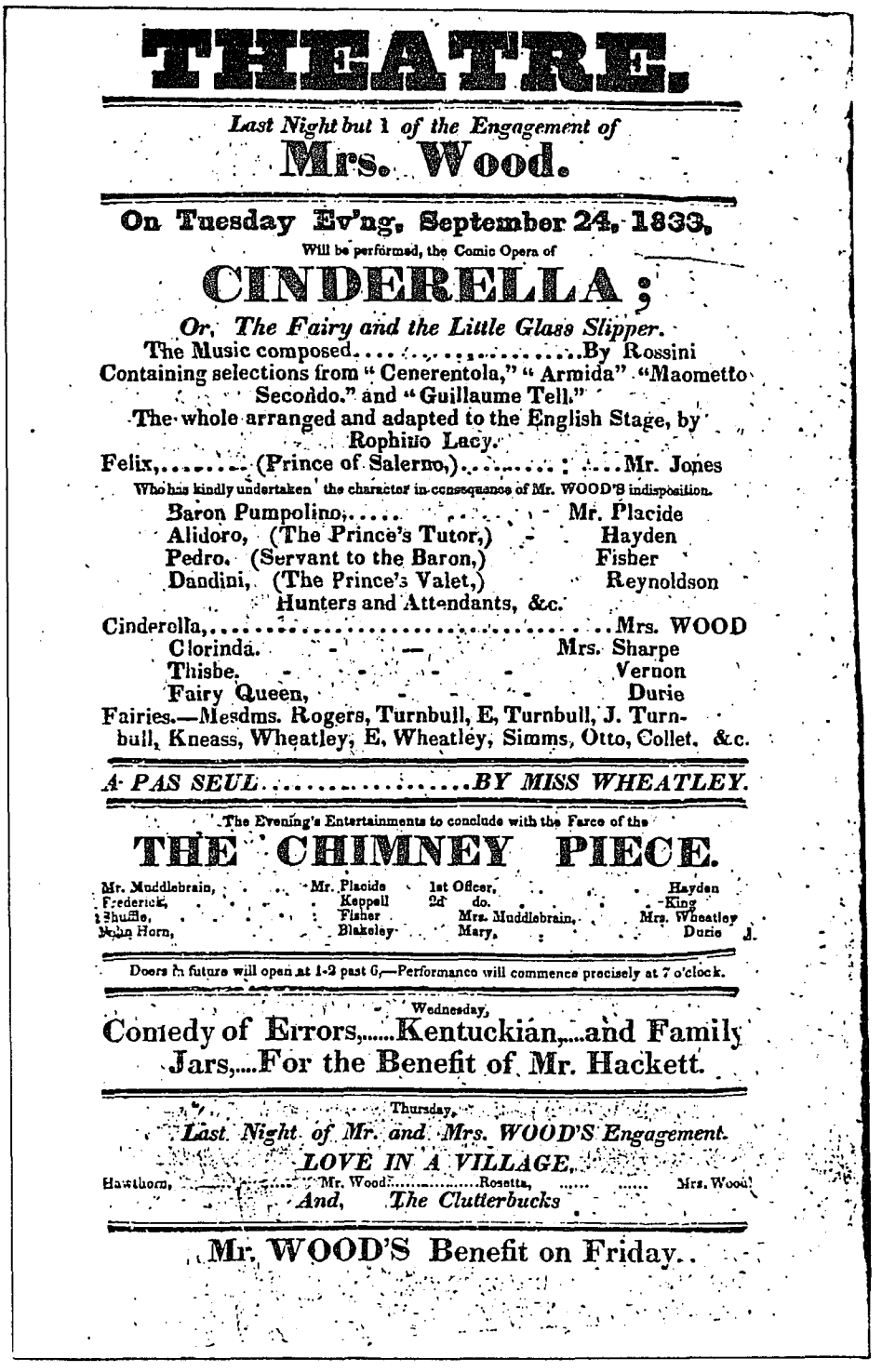
Wood's husband Joseph, although not universally praised as a vocalist, was described by one critic as "certainly the best singing actor we have had for some time"; Clapp wrote that he "agreeably surprised" the Boston audience by "the grace and fluency of his execution, the sweet mellow and full tones of a voice ranging from the upper bass to high tenor, and the manly elegance of his person." (Mirror, 21 September 1833, quoted in Odell, III:657; Clapp, 318) It was in duets with his wife, however, that Joseph Wood most pleased the American audience. "Nothing like their duets has ever been heard in [Boston] since," wrote Clapp in 1853,

> excepting perhaps the occasional hit of Madame [Anna] Bishop and [William] Reeves in Linda, and the exquisite blending of voice by [Fortunata] Tedesco and [Natale] Perelli. With the Woods, however, this fusion and blending of voice and soul in song, was the rule and constant practice. (Clapp, 319)

Comments by diarists in both Philadelphia and New York confirm the Woods' reported popularity among Americans. Sill frequently attended performances by the Woods and often commented on his pleasure at

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32. George Seilhamer, An Interviewer's Album, Number 3, Mary Ann Horton (New York: Alvin Perry & Co., 1881).



THEATRE.

Last Night but 1 *of the Engagement of*

Mrs. Wood.

On Tuesday Ev'ng, September 24, 1833,

Will be performed, the Comic Opera of

CINDERELLA;

Or, The Fairy and the Little Glass Slipper.

The Music composed.....By Rossini

Containing selections from "Cenerentola," "Armida" "Maometto Secondo." and "Guillaume Tell."

The whole arranged and adapted to the English Stage, by Rophino Lacy.

Felix,.....(Prince of Salerno,).....Mr. Jones

Who has kindly undertaken the character in consequence of Mr. WOOD'S indisposition.

Baron Pumpolino,..... Mr. Placide
Alidoro, (The Prince's Tutor,) Hayden
Pedro, (Servant to the Baron,) Fisher
Dandini, (The Prince's Valet,) Reynoldson
Hunters and Attendants, &c.

Cinderella,.....Mrs. WOOD
Clorinda. — Mrs. Sharpe
Thisbe. Vernon
Fairy Queen, Durie

Fairies.—Mesdms. Rogers, Turnbull, E. Turnbull, J. Turnbull, Kneass, Wheatley, E. Wheatley, Simms, Otto, Collet, &c.

A PAS SEUL.....BY MISS WHEATLEY.

The Evening's Entertainments to conclude with the Farce of the

THE CHIMNEY PIECE.

Mr. Muddlebrain,	Mr. Placide	1st Officer,	Hayden
Frederick,	Keppell	2d do.	King
Shuffle,	Fisher	Mrs. Muddlebrain,	Mrs. Wheatley
John Horn,	Blakeley	Mary,	Durie

Doors in future will open at 1-2 past 6,—Performance will commence precisely at 7 o'clock.

Wednesday,

Comedy of Errors,....Kentuckian,....and Family Jars,....For the Benefit of Mr. Hackett.

Thursday,

Last Night of Mr. and Mrs. WOOD'S Engagement.

LOVE IN A VILLAGE.

Hawthorn, —..... Mr. Wood.....Rosetta, ... Mrs. Wood

And, The Clutterbucks

Mr. WOOD'S Benefit on Friday.

Playbill from a performance of Cinderella, starring Mary Ann Wood, at the Park Theatre, 24 September 1833.

THEATRE.

Eighth night of LA SOMNAMBULA! in which

MRS. WOOD, MR. WOOD,

—AND—

MR. BROUGH.

WILL APPEAR.

Doors open at 6. Curtain will rise at 1-2 past 6.

Wednesday Evening, Jan. 6th 1836

Will be presented the celebrated Opera (Music by BELLINI, adapted to the English Stage by BISHOP) called

LA SOMNAMBULA

WITH NEW SCENERY BY MR. STOCKWELL.

COUNT RHODOLPHO - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - MR. BROUGH
ELVINO - MR. WOOD
Alessio.....Mr Andrews | Joanno.....Mr Rice
Notary.....Lewis | Pedro.....Whiting
AMINA - MRS. WOOD
Teresa.....Miss A. Fisher | Louise.....Madame Otto
Liza.....Mrs. Smith

CHORUS—Messrs. Addams, Stedman, Hall, Lothrop, J. Hall, Sowerby, Denton, Mesdames Campbell, Brown, Leman, Holden, Misses McBride, Kerr, Hurley, Whitmore, &c.

IN THE COURSE OF THE OPERA THE FOLLOWING MUSIC.

Chorus, Live Amina.
Cavatina, Sounds so joyful - - - Louise
The Wedding Song, - Alessio and Chorus
Chorus, May fortune's fairy power.
Recitativo, Dearest Companions, - Amina
Air, Oh! Love, - - - - Amina
Duetto, Take now this ring, - Elvino, Amina
Air, As I view these scenes, - Rhodolpho
Dialogue Chorus, Who is he?
Chorus, Then gently gliding.
Recitativo, From my toilsome journey, Rhodolpho.
Chorus, Good Repose.
Recitativo and Duetto, Surely this must be the Nocturnal Phantom.
Chorus, Nothing fearing, let us enter.
Dialogue Duett and Chorus, Go Guilty Traitress, - - - - Elvino and Amina
Duett and Chorus, We disdain thee, Alessio and Liza.
Air, I am not guilty, - - - - Amina
Duett, Such return for love according, Elvino and Amina.
Concerted Piece, See him dear mother, Amina, Elvino, Principals and Chorus.
Song, Still so gently o'er me stealing, Elvino
Chorus, Liza the chosen is.
Air, These sounds of joy, - - Louise
Quartette and Chorus, If I saw it, I could believe you, Elvino, Rhodolpho, Principals and Chorus.
Chorus, Oh! guide her wanderings now.
Dialogue Music, Once more could I now see him, - Amina, Principals and Chorus
Recitative, The ring he gave me, - Amina
Air, Yes for thee, - - - Amina
Duetto and Recitativo, Do not restrain me, Elvino and Amina.
Dialogue Music, Where am I? Amina and Principals.

THE MUSIC UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. COMER.

To conclude with the admired Farce of

THE DUMB BELLE!

Capt. Vivian.....Mr. G. Barrett | Janus.....Mr. Benson
O'Smirk.....Comer | Mr. Manvers.....Sarzedas
Eliza.....Mrs. G. Barrett | Mary.....Miss McBride

EASTBURN'S PRESS, 18 STATE STREET.

Playbill from a performance of Bellini's La Sonnambula, given by the Woods and William Brough at the Park Theatre, 6 January 1836.

listening to them. "The House was crowded . . . and the audience delighted with their exquisite Singing," he recorded in January 1836.

> I have never heard them in better voice, & they exerted themselves to please-- I have heard many of the Prima Donnas of Europe, but none pleases me more, if as much as Mrs. Wood-- (Sill, 22 January 1836)

And four years later, Thomas Chamberlain noted

> This was the last night of [Mrs. Wood's] engagement, and if she appears no more whilst I am in New York it will be a few dollars in my pocket, for I cannot resist going to see her. (Chamberlain, vol. 2 (1840-1861), 23 October 1840)

The Woods made two separate tours of the eastern United States. They appeared in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere from September 1833 through May 1836, when they returned to England. They came back to America in September 1840 for a second tour, but this one lasted only through January 1841. (Brooks, AG) Like Austin, the two singers often teamed up with other British singers to form (generally short-lived) vocal-star troupes, sometimes with the same singers who earlier had travelled with Austin. Although the Woods were extremely successful in this country, both of their visits were cut short by controversies about other artists' benefit performances (evidently the result of misunderstandings), and an announced visit to New Orleans had to be abandoned. Censure by American audiences on both occasions, however, was directed towards Joseph Wood, who was blunt and short-tempered; the popularity of Mary Ann Wood among Americans remained

undiminished. [33]

Numerous other singers were active in the United States during the tenures of Elizabeth Austin and the Woods; a few of them have been mentioned above as performing at one time or another in vocal-star troupes with Austin. Some of these performers--most of whom were British--played important enough roles in the early history of opera performance in this country to merit at least brief mention in this chapter.

Two vocalists typical of "secondary" singers who performed with Austin and the Woods (and other vocal stars who appeared in the United States slightly later) were the tenor Charles Edward Horn (1786-1849) and the soprano Elizabeth Feron (1797-1853), both of whom first appeared on the American stage in the late 1820s. Horn is best known to scholars of American music as a composer and as an all-around theatre musician, but he also was quite conspicuous and renowned as an itinerant vocal star during the 1820s and 1830s. He toured extensively throughout the eastern half of the continent after his debut in New York in October 1827, performing in operas in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Albany, New Orleans, Baltimore, Washington, and elsewhere; he also made a concert tour of the Northeast during the summer of 1832 (including appearances in Boston, Portland, Providence, and Halifax) and one in the

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33. Brooks, AG. For information on the aborted New Orleans engagement, see the Spirit of 6 March 1841 for a published copy of the letter Joseph Wood wrote to James Caldwell (manager of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans) explaining why he and his wife suddenly cancelled their already scheduled engagement at his theatre.

South in 1834.[34]

Feron, who made her American debut (also in New York) in 1828, was a "brilliant soprano," described by one prominent London critic as "second to no English singer and inferior to no Italian but [Giuditta] Pasta" (then the reigning European prima donna).[35] She was a secondary singer in the United States only because of insurmountable competition from Elizabeth Austin. Madame Feron already had established a formidable reputation in England and on the continent prior to her arrival in America, and in 1828 was the most internationally renowned singer yet to appear in this country. Evidently, however, she was not as physically attractive as Elizabeth Austin, and despite her stature as "a brilliant singer of the most florid Italian school, with a voice of equal power and melody," she was unable to overcome the year-long headstart that Austin had in the affections of American audiences; she lacked, according to Joseph Ireland, "the graceful form, the face divine, and the inexpressible charm of girlhood, which rendered her fair predecessor so irresistible." (Ireland, I:593) As a result, although Feron remained

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34. Odell, III:304. Horn played an important part in the development of music in the United States of the antebellum period. When he arrived in America he had already established a reputation as a composer of operas and songs and as an adaptor of the operas of other composers (including Mozart and Rossini) to the English stage. In addition, in 1832 he became the musical director at the Park Theatre; he later served as the conductor of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; was active as a music publisher and the owner of a music store in New York; and participated in the founding of the New York Philharmonic Society in 1842. See Nicholas Temperley, "Horn, Charles Edward," AG. For a discussion of Horn's vocal abilities, see the Albion, 20 October 1827; information on the concert tours is from the Spirit 15 September 1832 (eastern tour) and the AMJ, 1 October 1834, 23. (southern tour).

35. Odell, III:385; the critical opinion is quoted by Richard Grant White, in his "Opera in New York," Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, Part I (March 1882), 696.







Portraits of Elizabeth Hughes (top left); William Brough (top right), and Elizabeth Feron (left).

in this country until 1833 and appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans, her pecuniary success did not approach that of her contemporary.[36] Feron performed at various times (either in vocal-star troupes or in joint engagements by the same theatre) with Mary Ann Knight, John Sinclair, Elizabeth Hughes, Elizabeth Austin, Charles Horn, Thomas Walton, and the Italian singers Felice Angrisani and Frances Brichta. (Odell, III:385)

A number of other more-or-less prominent secondary vocal stars arrived in the United States slightly later than these two; in contemporary sources, their names are linked with those of Austin, Horn, Feron, and the Woods. John Sinclair (1790-1857) was a Scottish tenor who toured this country for eleven years (1831-1842), performing in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Charleston, St. Louis, and points in between. Elizabeth Hughes, who sang in the United States for only two theatrical seasons (1831-1833), was considered by many at the time (before the appearance of Mary Ann Wood) to be second only to Mrs. Austin in vocal skill. (Ireland, II:50) Charlotte Watson (1817-), who after her marriage in 1837 was known as Mrs. Bailey, made her American debut in 1834 and remained in the United States until 1847. She performed all over the country, including--in addition to the usual locations--in St. Louis and Cincinnati, true hinterland cities during the 1830s and 1840s. She sang with the Woods and with William Brough in the 1830s and, during the next decade, with many of the vocal stars who

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36. Ireland, I:564. Francis Wemyss, who described Feron as "really fat, fair, and past forty," wrote that she returned home "mortified with her reception [here], with no very exalted opinion of the American taste for music." See Wemyss, 163.

first appeared in the United States in 1838 and 1839, including Jane Shirreff, John Wilson, and Edward and Anne Seguin. Another soprano, Antoinette Otto, was a native of Germany. She started her American career in the chorus of the Park Theatre company, and by 1833 was singing her first (small) name roles. (Odell, III:621; Spirit, 2 May 1840) She did not really begin to tour as a star until 1836 or 1837, but from that time until she returned to Europe in 1846 she performed all over the eastern half of the country as a member of various vocal-star troupes.

The bass William F. Brough is a final example of a "secondary" English vocal star who performed widely in North America during this period. Brough came to the United States with Joseph and Mary Ann Wood in 1833, but did not make his American debut until September 1835, when he appeared with them in Cinderella (as Dandini) in New York. (Odell IV:51) Brough performed with the Woods during both of their visits to this country, made at least two different tours to the South as a member of vocal-star troupes (the first, with Antoinette Otto and Thomas Bishop, from November 1838 through May 1839; the second, with Otto and John Jones, from November 1839 through the spring of 1840), and also sang and toured with Jane Shirreff and John Wilson in 1839 (see Chapter 2). His extensive travels during the late 1830s were typical of those of vocal stars in general; also typical is the extent to which his path crossed those of other itinerant singers. Table 1 is a chart of Brough's travels from September 1835 through April 1841, when he (temporarily) returned to England. Although incomplete (the information was gleaned from secondary sources and contemporary music and theatre

TABLE 1. VOCAL-STAR ACTIVITIES OF WILLIAM F. BROUGH, 1835-1841

DATES	LOCATION	OTHER SINGERS NAMED
Sept-Oct 1835	NYC. Park Theatre	Mr. & Mrs. Wood. Also Walton, Latham, Richings, Conduit
Oct-Nov 1835	Boston. Tremont St. [?]	Woods
Nov-Dec 1835	NYC. Park Theatre	Woods
January 1836	Boston. Tremont [?]	Woods
Jan-Feb 1836	Philadelphia. Chestnut Street Theatre	Woods, Thomas Walton.
March-April 1836	NYC. Park Theatre	Woods
April 1836.	NYC. Chatham St. Theatre	Woods
April-May 1836.	Philadelphia. Arch St.	Woods
May 1836.	NYC. Park Theatre	Woods
Sept 1837.	NYC. Park Theatre	Mary Ann Horton, Charles Horn
November 1837	Philadelphia, Chestnut St.	
Dec 1837.	Baltimore. Holliday St. [?]	C. E. Horn, M. A. Horton, T. Walton.
Jan 1838.	Philadelphia	Antoinette Otto, Pearson
Jan-Feb. 1838.	NYC. Park Theatre	Caradori-Allan, J. Jones, Peter Richings, Miss Hughes, Mrs. Bailey
Feb 1838.	Philadelphia	Caradori-Allan
April 1838.	NYC.	Caradori-Allan, Mrs. Hughes, J. Jones
June 1838.	Phila.	concert
Nov 1838.	Philadelphia	A. Otto, T. Bishop.
Jan 1839.	NYC. National Theatre	Mrs. Bailey, P. Richings
Feb 1839.	Charleston. Theatre	A. Otto, T. Bishop
March 1839.	Augusta, Ga.	A. Otto, T. Bishop, Hardwick.
March 1839.	Charleston	A. Otto, T. Bishop, Thomas A'Beckett
May 1839.	Charleston again.	
Sept 1839.	Philadelphia	Jane Shirreff, John Wilson
Sept-Oct 1839.	Baltimore.	ditto
Nov 1839.	Pittsburgh.	Brough benefit
Feb 1840.	Savannah.	A. Otto, John Jones.
April 1840	New Orleans	A. Otto, John Sinclair
May 1840	Mobile, Alabama	A. Otto, John Sinclair
1840 (when?)	St. Louis.	A. Otto, John Sinclair
June 1840.	NYC to Buffalo--concert tour	
summer 1840.	Buffalo, Syracuse, Canada--concert tour	
Sept-Oct 1840.	NYC. Park Theatre	Woods, Leffler, Mrs. Bailey, A. Andrews
Oct 1840.	Philadelphia. Chestnut	Woods
Nov-Dec 1840.	NYC. Park Theatre	Woods, Clara Fisher Maeder, John Jones
Dec 1840.	Boston. Tremont?	Woods.
Feb. 1841.	Charleston?	Martyn, Inverarity
April 1841.	Richmond.	M/M Martyn, Inverarity

periodicals, but not from contemporary newspapers), the chart clearly demonstrates that vocal-star activity was not limited to the Northeast. Like Charles Horn, Brough became a major musical and theatrical influence in this country. After a lengthy first career as a singer, he embarked on a successful second one as an operatic impresario and manager; during the 1840s, he also served as the New York agent for the Illustrated London News. (Lawrence, 272) Brough's American career (interrupted by several trips back to England) continued through the 1850s; by the mid-1840s, however, his activities were principally with English opera companies rather than with vocal-star troupes. (For additional information on Brough, see also Chapters 5 and 6.)

The first-rank British vocal stars who travelled and performed in the United States during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s relied heavily on singers like Brough, Otto, Sinclair, and the others mentioned--as well as on numerous additional individuals who were part of this fluctuating pool of secondary vocal stars. Even more important to the success of vocal-star troupes, however, was an entirely different group of performers: the actors, singers, and instrumentalists connected with the stock companies of theatres all over the eastern and southern portions of North America. Although the activities of these performers were mostly unsung, the support they provided to visiting singers was essential, for a vocal-star troupe, no matter how good, could not mount an opera by itself. They did not, by themselves, constitute an opera company, just as travelling theatrical stars did not constitute a dramatic troupe. Operatic stars such as Austin or the Woods (or luminaries who appeared later in the 1830s, such as Jane Shirreff, Anne Anne and Edward Seguin, and John Wilson), and dramatic stars such as Forrest,

Booth, Kean, Cushman, or Macready, played only the most important roles; the subordinate players, and (in opera) the chorus, were all members of the stock company associated with the local theatre at which the stars were engaged. Stock company players (even those who normally took leading roles when the local company performed alone) assumed secondary parts when stars were hired. To assist dramatic stars they performed supporting roles in such works as Richard III, Hamlet, The School for Scandal, or The Six Degrees of Crime; for vocal stars they assumed the secondary parts in the likes of Cinderella, Fra Diavolo, The Beggar's Opera, and The Marriage of Figaro. This reliance on stock company performers is the most significant difference between vocal-star troupes and the full-fledged English opera companies of the late 1840s, 1850s, and later.

A great deal of evidence beyond cast lists and performance reviews illustrates the relationship between vocal-star troupes and local stock companies. Advertisements for productions by vocal-star troupes, for example, occasionally read like the following, which appeared in 1839: "To-night, Gustavus the III . . . will be played. The entire company will assist in it, and the principal characters will be sustained by all the vocal talent of the Theatre."[37] The vocal star Anne Seguin, interviewed in 1881, remembered

> In those days it was the rule for everybody to go on when opera was given--that is, everybody in the regular company

37. This is in reference to a performance by the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin vocal-star troupe. See the New York Daily Express, 21 October 1839.

> of a theatre was required to assist in dressing the stage on opera nights.[38]

Stephen Massett, an actor who wrote in his memoirs of being a member of a stock company, gave an account from the other side. He described working at the Charleston, South Carolina, theatre in 1841 when the Seguin Opera Company (an expanded vocal-star troupe) arrived for an engagement. La Sonnambula was the scheduled opera and Massett was assigned the part of one of the male peasants. "My duties," he related, were "simply to come on and go off with one of the female ditto, joining in the chorus loud or soft as the case might be."[39]

Massett had additional experience as a subordinate actor in another opera mounted by the Charleston company. In a production of Fra Diavolo (again with the Seguins as stars), he was assigned one of the minor singing roles, that of Matteo, the innkeeper. There were only two days for "getting [the opera] up," and Edward Seguin eventually decided that the part was too difficult for the inexperienced Massett to learn on short notice. Consequently, it was reassigned as a spoken role to another actor in the company. (Massett, 42-43) Many of the operas regularly performed by vocal-star troupes, like Fra Diavolo, La Sonnambula, or The Bohemian Girl, have a limited number of principal singing roles--few enough, in fact, that the most important parts were all taken by the visiting vocalists. If the theatre's manager, however, discovered that he did not have a sufficient number of musically skilled actors to cover all of the secondary roles (as happened in Charleston),

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38. George Seilhamer, An Interviewer's Album (NY: Alvin Perry & Co, 1881), No. 9: Anne Seguin.

39. Stephen Massett, Drifting About (New York: Carleton, 1863), 42-43.

the parts were simply spoken, and any songs normally performed by the characters omitted.[40] The two-day rehearsal period mentioned by Massett seems grossly inadequate until one realizes that vocal-star troupes tended to limit the operas they performed to those works that were a normal part of the theatrical repertory; stock-company actors and instrumentalists, consequently, were familiar with the roles, chorus numbers, and staging conventions of these works, and theatres already owned appropriate scenery and costumes.[41]

Stephen Massett did not voice any complaints about having to perform in opera choruses, but he was a singer as well as an actor. Some of the actors in stock companies, however, were not delighted at the prospect of being drafted into an opera chorus or of "dressing the stage," as Anne Seguin put it. Members of the Chestnut Street Theatre company in Philadelphia, in fact, threatened to quit in November 1845 when ordered to perform in the chorus for a production of The Bohemian Girl. One indignant actress reportedly wailed in protest, "It is too much, to ask the Lady MacBeths and the Juliets to suddenly drop to singing in opera choruses." (Curtis, 346) In this particular incident most of the company players eventually capitulated, and the threatened rebellion was averted. This dissatisfaction among stock players,

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40. It is almost impossible to divine from playbills which of the subordinate parts of an opera were sung and which were read. And reviewers are of little help, for they generally limit their specific praise or criticism to the visiting stars--with occasionally a passing comment about a performance by only the most prominent members of the stock company.

41. According to theatre historian Mari Kathleen Fielder, although Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre company continued to operate throughout the 1830s as "a typical stock company" the troupe nonetheless emphasized productions of operas, spectacles, and pantomimes, as these were its most profitable works. In 1835, for example, the troupe had sixty operas or operettas in its repertory. See Fielder, "[Old] Chestnut Street Theatre Stock Company" (1826-1855), ATC, 194.

however, would become more noticeable in the late-1840s and 1850s, as opera performance (especially in the larger cities) became increasingly regarded as the domain of "specialty" troupes, that is, itinerant opera companies.

Reviewers of opera performances by vocal-star troupes and stock companies sometimes voiced damning complaints about the overall quality of performance by the supporting actors and actresses. The critic for the American Musical Journal of October 1834 was particularly caustic about performances by the stock-company actors during an engagement of the Woods at the Park Theatre. "The inability of the available vocal talent, which the Theatre possesses, to do justice to any opera containing much concerted music," he wrote,

> [was] painfully apparent [last evening]. We have no wish to hurt the feelings of the musical persons who were engaged in the matter, by giving names; suffice it therefore, to say that all the secondary parts in [The Maid of Judah] and also in Fra Diavolo, were shamefully given. . . . To this lack of tone and ensemble, by the way, do we in a great measure attribute the want of success which characterizes one or two of Mr. and Mrs. Wood's engagements. How, in fact, could it possibly turn out otherwise, when Mr. Blakely and Mr. Fisher--two persons useful enough in their line, but utterly ignorant of music--how, we repeat, could it be otherwise, when these gentlemen were respectively charged with difficult and intricate tenor and bass parts, in Trios, Quintettos, &c. &c. (AMJ, October 1834, 18)

The following year, during another engagement of the Woods, a critic writing for the same journal was similarly harsh in his judgement of a performance of Cinderella. "It has appeared to us," he commented,

> that the manager of the Park has studiously, for the last few years, kept his second women for the purpose of setting off with greater brilliancy the qualities of his

> prima donnas; for we doubt whether a more incompetent set of ladies for operatic business could be found in any theatre in the country than has usually been cast in these parts. (AMJ, October 1835, 261)

By 1845 the situation apparently had not changed much. In a review of a performance of The Bohemian Girl by the Seguin Opera Company at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, the critic commented sardonically, "the subordinate characters were, as usual, very badly filled." (Spirit, 7 November 1846, 439)

Not all efforts by stock-company actors, however, were mediocre or poor. Although the quality of stock companies tended to fluctuate from year to year, theatres in the larger cities (especially in New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans) often had strong troupes whose players could more than hold their own in dramatic and operatic performances alike. In 1832, for example, a writer commenting on the engagement of Mrs. Austin and Miss Hughes at the Park Theatre suggested that "The Marriage of Figaro and Masaniello were . . . selected by Mr. Simpson [the manager] . . . as giving scope to the entire display of the varied talents of his excellent company of stock actors." (Spirit, 19 May 1832) That same year a critic for the Mirror, in a review of a performance of Cinderella, wrote that the choruses of the Tremont Street Theatre in Boston "were admirably drilled . . . [and] completely perfect in their business"; three years later the chorus at one of the Philadelphia theatres was described as "the most effective in the United States for its size . . . its business is always perfect"; and in 1838 a writer in The Musical Review offered "great praise . . . to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Chorus" of the Park Theatre, for not only was "their portion of the music . . . given with great precision and

effect," but "they are improving daily."[42] Finally, the New Yorker Thomas Chamberlain, in a diary entry dated 9 October 1840, praised a performance by the Park Theatre company of La Sonnambula (and, incidentally, confirmed that opera's popularity). "The choruses in this piece," he wrote, "are remarkably well performed, as indeed they ought to be, with the practice they have had in [it]." He continued parenthetically, "I might add [that] it is about the only piece [at the Park] in which they are [well performed]." In November and December, on the other hand, he waxed enthusiastic about performances at New York's National Theatre, noting that "the choruses were splendid" in Donizetti's The Elixir of Love and describing the choral singers as both "first rate" and "splendid" for a production of Don Giovanni. (Chamberlain, 9 October, 19 November, 5 December 1840)

A theatrical company's choice of repertory was a major factor in its success or failure; some operas simply were too ambitious to be tackled by stock troupes, even with the assistance of visiting vocal stars. In 1832, for example, the Park Theatre company mounted (among other works) productions of the Lacy/Rossini pastiche The Maid of Judah and Boieldieu's The White Lady. About the troupe's performance of the former, the critic of the Mirror had nothing good to say. "This opera contains beautiful music," he wrote,

> but there are so many concerted pieces in it, which require to be filled by professed singers, that it is no

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42. Mirror, 24 March 1832; "The Orchestras," Mirror, 3 January 1835, 211; The Musical Review, 27 June 1838, 95. The Philadelphia theatre is identified as under the management of Mr. Maywood. In 1835 Robert Maywood managed both the Chestnut and Arch Street theatres in Philadelphia. See Fielder, ATC, 195-196.

> less than a mockery to entrust them to singing actors, or chorus singers. Here again we see Mr. [Peter] Richings thrust into a part expressly arranged for [Henry] Phillips, the best bass singer in England, and taking part with the prima donna of the piece, Miss Hughes, in a duet which, on the Italian stage, was thought to tax the powers of [Matteo] Porto or [Filippo] Galli; and which, without any disparagement to Mr. Richings, with no knowledge of music, and with a baritone voice of inferior quality, he ought not to have had fastened on him. (Mirror, July 1832, 22)

The same critic's evaluation of the company's production of the lighter Boieldieu opera, however, was quite different. "The cast of this piece, on the contrary, displayed the elite of the Park company," he judged,

> Jones, Placide, Mrs. Sharpe, Thorne, and Richings--all have parts within the scope of their talents, and the adapter of the music most freely offers his testimony, that the opera has been cast with all the strength and all the talent he could desire. (Mirror, July 1832, 22)

The overall quality of a theatre's company undoubtedly had a major influence on the decision of a vocal star (or vocal-star troupe) to accept or reject an engagement, no matter how tantalizing the terms offered by the manager. For once engaged, the stars' success or failure depended on the ability of the theatre's stock performers to mount the production. As one critic pointed out, "a good chorus may aid inferior principals, but principals can very rarely supply or cover the defects of bad choristers." (Spirit, 17 November 1849, 468) Occasionally, if the local talent proved to be particularly deficient, the visiting singers were forced to change their performance plans. The soprano Mary Ann (Horton) Horn, for example, remembered travelling in a vocal-star troupe with her husband Charles Edward Horn in the mid-1830s. They had an engagement at an unnamed theatre in New Orleans, she related, but "the [stock] company, was so bad that we could not give opera. Instead

we gave concerts, not only in New Orleans, but in other parts of the South." (Seilhamer, No. 3)

The other important group of performers on which vocal-star troupes depended was the theatre orchestra. It was indispensable for the performance of opera, and both vocal-star and English opera troupes relied heavily on the instrumental musicians attached to the theatres at which they were engaged.[43] During the 1830s and 1840s, the standing orchestras of local theatres were often augmented for opera performances by vocal-star troupes--apparently by hiring additional local instrumentalists. A playbill from a performance of Auber's Masaniello by the company of the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia in 1832, for example, announced that "in order to give all possible effect to the music, the Orchestra will be augmented."[44] Another playbill, from a performance of Amilie, or the Love Test (William Rooke) at Boston's Tremont Street Theatre in November 1838, likewise noted that "the Orchestra will be increased."[45]

Consistent information on the size and make-up of theatre orchestras is difficult to find. During this period four theatres--the Tremont (Boston), St. Charles (New Orleans), Park (New York), and Chestnut Street (Philadelphia)--maintained the largest orchestras in the

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43. It was not until the advent of larger itinerant Italian companies in the 1840s and 1850s that opera troupes began to travel with their own orchestras. Apparently the first to do so was the Havana Opera Company of 1843 (see Chapter 3).

44. Playbill, Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), 19 May 1832, Theatrical Programs, 1831-1834, Graphic Arts Collection, MWA (the collection and institution hereafter referred to as GA/MWA).

45. Playbill, Tremont Street Theatre (Boston), 5 November 1838, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, NN (the collection and institution hereafter referred to as TC/NN).

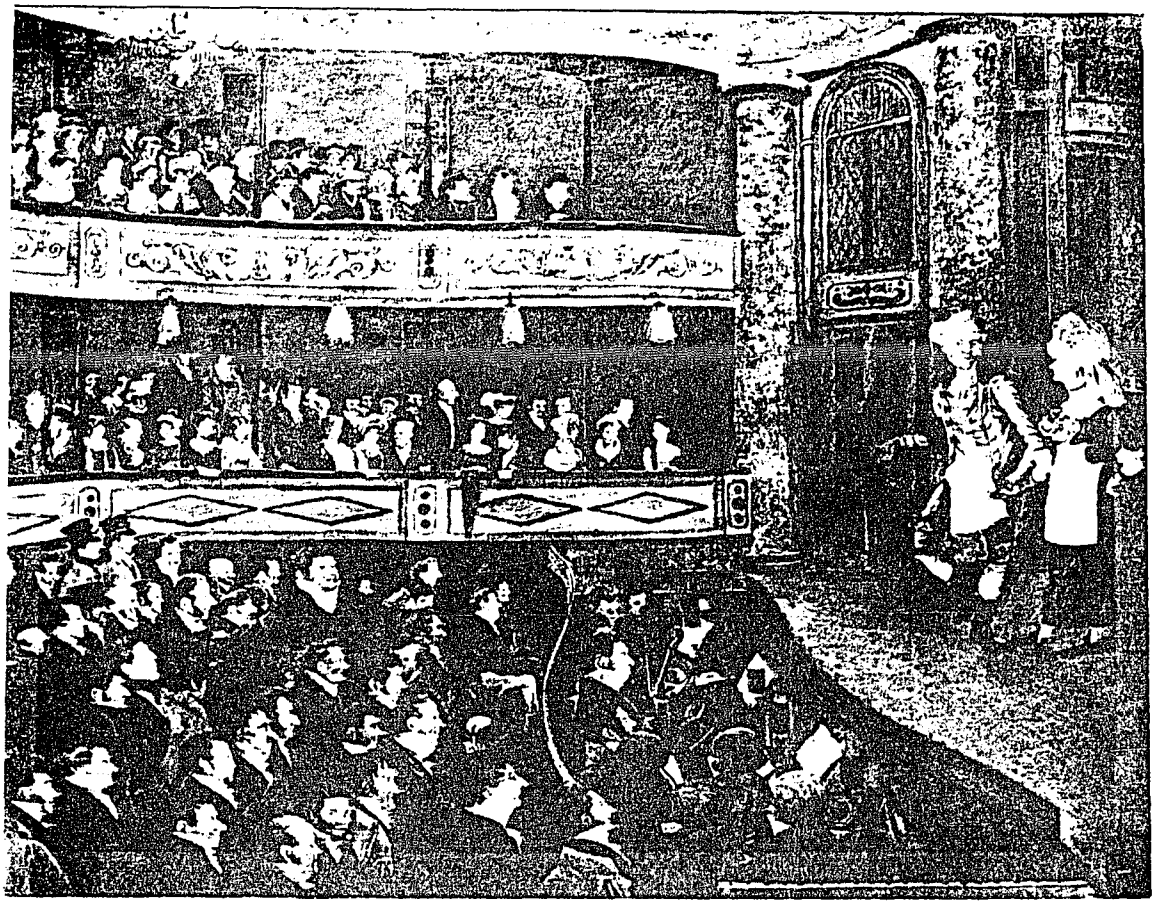
country.[46] As early as 1828 the Tremont Theatre had an orchestra of twenty-eight instrumentalists (of unknown combination); in 1835 the author of an article titled "The Orchestras" judged this ensemble to be "the best in America."[47] He admitted, however, that he did not intend to "notice the orchestras of the south" in his article; as a consequence, he awarded first-place honors to the wrong group of instrumentalists, for the orchestra of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans almost certainly was a stronger ensemble. The St. Charles, a splendid new theatre, had first opened its doors in 1835, and the large orchestra that owner and manager James Caldwell engaged for his inaugural season consisted of "at least twenty-nine instrumentalists plus the conductor"--seventeen strings (ten violins, two violas, three cellos, two double basses), six winds (two clarinets, two flutes, one oboe, one bassoon), five brasses (two trumpets, one trombone, and two horns), and harp.[48] This orchestra also could boast of several skilled virtuoso instrumentalists, including James Kendall (clarinet), Felippe Cioffi (trombone), and John T. Norton (trumpet). (Kmen, 138-140) During that same year, the orchestra at the Park Theatre numbered only eighteen; six years later, however, that theatre's ensemble had grown considerably, to twenty-seven musicians, including eleven strings (three first violins, two second violins, two violas, two cellos, two double basses); seven

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46. The only theatre with a comparable (or larger) orchestra than those maintained by these four houses was the Théatre d'Orléans in New Orleans, at which performances were in French. This house also supported a resident opera company. For both of these reasons, the establishment did not engage performers of English opera, and as a consequence it is excluded from this discussion.

47. Clapp, 265; A Man About Town, "The Orchestras," Mirror, 3 January 1835, 211.

48. Kmen, 139. Even this orchestra, impressive for the time and place, was slightly smaller than that employed at the Théâtre d'Orléans.



Famous painting by John Searle of the audience in attendance at a performance at the Park Theatre in 1822. Notice the small orchestra seated in front of the stage.

winds (two clarinets, one oboe, two flutes, and two bassoons); six brass (two horns, two trombones, and two trumpets), and three percussion instruments (double drums, grande casse, and cymbals).[49] In the same year (1841) the regular orchestra at the Chestnut Street Theatre included twenty-three instrumentalists: eleven strings (seven violins, two violas, two cellos), six winds (two clarinets, two flutes, one oboe, one bassoon), five brass (two horns, two trombones, one trumpet), and drums.[50] For one of the Woods' engagements during 1841, however, the orchestra was augmented by "a goodly number of amateurs [who] volunteered their services," reportedly increasing the size of the ensemble to forty-seven musicians, "most of them of great merit."[51] Occasionally, for a truly special event, a theatre assembled quite a large ensemble, such as the orchestra of fifty-five hired by the Chestnut Street Theatre for the première of William Henry Fry's Leonora by the Seguins in June 1845. The cost of such extraordinarily large ensembles, however, was prohibitive for all but the most exceptional events at even the largest theatres in the country.[52]

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49. Mirror, 3 January 1835, 211; playbill, Park Theatre, 16 April 1841 (Seguin Opera Company, Zampa). Playbill Collection, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA.

50. Playbill, Chestnut St. Theatre, 3 May 1841 (Seguin Opera Company), PPL.

51. Spirit, 16 January 1841. In comparison with these several American theatre orchestras, the instrumental ensemble of Drury Lane Theatre in London for 1841 numbered forty-one musicians. It is worth noting, however, that in 1829 Fétis ranked the orchestras of both Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres far below those of the Variétés Théatre and the Théatre de Madame in Paris. How the Drury Lane orchestra compared with the ensembles of other European theatres in the late 1830s or early 1840s is unknown. See Adam Carse, The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1948), 201; 199.

52. William G. Armstrong, A Record of the Opera in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1884, R/New York: AMS Press, 1976).

Orchestras of other American theatres were almost invariably smaller than the instrumental ensembles of the St. Charles or the major theatres on the East Coast. The theatre in Mobile, Alabama, mustered only fourteen musicians for performances by the Woods in 1837; during that same year, the St. Louis theatre engaged an orchestra of only eleven (four violins, one viola, cello, double bass, one flute, two horns, and one trumpet).[53] In 1838 the ensemble at the theatre in Providence, Rhode Island numbered nine, and its composition (two violins, double bass, two clarinets, two horns, trumpet, and trombone) indicates that it was closer in sound to a band than to a regular string-dominated theatre orchestra. This ensemble nonetheless was a source of pride for residents of the city, and was described as "the largest and best drilled orchestral band that had ever been heard in Providence."[54] In New Orleans in 1841 the American Theatre (another English-language house in that city) had an orchestra of eighteen; for the Charleston theatre during this period we are told only that in 1841 it had an orchestra that was "the best, by far the best" ever heard in the city.[55]

The quality of performance by theatre orchestras for vocal-star opera productions is something about which we know little; at best, written comments in the press are conflicting, ranging from utter

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53. "Mobile Theatricals," Spirit, 25 March 1837; "Missouri Theatricals," Spirit, 22 July 1837.

54. Charles Blake, An Historical Account of the Providence Stage: Being a Paper Read Before the Rhode Island Historical Society, October 25th, 1860 (1868; reprint New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), 224.

55. Mirror, 2 October 1841; uncited quotation (from the Charleston Courier?) in Stanley W. Hoole, The Ante-Bellum Charleston Theatre (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1946), 44.

damnation to high praise. A correspondent to the American Musical Journal in 1835, for example, complained bitterly about the performance of the Park Theatre orchestra during one of the Woods' engagements. "At the orchestra I was perfectly astonished," he wrote,

> for by placing myself in the pit near the music desks, I perceived [that players of] some instruments never even attempt the passages that were written. I am told, and indeed I do not doubt it, that the present is the most inefficient orchestra that this theatre has had for years past. The Leader appears to endeavour to make amends for the deficiency of his band, by the most extraordinary capers upon his finger board, so that we almost doubt whether they were ever equalled by the king of fiddlers, Paganini, himself. Mr. [William] Penson should be made to know that . . . these mountebank tricks . . . are neither amusing, nor instructive, but an impudent liberty with the composer and actor, and an insult to the audience. (AMJ, November 1835, 278-79)

More often, however, critics were less strident than this in their censure of theatre orchestras. In 1833 a critic for the Spirit, writing about a performance of The Marriage of Figaro by Elizabeth Austin and the Park Theatre company, commented mildly that "the Opera could not have been in better hands--though some of the fiddles could--." Seven years later, after attending a performance of Donizetti's The Elixir of Love at the National Theatre, Thomas Chamberlain wrote in his diary that "the band [was] but so-so." (Spirit, 21 March 1833; Chamberlain, 19 November 1840.)

Most frequently, critics and other auditors alike praised theatre instrumentalists. The same Park Theatre orchestra that was attacked so vehemently in the American Musical Journal in November 1835 was highly praised by a critic for the Mirror, who wrote that the ensemble's leader William Penson "has brought his orchestra into an

excellent state, [one] that for once gives satisfaction to the critics of the daily press." (Mirror, 28 November 1835, 174.) In 1840 the Park Theatre orchestra was described as "in excellent training," and that of the Tremont Theatre in Boston (variously under the direction of the distinguished violinist Louis Ostinelli and the all-around theatre musician Thomas Comer) was frequently praised as "excellent" (in 1832) and "very good, much better than [New York] can boast of at present" (in 1835).[56]

The discrepancies in perception probably can be blamed on widely divergent levels of experience with orchestral performance. As one music periodical reported in 1839, "instruments and instrumental music are as yet very little understood, and consequently not properly appreciated, in this country." This explanation again suggests that pecuniary gain was a principal motivation for touring musicians, for the writer pointed out that "first rate performers can do much better by remaining in Europe; and therefore, we rarely, if ever, see them here." (The Musical Magazine, 5 January 1839, 15) Since many auditors (including critics) had little experience listening to instrumental ensembles, an orchestra that played reasonably in tune and together probably would have been considered satisfactory; awareness of instrumental timbre and color, or even of missing or substituted parts, after all, requires a somewhat discriminating ear. A writer for the Mirror addressed this issue in 1835. Secondary instruments (as opposed to principals), he pointed out,

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56. The Corsair, 22 February 1840, 796; Spirit, 1 December 1832; AMJ, November 1835, 287.

> are generally awfully deficient in this country. . . . Let us take the opera of Masaniello for instance, and the Maid of Judah, as played at the Park theatre. In both of these operas the first clarionet has to play the first hautboy part, and the second clarionet the part of the first, and consequently the second parts of either instrument are not represented. The bassoon has to play a part written for two bassoons, and consequently plays notes which, as they were intended in many parts to produce the effect of a duet, are so much nonsense when played by one instrument. All this might have been remedied by the parts being properly condensed; but the London resident of the Park management, whose musical knowledge may be limited to an imperfect acquaintance with the tunes of Yankee Doodle and God Save the King, sent them out as real Drury-Lane parts; and the New York resident ordered them to be played, and so they are played. (Mirror, 17 January 1835, 231)

The most common complaint voiced about performances by theatre orchestras was their tendency to play too loudly, which either upset the balance of the ensemble or drowned out the singers. In 1839, the Park Theatre orchestra was mildly criticized because "the brass instruments are occasionally a little too loud for the rest of the band." (Spirit, 4 May 1839) Whatever the perceived strengths and weaknesses of theatre orchestras during the 1830s, critics seemed to agree that overall quality of performance had improved dramatically since the 1810s and 1820s. According to some sources, vocal stars were responsible for this improvement. The musical profession, wrote one critic, is "indebted to Mrs. Austin":

> To her may the Park orchestra attribute their being paid full salaries during the whole season; through her means have managers of the principal theatres found out the necessity of maintaining full bands. (AMJ, April 1835, 115)

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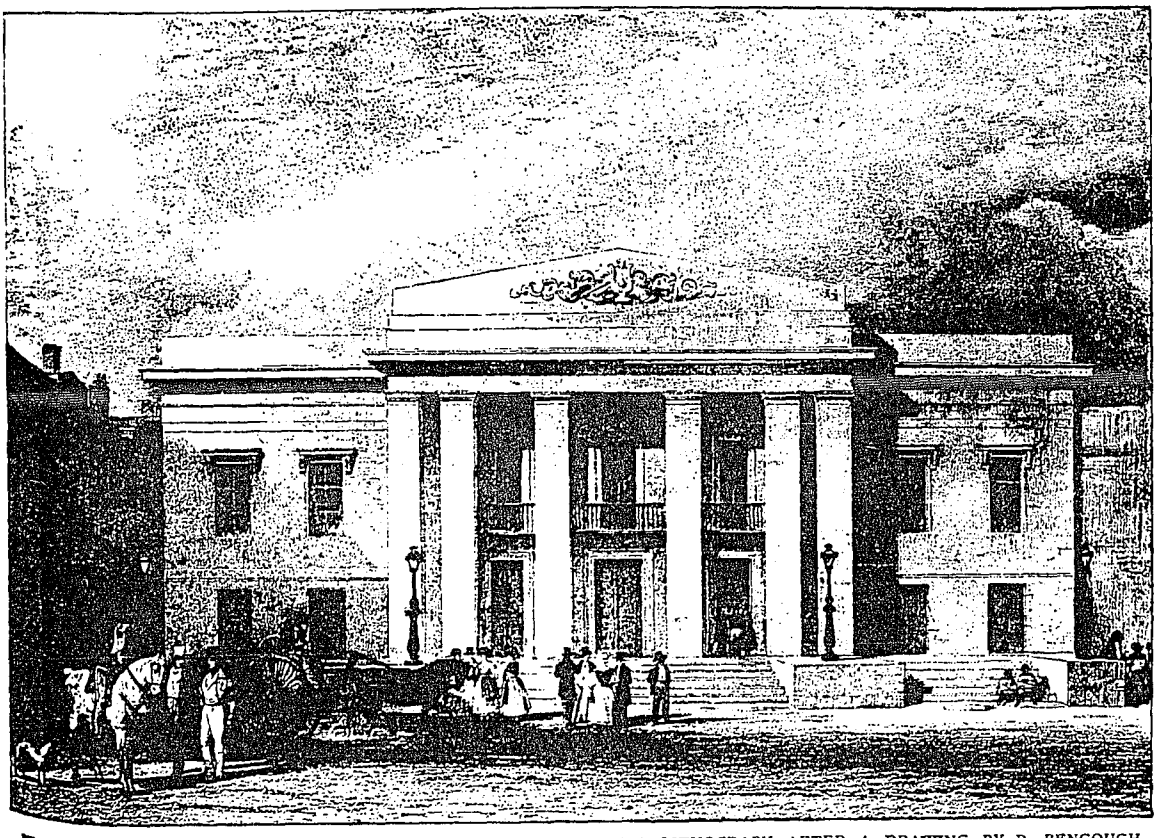
The obvious success of Elizabeth Austin in the late 1820s and early 1830s, and the even more pronounced triumphs of the Woods on their first visit from 1833 through 1836 had not gone unnoticed in the business offices of American theatres. As Francis Wemyss pointed out in the late 1840s, by the mid-1830s the successes of both Austin and the Woods had so thoroughly established English opera in the United States that the genre had become "essential to the success of a theatrical season." (Wemyss, 236) Managers had learned well that their audiences were ready and willing to pay good money for performances of English and "Englished" opera by top-notch vocal stars. And in the waning years of the decade, two managers in particular--James Wallack of New York's National Theatre, and Edmund Simpson of the Park--attempted to capitalize on this popularity. As a direct result of their competition, the rate of British vocal-star importation to the United States was greatly accelerated, and the level of overall operatic activity around the country during the years 1838, 1839, and 1840 considerably enhanced.[57]

Wallack (1794-1864) was a successful theatrical star, active in both Britain and the United States during the 1820s and 1830s; in 1837 he decided to try his hand at management. (Ireland, I:343) He took

57. By the 1830s theatrical supremacy of the East Coast had shifted from Philadelphia to New York; consequently, the managers most responsible for importing new stars from England were the individuals who ran the theatres of Manhattan.

over direction of the National Theatre (located at Leonard and Church Streets in New York) and for its reopening in September 1837 assembled a strong stock company. (Ireland, II:229) To help fill out the operatic division of this troupe (which eventually included, among others, the vocal stars Charlotte Watson, Antoinette Otto, Charles Horn, and Mary Ann Horton), Wallack recruited several new singers from London. (Lawrence, 40) The principal newcomers were the soprano Miss Turpin, the "late Prima Donna of the Covent Garden Theatre" and a fair singer (but one who would make little impact on the United States), and Henry Horncastle, a very respectable and successful buffo and formerly a singer at Drury Lane and the theatres of Dublin and Liverpool. (Odell, IV:211) Horncastle's impact on the American musical and theatrical scene was the opposite of Turpin's, for the buffo toured the United States widely as a vocal star from 1838 through 1840 and again in the 1850s as a member of a variety of English opera companies.[58] As manager, Wallack got the opera portion of his inaugural season (1837-38) off to a quick start; both of his new singers, along with Mr. Morley (a bass) and Antoinette Otto, performed in La Sonnambula on 2 September, the second night of the season. (Odell, IV:212) During the year the company gave a large number of performances of the usual repertory, including both older English works (Guy Mannering, The Poor Soldier, The Waterman, and The Devil's Bridge) and "newer" Italian ones (The Marriage of Figaro and La Sonnambula). (Lawrence, 40) In November the operatic spectacle The Two Figaros, a melange of music by Rossini and Mozart, was

58. During the 1850s Horncastle would be associated with the Nau English Opera Troupe (in 1854) and the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company (in 1855-56). For further information on Horncastle's activities from 1838-1840, see Chapter 2; for his activities with the Pyne and Harrison Company, see Chapter 6.



ITALIAN OPERA-HOUSE, AFTERWARD NATIONAL THEATER. FROM A LITHOGRAPH AFTER A DRAWING BY R. BENGOUGH. (FROM COLLECTION OF GEORGE P. ELDER, ESQ.)

James Wallack's National Theatre, formerly the Italian Opera House. Located at Leonard and Church Streets in Manhattan.

introduced; it enjoyed "great success." (Odell IV:219; Lawrence, 40)

Simpson (1784-1848), as manager of the Park Theatre--Wallack's competition--was not to be outdone. A scant two weeks into his company's 1837-38 season, he engaged a vocal-star troupe (consisting of William Brough, Charles Horn, and Mary Ann Horton; the latter two would shortly join Wallack's company) for several weeks of performances. (Odell, IV:191) Some New Yorkers had hoped that Simpson would be able to lure Mary Ann Wood back across the Atlantic, but this was not to happen for several more years. In lieu of Wood, the Park engaged a new vocal star, Maria Caradori Allan (1800-1865), a soprano who arrived in the United States with an established continental reputation; she was considered by many to be the equal of Wood. (Odell, IV:194; Ireland, II:218)

Allan was one of the more influential singers to appear in the United States during the period. Richard Grant White described her voice as a "delicious soprano of unusual compass"; according to one of her contemporaries, it was "sweet, but not strong, her knowledge of music very great, [and] her taste and style excellent, full of delicacy and expression."[59] Furthermore, she was a beautiful woman, with "large liquid blue eyes and golden hair, and a complexion of milk and roses." (White, II:865) Although White reported that she was more successful in the concert hall than on the operatic stage, her engagement at the Park was a triumph; Philip Hone, who attended her debut (as Rosina, in The

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59. White, "Opera in New York" Part II (April 1882), 865; Musical Reminiscences of an Old Amateur (London, 1827), quoted in White, II: 866.

Barber of Seville) on 31 October 1837, recorded in his diary that she was a "decided hit." (quoted in Lawrence, 15) In addition to the usual repertory, Allan also performed in two American premières, Michael William Balfe's The Siege of Rochelle (9 April 1838, with Brough, John Jones, Elizabeth Hughes, Peter Richings, and others), and The Elixir of Love, an adaptation of Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore (18 June 1838, with Jones, Hughes, Mr. Morley, and the actor Henry Placide). (Odell, IV:204, 208; Lawrence, 44) The latter production, which evidently included a jumble of pilfered numbers from Le Pré aux clercs (Hérold), Anna Bolena (Donizetti), and Maometto secondo, Otello, and Tancredi (Rossini), was very successful.[60] The English opera by Balfe, however, was a failure. Allan thereafter successfully toured the United States as a vocal star, performing in concerts and in operas with William Brough, Antoinette Otto, Elizabeth Hughes, John Jones, Charlotte Bailey, and others, and travelling as far afield (in a concert tour in 1839) as Louisville and St. Louis. She returned to London in July 1839. (MR, 16 February 1839, 380)

For his next season, James Wallack's response to Simpson's success

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60. Lawrence, 45; Odell IV:208. The following theatrical season (on 14 January 1839) Allan, along with Brough, Bailey, Hughes, and Jones, would participate in another American première--of the English version of La Gazza Ladra. (Odell, IV:282) The opera had first been heard in North American (in French) in New Orleans at the Théâtre d'Orléans (on 30 December 1828); the East Coast première, again in French, was by John Davis's French Opera Company of New Orleans in Philadelphia, on 30 December 1828. (See Belsom, 18) The North American première of the Italian version was by the Rivafinoli Company on 18 November 1833. Henry Bishop made two English adaptations of this opera, in 1830 and 1838. (See Lawrence, 57n). Vera Lawrence erroneously suggests that Caradori Allan's success at the Park Theatre during the 1837-1838 season was hampered by the unprecedented triumph of the vocal stars Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin at the National Theatre. This trio of stars did not arrive in the United States until the beginning of the 1838 season; they did have a deleterious effect on the fortunes of the Park theatre during the 1838-1839 season. (See Lawrence, 45; see also Chapter 2).

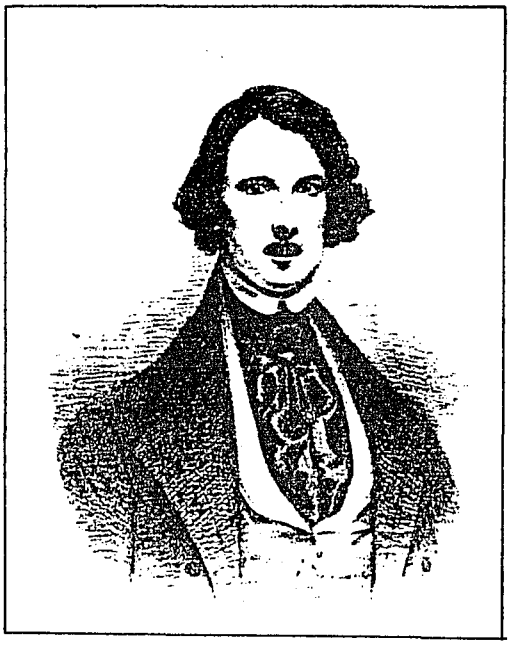
was to up the ante, and in the autumn of 1838 he imported even more--and better--vocal stars. On 18 September 1838 he introduced his first new celebrity, Giuseppe de Begnis (1795-1849), a native of Rome and the greatest buffo yet to appear on the American stage. (Ireland, II:275) Then, less than a month after the de Begnis debut, Wallack triumphantly raised the National Theatre curtain on a whole trio of vocal stars: Jane Shirreff, John Wilson, and Edward Seguin. The manager had recruited these three in the hope that they--and a new opera they brought from London (Michael Rooke's Amilie, or the Love Test)--could successfully lure New York audiences away from the Park and into his own house. His gamble paid off. The success of these three singers at his theatre (and elsewhere) during the 1838-39 season was unprecedented. The Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin vocal-star troupe was the triumph of the season at Wallack's National Theatre--and to make Wallack's victory over Simpson even more lopsided, the Park manager had no operatic novelties of his own with which to counteract the seemingly irresistible draw of the singers at the National. (Shirreff and Wilson are the subject of Chapter 2.)

Simpson was determined not to misjudge the public's seemingly ravenous appetite for opera two years in a row, and in the fall of 1839 he imported his own new vocal stars, a quintet of singers that included Charles T. Martyn, a baritone, his wife Mrs. Martyn (née Inverarity), a soprano, and the tenor Charles Manvers, all three from Covent Garden; Signor Theodore Victor Giubilei (1801-1845), a bass from Drury Lane; and--the surprise success of the company--a young contralto named Clara Poole. (Odell, IV:342) Simpson's stars chose for their debut performance









Top: The vocal stars Mrs. Charles Edward Horn (formerly Mary Ann Horton) and Charles Edward Horn.
Bottom: Maria Caradori-Allan, soprano, and Theodore Victor Giubilei, bass.

Fidelio (in English translation), an unfortunate choice, for the work puzzled both audiences and critics. Despite its unpopularity, however, the "serious and sometimes heavy" opera was performed for fourteen times before the company moved on to more familiar fare, which included (over the course of several engagements) Cinderella, La Sonnambula, La Gazza Ladra, The Love Spell, Guy Mannering, Rob Roy, and other works.[61] To the dismay of Edmund Simpson, however, his new vocal-star troupe did not begin to duplicate the success that Wallack's singers had enjoyed at the National Theatre during the previous season.

As a result of this spate of activity, within a single year (autumn 1838 to fall 1839) the managers of New York's two dominant theatres, the Park and the National, were responsible for introducing ten new vocalists to the American public. Wallack's five singers (de Begnis, Shirreff, Wilson, Seguin, and Seguin's wife Anne) all arrived in 1838, Simpson's five (Martyn and his wife, Manvers, Poole, and Giubilei) in 1839. The long-term American success of Simpson's singers (and hence their overall impact on American musical culture) was varied. Although Mrs. Martyn was a favorite artist in Britain, by the time she came to the United States her voice was worn and her success as a consequence was limited. Her husband was barely tolerated in New York; both returned to England in the fall of 1840. (Ireland, II:298; Odell, IV:342) Clara Poole arrived as an unknown and as a subordinate to Martyn, and her success with the New York and Philadelphia public was a surprise. (Ireland, II:299; Odell, IV:342) She was described in the New

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61. Corsair, 14 September 1839, 426, quoted in Lawrence, 59; Odell IV:343.

York press as "a lively, plump, pretty little actress, [with] a strong, musical [contralto] voice, as clear as crystal." (Evening Star, 10 September 1839, quoted in Lawrence, 59) After the break-up of the 1839-40 Park Theatre troupe, she performed during the following theatrical season (in New York and Philadelphia) with the Seguins, Giubilei, and Manvers; her final American appearance was in April 1841. (Ireland, II:299) Giubilei (1801-1845), a native of London despite his Italianate name, was a skilled actor and an accomplished bass singer who also apparently left the United States after the 1840-41 season. (Ireland, II:299; Lawrence, 60) During his second season in North America, however, he performed widely, appearing--at different times--with Shirreff and Wilson, and with the Seguins. Charles Manvers, unlike the three co-stars of his Park Theatre troupe, remained in the United States for a lengthy period--until 1851; he travelled as a vocal star for a short period of time, then sang in a number of English opera companies (including his own troupe, which toured from 1848 through 1851). (For additional information about Manvers, see Chapter 5.)

Two of Wallack's singers (Shirreff and Wilson) likewise left the United States within two years of their arrival. The other three, however, remained here until their deaths, and played important roles in the development of opera in this country. The activities of the Seguins are discussed in detail in Chapter 5; de Begnis, however, merits additional mention here. According to Richard White, he was "indisputably the great buffo of his time"; the same authority reported that he remained in the United States only because of his terror of the ocean. "The voyage over here," explained White, "filled him with such fear that he never returned [to Europe]." (White, II:873-874) De Begnis

travelled widely as a vocal star, performing at different times with Jane Shirreff, John Wilson, the Seguins, Charlotte Bailey, Charles Manvers, Clara Poole, William Brough, Charles Horn, Henry Horncastle, Theodore Giubilei, and Joseph and Mary Ann Wood (during their second visit to the United States). He also managed and sang with an Italian Opera Company at Palmo's Opera House in New York in 1844 (see Chapter 3) and with the Anna Bishop English Opera Company in 1847 (see Chapter 5). His influence on the cultivation of opera in the United States was significant, and it continued undiminished until his death by cholera in New York in 1849.

The increased number of stellar vocalists active in the United States in 1838, 1839, and 1840 clearly indicates the growing popularity of opera among American audiences. The very presence of these vocalists and the sheer numbers of their numerous concert and opera performances in the 1838-40 period and afterwards had a stimulating effect on the development of American musical culture. Viewed together, this cluster of singers, some of whom continued to perform in the United States until the early 1850s, represent the final large influx en masse of British vocal stars in the nineteenth century. For in the next decade, a nationwide economic slump (caused by a shortage of currency in the United States and a depression in Europe, and first manifested in the Panic of 1837) would close American theatres all over the country, throwing actors, orchestra musicians, and singers out of work, and discouraging many British stars who otherwise might have entertained the notion of travelling to the United States in pursuit of fame and fortune. By the time the nation's theatres recovered from effects of the Panic, the heyday of vocal-star troupes was past; by

1847, Italian opera companies were in the ascendant, and the performance of English opera in North America was in the hands of full-fledged English opera companies.

Solid information about the careers of these vocal stars--especially those who were "journeymen" singers--is extremely difficult to unearth. Their names pop up in secondary sources (notably in studies of the history of music or the theatre in particular American cities) and in primary sources such as playbills or music and theatre periodicals. Only by adding up all these isolated bits of information, and then patiently sorting through the resulting tangled web, can one begin to understand just how active these singers were, how their careers constantly converged and diverged, how frequently they performed, and how widely they traveled. But even this information, painstakingly assembled, gives only the bare bones of an itinerary--which then must be fleshed out by extensive additional detective work, primarily in newspaper files.

In order to understand the true place of vocal-star troupes in American life of the 1820s and 1830s, it would be helpful to have a detailed picture of the extent of their activities, but the task appears almost impossible. A thorough examination of one such troupe, however--that of Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, during their twenty-month American visit--may provide a sound compromise.

Chapter 2: Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, Vocal Stars. 1838-1840

During the summer of 1838 James Wallack sent his older brother Henry (his former stage manager) to London to undertake the serious task of recruiting "stars" for the 1838-39 season. (Odell, IV:212, 290) The younger Wallack, a well-known actor and former star of the Park Theatre, had taken over management of the National the previous year. The theatre was not a new one. Ironically--especially in view of the repertory that Wallack was destined to offer during his second season--it was the old Italian Opera House, which had been constructed largely through the efforts of Lorenzo da Ponte and had opened in 1833 with a lengthy run of performances by the Italian opera company of Cavaliere Rivafinoli.[1] After the ultimate failure of that troupe, the house had fallen on hard times, for it was situated in an inconvenient and poor neighborhood. (Brown, 1:240-241) When Wallack took over in 1837 his aim was to turn around the fortunes of the theatre and, incidentally, to offer stiff competition to the Park, the dominant theatre in New York since the beginning of the century. To almost everyone's astonishment, Wallack managed to do just that, in part by assembling a stock company "so full and effective in every department"

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1. Giovanni Ermenegildo Schiavo, Italian-American History. Volume I: Italian Music and Musicians in America (New York: Vigo Press, 1947), 50, 54; see also Chapter 3.



Map of lower Manhattan, 1844. Wallack's National Theatre was located at Church and Leonard Streets (upper center). The Park Theatre was located on Park Row, about two hundred feet east of Ann Street (dead center).

that its equal "had never before been gathered together in New York."[2] Fresh on the heels of his first successful theatrical campaign, Wallack, in the summer of 1838, was eager to import from London strong reinforcements for his new season. His brother's task was fairly clear-cut: he was to find some stars who were successful (and might therefore bring continued success to the National), and somehow lure them to the United States.

It is unlikely that Wallack gave his brother specific instructions about the type of performers he should engage. And Henry, of course, did not limit his perusal of the theatrical field to actors and actresses. Well-known dancers and opera stars were also fair game--especially the latter, for as was mentioned in Chapter 1, opera had functioned as an important part of the National's repertory during its première season. Besides, as veteran actors on the American stage, both of the Wallacks were quite familiar with both operatic performers and opera productions by vocal-star troupes and stock companies alike.[3] It should not be surprising, then, that in the summer of 1839 a pair of opera singers--and a new and popular opera--attracted Wallack's attention.

The previous December two favorite and well-known English singers, Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, had created major roles in the Covent

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2. Ireland, II:229. The critic for The Knickerbocker called Wallack's troupe "the best stock company in the United States." The Knickerbocker, October 1838, 381.

3. Both Henry and James had made their American debuts twenty years earlier, in 1818. See Ireland, I:341, 375.

Garden première of the three-act opera Amilie, or the Love Test, by William Michael Rooke.[4] The opera had been praised in the London musical press for having "much pleasing melody" and orchestral accompaniments that were "full and appropriate"; the reviewer for the London Musical World, who admitted attending the performance with low expectations, had pronounced Amilie "one of the most successful works that has been produced since the young days of Mr. [Henry Rowley] Bishop."[5] The opera likewise had met with decided audience approval--which presumably piqued the interest of Wallack, on the prowl for audience-pleasing performers and theatrical fare.

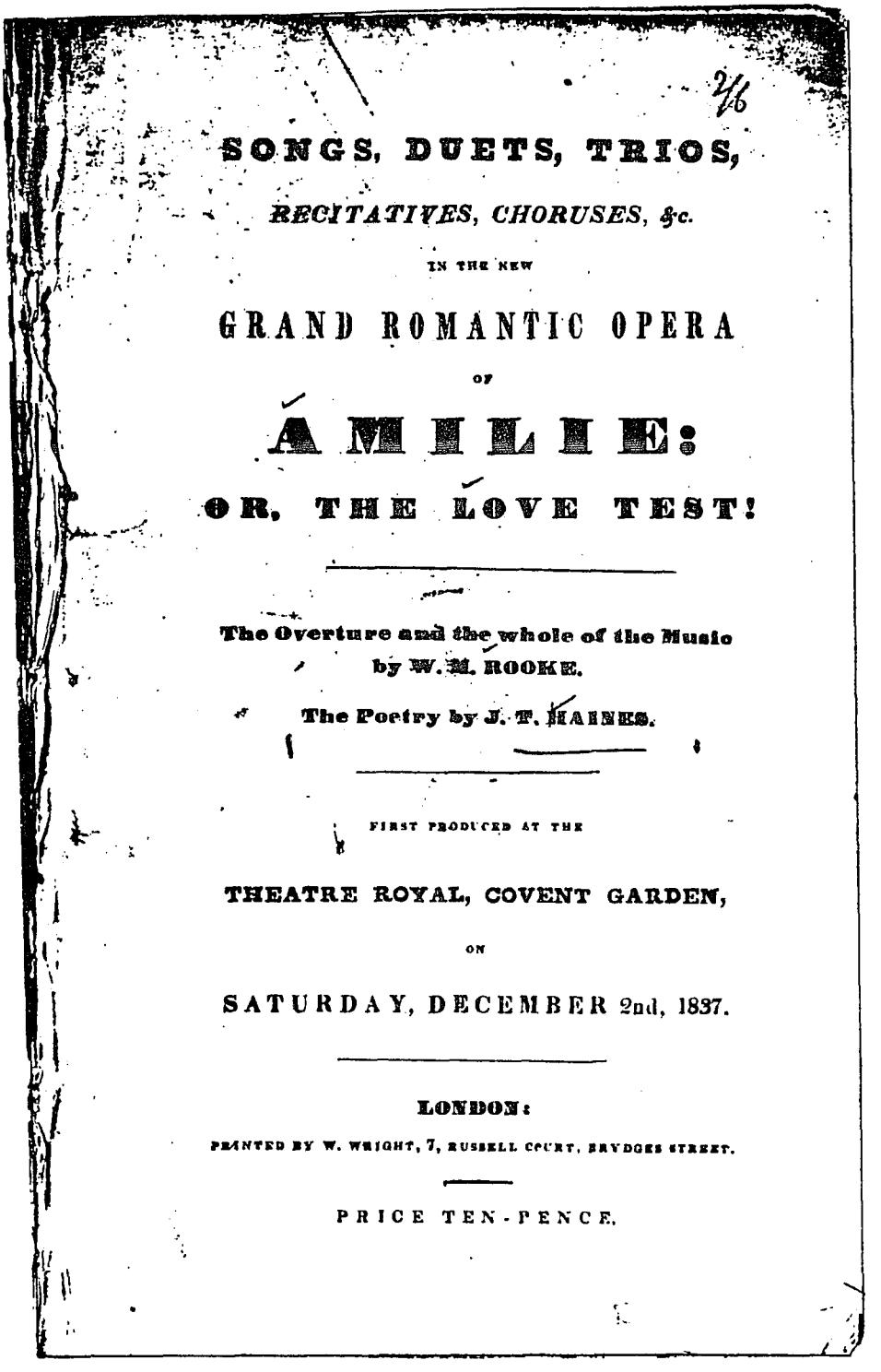
After some inquiries, Wallack learned that Wilson and Shirreff were amenable to an American tour. The third star of the opera, Henry Phillips, either was not asked or could not be convinced to make the crossing.[6] For a while, in fact, it looked as if the National's management was satisfied with only two new star singers, for The Musical

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4. William Michael Rooke (1794-1847), an Irish composer and violinist, is best known as the teacher of the British opera composer Michael William Balfe. Rooke was a well-known theatre musician first in Dublin and later in London; he served as chorus master at Drury Lane and orchestra leader under Bishop at Vauxhall Gardens in the 1830s. Amilie, Rooke's first opera, had been composed in 1818, so it was not new at the time of its première, which took place on 9 December 1837. See H. W. Husk/W. H. Grattan Flood, "Rooke," in NG, and The Athenaeum of 9 December 1837, 900.

5. Athenaeum, 9 December 1837, 900; Musical World (hereafter referred to as MW), 8 December 1837, 203; Husk/Flood, NG, 182.

6. Phillips made a concert tour of the United States in 1844, which he detailed in his memoirs. See Phillips, Musical and Personal Recollections, London, 1864. The Athenaeum review of the première performance of Amilie also mentions two other singers who later toured the United States, Charles Manvers and Joseph Stretton. Manvers, as we saw in Chapter 1, was among the troupe of vocalists recruited by Edmund Simpson of the Park Theatre for his 1839-1840 season; for additional information about him, see Chapter 5. About Stretton, see Chapters 5 and 6. The Athenaeum, 9 December 1837, 900.



SONGS, DUETS, TRIOS,

RECITATIVES, CHORUSES, &c.

IN THE NEW

GRAND ROMANTIC OPERA

OF

AMILIE:

OR, THE LOVE TEST!

The Overture and the whole of the Music by W. M. ROOKE.

The Poetry by J. T. HAINES.

FIRST PRODUCED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN,

ON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2nd, 1837.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. WRIGHT, 7, RUSSELL COURT, DRURY LANE STREET.

PRICE TEN-PENCE.

Libretto to Michael Rooke's Amilie, or the Love Test, from the Covent Garden production in January 1837.

Review announced to its readers in the early autumn that "a fine operatic corps, among whom are Miss Shirreff and Mr. Wilson, English vocalists, have been engaged for the [National] Theatre." (MR, 15 September 1838, 203) By late summer, however, Wallack had snared another eminently suitable Covent Garden vocalist to take Phillips's place--the bass Arthur Edward Seguin. Seguin, furthermore, brought along yet a fourth vocalist: his wife Anne, a soprano who was not part of the original trio hired by Wallack but who, after her American debut in February, would play an important role in the history of opera performances by vocal-star troupes in the United States.

The newly recruited singers arrived in New York during September and October 1838. Shirreff and her mother, together with John Wilson and his wife Mary, all landed on 24 September. They had crossed on the steamship Great Western, encountering "continual squalls and heavy weather" on their sixteen-day trip. (New York Daily Express, 25 September 1838) Some two weeks later, "Mr. Seguine [sic], Lady, 3 children, and servant" disembarked from the packet ship Samson, which had left London on the first of September. (Daily Express, 9 October 1838) The arrival of the National's new stars and their impending appearance at the theatre was quietly announced in the New York daily newspapers shortly before their scheduled debut performance at the National in the middle of October. (New-York American, 10 October 1838)

Wallack's three vocal stars have been almost completely forgotten today. Their operatic and concert performances during the 1838-39 and 1839-40 seasons, however, created much more than a minor musical and

theatrical furor in this country. The three--and in particular Jane Shirreff--became great American favorites. According to the theatre historian Joseph Ireland (writing in the mid-1860s), the soprano was America's "most admired English prima donna between the days of Mrs. Wood and those of Louisa Pyne."[7] She and Wilson remained in North America for more than a year and a half, travelling and performing throughout the eastern half of the continent before returning to England in the spring of 1840. Shirreff toured as a member of several vocal-star troupes and, in the company of Wilson, as a concert artist, giving vocal concerts in both small towns and large cities in an area bounded by Detroit to the west, Montreal to the north, and Savannah to the south. Her activities during her sojourn in this country are typical of the pattern followed by many vocal stars during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, and this chapter will focus on her experiences. There is a particularly compelling reason for choosing her tour as a prototype (rather than one of, for example, Elizabeth Austin or Joseph and Mary Ann Wood): she left a remarkable collection of materials that document her stay in the United States. These make possible a detailed account of her activity, including her itinerary, repertory, financial remuneration, and reception by and reaction to American audiences--a perfect illustration of the activities of dozens of other English vocal stars and vocal-star troupes who toured the United States during this period.[8]

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7. Ireland, II:276. For more about Wood, see Chapter 1; about Pyne, see Chapter 6.

8. Jane Shirreff Collection, TC/NN. The library is unable to supply any information concerning the provenance of this collection.

The Characters

Because of the fascination that many early nineteenth-century Americans had with theatrical goings-on in London, managers in this country made sure to publicize any connections their visiting celebrities had with the London theatre. And as "stars of the London stage," all of Wallack's new singers had excellent credentials. Jane Shirreff (1811-1883) had made an auspicious debut at Covent Garden in December of 1831, and from then until her arrival in the United States she sang regularly either there or at Drury Lane. She also had appeared with the Concerts of Antient Music, the Philharmonic Concerts, and at various provincial festivals.[9] A soprano, she possessed perfect intonation and a voice that was full-toned and powerful; one reviewer described her upper notes as "clear and bell-like"; another wrote that her voice was "clear, full, and bird-like."[10] Shirreff also was a superior actress, and in this area she outclassed her predecessor, Mary Ann Wood. Miss Shirreff, wrote the critic for the Boston Morning Post

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9. At Covent Garden, for example, she appeared as Isabel in that theatre's première of Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable, as adapted and translated by Michael Rophino Lacy (1832); as the page Oscar in the London première of Auber's Gustavus III (1833); as Zerlina in Mozart's Don Giovanni (1834), and in Hérold's Le Pre aux Clercs (1834) and Auber's Lestocq (1835) both as adapted by Thomas Cooke. During this time she performed with a surprising number of other Covent Garden singers who, at one time or another, would appear in the United States--including Miss Inverarity (who would appear at the Park in 1839 as Mrs. Martyn), Thomas Reynoldson, John Braham, Henry Phillips, Theodore Victor Giubilei, and William Harrison. See Harold Rosenthal, Two Centuries of Opera at Covent Garden (London: Putnam, 1958), 40, 42, 46-50. For more about Harrison's tour of the United States in an opera company with Louisa Pyne, see Chapter 6.

10. Husk, Grove, 1898, vol. 3:483; Stephen S. Stratton and James D. Brown, British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors, and Composers Born in Britain and Its Colonies (Birmingham: Stratton, 1897; reprint New York: Da Capo, 1971); Boston Morning Post, 7 November 1838; Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470.



MISS SHIREFF, OF COVENT GARDEN THEATER. (FROM A STEEL ENGRAVING AFTER A DRAWING BY A. WIVELL. FROM THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS J. MCKEE, ESQ.)

Jane Shirreff of Covent Garden Theatre, London, and the National Theatre, New York.

shortly after her debut in that city, "has not the wonderful volume and richness of sound of Mrs. Wood, but in every other respect she is, as an actress, incomparably her superior."[11] Others similarly praised her skills as a performer. In a review following the troupe's debut performance in New York the critic for a Manhattan daily informed his readers that "Miss Shirreff . . . is a finely formed woman, with an expressive eye--and an admirable theatrical face. But more than form, color, or complexion--she has soul, heart, mind, intellect, and genius in her music and style of acting." (New York Morning Herald, 15 October 1838) The critic for the Knickerbocker described her acting as "natural and graceful," and a reviewer wrote in the Philadelphia National Gazette that she "possesses an interesting face and figure, a fine, well disciplined voice and taste, and a racy and delightful appreciation of the character she represented" (Amina, in La Sonnambula). (National Gazette quoted in MR, 19 January 1839) According to Joseph Ireland, Shirreff "fairly bewitched half the young men of the city by her engaging naîveté of manner." (Ireland, II:277) This was a decidedly appealing and marketable quality; a critic for a Philadelphia newspaper described the "naivete and . . . earnestness about her representation of the character" of Amilie, and his counterpart at the Boston Morning Post commented on her "unembarrassed and graceful" motions and her "simple and naive" manner. (Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, 21 January

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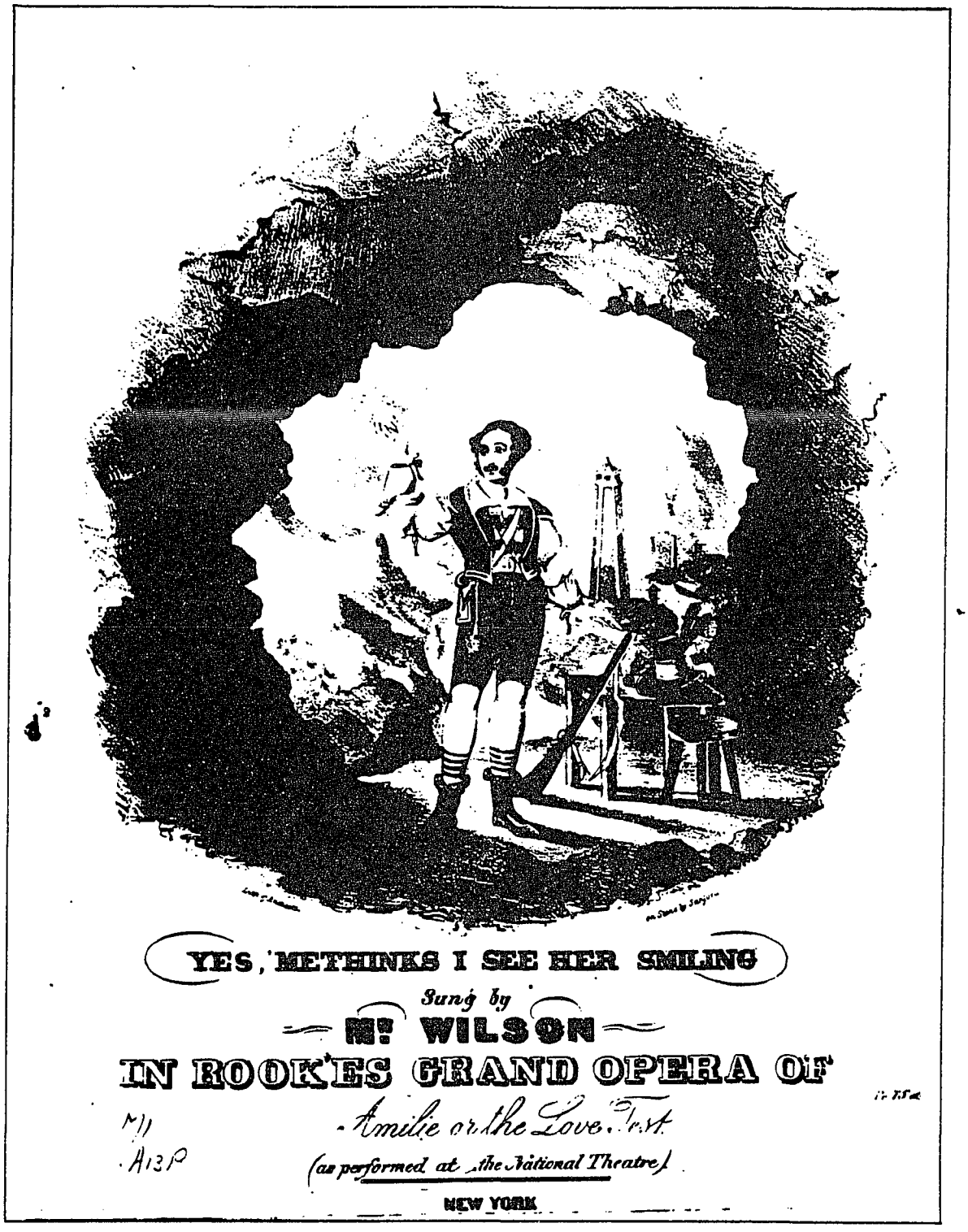
11. Boston Morning Post, 26 November 1838. William Armstrong, writing forty-five years after the fact, disagreed, claiming that Shirreff was "young and good looking, had an agreeable voice, and sang well," but that she "could not be compared with Mrs. Wood as an artist." See Armstrong, 45.

1839; Boston Morning Post, 26 November 1838) This very artlessness was an important part of the image that Shirreff wished to convey, and the fact that American critics frequently commented on her "modest demeanor," and the "purity of her life" and pointed out that she enjoyed an "unblemished reputation in private life" contributed in no small measure to her success with an American public still somewhat suspicious of the morality of women on the stage.[12] After twenty successful months in North America, Jane Shirreff returned to London, married, and retired from professional life.

For the duration of her stay on this continent, Shirreff travelled and performed with John Wilson. The older singer apparently regarded the soprano as his protégée; he looked after her interests and managed

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12. The Corsair, 16 May 1839, 13; Boston Morning Post, 7 November 1838. The earnest cultivation of an image of moral purity was something to which many prima donnas and actresses paid close attention, for the American theatrical public could be damning in its condemnation of those who did not live up to its high standards. Francis Wemyss, for example, relates that during Elizabeth Austin's first engagement in Philadelphia in 1828 no women were in the audience, because of an "unmanly attack" on the soprano's morals (concerning the propriety of her relationship with F. H. F. Berkeley) in a local newspaper prior to her arrival in Pennsylvania. (Wemyss, 135) Ten years later, the actress and singer Eliza Vestris (1797-1856), who married her lover Charles Mathews (rather belatedly) just before their arrival in America, suffered for not measuring up to what Vera Lawrence calls "the rigid standards of morality exacted from theatre folk by an aggressively bigoted American public." The American engagement of the Mathews couple was disastrous, and they returned to England somewhat bitter about their failure here. (See Lawrence, 47 and Odell, IV:272-273) This American tendency to judge women performers on the basis of private morality was still an issue as late as 1850; Jenny Lind paid such careful attention to the cultivation of her image during her American tour of 1850-52 that "she became something of a symbol" in the popular mind. ("Lind, Jenny," William Brooks, AG) That Americans by this time were slowly becoming more tolerant of the private lives of their Female performers, however, is suggested by the professional triumph of the English soprano Anna Bishop, who seems to have suffered no audience repercussions when she arrived here in 1847, despite open knowledge that she had abandoned her husband and children to travel and perform with her lover, Nicholas Bochsa. (See also Chapter 5.)



John Wilson in Amilie, as portrayed in a sheet-music engraving for one of the arias. Notice the Tyrolean costumes and set for the opera.

her financial affairs throughout the tour.[13] As a well-known performer in his own right, Wilson (1801-1849) was eminently qualified to act as Shirreff's protector and mentor. A tenor of Scottish birth, he first appeared in concerts and opera in Edinburgh; after his operatic debut in 1830, he sang in English opera at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane, where he performed with Shirreff, both of the Seguins, and many others. (Stratton, 452) He was described in 1866 as of "fine, open, [and] manly countenance"; his voice was "pure, sweet, vigorous, and highly cultivated" as well "clear, rich, and fresh."[14] Wilson took advantage of the craze for national song and made himself into one of the most successful Scottish singers in the nineteenth century: he travelled extensively on the concert circuit, giving "Songs of Scotland" entertainments, and in 1842 published Wilson's Edition of the Songs of Scotland, a two-volume compendium of piano-vocal arrangements of traditional Scottish tunes.[15] Like Shirreff, he remained in the United States for twenty months. He returned to North America for a second tour in 1849 but was stricken with cholera while performing in Quebec City and died there on 9 July 1849. (Stratton; Quebec Gazette, 9 July 1849)

Edward and Anne Seguin commenced their American careers in the company of Shirreff and Wilson--Mr. Seguin in October 1838, Mrs. Seguin

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13. In his study of the history of opera in Philadelphia John Curtis states that during this North American tour Wilson regarded Shirreff as his ward. See Curtis, 249.

14. Ireland, II:278; Stratton, 452; last quote about his voice is from the Philadelphia National Gazette, 15 January 1839.

15. London: Printed for Mr. Wilson, 47 Gower Street, n.d. See the illustration on page 187.

in February 1839. Like their fellow-performers, both Seguins were well known to the London opera-going public before their arrival in the States. Arthur Edward Seguin (1809-1852) had begun his singing career in London in 1828. A product of the Royal Academy of Music, he had a deep rich bass voice of extensive compass and precise intonation, and was considered a superlative actor. After his debut in Boston in November 1838, the critic for the Boston Morning Post waxed rhapsodic: "The moment Mr. Seguin opened his mouth," he wrote,

> the corresponding feature of his auditory assumed the same appearance; one universal gape seemed to infect all; such was the astonishment produced by his magnificent organ.

Seguin, whose voice was a "pure, legitimate and ponderous bass, of large and even quality" was, according to this critic, "beyond all comparison, the finest singer of his class we have yet heard in America." (Boston Morning Post, 7 November 1838) Stephen Massett, writing in 1863, also remembered the strong impression that Seguin made when he first appeared in this country. The actor described the dress rehearsal at the National Theatre for Amilie before that opera's première. "The stage was lighted up, and chairs were placed for the 'principals'," he wrote,

> and when the time came for the aria "My boyhood's home," on walked Mr. Seguin, in his rough pea jacket, as if just from sea, and with his magnificent voice charmed every one present by the rendering of this popular melody. (Massett, 25)

Before immigrating to the United States in 1838, Seguin had fashioned a highly successful career on the London stage, where he sang





Edward and Anne Childe Seguin

at Covent Garden, Drury Lane, the King's Theatre, and the English Opera House; he also performed with the Concerts of Antient Music and at various festivals.[16] Anne Childe Seguin (1814-1888), a soprano, also received her musical training at the Royal Academy; she sang at Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Concerts of Antient Music, and performed with both Malibran and Grisi at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket.[17] Although Mrs. Seguin did not elicit such universally laudatory praise for her voice as did Austin, Wood, or Shirreff, she was described as a "pleasing and accomplished singer" and as a "correct" and "very beautiful musician"; Americans, according to Nicholas Tawa, found her "handsome, graceful, and vivacious, as well as an accomplished actress." (Spirit, 17 February 1844; Mirror, 30 April 1842, 87; Tawa, AG) After the Seguins concluded their various engagements with James Wallack following 1840, they formed the Seguin Opera Company, a vocal-star troupe that travelled and performed English opera throughout the eastern, midwestern, and southern United States until shortly before Edward Seguin's death in 1852.[18] The Seguins played an important role in the performance and cultivation of English opera in this country during the 1840s; for more information about their later careers, see Chapter 5.

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16. Nicholas Tawa, "Seguin," AG; Husk, "Seguin," Grove (1911).

17. New York Times obituary, 25 August 1888; Tawa, AG; Husk, Grove. Tawa describes Seguin's voice as a soprano; Odell states that she had "a contralto voice of superb quality, produced with all the elegance and finish of the English school"; she seems, however, to have sung primarily soprano roles. See Odell, IV:297.

18. In England Mr. Seguin was known as Arthur; in the United States he adopted his middle name, Edward. See Tawa, AG.

Amilie in New York

The Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe made its debut performance at the National Theatre in New York in precisely the opera that had caught Henry Wallack's eye in London--Rooke's Amilie, or the Love Test. The National's manager spared no expense and neglected no detail in mounting the work. The theatre, in fact, was closed on Saturday evening, 13 October, "in consequence of the preparations for the grand new opera." (This was the dress rehearsal at which Seguin's singing was described by Massett.) (New-York American, 12 October 1838) Amilie opened on Monday 15 October with new scenery and costumes, a chorus of over two dozen stock-company singers, and an "expanded" orchestra under the direction of William Penson, formerly the orchestra leader at the Park.

The Wallacks had gauged their public well, for the opera was a success with New York audiences from the very beginning. The critic from the New York Morning Herald, after experiencing the rush of opening night, wrote:

> Last night we attempted to get a peep into the National Theatre, but such was the crowd, the thing was utterly impossible. So popular is the Opera--so popular the prima donna--the tenor--the bass--the all, that we know not when we can have a chance of seeing it. (New York Morning Herald, 16 October 1838)

Subsequent enthusiasm was no less marked. According to the Knickerbocker, audiences crowded the National "nightly, from pit to gallery"; they also made the theatre "resound with round after round of the most enthusiastic applause." (Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470)

The same critic noted that the performance was "unmarked by a single blemish," and Joseph Ireland later described the success of Amilie as "brilliant in the extreme." (Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470; Ireland, II:276) All three stars were soundly praised in the press, as were Wallack's stock players, who sang in numerous "delightful and spirited choruses [that] . . . were admirably given." (Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470) Secondary roles were taken by several of the National's better singers, including Henry Horncastle (the buffo Wallack had imported the previous year), W. H. Williams, Andrew Andrews, and Mrs. William Penson, wife of the orchestra leader.[19] Amilie was so successful that it ran for the entire duration of the troupe's initial two-week engagement at the National--fourteen evenings in all.[20] Also part of each performance was a farce (given by the stock company) that changed nightly. In addition, the theatre orchestra played an instrumental composition (often an operatic overture) between the two dramatic works.

The author of the opera's text was one John Thomas Haines, who wrote the libretti for both of Rooke's operas. The story, in the words of a London critic, "consists in a young girl remaining faithful to her lover through the persecutions and machinations of a rejected suitor,"

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19. Odell, IV:292-293; Andrew Andrews was a well-known singing actor and light comedian who would later be a member of companies at the Park, Barnum's Museum, and Burton's Theatre. See Ireland, II:242.

20. A week's engagement consisted of six performances, one every evening, excluding Sundays. The singers' two extra performances (on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 30 and 31) were emergency duty; the opera troupe filled in for Wallack when the star of the subsequent engagement (ballet star Mlle. Josephine Stephan) suffered an injury on the first night of her run. Playbills, National Theatre, 30-31 October 1838, Shirreff Collection.

hence the subtitle "Love Test." The young woman, Amilie, is rewarded by being reunited with her lover at the end of the third act.[21] Although the opera is in the English style (with dialogue rather than sung recitative), the critic for the Knickerbocker pointed out that in fact it had very little spoken dialogue.[22] The musical numbers include arias and (short) recitatives, ensemble works (duos, trios, and--at least by description--some fairly complex finales), choruses (described as "some of the most delightful and spirited . . . we ever heard wreaked upon music"), and a potpourri overture.[23] The critic of the Athenaeum praised Rooke's orchestral writing, and suggested that the composer had

> taken the benefit of his situation, as a member of the [London] Philharmonic orchestra--but . . . only in the most legitimate way; he has enriched his mind, but brought away nothing which belonged to another. (Athenaeum, 9 December 1837, 900)

Amilie is set in the mountains of Switzerland, and Rooke filled it with fetching folk-like melodies. According to a critic of the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, the opera's popularity "in London and New York, where it has met with decided and prolonged success," could be

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21. Musical World (London), 8 December 1837, 203; "The Opera of Amilie," Boston Morning Post, 7 November 1838.

22. Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470. The Library of Congress has a bound piano-vocal score of Amilie, but it was being microfilmed during the course of this research and was unavailable for examination. A detailed description of the plot and musical numbers can be found in the article about the opera in the Boston Morning Post cited above, and numerous individual sheet-music selections from the work (ten arias, several with recitatives, one chorus, and the overture) and several copies of the opera's libretto are in the collection of the Music Division, DLC.

23. Knickerbocker, November 1838, 470. See illustration on page 100 for a list of the musical numbers in the opera.

THIS EVENING, Dec. 31, 1838.

Will be performed, (1st time in Baltimore,) the celebrated *New Opera* of

AMILIE OR, THE LOVE TEST.

The Music composed by W. M. Rooke, Esq.—with New Scenery, Costumes, Properties, and Machinery. The Musical department under the direction of Mr. Duggan. A period of *six months* is supposed to elapse between each Act.

Gen. Count Von Der Teimer, (in the Austrian service.) } Mr. SEGUIN, from the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Italian Opera, &c his first appearance in Baltimore.

Jose Speckbacker, (a Chamois Hunter, his original character,) } Mr. WILSON, from the Theatres Royal. Drury Lane and Convent Garden, his first appearance in Baltimore.

Anderl Brenner, (distinguished as a Gipsey,) } Mr. HORNCASTLE.

Amelie, (her original character,) Miss SHIRREFF, from the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Convent Garden, her first appearance in Baltimore.

In the course of the Opera, the following pieces of Music.

ACT FIRST.

Chorus—"Come gather, brave hunters."
Solo—Jose—The bold hunter's mirth.
Recitative & Air—Jose & Chorus—The ice clad Alp.
Hymn to the Dead—Amilie & Chorus—Rest, spirit, rest.
Grand Scena—Amilie—Oh, love art thou true?
Song—Leda—to the vine least.
Recitative and Air—Count—My boyhood's home.
Finale to Act 1—Amilie, Jose and Count—Oh fatal chance.
Chorus—Down with the hunters.
Count—Cease this anger.
Trio—Amilie, Count & Jose—Beware that hour.
Jose—See this letter.
Amilie—I dare not break thee, ruby seal.
Chorus—Mark her eye, it is love's message.
Amilie and Chorus—Oh happy day.

ACT SECOND.

Scena, Recitative—Jose—By passion tossed.
Duett—Pierre & Jose—What juggling fiend.
Air—Jose—Time thou cheat of human bliss.
Chorus of hunters—To the mountain.
Song—Count—What is the spell.
Recitative & Air—Amilie—When the morning.
Finale to Act 2.—Solo—Oh hour of grief.
Duett—Oh fatal day.
Solo—Cold, icy clad.
Chorus—Madness hath fallen on her brain.
Count—Curse the traitor.

ACT THIRD.

Chorus of Gipsies—Tarry not, brother.
Recitative and Air—Anderl—Under the tree.
Air—Amillie—Oh! I remember.
Trio—Jose, Count and Paul—Dare the foe invade our land.
Finale—Quartette—Farewell, Oh thou world.
Solo—Jose—Distraction, thus rejected.
Solo—Amilie—Oh men! Oh brave.
Solo—Count—Forbear, hold man.
Quintette—Principals—To this heart.
Amilie and Chorus—Joy! Joy!

To conclude with the Interlude of

SUDDEN THOUGHTS, or, Fashionable Society.

The Box Plans will remain at Mr. Robinson's Library until Monday, where places may be taken for any and every night of the Week,—and on Monday, at 10 o'clock, the Box Office will open, and places may be secured there as usual.

On Tuesday evening, the admired and popular opera of **LA SONNAMBULA.**
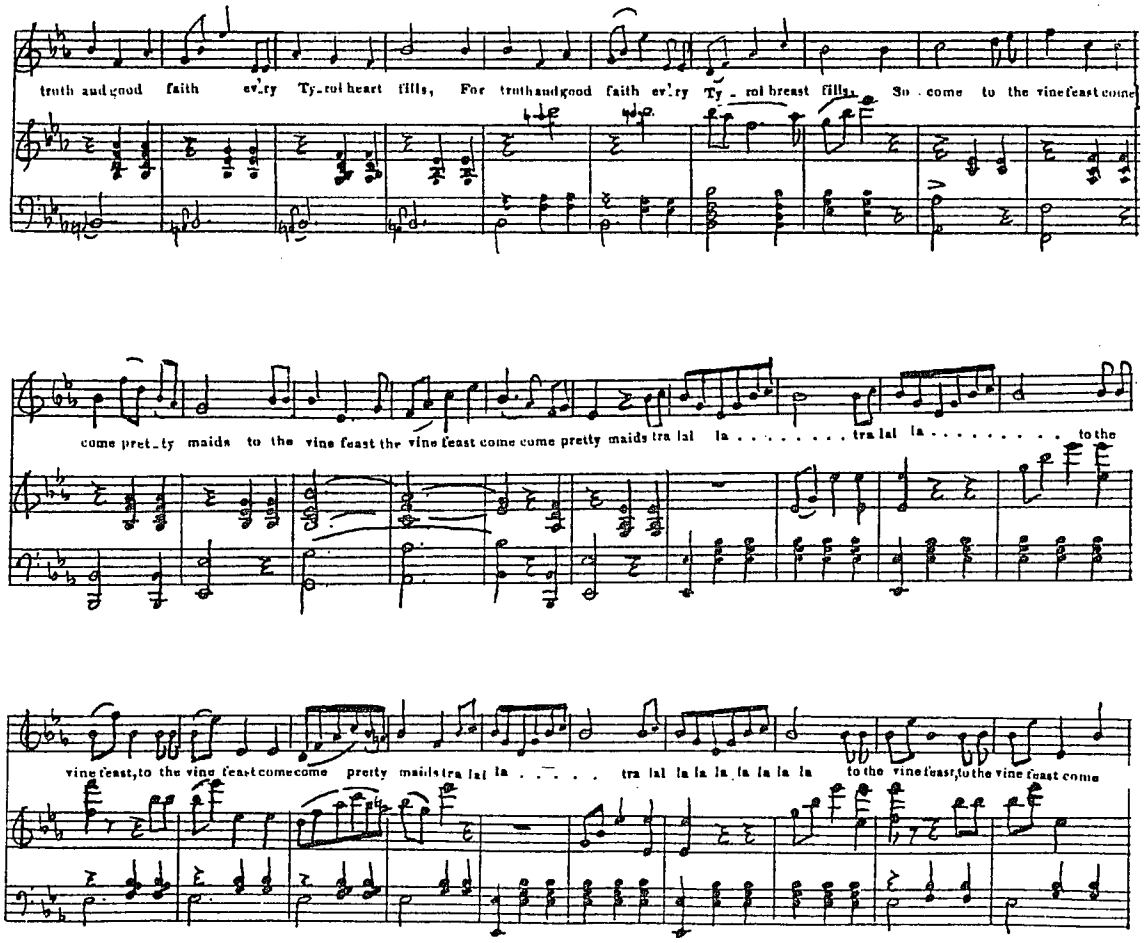
Amina, Miss SHIRREFF; Elvino, Mr. WILSON; Count Rodolpho, Mr. SEGUIN; Alessio, Mr. HORNCASTLE, and the CHORUS of the National Theatre, New York.

List of the musical numbers in Amilie, from an advertisement in the Baltimore American & Commercial Daily Advertiser, 31 December 1838.

attributed to "the Alpine melodies which belong naturally to the story and prevail throughout the piece. Such themes as these," he explained, "are always sure to gratify both cultivated and uncultivated auditors." (Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, 21 January 1839) Rooke's score, in fact, is full of folk-music references (to both Alpine and non-Alpine musics), including drone basses, "Scotch-snap" rhythms, horn calls, and yodel-like melodies. For example, the soprano aria "To the Vine Feast" (which was performed by Mrs. Penson in New York and, later, by Mary Ann Knight in Philadelphia) illustrates Rooke's use of many of these musical techniques.[24] A distinctly ländler-like song in ternary form, it commences with a brief solo for horn, which foreshadows the opening gesture of the soprano's melody. Midway through the A section the orchestra (or pianist) plays a drone in the bass, and close to the end of this section the vocal line, replete with "tra-la-las," is decidedly yodel-like (See Example 1.) The song is quite appealing and tuneful, and Rooke demonstrates both skill in modulation and a sound sense of drama in his treatment of the middle (B) section and in its movement back to the A section. Much of the middle section is in the subdominant (A-flat) rather than the more-usual dominant (B-flat). Rooke delays movement to the dominant until the very end of the section (by which time he has shifted to A minor); he achieves the modulation by means of a German-sixth chord, after which he strongly reiterates the new tonality (still the dominant). Then, in an effective and dramatic
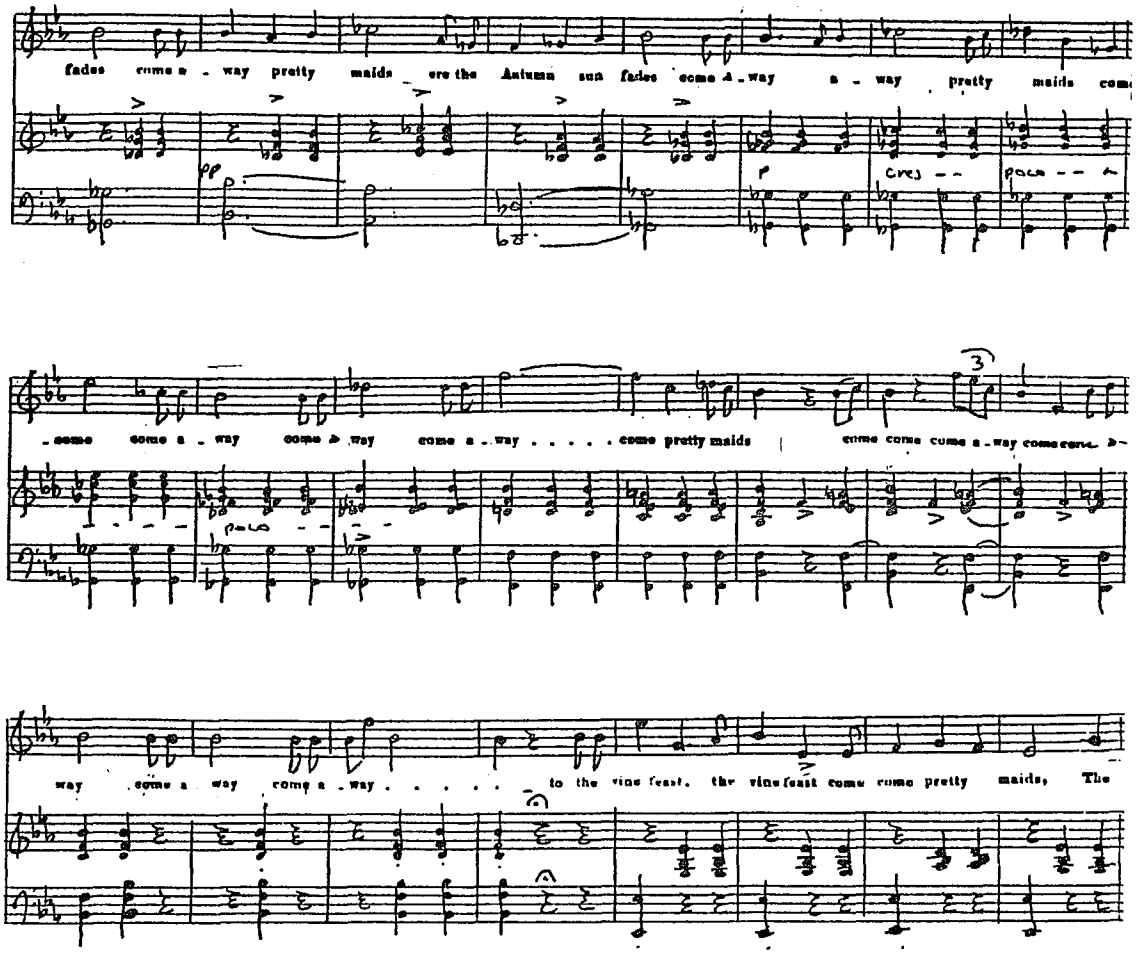
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24. "To the Vine Feast" (Philadelphia: George Willig, 183-). A copy is in the Music Division, DLC.



EXAMPLE 1. A portion of the A section of "To the Vine Feast" that illustrates Rooke's use of techniques evocative of folk music. Notice the drone in the accompaniment, and the yodel-like melody.

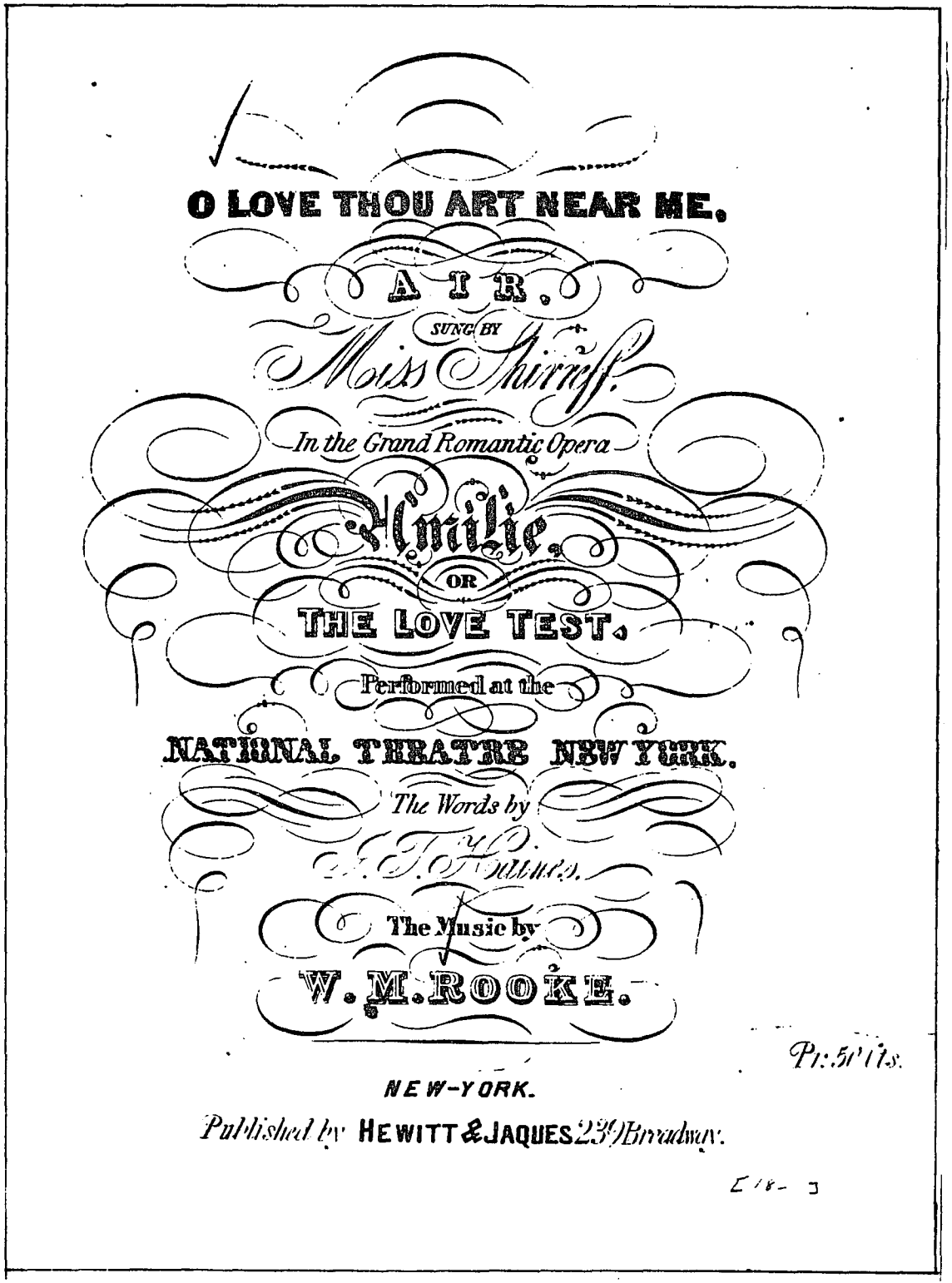
gesture, the song suddenly (and rather unexpectedly) segues to the beginning of the A section, simultaneously shifting back to the tonic (E-flat), as is illustrated in Musical Example 2.

Much of Amilie's popularity can be attributed to this evocation of folk music. The American public had been fascinated with Scotch tunes since the late eighteenth century, and a mania for Irish melody had started in 1818, when Thomas Phillips, one of the first British vocal
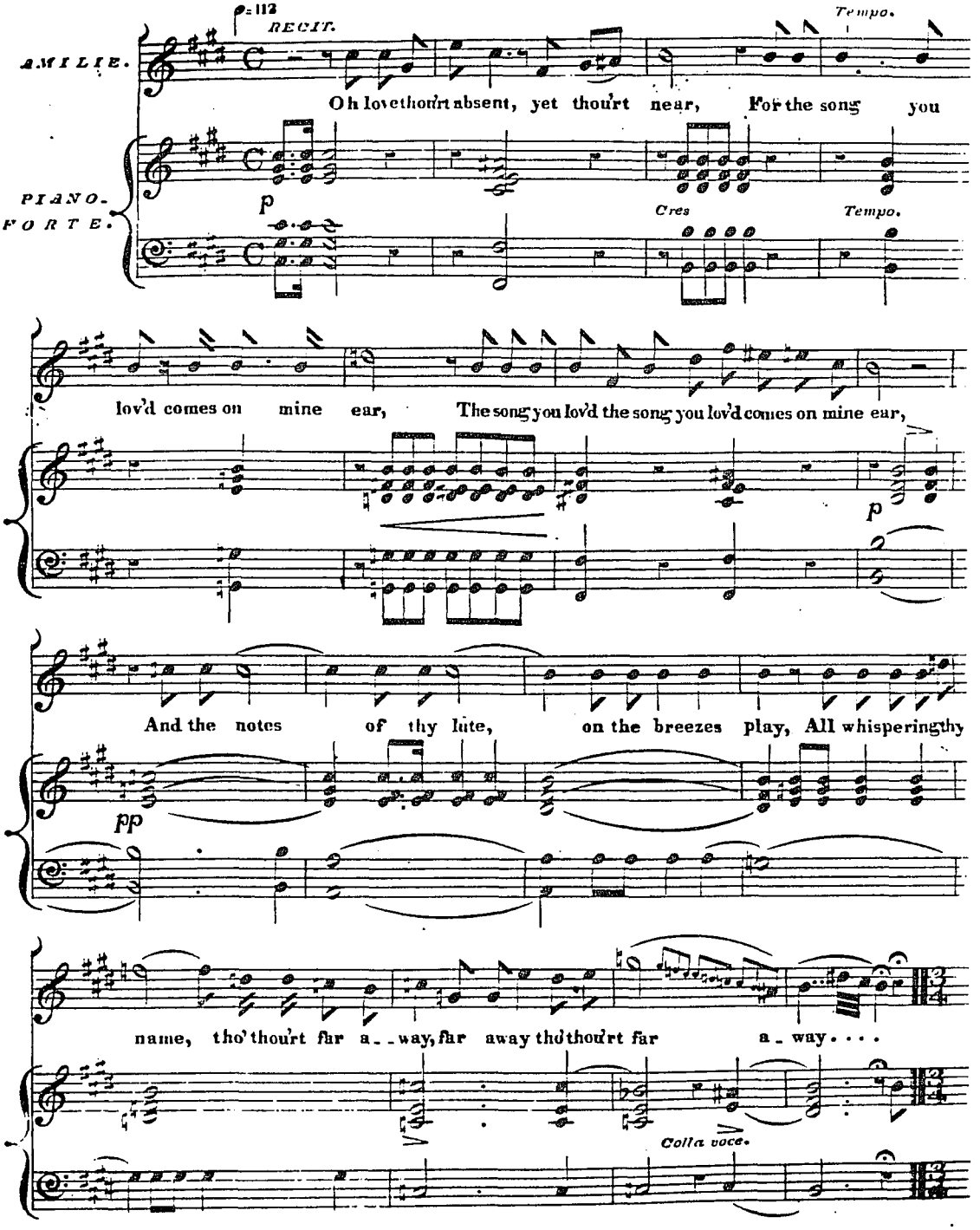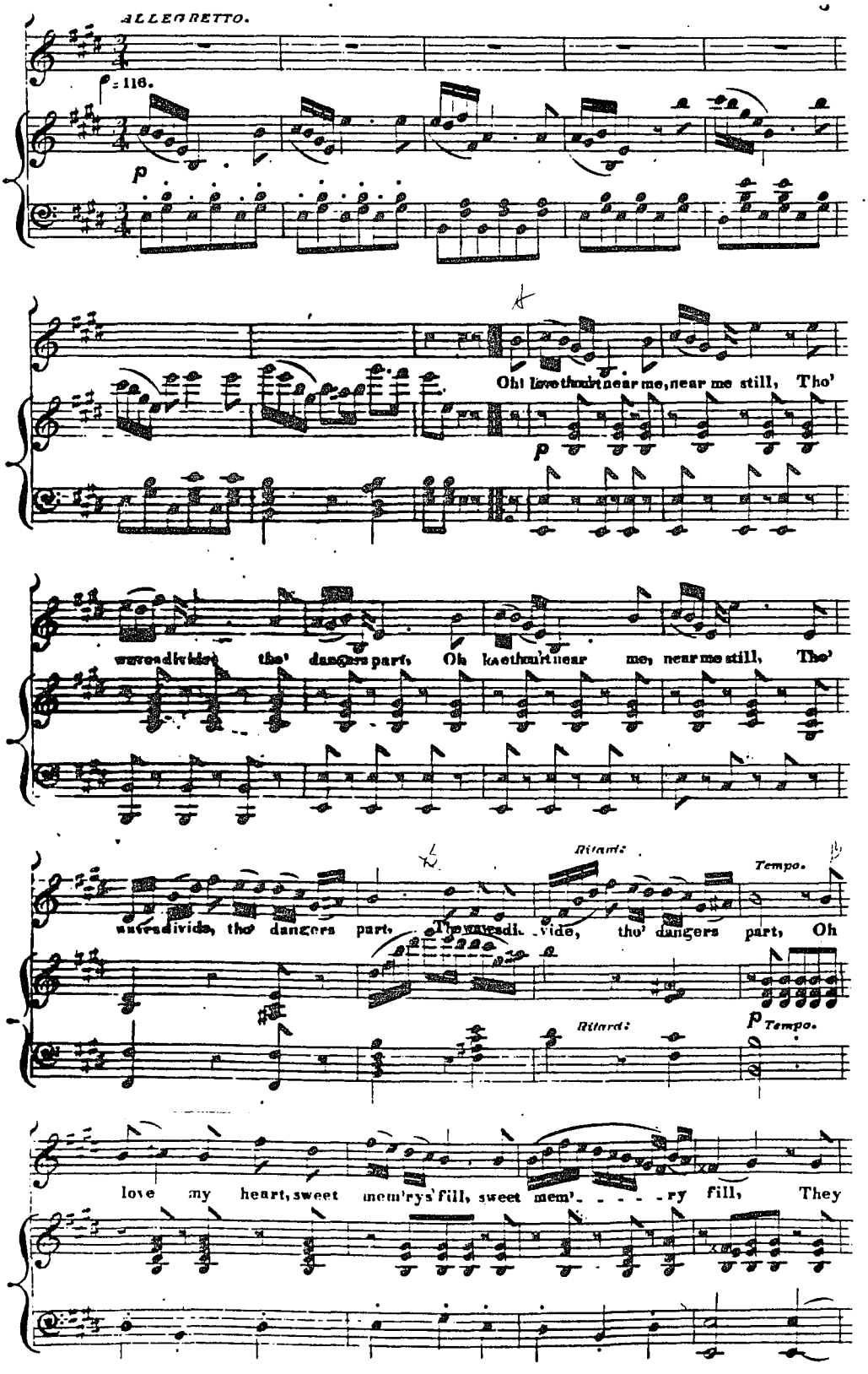


EXAMPLE 2. The transition from the B section back to the A section in "To the Vine Feast."
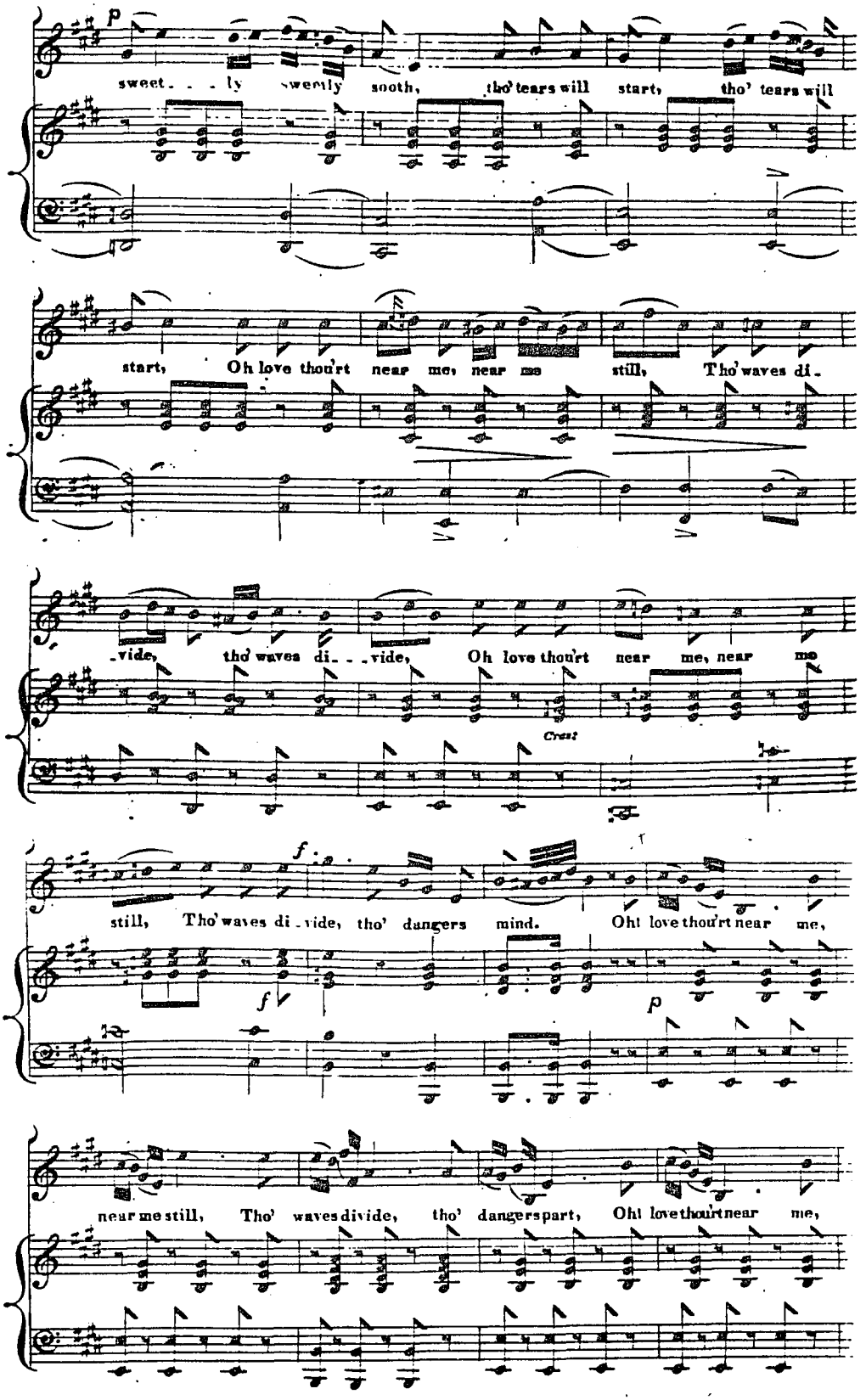
stars, introduced the songs of Thomas Moore to the United States. American audiences of 1838 were also ready to succumb to the charms of "Tyrolean" melody; this is amply demonstrated by the phenomenal success that the Rainer Family would soon enjoy. These self-billed "Tyrolese minstrels," who performed harmonized native songs in native costumes, were the first of the many singing families to tour the United States--and their American debut would be in New York in November 1839, slightly over a year after the première of Amilie. (Hamm, Yesterdays, 142; Dale
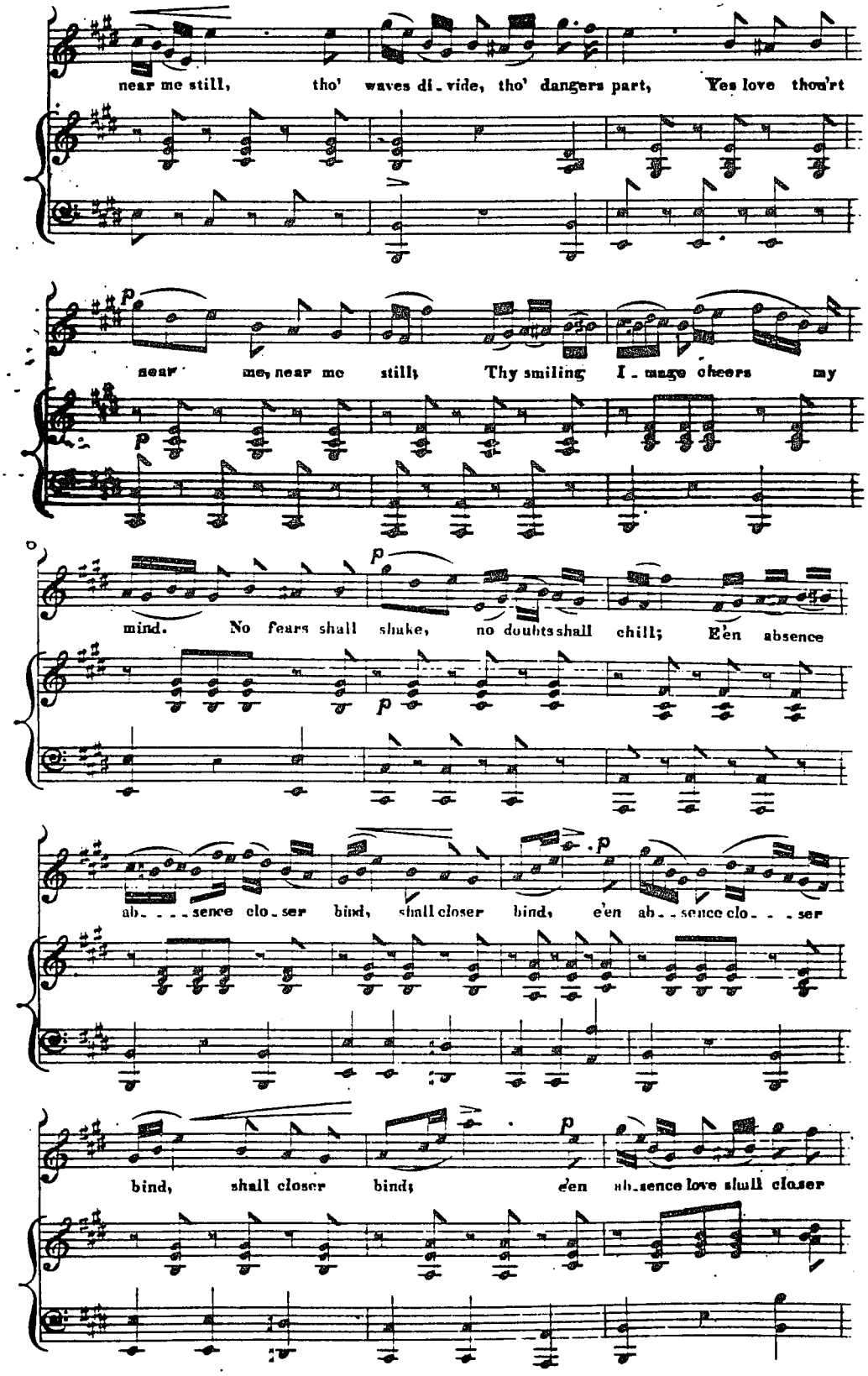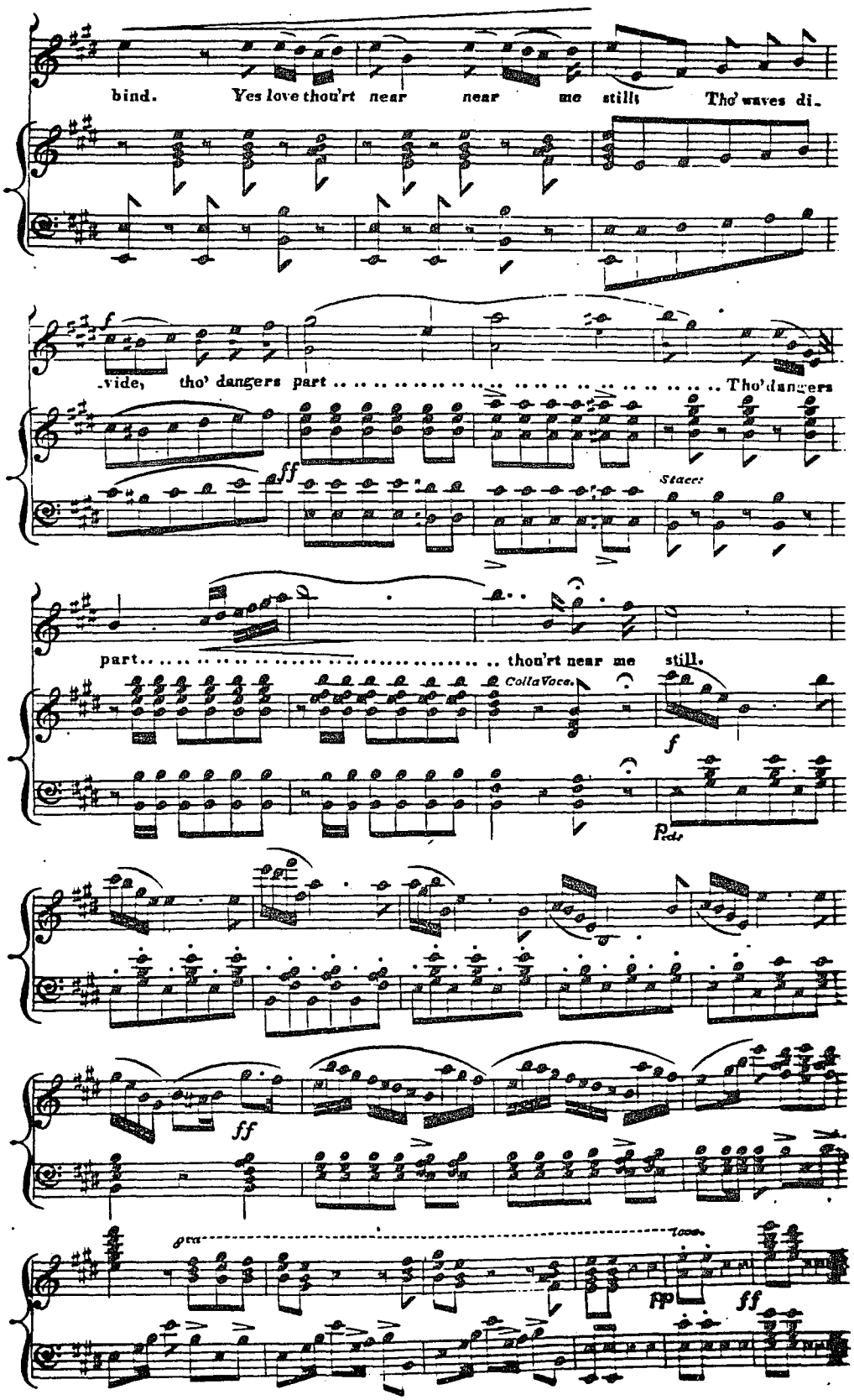


Example 3. Florid aria "O Love Thou Art Near Me," as sung by Jane Shirreff in Amilie. From the Music Division, DLC.


♩=112
RECIT.
Tempo.
AMILIE.
Oh love thou'rt absent, yet thou'rt near, For the song you
PIANO-FORTE.
p
Cres
Tempo.
lov'd comes on mine ear, The song you lov'd the song you lov'd comes on mine ear,
p
And the notes of thy lute, on the breezes play, All whisperingthy
pp
name, tho' thou'rt far a_way, far away tho thou'rt far a_way....
Colla voce.


ALLEGRETTO.
♩= 116.
p
Oh! love thou'rt near me, near me still, Tho'
p
wave and divide, tho' dangers part, Oh love thou'rt near me, near me still, Tho'
Ritard:
Tempo.
wave and divide, tho' dangers part, The wave di-vide, tho' dangers part, Oh
Ritard:
p Tempo.
love my heart, sweet mem'rys fill, sweet mem'-ry fill, They
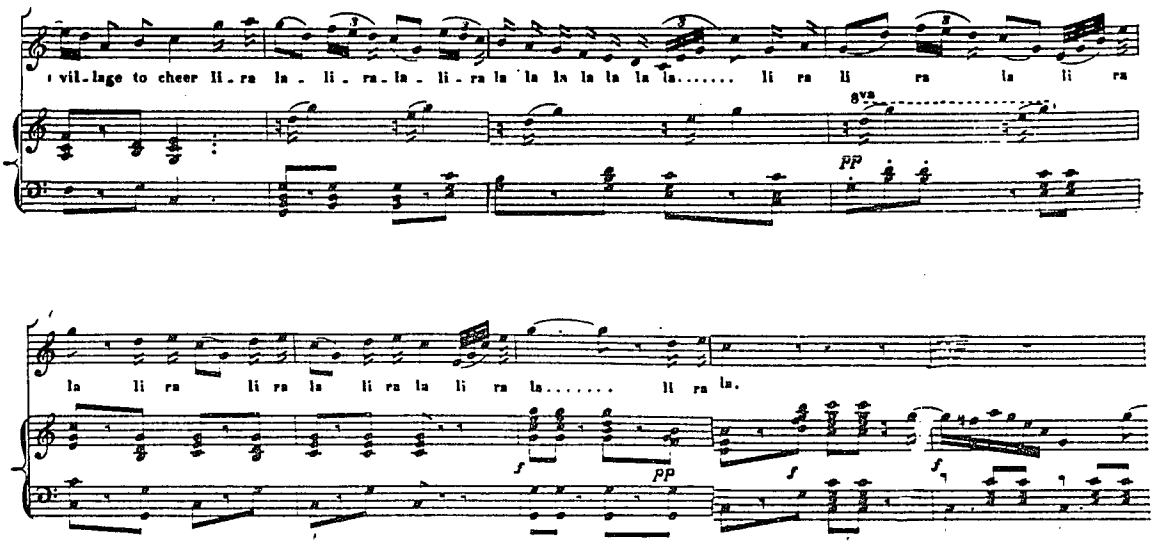

p
sweet . . . ly sweetly sooth, tho' tears will start, tho' tears will
start, Oh love thou'rt near me, near me still, Tho' waves di-
-vide, tho' waves di- - -vide, Oh love thou'rt near me, near me
Cres
f
still, Tho' waves di-vide, tho' dangers mind. Oh! love thou'rt near me,
f
p
near me still, Tho' waves divide, tho' dangers part, Oh! love thou'rt near me,


near me still, tho' waves di-vide, tho' dangers part, Yes love thou'rt
near me, near me still; Thy smiling I-mage cheers my
mind. No fears shall shake, no doubts shall chill; E'en absence
ab-sence clo-ser bind, shall closer bind, e'en ab-sence clo-ser
bind, shall closer bind; e'en ab-sence love shall closer


bind. Yes love thou'rt near near me still Tho' waves di-
-vide, tho' dangers part
Tho' dangers
Staccº
part
thou'rt near me still.
Colla Voce.
Pedº
ff
pp
ff
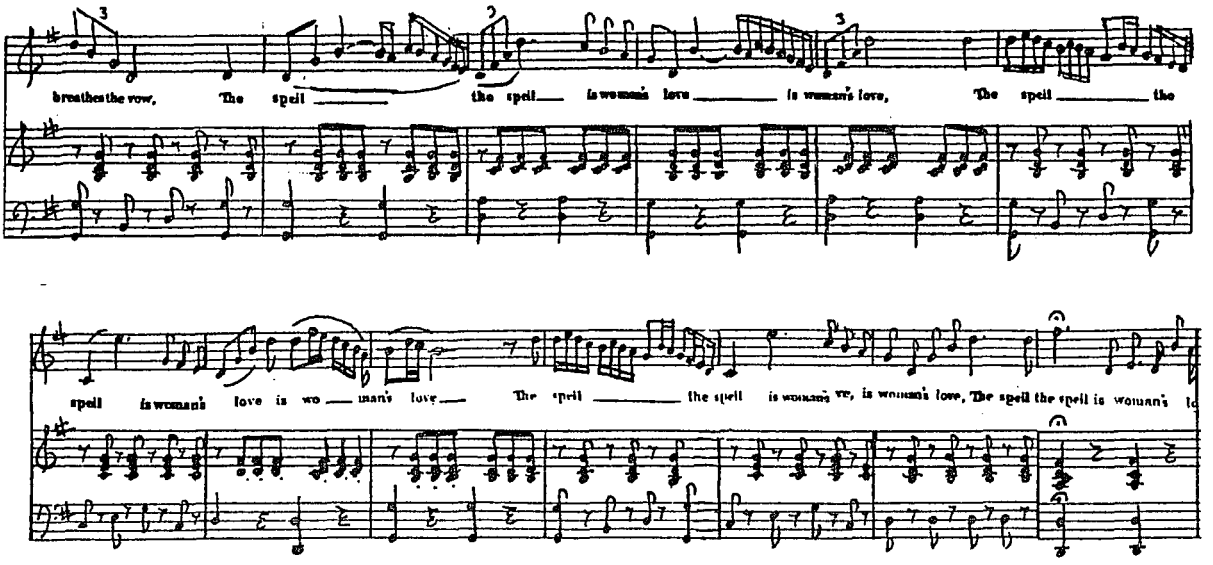
Cockrell, "Rainer," AG) But Americans, as we have seen, were also enamored of Italian melody, and Amilie features numerous arias that are quite florid and Italianate in style. The ten extant sheet-music publications of solo arias from Amilie include at least one (sometimes more) florid song for each of the three star singers. The recitative and aria "O Love Thou Art Near Me," sung by Jane Shirreff, is a good example (see Example 3). Melodically, the song is both florid and "birdlike," allowing the soprano to show off her vocal dexterity in a manner much loved during the period. Especially "operatic" is the coda of the aria (the entire song is in the form ABAC/coda): the accompaniment builds to a fortissimo, and the soprano moves dramatically from e' to b" in slightly more than a measure. Another of Shirreff's florid arias, even more evocative of songbirds, is "When the Morning First Dawns"; it is strophic in form and tells a tale of lovers wandering in the woods, listening to nightingales (in the early morning) and larks (in the evening). The vocal pyrotechnics are given as Example 4.

The stylistic contrast typical of Rooke's opera can be readily seen in a comparison of two arias sung by Edward Seguin. The first, "What is the Spell?," is full of the triplets and broken-chord melodic gestures typical of Bellini. It is in a fairly straightforward rounded binary form, and towards the end of each A section there is a sequence particularly full of fioritura, as is illustrated in Example 5. The second song, "My Boyhood's Home" (reproduced in its entirety as Example 6), is a simple, ballad-like tune in ternary form. Although it has none of the folkish characteristics of "To the Vine Feast," it has a pleasant, somewhat plaintive, and eminently "hummable" melody (built on



EXAMPLE 4. The florid, bird-like section of the aria "When Morning First Dawns," as sung by Jane Shirreff in Amilie.

the progression I-V-ii-V-I) in the A section; the middle section, in strong contrast, is dramatic, march-like, and overtly militaristic--complete with thunderous octaves and chords in snare-drum rhythms in the accompaniment. If the number of different sheet-music editions of a work is any indication, "My Boyhood's Home" was one of the most popular songs in the opera--and it must have retained its appeal, for Stephen Massett referred to it as a "popular melody" twenty-five years after its American première. (See Massett's description of the dress rehearsal for Amilie, quoted above.) "What is the Spell," on the other hand, became one of the songs that Seguin performed frequently throughout 1838-39, in concert and interpolated into opera performances--which suggests that American audiences were also fond of the more florid style.

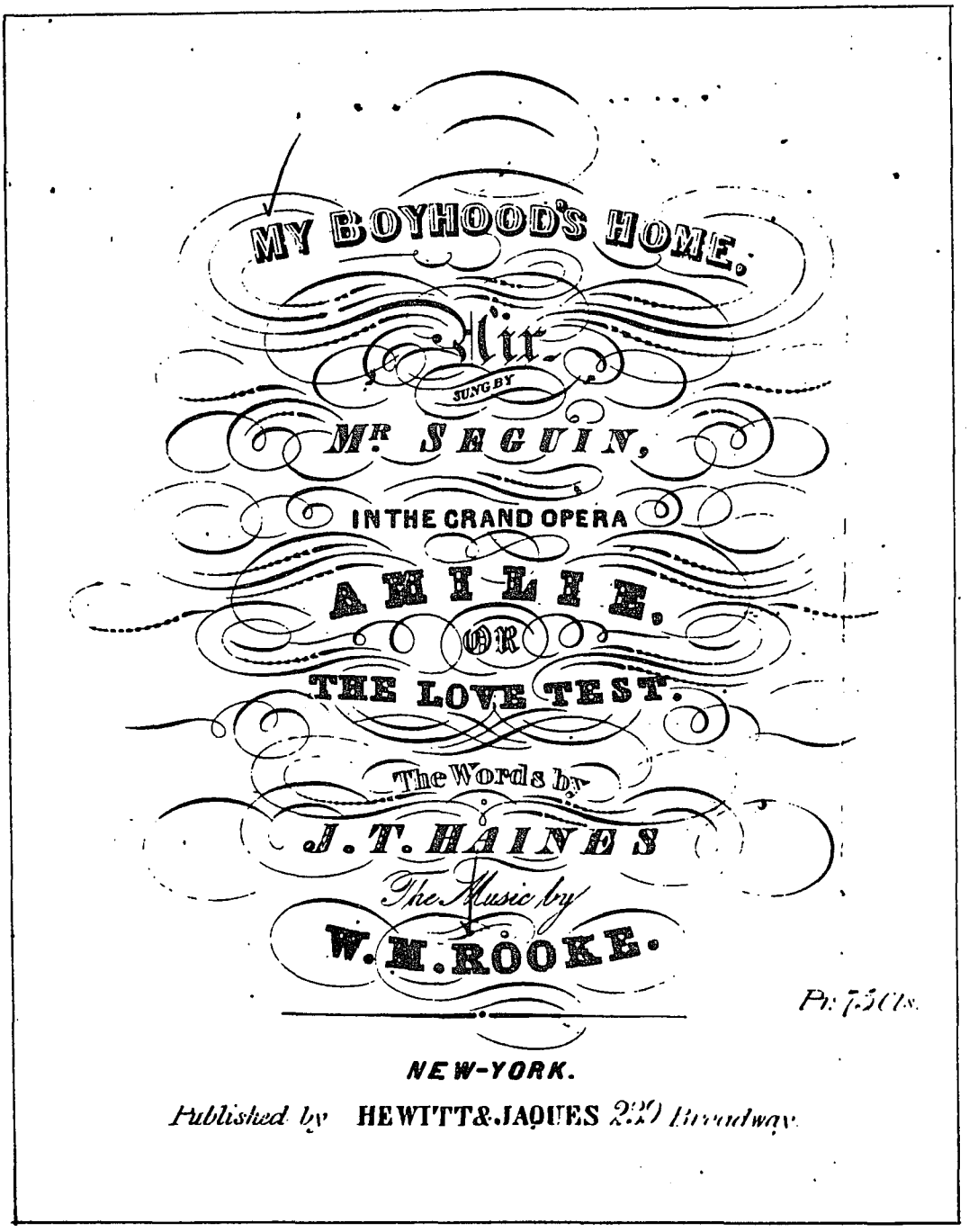


EXAMPLE 5. Italianate melody towards the end of the A section of Edward Seguin's aria "What is the Spell?"
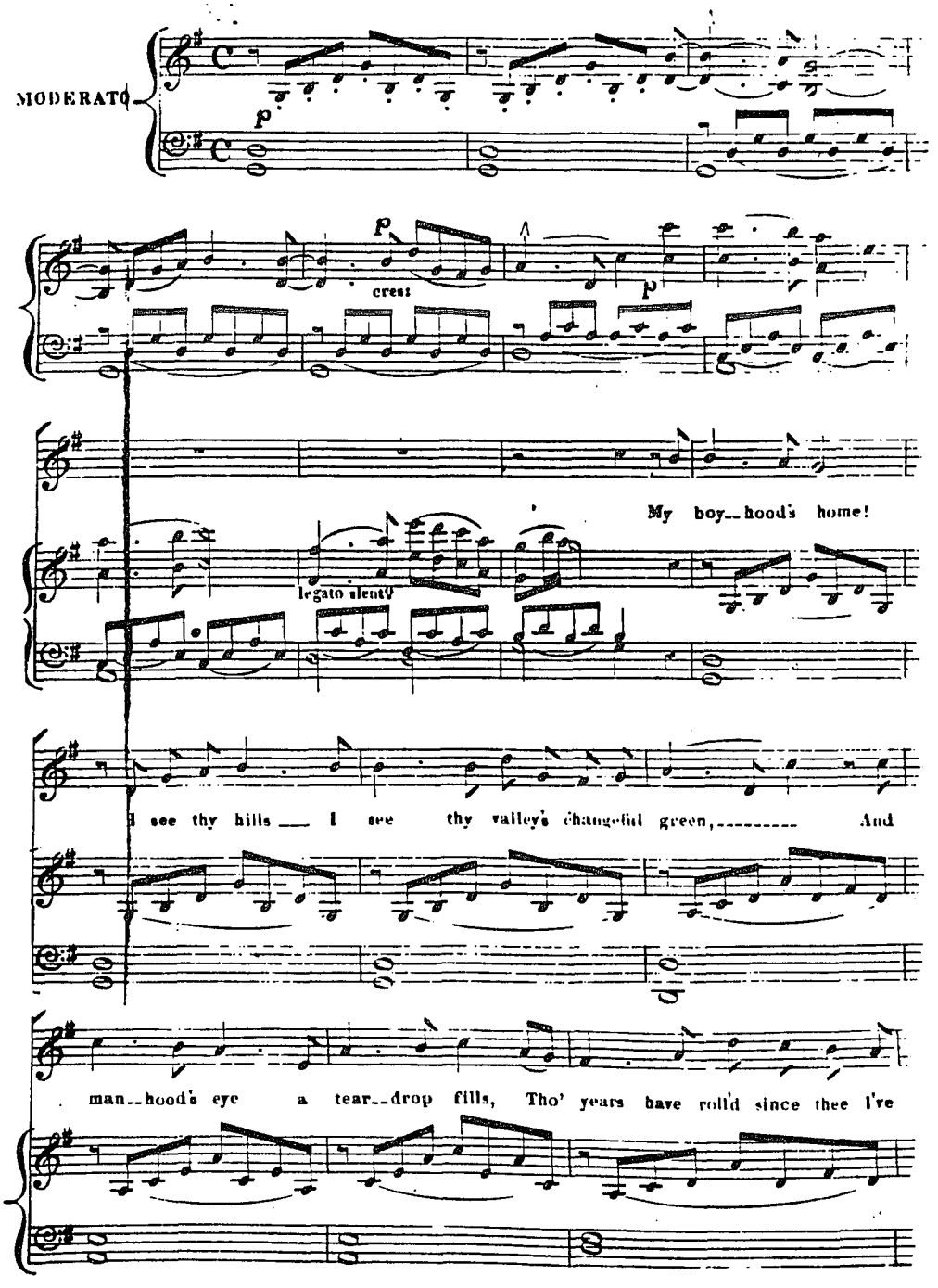
The juxtaposition in the same opera of simple, tuneful, and folklike songs with florid and Italianate arias might seem jarring to some modern listeners. In the 1830s and 1840s, however, the combination apparently was just what American audiences wanted.[25] Hamm points out that slightly later in the century, "In bound volumes of separate items of sheet music representing personal home collections, Bellini is found side by side with Thomas Moore, Henry Bishop, Henry Russell, the Hutchinsons, and Stephen Foster." (Hamm, Yesterdays, 76) One might think, in fact, that Rooke had written Amilie precisely for American audiences of the 1830s and 1840s, except that he had composed the opera twenty years earlier, in 1818.
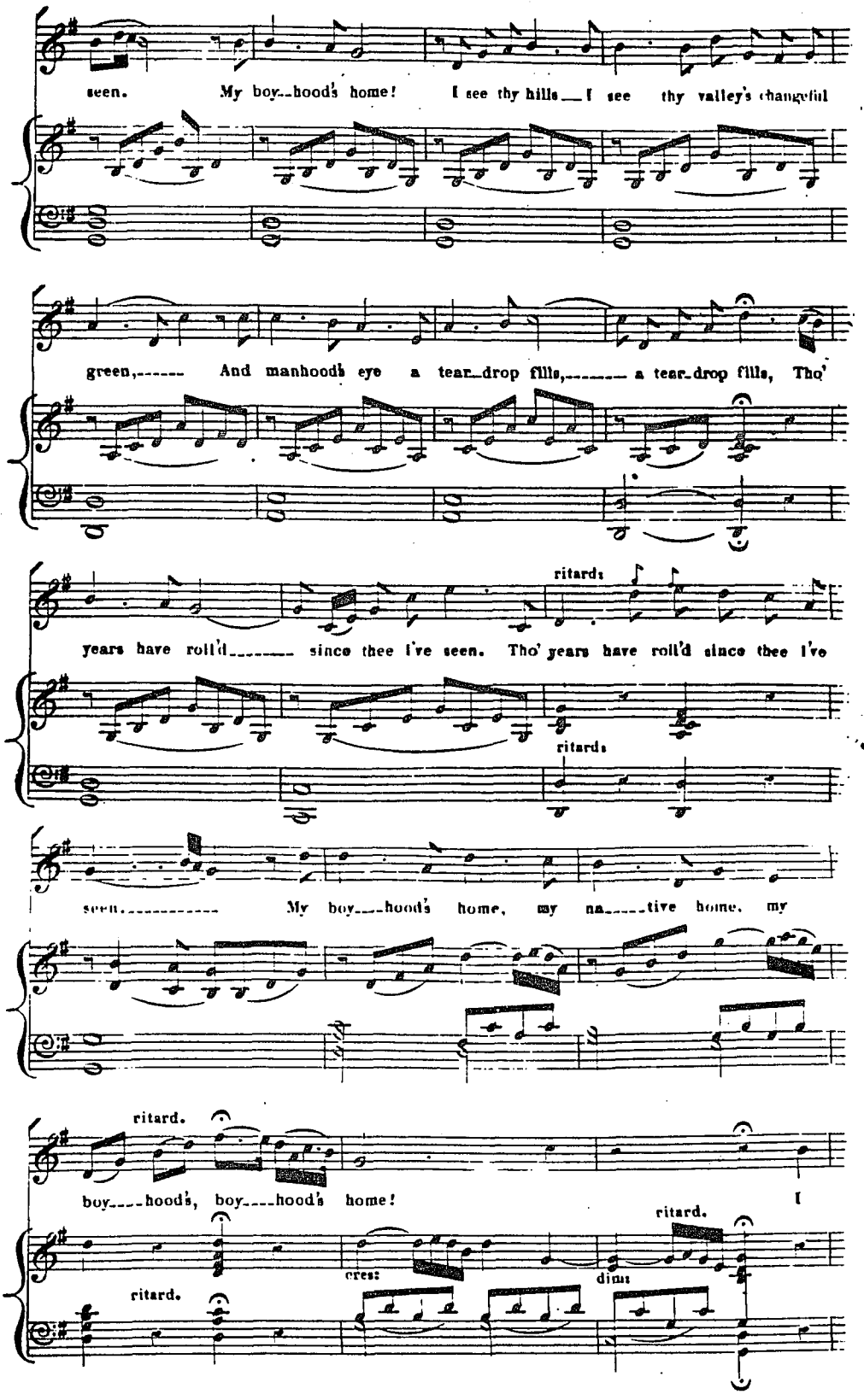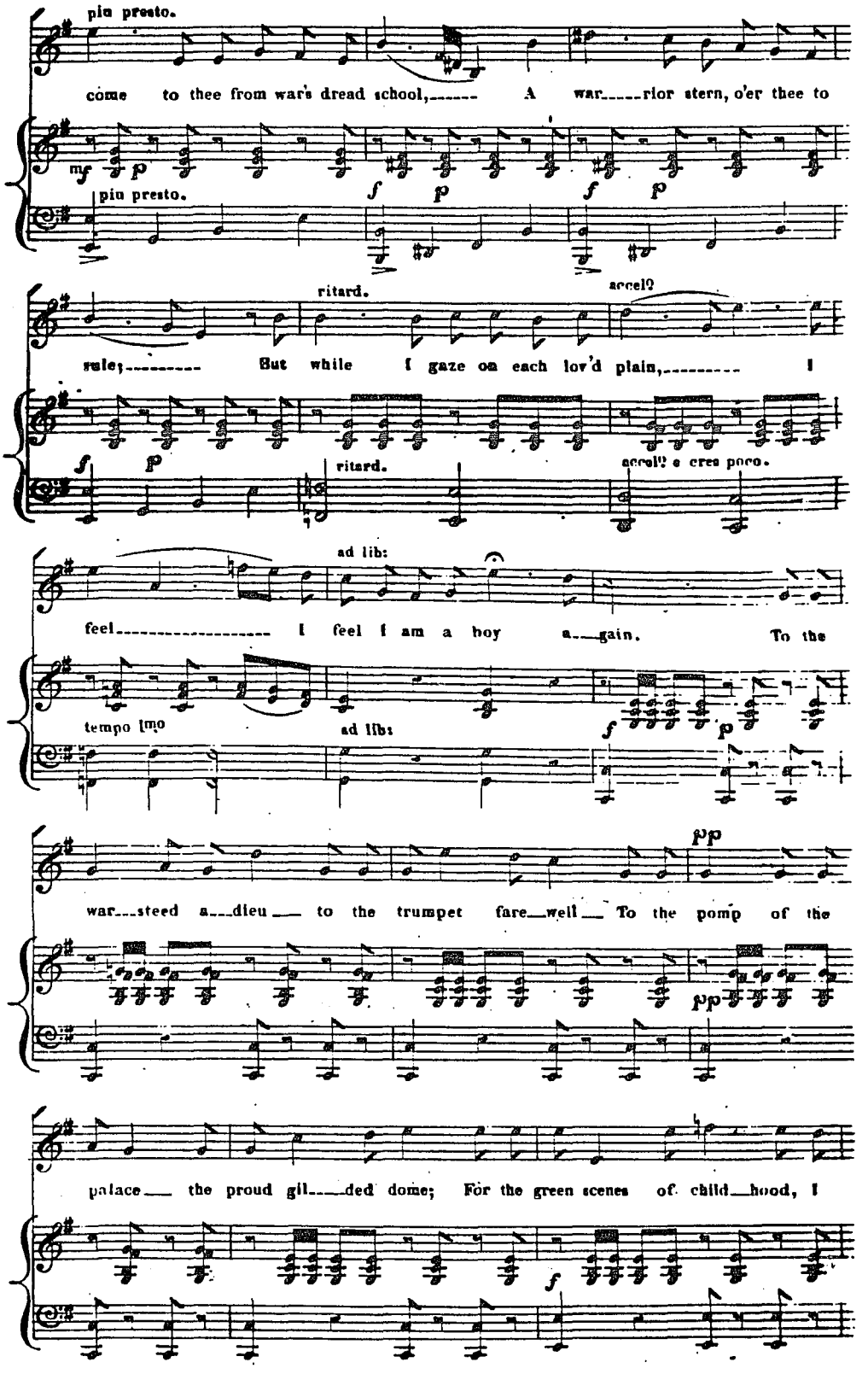
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25. Charles Hamm makes this point several times in his study of popular song in the United States. For example, an anthology that he describes as a "typical collection of the time" (The Social Choir, published in Boston in 1835) includes selections from operas (English, French, and Italian) cheek-by-jowl with Scotch and Irish songs. See Hamm, Yesterdays, 142.
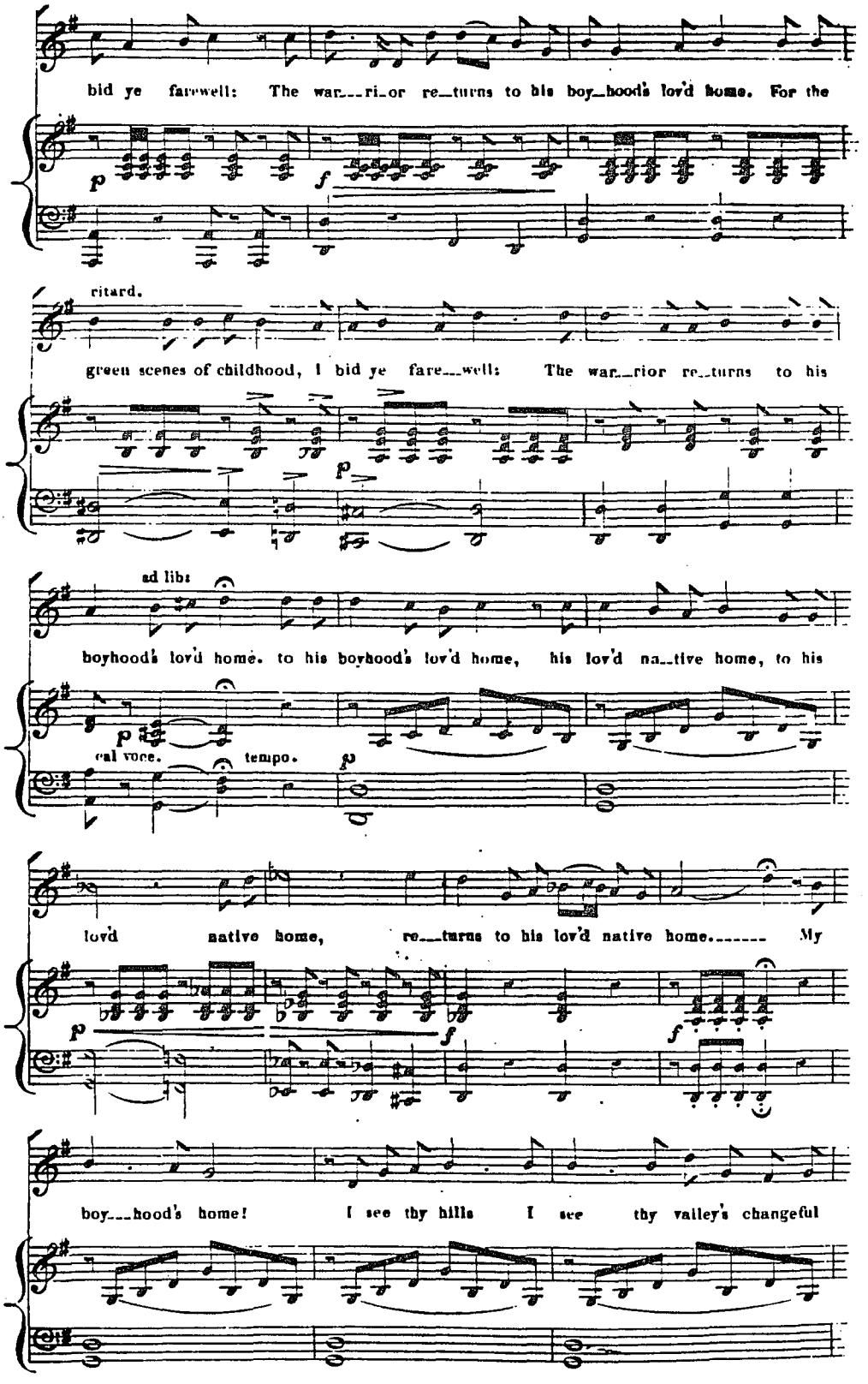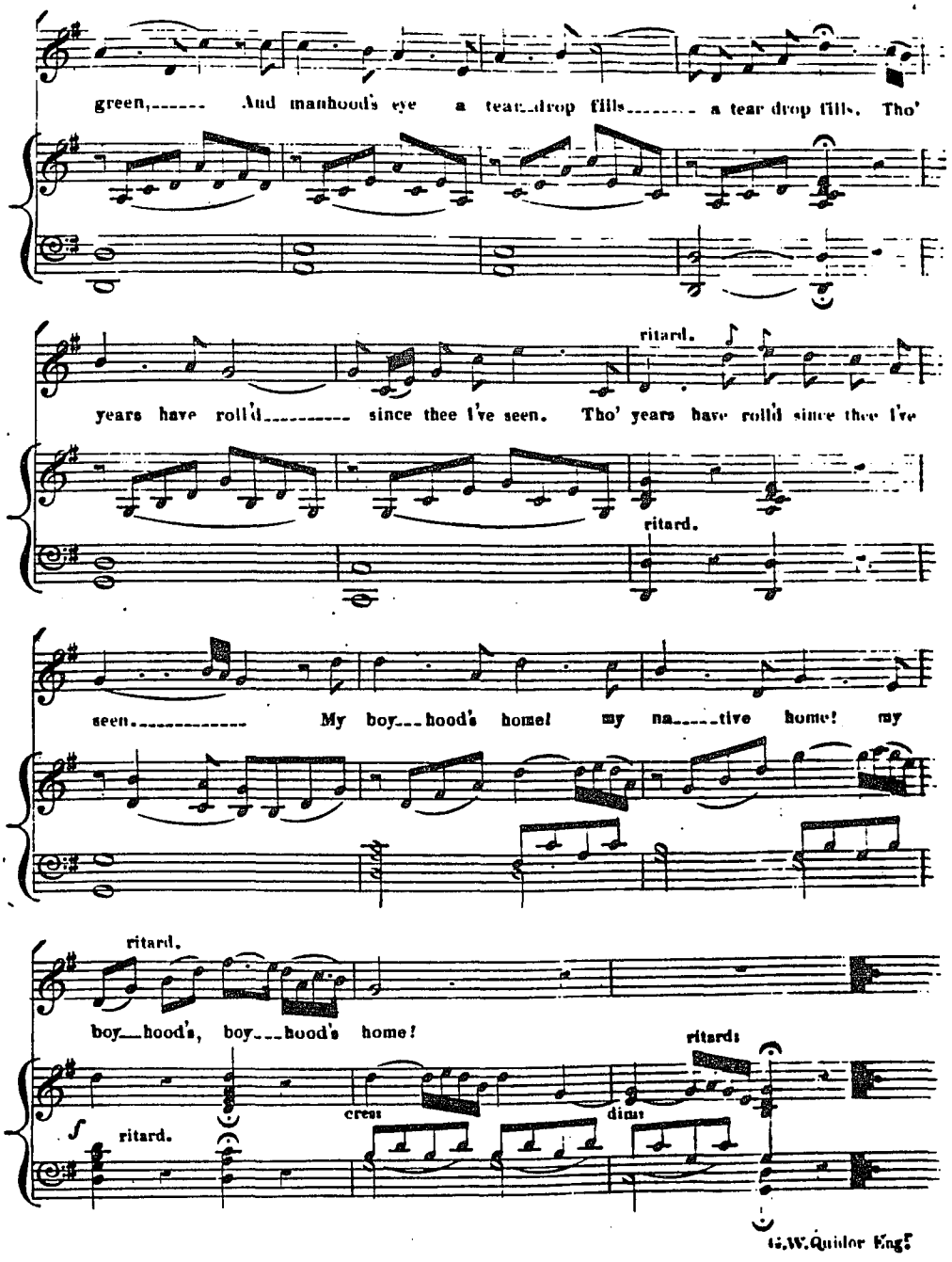


Example 6. Edward Seguin's aria "My Boyhood's Home." From the Music Division, DLC.


MODERATO
p
cres:
p
My boy--hood's home!
legato alentV
I see thy hills ___ I see thy valley's changeful green,_____ And
man--hood's eye a tear--drop fills, Tho' years have roll'd since thee I've


seen. My boy--hood's home! I see thy hills__I see thy valley's changeful
green,------ And manhood's eye a tear-drop fills,------- a tear-drop fills, Tho'
ritards
years have roll'd_____ since thee I've seen. Tho' years have roll'd since thee I've
ritards
seen.---------- My boy---hood's home, my na-----tive home, my
ritard.
boy----hood's, boy----hood's home! I
ritard.
cres:
dim:
ritard.


più presto.
come to thee from war's dread school,—— A war——rior stern, o'er thee to
più presto.
ritard.
accel?
rule;—— But while I gaze on each lov'd plain,—— I
ritard.
accel? e cres poco.
ad lib:
feel—— I feel I am a boy a——gain. To the
tempo Imo
ad lib:
pp
war——steed a——dieu—— to the trumpet fare——well—— To the pomp of the
pp
palace—— the proud gil——ded dome; For the green scenes of child——hood, I


bid ye farewell: The war_ri_or re_turns to his boy_hood's lov'd home. For the
p
f
ritard.
green scenes of childhood, I bid ye fare_well: The war_rior re_turns to his
p
ad libi
boyhood's lov'd home. to his boyhood's lov'd home, his lov'd na_tive home, to his
p
cal voce.
tempo.
p
lov'd native home, re_turns to his lov'd native home. My
p
f
f
boy_hood's home! I see thy hills I see thy valley's changeful


green,------ And manhood's eye a tear-drop fills------ a tear drop fills. Tho'
ritard.
years have roll'd---------- since thee I've seen. Tho' years have roll'd since thee I've
ritard.
seen---------- My boy---hood's home! my na-----tive home! my
ritard.
boy---hood's, boy---hood's home!
ritard:
f
ritard.
cresc
dimi
W.Quidor Engr

Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin on Tour: Boston, Providence, and New York

When Elizabeth Austin came to the United States in 1828 under contract to William Warren, she had agreed to perform at his theatres for a specific length of time, after which she was free to make engagements elsewhere. Evidently Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin had a similar type of arrangement with James Wallack, for at the end of their initial two-week engagement at the National Theatre they left New York. Undoubtedly Wallack would have been perfectly happy to keep his trio performing opera at the National for as long as they were drawing paying houses, but there had been no way for the manager to predict the extent of their success in New York, and he had allotted them a rather conventional two-week slot in his fall schedule. He also had made numerous engagements with other artists for the fall and winter season, and these contracts had to be honored regardless of the success of the current performers.[26] Under the circumstances, the best that Wallack could do was to book the singers into the remaining free time in the National's 1838-39 schedule (which consisted of three weeks in December 1838, seven weeks in February-March 1839, and a block of eight weeks in April, May, and June 1839) and hope that the vocal stars would continue to draw "large and fashionable" audiences when they returned to New York.

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26. The immutable reality that performers had to leave a theatre at the end of their allotted time--even though they might be at the height of a theatrical triumph--was one of the most obvious failings of the star system. Odell refers to this method of operation as "that wretched system of short engagements." Odell, IV:55.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, itinerant vocal stars and vocal-star troupes did not limit their appearances to the northeastern part of the country, although most visiting artists did concentrate their performances in the Northeast when they first arrived, branching out only later to include the South or the West (the Ohio-Mississippi river basin). This pattern was both logical and practical. Not only was a majority of the population of the United States concentrated in the Northeast, but cities were closer together and the transportation network fairly well established. Furthermore, it was imperative that performers establish their reputations firmly in the public mind before heading away from the more populous areas of the country; since the American musical and theatrical press was based in the Northeast, it made sense to commence with a tour of the large cities in that region. Finally, as we have seen, major stars generally arrived in this country under the aegis of a theatre manager (often based in New York or Philadelphia), and obligations to him had to be met before they were free to head out into the hinterland. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Wallack's vocal stars, who had engagements at his theatre in October and December 1838 and February-March and April-June 1839, stayed within a reasonable distance of Manhattan during the entire 1838-39 theatrical season (15 October 1838 through 22 June 1839). Between their appearances in New York, however, they gave opera performances in four other Northeastern cities: Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Washington. (Shirreff and Wilson, without Seguin, also performed for one week in Providence, Rhode Island.) The singers' itinerary during these nine months is given as Table 2.

The first city that the vocal stars visited after their tumultuous reception in New York was Boston, where they opened in Amilie at the Tremont Theatre on 5 November. Bostonians, although they approved of the vocal stars, evidently disliked Amilie from the beginning; midway through their first week, the critic for the local Daily Evening Transcript hinted that he (and the rest of the Boston audience) had been less than overwhelmed by the new opera. "We do not think that Amilie is an Opera well calculated to display [the vocalists'] powers to the best advantage," he wrote. "It is good and new, but we should much prefer, old as the piece is, to hear them in La Sonnambula." (Daily Evening Transcript, 7 November 1838) At the beginning of their second week, in fact, the troupe did bring out that tried-and-true Bellini opera. The public response improved markedly, for (presumably) the same critic enthused,

> La Sonnambula went off gloriously at the Tremont [Theatre] last evening. We never heard such loud and so frequent applause. . . . It is not a gem, but a casket of gems . . . it throws that thing of shreds and patches, the opera of Amilie, far into the back ground. It is no secret that the house was not well filled last week. The fault was with the piece, and not the performers. The energetic applause bestowed on La Sonnambula last evening is proof enough of the assertion. (Daily Evening Transcript, 13 November 1838)

The vocal stars had learned their lesson well and performed Bellini's opera exclusively for the remainder of the Boston engagement.[27]

The negative (or, at best, lukewarm) response to Amilie by Boston audiences is somewhat puzzling. The opera, as we have seen, was a smash

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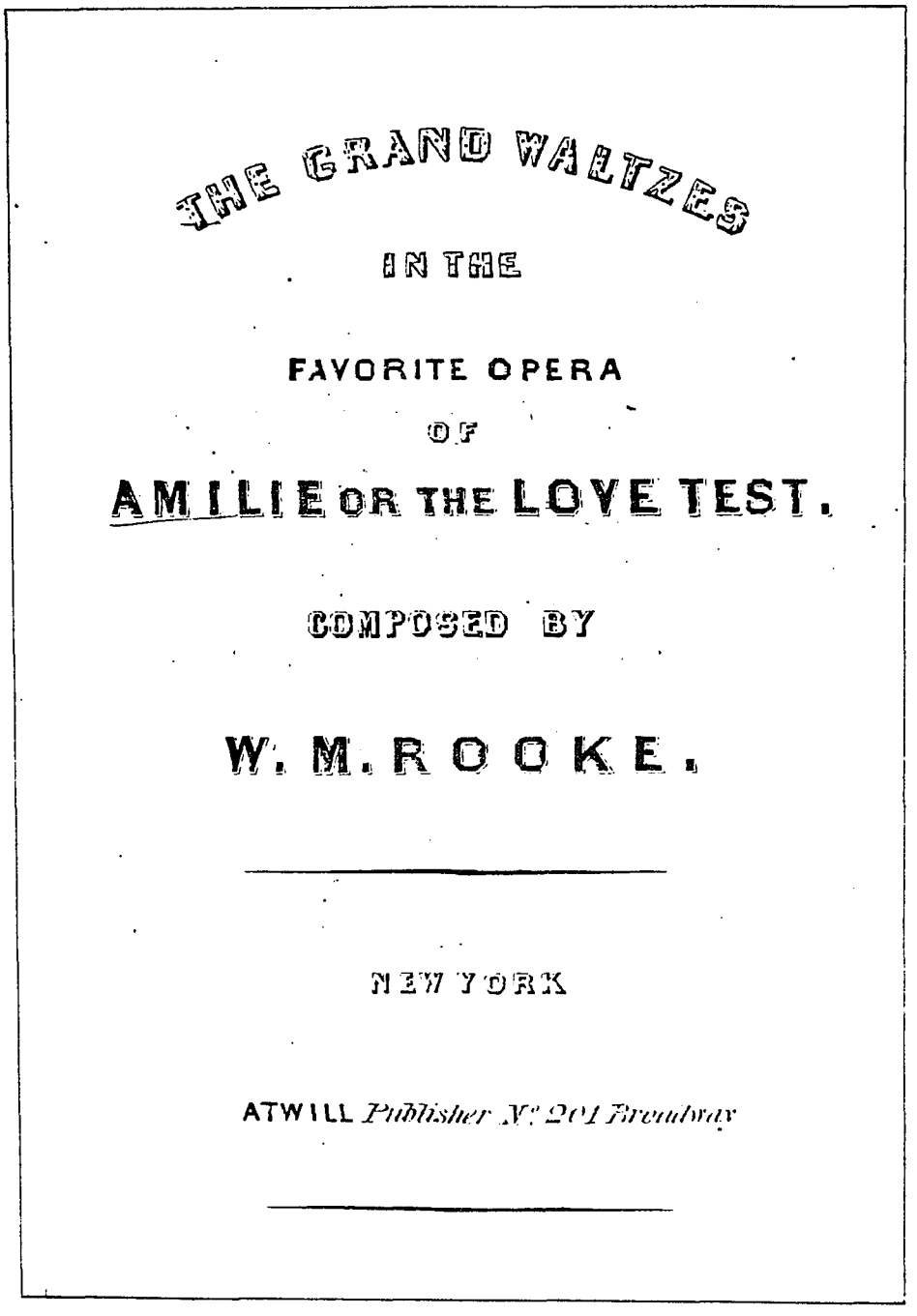
27. Excepting only the performance on Monday 19 November, when John Wilson choose to play in Guy Mannering and The Waterman for his benefit. See playbill, Tremont Street Theatre, 19 November 1838, Shirreff Collection.

hit in New York (and would continue to be so throughout the year); it also was well received when the same troupe mounted it in Washington, Baltimore, and (if with some reservations) in Philadelphia.[28] Many of the opera's arias were widely disseminated in sheet-music form as piano-vocal arrangements, with numerous editions of the more popular selections, and tunes from Amilie were fashioned into grand waltzes, marches, quadrilles, and "brilliant divertimentos" for performance on the piano, flute, and Spanish guitar.[29] That Bostonians failed to embrace the new opera--despite its popularity elsewhere in the country--may be explained simply as evidence of musical and theatrical conservatism, for which the citizens of that city had a solid reputation. That the opera did not succeed in Boston is not particularly significant in itself, however, except for what it tells us about operatic repertory. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the overall repertories of itinerant vocal-star troupes in the United States

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28. For Washington and Baltimore, see the Washington National Intelligencer, 27, 28, 29 December 1838; Baltimore Sun, 5 and 10 January 1839. For a discussion of the public's reaction in Philadelphia, see below.

29. See, for example, "The Beauties of Amilie; or the Love Test, containing the whole of the songs, duetts, choruses, etc., arranged in four books as brilliant divertimentos for the pianoforte by Charles M. King" (New York: Firth & Hall, n.d.); "Quadrilles, selected from Rooke's celebrated opera of Amilie," arranged by J. Weippert (Baltimore: J. Cole, n.d.); "My Boyhood's Home, arranged for Spanish Guitar" (Philadelphia: George Willig, n.d.); "When Morning First Dawns," arranged as a waltz for piano (New York: Firth & Hall, n.d.); and "Quadrilles Selected from W. M. Rooke's Celebrated Opera of Amilie . . . as performed at the Light Guard Soirée, New York" (New York: Hewitt & Jacques, n.d.), all in the collection of the Music Division, DLC; and "The Most Popular Melodies of W. M. Rooke's opera Amilie," arranged for flute by E. Manuel (Philadelphia: Fiot, Meignen & Co., n.d.), in the collection of the Music Department, MB.



Cover from a sheet-music publication of a set of melodies from Amilie, arranged as waltzes for piano.

TABLE 2. ITINERARY OF THE SHIREFF/WILSON/SEGUIN VOCAL-STAR TROUPE 15 OCTOBER 1838-22 JUNE 1839

15 Oct-31 Oct 1838	New York (National Theatre)	14 opera performances
5 Nov-23 Nov 1838	Boston (Tremont Street Theatre)	15 opera performances
10, 17 Nov	Boston (Masonic Temple)	2 concert performances
26 Nov-30 Nov 1838	Providence, Rhode Island	5 opera performances[a]
3 Dec-21 Dec 1838	New York (National Theatre)	17 opera performances
24 Dec-29 Dec 1838	Washington, (National Theatre)	6 opera performances
31 Dec-12 Jan 1839	Baltimore (Holliday St. Theatre)	12 opera performances
14 Jan- 9 Feb 1839	Philadelphia (Chestnut St Theatre)	24 opera performances[b]
11 Feb-30 Mar 1839	New York (National Theatre)	41 opera performances[c]
1 Apr-28 Apr 1839	Philadelphia (Chestnut St Theatre)	22 opera performances[d]
(19 April 1839	New York	1 concert performance)
29 Apr-22 June 1839	New York (National Theatre)	48 opera performances[e]

Total opera performances by the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin Troupe, 1838-1839	199[f]
Additional opera performances by Shirreff and Wilson	5
Concert performances during this period	2

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a. The Providence engagement was of Shirreff and Wilson, and did not include either Edward or Anne Seguin.
b. Because of illness, Jane Shirreff appeared in only nineteen of these performances.
c. Because of continued illness, Shirreff appeared in only thirty-one of these performances.
d. Shirreff appeared in nineteen of these performances.
e. Shirreff appeared in thirty-four of these performances.
f. Jane Shirreff missed a total of thirty-two performances during the 1838-39 theatrical season.

were fairly consistent from city to city. The Boston reaction to Amilie, however, suggests that this apparent universality of musical and musical-theatrical taste around the country was not unanimous; an opera that played well in one city evidently was not guaranteed to succeed in another. Furthermore, this discrepancy indicates that a large number of performances of a particular work is not by itself an adequate gauge of popularity. In Boston, after all, the troupe presented Amilie for five (or one-third) of its fifteen performances at the Tremont Theatre before the management realized that the opera was not going to "take" and withdrew it.

After leaving Massachusetts, the Seguins headed back to New York, while Shirreff and Wilson made a brief, one-week stop in Providence. That their engagement in the Rhode Island capital was a last-minute arrangement is indicated by a notice that appeared in the Providence Republican Herald on 21 November. "We perceive," wrote the editor,

> that those distinguished vocalists, Miss Shirreff, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Seguin will finish their engagement in Boston, this week, and we but echo the wish of our Theatre-going community, when we express a desire that these talented performers will be engaged by our spirited managers, after the [current] engagement. (Republican Herald, 21 November 1838)

Shirreff and Wilson were receptive to the overtures of the "spirited managers," and they gave five performances with the stock company of the Providence Theatre. The operas they chose to mount were familiar works from the old ballad-opera repertory--Love in a Village (Arne), Clari, or the Maid of Milan and Guy Mannering (Bishop), and Rob Roy. The singers' choice of repertory is probably a measure of the type of opera the local

stock company could mount on short notice, rather than a reflection of the operatic tastes of Providence citizens. The troupe was well received in Rhode Island; at its second performance Guy Mannering drew a "crowded audience"--presumably one that was mixed socially, economically, and racially, although (as in most theatres) the Providence house restricted the "colored persons" in its audience to "a division in the Gallery." (Providence Republican Herald, 26 November, 1 December 1838)

The trio of vocal stars was reunited in early December for the singers' first return engagement at the National. They performed there for three weeks (3-21 December), adding Auber's Fra Diavolo to their American repertory of Amilie and La Sonnambula. Their first several engagements of the 1838-39 season (in New York and Boston), and the manner in which the singers introduced their operas offer a good example of the standard scheduling practices followed by most vocal-star (and opera) troupes--and also by most theatrical companies--during the period. If the first work a troupe offered attracted good paying houses, the manager and the company kept it on the boards. If this meant that the same opera or drama was performed every evening for the duration of a star's or a troupe's engagement, so be it. When the production began to wane in popularity, the company replaced it with something else--and similarly continued with that work for as long as it drew large audiences. (This approach to a certain extent is still followed today.)

The population on the East Coast of the United States in the late twentieth century, however, is immense, and one can generally assume that a theatre audience today is made up of entirely different individuals for each performance. This was not the case in the early

nineteenth century; it was not at all unusual for individuals to attend several performances of the same dramatic work during a single engagement. In 1837, for example, one theatre-goer in Mobile, Alabama, commented in a letter to the Spirit that he had attended four (out of six) performances of Cinderella (as mounted by the local stock company) within a short period of time--and did not indicate that this was by any means extraordinary. ("Mobile Theatricals," Spirit, 25 March 1837) Three years later (in 1840), the Philadelphia merchant Joseph Sill noted in his diary that he had seen La Sonnambula some twenty times since the opera's Philadelphia première in 1836. (Sill, 26 October 1840) Finally, in 1841 a critic writing in the Spirit about a recent run of Don Giovanni in New York City (mounted by an unknown company) pointed out (probably with some exaggeration) that the opera "was performed to the same audience each night; that there was but the slightest change of faces--the same seats being occupied by the same individuals night after night." (Spirit, 16 January 1841) This tendency for audiences to attend repeated performances of the same work was common especially if the visiting star was a celebrity, or if the work being performed was either old and a favorite (as with La Sonnambula or Cinderella) or new and unfamiliar (as with Amilie). Managers, of course, were aware that many of their patrons were returning night after night to witness repeat performances of the principal work on the bill. As a result, the farce that concluded each evening's performance (which usually was amusing, but not sufficiently interesting to be watched several times within a short span of time) was changed frequently.

The added complexity of music (a play can be read, after all)

meant that a new opera, in particular, required numerous hearings before an auditor might feel that he or she was sufficiently familiar with the work. Individuals of the 1840s who wished to learn a new opera had only two options: they could purchase and learn the sheet-music publications of the more popular arias, or they could attend multiple performances when the opera was produced at the local theatre.[30] In fact, the performance patterns for both of the successful new operas in which Shirreff and Wilson appeared reflect this. Both Amilie and Adolph Adam's The Postillion of Longjumeau were performed for two entire weeks--to the total (or, in the case of Postillion, almost-total) exclusion of other operas.[31] And clearly some auditors attended more than one performance. A New York critic, after noting that Rooke's opera "gives great pleasure to the [New York] audience," pointed out that "some of [Miss Shirreff's] hearers have been present at the performance of [Amilie] ten or fifteen times, and always with the same satisfaction." (Daily Express, 16 October 1839)

Contemporary critics, in fact, often pointed out as a mark of quality the ability of an opera to stand up to repeated hearings. One reviewer in Philadelphia remarked that "the many beautiful melodies and combinations of [Amilie] improve much on repetition," and another critic wrote after the Philadelphia première of The Postillion of Longjumeau

30. Operatic transcriptions for piano--along with piano potpourris, fantasias, and variations based on the melodies of particular operas--functioned as yet another familiarizing option, once an opera became fairly well established.

31. The vocal-star troupe mounted the North American première of the English version of Adam's opera (as translated by J. B. Phillips) in New York during the subsequent theatrical season, on 30 March 1840. See the New York Sun, 30 March 1840, and Alfred Loewenberg, Annals of Opera, 1597-1940, 3rd edition, revised (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), col. 783. The North American première of the opera (in French) had been at the Théâtre d'Orléans in New Orleans two years previous, on 19 April 1838. See Belsom, 48.

TABLE 3. REPERTORY PERFORMED BY THE SHIRREFF/WILSON/SEGUIN VOCAL-STAR TROUPE, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1838

NEW YORK CITY. 15-31 OCTOBER 1838. NATIONAL THEATRE.

15 Oct (Monday): Amilie/Raising the Wind (farce)
16 Oct: Amilie/Spoiled Child (farce)
17 Oct: Amilie/Robert Macaire (drama)
18 Oct: Amilie/Luke the Laborer (drama)
19 Oct: Amilie/Naval Engagements (farce)
20 Oct: Amilie/Robert Macaire (first act)

22 Oct (Monday): Amilie/Naval Engagements
23 Oct: Amilie/The Waterman (with Wilson and Shirreff). Wilson benefit
24 Oct: Amilie/Naval Engagements
25 Oct: Amilie/The Waterman (Wilson and Shirreff). Sherriff benefit
26 Oct: Amilie/Robert Macaire (entire)
27 Oct: Amilie/Musical Pasticcio/Sudden Thoughts (farce)

30 Oct (Tuesday): Amilie/Sudden Thought (farce)
31 Oct: Amilie/Musical Pasticcio/My Young Wife and Old Umbrella (farce)

BOSTON. 5-23 NOVEMBER 1838. TREMONT STREET THEATRE.

5 Nov (Monday): Amilie/State Secrets (farce)
6 Nov: Amilie/The Citizen (burletta)
7 Nov: Amilie/Irish Tutor (farce)
8 Nov: Amilie/Young Widow (comedy)
9 Nov: Amilie/Truth! or, a Glass too Much (drama)

12 Nov (Monday): Sonnambula/Truth
13 Nov: Sonnambula/Does Your Mother Know You're Out (comedy)
14 Nov: Sonnambula/Truth
15 Nov: Sonnambula/Little Sins and Pretty Sinners (farce)
16 Nov: Sonnambula/Truth

19 Nov (Monday): Guy Mannering/The Waterman. Wilson benefit.
20 Nov: Sonnambula/Little Sins
21 Nov: Sonnambula/Musical Pasticcio. Seguin benefit
22 Nov: State Secrets (farce)/Sonnambula
23 Nov: Sonnambula/Vocal Concert. Shirreff benefit

PROVIDENCE, RI. 26-30 NOVEMBER 1838. PROVIDENCE THEATRE.

26 Nov (Monday): Love in a Village/Lady and the Devil
27 Nov: Guy Mannering/Perfection, or the Lady of Munsrer
28 Nov: Clari, or the Maid of Milan/No Song, No Supper
29 Nov: Guy Mannering/comic dance, Mr Burns/Miller's Maid (romantic Melo Drama)

NEW YORK. 3-21 DECEMBER 1838. NATIONAL THEATRE.

3 Dec (Monday): Amilie/Valet de Sham (farce)
4 Dec: Amilie/Modern Antiques! (farce)
5 Dec: Fra Diavolo/Valet de Sham
6 Dec: Fra Diavolo/Shocking Events! (farce)
7 Dec: Fra Diavolo/The Spoil'd Child! (farce)
8 Dec: Amilie/The Dead Shot (farce)

10 Dec (Monday): Sonnambula
11 Dec: Sonnambula/Deaf as a Post!
12 Dec: Sonnambula/The Bengal Tiger (farce)
13 Dec: Sonnambula/Illustrious Stranger (farce)
14 Dec: Sonnambula/Stranger
15 Dec: Sonnambula/Uncle John (farce)

17 Dec (Monday): Sonnambula/Miller & His Men
18 Dec: Amilie/Uncle John
19 Dec: Fra Diavolo/Cramond Brig (burletta). Wilson benefit
20 Dec: Amilie/Une Bonne Bouche Musicale. Seguin benefit
21 Dec: Sonnambula/No Song, No Supper. Shirreff benefit

that "the music [of this opera] can be heard many times with increased pleasure, --with every fresh hearing new designs and effects are developed." He added, "an opera to be worth hearing should bear successfully many repetitions." (Pennsylvanian, 24 January 1839; Philadelphia National Gazette, 21 April 1840) Finally, Joseph Sill, our reliable source of behind-the-scenes attitudes towards opera, made similar comments in 1841. "In the evening," he wrote, "a large party of us went to see the Opera of "Norma" and were more delighted than on our last Visit--Every representation develops new beauties in the orchestra, in the Songs, Duetts, & Chorusses that we did [not] discover before." (Sill, 29 January 1841)

If a performer's engagement was for an extended period (more than one or two weeks)--as was the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe's December re-engagement in New York--the management would mount several additional "new" operas, or a combination of the works already introduced, performed on alternate evenings. (For a list of the operas performed by Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin from October through December 1838, see Table 3.) Usually the company chose as its second or third opera one that was a guaranteed audience favorite--especially if, as in the case of Wallack's singers, the first production was of a new work. This had certainly been the case in Boston, where even the newspaper critic was crying for the production of La Sonnambula, "old as the piece is." The performance pattern of Wallack's star troupe during its second visit to New York in December 1838 was typical. For the first two nights of their return engagement the singers performed Amilie, for the next three nights a "new" opera, Fra Diavolo, then Amilie again on Saturday night. For the entire second week the troupe produced La Sonnambula, and during the

the third week gave all three operas on different nights. Although Shirreff did not keep records of the financial receipts for each of these performances, the records she did keep in 1839 generally support managerial decisions to change operas. Extraneous circumstances (weather, the night of the week, a benefit performance, etc.) had an important effect on attendance, but almost invariably (excepting benefits) the first performance of a work drew the largest crowd, and subsequent performances attracted ever-smaller ones.[32]

The Tour Continues: Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia

At the conclusion of their December re-engagement at the National, the trio of vocal stars took to the road once again. This time they headed south from New York for a seven-week trip that included performances in Washington (one week), Baltimore (two weeks), and Philadelphia (four weeks). (For information about the operas performed in each city, see Table 4.) The singers' reception in all three cities was enthusiastic. "Some of the choicest songs" from Amilie were encored the night of its second performance in Washington, and the singers' final appearance there on 29 December ended with a "tumult of applause" from a "numerous and brilliant" audience. (Washington National Intelligencer, 28-29 December 1838) In Baltimore, where "the Grand Romantic Opera of Amilie . . . elicited the unqualified approbation" of the citizens, the "musical public" was "thrown into ecstasies by the

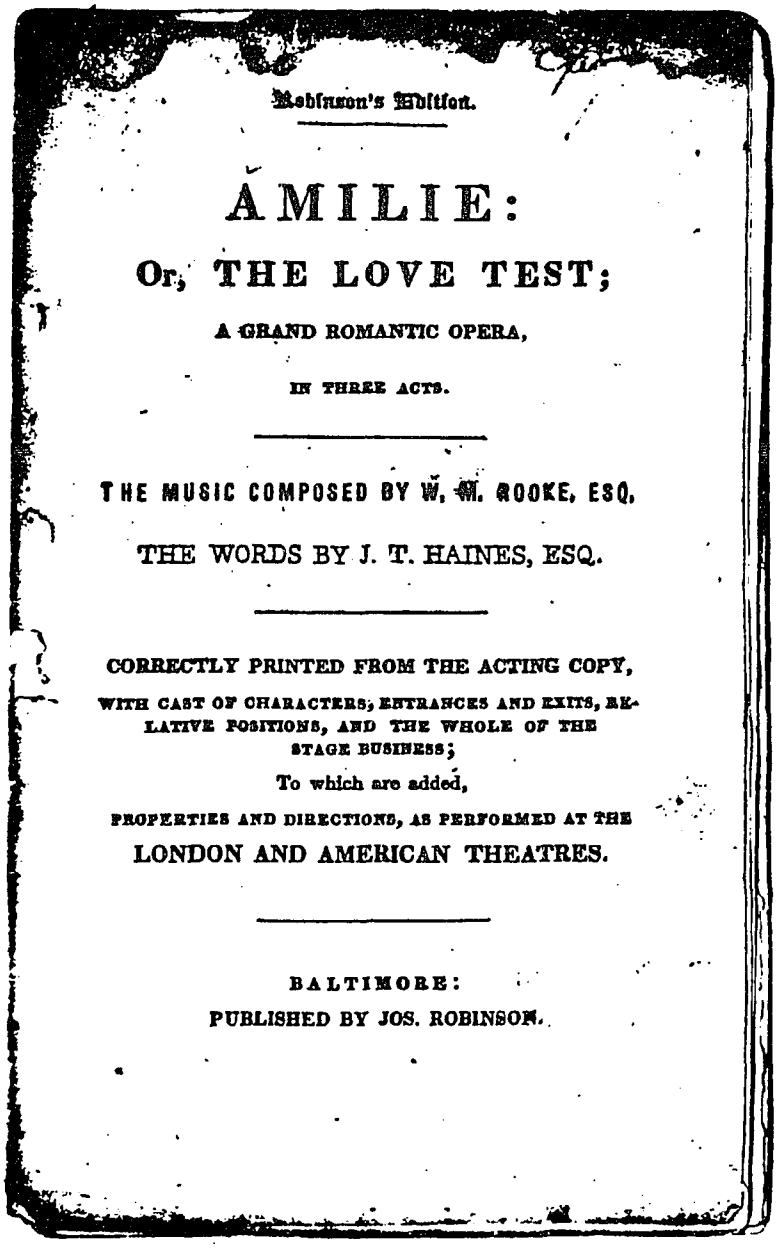
32. As an example, Fra Diavolo was introduced in Philadelphia during the third week of the troupe's first engagement there. On 29 January 1839 the house took in $730; for the subsequent four performances the takes were $570; $520; $362, and $481 (Saturday night). See financial ledger, Shirreff Collection.

performances of the most delightful cantatrice that has ever charmed the ear." (American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, 5 January 1839; Baltimore Sun, 5 January 1839)

In Philadelphia the singers, although well received in general, ran into some difficulties with Amilie--but of a different sort than those they had encountered in Boston. Back in October, when the stars had made their successful American debut at the National Theatre in New York, Francis Wemyss, by then the manager of Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, had been watching carefully. Amilie's popularity had so impressed him that he had quickly engaged several vocal stars and a number of New York choristers, and had mounted a production of his own in Philadelphia in November. Starring Antoinette Otto, William Brough, and the singer/actor Thomas Bishop, Amilie had been received, according to Wemyss, with "cheers, and such applause as rewards a manager . . . by the knowledge that the receipts of his treasury will be increased." (Wemyss, 305) The opera ran for two full weeks at the Walnut Theatre (19 November to 1 December 1838) and was judged a great success.[33]

The Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe did not open at the house competing with Wemyss's, the Chestnut Street Theatre, until 14 January 1839--a full three months after their debut performance in New York. The fact that Wemyss had stolen a great deal of their thunder by pre-empting their new opera, however, became apparent fairly quickly. The singers chose to open their month-long engagement with a safe and sure crowd-pleaser, La Sonnambula, probably in order to give the Chestnut

33. Arthur Herman Wilson, A History of the Philadelphia Theatre 1835-1855 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), 198.



Robinson's Edition.

AMILIE:

Or, THE LOVE TEST;

A GRAND ROMANTIC OPERA,

IN THREE ACTS.

THE MUSIC COMPOSED BY W. M. ROOKE, ESQ.

THE WORDS BY J. T. HAINES, ESQ.

CORRECTLY PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY,

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, ENTRANCES AND EXITS, RELATIVE POSITIONS, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS;

To which are added,

PROPERTIES AND DIRECTIONS, AS PERFORMED AT THE

LONDON AND AMERICAN THEATRES.

BALTIMORE:

PUBLISHED BY JOS. ROBINSON.

Libretto to Amilie, from the Baltimore production in January 1839.

TABLE 4: REPERTORY PERFORMED BY THE SHIRREFF/WILSON/SEGUIN VOCAL-STAR TROUPE, 24 DECEMBER 1838-9 FEBRUARY 1839

WASHINGTON. 24-29 DECEMBER 1838. NATIONAL THEATRE.

24 Dec (Monday): Sonnambula/Love in Humble Life (afterpiece)
25 Dec: Sonnambula/Vagrant, the Workman and the Manufacturer (new drama)
26 Dec: Amilie/Bee Hive (afterpiece)
27 Dec: Amilie/After the opera songs/Fish Out of Water (afterpiece). Shirreff benefit
28 Dec: Fra Diavolo/A Musical Pasticcio. Seguin benefit
29 Dec: Fra Diavolo/Musical Pasticcio

BALTIMORE. 31 DEC-12 JANUARY 1839. HOLLIDAY STREET.

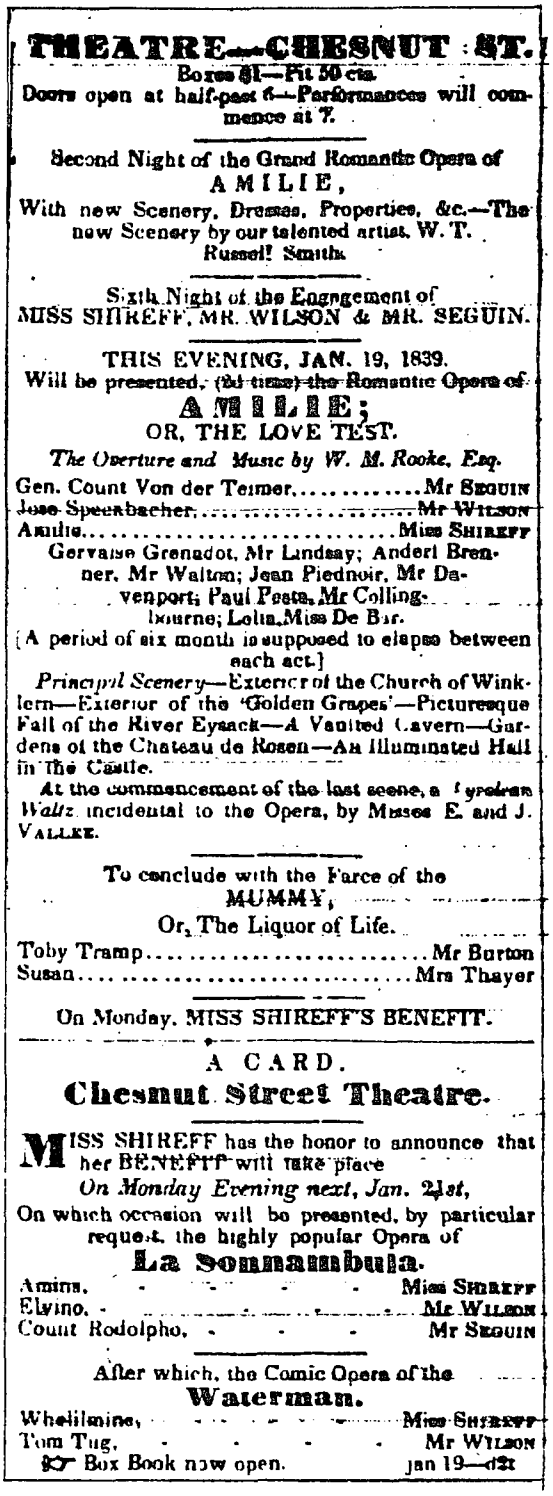
31 Dec (Monday): Amilie/Sudden Thoughts! or Fashionable Society
1 Jan: Sonnambula/Love in Humble Life (afterpiece)
2 Jan: Fra Diavolo/A Quiet Day (afterpiece)
3 Jan: Amilie/The Bath Road (afterpiece)
4 Jan: Amilie/Pasticcio
5 Jan: Sonnambula
7 Jan (Monday): Amilie/Pasticcio/favorite farce
8 Jan: Sonnambula/concert. Seguin benefit
9 Jan: Fra Diavolo/Cramond Brig. Wilson benefit
10 Jan: Cinderella/favorite farce
11 Jan: Cinderella/favorite selection of vocal music. Shirreff benefit
12 Jan: Sonnambula/Cramond Brig

PHILADELPHIA. 14 JANUARY-9 FEBRUARY 1839. CHESTNUT STREET.

14 Jan (Monday): Sonnambula/Katharine and Petruchio
15 Jan: Sonnambula/Gen. Bertrand's Farewell to France (favorite song)/The Spitfire (farce)
16 Jan: Sonnambula/Gallopade/State Secrets (farce)
17 Jan: Sonnambula/The Wandering Minstrel (farce)
18 Jan: Amilie/A New Cotillion (orch) from Robert le Diable/Fish out of Water
19 Jan: Amilie/Robert le Diable cotillion/The Mummy (farce)
21 Jan (Monday): Sonnambula/Misc Concert. Shirreff benefit
22 Jan: Amilie/Dead Shot (entertainment)
23 Jan: Amilie/My Friend the Governor (drama)
24 Jan: Amilie/The Spitfire
25 Jan: Sonnambula/New Wiener Gallopade, arr by F. Wieland (orch)/Comfortable Service (entertainment)
26 Jan: Amilie/New Wiener Gallopade/Fish out of Water
28 Jan (Monday): Sonnambula/Misc Concert. Wilson benefit
29 Jan: Fra Diavolo/My Friend the Governor
30 Jan: Fra Diavolo/Barbers at Court (entertainment)
31 Jan: Fra Diavolo/The Mummy (farce)
1 Feb: Fra Diavolo/New Trumpet Gallopade, orch/Comfortable Service (entertainment)
2 Feb: Fra Diavolo/Trumpet Galopade, arr F. Wieland (orch)/Turning the Tables
4 Feb: (Monday): Sonnambula/Trumpet Gallopade/Perfection/Musical entertainment [Shirreff sick]
5 Feb: Sonnambula
6 Feb: Cinderella /vocal and instr concert. Seguin benefit [Shirreff sick]
7 Feb: Cinderella/Young Widow (farce) [Shirreff sick]
8 Feb: Guy Mannering/New French Cotillion (orch)/A Day after the Wedding (farce) [Shirreff sick]

Theatre company time to rehearse the new opera. They unveiled Amilie on the fifth night of their engagement, and for the first few performances the new work drew fairly well. The company attracted "a splendid house" for opening night (18 January) and "an excellent house" the next evening. (Shirreff Diary, 18-19 January 1839; Wemyss, 305) Even the local critics expressed enthusiasm. After Amilie's second presentation on 19 January the reviewer for The Pennsylvanian commented positively about the opera's "pleasing melodies and effective choruses." He described the work as "admirably sustained throughout, both on the stage and in the orchestra," and concluded that it "cannot fail" in Philadelphia. (The Pennsylvanian, 21 January 1838) It seems, however, that the Philadelphians who flocked to the Chestnut Street Theatre for the first two nights of the opera wished primarily to see and to hear the celebrated new prima donna, and to compare her performance of Amilie with that by Madame Otto (who had been well received the previous November). After this wish was fulfilled, however, the audiences melted away. By the company's third presentation, Philadelphia enthusiasm for the work had declined precipitously. Shirreff noted in her diary on 22 January that the company had attracted a "bad house" that evening. The next day she recorded, "not a very good house--seems this opera will not do as much here as in New York--" and on the 24th she wrote, "confirmed in my opinion about this opera [in Philadelphia]."[34] The audience for the final

34. Shirreff diary, 22-24 January 1839, Shirreff Collection. Financial information from Shirreff's financial ledger likewise portrays a precipitous decline in the opera's popularity. On its opening night the house take was $676 in paid admissions; on the second night the theatre took in $607. The subsequent three performances, however, netted $455 (on Tuesday 22 January), $302 (on Wednesday), and $230 (on Thursday). Financial ledger, Shirreff Collection.



THEATRE—CHESNUT ST.

Boxes $1—Pit 50 cts.
Doors open at half-past 6—Performances will commence at 7.

Second Night of the Grand Romantic Opera of
AMILIE,
With new Scenery, Dresses, Properties, &c.—The new Scenery by our talented artist, W. T. Russell Smith.

Sixth Night of the Engagement of
MISS SHIREFF, MR. WILSON & MR. SEGUIN.

THIS EVENING, JAN. 19, 1839.
Will be presented, (2d time) the Romantic Opera of
AMILIE;
OR, THE LOVE TEST.

The Overture and Music by W. M. Rooke, Esq.

Gen. Count Von der Teimer.....Mr SEGUIN
~~Jose Speenbacher.....Mr WILSON~~
Amilie.....Miss SHIREFF
Gervaise Grenadot, Mr Lindsay; Anderl Brenner, Mr Walton; Jean Piednoir, Mr Davenport; Paul Pasta, Mr Collingbourne; Lolia, Miss De Bar.

[A period of six month is supposed to elapse between each act.]

Principl Scenery—Exterior of the Church of Winklern—Exterior of the 'Golden Grapes'—Picturesque Fall of the River Eysack—A Vaulted Cavern—Gardens of the Chateau de Rosen—An Illuminated Hall in the Castle.

At the commencement of the last scene, a *Tyrolean Waltz* incidental to the Opera, by Misses E. and J. VALLEE.

To conclude with the Farce of the
MUMMY,
Or, The Liquor of Life.
Toby Tramp.....Mr Burton
Susan.....Mrs Thayer

On Monday, MISS SHIREFF'S BENEFIT.

A CARD.
Chesnut Street Theatre.

MISS SHIREFF has the honor to announce that her BENEFIT will take place
On Monday Evening next, Jan. 21st,
On which occasion will be presented, by particular request, the highly popular Opera of
La Somnambula.
Amina, - - - - - Miss SHIREFF
Elvino, - - - - - Mr WILSON
Count Rodolpho, - - - - Mr SEGUIN

After which, the Comic Opera of the
Waterman.
Whellilmina, - - - - - Miss SHIREFF
Tom Tug, - - - - - Mr WILSON

☞ Box Book now open. jan 19—d2t

Advertisement for a production of Amilie at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Underneath is an advertisement for Jane Shirreff's benefit performance, to be held on 21 January.

performance of Amilie during that engagement was slightly larger. In her diary on 26 January, Shirreff noted, "Amilie. a better house than the lst time it was done, but 'tis not relished [here.]" (Shirreff Diary, 26 January 1839) The critic for the Philadelphia National Gazette was much more blunt in his evaluation of the opera's reception. "We had intended to have prepared an analysis of the music [of Amilie]," he wrote during the company's second week, "but as the production has entirely failed, we deem the matter not worth while." (National Gazette, 26 January 1838)

Wemyss, who wrote about his theatrical coup in his memoirs, pointed out that although "the opera was better done at the Chestnut Street Theatre as a whole," his own presentation had been sufficient "to destroy any great excitement; the airs had become familiar, and notwithstanding the full force of the chorus from the National Theatre, [the Chestnut Street production] failed to draw money." (Wemyss, 315-316) Wemyss admitted cheerfully that his ploy had been "one of those fair (unfair) movements in management, which frequently overthrow well-laid schemes." (Wemyss, 316) When the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe returned to Philadelphia two months later (in early April 1839) they gave Amilie another try, and the results were much more gratifying; Shirreff concluded that Philadelphians "seemed to like it better than on our former visit--."[35] For the remainder of this engagement, however, the stars gave performances of Fra Diavolo and the perennials La Sonnambula

35. Shirreff Diary, 18 April 1838. The critic of the National Gazette, however, was not convinced. He wrote that he much preferred the vocal-star troupe's second novelty (Adolphe Adam's The Postillion of Longjumeau), and referred to Amilie as a "bald eruditie." See National Gazette, 23 April 1840.

and Cinderella. Auber's opera met with "great success," and the Bellini, which Shirreff astutely chose for her benefit performance on 21 January, attracted the largest house of the engagement.[36]

The comment by Francis Wemyss that the Chestnut Street Theatre production of Amilie in January had included "the full force of the chorus from the National Theatre" raises an important issue about vocal-star troupes in general and about the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe of 1838-39 in particular. As Wemyss's statement suggests, vocal stars of the 1820s and 1830s--who (as we have seen) usually travelled singly or in troupes of two, three, or four--occasionally toured with larger contingents, consisting of members of the stock company of a particular theatre. The latter took secondary roles and functioned as a chorus; this arrangement temporarily transformed a vocal-star troupe into something much closer to the English opera companies of the late 1840s and 1850s.

American theatres in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and New Orleans were the most likely houses to engage vocal-star troupes in the 1820s and 1830s, because their stock companies generally were strong enough to support opera productions adequately. Theatres in smaller towns such as Providence, Washington, and Baltimore, however, occasionally also wished to hire vocal stars for limited engagements, especially if a particular combination of singers was creating a major stir elsewhere. When the manager of such a theatre engaged vocal stars, however, it usually was for performances of the more old-fashioned

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36. The Pennsylvanian, 31 January 1839; financial ledger, 21 January 1839, Shirreff Collection.

operas of the ballad-opera repertory (such as the operas that Shirreff and Wilson performed in Providence), because the stock-company players already knew these works. If a local theatre wished to produce a more elaborate opera, or a new work that was creating a furor, the manager was forced to hire additional musicians to supplement his stock-company performers.

Occasionally, managers even in the larger cities (such as Boston and Philadelphia) had their interest piqued by a successful new group of performers or a particularly celebrated new theatrical work, and they, too, often wished to engage such popular attractions. In the case of a new opera, however, some were unwilling to absorb the significant overhead costs associated with its production (which included the copying of orchestral and choral parts, the manufacture of new costumes and scenery, and the training of the chorus and the orchestra). In both cases (small theatres that wished to mount a work that was not in the ballad-opera repertory and larger theatres whose management balked at the additional costs incurred by the production of a new opera), a theatre was more likely to engage a vocal-star troupe if, in fact, it was more like a real opera company--including singers for all the important roles, a chorus, and occasionally instrumentalists to augment the orchestra.[37]

The manager of the theatre where a new opera had been premièred sometimes could be prevailed upon to "lend" some of the members of his stock company to other theatres for short engagements. This practice

37. Sometimes, however, such fiscal caution backfired--as it did for the management of the Chestnut Street Theatre in January 1839.

was to the benefit of the manager who had mounted the original production, for by "lending" his already-trained chorus and singing actors he insured that the opera would continue to be produced, and therefore would remain in the public eye until the vocal stars could return to his own theatre for additional performances. It also provided work for the extra singing actors he had hired for the opera production, and kept them employed in the interim while non-operatic stars were performing at his theatre. It is also possible, on the other hand, that vocal stars themselves occasionally made a business arrangement with their original manager to "borrow" his stock company players for a short tour, perhaps in exchange for a percentage of their profits on the road.

In any case, during the 1838-39 season, James Wallack made one or the other type of arrangement regarding the disposition of the chorus and singing actors he had trained for Amilie, for over the course of their first six months in this country Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin toured with something of an entourage from the National Theatre. Cast lists from playbills of performances in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore include the names of various actors not in the ranks of the local stock companies.[38] Henry Horncastle, for example, appeared in Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia; Andrew Andrews's name shows up on playbills from Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston; and Mr. Duggan performed in Washington and Baltimore. All three

38. Extra performers did not appear with Shirreff and Wilson during their last-minute engagement at the Providence Theatre, which suggests that the troupe's other engagements (in Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, and Baltimore) had been arranged ahead of time, possibly by Wallack. The singers' performance in Providence of works exclusively from the older ballad-opera repertory also indicates that they functioned there as a true vocal-star troupe (relying entirely on the local stock company for support).

had appeared with the singing stars in their debut engagement in New York; as we have seen, Horncastle and Andrews were both members of Wallack's company.[39] The Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser actually announced to its readers in December of 1839 that "Mr. Horncastle, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Benetti, Mr. Thornton, Mr. Kavanaugh, and Miss Thornton," all described as employees of the National Theatre in New York, had been permitted "by James Wallack, Esq. . . . to accept the engagement" in Baltimore. (Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, 25 December 1839) Furthermore, in both Baltimore and Washington the performances by the visiting vocal-star troupe, according to local newspapers, were "sustained and supported by . . . the CHORUS of the National Theatre, N. Y." (in Baltimore) and assisted by "the whole of the Operatic Corps of the National Theatre, in New York" (in Washington).[40] The number of additional singer/actors who performed with the vocal stars varied from theatre to theatre, depending, perhaps, on the strength of the local stock company. A larger number of National Theatre actors performed with the star singers during their engagements at the smaller theatres in Washington and Baltimore, for example, than when they appeared with the more-complete local companies

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39. See Ireland, II:274 and playbills, Shirreff Collection. Mr. Duggan has been identified only as a "singing actor." See Odell, IV:715.

40. American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, 25 December 1839; Washington National Intelligencer, 24 December 1838. See also playbills from the performances in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore in the Shirreff Collection.

of Philadelphia and Boston.[41]

Whether Wallack had agreed to lend part of his stock company to the three vocal stars as part of his original contract with them, or whether this arrangement was made after the singers and Amilie had proven to be so successful in New York in October is unknown.[42] The arrangement itself, however, was rather an uncommon one for vocal stars. In fact, during the subsequent theatrical season (1839-40), Shirreff, Wilson, and the Seguins traveled only with other principal singers. All

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41. The cast information is from playbills in the Shirreff Collection; also from advertisements in the following newspapers: Boston: Evening Transcript and Morning Post (5-23 November 1838); Baltimore: American & Commercial Advertiser and Daily Advertiser (31 December 1838-13 January 1839); Philadelphia: The Pennsylvanian, North American, and Philadelphia Gazette (14 January-9 February 1839); Washington: National Intelligencer, (24-29 December 1839). Information on the 1838-39 stock companies of the New York and Philadelphia theatres is from Ireland, II:274 and Odell, IV:334 (National Theatre) and Wilson, 103 (Chestnut St. Theatre).

42. No details of Wallack's management or of contractual agreements between the manager and the troupe have survived, so any statements about management practices are conjectural. Very little, in fact, is known about theatrical or musical management during this period. The closest study that exists is Alfred Bernheim's. Although the thrust of Bernheim's study is theatre in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the author does include a survey of colonial and ante-bellum theatrical practices. Another useful study, which concentrates on sectional theatrical developments, is James Dormon Jr.'s admirable Theatre in the Ante Bellum South, 1815-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967). Some management issues are also dealt with in various studies of individual theatrical managers, as in, for example, William Carson's excellent books The Theatre on the Frontier: The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage (Chicago: University Press, 1932) and Managers in Distress: The St. Louis Stage, 1840-1844 (St. Louis: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1949), both of which deal with the careers of Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow; Old Drury of Philadelphia by Reese D. James (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), based on the daily account books of William Wood's Chestnut Street Theatre; James Napier Wilt, "History of the Two Rice Theatres in Chicago from 1847 to 1857" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Chicago, 1923); and Beatrice L. Nugent, "Benedict DeBar's Management of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, Louisiana 1853-1861" (Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1967). In the area of musical management the pickings are even slimmer. Laurence Lerner's study "The Rise of the Impresario: Bernard Ullman and the Transformation of Musical Culture in Nineteenth Century America" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970, is a useful start, but unfortunately contains many errors. A more recent and quite valuable contribution, however, is R. Allen Lott's "The American Concert Tours of Leopold de Meyer, Henri Herz, and Sigismond Thalberg" (Ph.D dissertation, City University of New York, 1986), part of which covers (much more thoroughly) some of the same ground attempted by Lerner.

the other parts in the operas in which they performed--including the chorus--were taken by members of the stock companies of the theatres where they were engaged.

The identity of the singers' business agent during the 1838-39 season is unknown; it is possible that Wallack or his business manager worked on their behalf to set up engagements at the major theatres in the Northeast. Extant correspondence between performers and managers active during the antebellum period suggests that although some engagements (especially at the more prominent theatres) were set up months in advance, it was certainly possible to make last-minute arrangements--especially if the performers were well known, or if they were involved in a production that was turning out to be particularly popular.[43] That Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin successfully negotiated contracts to perform at such important theatres as the Tremont in Boston and the Chestnut Street in Philadelphia indicates that someone was doing advance work; the last-minute engagement of Shirreff and Wilson in Providence, however, also suggests that--at least in the autumn--there was still some room for flexibility in their schedule.

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43. See, for examples, letters in the William James Davis Collection, 1846-1858, Manuscript Division, ICHi; letter from C. M. Bochsa to Messr Peters and Field, Music House, Cincinnati, 19 June 1848, Manuscript Division, ICHi, and correspondence in the John T. Ford Theatre Collection, Manuscript Division, DLC.

Disagreements, Illnesses, and Economic Triumphs

Towards the end of their engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre in February 1839, the vocal-star troupe began to fray around the edges. By that time the singers had been working together for three and one-half months, and the pressure of daily performances and constant travel was beginning to take a toll. No information in the public press hints that there was discord among any of the singers in the troupe, but several incidents that occurred during and shortly after the Philadelphia engagement--as recorded by Shirreff in her diary--indicate that rapport among the singers was no longer particularly good. It is possible that this personal discord was the result of--and certainly it was exacerbated by--a serious crisis that faced the troupe in early February: during the first week of that month Jane Shirreff fell seriously ill.

Overall, February and early March was a bad time for Jane Shirreff. She first mentioned not feeling well on Wednesday 30 January, when she complained of a "frightful cold"; nevertheless, she appeared in Fra Diavolo that night. On the 31st she was confined to bed all day, but felt well enough to perform that evening. (Shirreff diary) On Sunday she complained of a "very sore" throat, and on Monday, despite being "very ill," participated in the company's rehearsal for Cinderella, in which she was to appear that evening (in the troupe's première performance of that opera in Philadelphia). She left the rehearsal feeling "much worse," and after consultation with both a physician and with Robert Maywood (the manager of the Chestnut Street

Theatre), Maywood decided to have an apology printed and distributed to the public, and to substitute the familiar (and less demanding) La Sonnambula for that evening's performance. Shirreff noted in her diary that she "got through [La Sonnambula] wonderfully," but as a result she felt "much worse," and on Tuesday was confined to bed, unable to sing. This, of course, threw the troupe's plans for the remainder of the Philadelphia engagement into disarray; evidently Mrs. Sharpe took over Shirreff's roles for the rest of the week. (Playbills, Shirreff Collection, 5-9 February 1839)

In retrospect, the soprano's attempt to continue performing clearly backfired; instead of taking a few days off to recover, she kept singing and as a consequence seriously aggravated her deteriorating health. Shirreff never stated the reasons for her persistence; perhaps she simply underestimated the seriousness of her illness. And, of course, there was always the financial incentive: if she did not perform she was not paid. But more intriguing is the speculation that Shirreff pushed herself for reasons of professional competition and jealousy.[44] The company, after all, had in the wings another fully competent soprano, Anne Seguin, who was ready to take over should Shirreff falter. Edward Seguin was desirous of boosting his wife's professional career (she had performed very little since their arrival in the United States

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44. Shirreff's attempts to continue to perform (for whatever the reason) are in marked contrast with the Italian prima donnas of the late 1840s and 1850s who, as we shall see in Chapter 3, had a reputation among Americans for feigning illness. In fact, despite her obvious illness, at least one of Edward Seguin's supporters believed that the soprano was shirking her duty, for she mentions receiving "a most impertinent anonymous letter respecting my not playing Seguin's [benefit] night." See Shirreff diary, 9 February 1839.

four months before), and he had been lobbying on her behalf; Francis Wemyss, in fact, later wrote that the troupe eventually fell apart because the bass wished to "bring his wife more prominently before the audience." (Wemyss, 327)

Shirreff's illness during the first week of February gave Seguin his first opportunity to urge that his wife be hired as a temporary substitute, and the fact that Shirreff continued to sing despite being sick must have been frustrating and infuriating to him. That the soprano's persistence negatively colored Edward Seguin's behavior towards her is clear, for Shirreff began to note disagreements with him at precisely this time. On 1 February, for example, when Shirreff performed despite having a "frightful cold," she noted in her diary being "provoked with Seguin"; the next day she was much more than provoked, for she indignantly wrote, "Mr. Seguin behaved so ill during the whole of my character scene [in Fra Diavolo] that I resolved never to play in that opera again with him--told [manager] Maywood &c."[45] The nature of Seguin's alleged poor conduct is a complete mystery, for no reviews or newspaper commentary mention any abnormalities in this performance.

When Shirreff was unable to continue to perform, the Chestnut Theatre management turned to Mrs. Sharpe (an established vocal star and stock-company singer) rather than to Anne Seguin (an unknown) to take the prima donna's place. Occasional comments made by the soprano in her diary during February and April, however, suggest that by early spring

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45. Shirreff diary, 2 February 1839. This threat, of course, was not carried out.

she and the bass were barely amicable. In late February--by now performing in New York--Shirreff once again expressed outrage, this time because of "shameful conduct on the part of Seguin about the opera [La Sonnambula]." (Shirreff Diary, 26 February 1839) Finally, on 8 April, once again back in Philadelphia, the troupe was scheduled to perform Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro and Seguin, who had returned to New York with his wife for the weekend, fell ill and was unable to perform. (Mr. Walton of the Chestnut Street Theatre stock company took his place.) (The Pennsylvanian, 10 April 1839) Shirreff's mention of Seguin's absence clearly suggests an animosity towards her fellow-performer: "4/8. Marriage of Figaro--splendid house--Mr. Seguin not from New York--ill--him!!" (Shirreff diary, 8 April 1839)

Shirreff missed a total of five performances in Philadelphia, and the entire first week of the subsequent New York engagement. (See Table 5 for a schedule of the troupe's spring appearances.) She attempted to resume performing on Monday 18 February and managed to sing well enough for that week, but obviously was still not fully recovered, for the critic of one of the New York newspapers suggested that "the friends of Miss Shirreff" should "advise her [to] withdraw for a few nights, for her exertions under the indisposition through which she labors are sufficient to prove permanently injurious to the voice." (Daily Express, 21 February 1839) Shirreff persevered, however, and as a consequence suffered a relapse. During the last week of February she noted in her diary that she felt "weak and languid" and "very poorly--hoarse and ill"; on the 27th she was, by her own admission, "too weak and ill to attend rehearsal." (Shirreff diary, 24, 26, 27 February) Somehow she managed to perform for the remainder of the week, but finally approached

TABLE 5: PERFORMANCES BY THE SHIRREFF/WILSON/SEGUIN VOCAL-STAR TROUPE, 18 FEB-22 JUNE 1839

NEW YORK. 18 FEB-30 MARCH 1839. NATIONAL THEATRE.

11 Feb (Monday): Barber of Seville/Nicholas Nickleby
12 Feb: ditto
13 Feb: ditto
14 Feb: Barber of Seville/The Spitfire
15 Feb: (drama)
16 Feb: Il Fanatico per la Musica/Barber/Gentleman in Difficulties/Grand Musical Pasticcio. De Begnis benefit
18 Feb (Monday): Amilie/The Spitfire
19 Feb: Amilie/Deaf as a Post
20 Feb: Sonnambula/Nicolas
21 Feb: Fra Diavolo/Spitfire
22 Feb: Amilie/Nicolas
23 Feb: Fra Diavolo/Spitfire
25 Feb (Monday): Amilie/Crammond Brig
26 Feb: Sonnambula/Waterman
27 Feb: Amilie/Crammond Brig
28 Feb: Conrad and Medora/Nicholas
1 March: Conrad and Medora/Spitfire
2 March: Amilie/Turning the Tables
4 March (Monday): Rob Roy/Falls of the Clyde [Shirreff sick]
5 March: Cinderella/Uncle John (Wilson, Seguins) [Shirreff sick]
6 March: Cinderella/Deep as a Post [Shirreff sick]
7 March: Rob Roy/Nicholas (Wilson, Mrs. Bailey) [Shirreff sick]
8 March: Cinderella/Spitfire (Wilson, Seguins) [Shirreff sick]
9 March: issue missing
11 March (Monday): Amilie/LaFitte
12 March: Sonnambula/LaFitte
13 March: Amilie/LaFitte
14 March: Fra Diavolo/LaFitte
15 March: Love in a Village/Lafitte. Shirreff benefit
16 March: Guy Mannering/LaFitte. Wilson benefit
18 March (Monday): Amilie/LaFitte
19 March: Marriage of Figaro
20 March: Marriage of Figaro/concert. Seguin benefit
21 March: Sonnambula/LaFitte
22 March: Amilie/LaFitte
23 March: Marriage of Figaro/LaFitte
25 March (Monday): Marriage of Figaro/Instrumental concert. Mitchell benefit
26 March: Marriage of Figaro/Poor Soldier
27 March: Marriage of Figaro/LaFitte
28 March: Amilie/Pasticcio/Cinderella
29 March: Sonnambula (act I)/Amilie (act 3)/Clari
30 March: Fra Diavolo/concert/Clari. Wilson benefit

PHILADELPHIA. 1-27 APRIL 1838. CHESTNUT STREET THEATRE

1 April (Monday): Sonnambula/Pas de deux by Misses J&H Vallee/New Fancy Gallopade (orch)/Touch and Take.
2 April: Fra Diavolo/Pas de Deux/Fortunes Frolic
3 April: Sonnambula/Pas de Deux/Married Rake
4 April: Fra Diavolo/Pas de Deux/Parisian Gallopade (orch)/ The Secret
5 April: Sonnambula/Pas de Deux/Parisian Gallopade/A Day after the Wedding
6 April: Fra Diavolo/Pas de Deux/Parisian Gallopade/Dumb Belle

8 April (Monday): Marriage of Figaro/Pas de Deux/Raising the Wind
9 April: Marriage of Figaro/Pas de Deux/Fortune's Frolic
10 April: Marriage of Figaro/Grand Concert. Wilson benefit
13 April: Figaro/Pas de Deux/The Secret
15 April (Monday): Cinderella/Pas de deux/Married Rake. Shirreff benefit
16 April: Cinderella/'Twas I, or the Truth a Lie
17 April: Cinderella/The Weathercock
18 April: Amilie/Pas de Deux/Rival Valets
20 April: Amilie/New Fancy Gallopade (orch)/'Twas I, or the Truth a Lie
22 April (Monday): Love in a Village/Sonnambula (act I)/New Fancy Gallopade
23 April: Amilie/The Waterman (opera singers perform in both)
24 April: Marriage of Figaro/Unfinished Gentleman.
27 April: Sonnambula/Crammond Brig. Shirreff and Wilson benefit

NEW YORK. 29 APRIL-22 JUNE 1839. NATIONAL THEATRE

29 April (Monday): Mountain Sylph/John Dibbs
30 April: Mountain Sylph/Dumb Belle
1 May: Mountain Sylph/Spitfire
2 May: Mountain Sylph/My Neighbor's Wife
3 May: Mountain Sylph/What Have I Done?
4 May: Mountain Sylph/What Have I Done?
6 May (Monday): Amilie/The Original
7 May: Mountain Sylph/The Original
8 May: Sonnambula/The Original
9 May: Amilie/What Have I Done?
10 May: Mountain Sylph/The Original
11 May: Mountain Sylph/The Middy Ashore
13 May (Monday): Cinderella/The Middy Ashore
14 May: Cinderella/No (operetta)
15 May: Cinderella/The Original
16 May: Amilie/Musical Pasticcio. Shirreff benefit
17 May: Cinderella/Gilderoy. Wilson benefit
18 May: issue missing
20 May (Monday): John of Paris/The Pleasant Neighbor/Gilderoy
21 May: Amilie/The Middy Ashore
24 May: Sonnambula [in diary]. newspaper: Amilie/What Have I Done?
25 May: Amilie/The Original
27 May (Monday): Amilie/The Middy Ashore
28 May: Fra Diavolo/The Original. Seguin benefit
31 May: La Sonnambula
6 June: La Gazza Ladra
7 June: La Gazza Ladra
8 June: La Gazza Ladra
21 June: Wilson benefit

Wallack and, as she put it, "arranged to have a week's cessation." (Shirreff diary, 1 March 1839) Altogether, Shirreff missed three weeks of performances--one in Philadelphia and two in New York. During this time she was sufficiently ill to have had sixty leeches applied (11 February) and her throat lanced (3 March). She was not able to resume a regular performance schedule until 11 March. (Shirreff diary, March 1839)

As a result of Shirreff's sickness, James Wallack allowed Anne Seguin to make her American debut at the National Theatre on 11 February, as Rosina in The Barber of Seville. In fact, after February (whether or not Jane Shirreff approved) the National's vocal-star troupe consisted of four singers. And Wallack, like the skilled manager he was, used both of his sopranos to his best advantage: spotlighting Seguin while Shirreff was ill, featuring the latter singer upon her recovery, and finally mounting operas throughout March (in particular The Marriage of Figaro) that used the talents of both. The troupe included both sopranos until it disbanded following their final performance of the 1838-39 season.[46]

The National's manager did not hesitate to take advantage of a second new soprano when his first one fell ill for a very simple reason. He was a businessman, and he was making money hand-over-fist with opera performances; furthermore, no other kind of dramatic fare was attracting

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46. Playbills, Shirreff Collection. The addition of Anne Seguin to the company must have been on an ad hoc basis, however, for according to information from Shirreff's financial ledger, the economic terms to which Wallack and the vocal stars had agreed earlier in the year did not change in the spring.

audiences of any size. "It would be more characteristic," commented a critic in March 1839, "if [the National] theatre were called the Opera House, for it is to the refined and elevating entertainments which music affords, that it owes all its prosperity."[47] A writer for the Spirit had expressed a similar view earlier that same month. "The entertainment which is most universal and absorbing in its attractions," he wrote, "is with us [the] Opera." (Spirit, 9 March 1839) So successful was the opera--and so moribund everything else Wallack tried--that he must have rued the day that he allowed his vocal stars to leave for the month of April to perform in Philadelphia. When they finally returned to the National following this engagement to the south, a New York critic welcomed them back with open arms. "Most gladly did we read the announcement that the vocalists of the opera [have] returned to us," he wrote.

> Another week without them and the National would have been as lifeless as a dead lion. It was pleasant to witness with what alacrity the lovers of music responded to the call, and filled the house on Monday evening. (The Corsair, 4 May 1839, 123)

The extent of the vocal stars' success at the National Theatre had taken almost everyone by surprise. Not only was Amilie a stunning triumph in New York, but Wallack's operatic forces were clearly instrumental in keeping his theatre open during the year. That his vocal stars had found a financial bonanza in the United States--and that

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47. The Corsair, 23 March 1839, 30. The writer might have had tongue in cheek when making this comment; the National Theatre, remember, had started out as New York's first Italian Opera House. See Chapter 3.

Wallack and the other theatre managers who had engaged the singers shared in this prosperity--is obvious not only from contemporary critical acclaim published in newspapers (which information, incidentally, is often unreliable) but also from the daily figures meticulously recorded by Shirreff in her 1839 financial ledger.[48]

The financial arrangement that the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe had with James Wallack (and with the other theatre managers under whom they performed) was standard. The theatre was guaranteed a certain amount of each evening's "take" (generally between $150 and $300, the figure varying from theatre to theatre depending on the size and prestige of the house and on various other circumstances, including what the manager could get the performers to agree to).[49] The daily receipts in excess of that amount were split four ways: one part for the theatre, one for each of the three singers. In addition, each of the stars was allowed a benefit performance, the total proceeds of which were split between the beneficiary and the management of the theatre.[50]

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48. Shirreff kept detailed financial accounting, including her terms of engagement, the total gross receipts, and her shares, for the period December 1838-May 1840. For the period October-December 1838 she noted only her earnings. See financial ledger, Shirreff Collection.

49. In Baltimore, for the vocal stars' engagement, the theatre's figure was $150; the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia was guaranteed $250, as was the National in New York for the company's engagements in October and December 1838 and in February-March of 1839. In October of 1839, however, the National was guaranteed $300 of each evening's receipts.

50. Singers usually agreed to one benefit per engagement, but occasionally there were extra joint benefits (Shirreff and Wilson enjoyed two of these during the 1838-39 season) and extra solo benefits (for example, in Philadelphia on 9 February and 27 April 1839). For a long engagement, the number of benefits increased. Performers sometimes also agreed to sing for a benefit for the manager (as the entire company did for Wallack on 19 April 1839), the orchestra director, the stage manager (as the company did for William Mitchell on 25 March 1839), or for certain members of the stock company, such as an old actor or actress who was retiring. These latter, however, generally were special events and not part of a performer's contract. See Spirit, 27 April 1839, Odell, IV:30, and financial ledger, 25 March 1839 and playbills, Shirreff Collection.)



John Wilson and Jane Shirreff in costume for Amilie.

The final engagement of the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin vocal-star troupe during the 1838-39 season lasted eight weeks (from 29 April through 22 June), and the amount earned by Jane Shirreff during that period clearly demonstrates the success that she and her companions enjoyed. Because of the scheduling of various benefit performances (hers and those of the others), her weekly earnings varied wildly, ranging from a low of $83.56 (during a week when there were several benefits) to a high of $481.75 (the week of her own benefit); her share of the earnings overall, however, were enviable, totalling $1165.25; in 1986 dollars this is roughly the equivalent of $11,900.00.[51] During this same period, Shirreff and Wilson also gave three vocal concerts in Philadelphia (on 23, 30 May, and 13 June), and her earnings amounted to $252.62 (today, $2,575.00). Jane Shirreff's total income for the eight weeks of 29 April through 22 June, then, was $1,417.87 ($14,475.00). Over the course of the entire 1838-39 season (during which the vocal stars performed operas, almost to the exclusion of concerts) Shirreff--despite missing three full weeks of work--netted the handsome sum of $13,098; in 1986 dollars this is the approximate equivalent of $133,600.00.

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51. Using formulae suggested by Gary Greene in "Understanding Past Currency in Modern Terms," The Sonneck Society Bulletin, vol XIII/2 (Summer 1987), 48.

In its July 1839 issue, The Corsair offered an assessment of the theatrical season just finished, the lengthy summary of which is worth quoting:

> Tragedy and the higher comedy have not lately had charms for [New York] audiences. . . . The tact of the manager at the National Theatre induced him to dash boldly into Opera, with a larger accession of vocal strength, all the members of which [were] entirely new to American hearers; to this novelty he added an Opera, not a bar of which had been heard in this side of the Atlantic; and to complete the charm he embellished his stage with fine scenery, and his actors with costly and appropriate costumes. The public were fascinated at once; an impulse was given, in the direction of Opera, and every species of performance that could be brought to bear against it, was deeply injured in the collision. The petite comedie, and the vaudeville . . . could not stand before it. Tragedy was helpless against it; the Ballet, at the beginning of the season, sank in its opposition. . . . Even the amusements proposed by the manager of the National itself, as reliefs to opera, only served to remove the superfluity of coin from his own treasury, and proved to him that he had been another Frankenstein--had effected a creation, the force of which he had not only under-calculated, but which presently became beyond his own control. 'Amilie! Amilie!' was the universal cry, and for a while was not merely paramount, but it reigned alone. . . . Thus opera carried it throughout [the season], and preparation for opera is still in hand, with all the care of the rival powers. (The Corsair, 27 July 1839)

Lovers of the legitimate drama were less than enthralled with what they had seen happen in their theatres in 1838 and 1839. "The sweet but senseless warblings of the Rossini music," this same critic lamented, "are listened to with real or affected rapture by thousands, whilst the lofty sentiment, the pure morality, the speaking nature of Shakespeare, drops silently and unregarded on the dull ear of man." (The Corsair, 27 July 1839) Nor was this the first time that disgruntled drama critics had used the increasing popularity of opera as incontrovertible evidence

of degraded public taste. During the preceding fifteen years the public triumph of any particular vocal star had elicited similar cries of warning that the public taste in general and the serious drama in particular were in serious danger. After a particularly successful engagement by a vocal-star troupe that included Elizabeth Austin, Elizabeth Feron, and Charles Horn at the Park Theatre in 1829, for example, the New York Mirror had observed,

> Although the fine old tragedies and comedies are found too solid and substantial fare for the light and fluttering intellects of the worthy denizens of New-York, yet opera, with its airy and graceful attractions, has found favour in their eyes, and they have flocked in considerable quantities . . . to listen to the stream of song that has been nightly poured forth at the Park theatre for this week past. (Mirror, 11 April 1829)

Several months later the same periodical published a letter to the editor whose author decried the engagement of vocal stars by the Park, and the neglect of dramatic stars such as Junius Booth and Edwin Forrest. "There is always a small number in every Community," he pointed out,

> who prefer what some term light entertainment, consisting of Farce, low Comedy and Opera . . . We would fain hope the wishes of those who are partial to something more intellectual and solid will now be consulted [and that] therefore, after Mrs. Knight's present engagement is concluded, there will not be another Opera produced, at least for two months. (Mirror, 13 October 1829)

This attitude towards opera as "light entertainment" is perhaps the best explanation for the success enjoyed by the Shirreff/Wilson/ Seguin troupe in the Northeast (and particularly in New York) during

the 1838-39 theatrical season. And their success is even better understood when one remembers that during this year parts of the Northeast (including New York) were either on the verge, or were already in the midst, of the severe depression that had been looming on the nation's economic horizon ever since the Panic of 1837. It is a truism that in times of depression the citizenry almost invariably prefer lighter entertainment--"airy and graceful attractions" or "sweet and senseless warblings," for example--to heavier dramatic fare. What is revealing, however--especially in view of our late-twentieth century attitude towards opera as serious art-music--is that during this period of economic distress, it was to precisely this musical-theatrical form that many Americans turned. It is clear that to many Americans of the antebellum period, opera was an enjoyable, rather lightweight--and above all, popular--type of theatrical entertainment.

Shirreff and Wilson, 1839-40

At the conclusion of the final National Theatre engagement in June, Wallack's vocal-star troupe broke up, and Shirreff and Wilson left New York almost immediately for a whirlwind summer tour of concert performances. It was standard practice for singers during much of the nineteenth century to make concert tours in the summer months, for most of the theatres were closed in July and August. Performers also tended to fall back on concert tours when other engagements fell through. Shirreff and Wilson, as we shall see, mounted concert tours during 1839 for both of these reasons. Their first one, which lasted eight weeks (2 July-28 August), took them through upper New York State, northern Ohio,

southern Michigan, and into Canada. (Their itinerary during these two months appears as Table 6.)

During this summer tour the two singers must have felt like they were back in the provinces of Great Britain. There were numerous other British artists traipsing around North America in July and August of 1839, and Shirreff records meetings with several of them. She visited the renowned British actress Ellen Tree at West Point and Albany, New York, and was called on by Elizabeth Richardson (the oldest daughter of the elder Joseph Jefferson, and a highly esteemed singer and actress with the Park Theatre company) in Toronto on 19 August. She also ran into the tenor Frederick Lyster (who was also on a concert tour) on two different occasions--in Troy, New York (on 6 July) and in Montreal (28 August). (Shirreff diary) All of these musicians and actresses had performed extensively in England, and Shirreff and Wilson probably knew them well. To a British stage performer active in North America in the late 1830s the world was small--and this part of it, clearly, was still a part of the London cultural sphere.

Anne and Edward Seguin, along with W. H. Latham, a popular buffo singer, likewise took to the concert circuit during these hot months.[52] They performed in a number of the same cities as Shirreff and Wilson, sometimes within a week of their competitors' concerts.[53] The two concert

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52. Latham made his American debut at the Park on 3 September 1834, as Figaro in The Barber of Seville. He performed widely with the stock companies of both the Park and the National theatres. Although apparently not a regular member of the National's stock company during the 1838-39 season, he had appeared with the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin forces during the season, as Lord Allcash in Fra Diavolo (5 December 1838) and as Basilo in The Barber of Seville (11 February 1839). See Odell IV:2, 295, 297 and Ireland, II:99.

53. For example, the Seguins gave Grand Vocal Concerts in Montreal on 21 and 23 August, the week before Shirreff and Wilson were to appear in that city. See Montreal Gazette, 20, 22 August 1839.

Table 6: Concert Tour of Jane Shirreff and John Wilson

2 July-2 September 1839

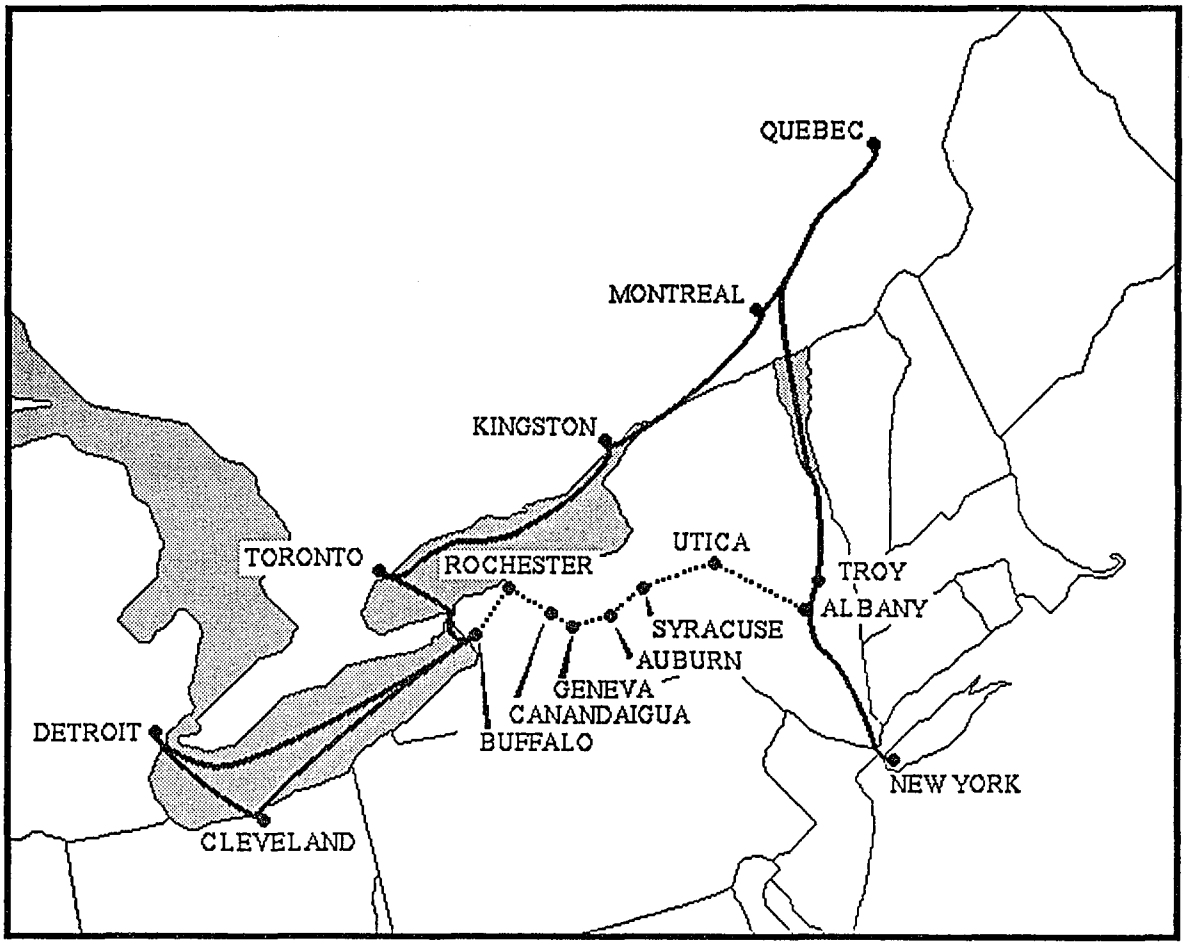
2 July	Albany, New York
8 July	Troy, New York
9 July	Albany
12 July	Utica, New York
13 July	Syracuse, New York
15 July	Auburn, New York
16 July	Syracuse
17 July	Geneva, New York
18 July	Canandaigua, New York
19 July	Rochester, New York
25 July	Buffalo, New York
30 July	Toronto, Canada
2 August	Buffalo
5 August	Toronto
8 August	Cleveland, Ohio
9 August	Cleveland
12 August	Detroit, Michigan
13 August	Detroit
16 August	Buffalo
19 August	Toronto
23 August	Kingston, Canada
28 August	Montreal, Canada
2 Sept	Montreal

troupes actually crossed paths in Quebec City on the last weekend in August, much to the consternation of Shirreff. When she and Wilson arrived in Quebec the morning of Friday 30 August, they discovered that their scheduled concert had been postponed from Friday to Saturday because the Seguins (who were singing in the same hall) had changed their night from Thursday to Friday. Before they had left Montreal to travel to Quebec, Shirreff and Wilson had scheduled a concert there for Monday September 2nd; there was no transportation available between the two cities on Sunday, and as a consequence the singers were forced to cancel their concert in Quebec and leave the city without having performed. Shirreff was understandably miffed. She and Wilson ran into the Seguins in the hotel lobby when they were leaving for Montreal on Saturday morning. "She had the arrogance," Shirreff recorded in her diary, "to speak to me as tho' nothing had happened--bah!" (Shirreff diary, 31 August 1839)

Shirreff travelled during this summer with her dog and her mother; Wilson had the companionship of his wife Mary.[54] Most of their

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54. It was not unusual for singers and other performers to travel with other members of their families; as Michael Baker points out in his study of nineteenth-century actors, "While the stock system predominated, acting was essentially a family affair. The family unit was central to almost all companies, large and small; indeed among the smallest troupes a single family might comprise . . . the whole company." See Baker, The Rise of the Victorian Actor (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1978), quoted in Arthur W. Bloom, "The Jefferson Company, 1830-1845," Theatre Survey. The American Journal of Theatre History, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1-2, 93-94. The same could be said for itinerant musical performers. Many, like the Seguins, were married to each other. It turns out, however, to be difficult to document this, for newspaper or periodical accounts almost never mention family relationships. For example, the bass Theodore Victor Giubilei was probably married to the dancer Mme. Proche Giubilei--for the two often appeared in the same engagements, in New York and elsewhere around the country. No newspaper confirmation of this, however, has come to light. (Ireland, II:299, 300) Many others--actors, dancers, singers--were related. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the baritone Charles T. Martyn was married to the soprano Miss Inverarity (who at least henceforth had the consideration to be known as Mrs. Martyn); later in the century Caroline Richings, a soprano vocal star, would travel around the United States with her adoptive actor-father, Peter; the actress and singer Charlotte Cushman was married to James G. Maeder, a theatre



Concert tour of Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, 2 July-2 September 1839.

transportation was by steamboat--up the Hudson from New York City, then to Troy, and by rail to Utica, then by canal to Syracuse and Auburn, New York. After returning to Syracuse from Auburn they continued on by stage to Geneva, Canandaigua, Rochester, Niagara, and Buffalo. They travelled between Buffalo and Toronto several times by steamboat, traversed the entire length of Lake Erie (stopping for concerts in both Cleveland and Detroit), and then turned east and went the entire length of Lake Ontario, stopping for a concert in Kingston, Ontario, before heading up the St. Lawrence River to Montreal and Quebec City. From Montreal they took a steamer down Lake Champlain; when they disembarked they took rail cars to Whitehall, New York. From there, in Shirreff's words, they "took a canal boat and finished the journey by coach--to Saratoga . . . a lovely place." (Shirreff diary, 4 September 1839) From the Springs they went on to Troy, New York, thence by boat down the river, back to their starting point, New York City. (For a map of their 1839 concert route, see page 162.)

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musician and composer; and the Ravel family, a renowned troupe of dancers and acrobats, was indeed a family.

Non-theatrical family members--spouses, parents, siblings, children--are almost never mentioned in the print media of the early nineteenth century. Barring a handful of chance references, one would assume that itinerant performers did not have families--or that they were tucked away back home somewhere, safe and sound. References to Shirreff's mother are limited to the list of passengers who arrived on the steamer Great Western from London on 24 September 1838, and to her diary. John Wilson's wife and the Seguins' children are likewise officially mentioned only in passenger lists--although Miss Shirreff does refer to "the Wilsons" and to "Mary" in her diary. The presence in the United States of the Seguin children is confirmed elsewhere by the death in 1843 of two of them of scarlet fever in Philadelphia while the Seguins were performing there. (Sill, 11 January 1843) Whether the three Seguin children normally travelled with their parents and just happened to be in Philadelphia, or whether the family made its home there is unknown.

Shirreff found parts of the trip quite enjoyable. She visited the falls in Trenton Falls Gorge, New York (near modern Berneveld, N. Y.) and was delighted by the "splendid sight"; she likewise enjoyed the "very beautiful scenery" around Geneva, New York (at the top of Seneca Lake, one of the Finger Lakes). (Shirreff diary, 11, 17 July) The steamer trips on the Great Lakes also must have been relaxing and enjoyable. But travelling by stage was hot, dusty, and fatiguing, and Shirreff repeatedly noted in her diary that she was very tired, ill, hoarse, or nervous. In Niagara she recorded that the weather was "oppressively hot" and further mentioned that the "room [was] so warm that [I] could not sleep"; in Kingston, Ontario, a month later it was still "intensely hot." (Shirreff diary, 20 July 1839; 21 August 1839) Much of the travellers' time during these two months was actually spent on the road. Whenever the troupe arrived at their destination a day or two prior to a concert, Shirreff would spend the extra time either practicing or reading.

After a week-long rest in New York in September, Shirreff and Wilson left for Philadelphia, where their operatic activities for the 1839-40 season commenced at the Chestnut Street Theatre on 16 September. They sang there for two weeks, then went to Baltimore for seven performances; for these two engagements they performed in a vocal-star troupe with the bass William F. Brough.[55] The singers' next engagement

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55. Brough shows up on playbills from performances in Baltimore dated October 1839 that are in the Shirreff Collection; his name is also mentioned in advertisements in the Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser on 30 September 1839. For Philadelphia, see Wemyss, 327; playbills for La Sonnambula, The Marriage of Figaro, and Cinderella in September 1839 in the Shirreff Collection; and advertisements in The Pennsylvanian, 16 September 1840. For more information on William Brough, see Chapters 1 and 6.

was at the National Theatre, where they (and the manager) hoped to duplicate their success of the previous season. James Wallack wanted to engage his original trio of vocal-stars, so Shirreff and Wilson parted company with Brough after the completion of their engagements in Philadelphia and Baltimore, and teamed up again with Edward Seguin.[56]

Considering the extent of their success during the 1838-39 season, Shirreff and Wilson can be forgiven for expecting another triumphant operatic tour of the Northeast in 1839-40. This, however, was not to be, for the 1839-40 theatrical season--to the misfortune of Shirreff, Wilson, Brough, the Seguins, Wallack, and the rest of the American theatrical community--was an unmitigated disaster. It was, in fact, the beginning of what one theatre historian has referred to as "perhaps the most grievous [period] in the history of the American stage." (Carson, Managers in Distress, 15) The depression that had been threatening the nation for several years affected different parts of the country at different times; by late 1839, however, the economic downswing had caught up with the Northeast. Imports were down, currency was scarce, people lost jobs. Theatrical activity, which typically flourishes during times of prosperity, came to a halt. By November 1839--only two months into the season--the New York Morning Herald reported that "at present writing theatricals are at a low ebb in this country--[with]

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56. The disintegration of the short-lived Shirreff/Wilson/Brough troupe--like the earlier break-up of the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe--might also have been the result of internal conflict. Some months after the second company disbanded, the soprano recorded in her diary that she had received "an extraordinary letter from Brough." She does not provide any details, but does mention being "very much hurt by such false accusations." (Shirreff diary, 9 December 1839) She must have written back to the bass, for two weeks later she noted, "Rec'd an answer from Brough in apology." (Shirreff diary, 25 December 1839) This series of entries suggests that Shirreff and Brough had suffered a misunderstanding or a disagreement while they were performing together.

every principal theatre losing money, including the Park and National in New York, the Chestnut in Philadelphia, and the Tremont in Boston." (16 November 1839) A month later the Spirit apologized for the dearth of theatrical news and expressed despair about the situation in general. "How all the difficulties of Managers--not in New York alone, but in Philadelphia, Boston, New Orleans, &c.--will terminate," he wrote, "it is impossible to conjecture."

> It cannot be that the taste for pleasures of this kind has suddenly become extinct; but it is very sure that the conduct of a theatre is now the most disastrous business that one can attempt. In England it is scarcely less so than in our own country. (Spirit, 26 December 1840)

Despite the grim economic situation, the trio of vocal stars remained guardedly optimistic about their immediate professional future. After all, they had enjoyed unprecedented success the previous year, much of it at the National Theatre in New York. And in the middle of October the same trio was scheduled to reopen at the same house. But fate intervened while Shirreff, Wilson, and Brough were still singing in Philadelphia. On 23 September, Wallack's National Theatre burned to the ground. As a consequence, when Shirreff and Wilson returned to New York following the conclusion of their Baltimore engagement, they opened--again with Edward Seguin--not at the National, but at Niblo's Theatre, which Wallack had rented the week after his house was consumed by flames. (Ireland, II:315) The manager's attempt to continue his season in rented quarters, however--hampered as it was by the general theatrical malaise--ended in failure. Wallack closed his theatre on 18 November; all the members of his company--and all the visiting artists engaged to appear during the upcoming season--were thrown out of work. Shirreff

and Wilson, suddenly unemployed, did what all singers tended to do when faced with similar circumstances: they mounted another concert tour.

The two singers probably did not set up a definite itinerary for either of their concert tours before they left New York. (For their concert and operatic itinerary during the 1839-40 theatrical season, see Table 7.) Both schedules were somewhat flexible, to allow for the repetition of concerts in towns where bad weather had interfered with a good audience turn-out, or where a second performance looked like it might draw a large crowd. After their first concert appearance in Syracuse, New York, on 13 July, for example, Shirreff had noted in her diary that they had been "persuaded to return on Tuesday to give another [concert]." (Shirreff diary, 13 July 1839) This lack of prior planning also had its drawbacks, however, for when the two singers arrived in Boston for concert they had planned to give on 7 November, they were unable to secure a hall and had to leave the city without giving a performance.

Regardless of whether or not the singers' itinerary was carefully arranged ahead of time, someone had to do some advance work on a concert tour. In particular, a suitable hall had to be rented, a competent accompanist engaged, and the concert advertised. Wilson probably managed both tours; Shirreff was not bothered by such managerial details and never mentioned them in her diary. Wilson could either have travelled a day or so ahead of Shirreff to take care of arrangements, or hired someone by mail to do so. Extant correspondence between performers and theatre managers suggests that the latter was an accepted modus operandi, and was probably used by Wilson, at least for some of

Table 7: Shirreff and Wilson's Itinerary, September 1839-May 1840

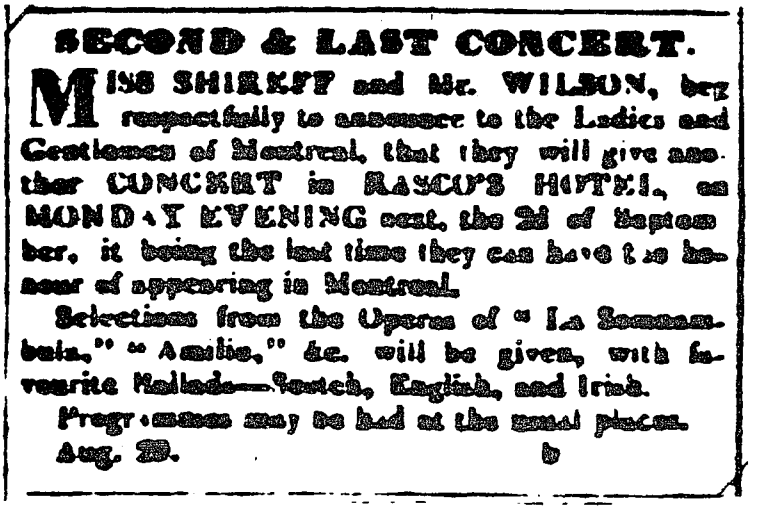
16-28 Sept 1839	Philadelphia (Chestnut St. Theatre)	12 opera performances
30 Sept-7 Oct 1839	Baltimore (Holliday St. Theatre)	7 opera performances
14-26 Oct 1839	New York (National Theatre/Niblo's)	12 opera performances
31 Oct	New Haven, Conn. (concert)	
1 Nov	New Haven (concert)	
2 Nov	Hartford, Conn. (concert)	
4 Nov	Hartford (concert)	
5 Nov	Springfield, Mass. (concert)	
6 Nov	Worcester, Mass. (concert)	
11 Nov	New York City (concert)	
15 Nov	New York City (concert)	
21 Nov	New York City (concert)	
25 Nov	New York City (concert)	
27 Nov	Philadelphia (concert)	
29 Nov	Philadelphia (concert)	
2 Dec	Philadelphia (concert)	
4 Dec	Baltimore (concert)	
14-27 December	Charleston, S. C. (Charleston Theatre)	10 opera performances
30 Dec	Augusta, Georgia (concert)	
1 Jan 1840	Augusta (concert)	
3 Jan	Augusta (concert)	
6 Jan	Savannah, Georgia (concert)	
7 Jan	Savannah (concert)	
8 Jan	Savannah (concert)	
9 Jan	Savannah (concert)	
10 Jan	Savannah (concert)	
11 Jan	Savannah (concert)	
18 Jan	Charleston, S. C. (concert)	
22 Jan	Norfolk, Virginia (concert)	
? Jan	Norfolk (concert)	
28 Jan	Baltimore (concert)	
29 Jan	Washington, D. C. (concert)	
30 Jan	Baltimore (concert)	
31 Jan	Washington (concert)	
1 Feb	Baltimore (concert)	
7 Feb	Philadelphia (concert)	
10 Feb	Philadelphia (concert)	
11 Feb?	Philadelphia (concert)	
18 Feb	New York City (concert)	
21 Feb	New York City (concert)	
26 Feb	New York City (concert)	
2 March	New York City (concert)	
6 March	New York City (concert)	
13 March	New York City (concert)	
30 Mar-13 Apr	New York City (Park Theatre)	11 opera performances
20 Apr-2 May	Philadelphia (Chestnut St. Theatre)	12 opera performances
22 May	Farewell appearance (by Jane Shirreff) at the Park Theatre; her final American performance.	1 opera performance

the arrangements he had to make.[57] Publicity for upcoming concerts never appeared in newspapers more than several days in advance, which also suggests that the singers were not working from a firm itinerary. In many towns the vocalists did not announce their concert in the newspaper at all. This was not unusual, however, for during the antebellum period most publicity for public performances in small towns was accomplished by the posting of handbills. (Bloom, 91) Someone had to have the handbills printed and distributed; again, either Wilson made such arrangements by mail or he travelled to the town beforehand to take care of the task himself. Occasionally the two singers arrived several days in advance of their planned concert date, or left to give a concert in a nearby town and then returned to the first location for a second or third performance; in either of these cases the singers had plenty of time to publicize an upcoming appearance.

Despite the economic depression, the popular pair of singers drew huge crowds to their fall concerts in New York and Philadelphia. According to Shirreff's financial records, the vocalists grossed a total of $2190 for their four New York performances and $1927 for the three in Philadelphia; since the price of admission to their concerts was $1.00, these figures translate into average crowds of 550 in the former and 640 in the latter city--not taking into account the inevitable deadheads, complimentary admissions, members of the press, and so forth.[58] On 16 November the New York Morning Herald reported that "Miss Shirreff and

57. See, for example, the materials already cited in the Davis Collection, ICHi, the letter from C. M. Bochsa at ICHi, and the Ford Collection at DLC.

58. For admission prices advertisements in the New York Morning Herald. For financial information, see financial ledger, Shirreff Collection.



SECOND & LAST CONCERT.

MISS SHIRREFF and Mr. WILSON, beg respectfully to announce to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Montreal, that they will give another CONCERT in RASCO'S HOTEL, on MONDAY EVENING next, the 2d of September, it being the last time they can have the honour of appearing in Montreal.

Selections from the Operas of "La Sonnambula," "Amilie," &c. will be given, with favourite Ballads—Scotch, English, and Irish.

Programmes may be had at the usual places.

Aug. 29. b

Advertisement for a concert by Shirreff and Wilson, from the Montreal Gazette, 29 August 1839.

Mr. Wilson are making immense sums by their concerts in this city"; Shirreff's figures confirm this statement. (Morning Herald, 16 November 1839) For these seven concerts the two singers earned (after paying expenses) $2875 (in 1986 dollars, $29,325.00); Shirreff's half came to $1437 ($14,657.00). (Shirreff financial ledger)

The vocalists attracted these large crowds with concert repertory that was a mixture of operatic arias and popular and Scotch ballads. Their autumn programs--and those of the previous summer--typically included almost equal proportions of ballads and selections from the musical stage (either English or translated Italian or French operas). The following program from the singers' final concert at Niblo's Grand Saloon in New York City on 25 November 1839 is typical:

PART I

Duett, "Love like a shadow flies" (Parry)	Shirreff/Wilson
Song "Who hath not mark'd?" (Rooke)	Wilson
Polacca, "Trifler, forbear" (Bishop)	Shirreff
Song, "The Flowers of the Forest" (Old Scotch Melody)	Wilson
Song, "Meet me in the Willow Glen" (A. Lee)	Shirreff
"The Meeting of the Waters" (Irish Melody) Harmonized for three voices by Maeder	Wilson, Shirreff, Maeder
"Savourneen Deelish" (Irish Ballad, S. Lover)	Wilson
Rondo, "The Rapture Dwelling" (Balfe)	Shirreff
Irish Song, "Rory O'Moore" (Lover)	Wilson
Duett, "Birks of Aberfeldie" (Old Scotch Melodie harmonized by Mr. Wilson)	Wilson, Shirreff

PART II

Scena--From the Opera of Fra Diavolo, descriptive of the life of a Brigand (Auber) Recitative, "My Companions are Warn'd" Air, "Proudly and Wide My Standard Flies" Recitative, "Now a poor and simple maid appears" Cantabile, "We never aught demand from the fair" Allegro, "Then since time flies so fast away"	Wilson
Scotch Song, "I'm ouer young to marry yet"	Shirreff
Song, "The land far away" (Maeder)	Wilson
Song, "Bid me discourse" (Bishop)	Shirreff
Scotch ballad, "My Boy Tammie"	Wilson
Scotch song, "The bonnie briar bush"	Shirreff
Trio, "The Last Rose of Summer" (Maeder)	Wilson, Shirreff, Maeder
Scotch song, "John Anderson, My Joe"	Wilson
Scotch song, "Oh whistle and I'll come to you my lad"	Shirreff
Old Scotch Ballad, "Tak yer auld cloak about ye"	Wilson
Duett, "Though I leave now in sorrow" (Scotch melody)	Wilson, Shirreff

(New York Morning Herald, 25 November 1839)

Of the twenty-five selections on this concert program, nine--or over one-third--are from operas: "Who hath not mark'd" from Amilie; "Trifler, forbear," a recitative and polacca from Henry Bishop's comic opera The Farmer's Wife; "The Rapture Dwelling" from Michael Balfe's The Maid of Artois; "Bid me discourse" from Twelfth Night, also by Bishop, and the lengthy scena from Auber's Fra Diavolo. Three compositions, "Meet Me in the Willow Glen" by George Alexander Lee, "Love Like a Shadow Flies" by John Parry, and James G. Maeder's "The Land Far Away" are the only non-operatic composed songs on the program. All the rest--

thirteen works--are contemporary arrangements of traditional songs, mostly Scotch or Irish. The British composers Samuel Lover and George Alexander Lee, and the Bohemian Leopold Kozeluch, arranged four of the songs: "Savourneen Deelish" and "Rory O'Moore" (Lover), "I'm O'er Young to Marry Yet" (Lee), and "Flowers of the Forest" (Kozeluch); for the remainder the singers probably used Wilson's arrangements or those by James Maeder, who was their accompanist for this and their other New York concerts. (Morning Herald, 11 November 1839; 21 November 1839) Six of the songs later appeared in Wilson's Edition of the Songs of Scotland (although with slightly altered titles): "The Birks of Aberfeldy," "My Boy Tammy," "The Bonnie Briar Bush," "John Anderson, My Jo," "Whistle and I'll Come to Ye, My Lad," and "Tak' Yer Auld Cloak Aboot Ye." Maeder already had published an arrangement of Parry's "Love Like a Shadow Flies," and his arrangements of the two traditional melodies "The Meeting of the Waters" and "The Last Rose of Summer" would be published in 1840 in a collection titled Six Irish Melodies by Thomas Moore Esq As Sung by . . . Miss Shirreff, Mr. Wilson & Mr. Maeder, Harmonized for Three Voices . . . by James G. Maeder.[59] It is also worth noting that all twenty-five of the selections on this concert program are vocal works. Wilson and Shirreff included instrumental compositions on their concert programs only when they were accompanied

59. See "Love Like a Shadow Flies," (Philadelphia: Kretschmar & Nunns, 1833), and Six Irish Melodies . . . (New York: C. E. Horn, 1840). Copies of each can be found in the collection of the Music Division, DLC.

by an orchestra (which usually occurred when the concert was in conjunction with an operatic performance). For an overwhelming majority of their concert appearances, however, their accompanist was a local pianist, who almost never performed a solo instrumental work as part of the program.[60]

Although concert selections changed from town to town on the singers' tours, the relative percentages of opera, traditional, and non-operatic non-traditional songs on this program are typical of programs from elsewhere around the country. The singers chose operatic selections by Rossini ("Rapture fills my joyful heart," from La Gazza Ladra and "Let Thine Eyes on Mine Mildly Beaming" from Cinderella); Balfe ("Well if I must Speak My Mind," from The Siege of Rochelle; "O'er Shepherd Pipe & Rustic Dell" from Joan of Arc; and "Oh Hasten, Dearest Lady," from Diadeste), Bellini ("Goodnight, Love" from La Sonnambula), Donizetti ("Barcarole" from Marino Falerio), Adam ("Romance" and "Pastoral Aria" from Postillion of Longjumeau), and Hérold ("Lovely Lady Mine," from La Pre Aux Clercs).[61] This list includes a fair sample of Italian composers; by far, however, the majority of operatic selections that Shirreff and Wilson included in their concerts were from works by Balfe, Rooke (especially from Amilie), and Auber (Fra Diavolo).

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60. A reporter for the Albany Argus mentioned in a brief article that the two singers were to be accompanied at their second Albany concert by a pianist named Miss Jackson, who was "a resident teacher of rare skill." See the Argus, 9 July 1839.

61. Rossini: Albany, NY, 8 July 1839 and Baltimore, 30 January 1840; Balfe: Albany, NY, 8 July 1839; Baltimore, 27 January 1840; and New York City, 15 November 1839; Bellini: Albany, 1 July 1839; Donizetti: Baltimore, 1 February 1840; Adam: Baltimore, 1 February 1840; and Hérold: New York City, 15 November 1839.

A large number of the songs on this and similar concert programs were published in sheet music form in the United States in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Many of them, as was usual, have tags like "As Sung by Miss Shirreff & Mr. Seguin;" "As Sung with Enthusiastic Applause by Mr. Wilson;" and "As Sung by Mr. Wilson in the Opera of Fra Diavolo."[62] Although most of the publications are not dated, their release undoubtedly coincided with the singers' highly successful concert tours and opera performances; they are further evidence that singers were well known to and popular with the American public.

The vocalists' mixed bag of concert repertory met with audience approval in most places; in only one city did newspaper reports indicate otherwise. In the winter of 1840 Shirreff and Wilson gave a series of six concerts in Savannah, Georgia, which (judging from press reports) at first were not well patronized. The repertory of the first two concerts was similar to the program quoted above, and after the second the reviewer from the Savannah Republican scolded his fellow citizens for their poor showing. He also expressed distress that "none of the pieces were much applauded, except some of the popular street ballads." (Savannah Republican, 8 January 1840) Wilson and Shirreff knew how to gauge the taste of their public, however, and henceforth gave the Savannah audiences a slightly larger dose of ballads--attracting larger audiences. On 10 January the two vocalists evidently decided that most

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62. "The Rapture Dwelling" (New York: Atwill, 184-?); "The Flowers of the Forest" (New York: Millett Music Saloon, n.d.); and "Proudly and Wide" (New York: Atwill, n.d.), all in the collection of the Music Division, DLC.

Savannahans preferred ballads and popular tunes to operatic selections, so they offered a concert comprised entirely of the former. (Apparently no program from this concert survives.) The local critic was mortified. "We regret the selection of pieces for to-night," he wrote.

> That Mr. Wilson and Miss Shirreff are better appreciated now, than at first, is entirely owing to the influence of those who have taste enough to discriminate in such matters. When [the size of the audience is] obviously in a state of improvement, why select a whole bill of popular ballads? However, the plan will no doubt fill the house, for these ballads have been all the go, at previous concerts, and if these distinguished strangers cannot give us the delightful strains of Rooke, Bellini, and Auber, then we are content to take such songs as Lover's 'Rory O'More.' The many-headed monster has decreed it, and it is sovereign in this country, but this same democracy is a horrid tyrant in all matters of polite accomplishments. For ourselves, we would rather hear Miss Shirreff and Mr. Wilson in their operatic selections, than all the ballads that were ever sung. (Savannah Republican, 10 January 1840)

Whether musical tastes in Savannah were different from those around the country, or whether that city simply had a blunt and outspoken music critic is unknown. In no other cities where Shirreff and Wilson gave concerts, however, were such sentiments expressed in print. For most of their concerts in the Northeast, in fact, the singers attracted "large and fashionable" (Hartford Courant, 5 November 1839) or "very numerous and fashionable" (Montreal Gazette, 29 August 1839) audiences; in New York and Philadelphia, as we have seen, the singers had no trouble whatsoever attracting "most crowded" houses (New York Morning Herald, 12 November 1839) and "immense numbers of persons" (Philadelphia National Gazette, 28 November 1839). Even in the small towns of upper New York State--such as Utica, Syracuse, Geneva, Canandaigua, and Rochester--the vocalists regularly attracted between fifty and one

hundred paid auditors for each of their concerts. (Shirreff financial ledger) All of these audiences--made up of residents of both large cities and small towns--were attracted by programs that regularly included both operatic airs and ballads.

The Operatic Repertory of Jane Shirreff and John Wilson

Over the course of the eleven months that Shirreff and Wilson devoted to opera productions in this country (including two months during the 1839-1840 season), they gave more than 230 performances.[63] They actually relied on a repertory of twenty-one operas. (For information on the works performed by the various troupes with which Shirreff and Wilson were associated during the 1839-40 season, see Table 8.) But this number is deceptively high, for in reality the singers used as war-horses only a half-dozen works: Amilie (61 productions), La Sonnambula (55), Fra Diavolo (31), Cinderella (22), The Postillion of Longjumeau (22), and The Marriage of Figaro (13). The remaining fifteen works--a combination of ballad, English comic, French, and Italian operas--were performed fewer than ten times each. (For the troupe's entire repertory, see Tables 9 and 10.)

A limited repertory was typical for vocal-star troupes. One critic praised the singer Maria Caradori Allan for limiting her performances during a New York engagement in January 1838 to three

63. Because of Shirreff's illness in February 1839, her total of 237 performances was lower than Wilson's 253.

TABLE 8: REPERTORY PERFORMED BY THE VARIOUS VOCAL-STAR TROUPES OF JANE SHIRREFF AND JOHN WILSON DURING THE 1839-40 THEATRICAL SEASON

PHILADELPHIA: CHESTNUT STREET THEATRE. 16-28 SEPTEMBER 1839

16 September (Monday): Sonnambula/Gretna Green
17 September: Sonnambula/Perfection
18 September: Fra Diavolo/The Secret
19 September: Cinderella/Wedding Day
20 September: Fra Diavolo/Rival Valets
21 September: Cinderella/Chaos is Come Again

23 September (Monday): Marriage of Figaro/Luke the Laborer
24 September: Love in a Village/Vocal Concert/Married Rake (Brough benefit)
25 September: Marriage of Figaro/Chaos is Come Again
26 September: Native Land/Vocal Concert (Shirreff benefit)
27 September: Native Land/Spoiled Child
28 September: Fra Diavolo/Crammond Brig (Wilson benefit)

BALTIMORE: HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE. 30 SEPTEMBER-7 OCTOBER 1839

30 September (Monday): Sonnambula/Oh, What Fun
1 October: Cinderella/Miss Gannon (dancer)/Handsome Husband
2 October: Fra Diavolo/Bottle Imp
3 October: Fra Diavolo/Maid of Croissey
4 October: Sonnambula/Loan of a Lover
5 October: Native Land/Crammond Brig (Wilson benefit)
6 October: Marriage of Figaro/Misc. concert/Fra Diavolo (last act) (Shirreff benefit)
8 October (Monday): Maid of Croissey/Tom and Jerry (Wilson benefit)

NEW YORK: NATIONAL THEATRE (AT NIBLO'S). 14-26 OCTOBER 1839

14 October (Monday): Amilie/Schoolfellow
15 October: Amilie/Raising the Wind
16 October: Amilie/Robert Macaire
17 October: Sonnambula/My Young Wife and Old Umbrella
18 October: Sonnambula/Schoolfellow
19 October: Sonnambula/My Young Wife and Old Umbrella

21 October (Monday): Gustavus III/My Young Wife and Old Umbrella
22 October: Gustavus III/Middy Ashore
23 October: Gustavus III/What Have I Done?
24 October: Gustavus III/Vocal concert (Seguin benefit?)
25 October: Gustavus III/Vocal concert (Wilson benefit)
26 October: Gustavus III/Vocal concert (Shirreff benefit)

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA: CHARLESTON THEATRE. 14-27 DECEMBER 1839

14 December: Sonnambula
16 December (Monday): Sonnambula/Handsome Husband
17 December: Fra Diavolo/Rendezvous
18 December: Fra Diavolo/The Dumb Belle
19 December: Cinderella/The Lottery Ticket
20 December: Sonnambula/Crammond Brig
21 December: Rob Roy/Married Rake

23 December (Monday): Cinderella/Dumb Belle
24 December: Fra Diavolo/Crammond Brig
26 December: Native Land/Lottery Ticket
27 December: Native Land/songs from Amilie (Shirreff benefit)

NEW YORK: PARK THEATRE, 30 MARCH-13 APRIL 1840

30 March (Monday): Postillion of Longjumeau/Catherine and Petruchio
31 March: Postillion of Longjumeau/A Roland for an Oliver
1 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Dancing Barber
2 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Young Widow
3 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Court of Old Fritz
4 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Court of Old Fritz

6 April (Monday): Postillion of Longjumeau/Crammond Brig (Wilson benefit)
7 April:
8 April: Sonnambula/dancers/instrumental concert/M. P. (Giubilei benefit)
9 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/The Review
10 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Clari, or the Maid of Milan (Shirreff benefit)

13 April (Monday): Sonnambula/State Secrecy

PHILADELPHIA: CHESTNUT STREET THEATRE. 20 APRIL-2 MAY 1840

20 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Dumb Belle
21 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Little Black Parlour
22 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Mrs White
23 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/My Uncle John
24 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Day After the Wedding
25 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/The Maid of Croissey

27 April (Monday): Postillion of Longjumeau/Touch and Take
28 April: Fra Diavolo/Turning the Tables
29 April: Sonnambula/My Uncle John
30 April: Postillion of Longjumeau/Loan of a Lover (Shirreff benefit)
1 May: Postillion of Longjumeau/Midas (Giubilei benefit)
2 May: Postillion of Longjumeau/Crammond Brig (Wilson benefit)

NEW YORK: PARK THEATRE, 21 MAY 1840

21 May: Postillion of Longjumeau/Loan of a Lover (Shirreff farewell benefit)

operas (Cinderella, The Barber of Seville, and La Sonnambula). "In thus circumscribing the range of the entertainments," he explained,

> they become vastly more pleasing. The choruses are more perfect, each subordinate more familiar with his part, and above all, the audience become familiar with the music. (Spirit, 27 January 1838)

The all-important role of the stock company was a crucial mitigating factor in the question of repertory, for most theatrical troupes knew only a limited number of operatic works. Furthermore, the fewer the number of operas mounted by a visiting troupe during an engagement, the easier it was for the local company. A relatively small repertory meant fewer opera choruses for the stock company players to rehearse, less scenery and stage machinery for the theatre to have painted or built, and fewer costumes for the stage manager to dredge up for the stock company performers to wear. (The vocal stars travelled with their own costumes.) On the other hand, although the stock companies' repertories were small, they usually included the most popular operas--and these were the works that the vocal-star troupes were most likely to perform. Visiting performers (whether dramatic or musical) did not come to the United States to educate or edify the American public, or to raise musical or theatrical standards, but to make money--and the Shirreff/Wilson repertory of crowd-pleasing works reflects this goal. Two of the singers' six war-horses were new operas, each produced as a calculated risk that it might turn into a big hit. A third work, the The Marriage of Figaro, was also familiar to Americans, although it did not enjoy nearly the popularity of the other three--Cinderella, La Sonnambula and Fra Diavolo--which were all old favorites of North

American audiences.[64]

Taken as a whole, Shirreff and Wilson's total repertory looks like an odd mixture of different operatic styles, especially the combination of Italian operas (with sung recitative) and French and English comic operas (with spoken dialogue). But, as pointed out in Chapter 1, all the foreign-language works produced by vocal-star troupes, including the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin company, were given in versions adapted to the English stage by such composers as Sir Henry Rowley Bishop and Michael Rophino Lacy. Few contemporary reviews or advertisements mention by name any of the translator/adaptors, but the versions used by British vocal-star troupes in the United States undoubtedly were the same adaptations in which the singers had performed in London. The six most-frequently performed operas in the repertory of Wallack's troupe included five translation/adaptations; they were by Bishop (Sonnambula and The Marriage of Figaro), Lacy (Fra Diavolo and La Cenerentola, renamed Cinderella, or the Fairy Queen and the Little Glass Slipper), and J. B. Phillips (The Postillion of Longjumeau). Amilie, of course, was written in English.

Americans (like their British cousins) were fond of songs with

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64. The U. S. première of Sir Henry Rowley Bishop's version of The Barber of Seville, had been in New York in 1819. For information on the popularity of Cinderella and La Sonnambula, see Chapter 1. Thomas Reynoldson's adaptation of Auber's Fra Diavolo, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was premièred in New York in June 1833 by Elizabeth Austin. On 19 November 1833 the Woods premièred a "new arrangement" of the opera, presumably the adaptation made by Michael Rophino Lacy. (See Odell, VI:661) It, too, continued to be popular on the American stage at least through the mid-1850s. Cinderella, La Sonnambula, and Fra Diavolo all were staples in the repertory of the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company on their American tours in 1854-57. For further information, see Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 9: Operatic Repertory of Jane Shirreff and John Wilson

1838-1839 Season

	NYC 10/38	Bos 11/38	RI 11/38	NYC 12/38	DC 12/38	Balto 1/39	Phila 1/39	NYC 2-3/39	Phila 4/39	NYC 5-6/39	total
Amilie	14	5	--	5	2	4	6	11	3	7	57
La Sonnambula	--	8	--	8	2	4	8	5	5	2	42
Clari	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	2(A)	--	--	1; 2(A)
Guy Mannering	--	1	2	--	--	--	[1]	1	--	--	4; [1]
The Waterman	2(A)	1	--	--	--	--	--	2(A)	1(A)	--	1; 5(A)
Love in a Village	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2
Rob Roy	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	[2]	--	--	1; [2]
Fra Diavolo	--	--	--	4	2	2	5	4	3	1	21
Crammond Brig	--	--	--	1(A)	--	2(A)	--	2(A)	1(A)	--	6(A)
Cinderella	--	--	--	--	--	2	[4]	[3],1(A)	3	4	9;[7];1(A)
Mountain Sylph	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	9
La Gazza Ladra	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	3
Barber of Seville	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	[5]	--	--	[5]
Conrad and Medora	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	2
John of Paris	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
Il Fanatico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	[1]	--	--	[1]
Marriage of Figaro	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	5	--	11
Poor Soldier	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1(A)	--	--	1(A)
Total number of performances	14 2(A)	15	5	17 1(A)	6	12 2(A)	19[5]	29[11] 8(A)	19 2(A)	27	164 [16] 15(A)

1839-1840 Season

	Phila 9/39	Balto 10/39	NYC 10/39	SC 12/39	NYC 3-4/40	Phila 4/40	NYC 5/40	total
Amilie, or the Love Test	--	--	3	1	--	--	--	4
La Sonnambula	2	3	3	2	2	1	--	13
Clari, or the Maid of Milan	--	--	--	--	1(A)	--	--	1(A)
Love in a Village	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Rob Roy	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	1
Elixir of Love	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Fra Diavolo	3	3	--	3	--	1	--	10
Crammond Brig	1(A)	--	--	1(A)	1(A)	1(A)	--	4(A)
Cinderella	2	1	--	2	--	--	--	5
Postillion of Longjumeau	--	--	--	--	11	10	1	22
Gustavus III	--	--	6	--	--	--	--	6
The Marriage of Figaro	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
Native Land	2	1	--	2	--	--	--	4
Total number of performances	12 1(A)	8	12	11 1(A)	13 2(A)	12 1(A)	1	69 5(A)

LEGEND: Figures in brackets [] represent performances in which Jane Shirreff did not participate because of illness. Figures followed by (A) were performed as afterpieces.

TABLE 10. Total Number of Performances of Operatic Repertory, 1838-1840

Amilie, or the Love Test (Rooke)	61		
La Sonnambula (Bellini)	55		
Clari, or the Maid of Milan (Bishop)	1	3(A)	
Guy Mannering (La dame blanche)	4	1(A)	
Rob Roy (Davy)	2		[2]
The Waterman (Dibdin)	1	5(A)	
Love in a Village (Arne)	3		
Elixir of Love (Donizetti)	1		
Fra Diavolo (Auber)	31		
Crammond Brig		10(A)	
Cinderella (Rossini)	14	1(A)	[7]
Postillion of Longjumeau (Adam)	22		
Mountain Sylph (Barnett)	9		
Gustavus III (Auber)	6		
The Gazza Ladra (Rossini)	3		
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)			[5]
Conrad and Medora	2		
Native Land (Bishop)	4		
John of Paris (Boieldieu)	1		
Il Fanatico (Mayr)			[1]
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)	13		
The Poor Soldier (Shield)		1(A)	
TOTALS	233	21(A)	[15]

LEGEND: Figures in brackets [] represent performances in which Jane Shirreff did not participate because of illness.

Figures followed by (A) were performed as afterpieces.

their plays, especially songs that could be hummed and sung and played on parlor pianos. Too much concerted music was frowned upon, and adaptors frequently eliminated long concerted pieces or turned them into strophic songs. But the comments of some critics suggest that even concerted pieces were popular with Americans, especially if the melodies were pleasing and singable. A journalist writing about Amilie in 1838, for example, predicted that the new opera would prove popular with audiences because, like La Sonnambula (which he called "overwhelmingly popular"), it was "so filled with concerted music, that the chorusses are hardly for an instant off the stage through the entire course." (Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, 31 December 1838) Americans, in general, were fond of operas with "lively and melodious music" or operas whose melodies they could "hum, sing, or whistle . . . as they return to their respective homes."[65] Whether the source of that melody was an aria, a chorus, or an instrumental piece seems to have been unimportant.

Another ready gauge of an opera's popularity (besides frequency of performance) was its use by singers for their benefits. During the 1838-39 season, each of the three stars in the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe usually had one benefit performance per engagement. The beneficiary split half the evening's take with the theatre; the other star artists volunteered their services in exchange for reciprocal treatment for their own benefits. If an opera was in the midst of a successful run, a

65. The first quote was in reference to Il Pirata and is from the Mirror, 15 December 1832; the second is a description of La Sonnambula and appeared in the Spirit, 3 July 1847, 224.

singer normally used that work for his or her benefit. During the troupe's opening engagement in New York, when Amilie was drawing such good houses, all three of the stars chose that opera for their benefits. Likewise in Boston the following month, both Shirreff and Seguin used La Sonnambula for their performances. During other engagements, however, their choices varied. A singer's identity with a particular opera or character (Shirreff with Amilie, for example) was an important factor in the choice, as was the track record of that work in a particular theatre. The operas chosen by the three singers during the 1838-39 season, not surprisingly, turn out to be the same operas whose popularity has already been demonstrated by frequency of performance. Shirreff used La Sonnambula four times, Amilie thrice, Cinderella twice, and Love in a Village once; Seguin chose Amilie, La Sonnambula, Fra Diavolo, and The Marriage of Figaro (all twice) and Cinderella (once); and Wilson went with Fra Diavolo (thrice), Guy Mannering (twice), and Amilie, Cinderella, and La Sonnambula (once each).

For a benefit performance, the farce (by the stock company) was generally omitted, and either a ballad opera (such as Crammond Brig, Clari, or the Maid of Milan, or The Waterman) or a vocal concert or "musical pasticcio" was performed instead. Vocal selections also sometimes were added to a normal evening's entertainment as an added attraction--performed after the opera, interpolated into it, or sung between the opera and the farce. Each singer had a standard repertory of songs, for he or she performed the same ones over and over again, regardless of whether the selections were sung in post-opera concerts or interpolated into the operas themselves. Most of the extra songs that

Shirreff and Wilson sang as part of their operatic performances also showed up on their concert programs.

John Wilson was well known for his Scottish songs, and often sang traditional tunes such as "John Anderson, My Jo," "My Boy Tammie," "The Lass of Gowrie," and "Tak Yer Auld Cloak Aboot Ye."[66] All four of these pieces were in his published edition of The Songs of Scotland (1842), and he also included them in his "Songs of Scotland" entertainments. Although most of his songs were Scotch, Irish, or English ballads, he did occasionally perform operatic selections, such as the "celebrated Cavatina of 'Vivi tu'" (from Donizetti's Anna Bolena), which he introduced (in English) into a performance of Cinderella in Philadelphia. (The Pennsylvanian, 5 February 1839) Most of the songs that Jane Shirreff sang in connection with opera performances were likewise popular ballads, such as "Comin' Thru the Rye." Her most-frequently performed songs in the United States, however, were "I'm O'er Young to Marry Yet" and "Whistle and I'll Come to Thee, My Lad," both Scotch songs in contemporary arrangements; she also occasionally sang selections from the operatic stage, such as "Pappataci" from Rossini's L'Italiana in Algeri and "The Rapture Dwelling," a "Grand Scene" from Michael William Balfe's The Maid of Artois.[67]

Edward Seguin's song choices tended to be more from the musical

66. Wilson sang "John Anderson" at almost every performance that included songs, including in New York (27 October and 19 December 1838), Washington, D. C. (27 December 1838), Baltimore (4 January 1839), and Philadelphia (21 January); he sang the others less frequently. See playbills, Shirreff Collection.

67. 20 December 1839, concert in New York City; December 1838, concert in Washington, D. C.; 11 January 1839, concert in Baltimore. See playbills, Shirreff Collection.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO

Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

WILSON'S

EDITION OF THE

SONGS OF SCOTLAND,

AS SUNG BY HIM IN HIS

SCOTTISH ENTERTAINMENTS.

PRINTED FOR MR WILSON, 47 GOWER STREET, LONDON;

Title page to John Wilson's Songs of Scotland.

stage and less from the ballad repertory. Although during the 1838-39 season he did not become readily identified with any one particular selection, he frequently performed the aria "Non più andrai" from Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro and "Qui sdegno" from The Magic Flute.[68] Since he sang these operas in English, it is safe to assume that he performed the selections in translation, despite the fact that they were always identified (in advertisements and on playbills) in Italian. Seguin also frequently performed selections from La Sonnambula ("As I View These Scenes So Charming") and Amilie ("What is the Spell?").[69] When the stars sang joint vocal selections (as duos or trios) they likewise tended to use repertory from the operatic stage, such as "Donque oi Sono" (probably "Dunque io son" from The Barber of Seville), "Sir, a Secret," from Cinderella, and "Vadasi via di qua," the so-called "Laughing Trio" from a Terzetto by the French opera composer Jean Paul Egide Martini (1741-1816).

The following program is typical of after-opera fare as performed by the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe during the 1838-39 season. The artists (with the help of Mr. Walton of the National Theatre in New York) gave this concert after a performance of Amilie in Philadelphia on 21 January 1839, for the benefit of Jane Shirreff:

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68. Figaro: 4 January 39, Baltimore; 27 October, New York City; 27 December 1838, Washington, D. C.; 21 January 1839, Philadelphia; Magic Flute: 6 February 1839, Philadelphia.

69. La Sonnambula: 27 October, New York City; Amilie: 8 January 1839, Baltimore; 6 February 1839, Philadelphia, 9 February 1839, Philadelphia.

CONCERT

Grand Overture	[orchestra]
"Non Piu andre" by Mozart	Mr. Seguin
Finale--"The Rapture Dwelling" from the Opera of The Maid of Artois	Miss Shirreff
The admired Scotch Ballad of "John Anderson, My Joe"	Mr. Wilson
"I'm o'er young to marry yet"	Miss Shirreff
"Life on the Ocean Wave"	Mr. Walton
Laughing Trio, Vadasi Via di Qua	Miss Shirreff, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Seguin

(The Pennsylvanian, 21 January 1839)

The concerts that followed opera productions often included some instrumental music, such as the unidentified "Grand Overture" mentioned above. Most the instrumental works were for orchestra, and they usually are only vaguely identified on playbills or in advertisements. During the company's first Philadelphia engagement in 1839, for example, the Chestnut Street Theatre orchestra performed "General Bertrand's Farewell to France, a favorite song arranged as a Gallopade, by F. Wieland" on 14 January; the "New Cotillion from Robert le Diable" on 18 January; a "New Wiener Gallopade" on the 25th; and a "Trumpet Gallopade" on 1, 2, and 4 February. (Philadelphia Public Ledger and Transcript, January 1839, and The Pennsylvanian, February 1839) During their second New York engagement, the stars gave a concert to conclude a performance at the National Theatre on 20 December; the selections included Strauss's "Waltz Apollo," "as arranged by the orchestra leader William Penson"; an unidentified clarinet concerto, and "National Air and Variations for Violin as composed and played by Sig. Bassini" (of the theatre orchestra). (Playbill, New York National Theatre, 20 December 1838,

TC/NN) Occasionally a program even included a piece of chamber music music--such as, for example, the "Quintetto composed by J. Kiffner, for cor de basset, clarinet, flute, horn, and trombone, to be performed by members of the orchestra"--which was part of the evening's entertainment in Philadelphia on 8 January 1839. (Playbill, 8 January 1839, Baltimore Holliday Street Theatre, TC/NN) By far the most common instrumental selections performed as part of an operatic production, however, were the overtures of other operas. By the late 1820s and early 1830s these instrumental overtures, entirely severed from the operas for which they had been written, had been appropriated by American theatre orchestras as an ordinary part of their repertories. Frequently an overture was performed between an opera and the farce that concluded the evening's performance; no less frequently, overtures were heard before the commencement of a dramatic work. Critics complained about the overuse of operatic overtures by theatre orchestras. As early as 1830 the overtures from The Caliph of Bagdad (Boieldieu), The Marriage of Figaro, Masaniello (Auber), Der Freischütz, and The Barber of Seville, according to a critic for the Dramatic Mirror, had become "worn out" because of "continual and hacknied use." (Mirror, 23 October 1830, 126)

As we have seen in Chapter 1, it was normal performance practice during the period for vocal stars to interpolate songs into whatever opera was being produced. Playbills often include the information that extra songs would be introduced, but it is almost impossible to fathom from these sources which songs were introduced, and when, and where. Most playbills and advertisements are no more specific than one from the National Theatre in New York in December 1838, which informed the audience that "during the evening and in the course of the Burletta

[Crammond Brig] the following songs" (followed by a list), would be sung. (Playbill, 19 December 1838, Shirreff Collection) Only rarely was a playbill or an advertisement more explicit--such as, for example, the announced performance by John Wilson of "Vivi tu" in Cinderella (quoted above), or a notice that on 5 December 1838 Edward Seguin would introduce into Fra Diavolo the "Brigand's Song" from Jules Benedict's first English opera, Gipsey's Warning. (Playbill, 5 December 1838, Shirreff Collection) It is safe to conclude, however, that songs were rather freely interpolated into opera performances, especially in view of the lengthy lists of "extra" songs that were named in advertisements and on playbills.

Conclusion

Many of the entries that Jane Shirreff made in her diary show clearly that the 1839-40 tour--especially the southern part--was fraught with inconveniences and irritations from the very beginning. The concert room in Baltimore was unsuitable, as was the accompanist ("such an accompanist," Shirreff wrote, "ye Gods! defend me!"); transportation (by boat and rail) south from Maryland was uncomfortable, dirty, and unpleasant; the artists' baggage (with costumes) arrived in Charleston almost a week late, causing cancellation of five opera performances in that city; and the theatre audiences there, according to Shirreff, were not only meagre, they were also the "dull[est] and most uninteresting and disagreeable . . . I have ever played to in America." (Shirreff diary, 16 December 1839) Shirreff's complaints on this trip, in fact, were endless. The hotel in Augusta, Georgia was "cheerless, cold and comfortless," the climate in the South was "unhealthy," the weather

cold, rainy, or just plain "cold and wretched in the extreme." (Shirreff diary, 30 December; 23 December; 31 December 1839) It is clear that by late 1839 Jane Shirreff was more than ready to pack her bags and head home to London; several times during December she expressed a sentiment she had first voiced during the summer months, "oh, how I long to end my exile!" (Shirreff diary, 7 August 1839)

The two singers concluded their stay in the United States as they had begun it, with opera performances in New York and Philadelphia. They had had a busy twenty months in North America, full of both success and failure, of good luck and bad. Shirreff and Wilson had arrived in this country at the very commencement of a severe national economic depression. The soprano had fallen seriously ill in the middle of her first dramatic season, and at the commencement of the second the theatre in which she and Wilson had given most of their performances burned to the ground. Despite all the troubles, however, their tour was an artistic and financial success. Jane Shirreff performed in 237 operas (Wilson, who had not missed any due to illness, appeared in 253); the two gave a total of 70 concert performances. They performed in eleven states, two Canadian provinces, and the District of Columbia, and covered approximately 9,000 miles on their travels around North America. The various concert and opera tours the two singers made while in the United States differed in repertory, itinerary, length, personnel, finances, and incidental circumstances, but as a whole, they are representative of the experiences of vocal-star troupes active during the time.

During the final eleven months of their visit (summer 1839 through

spring 1840), the two singers each earned $4675 ($47,685 in 1986 dollars) from concert performances and $3975 (or $40,545) from opera performances, for a combined amount of $8650 ($88,230.00 in 1986 dollars). Jane Shirreff's total earnings for her twenty months' work in the United States (in 1986 dollars) was $221,829. If the 1839-40 theatrical season had not been such an economic disaster, it is plausible that the singers might have earned even more Yankee dollars to take back to London in the spring of 1840. As it was, the influence of these two forgotten vocalists on the development of American musical culture during the 1840s must have been significant. They were an important part of an opera craze that was centered in New York; their success at the National Theatre in 1838-39 spurred the Park Theatre to import a troupe of its own singers as competition. Furthermore, their phenomenal financial success in North America undoubtedly encouraged other British musicians to try their luck on American audiences during the 1840s and 1850s, thereby increasing the number of professional musical performers and performances in the United States.

Finally, the artistic and financial success enjoyed by Jane Sherriff and John Wilson is a strong indication of the importance of entertainment to Americans of the ante-bellum period--and the importance of staged operas and operatic/ballad concerts within the arena of entertainment. Their success demonstrates clearly that opera and operatic music was important to Americans all over the eastern part of the United States in the late 1830s and early 1840s. It remained so even during times of economic hardship.

CHAPTER 3: ITALIAN OPERA COMPANIES, 1825-1860

> "Of making opera troupes there is no end." So would Mrs. Browning be likely to say if she lived in America and witnessed the many vain and impotent attempts to establish here a permanent and creditable institution of opera. Five and forty times at least within the recollection of the past few years, have the leading operatic managers of the land been utterly undone, ruined, swamped and devoted to everlasting disgrace. Five and forty times, at least, have broken-hearted paragraphs been scattered through the newspapers, announcing the fatal fact that Maximilian Maretzek, B. Ullman, Esq. or some equally eminent master of the art of humbug has at length retired in a disordered mental condition to the seclusion of private life and the mortification of sackcloth and ashes. Experience lessens all great evils. It is said the eels become in time accustomed to the skinning process. Just so must it be with operatic managers. (Dwight's, 23 October 1858, 235)

The history of the performance of Italian opera (in Italian) in the United States during the antebellum period is a story of both failure and success. It is a tale of shattered dreams, lost fortunes, failed individuals, bankrupt managers, and disbanded companies. But it also is a chronicle of successful premières, debuts, and gala benefits, of fame and adulation won, of reputations enhanced, and of fortunes made. It is, in the end, a history of perseverance and determination--a history of singers, instrumentalists, and impresarios who banded together again and again in new versions of the same troupes, always in search of the magical combination of big-name stars, popular repertory, favorable performing conditions, and receptive audiences--in short, in search of that elusive goal, the successful season.

The story of the gradual emergence of opera in Italian in the antebellum period is also bound up with a related issue, the repercussions of which are still felt in American musical life of the late twentieth century. For the eventual success of Italian opera during this period was inextricably linked with the slow but almost insidious expropriation of this musical-theatrical form by the wealthy and elite of American society--and by the increasing exclusion from these performances of the other social classes that traditionally had been a normal part of the American theatre audience. How the wealthy class undertook--and to a certain extent, succeeded in--this transformation of opera from an ordinary component of the popular theatre repertory into an art form widely identified as aristocratic and exclusive, is a complex story that will be addressed in this chapter. That the elite did not entirely succeed in this goal--or, at least, did not entirely succeed during the antebellum period--is a lesser-known side of that development; it, too, will form an important part of this discussion of Italian opera companies in antebellum America.

This chapter is divided into two segments: 1825 through 1847, and 1848 through 1860. During the first period, Italian operatic activity in the United States was rather sparse, in an on-again, off-again fashion. This situation changed considerably after 1847, for by that year (although it was not apparent at the time) the fight to establish foreign-language opera in the United States was well on its way to being won. During each year after 1846, in fact, there were--at least somewhere in the United States--one, two, or even three companies performing staged operas in Italian. All of these troupes were itinerant (the establishment of the first resident Italian troupe had to wait

until 1883, with the founding of the New York Metropolitan Opera Company); all of them were made up of constantly changing personnel.[1] The troupes existed, however, and not only were they active, but they also mounted staged performances of operas--in Italian--in numbers almost incomprehensible today.

The wealth of activity during the second period was a direct result of the foundation built by the earlier companies. As a consequence, it is important to examine in some detail the troupes that toured during the period 1825 though 1847. This approach, however, is impossible for each of the many companies that were active from 1848 through 1860; the sheer number of troupes, their wide-ranging and overlapping itineraries, the changing names under which they appeared, and the constantly fluctuating nature of their personnel makes the operatic history of this period seem to be an almost hopeless jumble. Consequently, the bulk of the information assembled about Italian troupes active in this country between 1848 and 1860 is presented in a table in the second section of this chapter; the history of Italian opera performance in the United States during this period--along with a discussion of crucial developments in the make-up of the audience--is treated as more of an overview than in the earlier section.

As with Chapters 1 and 2, this chapter should function as the background for a more-detailed study of a particular prototype Italian opera company. One such troupe--Max Maretzek's 1850-51 Astor Place Opera Company--is examined in detail in Chapter 4.

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1. The first resident opera company in the United States was established in 1806 at the St. Peter Street Theatre in the French Quarter of New Orleans. See Kmen, 73-74.

PART I: 1825-1847

The Garcías

The first Italian opera troupe to perform in the United States was a travelling company only in the broadest terms: the singers travelled here (from London), performed for a year (exclusively in New York), then left for Mexico. Since the influence of this troupe on subsequent itinerant Italian (and other language) opera companies in the United States was significant, however, it is appropriate to commence these annals with the arrival, in 1825, of Manuel García's Italian Opera Company.

In the summer of 1825 one Dominick Lynch, a wealthy New York wine merchant, member of the bon ton, and a music-lover, travelled to London to recruit opera singers for a season in America. Lynch was a prominent member of a group of wealthy New York socialites who were interested in promoting elite cultural activities in which they could participate. His trip to London was on their behalf, but he also had the essential backing of Stephen Price, the manager of the Park Theatre.[2] Price (1782-1840), who had become manager of that house in 1808, made frequent trips to London himself (to recruit players for his theatre), and he made a point to keep himself informed about the theatrical attractions

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2. The description of Lynch is from John Wakefield Francis, "The Garcías and Da Ponte," from an address before the New York Historical Society, 17 November 1857, titled "Old New York; or, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years." Dwight's Journal of Music (hereafter referred to as Dwight's), 1 May 1858, 35-36 (the same article was reprinted in the MW, 23 January 1858, 53-54). See also Molly Nelson, "The First Italian Opera Season in New York, (unpublished dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1976), 24-25.

(including Italian opera) that drew fashionable audiences in that cultural center. (Odell, 2:209; Durham, "Park Theatre Company," ATC, 387-391) In 1825 he and his partner (Edmund Simpson) had ample reason to be interested in novel theatrical fare, for the previous year their house had faced some serious competition from an upstart rival, the Chatham Theatre. Although a season of Italian opera in New York was something of a financial long shot in 1825--this was two years prior to the arrival of Elizabeth Austin--Lynch discovered that Price and Simpson were amenable to the idea of bringing a troupe to the United States, especially because the proposal had the support of a least a portion of New York high society. (Nelson, 82-88; Durham, 390-391) In London, Lynch attempted--unsuccessfully--to interest a number of prominent singers (including Maria Caradori-Allan and Giuditta Pasta) in a New York opera season. (Mattfeld, 18) Although originally rebuffed, he eventually managed to recruit an entire troupe (albeit a small one), the leader and patriarch of which was the prolific composer, distinguished teacher, and excellent and well known Spanish singer and actor, Manuel del Popolo Vicente Rodriguez García (1775-1832).

How Lynch induced García to forsake London for New York is unknown; Vera Lawrence suggests that the great Italian soprano Giuditta Pasta (a friend of the Garcías) had a hand in the negotiations. (Lawrence, xliv) Whether or not this allegation is true, it is certain that practical considerations played a major part in García's decision. The tenor himself, for example, was not enjoying a particularly successful season in London that year. He was fifty years old and his voice, according to the London Harmonicon, was "half worn out." (Harmonicon, 1830, 248, quoted in Mattfeld, 17-18) But although nearing the end of his own performing days,

García was a shrewd businessman and opera manager, and he had two offspring--a son Manuel, jr (a bass) and a daughter Maria Felicità (a contralto)--who were fledgling performers, and for whom he wished operatic careers. He knew that the standards of New York audiences were lower than those of their London counterparts, and that a season of performances in America would provide excellent training for his son and daughter. Furthermore, since his projected company included three members of his own family, the overhead costs of the troupe were extraordinarily low. The risks seemed reasonable, and the terms offered by Lynch and Price acceptable. So García signed a contract, gathered his company together, and boarded a ship headed west.

The Italian Opera Company arrived in New York on 6 November 1825. (Mattfeld, 18) The principal singers of the troupe numbered eight: the manager, Manuel García, tenor; his wife Maria Joaquina Stiches, soprano; Manuel, jr (1805-1906), a twenty-year-old bass; the seventeen-year-old contralto Maria Felicità (1808-1836) (who later would be renowned as Maria Malibran); Madame Barbieri (or Barbiere), a soprano; Giovanni (or Domenico) Crivelli, second tenor and chorus master; Felix Angrisani, a distinguished bass; and Paolo Rosich, basso buffo and librettist. Several other Italians who were listed on the ship's passenger list as "of the Italian Opera" served as support crew and chorus. These included Don Fabian, Giovanni Cardini, Cristoforo Constantini, Giuseppe Pasta (a tenor and the husband of Giuditta Pasta), and Signor Ferri (a singer and set designer) and his wife. (Mattfeld, 18; Lawrence, xlv) Although García brought with him no instrumental musicians, the orchestra of the Park Theatre was expanded to assist in the opera performances; as early as September the theatre's management had announced the engagement of a



MADAME MALIBRAN GARCIA. (FROM THE DRAWING BY JOHN HAYTER. PUBLISHED BY J. DICKINSON, LONDON, 1820.)

Maria Felicità Malibran (née García)

"double band" for the season. (Odell, III:174) For the performances by the García Company, the orchestra numbered twenty-six: seven violins (Nelson says six), two violas, three cellos, two double-basses, two flutes, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, two timpani, and piano--making this ensemble one of the largest and most complete orchestras ever assembled up to that time in the United States. (Nicholas Tawa, "García," AG; Nelson, 126-127)

The company made its debut performance on 29 November 1825 in Il barbiere di Siviglia. García's choice of an opening opera is an indication of his own astute business sense. Not only did that work have an extraordinary personal advertising value for the vocalist (Rossini had written the part of Almaviva for García, and the tenor had created the role in the opera's première in Rome in 1816), but the music was already familiar to New York audiences. The English version, as mentioned in Chapter 1, had been premièred at the Park Theatre in 1819, and the opera had not only been performed in New York every season until 1824, it also had been heard elsewhere around the country. As the critic of the New-York Review and Athenaeum Magazine commented in December 1825, "The music of 'Il Barbiere di Siviglia' has always been extremely popular, and Signor García has shewn great judgement in [its] selection [as] the first opera" of the season. (Quoted in Mattfeld, 20)

The company limited its repertory almost exclusively to proven European favorites; five of their nine operas, in fact, were by Rossini, the reigning operatic composer. Over the course of the season they mounted seventy-nine performances of nine different works, including Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia, La Cenerentola, Tancredi, Il Turco in

Italia, and Otello; Romeo e Giulietta (by Niccolò Zingarelli), Mozart's Don Giovanni (at the instigation of Lorenzo da Ponte, then a resident of New York), and two operas by García himself (to libretti by Rosich), L'amato astuto and La figlia dell' aria. García's company, of course, was responsible for the North American premières of all these works (in Italian).[3] As a rule the troupe performed twice a week at the Park Theatre, repeating each new opera after its introduction for as many times as possible before moving on to another work; by June, the company was rotating its repertory on a regular basis.[4] The other nights were occupied by dramatic performances given by the Park's company, the members of which, incidentally, were not particularly pleased that two of their evening performances each week were pre-empted by the foreigners. (Lawrence, l)

At first, the troupe drew well. The aristocratic nature of the opening night audience, in particular, was widely lauded in the contemporary press, and this commentary--especially references to "the galaxy of fashion and beauty" or the "elegant and well-dressed females" present in the theatre--has been much quoted in secondary sources.[5] That the Park management was encouraging a higher-class audience is clear from the doubled ticket prices (to $2.00 for boxes and $1.00 for the pit), the

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3. Rossini's Il barbiere, a four-act French version, had been performed in New Orleans in 1823. See Belsom, 12.

4. For a day-by-day accounting of the troupe's performances, see Nelson, 316-320.

5. Mirror, 3 December 1825, quoted in Mattfeld, 14; New York American, 30 November 1825, quoted in Lawrence, xlviii. For other descriptions of the "elegant and fashionable" audience, see Lawrence, xlviii-l; Nelson; Odell, III:183-4; Mattfeld, 13-14; Jay R. S. Teran, "The New York Opera Audience: 1825-1974," (unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1974), 1-4; Hamm, Yesterdays, 64-66, etc.

more-fashionable curtain time (8:00 p.m., rather than the usual 6:30 or 7:00 p.m.), and the availability of subscriptions for the entire series. (Advertisement from the New York American, quoted in Odell, III:182) Furthermore, shortly after the appearance of the García troupe, the New York newspapers became filled, according to Lawrence, with a "veritable deluge of advertisements of hitherto unknown items," including opera hats, opera cloaks, opera hoods, and so forth. (Lawrence, xlviii) This indicates clearly that the fashionable and wealthy--those who could afford to purchase such luxuries--were attracted in large numbers to the novel theatrical performances.

Evidence that is often overlooked, however, just as clearly suggests that the Italian troupe attracted attention (and paid admissions) from non-elite New Yorkers. What most modern commentators fail to mention about ticket prices, for example, is that the Park Theatre managers held the admission cost of their gallery seats to the usual 25 cents. They did so for a practical reason; as theatre historian Bruce McConachie pointed out, Price and Simpson knew that New York "craftsmen, servants, and other 'gallery gods'" could be counted on to "patronize Italian opera as they had English musical performances and plays."[6] That the troupe did indeed attract both wealthy and working-class New Yorkers is also illustrated--perhaps inadvertently--by a charming story about elite opera-going apparel that appeared in the New York Mirror. A local merchant, so the author related, imported a number of "beautiful silk cloaks for ladies" during the autumn of 1825. Despite numerous advertisements, he was unable to

6. Bruce A. McConachie, "New York Operagoing, 1825-50: Creating an Elite Social Ritual" (American Music, Summer 1988), 182.

sell them. "Well, things went on in this manner," the writer continued,

> until Signor García and the Italian company set themselves down among us and began una voce-ing and poco fa-ing until every one's head was turned. Joe [the clerk of the store] rummaged his pockets--picked out a couple of shillings--went up among the [gallery] gods--was in ecstasy and rapture--and next morning was directed to put into the newspapers another advertisement about the ever-lasting cloaks. Joe's head being full of the opera, wrote out in fair and legible characters, Opera cloaks--a brand new importation, &c.
>
> Next morning Joe was standing, as usual, behind the counter, and behold! a blue-eyed beauty came in--"have you any opera cloaks, sweet sir?" Joe down with the opera cloaks, and Blue-eyes fitted herself in a trice, and paid the price without a single frudge. Another fair lady came in-- "you have opera cloaks," said she. "To be sure we have," said Joe. Away went another opera cloak, and Joe laid violent hands on the cash. By this time, many others came in, and it was--"have you any opera cloaks?" "have you any opera cloaks?" "have you any opera cloaks?" until the whole importation was gone, and Joe had secured the proceeds in the till.

The obvious message of the story--that merchants could capitalize on the current operatic craze--confirms the appeal of opera to the fashion-conscious and wealthy. Just as clear, however, is the intelligence that clerks like Joe (who, according to the Mirror, "ever since . . . has made his appearance on the second seat in the pit on the opera nights") were likewise attracted to performances by the visiting Italians. ("Opera Cloaks," Mirror, 21 January 1826)

The fascination of the New York public with García's troupe was rather short-lived. A great deal of their early success apparently was due to the sheer novelty of their undertaking, for after only two months of performances, it was apparent that New Yorkers were not yet prepared to support an Italian company on a regular basis. The New York American reported in February that García was barely able to pay



FIG. 3.—OPERA COSTUME.



FIG. 2.—OPERA DRESS.



Examples of advertisements for clothing designed to be worn at opera performances. Above: from Harper's New Monthly Magazine; left: Godey's Magazine and Ladies' Book.

expenses; neither he nor the members of his family, he reported, had yet received any compensation. (Quoted in Lawrence, l) But the company's fortunes must have waxed as well as waned, for in June 1826 a critic for the Mirror complained that "the Italian opera threatens to exclude the English from the stage." Everyone was surprised, he continued, at the enthusiastic reception the company had enjoyed; no one had expected to see the Italian opera "so wholly engross the attention of the public, as to leave the music of our own language neglected." (Mirror, 17 June 1825, 375) Some lovers of the drama also added voices of dissent, complaining--as they would do later during successful runs of English opera--that the musical form was an inferior one, and that it was unworthy to take the place of "the old English tragedy and comedy" on the American stage. "We have always looked on farce, melo-drama, and opera, with dissatisfaction," one writer grumbled. "Let us [re]turn to the good old time when Shakespeare played."[7]

Dominick Lynch and a committee of several other wealthy New Yorkers refused to be discouraged by the on-again off-again nature of the public's support, and tried in the spring of 1826 to drum up enthusiasm for the construction of an opera house at which the Italian troupe would be the resident ensemble. The project, however, was abandoned, and García and his company gave their final North American performance on 30 September 1826, just eleven months after their New York debut. Shortly thereafter, they left for Mexico, where they performed for some eighteen months before returning to Paris. (Lawrence, li-lii; Nicholas Tawa, "García," AG) The manager left behind in New York, however, several members of his company--

7. New York Literary Gazette and Phi Beta Kappa Repository, 17 December 1825, quoted in Mattfeld, 15.

including Felix Angrisani, Paolo Rosich, Signor Ferri, and the troupe's star soprano, his daughter Maria, who in March 1826 had ill-advisedly married Eugene-Louis Malibran, a man who was more than twice her age and who, although reportedly wealthy, turned out to be almost penniless.[8]

Italian Opera After the Garcías: Montresor, Rivafinoli, Porto-Sacchi, and the Havana Company

American audiences had no opera in Italian for five years after the García troupe left New York in the autumn of 1826. As we have seen, Elizabeth Austin appeared on the stages of the United States for the first time in 1827, and her repertory of "Englished" Italian works guaranteed that Italian melody continued to be heard by Americans. But of Italian music in Italian, there was little during the late 1820s and early 1830s. There were a few isolated glimmers: the concerts given by vocal stars and by the several singers left behind in New York by the García troupe, for example, continued to include numerous selections from the Italian operatic repertory. And there also were a handful of incidental productions of staged operas in Italian during this period. In April 1829, for example, the vocal stars Elizabeth Feron and Charles Horn banded together with the Italians Angrisani, Rosich, and a new vocal star, Frances Brichta, to mount four performances of Il Trionfo della musica (a pasticcio from Mayr's opera Il Fanatico per la musica) at the Bowery Theatre in New York; in May the same singers travelled to Philadelphia to

8. Madame Malibran remained in New York for another year eking out an existence--and further acquainting New York audiences with Italian melody--by singing in concerts and in English-language operas at the Bowery Theatre. Her final performance in New York was on 27 September 1827, after which she returned to Europe, leaving her husband behind. See Mattfeld, 22.

perform that work (the first opera in Italian given there) at the Chestnut Street Theatre. (Odell, III:410-411; Curtis, 109; Wemyss, 172) A year later, in April 1830, Giulia da Ponte (the librettist's niece) and a number of other singers, including Angrisani, Rosich, and Ferri, mounted two performances of Cimarosa's Il Matrimonio segreto and da Ponte's pasticcio, L'Ape musicale (with music by Cimarosa, Salieri, Zingarelli, and--predominantly--Rossini) at the Park Theatre in New York.[9] Except for these isolated instances, however, there were no performances of opera in Italian (at least by professional companies) in the United States from the late 1820s to the early 1830s. This dearth of Italian opera, however, was interrupted in the early and mid-1830s by the appearance of three different troupes in the North, and two in the South. The northern companies performed principally in New York and Philadelphia from 1832 through 1835; the southern troupes performed in New Orleans and Louisville, Kentucky, in 1836 and 1837. All five companies were linked, to a certain extent, by shared personnel.

The first troupe to appear in North America during the 1830s was headed by the tenor Giacomo Montresor. The company had been recruited in Italy during the fall of 1831 by Lorenzo da Ponte, an indefatigable proselytizer for Italian language and culture, who reportedly was acting on behalf of "a number of gentlemen of N. York and Philadelphia." The troupe arrived in New York late in the summer of 1832.[10] The Montresor

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9. Mattfeld, 26; Odell, III:458; the description of the pastiche is from Andrew Porter, "Musical Events," New Yorker, 24 October 1988, 106-107.

10. The quote is from the Spirit, 3 March 1832, 335; the company's arrival is reported in the Spirit, 4 August 1832. For da Ponte's own explanation of his motives, see the forward ("To the Citizens of Philadelphia") to the libretto of Il Pirata, published in Philadelphia in 1833. A copy is in the collection of the Music Department, PPL.

Company numbered thirty-six individuals (not counting spouses, children, servants, and other hangers-on); this total included fifteen principal singers (five sopranos, two contraltos, four tenors, three basses, and one bass-buffo), six choristers, seven instrumental musicians (two oboists, a harpist, a trombonist, and string principals), a director of the opera, a chorus director, a scene painter and three assistants, a chief costumer, and Montresor himself.[11] According to the Mirror, the orchestra was "chiefly collected in New York"; it numbered nineteen: five violins, two violas, one cello, one bass, two each of oboes, clarinets, and horns, and one each of bassoon, flute, trombone, and trumpet. (Mirror, 13 October 1832, 119) Although smaller than García's ensemble, the orchestra had two oboists (both had arrived with Montresor), which undoubtedly effected an overall improvement; oboes had been conspicuously absent from García's orchestra.

The Montresor Company was the first Italian troupe to attempt a true season of opera in this country, for the García company's performances had been grafted onto a theatrical season. The musical climate in the United States, however, had changed a great deal in the years since Manuel García had left the country. In fact, according to the New York Mirror, García and his "inimitable corps" had commenced the change, which a critic for that journal described as nothing short of a musical revolution. "The sweet sound of the Italian [had] no sooner reached the American ear," he wrote, "than it became a convert." The writer (in a somewhat grandiose vein) continued with his interpretation

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11. The size of the company is reported in the Spirit, 4 August 1832; see also Odell, III:642. For a list of the personnel of this and the other companies discussed in this chapter, see the Appendix.

of musical history:

> After the Garcías left, the musical excitement was threatened with extinction, when a Knight renewed it. . . . Austin, Feron, Horn, and Pearman have lately been stars of the ascendant. A great change has been effected. Pianos . . . are manufactured without number, at as high a price as you please; and no house is without one. Music is every where cultivated. ("Musical Taste," Mirror, 18 July 1829, 15)

Montresor undoubtedly hoped that his troupe could exploit the growing taste for Italian melody. He also hoped that his singers would satisfy and please Americans, whose expectations had been heightened in the intervening years by performances of such superior vocal stars as Elizabeth Austin and the others mentioned by the Mirror critic quoted above. "Operas have become so fashionable in New York," the editor of the Spirit explained just prior to the opening of Montresor's season, "and Five years of listening to the scientific performances of various Prima Donnas, has perfected a taste that will require first rate execution, fully to gratify." (Spirit, 1 August 1832)

The Montresor company opened in New York at the Richmond Hill Theatre (renamed the Italian Opera House) to much acclaim. In November the Spirit reported that the opera house "continues to be fashionably attended," and that the company was enjoying "unequalled success"; in January the same journal noted that the "beauty and fashion of the city" packed the theatre, which--significantly--was "crowded from pit to gallery." (Spirit, 10 November 1832, 12 January 1833) The company mounted two seasons in New York and one in Philadelphia during 1832-33, giving thirty-five performances in the former city and twenty-three in the latter, of a total repertory of eight operas (La Cenerentola, L'Italiana

in Algeri, Mose' in Egitto, L'Inganno felice, Il barbiere di Siviglia, and Otello by Rossini; Il Pirata by Bellini, and Elise e Claudio by Mercadante).[12] All these works, excepting La Cenerentola and Il barbiere, were new to the North American stage. Montresor undoubtedly calculated that his troupe's performances of La Cenerentola would attract some of the same enthusiastic audiences that had flocked to Elizabeth Austin's performances of Cinderella; in this expectation, however, he was disappointed. Joseph Sill, who attended several of the Montresor company's performances in Philadelphia, commented favorably on the musical and dramatic abilities of various members of the troupe. But on 13 February he wrote that he "had attended the Italian Opera to see Cenerentola, or Cinderella . . . [and] as a whole we infinitely preferr'd the performance of Mrs. Austin and Mr. [John] Jones in the English version." (Sill, 13 February 1833) In this judgement Sill evidently was not alone, and American taste reflected that of British audiences; in an 1830 article from the London Harmonicon that praised Rophino Lacy's version of Cinderella, the author noted that "Rossini's Opera, La Cenerentola, has never, as a whole, been popular even on our Italian stage." (Quoted in The Euterpiad, September 1830, 86)

At the end of his first season in New York, Montresor found himself slightly in debt to the committee that had sponsored his performances there. He remained confident of eventual success, however, and was certain that subsequent profitable seasons would help defray the

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12. In New York they performed from 6 October-27 December 1832 at the Richmond Hill Theatre, and from 10 April-11 May 1833 at the Bowery Theatre; in Philadelphia from 23 January-13 March 1833 at the Chestnut Street Theatre. For the information on repertory, see Giovanni Ermenegildo Schiavo, Italian-American History. Volume I: Italian Music and Musicians in America (New York: Vigo Press, 1947), 44.

heavy expenses incurred during the first year, which included the formidable cost of transporting the troupe from Italy. Towards the end of the company's visit to Philadelphia (during which engagement they drew large houses but, according to Curtis, lost money), Montresor was dismayed to discover that the Italian Opera Association in the City of New York (which was building an Italian Opera House at Leonard and Church Streets in Manhattan) had awarded the first lease of the facility not to him, but to one Cavaliere Vincenzo Rivafinoli.[13] This development threw his plans and hopes for the subsequent (1833-34) season into serious disarray. Faced with significant debts and no future source of income, Montresor appealed to the good citizens of Philadelphia for assistance. "The Italian Opera, who have been here about 5 or 6 weeks," Joseph Sill wrote on 7 March, "have been compelled by their misfortunes to make application to the Community for relief, in consequence of the want of sufficient support." Five or six hundred dollars were raised by subscription for their benefit, and further assistance was promised. (Sill, 7 March 1833) At the conclusion of their engagement in Pennsylvania, the troupe returned to New York, and after a final performance there on 11 May, disbanded.

A large number of Montresor's musicians elected to remain in New York. This significant enlargement of the pool of competent singers living in the city, in fact, was the principal long-term contribution of

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13. See Curtis, 164. The surprise move by the Board seems to have been the result of political intrigue; Rivafinoli apparently was something of a wheeler-dealer. He managed to convince the powers-that-be that under his management the Opera House would earn large amounts of money, while under Montresor's tutelage the Italian Opera Association members would lose their collective shirts. See Schiavo, 45-49.

the Montresor Company to opera in the United States, for their one-year tenure had little lasting impact. Rivafinoli hired many of the Montresor performers for his own company, but he pointedly did not hire either Giacomo Montresor or most of the principal singers of the former troupe--despite being publicly urged to do so as late as December 1833. (Mirror, 7 December 1833) Sometime after the beginning of the new year, Montresor and his unemployed compatriots (including Luciano Fornasari, a bass; the leader's son Giovanni Battista Montresor, a tenor; soprano Adelaide Pedrotti; bass Giuseppe Corsetti, and orchestra director and violinist Michele Rapetti) left New York and headed south; they next are mentioned in the American musical/theatrical press (in 1835) as part of the Havana Opera Company. (Spirit, 29 August 1835)

Vincenzo Rivafinoli's company, the first resident troupe of the newly opened (and short-lived) Italian Opera House, shared a number of similarities (besides personnel) with the Montresor company. It performed in both New York and Philadelphia, it had a small repertory heavily weighted towards Rossini, and it was in existence for but a year. In New York, the company performed in the brand-new, luxurious facilities that the Italian Opera Association had built earlier that year. The backers of this venture (who apparently had been inspired by da Ponte) were a number of wealthy New Yorkers; the house itself, in the words of Richard Grant White (writing in 1882), was "of an exquisiteness and a splendor as has not since been seen in New York." (White, I:702) The theatre had a different arrangement from any other house built in the United States up to that point. The first tier, where the seats were mahogany sofas, was connected to the old "pit," which had been



Giacomo Montresor and Adelaide Pedrotti of the Montresor Opera Company in Il Pirata.



Stars of the Montresor Opera Company. Clockwise from upper left: Michele Rapetti, orchestra director and violinist; Giovanni Battista Montresor, tenor; Adelaide Pedrotti, soprano; Luciano Fornasari, bass.

transformed into a "parterre" (or "parquette"); this section, also furnished with upholstered sofas, was now open to women.[14] The second balcony was occupied by private boxes, for which the stockholders drew lots. This was the first theatre in New York to sell private boxes for the entire season, and most of them went to the members of the Italian Opera Association. (McConachie, 183) The prices of admission to the rest of the house were high: sofa-seats, $2.00, parterre, $1.00, and gallery, $.75. (Ireland, II:95)

The troupe gave approximately eighty performances (fourteen in Philadelphia, the rest in New York) of eight operas, including Rossini's La Gazza Ladra, La Cenerentola, La Donna del Lago, Il Turco in Italia, and Matilde de Shabran; Cimarosa's Il matrimonio segreto, Pacini's Gli arabi nelle Gallia, and La Casa da Vendere by Carlo Salvioni, the chorus master of both the Montresor and Rivafinoli troupes.[15] Overall, however, the public's reception of the company was much less than enthusiastic. A critic in the American Musical Journal wrote that "as a whole, the company was very mediocre"--inferior, he claimed, to both the García and the Montresor troupes. (AMJ, October 1834, 17) The troupe, in fact, ended its season disastrously, closing during July 1834 with an astonishing deficit of $30,000. Rivafinoli subsequently was accused of

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14. Mattfeld, 31-32; White, I:702, Schiavo, 50-53. For a description of the theatre, see White, Mattfeld, Schiavo, and Odell III:691-692.

15. The company's seasons were as follows: in New York: from 18 November 1833-21 February 1834; 24 February-4 April 1834; and 24 May-sometime in July 1834; in Philadelphia from 8 April-19 May 1834. For information on repertory, see Schiavo, 55; Curtis, 191; and Odell, III:695. La Gazza Ladra had been performed in French in Philadelphia (1827), New Orleans (1828), and New York (1830), and La Donna del Lago likewise had been produced in French in both New Orleans (1829) and New York (1829); the Rivafinoli company productions of both these operas were the first in Italian in the United States. See Belsom, 18-19 and Loewenberg, 655, 665.

dishonesty (by da Ponte, among others), but an itemized account of his expenditures suggests that the manager was not a crook, just an inept businessman.[16]

The overall impact of this company--beyond the importation of several additional singers--was minimal. "It produced no very strong impression upon the American public," White pointed out, "and, indeed, left no mark, in our musical experience, but that of its appearance and its extinction." (White, I:703) The underlying reasons for its failure, however--beyond artistic mediocrity and poor management--tell us a great deal about New York opera and theatre audiences of the 1830s. First, the continued--and growing--popularity of English (or translated Italian) opera, and the tremendous box-office draw of Joseph and Mary Ann Wood at the Park Theatre, provided almost insurmountable competition to the Italians. "The immense houses which Mr. and Mrs. Wood bring nightly to the Park," wrote Philip Hone in his diary, "prove that the New Yorkers are not devoid of musical taste, notwithstanding that the Italian opera does not succeed." (11 November 1835, quoted in Mattfeld, 34) Just as damaging as the Woods' popularity, however, was the high cost of admission to the Italians' performances. "The Opera was placed beyond the reach of the great body of the people," lectured a critic for the American Musical Journal, "and that class from whom support was mainly expected are not yet sufficiently numerous to be the exclusive supporters of an Opera House." (AMJ, October 1834, 18) The ready

16. Schiavo, 56; also see Frederic Louis Ritter, Music in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 211-212 for a reproduction of Rivafinoli's account ledger.

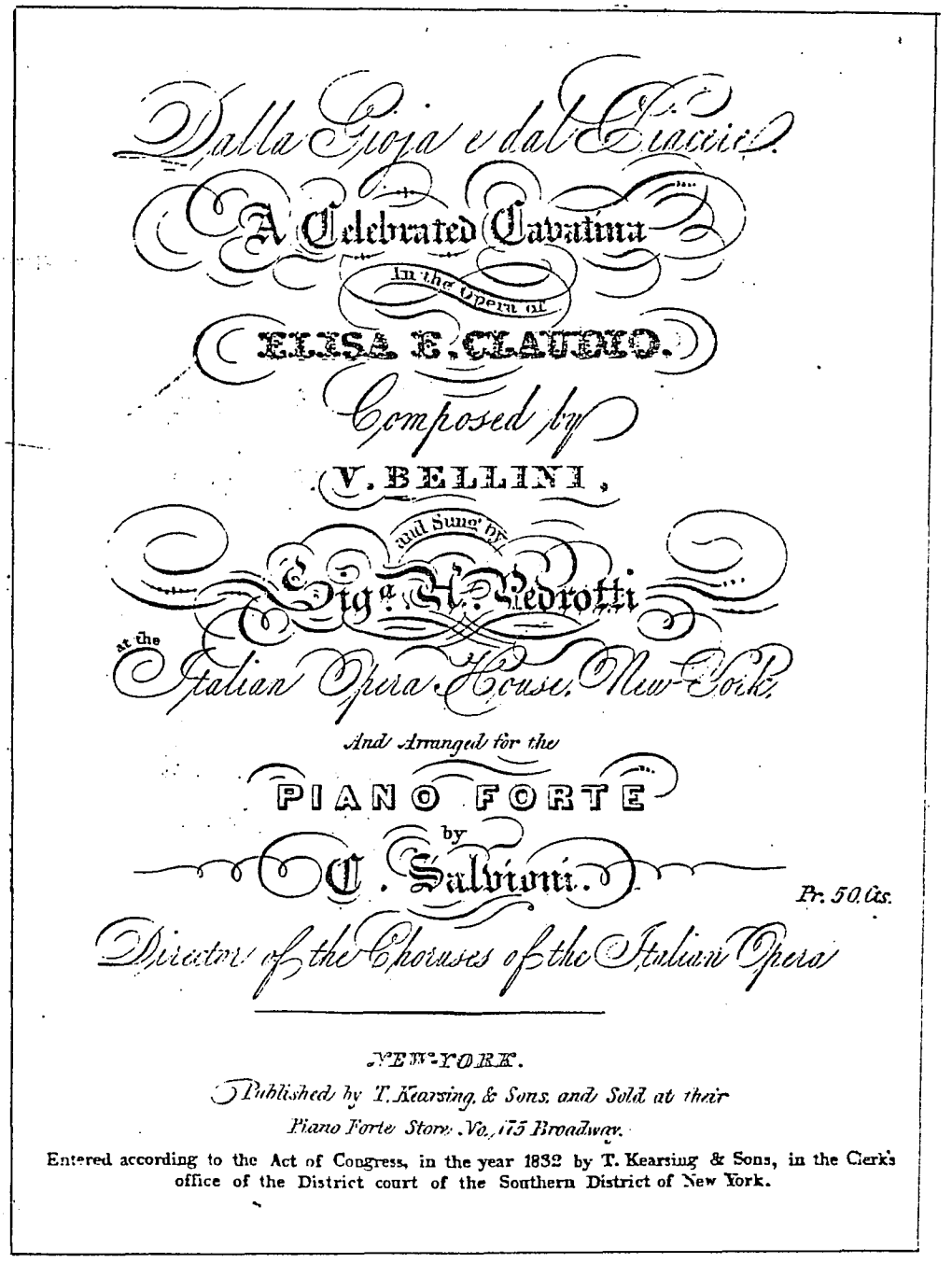
availability (at the Park Theatre) of opera performances by an overwhelmingly popular vocal-star troupe--performing in English, and at significantly lower admission prices--spelled almost-certain doom for the Rivafinoli company.

Finally, and in the long run perhaps more important, was the negative impression of exclusivity created by the sumptuous surroundings and private boxes of the new opera house. Because the wealthy and elite of New York City were not yet "sufficiently numerous" to support an opera company, this deliberate attempt to exclude the other parts of the traditional theatre audience simply backfired. Philip Hone, an aristocrat and one of the box-holders at the Italian Opera, commented in his diary about the majority of New Yorkers who stayed away from the Rivafinoli performances--and expressed admiration for this "spirit of independence which refuses to countenance to anything exclusive." (Quoted in Mattfeld, 34) The critic for the American Musical Journal quoted above probably voiced the thoughts (and severe disapprobation, to use a contemporary term) of many New York theatre-goers when he pointed out that the division of the opera house created "distinctions offensive to our republican notions" and gave "an impression that the Opera is intended to be exclusive." He solicitously advised the managers of the enterprise to "recollect that musical pieces have been the main support of the Park Theatre for several years past" and suggested that "no permanency will be given to [opera] until it draws its support from the great mass of people in middling circumstances." (AMJ, October 1834, 18) The tone of this man's criticism, however, suggests strongly that he had not yet caught on to the fact that the "impression" created by the new opera house was not inadvertant; exclusivity was one of the goals of the Italian

Opera Association. The wealthy of New York were not interested in importing Italian opera because of their innate love of music, but because it could be transformed into an exclusive and elite pastime, one that could lend to its auditors--merely by attendance--some of those attributes. The patronage of the Italian Opera House in London by the British aristocracy, certainly, was an obvious model. That this attempt at exclusivity failed in 1834 indicates that the American (and New York) theatre still depended for its support on the patronage of all social classes; the development of an exclusive audience for a particular segment of the theatrical repertory (opera) would simply have to wait until some future date, when the upper class was "sufficiently numerous."

The final Italian troupe to appear in the North in the 1830s was the second group to attempt to mount a successful season at the Italian Opera House. The Italian Opera Association--undaunted in spite the Rivafinoli fiasco--resolved on 20 September 1834 to lease the facility to the partnership of Antonio Porto, a singer from Rivafinoli's troupe, and Signor G. A. Sacchi, that company's treasurer. (AMJ, 24 December 1834, 42) Their troupe opened its season on 10 November 1834, again in the new Opera House. Within but five weeks, however, the American Musical Journal was predicting the demise of a company it characterized as "unquestionably . . . the most destitute of vocal talent, of any that has essayed the performance of Italian Operas in this country." (AMJ, 24 December 1834, 42) Apparently the orchestra, which numbered twenty-seven musicians, was the troupe's single redeeming feature.[17] In spite of the dire

17. According to the AMJ it consisted of seven violins, two violas, two cellos, two basses, one oboe, one bassoon, two each of horns, trumpets, clarinets, and flutes, three trombones, and drums. See AMJ, February 1835, 66-67.



Sheet music publication of a cavatina from Bellini's Elisa E Claudio. as sung by Adelaide Pedrotti of the Montresor Opera Company.

predictions, the company limped through its first season (10 November-24? December 1834) and, after some reorganization, mounted a second one (23 January-3 April 1835). Lowered prices, suggested the Mirror, had "brought about a change in feeling" towards the troupe; even the American Musical Journal admitted, somewhat grudgingly, that although the company "is not so good as is desirable, still they form the nucleus of a better [troupe], and should therefore be kept together." (Mirror, 7 February 1835; AMJ, February 1835) Repertory carefully chosen to highlight the company's strengths also helped; in particular, the Mirror critic suggested that they perform works "full of concerted pieces," for the troupe, so he reported, "is woefully inadequate in strong soloists." (Mirror, 28 February 1835) By the end of March the company's management felt that the troupe was strong enough to make a short out-of-town trip--to Albany, New York, where they performed Moses in Egitto, L'Inganno felice, and the second act of Eduardo e Christina in early April. The visit, according to the American Musical Journal, "appears to have given the liveliest satisfaction to the Albanians, and to have been a profitable one to the company."[18] The troupe returned once again to New York City and performed there from 22 April until sometime in May, when their season petered out. In October 1835 the Italian Opera Association realized that "the object for which the Opera House was built cannot be effected"; consequently, they authorized its sale. (Schiavo, 58) Eventually the theatre was purchased by James Hackett, renamed the National Theatre, and leased to James Wallack--whose successful opera-dominated season in 1838-39 we have already examined in some detail.

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18. H. P. Phelps, Players of a Century. A Record of the Albany Stage (Albany: Joseph McDonough, 1880), 187; see also AMJ, May 1835, 144.

Two Italian companies performed in the southern United States during 1836 and 1837. The first of these brings us full circle in this discussion of Italian troupes active in North America during the 1830s, for it was none other than the Montresor Opera Company, now under the direction of Giovanni Battista Montresor, Giacomo's son. (Schiavo, 43; Kmen, 140) A precise chronicle of the whereabouts or activities of the principal singers from the Montresor troupe (those left unhired by Rivafinoli) from May 1833 (when the company disbanded in New York) to March 1836 (when the troupe resurfaced in New Orleans) is not possible, nor is it particularly important. A general sketch of these singers' activities, however, is both feasible and of interest, for it clearly illustrates how resourceful musicians had to be to eke out a living as performers, and how widely travelled they were, despite the relatively undeveloped transportation system of the 1830s.

In 1833 one Francesco Brichta engaged Pedrotti, Montresor, Fornasari, Corsetti, Rapetti, and other members of the defunct Montresor troupe as the nucleus of the first resident opera company in Havana, Cuba.[19] The Montresor musicians evidently performed for Brichta for only one season (fall and winter 1834), however, for by April 1835 all of them (with the exception of the violinist Rapetti) had left Havana as a result of a dispute over wages with Brichta.[20] Apparently by that fall even Rapetti had joined the ranks of the disaffected, for in

19. Schiavo, 63; Brichta's relationship to the female vocal star of the same name (Frances Brichta) is unknown; their names, however, are suspiciously similar.

20. Brichta at this point decided to go to Italy to recruit another company, and by July 1835 he had secured a troupe of fifty (including instrumentalists and choristers) and was en route back to Havana, where he had a three-year contract to manage an opera company. See Schiavo, 63.

September the American Musical Journal reported that Montresor, Pedrotti, and Rapetti had just arrived in New York and that Fornasari was "daily expected." (AMJ, September 1835, 239) Montresor and his colleagues did not remain in New York long, for by March 1836 his company was in New Orleans, performing at James Caldwell's resplendent new St. Charles Theatre. (Kmen, 140) While in New York, however, Montresor had enlisted for his new troupe a number of the singers from his old one, most of whom had sung in the interim with the Rivafinoli Company; he also hired several performers who had come to the United States at the behest of that former competitor.[21] Undoubtedly many of these singers signed on eagerly with Montresor, despite the distance they had to travel for the engagement, for after the Rivafinoli company folded in July 1834, the Italian operatic pickings in New York had become slim indeed. Only a small number of the stranded singers had been hired for the Porto-Sacchi venture--which, in any case, was past history by May 1835. Whether Montresor paid the singers' travel expenses to New Orleans or whether they had to make their own way south is not known.

The Montresor Company opened its season on 6 March 1836 with the New Orleans première of Bellini's Il Pirata; during the next three months they gave a total of thirty-five performances (usually three per week) of seven different operas.[22] The company's repertory during this New Orleans

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21. Members of the New Orleans Montresor troupe who had been in the New York company included Francesco Sapignoli, Adelaide Pedrotti, Enrichetta Salvioni, Lorenza Marozzi, Signor Manetti, Ernesto Orlandi, and G. B. Montresor. Of these, Sapignoli, Salvioni, Marozzi, Manetti, and Orlandi had sung with Rivafinoli. The two singers Montresor hired who had come to the United States for Rivafinoli were Antonio de Rosa and Luigi Ravaglia. Information from Kmen, 136; Schiavo, 42, 55; Spirit, 4 August 1832; Odell, III:644, 690-694, and Mirror, 21 September 1833, 94.

22. The U. S. première of Il Pirata had been in New York on 5 December 1832 by the earlier troupe of the same name. See Belsom, 32; Loewenberg, 709.

engagement clearly indicates a gradual substitution of Bellini for Rossini in the affections of American opera lovers; of the seven works performed, four were by Rossini (Otello, La Cenerentola, Zelmira, and Il barbiere di Siviglia) and three by Bellini (Il Pirata, Norma, and La Straniera).[23] Four operas besides Il Pirata were presented for the first time in New Orleans, including Otello, La Straniera, Zelmira, and Norma; the latter two were also U. S. premières. (Kmen, "Singing," 408, 411; Belsom, 31, 34) The troupe closed its very successful St. Charles Theatre season on 31 May 1836; they had attracted good audiences for almost four months.[24] The nascent elitism that was beginning to be associated with Italian opera in New York seems to have been entirely absent in the Crescent City--for two reasons. First, foreign-language opera had been a part of the city's cultural fabric since as early as the 1790s. The first resident opera company, that of Louis Tabary at the St. Peter Street Theatre, had given over three hundred and fifty operas performances (in French) of seventy-six operas between 1806 and 1810; other companies, including that of John Davis (who arrived in New Orleans in 1809) had provided such a steady diet of French opera to the citizens of New Orleans that by the 1830s the musical-theatrical genre was firmly established in the city. (Kmen, 73-83; Belsom, 4) As the New Orleans Bee pointed out in April 1836, operas "amuse our citizens more than any other form of public amusement--except balls." (Bee, 26 April 1836, quoted in Kmen, 142) Second, it was a matter of national pride to the English-speaking residents to support Caldwell

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23. Henry A. Kmen. "Singing and Dancing in New Orleans: A Social History of the Birth and Growth of Balls and Opera, 1791-1841" (unpublished dissertation, Tulane University, 1961) (hereafter referred to as Kmen, "Singing," 408-411.

24. According to John Kendall, Caldwell claimed to have lost money on the Italians. Although he did lose money during the last half of his season, the deficits were not due to the productions of Italian opera. See Kendall, 137.

and his St. Charles Theatre, even when the featured artists were performing in Italian. Caldwell's engagement of the Montresor troupe represented a serious challenge to the operatic pre-eminence of the city's French-speaking theatre (in this case, the Théâtre d'Orléans), and the residents of the American sector--elite and non-elite alike--were delighted at the prospect of some real competition. "For those Americans who had resented French superiority in opera," Henry Kmen wrote, "it was a happy time." (Kmen, 141)

After closing their season in New Orleans, the singers (excepting Montresor and Pedrotti, who went back to Havana) travelled to Louisville, Kentucky, where they spent the summer performing in another theatre owned by Caldwell; the manager later claimed that he kept the entire company on his payroll throughout the summer to insure its return during the 1836-37 season. (Kmen, 143; Spirit, 22 October 1836; Kendall, 143) The troupe did indeed return to New Orleans in late 1836--or at least part of it did--and opened at the St. Charles Theatre on 4 December in La Cenerentola. This ensemble, however, was but a remnant of the Montresor troupe, to which some local (New Orleans) singers had been added. It now was known as the de Rosa Opera Company; Antonio de Rosa, a bass with Montresor, was the new head of the troupe. (Kendall, 136, 142-143) They performed intermittently at the St. Charles until 27 February 1837.[25]

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25. Kmen, "Singing," 412-415; the "real" Montresor troupe--or at least Montresor himself--was reported to have been in Mexico during 1836 (See Armstrong, 23); by 1840 he was once again back in Havana, as the conductor of the Italian company at the Tacon Theatre. See J. G., "on the U. S. ship "Warren," off Cuba, March 1, 1840," "Theatricals in Havana," Spirit, 4 April 1840.

Caldwell evidently was not satisfied with the calibre of this makeshift de Rosa company, for sometime before the end of their engagement he sent an emissary to Havana to persuade Francesco Brichta to bring his Havana Opera Company to New Orleans after the conclusion of the season there. (Kendall, 143) Caldwell's terms were acceptable to Brichta, and his troupe arrived on 1 April 1837. (Kmen, 151) Brichta brought with him soloists, chorus, orchestra conductor, and three string principals to augment the already large orchestra of the St. Charles; apparently he also absorbed into his troupe some of the singers of the now-disbanded de Rosa company. (Kendall, 144) This was the first of numerous visits that various Havana Opera companies would make to the United States during the antebellum period, and the troupe, even this early in its history, already had a formidable reputation in North America. "The Havana Company [is] one of the best that has ever crossed the Atlantic," a reporter for the New York Evening Star would explain the following spring, "because operatic singers have been always well paid by the rich and music-loving Spaniards." (Reported in Boston Musical Gazette, 30 May 1838, 21)

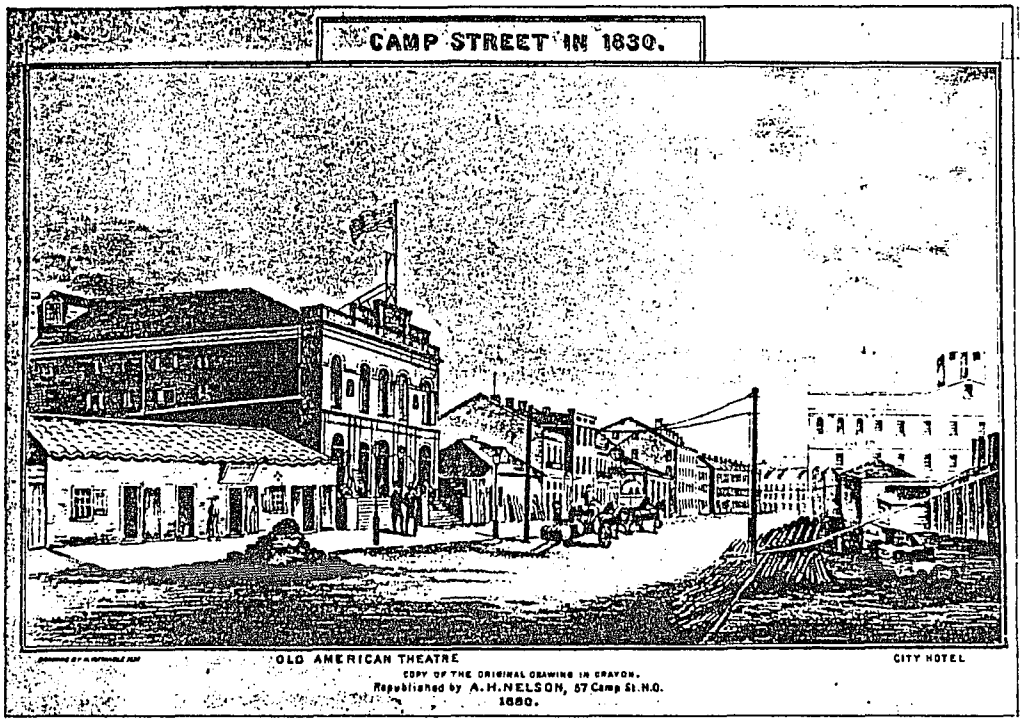
The Havana Opera Company performed at the St. Charles Theatre for slightly over two months, from 4 April through 6 June 1837. Their repertory of eight operas was much more varied than that of the Montresor troupe; it included three works by Rossini (Tancredi, Il barbiere di Siviglia, and Semiramide); two by Bellini (I Capuleti e i Montecchi and Norma); and one each by Saverio Mercadante (Donna Caritea), Luigi Ricci (Chiara di Rosembergh), and Gaetano Donizetti (Parisina). Six of these works were new to audiences in the Crescent

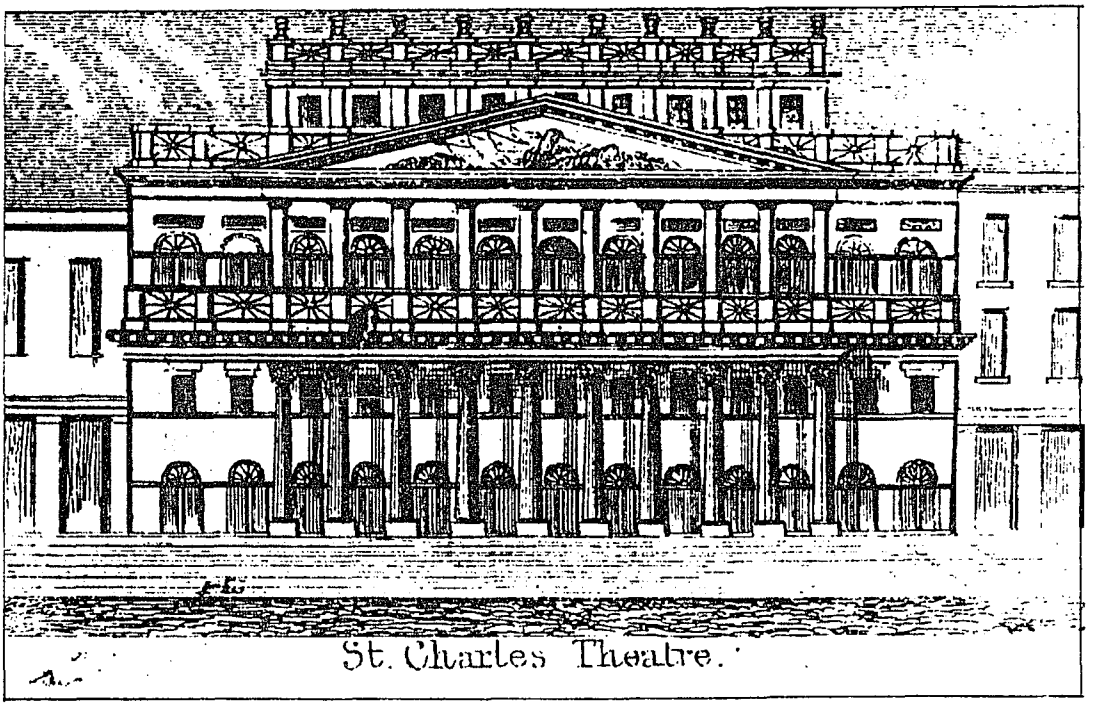
City; four of them wre given their North American premières.[26]

The musical sophistication, knowledge, and expectations of the New Orleans audience is demonstrated by a remarkable occurrence that took place during the second performance (on 21 May) of Semiramide, one of the new operas. The work was performed without incident up until the last act, at which point the management attempted--without explanation--to curtail the opera by the omission of the final scene. When the members of the audience realized that the curtain was not to be raised for the opera's conclusion, they reacted with indignation. "The falling of the green curtain was the signal for raising a most tremendous racket," wrote the critic for the Picayune the next day. The pit "became uproarious," and when no explanation was forthcoming from the management, the audience "became tumultuous. Such a din," he continued, "we have rarely heard. Hissing, howling, whistling, kicking and screaming reigned in that temple where, but a few moments before, all was harmony." The management attempted to subdue the auditors by dousing the house lights; this enraged the citizens even further (the more so because ladies were present), and a full-fledged riot ensued. Canes and other missiles were thrown, drapery around the boxes torn, cushions ripped open, seats broken, chairs sent flying in all directions. "The house," wrote the critic, "presented more the appearance of a brothel, in the midst of a row, than a respectable

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26. U. S. premières: I Capuleti e Montecchi, 4 April 1836; Caritea, Regina di Spagna, as Donna Caritea, 26 April; Semiramide, 19 May; and Chiara di Rosembergh, 3 May; New Orleans premières: Parisina, 4 June; and Tancredi, 12 May (Belsom, 36, 39, 40, 45; Kmen, "Singing," 418). For information on repertory in various cities I am indebted to Thomas G. Kaufman of Boonton, New Jersey, who generously gave me copies of his research notes for a book on operatic premières in the United States. Kaufman, MS worklist, New Orleans.





Two New Orleans theatres operating during the 1830s. Above: American Theatre, 1830. Below: St. Charles Theatre, 1838.

resort for amusement." The rioters were not subdued until the management finally sent someone out to explain that the company's soprano (Lorenza Marozzi), who was singing the title role, had suddenly been taken ill. The New Orleaneans' outrage was fueled by a strong suspicion that the Italians had attempted to cut the opera only because they were tired or lazy, and had done so on the assumption that the American audience would not know the difference. That they did know the difference suggests that many individuals in the audience either had attended the opera's first performance two days previous, had read the libretto ahead of time, or both. (New Orleans Picayune, 23 May 1837, quoted in Belsom, 41-42 and Kmen, 154)

This attempt by the Havana company to significantly alter the opera from the written version was probably common performance practice during the entire antebellum period; it certainly was an accepted practice in Europe. Unfortunately, there is little concrete information in the theatrical/musical press during the 1830s and early 1840s about specific changes made for performances mounted in the United States. Most journalistic complaints about "mutilations" to the scores of operas during this time are directed at English adaptations; only occasionally are journalistic critiques of Italian performances sufficiently specific to give a clear idea what was performed. This situation, however, would change significantly by the mid- to late-1840s. As performances of Italian opera became more numerous and the operas themselves more familiar to both audiences and critics, complaints about alterations, transpositions, deletions, and interpolations--indicating widespread practice--would become more commonplace.

The riot over changes in Semiramide was only a harbinger of further difficulties for manager Caldwell. The Havana company's St. Charles Theatre engagement ended abruptly on 6 June when a managerial disagreement between Brichta and Caldwell (which had been smoldering during most of the run) broke into open conflict. After Caldwell almost literally kicked the opera singers out of his theatre on 7 June, Brichta adroitly transferred his troupe to Caldwell's arch-rival, the Théâtre d'Orléans where the engagement extended from 10 June through 14 July. (Kmen, 151-157) The American manager was satisfied to see the Italians leave. "I have known nothing but trouble, annoyance and loss since my first unfortunate introduction of the Italian Opera last year," he reportedly grumbled to the Picayune after Brichta's company left. "For my own part," he continued, "I am not now, nor shall I ever be disposed to try it again."[27] Caldwell, as we shall see, would not keep this vow forever.

Havana Opera Companies, 1842-1844

For the next seven years, the only Italian opera troupe active in all of North America was the Havana Opera Company, and even this troupe stayed away for five full years; as we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, the economic situation in the United States during the late 1830s and early 1840s was not conducive to the support of expensive theatrical undertakings. William Caldwell apparently was the first American manager to attempt to bring the Italians back, for he offered

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27. New Orleans Picayune, 6 June 1837, and Le Courrier de la Louisiane, 12 June 1837, quoted in Belsom, 46.

to engage the troupe in the spring of 1841 to finish up the theatrical season at the St. Charles. Despite the "good terms" Caldwell offered, however, he was refused, for the company already had agreed to perform at Matanzas, Cuba, during the period the manager had in mind. (Spirit, 1 May 1841) In 1842, however, Caldwell's bid was successful, and the Havana Company, now managed by the impresario Francisco Marti y Torrens, arrived in New Orleans in late February.[28]

The company, which numbered fifty-seven, included principal singers, orchestra, and a chorus of thirty. Their engagement at the St. Charles commenced on 22 February, and was a resounding success. The troupe's stars, as well as its ensemble, were highly praised. "Of the chorus we must say a word," wrote a correspondent to the Spirit in March, "and that word must be one of the very highest commendation. They are good voices, every one of them, and are drilled with admirable nicety in all their duties." (Spirit, 12 March 1842) Two weeks later, another correspondent wrote to describe the troupe's reception, and to sing the praises of the company's prima donna, Ober Rossi. The theatre, he wrote, "was 'jam up' with beauties of the first grade, and fashionables, mustached like monkeys of the last grade." He continued:

> Of the performances I dare not speak--I am fearful of being carried away by the enthusiasm they created in my bosom. When I 'offered' myself to my wife, I don't believe my heart palpitated more than it did when the divine Ober Rossi burst first upon my view--then wiled [beguiled] my ear--then stole my homage. The piece was Marino Faliero, by Donizetti--a beautiful and touching

28. Belsom, 73; Spirit, 26 March 1842; according to Schiavo, however, the Havana company was under the direction of Lauro Rossi from 1835 through 1844. Perhaps Lauro was Marti's acting manager. See Schiavo, 423-424.

> composition--full of rich melodies that stole through the instrumentation like a soft sweet river through a meadow, and fraught with harmonies that ran parallel to each other like threads in a skein of golden wire! ("Sayings and Doings in New Orleans," Spirit, 26 March 1842)

By this time it had become abundantly clear that in New Orleans the Italian opera (as mounted at the St. Charles) was a viable competitor to the long-established French opera (performed at the Théâtre d'Orléans); whether mounted in English (by vocal stars) or in the original language, the Italian style was a musical/theatrical force whose appeal in the Crescent City was difficult to ignore. "The opera is eminently successful," wrote the critic quoted above, "and the San Carlos [St. Charles] averages $2,600 every night! 'Damn the times,' say good looking men, 'and let's enjoy the opera before going to the other world!'" ("Sayings and Doings in New Orleans," Spirit, 26 March 1842) The same correspondent wrote several months later to give his assessment of the Italian-opera situation in the Louisiana city. "The taste of this community has entirely changed within the last five years," he commented. "Everybody except flat boatmen and steamboat hands love the opera. Music is our goddess." ("Sayings and Doings in New Orleans," Spirit, 16 July 1842)

Despite their resounding success, the Havana company's season came to an abrupt halt after only ten performances, for the St. Charles Theatre burned to the ground on 13 March. (Kendall, 184-85; Spirit, 26 March 1842; Mirror, 5 March 1842, 32) Luckily, there was no loss of life in the conflagration, and the troupe, which had stored its costumes and properties elsewhere, lost only those costumes that had been sent to

the theatre for that evening's performance. (Belsom, 79; Kendall, 185) Marti quickly reached an agreement with the management of the Théâtre d'Orléans, and moved his troupe to the neighboring theatre, where they performed for another month.[29] During their visit to New Orleans, the Havana Company mounted seven operas by three composers. As before, the troupe's repertory is a reflection of changing operatic tastes; it included one work by Ricci (Chiara di Rosembergh), two by Bellini (La Sonnambula and Beatrice di Tenda) and four by Donizetti (Marino Faliero, Il Furioso nell' isola di San Domingo, Belisario, and L'Elisir d'amore). All of these works but one (Chiara di Rosembergh) were new to New Orleans audiences; four of them were new to the United States. All of them also were relatively recent compositions, for all date from the 1830s.[30]

The next spring, in April 1843, the Havana Company returned to New Orleans to perform again, this time in the American Theatre. Their engagement lasted for a month, and during that time they presented the U. S. premières of three operas, one by Bellini and two by Donizetti.[31] The company's personnel had changed almost completely from the troupe of the previous year, however, and Crescent City critics were quick to judge this version inferior to the former one. According to the Italian historian Giovanni Schiavo, this particular company could boast of only

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29. The troupe's engagement in New Orleans were 22 February-10 March 1842 at the St. Charles, and 16 March-18 April 1842 at the Théâtre d'Orléans.

30. U. S. premières: Marino Faliero, 22 February 1842; Beatrice di Tenda, 5 March; Il Furioso nell' Isola di San Domingo, 28 March; and Belisario, 15 April 1842 (not in 1843 in Philadelphia as cited by Loewenberg, 776); New Orleans premières (in Italian): L'Elisir d'Amore and La Sonnambula. See Belsom, 73, 77, 81, and 84.

31. Belsom, 101-108. The premières were of I Puritani on 17 April; Gemma di Vergy on 22 April; and Lucrezia Borgia, on 11 May. See Belsom, 99, 103, 107.

two vocalists (the tenor Cirillo Antognini and the bass Attilio Valtellina) who "amounted to anything"; the rest of the singers "were all minor ones." (Belsom, 100-101; Schiavo, 65-66) Despite its mediocrity, however, it is useful to look at this troupe in some detail, for it was the first Italian company to undertake a lengthy and extended tour of the United States--in this case, a trip that lasted nine months and included visits to Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Washington, and (again) New Orleans.

Shortly after ending their New Orleans engagement on 17 May, the Havana musicians boarded a northbound steamboat and headed for Cincinnati. Several theatre and music periodicals of the time carried regular reports on the whereabouts of itinerant performers, and the Havana Company departure was duly noted by the Spirit. "The Italian troupe," the reporter commented in rather a gossipy vein, "has gone to Porkopolis to give some melting strains." (Spirit, 3 June 1843) Cincinnati was a major port on the Ohio/Mississippi River network; as we have seen in earlier chapters, the city had not been without opera performances previous to 1843. The Havana Company, however, was the first Italian troupe to appear there; it also was the city's first experience with a fully appointed travelling opera company--in this case, a troupe that numbered thirty.[32] A reporter for one of the local newspapers, explaining the difference between this ensemble and the more common vocal-star troupes, pointed out that the Havana Opera Company

32. The [Cincinnati] Gazette, 2 June 1843, quoted in Charles R. Wyrick, "Concert and Criticism in Cincinnati, 1840-1850" (Master's thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1965), 112.

travelled not only with stars, but also with a chorus and an orchestra. "This," he emphasized, "is not the old story of one or two stars for the leading parts, and all the rest 'mere leather and prunella'."[33]

The company performed seven times over the course of three weeks at the National Theatre in Cincinnati, mounting productions of Norma, I Puritani, Gemma di Vergy, and Lucia di Lammermoor; according to the Daily Gazette, the troupe's principal singers "astonished" the citizens of the Queen City by the "exquisite skill and wonderful power in their divine art." (Wolz, 50; Wyrick, 113; Gazette, 10 June 1843, cited in Wolz, 50) After their last performance on 21 June the musicians headed up the Ohio River, making a brief stop in Pittsburgh before crossing the mountains to settle in for an extended stay on the East Coast.

The Havana Company opened at the Chestnut Street Theatre on 15 July 1843, one of the few times during the entire antebellum period that a travelling opera troupe opened in Philadelphia before New York. During the Philadelphia engagement (and later, in New York), a musician long associated with the New York musical scene, Signor La Manna, conducted the orchestra; the Havana troupe's conductor had resigned in New Orleans in May. (Schiavo, 65; Belsom, 106) The company performed in Philadelphia for two weeks (15-31 July), limiting themselves to four operas by Donizetti and Bellini (Lucia di Lammermoor, Belisario, I Puritani, and Norma). (Wilson; Armstrong, 47) Joseph Sill and a male friend attended one of the performances of I Puritani, and he commented

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33. Daily Gazette, 14 June 1843, quoted by Peter D. Wolz, "Opera in Cincinnati Before 1920" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1983), 50. The orchestra and the chorus must have been small, since the total size of the company was thirty. Perhaps only a nucleus of each--to be filled out by locals--travelled with the troupe.

afterwards that "as [this] was [the opera's] first representation in this City, it was not so well understood, and of course not so well appreciated as [Bellini's] other works, the 'Sonnambula' and 'Norma.'" The performance nevertheless attracted "a fashionable & tolerably well-fill'd house," and an interpolated song by the company's bass Valtellina, "Song to the Flag of Liberty," was "very spiritedly sung & brot down thunders of applause." Sill recorded that overall he was "much pleased" with the evening's entertainment, and that he wanted to "get better acquainted" the new opera. (Sill, 22 July 1843)

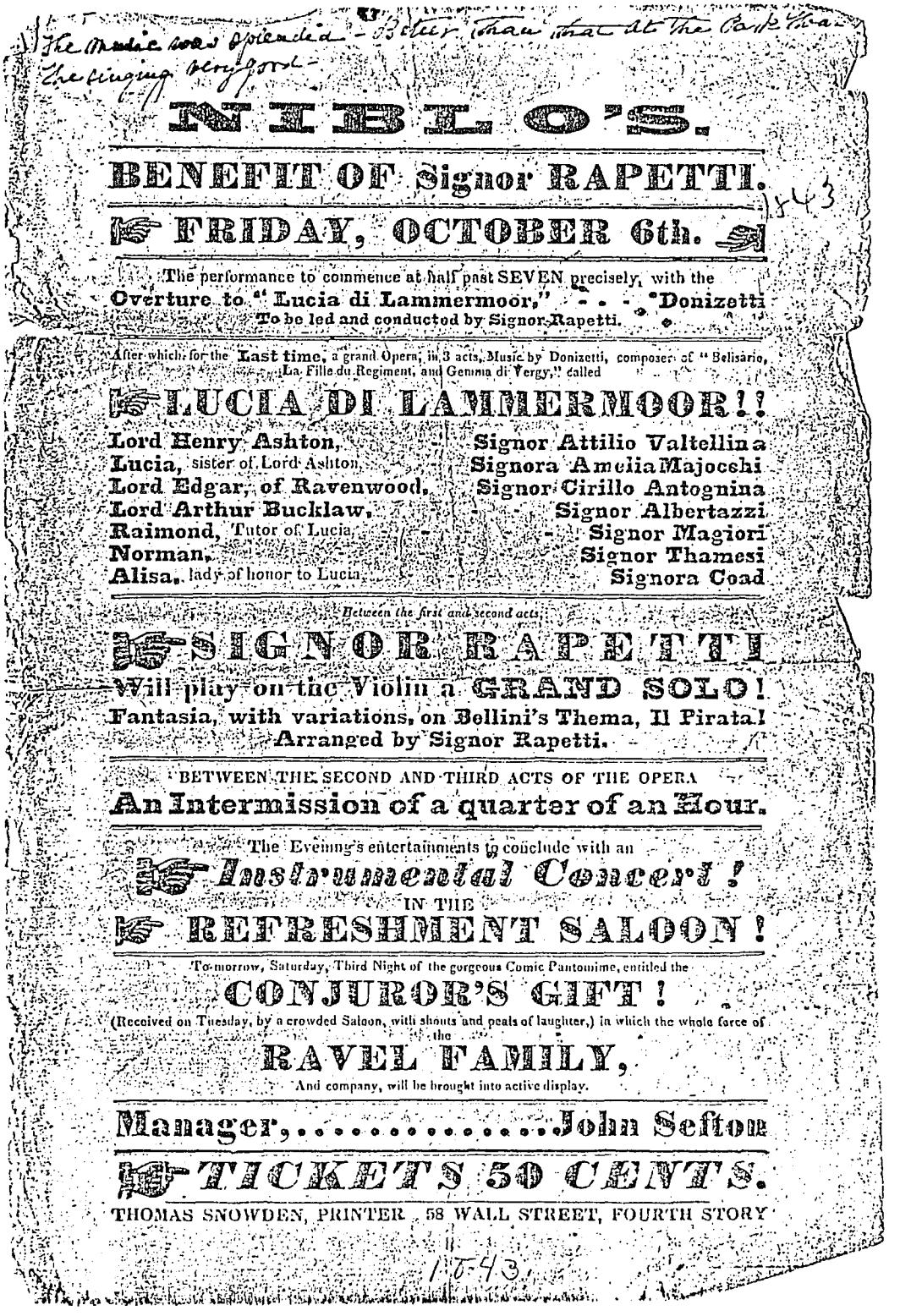
The whereabouts of the company for the next three weeks is unknown. Theatres often closed during July and August, so it is possible that the singers temporarily disbanded for the duration and simply enjoyed the summer months, blessedly away from the heat and miasma (and yellow fever) of Cuba. By the last week of August, however, they were engaged at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore, where they mounted productions of Norma, Lucia di Lammermoor, I Puritani, and Gemma di Vergy for a period of two weeks. (21 August-2 September. Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore) In September, fortified with some local New York singers, the troupe opened at Niblo's Garden in Manhattan. "Mr. Niblo," commented the Spirit, "has wisely determined to take advantage of the prevailing taste for music by engaging the Italian Company from Havana and New Orleans." Their performances of "Grand Opera," the critic continued, "will be quite a novelty, as it has not been played in this city for some time past." (Spirit, 16 September 1843) Staged Italian opera may have been a novelty, but the music was not. Even much of Lucia di Lammermoor--the New York première

performance of which this company mounted on its opening night--recently had become familiar to New York concert-goers; as Odell pointed out, "Italian singers flitting to and fro from Havana, had whetted the appetite [of New Yorkers] by [giving] concerts during the moments of transit through New York." (Lawrence, 216; Odell, IV:694)

At first the Havana troupe did not meet with resounding success at Niblo's; just a week into the engagement the critic for the Spirit reported that several of the company's principal singers had "comparatively failed." Yet, he commented philosophically, "it is very fair Italian Opera for fifty cents." (Spirit, 23 September 1843) Thereafter the troupe's fortunes must have improved, for the singers were re-hired at the end of their original engagement. During their tenure at Niblo's they performed two nights per week, alternating with the popular (and perennial) Ravel Company of acrobats and dancers.[34] For the entire duration of their stay at Niblo's they mounted only three operas--Gemma di Vergy, Norma, and Lucia, all in New York premières (in Italian). (Ireland, II:404; Loewenberg, 740, 763, 740)

Performances at Niblo's popular summer garden theatre were anything but exclusive. In 1840 Thomas Chamberlain described the casual atmosphere of the establishment. "Niblo's," he wrote in his diary, "is a first rate place altogether for the summer, the [best of] any of the theatres, [with] beautiful walks and promenades all defended from the weather, and a spacious saloon." (Chamberlain, 7 July 1840) A critic for the Spirit agreed with this assessment. "The gardens are now in

34. The season lasted 15 September-23 October. See Odell, IV:694, Lawrence, 217.



The Music was splendid - Better than that at the Park Theatre. The singing very good -

NIBLO'S.

BENEFIT OF Signor RAPETTI.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6th.

1543

The performance to commence at half past SEVEN precisely, with the
Overture to "Lucia di Lammermoor," - - - Donizetti
To be led and conducted by Signor Rapetti.

After which, for the **Last time**, a grand Opera, in 3 acts, Music by Donizetti, composer of "Belisario, La Fille du Regiment, and Gemma di Vergy," called

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR!!

Lord Henry Ashton,	**Signor Attilio Valtellina**
Lucia, sister of Lord Ashton,	**Signora Amelia Majocchi**
Lord Edgar, of Ravenwood,	**Signor Cirillo Antognina**
Lord Arthur Bucklaw,	**Signor Albertazzi**
Raimond, Tutor of Lucia,	**Signor Magiori**
Norman,	**Signor Thamesi**
Alisa, lady of honor to Lucia,	**Signora Coad**

Between the first and second acts,

SIGNOR RAPETTI

Will play on the Violin a GRAND SOLO!
Fantasia, with variations, on Bellini's Thema, Il Pirata!
Arranged by Signor Rapetti.

BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD ACTS OF THE OPERA
An Intermission of a quarter of an Hour.

The Evening's entertainments to conclude with an

Instrumental Concert!

IN THE

REFRESHMENT SALOON!

To-morrow, Saturday, Third Night of the gorgeous Comic Pantomime, entitled the

CONJUROR'S GIFT!

(Received on Tuesday, by a crowded Saloon, with shouts and peals of laughter,) in which the whole force of the

RAVEL FAMILY,

And company, will be brought into active display.

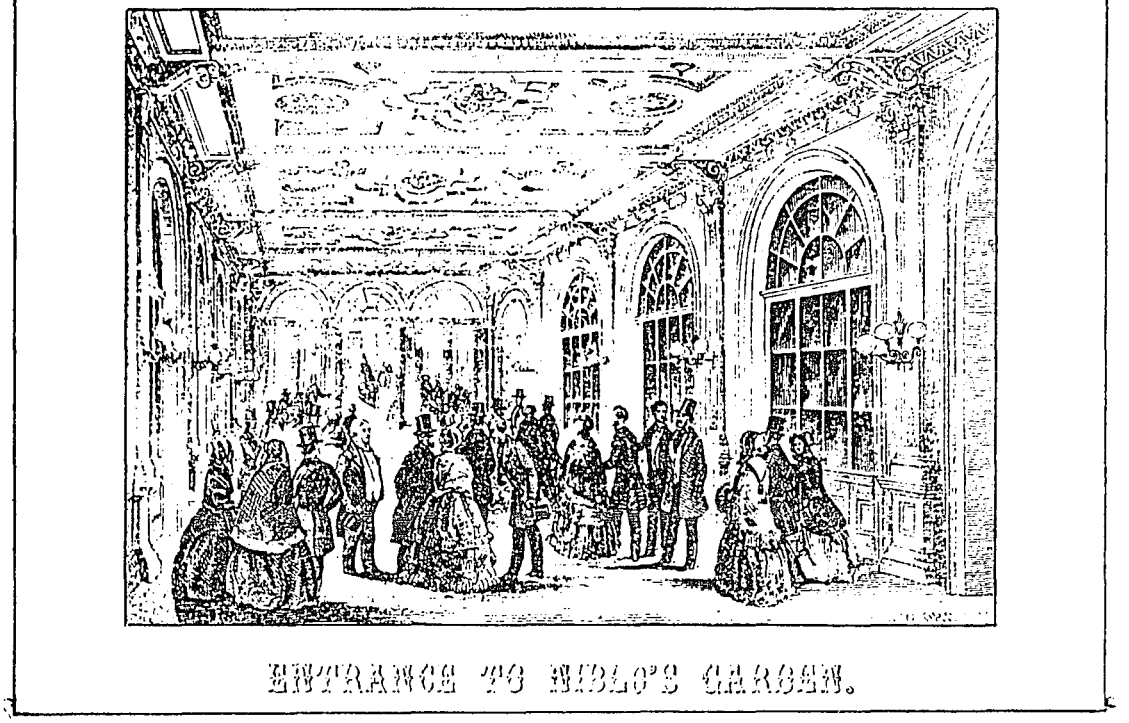
Manager,.....John Sefton

TICKETS 50 CENTS.

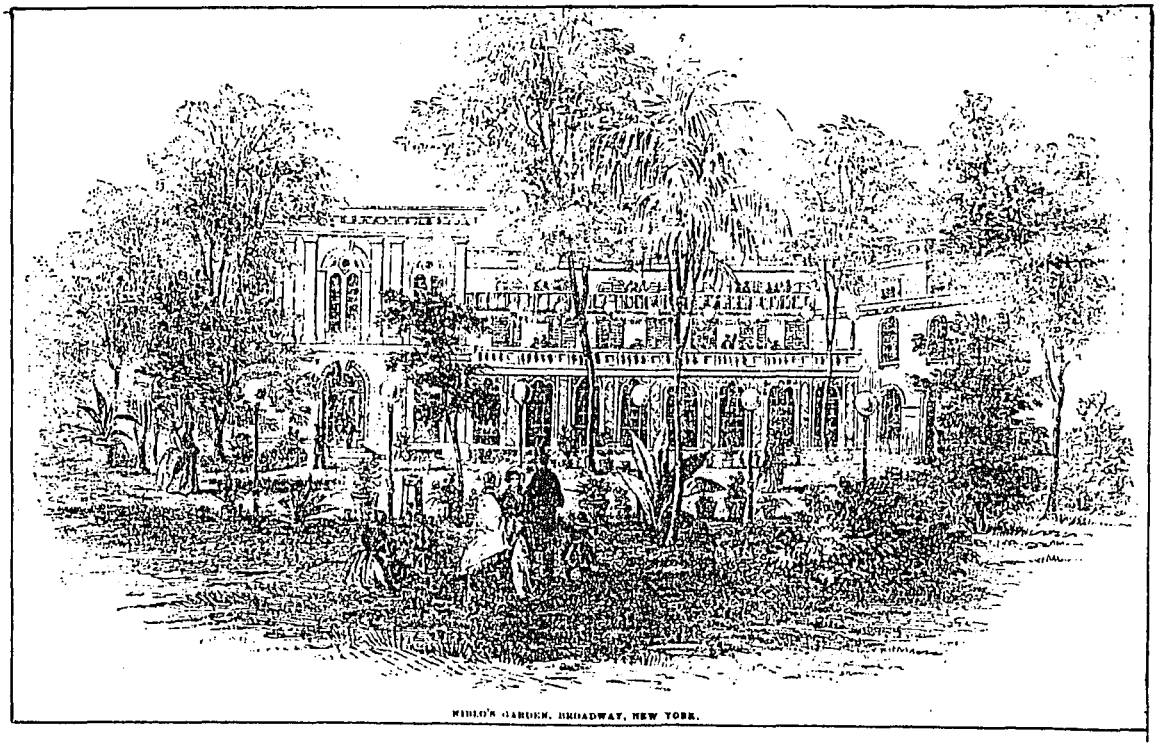
THOMAS SNOWDEN, PRINTER, 58 WALL STREET, FOURTH STORY

10-43

Playbill from a performance of Lucia di Lammermoor at Niblo's on 6 October 1843. Notice the written comment at the top: "The music was splendid--Better than that at the Park Theatre. The singing very good--"



ENTRANCE TO NIBLO'S GARDEN.



Two views of Niblo's Gardens in Manhattan.

beautiful order," he wrote in June 1843, "and the whole place, with its trees, and fountains, and flowers, harmonizes pleasingly with the attractions presented by the music and mirth of the saloon." (Spirit, 10 June 1843) Although the atmosphere was casual and relaxed--or perhaps because it was so--the importance of William Niblo's establishment on the development of American musical taste was marked. A critic for the Musical Review, for example, wrote that "thousands go there who would not go to the theatre; and thousands of others go there because the admission is but fifty cents." Furthermore, he pointed out, since Niblo's attracted "thousands . . . of strangers who are passing through [New York], or [who] are temporarily here on business," in the end "not only this city, but this entire country is greatly affected in regard to musical taste." ("Niblo's Garden," MR, 25 July 1838, 134) One review of a foreign-language opera production at Niblo's during this summer sheds a little light on what attracted Americans to such performances. "Although a large portion of the audience were unable to understand the language," wrote a critic for the Spirit, "still the frequent introduction of bits of most agreeable music amply repaid them and drew forth their applause." (Spirit, 27 May 1843) Of course, performances at Niblo's also attracted individuals (such as Thomas Chamberlain) who did go to the theatre regularly, and who were musically knowledgeable; at least some of them, furthermore, were pleased with the quality of the presentations. An extant playbill from a performance of Lucia di Lammermoor in October 1843, for example, has inscribed across the top, "The music was splendid--better than that at the Park Theatre. The singing was very good--" (Playbill, Niblo's Theatre, 6 October 1843, GA/MWA) (See the illustration on page 237.)

From late October through early November the Havana company again disappears from modern view. They next resurfaced in Philadelphia for another two-week engagement, during which they added Gemma di Vergy to the repertory already performed at the Chestnut Street Theatre. (Schiavo, 65; Armstrong, 47) At the conclusion of this run, the troupe headed south. They stopped in early December for short engagements in Baltimore and Washington, D. C., but evidently gave no other en-route performances--in Richmond, Charleston, or Mobile, for example--for they commenced another short run at the American Theatre in New Orleans on 13 December, after which they returned to Havana. (Spirit, 9 December 1843; Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; Kendall, 233) How many of the original singers were left with the troupe by the time it reached Cuba is unknown; at least four performers, however (Cirillo Antognini, Amalia Majocchi, Attilio Valtellina, and Luigi Perozzi), either stayed on the East Coast when the troupe headed south or returned to New York by February 1844.

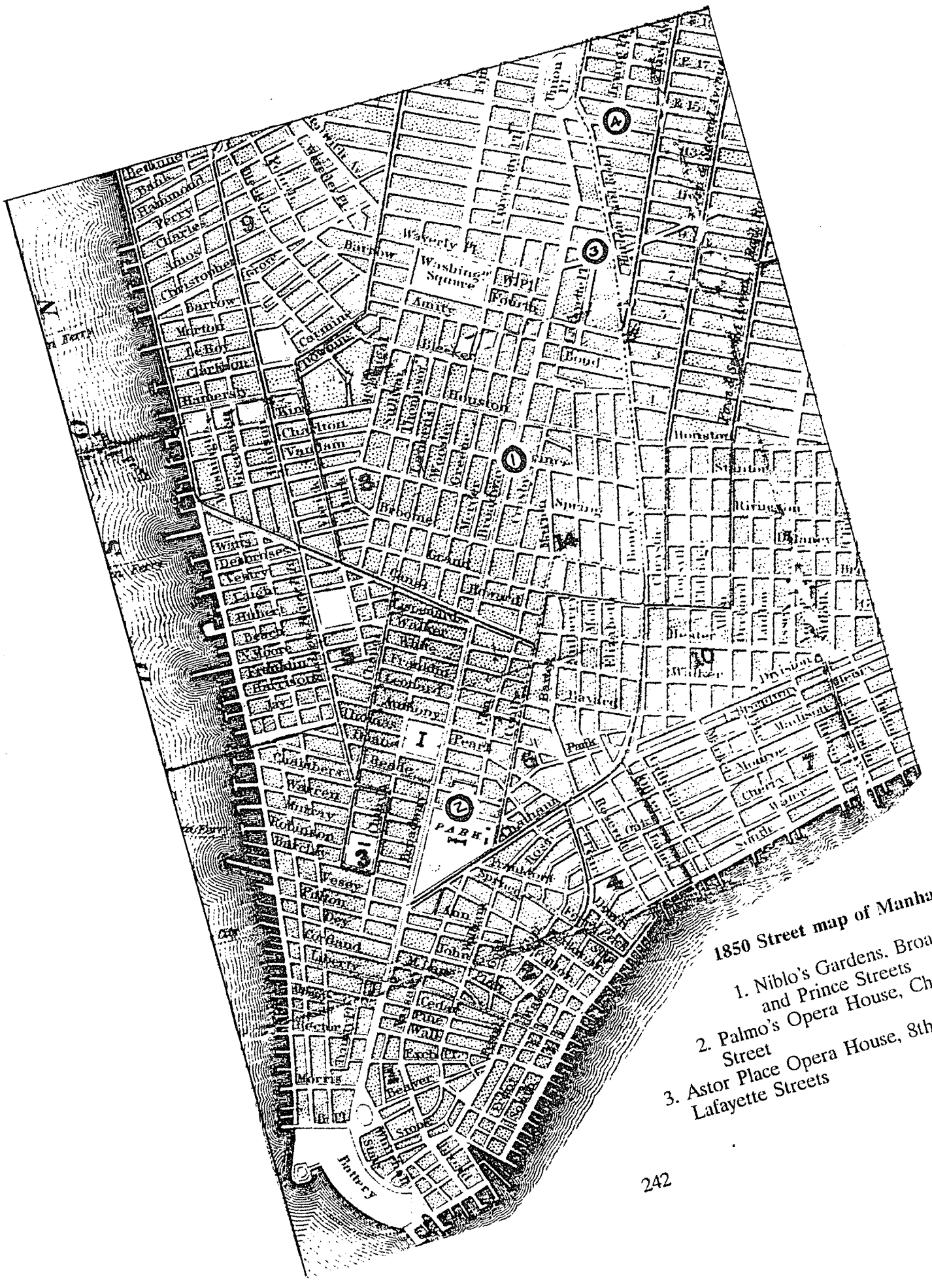
New York: Palmo's Opera Company

In the mid-1840s, the center of Italian opera performance in the United States once again shifted to New York. The credit for operatic activity in 1844 and early 1845 goes without qualification to one Ferdinando Palmo (1785-1869), an Italian gentleman who over the course of some twenty years (starting about 1823) had amassed a considerable fortune as the proprietor of fashionable cafès in New York. (Schaivo, 66) Palmo was an inveterate lover of opera, and in 1843, encouraged by Niblo's success in attracting Americans of all social classes to opera

performances, he decided to invest his fortune in an opera house--so that, as Ireland put it, "the music of his own beloved Italy should once more thrill the soul of himself and [his] countrymen." (Ireland, II:423) Palmo leased a former public bathhouse located on a convenient site on Chambers Street (opposite City Hall Park), and refurbished the place into an intimate little opera house. His was not an exclusive establishment. The seats, which numbered a mere 800, ran all around the house, without private boxes; the admission was a uniform $1.00 to all parts of the theatre, and curtain time was 7:30 p.m.[35] The New York Herald praised the arrangement as "republican" and suggested that it would "work as well as our own beautiful democratic system"; by abolishing the gallery as well as private boxes, Palmo apparently was aiming at a middle-class clientele. (Herald, 14 December 1843, quoted in Lawrence, 253)

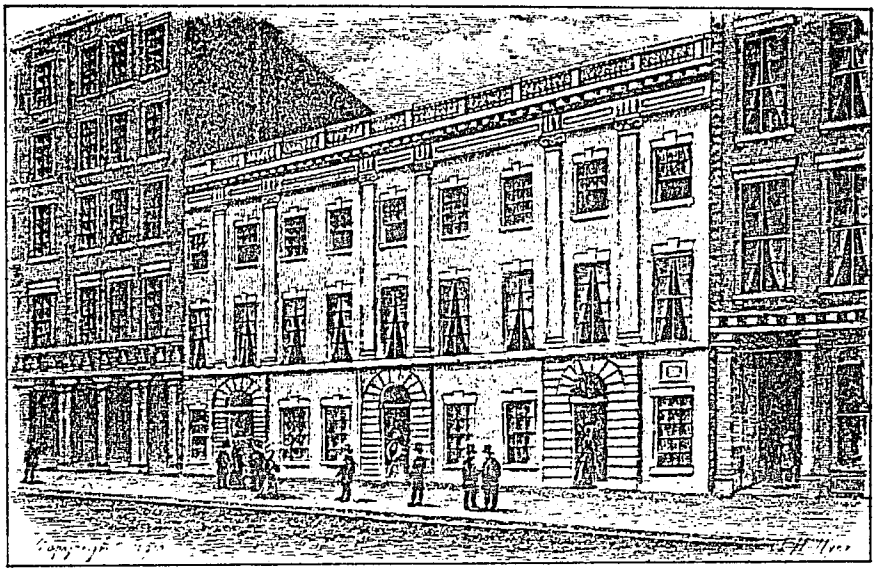
While refurbishing and decorating the theatre, the restauranteur-turned-impresario went about assembling an opera troupe. He did not import any new stars. On the contrary, all of the singers he hired were already well known to New York audiences through concert and opera appearances; many of them, in fact, had been part of the Havana company that had performed at Niblo's the previous fall--including the four Havana troupe "stars," Antognini, Majocchi, Valtellina, and Perozzi. For a new prima donna, Palmo hired Eufrasia Borghese, a fine singer and an excellent actress who had sung in Havana for the previous two years,

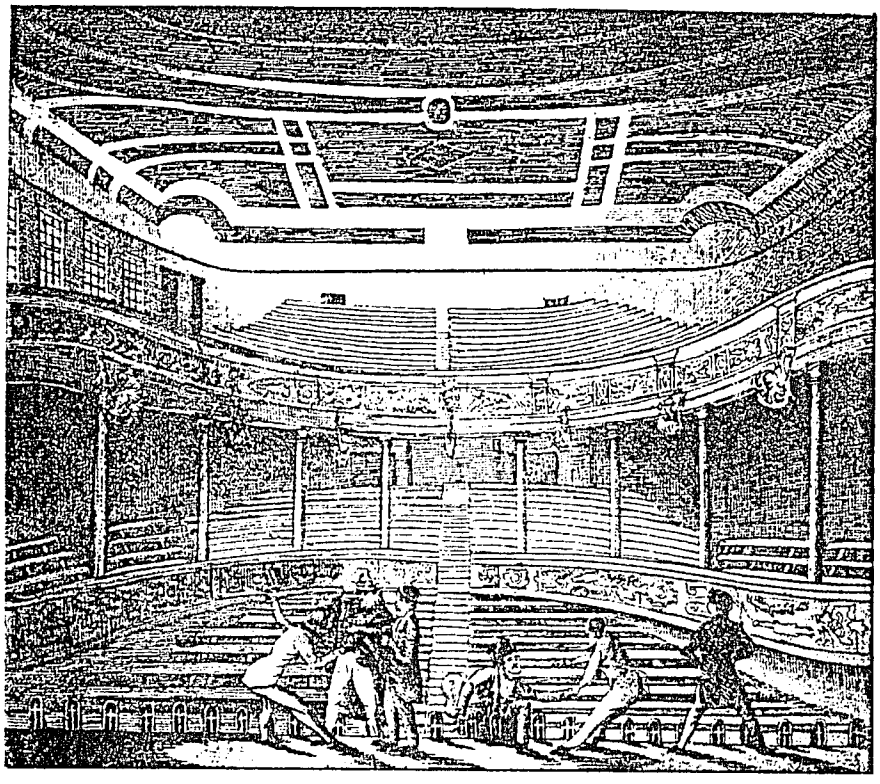
35. Lawrence gives the capacity of the theatre as 1100-1200, but both T. Allston Brown and Daniel Klein (in ATC) give the total seating as 800. See Lawrence, 251-253; T. Allston Brown, History of the New York Stage from the First Performance in 1732 to 1901 (New York: Dodd, 1903) (hereafter referred to as Brown, New York), I:337-339; Daniel A. Klein II, "Burton's Stock Company," in ATC, 134; for admission prices see ad in the Spirit, 27 January 1844.



1850 Street map of Manhattan

1. Niblo's Gardens, Broadway and Prince Streets
2. Palmo's Opera House, Chambers Street
3. Astor Place Opera House, 8th and Lafayette Streets





Two views of Palmo's Opera House, New York City.

but who was known to New York audiences only through concert appearances. (Lawrence, 254; Schiavo, 259-261) To this company of mostly second-rate singers, Palmo added a chorus of twenty-four and an orchestra of thirty-two of the best instrumental musicians in New York, under the direction of the inveterate Michele Rapetti. (Spirit, 3 February 1844; Lawrence, 255) Finally, the neophyte impresario hired Attilio Valtellina, a respected performer, to serve both as the troupe's primo basso and as its director.

Palmo's season opened on 3 February 1844 with the New York première of I Puritani. The troupe performed regularly on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings until 25 March, giving twenty performances of four operas (Lucia di Lammermoor, I Puritani, Belisario, and Beatrice di Tenda, the last two also in New York premières). (Loewenberg, 750, 765, 776; Odell V:52) Despite the acknowledged mediocrity of the company, it drew large audiences. Apparently, many New Yorkers shared the attitude of a critic for the Spirit, who counseled patience. "Let us not be so foolish," he advised, "to refuse to sustain this attempt to establish a stage for fuller and richer enjoyment hereafter [simply] because we cannot at the first command all the talent the world affords. In the language of another, 'let us not kill our canary, because we cannot get a nightingale'." (Spirit, 14 February 1844) To many auditors, in fact, the mediocrity of the troupe was an irrelevant issue. The fashionables found the house neither as elegant nor as comfortable as they wished (a critic for the New World complained that the armless seats were "miserably uncomfortable"); nevertheless, they attended the performances in droves. (New World, 10

Februry 1844, in Lawrence, 253) As a critic for the Spirit pointed out, Palmo's functioned as

> an elegant salon . . . where friends meet friends, acquaintance, acquaintance, without the bore of over-crowded and over-heated drawing rooms, and with none of the disagreements of party-giving and party-going. The entertainments are precisely the same, so far as seeing and being seen, enjoying the chit-chattery of themselves and of each other, and keeping on terms with society, are concerned.

The critic--lest his readers consider the habituées of the opera to be completely indifferent to the charms of the music--hastened to add that the musical offerings did function as an added attraction. He pointed out that instead of being forced to listen to the

> dolorous bangings and twangings of unlucky piano fortes, which are occasionally heard between the comparative lulls of universal conversation at an evening party, --at the Opera House, one has a chance, at least, of listening to the grandest compositions of the best masters, not only excellently sung, but with all their beauties impressed upon the soul by the potent aid of scenic and histrionic effects.

He concluded that "the addition of accessories like these [to the] social and fashionable assembly . . . cannot be considered a drawback upon its pleasure." (Spirit, 24 February 1844)

If the large numbers of opera-lovers and fashionables who thronged the theatre at every performance were any indication, Palmo should have been making money hand-over-fist. It soon became clear, however, that the manager had struck what Lawrence calls a "disastrous bargain" with his bass/director Valtellina. The financial terms to which he had agreed were impossible to meet, especially considering the size of the theatre;

even with full houses he was unable to show a profit after paying the star singers' exorbitant salaries. As a result, only a month after opening night, Palmo was well on his way to bankruptcy. (Lawrence, 257)

To make matters worse, the company soon found itself beset with other serious difficulties, many of which were symptomatic of the problems that would cause the failure of scores of Italian troupes during the remaining years of the 1840s and throughout the 1850s. The star tenor Antognini, for example--although acknowledged as an artist "of the first class"--repeatedly pleaded indisposition. As a result, Palmo was forced to send in a substitute for him night after night--which irritated critics and alienated members of the audience.[36] Furthermore, there erupted a veritable war between the rival partisans of the two sopranos, Majocchi and Borghese, in which the press joined most whole-heartedly. By March, according to Lawrence, a "general explosion of public accusations, counter-accusations, mutual recriminations, self-glorifying justifications, conflicting financial statements, and angry rebuttals" filled the newspapers. (Lawrence, 260) It was clear that the company was being torn apart by internal dissension, and New Yorkers rapidly became weary of the internecine war among visiting Italian "professors of harmony" whose "habit of quarrelling, overreaching, factionary intriguing, indulgence in ungenerous feeling, and moral discords of the most violent descriptions" was "the plague and shame of the musical--and particularly the vocal--profession." (Anglo American, 23 March 1844, 526, quoted in Lawrence,

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36. Assessment of Antognini is from White, II:875. The tenor's first appearance was not until 20 March. Odell, V:52.

260) Not surprisingly, the season collapsed in late March, and it soon was clear that the genial Palmo was the heavy loser in the enterprise. The Anglo American reported that of a net profit of $14,000, the principal singers had made off with $7,500. Each of the stars had made several thousand dollars in this venture; Palmo was left with a loss of $1,500. (Anglo American, 6 April 1844, 573, quoted in Lawrence, 260)

The company re-formed almost immediately for an additional twelve performances, this time under the management of Giuseppe de Begnis, the Italian buffo who had come to the United States in 1838 as a vocal star. This second season, including all the benefit performances, lasted from 29 April through 10 June. (Odell, V:53) It was somewhat more successful than the first season, perhaps because this troupe performed a different repertory than had Palmo's, one that included the Italian versions of some familiar--and popular--works (Il barbiere di Siviglia, Lucia di Lammermoor, La Sonnambula, and L'elisir d'amore, the New York premières--in Italian--of the latter two). (Loewenberg, 730, 743)

In September 1845 the same troupe was back, again under the aegis of Palmo. (Lawrence, 263) The company played for a month (giving performances of Lucia, L'elisir d'amore, and Il pirata), only to collapse spectacularly in renewed dissension and chaos in October. The troupe fell apart quite literally; during the last act of Il pirata on 18 October the tenor refused to continue, and half of the orchestra walked out over a wage dispute.[37] The New York press was both

37. Arthur Farwell and W. Dermont Darby, Music in America, Volume IV of The Art of Music, Daniel Gregory Mason, editor (New York: The National Society of Music, 1915), 125; Lawrence, 264.

scandalized and thoroughly disgusted by the behavior of the troupe as a whole.[38] A month later, however, phoenix-like (again), the company commenced yet another season, with a new prima donna (the Italian contralto Rosina Pico), and apparently with the serious collective intention to turn over a new leaf. This time they managed to stay together for almost two months, during which they gave performances of five works: Belisario, La Cenerentola, Semiramide, Chiara di Rosembergh, and Lucrezia Borgia--the last three in New York premières. (Loewenberg, 686, 735, 756) At the end of the run of scheduled performances, the critic of the Spirit wryly congratulated the singers on having brought a season to a successful conclusion without a single serious public squabble, fight, or letter of accusation or explanation to the newspapers. The image of Italian opera performers as greedy, contentious, lazy, and dishonest individuals, however--a stereotype that would be wide-spread among Americans during the late 1840s and 1850s--was already, by the mid-1840s, in full bloom; its source should be clear.[39]

Because of the long string of benefits that inevitably was tacked onto the tail end of each season, the company's last performance was on 25 January. The troupe must have been reasonably successful during this season, for they attracted large enough audiences that drama critics

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38. For a eye-witness description, see Spirit, 19 October 1844.

39. Spirit, 11 January 1845. For a detailed--and fascinating--account of the entire Palmo's fiasco, see Lawrence, 250-267; 325-328. Although Palmo was financially ruined by his venture, it apparently did not embitter him, even though he went to work as a cook, and subsequently was forced to depend on the generosity of friends and fellow-Italians in New York for sustenance. According to the editor of an Italian-language newspaper (Eco d'Italia), Palmo continued to be serene, cheerful, and generous for the rest of his life; he maintained a "philosophical indifference [to] both prosperity and undeserved adversity." Quoted by Schiavo, 389.



Eufrasia Borghese, prima donna of Palmo's Opera Company, 1844-45.

were prompted (once again) to complain about the dubious taste of New Yorkers, who were so interested in pleasure and entertainment that they would neglect the theatre in favor of seating themselves "night after night . . . in the Opera House." (Spirit, 25 January 1845, 576) After their final performance, the company was faced with three choices: mount another season in New York, mount a season elsewhere (Philadelphia or New Orleans, for example), or disband. It was unclear at first what the musicians would do. The previous December the Spirit had announced that the ensemble was engaged to appear in March and April at the American Theatre in New Orleans, and many expected the singers to leave. (Spirit, 7 December 1844, 492) By January, however, the southern trip was in doubt. "No definite information can be furnished with regard to the Italian Troupe," wrote the reporter for the Spirit, "as they seem all to be pulling in contrary directions. Borghese signed, on their behalf, articles to perform at New Orleans, but the Signora Pico is determined to concertize in Boston . . . The truth is," he concluded, "they are going, through their own folly and wilfulness, but to destruction."[40]

By early February it was clear that the company had split at least in half. On 8 February four singers (Borghese, Luigi Perozzi, Signor Tomasi, and Amalia Ricci--the first three erstwhile members of Palmo's troupe) were reportedly "progressing slowly southward, giving concerts at Philadelphia &c, with marked success"; at the same time, Pico was giving concerts in New York. (Spirit, 8 February 1845; Odell, V:147-48

40. This level of uncertainty about a company's intentions, incidentally, is typical of attempts by journalists of the time to predict (or by historians of the present to unravel) the movements of such troupes. Quote from Spirit, 25 January 1845.

Lawrence, 355) From 3 March through 2 May the southern branch of the troupe did appear at the American Theatre in New Orleans, where they gave performances of seven operas (I Puritani, Belisario, Lucrezia Borgia, Marino Faliero, L'elisir d'amore, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Semiramide). (Kaufman, MS worklist, New Orleans) The company's reception in New Orleans is not mentioned in any of the contemporary musical or theatrical journals, but they must have enjoyed some success, for the enthusiasm of New Orleans for opera had not abated. As a correspondent to the Spirit had reported the previous September, "we are persuaded that nothing is so popular as opera with all classes." (Spirit, 14 September 1844, 348)

The subsequent travels of this company are unknown; perhaps they went to Mexico, perhaps to Cuba, perhaps they simply disbanded. A reference to "the Borghese troupe" in the Spirit of 29 August 1846, however, suggests that at least the soprano continued to tour with some kind of an opera company. Borghese and Perozzi both eventually resurfaced in New York--the former in 1849 after some time spent in Havana, the latter in 1847. (Lawrence, 355) The other two--because of a dearth of information in contemporary periodicals--seem to have simply vanished. Italian opera, too, seems to have simply vanished from the United States for the rest of 1845 and for all of 1846. This situation, however, changed significantly--and permanently--in January 1847.

1847-1848: Palmo's, the Havana Company, and the Astor Place Opera Company of New York

1847 was an important year in the annals of Italian opera performance in the United States. During that year Americans witnessed the final demise of Ferdinando Palmo's ill-fated opera house, attended

performances in New York and Philadelphia of the Astor Place Opera Company (the troupe organized to perform in the new Astor Place Opera House in New York), and enthusiastically welcomed a truly world-class company from Havana, Cuba--which was making the first of several lengthy visits to North America.[41] Both the Havana and the Astor Place companies were travelling troupes, and obviously concern us; not so the last ensemble in residence at Palmo's. But the tale of the final Palmo's troupe is nevertheless relevant to this study, for the initial success of that company, in effect, led to the construction of the Astor Place House--a theatre that would serve as the New York home of a number of itinerant troupes from 1847 through 1852.[42] Because the activities of all three of these 1847 companies were important--and, to a certain extent, typical of those of many later troupes--is useful to briefly discuss the history of each.

The man behind the new company at Palmo's was the buffo Antonio Sanquirico. He had first showed up in New York in April 1844 as a member of Palmo's second company, and subsequently had returned to Europe sometime after May 1845--where he intended to stay.[43] During the summer of 1846, however, the bass became associated with a troupe of vocalists in Europe; remembering Palmo's delightful little opera house,

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41. By June 1847 Palmo's had been taken over by a dramatic company, and in July 1848 it became Burton's Theatre. See Odell, V:302; 377; 429-430.

42. For information on the effect of Palmo's company on the construction of the Astor Place house, see Lawrence, 430n.

43. Sanquirico was still in New York on 12 May 1845, for he participated in a concert at Castle Garden on that date. See Lawrence, 302; Spirit, 29 August 1846.

he decided to try to take this company to New York. After securing (by mail) a subscription list of thirty (at $100 each), the company announced a season at Palmo's; they left Liverpool for the United States in November 1846. (Spirit, 29 August 1846; 21 November 1846) The troupe was under the joint management of Sanquirico, the tenor Salvatore Patti, and one C. Pogliani. At the conclusion of this enterprise the latter would rapidly fade from view; the two singers Sanquirico and Patti, however, would remain active as members of opera companies in the United States well into the 1850s.[44]

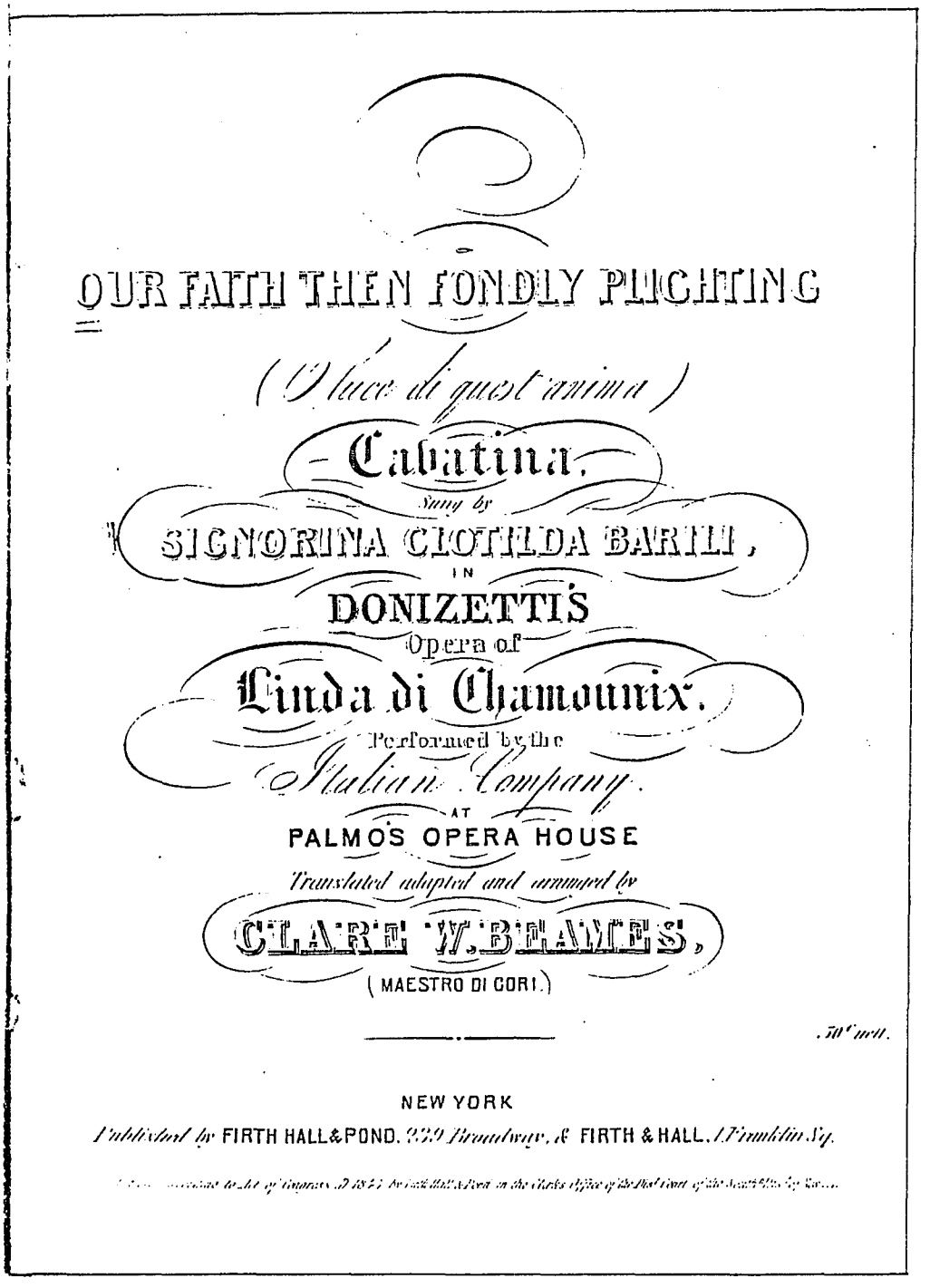
The Spirit reported in November that Sanquirico had engaged "a remarkably fine troupe"; this, in truth, was no mere puffery. (Spirit, 21 November 1846) The company had two major stars. The prima donna was the young Clotilda Barili (step-daughter of Salvatore Patti), a soprano who overwhelmed Manhattan critics and audiences with her teen-age good looks and angel-like singing; the principal tenor was Sesto Benedetti, a man who (according to White) had "in the tone and quality of his voice

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44. Both singers were members of Max Maretzek's 1850-51 Astor Place Opera Company, about which see Chapter 3. In addition, Salvatore Patti (1800-1869) was the patriarch of a musical family of great importance and stature in the musical culture of the United States of the mid-nineteenth century. He married Caterina Barili (?-1870), an Italian soprano and former prima donna, and the widow of Francesco Barili, a composer. Several of Caterina Barili's children were musicians who appeared on European and American stages, including Clotilda Barili and her three brothers Ettore (1829-1885) (a baritone), Nicola (? -1878) (a basso cantante), and Antonio (1820-1876) (bass and conductor). (See Lawrence, 425 and Schiavo, 238-242.) The union of Salvatore and Caterina Barili-Patti produced one son, Carlo (1842-1873), a violinist and conductor, and three daughters: Carlotta (1836-1889), soprano; Amalia (1831-1915), contralto; and Adelina (1843-1919), soprano; the latter was one of the most prominent and popular prima donnas of the nineteenth century. This information was compiled from a wide variety of sources, including William Brooks's unpublished research notes for his articles on Max and Maurice Strakosch and on Max Maretzek for AG, Brooks's articles on those individuals in AG, Lawrence; and Schiavo, 394-407.



Clotilda Barili and Sesto Benedetti, stars of Palmo's Opera Company, 1846-1847.



Sheet-music publication of a cavatina from Donizetti's Linda di Chamounix, as performed at Palmo's Opera House by Clotilda Barili.

something to which the public could not say no."[45] Within several weeks of the season's opening, "La Barili" had become the "toast of New York" and Benedetti was proclaimed a "full-fledged public idol" by the New York Herald.[46]

By the time the troupe opened its season on 4 January 1847 (with the U. S. première of Donizetti's Linda di Chamounix), New Yorkers had been almost two full years without performances of Italian opera. They greeted the termination of this enforced abstinence with delight; audiences flocked to Palmo's on opening night, and continued to do so for the duration of the first season, which lasted until 31 March. Certainly the esteem in which New Yorkers held "La Barili" and Benedetti did nothing to dampen the public's enthusiasm for the troupe; the presence of a favored star or two in the cast never hurt box-office receipts. The company's repertory also worked in its favor. According to Lawrence, the production of Lucia di Lammermoor (their second choice) was a "spectacular hit"; they also successfully mounted performances of two other new operas during these twelve weeks: Pier Antonio Copolla's Nina, la pazza per amore and Verdi's I Lombardi--both were the first works by either composer to be performed in the United States. (Lawrence, 429) When the season closed in March, the Sanquirico-Patti company discovered that their run had been, in Ireland's rather dry assessment, "more than ordinarily successful." (Ireland, II:481) The company, however, could

45. White, II:877 and Courier & Enquirer, 5 January 1847, the latter quoted in Lawrence, 427; see also Lawrence, 425.

46. Lawrence, 428; Herald, 19 January 1847, quoted by Lawrence, 429. One other company member new to New York was Ferdinando Beneventano (bass-buffo); the troupe filled out its ranks with other singers already in the United States, including Rosina Pico, Daniele Benetti, Madame Boulard Harriet Phillips, and Benetti Riese; Antonio Sanquirico sang bass roles.

not sustain this level of support.

During its second season the troupe was plagued by a rash of illnesses among its principal singers; with no stars to serve as box-office draws, audiences quickly melted away. To make matters even worse, in April the Sanquirico-Patti company found itself with another serious problem: direct competition from another Italian troupe--for the first time in the history of the United States. This competition, furthermore, came from no upstart neophyte troupe, but from Marti's Havana Opera Company, which in 1847 was a huge, formidable, and star-studded ensemble. This company paused in New York only briefly in April, giving three performances (two operas and one concert) before heading on to Boston. The mere presence in the United States of this brilliant ensemble, however, coupled with the publicity and excitement it generated, was enough to completely destroy any remaining enthusiasm left in New York for the Sanquirico-Patti troupe. One New York critic wrote that the Cuban troupe was "equal to if not superior to any company that ever came to this city, and [is] certainly better than [the company] at Palmo's." (Spirit, 24 April 1847) The Palmo troupe attempted to entice audiences back by adding four new operas to its repertory (Lucrezia Borgia, L'elisir d'amore, Semiramide, and Il barbiere di Siviglia), but even operatic novelty did not help. The season (which officially closed on 26 May but which dribbled on until 7 June with sundry benefit performances), was a financial disaster. (Lawrence, 432) At its end the company, in a pattern already drearily familiar, disbanded.

As we have seen, the 1847 Havana Opera Company was not the first ensemble of that name to visit the United States. But this version of the Cuban company was vastly superior to the others in both size and quality of performers; although even this ensemble would be surpassed in overall skill by the Havana Company of 1849-51 (about which see Chapter 4), the 1847 troupe easily outclassed any other opera company that had performed in North America up to that point. The impresario Marti represented the power--and the money--behind the impressive succession of opera companies in residence at the Gran Teatro de Tacon, an opulent theatre that he had built in the Cuban capital in 1838.[47] A number of the celebrities in this particular Havana troupe--including the company's co-directors and instrumental super-stars, the violin and doublebass virtuosi Luigi Arditi (1822-1903) and Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889)--had joined the company at the beginning of the 1846-47 season.[48]

Marti's Havana companies were primarily resident ensembles at the Tacon Theatre; only secondarily were they touring groups. But it obviously was to the musicians' advantage to leave Cuba during yellow-

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47. The theatre is still standing, although it has been much modified over the years. Today it serves as the National Theatre of Cuba; it was renamed (after the Revolution of 1959) the Teatro García Lorca. See Leo B. Pride, editor and compiler, International Theatre Directory. A World Directory of the Theatre and the Performing Arts (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973), 96; Lawrence, 434. For information on Marti, see Max Maretzek, Crotchets and Quavers (New York, S. French, 1855; reprint (along with Sharps and Flats, New York: American Musician Publishing Co., 1890) as Revelations of an Opera Manager in 19th Century America, New York: Dover, 1968), hereafter referred to C&Q or S&F, 149-158.

48. Other important members of the troupe who had been recruited around the same time included sopranos Fortunata Tedesco and Luigia Caranti di Vita; tenors Natale Perelli, Juan Severi, and Luigi Perozzi (a member of the first Palmo company); and basses Pietro Candi and Luigi Battaglini. Many of these singers would appear (in the early 1850s) on the rosters of a variety of other Italian companies that toured the United States, and several settled permanently in this country.

fever season; the visits of Havana companies to the United States, as a consequence, almost invariably occurred during the spring and summer months, after the conclusion of the Cuban opera season in late February or early March. The companies in 1837 and 1843 had followed this pattern, as did the 1847 troupe, which toured North America (and mounted seasons in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York) from mid-April through early October.[49]

When the company arrived in the United States it numbered seventy-three; by July its ranks had swollen to eighty-three.[50] They travelled with a complete contingent of musicians and support crew. "From the prima donna assoluta down to the youngest chorister," reported the New York Herald, "everything is comprised in its ranks--an entire orchestra, a magnificent wardrobe, in fact everything, save a theatre, they carry with them." (Herald, 15 April 1847, quoted by Lawrence, 434) The chorus, which numbered twenty (four sopranos, three altos, six tenors, and seven basses) was small but well rehearsed; according to the critics, it was better than any opera chorus yet heard in North America. "So powerful and melodious were the voices, and so perfectly were the tones delivered," marvelled one reporter, "that one could scarcely believe less than a hundred were singing." (Boston Musical Gazette [hereafter referred to as BMG], 25 October 1847) The critic for the Spirit agreed. "The choruses [in Ernani] were admirably, nay

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49. Their appearances were as follows: New York (15-16 April, and a concert on 17 April), Boston (19 April-4 June), New York (Park Theatre, 9 June-8 July, concert on 9 July); Philadelphia (12 July-6 August); New York (Castle Garden, 18 August-17 September); Boston (21 September-1 October); and New York (farewell concert at the Tabernacle, 15 October).

50. Playbill, Boston Athenaeum, 5 May 1847, Programs: Opera, 1836-59. GA/MWA; Lawrence, 445.

HOWARD ATHENÆUM

8TH NIGHT OF THE SEASON!

—OF THE—

ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY

FROM HAVANA,

CONSISTING OF 73 PERSONS.

Second Night of Giovanni Pacini's Grand Opera of

SAFFO,

Which was received with enthusiastic favor, on its first representation.

SIGNA. FORTUNATA TEDESCO

will appear. ☞Second appearance of

SIGNOR L. PEROZZI.

Wednesday Eve'g, May 5, 1847

Will be produced, for the 2nd time in the United States, Signor Giovanni Pacini's ~~Grand Lyrical Tragedy~~, in three acts, entitled

SAFFO!

ALCANDRO, Priest of Apollo	Sig. L. BATAGLINI
FAON	Sig. L. PEROZZI
IPPIA, Chief of the Priests	Sig. I. PIAMONTESI
LISIMACO	Sig. PIETRO CANDI
SAFFO	Signorina FORTUNATA TEDESCO
CLIMENE, Alcandro's daughter	Signorina SOFIA MARINI
DIRCE	Signorina THEODOLINDA GERLI

Chorus of both sexes—Priests, Attendants, Greek Citizens, Natives of Leucarde, Secret Guards, Musicians.

The action is in Greece—First part in Olympia ; the rest in Leucarde.

☞Parquette Boxes $1 ; Parquette 50 cents ; Boxes 50 cents ; Second Circle 50 cents.

☞Doors open at 7 o'clock ; the Opera will commence at 1-4 to 8 o'clock.☜

☞Books, containing an English version of the Opera, can be had at the Box Door. Price 12½ cents.

☞ The Choice of Boxes will be sold at Public Auction, in the Vestibule of the Athenæum, WEDNESDAY MORNING, at 10 o'clock.

CLARK & HATCH, Auctioneers.

☞ FRIDAY—Ninth Night of the Opera Season.

EASTBURN'S PRESS—STATE STREET.

Playbill for a performance by the Havana Opera Company at the Boston Athenaeum, 5 May 1847.



Giovanni Bottesini (doublebass) and Luigi Arditi (violin),
virtuosi and co-directors of the 1847 Havana Opera Company.

deliciously given," he wrote. "Indeed, [they sang] in such a style as never greeted our ears by any efforts of any choristers we ever listened to." (Spirit, 24 April 1847)

Even more astonishing were the instrumentalists who travelled with the troupe. The company's orchestra reportedly numbered between twenty-five and thirty, and this ensemble was described by the Spirit as "very perfect in its arrangement and disposition, and most favorable to the singers because [it is] constantly with them." (BMG, 25 October 1847; Spirit, 12 June 1847) Furthermore, the two virtuosi co-directors, Bottesini and Arditi, stunned their audiences with their feats of instrumental prowess; to New Yorkers, according to Lawrence, they were "nothing short of miraculous." (Lawrence, 442) The two performed duets of their own composition either during intermissions or after the evening's opera. Their repertory consisted of variations, either on operatic gems or on other tunes--such as La festa delli zingari, which was fashioned into a "grand duo bravura for the violin and doublebass," and performed in Philadelphia after La Sonnambula on 24 July. (Armstrong, 54)

During their North American visit the company performed ten works by five composers: I due Foscari (the United States première), Ernani, and I Lombardi (Verdi); Capuleti e i Montecchi, Norma, and La Sonnambula (Bellini); Mose' in Egitto and Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini); Linda di Chamounix (Donizetti); and Saffo (Pacini). The company also gave concert performances in each of the three cities; Mose' in Eggito, for example, was mounted as an oratorio in both Philadelphia and Boston

concert halls.[51] Furthermore, during the troupe's second Boston visit, the musicians gave operatic concerts for an entire week (11-15 October), performing the music (without acting or scenery) of Norma, La Sonnambula, Ernani, Linda di Chamounix, and Capuleti e i Montecchi at the Tremont Temple "for the benefit of those whose consciences will not allow them to attend the opera." (BMG, 25 October 1847)

The company made a strong impression on East-Coast audiences. As Lawrence summarizes, "with their fine singing stars, well-rehearsed chorus and orchestra, luminous musical direction by Arditi and Bottesini, elaborate staging, wardrobe of costumes 'worth $30,000,' and impeccable ensemble," the troupe "exhibited a degree of professionalism previously unknown" in New York--or, for that matter, in the rest of the Northeast. (Lawrence, 438) By the time the troupe left for Havana sometime after 15 October, its performances--like those of the vocal stars of the late 1820s and 1830s--had helped to heighten the expectations of American opera audiences. (BMG, 25 October 1847) The Sanquirico-Patti troupe already had fallen victim to the overwhelming impact of this company; during the autumn of 1847 another troupe--the company of the new Astor Place Opera House in New York--would also have to contend with the continuing reverberations from Marti's departed musicians.[52]

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51. Mose' in Eggito was also performed in Boston as a opera.

52. Lawrence Lerner claims that Bernard Ullman had a revolutionary and eye-opening role in the history of opera performance in the United States, because he emphasized (in 1853) the "total unity of the ensemble performance of Italian opera"--as opposed to the use of opera simply to "showcase the prima donna." It is obvious, however, that American audiences and critics were strongly impressed by the ensemble of the 1847 Havana company--a full six years prior to Ullman's "significant" activities as the manager of Henriette Sontag's Opera Company. Lerner also claims that Ullman was an innovator because he hired an orchestra and chorus to travel as part of the Sontag Company. This, says Lerner, was "extraordinary for nineteenth century America. Usually, only the

In the spring of 1847 a group of 150 wealthy New Yorkers decided to form yet another Italian opera association (there had already been two: the group that imported Manuel Garcías troupe in 1825 and the association that built the first New York Italian Opera House in 1833). According to both White and Schiavo, the socialites were impressed by the initial pecuniary success of the Sanquirico-Patti troupe; certainly the enthusiasm generated by the Havana Company during the spring and summer was likewise encouraging. (White, II:879; Schiavo, 77) The Association arranged to have the new Astor Place Opera House built; at the same time the directors sent Sanquirico and Patti back to Italy to recruit a company "capable of performing all the operas now being sung in Europe." (Herald, 25 March 1847, quoted by Lawrence, 454) Since there was a growing cadre of Italian singers now living in New York (including those left over from their own recently disintegrated company) the singer/managers did not have to recruit an entire troupe. They signed contracts, however, with a large group of singers and brought them back to New York in the fall.[53] They also hired some singers from their own defunct company, but apparently the newcomers outnumbered the oldtimers by almost two to one, and the overall

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principals travelled, while if an orchestra or chorus were used at all, they would be recruited as needed en route from the ranks of available local musicians, whatever their quality." As we have seen, this was not the case with the Havana Company of 1847, nor was it the case for the troupe that Marti would send to this country in 1849 or 1850. In fact, the Havana Company of 1843 also travelled with an orchestra, albeit a small one. Furthermore, the Astor Place companies of 1848-49 (under the management of Fry), as well as Maretzek's first two Astor Place troupes, the companies of 1849-50 and 1850-51, both travelled with chorus and orchestra. For information on the latter, see Chapter 4. See Lerner, 75-78.

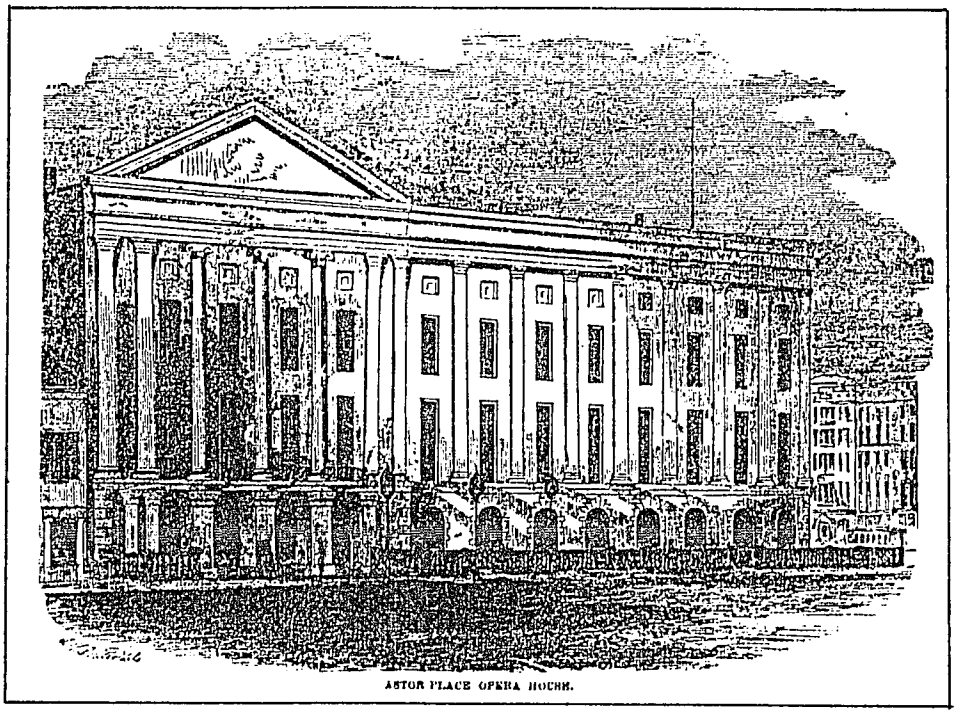
53. The newcomers to the United States were Caterina Barili-Patti (a soprano, the mother of Clotilda Barili, and Salvatore Patti's wife); Teresa Truffi (soprano); Giuseppina Lietti Rossi (contralto); Settimo Rossi (bass); Antonio Avignone (baritone); and the tenors Adelindo Vietti and Francesco Bailini. The troupe members from the previous Sanquirico-Patti company included Clotilda Barili, G. F. Beneventano, S. Patti, A. Sanquirico, and Antonio Barili; the star tenor of the previous season, Sesto Benedetti, was embroiled in a wage dispute with the management, but finally joined the troupe about a month into the season. See Lawrence, 466. The management also engaged--for a three-month period--another potential star, Eliza Biscaccianti, a Boston-born soprano who had

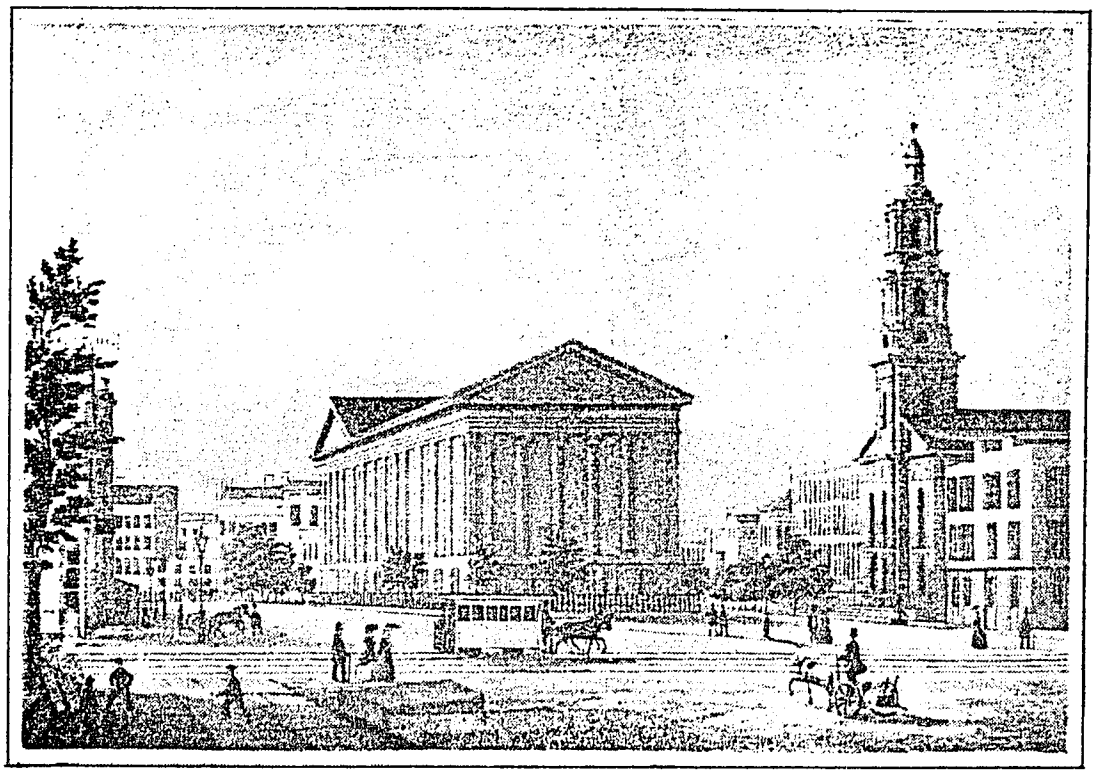
impression was of an entirely new company. (Courier & Enquirer, 25 November 1847, quoted by Lawrence, 460)

The construction of the Astor Place Opera House and the organization of this new company represents yet another in a continuing series of attempts by New York's bon ton to commandeer Italian opera for themselves. And this time, for a variety of reasons, their efforts met with a great deal more success than had previous ventures. The very segregation of opera from the popular theatre--by its removal to a house built exclusively for its performance--is the first and most obvious step in this process of expropriation. But its removal to this particular house loudly broadcast to New Yorkers of all classes the message of intended exclusivity; especially marked was the contrast with Palmo's deliberate attempt at egalitarianism. Even the location of the Astor Place House--at Eighth and Lafayette Streets, in a somewhat remote but very fashionable section of (then) uptown Manhattan--discouraged attendance by the everyday, non-subscribing, impulsive, theatre-going public. And if this was not in itself sufficient to frustrate ordinary theatre-goers, the physical layout of the house certainly helped. Those individuals who could only afford admission (fifty cents) to the old upper gallery (now renamed the "amphitheatre") found that section of the house to be "the most uncomfortable and ill-contrived place imaginable"; even worse, the view of the stage from the gallery was almost completely

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been studying and performing in Italy. Biscaccianti (1824-1896) was the granddaughter of American composer James Hewitt and the daughter of Sophia Hewitt and the Italian violinist Louis Ostinelli (who had emigrated to the United States sometime prior to 1822). Biscaccianti would enjoy a respectable career in both opera and concert performances, especially in California during the 1850s. See Lawrence, 454, 462 and Schiavo, 254-256.





Two views of the Astor Place Opera House, built in New York City in 1847.

blocked by a huge, ornate chandelier.[54] Furthermore, a dress code requiring "freshly shaven faces, evening dress, fresh waistcoats, and kid gloves for gentlemen" also discriminated against non-elite members of the audience. (Teran, 19) Finally, in case the rabble (or canaille, a derisive term used by many to refer to the ordinary portion of the audience) still did not get the message, the critic for the New York Herald spelled out it out in plain American English in the review of the opening-night performance: "The fashionable world is now completely organized--the opera is successful--white kid gloves are all the go--and the canaille must keep themselves a respectful distance from Astor Place hereafter. Read and obey."[55]

According to White, the intimidations worked. "It may safely be said," he wrote, "that there was hardly a person present [on opening night] who was not known, by name, at least, to a very considerable number of his or her fellow auditors"; the clear implication is that the audience of 1500 or so in the theatre for the company's debut on 22 November 1847 was made up exclusively of the close-knit New York social elite.[56] But White's observations, like those of many of his colleagues (he was the critic for the Courier and Enquirer), were selective: on

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54. Albion, 27 November 1847, quoted in Lawrence, 455. For a description of the interior, see Lawrence, 455-456 and White, 881.

55. New York Herald, 23 November 1847, quoted in Documents of American Theatre History: Famous American Playhouses, ed. William C. Young, 2 vols. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), I:112.

56. White, II:880. Lawrence states that the Astor Place House had a capacity of between 1500 and 1800; William Henry Fry, however, gives the following information on seating in that house: parquet, 308; two stage-boxes, 28; first-tier balcony and boxes, 277; second-tier private and open boxes, 246; third tier or amphitheatre, 600; total seating for "nearly 1500 persons." See Lawrence, 455, and "The Opera in New York," New York Tribune, reprinted in Dwight's Journal of Music, 19 January 1856, 116.

opening night, in fact, the house was crowded with both the bon ton and the general public. (Lawrence, 457) The critic of the Sunday Age, who did not have aristocratic blinders on, wrote that above the "very hotbed of Upper Tendom exclusiveness" were seated the "vulgar wretches, low creatures, [and] canaille"--some five hundred of them, "piled up [in the third tier], one above the other, and striving in vain to catch a glimpse of the stage." (Sunday Age, 28 November 1847, quoted in Lawrence, 456)

The Astor Place company was well received, although there was considerable disagreement among the critics as to its merits in comparison with the recently departed Havana company. (Lawrence, 504) Despite the lingering memories of that troupe's overwhelming success, however, by the end of the first six weeks of the season (during which time the company mounted productions of Ernani, Beatrice di Tenda, La Sonnambula, Lucia, and I Puritani), the Astor Place troupe was proclaimed a "solid and complete success." (Lawrence, 466) The Spirit's critic was hopeful. "If none of those unfortunate disagreements, which have heretofore occurred in connexion with every Italian company in this city, should occur with this [troupe]," he wrote, "we feel assured of its undoubted success." (Spirit, 23 January 1848) This, however, was not to be. Sanquirico and Patti were doomed to watch the early success of the Astor Place Company turn to disaster, just as they had watched their previous troupe fail in spite of its early promise. Although the company added new works to its repertory during the second season (Capuletti e i Montecchi and, on 14 February, the North American première of Mercadante's Il Giuramento), by mid-February it was clear that the ensemble was in serious financial trouble. The "unfortunate disagreements" so common to Italian troupes had cropped up:

singers became (or claimed to be) ill, and jealousies, competition, and backbiting were rife among the performers. The vocalists, to a large extent, were sabotaging their own performances by alienating the audience; the season--only two-thirds finished--ground to an ignominious halt in early March. (Odell, V:382-383)

The management, claiming merely to be taking a two- or three-week recess, put the company on the train and headed south in search of an audience in Philadelphia. (Lawrence, 505) The troupe carried on more-or-less successfully at the Chestnut Street Theatre, mounting productions of Lucia di Lammermoor, Lucrezia Borgia, Ernani, and Il Giuramento for several weeks. According to Joseph Sill, the Italians attracted reasonably good houses; on 3 March the theatre "was well filled by a fashionable and intelligent audience," and on 10 March "the House was well fill'd."[57] At the end of the final week of the season, however, the company--at least according to Curtis--"went broke" and returned home. (Curtis, 393) The New York critics, who thought that they had seen the last of the Italians, were surprised when the troupe reopened at the Astor Place House in late March. (Spirit, 6 May 1848; Lawrence, 505) They mounted one new opera (the North American première of Verdi's Nabucco), but thereafter gave only additional performances of Lucia di Lammermoor and Lucrezia Borgia; by the second week of April the end was clearly in sight. (Odell, V:383) Sanquirico and Patti eventually relinquished management of the rapidly failing troupe, and Michele Rapetti and the Barilis and Pattis split off and headed south on their own to perform in

57. Wilson; Curtis, 393; Sill, 3, 10 March 1848. The company gave a total of twenty-one performances of five operas during their four weeks of performing.

Philadelphia. (Literary Excelsior and Musical World, 6 May 1848) A final, last-ditch attempt by the three remaining stars (Truffi, Benedetti, and Beneventano) to keep the disintegrating company afloat failed, and the troupe fell apart completely in late April. (Lawrence, 505)

Although the troupe disintegrated in April (and relinquished control of the Astor Place House to New York pleasure-garden operator William Niblo), it was not long before new companies formed themselves from the rubble--three of them. Several company singers joined forces with some of the artists from the 1847 Havana Opera Company (who were back in the United States again after the completion of the Tacon season). This group opened at the Chestnut Street Theatre and performed for slightly over a week, then fell apart. (Armstrong, 60; Curtis, 393; Wilson) After reorganizing under the direction of Luigi Arditi (also recently arrived from Cuba), the company mounted a two-week season (14-26 August) at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, then again disbanded. (Curtis, 393) A different group of vocalists, which continued to cling to the name "New York Astor Place Company" (the group, in fact, was made up primarily of Astor Place singers), mounted a season at the Howard Athenaeum in Boston in May and June. They performed a repertory of four operas (Lucrezia Borgia, Nabucco, Ernani, and Il Giuramento) before disbanding. (Playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 29 May 1848, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston) Finally, a third group of survivors, the Barili-Patti contingent, formed themselves into a concert troupe and gave performances in Philadelphia and New York; they were assisted in this endeavor by the pianist and impresario-to-be, Maurice Strakosch. (Odell, V:406)

The reasons for the failure of the Astor Place troupe itself were numerous. Some of the company's problems were familiar by now; they included exorbitant salary demands by the stars and bickering among the singers.[58] A number of individuals, however, suggested that the New York critics were also to blame for the demise of the ensemble; many of the journalists, it seems, had endeavored to prove their own musical sophistication by picking apart the company's performances and repertory, by comparing the troupe unflatteringly to the departed Cuban ensemble, and even by cruelly attacking individual singers. Most of those who were interested in assigning blame, however, placed responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the managers. "The management was conducted by too many," complained the critic for the Spirit, "and authority [was] exercised by persons having no idea of what they were doing--a masterly activity which threw everything into confusion." Furthermore, he continued,

> There were too many stars, and too little brilliancy. The materials were possessed but so badly put together that there was discord behind the scenes and grumbling before them. The great variety that could have been presented was neglected, and two or three operas forced upon the subscribers. The bon ton, or the dilettanti, or both, were ennuied to death. (Spirit, 6 May 1848)

Perhaps a more serious problem, however--and one that most critics seem to have ignored--was the deliberate alienation of the popular audience by the Astor Place subscribers and directors. The bon ton, by 1847, evidently believed themselves to be sufficiently numerous to

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58. According to the Democratic Review, Clotilda Barili had been engaged (at the princely salary of $500 per month) for the entire season, but by March had appeared only four or five times; Caterina Barili-Patti had been engaged for a month (at $800), but had refused to sing after only two performances--possibly because of the shameful treatment to which she had been subjected by the New York critics. See Democratic Review, March 1848, quoted in Lawrence, 503; see also Lawrence, 497.

support opera without the help of the middling classes; the failure of the Astor Place troupe, however, seems to suggest that this was an erroneous judgement. Erroneous or not, the wealthy had set out to exclude what they thought of as riff-raff, and they had succeeded, to a great extent. Large numbers of "vulgar wretches, low creatures, [and] canaille" had been in the audience on opening night, but it did not take middle- and lower-class New Yorkers long to discover--and be thoroughly insulted by--the egregious discrimination built into the physical arrangement of the Opera House. Not only was the contrast between the inferior gallery seats and the plush sofas in the boxes and comfortable armchairs in the "parquette" markedly obvious, but--adding insult to injury--the non-wealthy opera-lovers, as non-subscribers, were completely excluded from the more comfortable section of the house, and they knew it. In November Philip Hone, who had predicted the eventual failure of the Astor Place company, based his forecast on precisely these social inequities. "I apprehend the danger [to the Astor Place enterprise]," he wrote in his diary, "to be the same which has hitherto operated against the opera and occasioned its failure, namely the aristocratic exclusiveness of assigning the principal seats to the subscribers." He continued:

> The public, strangers, and other entertainment-seekers, will not consent to an arrangement by which certain fashionables are helped first to the best cuts. There is nothing of which the sovereign people are so tenacious as their equality in matters relating to their amusements. The Declaration of Independence on political rights is not more precious to us freeborn Americans (as we love to call ourselves) than our right to demand for a (few) poor dollars the privilege of 'first come, first served.' (Hone MS diary, 23 November 1847, quoted in Lawrence, 459)

For the purposes of this study, the contribution of (middle- or lower-class) audience alienation to the demise of the first Astor Place troupe is much less crucial an issue than is the development of this alienation per se--and the significant role that the Astor Place elite had in its growth. Partly as a result of the Astor Place Opera House, the New York public--as the wealthy had intended--began to be chary of patronizing a form of entertainment that was gradually taking on some of the extraneous trappings of the elite. The upperclass social rituals that McConachie rightly suggests were becoming a part of opera-going (proper dress, proper behavior) were starting to be associated in the minds of the middle- and lower-class public (at least in New York) with Italian opera. As a result, ordinary New York theatre-goers were not just avoiding performances of the Astor Place Opera Company, many were also, by the late 1840s, beginning to experience feelings of antipathy towards Italian opera itself. A backlash was in the making.

In the United States there had always been an undercurrent of disapproval towards foreigners and foreign entertainments--especially among Americans with strong nativist leanings. Animosity towards Europeans in general increased during the 1840s, as levels of immigration climbed dramatically.[59] In New York, this xenophobia became intertwined with the increasing identification of Italian opera as an entertainment with aristocratic trappings; the combination gave fresh impetus and (in the eyes of many) legitimacy to the expression of nativist sentiment. Evidence of this attitude began to show up in the

59. By the mid-1840s over 100,000 immigrants (mostly Irish and German) entered the United States annually; by 1847 the number climbed to above 200,000. See Richard Morris, editor, Encyclopedia of American History (New York: Harper & Row, fifth edition), 653-4.

pages of musical/theatrical periodicals. "Everyone in the city but myself has heard 'Lucia di Lammermoor' and the other performances of the troupe now engaged at Palmo's," one such individual had written to the Spirit in April 1847.

> I am very fond of music, but (may I be forgiven for it!) I have some prejudices as strong, and no doubt as unreasonable, as those of blunt John Bull. I hate Italians! Like the war-horse towards the battle, I "scent" them "afar off." They look so greasy and are so redolent of pomatum, and bear's oil, olives, and sardines. And then the varlets are so vain! . . . the poorest supernumerary of an Italian company deems himself the wonder of men, and the idol of women. What superb voices the rascals have! How they do excel in music! And yet, beyond this . . . what is left of the land that produced Cicero and Petrarch. Oh! Monkeys and hand organs! (Spirit, 10 April 1847, 73)

Walt Whitman's well known plea to the democratic masses to throw off the yoke of European cultural domination also dates from this same year. "We have long enough followed obedient and child-like in the track of the Old World," he wrote in the pages of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in the autumn of 1847.

> We have received her tenors and her buffos, her operatic troupes and her vocalists, of all grades and complexions; listened to and applauded the songs made for a different state of society--made perhaps by royal genius, but made to please royal ears likewise; and it is time that such listening and receiving should cease.[60]

The appearance in the press of such anti-operatic opinions--and of such stereotypical and overtly anti-Italian sentiments--suggests that the New York elite had made some progress by the late 1840s in their

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60. Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 8 September 1847, quoted in Robert D. Faner, Walt Whitman and Opera (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1951), 39.

quest to remove Italian opera from the domain of the popular theatre.[61] But this progress was incomplete and, to a certain extent, transitory: the Astor Place Opera Company, after all, had failed. Furthermore (as we shall see in Chapter 4), the succeeding Astor Place troupes did not cater so exclusively and overtly to the wealthy. But the snobbish attitudes of the Astor Place elite that were so much in evidence during 1847 elicited a response from many New York lower- and middle-class opera lovers (and others); the so-called canaille avenged their wounded pride in May 1849 by the infamous Astor Place Riot, an altercation that ostensibly was prompted by a feud between the British actor William Charles Macready and the American star Edwin Forrest, but that in reality was a class conflict: the rich versus the poor; the aristocracy versus American democrats.[62] "Elite operagoing had successfully excluded the people," McConachie wrote in reference to the riot, "but clearly it failed to mystify them." (McConachie, 185) But had the New York elite really succeeded in excluding the people (other than temporarily)? Certainly, as Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate, the elite did not exclude the ordinary people from performances of Italian opera in English translation. But what of Italian opera? McConachie points out that by the late 1840s most of the elements that would eventually help the New York elite to claim Italian opera-going as an exclusive and fashionable activity were solidly in place. (McConachie, 187) During the 1850s, as we shall see in the following chapters, the New York elite used their opera-going rituals to make local

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61. As we have seen, many of the Italian performers themselves contributed to this negative image by their constant bickering and fighting.

62. An excellent study of the social and cultural pressures that led to the Astor Place Riot is Peter George Buckley's "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860" (unpublished dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984).

progress in their endeavor, and furthermore (by means of the mostly New-York based musical/theatrical press) to communicate the image of opera as entertainment for the wealthy to Americans in the hinterland. It will likewise become clear, however, that this conquest by the elite--even in New York, and even as late as 1860--was anything but a fait accompli.

Part II: 1848-1860

Viewed in retrospect, there is little question that 1847 was a watershed year for Italian opera in the United States. As the last year during which the entire aggregate of national Italian-opera performance can be summarized in narrative form, it marked the end of the on-again, off-again period. From 1847 through 1860 (and later) there would be no lengthy periods of hiatus in the performance of Italian opera in this country; although it was not clear at the time, the genre had finally become firmly established in the United States. This latter part of the antebellum period is also characterized by a multiplicity of Italian troupes; as Table 11 shows, from 1847 through 1860 there were unfailingly between three and six Italian companies active somewhere in this country during any single year. The same table also reveals that the increasingly wide-ranging itineraries of companies--away from both the East Coast and the cities located on the Ohio/Mississippi River transportation network--reached deeper and deeper into the interior. Finally, the personnel of the numerous troupes active during this period tended to be in a constant state of flux. Even more than English vocal-star companies, Italian troupes were so volatile that they formed, broke down, and reformed with a dismaying frequency; simply defining the

makeup of a particular ensemble sometimes approaches the impossible.

The overall history of the performance of Italian opera in America during this period, then, is the story of a tangled and complex web of numerous active companies in almost-constant flux. A chronicle of activity during any subsequent year (or of any succeeding Italian troupe) would require a lengthy and involved narrative even more convoluted and detailed than the preceding one describing the operatic goings-on during 1847 and 1848. Such a painstaking annals of the entire period might be of some interest and utility, but it is not necessary for the purposes of this study. Consequently, a synoptical history of the Italian companies active in this country from 1848 through 1860 is provided in chart form (see Table 11); no attempt is made to narrate the confused and intertwined histories of these various troupes (although some information in provided in the notes to Table 11). A brief discussion of the historical, social, and economic background during this period, however, is useful.

The activity of Italian opera companies in North America grew steadily after 1847 for a number of economic, political, social, and artistic reasons. First, the economic and political considerations. By the end of the 1840s the United States had finally recovered from the devastating nationwide recession caused by the Panic of 1837. By 1847 and 1848 exports were up, citizens were again employed, cities were growing and prospering, and the theatres were back in business. During the same period, conversely, the economic situation in Europe was increasingly unstable. Furthermore, the political crisis there was anything but conducive to the support of theatrical or musical business-

as-usual. As a result of this combination of factors, many journeymen musicians--instrumentalists and singers; Italians, Germans, and French--chose to immigrate to the United States during the late 1840s; as Saroni's Musical Times noted in 1849, "there is at this moment an unusual activity in the musical world. Every vessel that furrows the broad Atlantic brings with it its precious load of musical genius and talent." (Saroni's, 17 November 1849, 86) The immigration continued throughout the 1850s, and the increased pool of Italian singers living in the United States naturally had an effect on the number of opera troupes being formed. As early as the late 1840s, as we have seen, theatre managers and impresarios no longer had to send to Europe for entire troupes; it was sufficient to import a new star or two, around which could be built a company comprised largely of singers already living in New York. Since this pool of competent Italian vocalists continued to grow during the 1850s, the formation of numerous, competing companies became increasingly feasible as the decade wore on.

Another--and more personal--economic lure functioned to attract the stars around which the various troupes were built. By the late 1840s and early 1850s most prominent European performers were well aware of the monetary windfall that awaited them with a tour of the United States. Certainly the fortune that Jenny Lind made during her phenomenally successful 1850-52 American tour was common knowledge. But even before Lind's arrival, the United States had earned a reputation as a goldmine for European performers: numerous vocal stars had returned to England in the 1830s with their pockets bulging; the North American tour by Jane Shirreff and John Wilson--which had taken place at the beginning

of the recession--had been quite lucrative; and visits during the 1840s by virtuoso instrumentalists (such as Henry Vieuxtemps, Ole Bull, Leopold de Meyer, and Henri Herz) likewise had been pecuniarily successful.[63] By the middle of the 1850s, according to the Musical Review, the United States was known to Europeans as the "El Dorado of the musical world." (MR, 17 August 1854, 289) And no wonder. Countless complaints published in musical and theatrical journals in the United States during the 1850s blame the failure of Italian companies on the outrageous salaries demanded by--and paid to--European operatic stars (or supposed-stars). "The people of the United States," wrote the editor of The Musical World in 1852, "cannot afford (and ought not if they could,) to pay the . . . exorbitant and unjust . . . sums which are nightly expended, often on an ambiguous Prima Donna or an ordinary Tenor"; three years later the Musical Gazette wondered aloud why all the principal singers of the New York Academy of Music company were being paid "twice as much as they can command in any European city." (MW, 1 March 1852, 171; Musical Gazette, hereafter referred to as the MG, 17 March 1855)

Fair or unfair, excessive or not, the frequently exorbitant salary demands of European vocalists were often met--especially if the star was truly first-rank. As a result, not only did the quantity of Italian stars who were attracted to the United States during the 1850s increase considerably, so did the quality rise--and markedly. In 1853 the Muscial World gleefully wrote that "Europe is being deserted

63. For contemporary (nineteenth-century) information on the U. S. reputation as a performers' goldmine, see Saroni's Musical Times, 17 November 1849, 86.

altogether of its great stars," and to a certain extent--despite its sound of hyperbole--this was true. (MW, 7 May 1853, 289) Theodore Thomas, who performed as a violinist in several itinerant opera companies during the 1850s, later wrote, "I doubt if there were ever brought together in any part of the world a larger number of talented vocalists than were gathered in New York between 1850 and the early sixties."[64] During that decade, in fact, American audiences--and not just in New York--could attend performances by many near-great and some truly great European operatic stars, including Henriette Sontag (1806-1854), Anna de la Grange, Domenico Lorini, Angiolina Bosio (1830-1859), Lorenzo Salvi (1810-1879), Felicita Vestvali, Cesare Badiali (1810-1865), Ignazio Marini (1815-1873), Marietta Alboni (1826-1894), Pasquale Brignoli (1824-1884), and Marietta Gazzaniga (1824-1884).[65] From September 1854 through February 1855, two of the best singers of the century--Giulia Grisi (1811-1869) and her husband Giovanni Mateo Mario (1810-1883)--performed in opera in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington (see Table 11). According to the Musical Review, their tour was so successful that James Hackett, the American actor/manager who had engaged them, earned (after expenses) some $20,000 (roughly $242,000 in modern terms)--despite the "somewhat salaries the stars had demanded to come to the United States. (MR, 1 March 1855; 31 August 1854, 306)

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64. See Theodore Caskey Russell, "Theodore Thomas: His Role in the Development of Musical Culture in the United States, 1835-1905" (unpublished dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1969), 11-25, and Theodore Thomas, A Musical Autobiography, ed. George P. Upton, 2 vols. (Chicago: 1905), I:25.

65. For information on the tours made by Sontag, Alboni, de la Grange, and Vestvali see the entries and accompanying notes on their companies in Table 11; most of the other singers named performed at various times in the Havana, Astor Place, Academy of Music, Maretzek, Ullman, or Strakosch Opera companies. For biographical information on most of these singers, see Schiavo and Maretzek, C&Q and S&F.



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SECURED SEATS, $2, and $1, according to location. The sale of the the $2 Seats commences to-morrow, (SATURDAY) Morning, at 9 o'clock, and the $1 Seats at 12 o'clock, M., at the Music Store of

E. H. WADE, 197 Washington Street,

The TICKET OFFICE will be open daily, from 9 o'clock, A. M., till 5 P. M., at the Music Store of E. H. WADE, 197 WASHINGTON STREET.

☞ The only correct and authorized edition of ILLUSTRATED OPERA BOOKS, containing the Italian and English Words, with the Music of the Principal Airs, are for sale at the Howard Athenæum.

NOTICE.

MADAME HENRIETTE SONTAG intends, (after the close of the present season in Boston,) to visit and give Concerts in the following cities:

Providence, R. I.	*Salem,*	*Lowell,*	*Hartford, Ct.*
Taunton,	*Worcester,*	*Concord, N. H.*	*New Haven, Ct.*
New Bedford,	*Springfield,*	*Portland, Me.*	

SHE WILL BE ASSISTED BY THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS OF HER COMPANY.

Dutton & Wentworth, Printers, 37 Congress Street.

1853.



HOWARD ATHENÆUM!

LESSEE and MANAGER.....HENRY WILLARD
STAGE MANAGER.....ROBERT JONES

LAST GRAND OPERA NIGHT

In consequence of the numerous applications which have been made to the Manager for a repetition,

MADAME MARIETTA

ALBONI!

Will appear in a great character of

AMINA, AND MARIE,

Supported by the following Distinguished Talent,

MADAME SIEDENBURG,
SIGNOR ROVERE,
SIGNOR SANGIOVANNI,
SIGNOR A. VIETTI,
SIGNOR BARILLI,
SIGNOR RHOR

A FULL ITALIAN OPERA CHORUS and a GRAND ORCHESTRA.

☞ ADMISSION ONE DOLLAR. ☜
(SECURED SEATS)
PRIVATE BOXES.....$3.00
BOXES and PARQUETTE....$2.00
UPPER CIRCLE.....50 cts
Doors open at 1-4 of 7, and the Opera will commence at 1-2 past 7.

ON FRIDAY EVENING, FEB. 18TH, 1853.

Will be presented the second act of

LA SONNAMBULA!

AMINA,.....MAD. M. ALBONI
ELISA,.....Mad. SIEDENBURG
ELVINO,.....Sig. A. VIETTI
CONTE RODOLFO,.....Sig. BARILLI

The Performances will conclude with the second act of

LA FIGLIA DEL REGGIMENTO!

MARIE,.....MAD. M. ALBONI
TONIO,.....SIG. SANGIOVANNI
SULPIZIO,.....Sig. ROVERE
OTTENSIO,.....Sig. ROHR
CORPORAL,.....Sig. CIERI
MARCHIONESS,.....Sig'ra AVAGADRO

Conductor,.....Sig. Arditti
Second Conductor and Chorus Master,.....Sig. Nicolo
Stage Director,.....Sig Vitepranch
Prompter,.....Sig. Pozzesi

To-morrow, Saturday, An Afternoon Performance, Messrs.

Cony, Taylor, Mast[er] WILL E. Cony & their Dogs APPEAR.

In preparation a new Drama called WHO OWNS the HAND

"Times" Job Office—J. H. & F. F. Farwell, Printers, 3 and 5 State Street.

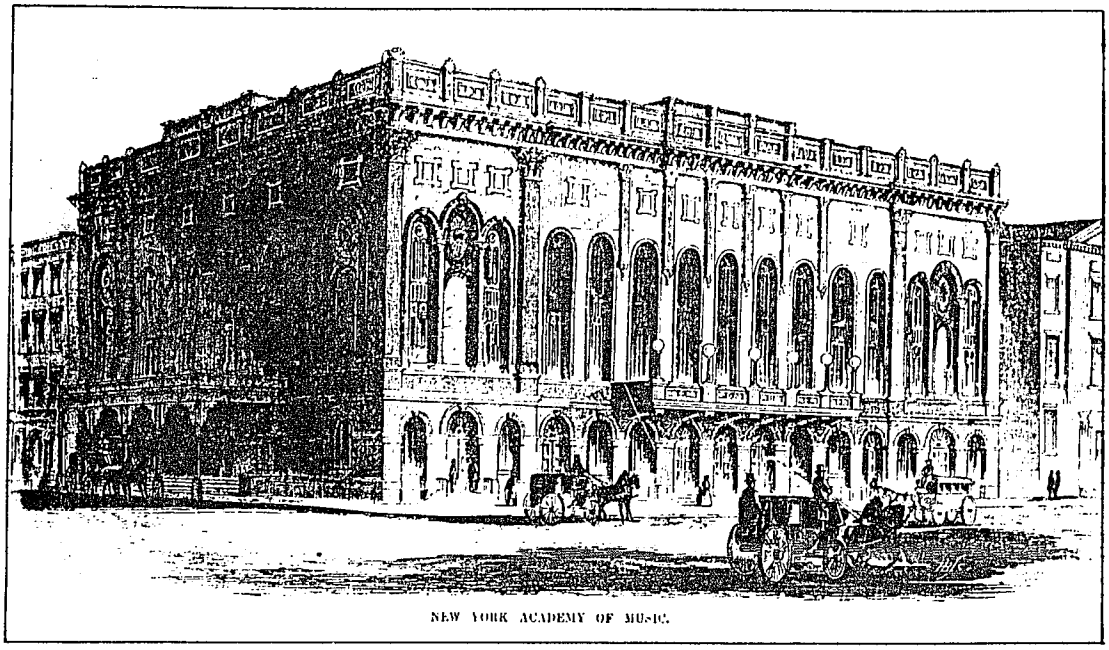
Playbills from opera performances at the Howard Athenaeum (Boston) by two popular prima donnas who performed in the United States during the 1850s, Henriette Sontag and Marietta Alboni.

The social factors involved in the increased numbers of Italian companies active in North America during the 1850s are also, to a certain extent, bound up with economic conditions. The return of prosperity in the late 1840s brought about a renewed effort to expand the nationwide transportation system, as well as a significant growth in the size, number, and prosperity of cities and towns all over the country. Both the expanded transportation network and the increased size of cities in the interior meant that the days during which an opera company would limit its activities almost exclusively to the major urban areas of the East Coast or to New Orleans and its environs were numbered. As Table 11 clearly shows, even in the early 1850s Italian opera troupes could be found performing as far afield as Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah (the Astor Place Company of 1850-51); San Francisco (the Pellegrini Opera Company in 1851 and 1853 and the Catherine Hayes Opera Company in 1854); and Montreal, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Chicago, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, Mobile, Memphis, Nashville, Toronto, Cleveland, Detroit, and Rochester (the Arditi Italian Opera Company tour of 1853-54).

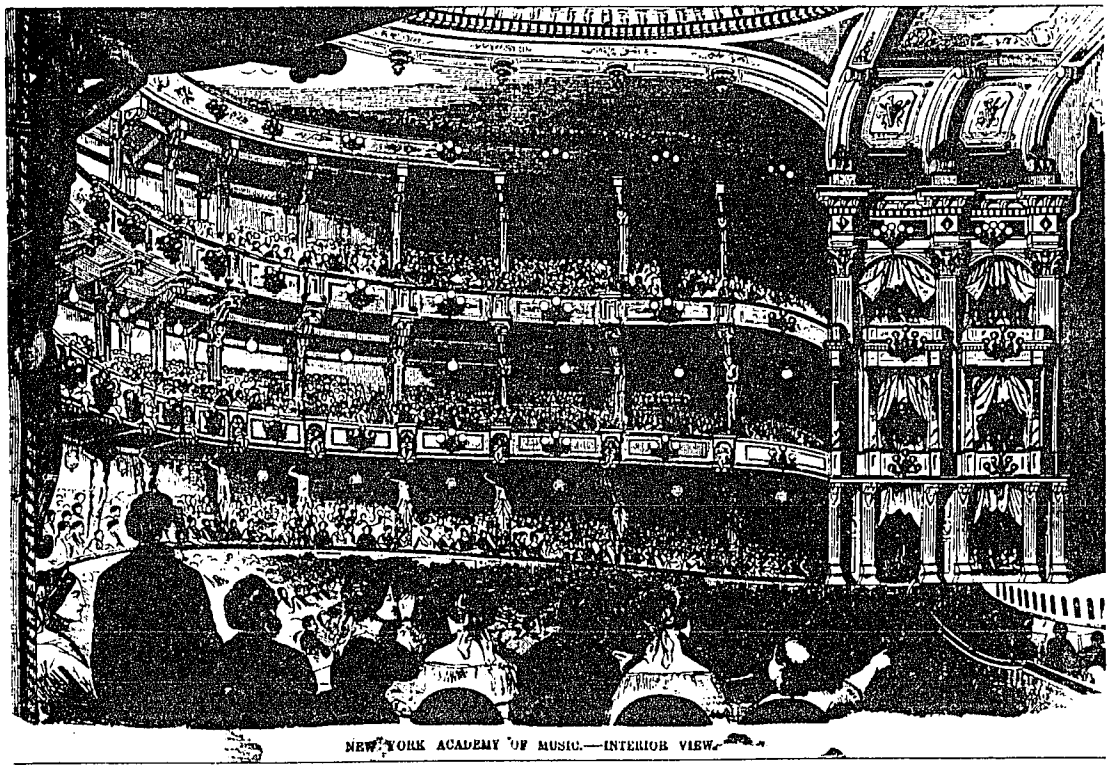
The pool of potential opera auditors also grew significantly during the period, which also contributed to the success of itinerant companies. The population of the United States itself increased by a third between 1840 and 1850, and again by the same percentage between 1850 and 1860; the country grew by 8 million (from 23 to 31 million) in the decade of the 1850s, the result of a high birth rate coupled with

huge increases in immigration. Many of the newcomers (in particular Germans fleeing political repression after the failed revolution of 1848) were middle-class urban dwellers who settled in towns and cities on the East Coast and in the interior of the country. The overall growth--and, even more important, the increased wealth--of the American middle class during the 1850s created an ever-expanding population of individuals with leisure time and disposable income, ready and waiting to be enticed into theatres and concert halls by touring European musical stars.

The size of the wealthy class, especially in New York and Philadelphia, likewise increased during this same time, and the opera-related activities of this segment of the population (perhaps inadvertantly) benefitted the rest of the country. The wealthy and elite of New York, as we have seen, set out to exclude non-aristocrats from the opera audience, in part by the physical layout of the Astor Place Opera House itself. That they succeeded (in New York) to a certain extent is clear; what they perhaps had not counted on when building their exclusive theatre, however, was the subsequent use of the Astor Place house as the home base for a number of itinerant companies that travelled extensively in the United States and Mexico from 1848 through 1852, performing Italian opera elsewhere in the country for audiences comprised of the elite--and (as we shall see in Chapter 4) the non-elite. The existence of an opera house in New York or in Philadelphia to serve as a home base obviously greatly facilitated the formation of travelling companies; after the demise of the Astor Place House in 1852, the New York Academy of Music took over as the East-Coast

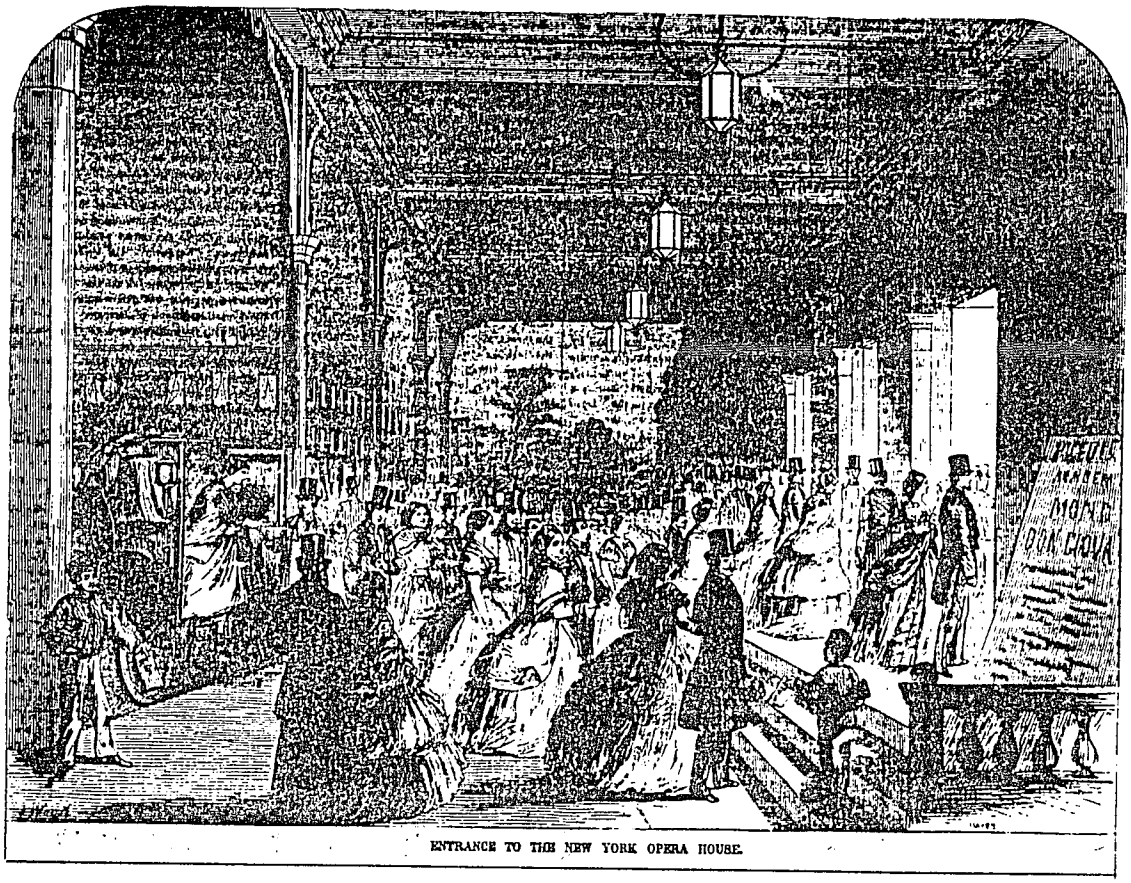


NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MUSIC.



NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MUSIC.—INTERIOR VIEW.

Exterior and interior views of the New York Academy of Music, which opened in October 1854.



ENTRANCE TO THE NEW YORK OPERA HOUSE.

Entrance to the New York Academy of Music.

headquarters of numerous troupes that travelled around North America.[66] The Academy first opened its doors in October 1854 with a performance of Norma (by the Mario and Grisi Opera Company); it served for the next thirty years as New York's center for opera performance.[67] The Philadelphia elite finally made their contribution to the cultivation of opera by building the Philadelphia Academy of Music, which opened in 1857. This house served a similar function as the headquarters of touring companies; during the three-year period of 1857 to 1860, it was the home base of troupes managed primarily by Max Maretzek.

The final factor in the proliferation of Italian opera performance during the 1850s was an artistic one: the presence in this country (after 1848) of operatic and concert impresarios--in particular Bernard Ullman, Maurice Strakosch, and Max Maretzek, each of whom had a significant impact on the cultivation of Italian opera in North America. The first of these, Bernard Ullman (?1817-1885), arrived in North America sometime around 1842. During the 1840s he successfully managed American concert tours by various artists, and in the early years of the 1850s was associated with the opera companies of the German soprano Henriette Sontag and the French coloratura soprano Anna de la Grange. From 1856 through 1860 he managed a variety of other opera troupes,

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66. The Astor Place House witnessed its last performances of Italian opera in March 1852. In early January 1852 the company, managed by Max Maretzek, literally broke in half, and the disaffected singers formed their own troupe, called the Italian Artists' Union. This group performed at Niblo's Theatre in direct competition with the remnants of the Astor Place company. The brief operatic war that ensued crippled both companies economically. See Odell, VI:165 and Saroni's Musical Times (hereafter referred to as Saroni's), 10 January 1852, 156. The Astor Place company subsequently headed south to New Orleans, from whence it went to Mexico. The Italian Artists' Union had a brief engagement in Boston, then dissolved. See American Musical Review (hereafter referred to as AMR), April 1852, 57 and June 1852, 89; MW, 15 April 1852, 154. See also C&Q. The Astor Place house reopened as a theatre in August 1852, but closed its doors forever two months later. See Odell, VI:243-244.

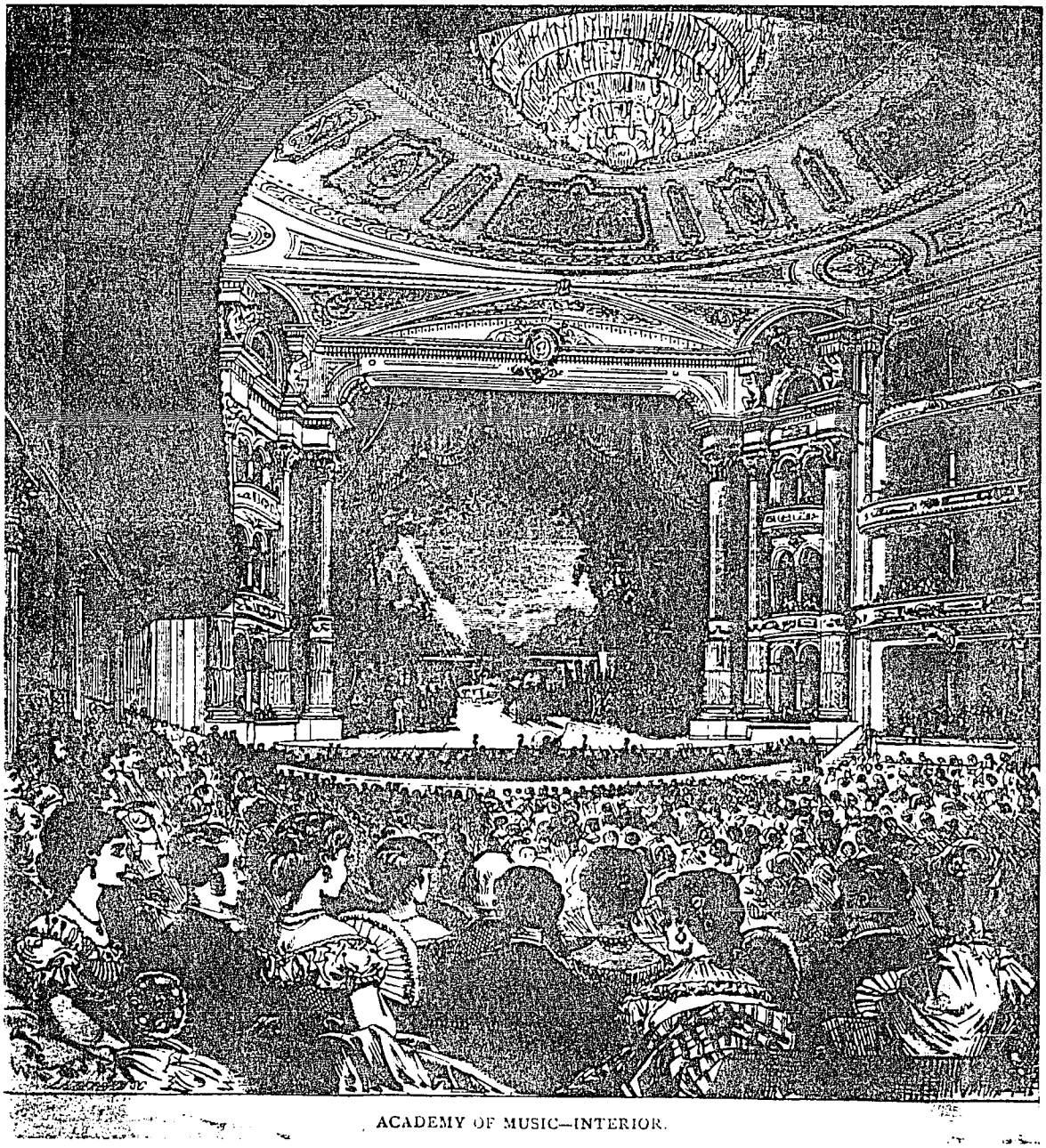
67. Irving Kolodin et al, "New York, 4. Opera and Musical Theatre," AG.

either on his own (the Ullman Opera Company), or jointly with Maurice Strakosch (the Ullman and Strakosch Opera Company). The Ullman Opera Company, and those Ullman managed with Strakosch generally were affiliated with the New York Academy of Music. Ullman returned to Europe in 1862. (William Brooks, "Bernard Ullman," AG; Lerner, 93, 97-98; Lott)

Maurice Strakosch (1825-1887) arrived in the United States in the spring of 1848. He quickly became closely associated with the family of Salvatore and Caterina Barili-Patti, and in 1852 he married their daughter Amalia, a contralto. During his thirteen years in the United States, Strakosch toured widely as a pianist, composer, and the manager of both full-blown opera companies and operatic concert troupes (featuring such artists as Amalia and Adelina Patti, Ole Bull, Teresa Parodi, Miska Hauser, and others). In 1855 he entered into a short-lived partnership with Maretzek and Ole Bull to manage the Academy of Music opera company, and from 1856 to 1857 managed his own opera troupe, which in February 1857 merged with Bernard Ullman's company. (William Brooks, "Strakosch, Maurice," AG) The Ullman and Strakosch Opera Company (also identified variously as the Academy of Music Opera Company, the Ullman Company, and the Strakosch Company) toured the East Coast of the United States until 1860. Strakosch is best known for his artistic association with his sister-in-law, the great coloratura soprano Adelina Patti; he managed her operatic career from 1860 through 1868, but they returned to Paris in 1861.[68]

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68. I am also indebted to William Brooks for copies of his research notes on the Strakosch family.



ACADEMY OF MUSIC—INTERIOR.

Interior of the Philadelphia Academy of Music, which opened in 1857.

M'VICKER'S THEATRE!

CLOSING NIGHT OF STRAKOSCH'S

ITALIAN OPERA !

BENEFIT

OF

MAURICE STRAKOSCH

Unprecedented combination of Talent and attraction—Rossini's famous comic opera of

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA !

The Barber of Seville.

Mme COLSON, M'lle PARODI,
BRIGNOLI, SQUIRES,
AMODIO, BARILI,
JUNCA, NICOLA,
MAURICE STRAKOSCH.

In the principal roles.

LA TRAVIATA.

And

SPEED THE PLOW.

The whole of Mr McVicker's excellent Dramatic Company will appear.

Dramatic performance to commence at 6 1-2. Opera at 8.

FRIDAY EVENING. MARCH 11th

Will be presented Morton's fine old comedy of

SPEED THE PLOW !

Sir Abel Handy	Bradley	Sir Phillip Blandford	Tilton
Farmer Ashfield	McVicker	Bob Handy	Myers
Henry	Cline	Harrington	Leighton
Evergreen	Dillon	Gerald	Dai
Peatilia	Lewis	Peter	Murphy
John	Kellogg	Susan Ashfield	Miss Woodbury
Lady Handy	Mrs Hough	Miss Blandford	Mrs Myers
Dame Ashfield			Mrs Marsh

PART II—First Act of

LA TRAVIATA

Violetta Valery	Mme Colson	Flora Bervoix	Mme Zapneri
Annina	M'lle Simon	Alfred Germont	Henry Squires
Giorgo Germont	Sig Amodio	Gaston	Sig Barili
Baron Douphol	Sig Lorenteli	Marquis D'Aubigney	Sig Richs
Doctor Grenville	Sig Barili	Joseph	Sig J Richs

PART III—Rossini's Comic Opera of

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Rosina	M'lle Parodi
Count Almaviva	Sig Brignoli
Dr Bartolo	Sig Nicola
Berta	M'lle Simon
Dr Basilio	Sig Amodio
Figaro	Sig Barili

Conductor, Maurice Strakosch
Leader - - - Herr Kreutzer
CHORUS DIRECTOR, - - - - - THEODORE SHERRER
PROMPTER, - - - - - - - - SIG. LANZA

THE PRICES OF ADMISSION

Will be, Dress Circle and Parquette, $1—reserved seats 50 cents extra. Admission on the evening $1.50, with the privilege of occupying such seats as may not have been secured—Gallery, 50 cents—Private Boxes $10.

OUR AMERICAN COUSIN !

This celebrated Comedy, which has been played in New York for the last Five Months, and is still drawing crowded houses—will shortly be produced at this Theatre, with New Scenery and Appointments and a cast equal to that by which it is performed at Laura Keene's Theatre.

Also in preparation a new Farce-Comic Drama, written by a gentleman of Chicago, entitled

Pike's Peak !

OR, CHICAGO BOYS ON A GOLD HUNT.

Playbill from a performance by the Strakosch Opera Company at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago, 11 March 1857

Max Maretzek (1821-1897) also arrived in the United States in 1848. He served as the musical director for the second Astor Place Opera House company, under the management of Edward Fry. Maretzek himself became manager of that company in March 1849 when Fry relinquished control; he later served as the manager of various Astor Place companies (also identified widely as "Maretzek Opera Companies") until 1852. (For more about Maretzek's activities from 1848 through spring 1851, see Chapter 4.) During the mid- to late-1850s Maretzek managed his own troupe (the Maretzek Opera Company), which toured extensively in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba; he also was associated with a number of the companies that performed at the Philadelphia Academy of Music.[69] Unlike Strakosch or Ullman, Maretzek remained active as an impresario in the United States until well after the Civil War. He retired from management in 1878 and died in New York in 1897. (William Brooks, "Maretzek, Max," AG)

Although Ullman, Strakosch, and Maretzek dominated the field of Italian opera performance and management in the United States during the 1850s, it should be clear from Table 11 that these three men did not act alone. Numerous other individuals, including some singers, managed their own opera troupes. The soprano Felicita Vestvali, for example, acted as the manager of a company that performed extensively in Mexico during 1856 and that visited the United States for five months in 1857, making appearances in New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh,

69. Opera troupes that operated out of the Philadelphia or the New York Academies of Music almost invariably were referred to as simply the "Academy of Music Company"--which simply compounds the confusion associated with the ambiguous names of opera companies.

and New York before returning to Cuba and Mexico. Teresa Parodi (the prima donna of Maretzek's 1850-51 company), Balbina Steffanone, and Maria Piccolomini, as other examples, at least nominally headed their own opera companies in the mid- and late-1850s. One other important competitor with the Strakosch/Maretzek/Ullman triumvirate was Luigi Arditi, the virtuoso violinist and orchestra leader for Marti's 1846-1851 Havana opera companies and the musical director for Maretzek's Astor Place troupe during part of 1851. (Keith Horner/Allen Lott, "Luigi Arditi," AG) From December 1852 through June 1855, Arditi was associated with a succession of opera troupes, including those identified variously in contemporary sources as the Alboni, Le Grand Smith, Marshall, Grand Combination, Arditi, DeVries, and Sontag Opera companies. It would be easy to assume that these were different and distinct troupes with which Arditi worked at various times; this, however, was not necessarily the case. It is not always easy to ferret out just which troupe was which, in part because the identification of an Italian opera company in contemporary newspapers, periodicals, or even on playbills, depended on the manager's (or a critic's) perception of how the troupe was best known to the public. As a result, a particular troupe was frequently referred to (sometimes simultaneously) by different names; conversely, the personnel of a company that was well known by a specific title (the Astor Place or Havana opera companies, for example) was often significantly different from season to season. The rampant confusion connected with the various Arditi companies (much of which--at least for the 1853-54 tour--has been sorted out by Thomas Kaufman) is typical; it is similarly difficult to sort

companies that toured and performed slightly later in the decade.[70]

It would be impossible to make an intelligible narrative summary of the activities (in general) and of the personnel, repertories, and itineraries (in particular) of all the Italian troupes active in the United States during the period 1848 through 1860. The survey of activity during the first part of the antebellum period (up to 1848), and the overview of the succeeding years, however, should suffice as adequate background for an examination of one prototype troupe active during the second part. This close examination of a single troupe, Max Maretzek's Astor Place Opera Company of 1850-51, will illustrate the astonishing complexities of opera management during the period, and will reveal a great deal--about fluctuation of personnel (from company to company), choice of repertory, managerial tactics, frequency of performance, and composition of audience--that can be applied to other Italian opera troupes of the period. In order to understand the pervasiveness of Italian operatic activity in the United States during the 1850s, one should consider both the number and itineraries of opera companies listed in Table 11, and the massive documentation concerning a single season of a single company reported in Chapter 4. By this type of extrapolation, then, an approximate picture of the sheer quantity of Italian operatic activity in this country during the 1850s begins to emerge, and the importance of this genre to the development of American musical culture of the time becomes clear.

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70. See Thomas G. Kaufman, "The Arditi Tour. The Midwest Gets Its First Real Taste of Italian Opera," (Opera Quarterly, winter 1986-87), 39-52.

TABLE 11: ITINERARIES OF ITALIAN OPERA COMPANIES IN AMERICA, 1847-1860

This table is arranged chronologically, from top to bottom. Entries in concurrent columns represent opera companies active during the same time period. The number following the name of each troupe refers to additional information about the company to be found in the Notes section that follows the table itself.

The following abbreviations are used in this table:

Aca	Academy of Music	Holli	Holliday Street Theatre
Athen	Athenaeum Theatre	Metro	Metropolitan Theatre
Balto	Baltimore	Nat	National Theatre
B'way	Broadway Theatre	NO	New Orleans
Castle	Castle Garden	OC	Opera Company
Ches	Chestnut Street Theatre	St. Chas	St. Charles Theatre
Cinti	Cincinnati	Wal	Walnut Street Theatre
con	concerts		

1847

SANQUIRICO-PATTI OC (1)
NYC (Palmo) 4 Jan-
-31 Mar
-- 7 Apr-
-7 June

ASTOR PLACE OC (2)
(Sanquirico & Patti, mgrs)
NYC (Astor) 22 Nov-

1848

-18? Feb
Boston
(Athen) 5? Jan-
-28 Jan [?]
Phila (Ches) 19 Feb-
-24 Mar
NYC (Astor) 27 Mar-
-28 Ap
Phila (Patti-
Barili) May
Boston 29 May-
-26 June
(Phila (Ches) 6-13 June)
(Phila 14-26 Aug)
NYC (Niblo's) 4-15 Sept

HAVANA OC (3)
NYC (Park) 15-17 Apr
Boston
(Athen) 19 Apr-
-4 June
NYC (Park) 9 June-
-8 July
Phila (Wal) 12 July-
-6 Aug
NYC (Castle) 18 Aug-
-17 Sept

LOMBARDI OC (4)
Boston May

1848 (cont)

ASTOR PLACE OC (cont)

Phila (Ches) 5-28 Oct
NYC
(Tabernacle) 15 Oct

ASTOR PLACE OC (2A)
(Edward Fry, mgr)
NYC (Astor) 1 Nov-

HAVANA OC
Boston
(Athen) 21 Sept-
-1 Oct

ASTOR OC (BRANCH) (2B)
Phila 5-31 Dec,

1849

5 Jan
Boston 18 Jan-

-2 Mar

ASTOR PLACE OC (5)
(Max Maretzek, mgr)
NYC (Astor) 19 Mar-

-12 Ap

-4 Apr

TEDESCO OC (6)
Charleston 14-15 Mar

GRAND ITALIAN OC (7)
Savannah? 7 Aug

ITALIAN OC (8)
NYC (B'way) 13 Aug-
-15 Sept

UNKNOWN OC (9)
Pittsburgh 6-10 Oct

ADAMS OC (11)
Savannah 19-29 Nov

ASTOR PLACE OC (10)
(Maretzek, manager)
NYC (Astor) 1 Nov-

ASTOR OC (BRANCH) (10a)
Phila 9 Dec-

1850

-20 Jan

-7 Mar

HAVANA OC (12)
Charleston 26 Mar-
-2 Apr
Boston 12 Mar-
NYC (Niblos) 11 Ap-
-3 May
-8 May
Boston
(Athen) 13-31? May
NYC (Astor) 3 June-
-5 July
NYC (Castle) 8 July-
-7 Sept
Phila (Ches) 10-24 Sept
Havana
(Tacon) 10 Oct

1850 (cont)

ASTOR PLACE OC (13)
NYC (Astor) 21 Oct-

ASTOR OC (BRANCH) (13a)
Phila (Ches) 10 Dec-

1851

-20 Jan
Balto (Holli) 23 Jan- **PELLEGRINI OC (14)**
-23 Feb -12 Feb SF (Adelphi) 12 Feb-
Boston
(Athen) 17 Feb-
-8 Mar
Phila (con) 4 Mar
Charleston 21 Mar-
-12 Ap -8 Ap
Augusta 14-21 Apr
Charleston 22 Apr
Boston 29 Ap-
-30 May
NYC (Astor) 3-14? June **ASTOR OC (13b)**
NYC (Castle) 16 Jn- **(SOUTHERN BRANCH)**

-19 Sept Phila 22 Sept-
-13 Oct
Richmond 29 Oct-
NYC (Astor) 3 Nov- -4 Nov
Charleston 10 Nov-
-13 Dec
-22 Dec Savannah 17-31 Dec

1852

ARTISTS' UNION
ITALIAN OC (15)
NYC 19 Jan- NYC (Niblos) 12 Jan-
Boston
(Theatre) 16 Feb-
-12 Feb
-early Mar -8 Mar

ASTOR PLACE OC (16)
NO 31 Mar-
-19 Ap
Mexico Apr-

STRAKOSCH OC (17)
NO 23-30 Ap

CARNCROSS OC (18)
Columbus, Ga Sept

SONTAG OC (19)
NYC (con) 27 Sept

1852 (cont)

ASTOR PLACE OC (cont)

ALBONI OC (20)
NYC (B'way) 27 Dec-

1853

-28 Jan

Boston
(Athen) 31 Jan-

-18 Feb

Phila (Wal) 28 Feb-
(Maretzek, cond) -11 Mar

-Mar

GRAND COMBINATION OC (23) <-------
NYC (Niblo's) 28 Mar-

STEFFANONE OC (24)

-7 May Charleston 10-12 May
Richmond 18 May

MARETZEK OC (27)
(including Sontag)
NYC (Castle) 11 July-

-23 Aug

SONTAG OC (cont)
con tour Nov-Dec

NYC (Niblo's) 10 Jan-

-18? Mar

Phila
(National) 28 Mar-

-16 Apr

Boston
(Athen) 19 Ap-

-27 May

Worcester 29-30 May

ARDITI ITALIAN OC (26)
Montreal 20 June-

-4 July

Toronto 8 July
Buffalo 11-22 July
Cincinnati 27 July-

-6 Aug

Louisville 9-20 Aug
Cincinnati 23-29 Aug

LORINI OC (21)
Lima, Peru Feb-

-Mar

PELLIGRINI OC (22)
SF (Adelphi) Feb-

?

-Apr

DUMBOLTON'S OC (25)
Michigan when?

1853 (cont)

MARETZEK OC (cont)
NYC (Niblos) 19 Sept-

-19? Dec

1854

To Havana Jan

MARETZEK OC (32)
NYC (Castle) 30 June-

-8 July

HENRIETTE SONTAG (CONCERT TOUR) (29)

Mobile	20-24+ Feb
NO (St. Chas)	6-31 Mar

SONTAG OC (30)

leave NO	1 Apr
Mexico City	12 Ap-

-June

HAYES OC (31)
San Francisco 29 May?

ARDITI OC (cont)

St. Louis	26 Sept-
	-2 Oct
Chicago	27-31 Oct
Milwaukee	2-5 Nov
Chicago	7 Nov
Detroit	9-16? Nov
Pittsburgh	18 Nov-
	-2 Dec
Balto (Front)	5-14 Dec
Washington	19-31 Dec

ARDITI OC
aka DEVRIES OC

Richmond	2-14 Jan
Charleston (cons)	18-19 Jan
Savannah	24 Jan-
	-3 Feb
Augusta	6-10 Feb

JOINT WITH SONTAG

Mobile	20-24+ Feb
NO (St. Chas)	6-31 Mar

ARDITI OC (con't)

where?	1-9 Ap
NO	10-13 Ap
Memphis	22, 24 Ap
St. Louis	1-22 May
Nashville	26 May-
	-5 June
Louisville	12 June-
	-3 July
Cincinnati	5-22 July

STEFFANONE OC (28)

NO to Havana	Jan
Havana	Feb-

-Mar

Mexico City Apr

1854 (cont)

MARETZEK OC (cont)

-25 Aug
Phila (Ches) 28 Aug-
-16 Sept

-29 Dec

GRISI & MARIO OC (33)
NYC (Castle) 4-29? Sept
NYC
(Academy) 2 Oct-

ARDITI OC (cont)
Cleveland 25-29 July
Buffalo 31 July-
-5 Aug
Toronto 9-12 Aug
Rochester 14-19 Aug

Chi 11 Oct, Nov

Chi (con) 17 Nov

Nashville
(con?) Dec

LORINI OC (34)
Chi (cons) 11 Oct,
7 Nov
St. Louis 16 Oct-
-15 Nov
Cincinnati 22 Nov-
-1 Dec

UNKNOWN OC (33)
Boston 26 Aug-
-?

BARILI-THORNE OC (35)
SF
(Metro) 15 Nov-
-23 Dec

1855

WARDEN'S OC (37)
Louisville 2-19 Jan

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (38)
NYC (Aca) 19 Feb-
2? Mar
(aka MARETZEK OC)
NYC (Aca) 12 Mar-

Phila (Wal) 2, 5, 6 Jan
Balto 9 Jan
Washington
(Nat) 8 Jan
Phila (con) 10 Jan
NYC (con) 11 Jan
Boston 15 Jan-
-11 Feb
NYC (Metro) 13-20 Feb

METROPOLITAN OC (39)
Chicago (Warner
Hall) 22 Feb

SF (Metro) Jan-
-Feb

SF
(American) 18-25 March

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (cont)
(cont)

	-18 May		
Boston	21 May-	NYC (Aca)	21 May-
	-9 June		-8 June
NYC (Aca)	11-18 June	Boston	11-18 June
		NYC (Aca)	21-29 June

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (41)

NYC (Aca)	1 Oct-

LAGRANGE OC (40)

NYC (Niblo's)	8 May

VESTVALI OC (42)

Mexico	20 Oct-

BARILI-THORNE OC

SF (Ital OC)	May
S America	August

1856

	-4 Jan		
Baltimore ?	?		
Phila (Wal)	14-16 Jan		
NYC (Aca)	18 Jan (1 perf)		
Boston	21 Jan-		
	-22 Feb		
Phila (Wal)	20 Feb-		
	-6 Mar		-Mar?
NYC (Aca)	12 Mar-		
	-7 Apr		
NYC (Aca)	16 Ap-		

GARBATO OC (43)

San Francisco	1855?

PARODI OC (44)

Michigan	1855-56

1856 (cont)

ACADEMY OC (cont)
-13 June

VESTVALI OC (cont)
Boston 4-19 June

to Mexico Sept
Mexico City 17 Oct

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (45)
NYC (Aca) 1-30 Sept
Boston 20 Oct-
-8 Nov
NYC (Aca) 10 Nov-
-11 Dec ---> to Havana Dec 1856

MARETZEK OC (46)

1857

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (47)
NYC (Aca) 21 Jan-
-13 Feb
Charleston 16-17 Feb
NYC (Aca) 23 Feb-
-20 Mar
Phila (Aca) 25 Feb-
-11 Apr
NYC (Niblos) 13 Ap-
-8 May

VESTVALI OC (48)
New Orleans 7 Ap-
-29 May

D'ANGRI OC (49)
Charleston 11 May

MORELLI OC (50)
NYC (Aca) 18, 20, 22 May
Phila (Aca) 11-25 May

NYC (Aca) 4-5? June
Boston 8 June-

ST. JOHN'S OC (51)
St. Louis 13-26 June
Savannah 19-20 June

LAGRANGE OC (52)
Cincinnati (cons) June

LAGRANGE OC (cont)
NYC (Aca) 29 Jn-
-20 July

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OC (54)
NYC (Aca) 7 Sept-
-10 Oct
NYC (Aca) 2-20? Nov

(aka ULLMAN OC)
NYC (Aca) 30 Nov-

1858
-15 Jan
Phila (Aca) 22 Jan-
-16 Feb
NYC (Aca) 22 Feb-
-1 Apr

MARETZEK OC (59)
NYC (Aca) 30 Aug-
-11 Oct
Baltimore Oct?
Washington Oct?

MARETZEK OC (cont)
4 July

MARETZEK OC (55)
Phila (Aca) 5-21 Oct
Havana early Nov-
-Mar
Charleston 2-6 Mar
Phila (Aca) 20 Mar-
-1 May
NYC (Aca) 31 May-
-30 June

STRAKOSCH OC (60)
NYC (Burton)14 Sept-
-1 Oct
Boston 5-9 Oct
Providence 11-13? Oct
Boston 14 Oct

VESTVALI OC (cont)
Cincinnati 2 July
Pittsburgh 22-27 July
Mexico, Cuba 9 Nov
Cuba Nov-
-Mar

ITALIAN OC (57)
NYC (Burton)10-15 May

UNKNOWN OC (58)
Balto (Front) May?

BURTON'S OC (52)
NYC (Burton)17 Aug-
-? Aug

STRAKOSCH OC (55)
Louisville 19-22 Jan

1858 (cont)

MARETZEK OC (cont)

Charleston Nov?
Havana Nov-

-Apr

VESTVALI OC (63)
Boston
(Theatre) ?-18 June

STRAKOSCH OC (cont)
NYC (Burton) 16-22? Oct
Balto (Holli) 23-28? Oct
Phila (Aca) 1 Nov-

-17? Dec

Louisville 26-29 Jan
St. Louis 31 Jan-

-19 Feb

Chi
(McVicker) 21 Feb-

-11 Mar

Cinti (Pike's) 15 Mar-

-13 Ap

Pittsburgh
(National) 15-21 Apr
NYC (Aca) 4 May-

-18 June

Hartford, CT. early June

ULLMAN OC (61)
NYC (Aca) 20 Oct-

-7 Dec

Boston 9 Dec-

-4 Jan

NYC (Aca) 6-13 Jan
Phila (Aca) 14-29 Jan
Balto (Holli) 2-5 Feb
Phila (Aca) 10 Feb
NYC (Aca) 11-12 Feb

NO 3 Mar-

-21 Mar

NYC (Aca) 11-30 Apr
Phila (Aca) 6-11 May
Phila 19 May-
(Theatre) -11 June
Worcester 14 June
Boston
(Theatre) 15 June-

-2 July

PARODI OC (62)
Louisville
(Mozart Hall) 11-13 Jan
St. Louis 31 Jan-

-19 Feb

PARODI OC (cont)
Buffalo Aug
Rochester Aug
Cincinnati 24 Aug-
-3 Sept

BIANCHI OC (64)
San Francisco May-

1859 (cont)

MARETZEK OC (65)
12 Sept-
-1 Oct
to Havana 16 Nov-

ULLMAN-STRAKOSCH OC (66)
Boston
(Theatre) 3-15 Oct
NYC (Aca) 17 Oct-
-3 Dec
Phila (Aca) 5-23 Dec
NYC (Aca) 21-30 Dec

1860

Boston (Aca) 2-27 Jan
NYC (Aca) 6 Feb-
-3 Mar
Phila (Aca) 5-10 Mar
Balto (Holli) 12-17 Mar
Washington 19-24 Mar
Balto (Holli) 26-31 Mar
Phila (Aca) 2-4 Apr
NYC (Aca) 9 Apr-

CORTESI OC (68)
left Havana early Feb
Matanzas
(Cuba) Mar
Porto Principe
(Cuba) Mar

-26 Mar
NYC (Winter
Garden) 11 Apr-

PARODI OC (cont)
Louisville
(Mozart Hall) 7-15 Sept
St. Louis 15 Sept-
-10 Oct
Cinti (Pike) 17-28? Oct
Detroit 21? Nov-
-2 Dec?
Chi (Metro) 5-10 Dec
St. Louis
(Varieties) 19-21 Dec
St. Louis
(Opera Hse) 27 Dec-
-7 Jan
Nashville 18?-28? Jan
Savannah
(Athen) 13-18 Feb
Augusta late Feb
Charleston
(Theatre) 20 Feb-
-3? Mar
Charleston 12-14 Mar
Macon late Mar
Columbus,
GA 26-31 Mar
Mobile
(Ampitheatre) April
NO 23 Apr-

BIANCHI OC (cont)
-Sept
NYC (Aca)

ANSCHUTZ OC (67)
NYC (Niblo's) 12-17 Dec

MARETZEK OC (cont)

-2 June?

ULLMAN-STRAKOSCH (cont)

-19 May

CORTESI OC (cont)

Charleston	14-15 May
Boston (Theatre)	28 May--2 June
NYC (Aca)	4-19 June
Boston	20-27 June

PARODI OC (cont)

-4? May

NOTES AND COMMENTARY FOR TABLE 11

1. SANQUIRICO-PATTI OPERA COMPANY. For a detailed discussion of this company, see Chapter 3.

2. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. For a detailed discussion of this company, see Chapter 3.

2a. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. For a brief discussion of this company, see Chapter 4.

2b. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY (DETACHMENT).

3. HAVANA OPERA COMPANY. For a detailed discussion of this company, see Chapter 3.

4. LOMBARDI OPERA COMPANY. This is an unknown company; see MW, 27 May 1848.

5. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. Max Maretzek's first (partial) season as manager of the Astor Place company. For a brief discussion, see Chapter 4.

6. TEDESCO OPERA COMPANY. This troupe is perhaps a remnant of the Havana Opera Company. See Hoole, 127.

7. GRAND ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY. According to a single surviving playbill, this company consisted of 35 artists, including a chorus and a full orchestra. Performances in Mobile, Charleston, and New Orleans also are mentioned; there is no mention of personnel or repertory. Playbill in Special Collections, University of Georgia. Cited in Katherine H. Mahan, "A History of Music in Columbus, Georgia, 1828-1928" (Unpublished dissertation, Florida State University, 1967), 33.

8. ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY. This company included the soprano Fortunata Tedesco; it was formed from parts of Astor and Havana troupes; see Lawrence, 573.

9. UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY. This is an unnamed company mentioned by Edward Garland Fletcher in "Records and History of Theatrical Activities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from Their Beginnings to 1861" (Unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1931). The company's repertory included Lucrezia Borgia and Fille du regiment.

10. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. Max Maretzek's first full season as the manager of the Astor Place company. For a brief discussion, see Chapter 4.

10a. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY (DETACHMENT).

11. ADAMS OPERA COMPANY. This troupe also is identified as the Biscaccianti Opera Company. See Elvena M. Green. "Theatre and Other Entertainments in Savannah, Georgia, 1810-1865" (Unpublished dissertation, Iowa State University, 1971), 437.

12. HAVANA OPERA COMPANY. This company also was referred to as the Arditi Opera Company. According to Hoole the troupe numbered more than ninety performers when it arrived in Charleston; by the time it reached Philadelphia six months later, it claimed on a playbill to be 110 strong. This company is discussed briefly in Chapter 5. Information for the itinerary of the 1850 Havana Opera Company is from the following sources: Charleston: Hoole, 55, 128. New York: Odell, V:563, 575, 590; appropriate issues of the Spirit, Saroni's, and the Message Bird. Boston: Message Bird, 15 May 1850, 335; 1 June 1850, 346, 351; 15 June 1850, 351; Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston. Philadelphia: Playbill, Chestnut Street Theatre, 11 September 1850, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; Figaro, or Corbyn's Chronicle (hereafter referred to as Figaro), 14 September 1850; Prompter's Whistle, 28 September 1850, 89, 91; Curtis; Havana: Message Bird, 1 November 1850, 515.

13. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. For an extended discussion of the 1850- 51 Astor Place Opera Company, see Chapter 5.

13a. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY.

13b. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY (DETACHMENT). Maretzek split his 1851-52 Astor Place Opera Company into two branches. The northern half was to perform in New York until the end of their New York engagement, at which point they planned to meet the southern half (which had proceeded south in a more leisurely fashion, performing en route) in New Orleans. From there the reunited forces would proceed to Havana for a lengthy engagement. In Crotchets and Quavers Maretzek reveals that the southern branch was under the charge of "an agent" (identified in the Savannah Republican as Bernard Ullman). The company experienced some difficulties in Charleston (Maretzek writes that Ullman "had got into serious troubles with the vocalists placed under his charge") and it subsequently fell apart in Savannah. Hoole, in fact, reports two different companies for the Charleston engagement: the Max Maretzek Opera Company (which performed 10-29 November) and the Don Giovanni Italian Opera Company (1-13 December). The singers for the two companies are the same, however, suggesting that the company split up before it reached Savannah. For an amusing account of the Southern goings-19.on, see C&Q, 193-199; the Savannah Republican is cited in Green, 457.

The Philadelphia engagement is reported in Curtis and Armstrong, as well as in the appropriate issues of Spirit, the Message Bird, and Saroni's. Curtis gives the terminal date of the engagement as 4 October, but Armstrong (who misidentifies the company as the "Havana Opera Company") gives it as 13 October. See Curtis, 461, and Armstrong, 69.

According to Stoutamire, this troupe was the first to give complete performances of Italian opera in Richmond. See Albert Stoutamire, "A History of Music in Richmond, Virginia, 1742-1856" (Unpublished dissertation, Florida State University, 1960), 180. Information on Charleston is from Saroni's, 29 November 1851, 61 and Hoole, 57; for Savannah, see Green, 457.

14. PELLEGRINI OPERA COMPANY. The first Italian opera mounted in San Francisco was La Sonnambula, performed by the Pellegrini troupe on 12 February 1851. This was the first opera performance of what would be a 55-night season in 1851. According to an uncited interview with the company's bass Alfred Roncovieri, the troupe arrived in San Francisco from Chile; their California appearances were the end of a six-month tour that had encompassed 25,000 miles. See Blake Anthony Samson, "Opera in San Francisco--the Starting Years" in San Francisco Opera Magazine (n.d.); George Rupert McMinn, The Theatre of the Golden Era of California (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1941), 374-375; Russell Hartley, "Opera in San Francisco" (typescript in the collection of the San Francisco Archives of the Performing Arts); FTP, Vol. 7, 10-13; Edmund McAdoo Gagey, The San Francisco Stage, A History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 32; FTP, "Music of the Gold Rush Era," 122; Joseph Gaer, The Theatre of the Gold Rush Era in San Francisco (New York: Burt Franklin, 1935; Revised 1970).

15. ARTISTS' UNION ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY. This was a splinter group from the Astor Place Company of 1850-51. The Artists' Union Company performed at Niblo's in direct competition with Maretzek; this precipitated an operatic price war that left both groups broke. The Artists' Union then went to Boston, where according to Maretzek they performed for two weeks before breaking up. (C&Q, 205) The troupe also was known as the Bosio Opera Company and Italian Artists' Union Opera Company. See Spirit, 21 February 1852, and Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston.

16. ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY. At the conclusion of his second New York engagement at the Astor Place Opera House, Maretzek took the remnants of his troupe to New Orleans and Mexico. The company had been severely crippled by the loss of numerous singers to the Artists' Union Italian Opera Company. Furthermore, according to Maretzek, the operatic war between the two companies (during January and February) had all but ruined him financially. As a consequence, he writes, his only recourse was to "carry that portion of the company which had remained faithful to my fortunes to Mexico, where I felt confident that it must make money." See Maretzek, C&Q, 202-205, 221; quote from page 221. For information on the engagement in New Orleans and Mexico, see Kaufman, MS worklist, New Orleans; Saroni's, 10 April 1852, 357; AMR, June 1852, 89; C&Q, 221ff.

The company's arrival back in New York in March 1853 is reported in Spirit, 12 March 1853.

17. STRAKOSCH OPERA COMPANY. See Kaufman, Ms worklist, New Orleans.

18. CARNCROSS OPERA COMPANY. This was a small troupe, comprised of three women and four men; the troupe reportedly sang opera in English and Italian. Nothing further is known about it. See Mahan, 35-36.

19. SONTAG OPERA COMPANY. The German-born Henriette Sontag (1806-1854) was a first-rank soprano. She had appeared to great acclaim in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and London (where she and Malibran had a friendly rivalry) before marrying a Sardinian ambassador (Count Carlo Rossi) and retiring from the stage in 1830. She resumed her operatic career in 1848, making several tours of England, then came to the United States at the behest of Bernard Ullman. For information on her career see Henry Pleasants, The Great Singers. From the Dawn of Opera to Caruso, Callas and Pavarotti. (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1966, 1981), 192-197; Slonimsky, Baker's, and Lerner, 64-73. See also White, IV:39-40.

    Sontag made her American premiere in concert on 27 September 1852; between 14 October and mid-December she appeared in concerts in Philadelphia twice, and in Boston, NYC, Baltimore, and Washington. Her operatic debut was at Niblos' Garden in New York on 10 January 1853. See Lerner, 71, also Dwight's, 8 January 1853, 111, AMR, (January 1853), 10-11. Information on the New York opera season can be found in the appropriate issues of Spirit, MW, and AMR; see also Odell, VI:240-242.

    For her Philadelphia engagement see Curtis, 491 and Armstrong, 76-77. The Boston information is from Kaufman, Ms worklist, Boston; Lerner, 78; and Spirit, 28 May 1853. The Worcester appearance was a concert performance only. See playbill, 29 May 1853, Worcester City Hall, Worcester concerts, 1851-54, GA/MWA.

20. ALBONI OPERA COMPANY. Marietta Alboni (1826-1894), a mezzo soprano, was another highly successful European singer. She had studied with Rossini as his only pupil, and had a "sumptuous and flawless" voice (Pleasants, 223); Dwight described her as the "greatest contralto in the world." (Dwight's, 15 May 1852, 46.) She arrived in this country in June 1852 (Spirit, 26 June 1852, 228) and performed in concert in various cities until December 1852, when she formed an opera company under the management of Le Grand Smith. (See Spirit, 12 March 1853.) By the time of her Philadelphia engagement Max Maretzek (who had been in Mexico with his company) was serving as her orchestra conductor. Shortly thereafter her company and Maretzek's joined forces for performances at Niblo's Garden in New York. See Spirit, 12 March 1853, 48, also fn 21, below.

    About Alboni's career, see Pleasants, 223-224. For comments on her voice, see White, III:35-39. Information on her itinerary is from the following sources: December 1852 through March 1853 issues of Dwight's, Spirit, and MW; Odell, VI:186-189; Kaufman, Ms worklist, Boston; playbills, Walnut Street Theatre, 28 February, 2, 4, 5 March 1853, Theatre Collection, PP; Curtis, 469; and Armstrong, 75-76.

21. LORINI OPERA COMPANY. In March 1853 Eliza Biscaccianti was reported to be on her way to join Domenico Lorini's Opera Company in Lima, Peru. According to Waddington, the Lorini Company also was known as the Garbato Opera Company, and it performed in San Francisco sometime in 1853. See Peter Waddington, "Musical Beginnings in the City of St. Francis," Opera and Concert (September 1947), 49. Lorini's troupe presumably disbanded during the winter or early spring of 1854, for he joined the Arditi Opera Company in New Orleans in April 1854. See Spirit, 5 March 1853 and Kaufman, "Arditi Tour," 45.

22. PELLEGRINI OPERA COMPANY. See FTP, vol. 7, p 10-13; Waddington, 49.

23. GRAND COMBINATION OPERA COMPANY. This troupe was a combination of the Alboni and Maretzek Opera Companies, the latter recently returned from Mexico. At the end of this engagement Marietta Alboni returned to Europe; she left on 1 June 1853. For more information, see Chapter 4; Odell, VI:242; and fn 18 above.

24. STEFFANONE OPERA COMPANY. This was a company formed around the soprano Balbina Steffanone, a former prima donna with the 1850 Havana Opera Company. See Hoole, 133, Stoutamire, 180, and White, III:31.

25. DUMBOLTON'S OPERA COMPANY. See Mary Evelyn Teal, "Musical Activities in Detroit from 1701 through 1870" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Michigan, 1964), Appendix C.

26. ARDITI ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY. For a full description of this company's tour, see Kaufman, "Arditi Tour." Other sources for the Arditi/DeVries Company itinerary includes: Cincinnati: Wolz, 64; Spirit, 13 August 1853. Louisville: John J. Weisert, A Large and Fashionable Audience: A Checklist of Performances at the Louisville Theatre, 1846-1866 (Louisville: Privately published, 1955); St. Louis: MW, 13 May 1854, 19; 20 May, 25; 27 May, 42; Dwight's, 3 June 1854, 71; Playbill, Varieties Theatre (St. Louis) 8, 12 May 1854, Playbill Collection, box 57, HTC; Musical Review and Choral Advocate (hereafter referred to as MR&CA), 25 May, 8 June 1854. Chicago: Karleton Hackett, The Beginnings of Grand Opera in Chicago (1850-1859) (Chicago: Laurentian Publishers, 1913), 32; Detroit: Teal, Appendix C. Baltimore: Spirit, 10 December 1853, 516; MW, 23 December 1853; Washington: MW, 14 January 1854, 19; Richmond: MW, 21 January 1854, 28; Stoutamire, 180. Savannah: MR&CA; 17 August 1854, 292; Green, 466. Augusta: MW, 11 February 1854, 65. New Orleans: MW, 22 April 1854, 190; Dwight's, 15 April 1854, 15.

Sources for the Arditi Company itinerary between 12 June- December 1854: Louisville: MW, 17, 24 June, 1, 8, 15 July. Cincinnati: Wolz, 67; Spirit, 22 July 1854; Playbill, Cincinnati National Theatre, 19 July 1854, Playbill Collection, box 84, HTC; MW, 8 July 1854. Cleveland, Buffalo, Toronto: Kaufman, "Arditi Tour." Rochester: MR&CA, 17 August 1854, 292, 31 August 1854, 207; MW, 26 August 1854, 203. Chicago: MG, 2 December 1854, 25; Robert L. Sherman, The Chicago Stage. Its Records and Achievements (Chicago: Privately published, 1947), 258; George P. Upton, "Attractions in Chicago" (notes and clippings, at ICHi), vol. 1, November 1854. Nashville: Francis Garvin Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville on the Eve of the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 139.

27. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. Maretzek's company performed at New York's Castle Garden during the summer of 1853; the troupe's prima donna during July and August was Henriette Sontag. She left the troupe after the close of the Castle Garden engagement. In September Maretzek's troupe took up residence at Niblo's Garden, since the Astor Place house had been closed. His prima donna was Balbina Steffanone; she and several other members of the company (Lorenzo Salvi and Ignazio Marini) were left-over singers from the great Havana troupe of 1850. See Odell, VI:270- 271; 314-315. See also the September through December issues of the MW, AMR, Dwight's, and Spirit. For information on the singers, see Schiavo, 75 and White, III:31-32.

In January 1854 Maretzek and his company were reported to be on their way to Havana by the MR&CA. See 5 January 1854.

28. STEFFANONE OPERA COMPANY. This troupe was also known as the Salvi Opera Company. It included among its members Carolina Pico-Vietti and her husband, Adelindo Vietti, who left this troupe and joined the Arditi Company in New Orleans in April 1854. See Kaufman, "Arditi Tour," 45. Information on the company's itinerary is from the MW, 18 March 1854, 121; Dwight's, 15 April 1854, 15; and the MR&CA, 19 January 1854, 16 February 1854.

29. HENRIETTE SONTAG (concert tour). Between 17 September and mid- October 1853 Henriette Sontag concertized extensively, performing in Philadelphia, Boston, Worcester, Buffalo, Baltimore, and elsewhere. According to Kaufman, she and her manager Bernard Ullman made their way south to New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, presumably concertizing en route. Lerner provides no information on this tour. Sontag gave a series of concerts in New Orleans between 13-17 February (her competition at the time was the concert troupe of Maurice Strakosch), then joined the Arditi/DeVries Opera Company in Mobile. See Kaufman, "Arditi Tour," 44, 50; Lerner, 83; playbill, 5 December 1853, City Hall, Worcester Concerts, 1851-54, GA/MWA.

30. SONTAG OPERA COMPANY. For information on Sontag's Opera Company in Mexico, see the MW, 18 March 1854; MR&CA, 11 May 1854, 157; and Dwight's, 15 April 1854, 15. In June, while the company was en route from Mexico City to Vera Cruz, Sontag and several members of her company contracted cholera; Sontag, Pozzolini, and Rossi all died of the disease; Badiali and others recovered. Pozzolini's death is reported in the MR&CA, 3 August 1854, 277; Rossi's death is reported in MW, 5 August 1854, 158 and in MR&CA, 17 August 1854, 292. Sontag died on 17 June 1854; her death is reported the MW, 1 July 1854, 97.

31. HAYES OPERA COMPANY. Catherine Hayes (1820-1861) performed with a company assembled for

her at the Metropolitan Theatre in San Francisco, which included included Signor Leonardi, Mr. Stephen Leach, and George Loder. This was not a travelling company, but rather a troupe assembled to assist a visiting star. Hayes left for Australia on 8 July 1854. See Spirit, 20 May 1854 and 3 June 1854; also FTP 2, vol. 7, 39. There is a biography of Hayes in the FTP "History of Opera in San Francisco." See vol. 1, 30-39.

32. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. According to George Odell, this troupe consisted of an "almost entirely new group of singers" from the previous year; it was "the most undistinguished [aggregation] that had been in New York for years." See Odell, VI:336. Information on the Philadelphia engagement is from Curtis, vol. 2; see also the issues between June and September of Dwight's, the MR&CA, MW, and Spirit.

33. GRISI AND MARIO OPERA COMPANY. Giulia Grisi (1811-1869) and her husband Giovanni Matteo Mario (d. 1883) were two of the very best European singers in the world during their prime. Their brief visit to the United States in 1854 was both historic and lucrative. American critics and audiences alike, however, expressed disappointment. Mario tended to be frequently indisposed, and Grisi was past her prime. Their company performed at the inaugural season of the New York Academy of Music. While in the United States the two singers were under the management of James H. Hackett, an actor and sometimes theatrical manager. Luigi Arditi was the orchestra director for this troupe, the other singers of which were recruited in the United States. For information on the singers, see Pleasants, 178-184 and White, IV:193-197. Dwight's, the MG, and the MW are full of commentary about them during the period September 1854 through February 1855. Information about their itinerary is also from the following sources: Philadelphia: Armstrong, 83; Washington: Dwight's, 13 January 1855, 116; Baltimore: MW, 14 April 1855, 177 and Kaufman, Baltimore worklist; Boston: MG, 20 and 27 January 1855, and MW, 3, 10, and 17 February 1855.

34. UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY. See the MR&CA, 31 August and 14 September 1854.

35. LORINI OPERA COMPANY. The Lorini Opera Company also is referred to as the Garbato Opera Company and the Lorini-Vietti Opera Company. When performing in Cincinnati the troupe was small; Wolz reports that it consisted of only eight performers. Information on the troupe's itinerary is from the following sources: St. Louis: Spirit, 14 October 1854; MG, 18 November 1854, 9; Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis; Harlan Jennings, MS worklist, St. Louis (Jennings' terminal date for the St. Louis engagement is 10 November). Cincinnati: Wolz, 68; playbill, Cincinnati Lyceum Theatre, 26-27 November 1854, Playbill Collection, box 84, HTC. Chicago: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 29.

36. BARILI-THORNE OPERA COMPANY. The Barili-Thorne troupe reportedly was from New York. They stopped for a short engagement in San Francisco on their way to Guayaquil, Ecuador, and Lima, Peru. The company, however, did not go south at the completion of their engagement in San Francisco in December 1854, for they are reported performing in that city during January and February of 1855. See Spirit, 16 December 1854; 13 and 20 January 1855; playbills, San Francisco Metropolitan Theatre, 8, 18, 23 December 1854, 31 January 1855, Playbill Collection, Box 8 (San Francisco), HTC; playbills, Metropolitan Theatre, 2 February and 1 March 1855, SF History Room, CSf; McMinn, 403-404; MW, 24 February 1855; and FTP, History of Opera in SF, vol. 7, 90; Hartley, n.p.; Don L. Hixon, Verdi in San Francisco, 1851-1899, A Preliminary Bibliography (Irving, California: privately published, 1980), 18-19, 33. In September 1855 Dwight's reports that the troupe had left California, and was en route to Callao (a port city in Peru, west of Lima), "with the design of making a professional visit to all the principal South American cities." See Dwight's, 8 September 1855, 181. Madame Barili-Thorne (nee' Clotilde Barili) died in Lima sometime in late August or early September 1856. Her death is reported in Dwight's, 13 September 1856, 191.

37. WARDEN'S OPERA COMPANY. Unknown company that performed in Mozart Hall, Louisville. Cited in John J. Weisert, Mozart Hall: 1851-1866. A Checklist. (Louisville: privately published, 1962).

38. ACADEMY OF MUSIC OPERA COMPANY. During its first season the Academy of Music Opera Company was under the joint management of Ole Bull, Maurice Strakosch, and Max Maretzek. Bull was general manager and lessee of the Academy, Strakosch went to Europe to recruit, and Maretzek conducted the orchestra. See Dwight's, 6 January 1855, 111 and MW, 3 February 1855, 37. The

enterprise collapsed within two weeks, but then re-opened under the management of Maretzek. See MR&CA, 15 March 1855, 90-91 and Dwight's, 10 March 1855, 180-181, 188. For Maretzek's account of the affair, see S & F, 16- 17. In early May the LaGrange troupe was engaged at Niblo's, and William Niblo arranged that the two troupes perform jointly. Odell reports, however, that the joint season was a failure; the singers did not get along, and the LaGrange Company performed only once during this period. See Odell VI:395, also New York Musical Review and Gazette (hereafter referred to as NYMR&G), 19 May 1855, 162, Dwight's, 19 May 1855, 55; and MW, 19 May 1855 for accounts of the singers' squabbles. For an account of the final season in NYC, see Odell, VI:395. For information on the Boston engagement, see Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; Eugene Tompkins, The History of the Boston Theatre, 1854-1901. (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1908); playbills, Boston Theatre, 21 May-9 June 1855, Rare Books, MB.

39. METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY. Unknown company that performed for one week. Cited in Sherman, 281.

40. LAGRANGE OPERA COMPANY. During the LaGrange Company's engagement in Boston they performed only one opera (on 18 June); the rest were concerts. See Tompkins, 33; Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; playbill, Boston Theatre, 18 June 1855, Rare Books, MB; Dwight's, 9, 16, 23 June 1855. For New York see: Odell, VI:395-396, and the appropriate issues of Dwight's, NYMR&G and MW.

41. ACADEMY OF MUSIC OPERA COMPANY. The 1855-56 Academy of Music Company was under the management of W. H. Payne; Maretzek was conductor. The troupe is also referred to as the Maretzek Opera Company, the LaGrange Opera Company, and Italian Opera Company. Sources: NYC: Odell, VI:476-77, 477-478; and Dwight's and MW (October 1855 through June 1856). Philadelphia: Armstrong, 85; Baltimore: Dwight's, 19 January 1856, 127; Boston: Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; playbills, 21 January-22 February, Boston Theatre, Rare Books, MB; Tompkins, 40-41.

42. VESTVALI OPERA COMPANY. This troupe was named for the soprano Teresa Vestvali; it also is identified as the Roncari (or Ronconi) Opera Company. It was reportedly performing in Mexico in late October 1855; the troupe included an orchestra of forty and an chorus of thirty-six. See MW, 15 December 1855, 385 and 1 March 1856, 97; Dwight's, 27 October 1855, 29 and 29 March 1856, 205. For Boston performances, see Tompkins, 44; and playbills, Boston Theatre, 4-18 June, Rare Books, MB. For information on travel to Mexico in the fall of 1856, see MW, 6 and 20 September, 15 November 1856. About Vestvali, see White, IV:197-198.

43. GARBATO OPERA COMPANY. See FTP, History of Opera in SF, vol. 7, 13.

44. PARODI OPERA COMPANY. This troupe was the company of the soprano Teresa Parodi. See Teal, Appendix C. About Parodi, see Chapter 4.

45. ACADEMY OF MUSIC OPERA COMPANY. The September season of the Academy of Music company was under the direction of Max Maretzek. This troupe is referred to variously as the LaGrange, Maretzek, and Academy of Music opera companies; the prima donna was Anna de LaGrange. The fall season in New York came to an abrupt end as the result of a disagreement between Maretzek and the Academy of Music stockholders, and Maretzek took the troupe to Boston. The subsequent New York season of 10 November-11 December season nominally was under the management of Baron Stankovitch, the husband of Lagrange. Under the arrangement Stankovitch had made with the stockholders (masterminded by Maretzek), the latter was not permitted to conduct; he did so anyways, after a large audience at the Academy gave an obviously staged demonstration in his favor. For Maretzek's account of the story, see S & F, 21-25; see also Odell, VI:475-475 and 573-574; MW, 4 October 1856, 465 and 25 October 1856, 529; NYMR&G, 15 November 1845, 353; and Dwight's, 11 October 1856, 15. For information on Boston, see Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; playbills, 20 October-8 November, Boston Theatre, Rare Books, MB; and Tompkins, 48.

    The second New York season (under Stankovitch) came to an abrupt halt in early December when the entire company accepted an engagement at the Tacon Theatre in Havana. See Dwight's, 6, 13, and December 1856.

46. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. Maretzek stayed in Havana for two months; he brought his troupe back to the United States in February 1857 with the intention of opening the new Philadelphia Academy of Music. By the time the company reached Charleston its prima donna Anna de LaGrange had left and was concertizing in New Orleans; she was replaced in Philadelphia by the soprano Marietta Gazzaniga. For Maretzek's account of his company's adventures in Havana, see S & F, 26-32. See also Dwight's, 7 February 1857, 151 and 21 February, 167, and Hoole for dates of performances in Charleston. For Philadelphia information, see Armstrong, 88-89; playbills, American Academy of Music (Philadelphia), 6 March-23 May, American Academy of Music Scrapbook, Music Department, PP; MW, 7 March 1857, 150, and issues from 23 May-6 June 1857; Dwight's, 11 April 1857, 14-15. For information on the New York (Niblo's) engagement, see Odell VI:563-564; Dwight's, 11 April, 2 May, and MW, 9 May 1857, 290. For the two-night "season" at the New York Academy of Music in June, see MW, 13 June 1857, 371 and Dwight's, 6 June 1857; Odell does not mention these appearances. Boston information is from Kaufman, Boston worklist; Dwight's, issues of 13, 20, and 27 June 1857; MW, issues of 20, 27 June and 4 July 1857; and playbills, Boston Theatre, 13, 15 June 1857, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA.

47. ACADEMY OF MUSIC OPERA COMPANY. The Academy of Music Company of January-March 1857 (also known as the Strakosch Opera Company) was a completely different troupe from that of the previous fall, for Maretzek had taken most of the singers in the former company to Havana in December 1856. The New York company, whose prima donna was Teresa Parodi, was under the management of Maurice Strakosch. Since her New York debut under Maretzek during the 1850-51 season, Parodi had toured the United States extensively in concert troupes with Strakosch. The company mounted two seasons in New York; at the close of the second one the Academy was dark until mid-May. See Odell, VI:575-576; MW, weekly issues from 31 January through 21 March 1857; and Dwight's, weekly issues from 24 January through 21 March 1857. For information on Parodi, see Chapter 5.

48. VESTVALI OPERA COMPANY. This company also is identified as the Corradi-Setti Opera Company. Information on the troupe's itinerary is from the following sources: New Orleans: Kaufman, New Orleans worklist. St. Louis: Kaufman and Jennings, MS worklists, St. Louis; Cincinnati: Wolz, 71 and playbill, Wood's Theatre, 2 July 1857, Playbill Collection, box 85 (Cincinnati), HTC. Pittsburgh: Fletcher. When she was not managing her own opera troupes (which generally performed in Central or South America), Felicita Vestvali performed in the companies of others. In late August 1857 she was part of a troupe that performed at Burton's Theatre in New York, and in September and October of that year was a member of the Academy of Music Company during its first 1857-58 season. See Odell, VI:529 and VII:62. By 21 November she was reported to have sailed for Matanzas, Cuba, with the rest of her own troupe; the following April Dwight reported that she had been "reaping laurels and dollars in Havana." See MW, 21 November 1857, 721 and Dwight's, 3 April 1858, 7.

49. D'ANGRI OPERA COMPANY. This is an unknown company that featured the soprano Elena d'Angri. It performed Il barbiere di Siviglia on 11 May 1857 at the Charleston Theatre; whether it was the entire opera or just scenes is unknown. The troupe included in its ranks Theodore Thomas. See Hoole.

50. MORELLI OPERA COMPANY. The New York Academy of Music was opened for three performances, under the management of P. Morelli, for the purpose of giving the young New York singer, Cora de Wilhorst, a chance to perform in opera before she left for more training in Europe. See Odell VI:573-574, and Dwight's, 6 June 1857, 78.

51. ST. JOHN'S OPERA COMPANY. This company is mentioned in the Savannah Daily Morning News on 15 June 1857; no repertory or other information is provided. Cited in Green, 504.

52. LAGRANGE OPERA COMPANY. The Cincinnati visit is mentioned in MW, 20 June 1857, 389. Information on the season at the Academy is in Odell VI:576-577; MW, 18 July 1857, 455; and Dwight's issues of 4 and 11 July 1857.

53. BURTON'S OPERA COMPANY. The Burton troupe was not intended to be an itinerant troupe, and it performed only in New York during August 1857. It seems to have functioned in part as temporary job for a number of singers (including Vestvali, Brignoli, Amodio, Coletti, and Luigia Caranti) who were

in between engagements. See Odell, VI:529

54. ACADEMY OF MUSIC OPERA COMPANY. The dates Lerner gives for the 1857-58 Academy of Music seasons are only partially correct. Compare those given here with Lerner's on 136-137. The company was managed jointly by Ullman, Thalberg, and Strakosch; the troupe also was known as the Ullman-Strakosch Opera Company. The star singers were Erminia Frezzolini, Anna de LaGrange, and Edouard Gassier (baritone); the conductor was Carl Anschutz. According to Lerner the troupe numbered 150 members, including a corps de ballet (Lerner, 130-131.) The Philadelphia information is from Dwight's, 30 January and 13 February 1858, and Armstrong, 92.

    The great German bass Carl Formes (1815-1889) made his American operatic debut with the Ullman Company early in the season that commenced 30 November 1857. As usual, the manager (Ullman) was beset with a variety of difficulties during the season, including a strike by the male chorus on 8 January. See Odell, VII:63-65; MW, issues of 5, 19, and 26 December 1857; and Dwight's, 16 January 1858, 322. For information on Formes, see White, IV:204; for Formes' account of his adventures with the Ullman Company, see Karl Formes, My Memoirs (San Francisco: James H. Barry, printer, 1891), 188ff. For information on the first Philadelphia engagement, see Armstrong, 92 and Dwight's, 30 January 1858, 351 and 13 February 1858, 306. For the second New York engagement, see Odell, VII:65; Dwight's issues 20 February-3 April 1858.

55. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. During its Philadelphia engagement, the Maretzek Opera Company also was known as the Marshall Opera Company, or the Marshall-Maretzek Opera Company; E. A. Marshall was the lessee of the Philadelphia Academy of Music. See S & F, 41; Dwight's, 26 Sept 1857, 207 and MW, 10 October 1857, 647. Later the troupe also was identified as the Havana Opera Company. For information about the Philadelphia engagement, see Armstrong, 91, and Dwight's, 3 October 1857, 215 and 17 October 1857, 231. At the beginning of the engagement at the Tacon Theatre, Maretzek had in his company both Marietta Gazzaniga (the successful prima donna of the previous year) and Erminia Frezzolini, apparently stolen from the Ullman/Strakosch New York Academy of Music Company. By February, Frezzolini had left the Havana company and was performing in New Orleans with Maurice Strakosch. See S & F, 32-34, and Dwight's, 13 February 1858, 367. For information on the Charleston engagement, see Hoole, 146; about the second Philadelphia engagement, see Armstrong, 95-96; weekly issues of Dwight's from 10 April-15 May 1858; playbills, American Academy of Music, 8, 23, and 24 April 1858, Academy of Music Scrapbook, PP; and playbills in Scrapbook Volume 5 (Academy of Music), PPL. At the conclusion of the season in Philadelphia the company broke apart in the midst of "pecuniary difficulties, intrigues, plots and counterplots, quarrels, and many other concomitant features of this peculiar and sensitive institution." See Dwight's, 15 May 1858, 53.

    When Maretzek's company returned from its travels to the South and commenced an engagement at the New York Academy of Music, the troupe was referred to as the Academy of Music Opera Company, the Maretzek Opera Company, or (in honor of the prima donna) the Gazzaniga Opera Company. See Odell, VII:66; Dwight's, issues from 5 June-17 July 1858; and MW, issues from 22 May though 19 June 1858.

56. STRAKOSCH OPERA COMPANY. According to Lerner, Strakosch broke off his partnership with Ullman during the second Academy of Music season (2-20 November 1857), and headed into the hinterland with Frezzolini. Frezzolini, however, is reported to have gone to Havana with Maretzek's company. Strakosch probably took a group of singers on a concert tour; he later met up with Frezzolini in New Orleans. See note 52, above. See also Lerner, 137. The Louisville information is from Weisert, "Mozart Hall."

57. ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY. This company was identified by Dwight as a fragment of the Philadelphia Academy of Music Company (aka the Maretzek Opera Company, aka the Havana Opera Company). They performed in Burton's Theatre (formerly Palmo's Opera House) for a week. See Dwight's, 15 May 1858, 55 and Odell, VII:16-17. Giorgio Ronconi and Anna de LaGrange both sang with this short-lived troupe; according to Dwight, they both left for Europe on 19 May 1858. See Dwight's, 22 May 1858, 63.

58. UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY. This mysterious company is identified in the Musical World of 24 April 1858 as belonging to Max Maretzek; in the 15 May issue, however, this is connection is denied.

According to the latter report, "a Mr. Stuart" was the operatic speculator managing the company. Originally the season was to commence on 21 April; apparently it started on 8 May. Marietta Gazzaniga was somehow connected with the troupe. See MW, 24 April 1858, 258 and 15 May, 305.

59. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. For information on the New York season, see Odell, VII:156 and Dwight's, 4 September 1858, 182; general information about the season can be found in the weekly issues of Dwight's, published on 18 Sept, 2, 9, and 16 October; a summary of the season is in 23 October, 236-37. See also the MW for the same time period. Just before the end of the season in New York, Maretzek learned that the Tacon Theatre, where his company had planned to start an engagement in November, had been severely damaged in an explosion. This caused much sympathetic hand-wringing on the part of the editorial staff of the MW. There was speculation that Maretzek's company would have to be broken up and that many of the singers would return to Europe; they would have difficulty finding employment in the United States, the editor pointed out, because there was "such a plethora [of singers] at present" in the country. Maretzek left immediately for Havana and secured a lease for another theatre in the city; he and his troupe reportedly left New York on 16 November 1858. See MW, 23 October 1858, 674, and 6 November 1858, 707.

A playbill from the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore announced in advance that the Havana Opera Company (Maretzek's troupe) planned a short series of four performances in that city, followed by "two or three in Washington," en route to Charleston and Havana. However, no evidence of these performances has come to light. The damage to the Tacon Theatre had delayed the troupe's departure from New York by two weeks, and it is likely that the company took the most direct route to Havana so as not to delay the opening of their season there. See playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 15 October 1858, Rare Books, MB. How long the Havana engagement lasted is unknown, although apparently it went well. By 9 April Dwight reported that the return of Maretzek's company to New York was "expected at any time." See Dwight's, 22 January 1859, 341 and 9 April 1859, 14.

60. STRAKOSCH OPERA COMPANY. Strakosch opened his New York season at Burton's Theatre, in direct competition with Maretzek at the Academy. According to Dwight the season was to be short, and was to be followed by a "provincial tour." See Dwight's, 18 September 1858, 197, as well as the issues of 2 and 9 October 1858; see also Odell, VII:113. For Boston and Providence information see Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; Dwight's, 9 through 23 October; see also Tompkins, 72. For New York information, see Odell, VII:114 and MW, 23 October 1858. An advertisement that appeared in the playbills of Baltimore's Holliday Street Theatre during October informed patrons of the imminent arrival of "Strakosch's Celebrated N. York Italian Opera Company;" according to the advertisement the troupe numbered thirty performers. See playbills, Holliday Street Theatre, Rare Books, MB. See also Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore. For Philadelphia information, see Armstrong, 99, and Dwight's, 13 November through 25 December 1858.

After the conclusion of the Philadelphia engagement in December, Strakosch and his troupe headed south and west for a tour. In Cincinnati the company opened the brand-new Pike's Opera House. They chose for the opening performance Flotow's Martha, and according to Wolz the public of the Queen City was outraged that the company inaugurated their new Italian opera house with a non-Italian opera. See Wolz, 74. The information on the itinerary is from the following sources: Louisville: Weisert, "Fashionable Audience." St. Louis: MW, 19 February 1859, 177; Jennings, MS worklist, St. Louis; Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis. Chicago: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 54; Hackett, 51; Sherman, 428. Cincinnati: Wolz, 74; Dwight's, 23 April 1859, 30, and playbills, Pike's Opera House, 15-23 March 1858, Playbill Collection, box 84 (Cincinnati), HTC. Pittsburgh: Fletcher.

When the Strakosch company returned to New York, they re-opened at the New York Academy of Music following the conclusion of the Ullman company engagement on 30 April. Strakosch now had in his ranks Ullman's former star, Maria Piccolomini (see below, fn 59), whose "farewell engagement" lasted from 4-31 May. When she left, Strakosch introduced a new soprano, Adelaide Cortesi. According to Dwight, a part of Strakosch's troupe performed in Hartford, Connecticut in early June. See Dwight's, 11 June 1859, 88. For information on the New York season, see Dwight's, 7 May 1859, 45, Odell, VII:161-162, and Dwight's, issues 14 May-18 June 1859.

61. ULLMAN OPERA COMPANY. Bernard Ullman's troupe took over the New York Academy of Music after Maretzek and his company vacated the premises (to go to Havana) in early October 1858. According to the MW, Ullman's company had a chorus of eighty and an orchestra of sixty, the latter led by Carl Anschütz. The troupe's two stars were the bass Carl Formes and the soprano Maria

Piccolomini; the latter became an immense favorite with American audiences. See MW, 23 October 1858, 674. About Piccolomini see White, IV:205-206. The information on the New York engagements is from Odell, VII:156-160, Dwight's (23 October through 4 December 1858), and MW (23 October through 11 December 1858). Kaufman's Boston worklist has 3 January as terminal date for that engagement; Dwight reports 4 January. See Dwight's, 8 January 1859, 326-27; see also Tompkins, 72.

For the Philadelphia engagement the troupe was called the Piccolomini Opera Company. See Armstrong, 100-101 and Dwight's, 15 January through 5 February, and 26 February. For Baltimore see Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; also playbills, Holliday Street Theatre, 2-5 February, Rare Books, MB.

Before heading South the troupe stopped for one additional performance in Philadelphia and two in New York. Odell mentions only one performance in Manhattan, on 11 February, but both Dwight and the MW report two. See Odell, VII:160; Dwight's, 26 February, 381, and MW, 19 February 1859, 115.

After the final New York performance, Ullman probably formed a smaller company for operatic and concert performances. Lerner says that the troupe toured the west, stopping in Cincinnati and other places en route to New Orleans. See Lerner, 154, also Kaufman, MS worklist, New Orleans.

When he returned from the south, Ullman reopened at the Academy of Music minus his two major stars, Piccolomini and Formes. According to Lerner, the soprano had defected to the camp of Maurice Strakosch because Ullman had bungled her appearance in New Orleans. See Lerner, 154-55; also see Dwight's, 2 April through 7 May 1859; and Odell, VII:161. For Philadelphia, see Armstrong, 103-104; also playbills, American Academy of Music (Philadelphia), 16-17 May 1859, Academy of Music Scrapbook, PP; and Dwight's, 14 and 21 May 1859. For Boston, see Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; Dwight's, 28 May through 18 June, and 2 July 1859. For Worcester, see Dwight's, 11 June 1859, 7.

62. PARODI OPERA COMPANY. This troupe also is referred to variously as the Strakosch Opera Company, the Grand Opera Company, and the Italian Opera Company. The travels of this troupe have not been thoroughly researched, and undoubtedly were much more extensive than indicated here. Dwight reports that the company numbered forty performers in August 1859, and when they appeared in Columbus, Georgia, in March 1860 the troupe also is described as forty in number. The information given here is from the following sources: Louisville: Weisert, "Mozart." St. Louis: Alfred Henry Noole, "The German Drama on the St. Louis Stage," Americanan Germanica, No. 32. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1917), 30; Jennings and Kaufman, MS worklists, St. Louis (according to Kaufman the December-January engagement ended on 5 January). Buffalo and Rochester: Dwight's, 20 August 1859, 166. Cincinnati: Wolz, 84; Dwight's, 3 September 1859, 183; MW, 5 November 1859, 5; both the MW and the Cincinnati Enquirer (quoted in Wolz) indicate that the troupe was not well received in Cincinnati. Detroit: Teal, Appendix C. Chicago: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, p 61; Wilke's Spirit, 14 January 1860, 304. Nashville, Wilke's Spirit, 18 February 1860, 384; Davenport, 142. Savannah: Green, 541; BMT, 25 February 1860, 7. Charleston: Hoole, 151; BMT, 25 February 1860, 7 and 10 March 1860, 28. Augusta: Walter E. Steinhaus, "Music in the Cultural Life of Macon, Georgia, 1823-1900" (Unpublished dissertation, Florida State University, 1973), 124. Macon: BMT, 7 April 1860, 63; Steinhaus, 124. Columbus, Georgia: Mahan, 105. Mobile: BMT, 21 April 1860, 79. New Orleans: BMT, 5 May 1860, 95; Kendall, 484.

63. VESTVALI OPERA COMPANY. See Playbill, Boston Theatre, 18 June 1859. Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA.

64. BIANCHI OPERA COMPANY. Information about this troupe is fairly scattered. The company may have performed intermittently from May through September; it may also have mounted several successive seasons. Information is from the following sources: Hixon, 20, 48, 64; Gaer; FTP, vol. 7, 90; unpublished research notes of Robert Commanday, California; libretto of Il Trovatore published in San Francisco in 1859 which lists the cast of the Bianchi company.

65. MARETZEK OPERA COMPANY. Maretzek's was the first company to perform at the Academy of Music during the 1859-60 season; Dwight's refers to this engagement as a "preliminary season." Lerner states that Maretzek and Ullman were business partners in this venture, but he provides no evidence to support this contention. Furthermore, Maretzek's unceasing and extremely negative references to Ullman in C&Q makes any kind of amicable partnership between those two seem highly unlikely. Odell suggests that the season was managed by Ullman, and Maretzek was the conductor. However, the personnel of Maretzek's company was quite different from that of the Ullman-Strakosch troupe (whose

engagement at the Boston Theatre overlapped Maretzek's New York run slightly), which suggests that there were two different and distinct companies. See Dwight's, 3 September 1859, 183; Lerner, 157-58; and Odell, VII:256-257. Reference to the sailing date to Havana is in Wilke's Spirit, 22 October 1859, 112. The terminal date of the Havana season is reported in MW, 10 March 1860, 5.

In early February, the MW reported that there had been a rift in Maretzek's company, and that his former prima donna Adelaide Cortesi was now "marching under her own banner." See MW, 25 February and 10 March 1860.

For his Winter Garden company, Maretzek featured as his new prima donna Inez Fabbri, a German. The Winter Garden, formerly the Metropolitan Theatre, had been refurbished, renamed, and reopened to the public in September 1859. See Odell, VII:215-216; Ireland, II:700-702; BMT, 2 and 16 June 1860.

66. ULLMAN-STRAKOSCH OPERA COMPANY. The Ullman-Strakosch Company opened its fall campaign in Boston; the orchestra conductors of the troupe were announced as Carl Anschütz and Theodore Thomas. The real winter opera season of the New York Academy of Music opened on 17 October, after Maretzek's troupe had left. The company in residence was jointly managed by Ullman and Strakosch; Muzio was the conductor. This season was almost a disaster, for several of the stars Strakosch had imported from Europe completely failed. Only the fortuitous operatic debut of Strakosch's sixteen-year-old sister-in-law, Adelina Patti--and her phenomenal success--saved the season. At the conclusion of the season Maurice Strakosch formed another concert company and toured the country extensively with Adelina Patti, performing (in the words of the BMT) "an almost endless series of farewells." (BMT, 19 May 1860, 103).

Information about the itinerary of the company is from the following sources: Boston: Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; playbills, Boston Theatre, 4-15 October, Rare Books, MB; Tompkins, 78-79; Wilke's Spirit, 22 October 1859, 112, issues of 14 January (304) and 21 January (308) 1860; Playbills, Boston Academy of Music, 7, 14, 20 January 1860, TC/NN; Playbills, Boston Academy of Music, 11, 14, 21 January 1860, Opera Programs, 1860-69, GA/MWA; NYMR&G, 21 January and 4 February 1860; 18 February 1860 has a summary of the January season. New York: Odell, VII:256-63; for a summary of the fall season see Wilke's Spirit, 10 December 1859, 224; Wilke's Spirit, 31 December 1859, 272; NYMR&G, and MW, 8 February through 10 March 1860, and 14 April and 26 May 1860. For Philadelphia, see Armstrong, 105 and 109; BMT, 21 April 1860, 78. Baltimore: Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; BMT, 10 March and 7 April 1860; playbills, Holliday Street Theatre (Baltimore), 20 March 1860, bound volume, Holliday Street Theatre programs, HTC. Washington: BMT, 24 March and 7 April 1860.

67. ANSCHUTZ OPERA COMPANY. This company was a non-travelling troupe formed of "second-choice" singers from the Academy of Music, under the direction of Carl Anschütz. See Odell, VII:249.

68. CORTESI ITALIAN OPERA. This was a splinter group from Maretzek's Havana Opera Company, headed by Adelaide Cortesi. The formation of the new troupe (and information concerning its plans to perform in Matanzas and Porto Principe in March) was reported in the Charleston Courier on 14 February 1860; this announcement was reprinted in the BMT of 25 February 1860. The Charleston engagement was reported in the same periodical on 19 May 1860; Hoole does not mention the company. For Boston information, see Kaufman, MS worklist, Boston; NYMR&G, 9 June 1860, 183; and BMT, 2 and 16 June 1860. For New York, see Odell, VII:263. Odell states that the season ended on 20 June, but both Kaufman and the BMT report that the troupe opened in Boston on that date.

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TRAVELLING OPERA TROUPES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1825-1860

Volume Two

by

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CHAPTER 4

MAX MARETZEK AND HIS ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY, 1850-1851

In October 1850 the doors of New York's Astor Place Opera House opened wide for its fourth year of operation. Max Maretzek, the man in charge of the Italian Opera Company in residence, was the third person to try his luck at managing an opera company at the Astor Place House since it had first opened in November 1847.[1] With the start of this new season, however, it was clear that Maretzek was becoming a man to be reckoned with in the production of opera in the United States, for this was his third year of association with an Astor Place company and his second as manager. Maretzek had survived the pitfalls and financial tribulations of two seasons mounted during 1849-50, as well as a short season (in April 1849) during the year previous to that.[2] He also would survive afflictions, catastrophes, crises, and mishaps of all varieties for many years to come, for when the 1850-51 season opened, Maretzek was still in the beginning stages of an illustrious thirty-year career as an operatic impresario in North America, during which time he would become

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1. Irving Kolodin, Francis Perkins, and Susan Thiemann Sommer, "New York, (Part 4. Opera and Musical Theater)," AG.

2. The term "season," as used during this period, does not always have the implication of longevity that it does today. Although the original meaning of the term was the same as the modern meaning (i.e., roughly from fall of one year to the spring of the subsequent year), during the nineteenth century a "season" was more like a modern "run." An operatic season for one of Maretzek's companies might last five months, or it might last no longer than a week. To make things even more confusing, the term was also sometimes used with the modern meaning.

one of the most influential individuals connected with the performance of Italian opera in the United States.

Maximilian Maretzek (né Mareczek) (1821-1897) was a native of Brno, Moravia (in modern Czechoslovakia). Although he began his musical career as a violinist and composer, he quickly made a name for himself as a conductor, and in 1842 was invited to Paris where he conducted opera and ballet for several years. (Schiavo, 81) In 1844 he was hired by George Lumley as choral director and assistant conductor at Covent Garden, and three years later Louis Antoine Jullien engaged him as chorus master in a grandiose (but unsuccessful) attempt to produce English Opera at Drury Lane Theatre in London.[3] After the collapse of Jullien's project, Maretzek landed another job as a choral director, this time for a London concert series organized by Hector Berlioz.

During the summer of 1848 Edward P. Fry (1815-1889), the new manager of the Astor Place Opera House company, contacted Maretzek (possibly through his brother William Henry Fry, who was in Europe) and offered him a position as musical director and conductor of his Italian Opera Company. (Ireland, II:544; C&Q, xxii) Edward Fry evidently was an ardent supporter of his older brother, who was a composer (and would later be a critic); according to Lawrence, the previous winter the young Fry had paid a substantial sum to Sanquirico and Patti to help underwrite a New York production of his brother's opera Leonora by the first Astor Place company. (Lawrence, 508-509) The troupe had fallen

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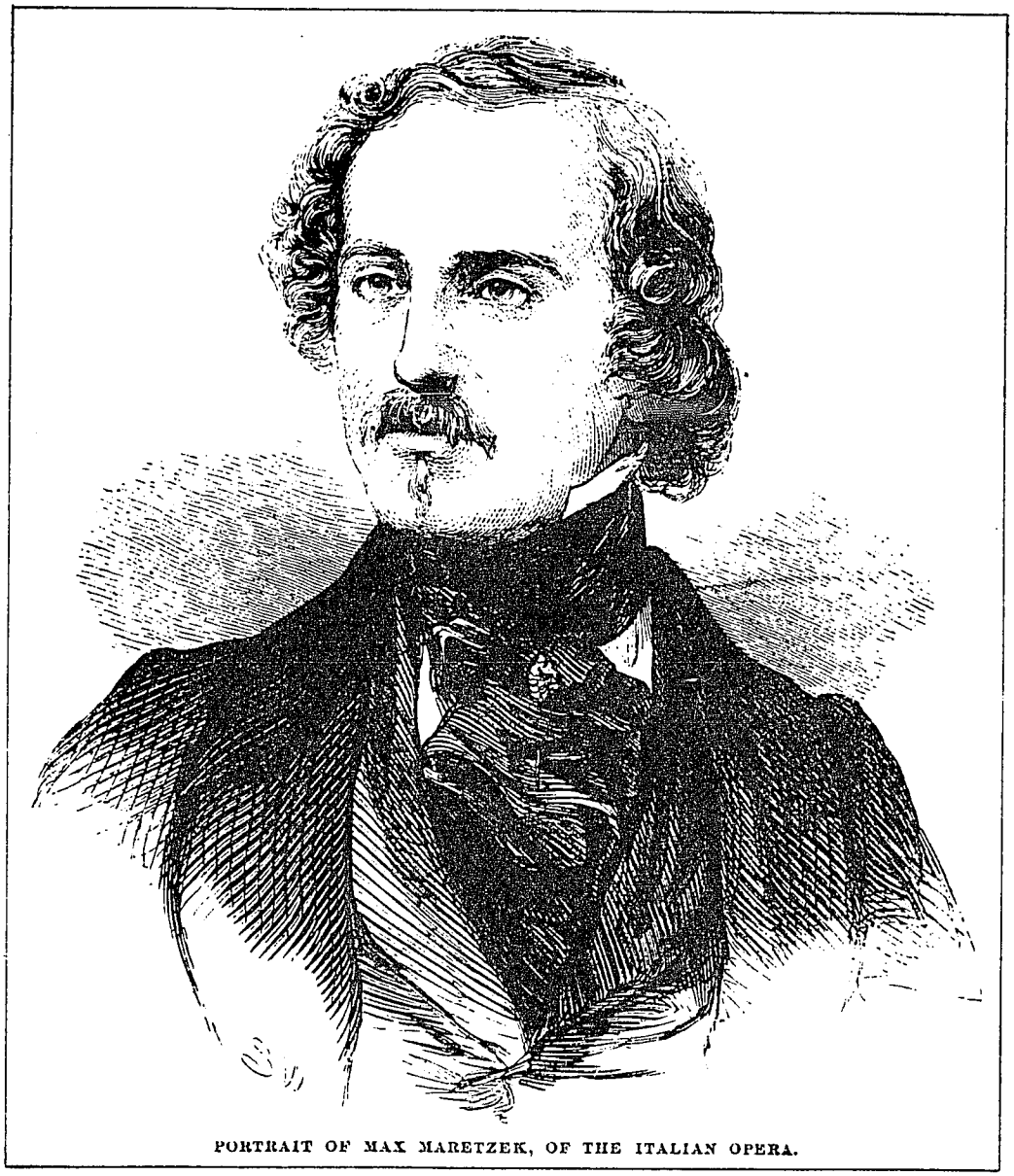
3. Charles Haywood, introduction to Maretzek, C&Q and S&F, xix.

apart before the performance, however, and Fry, who was determined to carry out his mission at any cost, purchased the costumes and music owned by the defunct company, sent money to his brother in Europe to hire new singers, rehired most of the old ones, and announced that he would assume management.[4] When Fry's representative approached Maretzek with his offer, the conductor apparently was out of work; in July Berlioz had gone back to Paris. Because of the political turmoil in France, Maretzek was reluctant to return to Paris (his previous place of employment), and the situation in Italy was equally bad. Fry's offer, as a consequence, must have seemed a godsend.[5] The always-ambitious young conductor regarded the virgin operatic territory of the United States as a plum ripe for picking, and he responded favorably to what he called Fry's "'engaging' inducement . . . to quit Europe." (C&Q, 25) In August he boarded a steamer headed west, leaving behind without regret the thick fog of late-summer London. Even the climate of his newly adopted country favorably impressed Maretzek upon arrival. Gazing out at New York harbor from the deck of his steamer, he was so pleased at the "bright, clear and blue sky"--a sky such as he "had not seen since [he] last left Naples"--that he determined at once, he later wrote to Berlioz, "to remain in America, supposing it were possible and (this

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4. C&Q, 21; Lawrence, 508-509, American Musical Times (hereafter referred to as AMT), 17 June 1848, 16. The editor of the journal incorrectly identified the purchaser of the opera company properties as William Henry Fry.

5. Ernest Newman, trans. and ed., Memoirs of Hector Berlioz from 1803-1865 (New York: Dover, 1960 [1932]), 456-457; Haywood, xxii. According to John Rosselli, the opera industry in Italy was dealt a series of severe blows first by the depression of 1847, then by the wars and revolutions in 1848-49; the industry did not fully recover until the mid-1850s. John Rosselli, The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi. The Role of the Impresario (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 63.



PORTRAIT OF MAX MARETZEK, OF THE ITALIAN OPERA.

Maximilian Maretzek, operatic impresario.

is for your private ear) profitable." (C&Q, 13)

Meanwhile, the Astor Place House had not been sitting empty all summer. The previous June, William Niblo had leased the theatre (he called it Niblo's at the Astor Place Opera House) in order to have a place for his summer season (his own theatre, on the grounds of his Manhattan pleasure gardens, had burned in September 1846). (Odell, V:243, 384-5) In an attempt to ameliorate the unfavorable conditions of the amphitheatre (gallery), Niblo had made several important structural changes to the Astor Place House, including the addition of a grand staircase that connected this formerly segregated area with the rest of the theatre.[6] Niblo's alterations evidently helped to make the house less frigidly aristocratic, as did his uniform admission price (50 cents) and his usual menu of highly varied theatrical productions (including drama, acrobatics, farce, concerts, opera, and ballet). His summer operation (which, in Lawrence's words, was "phenomenally successful") helped to remove some of the aura of exclusivity from the theatre.

When the opera season opened on 1 November, it was apparent that Fry likewise wished to avoid the charge of elitism. Although he ran the season on a subscription basis, the seats in the amphitheatre--now, because of Niblo's alterations, described as the "best in the house"--cost only twenty-five cents; furthermore, operas were also mounted on

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6. Whether Niblo did anything about the view-obstructing chandelier is not known. See Lawrence, 530, 505.

off-nights (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays), when the entire theatre was open to non-subscribers. (Lawrence, 510) Despite his good intentions, however, Fry turned out to be totally unsuited to the task that he had so blithely undertaken; Maretzek later wrote that the neophyte manager "knew nothing whatever of the business he had entered upon."[7] The season, which Lawrence described as a "bottomless quagmire of Byzantine intrigue, factional animosities, personal vendettas, and extempore illnesses," was a disaster. When it was over, Fry--who had lost a great deal of money--wisely gave up operatic management forever.[8]

The Managerial Committee of the Astor Place House immediately attempted to persuade Maretzek to take over the idle opera company and to lease the hall. After a few weeks of vacillation he agreed to do so, although he later described himself at the time as "very young, very unwise, and very enthusiastic." (C&Q, 74) He presided over a short season in New York in the spring of 1849, then--after a summer spent recruiting singers in Europe--organized and managed another company that

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7. C&Q, 21. Henry Krehbiel disparagingly described E. R. Fry as a man "who came from the counting house to a position of which he can have known nothing more than what he could acquire from attendance upon opera, of which he was fond, and association with his brother." In fairness to Edward Fry, however, this glib assessment is not entirely correct; as Gilbert Chase pointed out, Edward had served as general manager for his brothers' (Joseph and William Henry) successful production of Norma in Philadelphia in January 1841. Furthermore, he had written several opera librettos and had assisted his brother in adaptations of operas. See Schiavo, 77-80; C&Q, 25; Henry Edward Krehbiel, Chapters of Opera (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909; reprint New York: Da Capo, 1980); Gilbert Chase, America's Music. From the Pilgrims to the Present, revised third edition (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 305. For two engaging accounts of the 1848-49 season, see C&Q, Chapter 1, and Lawrence, 510-522.

8. Maretzek claims that Fry "ruined himself" economically by his short escapade. See C&Q, 148.

performed in New York and Boston during 1849-50.[9] In June 1850 this troupe disbanded until fall, and Maretzek and his new wife Apollonia Bertucca (one of the company's sopranos) took a cottage at Clifton, on Staten Island, for the summer. (Message Bird, 15 June 1850, 351)

Maretzek had been pleased with his 1849-1850 troupe, which he described as a "decidedly good Operatic Company," especially considering, as he put it, "the small means at my disposal." He judged the troupe vastly superior to the ensemble he had directed under Fry. (C&Q, 82) The public had been satisfied, and the season was deemed an artistic, if not financial, success. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the company had been successful in attracting a more-varied audience to its performances than had the original Astor Place troupe. A critic for the Spirit wrote a tongue-in-cheek description of the attire worn by various segments of the audience of the Astor Place House in which he pointed out that "clerks, dry goods and others--wine dealers--students, medical and otherwise, are usually known by the immensity of the bows on their cravats." (Spirit, 1 December 1849) Maretzek himself wrote that Don Giovanni saved the season financially; the opera, he claimed, "brought support from all classes, and attracted persons of all professions and every description to the Opera House." (C&Q, 98) Although Odell points out that he can find no evidence to

9. Message Bird, 1 October 1849, 83. The season in the spring of 1849 lasted only four weeks, from 19 March through 12 April. During the subsequent theatrical year (1849-50) Maretzek's company performed at the Astor Place House 1 November through 7 March and in Boston from 12 March through 4 May (See Odell, V:481, 570-73; Ireland, II:544; Saroni's, 16 March 1850, 290; Howard Athenaeum (Boston) Playbills, 15 and 16 April 1850. Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA) In the summer of 1849 William Niblo (and James Henry Hackett) leased the Astor Place House for theatrical performances. During this period the managers had the misfortune to engage the British actor William Charles Macready, and on 9 May the infamous Astor Place Riot occurred.

support Maretzek's claim of fourteen consecutive performances of this opera, other sources corroborate the manager's description of the audience.[10] A critic for Saroni's wrote:

> If any one had ever doubted the growing taste of this community for Music of an elevated character, a visit to the Opera House on Tuesday night, would have convinced him of his error. The parquette and amphitheatre were crowded, while the boxes were by no means indifferently filled. We are gratified, that it was Don Giovanni, an opera by Mozart, which called together so vast an assemblage. (Saroni's, 17 August 1850, 556)

Through natural attrition the 1849-50 company lost the services of several singers who decided that it was time to return to Europe, and they had to be replaced before the start of the 1850-51 season. Maretzek himself spent the summer on Staten Island, but he nonetheless contrived to fulfill an essential managerial duty (one that was almost a requirement for antebellum American opera company managers or agents) by sending his brother Albert and the company's tenor Giuseppe Forti on a summer recruiting trip to Europe. According to the American musical press, these two went in search of new contralto and bass singers for the troupe.[11]

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10. Odell, V:573; Saroni's, 2 February 1849. For other information on the success of the opera season, see Spirit, 23 February 1850, 12 and 4 May 1850; C&Q, 107; and Waldemar Rieck, "Max Maretzek--Impresario, Conductor and Composer," Musical Courier, 22 June 1922, 6.

11. Message Bird, 15 June 1850, 351; Saroni's, 17 August 1850, 556. According to John Rosselli, by the 1840s operatic agencies were well established in Italy. An impresario or a theatre manager could visit or write to an agency office (Milan was the center for most agents, but offices also were located in Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and elsewhere) to engage solo and chorus singers, instrumentalists, dancers, stage hands, or prompters; the businessman also acted as a forwarding agent for music rental or costume purchases. In the 1840s Alessandro Lanari (1787 or 1790-1852), one of Italy's leading impresarii, supplied singers for companies in European cities and for "the fast developing American market, especially Havana and New York." See Rosselli, 137-148, 36-37.

The task that had fallen to Forti and Albert Maretzek quickly became much more difficult than the simple replacement of departed vocalists with singers of similar calibre. As the summer of 1850 wore on it became clear that it was absolutely crucial for Maretzek to upgrade the overall quality of his troupe. This necessity also was clear to the musical press. "Let us hope," wrote the critic for Figaro, or Corbyn's Chronicle,

> that this [1850-51 company] may be a considerably better assortment of musical notabilities than those which were given us during the past year. . . . [It] is absolutely necessary for Maretzek, if he would make another and more profitable season than the last one, that he should give us something better than [last year's] artists." (Figaro, 31 August 1850)

Even Maretzek admitted that the 1849-50 company had proven satisfactory primarily because "the public of New York had not yet been accustomed to the Jenny Linds, Sontags, Albonis, Grisis, Marios and Lagranges"--all operatic superstars who (as we have seen) would appear in the United States during the 1850s. (C&Q, 82) The level of operatic competition, and the public's exposure to artists of "planetary proportion" (Maretzek's term), were both crucial factors in the success or failure of a season; during the summer of 1850 it became increasingly clear that the level of competition during the coming season would be drastically different than it had been the previous year.[12]

The competition that loomed on the operatic horizon (and which had no little influence on how Maretzek would conduct his season) came from

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12. C&Q, 83. Apparently the wonders of the 1848 Havana opera company were but distant memories by 1850. Maretzek does not mention those singers; of course, he had not been in the United States at the time.

two separate quarters. The first was Marti's Havana Opera Company, back in the United States again after an eighteen-month hiatus. This troupe had arrived in New York in April for a month-long engagement, gone briefly to Boston, then returned to New York and settled in at Castle Garden for the summer, performing Italian repertory in Italian. The second was the first-named superstar on Maretzek's own list: Jenny Lind. The "Swedish Nightingale," whose impending arrival in the United States had aroused much excitement and anticipation during the summer, landed in New York in September 1850; the concert tour (under the management of P. T. Barnum) on which she subsequently embarked has been described as "arguably the most successful [musical tour] in American history."[13]

The Havana Company was never in direct, head-on competition with the Astor Place troupe, for it left New York after its final performance at Castle Garden on 7 September 1850.[14] But the legacy it left behind was competition enough. Marti's ensemble, by Maretzek's own description, was "the greatest troupe which had ever been heard in America." The Havana company, he later wrote to the Austrian pianist Joseph Fischof, was a troupe that "has seldom been excelled in any part of the Old World." He continued:

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13. One indication that Americans were aware of Lind's impending arrival was the response to an announcement in the New-York Daily Tribune in August for a contest to furnish lyrics for a special song to be sung by Miss Lind. Several hundred poems, from all over the United States, were submitted. See W. Porter Ware and Thaddeus C. Lockard, Jr., P. T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind. The American Tour of the Swedish Nightingale (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 5, 14-15. The quote is from Brooks, "Lind," AG.

14. The Havana Company run in New York was at Niblo's from 11 April-8 May (Spirit, 20 April, 11 May, 1850); at the Astor Place Opera House, 3 June-5 July (Prompter's Whistle, 15 June 1850, 31-32; Saroni's, 15, 29 June, 6 July 1850; Message Bird, 15 July 1850, 351); then at Castle Garden 8 July-7 September (Odell, V:592). The company stopped for performances in Philadelphia during September on its way back to Havana. (Prompter's Whistle, 28 September 1850, 89, 91; Message Bird, 1 November 1850, 515).

> It would be useless, my old friend, to attempt to indicate the excellence of this Company. You have long since known their names, or been aware of their standing as artists, in the World of Music. The greater portion of them enjoy a wide and well-deserved European reputation, and their re-union, anywhere, would form an almost incomparable Operatic troupe. (C&Q, 156)

Maretzek's high opinion of the company was echoed almost universally in the American musical press.[15] Furthermore, Luigi Arditi, the leader of the Havana Company and later an important conductor of various opera troupes in England and the United States (including Maretzek's own company in 1851), likewise concurred. "When I look back to those ensembles," he later wrote in his memoirs, "I have no hesitation in saying that never for the time and place, would it have been possible to secure more admirable operatic performances than those rendered by this

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15. See the Message Bird, 15 May 1850, 330, and 15 June 1850, 351; Saroni's, 11 May 1850, 386; Spirit, 20 April 1850, 108; Figaro, 31 August 1850; Prompter's Whistle, 31 August 1850, 21; and AMR, September 1850, 60. Giovanni Bottesini was still the orchestra leader of this much-touted company, which by 1850 numbered 110 artists, had an orchestra of forty, and a chorus of thirty (Playbill, Chestnut St. Theatre, 11 September 1850, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; see illustration on page 000). The principal singers included sopranos Angiolina Bosio, Balbina Steffenone, and Fortunata Tedesco; tenors Lorenzo Salvi and Domenico Lorini; basses Ignazio Marini and Pietro Novelli; and baritones Cesare Badiali and Luigi Vita. (Schiavo, 75-76) Although the reputations of none of these singers have survived to the present, many of them were well known and highly respected artists in the middle of the nineteenth century. Angiolino Bosio (1830-1859), a soprano with a "pure, silvery" voice that was "remarkable alike for its penetrating quality and for its charm so fine and delicate that it seemed almost intellectual," was in her prime when she sang in New York--although her European reputation was not made until 1852. (The quote is from White, III:34; the other information is from Krehbiel, 61 and Henry C. Lahee, Famous Singers of To-Day and Yesterday [Boston: L. C. Page and Company, 1898], 89). Balbina Steffanone, another soprano, was described at the time as "a fine artiste, an admirable singer, and a powerful actress;" (The Albion, 13 April 1850, quoted in Odell V:564) and Fortunata Tedesco, although (according to White) not a great artist, could pour out "floods, or rather gusts of rich, clear sound" using a voice that was "so copious and so musical that she could not be heard without pleasure." (White, II:879) She was well received in this country. (Odell, V:263, 266-267, 563) According to Maretzek, Salvi, Marini, and Badiali--long before their appearances in the United States--had established European reputations "as artists of the very first class." (C&Q, 156) White describes Salvi's voice as "divine," Odell calls him "one of the most golden-voiced tenors in the history of opera," and Schiavo concurs, referring to him as "one of the greatest tenors of the nineteenth century." (White, III:31; Odell, V:565; Schiavo, 75) Ignazio Marini, according to Maretzek, was known in London as "the greatest Italian basso who had ever sung there," with the single exception of Louis Lablache. (C&Q, 157)







Some of the stars of the 1850-51 Havana Opera Company. Clockwise from left: Angiolino Bosio (soprano); Ignazio Marini (bass); Balbina Steffanone (soprano).

particular company."[16] And just in case Maretzek had failed to see the handwriting on the wall, American critics made sure to point it out to him. "After hearing [Havana Company singers] Marini, Salvi, and Badiali," wrote one journalist in July,

> we shall hardly be contented with fourth or fifth rate artists, and unless Maretzek engages some really talented artists, we very much fear that he will be often greeted with the beggarly account of empty boxes. [Maretzek's principal soprano Teresa] Truffi, indeed, would not suffer by a comparison with any of the prime donne of the Havana Troupe, but the stars of [tenor Sesto] Benedetti and [bass Pietro] Novelli have waned before the brilliancy of [tenor Lorenzo] Salvi and [bass Ignazio] Marini; and as to comparing [the baritone G. F.] Beneventano with [Cesare] Badiali--Hyperion to Satyr. (Message Bird, 15 July 1850, 394)

It obviously was going to be difficult for Maretzek's singers to compete with Marti's stars artistically. To make matters worse, however, it also was hopelessly impractical for the Astor Place troupe to attempt to compete with the Havana Company economically. Marti was a wealthy businessman whose principal employment was not as an impresario, so his fortune did not depend on the success or failure of his company. His troupe furthermore was supported by both a substantial number of Havanese subscribers and a hefty government subvention. (C&Q, 149-154) The Cuban impresario, then, sent his singers to New York for several practical reasons. First, he knew that their performances there would create a furor, which could only serve to enhance their reputations in Havana. Second (and as usual), he wished to remove his singers from Cuba during the torrid and yellow-fever-plagued summer months. And

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16. Luigi Arditi, My Reminiscences (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1896; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 9.

finally, because prominent Italian artists were understandably reluctant to travel to Cuba to sing for only one season, Marti had been obliged to engage them for a two-year period (1849-51).[17] Consequently, the singers were under contract to him for the intervening summer, and Marti vastly preferred for them to be singing anywhere than to be lying around idle during those months. (C&Q, 155-158; Odell, V:591) As a result of these circumstances, according to Maretzek, it was "purely a matter of the most perfect indifference to Marty . . . whether [the Havana troupe] made him money, or whether they did not make him money, during their summer season." (C&Q, 157) The Havana Company performed in New York at Castle Garden, then, at what the Astor Place manager called "something less than half the usual price"--fifty cents; this, of course, put the local company at a distinct disadvantage. (C&Q, 157) When Maretzek opened the season at the Astor Place House in October, then, it was with a company not only inferior to that of the just-departed Havanese, but for whose performances he had to charge admission prices significantly higher ($1.00 for unreserved parquet and boxes; $1.50 for reserved same; 25 cents for the amphitheatre). (Figaro, 19 October 1850)

Maretzek, however, had several factors in his favor in this competition with Marti. First was the simple law of supply and demand. During the theatrical season of 1850-51, Maretzek's audiences (wealthy

17. It is possible that the Havana troupe of 1849-51 was one of the companies sent out by the impresario Lanari. It was not unusual for his agency to send out troupes on two-year contracts. By the late 1840s Lanari was in partnership with one Lorini, an agent who "specialized in American business." One of the singers in the Havana company, as noted above, was named Domenico Lorini. Rosselli, chapter 2, note 69.

and non-wealthy alike) wished to attend opera performances, and the Astor Place Company was the only show in town. Music critics might complain, criticize, and unfavorably compare the Astor Place singers with those in Marti's departed company, but Marti's company was, in fact, departed--safely ensconced at the Tacon Theatre in Havana. A second factor--and one that Maretzek failed to mention--is that it was common practice to lower theatrical prices during the summer, especially when performances were held in an facility that could accommodate thousands, as could Castle Garden. The first opera company to perform in the Castle Garden auditorium when it opened in 1845 also had charged an admission price of 50 cents, and Maretzek, during the summer of 1851, would do the same.[18] Therefore it was hardly a matter for raised eyebrows that Maretzek had to charge prices (to the Astor Place House) that were appreciably higher than those charged by Marti during the summer. Finally, the Havana Company made its biggest impression in New York while performing in June, July, and August. Since many of the subscribers to the opera season at the Astor Place House were out of town during that time--at mountain or seaside resorts or at summer homes--few of them even heard the highly touted singers of the Cuban Company; any unfavorable comparisons, as a consequence, were so much hearsay.

This last factor--that the Havana Company performed before audiences made up of thousands of (mostly) lower- and middle-class individuals--would eventually be to Maretzek's benefit. The performances at Castle Garden (and, for that matter, earlier in the summer at

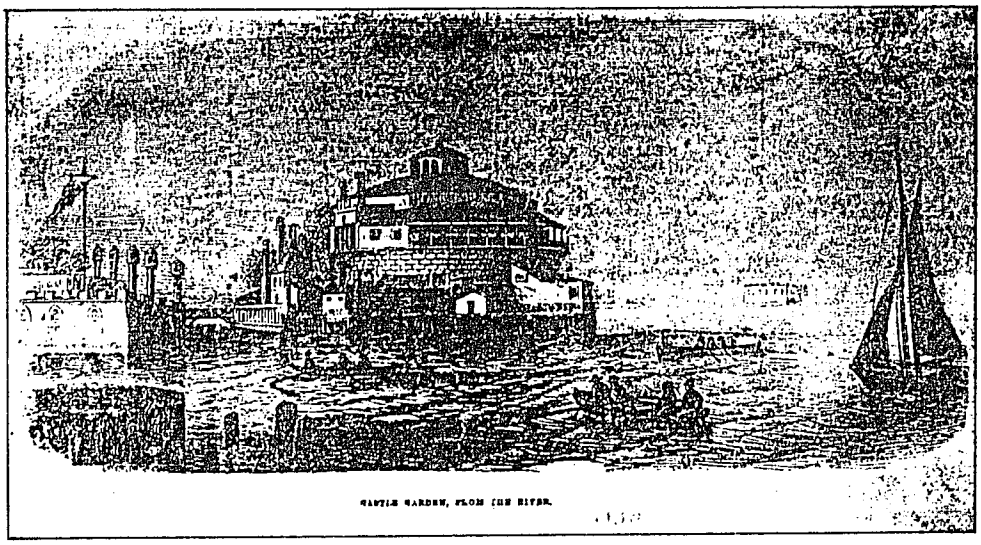
18. Odell, V:159; C&Q, 170; Playbill, Castle Garden 18 July 1851, Maretzek Opera Company Playbills, Brown Collection, Music Department, MB. All playbills cited in this chapter, unless otherwise identified, are from this collection.

Niblo's) were decidedly non-exclusive and non-elite, and seasons at both places must have attracted many ordinary Americans who heard (and some who were enchanted by) their first performances of foreign-language opera. At Niblo's new theatre (it had re-opened in July 1849), the Havana company attracted huge crowds.[19] The last night of their engagement there, according to the Message Bird, "was a bumper. Every nook and corner of that spacious theatre was crowded to suffocation, and hundreds went away unable even to obtain a standing place." (Message Bird, 15 May 1850, 335) The troupe attracted even larger crowds at Castle Garden. This resort, which was located on a tiny island just off the Battery (connected to Manhattan by a two-hundred foot causeway) was, like Niblo's, a place to lounge, eat Italian ices, visit with friends, promenade along the gallery overlooking the bay, watch ships and boats, catch a cool summer breeze, and listen to the evening's musical entertainment. (For the location of Castle Garden, see the map on page 82; also see the view of the resort on page 332.) (Lawrence, 3) Philip Hone's description of the interior of the theatre shortly after it opened gives an idea of the surroundings:

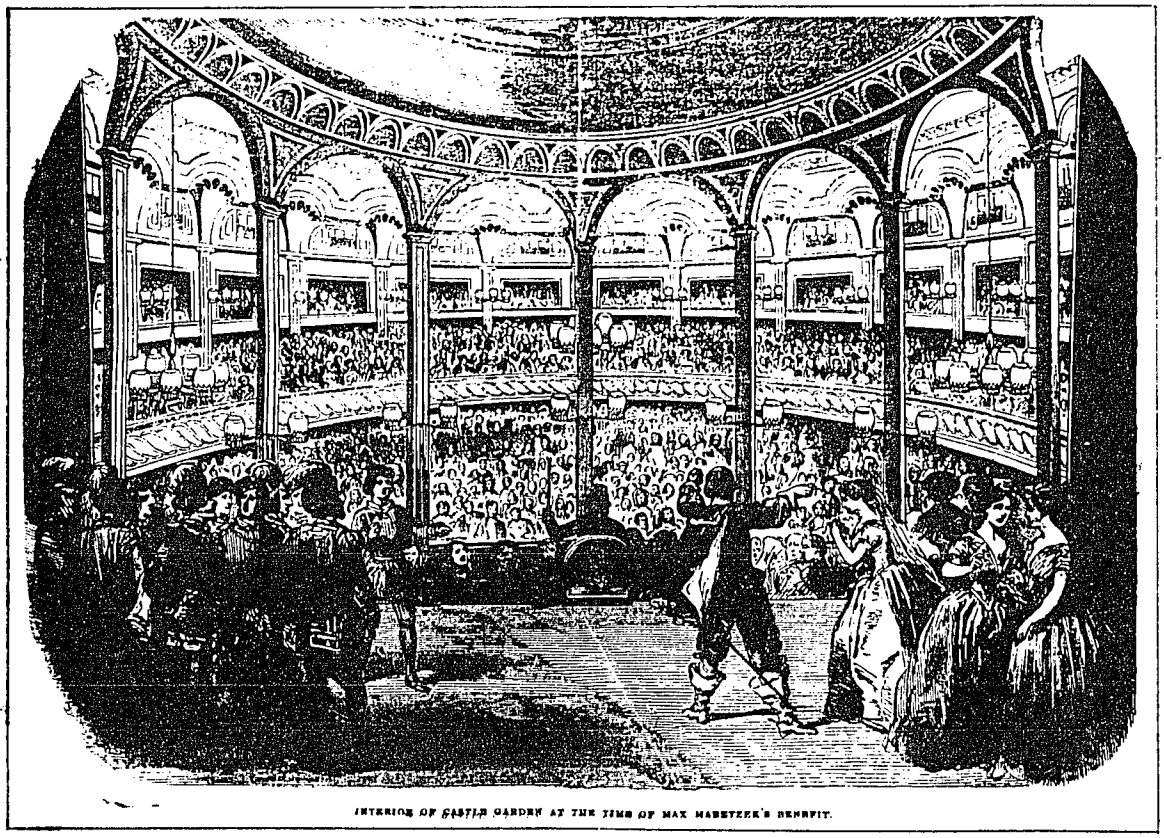
> when I entered I found myself on the floor of the most splendid and the largest theatre I ever saw, a place capable of seating comfortably six or eight thousand persons. The pit, or area of the pavilion, is handsomely floored, with some hundred small white tables and movable stools. . . . In front of the stage is a beautiful fountain which plays when the performers do not. The whole of this area is surrounded by circular benches above and below, from every point of which the view is enchanting. (Hone, MS diary, 23 May 1845, quoted in Lawrence, 304)

The size of the audiences attracted to Castle Garden by the Havana

19. Odell, V: 560. The Castle Garden performances also attracted many foreigners auditors. See Message Bird, 15 August 1850, 434.



CASTLE GARDEN, FROM THE RIVER.



INTERIOR OF CASTLE GARDEN AT THE TIME OF MAX MARETZEK'S BENEFIT.

Two views of the popular resort Castle Garden, located on a tiny island off the Battery.

Company surprised some New York critics. Many of them expected the troupe to fail because New York's fashionables were out of town and because the garden itself was a "miserably unsuitable place for the proper reception of sight and sound in either operatic or dramatic representations." (Spirit, 17 August 1850, 312; Saroni's, 13 July 1850, 494) Their expectations, however, were wrong. The troupe attracted nearly 5,000 on the night of their opening performance (of I Puritani), and attendance on subsequent evenings likewise numbered in the thousands.[20] Perfect acoustics and unencumbered sight-lines obviously were not of paramount concern to individuals attracted to the Castle. Enjoyable and pleasant entertainment was important, and evidently opera performances fit the bill. "We are rejoiced," wrote the critic for the Spirit, "that the million, who have music in their souls, but little in their pockets, have now an opportunity to enjoy delicious music." (Spirit, 13 July 1850, 252) And enjoyment of the music was indeed possible, despite the immense size of the hall. As the Message Bird reported in September,

> The doubts as to whether the voices of the Company would be able to fill [the] vast area [of the Castle] have been triumphantly dissipated. The voices of . . . all the principals, and the chorus, completely fill every nook of the interior; even above the full power of the most powerful orchestras, they can be heard distinctly in every part of the amphitheatre. (Message Bird, quoted in AMR, September 1850, 60)

The audiences could also enjoy a concert along with the vocal music, for a band performed between the acts of the operas; these instrumentalists,

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20. Spirit, 17 August 1850, 312; see also the Spirit, 20 July, 3 August 1850; Saroni's, 13 July 1850, 494.

according to Saroni's,

> discourse the choicest of music, undisturbed by the moving tide of humanity that, let loose from the spell thrown upon them by the singers, throng through the large area of the Castle and climb its broad staircases, to enjoy the grateful embrace of the ocean breeze, the still music of the calmly sleeping bay, and the poetry of the dancing star-beams. (Saroni's, 27 July 1850, 518)

Surely the performance of Italian opera in such enjoyable and non-aristocratic surroundings helped to reinforce the image of the musical/theatrical genre as a pleasant and accessible form of entertainment; it also dispelled some of the negative connotations created by the attempts of the Astor Place elite to make opera performance an exclusive pastime. Furthermore, some of the thousands of Americans who were first introduced to Italian opera (in Italian) at the Castle (or at Niblo's) must have sufficiently liked what they heard and saw to occasionally attend performances by Maretzek's company (or other troupes) during the regular season. At the same time that the Havana Company singers were vexing Maretzek because of the quality of their performances, then, they were helping to create a portion of his future audience.

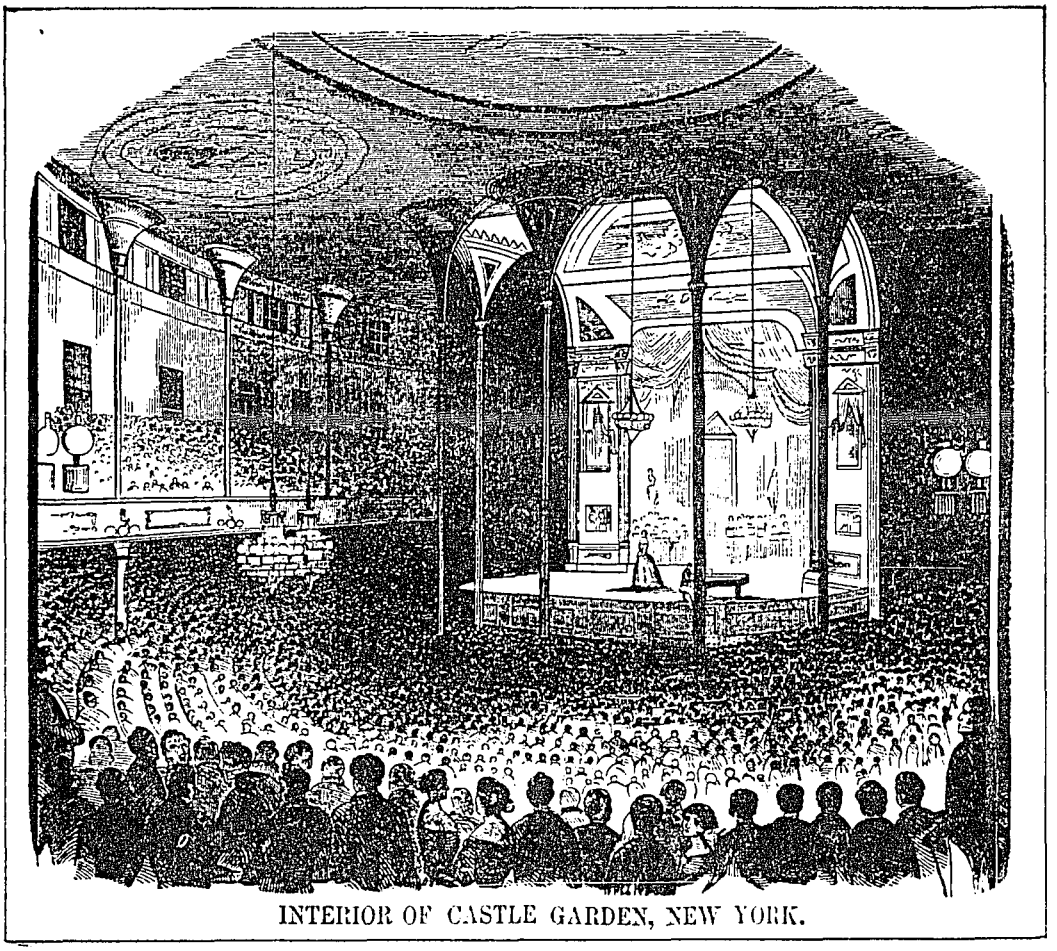
The Havana Company, as mentioned, left New York in early September. Maretzek's immediate competition from that troupe, as a consequence, consisted primarily of the remembered glory of departed singers. The competition from Jenny Lind, on the other hand, was something else entirely. The "Swedish Nightingale" arrived in New York in September to a veritable frenzy of excitement that had been orchestrated by the shrewd P. T. Barnum--a commotion that was similar to her reception by London

audiences from 1847 through 1849, and that was to continue almost undiminished until her departure from North America in May 1852. Lind sang her first concert in New York on 11 September at Castle Garden, less than a week after Marti's company closed its season there, and the excitement had been built to such a fever pitch that George Odell wondered in 1931 if the performance was not perhaps "the most thrilling [experience] in the history of American musical activities." (Odell, V:592) Not the finest performance, Odell cautioned, but the most thrilling, because "never before and possibly never since were so many human hearts beating in unison, in almost tragic expectation of the first notes from a human throat or indeed from any other musical instrument."[21]

Lind's European reputation, coupled with Barnum's massive exploitation of it, prompted some critics to predict that her appearances would "teach our public what good vocal melody really is." (Figaro, 31 August 1850) This, of course, is what Maretzek feared. And this heightening of expectations among American audiences is precisely what occurred. Americans had heard world-class singers before Lind; they had never, however, been subjected to the kind of hyperbole about a singer

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21. Odell, VI:83. It is only fair to point out here that Americans--especially those living in the major cities on the East Coast--were not quite the gullible, unsuspecting, and naive musical ignoramuses that some chroniclers of Lind's American tour have implied. See, for example, Ware and Lockard, and Phineas T. Barnum, Struggles and Triumphs (Hartford: J. B. Burr & Co., 1869; reprint New York: Arno, 1970), 281-282. The first-rank singers of the Havana Opera Company (including Bosio, Badiali, Marini, and Salvi), after all, had just recently performed in front of audiences in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Furthermore, residents of the latter two cities also had heard performances by the incomparable Maria Malibran, albeit twenty-five years earlier. It is unjust, then, to suggest that American audiences had never heard singers the calibre of Lind. Furthermore, the implication (by Barnum and Ware & Lockard, for example) that her fame in the United States was entirely the result of Barnum's publicity is incorrect. Lind's friend the British composer Jules Benedict, who accompanied her on the United States tour, later wrote that the impression Lind had made in Europe had "excited the greatest interest among lovers of music in the United States"--and this demonstrated interest had given Barnum the idea for the tour. See Sir Julius Benedict, "Jenny Lind" (Scribner's Monthly, May 1881), 127.



INTERIOR OF CASTLE GARDEN, NEW YORK.

Jenny Lind in concert at Castle Garden, 1851.

that Barnum unleashed. Lind's name became a household word, and people began to believe what they had been told--that she was a "matchless" singer and the "Queen of Song." (Ware/Lockard, 19, 26) And her performances in New York were in direct competition with the Astor Place Company, despite the fact that she sang in concert rather than in staged operas. Her first six concerts at Castle Garden, which took place between 11 and 24 September, were all sold out despite the minimum cost of three dollars per ticket. (Ware/Lockard, 20-21, 27) And in late October, when Lind returned to New York after a month-long engagement in Boston, it was for a series of fifteen concerts at the newly opened Jenny Lind (later Tripler) Hall between 24 October and 22 November--a series that coincided precisely with the opening weeks of Maretzek's season. (Odell, VI:83-91) When Lind finally left town for an extended American tour on 25 November, the damage--so Maretzek feared--had been done. (Brooks, "Lind," AG)

Long before Lind's arrival in the United States, however, Maretzek had leased the Astor Place Opera House for an appreciable part of the 1850-51 season. Because he was legally obligated to pay rent on the hall whether or not his company performed there, it was economically disastrous for his troupe to try to sit out the season--despite the likelihood of economic failure. "Figure to yourself," Maretzek later wrote, "the position of a luckless impresario with a company of Truffis and Beneventanos upon his hands, and the lease of the Astor Place Opera House upon his shoulders, with Jenny Lind and Barnum, real genius and undoubted 'humbug,' in a strange copartnership, staring ominously in his face." He would have been perfectly happy, he continued, "to give up the

whole concern"--except for his legal obligations and the sobering realization, as he confessed, that "I had not . . . the means to do anything else." (C&Q, 122-123) In August and September 1850, then, faced with the real possibility of economic ruin by season's end, Maretzek prepared to stand up to the competition as best he could. His plan was simple: to go to work, as he put it, "in the same manner I had seen practiced by Barnum."[22]

The troupe that Maretzek had assembled for the 1850-51 season was fairly strong; for name singers he had four sopranos, three tenors, two baritones, and four basses.[23] The chorus and orchestra were presumably similar in size and make-up to those of previous Astor Place troupes. The only available information about choral or orchestral musicians connected with the Astor Place establishment is from Edward Fry's 1848-49 company. That orchestra numbered forty-three: fourteen violins, four violas, three cellos, four contrabasses, two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, and horns, three trombones, one ophicleide, one kettle drum, and timpani. The company also boasted a

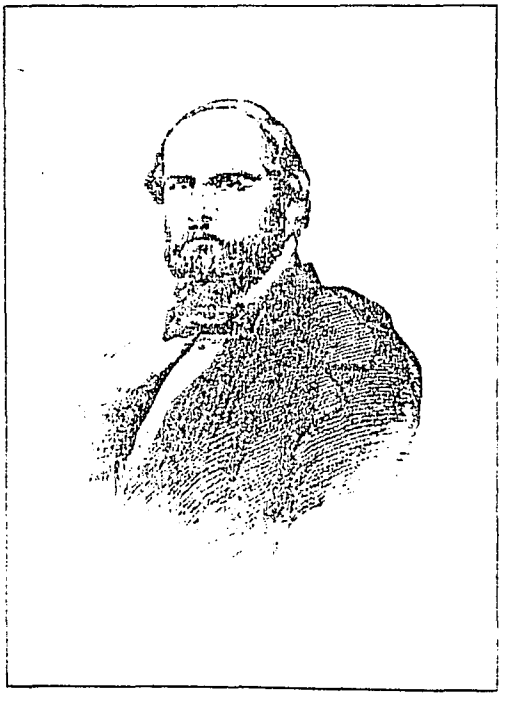
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22. C&Q, 124. Maretzek was quick to point out that this was "the first, and I am proud to say, the only time" he used Barnum's puffing tactics. Several years later, however, he was referred to in a music periodical as "the Barnum of the opera." See MW, 2 February 1852, 152.

23. The sopranos included Teresa Truffi, Amalia Patti, Apollonia Bertucca-Maretzek, and T. Avogadro; the tenors were Giuseppe Forti, Salvatore Patti, and Domenico Lorini; the baritones Antonio Avignone and G. F. Beneventano; and the basses August Giubilei, Settimo Rosi (or Rossi), Antonio Sanquirico, and Pietro Novelli. Teresa Truffi was the company's leading light; about her White wrote at length, in part as follows: "[Truffi] was not a great singer. She had not even a great voice, as Tadesco [sic] had. But there was that nameless something in the tone of her voice . . . which enabled her to move her hearers when many a more finished vocalist would leave them as untouched as by the piping of a bulfinch. Her voice was noble, if not perfect . . . her style was both admirable and charming. . . . She bore her audience away and aloft on a high tide of emotion. It must be confessed that this was partly due to her magnificent beauty and to her acting. . . . She had much influence upon the taste of the generation that saw her. After her, they . . . could not easily tolerate frivolous and vulgar artists, even when they were accomplished singers and pretty women." See White, II:880.







Members of the 1850-51 Astor Place Opera Company. Clockwise from left: G. F. Beneventano (baritone); Apollonia Bertucca-Maretzek (soprano); Teresa Truffi (soprano).

chorus of forty-four, some of whom functioned as minor name artists in the troupe.[24]

In order to utilize Barnum's tactics properly, however, Maretzek needed more than a well-rounded troupe with a sizeable orchestra and chorus. He also needed stars whose reputations he could "puff," and he was relying on his brother and Giuseppe Forti to bring back such an artist or two from Europe. The recruiting trip, however, had failed; Forti and Albert Maretzek--who had been sent overseas to recruit bass and contralto singers--had come back with only one artist, the bass Settimo Rossi (or Rosi). Rossi himself was not really a newcomer, for he been a member of the first two companies of the Astor Place House, and now apparently was returning to the United States after a year spent in Europe.[25] Furthermore, Maretzek and Forti had been unable to sign any contraltos to replace the two who had left.[26]

Despite the failure of the recruiting trip, when the season commenced in October the company had two other newcomers on its roster, both recruited in New York. The first, the baritone Antonio Avignone, had been (like Rossi) a member of the first Astor Place company; thus his was

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24. In his memoirs Maretzek describes the 1848-49 Astor Place Company orchestra as consisting of "about thirty-six performers on their individual instruments"; in this he evidently was mistaken--unless Fry had greatly exaggerated the extent of his instrumental forces in the newspaper advertisement that ran just previous to the beginning of the season. This latter seems unlikely, however, for the advertisement lists by name each member of the chorus and orchestra. See C&Q, 15 and the Tribune, 1 November 1848.

25. Rossi, according to White, was a favorite in New York. He was "handsome, strong, and manly," and he sang "always well, always correctly, and always in good taste." See White, II:881.

26. For the performance of contralto roles, the troupe had to rely at first on the services of Amalia Patti, one of its sopranos; later in the year a true contralto, Caroline Vietti, joined the company.

not a new face to the New York public. The second, also a familiar artist, had an even higher cachet with New York audiences than either Rossi or Avignone, for he was the tenor Domenico Lorini, whom Maretzek had lured away from the Havana troupe.[27] The rest of Maretzek's star singers were old and familiar faces from the previous season. Some of them were quite good and well liked by Americans; others were second- and third-rate artists. All of them, in any case, were much too well known to be the successful objects of any extensive "puffing." As Maretzek later wrote, "my old artists were impossible cards, for me to attempt playing in Barnum's manner. They were, alas! too well known." (C&Q, 123)

Evidently there were few first-class European singers who were willing to risk a season in the United States simultaneous with the Lind/Barnum extravaganza--or so the failure of the Forti/Maretzek recruiting trip seems to indicate. By early fall Maretzek was desperate. Finally, by pulling some trans-Atlantic strings and calling in some favors, he was able to engage a new prima donna, the soprano Teresa Parodi. She was (in Maretzek's words) "an artist of sufficient talent to realize the expectations which I might raise upon her behalf." (C&Q, 123) Parodi had been a favorite pupil of the great mezzo-soprano Giuditta Pasta, and was fairly well known and respected, especially in southern Italy and in London, where she was under contract to Benjamin Lumley at Her Majesty's Theatre. Lumley was willing to release her to Maretzek--for a financial consideration, of course. Once that deal was made and Parodi

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27. Message Bird, 14 September 1850, 462; Spirit 19 October 1850. Lorini first sang in New York with the Havana Company as early as the summer of 1847; he returned to the United States with Marti's troupe during the spring of 1850. He was, however, only a second tenor with the Havana Company; Lorenzo Salvi was the first tenor. See Odell, V:317, 563.





Some of the dancers who performed with the Astor Place Opera Company during the 1850-51 season. Top: Natalie Fitzjames. Bottom: the four Rousset sisters.

on her way to New York, Maretzek was ready to go. At last he had a viable star attraction for his season, and he intended to exploit her to the hilt.

THE FALL CAMPAIGN IN NEW YORK

Maretzek's troupe opened its New York season with performances of Weber's Der Freischütz (as Il Franco Archiero, and billed as the New York première of the Italian version) on 21, 23, and 25 October. (Playbills, Astor Place, 21, 23 October 1850) Because the company usually performed on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings early in the season, the Weber opera occupied the entire first week. The New-York Daily Tribune assured its readers that "a brilliant audience filled the house" and that Maretzek "could not have selected an opera better fitted to inaugurate his second season." (Tribune, 22 October 1850) Another local critic, however (who admitted later that he "stood alone among the Press in [his] strictures on the Freyschütz [performance]"), vehemently disagreed. The vocal portion of the opera, he complained, "was no more like Weber's opera of Der Freyschütz, as [he had] heard it when Weber himself conducted it, than a Dutch cheese is like a diamond." (Figaro, 26 October, 2 November 1850) Apparently Maretzek himself also disagreed with the verdict passed by the rest of the laudatory New York press. Whatever the reason, the opera was withdrawn after the third performance. During the troupe's second week Maretzek trotted out two old favorites--Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor and Verdi's Ernani.[28] The reaction of the critics, although favorable,

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28. The United States première of Lucia di Lammermoor, in French, had been in New Orleans, by Eugene Prévost's company at the Théâtre d'Orléans on 28 May 1841 (not on 28 December, as reported by Loewenberg); the New York première (in Italian) was two years later on 15 September 1843, presumably by the Havana Company. See Belsom, 65-70, Loewenberg, col. 772, and Spirit, 13, 16, 23 September and 7, 28 October 1843) The United States première of Ernani had been

was less than overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The Havana Company had recently performed both of these works with greatly superior singers, to large audiences and much acclaim (and for less cost to the public). The company, it appears, was biding its time until Parodi could join them.

Long before the new soprano's arrival, Maretzek had commenced his Barnum-like campaign to build up his new prima donna's American reputation. With single-minded determination he manufactured "foreign" letters and biographies, wrote public-relations "puffs," and obtained lithographs and engravings of her likeness--which he distributed to newspapers and periodicals. All of these efforts were for naught; according to Maretzek, the American public was so bedazzled with Barnum's overwhelming promotion of Lind that the editors of both newspapers and music journals indicated no interest at all in Teresa Parodi. "Whatever I did," Maretzek wrote later, "was against the pyramidal puffing of Barnum. [My efforts were] no more than the murmuring of a garden streamlet as compared with the roar and thunder of Niagara."[29]

Undaunted, Maretzek tried a new tack. He deliberately fabricated and circulated a story that Parodi (who was already en route to New York) had decided to renege on her Astor Place contract. The Duke of Devonshire, so the tale went, had secretly been in love with the soprano

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15 April 1847 at the Park Theatre in New York, also by the Havana Company. See Loewenberg, col. 838; Odell V/263; and Mattfeld, 30.

29. C&Q, 124. George Upton agreed with this assessment. Maretzek, he wrote "was no match for Barnum in [inventing] short stories. The people had caught Jenny Lind fever. . . ." Upton was quoted by Schiavo, 394.

for years, and at the announcement of her imminent departure for the United States had asked her hand in marriage. She had accepted, and now had no intention to come to New York; Maretzek--poor fellow--faced certain ruin. The story, according to the manager, had been leaked to an unnamed editor under strict pledge of secrecy; as expected (and precisely according to plan) it was published in its entirety almost immediately. The day after it broke, Maretzek related, the tale could be seen on the pages of every daily paper in New York, and within three weeks it had "found its way into almost every newspaper from Maine to Texas. In a fortnight more [it] had completed its travels by one huge stride from New York to San Francisco." (C&Q, 126) Maretzek was delighted at this development, especially since these same newspapers supposedly began to print the biographies, anecdotes, and portraits they had previously ignored. The unknown Teresa Parodi, according to Maretzek, suddenly became the object of a great deal of interest and curiosity in the United States. It seems, however, that the manager greatly exaggerated his story. Newspapers and periodicals certainly mentioned Parodi--and with greater frequency as the season progressed and her reputation grew--but nothing remotely resembling the great flood of attention described by Maretzek seems to have occurred. It is not impossible that Maretzek manufactured the entire tale out of whole cloth; as Odell noted wryly, "The good Max dealt ever in superlatives." (Odell, V:573)

Parodi, of course, did show up. She arrived during the middle of the troupe's first week; on 23 October the Tribune noted that Maretzek had engaged two suites of rooms at the Union-Place Hotel, one for Parodi, the other for the French dancer Mlle. Nathalie Fitzjames, who was also under

contract to the manager, and who would also play a role in the upcoming season. (Tribune, 23 October 1850) If Maretzek's story is true, he undoubtedly made a big show of relief when the supposed "Duchess of Devonshire" disembarked from the steamer Pacific. Parodi, needless to say, was astonished at the "rumor." The wily manager, however, was not finished, for he had yet another astute public-relations move up his sleeve. On the very day of Parodi's arrival, he closed the subscription list for the opera company (thereby forcing any would-be auditors without season subscriptions to purchase tickets to individual performances), and doubled his admission prices to $2.00 ($2.50 for reserved seats).[30] This, he related, "dispelled all doubts of [Parodi's] superiority, as it was supposed that I could not have dared to do this, with such a rival attraction as Jenny Lind in the market, if I had not been morally certain of her success." (C&Q, 127)

By this point, Maretzek had the New York media in his pocket. They seemed more than happy to help him augment excitement even further for the prima donna's debut, which was scheduled for the third week of the season. "PARODI. The Singer of the South, PARODI, will be heard for the first time in America, on Monday evening next," exclaimed the Tribune on 31 October.[31] "Expectation is already on the rise," the

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30. Tickets for the company's performances previous to Parodi's arrival cost $1.50 for reserved parquet or box seats and 25 cents for seats in the amphitheatre (gallery); for performances starting 4 November (the night of Parodi's debut), the same seats cost $2.50, $2.00, and $1.00. See Playbills, Astor Place, 1 and 4 November 1850.

31. Teresa Parodi (b. 1827) was a native of Genoa; her training likewise took place in the north of Italy, under Felice Ronconi in Milan and Giuditta Pasta in Como. Her identification as a "singer of the south" refers to her participation (with her brother) in the insurrection at Palermo in 1848. Evidently she sang in two successive carnivals in that city in the midst of the revolution, and aroused such a frenzy of excitement that--according to an account in the Boston Evening Transcript--"the whole people seemed to have gone mad for the beautiful cantatrice." The soprano subsequently was obliged to take refuge for over three weeks on a Sardinian ship. Americans of

columnist continued, "and the debut in New-York of the pupil of Pasta and the rival of [Giulia] Grisi will be greeted with the largest and most brilliant audience which the Opera House ever enclosed within its walls." (Tribune, 31 October 1850) Maretzek's choice of Norma as the soprano's debut vehicle was a stroke of managerial genius. By 1850, Bellini's masterpiece had become one of the most popular operas in America.[32] Furthermore, it was a role in which Jenny Lind had failed in England; it exploited Parodi's remarkable strength as a dramatic actress; it reminded American audiences of the singer's close relationship with the great Pasta, who had created the title role; and finally, while it was a part in which Parodi excelled, it was not her strongest role.[33] This last made it ideal for a debut, for Maretzek knew that the hordes who would flock to the three performances of Norma could easily be lured back again the following week when he featured his new "Prima Donna Assoluta from Her Majesty's Theatre, London" in a role for which she was renowned (and that would become her American tour de force): Lucrezia Borgia in Donizetti's

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this period were remarkably sympathetic towards all sorts of revolutionary movements, and Parodi's identification as the heroine of an embattled populace was a calculated attempt to appeal to these emotions. Her appearance in this country also struck a sympathetic chord with Italian immigrants. When she first arrived, according to Schiavo, "a flock of Sicilian refugees in New York welcomed her as their elder sister." See "Sketch of Parodi," Boston Daily Evening Transcript, 13 February 1851; "Contemporary Artists. Teresa Parodi," Message Bird, 2 December 1850, 541-542; and Schiavo, 393-394.

32. The North American première of Norma was in New Orleans in April 1836 (by the Montresor Company); the East Coast première (in Italian) was in Philadelphia in November 1843 (by the Havana Company). For more information, see Chapter 3. Charles Hamm referred to the arrival of this opera in the United States as "one of the central musical events of the entire nineteenth century." See Hamm, Yesterdays, 78.

33. Henry Pleasants related the horror of English critic Henry Chorley at Lind's failure in the role in London. Her rendition, the English critic wrote, was "something as entire, as aimless as it is possible for so remarkable an artist to make. The actress and the play had no agreement." See Pleasants, 204.

opera. (Tribune, 31 October 1850)

The New York audience behaved precisely as Maretzek had hoped: during Parodi's first week, they mobbed all three performances of Norma. "At the rising of the curtain," wrote one critic of the soprano's debut performance, "every seat in the opera house had an occupant. . . . The audience in the body of the house, was fashionable; in the amphitheatre, highly respectable." (Figaro, 9 November 1850) According to the Tribune, not only was every seat taken, but in addition "all the entrances and steps were occupied by those who were only too glad, at such inconvenience, to see and hear the Queen of the evening." (Tribune, 5 November 1850) The critical reaction to Parodi's performance in Norma, however, was mixed. Most agreed that her dramatic powers were great, but some had serious reservations about her singing. "She is physically and dramatically the greatest tragic singing actress we have ever heard in America," wrote Figaro's critic. He continued:

> Her face and voice . . . are truly grand; the first in expression, and the last in quality, but artistically, she has been greatly surpassed here; her execution is mediocre, never in any one instance (on this occasion) rising to great excellence, or reaching the expectations naturally awakened by so loudly bruited a celebrity as she has acquired. (Figaro, 9 November 1850)

The reservations about her performance in Norma did not carry much weight in the long run, however, for during her second week she performed as Lucrezia--and suddenly many of the critics became converts. After her first portrayal of the tragic role the reviewer for Figaro wrote a gushing critique, calling it an "indisputable fact" that her performance was the "greatest triumph ever witnessed in the Astor Place Opera House"; he



Teresa Parodi, soprano and star of the
1850-51 Astor Place Opera Company.

further opined that "by [this] performance she [has] fully justified her claim to the title of the greatest tragic singer that has yet been in America." (Figaro, 12 November 1850) The critic for the Albion, in a review that appeared after the Lucrezia performances, wrote,

> As a vocalist, Parodi appears to us almost faultless. . . . Her voice is pure and sympathetic; it has a great range--over two octaves . . . it has been so carefully cultivated, that she exercises over it the most perfect control. . . . Her vocalizing is perfect; devoid of trickery or machinery, pure as nature assisted by art can make it. (Albion, 16 November 1850, quoted in Odell, VI:63-64)

Maretzek was delighted with the reaction, for the popularity of at least one of the principal singers--preferably the prima donna--was crucial to a troupe's success. As the author of a letter published in the Musical World pointed out later in the decade, "nobody goes to hear an opera. They go to hear the prima donna." (MW, 20 June 1857, 388) Even those critics who were not entirely convinced of the soprano's artistic virtues may have helped Maretzek's cause by calling attention to Parodi. On 30 November, for example, the reviewer for the Spirit commented that there was "much diversity of thought" about her singing and acting; two weeks later he wrote, "we never saw an artiste about whose dramatic excellence such contrarity of opinion exists, nor have we ever [seen] one whose acting has created among [so] many such a furore." (Spirit, 30 November, 14 December 1850)[34] Comments of this nature are

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34. The critics never explain just what about Parodi's singing and acting was so controversial. It is possible that the dispute centered on her dramatic (rather than her musical) abilities, and that she was an adherent of the older, exceedingly melodramatic school of acting, as opposed to the newer, more natural and quieter style. This change, which caused a great deal of controversy, took place gradually over the century; a good example of the contrast is the difference in style between Junius Brutus Booth (1796-1852) and his son Edwin (1833-1893). See Lawrence W. Levine, "William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation" (American

hardly unmitigated praise; they certainly did nothing, however, to dampen natural curiosity about the new singer.

Parodi appeared as Lucrezia three times, sang the lead female role of Ernani the following week, then took several days off. To maintain the troupe's momentum, the manager inserted into the vacuum the New York première (incorrectly advertised as the "first time in America") of Donizetti's Parisina on Friday 22 November (and again on Monday the 25th). (Playbill, Astor Place, 22 November 1850) Teresa Truffi, the troupe's other (and much respected) soprano, sang the title role. Because Parodi did not appear, prices were reduced for both performances.[35]

In between the two productions of Parisina, Maretzek and the company mounted their first non-subscription event of the season, a "Grand Gala Night at the Opera House" on Saturday, 23 November. Since it was a non-subscription performance, all the seats in the house were sold individually; because the gala featured both Parodi and the American debut of Maretzek's Parisian danseuse Mlle. Nathalie Fitzjames ("of the Grand Opera, Paris, and other theatres"), the prices were the

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Historical Review, February 1984), 56-58. A critic for the Boston Courier, in a generally positive review, admitted that Parodi "may sometimes slightly exaggerate, or sometimes fail to come up with the freshness of reality"; he defended her acting, however, by adding that "this can be no justification to detract from her merits as an artist." A reporter for Harper's described Parodi as "not without dramatic talent, although prone to exaggeration," and George Upton later wrote that she "was often intensely energetic and 'ranted,' if I may apply that dramatic term to singing." Another Boston critic, who compared performances by Parodi and Angiolino Bosio, later wrote that Bosio's interpretation of Lucrezia was "as a whole, the best personation of that character we have ever had. It was far less ambitious than Parodi's, but more natural and effective." See Boston Courier, 28 February 1851; Harper's New Monthly Magazine, February 1851, 417; Upton, Musical Memories, quoted in Schiavo, 394; and Boston Evening Transcript, 8 May 1851.

35. Loewenberg seconds the claim that this was the United States première. The actual North American première, however, had been in New Orleans on 4 June 1837, by the Havana Company. Loewenberg also gives an incorrect date (20 October 1850) for the New York première of the opera. See Loewenberg, col. 751, and Belsom, 45.

same as those charged for Parodi's opera appearances. (Tribune, 23 November 1850) The house, despite both the high prices and the absence of regular subscribers, was nonetheless the largest of the season. (Tribune, 25 November 1850) According a reporter for Figaro, such gala concerts usually attracted audiences made up almost exclusively of the general public; "the 'upper tendom,'" he wrote, "does not come to such extra concerts, while the Public . . . crowd the house, and liberality for once is seated on the sofas usually dedicated to meanness." (Figaro, 30 November 1850)

By this time--the end of the fifth week of the season--Maretzek knew that he had the ingredients for a financially successful run, barring disaster. As early as the third week he had successfully orchestrated a ferment of public interest in his company and its star prima donna--even in the face of direct competition from the "Swedish Nightingale," who was singing at Tripler Hall at the same time. This interest, furthermore, had continued unabated for two additional weeks, outlasting the initial burst of natural curiosity about a new and highly touted artist. Now, Maretzek's task was to maintain--and build on--this interest and enthusiasm over the length of an extended season.

An essential element for maintaining audience interest was variety. The company was obliged to present a constantly changing bill of fare so attractive that the New York public would continue to attend performances in large numbers on a regular basis. This turned out to be not such a serious problem for the Astor Place troupe. For already--just two years into his American career--Maretzek was showing ample evidence of a

remarkable ability to get the most out of his available resources. As one example, he later wrote that if an opera manager had several new singers in his company, "it was unadvisable to produce them all at once upon the same night." Instead, he should "arrange their debuts to take place in succession" on different nights; by doing so, he not only avoided having four nervous debutants on stage simultaneously, he also (and probably more important) would "secure four good houses instead of one." (C&Q, 50) This simple tactic smacks of common sense, but Maretzek's managerial predecessor at the Astor Place House, Edward Fry, had in fact featured the debuts of four new singers in a single performance--with disastrous results. The simple dicta to string out novelties over as long a time period as possible, to vary the company's offerings through similar tactics, and to change bills of fare as often as necessary were major elements of Maretzek's managerial technique throughout the 1850-51 season.

The tactics Maretzek used to juggle his company's repertory at the Astor Place House are illustrative. The troupe mounted one world première and one New York première during this time. The latter was of Donizetti's Parisina; the former was of the opera Giovanna Prima di Napoli by Maurice Strakosch (which took place in January 1851). (Playbill, Astor Place, 6 January 1851) The troupe also added three other new works during the year (Semiramide, Der Freischütz and Gemma di Vergy), and furthermore performed yet another three operas that had not been heard in New York (at least in Italian) for some time: La Sonnambula; I Capuleti e i Montecchi, billed as Romeo e Giulietta (Bellini), and Il Giuramento (Mercadante). Of a total repertory of fifteen operas, then, over half were relatively fresh to the company's audiences in New York and elsewhere.

TABLE 12: REPERTORY OF THE 1850-51 ASTOR PLACE COMPANY, RANKED BY FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE

	NY	Phila	Balto	Bstn	South	Bstn	total
Ernani	7	5	1	1	3	3	20
Lucrezia Borgia	9	2	-	1	2	2	16
Norma	7	2	-	2	2	-	13
La Favorita	5	5	-	1	2	3	16
Lucia di Lammermoor	4	1	1	-	2	3	11
Parisina	4	2	2	-	1	-	9
Don Giovanni	2	3	-	-	-	4	9
Il Giuramento	2	1	1	-	2	1	7
Il Barbiere di Siviglia	2	-	-	1	2	2	7
Romeo e Juliet	4	-	-	1	-	1	6
Gemma di Vergy	4	1	-	-	-	-	5
Giovanna di Napoli	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Semiramide	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
La Sonnambula	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Der Freischütz	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
totals	60	23	6	8	16	19	132

This significant number of new (or relatively new) works, however, is misleading: these eight operas account for less than one-third (40 out of 132) of the company's total performances (see Table 12). The other two-thirds of the troupe's productions were of older, more familiar works; six of these seven, in fact, had become (even by 1850) a bit shopworn--especially considering the numerous repetitions that were common in any one season.[36] As is obvious from the list of Italian

36. It is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty the precise number of repetitions of these various operas. Information about scheduled performances can be obtained from playbills and newspaper advertisements; neither source, however, is reliable. As George Odell wrote (about the repertory performed by the Havana Opera Company during the summer of 1850): "I warn the . . . that my record is from the advertisements in the Herald; but the Albion expressly complains that the programme was frequently changed at the last moment, and on some occasions no performance was given." (Odell, IV:591) Only the review of an actual performance confirms that an opera had been given as advertised, and most newspapers in New York reviewed opera performances sporadically.

operas performed in New York during the four-year period 1847-1851 (see Table 13), Ernani, Norma, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Lucia di Lammermoor, La Favorita, and Lucrezia Borgia all had been performed during at least four of the six previous seasons. Ernani, Norma, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Lucrezia Borgia, in fact, were rapidly becoming operatic "chestnuts"--and over fifty-five percent of the Astor Place Company's 1850-51 performances were of these four works. This over-reliance on a handful of operas, however, was not obvious during Maretzek's season because he was so skillful at juggling the repertory and at utilizing to best advantage the company's novelties. The eight fresh works were introduced carefully and sparingly over the course of the eighteen-week New York season--in weeks one (Der Freischütz), five (Parisina), six (Gemma di Vergy), nine (La Sonnambula), ten (Il Giuramento), twelve (Giovanna di Napoli), fifteen (Romeo e Giuletta), and seventeen (Semiramide).[37]

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37. The Astor Place repertory should make it obvious that by the 1850s the earlier common practice of repeating performances of the same opera for weeks on end (see, for example, the performance record of the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin troupe) had fallen out of favor. By the late 1840s the American public, especially on the East Coast and in New Orleans, had been introduced to a rather large body of repertory; repetition for the sake of fostering familiarity was no longer necessary. Now, however, even new works--such as Parisina and Giovanna di Napoli--were not usually repeated more than twice in a row. Some critics decried this practice. "The great mistake that opera managers are too apt to make," wrote the Musical World, "is to change one new opera for another, just as the public are getting familiar with [it], and begin to like it. The WOODS understood this better when they gave us English opera, many years since. Sonnambula was repeated over a hundred nights successively, and the enthusiasm of their packed house increased with every performance." (See MW, 1 January 1853, 2) Others, however, pointed out that this constant change is what the public demanded; besides, it was closer to the general practice followed in the dramatic world. "The object of the opera-going public appears to be to find out how many operas they can gulp down in a season," J. S. Dwight complained, "and not how much lyrical instruction they can derive from a repeated consideration of the same work." (See Dwight's, 16 January 1858) The audience, to Dwight's evident sorrow, was not particularly interested in getting a musical education; they wanted to be entertained. By mid-century a skillful juggling of all the elements of a season--not only repertory, but also singers, dancers, and special attractions--were tactics characteristic not only of Maretzek, but of other opera and theatre impresarios and managers. They also were tactics that were absolutely essential if a season was to succeed in the face of strong competition.

As is the case with most theatrical (and musical-theatrical) productions during the nineteenth century and earlier, it is almost impossible to know with any certainty just what the audience saw and heard at these performances. Cuts, interpolations, transpositions, and ornamentation were all common performance practice--in Europe as well as in the United States; this did not begin to change until well into the century. Specific information on modifications made to a particular opera generally can be obtained from performance parts. There are extant, however, very few operatic scores or parts that can be linked to American performances during this time; even fewer contain marginalia or specific instructions to singers or instrumentalists.[38] Furthermore, contemporary evidence suggests that even the hundreds of extant libretti that were published for and distributed by opera companies in the United States are of little help in resolving this issue.[39] "It is well known to all but the hopelessly simple," wrote a critic in the Boston Musical Times, "that the prompter pays as little attention to the 'only authentic edition' [of the libretto] as to the Koran." He continued,

> Consequently, there is [much] discussion in the auditorium. . . . Some charming daughter, being quicker than the rest of the family, first discovers the place, points it out to paterfamilias, who settles his spectacles and prepares to read; but before he has taken the thumb off the first word, the entire corps operatic has leaped several pages. (BMT, 16 June 1860, 134)

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38. There is a strong possibility that the Tams-Witmark/Wisconsin Collection at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has some materials of this nature. A massive indexing project for this entire collection had just been finished while this dissertation was being completed.

39. Many large libraries around the country have substantial collections of these libretti. I examined samples at the American Antiquarian Society, the Newberry Library (Chicago), the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, and the Free Library of Philadelphia.

TABLE 13: ITALIAN REPERTORY IN NEW YORK, 1847-1851

1847 Havana OC	1847-48 Astor OC	1848-49 Astor OC	1849-50 Astor OC	1850 Havana OC	1850-51 Astor OC
Ernani	Ernani	Ernani	Ernani	Ernani	Ernani
Foscari (X)				Foscari	
Saffo					
Norma		Norma	Norma	Norma	Norma
Sonnambula	Sonnambula	Sonnambula			Sonnambula
Mosè					
Linda		Linda			
Romeo e Giu.	Capuleti e i Montecchi				Romeo e Giu.
Il Barbiere		Il Barbiere	Il Barbiere		Il Barbiere
	Beatrice				
	Lucia	Lucia	Lucia	Lucia	Lucia
	I Puritani			I Puritani	
	Lucrezia	Lucrezia	Lucrezia	Lucrezia	Lucrezia
	Giuramento (X)	Giuramento			Giuramento
	Nabucco				
		L'Elisir		L'Elisir	
		Favorita	Favorita	Favorita	Favorita
		Roberto			
		I Lombardi			
			Otello		
			Maria (X)		
			Don Pasquale		
			Anna Bolena (X)		
			Don Giovanni		Don Giovanni
			Parisina (X)		
		Huguenots (X)			

ABREVIATIONS:

Foscari	I Due Foscari	Mosè	Mosè in Egitto
Linda	Linda di Chamounix	Romeo e Giu	Romeo e Giulietta
Il Barbiere	Il Barbiere di Siviglia	Lucia	Lucia di Lammermoor
Lucrezia	Lucrezia Borgia	L'Elisir	L'Elisir d'Amore
Roberto	Roberto Devereux	Maria	Maria di Rohan

NOTE: (X) denotes the New York première of an opera.

One frustrated opera-goer "from the country," after attending a performance of Don Giovanni in New York, wrote a letter of complaint to the Musical World. "Is it often the case that operas are much altered in the performance without due notice of the same?" he asked, perhaps rhetorically. "If so, what shall we poor fellows do, who know nothing in the 'Book of the Opera.' It is a little hard upon us." (MW, 28 March 1857, 197)

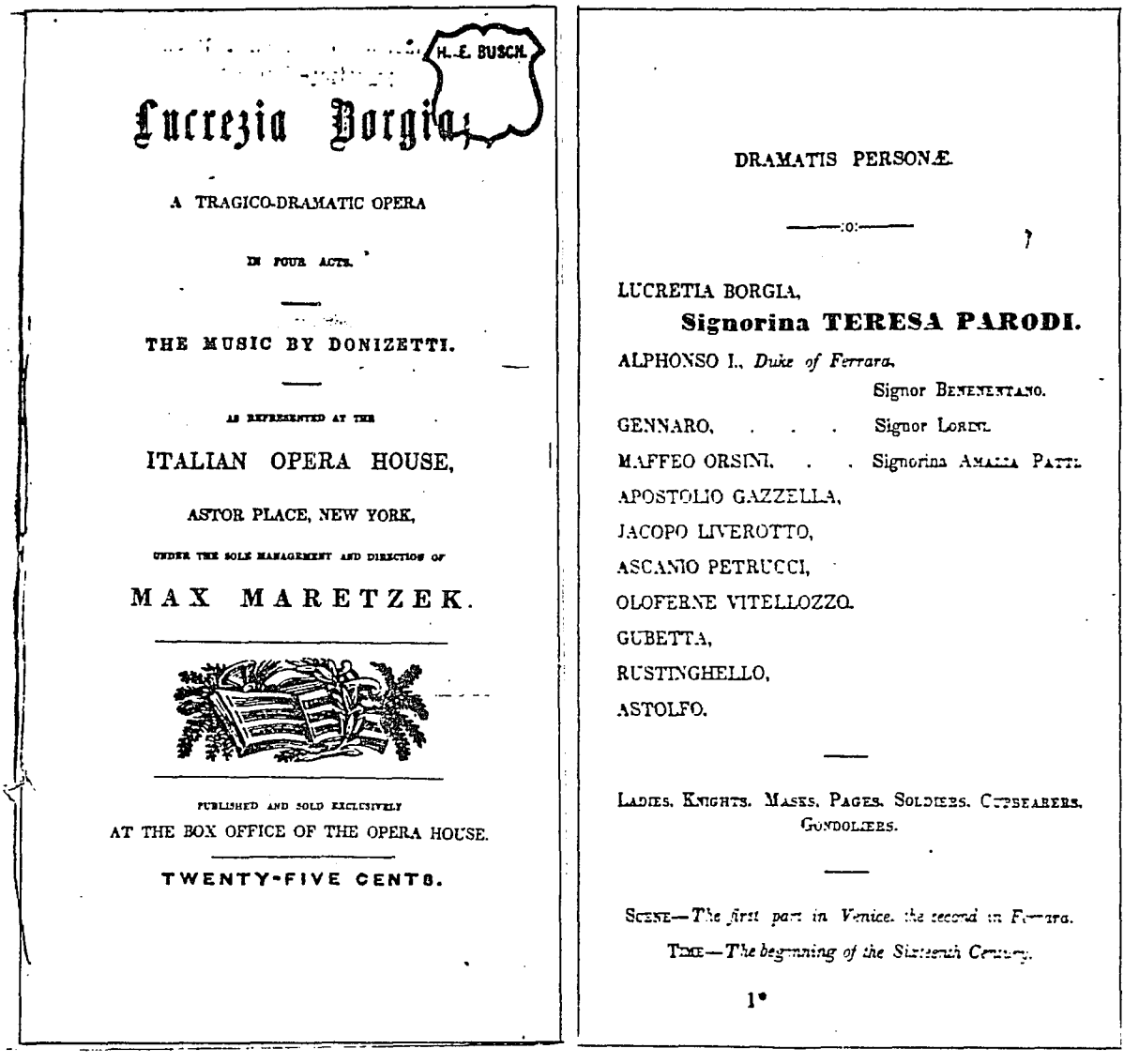
Such comments demonstrate that changes were frequent; the precise nature of the alterations, however, remains unclear. The overall reaction by critics to modifications in the text--like the earlier reactions to changes made in vocal-star productions--range from calm acceptance to violent disapproval. The Spirit's critic, when discussing a performance of Norma by the Astor Place troupe in January 1851, wrote:

> True, there was a little "scene" not set down in the bills, and "supplimentaria" to the composer's ideas, but it only had the effect of affording a new excitement. Prime Donne will have their vagaries, and the only way to correct them is to say nothing about them. (Spirit, 18 January 1851, 576)

A month later, after Parodi's first appearance in Boston (also in Norma), a newspaper reporter commented matter-of-factly that "she gave some fine runs most admirably in an interpolated piece." (Boston Post, 19 February 1851) And when Maretzek's company performed Rossini's William Tell in May 1855, even John Sullivan Dwight reported that "the inordinate length of the opera . . . necessitated large omissions. . . . The whole of the ballet . . . was cut out. Entire choruses and songs in every Act were left out, and others [were] much abridged." Although Dwight decried some of the modifications, he nevertheless concluded, "it was quite important that it should be shortened somewhat. . . . The parts omitted were, in the main, those which could best be spared."[40]

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40. Dwight's, 26 May 1855, 62. That this practice of cutting, adding, and altering was a normal occurrence in Europe is exemplified by a comment made by Hector Berlioz in an essay about this same Rossini opera: "Ruthless cuts have been made in the present score," he wrote of William Tell in 1834. The French composer, however, evidently disagreed with Dwight's



H. E. BUSCH.

Lucrezia Borgia

A TRAGICO-DRAMATIC OPERA

IN FOUR ACTS.

THE MUSIC BY DONIZETTI.

AS REPRESENTED AT THE

ITALIAN OPERA HOUSE,

ASTOR PLACE, NEW YORK,

UNDER THE SOLE MANAGEMENT AND DIRECTION OF

MAX MARETZEK.

PUBLISHED AND SOLD EXCLUSIVELY

AT THE BOX OFFICE OF THE OPERA HOUSE.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

—:o:—

LUCRETIA BORGIA,
Signorina TERESA PARODI.

ALPHONSO I., *Duke of Ferrara*,
Signor BENEVENTANO.

GENNARO, . . . Signor LORINI.

MAFFEO ORSINI, . . Signorina AMALIA PATTI.

APOSTOLIO GAZZELLA,

JACOPO LIVEROTTO,

ASCANIO PETRUCCI,

OLOFERNE VITELLOZZO.

GUBETTA,

RUSTINGHELLO,

ASTOLFO.

LADIES, KNIGHTS, MASKS, PAGES, SOLDIERS, CUPBEARERS, GONDOLIERS.

SCENE—*The first part in Venice, the second in Ferrara.*

TIME—*The beginning of the Sixteenth Century.*

1*

Title page and list of characters from the libretto to Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia, as performed by the Astor Place Opera Company.

Other critics, however, while no more specific, were much less acquiescent. The already-quoted reporter for Figaro who so vehemently lambasted the Astor Place troupe's version of Der Freischütz at the opening of the season is one example. Various others--especially later in the decade--complained, for example, that Don Giovanni was produced "in a ridiculous manner", that alterations to Verdi's Il Trovatore "so changed and marred [the work] . . . as fairly to deserve a sign of disapprobation from the public," and that the Italian repertory in general was "mutilated in the most absurd manner" or "recklessly cut to pieces."[41] None of these complaints, however, shed much light on what was performed; the answer to that question must await further research.

* * *

At the same time that Max Maretzek was grappling with the challenge of varied bills-of-fare at the Astor Place House, he was looking around with an eye to attracting audiences elsewhere. After all, his promotional techniques and his "star" prima donna had raised bumper crops of audiences in New York; logically, they should do

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verdict on the choice of deleted material, for he continued: "Those who make cuts know only how to cut out the good things; [as] in castrating, it is precisely the noblest parts that are removed." The widely accepted practice of wholesale alteration is also suggested by the numerous changes made to operas written for Italy but performed in Paris. One of the most obvious examples, of course, is the transformation of Verdi's I Lombardi into Jérusalem for the 1847 production at the Paris Opéra. See "Rossini's 'William Tell'," Gazette musicale de Paris (1834), translated by Oliver Strunk, ed., in Source Readings in Music History (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 813. My thanks to H. Robert Cohen for directing me to the Berlioz quote.

41. Dwight's, 11 June 1859, 88; MW, 31 January 1857, 68; a letter published in Dwight's, 28 May 1859, 71; BMT, 3 November 1860, 296.

likewise in other American cities. As early as 13 November, the Tribune noted that Maretzek had sent an unnamed agent to Philadelphia to obtain subscriptions for an opera season there. The plan was to alternate performances between Philadelphia and New York; the size and quality of Maretzek's troupe, the journalist noted, "[should] enable him to do this very effectively." (Tribune, 13 November 1850) Arrangements for the season in Philadelphia, where performances were to take place at the Chestnut Street Theatre, were handled by one Edward L. Walker, who owned a music store there. (Playbill, Chestnut Street Theatre, 10 December 1850) Maretzek was announced as the director of the fifteen performances, and the entire production was to be "in the same style and grandeur and magnificence displayed at the Astor Place Opera House, New York." (Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, 27 November 1850) The new season was announced to commence on Thursday, 5 December; in reality it did not start until the following Tuesday, 10 December.

Meanwhile, before the departure of the Philadelphia wing of the company--and simultaneous with all the miscellaneous pre-season preparations necessary in that city--there was plenty of activity to occupy Maretzek's attention in New York. During the last two and one-half weeks before the anticipated split, the company shifted into overdrive. No longer were performances limited to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. Beginning with 2 December and (with a few exceptions) extending through the end of the New York season in February, there were performances five nights of the week. Furthermore, there was a marked increase in the variety of repertory offered during any one week (see Table 14). Not only were there premières of new operas, but a single work

TABLE 14: ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY

CALENDAR OF PERFORMANCES, 21 OCTOBER 1850-11 MARCH 1851

	NEW YORK	
21 October (Monday)	Der Freischütz	
23 October	Der Freischütz	
25 October	Der Freischütz	
28 October (Monday)	Lucia di Lammermoor	
30 October	Ernani	
1 November	Ernani	
4 November (Monday)	Norma	
6 November	Lucia di Lammermoor	
7 November	Norma	
9 November	Norma	
11 November (Monday)	Lucrezia Borgia	
13 November	Lucrezia Borgia	
15 November	Lucrezia Borgia	
18 November (Monday)	Ernani	
20 November	Ernani	
22 November	Parisina	
23 November	Lucrezia Borgia (Gala night)	
25 November (Monday)	Parisina	
26 November	Norma	
27 November	Lucrezia Borgia	
29 November	Don Giovanni	
30 November	Gemma di Vergy	
2 December (Monday)	Gemma di Vergy	
4 December	Gemma di Vergy	
5 December	Lucia di Lammermoor	
6 December	Don Giovanni	
7 December	Lucrezia Borgia (Gala benefit)	
		PHILADELPHIA
9 December (Monday)	Norma	
10 December		Lucia di Lammermoor
11 December	Lucrezia Borgia	
13 December	Ernani	Don Giovanni
14 December	Concert	Don Giovanni
16 December (Monday)	Gemma di Vergy	
17 December	Concert	Ernani
18 December	La Sonnambula	
20 December	Parisina	Lucrezia Borgia

23 December (Monday)	Lucia di Lammermoor	Norma
26 December	Il Giuramento	Ernani
27 December	Il Giuramento	
28 December		Gemma di Vergy
30 December (Monday)	La Favorita	Norma
1 January 1851		Concert: Musical Fund Hall
2 January	La Favorita	Ernani
3 January		
4 January		Parisina
6 January (Monday)	Giovanna di Napoli	Parisina
8 January	Giovanna di Napoli	Il Giuramento
10 January	Giovanna di Napoli	Ernani
11 January	Concert (postponed)	
13 January (Monday)	Norma	La Favorita
14 January	Concert	Don Giovanni
15 January	Lucrezia Borgia	Ernani
17 January	Giovanna di Napoli	La Sonnambula (benefit)
18 January	Concert	La Favorita
20 January (Monday)	Norma	Benefit
21 January	Concert	
22 January	La Favorita	**BALTIMORE**
23 January	Concert	Ernani
24 January		
25 January		Parisina
27 January (Monday)		Lucia di Lammermoor
28 January	Romeo et Juliet	La Sonnambula
29 January	Romeo et Juliet	
30 January	Romeo et Juliet	Parisina
31 January	Romeo et Juliet	
1 February		Il Giuramento
3 February (Monday)	Il barbiere di Siviglia	
4 February		Benefit
5 February	Il barbiere di Siviglia	
6 February	Benefit	
7 February	La Favorita	Concert
10 February (Monday)	Lucrezia Borgia	
12 February	Semiramide	Concert
14 February	Semiramide	
		BOSTON
17 February (Monday)	Ernani	Lucrezia Borgia
19 February	Parisina	Norma
21 February	Ernani	Il barbiere di Siviglia
22 February		Concert-Providence, RI

24 February (Monday)	La Favorita	Romeo et Juliet
26 February		La Favorita
28 February		Benefit
1 March		Concert
3 March (Monday)		Semiramide
4 March	**PHILADELPHIA**	Norma
6 March	Concert	Concert for Whiting (postponed)
7 March	Ernani	
8 March	Concert	
10 March (Monday)		
11 March	Concert (benefit for Bertucca-Maretzek, in NYC)	

was no longer regarded as sufficient for an entire week's performances.

Maretzek used other techniques (besides changes in repertory) to increase variety in his offerings. Regular subscription performances of opera were increasingly interspersed with occasional benefits and "Grand Gala" events featuring the dancers Mlle. Fitzjames and Mons. Carrese--whose own ballet repertory likewise changed to further vary the bills of fare. Furthermore, whenever possible, the manager took advantage of the presence in New York of visiting musicians; if he could engage a renowned individual for a night or two, he featured that artist as a guest performer with the rest of his company. Maretzek constantly tinkered with his evening's programs; he was always looking for different ways to sweeten the pot. When a new opera was produced--or when a new and particularly successful combination of repertory and artists was achieved--the company typically presented the same bill for several performances before moving onto something else. Whether or not a performance was repeated, of course, depended entirely on the size of the audience it attracted. Otherwise, the bills were always varying,

always featuring different combinations of performers and different combinations of repertory--always with the inevitable goal of drawing yet another paying audience into the theatre.

The activities of the week commencing Monday 2 December provide some good examples of Maretzek's operating techniques. On Monday the company gave its second performance of Donizetti's Gemma di Vergy--an opera new to the troupe's repertory--with Parodi in the title role (its first performance had taken place the previous Saturday).[42] This opera was repeated on Wednesday, 4 December, after an off-night. On Thursday, Maretzek had a treat in store for his audience--or at least he thought he did. The "celebrated tenor Signor [Alessandro] Bettini" had arrived in New York on 30 November, en route from Paris to Havana where he had been engaged by Marti. Bettini, a "young man with a robust and vigorous voice and a manly figure," was to be in New York for several days while awaiting a steamer to Cuba. (C&Q, 167; Tribune, 2 December 1850) Maretzek, the consummate wheeler-dealer, recognized a golden opportunity when one appeared, and immediately approached the tenor and offered him a short engagement; on 3 December he triumphantly announced in the newspapers that Bettini had agreed to sing for "a few nights only." (Tribune, 3 December 1850)

The tenor's first appearance was on Thursday 5 December as Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor--Bettini's "favorite character," according to the

---

42. The United States première of this opera had been in New Orleans (by the Havana Company) on 22 April 1843--not in New York on 2 October 1843 (presumably by the same company) as reported by Loewenberg and Mattfeld. See Belsom, 103.

playbill.[43] The dancers Fitzjames and Carrese also were scheduled to appear. Unfortunately for Maretzek, however, Bettini was hoarse at the beginning of the performance, and became increasingly indisposed as the opera progressed. The manager was forced to halt the production at the end of the first act, and the audience was dismissed after being given the choice of a refund or an exchange for the next night (Friday), when the company would try the same bill again. (Odell, VI:65) Bettini, however, was still hoarse on Friday, so the troupe offered instead Don Giovanni--a work that had been very popular during the 1849-50 season. (C&Q, 98-99) On Saturday, Bettini again was advertised, again along with the dancers, again to perform in the opera Lucia di Lammermoor. That evening a huge crowd appeared at the Opera House for the performance. As ill luck (or ill singers) would have it, however, the auditors once again were disappointed. When the curtain rose, Maretzek came forward and announced that although the tenor had assured him repeatedly throughout the day that he would be able to sing, he had changed his mind a scant hour before curtain-time. By then, of course, it was much too late to post playbills with that announcement. Maretzek, who gave his little speech "evidently with great feeling," threw himself "upon the indulgence of the audience" and offered as a substitution Teresa Parodi in Lucrezia Borgia. The audience, undoubtedly to Maretzek's great relief, reacted to this offer with "shouts of applause." (Tribune, 9 December 1850)

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43. Playbill, Astor Place, 5 December 1850. It is unclear whether this performance was an extra one or if it was included in the subscription series. The playbills for Wednesday and Monday, 4 and 9 December, identify those performances as the 20th and 22nd subscription nights, respectively; the playbill for Thursday 5 December says nothing concerning subscriptions, and that for Friday is missing. On the playbill for the 5 December performance, however, is written at the bottom in an unidentified hand, "N. B. 6th & 7th Dec^{br} 21st Subscription & Saturday Extra," seeming to indicate that the 21st subscription performance was Friday, and the performances on Thursday and Saturday were both extras.

The manager successfully mollified his potentially irate audience by astutely offering as a substitute the star of the season in her most popular role. But Bettini himself came under attack in the New York press for his total lack of consideration for the New York public. "Tenor voices, we all know, are very delicate affairs," the critic for Figaro wrote sarcastically, "and in such weather as Bettini encountered on his arrival here, very apt to get out of order. But," he continued, "Bettini surely must have known whether he could or could not sing before the audience had assembled to hear him." (Figaro, 14 December 1850)

The sarcasm and suspicion expressed by this journalist were not unusual during the late 1840s and 1850s; it is another indication of Americans' increased animosity towards and distrust of Italian vocalists. To any kind of itinerant performer during this period, serious illness (at least in strictly professional terms) meant no performance. And no performance, of course, meant no pay. But in the decade that had passed since Jane Shirreff attempted to continue singing despite a serious malady, the circumstances of singers' illnesses--or purported illnesses--had changed. Choral or orchestral members of large troupes still found "no pay" to be a serious matter, for these musicians were paid by the performance.[44] For the stars of large Italian troupes, however, the story was different. Many of these singers, as we have seen, were paid

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44. According to an article in the MW, in 1857 the choral and orchestral members of the opera company at the Academy of Music in New York were paid $15 per week ($174 per week in 1986 dollars)--a pittance in comparison with what the stars took home. If one or more performances during a week were cancelled, the week's pay was adjusted accordingly. See MW, 28 November 1857, 733. For conversion to modern currency, see Greene, 48.

so handsomely that an occasional missed performance meant no economic hardship whatsoever; furthermore, a star of sufficient reputation could demand--and get--payment in advance for his or her appearances. Under such circumstances, a missed performance meant little or nothing financially.[45]

Illness seems to have been endemic to all travelling singers, but American critics increasingly viewed Italian artists as particularly unpredictable, undependable, and susceptible to maladies of various kinds. "These people always seem to be afflicted with some indisposition, and to demand much waiting for and caresses," wrote one individual in 1852 about an Italian company performing in Dresden, Germany. "One night Pozzolani,

---

45. For information about payment practices, see the MW, 11 July 1857, 437. Information about salaries paid to singers during this period is difficult to find. Newspapers or periodicals occasionally printed the reported salaries of various individual artists, but usually there is no means to verify the authenticity of these data. Since the figures often were given in an article expressing editorial outrage over the exorbitant salaries paid to opera singers, the figures themselves are probably suspect. In 1855 the MG published an article on Maretzek's company, which at that time was performing at the New York Academy of Music. Rather than listing the supposed salaries paid to the stars of the company, however, the author gave figures that he felt represented "the highest sum which [these particular singers] can be worth per month to any impresario, either in Europe or America"; the figures he supplied included monthly salaries of $500 ($5800 in 1986 dollars), $400 ($4640), $300 ($3480), $200 ($2320), $150 ($1740), and $100 ($1160). Presumably his suggested figures were significantly lower than what Maretzek's stars were actually paid, for in the same article he reported that one individual (who deserved, in his opinion, a monthly salary of no more than $150) had been paid $600 per month the previous season. (See MG, 17 March 1855) Although actual dollar amounts mentioned in periodicals may be suspect, there is no question that Italian singers were paid more in the United States than they earned at home. (See Rosselli, 50, 59. For conversion of currency, see Greene, 48) The figures reported in MG represent monthly salaries, but stars often were hired and paid for a certain number of performances. In 1853, for example, an article in the Spirit on the sudden collapse of the Alboni Opera Company noted that the tenor Lorenzo Salvi had been hired at a large salary for thirteen performances. He had been paid in advance, and at season's end had appeared only seven times. His behavior, according to the Spirit, had helped to bring about the downfall of the troupe. (See Spirit, 7 May 1853, 144) If a singer refused to live up to his or her commitments, the manager generally had no recourse but to take the offending individual to court for breach of contract. For one example of litigation between a manager and a star see Saroni's, 6 July 1850, 484.

the tenor, was sick--no opera; --on another, Tamburini, the basso--no opera again; and last [night] Persiani, the soprano--again no opera." (letter published in Dwight's, 17 July 1852, 114) The maligned company was performing in Europe, but the editor's sentiments closely echoed those of many Americans. As we saw in Chapter 3, by the mid-1840s many Americans had decided that Italian performers were greedy, contentious, lazy, and dishonest. The negative attitude had been fueled in particular by the behavior of singers associated with various companies assembled to perform in New York. The stereotype eventually included the conviction that most of the illnesses that befell Italian singers were feigned--that the supposed indispositions were simply matters of convenience for either the singers or their managers. In 1853 a critic (for the New York Daily Times) expressed what must have been a prevailing attitude towards many of the Italian stars when he wrote,

> The great singer in the present day . . . can do precisely what he likes. Get largely paid beforehand for services which he has it in his power to render or not as he chooses. Treat everybody from his manager down to his audience with insufferable impertinence. Have a new whim every hour in the day, and a fresh cold every time that his presence is required by the public. Sow sedition in the establishment with which he is connected, and make fools of two or three thousand respectable people half an hour before the raising of the curtain with a "sudden indisposition." (Reprinted in the MW, 21 May 1853, 59-60)

A critic for the Cincinnati Enquirer perhaps best summed up the skepticism that Americans felt towards the members of Italian opera companies. Reviewing a just-completed (and successful) season by the Grau Opera Company in the Queen City, he marvelled,

> They did what they agreed to do--which is very remarkable for Italian vocalists--The prime donne were not suddenly and mysteriously indisposed; the bassi did not refuse to sing; the tenori did not become unmanageable at the very moment they were needed most, and the artists were upon their good behavior unquestionably. (Quoted in Wolz, 109)

The resentment expressed by critics and audiences alike, of course, is completely understandable in view of the drawing power (and the exploitation of it by managers) of the same "star" singers who were so prone to maladies. American audiences of the nineteenth century--in this respect no different from their descendants in the twentieth--were attracted like flies to the honey of celebrity status and reputation. And managers, of course, knew and capitalized on this: hence Maretzek's frantic search in the late summer and fall of 1850 for a star singer whose reputation he could "puff," and his remarkable success in doing so. Audiences were drawn, then, by the promised appearance of a favorite star, perhaps singing in a favorite role. A last-minute substitution (because of a star's illness, whether real or not) often resulted in ill will directed at both the "star" and the manager--towards the singer if the disappointed individual believed that the illness was feigned; towards the manager if he believed that he (as a paying member of the audience) had been the victim of the nineteenth-century equivalent of a "bait-and-switch" operation.

* * *

After the fiasco of Bettini's non-appearance, the Astor Place company entered its seventh week, during which Maretzek began to use (for

the first time this season) a trick that was a standard managerial ploy: the promotional build-up that invariably occurred previous to a star's departure. Although Parodi had another three weeks of performances in New York, Maretzek announced to the public that the removal to Philadelphia of their new favorite was imminent. Both playbills and newspaper advertisements issued during the week carried the following announcement:

LAST WEEK
but one of

SIGNORINA TERESA
PARODI

In New York

(See also the reproductions of the playbills from 2 and 9 December 1850 on page 372.) This style of subtle deception was such a standard technique, utilized by most impresarios and theatre managers, that the public undoubtedly had become accustomed to it and learned not to be taken in. At the same time that the public was becoming more sophisticated, however, managers and impresarios were growing more devious. The message on a playbill sometimes was so misleading that it could catch unawares even experienced play-, opera-, and concert-goers. An Astor House playbill issued during the subsequent week is illustrative. This bill announced that on 9 December:

Signorina Teresa

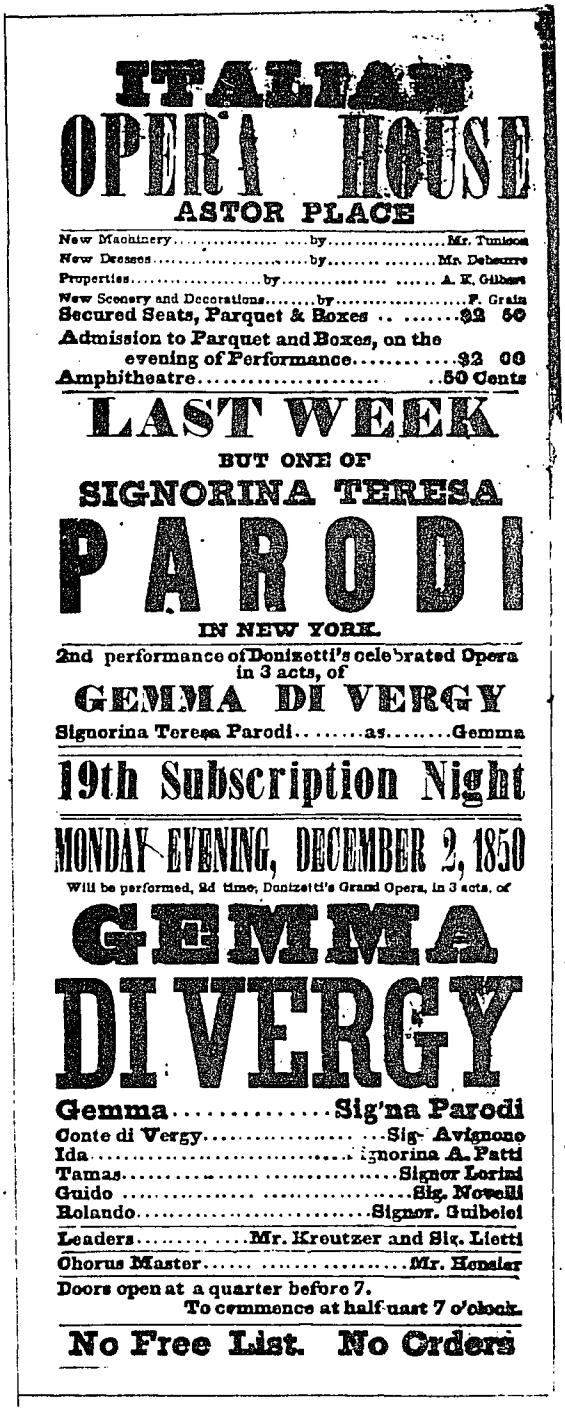
PARODI

Will perform for the

LAST TIME

Bellini's Grand Opera of

NORMA



ITALIAN
OPERA HOUSE
ASTOR PLACE

New Machinery.....by.....Mr. Tunison
New Dresses.....by.....Mr. Debeurre
Properties.....by.....A. E. Gilbert
New Scenery and Decorations.....by.....F. Grain
Secured Seats, Parquet & Boxes $2 50
Admission to Parquet and Boxes, on the evening of Performance.....$2 00
Amphitheatre.....50 Cents

LAST WEEK
BUT ONE OF
SIGNORINA TERESA
PARODI
IN NEW YORK.

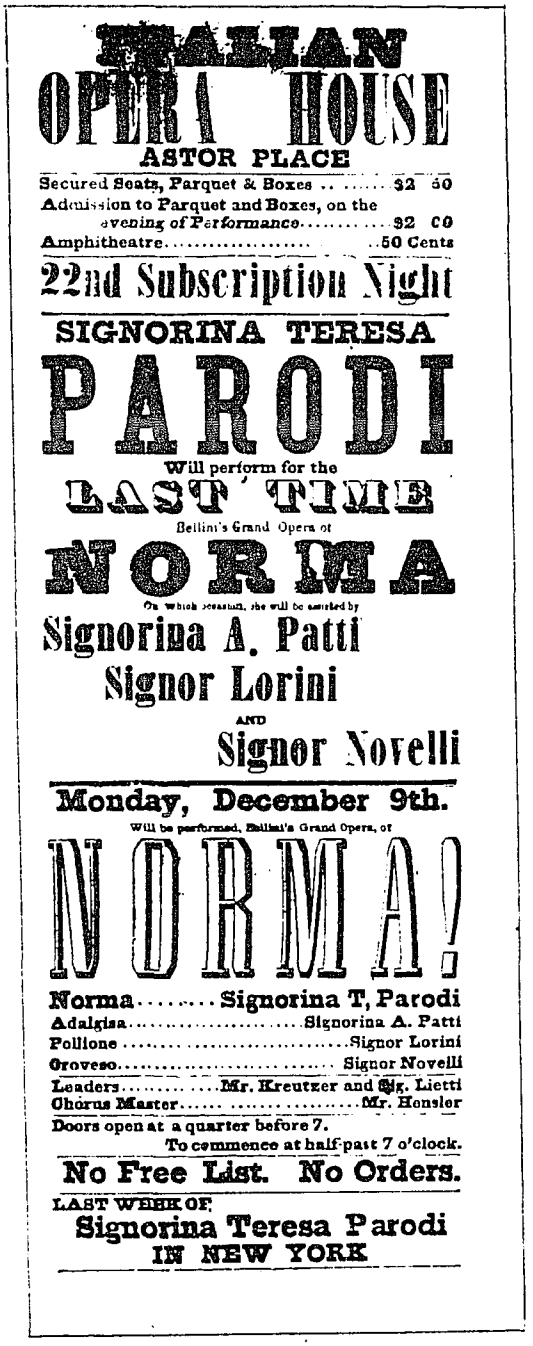
2nd performance of Donizetti's celebrated Opera in 3 acts, of
GEMMA DI VERGY
Signorina Teresa Parodi.....as.....Gemma

19th Subscription Night

MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 2, 1850
Will be performed, 2d time, Donizetti's Grand Opera, in 3 acts, of
GEMMA DI VERGY

Gemma.....Sig'na Parodi
Conte di Vergy.....Sig. Avignone
Ida.....Signorina A. Patti
Tamas.....Signor Lorini
Guido.....Sig. Novelli
Rolando.....Signor. Guibelei
Leaders.....Mr. Kreutzer and Sig. Lietti
Chorus Master.....Mr. Hensler
Doors open at a quarter before 7.
To commence at half-past 7 o'clock.

No Free List. No Orders



ITALIAN
OPERA HOUSE
ASTOR PLACE

Secured Seats, Parquet & Boxes $2 50
Admission to Parquet and Boxes, on the evening of Performance.....$2 00
Amphitheatre.....50 Cents

22nd Subscription Night

SIGNORINA TERESA
PARODI
Will perform for the
LAST TIME
Bellini's Grand Opera of
NORMA
On which occasion, she will be assisted by
Signorina A. Patti
Signor Lorini
AND
Signor Novelli

Monday, December 9th.
Will be performed, Bellini's Grand Opera, of
NORMA!

Norma.....Signorina T. Parodi
Adalgisa.....Signorina A. Patti
Pollione.....Signor Lorini
Oroveso.....Signor Novelli
Leaders.....Mr. Kreutzer and Sig. Lietti
Chorus Master.....Mr. Hensler
Doors open at a quarter before 7.
To commence at half-past 7 o'clock.

No Free List. No Orders.

LAST WEEK OF
Signorina Teresa Parodi
IN NEW YORK

Playbills from performances in New York City by the Astor Place Opera Company, 2 and 9 December 1850. These playbills illustrate the techniques used by Maretzek to announce the forthcoming departure of his star prima donna, Teresa Parodi.

The message could have two quite different interpretations: first, that Parodi's performance on 9 December, in Norma, would be her last in New York; or second, that this performance on 9 December would be Parodi's last appearance in the opera Norma during her remaining time in New York. As might be suspected, the latter message was the correct one; Parodi had yet another five performances to give (after the one of 9 December) before leaving for Philadelphia.

EXPANSION TO PHILADELPHIA

When the troupe's prima donna appeared in Norma on 9 December, the performance was not under the baton of Maretzek. The impresario had split his troupe and headed south to Philadelphia for the engagement there, apparently leaving the New York section under the direction of his deputy, Sesto Benedetti. (Tribune, 9 December 1850) There now were two Astor Place Companies, performing simultaneously in different cities; it is nevertheless inaccurate, however, to describe the troupe as split into two separate wings. Since New York and Philadelphia are quite close geographically, and the transportation link between the two cities reliable and relatively cheap, it was quite feasible (although not particularly easy) for Maretzek to shuttle singers back and forth. This, in fact, is what he did. Rather than splitting into two separate companies, then, the Astor Place troupe simply expanded to encompass two theatres of operation.

Almost all of the name singers (those mentioned in advertisements or on playbills) who performed during the Philadelphia engagement also appeared in New York during this same period. The several artists who

sang with the company in Philadelphia but not in New York were newcomers to the troupe who evidently had been added to the roster for the expansion.[46] Furthermore, over the course of the Philadelphia run, all of the stars who sang in New York also put in appearances in Pennsylvania. It was perfectly accurate, then, for the manager to list by name each of his star singers in the pre-season Philadelphia advertisements. The roster of the company actually in Philadelphia at any one time, however, fluctuated from week to week as singers came from and returned to New York.[47]

Maretzek arranged his Philadelphia performance dates (at least at the beginning of the season) in order to better divide his limited number of stars. During each of the first two weeks in Philadelphia the company mounted three performances--on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings; simultaneously in New York the troupe performed four and five nights, respectively (on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings during the week of 9 December, and adding Tuesday the subsequent week). Maretzek obviously chose his Philadelphia evenings

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46. The newcomers were bass Francesco Giubernao, bass Locatelli, and tenor Napoleone Parozzi.

47. Pre-season advertisements that appeared in newspapers and periodicals often included lists of the name singers expected to appear during the engagement. Most such enumerations, however, turn out to be inaccurate. The list that appeared in the North American and United States Gazette before the commencement of the Philadelphia season, for example, is incorrect on two counts: it included a singer (Benedetti) who did not perform in either New York or Philadelphia, and neglected to mention five vocalists who did appear in the latter city. (Benedetti did serve as a conductor in Philadelphia.) See N. A. and U. S. Gazette, 27 November 1850. Newspaper advertisements also occasionally have inaccurate casts listed for individual opera performances. In an attempt to sort out which of the company's singers were in Philadelphia and which were in New York on particular days during the simultaneous engagements, I compared newspaper advertisements (from journals in both cities) and extant playbills. For six different performances (for which there are no playbills), newspaper advertisements from both cities claim some of the same singers. Presumably the Philadelphia advertisements were correct, for they were newer ads; apparently the New York ads were recycled from earlier in the season and cast corrections had not been made.

based on his New York schedule: during the week of 9 December, for example, three vocalists (G. F. Beneventano, August Giubilei, and Amalia Patti) sang in New York in Lucrezia Borgia on Wednesday; two days later the trio performed in Don Giovanni in Philadelphia. If Mozart's opera had been mounted on the more-normal Thursday evening, the singers would have been fatigued, hence the change of the Philadelphia opera night to Friday.

Information about orchestral and choral musicians employed for the Philadelphia engagement is nonexistent. It is obvious, however, that the manager had to hire an additional chorus and another orchestra, for there were simultaneous performances in the two cities. Whether Maretzek split up his auxiliary forces, recruited an entirely new chorus and orchestra in New York and transported them to Philadelphia, engaged new musicians in Philadelphia, or used the Chestnut Street Theatre orchestra as the nucleus for his accompanying ensemble (and augmented it with other Philadelphia or New York musicians) is unknown. The North American and United States Gazette noted only that "the Orchestra will be a strong and talented one, including such artists as Waldhenfeld, the first violoncellist in the country, and will be under the masterly conduct of the Prince of leaders--Max Maretzek." (NA & USG, 10 December 1850) No other newspaper advertisements, playbills, or music or theatre periodicals mentioned the instrumental or choral musicians connected with the company's Philadelphia engagement.

The task of shuttling star singers back and forth from city to city (and insuring that the right singers were in the right places at the right

times for rehearsals as well as for performances) fell, undoubtedly, to Maretzek himself.[48] And what a gargantuan logistical headache it must have been. The opening of an entirely new theatre of operations more than doubled the necessary decisions. In addition to choosing the repertory, juggling joint appearances by various singers (and dancers), and calculating the drawing power of each evening's bill of fare, the manager now had to deal with railroad schedules, travel time, and accommodations for his performers. He also had to weigh the travel costs for a star versus his or her potential draw in a particular opera--and somehow determine whether it was more cost-effective to pay the transportation expenses or make do with a secondary singer (who would have a smaller audience draw) to cover the part.

In Philadelphia Maretzek followed the same general managerial modus operandi he had established in New York. He insured that far in advance the local newspapers published advertisements and "puffs" to inform the Philadelphia public of the troupe's impending arrival. The first Philadelphia advertisement appeared almost two full weeks prior to the beginning of the season; on opening night the same paper published a "puff" that predicted "undoubted success" for the troupe, reiterated the "great reputations" of the singers, and shrewdly reported the large number of seats that had already been taken. (NA & USG, 27 November, 10 December 1850) The Philadelphia Public Ledger, furthermore, informed its readers that the troupe's local manager (Walker) had taken great pains to improve the physical condition of the Chestnut Street Theatre by

48. It is possible, of course, that Maretzek delegated some of the legwork to his assistants, such as his brother Albert (who often worked as his agent) or Edward Walker. How the various duties and responsibilities were divided, however, is anyone's guess. Since (in the long run) the company was Maretzek's, and the responsibility for its economic well-being his, he probably made a majority of the decisions.

installing two additional stoves and by removing the liquor bars from the building. These improvements, the Public Ledger suggested, made the theatre a "place for the enjoyment of pure and refined pleasure, without any drawbacks;" no opera-lover, in other words, need fear discomfort or embarrassment by attending a performance. (Public Ledger, 13 December 1850)

For the first four performances in Philadelphia Maretzek relied on three well known and popular operas: Lucia di Lammermoor, Don Giovanni, and Ernani. The manager counted on the anticipation, excitement, and glitter associated with the season's opening week to attract substantial crowds; "large and brilliant" and "large and fashionable" audiences obligingly attended these performances--at least according to the local newspapers.[49] The opening night of the season featured the Philadelphia debut of Apollonia Bertucca-Maretzek in Lucia. On the other three nights Teresa Truffi was featured in both Don Giovanni and Ernani. The Public Ledger, on the day of Truffi's second performance, pointed out that she was soon "to leave for New York, to remain there for some time"; the clear implication was that if Philadelphia music-lovers intended to hear her sing, they should not procrastinate. (Public Ledger, 14 December 1850)

Although the company apparently attracted full houses in its first two weeks of performances, the singers found that the commencement of the Philadelphia season was remarkably similar to the beginning of the New York season in one respect: they were again compared, unfavorably, with

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49. NA & USG, 11 December; Public Ledger, 14 December. But Curtis writes that the first performance by the troupe drew a poor house, the result of high prices, cold weather, and the recent appearance of Jenny Lind. See Curtis, vol. 2, 10 December 1850.

the Havana Company. John Hill Martin, a Philadelphia resident, witnessed the company in Lucia di Lammermoor on 10 December. "Bertucca, Avignone, Forti, and Rossi [are] all good singers," he wrote in his diary, "but [they are] not equal to the previous troupe."[50] For the time being, however, the company had to make do without Parodi, for she had not yet finished her performances in New York. The northern branch of the troupe was in the eighth week of its season, during which they were offering Norma, Lucrezia Borgia, and Ernani--featuring Parodi's last appearance in each. On Saturday of that week (14 December), the prima donna sang in a Grand Gala Concert at Tripler Hall that was advertised--incorrectly--as "Parodi's only concert appearance in New York." (Tribune, 14 December 1850)

Maretzek stalled as long as possible before he introduced his big attraction to Philadelphia; Parodi made her debut there in Lucrezia Borgia on Friday 20 December--at almost the end of the company's second week. Prior to the star's appearance, the manager had widely puffed her pending arrival, making sure to include lavish reports of her success in New York. When she finally came, he doubled his admission prices; both of these tactics had been successful in New York.[51] After her Philadelphia debut, Parodi sang in the next seven consecutive performances, to great acclaim and large audiences. The critic for the North American and United States Gazette pointed out that her success was all the more remarkable, coming as it did on the heels of Jenny

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50. John Hill Martin Papers, Manuscript Collection, PHi vol. 1, 103

51. Prices had been $1.00 for box and parquet (unreserved; 50 cents extra for reserved seats) and 25 cents for the amphitheatre. See playbills for Chestnut Street Theatre, 17 and 20 December 1850.

Lind's triumphant engagement. Diarist Joseph Sill confirmed that the Chestnut Street Theatre--at least at Parodi's debut performance on 20 December--was packed; "I went to the Parquette," he wrote,

> & could only get a 'stool' as the house was filled.-- Parodi filled the character admirably, and has great musical power; tho' she is not so perfect as many others whom I have heard-- Still, I was exceedingly pleased both with the performances & the opera; and also with the appearance of the house, which was very brilliant with people. (Sill, 20 December 1850)

Because of the truncated nature of the Philadelphia season, the operas in which Parodi performed changed much more frequently than they had in New York. She sang, in quick succession, in Lucrezia Borgia (twice), Norma (twice), Ernani, Gemma di Vergy, and (for her benefit and last performance), once again in Lucrezia Borgia (see Table 14).

By the prima donna's fourth appearance on 26 December, however, the magic of her novelty appeared to be wearing somewhat thin. On 27 December the Gazette commented rather disapprovingly that the audience in attendance the previous evening, although "very select and discriminating," was "not such a one, in point of numbers, as the occasion deserved." (NA & USG, 27 December) In quick response to the low turn-out, Maretzek added another attraction to his Saturday offering of Gemma di Vergy: the debut performances--billed as for "This Night Only"--by the sisters Caroline, Teresina, Adelaide, and Clementine Rousset, "Première Danseuses . . . from the Grand Theatres of St. Petersburg, Brussels and Italy." (Playbill, Chestnut Street Theatre, 28 December 1850) The combination of ballet and opera did the trick; a review that appeared on 30 December described the resulting house as "crowded from parquet to dome" with an audience that was "the most splendid . . . of the season."

(NA & USG, 30 December 1850) The attraction was so successful, in fact, that the management decided to feature the Rousset sisters again the following Monday, in combination with Parodi's second appearance in Norma.[52]

By now, the Philadelphia branch of the troupe had entered its fourth week of the season and momentum was building. Parodi's departure was fast approaching, and this was prominently noted on playbills and in advertisements. Meanwhile, in New York, the northern branch seems to have been doing fairly well without either Parodi or, for that matter, Maretzek. The troupe had filled in the vacuum left by the departure of the star prima donna with performances of Parisina--still novel enough to draw substantial audiences--and Lucia di Lammermoor, both featuring Truffi (returned from Philadelphia). After these productions, the company mounted two operas that were new neither to the troupe nor to New York audiences, but that had not yet been mounted this season: Mercadante's Il Giuramento (its first performance in New York for two years) and Donizetti's La Favorita.[53] Both of these operas also featured Truffi in prominent roles, and both evidently were well received by New York audiences.

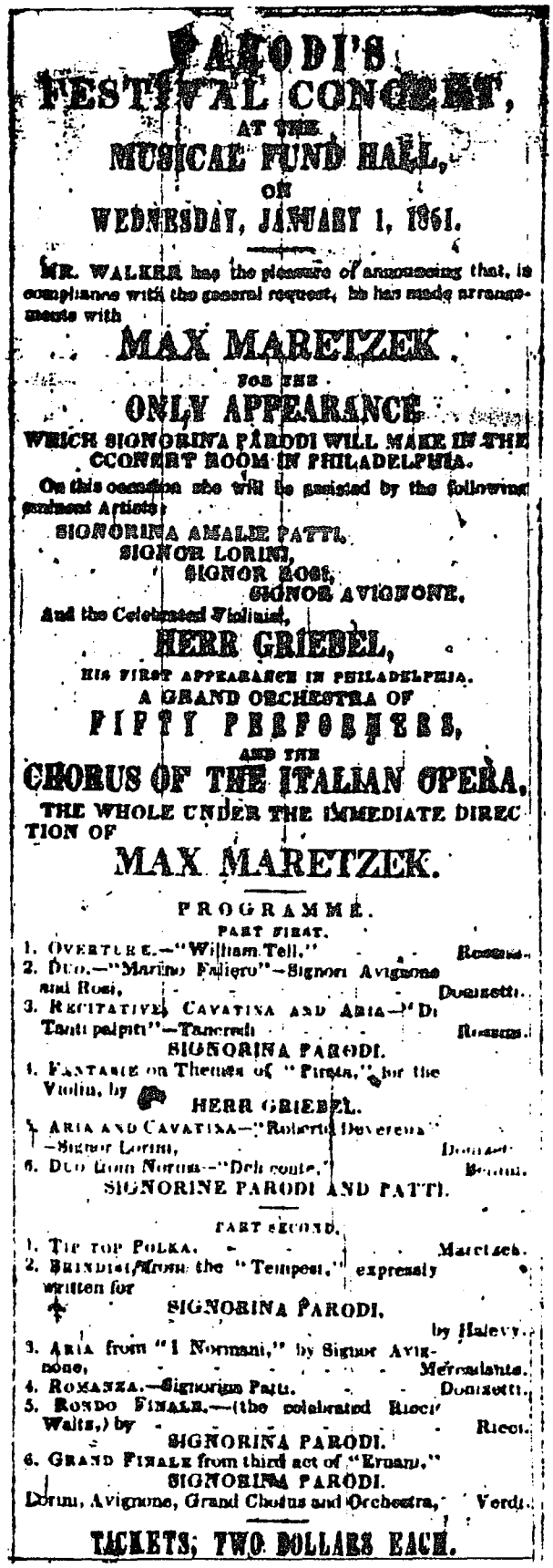
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52. This arrangement apparently was a last-minute affair prompted by the success of Saturday's performance, for the dancers' second appearance, which is announced in the newspaper, is not mentioned on the playbill distributed for that evening's performance. See NA & USG, 30 December 1850 and playbills, Chestnut Street Theatre, 28 and 30 December 1850.

53. The 1847-48 Astor Place Company had mounted the United States première of Il Giuramento; the work was performed by the 1848-49 company, but not by Maretzek's troupe of 1849-50. See Mattfeld, 31. La Favorita had most recently been performed at Castle Garden by the Havana Company during April 1850. See Odell, V:565, 566.

Back in Philadelphia, Maretzek was orchestrating Parodi's final appearances there. After her second performance of Norma on Monday 30 December (with the Rousset sisters), the prima donna had one last scheduled appearance in that city. On 1 January, however, Walker announced that he was "unwilling that the popular Parodi should leave Philadelphia without being seen and heard by the many who are prevented from attending the theatre." Consequently (and "at much expense"), he arranged for her appearance in a "Festival Concert" that evening at Musical Fund Hall, assisted by a "Celebrated Violinist" (one Herr Greibel), the chorus of the Italian Opera company, a "Grand Orchestra of Fifty Performers," and most of the members of the Astor Place troupe who happened to be in Philadelphia. The concert consisted almost entirely of operatic selections from works by Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Mercadante, and Halévy; even the single work for violin was a "Fantasie on Themes of 'Pirata' for the Violin." (See the reproduction of the program on page 382.) According to the Public Ledger, the performance was a great success. Presumably it attracted those individuals whose religious convictions would not allow them to enter a theatre, as well as music-lovers who preferred to hear their operatic stars in the less fettered context of a concert. The next evening, Thursday 2 January, Parodi chose for her benefit and last Philadelphia appearance the reliable Lucrezia Borgia. Since this was the third performance of the opera with in a two-week period, however, the management decided to sweeten the pot with the Philadelphia debut of Maretzek's dancers Fitzjames and Carrese. (Playbill, Chestnut Street Theatre, 2 January 1851)

At this point, the middle of the eleventh week in New York (and the fourth in Philadelphia), the company's two sopranos changed places: Parodi



PARODI'S
FESTIVAL CONCERT,
AT THE
MUSICAL FUND HALL,
ON
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1851.

MR. WALKER has the pleasure of announcing that, in compliance with the general request, he has made arrangements with

MAX MARETZEK

FOR THE

ONLY APPEARANCE

WHICH SIGNORINA PARODI WILL MAKE IN THE CONCERT ROOM IN PHILADELPHIA.

On this occasion she will be assisted by the following eminent Artists;

SIGNORINA AMALIE PATTI,
SIGNOR LORINI,
SIGNOR ROSI,
SIGNOR AVIGNONE,

And the Celebrated Violinist,

HERR GRIEBEL,

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN PHILADELPHIA.

A GRAND ORCHESTRA OF

FIFTY PERFORMERS,

AND THE

CHORUS OF THE ITALIAN OPERA,

THE WHOLE UNDER THE IMMEDIATE DIRECTION OF

MAX MARETZEK.

PROGRAMME.

PART FIRST.

1. OVERTURE.—"William Tell." Rossini.
2. DUO.—"Marino Faliero"—Signori Avignone and Rosi, Donizetti.
3. RECITATIVE, CAVATINA AND ARIA—"Di Tanti palpiti"—Tancredi Rossini.

SIGNORINA PARODI.

4. FANTASIE on Themes of "Pirata," for the Violin, by

HERR GRIEBEL.

5. ARIA AND CAVATINA—"Roberto Devereux" —Signor Lorini, Donizetti.
6. DUO from Norma—"Deh conte," Bellini.

SIGNORINE PARODI AND PATTI.

PART SECOND.

1. TIP TOP POLKA. Maretzek.
2. BRINDISI from the "Tempest," expressly written for

SIGNORINA PARODI,

by Halevy.

3. ARIA from "I Normani," by Signor Avignone, Mercadante.
4. ROMANZA.—Signorina Patti. Donizetti.
5. RONDO FINALE.—(the celebrated Ricci Waltz,) by Ricci.

SIGNORINA PARODI.

6. GRAND FINALE from third act of "Ernani."

SIGNORINA PARODI.

Lorini, Avignone, Grand Chorus and Orchestra, Verdi.

TICKETS, TWO DOLLARS EACH.

Advertisement for a concert by the Astor Place Opera Company on 1 January 1851 at Musical Fund Hall in Philadelphia.

went north, and Truffi south. With the departure of Parodi, the number of performances per week at the Chestnut Street Theatre increased--just as the momentum at the Astor Place House had increased as the season progressed there. The fourth and fifth weeks of the engagement featured four performances each, and during the final (benefit) week there were five (see Table 14). In addition, Maretzek increased the levels of variety and novelty offered in Philadelphia, and decreased his admission prices. (NA & USG, 4 January 1851) After Parodi's departure the Philadelphia troupe used a new opera to attract audiences, presenting (precisely as had the New York branch) Truffi in Parisina--in this case giving the Philadelphia première of the work. During the fifth and sixth weeks of the season the troupe offered a veritable potpourri of operas: Parisina (its second performance), Il Giuramento, Ernani (twice), La Favorita (twice), Don Giovanni, La Sonnambula, and--in the troupe's final appearance--a benefit performance that consisted of parts of various operas. In addition, two groups of dancers (the duo of Fitzjames and Carrese, and the Rousset sisters) also appeared during these two weeks, adding another element of variety to the bills of fare.

The only additional information about the Philadelphia audience during this engagement is from Joseph Sill's diary; what he tells us, however, is instructive. He attended a total of five performances during the season, and in general was pleased with the company--although he disliked Ernani and found the plot of Parisina "disagreeable, but the Music . . . often very sweet and expressive." He took his daughter to one performance, his son to another, and his wife, his daughter, and a woman who worked at his store to a third. "Mrs. Sill," he noted, "had not

attended the Theatre for about 2 years, & I thought that a visit there would be agreeable & pleasant to her." (Sill, 13 January) The trip on 10 January was a casual, spur-of-the-moment affair; as he related,

> In the Evening Mr. Wilton call'd, and after chatting with us for a length of time, presented us with 3 tickets of admission to the 'opera'--[my son] Willy & I accompanied him there & the other ticket we presented to Mr. Richter, the Musical Teacher." (Sill, 10 January)

Sill's attendance at both dramatic and operatic performances during the twenty-year period covered by his diaries was remarkably consistent. His numerous comments do not indicate musical literacy, but he obviously had a discriminating ear. He frequently took his young children to opera performances (which suggests that he did not consider it inappropriate fare for them) and, as the diary entry quoted above indicates, he sometimes attended performances on the spur of the moment.[54] Furthermore, he did not seem to make any distinction between English, French, or Italian varieties of opera: he attended performances of all three types. All of these factors suggest that to Joseph Sill (and perhaps to other Philadelphians) Italian opera was still a normal part of the theatrical venue. Comments found in a Philadelphia monthly, Graham's Magazine, furthermore indicate that some Philadelphians were resisting the attempts by the elite (in particular New Yorkers) to claim Italian opera for their own. "The small circle of fashionable people may subscribe and

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54. As with drama (or with movies today), however, Sill exercised caution in his choice of which operas he took the children to see. After his first hearing of Don Giovanni (by the Seguins) in 1841 he wrote that "the moral of the Play is shocking, and hardly tolerable," and when he attended the Astor Place company presentation of this work on 14 January he went alone. During this same engagement, however, Sill took his daughter Mary to see Parodi in Lucrezia Borgia, an opera that he had described (on first hearing in 1847) as "of course unpleasant in the story, & bloody in the end." Sill, 5 May 1841; 29 November 1847.

talk," wrote the editor, "but they can do little in this opera matter, without the support of the plain, unpretending portion of the inhabitants, who, after all, make up the audience, and bring in the money." ("Fine Arts," Graham's Magazine, August 1850)

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As the Philadelphia engagement was drawing to a climactic finish, excitement was building once again in New York. Maretzek's name continued to appear on the Philadelphia playbills as conductor there, but by 3 January he had returned to the Astor Place House. (Benedetti was left in charge at the Chestnut Street Theatre.)[55] Prior to the next bout of excitement slated to begin in New York on 6 January there was a temporary lull; no performances were given at the Astor Place House for the remainder of the week following Truffi's departure. There was, however, a spate of rehearsals and (as reflected in the newspapers and periodicals) a general air of anticipation: in early January the company was scheduled to mount the world première of an opera. The work was Giovanna Prima di Napoli, and the author was the pianist, impresario, and composer Maurice Strakosch--a man well known and well liked by New York audiences and music professionals alike.

The opera's première had been anticipated from the very beginning of the season. The Message Bird had announced in July that the Astor Place troupe would give the debut performance during the year, and

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55. Playbills, Chestnut Street Theatre, 4, 5, 17, 18, 20 January 1851. Maretzek undoubtedly returned to Philadelphia for the performance on 20 January, which was his benefit. See playbill, Chestnut Street Theatre, 17 January 1851.

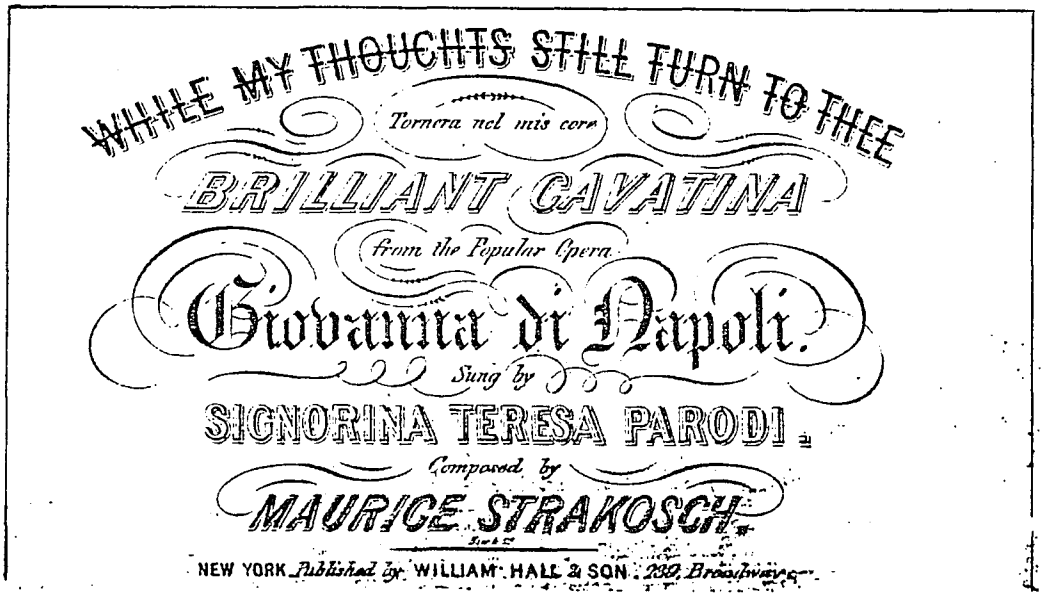
several journals had occasionally published reports on the progress of rehearsals. (Message Bird, 15 July 1850, 395) The three-act opera was written to a libretto by Agostino Pendola; Strakosch composed it, according to the published libretto, "expressly . . . for the Italian Opera Company of New York, Under the Management and Direction of Max Maretzek."[56] It is Strakosch's only known opera; at the time he was much better known as a pianist and a composer of works for the piano.

Reviews indicate that the opera was well received at its première on 6 January. The critic for the Tribune called it "the work of a most devoted and appreciating student of [the Italian] style." He was quick to point out that the opera "has no original melody or treatment," but obviously did not consider this cause for censure, for he wrote that "[the work] recalls the pleasantest parts of the pleasantest operas as its sweet, full stream flows on." Strakosch evidently was adept at writing in the style of the most popular contemporary opera composers of Europe. The critic for the Message Bird commented that "of course it is not to be disguised, that some of the themes [of the opera] are first cousins to something, somewhere heard before," and the Tribune's reporter pointed out similarities to works by Verdi (especially Ernani), Weber, and Meyerbeer. Overall, however, Giovanna di Napoli won unqualified approval from local critics. One reviewer concluded that Strakosch had "done himself great credit" in the composition of his first opera, and another wrote that the work was "of a remarkable uniformity of excellence." This latter journalist praised the opera's "unflagging sense of melody," and

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56. Giovanna Prima di Napoli, (New York: Published for and sold at the box office of the [Astor Place] Opera House, 1850); Loewenberg, col. 888. For more information on Strakosch, see Chapter 3.





Top: opera and concert impresario, pianist, and composer Maurice Strakosch.
Bottom: top of the title page of a sheet-music publication from Strakosch's opera Giovanna di Napoli, this one "as sung by Signorina Teresa Parodi."

rejoiced in the absence of "those dreamy desert patches of monotonous and meaningless recitative which disfigure most . . . contemporary Italian Operas." (Message Bird, 1 February 1851, 610; Tribune, 8 January 1851)
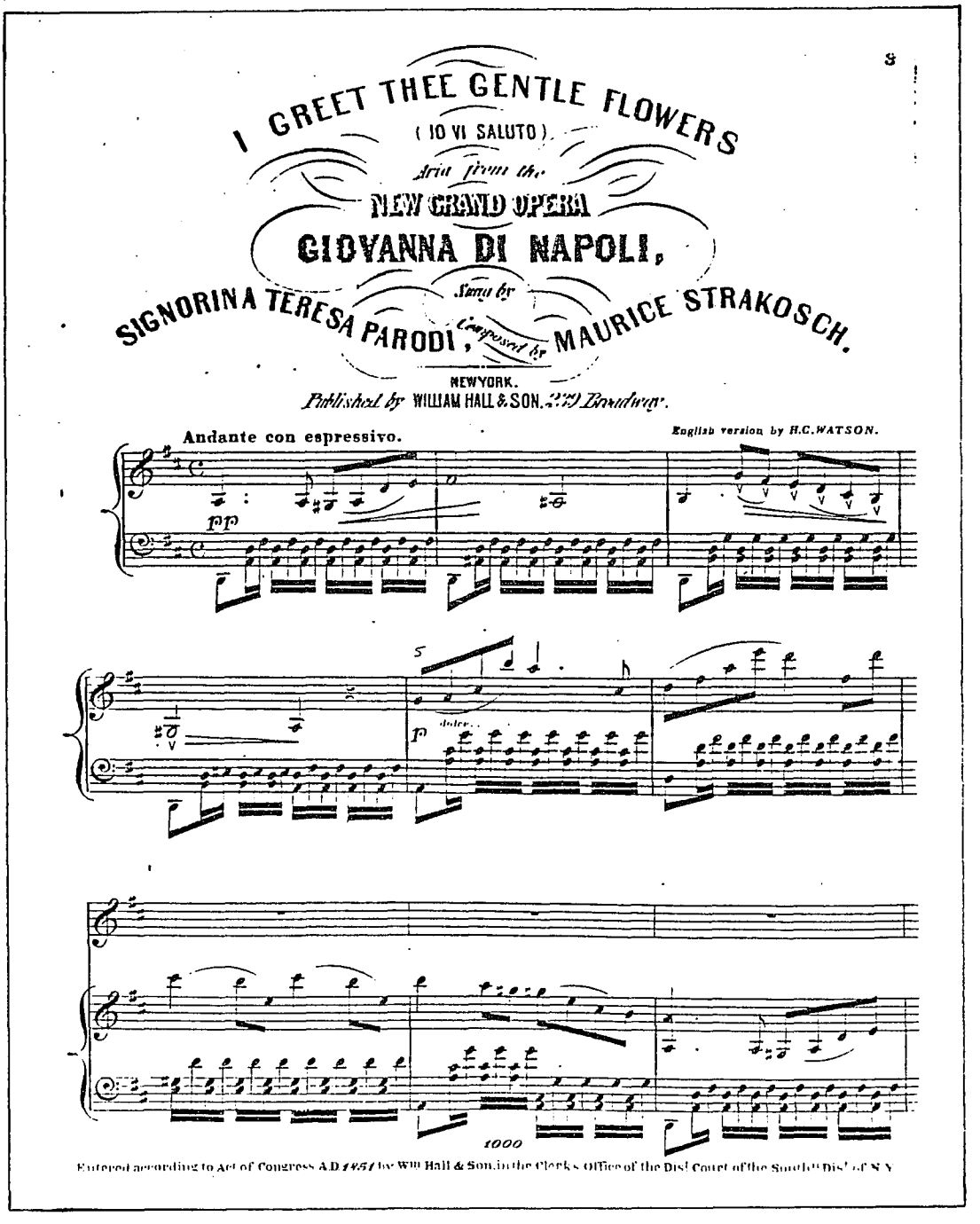
Although this last comment seems to suggest the use of spoken dialogue in place of recitative, no other reviews indicate that this was the case. The opera evidently was never published in score (if it was, no copies have been located), so this question cannot be definitively answered. In the sheet music publications from the opera, however, there are occasional sections of recitative; they are, in fact, melodious and dramatic, with instrumental interjections.[57] It is possible that Strakosch, aware of the distaste his audience had for long stretches of dry recitative (sung in a language incomprehensible to most Americans) kept these sections as short and as interesting as possible.

The aria "I Greet Thee Gentle Flowers" ("Io vi saluto"), written for the soprano Parodi, is a good example. It commences with a twenty-measure instrumental introduction consisting of two eight-measure phrases (with melodic structures, respectively, of ab and ab^1) and a four-measure extension that has echoes of the opening melodic gesture of "a" (see Example 7). The soprano enters alone at measure 21; these first three measures then are answered with an instrumental interjection at measure 24 that again recalls the first part of the melody in the introduction. The next interjection (at measures 27-28) is dramatic in nature; it consists of rapid sixteenth-note repetitions of subdominant and dominant-seventh chords followed by a resolution to the tonic at

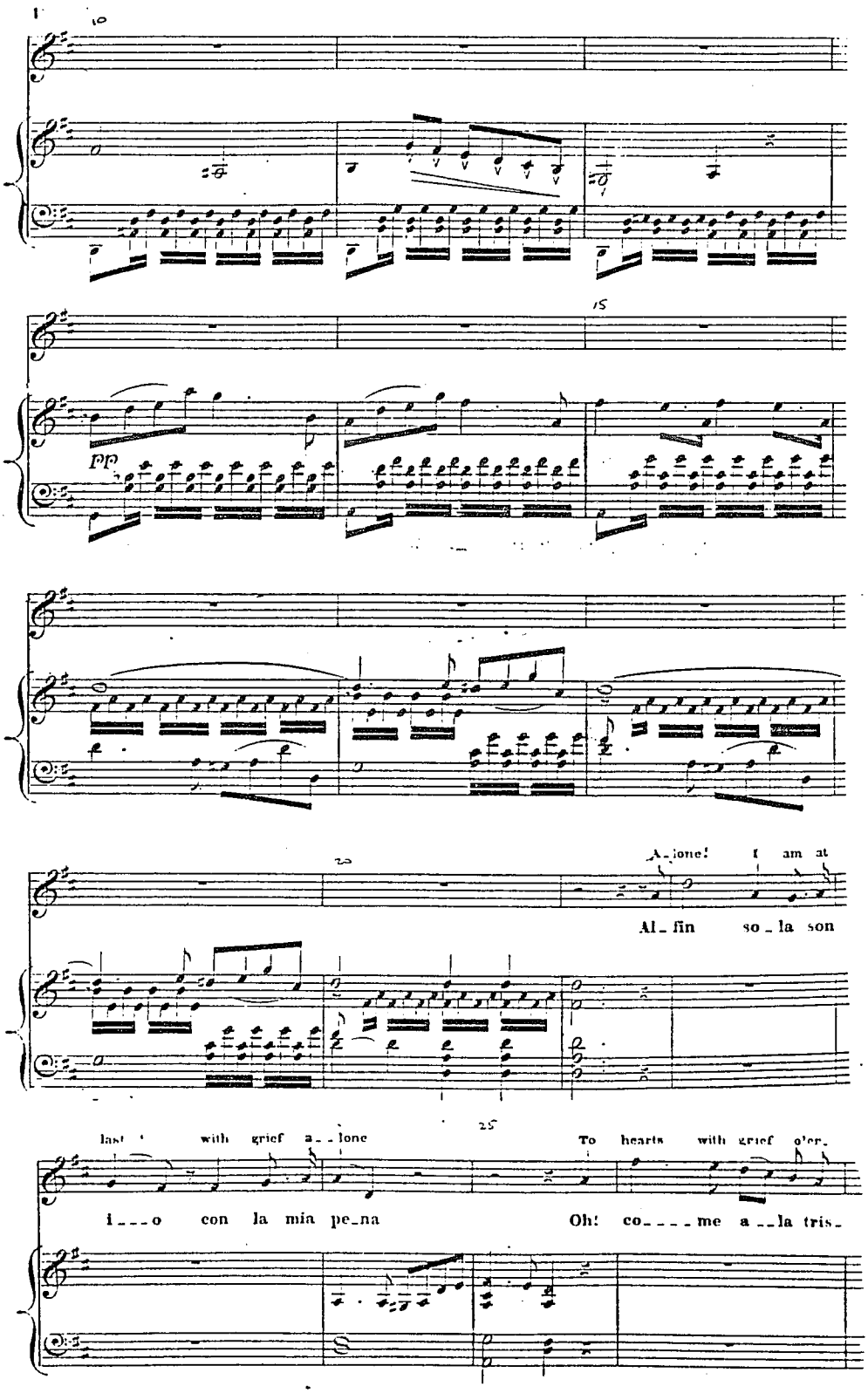
57. Six pieces of sheet music (New York: William Hall & Son, 1851) are in the collection of the Music Division, DLC.
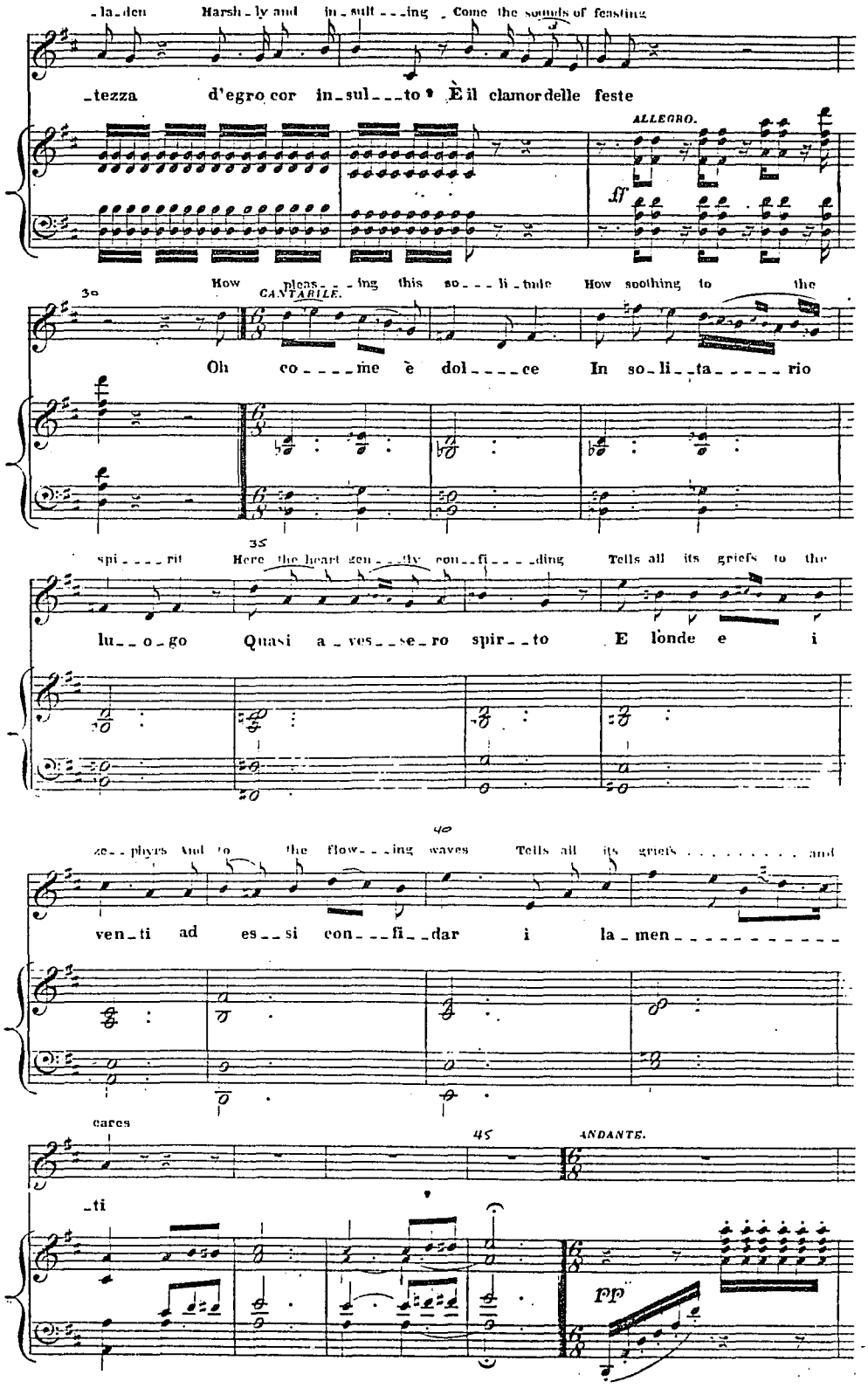
measure 29. At this point (the final sixteen measures of the recitative section) the character shifts significantly: the time signature changes to 6/8 and the music becomes more active harmonically. Strakosch, using a technique that is typical of the mid-century, borrows chords from the parallel minor (the work is in D-major); the movement here is by major thirds: the progression is from the tonic to a flat-sixth (B-flat), minor fourth (G minor), then (at measure 38) the dominant (A). Most important, however, is the change in character of the vocal part (now marked "cantabile"), which is arioso-like: pleasing, melodious, and definitely not "monotonous."

If a new work were judged today to have "no original melody or treatment," the composer would consider the critique a damning insult. It is entirely possible, however, that Strakosch was not disturbed by this assessment. The composer probably had set out deliberately to write a pleasant, sweet, melodious--and thoroughly conventional--opera. Maretzek, after all, had commissioned the work, and the impresario's goal was to please his American audiences, who seemed to prefer the conventional and the familiar; as one reviewer noted of the opera: "[it] is written in the most approved modern Italian style; the aim of the composer being, apparently, to invent a series of pleasing and brilliant melodies, and present them to the public in the most palatable and acceptable way." (Message Bird, 1 February 1851, 609) All six extant numbers from Strakosch's opera are in standard forms (most are ternary), and the tonal treatment likewise is rather commonplace, with modulatory movement either to the dominant, the subdominant, or the relative minor or major. For example, in the tenor Romanza "Still Dreaming and Thinking of Thee" (Tre lunghi e miseri anni"). Strakosch commences in B-



Example 7. Introduction and recitative section from "I Greet Thee Gentle Flowers," from Giovanna Prima di Napoli by Maurice Strakosch. (New York: William Hall & Son, 1851).


10
15
pp
20
Alone! I am at
Al_ fin so_ la son
25
last with grief a_ _lone
To hearts with grief o'er_
i_ _ _o con la mia pe_na
Oh! co_ _ _ _me a_ _la tris_


-la-den Harsh-ly and in-sult-ing Come the sounds of feasting
-tezza d'egro cor in-sul-to È il clamor delle feste
ALLEGRO.
ff
How pleas-ing this so-li-tude How soothing to the
30
CANTABILE.
Oh co-me è dol-ce In so-li-ta-rio
spi-rit Here the heart gen-tly con-fi-ding Tells all its griefs to the
35
lu-o-go Quasi a-ves-se-ro spir-to E londe e i
ze-phyrs And to the flow-ing waves Tells all its griefs and
40
ven-ti ad es-si con-fi-dar i la-men-
cares
-ti
45
ANDANTE.
pp

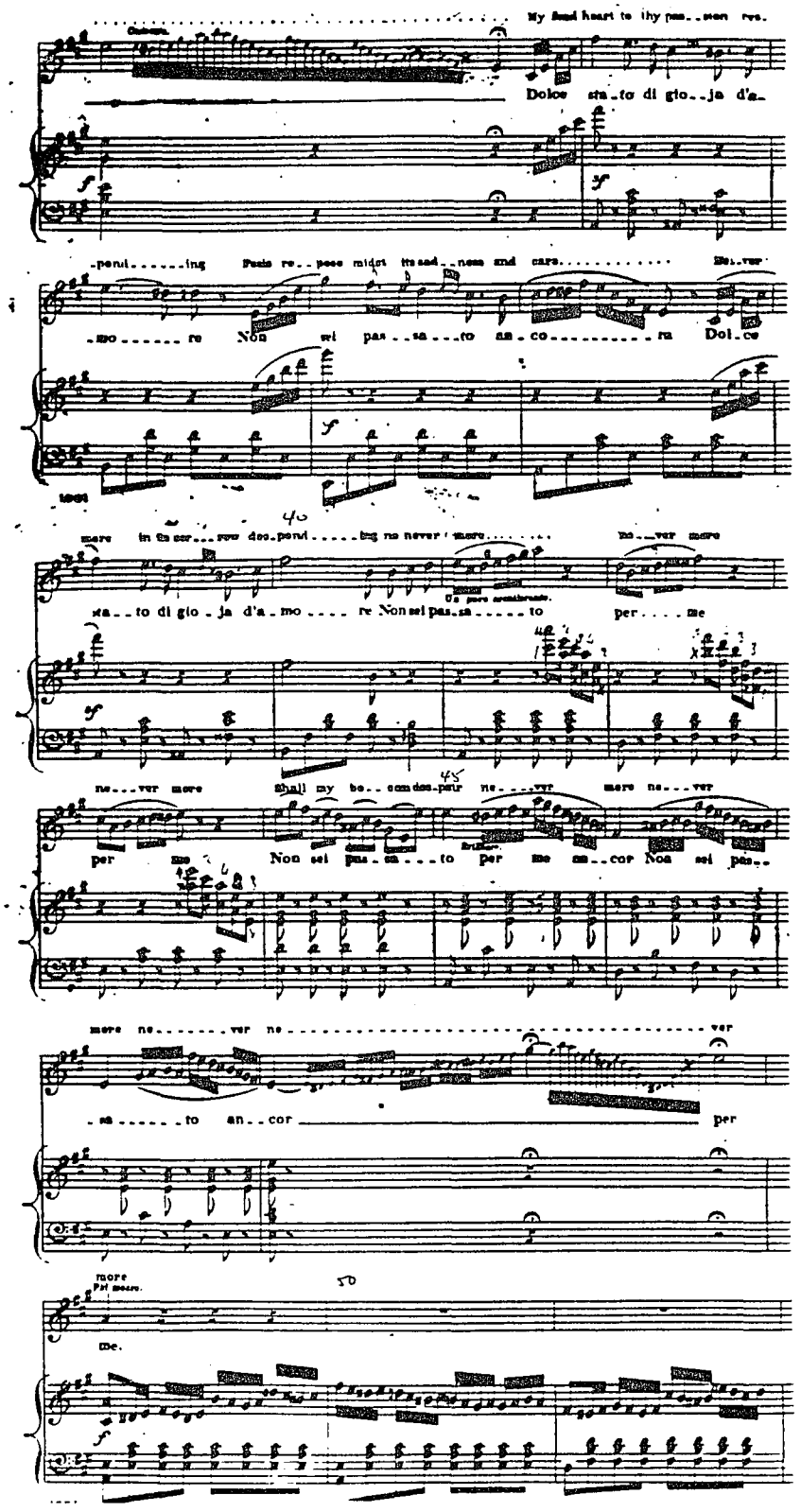
minor, moves in the brief middle section to D-major, and concludes with a repetition of the first section in B-major, the parallel mode.[58] In "Oh Giovanna Heaven Inspiring" ("Ah par d'angelo O Giovanna"), a tenor aria in ternary form, the harmonic movement is G-major (A section); B-minor to D-major (B section); and G-major (A section).

Both of Parodi's arias, "I Greet Thee Gentle Flowers" ("Io vi saluto") and "While My Thoughts Still Turn to Thee" ("Tornera nel mis core") are in bel canto style, with numerous examples of fioritura--again evidently in response to American taste. In the second of these, which consists of a ternary aria (Allegro con spirito) that is repeated in its entirety after an extended instrumental interlude (giving the piece the form ABA/C/ABA), Strakosch provides the soprano with two written-out cadenzas, at the end of the B and the second A sections: AB(cadenza)A(cadenza)/C/AB (cadenza)A(cadenza) (see Example 8).
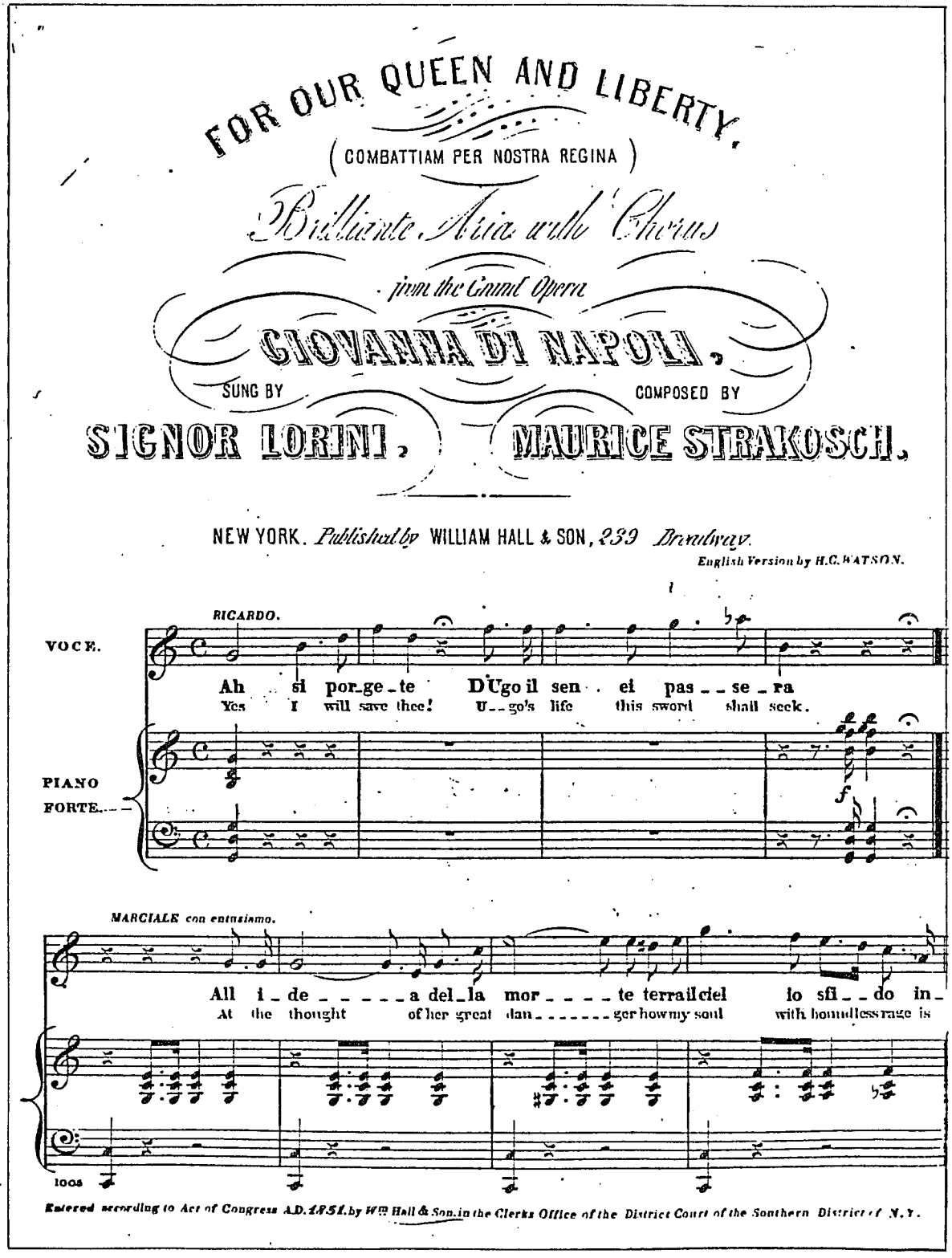
One of the most appealing of the six arias includes a part for chorus. "For Our Queen and Liberty" ("Combattim per nostra Regina"), a stirring martial work (in a form that can be diagrammed ABAC/ABAC^1), was written for and sung by the company's tenor Domenico Lorini. The original "ABA" section is sung by the tenor alone; the original "C" section is for chorus alone. The composition is harmonically simple, as befits a military call-to-arms. (The aria is given in its entirety as Example 9.) The A section consists principally of tonics and dominants, with a few altered chords thrown in for color: notice the
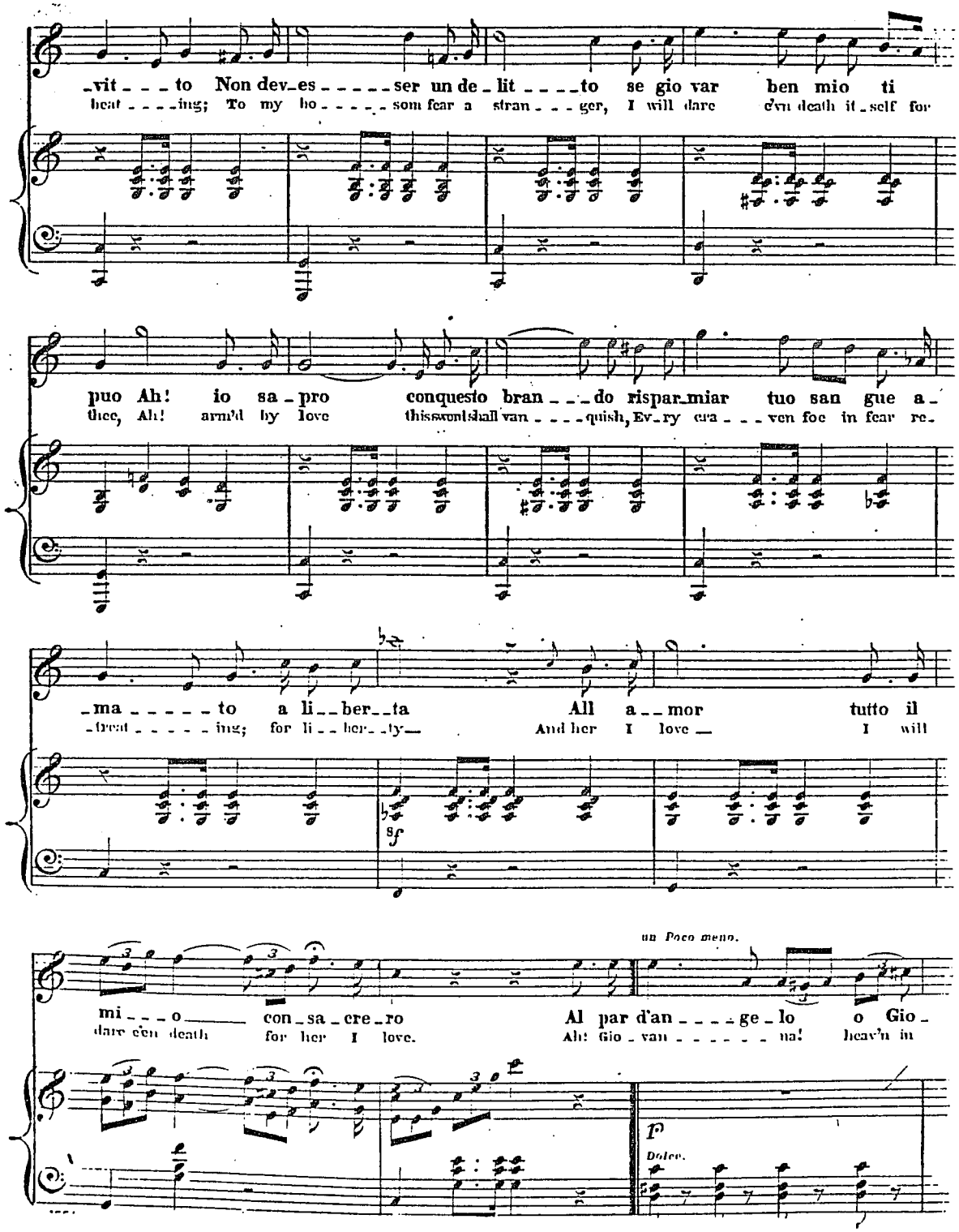
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58. The overall impression of "Still Dreaming" is reminiscent of the well known aria "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls" from Michael Balfe's very popular English comic opera The Bohemian Girl, about which see Chapter 5.
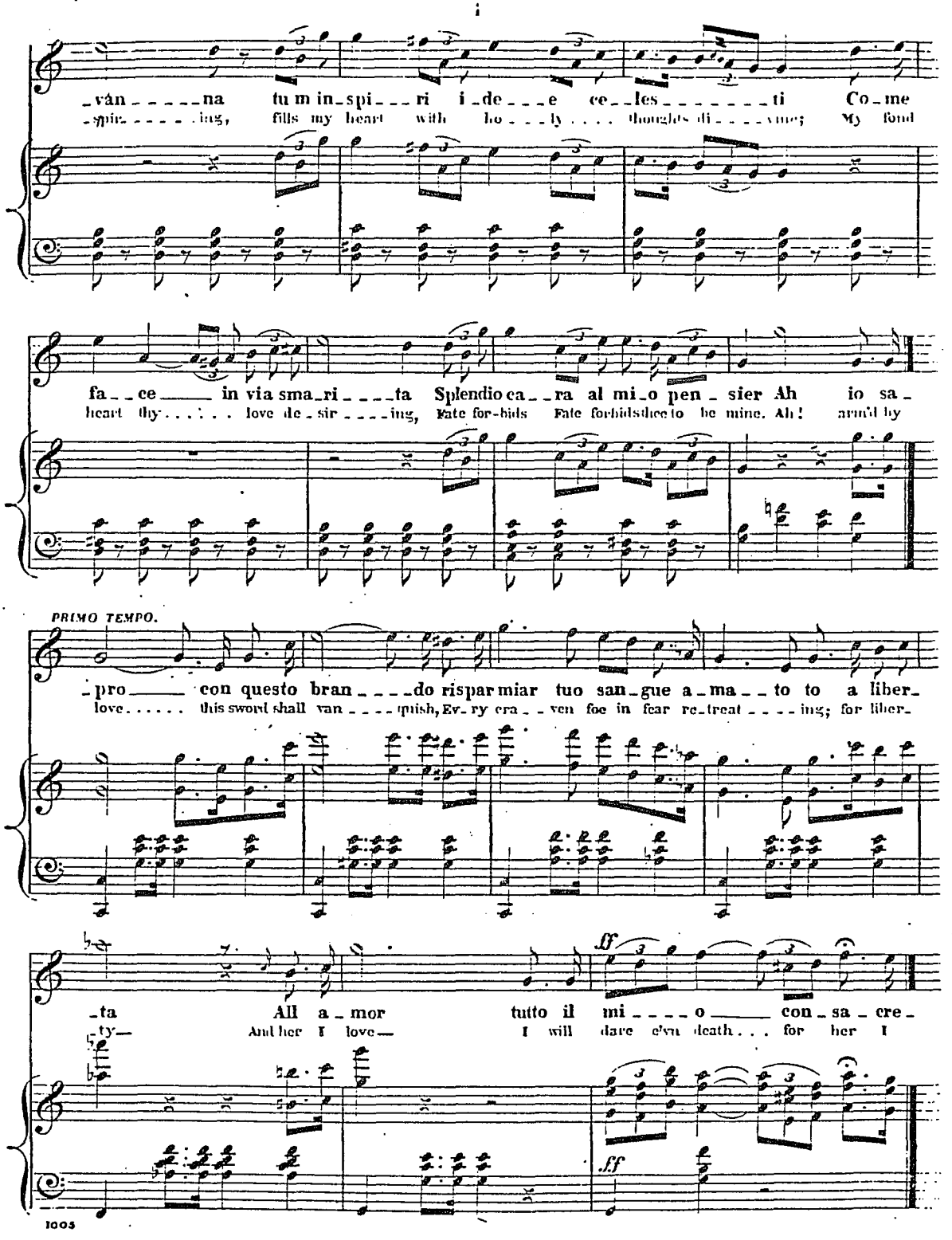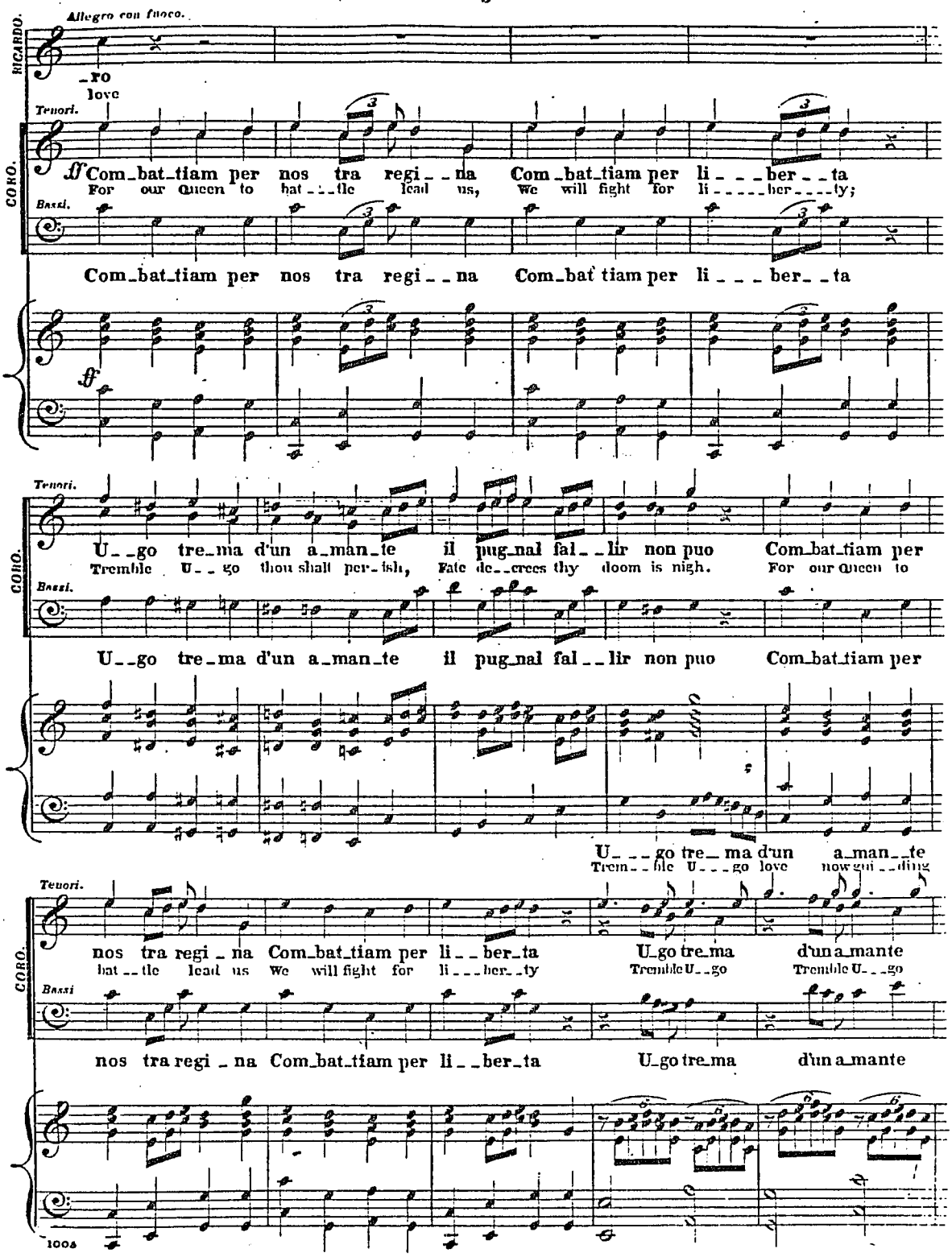


Example 8. Measures 34-51 of "While My Thoughts Still Turn to Thee," illustrating two examples of fioritura in the cavatina. The cadenzas occur at the ends of the B and second A sections; the song is in ternary form. (New York: William Hall & Son, 1851) .
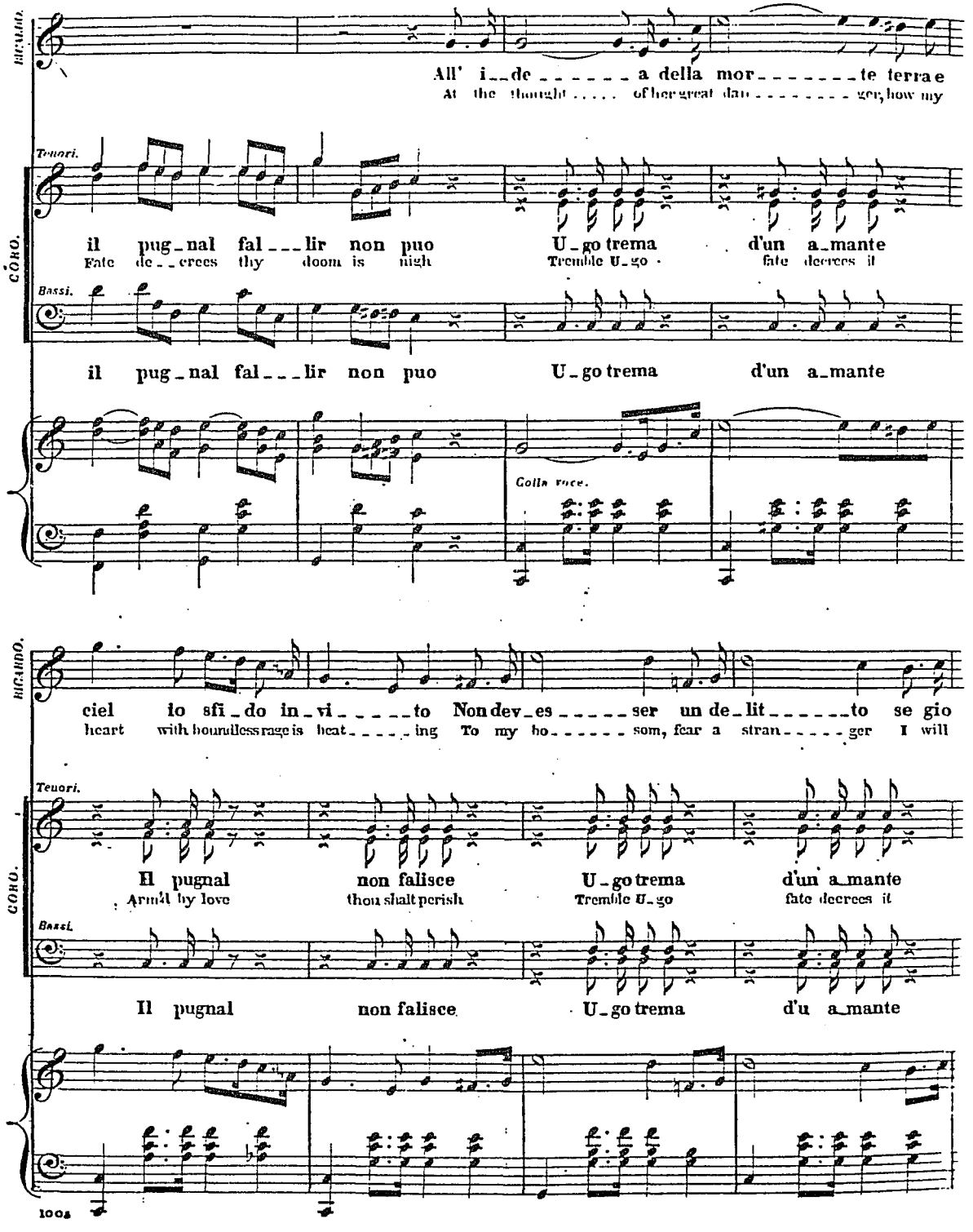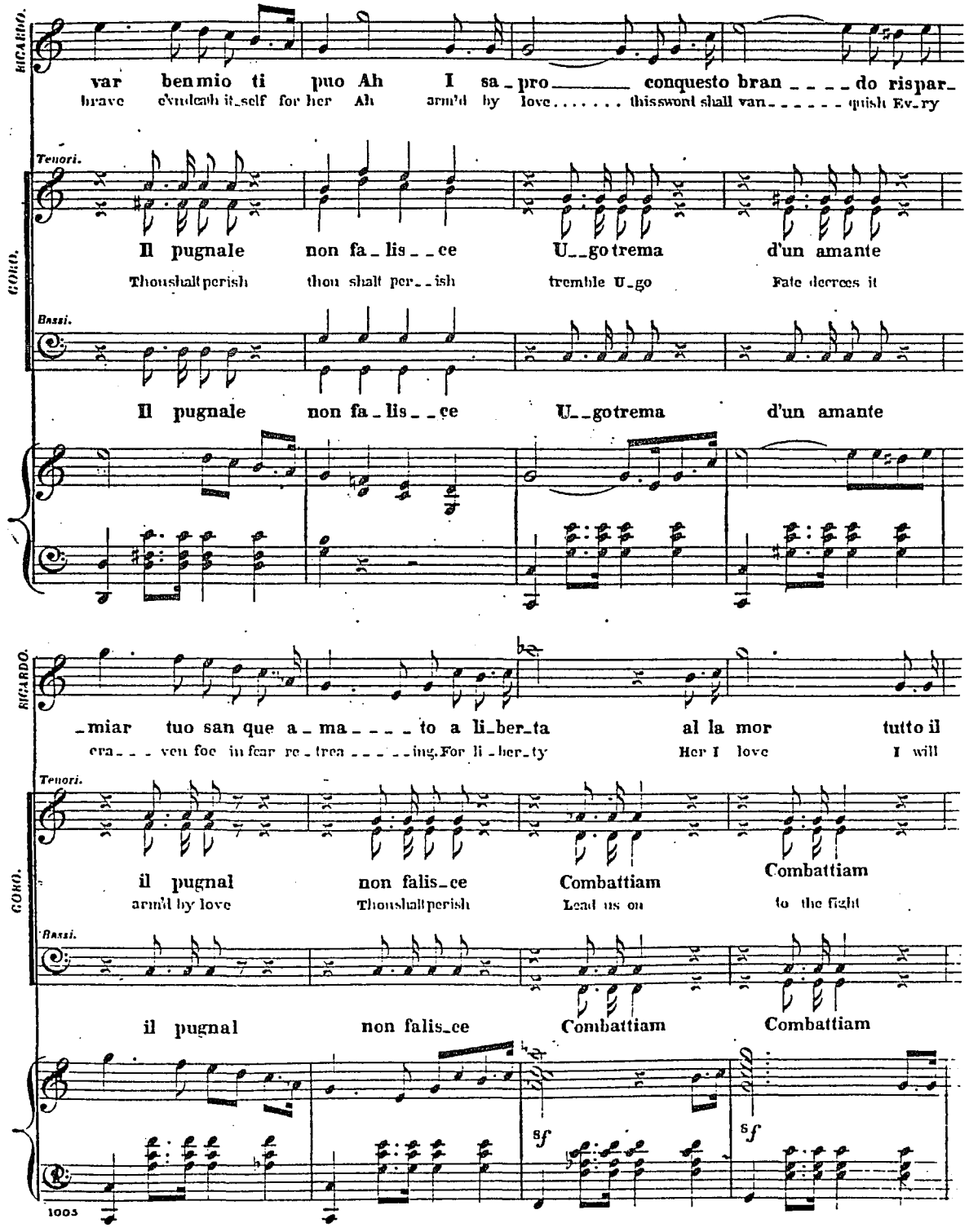


Example 9. "For Our Queen and Liberty," for tenor and chorus, from Giovanna Prima di Napoli. (New York: William Hall & Son, 1851)
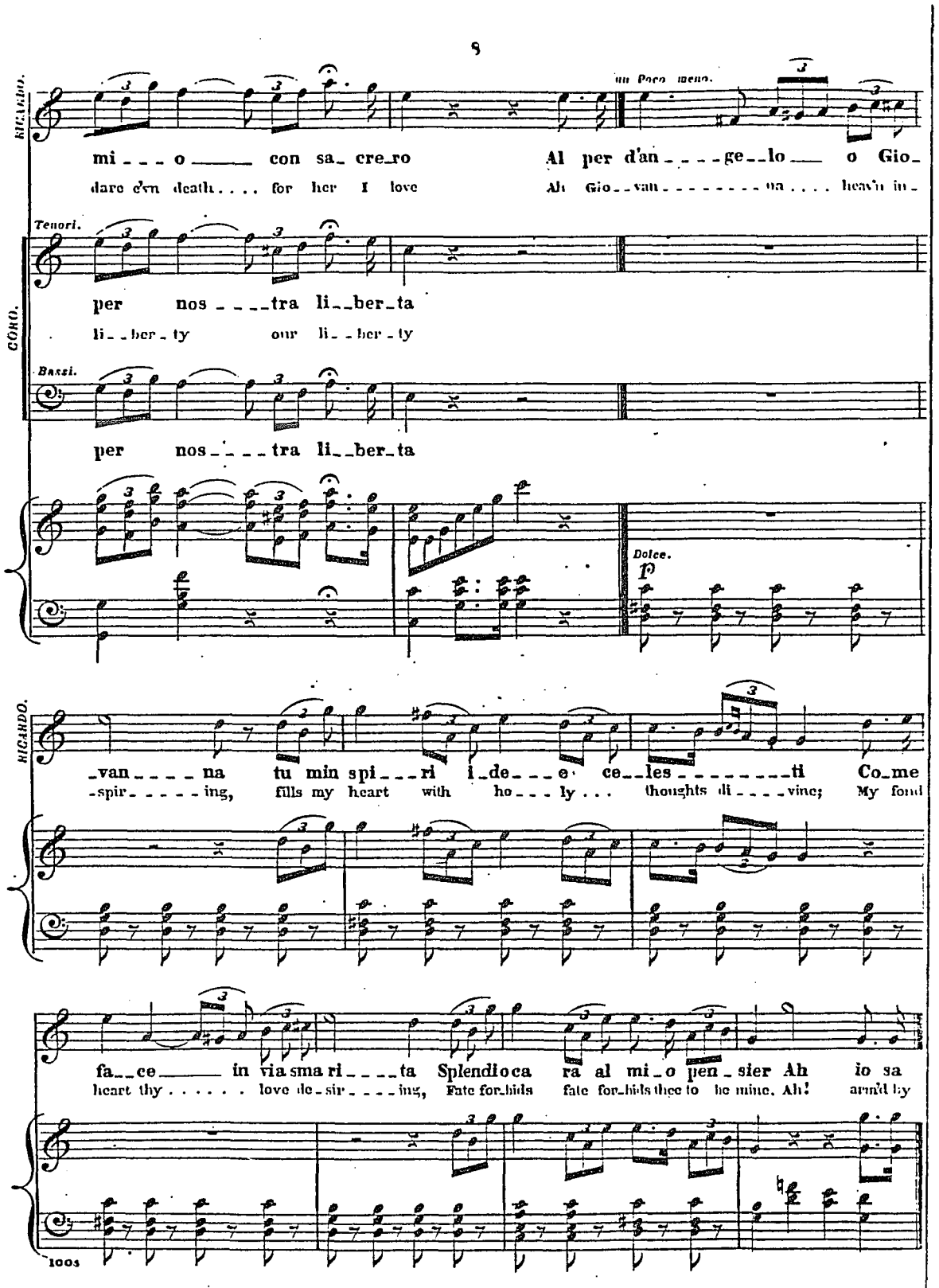

-vit - - - to Non dev-es - - - - - ser un de-lit - - - - to se gio var ben mio ti
beat - - - - ing; To my ho - - - - - som fear a stran - - - ger, I will dare e'en death it-self for
puo Ah! io sa-pro conquesto bran - - - do rispar-miar tuo san gue a-
thee, Ah! arm'd by love this sword shall van - - - - quish, Ev-ry cra - - - ven foe in fear re-
-ma - - - - - to a li--ber--ta All a--mor tutto il
-treat - - - - - ing; for li--ber--ty— And her I love— I will
8f
un Poco meno.
mi - - - o con-sa-cre-ro Al par d'an - - - - ge-lo o Gio-
dare e'en death for her I love. Ah! Gio-van - - - - - - na! heav'n in
p
Dolce.

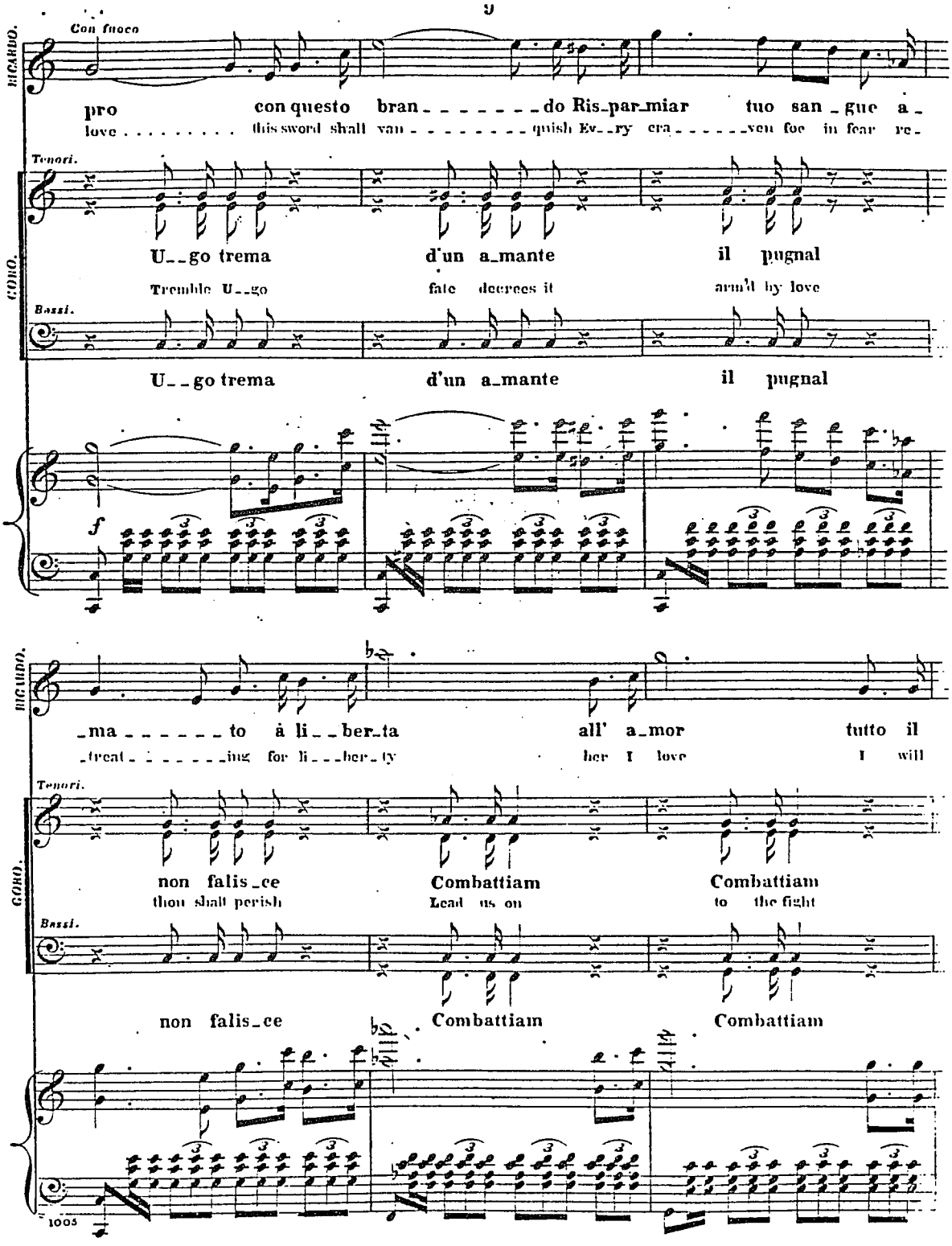

ván na tu m in spi ri i de e ce les ti Co me
spir ing, fills my heart with ho ly thoughts di vine; My fond
fa ce in via sma ri ta Splendio ca ra al mi o pen sier Ah io sa
heart thy love de sir ing, Fate for-bids Fate forbidsthee to be mine. Ah! arm'd by
PRIMO TEMPO.
pro con questo bran do rispar miar tuo san gue a ma to to a liber
love this sword shall van quish, Ev ry cra ven foe in fear re-treat ing; for liber
ta All a mor tutto il mi o con sa cre
ty— And her I love— I will dare ev'n death for her I
ff
ff
1005
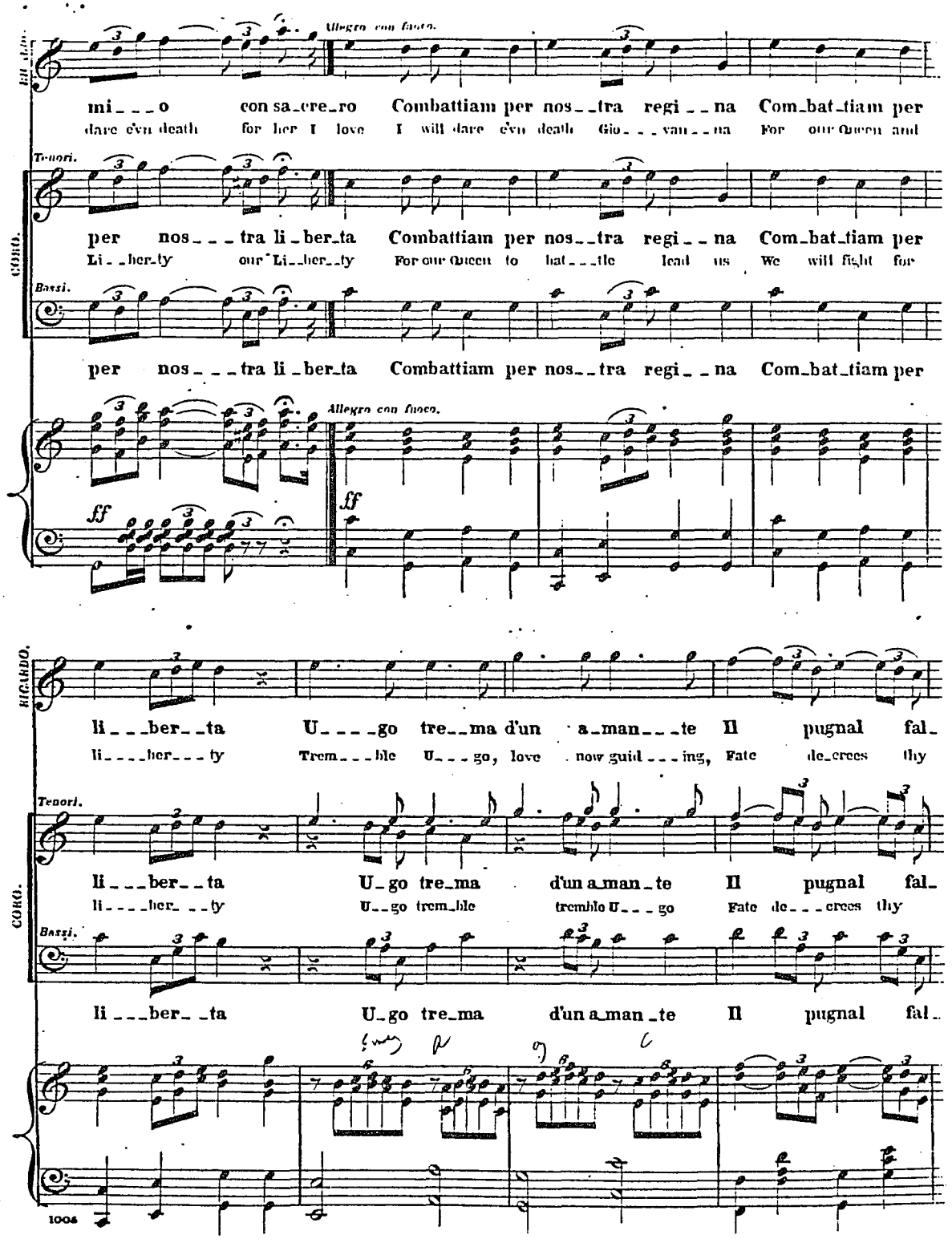

Allegro con fuoco.
RICARDO.
-ro
love
CORO.
Tenori.
ff Com-bat-tiam per nos tra regi--na Com-bat-tiam per li---ber--ta
For our Queen to bat---tle lead us, We will fight for li-----ber----ty;
Bassi.
Com-bat-tiam per nos tra regi--na Com-bat tiam per li---ber--ta
ff
Tenori.
U--go tre-ma d'un a-man-te il pug-nal fal--lir non puo Com-bat-tiam per
Tremble U--go thou shalt per-ish, Fate de--crees thy doom is nigh. For our Queen to
Bassi.
U--go tre-ma d'un a-man-te il pug-nal fal--lir non puo Com-bat-tiam per
U---go tre-ma d'un a-man--te
Trem--ble U---go love now gui--ding
Tenori.
nos tra regi-na Com-bat-tiam per li--ber-ta U-go tre-ma d'un a-mante
bat--tle lead us We will fight for li---ber--ty Tremble U--go Tremble U---go
Bassi
nos tra regi-na Com-bat-tiam per li--ber-ta U-go tre-ma d'un a-mante
1008
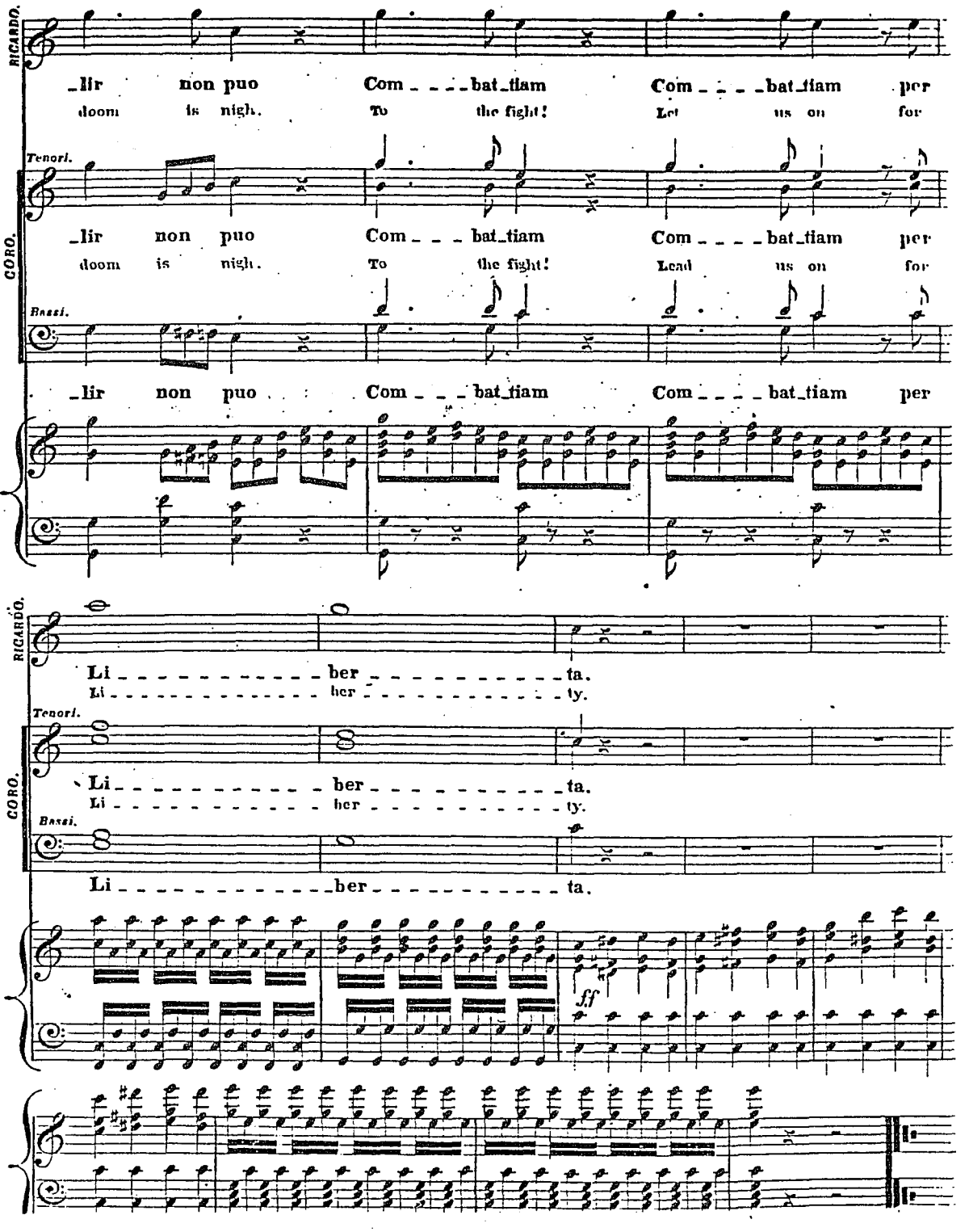

RICCARDO.
All' i_de_a della mor_te terra e
At the thought of her great dan_ger, how my
CORO.
Tenori.
il pug_nal fal_lir non puo U_go trema d'un a_mante
Fate de_crees thy doom is nigh Tremble U_go fate decrees it
Bassi.
il pug_nal fal_lir non puo U_go trema d'un a_mante
Colla voce.
RICCARDO.
ciel io sfi_do in_vi_to Non dev_es_ser un de_lit_to se gio
heart with hourdless rage is beat_ing To my bo_som, fear a stran_ger I will
CORO.
Tenori.
Il pugnal non falisce U_go trema d'un a_mante
Armed by love thou shalt perish Tremble U_go fate decrees it
Bassi.
Il pugnal non falisce U_go trema d'u a_mante
1008


RICARDO.
var ben mio ti puo Ah I sa_pro conquesto bran_____do rispar_
brave evinceth it_self for her Ah arm'd by love..... thisswordshall van_____quish Ev_ry
CORO.
Tenori.
Il pugnale non fa_lis__ce U__go trema d'un amante
Thoushalt perish thou shalt per__ish tremble U_go Fate decrees it
Bassi.
Il pugnale non fa_lis__ce U__go trema d'un amante
RICARDO.
_miar tuo san que a_ma____to a li_ber_ta al la mor tutto il
era___ven foe in fear re_trea_____ing. For li_ber_ty Her I love I will
CORO.
Tenori.
il pugnal non falis_ce Combattiam Combattiam
arm'd by love Thoushalt perish Lead us on to the fight
Bassi.
il pugnal non falis_ce Combattiam Combattiam
sf
sf
1003


RICARDO.
un Poco meno.
mi o con sa cre ro
dare ev'n death . . . for her I love
Al per d'an ge lo o Gio
Ah Gio van na . . . heav'n in
CORO.
Tenori.
per nos tra li ber ta
li ber ty our li ber ty
Bassi.
per nos tra li ber ta
Dolce.
p
RICARDO.
van na tu min spi ri i de e ce les ti Co me
-spir ing, fills my heart with ho ly . . . thoughts di vine; My fond
fa ce in via sma ri ta Splendi o ca ra al mi o pen sier Ah io sa
heart thy . . . . . love de sir ing, Fate for bids fate for bids thee to be mine. Ah! arm'd by
1003


RICARDO.
Con fuoco
pro con questo bran_ _ _ _ _ _ _do Ris_par_miar tuo san_gue a_
love . . . . . this sword shall van_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _quish Ev_ _ry cra_ _ _ _ _ven foe in fear re_
GOMO.
Tenori.
U_ _go trema d'un a_mante il pugnal
Tremble U_ _go fate decrees it arm'd by love
Bassi.
U_ _go trema d'un a_mante il pugnal
f
RICARDO.
_ma_ _ _ _ _ _to à li_ _ber_ta all' a_mor tutto il
treat _ _ _ _ _ing for li_ _ber_ty her I love I will
GOMO.
Tenori.
non falis_ce Combattiam Combattiam
thou shalt perish Lead us on to the fight
Bassi.
non falis_ce Combattiam Combattiam
1005


Allegro con fuoco.
mi_ _ _o con sa_cre_ro Combattiam per nos_ _tra regi_ _na Com_bat_tiam per
dare ev'n death for her I love I will dare ev'n death Gio_ _ _van_ _na For our Queen and
CORO.
Tenori.
per nos_ _ _tra li_ber_ta Combattiam per nos_ _tra regi_ _na Com_bat_tiam per
Li_ _ber_ty our Li_ _ber_ _ty For our Queen to bat_ _ _tle lead us We will fight for
Bassi.
per nos_ _ _tra li_ber_ta Combattiam per nos_ _tra regi_ _na Com_bat_tiam per
Allegro con fuoco.
ff
ff
RICARDO.
li_ _ _ber_ _ta U_ _ _ _go tre_ _ma d'un a_man_ _ _te Il pugnal fal_
li_ _ _ _ber_ _ _ ty Trem_ _ _ble U_ _ _ go, love now guid_ _ _ing, Fate de_crees thy
CORO.
Tenori.
li_ _ _ber_ _ta U_go tre_ma d'un a_man_te Il pugnal fal_
li_ _ _ _ber_ _ _ty U_ _go trem_ble tremble U_ _ _ go Fate de_ _ _crees thy
Bassi.
li_ _ _ber_ _ta U_go tre_ma d'un a_man_te Il pugnal fal_
1006


RICARDO.
lir non puo Com _ _ _bat_tiam Com_ _ _ _bat_tiam per
doom is nigh. To the fight! Let us on for
CORO.
Tenori.
lir non puo Com _ _ bat_tiam Com_ _ _ _bat_tiam per
doom is nigh. To the fight! Lead us on for
Bassi.
lir non puo Com _ _ bat_tiam Com_ _ _ _bat_tiam per
RICARDO.
Li_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ber_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ta.
Li_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ her_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ty.
CORO.
Tenori.
Li_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ber_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ta.
Li_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ her_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ty.
Bassi.
Li_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ber_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ta.
ff

chromatic passing tones G-sharp and A-flat in measures 7 and 8 and the ii half-diminished seventh (in first inversion) in measure 18; the altered-sixth scale degree in this latter chord is taken from the parallel minor, again, a typical nineteenth-century borrowing technique that Strakosch apparently used frequently in this opera. The B section consists entirely of movement back and forth from secondary dominant to dominant (or movement from tonic to dominant in the dominant key); in the C section the only striking harmonic segment is a brief (two-measure) flurry of borrowed dominants at measures 41-42. The harmonic simplicity, however, belies a work that is skillfully constructed dramatically. Strakosch builds excitement by the simple expedient of adding elements with each repetition of the A section: in the first repetition, by adding octaves to the piano accompaniment; in the second, by adding the chorus; in the third, by using both the chorus and increasing the rhythmic complexity of the accompaniment. The work builds to a rousing finale with a final repetition of the C section (marked allegro con fuoro), sung by both the chorus and the soloist. The melody is stirring, and Strakosch's handling of chorus, soloist, and accompaniment is skillful. The audience must have left the theatre humming one or another of the tunes.

* * *

The Astor Place Company repeated Giovanna Prima di Napoli twice during the week of 6 January and performed it once more the following week (on 17 January) before withdrawing it.[59] With the relative success

59. It is impossible to ascertain just how financially successful the opera was. No information about attendance is available beyond what the newspapers report, and critics' descriptions of houses as "crowded and brilliant" are not always reliable. The opera was performed four times in

of Strakosch's work, Maretzek's season appears to have been going swimmingly. The logistical complications of managing simultaneous seasons in two cities had not proven to be insurmountable, and the engagements in both Philadelphia and New York had proceeded with no noticeable hitches. Just after the third performance of Giovanna di Napoli, however, Maretzek's delicate two-city balancing act began to topple dangerously, and the manager had to administer emergency personal attention to both troupes in order to avert further crises. The resulting (temporary) near-chaos experienced by the two exemplifies both the precarious nature of Maretzek's enterprise, and the absolute necessity of a firm managerial hand at the helm of an Italian opera company. It also illustrates some of the unexpected problems that occasionally blew up in the faces of opera company managers.

On Saturday evening, 11 January, a "Grand Musical Festival" was scheduled at Tripler Hall in New York, on which occasion Teresa Parodi was to be joined by the Austrian violinist Miska Hauser (1822-1887) (in his American debut) and the pianist Strakosch. Maretzek was to be the conductor of the orchestra. On Saturday morning, however, the manager received a telegram from Philadelphia, informing him that "some screw was loose in the difficult mechanism of the Philadelphia branch of his company." (Tribune, 13 January 1851) The precise nature of this problem was never described by the New York journalists, and the difficulty was never even alluded to in the Philadelphia papers. Whatever the trouble,

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New York before being withdrawn. It was not performed by the company anywhere else during the years 1850-51; whether or not it has been mounted since is unknown. The quote is from the Tribune, 8 January 1851.

however, it was serious enough that Maretzek's "immediate departure" for Philadelphia was required, and the manager, again in the words of the Tribune, "rush[ed] on to the City of Brotherly Love . . . [to] pour on such oil of healing as he could command." (Tribune, 15 January 1851)

Maretzek in Philadelphia, however, was an opera manager figuratively out of the frying pan and into the fire, for he had no sooner left New York when arrangements for the Saturday evening concert began to unravel with a dizzying rapidity. The manager had left the duties of conducting the orchestra at the Saturday-evening concert in the capable hands of his New York deputy, one Herr I. Kreutzer.[60] Parodi, however, suddenly was seized with serious misgivings about performing her new pieces--which she had rehearsed under Maretzek's baton--under Kreutzer. Apparently her fears had nationalistic--as well as musical--roots, for she announced that although she could not possibly sing under the German Kreutzer, she could bring herself to perform under the baton of an Italian conductor, if one could be engaged. The orchestra, however, staged a mutiny of its own, and refused to play under anyone but Kreutzer--especially under an unknown Italian.[61] As a result, the concert was postponed to Tuesday,

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60. Kreutzer also had been associated with Maretzek's 1849-50 troupe, as orchestra leader. Odell, V:571. Nothing more is known about him.

61. Evidently ethnic conflicts of this nature, although rarely mentioned in histories of music in the United States, were not unprecedented. In May 1858, for example, a small unnamed opera company that was performing in Baltimore had to postpone a performance because (according to the MW) "the German elements of the orchestra [would not] amalgamate with the Italian." After a "violent quarrel" sprang up between the local (German) musicians and the director (an Italian), the musicians left the hall en masse, and (again in the words of the reporter) "all the eloquence of a veteran music-publisher, or the threats of the manager, could not prevail on them to return to duty." The manager, in fact, had to import an orchestra from Philadelphia before the opera performances could proceed. See MW, 15 May 1858, 305.

disappointing the three or four thousand individuals who had gathered for the performance on Saturday. Order was not restored until Maretzek returned. Even so, the audience at the subsequent make-up concert (over which Maretzek presided), although large, was in size not nearly as grand as had been the gathering on Saturday; all the stars (and the management) were financial losers in a fiasco that apparently had been precipitated by the whim of a prima donna. (Tribune, 15 January 1851)

Maretzek does not specifically mention this imbroglio in his memoirs; it was, after all, a relatively minor incident. He does, however, detail a sufficient number of similar difficulties--problems caused by singers' "quarrels, jealousies and intrigues" as well as various and sundry "tricks, plots and conspiracies" inflicted upon opera managers by "capricious, conceited, egotistical, rapacious, intriguing, cheating, troublesome, mischievous and malicious . . . vocalists"--to suggest that the inconveniences caused by Teresa Parodi in this instance were not particularly extraordinary; this type of behavior, of course, contributed no end to the increasingly widespread and negative stereotype about Italians opera singers. (C&Q, 158) Even to the scholar who reads skeptically Maretzek's tales (which George Odell describes as the "doubtless exaggerated accounts of his sufferings"), it becomes clear that the lot of a manager of an Italian opera company was not an easy one. (Odell, V:571) More often than not, he seems to have been at the mercy of his so-called "charges."

SIDESHOW IN BALTIMORE

The Philadelphia season of 1850-51 concluded on Monday 20 January. The New York engagement had yet another five weeks to run, and Maretzek summoned back to New York six of the thirteen singers who had appeared during the final week in Philadelphia (Beneventano, Bosio, Giubilei, Amalia and Salvatore Patti, and Sanquirico). For the other seven (Avignone, Avogadro, Bertucca, Forti, Parozzi, Rosi, and Truffi), however, he had different plans: he sent them, along with the baritone Biondi and the bass Locatelli, south to Baltimore, where this new itinerant branch of the company was engaged for a run at the Holliday Street Theatre.

This ensemble, unlike the fluctuating group of artists who had appeared in Philadelphia and New York, was really a separate branch of the New York troupe. Under the direction of Benedetti, the Baltimore company was independent of the New Yorkers, and its season featured none of the shuttling back and forth between cities that had characterized the Philadelphia engagement; the Baltimore Sun of 23 January noted that "the famous Maretzek has sent to the Holliday Street Theatre a company . . . [that] includes all the distinguished performers of the great troupe now at the Astor Place Opera [House].--The whole under the direction of Signor Benedetti." (Baltimore Sun, 23 January 1851, my emphasis) This advertisement, as usual, does contain a certain amount of hyperbole, for beyond Truffi, none of the troupe's really big-name stars (Beneventano, Bosio, Giubilei, the two Pattis, or Parodi) sang in Baltimore.

The Maryland season was advertised to last "Positively Six Nights Only"; in fact, they gave precisely this many performances. (Baltimore Sun, 15 January 1851) The troupe mounted six different operas: Ernani, Parisina, Lucia di Lammermoor, La Sonnambula, La Favorita, and Il Giuramento. During so short a season there was no time for repeat performances; besides, the management did not want to risk attracting a small crowd on the second night of an opera's performance. Under the circumstances, this policy made good managerial sense. Benedetti left little to chance at the Holliday Street Theatre: when the old favorite La Sonnambula was performed on 28 January ("the first time in Italian in Baltimore") he featured in addition the dancers Fitzjames and Carrese; the newspaper advertisement proclaimed "Grand Gala Night. Combination of Opera and Ballet." (Baltimore Sun, 27 and 28 January 1851)

According to newspaper reviews the reception of the troupe by the Baltimore public was unanimously favorable. Critics mention "fashionable," "brilliant," and "overflowing and highly fashionable" audiences, and in a review of the company's performance of Lucia di Lammermoor on 27 January, the theatre was described as "resplendent with beauty and fashion throughout." (Baltimore Sun, 28, 24 January, 12 February, 27 January 1851) The "appearance . . . animation, and sociability" of the audience suggested to the critic the gathering of Baltimoreans who earlier in the year had assembled to pay homage to Jenny Lind. (Baltimore Sun, 28 January 1851) Reviews of the quality of performance by the company are likewise overwhelmingly--and exclusively--positive; as usual, this tends to cast a shadow of doubt on the objectivity of the reviewers. In fact, when Maretzek's troupe returned

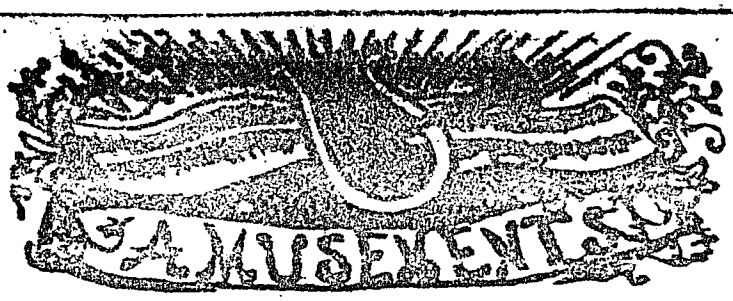
to Baltimore in the fall of 1851, a Baltimore correspondent to Saroni's described "the production of opera here last winter, under Maretzek's name, but without his presence," as being "in a style utterly beneath serious criticism." He furthermore mentioned that performances by the troupe under Benedetti had left such a negative impression on the Baltimore public about Maretzek's company that the manager had to work hard to overcome it when his troupe revisited the city in the fall.[62]

The Baltimore season lingered into a third week with a benefit performance for Truffi, who chose the second act of Lucrezia Borgia and the first, second, and third acts of Ernani, which is a good indication that the latter opera probably had drawn a large crowd at its production in the first week of the run. On Friday 7 February and again on Wednesday the 12th the company joined forces with Baltimore's Germania Society for two "Grand Musical Festivals." Like the earlier concert in Philadelphia, the works performed consisted almost entirely of operatic selections; the concert on the 12th, for example, included works by Auber (overture from Zannetto), Verdi (overture from Nabucco), Rossini (overture from Guillaume Tell), and Donizetti (Duet from Marino Faliero; Aria, Grand Finale from Act II, and Romanza from La Favorita; Quintette and Duet from Lucia di Lammermoor; and Terzetto from Lucrezia Borgia).

While the Baltimore branch of the company was performing, the main body of the Astor Place troupe in New York had been busy wrapping up their extended season by mounting four productions per week. Parodi,

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62. Saroni's, 8 November 1851, 11-12, "Communication from Baltimore," dated 27 October 1851. It is possible, of course, that the latter writer in this case was as biased as was the former--in this instance with a negative rather than a positive slant.



HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE.

SECOND GRAND MUSICAL FESTIVAL—By the full **ITALIAN OPERA TROUPE**, with their splendid Orchestra and Chorus, and the celebrated **GERMANIA MUSICAL SOCIETY**, on this occasion present a Programme of surpassing excellence.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, Feb. 12.

1.—Grand overture, opera Zannetto, by full Germania Society and Orchestra,.....Auber.
2.—Duetto from the beautiful opera of Marino Faliero, Signora Avignone and Rosi.....Donizetti.
3.—Grand aria from La Favorita O, mio Fernando, sung by Signora Truffi Benedetti.....Donizetti.
4.—Grand overture, tragedy of Napoleon's Last Days... Bergman.
5.—Grand finale, second act opera La Favorita, by Signora Truffi, Signors Forti, Rosi, Avignone, full chorus and Germania Band.....Donizetti.
6.—Grand quintette, Lucia di Lammermoor, sung by Signora Traffi, Signors Forti Avignone, Rosi and full chorus and Germania Band.....Donizetti.

PART II.

1.—Grand overture to opera Nabucco.....Verdi.
2.—Romanza from opera La Favorita Spirto Gentil, sung by Signor Forti.....Donizetti.
3.—By desire, the celebrated Bird Song, Germania Band.
4.—Grand terzetto, opera Lucretia Borgia, sung by Signora Truffi Benedetti, Signors Forti and Rosi, accompanied by Germania Society.....Donizetti.
5.—Duetto, Lucia di Lammermoor, The Challenge, by Signors Forti and Avignone.....Donizetti.
6.—Grand overture, Guillaume Tell, by general request. Rossini.

To conclude with the grand finale to Ernani, by the full Opera Troupe, Chorus, Germania Musical Society and Orchestra.

☞ Doors open at 7 o'clock—performance commences at 8 o'clock.

☞ Prices have been fixed at the following reasonable rates—Dress Circle and Parquet $1; Family Circle and Upper Tier 50 cts. fe 12

Advertisement for the troupe's Second Grand Musical Festival in Baltimore, 12 February 1851.

whose contract with Maretzek was soon to expire, sang in every performance; her final New York appearance and benefit took place on 14 February in Semiramide. It was not unusual for benefit performances to include guest appearances by additional artists who were willing to "kindly volunteer their services"; on this occasion Maurice Strakosch, Miska Hauser, and the violinist Mr. Greibel performed various instrumental works between the acts of the opera.[63] This was to be Parodi's final appearance with the troupe in New York this season, and the advertising made careful note of that fact.[64] The public showed up in droves, and responded enthusiastically to the singer's appearance, throwing on the stage at the close of the first act "enough bouquets to stock an ordinary florist." (Tribune, 18 February 1851) The Tribune reported that the receipts of the evening amounted to $1967, of which Parodi received $1200 outright and divided the balance with Maretzek; if this division was an equal one, she took home a total of $1583 for the evening's work, which is the equivalent of $20,658.15 in 1986 funds. (Tribune, 18 February 1851; Greene, 48)

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63. Greibel performed an unattributed "Fantasie on the Violin" between acts one and two, and between acts two and three Strakosch played a "Grand Fantasie on the Piano" and Hauser and Strakosch "The Bird on the Tree," a programmatic work for violin and piano that is the violinist's Opus 34. Playbill, Astor Place, 14 February 1851.

64. This was Parodi's final appearance in New York with the Astor Place Company during this season, but it was hardly her final appearance in the city. Although New York journalists widely announced that she was shortly to return to Europe, she did not do so, in fact, until 1853. At the conclusion of her contract with Maretzek in March 1851 she formed a concert troupe with Strakosch, Amalia Patti, the baritone Antonio Avignone, and several other artists; they toured in the South (appearing in Richmond, Charleston, Mobile, Louisville, and New Orleans, among other cities) from March through June. Parodi was back in New York with the Astor Place Company for part of the 1851-52 season, and she, Patti, and Strakosch (occasionally with other artists) toured widely throughout the United States during 1852, 1855, and 1856. In 1857 the soprano appeared with both the Maretzek and the Strakosch Opera Companies, and in 1859 and 1860 she formed her own opera troupe and took it on tour (see Table 11). Her activities after 1860 are unknown.

THE ROAD COMPANY

The conclusion of Parodi's New York engagement also marked the end of the New York season for the Astor Place Company. A skeleton crew (mostly of singers returned from Baltimore--whom the critic of the Message Bird described as "the hitherto-absent half of the operatic troupe") remained in New York to perform during the final week of benefits (for Truffi, Forti, and the dancer Fitzjames). The majority of the company, however, took to the road. (Message Bird, 1 March 1851, 642) From the middle of February until the end of May the whole Astor Place Company was transformed into an itinerant troupe, performing in Boston, Charleston, Augusta, and (again) Boston. Not until the conclusion of the second Boston engagement would the company return to New York--and then it was to perform, as had the Havana Company during the previous summer, at Castle Garden.

During the four months that Maretzek's company was on the road, its personnel fluctuated to a certain extent; some singers joined the troupe, performed for awhile, then disappeared; others (who had been with the company in New York or Philadelphia) rejoined the ensemble in Charleston or during the second Boston engagement; still others (newcomers to the country or artists who had left another troupe, such as the Havana Company) signed on with Maretzek's ensemble for the duration. Parodi performed with the company for a short while more before taking her final leave, and Maretzek and Benedetti apparently traded off responsibilities as acting managers. The repertory performed during the course of the four seasons was fairly consistent; most of the other circumstances, however,

were different. The engagements in all three cities warrant a brief examination.

BOSTON

The season in Boston, which commenced on 17 February, was held at the Federal Street Theatre. Advertisements note that the visiting troupe featured the "Casts, Costumes, Grand Orchestra, and Chorus of the Astor Place Opera House, New York." (Courier, 11 February 1851) As this suggests, itinerant opera companies during this time travelled with their own costumes; whether they were the property of the troupe or of individual singers--or a combination of both (stars wearing their own, chorus singers wearing the troupe's costumes) is unknown. By omission, the advertisement also alludes to the fact that most travelling companies did not take along scenery. Newspaper critics occasionally commented on new scenery painted for a particular opera production, but such references suggest that the painters were individuals associated with the local theatre. This situation seems to be the same for all types of opera troupes active during this period.[65] How large was the chorus or the orchestra mentioned in the advertisement--or how many musicians Maretzek had left behind for the final three performances in New York--is unknown.

For the Boston engagement Maretzek hired as his business manager the same Edward Walker who had served in that capacity in Philadelphia.[66]

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65. The García troupe included in its ranks a set designer, and Giacomo Montresor brought from Italy as part of his company a scene painter and three assistants. I have located no other references to scene painters as members of itinerant companies. See Chapter 3.

66. No information about Walker has come to light in either music or theatre reference works.

Walker arrived in Boston on 12 February and set about sprucing up the slightly ratty interior of the theatre: he had boxes reconstructed, worn carpets replaced, additional gas lights installed, and the number of stoves increased. (Courier, 13 February 1851) The hall had been allowed to deteriorate into a shabby and soiled state during the preceding several years, when it had been leased out to pantomime companies and equestrian groups as well as to dramatic stars; an elite and exclusive house it was not. (Durham, "Boston [Federal Street] Theatre Company," ATC, 80) This state of affairs was cause for some concern; one individual wrote to a local newspaper with a warning that "lovers of the opera" would not attend performances at the Federal Street Theatre until after a "thorough cleansing of the dirt and dust which has been allowed to lie unmolested on its floors for three seasons past, and which only requires the peculiar manner of Yankee applause to raise into an atmosphere sufficient to stifle the most enthusiastic opera-goer." The editor responded with an assurance that Walker's activities would indeed put the theatre into a "comfortable condition." (Evening Transcript, 13 February 1851)

Walker also managed publicity efforts. He ran numerous advertisements in the newspapers, and made sure that they included the information that Parodi's Boston performances were the last of her lengthy engagement with Maretzek. He probably was aware of the soprano's intentions to form a concert company at the completion of the Boston season, so he worded his advertisements very carefully: "Signorina Parodi Will Appear in Six Different Operas. Being the Last Nights of Her Engagement with Max Maretzek, and positively her last and ONLY APPEARANCE in Opera in America, previous to her departure for Europe." (Evening Transcript, 11 February 1851, my emphasis) Walker also had a local

printer run off playbills, which were soon plastered all over the city.

Finally, in order to properly whet the appetite of the Boston public, Walker provided "puffing" material about Parodi to the local dailies. The Evening Transcript of 12 February obligingly ran one such article, a lengthy biographical essay titled "A Sketch of Parodi." This "puff," in fact, is something of a public-relations tour de force, for its author covered everything about the soprano that might appeal to the sensibilities of Americans: the singer's humble origins in Genoa; the attempts of her respectable parents to dissuade her pursuit of a public career; her discovery by and study with the renowned Madame Pasta; the "wonderful display of [her] musical genius" on various European stages; her deep sympathies for the "struggling patriots" of Sicily and the consequent necessity for her to flee that island once the "friends of liberty" were "finally compelled to succumb to the overwhelming power of despotism"; her triumphant success in London; her arrival in the United States; and last--but hardly least (and reminiscent of Jenny Lind)--her generous and selfless nature, unspoiled youth, and cheerful willingness to assume the heavy responsibility of financial support for her parents and siblings back in Italy. (Evening Transcript, 12 February) Some of these biographical facts were mentioned in a calculated attempt to counteract the negative stereotype about Italian performers (to which, as we have seen, Parodi herself contributed). The portrayal of the vocalist as a woman with documented sympathies towards the common folk spoke to Americans' well known support for European revolutionaries; it also functioned as a veiled allusion to the unresolved social issues raised by the Astor Place Riot (and still very much in the American consciousness) that had occurred just two years earlier. (Boston Courier, 17 February 1851)



SIGNORA PARODI IN THE CHARACTER OF NORMA.

SIGNORA PARODI.

The following is an outline of the history of this young *artiste*, the pupil and adopted daughter of Pasta. Signora Parodi was born at Genoa, in 1827; her father is a retired and pensioned *employee* of the Sardinian Government. So early did she display natural musical gifts, that at twelve years of age she was placed by her parents at the Musical Institute at Genoa, under Maestro Celli; from which she was removed to the tuition of a professor of some celebrity in the same city, Maestro Degola. In 1844 she had exhausted the lore of these masters, and was taken by her mother to Milan, to study under Felice Ronconi. She had not been many days in the capital of Lombardy, when she happened to be heard at a private concert by the husband of Pasta, who was so struck by the resemblance of her vocal gifts to those of his renowned consort, that the following morning he hurried back to his villa at Como, to tell La Pasta that he had heard a young singer, in whom her voice and dramatic spirit were revived. Pasta repaired to Milan, to gratify the curiosity her husband had excited. Such an impression did the young musical pupil produce upon her, that she employed every means to persuade Madame Parodi to leave her daughter under her care, and return to her family at Genoa. Madame Parodi consented: Pasta took her daughter with her to her villa at Como, and from that time she became her pupil and adopted daughter. Felice Ronconi, it is true, having complained of being deprived of a pupil, from whose success he expected to derive an addition to his fame, she having been so suddenly withdrawn from him, Pasta could not resist his entreaties; but she returned with Parodi to Milan, and gave her lessons at the same time as her professor. Immediately after this date her star commenced to rise gradually higher and higher in the musical hemisphere, until its brilliancy and power cast a light all over Europe. She made the tour of the principal cities with the most perfect professional success, and since that time her history is that of to-day—the current record of our own time.

Her late engagements in this country have served to win for her increased celebrity and honors, and have ranked her in our estimation with the first vocalists in the world.

Portrait and biographical sketch of Teresa Parodi. An example of the type of material distributed by Maretzek (or others) to the American press for advertising purposes. This particular item ran in Gleason's in the autumn of 1851, by which time Parodi's reputation in this country was well established.

The Boston engagement was advertised to be of six nights; in reality, the company gave a total of eleven performances (nine operas and two concerts). It was easy for Maretzek to vary each evening's bill of fare; as in Baltimore, the troupe simply produced a different opera each night (see Table 15). The company's reception by the Boston public was gratifyingly enthusiastic. On opening night, according to the Evening Transcript, the audience was "large, brilliant and enthusiastic, [it] filled all [the] seats, and crowded the lobbies." Parodi, according to the same newspaper, carried the night, surpassed all expectations, and was "applauded to an extent rarely witnessed in Boston." As further proof of the soprano's triumph, the critic pointed out that by press time the next day all seats in the parquet and first tier of boxes had been sold for the company's second performance (of Norma) on the 19th. "We might add," continued the reviewer, "that these were all bona fide sales, not hypothetical or made for purposes of effect, as in other instances that might be named." (Evening Transcript, 18 February 1851) Other critics concurred. The reviewer for the Boston Post, for example, wrote that "as far as the popular favor is concerned there can be no question of [Parodi's] success." He continued:

> The applause from her crowded audience was frequent and cordial, and whether from the comparative novelty of opera the present season . . . [or] from the belief in the European reputation of the vocalist, or from the genuine appreciation of actual excellence, her hearers seemed well satisfied with her efforts to please and to interest. (Boston Post, 19 February 1851)

Subsequent performances by the company likewise attracted both large audiences and favorable reaction from the Boston press. The

TABLE 15: CALENDAR OF PERFORMANCES, 21 MARCH-30 MAY 1851

BOSTON

17 February (Monday)	Lucrezia Borgia
19 February	Norma
21 February	Barbiere di Siviglia
[22 February	Concert in Providence, R. I.]
24 February (Monday)	Romeo e Giulietta
26 February	La Favorita
28 February	Benefit
1 March	Concert
3 March (Monday)	Semiramide
4 March	Norma
6 March	Benefit concert (cancelled)
7 March	Ernani
8 March	Concert

CHARLESTON, S. C.

21 March	Ernani
22 March	La Favorita
24 March (Monday)	Parisina
25 March	Ernani
27 March	Lucrezia Borgia
28 March	La Favorita
29 March	Il Giuramento
1 April	Lucrezia Borgia
2 April	
5 April	Norma
7 April (Monday)	Lucia di Lammermoor
9 April	Norma
10 April	Concert
12 April	Concert

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

14 April (Monday)	Ernani
15 April	Lucrezia Borgia
17 April	Il Giuramento
19 April	Il barbieri di Siviglia
21 April (Monday)	Norma

CHARLESTON

22 April	Il barbieri di Siviglia

BOSTON

28 April (Monday)	Ernani (postponed)
29 April	Ernani
1 May	La Favorita
2 May	Il Giuramento
3 May	Concert
5 May (Monday)	Lucia di Lammermoor
7 May	Lucrezia Borgia
8 May	Il barbieri di Siviglia
9 May	Ernani
10 May	Concert
12 May (Monday)	Lucia di Lammermoor
14 May	La Favorita
16 May	Don Giovanni
17 May	Concert
19 May (Monday)	Don Giovanni
21 May	Lucia di Lammermoor
22 May	Ernani
23 May	Don Giovanni
26 May (Monday)	Lucrezia Borgia
27 May	Romeo e Giulietta
28 May	Don Giovanni
30 May	La Favorita

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receipts for the company's first performance of Norma, for example, amounted to $2500 (the equivalent of $32,625 in 1986). (Message Bird, 1 March 1851, 643; Greene, 48) Furthermore, at the beginning of the second week one newspaper reported that in spite of bad weather there had been a large audience at the previous evening's performance; the theatre's "lower and upper portions" (the pit and the gallery), he wrote, "were crowded, and the second tier was two-thirds full."[67]

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67. Courier, 25 February 1851. For other evidence of Boston audience enthusiasm, see the Courier of 20 and 22 February and the Evening Transcript of 22 and 27 February 1851.

In addition to opera performances, the troupe also gave three concerts during the engagement: two in Boston (both at the Tremont Temple), and one in Providence, Rhode Island. As usual, the repertory of all three concerts was almost entirely operatic. For the 1 March performance the singers were once again joined by colleagues Hauser and Strakosch for a "Grand Monstre Concert"; in addition to various sung operatic numbers (by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Halévy) the concert featured Hauser performing his "Fantasie Dramatique for Violin on Lucia di Lammermoor" and (again) the "Bird on the Tree Fable"; Strakosch playing the Boston première of his "Fantasia de Concert on Figlia del Regimento"; and the orchestra mounting a performance of Maretzek's "Promenade Quadrilles" and "Tip Top Polka."[69]

The performance in Rhode Island (22 February), was billed as a "Grand Parodi Concert"; several other singers from the opera company, as well as the troupe's "Grand Orchestra," also appeared. (Providence Daily Journal, 22 February 1851) Comments published in the local newspaper illustrate once again the overwhelming impression that Lind had made on the American public (she had appeared in Providence on 7 October 1850). (Ware/Lockard, 38) Parodi's performance was described as a "greater feast to our music-loving people than they have ever before enjoyed," excepting, of course, "the entertainment in which the world famed Jenny Lind made

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69. It was not coincidental that Hauser and Strakosch were in Boston; their concert company (with Parodi) commenced performing almost immediately following the conclusion of her engagement with the Astor Place Company on 3 March. The Strakosch and Parodi Company must have left Boston immediately, for they appeared at the Chinese Museum and the Musical Fund Hall in Philadelphia on 6 and 8 March, respectively. (Evening Transcript, 22 February 1851) In Philadelphia the troupe included Hauser, Strakosch, Amalia Patti, Parodi, Avignone (a baritone who had sung with the Astor Place Company in Philadelphia and Baltimore) and a Mr. Waldtenfel (Philadelphia North American, 6 March 1851).



ITALIAN OPERA.

FEDERAL STREET THEATRE.

FIFTH NIGHT OF

PARODI.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRY 28th,

Will be presented (FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY) Donizetti's Grand Opera,

LA FAVORITA!

LEONORA, SIGNORINA TERESA

PARODI.

FERDANDO, SIGNOR LORINI
ALPHONSO, SIGNOR BENEVENTANO
BALTHAZAR, (his first appearance in two years) SIGNOR ROSI
GONSALVO, SIGNOR PATTI
INES, SIGNORA GARRETT

Conductor, Max Maretzek

LEADER, HERR MEUSTER

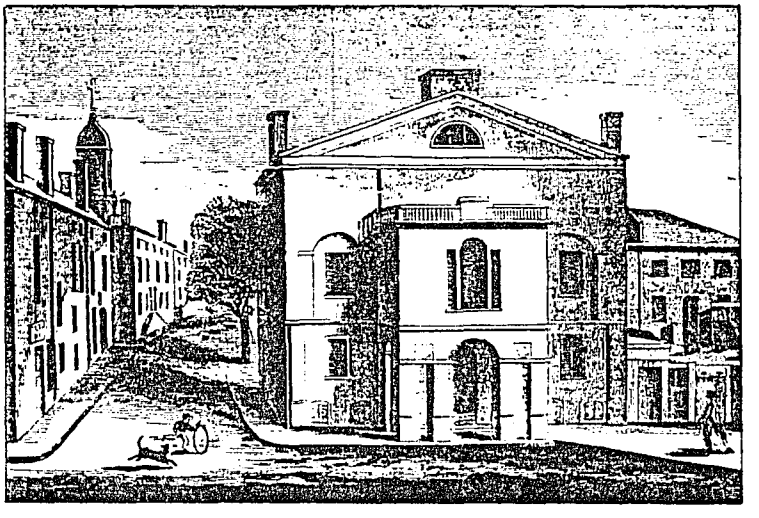
PRICES OF ADMISSION.

BOXES & PARQUET $2.00
3d & 4th TIERS 50

Tickets may be obtained at the Box Office, at the Theatre, daily, between the hours of 9 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon.

Doors open at 6 1-2. Opera to commence at 7 1-2 o'clock.

"Times Steam Job Presses"—J. H. & E. F. Farwell Printers.



Top: Playbill from a performance by the Astor Place Opera Company at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston.
Bottom: An early depiction of the Federal Street Theatre.

her first and last appearance [in Providence]." The critic hastened to add that Parodi was "not . . . so charming a singer as Jenny"; he explained, however, that by late February Lind's October performance was sufficiently distant in the past that it was possible to listen to Parodi without undue and unfavorable comparisons with the "Swedish Nightingale." (Providence Daily Post, 24 February 1851)

On 3 March the company completed its advertised run of six opera performances in Boston; this was also the date of Parodi's final appearance with the troupe. The overall critical verdict on the season was favorable. "The manner in which [the operas] were got up," wrote the reviewer for the Courier, "has given entire satisfaction . . . [and] it has been a favor to witness the excellent performances at the Federal Street Theatre." The critic added, "it is to be regretted that [Maretzek] has limited himself to six performances [especially as] we have had so little of opera lately." (Boston Courier, 27 February 1851) Evidently, Maretzek came to the same conclusion: an announcement appeared the following Monday with the news that the manager had changed his mind about ending the season, and had sent to New York for reinforcements (Truffi, Forti and the dancers Fitzjames and Carrese) to replace the departed Parodi. The Evening Transcript was delighted with this development. "We have pleasure," the editor wrote, "in learning that all our operatic enjoyment for the season is not over yet. Truffi, ever a great favorite in Boston, is expected to protract the engagement of Max Maretzek's excellent company with Mr. Walker." (Evening Transcript, 3 March 1851) The soprano and her husband Sesto Benedetti (who probably travelled with the other performers) arrived in Boston on 4 March. (Evening Transcript, 5 March 1851)

Whether Maretzek envisioned a lengthy re-engagement in Boston or just a short one is unknown; the Evening Transcript, however, announced that the troupe planned to mount four additional operas during the season: Ernani, Don Giovanni, Parisina, and Il Giuramento--all works that they had not yet performed in Boston. (Evening Transcript, 5 March 1851) It came as a surprise, then, that at the end of the first week the company abruptly announced the conclusion of the extended season. The critic for the Evening Transcript was dismayed at this sudden change of plans. "We had hoped," he wrote, "[that] sufficient encouragement would have been extended to induce Maretzek to keep [his company] here another week." (Evening Transcript, 6 March 1851) The reason for the sudden change of plans would become clear later, when the troupe returned to Boston in April. For the time being, however, Maretzek simply changed the bill for the troupe's concert on Saturday 8 March to read "Grand Farewell" performance. On Monday the 10th the company members packed up their instruments, costumes, and music, and boarded trains for New York--whence to depart for Charleston, South Carolina. (Evening Transcript, 10 March 1851)

CHARLESTON AND AUGUSTA

The Astor Place Company, identified in the playbills of the Charleston Theatre simply as the "Italian Opera," travelled south by sea, leaving New York on 15 March on the steamship Southerner, and arriving in Charleston three days later. (Charleston Daily Courier, 19 March 1851) The troupe's first performance at the Charleston Theatre was scheduled for Thursday the 20th, but Truffi fell ill en route and

the Charleston Mercury announced that opning night was postponed until Friday. (Mercury, 20 March 1851)

There was almost no advance publicity in the Charleston newspapers for the company; the first advertisement did not appear until the nineteenth, when "The Managers" announced the troupe's arrival and the date of its first appearance. This lack of advance newspaper publicity, however, is understandable in view of the company's abrupt departure from Boston (and its subsequent sudden arrival in Charleston). The already-mentioned notice in the Mercury that the troupe's debut performance had to be postponed, however, suggests that the citizens of Charleston had some advance warning that the troupe was expected--as does the fact that by 17 March a subscription list for the opera season already had been assembled.[70] Evidently F. C. Adams, the manager of the Charleston Theatre, relied heavily on the posting of playbills--rather than newspaper advertisements--for the dissemination of information about his coming attractions.

This time-honored method of theatrical publicity would have been perfectly adequate in the South Carolina city, for in 1850 Charleston was a small town with a dense population concentrated almost entirely within the limited confines of the city. Excepting Augusta, in fact, Charleston was by far the smallest town in which the troupe mounted a season during the year: according to United States Census figures, in 1850 Charleston boasted a population of only 42,985, of whom 19,523 (or slightly over

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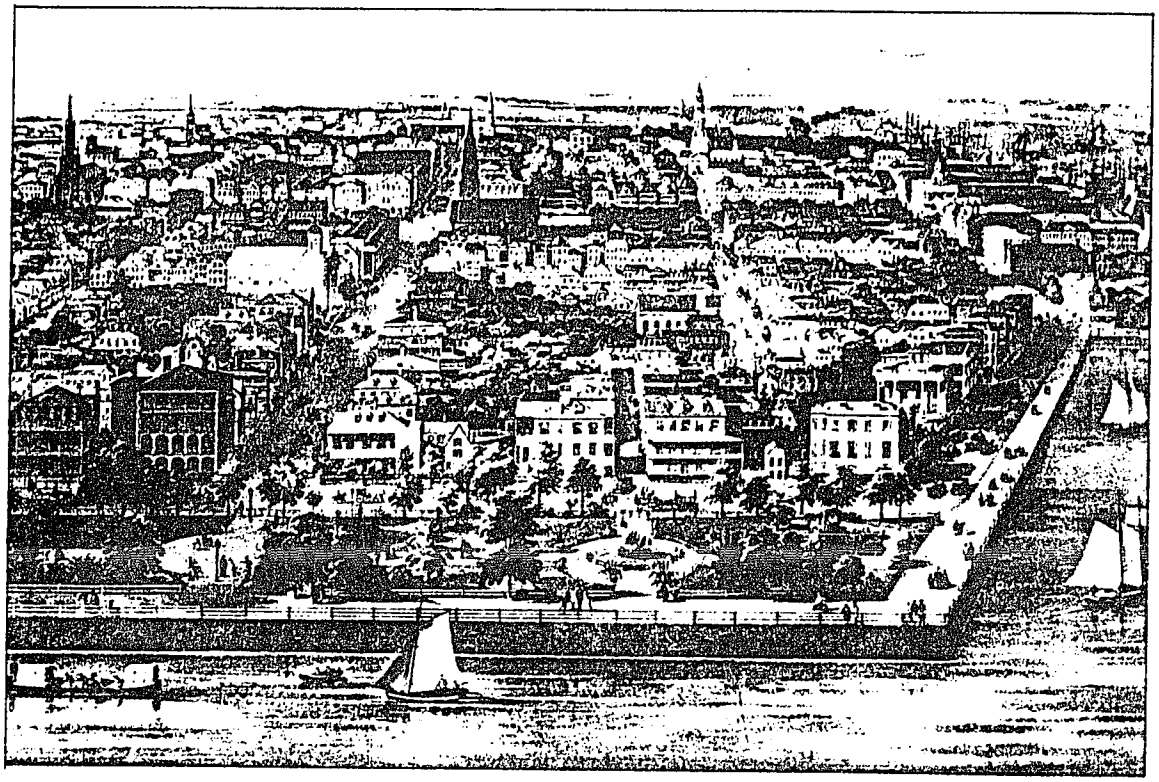
70. The Daily Courier carried the following announcement on 17 March: "Subscribers to the Opera, will please call at the Box Office, between the hours of 9 and 12 o'clock on This Day and receive their tickets for this season, which will be in readiness." Charleston Daily Courier, 17 March 1851.

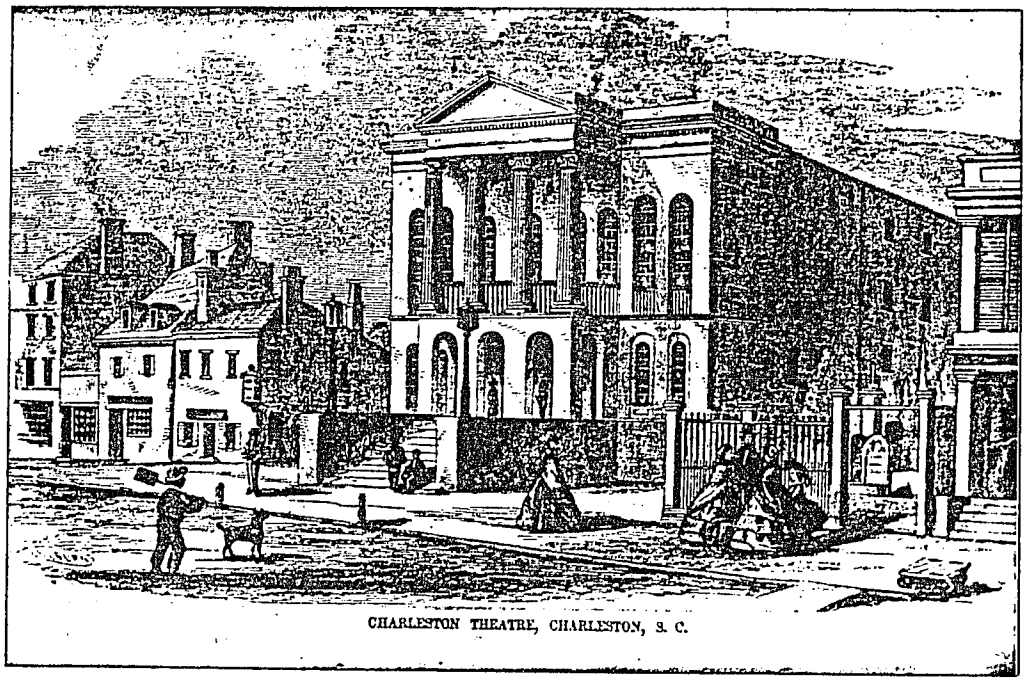
45%) were slaves; the city proper occupied an area significantly less than one square mile. In stark contrast to Charleston were the sizes of all the other cities in which the company performed: New York (654,429, including Brooklyn), Philadelphia (340,045, including suburbs), Boston (208,335, including suburbs), and Baltimore (169,054). Other American cities of the same relative size as Charleston in 1850 were Buffalo (42,000), Louisville (43,000), Washington, D. C. (40,000), and Providence (41,500). The troupe, as we have seen, did perform in the last-named city, but Maretzek had deemed the town large (or important) enough for only one concert. Charleston, of course, had long been a major American cultural center; by the mid-nineteenth century, however, the town was in the process of losing this position. Nevertheless, in 1851 Maretzek felt sufficiently confident of Charlestonians' support that he mounted a full season there.[71]

Maretzek depended on Adams to handle the miscellaneous preliminary details, for the entire opera troupe--including acting manager, stage manager, chorus master, prompter, conductor, leader of the orchestra, instrumentalists, and singers--all arrived at the same time. (Passenger list, Charleston Courier, 19 March 1851) Maretzek himself apparently was serving in the capacity of general manager on this trip, for advertisements and playbills alike identify Benedetti as "acting manager"

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71. For population figures see Allen Pred, Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States, 1840-1860. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980, 12, and Seventh Census of the United States. An Appendix Embracing Notes Upon the Tables of Each of the States, Etc. (Washington, D. C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), 339; for information on Charleston's geographical configuration, see John P. Radford, "Race, Residence, and Ideology: Charleston, South Carolina in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in Geographic Perspectives on America's Past, David Ward, editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 347.





Top: A view of antebellum Charleston, South Carolina.
Bottom: The New Charleston Theatre.

of the troupe, and Signor G. Lietti as the orchestra conductor.[72] After Benedetti's (presumably unsatisfactory) handling of the company in Baltimore, Maretzek perhaps had decided that his second-in-command needed some additional supervised managerial experience. In addition, as we shall see, Maretzek had other business that would occupy his attention in Charleston.

The make-up of the troupe--as far as can be determined--was admirably economical: numerous company members served in several capacities. In addition to his major singers, the manager utilized in name roles several vocalists who were relatively unfamiliar--but who probably were normally members of the chorus.[73] Conversely, at least one singer who had appeared in name roles elsewhere (the contralto Avogadro) sang in the chorus on this trip.[74] The doubling-up of duties must have been a standard practice, especially for a road company. Certainly all the secondary singers in the Astor Place troupe helped to fill out the ranks of the chorus when otherwise unoccupied. At least one other troupe member also wore two different professional hats during this engagement: the company's prompter, Mr. Hensler, occasionally sang bass parts.

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72. Playbills, Charleston Theatre, MB; advertisement, Charleston Courier, 21 March 1851. Maretzek's presence in Charleston is confirmed by the appearance of his name on the passenger list of the Southerner that appeared in the Courier on 19 March 1851.

73. These singers included the soprano Mrs. Garrett, bass Domenico Locatelli, and tenor Napoleone Parozzi. Parozzi was listed as a chorus member of the 1848 Astor Place Company. During the 1850-51 season he performed in name roles regularly in Philadelphia; he also was a member of the Baltimore branch of the company. Mrs. Garrett had performed in name roles twice in New York and once in Boston in January and February 1851; Locatelli had been featured twice in Philadelphia and once in Baltimore. See Maretzek playbills, MB.

74. Her name appears on none of the playbills from this season, but it shows up on the passenger list from the Southerner.

The Charleston company included many of the name singers who had appeared in Boston; the notable exception was Parodi. The five principals during this southern tour were Truffi, Forti, Beneventano (baritone), Rosi (bass), and Giubilei (bass); all but Forti and Truffi had been members of the Boston company, and those two had been summoned to Massachusetts for the extended season there. Midway through the Charleston engagement the management added two other name singers: Caroline Vietti (a contralto who first performed on 27 February) and the Boston soprano Virginia Whiting, whose Charleston debut was on 5 April. Whiting--along with the buffo Antonio Sanquirico--came south on the steamer Southerner on its next trip from New York to Charleston; they arrived on 27 March. (Daily Courier, 28 March 1851) Passenger lists published in newspapers (like that for the Southerner) provide further proof of what we already know--that many itinerant performers travelled with next-of-kin. In 1850, of course, it would have been unseemly for a young unmarried woman like Virginia Whiting (she had made her professional debut only several months earlier, under Maretzek) to travel alone, so her mother accompanied her to Charleston.[75]

According to newspaper "puffs" this particular version of the Astor Place Company numbered some seventy performers, with "upwards of forty

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75. Vietti, a contralto, was a member of Marti's Havana Opera Company, which had recently concluded its season at the Tacon Theatre. Vietti and Fortunata Tedesco, another of Marti's ex-singers, had arrived in Charleston on 11 March. See the passenger list for the Isabel, Daily Courier, 12 March 1851.

Whether Virginia Whiting's mother turned around and went back to New York after delivering her daughter to Maretzek is unknown; this is certainly possible, but it nevertheless is more likely that Whiting mère remained with the company for as long as her daughter was engaged. (See Daily Courier, 28 March 1851) If her mother did stay, the soprano would not have been the only member of the troupe to have the company of family in Charleston. The singers Beneventano, Garrett, Locatelli, Parozzi, and Truffi all travelled with their spouses (as mentioned, Truffi and Benedetti were married). As these were all "name" singers, it appears that the troupe's stars were permitted to bring their spouses on tour, but the members of the chorus and orchestra were not. See the Daily Courier, 19 March 1851.

persons" in the orchestra and chorus. (Charleston Mercury, 20 March 1851) It is impossible to determine the actual size and make-up of either chorus or orchestra, however, or to know whether musicians associated with the Charleston Theatre (or other local musicians) were engaged to augment either. It is likewise impossible to corroborate the figure of seventy performers; if the company had been noticeably smaller, however, one of the critics in either Charleston or Augusta probably would have mentioned it. Whatever the size of the company, the manager (Maretzek or Benedetti) conducted the Charleston season in precisely the same manner that had previously proven successful--with variety as the governing principle. Over the course of three weeks the troupe performed eight different operas (Ernani, La Favorita, Parisina, Lucrezia Borgia, Il Giuramento, Norma, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Il barbiere di Siviglia), giving two performances of four of them (Ernani, La Favorita, Lucrezia Borgia, and Norma). Despite the repeats, each of the fifteen bills presented was different, the result of a varied slate of dances performed by Fitzjames and Carrese (who had come south with the troupe) and the introduction of new singers (Whiting and Vietti) at crucial points. (See Table 16.)

Apparently the company was well received by the public of Charleston. The only available commentary on the makeup of the Charleston audience, however, is from a diary entry by a individual who had attended an opera performance of the previous spring. Elizabeth West Nevins, a Philadelphian who kept a journal on a trip to the South during 1850, was in Charleston when Marti's Havana Company, en route to New York, stopped there in March and April. Nevins and her party attended four of the five

performances (the night they did not go she played whist). On the final evening, she noted that the theatre was "crowded from pit to dome"--a significant comment, especially for a segregated theatre in a town with a slave population of 45%.[76] Newspaper commentary during the Astor Place Company season suggests similarly large audiences. Apparently neither of the critics for the two newspapers was particularly knowledgeable musically. The reviewer for the Mercury seems to have possessed a modicum of musical discernment ("the chorus was well-drilled," he wrote about the first performance, "but it lacked a little efficiency on the female side. . . . The Orchestra was full and efficient, every instrument harmonizing to the echo.") (Charleston Mercury, 22 March 1851) The critic for the Daily Courier, however, wrote remarkably vacuous reviews. His "critique" of the opening night performance included the following non-judgmental (and very "puff"-like) comments:

> We have no desire, even if time and space allowed, to criticize or discriminate between the respective performers. It is sufficient to say that the whole was harmony itself, and that never before within the walls of the new Theatre has an audience been more gratified at an Operatic performance. (Daily Courier, 22 March 1851)

The citizens of Charleston deserved better; evidently they patronized the company's performances for the entire duration of their season.

Ironically, Maretzek and his troupe faced some significant competition during their stay in Charleston--much more challenging, in fact, than in the larger cities of Philadelphia or Boston. As mentioned

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76. Elizabeth West Nevins (Mrs. Charles Lawrence Perkins) Diary, 1850. Manuscript Division, NN.

TABLE 16: BILLS OF THE ASTOR PLACE OPERA COMPANY DURING ITS CHARLESTON SEASON, 21 MARCH-12 APRIL 1851

21 March (Fri)	Ernani (Truffi) Fitzjames and Carrese: Pas des tambourine and La Manola
22 March (Sat)	La Favorita (Truffi) Fitzjames and Carrese: Grand Pas de Deux and La Zingarella
24 March (Mon)	Parisina (Truffi) Fitzjames and Carrese: Pas des tambourine and La Manola
25 March (Tues)	Ernani (Truffi) Fitzjames and Carrese: Pas de Deux and La Sicilienne
27 March (Thur)	Lucrezia Borgia (Truffi, Vietti). "First Appearance of the Celebrated Contralto Singer, Signora Vietti" Fitzjames and Carrese: La Zingarella and La Manola
28 March (Fri)	La Favorita (Truffi) "Second and Positively Last Night of Favorita" Fitzjames and Carrese: Grand Pas de Deux and La Sicilienne
31 March (Mon)	Il Giuramento (Truffi and Vietti. Truffi's benefit) "Two Prime Donne in One Opera!" Fitzjames and Carrese: La Sicilienne
1 April (Tues)	Lucrezia Borgia (Truffi, Vietti) "For the Last Time This Season" Fitzjames only: Las Malaquenas
4 April (Fri)	Truffi sick: no opera
5 April (Sat)	Norma (Truffi, debut of Virginia Whiting) Fitzjames: Tip Top Polka (by Maretzek)
7 April (Mon)	Lucia (Whiting). "Second Appearance of Miss Virginia Whiting" (dancers have gone to Augusta)
9 April (Wed)	Norma (Truffi, Whiting) "Last Appearance of Miss Virginia Whiting."
10 April (Thur)	Concert
12 April (Sat)	Concert
	(14-21 April: in Augusta, Georgia)
22 April (Tues)	Barber of Seville (Vietti) "Positively The Last Night that the Italian Opera Company Can Perform in Charleston." Fitzjames and Carrese: unnamed dance.

above, Caroline Vietti and Fortunata Tedesco (the latter one of Marti's most luminous stars) had arrived in Charleston on 11 March. They gave a grand concert at Hibernian Hall in the city on the 15th, three days before the Astor Place Company arrived. (Daily Courier 14 March 1851) Presumably the audience that these two singers attracted included many of the same individuals whom Maretzek hoped to lure to his performances. Much more serious--and, under the circumstances, ironic--was competition from the concert company of Strakosch and Parodi; their troupe arrived via steamer from Wilmington (North Carolina?) on April first. It now numbered seven (Parodi, Strakosch, Amalia Patti, Avignone, Hauser, Salvatore Patti, and a Sig. Mustna); four of the seven had once been members of Maretzek's company, and both Strakosch and Hauser, as we have seen, had performed with the opera troupe on numerous occasions.[77] Advertisements for Parodi's two concert appearances in Charleston preceded her actual arrival there by about a month, attesting to Strakosch's remarkable organizational efficiency. Small ads announcing her imminent appearance "towards the end of the month" appeared in the Daily Courier as early as 10 March; large impressive advertisements, listing full concert programs, were published in the newspaper during the last week before the concert.[78]

The concert troupe was scheduled to give two performances, on Wednesday and Saturday, 2 and 5 April. Strakosch and Maretzek apparently were not interested in cut-throat competition; Maretzek also

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77. Daily Courier, 2 April 1851. According to the Message Bird, in fact, the troupe was described prior to a concert in Richmond, Virginia, as consisting of Strakosch, Hauser, and the "principal performers of the Astor Place Opera Troupe." See Message Bird, 1 March 1851, 643.

78. See Charleston Daily Courier, 10 March and after, and 24 March and after. The Parodi/Strakosch troupe arrived only one day before the first scheduled performance, which under any circumstances was cutting the schedule a little close. Daily Courier, 2 April 1851.

must have realized that many of his subscribers wished to hear Parodi, and that they would not be happy about sacrificing an opera ticket (for which they had paid) in order to attend one of her performances. It was bad enough, most Charleston music-lovers thought, that they had to be satisfied with hearing the prima donna in concert and not in opera. At least one of the city's critics recognized this mood of disgruntlement among the citizenry, for in a favorable review of Parodi's first performance, he noted a "shade of disappointment" in the audience,

> not because [Parodi's] performance was not brilliant and full of the loftiest inspirations of genius, but because she could not help giving indications, under all the restraints of the concert room, of those wonderful dramatic powers which have made her the glory of the stage. (Mercury, 3 April 1851)

Rumors that Maretzek himself was maliciously preventing an opera appearance by Parodi apparently were rife throughout the community, for he felt compelled to add to one of the company's playbills the following disclaimer:

> The Managers would respectfully inform the citizens of Charleston that they have no connection with, or interest in, the Concerts to be given by Madame Parodi; nor has the Opera Company now performing under their management, nor Mr. Maretzek, any control over or interest in them whatever.
>
> The Managers have deemed it their duty to make this explanation, in consequence of a misapprehension which, they have been repeatedly informed, exists in the public mind, that they had prevented her from appearing in Opera, to protect their own interests. (Playbill, Charleston Theatre, 1 April 1851)

Whether to avoid the appearance of competition with Strakosch and Parodi, to accommodate the wishes of his subscribers, or for some other

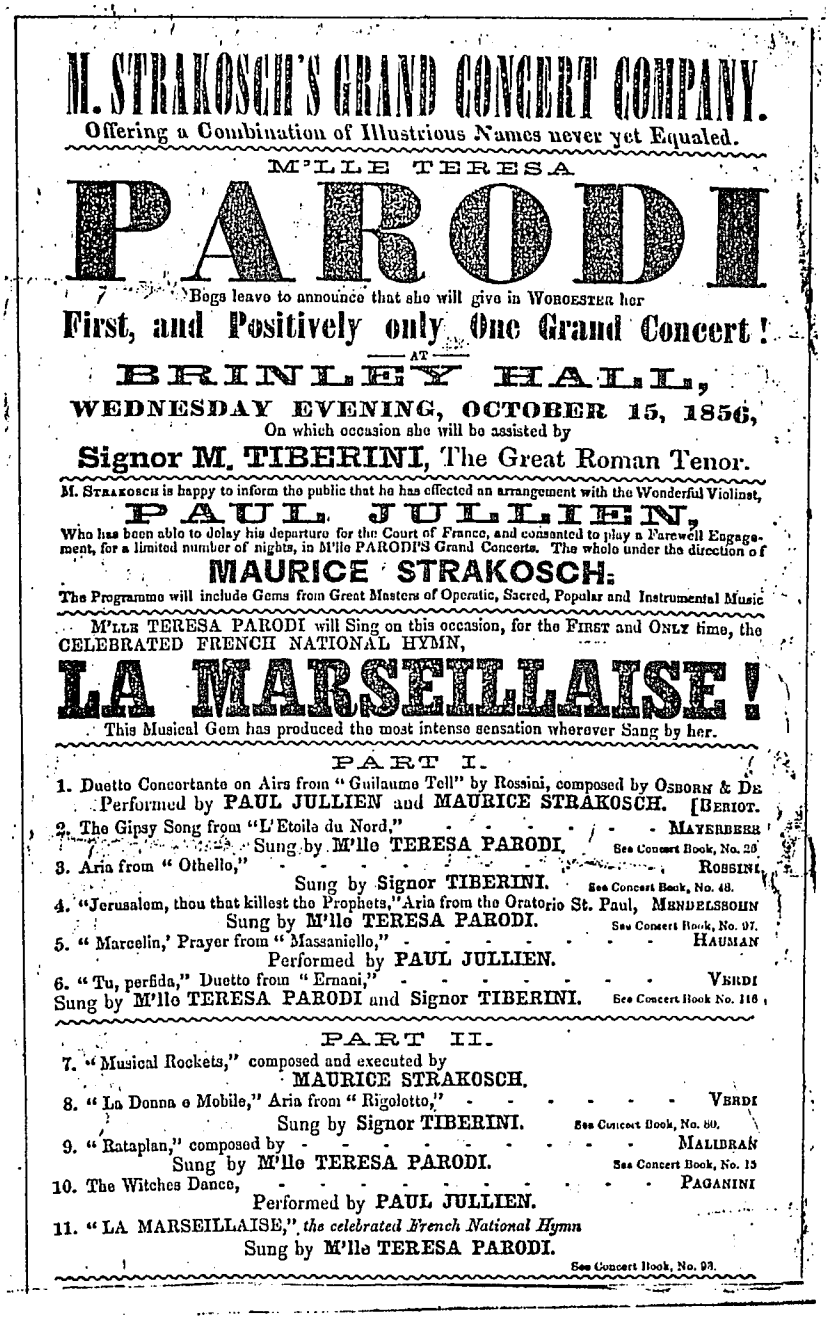
reason, Maretzek announced on 1 April that the "Opera at the Theatre" was "suspended until Friday evening," at which time Truffi would appear in Norma. (Daily Courier, 2 April 1851) Maretzek evidently did not want to compete with the concert singers on either of their two nights. Truffi, however, fell ill on Friday and her performance had to be postponed to Saturday, putting it in direct competition with Parodi's concert. Apparently both performances attracted sizeable audiences, which delighted the Mercury's critic. "It is a gratifying evidence of the musical taste of our City," he wrote,

> that it can furnish in one night two such audiences as that of the Opera and that of the Concert, and equally gratifying that Charleston can attract the musical talent to furnish forth two such splendid entertainments. (Mercury, 7 April 1851)

Flush with the successful season in Charleston, the joint management of the Astor Place Company and the Charleston Theatre decided to attempt a short season in Augusta, Georgia. The smaller city (population 11,753) was located about 140 miles inland from Charleston; the two towns were linked by rail.[79] By the last week of the opera company's Charleston season, the dancers Fitzjames and Carrese had already been performing in Augusta (with a dramatic troupe) for a week, and it is possible that a favorable reaction to their performances encouraged Maretzek and Adams to undertake the sidetrip to Augusta. The first Opera Company advertisement, however, had appeared in the Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel on 3

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79. Of this total population, 4,718 were slaves. According to the Seventh United States Census Report, population statistics were not available for the city of Augusta. Local officials, however, took a census of their own in 1852, and these figures were incorporated into the Census Appendix Report published in 1853. Seventh Census of the United States. An Appendix Embracing Notes Upon the Tables of Each of the States, Etc. (Washington, D. C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), 366.



M. STRAKOSCH'S GRAND CONCERT COMPANY.

Offering a Combination of Illustrious Names never yet Equaled.

M'LLE TERESA

PARODI

Begs leave to announce that she will give in WORCESTER her

First, and Positively only One Grand Concert!

AT

BRINLEY HALL,

WEDNESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 15, 1856,

On which occasion she will be assisted by

Signor M. TIBERINI, The Great Roman Tenor.

M. STRAKOSCH is happy to inform the public that he has effected an arrangement with the Wonderful Violinst,

PAUL JULLIEN,

Who has been able to delay his departure for the Court of France, and consented to play a Farewell Engagement, for a limited number of nights, in M'lle PARODI'S Grand Concerts. The whole under the direction of

MAURICE STRAKOSCH.

The Programme will include Gems from Great Masters of Operatic, Sacred, Popular and Instrumental Music

M'LLE TERESA PARODI will Sing on this occasion, for the FIRST and ONLY time, the CELEBRATED FRENCH NATIONAL HYMN,

LA MARSEILLAISE!

This Musical Gem has produced the most intense sensation wherever Sung by her.

PART I.

1. Duetto Concertante on Airs from "Guilaume Tell" by Rossini, composed by OSBORN & DE BERIOT.
   Performed by PAUL JULLIEN and MAURICE STRAKOSCH.
2. The Gipsy Song from "L'Etoile du Nord," - - - - - MAYERBEER
   Sung by M'lle TERESA PARODI. See Concert Book, No. 26
3. Aria from "Othello," - - - - - - - - - - ROSSINI
   Sung by Signor TIBERINI. See Concert Book, No. 48.
4. "Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets," Aria from the Oratorio St. Paul, MENDELSSOHN
   Sung by M'lle TERESA PARODI. See Concert Book, No. 97.
5. "Marcelin,' Prayer from "Massaniello," - - - - - - - - HAUMAN
   Performed by PAUL JULLIEN.
6. "Tu, perfida," Duetto from "Ernani," - - - - - - - - VERDI
   Sung by M'lle TERESA PARODI and Signor TIBERINI. See Concert Book No. 116

PART II.

7. "Musical Rockets," composed and executed by
   MAURICE STRAKOSCH.
8. "La Donna e Mobile," Aria from "Rigolotto," - - - - - - - VERDI
   Sung by Signor TIBERINI. See Concert Book, No. 80.
9. "Rataplan," composed by - - - - - - - - - - MALIBRAN
   Sung by M'lle TERESA PARODI. See Concert Book, No. 15
10. The Witches Dance, - - - - - - - - - - PAGANINI
    Performed by PAUL JULLIEN.
11. "LA MARSEILLAISE," *the celebrated French National Hymn*
    Sung by M'lle TERESA PARODI.
    See Concert Book, No. 93.

Playbill for a performance by the Strakosch Grand Concert Company in 1856 at Brinley Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts. By the time of this concert Teresa Parodi was again a member of Strakosch's well travelled and very successful troupe.

April, indicating that the managers had been thinking in terms of Augusta at least since the middle week of the Charleston season. (Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, 3 April 1851) After the fact, however, Maretzek probably wished that his troupe had remained in Charleston, for the engagement in Georgia was almost a disaster.

The company announced a one-week season (five performances) and billed it as the "First Italian Opera in Augusta." (Daily Chronicle, 13 April 1851) The run would last from Monday to Monday (14-21 April), with performances on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings; a different opera would be mounted each night. (Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, 13 April 1851) The audience at the first performance, however, was so disappointingly small (the local critic termed it "very thin, though elite and discriminating") that Maretzek immediately decided to retreat to friendlier territory in South Carolina--at least so he announced. (Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, 15 April 1851) He altered the billing of the troupe's second performance to "Last Night of the Season," and had playbills printed to announce the change. (Playbill, Augusta Concert Hall, 15 April 1851) The critical reaction in Augusta was predictable. "It is a matter of sincere regret to us," wrote a local reporter, "that the Manager . . . has in consequence of the apparent indifference of the community to the merits of the Opera, determined to close after to-night. We wish it were otherwise," he lamented, "but [the manager] cannot continue without [incurring] too great a [financial] sacrifice." (Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, 15 April 1851)

The citizens of Augusta who considered themselves music lovers

reacted in a logical manner to this announcement; the cultural reputation of their city, after all, had been seriously besmirched by the apparent "indifference of the community to the merits of the Opera." Galvanized into action, they flocked to the company's second performance. Maretzek was so pleased at this turnabout that he changed his mind about leaving, and announced to "the citizens of Augusta" that owing to the large Tuesday-night audience and to "the assurances which he [had] received from several sources," the company would give another opera on Thursday; "The Opera--Another Night!" triumphantly crowed the newspaper headline. (Daily Chronicle and Sentinel, 17 April 1851) All of this posturing, of course, might have been just another of Maretzek's many managerial tricks. Whether a bluff or a genuine act of desperation, however, the ploy apparently worked, for the troupe completed its entire season of five appearances as originally planned.

Following the final performance on 21 March, the Astor Place Company quit Augusta, travelled to Charleston, and gave another final performance, this one on the 22nd. The next afternoon they left Charleston and travelled north by land, headed back to Boston. (Playbill, Charleston Theatre, 22 April 1851)

The company that left Charleston in late April, however, was much altered from the troupe that had arrived a month earlier. The changes would not become apparent until the ensemble commenced its second season in Boston; by then, however, it would be clear that Maretzek had added to his company a number of superstars--all of whom had the ability and celebrity to make Boston and New York forget about the departed Teresa

Parodi. The changes were the result of circumstances that were in part fortuitous, in part calculated risk and careful planning; the essential final negotiations had taken place in Charleston. A reconstruction of the various steps Maretzek went through in order to acquire his new singers provides a satisfactory explanation for the company's rather odd and abrupt departure from Boston in early March, and its sudden arrival in Charleston shortly thereafter. More important, it tells us a great deal about the behind-the-scenes strategies, schemes, and machinations in which opera-troupe managers of the period dealt. The chain of events that ended in the spring of 1851 had commenced, according to Maretzek, in New York--eight or nine months previous, during the summer of 1850.

When Maretzek witnessed the performances of Marti's Havana Company at Castle Garden in August and September 1850, he realized immediately that his company--and, in fact, any troupe that could be assembled in the United States--was hopelessly outclassed. Furthermore, as long as this particularly stellar group of singers was under Marti's management, and as long as that impresario (because of the particular circumstances under which he operated) could continue to charge low prices for their performances in New York, the Havana Company, in Maretzek's words, would represent "a most dangerous and effective opposition to the New York management." (C&Q, 158) Consequently, that summer the Astor House manager "made up [his] mind" immediately about Marti's stars: he would use "any means possible, to secure them for [New York]." (C&Q, 157)

Maretzek was aware that most of the vocalists Marti had assembled for his remarkable company were under contract until the conclusion of the 1850-51

Havana season. He immediately embarked on a campaign to sign them to his own management at the expiration of their engagement to Marti. As he later wrote, "I decided [to] enter into immediate communication with the . . . artists composing the [Havana] troupe." How smooth were the various negotiations is impossible to know. We can suspect, however, that Maretzek knew that his best chance for engaging these artists--and the only chance he had to avoid being upstaged by his rivals Ullman or Strakosch (or some other impresario)--was to be in personal contact with the singers as soon as they set foot in the United States (most of them could be expected to travel back to Europe via New York). Timing was of the essence in this venture, so he maintained close contact with individuals in Havana throughout the course of the opera season there, and played a waiting game in Boston when March (the traditional end of the season at the Tacon) rolled around.

The most convenient route from Cuba to New York was by way of Charleston, and Maretzek intended to be there when Marti's ex-singers disembarked. Since Charleston also was a good music and theatre city, the manager could take his whole company with him; the Astor Place troupe could be performing (under the direction of Benedetti) while Maretzek awaited the arrival of, and then negotiated with, the Havana singers. Presumably, then, Maretzek made an arrangement (by mail) with the management of the Charleston Theatre for an opera season there, but left the beginning date somewhat flexible. Then he waited. By the time the Astor Place troupe concluded its scheduled run in Boston, Maretzek had heard nothing from Havana. He did not want to take the troupe prematurely to Charleston (the city was, after all, tiny), so he sent to New York for reinforcements to replace the departed Parodi and announced a continuation

of the Boston season. But Truffi, Benedetti, Fitzjames, and the others had no sooner arrived in Massachusetts when Maretzek heard from Havana that the season at the Tacon Theatre had ended, and that Marti's singers were soon to be leaving for South Carolina. The waiting game over, Maretzek dashed off a telegram to the manager of the Charleston Theatre announcing his anticipated date of arrival and brought the engagement in Boston to an abrupt halt. By 10 March the whole troupe had left for New York (where they stopped long enough for one benefit concert), then headed for Charleston.

Just as expected, Marti's ex-singers arrived in Charleston while the Astor Place Company was performing there. Tedesco and Vietti, as already mentioned, had shown up a week before the New York troupe, and Maretzek must have engaged Vietti almost immediately. The rest of the Havana singers landed in Charleston a month later, and Maretzek set to work. [80] Altogether, he managed to sign seven of the ex-Havana Company artists, including the troupe's star basso Ignazio Marini, and one of the sopranos, Angiolina Bosio. As a consequence of his managerial coup, when the Astor Place Opera Company reopened at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston on 29 April, Maretzek not only had six new singers in his troupe (whose "first" and "second appearances" he could--and would--string out to glorious lengths), he also now had seven of the stars from the company that had so outclassed his own troupe the previous year.[81]

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80. They arrived on the Isabel from Cuba and Key West on 25 March. See the Daily Courier, 26 March. Undoubtedly, Maretzek was not pleased with the fortuitous (?) arrival of one of his rivals, Maurice Strakosch, several days later.

81. These singers included the sopranos Carolina Vietti (who had joined the troupe in Charleston) and Angiolina Bosio; tenors Timoleon Barratini (or Baratini), Geremia Bettini, and Domenico Lorini (who had left the Havana company earlier in the year and had appeared with Maretzek's troupe in February); and basses Domenico Coletti and Ignazio Marini.

BOSTON (AGAIN)

When Maretzek's company had cut short its extended season and abruptly quit Boston on 10 March, they evidently left behind a number of disappointed opera-lovers. The newspapers attempted to appease Bostonians by publishing reports that the troupe planned to return to the city in late April. On the very day the company left, in fact, the Evening Transcript reported the "rumor" that "a number of gentlemen" had approached Maretzek and promised him "certain profits" if he would return and produce another opera season later in the spring. (Evening Transcript, 10 March 1851) A week later, this rumor had turned to reality--or, at least, possibility. The same journal announced that Maretzek would stage another three-week season in Boston sometime in April, if two hundred and fifty subscribers (at $1 per night, for 12 nights) could be found. The editor judiciously pointed out to his readers that the amount of financial security Maretzek wanted (in the form of pledged subscriptions) came to less than half the amount required by Barnum for Jenny Lind's concerts--and Maretzek's proposal, for a "much superior entertainment" (in the editor's opinion), was for twelve performances. "It would be mortifying indeed," he warned, "if such a proposition is allowed to fail." (Evening Transcript, 17 March 1851) Within a month, the newspaper proudly announced that the subscription had succeeded, and that the company would be back in Boston by 23 April.[82]

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82. Evening Transcript, 11 April 1851. A week later the newspaper announced that the company had been delayed and their first performance would not occur until 28 April. Evening Transcript, 19 April 1851; Boston Courier, 29 April 1851.

For his new season in Boston, Maretzek charged significantly lower admission prices than he had during the company's first engagement at the Federal Street Theatre.[83] This change in policy could have been the result of several factors. First, during this engagement Maretzek's company had the luxury of a large block of subscribers (there is no evidence that subscriptions had been sold for the earlier season). Second, by April 1851 the Lind- and Parodi-mania had diminished somewhat, and Maretzek realized that the public was no longer as willing to pay prices inflated through hyperbole. (Besides, the Astor Place Company now was a solid troupe with real talent--rather than a mediocre company with one shining star.) Finally, for this engagement Maretzek had dispensed with at least one overhead expense, for Edward Walker no longer was associated with the troupe. All the improvements that Walker had made to the Federal Street Theatre, however, were still there--and the new, improved Astor Place troupe could enjoy the benefit of these improvements.

The repertory of the company on this visit to Boston was essentially the same as during the troupe's first engagement; there were many more repetitions, but the season was almost twice as long (see Table 15).[84] Also, Maretzek did not try so hard to vary each night's bill through repertory; his company now was sufficiently talented musically

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83. Parquet, first and second tier of boxes, $1.00; Family circle, 50 cents, gallery, 50 cents. During the earlier visit the prices had been $2.00 for boxes and parquet and 50 cents for the third tier and gallery. See playbill, Federal Street Theatre, 29 April 1851; Boston Courier, 14 February 1851.

84. The company gave twenty-one performances during this engagement, of a total of eight operas. The following works were mounted: Lucrezia Borgia (twice), Il barbiere di Siviglia, Romeo e Juliet, La Favorita (thrice), Ernani (thrice), Il Giuramento, Lucia di Lammermoor (thrice), and Don Giovanni (four times). The troupe also gave four concerts, all on Saturdays. See playbills, Federal Street Theatre.

that novelty was not such an overriding concern. Furthermore, he had the added advantage of six new singers whose first, second, and last performances he could use for purposes of variety.[85]

The troupe had advertised a season in Boston of three weeks. In fact, however, the engagement lasted for five (counting the final week of benefits.) According to newspaper reports, most of the performances were well attended. The Evening Transcript reported that the receipts for one performance (which featured the renowned soprano Angiolino Bosio) were "over $1500"--the equivalent of $21,750 in 1986.[86] The critical reception also was both enthusiastic and appreciative--so much so that one of the city's critics felt that his fellow Bostonians had vindicated themselves as lovers of music. "The artists of the operatic corps must be aware by this time," he wrote somewhat smugly, "that Bostonians may be warmed up by genuine merit to something very like enthusiasm." This proved, he concluded, that "they are not all cotton, ice or granite." (Evening Transcript, 22 May 1851) A week later the same critic offered a succinct assessment of the troupe's Boston season: "Last night saw the brilliant

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85. All of Maretzek's "new" singers had performed in Boston with the Havana Company earlier in the year. Their first performances, consequently, were "first" only for the season or with the company; there were no real debut performances, and Maretzek was careful to observe this distinction. Maretzek, as we have seen, was a master in the art of concocting slightly misleading playbills, and the troupe's advertisements for its three productions of Ernani illustrate well his tactics during this season. Maretzek used the company's opening-night performance of Ernani on 9 April to herald Ignazio Marini's first appearance. On 9 May the troupe mounted the same opera again, but this time--according to the playbill--it was for the "last time this season." In fact, it was the last time that Marini would perform in Ernani that season. The company, however, presented Verdi's opera once more on 29 May (for Truffi's benefit), this time announcing boldly the "first appearance of/Signor Bettini!/in Ernani!" It was Bettini's third appearance, but his first in that opera. See playbills, Federal Street Theatre, 9 and 29 May 1851.

86. Evening Transcript, 8 May 1851; Greene, 48. The company's second concert (on 10 May), however, was only "thinly attended." Daily Evening Transcript, 12 May 1851.



CELEBRATED TRIO IN LUCREZIA BORGIA.

Our readers are too familiar with this beautiful opera to require praise for its excellence from our pen. The scene which our artist has here sketched for us, is that which occurs between the Duke (Marini), Lucrezia (Bosio), and Genaro (Lorini), when the familiar and beautiful trio occurs, that never fails of being rapturously encored. By a careful observation of the engraving, it will be observed that our artist has preserved the likeness and entire expression of the scene to the life. It was taken during the performance of the opera recently, at the Boston Theatre, Federal Street, where Max Maretzek closed, a short time since, the most successful opera season ever consummated in Boston.

Topical material from Gleason's about the Astor Place Opera Company. The singers portrayed are three of the ex-Havana Opera Company stars Maretzek added to his troupe in Spring, 1851. Notice the comment in the caption "Our readers are too familiar with this beautiful opera to require praise for its excellence from our pen."

termination of the most brilliant operatic season we have ever had in Boston." (Evening Transcript, 31 May 1851)

POSTSEASON ACTIVITIES

When the members of the Astor Place Opera Company took their bows after the final performance on 31 May, they concluded both their Boston engagement and the operatic season of 1850-51. The year had been a good one. It was so successful financially that at its conclusion Maretzek not only was able to pay off debts from the previous season, but he could also "close [his] campaign with some profit." (C&Q, 127) Maretzek himself gave credit to Teresa Parodi; much of the troupe's success, however, could be traced directly to his own hard work and excellent managerial instincts.

From Boston the company returned to New York, where they commenced a summer season--briefly at the Astor Place House, then at Castle Garden; the manager hoped to duplicate Marti's phenomenally successful season of the previous summer. His hopes for artistic excellence and financial success were justifiably high, for by June he had added to his troupe the rest of Marti's former stars (with the single exception of Tedesco). The future of opera in the United States, as a consequence, was looking quite rosy. (C&Q, 158) "With the acquisition of this [Havana] company," Maretzek later remembered, "I began firmly to believe that Italian Opera would be perpetually domiciled in my new country." (C&Q, 158)

This fond dream of the permanent establishment of opera in New York (or in the Northeast), however, wilted in the summer heat. Like the

Havana troupe of the previous summer, Maretzek's company attracted huge crowds to Castle Garden; the Message Bird, in fact, noted in September that "The Italian Opera, as it is now conducted under Mareztek [sic] seems to be extremely popular." (Message Bird, 1 September 1851, 41) But the company failed nonetheless, the victim (like so many other Italian opera troupes) of greed, bickering, duplicity, and the general misbehavior of the singers. As Maretzek explained in some detail in Crotchets and Quavers, those singers whose vocal and artistic abilities were so remarkable, and whose contracts he had so coveted, had temperaments of equal magnitude. Individually, despite their "restless duplicity, their ungracious treatment of [the management], and the want of wisdom shown in the conduct of their relations with the public," the singers would have been manageable. (C&Q, 170) But the strength of this troupe was its remarkable ensemble and its depth. And as a group, the ex-Havana stars managed to live up (or down) to the stereotype of Italian artists that had become widespread among Americans; together, they simply overwhelmed Max Maretzek.

"The perfect liberty they enjoyed in New York," he explained later, "without the strict police regulations of either Italy or Havana, soon degenerated into impudence, insolence, and the most audacious contempt both for the public who came to listen to, and the management which paid them." (C&Q, 158) Maretzek described some of the problems that resulted in his near-bankruptcy: excessive demands for salaries, benefits, and bonuses; extra expenses for housing and feeding of spouses, servants, dogs, and parrots; demands that the management hire friends and acquaintances; demands that the management provide season tickets for

friends, relative, and acquaintances. Behind many of these demands, according to Maretzek, was the very real threat of blackmail: feigned illness, drunkenness on stage, sudden non-appearances, and sabotoged performances.[87]

An attempt to detail here what Maretzek called "all [his singers'] quarrels, jealousies and intrigues amongst themselves, or their tricks, plots and conspiracies against their Manager" would have to rely almost entirely on the (presumably biased) testimony of Maretzek himself. In any case, such detail, as Maretzek also wrote, would "take up far too much time and space." (C&Q, 158) Suffice it to say that by the end of the summer the Astor Place Company had collapsed utterly, its artists were scattered to the winds, and its manager was in deep financial trouble. After a scant three months of operations, the troupe had amassed, according to Maretzek, a "clear and unmistakable deficit of $22,000"--the rather sobering sum of $286,000 in 1986 terms.[88]

In the end, despite the financially and artistically successful season of 1850-51, and despite the high hopes at the beginning of the summer, by the fall the Astor Place Company was no more. It had become, in fact, one of the first of many opera troupes that Americans in the

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87. C&Q, 164-169. Rosselli explains that impresarios in Italy--as Maretzek implied--turned to civil authorities when faced with disciplinary problems with singers. A vocal star who feigned illness (and thereby broke his contract) was arrested and kept in jail or under house arrest and delivered to the opera house each night in time for the performance. This was the case in Mexico as well, according to Maretzek. See Rosselli, 96-99; C&Q, 256-260.

88. C&Q, 171; Greene, 48. Maretzek also blamed small audiences at Castle Garden for contributing to the collapse of his company. Reviews published in the New York Herald, however, consistently comment on the large crowds in attendance at the opera that summer. (See, for example, reviews that appeared on 7 and 22 June; 12, 14, 24, and 26 July; 21 August, and 2 September 1851.) This apparent discrepancy between reportedly large and enthusiastic audiences during a season and almost invariable financial distress and failure at its conclusion was fairly commonplace; the issue was the target of much editorial commentary during the 1850s.

1850s (and 1860s and 1870s) would see rise and fall in the "vain and impotent attempt to establish here a permanent and creditable institution of opera." (Dwight's, 23 October 1858, 235, reprinted from the Boston Courier) Despite its eventual failure, however, we have learned a great deal from the activities of the Astor Place troupe during the 1850-51 season. Maretzek's various managerial techniques presumably were typical of those of other Italian opera impresarios active during the 1850s; certainly they were typical of the techniques he used with his own later troupes. His heavy dependence on the transportation system in the Northeast (especially between Philadelphia and New York) is indicative of the increasing exploitation of the nation's expanding railroad network by theatrical and operatic companies during the 1850s; the ability of his company to travel quickly from Charleston to Augusta by rail foreshadows the huge expansion of opera-troupe itineraries into the American interior that would occur early in the new decade. The competition from Marti's troupe--and, especially, from operatic concert companies--is typical of competition faced by many troupes in the 1850s, and the fluctuating personnel (from branch to branch of Maretzek's company, from Maretzek's troupe to Strakosch's concert company, and from Marti's company to Maretzek's) is completely characteristic. Furthermore, the varied problems that Maretzek had with his singers, and the crises he was required to resolve were the same kinds of problems and crises managers faced over and over again during the 1850s.

The repertory performed by the Astor Place Company during 1850-51 is likewise typical. It is an excellent example of the Italian operas heard

by Americans in the late 1840s and early 1850s--and, for that matter, during the mid- and late-1850s: as the decade wore on, the Italian opera repertory became more and more stagnant, and critics complained increasingly of "thread-bare Italian operas," "old and worn-out Italian operas," and a "repertoire which has already been drawn upon well-nigh ad nauseum." (AMR, November 1853, 170; MR&G, 3 May 1856, 132; MW, 24 September 1853, 27) This over-reliance on many of the same operas that had been introduced in the late 1840s and early 1850s did not change significantly for the entire decade, except for the addition of more works by Verdi--especially La Traviata (1853), Il Trovatore (1855), and Rigoletto (1855)--and the critics so lamented the preponderance of these works (in particular Il Trovatore) in the repertories of Italian companies that by 1857 or 1858 John Sullivan Dwight began to refer to itinerant opera troupes as "trovatopera companies." (Dwight's, 2 October 1858, 214)

Finally, the audiences that Maretzek's company attracted in New York and elsewhere were similar to audiences that Italian troupes attracted throughout the 1850s. The attempts by the wealthy and elite to claim Italian opera for themselves would continue, and these efforts would increasingly succeed in large East-Coast cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. At the same time, however, Italian troupes--the same singers, and performing the same repertory as for the elite--continued to perform at Niblo's and Castle Garden in New York, attracting thousands of the canaille and introducing them to some of Europe's best vocalists. Even more important, the same troupes--again the same singers, and performing the same repertory--used the aristocrats' opera houses (in New York and Philadelphia) as home bases, and traveled around the country,

where they performed in regular theatres, as an accepted and normal part of the theatrical venue, and before audiences comprised of all segments of American society.

CHAPTER 5: ENGLISH OPERA COMPANIES, 1841-1860

During the five-year period from June 1837 through February 1842 (as we have seen) no professional company mounted a season of opera in Italian in the United States. Outside of New Orleans (and, briefly, Louisville) this Italian-opera hiatus was even more prolonged, for it extended from May 1835 (with the demise of the Porto-Sacchi Company in New York) through June 1843 (when the first Havana Company arrived in Cincinnati). This dearth of Italian companies, however, does not indicate a lack of interest in Italian opera among Americans, nor does it suggest that the music of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini was unheard by audiences in the United States during this period. On the contrary, as we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, Americans of the 1830s and 1840s were increasingly enamored of Italian melody; their fascination with opera is clearly reflected both in the success of the numerous English vocal stars and in the operatic repertory they performed. Skilled vocal stars such as Shirreff, Wilson, and the Woods neatly stepped into the breach and gave Americans plenty of Italian opera, albeit translated into English; these same vocalists increasingly replaced the erstwhile performers of opera in English--the singing actors and actresses of local stock companies.

During the 1840s, this pattern toward the reliance upon highly skilled artists for the performance of opera in English intensified. Vocal stars continued to be active throughout the 1840s (especially in theatres on the American frontier), but as early as 1842 fewer of them plied the theatrical circuit alone or in duos or trios; it now became the norm for singers to form themselves into small companies of four, five, or

six. This movement to larger ensembles was in part a continuation of two related trends apparent in the late 1830s: higher performance expectations on the part of audiences, and the ever-growing popularity of the more-difficult bel canto repertory; both were exacerbated by the appearance after 1843 of large, self-sufficient, and glamorous Italian opera companies that travelled and performed outside of New Orleans or the New York-Boston-Philadelphia axis.

The increased size of vocal-star ensembles also was a response to developments in the American theatrical world. By the early 1840s the star system was at the height of its popularity, and the resulting deleterious effect on stock companies was pronounced. Local theatre managers, who competed with each other for the services of big-name dramatic and musical performers, agreed to exorbitant salary demands by the stars--demands that sometimes, at the end of an engagement, left them with nothing to pay house expenses. Because the public was no longer willing to patronize performances by the stock company alone, however, managers were forced to continue the practice of engaging high-priced stars. In order to stave off bankruptcy, theatre owners had to cut expenses; the most common method was to slash the salaries of their actors and actresses. Many competent thespians, as a consequence, were dismissed from stock companies and replaced by inferior performers whose salaries were lower; this accelerated a decline in the overall quality of stock companies, many of which had already lost some of their best performers to the lure of "stardom." (Bernheim, 28) As a result, many companies that in the 1830s could have mounted (with the assistance of one or two vocal stars) an acceptable production of, for example, Cinderella,

were no longer capable of doing so by the early 1840s. Travelling singers could no longer rely on local stock company members to perform even the secondary roles in the operatic repertory. In response to this situation, vocal stars banded together into larger troupes: five or six singers, to cover the vocal roles of most works in the repertory and to serve as the nucleus of a chorus.

English opera companies of the mid- and late-1840s remained fairly small; they were basically expanded vocal-star troupes. By the 1850s, however, most English troupes (excepting those operating on the theatrical frontier) were larger, numbering between fifteen and thirty performers--principal and secondary singers, chorus, and orchestra leader. To a great extent, however, even these larger English companies were a compromise--a middle ground between the small, highly mobile, and heavily dependent vocal-star troupes and the large, unwieldy, and self-sufficient Italian companies. Their similarities to the earlier vocal-star ensembles were numerous. First, like vocal stars, all English troupes relied on stock companies: some on the services of stock company performers, almost all on the orchestra of the theatre in which they performed. Second, English companies, like vocal stars, performed in the vernacular. And third, even in the late 1850s English troupes still occasionally performed works that had been mainstays in the older vocal-star repertory: eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English operas by Dibdin, Storace, Arne, and Bishop, now generally chosen for benefit performances or as afterpieces rather than as the principal bills of fare. English opera troupes, however, also shared some of the characteristics of the flashier, more self-sufficient Italian companies. Most obvious, of course, was the

incorporation of numerous works from the Italian repertory, for almost as soon as an Italian company successfully introduced a new opera to American audiences, it was translated, adapted, and happily seized upon by the current English troupes. Among these adapted works were operas by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi. Finally, as already mentioned, the increased size of English companies (especially those active in the 1850s) was to a great extent an imitation of the size and polish of the large Italian troupes. English stars who wished to compete with the foreign-language troupes (or even to satisfy audiences whose expectations of performance standards had been heightened) were forced to surround themselves with larger companies and more-skilled performers.

THE SEGUIN OPERATIC TROUPE

From 1841 through 1847 one pair of singers, Anne and Edward Seguin, dominated the performance of opera in English in the United States. The Seguins, as we have seen, were among the sizeable group of vocal stars who came to this country in the late 1830s and early 1840s; they arrived in 1838 with Jane Shirreff and John Wilson, and Edward (and later Anne) toured with those two very successful vocal stars during their first year in America. By mid-1841, however, the Seguins were almost the sole representatives of this group still left in the United States. Shirreff and Wilson had departed in 1840; the Woods left abruptly for the second (and final) time in January 1841; and Theodore Giubilei and Clara Poole, who sang with the Seguins (and Charles Manvers) in Philadelphia and New York during 1840-41, sailed home at the conclusion of that season.[1] The

1. Giubilei and Poole reportedly returned to engagements at Drury Lane Theatre. Spirit, 3 July 1841.

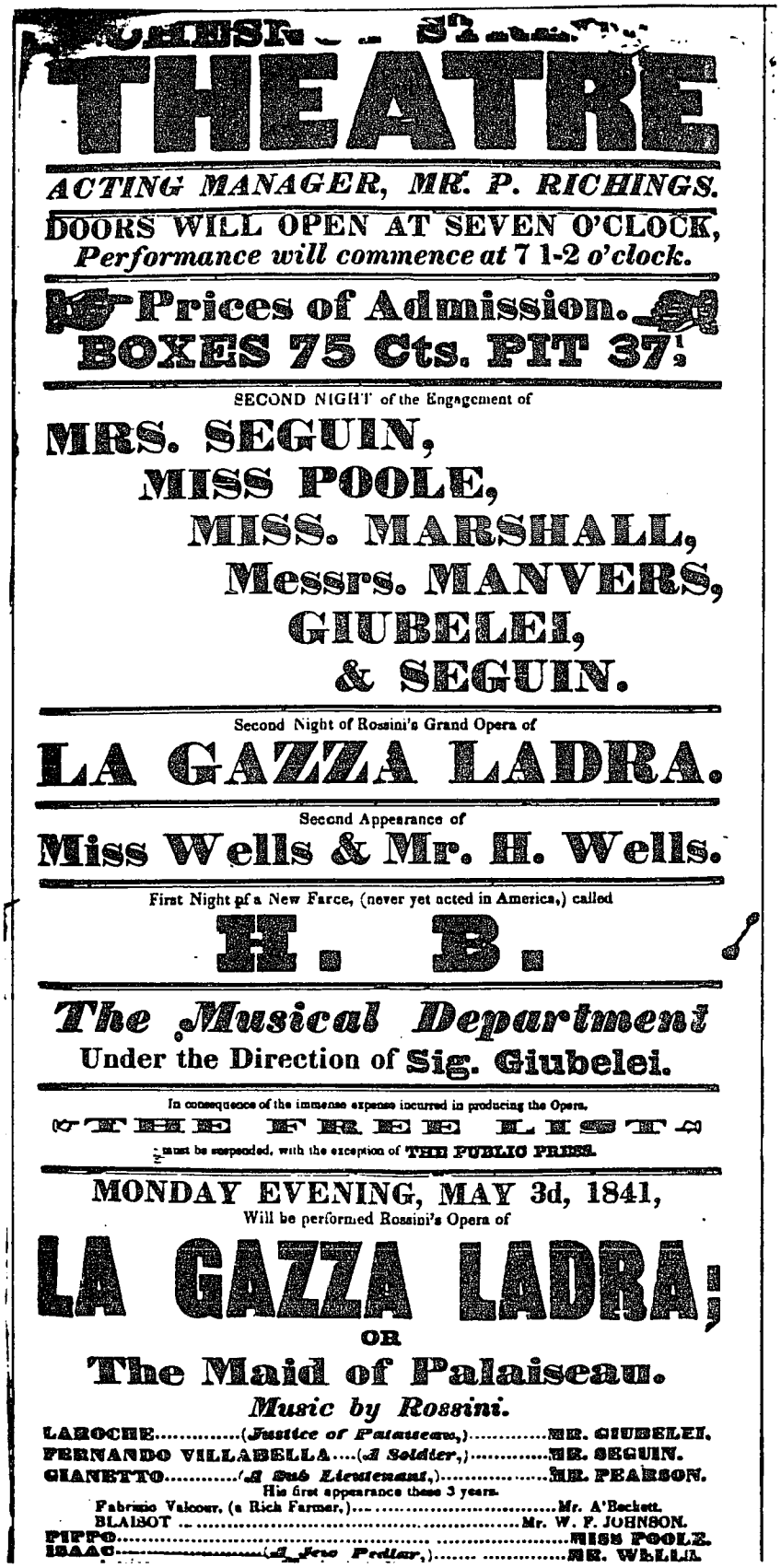
rash of departures left the field of English opera wide open for the Seguins; even better was the absence of any newly arrived vocal stars of high calibre and reputation to replace those who had departed. The resulting dearth of competition was probably a principal factor in the Seguins' decision to stay in this country.

Both of the Seguins had been successful in London prior to their arrival in North America, and both presumably could have resumed their careers there had they returned. Edward sang regularly throughout the 1830s at Covent Garden and Drury Lane; Anne (née Childe) Seguin had also appeared in opera in London (at the King's Theatre and at Drury Lane) before crossing the Atlantic. Apparently both were successful during their first three years in this country; certainly, during the time that Edward Seguin was closely associated with Shirreff and Wilson, his pecuniary success was equal to theirs.[2] Because none of the Seguins' business records have survived, we can only guess at their earnings after they parted ways with Shirreff. The fact that they remained in the United States after 1841, however, strongly suggests that they were at least moderately successful--in spite of the national economic slump--and that their artistic and financial future appeared to them to be more promising in North America than in England.

The Seguins' gamble paid off--to the extent that they never returned permanently to Britain. Their success (in part) was a result of the absence of competition: with the exception of operatic productions by stock companies (with or without the assistance of vocal stars) and three

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2. Nicholas Tawa, AG, W. H. Husk, NG; Ronald Humphrey Legge, "Seguin," Dictionary of National Biography. For information on the Seguins' voices, see Chapter 2.



CHESNUT ST.

THEATRE

ACTING MANAGER, MR. P. RICHINGS.

DOORS WILL OPEN AT SEVEN O'CLOCK,
Performance will commence at 7 1-2 o'clock.

Prices of Admission.
BOXES 75 Cts. PIT 37½

SECOND NIGHT of the Engagement of

MRS. SEGUIN,
MISS POOLE,
MISS. MARSHALL,
Messrs. MANVERS,
GIUBELEI,
& SEGUIN.

Second Night of Rossini's Grand Opera of

LA GAZZA LADRA.

Second Appearance of

Miss Wells & Mr. H. Wells.

First Night of a New Farce, (never yet acted in America,) called

H. B.

The Musical Department

Under the Direction of Sig. Giubelei.

In consequence of the immense expense incurred in producing the Opera,

THE FREE LIST

must be suspended, with the exception of THE PUBLIC PRESS.

MONDAY EVENING, MAY 3d, 1841,
Will be performed Rossini's Opera of

LA GAZZA LADRA;

OR

The Maid of Palaiseau.

Music by Rossini.

LAROCHE.....(*Justice of Palaiseau,*).....MR. GIUBELEI.
FERNANDO VILLABELLA....(*A Soldier,*).....MR. SEGUIN.
GIANETTO.....(*A Sub Lieutenant,*).....MR. PEARSON.
His first appearance these 3 years.
Fabrizio Valcour, (a Rich Farmer,).....Mr. A'Beckett.
BLAISOT .....Mr. W. F. JOHNSON.
PIPPO.....MISS POOLE.
ISAAC.....(*A Jew Pedlar,*).....MR. WELLS.

Portion of a playbill from a performance by the Seguins at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. For this engagement (in 1841) the singers were named individually, in typical vocal-star fashion.

months of competition in 1845 from a short-lived extended vocal-star troupe called the Brough-Delcy English Opera Company, the Seguins enjoyed a virtual monopoly on English opera in the United States from the summer of 1841 until July 1847 (see Table 18). This dearth of rival opera companies was caused by three related factors. First, the prolonged economic depression in the United States during the 1840s (and the continued dismal fortunes of American theatres) meant that fewer singers were tempted to make the huge investment in time and expense to cross the Atlantic in search of fame and fortune.[3] Second, although opera continued to be a popular performance medium among Americans during the early- to mid-1840s, English opera (rather than Italian or French) was the dominant style--and most of the demand could be satisfied by the Seguins, whose firmly established base of operations was an obvious deterrent to British vocal stars who may have harbored dreams of quick riches in the New World. And finally, the already mentioned trend towards the formation of larger itinerant companies meant that many of the singers who came to the United States in spite of factors one and two became part of the Seguins' company.[4]

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3. According to Odell, the period 1839 to 1848 was "perhaps the very worst" of times for theatres during the entire nineteenth century; leading theatres, he wrote, "were often forced to suspend their operations, while minor houses sank to lower and lower depths of sensationalism." Odell, IV:339.

4. English vocal stars continued to visit the United States during the 1840s, but none seemed to catch the imagination of American audiences to the extent of earlier singers such as Austin, Wood, Shirreff or, in the 1840s, the Seguins. The English tenor John Braham (1774-1856) performed in this country from October 1840 through January 1843 but his activity did nothing to challenge the domination by the Seguins. Although he was one of the leading vocalists on the English stage, by the time he arrived in the United States he was 68 years old, and many believed that he was past his prime. Braham appeared in both operas and concerts but was thought (by many critics) to be better suited to the concert hall than the operatic stage, perhaps in part because the roles he preferred were of an old-fashioned repertory. See Charles Hamm, "John Braham," AG; Lawrence, 178; World of Music, 23 November 1840, 60.

Lack of competition, however, is not in itself sufficient explanation for the Seguins' remarkable success. For these two British stars attracted audiences with such consistency that to many Americans of the 1840s and early 1850s the very name "Seguin" was all but synonymous with the term "English Opera." Their triumph was due both to their skill as performers and to a continued widespread interest by American theatre-goers in music in general and in opera in particular. Opera in English, which had rescued the dramatic season at the National Theatre in 1839 and 1840, continued to attract otherwise-reluctant audiences for several years thereafter--despite the disastrous condition of theatres nationwide. Joseph Sill noted this phenomenon in his diary after attending several performances by the Seguins and the tenor Mr. Shrival at the Chestnut Street Theatre in December 1842. "The house was quite crowded in every part," he wrote,

> and presented a cheering sight, in contrast to the thin empty houses we have been accustom'd to for these few months past. The audience seem'd glad to listen again to the sweet tones of Bellini's music; and gave frequent tokens of their approbation during the performance of [La Sonnambula]." (Sill, 5 December 1842, 175)

According to theatre-manager F. C. Wemyss, this particular Philadelphia engagement (which ran well into February 1843) was the "longest opera season ever continued [in Philadelphia] by an English company." (Wemyss, 379) Later that same year, when the Seguins appeared in Charleston, South Carolina, the response was similar. "Every week's receipts since the opening night [of the Seguins' engagement] have considerably exceeded the expenditures," noted the Charleston Courier in January 1843. "The amount taken last week with an exception or two equaled that of any week

since the Theatre was built." (19 January 1843, quoted in Hoole, 46) According to theatre historian W. Stanley Hoole, the singers' engagement in Charleston helped to make the 1842-43 season one of the theatre's "most lucrative." (Hoole, 46)

Success of this type insured that the Seguins had little trouble convincing managers around the country to engage them and the other singers with whom they toured. As a result, they travelled extensively over the course of the next eleven years. Beginning with a lengthy excursion to the southern part of the United States (including stops in Richmond, Charleston, Augusta, Mobile, and New Orleans) in 1841, and continuing with tours each year until 1852, they took English opera--or at least opera in English--all over eastern North America. They travelled to the American West, performing in St. Louis and Cincinnati in 1843 and 1851, and made three visits to Canada, appearing in Montreal in 1840, 1841, and 1847. They also journeyed to the American South regularly; the troupe performed in Charleston, South Carolina, so often during the 1840s that Hoole referred to them as "the inevitable Seguins."[5]

Although Anne and Edward Seguin were active through 1852, the time of their greatest impact on American audiences was from 1841 through 1847--the period during which they had almost no competition, especially outside of New York or New Orleans.[6] Most American theatre-goers and

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5. Hoole, 46. For information on the Seguins' various tours, see the notes to Table 18. In view of these frequent, lengthy, and far-ranging trips, it should be clear that the Seguins' ensemble was truly an opera company of the United States. Vera Lawrence's (perhaps unintentional) implication that theirs was a New York-based company that took an "occasional time out [from performances in New York] for a tour" is incorrect. See Lawrence, 328.

6. As discussed in Chapter 3, the only performances of Italian opera (in Italian) in the United States during this period (excepting the Havana Company visits in 1842 and 1843) were in New York City. The important exception to any general statement about opera performances in general in the

opera lovers of the 1840s regarded the Seguins in much the same light as they regarded Edwin Forrest, James Hackett, Henry Placide, or William Charles Macready: as the best performers of opera or drama in the United States. Americans also continued to think of the Seguins and their associates as vocal stars rather than as an opera company. Over the course of the 1841-42 season, for example, the two singers toured extensively with the tenor Charles Manvers; the Spirit (which closely followed their movements around the country) invariably referred to them either as "the Seguins" or as "the Seguins and Manvers." The following year, when the same trio performed in Mobile, the local Advertiser and Chronicle called them "our vocal 'stars'."[7] Furthermore, playbills from the Seguins' performances--some as late as 1847--follow the same pattern as that used to identify itinerant dramatic stars: the visitors were given prominent individual billing at the top of the playbill or advertisement; they were rarely referred to as an opera (or theatrical) "troupe" or "company."[8] (See the illustration on page 458.)

United States during the antebellum period is New Orleans; the residents of this city had, at the Théâtre d'Orléans, a resident French opera troupe. The French Opera Company of New Orleans also embarked on several East Coast tours in 1844 (visiting New York, Montreal, and Philadelphia) and 1845 (St. Louis, New York, and Philadelphia). For further information on the Italian companies, see Chapter 3.

7. Spirit, 18, 25 December 1841, 5, 19 February 1842. The Mobile newspaper is quoted by Frances Margaret Bailey, "A History of the Stage in Mobile, Alabama from 1824-1850" (unpublished Master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1934), 92.

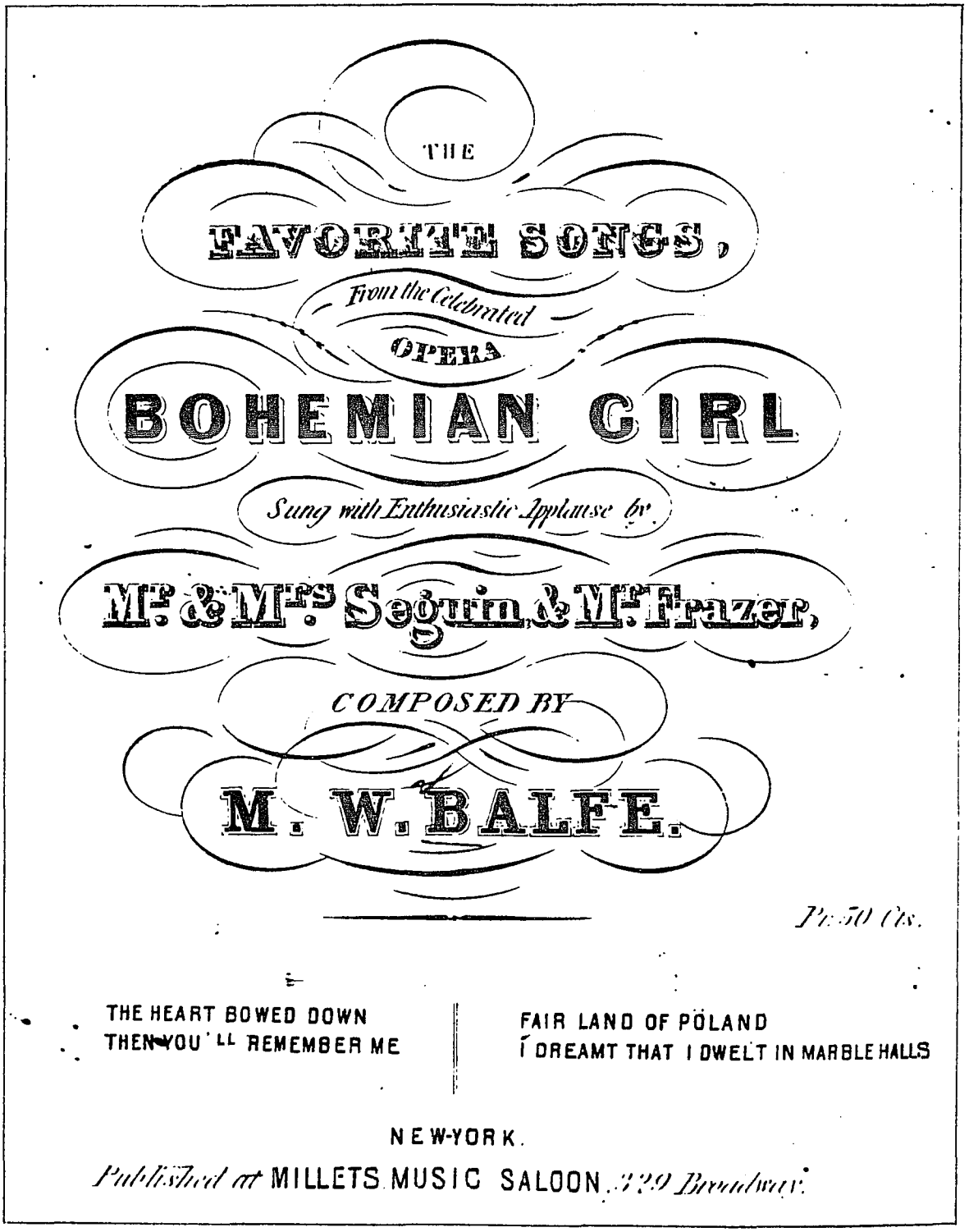
8. See, for example, the following playbills: Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, 15 May 1841 and 6 February 1843, Theatre Department, PP; St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, 3 March 1845, Playbill Collection, New Orleans Box 37, HTC; Tremont Street Theatre, Boston, 1 October 1841, TC/NN; Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia 27 May-21 June 1841, PPL; Federal Street Theatre (Boston), 1 February 1847, Federal Street Theatre Collection, Rare Books, MB. Occasionally during the 1841-42 tour, the Seguins and Manvers enlisted the help of the better actor/singers of some of the particularly strong stock companies and, as a temporarily expanded troupe, made short tours to nearby cities. During January and February 1842, for example, the trio apparently struck a bargain with James Caldwell (the manager of New Orleans' St. Charles Theatre) that was similar to the arrangement that Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin had made with James Wallack two years previous. In this case, the vocal stars performed with the stock company of the St. Charles Theatre for a month, then went to Mobile for a two-week engagement--accompanied by about a half-dozen singers from

The Seguins' persistent identity as vocal stars, although seemingly a minor issue, is nevertheless an important one, for it tells us something about the American opera audience of the 1840s. The enduring vocal-star image of these singers suggests that English opera continued to be a normal and ordinary part of the American theatrical venue throughout the 1840s. Vocal stars, after all, were a specialized subset of dramatic stars; as such, they were an accepted part of the English-speaking theatre. And as long as vocal stars could attract the mixed American theatre audiences that were typical of the time (audiences of widely varying social and economic background), and as long as opera itself was integrated into the rest of the theatrical venue by virtue of shared vernacular language, then the genre retained its position as a part of American popular culture.
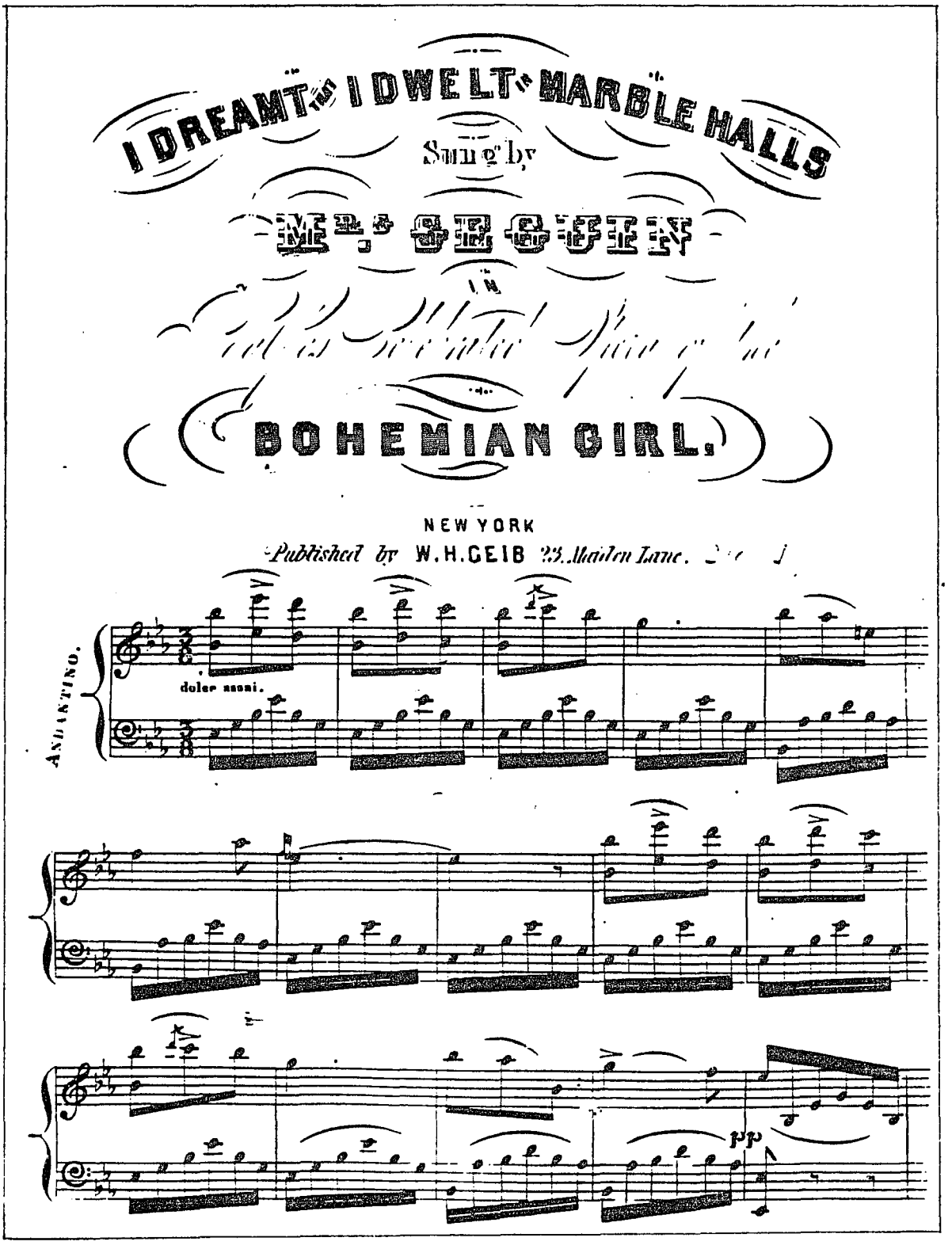
What was the make-up of the Seguins' audience during the period 1841 through 1847? According to the Spirit, the singers drew "immense houses" to their performances in New Orleans in 1841; the already mentioned large crowds they attracted in Charleston in 1843 included the "fashion and beauty of the city." (Spirit, 19 February 1841; Hoole, 46) In the spring of 1844 performances by Palmo's Italian company in New York posed a brief threat to their popularity there; in May the Spirit blamed a poor audience turn-out for a Seguin performance of Anne Boleyn (the fashionables were notably absent) on "the establishment of the Italian Opera, at which place

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Caldwell's New Orleans company. Several of the performers named in a review published in the Mobile Advertiser and Chronicle (including Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Archer, M/M Brunton, and Miss Kemble) were members of the stock company at the St. Charles. See Bailey, 92 and Kendall, 181.



Cover to a sheet-music publication of the favorite songs from Michael Balfe's The Bohemian Girl. This sample names the performers most closely identified with the work: Edward Seguin, Anne Seguin, and James Frazer.



Sheet-music publication of "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls," a popular song performed by Mrs. Seguin in The Bohemian Girl.

the public are instructed to believe Italian music can alone be performed." (Spirit, 11 May 1844, 132) This Italian threat, however (although perhaps a somewhat unsettling omen of what lay in the future), was short-lived. The following autumn, on 25 November 1844, the Seguins matched--and overwhelmed--the Italian competition by mounting the American première of a new English opera, Michael Balfe's The Bohemian Girl. The novelty not only became an instant hit, it remained extraordinarily popular for years. Its introduction, furthermore, guaranteed the success of the Seguins' 1844-45 season; it also (for the moment) insured the triumph of English opera in the face of competition from Italian, even in New York. As the Spirit observed in December, "The continued and increasing success which has attended the [Seguin] opera [company] conclusively shows a strong disposition on the part of the public to patronize any opera, avowedly of the English school of music." (Spirit, 7 December 1844, 492)

Even this small skirmish was limited to New York; outside of Manhattan and New Orleans, the performance of opera in Italian--and its challenge to opera in English--was nonexistent between 1844 and 1847. The Seguins' success, as a consequence, continued apace. In Boston in 1845, according to William Clapp (writing in 1853), the Seguins enjoyed "the most successful and brilliant English opera season in this city [since] the days of 'The Woods.'" (Clapp, 435) The following year, again in Boston, the Spirit reported that "every seat in the private boxes and first and second tiers" of the Federal Street Theatre had been taken even before the singers commenced their engagement there in September; after the performers left town, the verdict on their three-week run was that it

had been "most brilliant," with the house "literally jammed with the elite of the city." (Spirit, 26 September 1846 and 17 October 1846) Clapp also commented on the troupe's success during this 1846 season. "So potent was the spell that bound old Boston to English opera then," he wrote,

> that almost every performance [during the Seguins' engagement] had a good house, and many were honored with overflows. Two benefits were awarded to Mrs. Seguin, and both had 1400 auditors within the walls, besides many unable to obtain admission, that remained upon the side-walks content with catching a strain at intervals. (Clapp, 439)

The Seguins' success was not limited to Boston, nor is our information on the audiences they attracted. The Spirit reported in 1845 that the singers were doing "a spirited business" at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore; two years later the same source noted that the troupe was "doing a great business" in Charleston in March, and "an excellent business" at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia in May. (Spirit, 6 December 1845, 488; 6 March 1847, 24; 22 May 1847) Finally, Joseph Sill, who was a frequent auditor of the company's performances, made numerous comments in his diary on the audiences they attracted in Philadelphia. In April 1846, for example, the Chestnut Street Theatre "was cramm'd" for a performance of Don Pasquale; two years later the Seguins attracted a "large and fashionable" audience for an April performance of Masaniello; and in June of that year (for Norma) the theatre was "fill'd by the beauty and fashion of the City." (Sill, 27 April 1846; 28 April 1848; 5 June 1848)

As we have seen in previous chapters, published descriptions of opera (and theatre) audiences from the antebellum period generally note

the presence of only the wealthy--to the neglect of the denizens of the gallery, the pit, and the norotious third tier. But just as there is evidence that performances by vocal stars or Italian opera companies attracted mixed audiences, so too is there information to suggest that the Seguins, as performers, were popular among ordinary Americans, and that the music of the operas they mounted was well known even to those who did not attend the theatre.

Much of the evidence of the Seguins' widespread popularity is associated with music from one of the most favored and enduring works in their repertory, The Bohemian Girl. Even before they gave the American première of this English opera, its melodies were familiar to many; according to the Spirit, the tunes had been "heard at some miscellaneous concert, or introduced by singers into a meagre operetta, and still are strummed on some jingling piano forte, or rendered discordant by practising songsters." (Spirit, 2 December 1844) After the opera's first performance, its most fetching melodies permeated the culture. "The gems of this opera," wrote Clapp,

> were soon the rage in saloons, and ground upon organs, or hummed in the streets. "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls," absolutely possessed, as with an enchanter's spell, the female population of this vicinity, and [it] was the all-engrossing idea of amateur singers. In a large party given during this excitement, request was made for a song, and the ladies present being interrogated as to their repertoire, each and all responded "I dreamt". (Clapp, 438)

Richard Grant White, writing from the vantage point of the early 1880s, sourly remembered the opera's widespread popularity almost forty years earlier. The "trivial airs" of this work, he wrote,

> with their vulgar rhythms and hideous intervals, were sung, and whistled, and thrummed, and hand-organed all day without hearing, in some form, "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls," and sleep was disturbed, if not by the dream, at least by the musical telling of it, the echoes of which have hardy yet died away. (White, II:876)

In 1846 or 1847 an unknown young man, one William G. Bell, attended a performance of The Bohemian Girl in Philadelphia. Bell, who by his own admission was a non-habitué of the opera house (and who obviously was a non-musician), found the performance so entertaining that the next day he went out and purchased the sheet music to the opera and sent it to a young woman of his acquaintance. "I heard the Seguins Together with Mes^{srs} Harrison & Frazier [sic] last night at the Walnut St. Theatre--" he wrote on the title page,

> My views of the "opera" have undergone quite a change--I was highly delighted with some portions of the "Bohemian Girl" and have accordingly sent it to you--whether I have selected the pretty pieces or not, I am unable to say-- I trust however, that you will find some of the pieces worthy [of] your attention-- The words to "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls" are considered pretty and would certainly be quite agreeable to a growing lady of sixteen summers--[9]

The dissemination of English-opera music throughout American culture illustrates the appeal of the Seguins' repertory to a wide strata of society; it contributes little first-hand information, however, to our understanding of the

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9. The recipient of this gift happily failed to follow her friend's final instruction, to "rub this [message] out with India Rubbers--". The Music of the Bohemian Girl, Consisting of Six Songs and Three Pieces (Philadelphia: E. Ferrett and Company, 1845). Music Division, DLC. An indication of the lasting popularity of melodies from The Bohemian Girl is the inclusion of five numbers from the opera in a collection of popular songs titled Heart Songs published early in the twentieth century. (Boston: Chappel Publishing Co., 1909).



Howard Athenæum!

THOMAS FORD, ... LESSEE.
W. L. AYLING, ... STAGE MANAGER.

BENEFIT OF MR. SEGUIN!

AND LAST NIGHT BUT FOUR OF THE

Seguin Operatic Troupe,

MRS. SEGUIN,
MISS E. LICHTENSTEIN,
(PUPIL OF MRS SEGUIN.)
MR. ARTHURSON,
MR. F. MEYER,
MR SHRIVAL,
AND MR. SEGUIN.

Friday Evening, November 5th, 1847

Will be presented 1st act of ROSSINI'S Comic Opera the

BARBER OF SEVILLE,

WITH ALL THE ORIGINAL MUSIC.

COUNT ALMAVIVA	MR SHRIVAL
DOCTOR BARTOLO	MR SEGUIN
FIGARO	MR MEYER
ROSINA	MRS SEGUIN
Basil . . Mr Sauer	Notary . . Mr Adams
Fiorello . . Mr Roberts	Marcellina . . Miss Roberts

Programme of Songs, Duetts and Choruses.

CHORUS—Piano, Pianissimo,
SERENADE—" Come shining forth, my dearest." . . . Almaviva
CHORUS—" Many thanks sir,"
SONG—" Oh, I am a barber." &c. . . . Figaro
DUET—" Oh, the Sound of chinking money" . . Almaviva and Figaro
SONG—" Tyrant, soon." . . . Rosina
DUET—" Thought enchanting" . . . Rosina and Figaro
SONG—" Yes, detraction!" . . . Basil
GRAND FINALE—" Hollo! house here" Rosina, Almaviva, Bartolo, Figaro, &c.

To be followed by the Celebrated Opera, in 3 acts of the

POSTILION OF LONJUMEAU

THE MUSIC BY MONS. ADOLPH ADAM.

CHARACTERS IN THE FIRST ACT.

CHAPELOU, (the Postilion)	MR SHRIVAL
BIJOU, (a Wheelwright)	MR SEGUIN
MADELINE, (Mistress of the Village Inn)	MRS SEGUIN
THE MARQUIS DE COURCY	MR MEYER

Peasants, Male and Female by all the Ladies of the Chorus.

The first act passes at the Inn in the Village of Lonjumeau in 1756. A period of ten years is supposed to elapse between the first and second acts.

CHARACTERS IN THE SECOND AND THIRD ACTS.

CHAPELOU, under the assumed name of St Par and principal singer at the Opera,	MR SHRIVAL
BIJOU, . . under the name of Alcindor, the Primo Basso . .	MR SEGUIN
MADELINE, . . under the name of Mdme de la Tour, . .	MRS SEGUIN
THE MARQUIS DE COURCY	MR MEYER
Swardon . . Mr Benson	Rose . . Miss Boquet

Singers and Corphees of the Opera, Neighbours & Friends of Mad de la Tour Soldiers, Domestics
The 2nd and 3d acts pass at the Country House of Mad. de la Tour, near Fontainebleau, in 1770.

Act I.

Introduction—" Their hands are joined forever" . . Madelaine, Chapeau and Chorus
Air—" Husband ever dear" . . . Madeline
Duett—" And can it be" . . . Madeline and Chapeau
Rondo—" Come friends and listen to my story" . . . Chapeau
Duett—" With my request you must comply" . . . Chapeau and Marcus
Trio—" Ah! fortune possessing" . . . Chapeau, Marquis and Bijou
Solo—" Come love, come, thy Madelaine awaits thee" . . . Madelaine
Grand Finale—" Why this noise!" . . . Madelaine, Bijou and Chorus

Act II.

Grand Air—" Now ten long years have passed" . . . Madame de la Tour
Concerted Piece—" Dreadful it is to be so much tormented" St Phar, Marquis, Alcindor & Chs
Romance—" Beneath the spreading tree" . . . St Phar
Air—" The Primo Basso, I am!" . . . Alcindor
Duett—" Ah! happy chance that brings thee here." . . Madame de la Tour and St Phar
Grand Finale—" Fortune now her favors on him showers" St Phar, Marquis, Mad de la Tour &c
Air—" Freely I invite you" . . . St Phar
Chorus—" Freely he invites us"

Act III.

Concerted Piece—" May happiness without allay" . . Mad de la Tour, St Phar and Chorus
Grand Air—" To wealth and honor I'm united" . . . St Phar
Duett—" Ah! for my sorrow have compassion." . . Madame de la Tour and St Phar
Chorus—" The wretch now quickly seize him."

Omnibuses will leave the Howard Athenæum every evening at the close of the performance for Charlestown and Cambridge.

Parquet Boxes 81—Parquet & Dress Boxes 50 Cts—all other parts of the house 25 Cts.

Playbill from the Howard Athenaeum in Boston for a performance by the Seguins on 5 November 1847. The performers here are identified as the Seguin Operatic Troupe.

makeup of the audiences actually in attendance during their engagements. As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, however, operatic performances by vocal stars did attract mixed audiences. And there is nothing in the record to suggest that the popular segment of the audience became disaffected with performances by artists such as the Seguins during the 1840s. The diary of one young Philadelphia bookkeeper, in fact, strongly indicates the opposite. The diarist, identified only as N. Beekley, kept a succinct account of his daily activities during 1849. Although hardly a wealthy individual (he records being paid $500 per year, the 1986 equivalent of $6550), he attended lectures, concerts, and theatrical performances on a regular basis, sometimes as often as three or four times per week. And the catholicity of his taste in amusements reads like a compendium of American theatrical offerings of the period: he attended various concerts, a series of lectures by the American naturalist Spencer Fullerton Baird, magic shows put on by one Herr Alexander, performances by the New Orleans Serenaders (a minstrel troupe), dramatic works at the Walnut, Arch, and Chestnut Street Theatres (including such varied fare as The Hunchback, Guy Mannering, Lady of Lyons, Shakespeare's MacBeth and Much Ado About Nothing, and sundry "good comedies," amusing farces," and other unnamed entertainments), and opera performances by the Seguins (including The Bohemian Girl, Mercadante's The Bravo, The Daughter of the Regiment, Don Giovanni, and Norma--the latter twice in one week). Beekley's activities clearly suggest that he--and probably others like him--considered the Seguins and their repertory an ordinary part of theatrical entertainment at mid-century.[10] What is even more significant, however, is that the Seguins also continued to attract wealthy and

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10. N. Beekley, Diary, 1849. Manuscript Department, MWA; Greene, 48.

fashionable auditors throughout the 1840s. This is notable especially in view of the efforts made by the elite during the late 1840s and 1850s to both appropriate Italian opera for themselves and to define foreign-language opera as the only fashionable operatic entertainment. Information about audiences at the Seguins' performances, then, clearly suggests that even in the late 1840s the division of the American audience into adherents of Italian (fashionable) and English (unfashionable) opera--a fissure that was beginning to be apparent (at least in New York) in the 1840s--was, for the most part, still in the future.

The Seguins and their fellow-performers were widely regarded as vocal stars for most of the 1840s, but they nonetheless served an important transitional role in the history of English opera performance in the United States. During the late 1840s and early 1850s--on their watch, figuratively speaking--vocal-star troupes (even the larger ones) gradually disappeared, replaced by full-sized English opera companies. The Seguins themselves functioned, at different times, as members of each. By the mid-1840s their entourage was referred to occasionally as an "operatic troupe" or the "Seguin Operatic Company"--recognition, no doubt, that the bass and soprano toured regularly with four, five, or six other performers.[11] By 1847 this shift of

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11. A playbill from a performance by the Seguins, Mr. Frazer, and five other singers ("from the Park Theatre, New York") at the Howard Athenaeum (Boston) in October 1845, for example, refers to the musicians as an "Operatic Troupe"; a year later the Spirit described them as the "Seguin troupe." See playbill, Howard Athenaeum (Boston), 29 October 1845, in Opera Programs, 1836-59, GA/MWA; Spirit, 17 October 1846; see also playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 11 February 1846, TC/NN, and playbills, Howard Athenaeum, 9 February 1846 and Federal Street Theatre (Boston), 1 February 1847, Rare Books, MB.

    Although it is clear that the Seguins did maintain a small, somewhat fluctuating company during this period, it is almost impossible to discover very much about the troupe: how large it was at any one time or in any one location, how long the associations lasted, or even if the various singers were engaged by the theatrical management individually or as a group. From 1842 through 1845 the Seguins' company toured (or at least performed in various cities besides, or in addition to, New York) with the following singers: Charlotte Bailey, Thomas Archer, Emily Coad, and Mr. Shrival

identity--from vocal stars to featured artists of an English opera company--was eminently desirable. In that year, as we have seen, the entire arena of operatic performance in the United States changed significantly. The Seguins were faced with their first serious competition in years, not only from the Havana Opera Company (which arrived in April) and the Astor Place troupe (its first performances were in November), but from the British soprano Anna Bishop, who performed operas in New York and Boston in August and September and who organized an English opera company and embarked on a tour of the United States in October. All of these newly arrived or newly organized companies performed for significant amounts of time outside of New York, and all of them (but especially the Italians) were really companies: modern, glamorous, self-sufficient, and featuring new (to Americans) celebrities. The Havana company in particular had an overwhelming impact on Americans, one that was felt almost immediately by the familiar and rather shopworn Seguins--who, after all, were a throwback to the old-fashioned days of opera performances by vocal stars and stock companies. In Boston, where they had enjoyed unchallenged popular success since 1838, the Seguins were simply outclassed by the Italians: "Marti's Operatic Company," wrote Clapp, "in their admirable presentment of Italian Opera, [eclipsed] all the glories of former dramatic vocalists, and consigned English opera to neglect." (Clapp, 376)

In 1847 and 1848, in an attempt to shed their old-fashioned vocal-star image and counter the new high-powered competition, the Seguins transformed themselves

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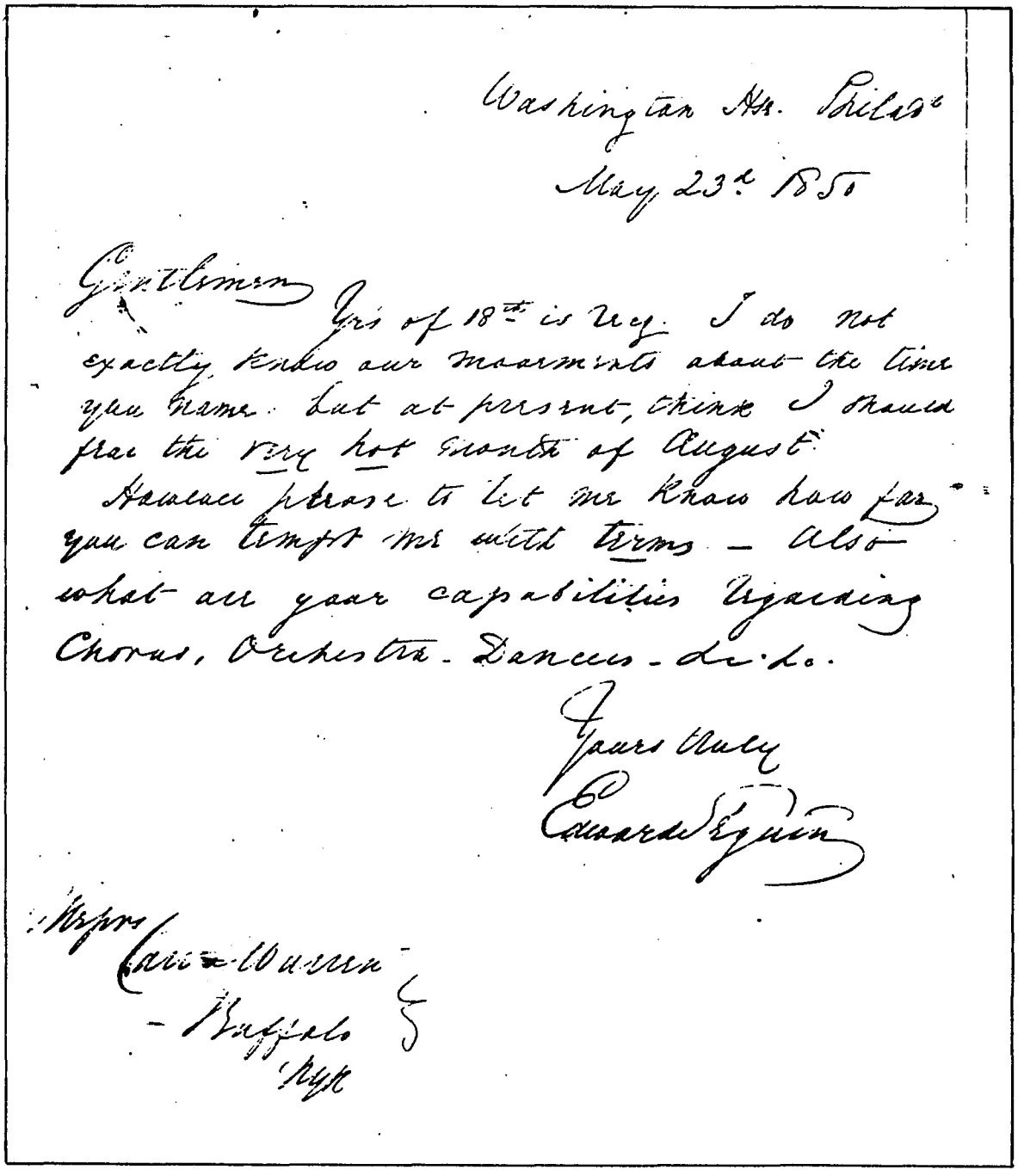
(who replaced Charles Manvers when the latter returned to England) in 1842-43; Bailey, Archer, Shrival, Coad, and Mrs. Richardson in 1843-44; and Coad, Andrew Andrews, and Mr. Frazer (Shrival's replacement) in 1844-45. The sources for these names are the same as those cited in the notes for Table 18.

into a true (albeit small) English opera company. They accomplished this alteration primarily by the addition to their entourage of a chorus borrowed from the Park Theatre in New York.[12] The attempt to shed their vocal-star identity worked; henceforth the troupe was known almost universally as the Seguin Opera Company. It soon became clear, however, that the expansion itself was futile. As Clapp explained, although the Seguins returned to Boston--the scene of their former triumphs--numerous times after 1847, the huge audiences of earlier years had disappeared; the magnetic appeal of the Havana Company "made all lesser lights dim." (Clapp, 439)

The increase in troupe size did not have the desired effect, so the Seguins quickly reverted to form and resumed their heavy dependence on stock companies for both dramatic and musical support. They kept their new identity (as the Seguin Opera Company), but their ensemble in fact once again became an extended vocal-star troupe. That this was indeed the case is indicated fairly conclusively by a letter Edward Seguin wrote to the manager of the theatre in Buffalo (New York) in 1850. Inquiring about the possibility of an engagement during August, Seguin queried, "what are your capabilities regarding chorus, orchestra, dancers, &c, &c." Clearly, after over a decade of successfully performing in small, easy-to-manage, extended vocal-star ensembles, the Seguins were reluctant--or unable--to take on the added burdens inherent in the management of even a small opera company. The transition would have complicated their lives by several degrees of magnitude,

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12. Their appearances in Charleston in February and March 1847 featured a "full chorus from the New York Park Theatre"; in August of that same year the stars performed for two weeks in Montreal, again assisted by a chorus from the Park. See Hoole, 50; Dorith R. Cooper, "Opera in Montreal and Toronto: A Study of Performance Traditions and Repertoire" (unpublished dissertation, University of Toronto, 1984), 56-58; and Spirit, 4 September 1847, 332.



Washington Av. Philad.
May 23d 1850

Gentlemen Yrs of 18th is rec'd. I do not exactly recollect our movements about the time you name. But at present, think I should fear the very hot months of August.

Please please to let me know how far you can meet me with terms — also what are your capabilities regarding Chorus, Orchestra. Dancers &c &c.

Yours truly
Edward Seguin

Messrs Carr & Warren
Buffalo
N.Y.

Reproduction of a letter written by Edward Seguin in Philadelphia to M[ssrs] Carr and Warren, managers of the Buffalo, New York, theatre. The letter is a response to an inquiry about the Seguins performing in Buffalo.

amd (as we have seen) to no avail. Although the Seguins continued to perform until 1852, and although other groups of singers (including the Anna Thillon and the Manvers Opera companies) toured as extended vocal-star troupes in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the heyday of opera performances by vocal-star troupes in the United States had come to an end by 1848 or 1849.[13]

The Seguins' repertory was strikingly uniform all over the country (although they tended to limit American premières to New York or Philadelphia). It also was consistent for the entire duration of their American careers. Many of the operas the Seguins performed in the early 1840s were the same works in which they appeared ten years later; by the mid-1840s, in fact, they were being criticized (especially in New York) for their "dull, repetitive repertory." (Lawrence, 418) At the same time that they relied on a rather limited corpus of works, however, it is only fair to point out that the Seguins also were responsible for a remarkable number of North American premières. In addition to the already mentioned opera The Bohemian Girl, the singers introduced to American audiences Don Pasquale (Donizetti, 9 March 1846, New York), Maritana (Wallace, 9 November 1846, Philadelphia), The Bravo (Mercadante, 2 October 1848, Philadelphia), and The Enchantress (Balfe, 26 March 1849, New York), all in English.[14] They also gave the first American performances in English

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13. ALS, Seguin to Messrs Carr & Warren, 23 May 1850, William James Davis Collection, Manuscript Division, CHi; Edward Seguin disbanded the troupe in 1852 due to his own ill health. He died in December 1852. Anne Seguin retired from the stage when the company was disbanded, and subsequently taught voice in New York until shortly before her own death in 1888. See DNB; NG; BMT, 21 April 1860, 87; Spirit, 12 June 1852, 204; playbill, Broadway Theatre (NY), 18 June 1852, GA/MWA.

14. Don Pasquale: Mattfeld, 49; Maritana: Loewenberg, col. 852; Bravo: Armstrong, 63; Enchantress: Mattfeld, 50.

of four other works that already had been performed here in their original languages: The Brewer of Preston (Auber, 23 March 1846, New York), Anna Boleyn (Donizetti, translated by Fry, 11 April 1844, Philadelphia), I Puritani (Bellini, 11 November 1845, Philadelphia), and The Israelites in Egypt (Rophino Lacy's combination of Handel's Israelites in Egypt with Rossini's Mose, 31 October 1842, New York).[15]

In addition to these nine European works, the Seguins were also responsible for the premières of three "native operas." Charles Edward Horn's The Maid of Saxony was given its first performance in New York on 23 May 1842 (and presumably its last four days later), and C. Jarvis's Luli was performed three times in Philadelphia after its première there on 16 December 1846--after which it, too, sank without a trace. (Armstrong, 53; Spirit, 9 January 1847) The third American work was William Henry Fry's Leonora; it is the most historically significant of the three and the opera with which the Seguin Company has been closely associated by scholars of American music. Fry's work, a full-blown three-act grand opera in English (but indisputably Italian in style), was the first grand opera composed by an American actually to be produced.[16]

Leonora was based on Edward Bulwer Lytton's popular Lady of Lyons (to a libretto by Fry's brother Joseph); the title role was written for Anne Seguin.

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15. Brewer: Mattfeld, 43, Loewenberg, col. 798; Anna Boleyn: Loewenberg, col. 728; Israelites: Mattfeld, 58.

16. It was this opera (translated into Italian) that the composer's brother Edward Fry wanted the first Astor Place Company to mount; their failure to do so led to his ill-fated attempt to manage that troupe during 1848-49.

(Lawrence, 336) The opera was given a lavish production at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia on 4 June 1845; the orchestra and chorus are variously reported to have numbered between fifty or sixty and seventy or eighty, respectively.[17] That the music was strongly influenced by contemporary Italian composers was noted by critics and audience alike. "Many of the leading themes [of the opera] are too evidently copied from Bellini, which throws a doubt upon the originality of the piece," wrote Joseph Sill in his diary after witnessing the second performance of Fry's work. "Still," he concluded, "there is enough left to stamp Mr. Fry as a man of great musical genius and to yield him the credit of being the first author of an American Opera." (Sill, 5 June 1845) Several of the New York critics, who had travelled to Philadelphia for the performance, had a field day gleefully trashing the work, but it had a successful run of twelve performances and the Seguins revived it for an additional four at the Walnut Street Theatre in December 1846.[18] One critic mildly suggested to his ascerbic journalistic brethren that the work's apparent popularity with the Philadelphia public is "tolerably conclusive proof that it must possess merits--for we hold it as an indisputable fact that the public will not crowd to dramatic representations which do not possess intrinsic value." (Albion, 14 June 1845, 228, quoted in Lawrence, 341) Francis Wemyss (a Philadelphian) later accused New York audiences and critics of sour grapes because the opera had been premièred in Philadelphia rather than in New York. "The whole United States would have teemed with [Fry's] praises," he wrote in his reminiscences, "if the

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17. Lawrence, 336; H. Wiley Hitchcock, Music in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 98.

18. Lawrence, 336-42; Armstrong, 53, Charles Hamm, Music in the New World (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1983), 204.

composer had not sinned by "daring to present the first lyrical drama ever composed in America to the citizens of Philadelphia for judgment, before the New Yorkers had an opportunity of passing upon its merits." (Wemyss, 401)

Although one of the Seguins' most successful vehicles was The Bohemian Girl, an English opera, their performances were by no means limited to works of English origin. Their repertory consisted, for the most part, of foreign-language works translated and "adapted" for the English stage by such composers as Michael Rophino Lacy and Sir Henry Rowley Bishop. (For more information on English adaptations, see Chapter 6.)[19] From 1841 through 1852 the Seguins appeared in slightly over thirty different operas, including French, Italian, English (and one German) works.[20] Statistics on the frequency with which the Seguins performed particular operas are not available, but Table 17 illustrates clearly which works the singers included in their repertory year after year: Cinderella (Rossini), The Elixir of Love (Donizetti), Norma and La Sonnambula (Bellini), Fra Diavolo (Auber), Der Freischütz (von Weber), The Postillion of Longjumeau (Adam), and The Bohemian Girl (Balfe). All except The Bohemian Girl were operas from the older vocal-star repertory; four of the eight were Italian works.

Although frequency of performance is unknown, the repertory itself is revealing. A tabulation of all the titles, for example, strongly suggests a movement away from a rather even balance of English, French, and Italian works, and towards a repertory

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19. During this time, of course, opera in English was the norm; there is little controversy to be found in the American musical or theatrical press over the relative merits of English vs Italian opera before 1847 or 1848.

20. For a list of the operas performed by the Seguins during each year from 1841 through 1852, see Table 17.

TABLE 17: REPERTORY PERFORMED BY THE SEGUINS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1841-1852.

1841-42	1842-43	1843-44	1844-45	1845-46
Amilie*			Amilie	Amilie
	Acis & Galatea			
		Anne Boleyn		
Barber of Seville	Barber of Seville	Barber of Seville		
		Bohemian Girl	Bohemian Girl	Bohemian Girl
				Brewer of Preston
The Bronze Horse				
Cinderella	Cinderella	Cinderella		
	Crammond Brig			
				Don Pasquale
	Elixir of Love			Elixir of Love
Faint Heart				
	Marriage of Figaro		Marriage of Figaro	
Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo
	Der Freischütz			
The Gazza Ladra				
		Gustavus III		
	Israelites in Egypt			
	John of Paris		John of Paris	
		Leonora	Leonora	
			Love in Village	
	Massaniello		Massaniello	
Maid of Saxony				
		Maritana		
Norma		Norma	Norma	Norma
	No Song No Supper			
	Olympic Revels	Olympic Revels		
Postillion	Postillion	Postillion	Postillion	Postillion
				I Puritani
	Rob Roy			Rob Roy
Sonnambula	Sonnambula	Sonnambula	Sonnambula	Sonnambula
	Stabat Mater			
The Waterman	The Waterman			
Zampa	Zampa			

* Amilie was announced for performance in New Orleans.

1846-47	1847-48	1848-49	1849-50	1850-51	1851-52
					Amilie
Barber					
	Bayadere (?)			Bayadere	
Bohemian	Bohemian	Bohemian	Bohemian	Bohemian	Bohemian
		The Bravo	The Bravo		
Brewer of Preston					
	Cinderella (?)	Cinderella		Cinderella	
		Daughter	Daughter	Daughter	
		Don Giovanni	Don Giovanni		
Don Pasquale		Don Pasquale			
		Enchantress	Enchantress		
Elixir of Love	Elixir of Love	Elixir of Love	Elixir of Love		
Figaro					
Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	Fra Diavolo	
Freischütz	Freischütz			Freischütz	Freischütz
	Gazza Ladra (?)		Gazza Ladra	Gazza Ladra	
	Guy Mannering				
			Gustavus III		
				Israelites	Israelites
					Linda of Chamounix (?)
Luli					
Maritana	Maritana	Maritana			
Masaniello	Masaniello	Masaniello			
Mountain Sylph					
Norma	Norma	Norma	Norma	Norma	Norma
	Olympic Revels		Olympic Revels		
Postillion	Postillion				
	Rob Roy				
Sonnambula	Sonnambula	Sonnambula		Sonnambula	Sonnambula
	The Waterman				
Zampa					

more clearly dominated by Italian opera. From 1841-42 through 1845-46, the breakdown of opera titles (excluding the solitary German work, Der Freischütz) is ten English, ten Italian, and eight French; from 1846-47 through 1851-52, on the other hand, the singers appeared in nine English, twelve Italian, and six French works. This pattern is consistent with other information we have about opera performance in the United States during the period, including the ever-increasing popularity of Italian melody and the growing numbers of Italian companies. The dominance of the Seguins' repertory by Italian operas, in fact, is even more clearly marked in the final three years of their American career: from 1849-50 through 1851-52 the troupe performed four English titles, two French, and nine Italian. Obviously, in order to satisfy the demands of the American public, this troupe of English singers had to abandon the performance of numerous French and English operas in favor of an increasingly Italian repertory.[21]

For an eleven-year period between 1841 and 1852, Anne and Edward Seguin performed as members of an extended vocal-star troupe--an in-between ensemble that served as a transition from the small vocal-star companies (of the 1830s and mid-1840s) to the larger English opera troupes (of the late 1840s and 1850s). The Seguins' overall repertory and their continuation of the trend towards the performance of more Italian operas likewise suggests a transitional role. By keeping the older portion of this repertory before American audiences during the 1840s, they preserved and handed on

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21. A simple title inventory of this nature is inevitably misleading, since each work in the company's repertory is given equal weight whether performed once, twice, or forty times. This type of tabulation, in fact, is biased in favor of the English titles rather than the French or Italian ones, since the operas that the Seguins premiéred (and performed only several times, such as The Maid of Saxony and Luli) were English works. If it was possible to weight titles based on frequency of performance, then, the dominance by Italian works would be even more obvious.

to later English companies the performance tradition of the vocal stars. By updating and adding to their corpus of works occasional newer compositions (many by Italian composers) and by performing a repertory that was increasingly dominated by Italian operas, however, they also perpetuated a trend already visible in the repertories of vocal stars--a trend that would be maintained, in turn, by English opera companies of the late 1840s and 1850s. This suggestion that the Seguins simultaneously kept alive an older repertory and contributed to a trend towards Italian operatic dominance might, in fact, be a case of misplaced credit. The Seguins, after all, were in the entertainment business, and they gave the American public what it demanded. The patterns obvious from their repertory, then, simply reveal that the American operatic (and theatrical) audience of the 1840s had both progressive and conservative tendencies: Americans increasingly wished to hear new Italian operas, but at the same time continued to attend performances of older works--many of which had been in the repertory since the 1830s.

TABLE 18: ITINERANT OPERA COMPANIES ACTIVE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1841-1848

1841

SEGUIN OC (1)

Boston (Tremont)	27 Sept-8 Oct
Phila (Chestnut)	Oct? Nov?
Richmond	22-30 Nov
Charleston	7-16 Dec
Augusta	Dec (1 night)

1842

NO (St. Charles)	5 Jan--5 Feb
Mobile (Royal St)	10-28 Feb
Charleston	12-29 Mar
NYC (Park)	25 Apr--7 June

HAVANA OC (2)

NO (St. Charles)	22 Feb--10 Mar
NO (Théâtre d'Orléans)	16 Mar--18 Apr

SEGUIN OC (3)

NYC (Park)	29 Oct--26 Nov
Phila (Chestnut)	5 Dec--18 Feb

1843

Charleston	3-18 Mar
Savannah	21 Mar--6 Apr
Charleston	10-27 Apr
where?	May--June
Cincinnati	1 July--14 July
St. Louis	31 July--12 Aug

HAVANA OC (4)

New Orleans	17 Apr--17 May
Cincinnati	8-21 June
Pittsburgh	30? June--3? July
Philadelphia	15 July--31 July
where?	Aug
NYC (Niblo's)	6-11? Sept
NYC (Niblo's)	15 Sept--23 Oct
Philadelphia	13-24 Nov
Baltimore	Dec
NO	13 Dec

FRENCH OC OF NO (5)

NY (Niblo's)	19 May--2 Aug
Canada?	Aug--Sept
Phila (Ches)	14 Sept--21 Oct

SEGUIN OC (6)

where?	Sept
Balto (Holliday)	11-30 Oct

1844

Mobile (Corinthian)	2 Jan
NO (American)	4? Jan--3 Feb
Mobile	14-20 Feb
Charleston	7-11 Mar
Phila (Chest)	1-23 Apr
NYC (Park)	25 Apr--11 May
Phila	28? May-4? Jn
To England	Summer

PALMO'S OC (7)

New York	3 Feb--20 Mar
New York	29 Apr--10 June
New York	30 Sept--19? Oct
New York	18 Nov-

SEGUIN OC (8)

NYC (Park)	25 Nov--14 Dec

(SEGUIN, CONT)

Phila 20 Dec-
1845 -11 Jan
NYC 13-18 Jan
Charleston 29 Jan-
-15 Feb
pass thru Mobile 27 Feb
NO (St. Charles) 3-15? Mar
Mobile (Royal St) 17-26 Mar
where? Apr
NYC (Park) 28 Apr-
-17 May
Phila (Ches) 19 May-
-1 July

SEGUIN OC (12)

Boston 27 Oct-
-1? Nov
Balto (Holliday) 1?-13? Dec
NYC (Park) 22 Dec-
1846 -6 Jan
Boston (Athen) ? Jan-13? Feb
NYC (Park) 9-31 Mar
Boston 14 Apr (concert)
Phila (Ches) 27 Apr-
-8 May
Long Island June

SEGUIN OC (13)

Boston (Federal) 28 Sept-
-16 Oct
where? late Oct
Phila (Walnut) 2-27 Nov
Phila (Walnut) 8-16? Dec
1847 -Jan???
Boston (Federal) -22 Jan-5 Feb
Charleston 22 Feb-
-6 Mar
Savannah 8-20 Mar
Phila (Ches) 5 Apr-
-5 June
London July

SEGUIN OC (16)

Montreal Aug-
-Sept
Boston 21 Sept-
Phila (Walnut) 11-26 Oct
Boston (Athen) 4 Nov-

(PALMO'S, CONT)

-25 Jan

ITALIAN OC (9)

New Orleans 3 Mar-
-2 May

BROUGH-DELCY OC (11)

NYC (Park) 15 Sept-
-3 Oct
Phila (Ches) 13 Oct-
-25 Oct
Phila (Ches) 10 Nov-
-22 Nov

SANQUIRICO-PATTI OC (14)

NY (Palmo's) 4 Jan-
-31 Mar
NY (Palmo's) 7 Apr-
-7 June

ANNA BISHOP OC (17)

NYC (Park) 4-18 Aug
Boston 26 Aug-
-10? Sept
NYC (Park) 21 Oct-
-6 Nov

FRENCH OC OF NO (10)

NYC (Park) 16 June-
-15 Aug
NYC (Niblo's) 25 Aug-
-24 Sept
Phila (Ches) 29 Sept-
-11 Oct
NYC (Park) 17 Nov-
-3 Dec

HAVANA OC (15)

NYC (Park) 15-16 Apr
Boston
(Athenaeum) 19 Apr-
-4 June
NYC (Park) 9 June-
-8 July
Phila (Walnut) 12 July-
-6 Aug
NY (Castle) 18 Aug-
-18 Sept

MANVERS OC (18)

NYC (Park) 4-5 Oct
Albany
(concert) 21 Oct
Michigan when?

(SEGUIN, CONT)		(ANNA BISHOP, CONT)			
	-19 Nov	Boston (Federal)	? -18 Nov	**ASTOR PLACE OC (19)**	
		Phila (Walnut)	22 Nov- -7 Dec	NYC (Astor)	2 Nov-
		NYC (Broadway)	13-24 Dec		
New York	26 Dec (con)	Phila (Walnut)	27 Dec-		
1848 where?	Jan-		-6 Jan	(Boston-- Athen	5 Jan-
		Charleston	12-24 Jan		
		(concerts)	28-29 Jan		-28 Jan)
		Savannah	31 Jan- -5 Feb		
	-Feb	NO (St. Charles)	14 Feb-		-18 Feb
				Phila (Ches)	19 Feb-
			-2 Mar		
Richmond	17-31 Mar	Mobile	6-21 Mar		-24 Mar
Petersburg (concert)	early Apr?			NYC (Astor)	27 Mar-
NYC (Bowery)	13 Apr-				-28 Apr
	-7 May	New Orleans	May	Phila	May
Balto (Holliday)	May ?-			Boston	29 May-
	-10? June			(Phila--Ches	6-13 June)
					-26 June

LEGEND:

The table should be read from top to bottom; entries in concurrent columns represent opera companies active during the same time period. Under the Astor Place Opera Company (No. 19), the entries within parentheses represent branches of the parent company.

The following abbreviations are used in this table:

Athen	Athenaeum Theatre, Boston
Balto	Baltimore
Ches	Chestnut St. Theatre, Philadelphia
Phila	Philadelphia
NO	New Orleans
OC	Opera company

NOTES TO TABLE 18: OPERA COMPANIES ACTIVE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1841-1847

(1) **SEGUIN OPERA COMPANY.**
During 1841-42 the Seguins travelled with Charles Manvers. In Charleston the company was reported to consist of M/M Seguin, M/M Manvers, Miss Manvers, and Miss Coad. Coad and Miss Manvers evidently remained in Charleston when the Seguins left for New Orleans, for in January they are reported among the cast of the Charleston Theatre rehearsing for a performance of Figaro. In New Orleans the troupe consisted of the Seguins, Richardson, Manvers, and Mr. Archer; see Kendall for a description of the stock company's role in opera performances. In Mobile the troupe is identified as the "St. Charles Opera Company"; other performers named (besides Manvers) included Mr. Archer, Mr. Verity, Mr. Brunton, Mad. Thielman, Mr. Hodges, and Mrs. Richardson. In New York in April the "name" singers included the Seguins, A. Andrews, Mrs. Knight, Mary Taylor, and Charles Manvers.

Sources: Boston: Spirit, 23 October 1841; playbill, Tremont Theatre 1 October 1841, TC/NN; Mirror, issues of 2, 9, 16 October 1841; **Philadelphia:** Spirit, 23 October 1841; **Richmond:** Spirit, 20 November 1841; **Charleston:** Hoole, 114; Massett, 42-43; Spirit, 18, 25 December 1841; Spirit, 26 March 1842; Mirror, 22 January 1842; **Augusta:** Spirit, 25 December 1841; **New Orleans:** Spirit, 25 December 1841; 15, 22 January, 5, 19 February 1842; Kendall, 183-184; Mirror, 22, 29 January, 12 February, 5 March 1842; Nellie Smither, A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1944); **Mobile:** Bailey, 92, 298-300; Mirror, 26 February 1842, 21; Mary Morgan Duggar, "The Theatre in Mobile, 1822-1860" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1941), 111-112; **New York:** Spirit, 23, 30 April, 7, 13, 28 May 1842; Mirror, 30 April 1842, 87; Odell, IV:544-45.

(2) **HAVANA OPERA COMPANY.**

Sources: Belsom, 73-88; Mirror, 5 March 1842, 32; Spirit, 12 March 1842; Smither, n.p.

(3) **SEGUIN OPERA COMPANY.**
According to Odell, this was the worst theatrical season financially in the history of New York theatricals. (Odell, IV:603) During this season the Seguins opened with three weeks of the Rossini/Lacy Israelites in Egypt, after which they resumed standard fare. In Philadelphia during the winter the Seguins lost two of their children to scarlet fever. For information about the role of stock companies in St. Louis, see Carson, Managers.

The Seguins performed with the following singers in these places: **New York:** Thomas Archer, Mr. Boulard, Charlotte Bailey, Mrs. Hoskins, Mrs. Knight, Mr. Plumer, and Mr. Shrival; **Philadelphia:** Bailey, Coad, Plumer, Richings, and Shrival; **Charleston:** Archer, Coad, Shrival; **Savannah:** Archer, Coad, H. Phillips, Shrival; **Cincinnati:** Bailey, Shrival; **St. Louis:** Archer, Shrival.

Sources: New York: Odell IV:610-611; Spirit, 29 October, 5, 26 November 1842; **Philadelphia:** Spirit, 10, 24 December 1842; Armstrong, 42; Wemyss, 379; playbill, Chestnut St. Theatre, 6 February 1843, Theatre Division, PP; Wilson; **Mobile:** Bailey, 324; **Charleston:** Hoole, 46, 116; **Savannah:** Dorman, 167; Green, 391; **Cincinnati:** Wolz; Spirit, 8 July 1843; **St. Louis:** Carson, Managers, 229-231; Spirit, 19 July 1843.

(4) **HAVANA OPERA COMPANY.**

Sources: New Orleans: Belsom, 98, 101; Kendall, 233; **Cincinnati:** Wolz, 50; Wyrick, 113; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Armstrong, 47; Schiavo; **New York:** Lawrence, 216-218; Odell IV:694-95; **Baltimore:** Spirit, 9 December 1843; Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore. See also Chapter 3.

(5) **FRENCH OPERA COMPANY OF NEW ORLEANS.**

Sources: New York: Odell, IV:689-694; V:67; Lawrence, 213-216; Spirit, 20 May 1843; 27 May 1843; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Armstrong; Curtis, 309; **Canada:** Lawrence, 216.

(6) **SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
It is unclear just when the Seguins left for England, or how long they stayed. They are last mentioned in the spring of 1844 singing in concert in New York on 31 May 1844. See Odell, V:73-74.

During the 1843-44 season, the Seguins performed with the following singers: **Baltimore:** Archer, Bailey, Richings, Shrival; **Mobile:** Archer, Mrs. Richardson, Shrival. Secondary singers included Misses Verity, Jones, Warner, Hally; Mrs. Bowman; Mr. Van Pragg, Solomon, A'Beckett, Walters, Bowers, Milto, Bowman, Sig. Paladine; **Charleston:** A'Beckett, Shrival; **Philadelphia:** Frazer, Shrival; **New York:** Andrews, Coad, Knight, Shrival.

Sources: Baltimore: Kaufman MS worklist; Spirit, 28 October 1843; **Mobile:** Bailey, 324, 326; Duggar, 132-4; **New Orleans:** Spirit, 6 January, 17 February 1844; **Charleston:** Spirit, 16 March 1844; Hoole, 48, 118; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Armstrong, 48; **New York:** Spirit, 16, 23 March; 20, 27 April; 4, 11 May 1844; Odell, V:15-16; Lawrence, 267-269; **England:** Lawrence, 267; Spirit, 23 March 1844.

(7) **PALMO'S OPERA COMPANY.**
Under this heading appeared three companies organized under the name Palmo's. All the troupes performed only in New York, over the course of three seasons. For more information on the troupes, see Chapter 3; for information on company members, see the Appendix.

Sources: Schiavo, 66-67; White, II:874-876; Spirit, 4 May 1844, 118; 16 November 1844; Lawrence, 355.

(8) **SEGUIN OPERA COMPANY.**
After spending the summer in England, the Seguins brought back to the United States a new tenor, a Scotsman named Frazer, and Balfe's The Bohemian Girl. The Spirit reported on 25 January 1845 that Frazer, the Seguins, and others had sailed for New Orleans. In February the company passed through Mobile en route to New Orleans; it is not clear whether or not they performed. See Spirit, 15 March 1845. The Seguins sang with the following singers: **New York:** Andrews, Frazer, Knight, Pearson; **Charleston:** Andrews, Frazer, Miss Moss; **New Orleans:** Andrews, Coad, Frazer; **Mobile:** Andrews, Frazer; **New York:** Frazer.

Sources: New York: Odell, V:92-93; Spirit, 30 November, 7, 14 December 1844; 18, 25 January 1845; 26 April, 12, 17 May 1845; Odell, V:101; Lawrence, 267; **Philadelphia:** Armstrong; Wilson; Wemyss, 401; **Charleston:** Hoole, 48, 120; Spirit, 8 February 1845; **Mobile:** February: Spirit, 15 March 1845; for the later season see Bailey, 49, 330; Spirit, 5, 12 April 1845; Duggar, 140; **New Orleans:** playbills, St. Charles Theatre (New Orleans), 3-8, 12, 15 March 1845, Playbill Collection, Box 37 (New Orleans), HTC.

(9) **ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY.**
This troupe represents the remnants of Palmo's Company. See Chapter 3.

Sources: Kaufman MS Worklist, New Orleans.

(10) **FRENCH OPERA COMPANY OF NEW ORLEANS.**

Sources: New York: Odell, V:103, 158; Lawrence, 329-334; Spirit, 14 June 1845, 188; 28 June, 30 August, 320; 13, 20 September 1845; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Armstrong, 51; Curtis, 340.

(11) **BROUGH-DELCY ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
This was a short-lived extended vocal-star troupe. In New York, the company included Miss Catherine Delcy (the daughter of Michael Rophino Lacy), a tenor F. Gardner, William Brough, and Miss Moss. Lacy, who accompanied his daughter from England, served as musical director and conductor. According to Curtis, in Philadelphia the company included Delcy, Gardner, Brough, Ownes, Coad, Mrs. Hughes, Mr. Eberle, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Stevens. How many of these individuals were members of the Chestnut Street stock company is unknown. In November in New York the company mounted the American première of the English version of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor.

Sources: New York: Spirit, 13, 20, 27 September 1846; Odell, V:167, 170; Spirit, 15, 22,29 November, 6 December 1845; Lawrence, 335-336; **Philadelphia:** Curtis, 343; Armstrong, 52; Wilson.

(12) **SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
During the 1845-46 season the Seguins sang with the following performers: **Boston:** Mrs. Rosenthal, Mrs. Burrowes, Mr. Van Pragg, Mr. Benetti, Mr. Schnepff (all advertised as from the

Park Theatre); **Philadelphia** (November): Seguins, Frazer, Delavanti; **Baltimore**: Bailey, Frazer; **New York** (December): Delavanti, Frazer, Moss; **Boston** (January): Frazer, Meyer; **New York** (March): Frazer, F. Meyer.

Sources: Boston: Playbill, Howard Athenaeum (Boston), 29 October 1845, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; Spirit, 24 January, 14, 21 February 1846. Notice of concert on 14 April: BMG 27 April 1846, 54; Clapp, 435ff; **Philadelphia**: Wilson; Armstrong, 52-53; Curtis, vol. 2, 346; Spirit, 15 November 1845, 452; Spirit, 2, 9, 16 May 1846; **Baltimore**: Spirit, 6, 13 December 1845; **New York**: Odell, V:172-173; Spirit, 20, 27 December 1845, 3 January 1846; Odell, V:179-180; Spirit, 7, 14, 21, 28 March 1846; **Boston**: playbills, Boston Athenaeum, 6, 11, 13 February 1846, Playbill Collection, TC/NN; playbill, Boston Athenaeum, 9 February 1846, Rare Books, MB; **Summer**: Spirit, 20 June 1846.

(13) **SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
In January 1847 Seguin and Frazer leased the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, then rented it out, "until their return from the South on the 1st of March." (See Spirit, 9 January 1847)

During the 1846-47 season the Seguins performed with the following singers: **Boston**: Frazer, Meyer; **Philadelphia**: Frazer; **Boston** (Jan-Feb): Frazer, Holman, Meyer, Phillips; **Charleston**: Frazer, G. Holman, Meyer, Adelaide Phillips, full chorus from the Park Theatre in New York; **Savannah**: Frazer, Holman, Meyer, Phillips; **Philadelphia** (April): Frazer.

Sources: Boston: Playbills, Federal Street Theatre, 28 September, 9, 12, 17 October 1846, TC/NN; playbill, Federal Street Theatre, 16 October 1846, GA/MWA; playbill, Federal Street Theatre, 289 September [1846], Rare Books, MB; Spirit, 26 September, 17, 24 October 1846; Clapp, 389; **Philadelphia**: Wilson; Spirit, 7, 14 November 1846. December engagement: Armstrong, 53; Spirit, 9 January 1847; Lawrence, 488; **Boston**, 1847: Playbills, Federal Street (Boston) Theatre, 25 January, 5 February 1847, TC/NN; playbill, Federal Street (Boston) Theatre, 22, 29 January, 1 February 1847, Rare Books, MB; **Charleston**: Hoole, 50, 124; Spirit, 6 March 1847; **Savannah**: Dorman, 167; Green 421; Spirit, 27 March 1847; **Philadelphia**: Wilson; Spirit, 10 April, 22 May 1847; **London**: Spirit, 19 July 1847, 236.

(14) **SANQUIRICO-PATTI ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY.**
For more information on this troupe, see Chapter 3; for a list of company members, see the Appendix.

Sources: Spirit, 21 November 1846, 468; Schiavo, 69; Lawrence, 425.

(15) **HAVANA OPERA COMPANY.**
For more information on this troupe, see Chapter 3; for a list of company members, see the Appendix.

Sources: Odell, V:263, 266; Spirit, 17 April 1847; Armstrong, 54; Lawrence, 434-435, 438.

(16) **SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
In May William H. Reeves, who had been with the Bishop Company, joined the Seguins when Bishop's troupe disintegrated in April. (See Literary Excelsior and Musical World, 27 May 1848)

During the 1847-48 season, the Seguins performed with the following singers: **Montreal**: Arthurson; Miss Lichtenstein, Meyer, Shrival, chorus; **Boston** (November): Arthurson, Lichtenstein, Meyer, Shrival; **Richmond**: Gardner, Lichtenstein, Mr. Sauer; **New York** (April): Gardner, Lichtenstein, Phillips, Sauer, Miss Turnbull; **Baltimore**: Reeves.

Sources: Montreal: Spirit, 4 September 1847, 332; **Philadelphia**: Wilson; Literary Excelsior, 30 October 1847; Armstrong, 47; **Boston**: Spirit, 6 November 1847, 440; playbills, Boston Athenaeum, 4, 12, 19 November 1847, TC/NN; Literary Excelsior, 13 November 1847; playbill, Boston Athenaeum, 5 November 1847, GA/MWA; **New York**: Odell, V:314, report of concert; April/May: V:350-351; Lawrence, 524; **Richmond**: Stoutamire, 179; Literary Excelsior, 25 March, 15 April 1848; Spirit, 18 March, 1 April 1848. Spirit says last night was 23 March, but Mrs. Seguin gave a concert that evening. Stoutamire says that the last night was 31 March; **Petersburg**: Literary Excelsior, 15 April 1848; **Baltimore**: Spirit, 3 June 1848, 180; Literary Excelsior, 10 June 1848.

(17) **ANNA BISHOP ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY.**
Bishop's departure from England was reported in the Spirit on 12 June 1847. Her American operatic debut was on 4 August 1847 at the Park Theatre.

Bishop appeared with the following singers in 1847-48: **New York City** (Park): Mrs. Bailey, William Brough, Frazer, Sidney Pearson (member of Park Theatre Co). T. Y. Chubb was in charge of the orchestra; **Boston** (August): Brough; **New York** (October): Brough, de Begnis, Giubilei, Korsinsky, Macfarren, Reeves (debut), Valtellina. Director: Bochsa; Chorus director: R. Benetti; **Boston** (November): Benetti [Biennetti], Brough, de Begnis, Giubilei, Macfarren, Reeves; **Philadelphia** (November): Brough, Korsinsky, Reeves, Valtellina; **New York** (December): Brough, MacFarren, Reeves, Valtellina; **Philadelphia** (December): A'Beckett, Andrews, Mary Barton, Benetti, Brough, Reeves, Korsinsky, Macfarren, Reeves; **Charleston**: Andrews, Barton, Benetti, Brough, Reeves, Korsinsky, Valtellina; **Savannah**: Barton, Brough, Korsinsky, Meighen, Reeves, others (some perhaps from the Charleston Theatre); **New Orleans** (February): Barton, Benetti, Brough, Korsinsky, Reeves, Watson; **Mobile**: Benetti, Brough, Korsinsky; Reeves, Valtellina.

Sources: New York: Spirit, 12 June, 17, 24, 31 July, 7, 14, 21 August 1847; Odell, V:321-322; Odell, V:324-325; Spirit, 16, 23, 30 October, 6 November 1847; Literary Excelsior, 23, 30 October, 13 November 1847. Third engagement: Odell, V:336; playbills, Broadway Theatre (New York), 13, 14, 16, 18, 20-23, 25? December 1847, Anna Bishop Collection, MB, Spirit, 18, 25 December 1847, 1 January 1848; Lawrence, 470, 473; **Boston**: Playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 26 August 1847, GA/MWA; playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 31 August 1847, Rare Books, , MB; Clapp, 451; Spirit, 4, 18 September 1847; BMG, 13 September 1847, 134; Second engagement: playbills, Federal Street Theatre (Boston), 17-18 November 1847, Rare Books, MB; Spirit, 20 November 1847, 464; **Philadelphia**: Wilson; Spirit, 4 December 1847; Armstrong, 57; Curtis, vol. 2, 386. Second visit: playbills, Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), 27-31 December 1847, 1, 3-6 January 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Armstrong, 57; Curtis, vol. 2, 386; Spirit, 8 January 1848; **Charleston**: Hoole, 52, 126; playbills, Charleston Theatre, 12-14, 17-18, 21 (concert), 22, 24, 28-29 January 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Spirit, 5 February 1848; **Savannah**: Green, 429; playbills, Savannah Theatre, 31 January, 1, 3, 5 February 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; **New Orleans**: playbills, St. Charles Theatre, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21, 23-24, 28-29 February, 2 March 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Spirit, 26 February 1848; Literary Excelsior, 18 March 1848; **Mobile**: Bailey, 104; playbills, Mobile Theatre, 6-7, 9-11, 13-15, 17-18, 20-21 March 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Literary Excelsior, 8, 15 April 1848; Spirit, 8 April 1848.

(18) **MANVERS OPERA COMPANY.**
According to Lawrence, Eliza Brienti was incapacitated by nerves on opening night; the performance also coincided with Anna Bishop's second concert and consequently was a financial disaster. The season closed after the second performance. The company included the following singers: **New York** (October): Charles Manvers, Eliza Brienti, August Giubilei, Mrs. Grary, Mr. Andrews; Albany: Manvers, Brienti, Giubilei; **Michigan**: Manvers, Brienti; **New Orleans**: Brough, Brienti.

Sources: New York: Spirit, 19 October 1847, 392; Odell, V:324; Lawrence, 472-473; **Albany**: Spirit, 30 October 1847, 428; **Michigan**: Teal, Appendix C; **New Orleans**: Kendall, 269.

THE SONGBIRDS: ANNA BISHOP AND ANNA THILLON

Two of the most successful English opera companies active in the United States during the late 1840s and early 1850s were troupes assembled for the support of two British sopranos, Anna Bishop and Anna Thillon. Some contemporary critics complained that neither "prima donna" was worthy of the name: Bishop, who had an agile and flawless but relatively weak voice, was deemed better suited to the concert hall than the operatic stage; Thillon, although a talented and beautiful actress, was but a passable vocalist. Both singers, however, attracted huge American audiences as much for non-musical as musical reasons, for auditors were mesmerized by Bishop's "fine form," magnificent gowns, and fabulous jewels, and by Thillon's dramatic ability and sheer beauty. For whatever the reasons, both women enjoyed great artistic and pecuniary success in the United States; thousands attended their concerts, and thousands more witnessed performances mounted by the English opera companies they assembled about themselves.

Anna Revière Bishop (1810-1884), the estranged wife of the British composer Sir Henry Rowley Bishop, preceded Thillon to this country by over four years; she arrived in New York in July 1847. In her party were the bass William Brough, returning once again to the scenes of his earlier success with Jane Shirreff, John Wilson, and other vocal stars, and the French harpist, composer, and convicted forger Robert-Nicholas-Charles Bochsa (1789-1856), the man for whom the soprano had abandoned her husband and three children in 1839.[22] According to

22. Brough: Spirit, 18 June 1847, 188; Bochsa: Slonimsky; Jane Weidensaul: "Bochsa. A Biographical Sketch," American Harp Journal (Fall, 1970), 4-7; Frank Walker, The Man Verdi (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 135-136.

the London Musical World, Bishop was enticed to the United States by visions of wealth. An American agent, so the periodical reported, approached her in the midst of a tour of provincial Britain and offered her such a "splendid and substantial" engagement in the United States that it would have been "little short of madness [for her] to refuse." She sailed for America almost immediately.[23]

Bishop must have seriously considered an American tour even before agreeing to the agent's irresistible offer. Her experience as an itinerant musician--even prior to her arrival in the United States--was extraordinary. Her first concert tour commenced in 1839 and lasted six years, during which time (by her own account) she and Bochsa performed in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Modavia (now northeastern Rumania and southeastern USSR), Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Bavaria--almost everywhere in Europe, in fact, except France, where there was a standing warrant for the arrest of her accompanist.[24] Her experience as a prima

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23. London Musical World, reprinted in the BMG, 2 August 1847. The periodical reported that Bishop planned to return to England in the spring; in fact, she did not return to her native country until September 1858. Richard Northcott, The Life of Sir Henry R. Bishop (London: The Press Printers, Ltd, 1920), 93.

24. George Seilhamer, An Interviewer's Album, No. 14: Anna Bishop, 105; Walker, 137-138; Weidensaul, 6-7. Bishop's globe-trotting habits did not end with her visit to North America. Between 1847 and 1876 she performed in Mexico, California, the Utah Territory, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), Manila, Hong Kong, Singapore, Calcutta, Ceylon, India, and South Africa. Over the course of her three decades of travelling she collected numerous extraordinary (and sometimes apocryphal-sounding) tales. In 1849 in Mexico, for example, she and Bochsa (and their private escort of ten cavalleros) were held up by thieves. The banditti, so the story goes, did not wish to murder their victims and steal their gold and jewels; they requested, instead, that Bishop, accompanied by Bochsa, sing for them a Mexican song titled "La Pasadita." After listening to a somewhat nervous performance, the outlaws exclaimed their appreciation, thanked the prima donna, then "mounted their horses, and dash[ed] off at full speed." Another adventure, even more fantastic, occurred in 1866 when Bishop was en route from Honolulu to Hong Kong. The ship on which she was a passenger was caught in a hurricane and wrecked; she and several others, who were marooned on an uninhabited desert island in the South Pacific, survived for three weeks on provisions salvaged from the wreck, then made their way, in an open boat, to the Ladrone Islands, some 1,400 miles distant. The Mexican tale is recounted in The Message Bird, 15 August 1850, 424; Nicholas Bochsa either wrote the satirical song "La Pasadita" or transcribed and published it (Philadelphia: A. Fiot, 1850) under his name (with a lithograph of Anna Bishop in Mexican costume on the cover) in an attempt to capitalize on the publicity

donna was at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples, where she gave 327 operatic performances over the course of some twenty-seven months during 1845, 1846, and 1847. (Seilhamer, 105; Walker, 137-138)

Bishop's voice, a high soprano of great range, agility, and reliable intonation, was "sweet and pure." Described variously as brilliant, exquisite, and virtuosic, and frequently likened to a bird or a flute, it was not powerful, but otherwise conformed perfectly with the mid-nineteenth century conventions of soprano vocal beauty.[25] Her concert repertory--both in Europe and in the United States--consisted of arias and scenes from contemporary operas (Tancredi, La Gazza Ladra, Romeo e Giulietta, Anna Bolena, La Sonnambula, Lucia di Lammermoor, L'Ambassadrice, Il barbiere di Siviglia), often performed in costume; occasional ballads ("The Last Rose of Summer," "John Anderson, My Joe," "On the Banks of the Guadalquiver," "Auld Robin Gray"); and works for harp, usually Bochsa's own virtuosic fantasias ("La Moderne Italie, a Grand Capriccio di Bravura, introducing a melody from Norma and Motivo from L'Elisir d'amore" or "Mosaique musicale, solo for the harp, composed by Bochsa, introducing a theme by Bellini, an Irish melody, and a motive from Donizetti").[26] Her reception by concert audiences throughout Europe was wildly enthusiastic; it foreshadowed, for the most part, the reaction

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generated by the story. The shipwreck story is in Northcott (quoting Bishop extensively), 94-96, and Walker, 141.

25. For several contemporary descriptions of her voice, see the Albion, 7 August 1847, quoted in Odell V:321 and Lawrence, 469.

26. Programs from Bishop's European tour of 1839-1845 are preserved in the Anna Bishop Collection, Music Department, MB. Unless otherwise identified, all the playbills cited for Bishop's performances are from this collection.

of American concert-goers.[27]

Although Bishop's concert tours of the United States were quite successful, she seems to have preferred to perform in opera. Over the course of her American career she did so by three different methods: first, as a visiting star with prominent East-coast theatres (in New York or Boston, for example), second, as the featured artist around which a resident opera company was assembled at the Metropolitan Theatre in San Francisco, and finally, as the star of her own opera troupes. None of the several English opera companies with which she travelled around North America between 1848 and 1854, however, survived even a single tour; several of her concert tours, in fact, commenced upon the collapse of one or another opera troupe. Like the various Seguin companies (and like many of the Italian ensembles), her troupes--all known as the Anna Bishop Opera Company (or some slight variation on that sobriquet)--formed anew for each tour.

In comparison with her English-opera competition (Anne and Ned Seguin and their familiar band of vocalists), Bishop enjoyed some obvious advantages. Hers was a new face and a new voice; even more to the point, she was a beautiful woman and a glamorous celebrity, famous for accolades won in the capitals of Europe. Her route to American success, however, was not automatic or without setbacks. In 1847 Bishop's competition was not just the Seguins, it was the Sanquirico-Patti troupe, the Havana Company, and the Astor Place troupe--all performers of Italian opera. Bishop's arrival in the United States coincided with the development of a

27. Walker, 137; 140-141; for her reception in New York, see Lawrence, 469-73; 524-27.



HOWARD ATHENAEUM.

W. H. Chippendale, - - - - - - Acting Manager.
W. L. Ayling, - - - - - - - - Stage Manager.

FIRST NIGHT OF

MADAME

ANNA BISHOP!

Primà Donna Assoluta di Cartello of the San Carlo, Naples,

On this occasion, MADAME ANNA BISHOP, will offer to the Public, an

Operatic Entertainment!

IN COSTUME,—IN THREE PARTS!

On the plan of those she gave at Vienna, Stockholm, St Petersburg, Munich Rome Naples, and lately at the Park Theatre, New York, including some of her most favorite

☞The Free List, with the exception of the Public Press, will be suspended during the engagement of Madame ANNA BISHOP.

PART FIRST.

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 26TH, 1847.

GRETNA GREEN

After which a GRAND SCENE from Balfe's admired Opera of the

MAID OF ARTOIS!

RECIT,—" *My thought, which forth had wander'd.*"
CAVATINA.—" *The heart that once hath fondly teem'd.*"

ISOLINE..... MADAME ANNA BISHOP

GRAND OVERTURE, FULL ORCHESTRA.

To which will be added a Comedy Scene from

Il Barbiere di Siviglia!

CAVATINA.—"*Una voce poca fa.*"

ROSINA.....MADAME ANNA BISHOP.

PART SECOND.

The admired comedy, as it was rehearsed

NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS!

After the first act of the Comedy, the First Scene of the Second Act of Donizetti's

LINDA DI CHAMOUNI

Introducing the romance

CAVATINA—"*Oh! home of all my joys.*"

And the admired ballad

"*On the Banks of Guadalquiver.*"

PART THIRD.

THE SECOND ACT OF THE COMEDY.

The whole to conclude with the Great Scena and Cavatina from

TANCREDI,

O PATRIA—DI TANTI PALPITI, SUNG BY MME A. BISHOP.

In the Costume of Tancredi.

Playbill from one of Anna Bishop's Operatic Entertainments, at the Howard Athenaeum (Boston) on 26 August 1847. The program included a farce and a comedy performed by the stock company, an overture, and scenes from operas by Balfe, Rossini, and Donizetti.

new (and fashionable) enthusiasm among many music-lovers in Boston and New York for Italian opera in Italian--a fervor that had taken both towns by storm earlier in the spring, and which continued unabated throughout the summer and into the fall and winter. As a consequence, during her engagements in the Northeast in the fall of 1847, the growing conflict between the proponents of Italian and English opera--which had been virtually nonexistent earlier in the 1840s--began to emerge as a major issue.

In July the Spirit expressed the hope that "the rage for Italian opera will not prejudice the revival of [opera in] our mother tongue" by Bishop and her companions. (Spirit, 31 July 1847, 272) In fact, the soprano (along with her supporting cast of William Brough, Charlotte Bailey, James Frazer, and other members of the theatre's stock company) drew large and enthusiastic audiences during her first engagement at the Park Theatre in August.[28] But when she, Brough, and Bochsa went to Boston in late August for two and one-half weeks of performances at the Howard Athenaeum, they drew but indifferent houses. Her engagement, the correspondent to the Spirit reported, was too early in the season to attract large audiences. More important, however, her performances of operatic scenes (with which she commenced the engagement) were of limited interest to the Boston "fashionables," who were "all looking forward with

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28. Lawrence's suggestion that Bishop formed an actual troupe for her performances at the Park Theatre is incorrect. Bishop herself fails to mention forming a company for this engagement; furthermore, when she appeared in Boston in late August and early September, Brough was the only other singer mentioned in the press or named on playbills. If Bailey, Frazer, and the others who performed with the soprano at the Park Theatre had been part of a Bishop company (rather than singers engaged by the Park or members of the stock company there) they would have accompanied her north to Boston. See Lawrence, 469; Seilhamer Interview No. 14, 109; Spirit, 24 July 1847, 260, 18 September 1847, 356; and playbill, Boston Athenaeum, 31 August 1847, Rare Books, MB.

anxiety for the Italian troupe"--the Havana company, which was scheduled to open at the Athenaeum in September. (Spirit, 4 September 1847, 332)

The singers returned to New York at the conclusion of the Boston engagement in mid-September. It was not until then that Bishop, according to the Literary Excelsior, formed a real "company to play operas"--a troupe with which she intended to tour the United States. (Literary Excelsior, 23 October 1847; 8 January 1848) The Anna Bishop English Opera Company included (among other singers) Mrs. George Alexander Macfarren (contralto), William H. Reeves (tenor), Miss Mathilde Korsinsky (contralto), Signor Attilio Valtellina (bass), William Brough (bass), and Giuseppe de Begnis (bass buffo). The troupe's first engagement (of three weeks) at the Park Theatre was brilliantly timed to fall midway between the departure of the Havana troupe and the opening of the Astor Place House; as a result, it was "very successful." (Spirit, 6 November 1847) Perhaps as a compromise to the prevailing enthusiasm for Italian opera, the company sang in Italian and English on alternate nights; each performance concluded with a standard selection from the soprano's concert repertory--a "disembodied scene" from another opera (during this engagement Tancredi and The Love Spell), performed in costume.[29]

When Bishop's troupe appeared in Boston, their performances (now that the Havana Company had left) met with "great success"; in November the Spirit reported that the houses "have been in a continual jam." (BMG, 13 September 1847, 134; Spirit, 20 November 1847, 464) By the time the company returned to New York in December, however, they found themselves

29. Literary Excelsior, 23 October 1847; Spirit, 16 October 1847, 404; Lawrence, 474.

performing in direct competition with the Astor Place troupe, and their fortunes plummeted. Their engagement at the Park, in the words of the Spirit's critic, should have been "just the thing" in New York. (Spirit, 18 December 1847, 512) Unfortunately, he explained,

> the rage for the Italian opera, where a better opportunity is afforded to display costly dresses and study the fashions of the bon ton, as the subscribers are termed, withdrew from Madame [Bishop] the patronage to which she was entitled by superior ability. (Spirit, 1 January 1848)

Bishop and her company left New York in late December, after a series of performances that, according to the Spirit, was "short and by no means profitable." (Spirit, 1 January 1848)

The troupe's next stop was in Philadelphia; faced with no competition, they were well received. Then, in early January, Bishop took her entourage, slightly pared down, on a southern tour that was to include stops in Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Mobile, and points further west. The company attracted large audiences in Charleston, and "created immense sensations" in both New Orleans and Mobile; the original one-night engagement in Savannah also evidently drew large crowds, for it was extended twice, for a total of four performances.[30] The troupe continued to perform in both Italian and English. In Mobile, for example, Bishop appeared in Norma, "in its original Language (Italian)" on 7 March, Linda of Chamounix, "translated into the English language expressly for Madame Anna Bishop" on 9 March, and La Sonnambula, "in the English Language

30. Hoole, 52; Spirit, 8 April 1848, 84; playbills, Savannah Theatre, 31 January, 1, 3, 5 February 1848, Bishop Collection, MB.



Portrait of the young Anne Revière Bishop.



Likeness of Bishop on the title page of a sheet music illustrating one of her famous jewel-bedecked gowns.

(Except the GRAND FINALE, that in Italian)" on the 10th. This combination of English (familiar) with Italian (unfamiliar) opera, however, may have been a contributing factor to an ugly incident in Mobile that involved the company's musical director, Nicholas Bochsa. (Playbills, Mobile Theatre, March 1848)

Opera in English was a familiar theatrical form to Mobilians; numerous vocal stars (including the Seguins) had visited the Alabama city during the 1840s. Italian opera in Italian, however, was a novelty in the town--as it was everywhere else the company performed on this southerly trip, with the exception (as usual) of New Orleans. In early April 1848, the Literary Excelsior, which was following the progress of the Bishop company, reported that Bochsa had gotten himself "into a scrape with the Mobilians." The audience, the magazine reported, had called for an encore of the finale to Linda of Chamounix after its performance, and Bochsa had refused. Worse, he had done so in a manner the audience considered contemptuous; he subsequently was "soundly hissed." (Literary Excelsior, 8 April 1848) That this occurrence was more than a minor incident is suggested by a news item published in the Spirit of the same date--which reported that the Bishop troupe had abruptly fallen apart in Mobile. (Spirit, 8 April 1848, 84; report confirmed by the Literary Excelsior, 15 April 1848) A month later, two of the erstwhile members of the company (Brough and Reeves) returned to New York City; they informed the Spirit that the troupe had dissolved not because Bochsa had broken his arm (as had been reported), but because of the arrogant Frenchman's "untoward conduct . . . not only to the artists, but to the public generally, which

drew especially from the Mobilians, their disapprobation."[31] Evidently Bishop and Bochsa learned the hard way that foreign artists, especially arrogant ones who mounted foreign-language operas in the American hinterland during the 1840s, had to take care not to tread on the sensibilities of proud (and wary) American audiences. By the late 1840s the aristocratic segments of audiences in New York (and perhaps Boston and Philadelphia as well) had begun to demonstrate a preference for the more fashionable Italian opera--or, at least, a willingness to patronize performances. Elsewhere, however, there were latent hostilities (towards foreigners in general) that European artists had to be careful not to rouse.[32]

When her company dissolved in mid-tour, Bishop reverted to form and

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31. Spirit, 6 May 1848, 132. I have been unable to unearth any more details about this tantalizing incident. The reporter for the Mobile Register and Journal only alludes to this occurrence (which probably took place evening of the troupe's final performance, 21 March). On 22 March the newspaper reported the close of the opera season and the reviewer commented that the troupe, which had created "more intense [excitement] than we remember," left behind pleasant memories. He praised the company members Bishop, Korsinski [sic], Reeves, Valtellina, and Brough, then added, "the veteran Bochsa, too, though perhaps of the genus irritable is made up of the soul of music. The little specks of over-appreciation, which jar a little on the scene, are lost in the contemplation of his greatest attainments . . . " Mobile Register and Journal, 22 March 1848.

32. Before returning north, Brough and Reeves gave a number of concerts in small southern towns. (Spirit, 25 March 1848) In early April they advertised themselves as "late of Madame Bishop's troupe" and performed two "ballad concerts" (on 4-5 April) in Columbus, Georgia. See the Columbus Enquirer, 4 April 1848, cited in William Osler Langley, "The Theatre in Columbus, Georgia from 1828 to 1878" (Master's thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1937), 39. In May, Reeves joined the Seguin Opera Company; he sang with that troupe throughout the 1848-49 season. See the Literary Excelsior, 17 May 1848, also Table 18, Number 16. After leaving the Bishop company, Brough teamed up with the old vocal star Charles Manvers and several new singers (the soprano Eliza Brienti and the bass August Giubilei, the latter the brother of Theodore Victor Giubilei, who had sung with Shirreff and Wilson in 1840). These latter performers had formed a vocal-star troupe for opera and concert performances at the Park Theatre and elsewhere during the fall of 1847. In July 1848 the Manvers Opera Company performed at the Astor Place House (under the management of William Niblo); during 1848-1849 and 1849-50 the company conducted two tours to the South and West, where they performed in operas, concerts, and "operatic soirees." See also Table 18.

(with Bochsa) embarked on a concert tour that lasted some five months, during which she appeared in "all the large cities and towns from New Orleans to Quebec." They returned to New York in October 1848. (Lawrence, 526) After a lengthy (and very successful) farewell tour that lasted until early January 1849 ("Madame Bishop," reported the Spirit on 13 January, "has given her very-positively-never-to-be-repeated-and-eternal-farewell-concert, for the sixth time"), they left the United States for Mexico, not to reappear until July 1850.[33]

Over the course of the next decade Bishop returned to North America on numerous occasions, performing, for the most part, on concert tours (1850, 1851-52, 1853; 1859-60). In November 1852 she and Bochsa formed another opera company at Niblo's Theatre in New York, and after a successful run of performances there, embarked on another tour to the South. The fate of this company, however, was similar to the fate of the previous one. By the time they reached Washington, D. C. in early February (after performances in Philadelphia and Baltimore), the Spirit reported that the company "is completely scattered, never perhaps to be reorganized." (Spirit, 5 February 1853, 82) The reasons for the disintegration of this troupe are unknown. Bishop's most successful American operatic engagements during the 1850s were in New York and in San Francisco; in the latter city she performed from February 1854 through at least March 1855 with a company organized by the Metropolitan

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33. As an example of her success, a New York concert on 30 December 1848 attracted 5000 auditors. For information on the tour to Mexico, see Walker, 141; Baltimore Olio, March 1850, 35; AMR, May 1850, 36.

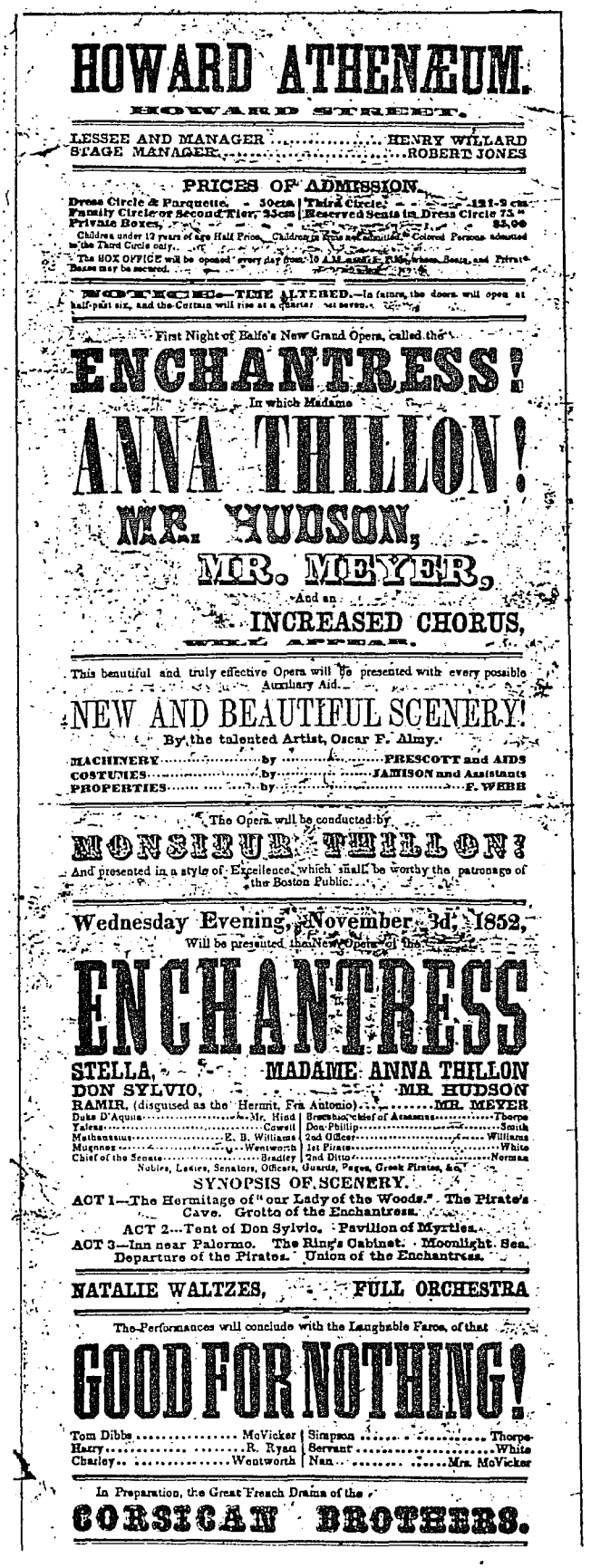
Theatre there.[34]

In the early 1850s, Anna Bishop was faced with a new competitor from England: in 1851 another English "songbird," Anna Thillon (1812-1903), arrived in the United States. Thillon sang in concert less frequently than did Bishop; most of her appearances, in fact, were in opera. But the opera troupe with which she travelled for the three years she spent in North America (1851-1854) was, like the Seguin companies of the 1840s, quite small; in some ways, it was more akin to a small dramatic company (or a vocal-star troupe) than to an opera troupe. Despite its size, her company (like the later troupes of the Seguins) were referred to almost universally in the musical and theatrical press as the "Thillon Opera Company."

Thillon came to the United States in the autumn of 1851 at the instigation of the New York theatre (and pleasure-garden) manager, owner, and impresario William Niblo. As we have seen, Niblo had frequently experimented with opera performances at his Manhattan establishments during the 1840s. In the spring of 1850, he engaged the Havana Company for a run of four-and-one-half weeks, and was quite pleased by the large crowds that the troupe attracted. His experiences with opera, reinforced by the vivid example of Jenny Lind's phenomenally successful 1850-51 American tour (a managerial tour-de-force that every impresario in the

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34. Estevan, Opera in San Francisco, FTP, 41; McMinn, 403-406; Playbills: American Theatre, 3 March 1854, Playbill Collection, Box 6 (San Francisco), HTC; Metropolitan Theatre, 30 April, 7 May, 22 July, 25 November 1854, Playbill Collection, Box 8 (San Francisco), HTC; Spirit, 18 March 1854, 55, 8 April 1854, 92, 3 June 1854, 185, 188, 1 July 1854, 230; 2 September 1854, 338, 4 November 1854, 446, 18 November 1854, 470; MW, 1 July 1854, 98. For some of the information on Bishop's activities in San Francisco I am indebted to Robert Commanday, who generously allowed me to consult his research notes for a projected book on the history of opera in that city.



HOWARD ATHENÆUM.

HOWARD STREET.

LESSEE AND MANAGER.....HENRY WILLARD
STAGE MANAGER.....ROBERT JONES

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Family Circle or Second Tier, 38cts. | Reserved Seats in Dress Circle 75 "
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DOORS OPEN—TIME NOT ALTERED.—In future, the doors will open at half-past six, and the Curtain will rise at a quarter to seven.

First Night of Balfe's New Grand Opera, called the

ENCHANTRESS!

In which Madame

ANNA THILLON!

MR. HUDSON,

MR. MEYER,

And an

INCREASED CHORUS,

WILL APPEAR.

This beautiful and truly effective Opera will be presented with every possible Auxiliary Aid.

NEW AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY!

By the talented Artist, Oscar F. Almy.

MACHINERY.....by.....PRESCOTT and AIDS
COSTUMES.....by.....JAMISON and Assistants
PROPERTIES.....by.....F. WEBB

The Opera will be conducted by

MONSIEUR THILLON!

And presented in a style of Excellence, which shall be worthy the patronage of the Boston Public.

Wednesday Evening, November 3d, 1852,

Will be presented the New Opera of the

ENCHANTRESS

STELLA, - - MADAME ANNA THILLON
DON SYLVIO, - - MR. HUDSON
RAMIR, (disguised as the Hermit, Fra Antonio).....MR. MEYER

Duke D'Aquila	Mr. Hind	Benedetto, Chief of Assassins	Thorpe
Yalesa	Cowell	Don Phillip	Smith
Methanasius	E. B. Williams	2nd Officer	Williams
Mugnoz	Wentworth	1st Pirate	White
Chief of the Senate	Bradley	2nd Ditto	Norman

Nubles, Ladies, Senators, Officers, Guards, Pages, Great Pirates, &c.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT 1—The Hermitage of "our Lady of the Woods." The Pirate's Cave. Grotto of the Enchantress.
ACT 2—Tent of Don Sylvio. Pavilion of Myrtles.
ACT 3—Inn near Palermo. The Ring's Cabinet. Moonlight. Sea. Departure of the Pirates. Union of the Enchantress.

NATALIE WALTZES, - - FULL ORCHESTRA

The Performances will conclude with the Laughable Farce, of that

GOOD FOR NOTHING!

Tom Dibbs	McVicker	Simpson	Thorpe
Harry	R. Ryan	Servant	White
Charley	Wentworth	Nan	Mrs. McVicker

In Preparation, the Great French Drama of the

CORSICAN BROTHERS.

Playbill from a performance of Balfe's The Enchantress at the Howard Athenaeum in 1852. Thillon, Hudson, and Meyer were assisted by the Athenaeum stock company. Also indicative of normal theatrical practice was the performance of a farce after the opera.

United States observed with envy), convinced Niblo that opera performances would attract large paying audiences. Consequently, he sent to Europe for a prima donna; the soprano he engaged was Thillon.[35]

Thillon was accompanied to North America by her French husband, Claude Thillon (a violinist who had once served as Jullien's concert master) and by James Hudson (an Irish vocalist and light comedian who was making his second visit to the United States). (Wolz, 64; Ireland, II:550) The soprano commenced her American visit with a month-long engagement at Niblo's; over the course of the next three years her troupe would return to that establishment for lengthy visits on a fairly regular basis. At Niblo's, as elsewhere (and in true vocal-star fashion), Thillon and Hudson were assisted by stock company players. Mons. Thillon acted as the director of the opera when the troupe was performing in New York; elsewhere, he also served as the conductor of the orchestra.[36]

When not engaged at Niblo's, the Thillon Opera Company (which included, at various times, other English-opera regulars such as James Frazer, Stephen Leach, Frederick Meyer, and Fred Lyster) performed in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston. In 1853 the troupe made an extensive

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35. In 1851 and 1852 Niblo put his theory about the appeal of opera to American audiences to the test: over the course of that season he engaged not only the Thillon troupe, but also the Artists' Union Italian Opera Company (the spin-off group from Maretzek's Astor Place troupe) and the French Opera Company of Madame Fleury-Jolly and Monsieur Menehard. John Purdy Blair, jr., who analyzed the productions at Niblo's Garden Theatre from 1849 through 1862, concludes that "during 1852 opera made an enormous impression on the programming at Niblo's Garden Theatre. Both the Menehard-Jolly and the Thillon-Hudson troupes had performed there and had great success in this genre." See Blair, "Productions at Niblo's Garden Theater, 1849-1862" (unpublished dissertation, University of Georgia, 1982), 84.

36. Blair, 69. Thillon is mentioned as a conductor on playbills from the Howard Athenaeum (Boston) dated 3 November 1852 and 26 October 1853, in Theatrical Programs, 1850-54, and Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; St. Louis Theatre, 29 March 1853, St. Louis Box 57, HTC, and in Wolz, 64.

trip to the South and West, mounting opera seasons (in New Orleans, Mobile, Memphis, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh) and giving concerts (in Detroit, Chicago, and elsewhere). (See the notes to Table 19, number 26.) In late 1853 the singers heeded the call of El Dorado and headed to the Far West. Travelling to California via Nicaragua, the singers reached San Francisco on 31 December 1853, shortly before the arrival of Thillon's English-opera competitor, Anna Bishop. (Hartley, 50) Thillon and Hudson mounted operas with a company assembled by the management of the Metropolitan Theatre in San Francisco from January through early April, and again in May 1854; they also embarked on an unsuccessful concert tour to the California mountains in late April and early May. (Spirit, 18 March, 55; 8 April, 92; 20 May, 159; 3 June, 185; 1 July 1854, 230) The California correspondent to the Spirit (identified as "J. P. C.") gave conflicting information about Thillon's success in the Far West. On 18 March 1854, for example, he claimed that Thillon and Hudson had made $10,000 for their first eight performances; two months later, however, he reported that the visitors had attracted only two good houses during the course of their entire engagement. (Spirit, 18 March 1854; 20 May 1854) On the other hand, the Musical World noted in July that the singers had made a fortune during their six months on the West Coast. "During her residence in California," the periodical reported, "Madame Anna Thillon has made from $20 to $30,000."[37]

Anna Thillon's repertory was small; during the three years she spent in North America, she performed in less than a dozen operas. Although one

37. MW, 1 July 1854, 98. Translated into 1986 dollars, this figure of $20,000-$30,000, if accurate, would be the equivalent of an astonishing $241,800-$362,700. See Greene, 48.

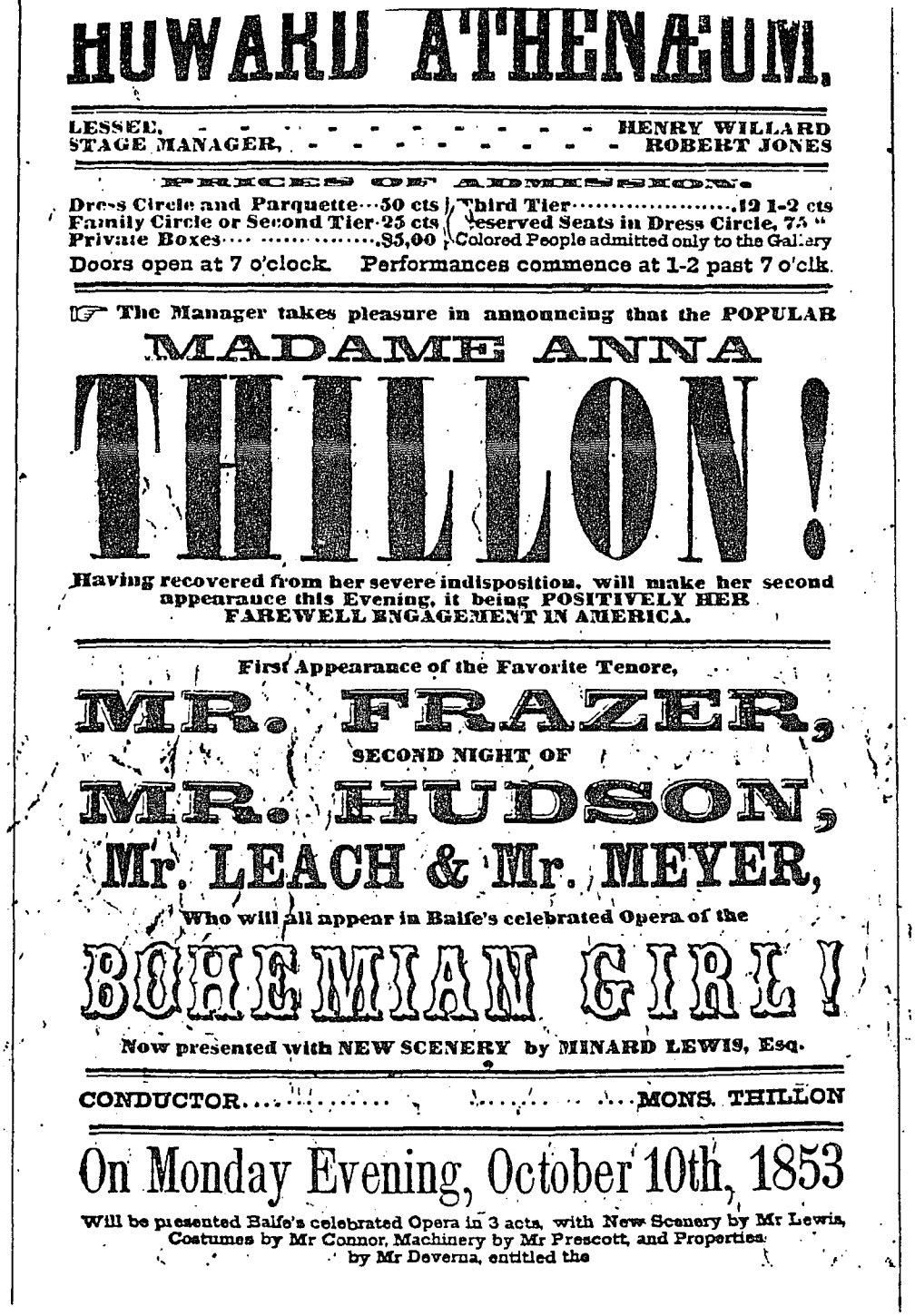
critic described her repertory as "French opera Anglicized," the works she preferred (and in which she appeared with overwhelming frequency) were English-opera (and Englished-opera) standards: The Bohemian Girl and The Enchantress (Balfe); The Black Domino and The Crown Diamonds (Auber); and The Daughter of the Regiment (Donizetti). Niblo advertised that Thillon's performance of The Crown Diamonds on 18 September 1851 was the North American première (in English) of that opera. This, however, was an error, for Charles Manvers's vocal-star company had mounted the opera in New York three years earlier, on 18 July 1848.[38] Thillon and Hudson also appeared occasionally in other Italian/English standards: La Sonnambula, Cinderella, and Fra Diavolo, and in one non-standard, Rooke's Amilie. Thillon's adaptations of these operas evidently were even more truncated than the usual English versions. In 1852 a critic for the Spirit referred to her Crown Diamonds as "a light version" of the opera. Later, another critic wrote that the same work, as performed by Thillon, was an "opera cut down to a drama [with songs]," and in July 1853 the Spirit noted that Thillon's repertory consisted of operas that had been "very much cut and slashed . . . [so that] the music [is] rendered accessory to the acting." (Spirit, 20 March 1852, 60; 16 December 1853, 517; 23 July 1853, 276)

These drastically pared-down versions of operas apparently were more suited to Thillon's vocal abilities than were the original works. As mentioned, Thillon was considered by many to be not particularly well equipped for the role of prima donna. After her New York debut at Niblo's Garden in September 1851, the critic of the New York Albion wrote that her

38. The quote is from the AMR, February 1852, 25. The incorrect information about the première is in Blair, 68; Loewenberg gives the correct date, col. 791.

voice, which was of "moderate compass, and well under her command; of small volume, but sweet and flexible," was more suited to "the drawing room or concert hall . . . than [to] the 'grand opera.'" (Albion 20 September, 1851; quoted in Odell, VI:164) John Sullivan Dwight characterized her performing style as "slender, but graceful singing." (Dwight's, 30 October 1852, 32)

Thillon's lack of a large voice, however, was not an impediment to her popularity. The Spirit reported in early November 1851 that for her first engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre, she had "set the Philadelphians almost crazy by her warblings and personal beauty; the demand for seats," he continued, "was so great as to render an advance of price necessary." (Spirit, 1 November 1851, 444) Two months later a correspondent wrote from Boston, "it appears [that] our fashionable society are entirely satisfied with [Thillon], as the house is densely crowded with brilliant audiences on the nights of her performances." (Spirit, 10 January 1852, 564; 17 January 1852, 576) At the soprano's benefit on Friday, 2 January 1852, the theatre attracted one of the most fashionable audiences seen in Boston since the engagement of Maretzek's Astor Place Company eight months earlier. (Spirit, 10 January 1852, 564) The Spirit reported at the end of her run in Boston that Thillon had just completed "one of the most successful engagements that any one theatrical artiste has ever fulfilled in our city, at least for the past fifteen years." (Spirit, 21 February 1852, 1) In the midst of this abundance of media enthusiasm over the "fashionable" and "brilliant" character of the Boston audiences, however, a reminder might be in order that a full house at the Howard Athenaeum (and elsewhere), no matter how "brilliant" the



HUWARD ATHENÆUM.

LESSEE, - - - - - - - - - - - HENRY WILLARD
STAGE MANAGER, - - - - - - - - - - ROBERT JONES

PRICES OF ADMISSION.

Dress Circle and Parquette---50 cts | Third Tier.....12 1-2 cts
Family Circle or Second Tier-25 cts | Reserved Seats in Dress Circle, 75 "
Private Boxes.....$5,00 | Colored People admitted only to the Gallery

Doors open at 7 o'clock. Performances commence at 1-2 past 7 o'clk.

☞ The Manager takes pleasure in announcing that the POPULAR

MADAME ANNA

THILLON!

Having recovered from her severe indisposition, will make her second appearance this Evening, it being POSITIVELY HER FAREWELL ENGAGEMENT IN AMERICA.

First Appearance of the Favorite Tenore,

MR. FRAZER,

SECOND NIGHT OF

MR. HUDSON,

Mr. LEACH & Mr. MEYER,

Who will all appear in Balfe's celebrated Opera of the

BOHEMIAN GIRL!

Now presented with NEW SCENERY by MINARD LEWIS, Esq.

CONDUCTOR.....MONS. THILLON

On Monday Evening, October 10th, 1853

Will be presented Balfe's celebrated Opera in 3 acts, with New Scenery by Mr Lewis, Costumes by Mr Connor, Machinery by Mr Prescott, and Properties by Mr Deverna, entitled the

Full-sized reproduction of the top portion of a playbill from the Howard Athenaeum showing the wide range of ticket prices and the reminder "Colored people admitted only to the Gallery."

description in the press, also included individuals of the middle and lower classes. A playbill from one of Thillon's performances in Boston quietly belies the overall impression of a wealthy and exclusive house; it clearly states that although private boxes at the theatre cost a prohibitive $5.00, one could be admitted to the Dress Circle and Parquette for fifty cents, to the Family Circle or Second Tier for twenty-five cents, and to the Third Circle for only twelve and one-half cents. A legend on the playbill also reads, "Colored Persons admitted to the Third Circle only." (Playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 3 November 1852, Opera Programs, 1836-59, GA/MWA; see the illustration on the previous page.)

Thillon's attraction, it should be clear, was not her voice. What she lacked in vocal power, however, she more than made up with histrionic ability and sheer beauty; "her chief power," according to a critic writing in the Spirit, "lays in the seductive style of her dramatic acting." (Spirit, 23 July 1853, 276) The Musical World agreed. "Of course, nobody with ears sensitive to musical tone listens to Madam [Thillon] for the music that she affords," pointed out a critic for that periodical. Rather, "one looks at her as an uncommonly pretty woman, who addresses herself to the eye and the taste of the auditor more than to the ear." (MW, 15 July 1854, 126) The private, written comments of some of her auditors confirm this assessment--and also strongly hint at her appeal to the men in her audience. John Hill Martin, who attended several of her performances in Philadelphia in October 1851, wrote afterwards,

> I went to the Chestnut to see [Martin's emphasis] Madame Anna Thillon in the Opera of the "Crown Diamonds." She could not sing well. She was the loveliest woman I ever saw. She was graceful and fascinating, her perfect beauty of face and figure drew crowds to see her. Her form was a model of female perfection. I have it from the dress

> maker. Her skin was a white as snow. She wore her dark brown hair in a profusion of ringlets, which fell over an exquisite pair of shoulders and perfect neck and bosom, in the style of Marie Antoinette, whose portrait she resembled very much. . . . Her . . . tenor was an English light-comedian called Hudson. . . . Tenors are always the lovers in an Opera on the stage, [and] the world said that he was the lover both on and off the stage--if he was I know several who envied him.[39]

Carolyn White, a young Bostonian who occasionally attended operas with her husband Frank, was even--if possible--less restrained in her comments. "Frank and I went to see the beautiful handsome Anna Thillon this eve," she wrote on 24 December 1851. She continued,

> I think I never saw so handsome a face as hers before in my life--and her every motion is perfect grace. So arch--so fascinating--so bewitching--you can scarce withdraw your gaze from her--her singing is fine--her acting exquisite--Frank is in raptures. (White's empahsis)[40]

Her husband, White mentioned, went to see Thillon three times while the beguiling singer was performing in Boston.

Thillon's final lengthy engagement in the United States was at Niblo's Garden during the summer of 1854. By that time, the soprano had become an established theatrical attraction in Manhattan. During this final engagement, she and Hudson performed three times per week, alternating nightly with the Ravel Family, an extraordinarily popular group of acrobats and pantomimists; both the Thillon Opera Company and the Ravel Family were regular attractions at Niblo's. (Blair, 135) The audiences that flocked to performances by both groups, furthermore,

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39. John Hill Martin Papers, Diaries, vol. 1, 118, Manuscript Division, PPHi

40. Carolyn B. White diary, vol.3 (22 September 1851-7 July 1852), Manuscript Department, MWA.



Portrait of the beautiful soprano Anna Thillon (1812-1903)



Engraving from Gleason's of Anna Thillon and James Hudson in a performance of The Crown Diamonds, one of the staples of Thillon's repertory.

evidently did not consider this juxtaposition to be in any way anomalous. "Niblo's continues to be crowded nightly," the Spirit observed in July, "it seeming to make no difference to its audience whether opera or pantomime is the attraction." (Spirit, 22 July 1854, 276)

The success of Anna Bishop and Anna Thillon speaks to several issues related to the performance of English opera in the United States in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The most obvious is that glamour and beauty, although not important enough to substitute for musical ability--were nevertheless strong attractions in a prima donna. In October 1848 the critic Henry Watson, writing in the New York Mirror, commented that it was worth a visit to the theatre just to see Anna Bishop's costumes and jewels. (Mirror, 11 October 1848, quoted in Lawrence, 526) Two years later a critic for the Spirit, after noting that the orchestral music of a Bishop production was "excellent, and the chorus department is very effective" added admiringly that "the dresses, scenery, and every other requisite, are rich and gorgeous." (Spirit, 7 September 1850, 348) Perhaps more important, however, is the realization that to many Americans of the 1850s, opera performances--like dramatic performances of all types--clearly continued to be entertainment. Both Bishop, with her attractive figure and expensive gowns, and Thillon, with her beauty and dramatic ability, attracted huge audiences both for concert and operatic performances. Americans had not yet been taught that opera was supposed to be edifying, educational, and uplifting, or that opera was art, not entertainment. Operatic artists who appeared before American audiences of the early 1850s were not yet practitioners of an esoteric art form. Rather, they were practical entertainers, in search of fame, fortune, and large audiences, and they gave the American public what it was willing to pay for.

ENGLISH COMPANIES OF THE MID- AND LATE-1850S

During the middle and late 1850s, English opera companies--although not as plentiful as the ever-increasing numbers of Italian troupes--persisted as a potent force in the arena of opera performance in the United States. To a certain extent, performers of English opera lost ground to the Italians during this time. Americans continued to be increasingly attracted to Italian opera, and melodies from works by Donizetti, Bellini, and (especially) Verdi increasingly permeated American musical culture. In addition, more and more world-class Italian singers visited and performed in the United States during the decade, and these performers--who attracted large audiences by their ability and fame--often won new converts to their art. Finally, Italian opera companies and (especially) Italian concert troupes took advantage of marked improvements in the American transportation system, and extended their itineraries to include sections of the country that would have been unthinkable five or ten years earlier. As a consequence, individuals in many cities and towns in the American interior had the opportunity to hear opera in Italian for the first time. Many were eager to see and hear their favorite operas--performed in the language in which they had been written, and sung by stars some of whom had won fame and fortune on the stages of Europe.

In other ways, however, English opera and English opera companies made great strides during this decade. The performance of opera by Italian companies was not the only means by which the appetite for Italian melody could be sated; as in previous decades, many Americans were perfectly satisfied to hear their favorite Italian operas sung in English.

Theatre managers, especially those in New York, were aware of this appeal, and continued to import English opera companies and British singers. Growing support in London late in the decade for the permanent establishment of English opera (aided, to a great extent, by Louisa Pyne and William Harrison after their return home from their three-year visit to this country) had positive repercussions on the status of English opera here. Finally, the increased (and deliberate) appropriation of Italian opera by the wealthy (especially in urban areas of the Northeast)--exacerbated by the growing identification of Italian opera-going as an elite pastime--fueled the debate over Italian versus English opera. In many ways, this increased the appeal of the latter to middle-class Americans and to Americans who lived away from the cultural centers on the East Coast.

The most prominent English troupe to visit the United States during the 1850s performed here in the middle years of the decade. The Pyne and Harrison Opera Company, which toured the country from 1854 through 1857, did much to promote the performance of opera in English in North America. Louisa Pyne, in the words of George Odell, became "one of the most popular singers known to the American stage"; she was the first English soprano to tour the United States widely and for extended periods of time in a full-sized English opera company complete with secondary singers, chorus, and orchestra director. (Odell, VI:343) The visit of the Pyne and Harrison Company is discussed (and one of their tours to the American South and West examined in detail) in Chapter 6. Numerous other English opera troupes, however, also toured widely in the United States during and after the visit of the Pyne and Harrison company. The activities of three of

these troupes--the Durand Opera Company, the Escott Opera troupe, and the Cooper English Opera Company--illustrate the fate, and document the influence of English opera troupes in the United States during the second half of the decade.

The Lyster and Durand English Opera Company, an ensemble made up primarily of singing actors and actresses, first appeared as a troupe performing at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore in March and April 1855. (MW, 7 April, 159; 14 April, 178; 5 May 1855) During the next four years the company was known variously as the Durand English Opera Company, the New Orleans English Opera Company, and Crisp's Opera Company. In April 1859 several of the primary singers (or perhaps the entire troupe) travelled to San Francisco, where they were engaged by theatre manager Tom Maguire for performances at the Maguire Opera House; there they were known variously as the Lyster English Opera Company, the New Orleans English Opera Troupe, or (in 1860) the Lyster Grand Italian Opera Company. After 1860, as a combined English and Italian troupe, the ensemble became "a regular feature on the San Francisco scene."[41]

The star performers of this company were the soprano Rosalie Durand and the baritone Frederick Lyster; others closely associated with the troupe were Georgina (or Georgia) Hodson (contralto), Francis Trevor, Frederick Meyer (bass), and two of the Seguins' old associates, the tenors William Reeves and (but only briefly) James J. Frazer. The personnel of the company fluctuated from year to year, as was typical of most opera

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41. Gagey, 92; Estavan, Opera in San Francisco, 7, 13; Benjamin Noid, "A History of the Theatre in Stockton, California, 1850-1892" (unpublished dissertation, University of Utah, 1968), 226-227, 229-230; McMinn, 419; Playbill, Maguire's Opera House, 26 July 1859, San Francisco History Room, CSf; the quote is from Hartley.

troupes active in the United States. Also typical of both English and Italian companies was the seeming interchangeability of singers; in particular many English performers moved from troupe to troupe, accepting work where and when it was available. At various times, for example, the Durand company included numerous former members of the Pyne and Harrison troupe of 1855-56, including (in addition to Frank Trevor and Fred Lyster), Joseph Stretton, Frank R. Swan, G. H. Warre [or Warrie], and the Pyne company's orchestra conductor, Anthony Reiff, jr. Many of the singers named as members of the Durand company also performed, at one time or another, with the Bishop, Thillon, and Seguin opera troupes; in late 1859 the singers Lucy Escott and Henry Squires, of the Escott English Opera Company, travelled to San Francisco to join forces with the Durand troupe at Maguire's Opera House.[42]

The principal difference between the Durand company and the Pyne and Harrison troupe--and it was an important one--was the absence in the former of any well known and recognized musical celebrities. Many of the vocalists associated with Durand and Lyster had performed in other English companies or with other well known English singers, but most of them were singing actors and actresses based in New York; many, in fact, had been

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42. Citations for the former Pyne and Harrison Company members: Hoole, 146; Green, 521; Playbill, Crisp's Gaiety Theatre (New Orleans), 14 November 1856, New Orleans (Box 36), HTC. For information on the personnel of the Durand Company in San Francisco, see George E. Barnes, Bulletin, 7 March 1896, in Estavan, 26. In addition to the already mentioned associations with the Seguins and the Pyne and Harrison troupes, Fred Lyster appeared with Anna Thillon at Niblo's during the summers of 1852 and 1853. (Odell, VI:240, 316) James Frazer, in addition to his appearances with the Seguins in 1844 through 1846, sang with Bishop during her first New York engagement in the autumn of 1847 and with Thillon during the summers of 1853 and 1854. (Lawrence, 267-269, 469, 473; Odell, VI:243, 316) Meyer performed with the Seguins from 1846, with Anna Thillon at Niblo's in 1851, and with the Pyne and Harrison Company at the Broadway Theatre in New York in December 1854. (Lawrence, 418; Odell VI:163ff, 345-46) Reeves appeared with Anna Bishop in 1848 (Lawrence, 473-4; Literary Excelsior, 30 October 1847) and toured with the Seguins in 1848 and 1849 (Lawrence, 524, 588; Cooper, 56-58). For other sources on the Seguin company, see the notes to Table 18.

members of stock companies there. More important than the rank-and-file members, however, were the "name" singers of the troupe. And Rosalie Durand, although described as having a "very sweet voice of good compass . . . a fine figure, handsome face, keen black eyes, and a winning, pleasant expression when she sings," was not Louisa Pyne--nor did she have the name-recognition or popular appeal of either Anna Bishop or Anna Thillon (or, for that matter, any of the prominent Italian prima donnas connected with companies in the United States). (MW, 5 May 1855, 8) Durand, in fact, arrived in this country with no prior musical reputation at all. She spent much of her first year in America as an actress in New York theatrical companies.[43]

The inaugural performances by the Durand Company were in Baltimore (in March and April 1855) and in Philadelphia (in June). The following October, Dwight's Journal reported that "Rosalie Durand and company" were performing an adaptation of Boieldieu's John of Paris at Burton's Theatre in New York. (Dwight's 27 October 1855, 29) Durand and Lyster, in fact, were at that time members of Burton's stock company; reports of activity by this operatic "troupe" in the autumn of 1855, then, are inaccurate. The following spring (March 1856), several thousand miles from New York, one W. H. Crisp, who had managed theatres in Savannah, Georgia, for several years, was engaged by the owners of the Gaiety Theatre in New Orleans to take over management of that house. (Kendall, 362) The theatre, which opened in November 1856 under the name Crisp's Gaiety, featured a new

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43. Durand made her American debut in New York in June 1855; she was a member of the acting company at Burton's Theatre during the autumn of 1855 and moved to Laura Keene's Varieties in January 1856. (Ireland II:630; Odell VI:431ff, 452ff) Lyster, a tenor, was a member of the company at Brougham's Lyceum in New York; during the 1852-53 season he sang at Laura Keene's, and in 1855-56 at Burton's Theatre. See Odell VI:48-49ff, 214ff, 431ff.

MAGUIRE'S OPERA HOUSE

Proprietor & Manager, - - - - - Mr. T. Maguire
Treasurer, - - - - - - - Mr. C. V. Hand

Second Season of the New Orleans

ENGLISH OPERA TROUPE.

Miss ROSALIE DURAND

As Polly Peacham.

Miss GEORGIA HODSON

As Captain Macheath.

Tuesday Evening, July 26th, 1859.

Will be given for the First Time, GAY'S Celebrated

BEGGAR'S OPERA

Polly Peacham, - - - - - Miss Rosalie Durand
Captain Macheath, - - - - Miss Georgia Hodson
Lucy Lockit, - - - - - - - Miss Ada King
Mat of the Mint, - - - - - - Mr. F. Trevor
Filch, - - - - - - - - Mr. Boudinot

Peacham	Mr. Potter	Drawer	Mr. Macklin
Lockit	Mr. McCabe	Mrs. Peacham	Mrs. Glasgsley
Ben Budge	Mr. Newman	Jenny Diver	Miss Jennie Manzenilo
Crookfingerd Jack	Mr. Duke	Mrs. Coaxer	Mrs. Boutinot
Jemmy Twitcher	Mr. Herrmann	Suker Taudry	Miss A. Manzenilo
Nat Dreary	Mr. Roesing	Molly Brazen	Mrs. Thayer
Nimming Ned	Mr. Lucien	Beggar	Mr. Hamilton
Harry Paddington	Mr. Marrsen	Player	Mr. Thayer
Robin of Bagshot	Mr. Kretschman		

SYNOPSIS OF MUSIC.

ACT FIRST.

Song—'Tis Woman that seduces all mankind,....Filch
Air—Can love be controlled by advice!.....Polly
Duett—Oh! Polly you might have toyed, Polly and Mrs. Peacham
Air—Oh! Pander Well,.....Polly
Duett—Pretty Polly, Say,.....Macheath and Polly
Air—My heart was so free,.....Macheath
Duett—Over the hills and far away, Macheath & Polly
Duett—The Miser thus,.....Macheath and Polly

ACT SECOND.

Song and Chorus—Fill every Glass, Mat of the Mint and Chorus
Song and Chorus—Let us take the Road, Mat of the Mint and Chorus
Air—If the heart of a Man,.....Macheath
Air—As the Tree I shall suffer,.....Macheath
Song—How happy could I be with either,.....Macheath
Air, with variations & Bravours—Cease your funning, Polly
Duett—Why how now Madam Flirt,.....Polly and Lucy

ACT THIRD.

Song—Come Sweet Lass,.....Lucy
Air—The Charge is prepared,.....Macheath
Scena—Oh, cruel, cruel Case,.....Macheath
Terzetto—Would I might be hanged,.....Polly Lucy and Macheath
Roode Finale—Like the gloom of Night,.....Polly

In addition to the Opera, the following Songs will be introduced by request.

Romance—Ever of Thee,.....Macheath
Song—Home, sweet Home,.....Polly

ARGUMENT.

The Beggar's Opera was originally written by the Poet Gay, as a satire upon the Italian Opera, and its popularity was such that for two years it kept triumphant possession of the Stage, to the exclusion of the Italian Opera, Mr. under the direction of the immortal Handel. This piece is said to have arisen from a remark of Dean Swift to Mr. Gay "That a *Newgate pastoral*, might make a pretty sort of thing." It had a run of Sixty-Three Nights in its first season, (1727) and spread rapidly throughout England, Ireland and Scotland. The card-tables and the drawing rooms echoed with its praise, the Ladies had the songs engraved on their fans, even screens and other pieces of furniture were decorated with them. The *profits were so considerable*, both to the author, Mr. Gay, and to the manager, Mr. Rich, as to produce the saying, (not it had "Made Rich gay and Gay rich." Miss Fenton, the English Prima Donna of the Day, who played the part of Polly became the Idol of the Town, and of the Duke of Bolton, by her marriage with whom she attained the highest rank a subject can acquire in England.

In the present revival of this piece every passage, the least objectionable has been carefully expunged, and nothing left which could by any possibility offend the most refined and scrupulous, while the Original Plot, and form of the Story has been studiously preserved. The Opera opens with a Dialogue between an Actor and a Beggar who explains the nature of the piece, something after the manner of the *Ancient Greek Chorus*.

Playbill from a performance by the Durand Opera Company at Maguire's Opera House in San Francisco, 26 July 1859.

stock company. According to a playbill from the theatre, the "distinguished artistes" engaged in the "operatic department" of the troupe included an assortment of familiar names from Burton's Theatre: Frazer, Stretton, Lyster, Trevor, Durand, and Hodson.[44] The singers, who probably had been lured away from New York as an ensemble, performed at Crisp's Theatre during November and December 1856. They appeared in musical works and operas like The Bohemian Girl, Der Freischütz, and Rob Roy, and assisted the dramatic company in the performance of such fare as Walter Scott's The Lady of the Lake and John Brougham's burlesque Pocahontas (the title role of which Georgina Hodson had created at Wallack's Theatre in New York the previous December).[45]

Lyster, Durand, and the others used the New Orleans engagement to solidify their own ensemble. By February 1857 the same half-dozen individuals were at the People's Theatre in St. Louis, performing under the name Crisp's Opera Company; whether or not they retained a managerial association with W. H. Crisp is unknown. (Kaufman and Jennings, MS worklists, St. Louis) Henceforth, the singers remained independent of any particular theatre or city until 1859, when they became something of a house company at Maguire's in San Francisco. Between 1857 and 1859, however, they acted as a true itinerant company, travelling widely around the country and performing in various theatres.

The Durand Company, as was typical of English troupes, travelled without an orchestra. For their engagement in Philadelphia in 1859 the

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44. Kendall, 165-66; Playbill, Crisp's Gaiety Theatre, 14 November 1856, New Orleans (Box 36), HTC.

45. Kendall, 366; Odell: V:443. For information on Pocahontas, see William Brooks, "Pocahontas: Her Life and Times," American Music (Winter 1984), 19-48.

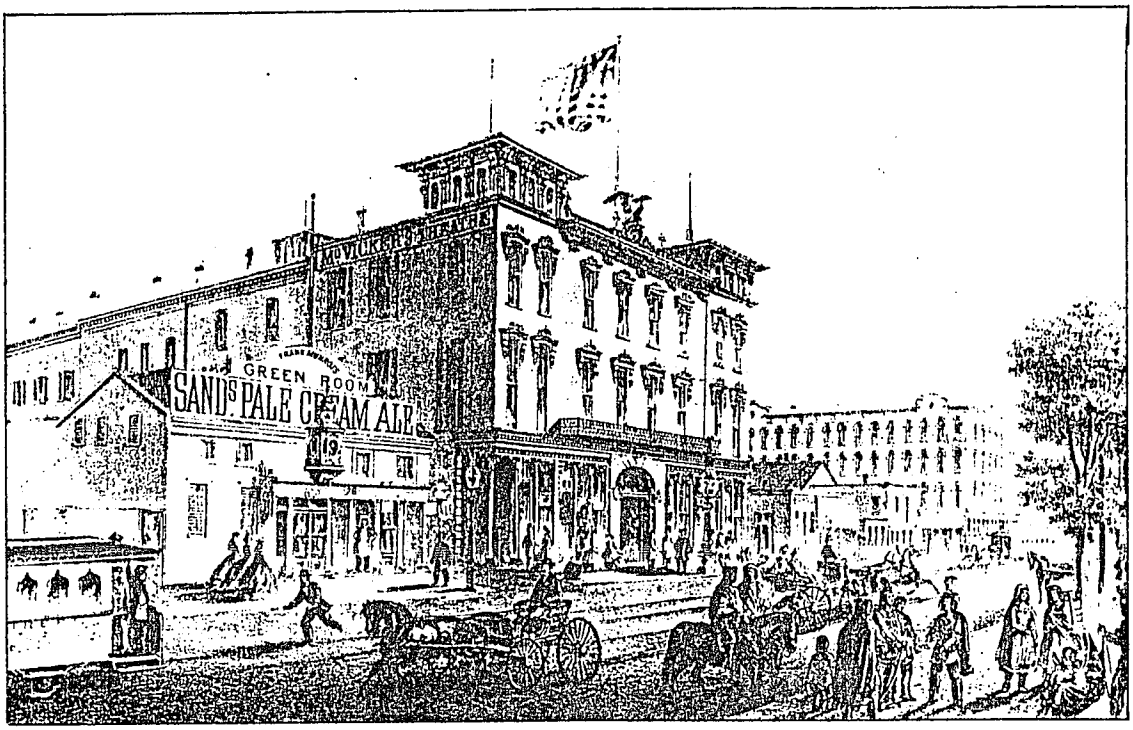
theatre management advertised that "an augmented orchestra" had been engaged "expressly for the occasion"; in September 1857 the Detroit Tribune noted that the theatre there had engaged the Detroit City Band to supplement the instrumental efforts of the house orchestra.[46] The company's repertory was monotonously typical of that of English troupes, although the usual operas (Cinderella, Fra Diavolo, Daughter of the Regiment, The Bohemian Girl, The Crown Diamonds, Der Freischütz, The Barber of Seville, and La Sonnambula) were supplemented more frequently than usual by works from the older vocal-star repertory (John of Paris, Rob Roy, and The Beggar's Opera); this slant is probably a reflection of the stock-company origins of many of the troupe's singers. At the same time, however, the company attempted to keep up with current operatic taste; by 1859 they had incorporated into their repertory translations of more recent Italian works, including Lucrezia Borgia and Il Trovatore.[47] The frequency with which they performed the latter opera (as The Troubadour) is suggested by John Sullivan Dwight, who referred to the troupe several times during the summer of 1859 (somewhat derisively) as one of the numerous "Trovatopera" companies then plying the American theatrical circuit. (Dwight's, 4 June 1859, and 20 August 1859, 166)

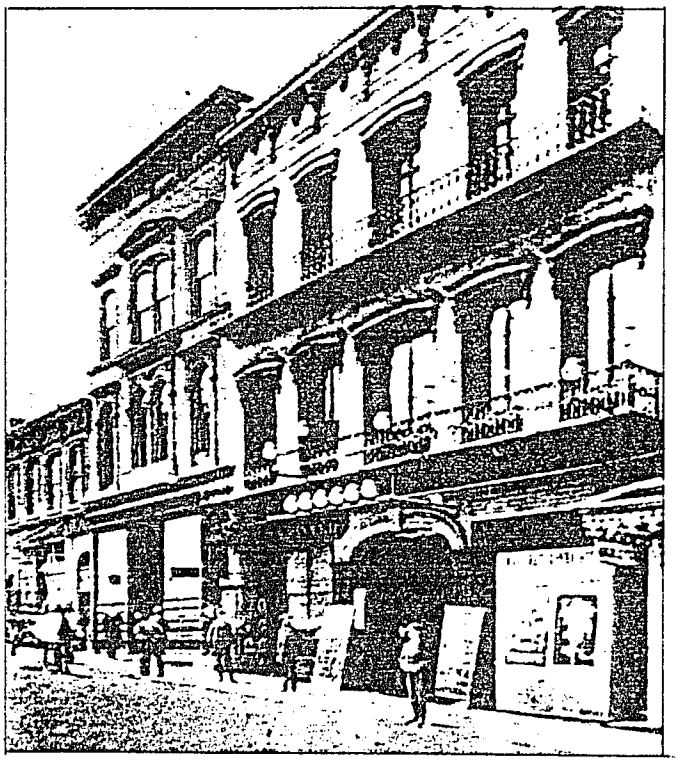
From June 1857 through April 1859 the troupe, known generally as the New Orleans English Opera Company, toured widely all over the eastern half of the United States, performing in the Southeast and South (Richmond, Baltimore, Charleston, Savannah, Macon, and Columbus, Ga.) and in the West

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46. Playbills, New Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), 21 March-2 April 1859, Theatre Department, PP; Detroit Tribune, 9 September 1857, quoted in Teal, Appendix C.

47. Cooper, 229-230; Weisert, "Fashionable"; photocopy of a program from a benefit performance in San Francisco, Theatre File, Archives of the Performing Arts, San Francisco.





Top: McVicker's Theatre in Chicago.
Bottom: Maguire's Opera House, San Francisco.

(Nashville, St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Detroit). The company did not appear in either Boston or New York during these two years, and their movements were ignored almost entirely by the American musical press (which was based, for the most part, in those two cities). Consequently, both the full extent of their travels and their reception by American audiences is unknown.

The two remaining English troupes active in the United States during the waning years of the decade, for some reason, did not suffer the same fate at the hands of the American musical and theatrical press. The activities of both the Cooper and the Escott English opera companies were recorded fairly systematically in Dwight's Journal, the Musical World, and (less often) the Spirit throughout 1858, 1859, and 1860. The two companies shared a number of similarities: both arrived in the United States in the autumn of 1858, imported by the managers of New York theatres (Cooper by Wallack's, Escott by Burton's); both fared poorly during their first engagements in Manhattan; both enlisted the services (at different times) of some of the same singers; and both travelled widely throughout eastern North America from 1858 through 1860, introducing opera to new audiences in towns and cities further and further away from the beaten track and, at the same time, avoiding New York and (for the most part) Boston.[48]

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48. According to Weisert ("Mozart Hall"), the Cooper company performed in Louisville in January 1858, but this is incorrect; Henry Cooper arrived in this country in September of that year and the troupe was not organized until then. D. Miranda, a tenor who made his American debut with the Cooper troupe, joined the Escott Company in 1859; the troupe subsequently was called the Escott and Miranda Opera Company. John Brookhouse Bowler (tenor) and Aynsley Cook (bass), both of whom came to this country with the Escott company, joined the Cooper troupe in 1859. For sources, see the notes to Table 19.

The Cooper Opera Company was the more successful and long-lived of the two ensembles. Henry C. Cooper, for whom the troupe was named, was the musical director and orchestral conductor of the company; he was described in the musical press as a "celebrated violinist" and on playbills as the "late leader of the [London] Philharmonic, Italian Opera, &c." (MW, 29 May 1858, 337; playbills, Boston Musuem, 5-17 March 1860, GA/MWA) His wife Annie Milner, a woman of fair complexion and light hair, was the company's prima donna. She performed in concerts in New York and Boston in 1857 and 1858 before attempting roles in opera; as the critic for the New York Tribune explained in 1858, "hitherto [she] has been known only in the concert-room, but during some months [past] she has been studying hard for the stage." This same critic described her voice as a "fresh, beautiful soprano, with great facility in the upper notes, much flexibility, and capabilities for [both] a sustained slow movement [and] equally [for] rapid, florid passages"; she also had a "great aptitude for the theatre," including an "artistic style, and an unaffected manner."[49] Although the company (at least according to some critics) could not boast of any striking individual members beyond Milner and Cooper, the other singers who were part of the troupe performed well together. "The ensemble is very good," noted the critic of the Boston Musical Times; "the artists are unanimous--the effect is pleasant."[50] The critic for the New York Times was more enthusiastic. "A finer quartet it has not been our

49. The Tribune article (by Fry?) was reprinted as "The Opera in English" in Dwight's, 18 September 1858, 197. In 1857 Milner toured with an entourage identified as the "Ullman Opera Troupe," and in November she was singing with them in concerts in New York; she also performed in Boston in oratorios in the spring of 1858. See Dwight's, 21 November 1857, 269; 25 September 1858, 207.

50. BMT, 25 February 1860, 11. The same critic commented that he had not heard such good English opera since the days of the Seguins.

good fortune to hear for many years," he wrote. "The voices are perfectly fresh, of good quality, and in some instances of very superior cultivation."[51] Other members of the company included, at various times, Charles Guilamette (baritone), George Holman (tenor), Harriet (Phillips) Holman, Annie Kemp (contralto), D. Miranda (tenor), G. H. Warrie, Mr. F. Rudolphsen (bass), Aynsley Cook (bass), Brookhouse Bowler (tenor), and others. Most of these singers performed, at one time or another, with other English opera troupes and with theatrical companies (mostly in New York) during the late 1840s and 1850s; several performers (such as the Holmans) also had once been members of operatic burlesque companies like the Ethiopian Serenaders and Palmo's Ethiopian Opera Company.[52]

The makeup of the Escott Opera Company was similar to that of the Cooper troupe. The company could boast of two notable singers. The soprano Lucy Escott was described as a "superior vocalist, with a pure, fresh voice, [who] sings with great expression, [is] always accurate, [with] each note full toned and each word thoroughly articulated."[53] The tenor Miranda, who joined the troupe in 1859, was described by the same critic as a "thorough artist" and an "excellent tenor [with] tones [that]

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51. The Times article was reprinted in Dwight's, 18 September 1858, 199. One suspects that the critic in question had not been attending many of the performances by the numerous Italian companies active in New York City.

52. Information on the Holmans' experience in burlesque companies is from Odell V:133-34, 233, 244-45; Lawrence, 524.

53. Escott was a native of Springfield, Massachusetts. She had been educated in Europe, made her operatic debut in Italy, and later organized an English opera company; in June 1858 they were reported performing in towns located in the British provinces (Limerick, Cork, Plymouth). Ireland, 684; Wolz, 88; Dwight's, 5 June 1858, 78. The Escott company had some reputation in the United States prior their arrival here, for in July 1858 Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper announced that the "Lucy Escott English opera company" was planning to come to the United States. See the issue of 10 July 1858, 87.

☞ENGAGEMENT OF THE

COOPER OPERA TROUPE!

Pronounced by the Musical Critics of the South and West to be the Finest Combination of Lyric Artists in the Union.

ANNIE MILNER,

PRIMA DONNA ASSOLUTA.

Miss H. PAYNE, SECONDO DONNA

Miss A. MAURICE, CONTRALTO.

MR. BROOKHOUSE BOWLER, MR. SUGDEN,

MR. BOUDINOT,

—AND—

MR. AYNSLEY COOK,

THE CELEBRATED BASSO.

THE ORCHESTRA will be enlarged and Effective. Extra Choruses, &c—the whole under the direction of

H. C. COOPER,

Late Leader of the London Philharmonic Society, Italian Opera, &c.

ON FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 9th, 1860

Will be presented BALFE's Favorite Opera, of the

BOHEMIAN GIRL!

ARLINE.....ANNIE MILNER

Queen of the Gipsies.....Miss H. Payne	Count Arnheim.....Mr Boudinot
Buda .....Mrs Burroughs	Morenstein .....C. Thorne, Jr
Thaddeus.....Mr Bowler	Captain of Count Arnheim's Guard Delano
Devilshoof.....Mr Aynsley Cook	Servant.....Mr Johnston
(Who is acknowledged to be without a rival in this character)—	First Gipsy.....Mr Bruno
	Retainers, Soldiers, Gipsies, Nobles, Ladies,

As a Finale to the Opera, ANNIE MILNER will Sing the world-renowned Song, 'Lo, here the Gentle Lark!" Violin Obligato, H. C. COOPER.

The action of this Lyric Drama commences at the Chateau of Count Arnheim, an Austrian; the peasantry and retainers of the Count are preparing for the chase; when Thaddeus, a Polish exile appears. He encounters a band of Gipsies, headed by Devilshoof, who hearing that he is pursued, conceals him, and puts the pursuers on the wrong track; the shouts of distress are heard, and Florenstein rushes on; the Count's Child and attendant have been attacked by an enraged stag; hearing this, Thaddeus grasps his rifle and hastens to their relief, kills the animal and saves them from death; the Count returns in time to hear of the peril of his child and see Thaddeus bearing her in his arms; the Count overwhelms Thaddeus with thanks, and invites him to join in the festivities; the Count proposes a toast, "health and long life to the Emperor." All excepts Thaddeus honor the toast, and his silence being observed, the Count challenges him to empty his goblet; Thaddeus dashes the wine to earth; the guest incensed at this, threatens his life; Devilshoof takes sides with Thaddeus; the Count orders Devilshoof to be secured; Thaddeus departs; during the fete Devilshoof escapes, rescuing with him the Count's daughter, Arline; his flight being discovered, the greatest excitement prevails; he escapes, and the unhappy father sinks in despair as the first act ends.

Twelve years elapse and we behold the city of Prosburg, in the suburbs of which the Gipsies are encamped with the queen of their tribe, in whose tent dwells Arline; Florenstein a foppish attache of the Count, is met with by Devilshoof and his companions, who relieve him of his jewelry, among which is a medallion; Thaddeus who has joined the band, is enamored of Arline, and tells her it was he who saved her life, but conceals from her the secret of her birth; Arline confesses her love for him and they are betrothed; the Count appears, bowed down with sorrow; Florenstein calls his attention to the charming Arline; he beholds his medallion on her neck and claims it, charges her with having stolen it; the guard is called, Arline is arrested and brought before the Count; Florenstein passes the charge, and circumstances strengthen the appearance of Arline's guilt, when the Count perceives the wound mark on her arms; he asks its origin; she repeats the story, as related by Thaddeus; the Count recognizes his long lost child, and the act ends with an affecttionate tableau.

In the third act Arline is restored to her rank, but the change does not diminish her love for Thaddeus; he daring all danger for an interview, seeks and finds her; he comes to bid her farewell, and prays that she will, even when surrounded by other admirers, give a thought to him who loves her; she promises fidelity; the Gipsy Queen, who loves Thaddeus, conspires to seperate the lovers, but her plots fail; Thaddeus relates his history to Count Arnheim, who in gratitude to the saviour of his child, bestrows her upon him; vengeance now fills the heart of the Gipsy Queen; she induces one of the tribe to fire at Thaddeus, as he is embracing Arline, but by a timely movement of Devilshoof, the bullet reaches her own heart; the lovers are united and all ends happily.

Previous to the Opera, the Laughable Farce,

SOMEBODY ELSE!

Hans Moritz.....Mr W. Warren	
Ernest Walburg.....Mr J. Wilson	Minnie.....Mrs H. Beacon
Henry Flitterman.....C. Thorne, Jr	Louise.....Miss Anderson

☞SATURDAY AFTERNOON,

☞COOPER OPERA TROUPE.☜

Will appear in the Famous Opera,

LA SONNAMBULA.

☞SATURDAY EVENING—commencing at 7 1-2 precisely, the

BOHEMIAN GIRL.

☞In Rehearsal—the Great Opera, DER FRIESCHUTZ! and the Popular Operatic Play, ROB ROY!

Playbill from a performance by the Cooper Opera Troupe at the Howard Athenaeum, 9 March 1860. The evening's program included performances of The Bohemian Girl and a farce mounted by the stock company.

are very full and sweet." When Miranda first performed in New York with the Cooper company, the critic for the Times wrote, "we have had no such voice in this city for very many years. . . . [Miranda's] voice is manly, clear, sympathetic, and of unusual power"; even Dwight called him "a really good singer."[54] The other members of the company included Emma Heywood, Charles Durand, Henry Squires, Aynsley Cook, Brookhouse Bowler, a Miss White, Mr. Gledhill, and Mr. Hayes, most of whom, again, performed with other English opera troupes and with theatrical stock companies.

The Cooper Opera Company first appeared in this country in successive engagements in New York at Wallack's Theatre (6-18 September) and in Boston at the Athenaeum (20 September through 10 October); the Escott troupe opened in New York at Burton's Theatre on 4 October, while Cooper and Milner were in Boston.[55] At the time of the Cooper Company's New York performances, no English troupe had mounted productions of opera in New York since the last appearances of the Pyne and Harrison company in April and May 1857. The Spirit--which tended to favor opera in the vernacular--welcomed the Cooper troupe to Manhattan when they opened at Wallack's. "There is little difference in cost between a first-rate dramatic company and a troupe of English singers," the critic suggested, and there is little reason why a small company like Cooper's shouldn't work." (Spirit, 11 September 1858, 580) The same reasoning undoubtedly applied to the Escott Company. Both troupes, however, ran into serious trouble during their inaugural engagements in New York.

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54. MW, 17 December 1859, 4; Times quoted in Dwight's, 18 September 1858, 199; Dwight quotation is from the same issue, 198.

55. For sources on the company's appearances in New York and Boston, see the notes to Table 19: English Opera Companies, 1847-1860.

The New York correspondent to Dwight's reported on 18 September that the Cooper company was "really quite good." The critic for the Spirit (writing on the same date), however, offered a different assessment of the situation. He observed that the singers were drawing only small audiences, and further maintained that this response by the public was "justly so." (Spirit, 18 September 1858, 594) He went on to explain that the company's principal singers and chorus (of about twelve) were adequate, but that the orchestra (of eighteen) was bad; many of the singers, furthermore, were inexperienced. (Spirit, 11 September 1858, 580; 18 September 1858, 594; Odell VII:29) The company's two-week engagement at Wallack's was not renewed; after this unsuccessful (albeit not disastrous) run, the troupe headed north to try its luck in Boston. Two weeks after the Cooper company closed at Wallack's, the Escott troupe opened at Burton's--unfortunately, to much more severe criticism and a harsher fate. Their engagement, which was described after the fact by the Musical World as "another unsuccessful attempt 'to permanently establish' English opera" in New York, was an utter failure; after just six performances (of The Bohemian Girl and The Troubadour), manager William Burton abruptly terminated his engagement with the opera singers.[56]

The rapid failure of two English opera companies within three weeks of each other in Manhattan did not bode well for the future of vernacular opera in New York. The critic of the Musical World placed the blame for

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56. Burton, who had been growing dissatisfied with theatrical management, permanently closed his theatre after cancelling the Escott contract and returned to the stage. Although the Escott company had been drawing poorly, he evidently was not particularly interested in fixing whatever ailed the troupe. See MW, 16 October 1858, 658; Odell, VII:113-114.

the Escott troupe's failure squarely on manager Burton's shoulders. "So recently have the artists of the Lucy Escott troupe arrived in this country, and so sudden has been their eclipse that we scarcely know where to begin," he wrote on 16 October. The singers had barely set foot on American ground, he pointed out, when they found themselves already on stage in front of an audience. They had been given little time to recover from the rigors of a trans-Atlantic voyage, and little (if any) time to rehearse. Furthermore, they also had to put up with the "insufficient orchestra and . . . miserable chorus" that Burton had engaged for their support. This reviewer, who probably strongly disagreed with the opinion of the Spirit's critic (quoted above) that there was little difference in cost between an English company and a small dramatic troupe, contended that there was a world of difference in how the two types of company should be handled. "The day is passed," he argued,

> when operatic matters can be managed with the loose hand of dramatic enterprise. It is no longer practicable to use a company of singers as an individual "star," that can be driven through its repertoire without taking a breath. All the usual adjuncts of a theatre must be dismissed, and the hand of taste should supply the accessories required by a new state of things. This radical change is not effected in a day. It needs time and conscientious art effort. For the simple reason that theatrical managers know nothing whatever of the requisites of opera, it follows that opera under their auspices invariably fails. . . . The conjuror who has a booth at a country fair makes more preparations for the public than does the average theatrical manager for English opera. (MW, 16 October 1858, 658)

The cause of the Escott troupe's precipitous failure may have been inadequate preparation by Burton's. Other information, however, suggests that there were even more serious and deep-rooted problems besetting

English opera in New York during the fall. Odell, who described the city in the autumn of 1858 as "a town suffering from too much opera," suggested that the two English troupes failed because of the competition they faced from Italian companies--and stiff competition it was, indeed. During the Cooper company's engagement (and overlapping some with the Escott troupe's run), both the Strakosch and the Maretzek Opera companies were in town competing with each other--the former was at Burton's Theatre, the latter at the Academy of Music. Furthermore, not only was Strakosch's troupe scheduled to reopen at Burton's for a week starting 16 October, but the Ullman Opera Company was set to occupy the Academy of Music for six weeks starting on the 20th. (See Table 11.) Maretzek, Ullman, and Strakosch soon discovered that there were hardly enough opera lovers in New York to simultaneously support all of their companies. The Maretzek troupe, in fact, soon left for Havana, and Strakosch took his company on an extended trip to the West. The two English companies, both of which were seriously outclassed by the quality of their competition, simply got lost in the shuffle.

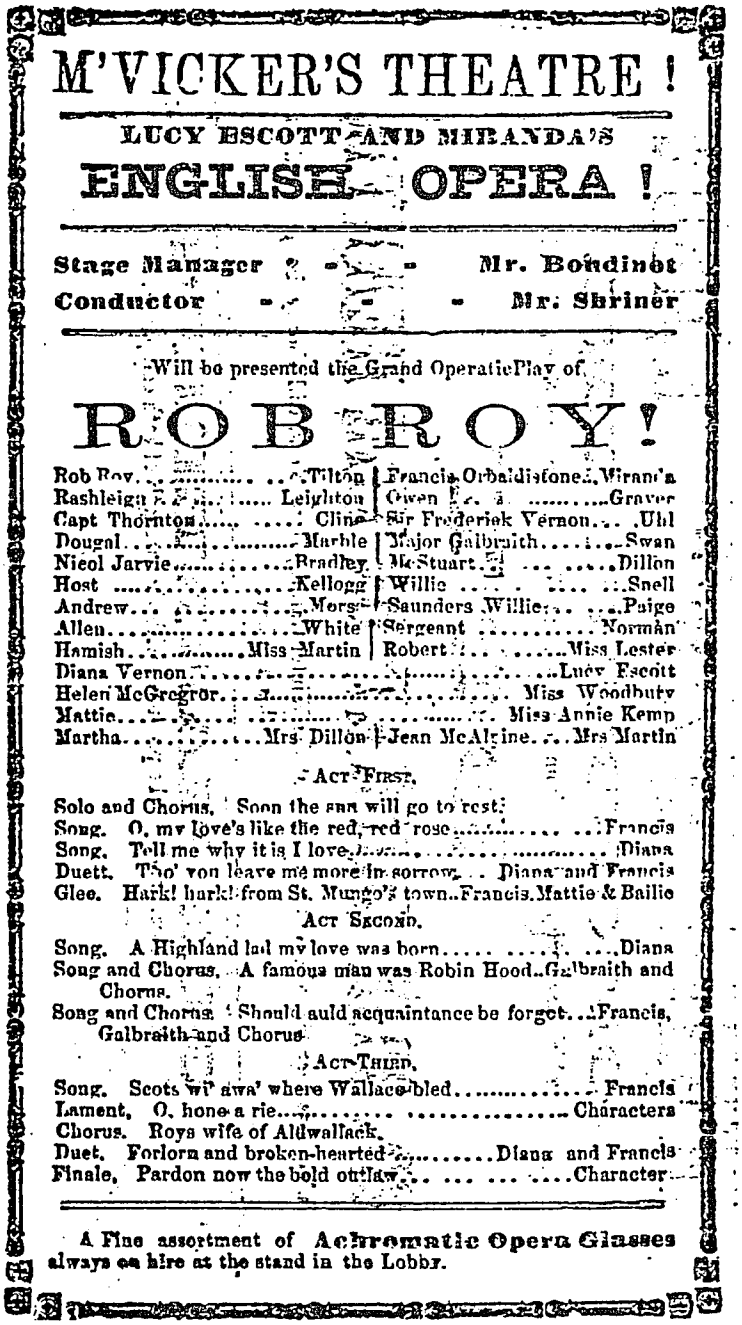
Even worse than being outclassed and ignored, however, were the overt attacks that the two English troupes suffered from some of the New York and Boston critics. At issue were not only the (woefully inadequate) resources the smaller troupes had at their disposal, but also the very operas they chose to perform. Critics in both cities, for example, took the Cooper company severely to task over its choice of repertory in the autumn of 1858. After opening in New York with the "inevitable" The Bohemian Girl, the singers quickly moved on to English versions of the currently popular Italian operas--Il Trovatore (the American première in English), Lucia di Lammermoor, Elisir d'Amore, and the (also inevitable)

La Sonnambula. Al of these, of course--with the exception of Il Trovatore--were well known to American opera audiences; all had been performed in the United States in English adaptations for years. By 1858, however, especially in the major cities on the East Coast, these operas (and many others) were also well known in their original Italian versions. And the English adaptations, as a result, did not sit well any more--at least with the critics.

The decision on the part of the Cooper Opera Company to perform a repertory of adapted Italian works, wrote the critic for the Spirit in September, "is altogether a mistake. No one wishes to see the Italian repertoire mauled, and it amounts to this and no more." Instead of translations of Italian operas, he suggested, it would make more sense for English companies to perform selections from German operas and "from the light works of the French school--works that are heard here only in English." (Spirit, 18 September 1858, 594) The company suffered from similar criticism when it appeared at the Howard Athenaeum in Boston later that same month. "English opera, as it is called, or the Italian opera in English, which it usually and actually is," wrote Dwight during the troupe's engagement,

> is such a queer compound of incongruous things, half serious, more than half burlesque, with ingredients variously proportioned of everything, from the almost sublime to the quite ridiculous, that it is difficult, almost impossible, to write about it seriously and earnestly.

Boston opera lovers, he continued, are now "accustomed . . . to the conventional recitative of the Italian stage." As a consequence, "no one can help smiling, at least, when the musical thread of the drama is so



M'VICKER'S THEATRE!

LUCY ESCOTT AND MIRANDA'S

ENGLISH OPERA!

Stage Manager - - - Mr. Bondinot

Conductor - - - - Mr. Shriner

Will be presented the Grand Operatic Play of

ROB ROY!

Rob Roy	Tilton	Francis Osbaldistone	Miranda
Rashleigh	Leighton	Owen	Graver
Capt Thornton	Cline	Sir Frederick Vernon	Uhl
Dougal	Marble	Major Galbraith	Swan
Nicol Jarvie	Bradley	McStuart	Dillon
Host	Kellogg	Willie	Snell
Andrew	Morse	Saunders Willie	Paige
Allen	White	Sergeant	Norman
Hamish	Miss Martin	Robert	Miss Lester
Diana Vernon			Lucy Escott
Helen McGregror			Miss Woodbury
Mattie			Miss Annie Kemp
Martha	Mrs Dillon	Jean McAlpine	Mrs Martin

Act First.

Solo and Chorus, Soon the sun will go to rest.
Song. O, my love's like the red, red rose.....Francis
Song. Tell me why it is I love.....Diana
Duett. Tho' you leave me more in sorrow...Diana and Francis
Glee. Hark! hark! from St. Mungo's town..Francis, Mattie & Bailie

Act Second.

Song. A Highland lad my love was born.....Diana
Song and Chorus. A famous man was Robin Hood..Galbraith and Chorus.
Song and Chorus. Should auld acquaintance be forget...Francis, Galbraith and Chorus

Act Third.

Song. Scots wi' awa' where Wallace bled.....Francis
Lament, O, hone a rie.....Characters
Chorus. Roys wife of Aldwallack.
Duet. Forlorn and broken-hearted.....Diana and Francis
Finale, Pardon now the bold outlaw.....Character

A Fine assortment of **Achromatic Opera Glasses** always on hire at the stand in the Lobby.

Undated playbill from a performance by the Escott and Miranda Opera Company at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago. Rob Roy, which is called a "Grand Operatic Play," was a throwback to the vocal-star repertory of earlier in the century.

harshly snapped by the intervention of the spoken dialogue." Many auditors, he continued, are not amused at all, but rather consider the "substitution of spoken dialogue in the English version, for the recitative of the Italian opera" to be nothing short of "ridiculous." (Dwight's, 25 September 1858, 207)

To a certain extent, this negative attitude towards translated opera--a performance style that, after all, had been seen on the American stage for decades--was musical in origin. As Dwight pointed out, East-Coast lovers of foreign-language opera had (by 1857 or 1858) ample opportunity to hear the repertory performed in its original language; to these auditors, the substitution of spoken dialogue for recitative must have seemed jarring. But many of the bon ton who supported Italian opera companies had an ulterior motive in considering "the substitution of spoken dialogue . . . for recitative" to be "ridiculous": sung recitative was part of the mystique that set "their" opera apart from standard theatrical fare. If the comments by the Spirit's critic (quoted above) are any indication, the supporters of foreign-language opera (fashionables and music-lovers alike) had made a great deal of progress by the late 1850s in their campaign to define foreign-language opera as the "correct" (fashionable) style, and translated versions of "their" repertory as vulgar, ridiculous, and fit only for the canaille.

The fate of these two troupes clearly indicates that in the late 1850s--at least in New York and Boston, where performances by large, polished troupes were no longer a rarity--English opera as mounted by a small company in a regular theatre, especially if done so in a rather

haphazard manner, was no longer satisfactory. Entirely aside from the issue of fashion was the reality that individuals who had attended performances by specialized companies now demanded much more; opera performance by inferior troupes with only two or four real singers was no longer acceptable.

The criticism leveled at the Cooper and Escott companies, however, was limited principally to Boston and New York--cities in which the performance of opera in Italian had become familiar. In marked contrast, elsewhere in the country audiences generally welcomed English opera companies with unreserved enthusiasm. Many music lovers outside of the Northeast were grateful for any kind of opera performances. Most had little experience with large polished opera companies, and as a consequence had little basis for comparison; they were both easier to please and less eager to criticize. The exception to this generalization, as usual, was New Orleans; although opera audiences in the Crescent City were quite experienced with the performance of opera in Italian, this familiarity did not diminish their enjoyment of Italian opera in English. As discussed in Chapter 3, this was the result of two factors: the unique position of opera in the cultural fabric of the city, and the fierce and long-lived rivalry between the French- and English-speaking segments of the population, each of which continued to support the performance of opera in its own tongue.

Because English troupes (like the Cooper and Escott companies) found themselves unwelcome and financially unsuccessful in major cities of the Northeast, they headed increasingly for the interior of the country in the

last few years of the decade, where they found a growing demand for opera performances. The enthusiastic reception given them in the interior, together with an expanded transportation system, made extended tours away from the big cities of the Northeast (and even away from the Ohio-Mississippi River system) both feasible and profitable. Consequently, both the Cooper and the Escott troupes, like the Pyne and Harrison company before them, expanded their itineraries to include cities not previously visited by opera companies. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the Cooper company gave what was advertised as the "first opera ever given in this city"--a performance of the English version of Il Trovatore, or The Gipsy's Vengeance! on 11 October 1858. (Playbill, Theatrical Programs, 1831-34, GA/MWA) In 1859 the Escott and Miranda Company visited Peoria, Illinois, much to the astonishment and delight of Peorians, who could scarcely believe that an opera troupe of any reputation whatsoever would "come to a place like ours"; they were delighted with the company's performances and acknowledged afterwards that the merit of the troupe "could no longer be questioned."[57] The following year, the Cooper Opera Company conducted a tour of New England that included performances in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut, Providence, Rhode Island, and Rochester and Albany, New York; although several of these towns already had enjoyed visits in the preceding years by opera companies (and numerous performances by operatic concert troupes), none could be considered to be on the beaten track during the 1850s.

Audiences in these towns, as mentioned, were much easier to please

57. Peoria Daily Transcript, 29 December 1859, quoted in Don Marine, "A History of Professional Stage Theatricals in Peoria, Illinois Before the Civil War" (unpublished dissertation, Tulane University, 1972), 180.

than were the more experienced and discriminating audiences of Boston and New York. In 1859, for example, the Cooper company visited Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Prior to their arrival the troupe claimed to be "the largest and most complete opera company that ever visited Milwaukee"--falsely, for the much-larger Arditi Company had performed there in November 1853. The English troupe also advertised that they would be assisted by a "complete orchestra and chorus." In fact, during this particular visit the company was quite pared down; they had a chorus of only three men and performed with an "orchestra" of one pianist and H. C. Cooper on the violin.[58] Nevertheless the Milwaukeans, although at first disappointed and angry because of the fraudulent advertising, attended the troupe's performances in large numbers. As a correspondent later wrote to the Musical World, the chorus, although small, "was really good," and the so-called orchestra "accompanied with much taste and effect." After city residents "got over the first deception," he reported, they "liked the company very well, as the full houses abundantly testified." (MW, 6 August 1859, 3) The impressions of a woman who heard the same company when they were in Detroit in 1859 may be typical of the reactions of other average citizens who lived in the American interior. A resident of Ann Arbor, she attended a performance of Il Trovatore while visiting Detroit. "Last evening I went to an Opera!" she wrote to a friend at home. She continued:

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58. The Cooper English Opera Company apparently fluctuated in size. For its visits to the West (including Detroit and Milwaukee) in 1858 and 1859, the company did not include a chorus; in 1860, however, the troupe was closer in size to the Pyne and Harrison Company and included at least the core of a chorus. See Teal, Appendix C, note 190; playbills, Baltimore Holliday Street Theatre, 14 February 1860, HTC; BMT, 10 March 1860, 41.

WORCESTER THEATRE

FIRST OPERA EVER GIVEN IN THIS CITY.

FOR

ONE NIGHT ONLY, POSITIVELY.

H. C. COOPER'S ENGLISH OPERA TROUPE

ANNIE MILNER - - PRIMA DONNA.

Mr. Cooper having been urgently requested to inaugurate in Worcester, this the most delightful amusement of the age, begs respectfully to intimate that it is impossible to give *more than one* performance, which will take place on

MONDAY EVE'G, OCT. 11,

With all the celebrated Artistes, so recently crowned with success in New York and Boston, when will be given the English Version of Verdi's Great Work, the

TROVATORE

ANNIE MILNER,
MRS. HOLMAN,
D. MIRANDA,
C. GUILMETTE,
F. RUDOLPHSEN,
GEO. HOLMAN.

MONDAY EVE'G, Oct. 11th, for the first and only time, the English Version of Verdi's

IL TROVATORE!

OR, THE GIPSY'S VENGEANCE!

Leonora.....Miss Annie Milner
Azucena.....Mrs Holman
Ines.....Mrs Rosenthal
Manrico, (as played by him with tremendous success at the Drury Lane Theatre), Mr Miranda
Count di Luna.....C. Guilmette
Ferrando.....F. Rudolphsen

EPOCH OF THE ACTION, 1409.

ACT FIRST.—THE DUEL.

The Count di Luna is deeply enamored of Leonora, his jealous fears are aroused by hearing the sound of a serenade under the window of Leonora; in the darkness she stumbles against the Count supposing him to be her lover; Manrico appearing, accuses her of infidelity; the Count is furious, demands the name of the intruder, and defies him to single combat; many years before, the younger brother of the Count was supposed to be poisoned by a Gipsy woman; she was pursued, captured and burned at the stake—she died imploring her daughter to avenge her; the daughter stole the child of the Count, and though pursued, could not be found, but in the burning embers which consumed the Gipsy were discovered the half burned bones of a child.

ACT SECOND.—THE GIPSY.

The Camp of the Gipsys—Manrico still weak from his encounter with the Count; Azucena, his supposed mother, relates the foregoing story of which she was one of the Chief actors—'Returning from the scene she met the child of the Count; clutching both children she rushed to the still burning pile and cast the child into the flames, becoming calm, she turned to her own child and found the son of the Count; —she had sacrificed her own son to revenge her mother.' Manrico now hears that he is believed dead to Leonora, who, in deep sorrow, is about to take the veil; the Count attempting to bear Leonora away by force is frustrated by Manrico, who, supported by his friends, bears her triumphantly with him.

ACT THIRD.—THE GIPSY SON.

The third act opens in the camp of the Count—Azucena is dragged in by soldiers who think her a spy; Ferrando recognizes her as the daughter of the burned Gipsey; she is threatened with death and calls on her son Manrico for help; the Count orders the stake for her execution to be erected in sight of Manrico, who hastens from the arms of Leonora to his mother's rescue.

ACT FOURTH.—THE PUNISHMENT.

Manrico and his mother are condemned to death; Leonora seeks the palace determined to save her lover; she offers her hand to the Count in exchange for Manrico's freedom; Leonora hastens to inform Manrico who rejects the proposal; she informs him that, determined to free him she had taken poison, after having accepted the Count; the Count finding Leonora dead, orders the execution of Manrico; Azucena rushes to the window exclaiming "Which thou hast slain thy brother! Oh, mother thou art indeed revenged!"

H. C. COOPER, - - Conductor and Musical Director.

Playbill from a production billed as the "First Opera Ever Given" in Worcester, Massachusetts. Cooper English Opera Company, 11 October 1858.

> I was delighted, and what is more strange, not disappointed. Of course, it was on a small scale--but I could imagine how it might be in perfection, and it opened a new world to me-- . . . I was delighted and entranced . . . it was like a story!

Although Verdi's music was new to the letter-writer, she judged it to be "very fine." She planned to attend another performance that evening, of The Child of the Regiment, and anticipated this performance with delight. Donizetti's work, she confided, "will be the more interesting, as I have heard much of the music." (Quoted in Teal Appendix C, note 190) Finally, even in Cincinnati--hardly an operatic or theatrical backwater--audiences were inclined to appreciate a company's performances despite its drawbacks. A critic for the Enquirer, writing in 1858 about a performance by the Cooper company, for example, complained gently that one of the operas in the troupe's repertory, La Sonnambula, was "rather old-hackneyed, one might say." He was quick to add, however, that "we are too happy to get any opera to quarrel about its age." (27 December 1858, quoted in Wolz, 73)

In some cities away from the Northeast, audiences clearly preferred English opera over Italian even when both were readily available. In 1859, audiences in Montreal and Toronto heard performances by two troupes, the Parodi Italian Opera Company and the Cooper English Opera Company--and the latter was clearly the more successful of the two. In Toronto (a city that was not unfamiliar with Italian opera), a performance by Parodi of La Traviata attracted but a meagre audience to the Lyceum Theatre in August 1859. In contrast, three months later the Cooper company mounted an English-language version of the same work, and attracted overflowing

houses. (Cooper, 124-133) The Cooper troupe, in fact, dominated the operatic "market" in both that city and in Montreal from 1858 through 1860, despite several visits by the Parodi company. As Dorith Cooper concluded in her study of opera performance in those two Canadian cities,

> The Coopers' enormous success, especially in Toronto, indicated that Italian grand opera rendered in English could indeed draw a large audience, and was therefore an increasingly important factor which purely Italian ensembles (such as Parodi's) had to bear in mind. (Cooper, 133)

As discussed in Chapter 3, in the late 1850s--and into the 1860s and later--more and larger Italian troupes followed in the footsteps of the English companies (and of Italian troupes like the Arditi Company of 1853 and 1854), and expanded their itineraries to encompass all parts of the country. As larger and more polished Italian companies visited more and more American cities and towns, opera audiences even in the hinterland became more discriminating and demanding. But at the same time that Italian troupes were reaching out for audiences all over the country, English companies were growing larger and more polished. In spite of the inroads made by the Italians, then, there continued to be a large audience for opera in English in North America. By the late 1850s, in fact, this audience was growing--fueled both by the efforts of Louisa Pyne and William Harrison to establish English opera at Covent Garden in London, and by a backlash against Italian opera--which, as the decade wore one, became more firmly entrenched in the American mind as entertainment for the wealthy.

The English opera companies that toured North America in the 1850s, although somewhat overshadowed by their Italian competitors, eventually had a long-range impact on the performance of opera in the United States. On the foundations laid by these troupes was erected a substantial English opera movement in the United States--a movement that espoused "opera for the people," that featured fabulously successful companies headed by such American prima donnas as Emma Abbott and Clara Louise Kellogg, and that constituted an important aspect of American opera production during the second half of the nineteenth century.

TABLE 19: ENGLISH OPERA COMPANIES, 1847-1860

1847

SEGUIN OC (1)		**ANNA BISHOP OC (2)**			
Montreal	Aug-	NY (Park)	4-18 Aug		
	-Sept	Boston	26 Aug- -10? Sept	**MANVERS OC (3)**	
Phila	11-26 Oct	NY (Park)	21 Oct-	NY (Park)	4-5 Oct
Boston (Athen)	4 Nov- -19 Nov		-6 Nov	Albany (cncrt)	21 Oct
		Boston (Fed)	?- -18 Nov	Michigan	when?
		Phila (Wal)	22 Nov- -7 Dec		
		NY (B'way)	13-24 Dec		
New York	26 Dec (con)	Phila (Wal)	27 Dec-		

1848

where?	Jan-		-6 Jan		
		Charleston	12-24 Jan		
		(cons)	28-29 Jan		
		Savannah	31 Jan- -5 Feb		
	-Feb	NO (St. (Charles)	14 Feb- -2 Mar		
Richmond	17-31 Mar	Mobile	6-21 Mar		
Petersburg	early Ap? (1 con)				
NY (Bowery)	13 Ap- -7 May	New Orleans	May		
Balto (Holli)	May ?- -10? June				
SEGUIN OC (6)		**ANNA BISHOP OC (4)**		**MANVERS OC (5)**	
		New York	July	NY (Astor)	? 18 July
Phila (Wal)	25 Sept- -12 Oct				
NY (B'way)	11-21? Oct	NY (Park) (scenes)	4-28 Oct		
Phila (Wal)	26? Nov	Phila (Arch)	31 Oct- -8 Nov (scenes)	Cincinnati	6 Nov?
Charleston	7-16 Dec	New York	23, 27 Dec, (cons)	NO	Dec?
Savannah	18-30 Dec		early Jan		

1849

Charleston	1-6 Jan	Boston	Dec- -6? Jan		
Richmond	23 Jan- -6 Feb	(Phila	17 Jan, 3 Feb	NO (St. Charles)	29 Jan- -4 Feb
where?	Feb-Mar	(Charleston	6-24 Mar.		
NY (B'way)	26 Mar- -17 Ap	Probably error by Hoole)		St. Louis	Ap? (cons)
Phila (Wal)	23 Ap-			Cincinnati (Melodeon)	18-27 Ap (cons)

1849 (cont)

SEGUIN OC (cont)

Boston
(Athen) 4?-8 June
[Phila
(Barnum) 20 May-15 June]

SEGUIN OC (7)
Phila (Wal) 18-29? Aug
Phila (Wal) 1-13? Oct
Baltimore 22-26 Oct
NY (B'way) 12-24 Nov
Phila (Wal) 26 Nov-
-8 Dec
Charleston? Dec?

1850

Boston 7-? Jan
NY Feb
Balto (Holli) 4-26 Mar
Providence Ap

SEGUIN OC (10)
Albany July-
-Aug
where? Sept-
-Oct?
NY Nov-
-Jan

1851

Phila
(Barnum) 10 Feb-
-1 Mar
Balto (Holli) 7-15 Mar
St. Louis
(Bates) 14 Ap-
-3 May
Louisville 12-28 May
Cincinnati
(National) 2-21 June

ANNA BISHOP OC (cont)
-5 May

UNKNOWN OC (9)
Savannah ?-
-21 Mar

ANNA BISHOP OC (11)
Charleston July (cons?)
NY (Astor) 20-23 Aug
NY (B'way) 2-12? Sept
Michigan when?
Phila (Wal) Feb
Charleston Ap-
-May
Chicago Aug (cons)

MANVERS OC (cont)

Pittsburgh 14-18? May

MANVERS OC (8)
Richmond Nov
Petersburg Dec
(operatic soirees)
where? late Dec
Savannah 31 Dec-
-11 Jan
where? NO? Jan-
-Feb
Mobile Feb (operatic entertainments)
where? Mar-
-Ap
St. Louis 27 May-
-8 June
Milwaukee July
Chicago 29 July

MANVERS OC (12)
Buffalo
(Eagle St) 2-7 Sept
Pittsburgh? 26 Nov-
-18 Dec

UNKNOWN OC (13)
Milwaukee Dec-
-Jan
Chicago 24 Feb-
-8 Mar

1851 (cont)

SEGUIN OC (16)
Boston
(Athen) 27 Oct-
-1 Nov

Phila (Wal) 1-6? Dec
Washington 8 Dec-

ANNA BISHOP OC (15)
Newark 22 Oct (con)
NY Oct-
-Dec (cons)

ANNA THILLON OC (14)
NY (Niblos) 18 Sept-
-18? Oct
Phila (Ches) 22 Oct-
-15? Nov
Balto (Holli) 17-22? Nov
where? early Dec
Boston
(Athen) 24 Dec-

1852

-Jan? Balto (Holli) 10-22 Jan

Phila Feb?
where? late Feb-
-Mar
Balto (Holli) 22 Mar-
-2? Ap
Washington 5?-16? Ap
Phila (Wal) 22 May- ?
NY (B'way) 7-19? June

vacation July-
-Aug

CARNCROSS OC (21)
Columbus, Ga Sept

CAROLINE RICHINGS OC (22)
Phila (Wal) 25 Oct-
-6 Nov

NY (B'way) 13-24 Dec

ANNA BISHOP OC (23)
NY (Niblo's) 1 Nov-
-2 Dec
Phila (Wal) 6 Dec

Columbus, Ga May
Charleston June (cons)
Philadelphia June cons?

-11 Feb
Phila (Ches) Feb-
-5? Mar
NY (Niblos) 15 Mar-
-9 June

ANNA THILLON OC (20)
Michigan 16 July con

NY (NY
Theatre) 30 Aug-
-? Sept
NY (Niblos) 8-16 Sept

Boston
(Athen) 18 Oct-
-26 Nov
NY (Niblo's) 6-21 Dec
Phila 29 Dec?

RICHINGS OC (17)
Phila (Wal) 9-21 Feb

UNKNOWN OC (18)
Baltimore 16-18 Feb

UNKNOWN OC (19)
Phila (Ches) 5 Ap-
-5 June

1853

RICHINGS OC (cont)
Phila (Wal) Jan?
on tour (cons?)

UNKNOWN OC (24)
Boston
(Athen) Jan

BRAHAM'S OC (25)
Baltimore Feb-
-Mar

DUMBOLTON'S OC (27)
Michigan when?

RICHINGS OC (28)
Boston Oct

Cleveland
(Foster) 16 Dec

ANNA BISHOP OC (cont)
Balto Jan

Washington Feb (2 cons)

Charleston Ap (cons)
Richmond late Ap (cons)

Augusta Ap-May (cons)
Savannah May (cons)

NY (Niblos) 15, 17 Nov

ANNA BISHOP OC (29)

Phila (Wal) 6?-29? Dec

1854

SF (Metro) arrive 2 Feb
7 Feb (con)

NO (St.
Charles) ?- 26 Feb-
-? Mar
Mobile Mar?
Memphis? when?
St. Louis
(Varieties) 23? Mar-
-7? Ap
Cincinnati
(Bates) 18-30 Ap
Pittsburgh 6-11? May

ANNA THILLON OC (26)
NY (Niblo) 6 July-
-2 Sept

Boston
(Athen) 3-26 Oct

SF (Metro) 16? Jan-

1854 (cont)

RICHINGS OC (cont)
Cincinnati 20-25 Feb

Detroit 22? May-
-3? June

DE MARGUERITES OC (30)
Phila (Ches) 12-14 June

PYNE & HARRISON OC (31)
NY (B'way) 9 Oct-
-28 Oct
Phila (Wal) 30 Oct-
-18 Nov
NY (B'way) 20-23 Nov
Boston 27 Nov-
-16 Dec
NY (B'way) 18 Dec-

1855

-17 Feb
Phila 19? Feb-

-18 Mar
NY (Niblo) 2, 9 Ap (cons)
NY
(Brooklyn) 5, 10 Ap (cons)
Boston
(Theatre) 16 Ap-

-5 May
Providence May?

ANNA BISHOP OC (cont)

30 Ap-

(gave 10
seasons)

-Nov

ANNA BISHOP OC (35)
SF (Metro) Jan-

-3 Jan
Charleston 16-20 Jan

METROPOLITAN OC (37)
Chi (Warner
Hall) 19?-24? Feb
DURAND OC (38)
Balto (Holli) 26 Mar-

-27 Ap

ANNA THILLON OC (cont)
-? Ap 16
hinterland Ap-
-May (cons)
SF (Metro) ? -26? May

mountains June (cons)
NY (Niblos) 4 July-
-8 Aug

NAU OC (33)
NY (Niblo's) 20 Nov-

RICHINGS OC (32)
Chicago 2 Oct
(operatic con)

Cincinnati 26 Feb-
-9 Mar

BARILI-THORNE OC (34)
SF (Metro) Nov-

-Dec

WARDEN'S OC (36)
Louisville 2-19 Jan

1855 (cont)

PYNE & HARRISON OC (39)
NY (Niblo's) 23 May-
-3 Nov
Providence 12?-16? Nov
Boston 15 Nov (con)
NY 17 Nov (con)
Balto (Holli) 19 Nov-
-29 Nov
Phila 30 Nov (con)
Pittsburgh 3-7 Dec
Cinti
(National) 11 Dec-
-29 Dec
Louisville 31 Dec-

1856

-5 Jan
NO (St.
Charles) 24 Jan-
-8 Feb
Mobile 12, 14, 15,
18 Feb
NO (Gaiety) 20-22, 24 Feb
St. Louis 10 Mar-
-31 Mar
Louisville 2-3 Ap (cons)
Cincinnati 4 Ap (con)
Balto 9 Ap
Washington 14-19 Ap
Richmond 21-29 Ap
Washington 30 Ap-3 May
Balto (Holli) 5-17 May
Washington 19-23 May
NY (Niblos) 26, 28 May (cons)
Montreal June

ANNA BISHOP OC (cont)

To Australia Aug 1855

ANNA BISHOP OC (41)
Sydney Dec

DURAND OC (cont)

Phila (City
Museum) 11-29? June

DURAND OC (40)
NY (Burton) Oct

AMERICAN OC (42)
Phila (Mscl
Fund) Ap (con)
RICHINGS OC (43)
St. Louis 22 May 1856

1856 (cont)

PYNE & HARRISON OC (44)

Detroit	11-16? Aug
Chicago	18, 27 Aug (cons)
Buffalo	17 Sept (con)
Boston (Athen)	Oct? Nov?
New Beford	Nov?
NY	15 Nov con
Washington	10-14 Nov
Balto (Holli)	17 Nov--1? Dec
NY (Niblos)	15 Dec-

DURAND OC (45)

NO (Gaiety)	Nov ? Dec
St. Louis (People's)	2-14 Feb

KNEASS OC (46)

Michigan	1856 or 1857 when?

1857

Richmond	23? -28 Feb
Pittsburgh	9-14 Mar
NY (Burton)	14 Ap-1 May cons on 1, 7 May
Boston (Music Hall) (farewell con)	18 May

DURAND OC (47)

Richmond	June
Baltimore	8-24 June
Phila (National)	29 June--4 July
Detroit	7? -12? Sept
Cincinnati	10 Oct
Richmond	1 Nov

ST. JOHN'S OC (48)

Savannah	19-20 June

1858

COOPER OC (49)

Louisville	10-15 Jan
Savannah	4-16 Jan
Charleston	18 Jan--6 Feb

RICHINGS OC (50)

Phila (Wal)	8 Jan-

1858 (cont)

COOPER OC (cont)

Washington? 10 June-?

COOPER OC (52)

NY
(Wallack's) 6-18 Sept
Boston
(Athen) 20 Sept-
-10 Oct
Worcester 11 Oct

Detroit 15-19 Nov
St. Louis 29 Nov-
-11 Dec
Cincinnati 27 Dec-
-4 Jan

1859

where? Jan-Feb-
-Mar

Louisville 22 Mar-
-1 Ap

COOPER OC (cont)

Macon, GA 24 Feb
Columbus,
GA 12-24 Mar
3-19 Ap
Nashville 29 Ap-?
Cincinnati 17-29 May
Louisville 31 May-
-12 June

NEW ORLEANS OC (51)

St. Louis 30 June-
-7 July
? 16-28 Aug
Louisville 30 Aug-
-11 Sept

Chicago
(McVicker) 27 Sept-
-8 Oct

Pittsburgh 13-27 Oct
Richmond 1 Nov-?

Savannah 6 Dec-
-24 Dec
where? NO? late Dec-
-Jan

Columbus, Ga 9-10 Jan
Savannah 28 Jan-
-22 Feb
Charleston 28 Feb-
-8 Mar
Phila
(New Wal) 21 Mar-
-2 Ap

RICHINGS OC (cont)

-5 Mar

ESCOTT OC (53)

NY (Burton) 4-9 Oct (6 perf)

Hartford, CT Nov

1859 (cont)

COOPER OC (cont)

Chicago (National)	11-23 Ap
Detroit	25? Ap--7? May
Pittsburgh	23-31 May
Canada?	June?
Detroit	July (6 perf)
Chicago (Metro)	11-17 July
Milwaukee	18-23? July
Cincinnati	1-14 Aug

LYSTER GRAND ITALIAN OC (54)

Sailed for Calif	Ap
SF (McGuire)	12-17 June, 9, 14 July,
	Aug-

COOPER OC (55)

Pittsburgh	30 Aug--10 Sept
Toronto	early Oct
Montreal	17? Oct-1 Nov
Buffalo	Dec
-Dec	
Pittsburgh	27-31 Dec

Stockton, CA	26 Oct--3 Nov

ANNA BISHOP OC (56)

return to US	Aug [check this]
NY	Sept (cons)
Newark, NJ	21, 23 Oct; 7, 8, 21 Nov
Worcester	16 Dec (con)

ESCOTT & MIRANDA OC (57)

Newark	2 Nov
Buffalo	21? Nov
Detroit (Metro)	late Nov
Chi (McVicker)	5-17 Dec
Peoria	26-31 Dec

RICHINGS OC (58)

Buffalo	?-18 Nov
Cincinnati	21-24 Nov
Pittsburgh?	Nov-
Balto (Holli)	12-31 Dec

1860

where?	Jan
Balto (Holli)	13-14 Feb
Phila (Academy)	16? Feb--3 Mar
Hartford	pre-10 Mar (1 perf)
New Haven	Mar (2 perfs)
Boston (Museum)	5-17 Mar

Savannah	Feb
Texas	Feb-Mar?

Cincinnati	9 Jan (1 perf)
Cincinnati	2 Feb--18 Feb

where?	Jan--Mar

COOPER OC (cont)

Providence (Pine St)	19-23? Mar
Boston	24 Mar
Albany	26 Mar?-7? April
Montreal	9? Ap-
Toronto	? -19 May
Rochester	22-26? May
Albany	28?-30? May

ANNA BISHOP OC (cont)

St. Louis	24-25

RICHINGS OC (cont)

Memphis	April (con?)
Louisville	Apr
Cincinnati	30 Apr--7 May

Louisville	Ap
Cincinnati	30 Ap--7 May

NOTES TO TABLE 19: ENGLISH OPERA COMPANIES, 1847-1860

(1) SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

In May: "Mr. Reeves, late of the Bishop company, has joined the Seguins." Literary Excelsior, 27 May 1848.

Sources: Montreal: Spirit, 4 September 1847, 332; Cooper, 56-58; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Literary Excelsior, 30 October 1847; Armstrong, 47; **Boston:** Spirit, 6 November 1847, 440; Playbills, Boston Athenaeum, 4, 12, 19 November 1847, TC/NN; Literary Excelsior, 13 November 1847; playbill, Boston Athenaeum, 5 November 1847, GA/MWA; **New York:** Odell, V:314; report of concert; April/May: V:350-351; Lawrence, 524; **Richmond:** Stoutamire, 179; Literary Excelsior, 25 March, 15 April 1848; Spirit, 18 March, 1 April 1848. Spirit says that the last night was 23 March, but Mrs. Seguin gave a concert on that date. Stoutamire says last night was 31 March; **Petersburg:** Literary Excelsior, 15 April 1848; **Baltimore:** Spirit, 3 June 1848, 180; Literary Excelsior, 10 June 1848.

(2) ANNA BISHOP ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

Bishop's departure from England is reported in the Spirit on 12 June 1847. About her own travels, Bishop told Seilhamer: "After leaving the Park, I made a tour of the country, appearing in all the principal cities, both in concert and opera. For several years I repeated my visits to the chief towns annually, and even extended my journeyings to Havana and Mexico, and finally to California. From California I was induced to visit the Australian colonies." See Seilhamer, 1881.

Sources: New York: Spirit, 12 June, 17, 24, 31 July, 7, 14, 21 August 1847; Odell, V:321-322; Odell, V:324-325; Spirit, 16, 23, 30 October, 6 November 1847; Literary Excelsior, 23, 30 October, 13 November 1847. Third engagement: Odell, V:336; playbills, Broadway Theatre (New York), 13, 14, 16, 18, 20-23, 25? December 1847, Bishop Collection, MB; Spirit, 18, 25 December 1847, 1 January 1848; Lawrence, 470, 473; **Boston:** Playbill, Howard Athenaeum (Boston), 26 August 1847, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 31 August 1847, Rare Books, MB; Clapp, 451; Spirit, 4, 18 September 1847; Boston Musical Gazette, 13 September 1847, 134; Second engagement: playbills, Federal Street Theatre (Boston), 17-18 November 1847, Rare Books, MB; Spirit, 20 November 1847, 464; **Philadelphia:** Wilson; Spirit, 4 December 1847; Armstrong, 57; Curtis, vol. 2, 386. Second visit: playbills, Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), 27-31 December 1847, 1, 3-6 January 1848; Armstrong, 57; Curtis, vol. 2, 386; Spirit, 8 January 1848; **Charleston:** Hoole, 52, 126; playbills, Charleston Theatre, 12-14, 17-18, 21 (concert), 22, 24, 28-29 January 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Spirit, 5 February 1848; **Savannah:** Green, 429; playbills, Savannah Theatre, 31 January, 1, 3, 5 February 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; **New Orleans:** playbills, St. Charles Theatre, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21, 23-24, 28-29 February, 2 March 1848, Bishop Collection, MB; Spirit, 26 February 1848; Literary Excelsior, 18 March 1848; **Mobile:** Bailey, 104; playbills, Mobile Theatre, 6-7, 9-11, 13-15, 17-18, 20-21 March 1848, Bishop Collection, MB.

(3) MANVERS OPERA COMPANY

In Toronto, the company gave "operatic soirées." See also Note 18 in Table 18.

Sources: New York: Spirit, 19 October 1847, 392; Odell, V:324; Lawrence, 472-473; **Albany:** Spirit, 30 October 1847, 428; **Michigan:** Teal, Appendix C; **New Orleans:** Kendall, 269; **Toronto:** Cooper, 70.

(4) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

From the time of the break-up of the company until her return to NYC, Bishop, Bochsa, and Valtellina made their way north on a "concert tour," with Bishop presenting her "disembodied opera scenes" and Bochsa his "spectacular harp solos." (Lawrence, 524) On their return to NYC, Bishop was "added to the Park forces" and sang scenes from numerous operas to supplement the Park's dramatic fare. See Odell, V:413-414.

Sources: New York (arrival): Spirit, 5 August 1848, 288; Odell, V:413-414. NYC concert: Lawrence, 543-544; **Philadelphia:** Curtis, vol. 2, 416-417; **Charleston:** Hoole, 127 (probably a mistake).

(5) MANVERS ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

William Niblo rented the Astor Place Opera House for his summer campaign. This was the house troupe; it performed some operas, but was not really a company. In October the company was reported headed south to New Orleans for an engagement that was to commence in early December. See Spirit, 21 October 1848. In New Orleans the company consisted of Manvers, Brienti, and Brough. In Cincinnati the performances were "operatic entertainments," with no chorus and no orchestra (accompaniment was on the piano).

Sources: New York: Odell, V:385; **Cincinnati:** Spirit, 18 November 1848; Spirit, 12 May 1849, 144; Wolz, 56; **New Orleans:** Spirit, 21 October 1848; Playbills, St. Charles Theatre, 29 Jan-4 February 1849, Playbill Collection, Box 38 (New Orleans), HTC; **St. Louis:** Spirit, 12 May 1849, 144; **Pittsburgh:** Fletcher; **Mobile:** Duggar, 161.

(6) SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

In New York and Philadelphia in the spring the company produced Balfe's The Enchantress for long periods of time.

During this season the company included the following singers: **New York:** Reeves, Seguins, George Holman, Stephen Leach (NY debut), Mrs. H. Phillips, G. H. Andrews; **Charleston:** Holman, Reeves, Phillips, Leach. **New York** (Spring 1849): Leach, Holman, Reeves. **Philadelphia:** same.

Sources: Philadelphia: Wilson (terminal date is 7 October; Armstrong, 61 (terminal date is 12 October); Spirit, 7 October 1848, 396; Second engagement: Armstrong, 63; third engagement: Wilson; Armstrong, 62-63; Curtis, vol. 2; playbill, Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia), 24 April 1849, Theatre Division, PP; Spirit, 5 May 1849, 132; **New York:** Odell, V:419-420, 425- 426; Spirit, 21, 28 October 1848; 31 March 1849, 72; 7, 14, 21 April 1849; **Charleston:** Hoole, 127; **Savannah:** Green, 434; Dorman, 167; **Richmond:** Stoutamire, 179; **Boston:** playbill, Howard Athenaeum (Boston), 8 June 1849, Rare Books MB; **Philadelphia** (May-June): Curtis; there is nothing about this in either Armstrong or Wilson.

(7) SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

In mid-September the Message Bird reported that Brienti, Manvers, and the Seguins were back in New York City. According to Curtis, the Seguin company brought dancers to Philadelphia, at least on one of their trips. (See Curtis, vol. 2, 429.) Before the Baltimore engagement, the troupe gave several costume concerts at Carroll Hall of selections from The Barber of Seville and The Postillion of Lonjumeau. The company was reported in New York in February 1850, but there is no record of performances there, so they probably were just passing through. See Message Bird, 15 February 1850, 240. In Providence, the company reportedly performed at the Museum.

The troupe consisted of the following singers: **New York:** Rosa Jacques, Reeves, Seguins; **Baltimore:** Jacques, Seguin, Reeves; in March, add Meyer.

Sources: Philadelphia: Wilson; Message Bird, 15 October 1849, 103; 1 November 1849, 118; 1 December 1849, 151, 160; Curtis, vol. 2; **New York:** Odell, V:515-516; Spirit, 17 November 1849, 468; 24 November 1849; Saroni's, 24 November 1849, 100; 1 December 1849, 112; Message Bird, 15 September 1849, 64; **Charleston:** Saroni's, 22 December 1849, 148 (however, there is no mention in Hoole, so this is perhaps a mistake); **Boston:** Saroni's, 19 January 1850, 196; Message Bird, 1 January 1850, 185; **Baltimore:** Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 23 March 1850, Playbill Collection, Box 44 (Baltimore), HTC; Baltimore Olio, vol. 1/3, March 1850, 35; **Providence:** Spirit, 20 April 1850, 108.

(8) MANVERS ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

There was a report in mid-Sept that Brienti, Manvers, and Seguins were back in NYC, after which point Manvers and Brienti evidently left the Seguins. In November Saroni's reported that the "Manvers Company" was en route to Richmond, where they intended to give a "series of operatic representations"; the same periodical reported in December that the troupe was giving successful operatic soirees in Petersburg. In St. Louis the company, according to the playbills, was "Assisted by the Dramatic Corps and an Augmented Orchestra." This troupe gave the first operatic performance in Chicago on 29 July 1850; just before the second performance the theatre burned down. For a

description, see Davis, History of Opera in the American West, also Farwell/Darby, 169-170. By the Spring, the Leatis evidently had left the Manvers company, for they were reported performing in "costume concerts" in Toronto, 11-27 June 1850. See Cooper, 74.

The troupe consisted of the following singers: **Petersburg**: Manvers, Brienti, the Leatis; **St. Louis**: Brienti, Manvers, Giubilei.

Sources: **New York**: Message Bird, 15 September 1849, 64; **Richmond**: Saroni's, 24 November 1849, 100; **Petersburg**: Saroni's, 22 December 1849, 148; **Savannah**: Green, 438; Saroni's, 12 January 1850, 185; **Mobile**: Saroni's, 2 March 1850, 267; **St. Louis**: Playbills, St. Louis Theatre, 24 May, 27 May-8 June, Playbill Collection, Box 59 (St. Louis), HTC; Jennings, MS worklist, St. Louis; **Milwaukee**: Schleis, 38-39; **Chicago**: McVicker, 69; Davis, 36-37; Hackett, 16.

(9) UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY

The only source for this troupe is a playbill for the Savannah Theatre dated 21 March 1850, in the HTC.

(10) SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

The Message Bird reported in September that the troupe was giving operatic scenes in costume in Albany, NY. The same month, the Prompter's Whistle mentioned that they were about to disembark on a tour to the West. See Prompter's Whistle, 14 September 1850, 43. This report was premature, however, for both Seguin and Meyer performed in New York with Anna Bishop in a production of The Mount of Olives on 3 November 1850 and The Creation on 17 November 1850; they also appeared in a benefit performance on 10 December 1850 for T. D. Rice. Both of the Seguins also performed at the Broadway Theatre in late December and early January 1851 and at benefit for Brough on 23 January 1851. See Odell, VI:8, 68, 90-91;

The company included the following singers: **Philadelphia**: Seguins, Meyer, Bailey; Gardner; **Cincinnati**: Coad, Meyer, Bernard, Mehen; **Baltimore**: Seguin, Gardner, Bailey.

Sources: **Albany**: Message Bird, 1 September 1850, 446; **New York**: Odell, VI:8; **Philadelphia**: Wilson, Spirit, 1 March 1851, 24; Armstrong, 69; Curtis, vol. 2 (Curtis has terminal date of 1 March; Wilson has terminal date of 28 February); Message Bird, 15 April 1851, 45; **Baltimore**: Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; **St. Louis**: Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis; **Louisville**: Weisert, "Fashionable," 35-36; **Cincinnati**: Spirit, 14 June 1851, 204; Wolz, 60.

(11) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

Bishop was in Mexico during part of 1849 and 1850; the Baltimore Olio (March 1850, 35) and American Musical Review (May 1850, 36) reported her return to the United States in April 1850. She performed in Judith at the Astor Place House in August; business was not good, so the company moved to the Broadway Theatre in September. There she was assisted by Novelli, Mlle Adeline, Mueller, Beutler; they also performed scenes from operas. The Charleston performances were at Hibernian Hall.

Sources: **Charleston**: Baltimore Olio, July 1850, 83; 1851: Hoole, 57; **New York**: Odell, VI:2-3, 61-62; Saroni's, 31 August 1850, 578; **Michigan**: Teal, Appendix C; **Philadelphia**: Spirit, 8 February 1851, 612; **Chicago**: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 14.

(12) MANVERS OPERA COMPANY

The company in **Buffalo** consisted of Manvers, Brienti, and Giubelei.

Sources: **Buffalo**: Prompter's Whistle, 14 September 1850, 42; **Pittsburgh**: Fletcher.

(13) UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY

The Spirit reported that a company performed Cinderella every night for two weeks in Milwaukee. Another (the same?) company performed Cinderella and Rob Roy in Chicago slightly later. These may have been performances by theatrical stock companies.

Sources: **Milwaukee**: Spirit, 11 January 1851, 564. No information in Schleis; **Chicago**: Rice, Account book, 23.

(14) ANNA THILLON OPERA COMPANY

Thillon made her US debut at Niblo's on 18 September 1851 in a company that included M/M Holman, Meyer, Hudson, and Mary Taylor; it was directed by Claude Thillon, and Signor La Manna conducted. During this engagement (on 18 September 1851), she gave the American première (in English) of Auber's The Crown Diamonds, which (according to advertisements put out by Niblo), was written for Thillon. Her Philadelphia company included Hudson, Meyer. Saroni's mentions that in Boston she was "well supported by Mr. Hudson and the talented stock company of the Howard [Athenaeum]." See Saroni's, 27 December 1851, 125. At Niblo's from March through June, her company sang three times per week, alternating with the stock company. At Niblo's the troupe included Andrews, Moorehouse, Julia Daly, Wharton, Trevor, Roberts, Williams (presumably many from Niblo's stock). See Blair, 68.

Sources: New York: Odell, VI:163-164; Blair, 68, 74; Spirit, 20 September 1851, 372, 27 September, 384, 11 October, 408; March 1852: Saroni's, 28 February 1852, 261, 27 March 1852, 325, 17 April 1852, 373; AMR, April 1852 57; Spirit, 13 March 1852, 48, 20 March 1852, 60; 27 March, 72; 3 April, 84; 10 April, 96; 17 April, 108; 1, 15 May, 1 June 1852; Dwight's 1 May 1852, 28; Odell, VI:165-166; **Philadelphia:** Spirit, 1 November 1851, 444, 15 November 1851; Armstrong, 71; **Baltimore:** Playbill, Holliday St. Theatre (Baltimore), Playbill Collection, Box 44 (Baltimore), HTC; **Boston:** Spirit, 20 December 1851, 528, 10 January 1852, 564, 17 January, 576; Clapp, 461; Saroni's, 14 February 1852, 236, 244; playbills, Howard Athenaeum, 31 December 1851, 7 January, 11 February 1852, Rare Books, MB; playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 14 January 1852, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; Spirit, 21 February 1852, 1; AMR, February 1852, 25; **Chicago:** Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 19; **Detroit:** Teal, Appendix C

(15) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

The engagement in Georgia lasted one week. This tour was billed as a "Farewell Tour." According to Dwight's of 5 June 1852 Bishop had visited 30 or 40 towns and given 120 concerts. In Baltimore the troupe was reported to be comprised of Jacques, Braham, Strini, Leach, and Rudolf.

Sources: Newark: Kaufman, "Music in NJ;" **New York:** Odell VI:90-92; **Baltimore:** Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; **Columbus:** Mahan, 54; **Charleston:** Dwight's, 5 June 1852, 70; **Philadelphia:** Saroni's, 3 July 1852, 98; **Toronto:** Cooper, 92.

(16) SEGUIN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

The troupe performed in Philadelphia in May with the dancer Mad. Celeste. During June the Seguins were associated with the stock company at the Broadway Theatre in New York, jointly with Mad. Celeste. They were reported to be on vacation during the summer of 1852 in the Spirit (17 July 1852, 264 and 14 August 1852, 312). In the fall of 1852 Edward Seguin joined the stock company at Wallack's Theatre in New York as an actor and as primo buffo. He made his final appearance on 10 September, and died of consumption on 12 December 1852 at the age of 43. He had been sickly for some time. See Odell, VI:215, 217; Dwight's, 18 Sept 1852, 372.

In Boston the company included: Mr. Bishop; Mrs. Bailey; Julia Turnbull; Miss Price. By 1852: Bishop, Caroline Richings.

Sources: Boston: Spirit, 1 November 1851, 444; 8 November 1851; Carolyn White diary, vol. 3, MWA; playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 27 October 1851, Rare Books, MB; Clapp, 460; **Philadelphia:** Spirit, 29 November 1851, 492; Armstrong, 71; February 1852: Spirit, 28 February 1852, 14; May 1852: Armstrong, 72; **Washington:** Spirit, 29 November 1851, 492; 3 January 1852, 552. April, 1852: Spirit, 10 April 1852, 96; Saroni's, 17 April 1852, 374; **Baltimore:** Playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 24 March 1852, Playbill Collection, Box 44 (Baltimore), HTC; Spirit, 13 March 1852, 48, 3 April 1852, 84; Saroni's, 10 April 1852, 357; **New York:** Odell, VI:120; Spirit, 12 June 1852, 204 and 19 June 1852, 216; playbills, Broadway Theatre, 7, 14 [?] June 1852, Theatre Division, PP; playbills, Broadway Theatre, 18 June 1852, Opera Programs 1836- 1859, GA/MWA.

(17) CAROLINE RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

Caroline Richings (1827-1882), a British-born soprano, who was the adopted daughter of the veteran actor Peter Richings, made her operatic debut in Philadelphia on 9 February 1852 as Marie in The Daughter of the Regiment. She probably performed with the stock company of the Walnut Street Theatre, with which her stepfather was associated. She and her father later toured the country, performing in dramatic works and operas; this may have been an early version of such a troupe.

Sources: Wilson; Saroni's, 14 February 1852, 237; Bailey, AG.

(18) UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY

Source: Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore. The members of the troupe included: Bregel??, Braham, Strepel(?), Jacques, Leach. (Could this be the Seguin company, whose whereabouts in February 1852 are unknown?)

(19) UNKNOWN OPERA COMPANY

This might be the Seguin Company, which performed in Philadelphia during May 1852. The repertory looks like Seguin repertory. It included: Norma, Fra Diavolo; The Postillion of Longjumeau, La Sonnambula, Maritana, The Brewer of Preston, The Bohemian Girl, Don Pasquale, Masaniello, Cinderella, The Elixir of Love, The Marriage of Figaro, Der Freischütz, Zampa, and others.

Source: Wilson.

(20) ANNA THILLON OPERA COMPANY

During the fall of 1852, the company's schedule at Niblo's was "confused and sporadic." (Blair, 90) In December the schedule was more regular; they performed weekly, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

The company included: **New York**: Meyer, Leach, Lyster, Thillon, Hudson, Alleyne, Beutler, Mueller, Rea, G. Howard, Convers, Mrs. Convers, M. Nesbitt, others; **Boston**: Thillon, Hudson, Meyer. (Thillon as manager and director).

Sources: Michigan: Teal, Ap. C; **Chicago**: Upton, Vol. 1, 19; **New York**: Odell, VI:243-244; 239-240; Spirit, 4 September 1852, 348; Blair, 90; **Boston**: Dwight's, 30 October 1852, 31, 6 November, 39; Spirit, 23 October 1852, 421; 30 October, 444; 4 December, 499; **Philadelphia**: Armstrong, 75; **New Orleans**: Kendall, 281; Spirit, 26 February 1853, 24; **Mobile**: Spirit, 26 March 1853, 72; **Memphis**: Spirit, 19 March 1853, 60; **St. Louis**: Playbill, Varieties Theatre, 29 March, 7 April 1853, Playbill Collection, Box 57 (St. Louis), HTC; Spirit, 16 April 1853, 108; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 64. Spirit, 30 April 1853, 132; **Pittsburgh**: Fletcher.

(21) CARNCROSS OPERA COMPANY

This is a totally unknown opera company, reportedly consisting of three women and four men; they performed in English and Italian. Source: Mahan, 35-36.

(22) CAROLINE RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

In July the Spirit reports that Richings and his daughter succeeded "beyond their expectations" in their operatic representations. See Spirit, 9 July 1853, 252. Peter Richings had performed with the Seguins and with Anna Bishop.

The company in Philadelphia included: Richings, Miss E. Reed, Mr. T. Bishop, Mr. Rohr, Mr. Richings, A'Beckett, music director: Mr. Cunnington.

Sources: Philadelphia: Playbill, Walnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia), 25-28 October, 6 November 1853, Theatre Division, PP; Spirit, 9 July 1853, 252; **New York**: Odell, VI:200; **Philadelphia**: MW, 5 February 1853, 62.

(23) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

The formation of "Bishop's Opera Company" was much discussed during summer of 1852. As early as July 1852 Dwight's Journal noted that a company was being planned and would consist of Braham, the Seguins, Bishop, &c, &c; the whole troupe was to be under the direction of Bochsa.

In October Dwight's named the company: Rosa Jacques, Mrs. Barton Hill, Bishop, Signors Guidi, Leach, Strini, and Henry Phillips. The reviews of the first performances named Jacques, Guidi, Strini, Leach, Rudolph, Augustus Braham, La Manna, and Bochsa. The company gave the North American première of Flotow's Martha on 1 November 1852, in which Augustus Braham made his American operatic debut. By the time the troupe reached Baltimore, Guidi had left the ranks. In Washington, the singers were still referred to as "Bishop and her troupe," but evidently by now the company had disbanded. Musical World reported the dissolution of the company in its issue of 5 February 1853 (p. 82). After the troupe dissolved, Bishop and Bochsa embarked on a "concerting jaunt southward," (Spirit, 26 February 1853, 24); both the Spirit and the AMR covered her concertizing activities in Charleston, Richmond, Augusta, and Savannah. See Spirit, 9 April, 96; 23 April, 120; 30 April 1853, 132; AMR, May 1853, 75.

Sources: New York: Dwight's, 24 July 1852, 127; 2 Oct 1852, 206; Spirit, 2 October 1852, 396; 16 October, 420; 6 November, 456; 13 November, 468; 4 December, 504; Odell, VI:239-240; MW, 6 November 1852, 150; Blair, 94; **Philadelphia:** Armstrong, 75; **Baltimore:** MW, 22 January 1852, 59; **Washington:** Spirit, 19 February 1853, 3.

(24) UNKNOWN ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

This troupe performed The Bride of Lammermoor at the Athenaeum. Singers named: Mrs. Mowatt, Mr. W. R. Goodall. It probably was a theatrical company.

Source: Playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 7 January 1853, Playbill Collection, TC/NN.

(25) BRAHAM'S OPERA COMPANY

The Spirit reported in February 1853 that Braham's Opera Company "has been delighting the Batimoreans." The troupe included Rosa Jacques. By March, the company had disbanded.

Sources: Spirit, 26 February 1853, 24; 5 March 1853, 36.

(26) ANNA THILLON OPERA COMPANY

The New York company sang in the fall of 1853 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at Niblo's; the troupe included Thillon, Hudson, Maeder, Julia Miles, Leach, Martin, Lyster, H. Eytinge, Meyer, Rea, Russell, Frazer, La Manna. In Boston, the company included Frazer, Leach, Meyer, Hudson, Julia Miles, and others. Thillon performed at Niblo's in November 1853 with Leach, Hudson, and Maeder. Thillon left for California with Hudson via Nicaragua, arrived 31 December 1853. They attempted a tour of interior in May 1854 and failed. See FTP, vol. 7, 49-50. The company returned east in June 1854. The San Francisco engagement started 23 January 1854 (according to the Spirit, 18 February 1854); however, Chrono.SF says the third performance was on 20 January, which suggests that she started 16 January. Thillon performed at the Metropolitan Theatre in a series of engagements from January through April; in April and May she performed in the hinterland (Marysville, Grass Valley, Nevada, etc.). In NYC in July/Aug 1854, the company included Fred Lyster, Frazer, Meyer, Reynolds, Andrews, Maeder (Blair, 135).

Sources: New York: Odell, VI:243; Blair, 108 (says terminal date of season was 21 August); Spirit, 9 July, 252; 16 July, 264; 23 July, 276; 30 July, 288; 6 August, 13 August, 312; 20 August, 324; 3 September 1853, 348; AMR, August 1853, 122. November engagement: Odell, VI:315; Spirit, 12 November, 468; 19 November 1853, 480; AMR, December 1853, 186; July 1854: Odell, VI:316; Spirit, 7 July, 252; 15 July, 264; 22 July 1854, 276; Dwight's, 5 August 1854, 143; MW, 15 July 1854, 126; Blair, 135; **Boston:** Playbills, Howard Athenaeum, 10, 17, 26 October 1853, Opera Programs, 1836-1859, GA/MWA; Spirit, 8 October, 408; 22 October, 432; 29 October 1853, 335; **San Francisco:** Chrono.SF; MR&CA, 2 March 1854, 75; MW, 18 February 1854, 78; Spirit, 28 January, 589; 18 February, 7; 18 March, 55; 8 April, 92; 20 May, 159; 3 June, 185; 1 July 1854, 230; playbills: Metropolitan Theatre (San Francisco), 1, 24 February, 1, 8, 17, 21 March, 17, 19 May, Playbill Collection, box 8 (SF), HTC; Gaer; playbill, Metropolitan Theatre, 19 May 1854, Archives, CSfCP, San Francisco.

(27) DUMBOLTON'S OPERA COMPANY
Unknown opera company. **Source:** Teal, Appendix C.

(28) RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY
Sources: Boston: Spirit, 8 October 1853, 408; 29 October 1853, 435; **Cleveland:** Gerhard Gaiser, "The History of the Cleveland Theatre from Its Beginning to 1854" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Iowa, 1953); **Cincinnati:** Wolz, 67; **Detroit:** MW, 3 June, 50; 10 June 1854, 62.

(29) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY
Bishop travelled to California via Panama. In San Francisco, she started with concerts, but failed, for her prices were too extravagant even for California. The California correpondent to the Spirit (Stephen Massett?) wrote: "The great mistake which stars labor under in coming to California is, that every dream of the golden land must be realized--they anticipate too much at first, and learn a lesson by their disappointment." See Spirit, 18 March 1854, 55. Bishop's production at midsummer of Der Freischütz was called the "most outstanding event of 1854." (McMinn) The theatre featured an orchestra of 33; the musical director was Bochsa. The company included Bishop, Mengis, Julia Gould.

Sources: San Francisco: Waddington; FTP vol. 7, 41; McMinn, 403-406; playbills, American Theatre, 3 March 1854, Playbill Collection, box 6 (San Francisco), HTC; playbill, Metropolitan Theatre, 30 April, 7 May, 22 July, 25 November 1854, Playbill Collection, box 8 (San Francisco), HTC; Spirit, 18 March 1854, 55; 8 April 1854, 92; 3 June 1854, 185, 188; 1 July 1854, 230; 2 September 1854, 338; 4 November 1854, 446; 18 November 1854, 470; MW, 1 July 1854, 98; unpublished research notes, Robert Commanday, San Francisco.

(30) DE MARGUERITES ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY
Unknown company. According to Spirit, the troupe proved to be a failure and closed after its second performance. The members who were named included Madame de Marguerites, A. Gernville, Prof. Rohr, Mrs. King, E. Warden, Mrs. Altemus, and Severino Strini; musical conductor: Charles Mueller.

Sources: Curtis, vol. 2, 503; Sill vol. 10, 511; Spirit, 10 June, 204; 17 June, 216; 24 June 1854, 228; Armstrong, 78.

(31) PYNE AND HARRISON ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY
The company at the Broadway Theatre included Borrani, Harrison, L. Pyne, S. Pyne, and Reeves; other roles were filled by Broadway stock and some other singers; in Philadelphia the company included Borrani, Harrison, Meyer, Pynes, Reeves; stg mgr: Mr. Sefton. The troupe stopped in New York in November for four performances at the Broadway Theatre, en route from Philadelphia to Boston. The company at the Broadway (December 1854-February 1855) included Harrison, Borrani, Meyer, Reeves, and Whiting.

Sources: New York: Odell, VI:343-344; MR&CA, 3 August, 277; 12 October, 355; 26 October 1854, 371; MW, 14 October, 79; 21 October, 90; 28 October 1854, 102; Spirit, 14 October, 420; 21 October, 432; 28 October, 444; 4 November 1854, 456; Dwight's, 14 October 1854, 14. Second engagment: Odell, VI:344; Dwight's, 25 November 1854; MG, 25 November 1854, 17; Spirit, 18 November, 480; 25 November, 492. Third engagement: Odell, VI:345; MG, 30 December, 57; 6, 27 January 1855; MW, 23 December 1854, 202; Spirit, 23 December, 540; 30 December, 552; 6 January 1855, 564; 27 January, 600; Dwight's, 6 January 1855, 111; concerts: Odell, VI:415, 421; MG, 7 April 1855; MW, 14 April 1855, 170; **Philadelphia:** Dwight's, 4 November 1854, 37; MG, 18 November 1854, 9; MW, 18 November, 142; 25 November 1854, 154, 155; Armstrong, 79; Spirit, 25 November 1854. Second engagement: Armstrong, 84-85; MG, 10 March 1855; MW, 10 March 1855, 111; **Boston:** Playbills, Boston Theatre, 14-15 December 1854, Opera Programs, GA/MWA; playbills, Boston Theatre, 27 November-16 December 1854, Rare Books, MB; Dwight's, 9 December 1854, 78, 16 December 1854; MG, 25 November, 17; 2 December, 25; 9 December, 36; 16 December, 44; 23 December 1854, 51; MW, 9 December, 179; 16 December 1854, 190; Spirit, 2 December, 504; 16 December, 517; 23 December 1854, 535; Tompkins, 27-28. Second engagement: Dwight's, 21 April, 21; 5 May, 39; 19 May 1855, 55;

Playbills, Boston Theatre, 25 April, 2 May 1855, Playbill Collection, TC/NN; playbills, Boston Theatre, 17 April-5 May 1855, Rare Books, MB; NYMR&G, 19 May 1855, 165; MG, 28 April 1855, 197; Tompkins, 31; **Providence**: Charles Blake, An Historical Account of the Providence Stage: Being a Paper Read Before the Rhode Island Historical Society, October 25th, 1860. (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971; reprint of an 1868 publication), 261-263.

For further information on the Pyne and Harrison Company, see Chapter 6.

(32) RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

The Cincinnati engagement was mostly theatrical. Only two operatic works were performed.

Sources: Chicago: Upton, "Attractions"; John Rice Account Book, ICHi; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 69.

(33) NAU OPERA COMPANY

Also known as Niblo's English Opera Troupe. The troupe was brought to the United States by William Niblo to replace the Pyne and Harrison Company. Dolores Nau was a native of Baltimore; she was educated in France. The company consisted of A. St. Albyn (US debut), Eliza Brienti, Allan Irving, George Harrison (US debut), Horncastle; the conductor was Thomas Baker. The chorus was not very good; the orchestra, however, was reported to be good. The company went south under the direction of Mr. Corbyn (MG, 13 January 1855, 73). No mention of them after Charleston.

Sources: New York: Blair, 147; Odell, VI:380-381; MG, 11 November, 3; 25 November, 18-19; 9 December, 30 December 1854, 57; NYMR&G, 23 November, 402; 7 December, 419; 21 December 1854, 438; Spirit, 4 November, 456; 25 November, 492; 9 December, 516; 16 December 1854, 528; Dwight's, 4 November, 37; 25 November 1854; MW, 4 November, 114; 16 December, 190; 23 December 1854; **Charleston**: Hoole, 138; MG, 27 January 1855, 89;

(34) BARILI-THORNE OPERA COMPANY

Nothing more is known about this troupe. They may have sung in Italian. Emily Thorne returned to New York from California in October 1855, where she joined the stock company at Burton's Theatre.

Sources: Gaer; Odell, VI:432, 433.

(35) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

In March Bishop performed with the Barili-Thorne company in San Francisco. Her farewell concert there was on 27 August 1855, after which she sailed to Australia on 30 August 1855. She arrived in Sydney on 3 December 1855.

Sources: San Francisco: Playbill, Metropolitan Theatre, 16 January, 13 February, 8 March 1855, Playbill Collection, Box 8 (San Francisco), HTC; **Australia**: FTP, vol. 7, 43.

(36) WARDEN'S OPERA COMPANY

It is unclear whether this company performed operas, operatic concerts, or what. Mentioned in Weisert, "Mozart Hall."

(37) METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY

This is an unknown company. They performed for one week in Chicago.

Source: Robert Sherman, The Chicago Stage. Its Records and Achievements (Chicago, privately published, 1947), 81.

(38) DURAND ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

Also known as the Lyster and Durand English Opera Company. The troupe consisted of Rosalie Durand, Frederick Meyer, Miss Mary Gannon, Miss E. Morant, Mrs. G. H. Allen, Fred Lyster, Mr. Herbert. William H. Reeves was scheduled to replace James Frazer 7 April. Philadelphia company: Durand, Reeves, Lyster.

Sources: Baltimore: MW, 7 April, 159; 14 April, 178; 5 May 1855; **Philadelphia:** Armstrong, 84; Wilson.

(39) PYNE AND HARRISON OPERA COMPANY

The company had a triumphant summer season under the musical direction of George Bristow. They commenced with a falsely claimed American première of The Daughter of the Regiment ("from the original score"). The season's engagement also included performances of The Daughter of St. Mark (Balfe), Queen of a Day (Buckstone/Fitzwilliam), and Bristow's Rip van Winkle (première, 27 September), among other standard works. The company included Borrani, Horncastle, Holman, Stretton, Swan; the season lasted 125 nights.

Sources: New York: Odell, VI:381-382; 469-470; Dwight's, 2 June, 68; 6 October 1855, 6; MW, 3 November, 313; 10 November, 325; 16 June, 80; 23 June, 92; 30 June, 102; 11 August, 169; 25 August 1855, 15 September 1855, 29 September, 253; 13 October 1855, 278-279; NYMR&G, 19 May, 165; 2 June 1855, 177; **Providence:** MW, 17 November 1855, 337; **Boston:** Dwight's, 17 November 1855, 54; MW, 17 November 1855, 337; **New York** (concert): MW, 17 November 1855, 337; Odell, VI::508; **Baltimore:** Playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 19 November 1855, Playbill Collection, HTC; **Philadelphia** (concert): Dwight's, 8 December 1855, 76; **New Orleans:** Daily Picayune, 25 January 1856, 9 February 1856; **Mobile:** Mobile Daily Advertiser, 12-19 February 1856; **New York** (May): Odell, VI:505; **Montreal:** Dwight's, 21 June 1856, 95.

For the company's itinerary from 3 December 1855 through 23 May 1856, see Chapter 6.

(40) DURAND ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

Lyster and Durand were part of the stock company at Burton's in September 1855.

Sources: Odell, VI:431, 433; Dwight's, 27 October 1855, 28.

(41) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

Bishop and Bochsa reached Sydney, New South Wales, in December 1855; they reportedly were performing in Melbourne in June. Bochsa died in Sydney in January 1856.

Sources: Australia: FTP vol. 7, 43; Dwight's, 17 September 1856, 207; Walker, Verdi, 141.

(42) AMERICAN OPERA COMPANY

This is an unknown opera company, perhaps only a concert troupe. The members of the troupe included Miss Henriette Behrend; Mr. H. Millard; Mr. Borrani (from the Pyne and Harrison troupe).

Source: NYMR&G, 5 April 1856, 103.

(43) RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

Richings & Co. performed Daughter of the Regiment. How much of the troupe's repertory was dramatic and how much operatic is unknown.

Source: Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis.

(44) PYNE AND HARRISON OPERA COMPANY

According to Teal, the company gave a six-night season in Detroit, which was the longest held in that city up to that point. The company at Niblo's in December 1856 included Horncastle, Reeves, Guilamette, Harrison, Pynes, and Mrs. Reeves.

Sources: Detroit: MW, 30 August 1856, 405; Teal, Appendix C; **Chicago:** MW, 13 September 1856, 421; Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 35; Sherman, 305; **Buffalo:** NYMR&G, 20 September 1856, 290; **Boston:** MW, 1 November, 343; 22 November 1856, 625; **New Bedford:** MW, 22 November 1856, 625; **New York:** MW, 22 November 1856, 625; **Washington:** MW, 22 November 1856, 625; Kaufman, MS worklist, Washington; **Baltimore:** Musical World, 6 December 1856; Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; **New York:** Odell, VI:563; MW, 13 December, 697; 20

December 1856, 721; 17 January 1857, 35; NYMR&G, 27 December 1856, 403; Dwight's, 24 January, 132; 31 January, 141; Blair, 193; **Richmond**: Playbill, Richmond Theatre, 28 February 1857, Playbill Collection, Box 42 (Richmond), HTC; Stoutamire, 179; **Pittsburgh**: Fletcher; **New York** (April/May): Odell, VI:525, 598; Dwight's, 18 April, 21; 2 May 1857, 39; (according to Odell, the troupe gave concerts on 1 and 7 May; according to Blair, their final performance was on 1 May. See Blair, 204); **Boston**: Dwight's, 16 May 1857, 55; MW, 23 May 1857, 324.

(45) DURAND ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

Company included Durand, Hodson, Stretton, Frazer, Lyster, Trevor, Marie Duckworth. According to Tom Kaufman, the company (in St. Louis) consisted of the following performers: Durand; Hodson; Frazer; Trevor; Lyster; Stretton.

Sources: New Orleans: Playbill, Crisp's Gaiety Theatre, 14 November 1856, Playbill Collection, Box 36 (New Orleans), HTC; Dwight's, 20 December 1856, 95; Kendall, 365-366; **St. Louis**: Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis.

(46) KNEASS OPERA COMPANY

Source: Teal, Appendix C.

(47) DURAND OPERA COMPANY

This company also was known as Crisp's Opera Company (for Crisp's Gaiety Theatre in New Orleans), the New Orleans English Opera Company, and the Great English Opera Company. According to Kaufman, in Baltimore the troupe included Durand, Hodson, Trevor, and Lyster. The company performed in Detroit for "an unheard-of two-week opera season." (See Teal.) Hoole names the members of the troupe when performing in Charleston as Fred Lyster, H. Warton, Frank Trevor, Rosalie Durand, Ada King, Georgia Hodson, and Anthony Reiff. In Savannah the company included Hodson, Durand, Lyster, Trevor, F. B. Swan, and Reiff.

Sources: Richmond: Stoutamire; **Baltimore**: Kaufman, MS worklist, Baltimore; **Philadelphia**: Playbills, National Theatre (Philadelphia), 29 May-4 July 1857, Theatre Division, PP; **Detroit**: Teal, Appendix C; **Savannah**: Green, 510; **Charleston**: Hoole, 146; **Macon**: Steinhaus, 53; **Columbus**: Mahan, 37; **Nashville**: Francis Garvin Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville on the Eve of the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 142; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 239, 73; **Louisville**: Weisert, "Fashionable."

(48) ST. JOHN'S OPERA COMPANY

Unknown opera company, cited in Green, 504. No repertory or other information is available.

(49) COOPER OPERA COMPANY

Annie Milner, Perring, Giulmette, and Henry Cooper performed at Wallack's Theatre in New York in May 1858. The Musical World of 29 May 1858 mentioned a "new English Opera Company, organised by Dr. Guilmette of this city" that included Milner, Frazer, and Mr. Rudolpsohn. The periodical reported that they planned to open in Washington on 10 June 1858, followed by appearances in Baltimore, and New York. See MW, 29 May 1858, 337.

Sources: Louisville: Weisert, "Mozart Hall"; **New York**: Odell, VII:27.

(50) RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

(51) NEW ORLEANS ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

This is the Durand Opera Company, under another name. St. Louis: Jennings' terminal date is 6 July; Kaufman's is 7 July. In Savannah the troupe included J. Arnold, Boudinot, Lyster, F. R. Swan, (Upton has F. B. Swan), Trevor, G. H. Warrie, Rosalie Durand, G. Hodson, A. King. W. S. Lyster, manager; conductor: Reiff. The troupe consisted of many of the singers from the Pyne and Harrison Company. In Charleston the company included Hodson, Durand, Lyster, Trevor, and Reiff. Sherman erroneously has the terminal date as 9 October, which was a Sunday. The company sometimes was known as the Hodson and Durand English Opera Company (in addition to all the other names).

Sources: St. Louis: Jennings and Kaufman MS worklists, St. Louis; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 239; **Louisville**: Dwight's Journal, 19 June 1858, 96; Weisert, "Fashionable"; **Chicago**: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 51; Hackett, 42; Sherman, 396; **Pittsburgh**: Fletcher; **Richmond**: Stoutamire; **Savannah**: GAre, 511, 521; **Charleston**: Hoole, 149; **Philadelphia**: Playbill, New Walnut Street Theatre, 21 March-2 April 1859, Theatre Department, PP.

(52) COOPER OPERA COMPANY

By September the company had jelled, and was known as H. C. Cooper's Opera Troupe (at least according to Odell, who says that they "came in" to Wallack's Theatre in September). The artists included M/M Holman, D. Miranda (a new tenor), Annie Milner (Mrs. Cooper), Charles Guilmette, and F. Rudolphsohn; Cooper was the conductor. Dwight incorrectly claimed that the company was performing at Niblo's. According to Odell, the Ravels had sole possession of the latter theatre for all of September and October (Odell, VII:54). The troupe, at least by late December 1858, was also known as the Annie Milner Opera Company--they were identified as such in Cincinnati and Louisville. Wolz has the dates of their engagement in Cincinnati as 10 December 1858 through 4 January 1859; he says the company was made up of secondary singers drawn from the New York theatres. By April 1859 the troupe included in its ranks the following singers: Brookhouse Bowler, Ansley Cook, Annie Milner, Rudolphson, Andrews, Prof Hoffman (pianist), Miss C. T. Smith, Miss H. Payne, Miss J. Payne, Mr. Sobatzy, others (named in Upton); in Detroit, the company included: Cooper, Milner, Holman, Mrs. Holman, Fiske, Guilmette, Miranda, and Rudolphsen.

Sources: New York: Odell, VII:29; MW, 11 September, 580; 18 September 1858, 594; Dwight's, 4 September, 182-3; 18 September 1858, 197-199; **Boston**: Playbill, Howard Athenaeum, 27 September 1858, Brown Vertical File, Music Department, MB; Dwight's, 25 September 1858, 207; **Worcester**: Playbill, Worcester Theatre, 11 October 1858, Theatrical Programs, 1831-64, GA/MWA; **Montreal and Toronto**: Cooper, 133-137; **Detroit**: Teal, Appendix C; **St. Louis**: Jennings, MS worklist, St. Louis; Dwight's, 1 January 1859, 317; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 73, 240. Dwight's Journal, 1 January 1859, 317; **Louisville**: Weisert, "Mozart Hall"; **Chicago**: Sherman, 449; Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 57; **Detroit**: MW, 21 May 1859; Teal, note 190 and Appendix C; **Pittsburgh**: Fletcher; **Canada**: Teal, Appendix C ("after leaving Detroit in early May they embarked upon a Canadian tour and then returned to Detroit for six nights in July."); Cooper, 139; **Detroit**: Fletcher, Appendix C; **Chicago**: Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 59; Sherman, 452; **Milwaukee**: MW, 6 August 1859, 3; **Cincinnati**: Wolz, 83.

(53) ESCOTT ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

This company was named for the English soprano Lucy Escott. It first appeared in New York. Company (in NY) consisted of Lucy Escott, Miss White, Emma Heywood, Charles Durand, Henry Squires, Aynsley Cook, Hayes, and Gledhill. Most or all were new. Brookhouse Bowler made his US debut with the company on 6 October 1858. The company was a failure in New York. Escott performed variously in NYC in stock companies in May and June 1858. See Odell, VII:119, 152, 159, 194, 200

Sources: New York: Odell, VII:113-114; Dwight's, 4 September, 182; 9 October, 221, 223; 16 October 1858, 231; **Hartford**: Dwight's, 4 December 1858. Report from Hartford dated 27 November 1858.

(54) LYSTER GRAND ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY (DURAND OPERA COMPANY)

This was another name for the Durand Company. Under the name "Lyster Grand Italian Opera Company," the troupe left for California in April 1859. They were imported by Tom Maguire, a theatre manager in San Francisco, for performances at his Opera House. They gave four seasons during 1859. Dwight's reported in August that the company included Durand, Hodson, King, Lyster, Trevor, and Boudinot. Escott and Squires sailed for San Francisco in April 1860 to join them.

Sources: Departure for California: BMT, 7 April 1860, 63; **San Francisco**: Dwight's, 20 August

1859, 166; Gagey, 92; McMinn, 419; Commanday file; FTP, vol. 7, 13, 26; playbill, Maguire's Opera House, 26 July 1859, San Francisco History Room, CSf; **Stockton:** Noid, 226-227.

(55) COOPER ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

The Company included Annie Milner, Bowler, Rudolphsen, Cook, Cooper, others. The troupe in Baltimore (February 1860) included Arnold, Barton, Bowler, Boudinot, Cook, Collins, Cooper, Gillespie, Hurlie, Kemp, Mandeville, Milner, Mikens, Payne, and Warrie. The company's business agent was T. Allston Brown. In Philadelphia (February 1860) the troupe included Milner, Bowler, Cook, Boudinot, Warrie, Sudgen, Ryley; Miss H. Payne, Mrs Burroughs, Mr. Neale, and Mr. Bell; Cooper acted as the musical director. The company failed in Philadelphia.

In the fall of 1860, the company performed in Charleston in November, in front of "small, disinterested audiences," and the manager of the theatre curtailed the engagement. (Hoole, 63.) According to the BMT (3 November 1860), "Charleston, although said to be a musical city, is now under too much political excitement to prove a profitable place for amusements until after the election. I question whether the best stars in the musical world would attract here now." In Savannah in December Annie Milner inserted into a performance of Fra Diavolo a "southern call to arms," with "words adapted and respectfully dedicated to the MINUTE MEN OF THE SOUTH." See Playbill, Savannah Theatre, 15 December 1860, Box 20 (Savannah, Georgia), HTC.

Sources: Pittsburgh: Fletcher; **Montreal:** Wilkes's Spirit, 22 October 1859, 112; Cooper, 149-152; second engagement: BMT, 21 April 1860, 74; **Toronto:** Wilkes's Spirit, 22 October 1859, 112; **Buffalo:** MW, 31 December 1859, 4; Wilkes's Spirit, 31 December 1859, 272; **Baltimore:** Playbills, Holliday Street Theatre, 13-14 February 1860, Bound volume (Holliday Street Theatre), HTC; **Philadelphia:** playbills, Academy of Music (Philadelphia), 18, 21 February 1860, Scrapbooks, PPL; BMT, 25 February 1860, 7, 11; MW, 10 March 1860, 4; **Boston:** BMT, 10 March 1860, 5, 22; NYMR&G, 17 March, 86; playbills, Boston Museum, 5-17 March 1860, Theatrical Programs, Boston Museum, 1860-1863, NYMR&G, MW, 31 March 1860, 5; **Providence:** BMT, 25 February 1860, 12 (reports that the company was to commence a short season on 5 November-- apparently erroneously). See BMT, 10 March, 44-45; 24 March, 44; MW, 31 March 1860, 5; **Albany:** MW, 31 March 1860, 5; NYMR&G, 31 March, 103; 14 April 1860, 26 May, 161; **Hartford:** BMT, 10 March 1860, 41; **New Haven:** BMT, 24 March 1860, 45; **Toronto and Montreal:** BMT, 19 May 1860, 103; Cooper, 152-157; **Rochester:** BMT, 19 May 1860, 103.

(56) ANNA BISHOP OPERA COMPANY

Bishop returned to the United States for her second visit in September 1859. See Seilhamer, An Interviewer"s Album, 109. Although the troupe was billed as the Anna Bishop Opera Company, most of these performances probably were concerts. The BMT, for example, noted in February 1860 that Miss Bishop was meeting with "marked success" on her tour of the South and that the local newspapers "speak of her concerts as being attractive novelties." BMT, 25 February 1860, 3.

Sources: New York: Odell, VII:295; **Newark:** Kaufman, "Music in NJ," **Worcester:** playbill, Mechanic's Hall, Worcester, 16 December 1859, Musical Programs, Concerts, 1859-1861, GA/MWA; **Savannah:** BMT, 25 February 1860, 7; **Texas:** MW, 28 April 1860, 4; **St. Louis:** Kaufman, MS worklist, St. Louis.

(57) ESCOTT AND MIRANDA OPERA COMPANY

Escott and Miranda were associated with Niblo's Theatre during June 1859 (Odell, VII:152 and MW, 4 June 1859, 3) and sang in opera (presumably with members of the stock company) at the Boston Museum on 18-19 July. See playbill, Boston Museum, 18-19 July 1859, Theatrical Programs, 1857-1859, GA/MWA. In October the MW announced that Miranda was forming an opera company "to give performances in the West during the autumn and coming winter." (MW, 29 October 1859, 5) In Buffalo the company reportedy included Escott, Annie Kemp, Miss Duckworth, Boudinot, Mr. Ross Frank, Miranda, Mayer, M. Boudinot, Miss Dunn, and Mme. Shinflie; In Chicago, the members named were Escott, Kemp, Frazer, Boudinot, Duckworth, Miss Ross, Miranda, Frank R. Swan, Mr. Myers, Miss Boudinet, Miss Derm, and others. In March the MW reported that Miranda and Escott were back in New York after completion of their western tour, and were looking for work. See MW, 24 March 1860, 4.

In April Miranda was reported to have been hired by Maretzek for Italian opera. See BMT, 21

April 1860, 79. Escott joined the Durand Opera Company in April 1860. See BMT, 7 April 1860, 63.

Sources: Newark: Kaufman, "Music in NJ"; **Buffalo:** Wilkes's Spirit, 26 November 1859, 192; MW, 3 December 1859, 5; **Detroit:** Teal, Appendix C; **Chicago:** Sherman, 445; MW, 17 December 1859, 4; Upton, "Attractions," vol. 1, 61; **Peoria:** Marine, 180; **Cincinnati:** Wolz, 88.

(58) DRAYTON PARLOR OPERA COMPANY

It is unclear exactly what these performances were like, although they probably were costume concerts. The MW noted that "those who are . . . opposed to theatrical or operatic performances, find in these entertainments an extremely agreeable and entirely unobjectionable substitute." See MW, 3 March 1860, 4. According to Odell, the company performed "theatrical proverbs" in New York. (Odell, VII:212, 264) They invented their "parlor operas" at Hope Chapel in New York in November 1859 (Odell, VII:265, 292); they also called their productions "Parlour Operas and Lyric Proverbs." (See Odell, VII:299, and Wilkes's Spirit, 17 December 1859, 240, 256.

Sources: New York: Wilkes's Spirit, 17 December 1859, 240, 256; Odell, VII:212, 264, 265, 292, 299;; **Philadelphia:** BMT, 25 February 1860, 7; MW, 3 March, 4; 17 March, 5; 24 March, 3; **Baltimore:** BMT, 10 March 1860, 28; **Hartford:** BMT, 24 March 1860, 41; **Boston:** NYMR&G, 14 April 1860, 118; BMT, 10 March, 7; 7 April 1860, 58.

(59) RICHINGS OPERA COMPANY

According to Bailey in AG, Peter and Caroline Richings founded the Richings Opera Company in 1859. See Dee Bailey, "Richings," AG.

Sources: Buffalo: Wilkes's Spirit, 26 November 1859, 192; **Cincinnati:** Wilkes's Spirit, 26 November 1859, 192; Wolz, 92, 240; **Baltimore:** Playbills, Holliday Street Theatre, 12-31 December 1859, Bound volume (Holliday Street Theatre), HTC; **Memphis:** MW, 21 April 1860, 5; **Louisville:** MW, 28 April 1860, 4.

Chapter 6: The Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company, 1855-1856

> If the great mass of the American people accustomed to attend concerts were asked, after hearing opera in both [English and Italian], "which do you prefer?" we feel sure that, setting aside the influence of "snobbery," and "id omne genus," an overwhelming majority would vote for music in the language they speak and understand. (AMR, July 1853, 104)

By the middle years of the 1850s the American opera audience was not only well established, it was expanding by leaps and bounds. Increasing numbers of Italian opera companies and Italian operatic concert troupes (such as the Parodi/Strakosch company) plied the constantly expanding American theatrical circuit, demonstrating clearly that many Americans were happy to take opera as presented by the foreign-language troupes, lock, stock, and barrel.

At the same time, however, a rather sizable portion of the audience (especially in the hinterland) stubbornly resisted the allure of the glamorous foreigners. Despite a seemingly insatiable hunger to see and hear European musical "stars" (instrumental as well as vocal) and a desire to be "cultured," educated, genteel, and (above all) fashionable, many middle-class Americans were at the same time staunch adherents to the principles of egalitarianism--and they resented anything that smacked of old-world aristocratic (or new-world upper-class) snobbery. The growing identification of Italian opera as an elite pastime alienated many theatre-goers and music-lovers--especially when this factor was combined with the negative image of the foreign opera stars, whose numerous and well publicized foibles continued unabated throughout the decade. Many of these Americans, as the success of the Cooper, Escott, and Durand

companies attested, wanted performances of opera, but they also wanted to be able to understand what was happening on the stage. As one music critic put it in 1857, "a good English opera is, after all, the only one which can give entire satisfaction to the great mass of our people." (MW, 11 July 1857, 437)

This increased demand for English-language opera in the United States coincided with a revival of English opera that was underway in Great Britain at the same time. Louis Jullien's attempt to establish English Opera at Drury Lane in 1847-1848 had ended in failure; his bankruptcy had thrown his conductor, Max Maretzek, out of work, and had freed the latter to accept the "engaging offer" made by Edward Fry of New York. The next concerted effort to permanently establish English opera in London (at Covent Garden, from 1857-1864) also had transatlantic connections: the principal movers behind the effort were two British singers, the soprano Louisa Pyne (1832-1904) and the tenor William Harrison (1813-1858), who spent three years prior to their London venture catering to the demand for English opera in the United States. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company was the most successful and prominent English troupe to perform in North America during the 1850s; their triumph in this country--which paved the way for their London success--clearly demonstrates the demand for English-language opera in the United States during the decade.[1]

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1. For a discussion of the English-opera movement in London, see Michael Hurd, "Opera: 1834-1865" in The Romantic Age, 1800-1914, ed. Nicholas Temperley, vol. V of the Athlone History of Music in Britain (London, The Athlone Press, 1981), 307-329, and Harold Rosenthal, "Opera in English," Music and Musicians, September 1962, 16-18. About Pyne, see Ellen Creathorne Clayton, Queens of Song: Being Memoirs of Some of the Most Celebrated Female Vocalists Who Have Appeared on the Lyric Stage, From the Earliest Days of Opera to the Present Time (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1863).

The Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company

Louisa Pyne and William Harrison were both well established English singers before they teamed up in 1853 as the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company. Pyne, almost twenty years Harrison's junior, had made her concert debut at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, at the age of ten; her operatic debut, at Boulogne, was in 1849 as Amina in La Sonnambula. American music lovers first heard about her that same year, when the New York periodical Message Bird noted that she had "received an enthusiastic reception" as Amina at the Princess' Theatre in London. (Message Bird, 15 November 1849, 135) Prior recognition among the American public, if only by name, was important if a singer hoped for a successful tour of the United States, and Pyne was off to a good start. Saroni's helped out a year later by reprinting (from "an English publication") a rave review of another performance at the Princess' Theatre. "With the purity of a Lind--with the sweetness of a Sontag," gushed the critic,

> she stood like an angel warbling strains of comfort and resignation, totally unconscious, as it appeared, of any listening audience. . . . The vocal feats she accomplishes are perfectly marvellous in one so young, and nothing can exceed the captivating ease with which she performs her miracles of musical precocity. (Saroni's 1 June 1850, 425)

The soprano's first big professional break came in 1851, when she was called to the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, to substitute for an indisposed singer in the part of Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute. Her performance in the difficult role took everyone by surprise and "quite

eclipsed that of her predecessor"; the American musical press noted her success and commented approvingly, "this young lady . . . is rising among the singers of European reputation, steadily and surely."[2]

Pyne's partner William Harrison made his operatic debut at Covent Garden in 1839, where his success was "brilliant and decided."[3] A popular singer on the English stage, he had a voice of "remarkable purity and sweetness" as well as a reputation as an excellent actor. After his debut performance in 1839 (in Rooke's opera Henrique, or the Love Pilgrim), Harrison's performance was lauded. "His style," wrote a critic,

> [is] distinguished by great power, pathos, and dramatic energy, holding, as it were, the "mirror up to Nature," whether representing the peasant or the king, and also by a peculiarly clear and distinct enunciation, a quality rarely to be met with in a singer. (Unidentified clipping, Harrison file, HTC)

Harrison built his career around English opera. Before his arrival in the United States he had created the tenor roles in William Vincent Wallace's Maritana (1845), Jules Benedict's Brides of Venice (1844) and The Crusaders (1846) and--significantly, in view of Americans' fondness for this opera--Michael Balfe's Bohemian Girl (1843).[4] Despite a strong reputation in his native land, however, Harrison apparently was not well known to the American public before his arrival. The reaction to his singing and acting by critics in the United States would be, at best, mixed.

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2. Harold Rosenthal, "Pyne, Louisa," NG; Choral Advocate and Singing Class Journal, September 1851, 55.

3. Unidentified printed material, "William Harrison," in Harrison folder, Engravings and Illustrations, HTC.

4. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Sir George Grove (London: Macmillan, 1879-1883). There is no hint in the secondary sources on Harrison of a serious vocal problem--poor intonation--that plagued him for most of his American visit.

These two singers teamed up in England with a baritone named Borrani sometime early in 1853. They took their company on the road almost immediately, performing in Balfe's The Enchantress at the Theatre Royal in Liverpool in March of that year. (Massett, 162) There is no news of the troupe in the American musical/theatrical press for the rest of 1853 or the first half of 1854. The singers must have stayed together as a company and performed in the provinces, however, for the following summer Thomas Barry, who was in Europe recruiting for New York's Broadway Theatre, signed up the same ensemble for a visit to the United States. In August 1854 Dwight's Journal noted Barry's return to New York:

> The daily papers announce the return from Europe of the manager, Mr. Barry who has . . . engaged the following singers for the Broadway Theatre:--Opera, Miss Louisa Pyne, Mrs. Pyne, first and second prima donnas; Mr. Harrison, tenor; M. Bassoni [sic] (basso).[5]

On 23 August 1854 the four singers (Susan Pyne, Louisa's older sister, was a mezzo-soprano) left Liverpool for the United States aboard the steamer Pacific; they arrived on 4 September. Harrison was accompanied by his wife; the Misses Pyne had the companionship of their parents.[6]

The American debut of the new English company, in La Sonnambula, was at the Broadway Theatre on Monday, 9 October 1854. This first

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5. Dwight's, 5 August 1854, 143. According to Odell, Thomas Barry left the employ of the Broadway Theatre shortly after his return to America to become manager of the new Boston Theatre. See Odell, VI:341. As Susan Pyne is elsewhere consistently referred to as "Miss Pyne," it appears that this reference to her as "Mrs." is erroneous.

6. New-York Daily Times, 5 September 1854. Anthony Reiff frequently mentioned the presence of Mrs. Harrison during the course of the company's 1855-56 tour. See Anton Reiff Journal, Special Collections, Troy H. Middleton Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Clayton, 399.



THE MISSES PYNE, AND MESSRS. HARRISON AND BORRANI.

Placard of unknown origin with portraits of the four original Pyne and Harrison Company stars: Louisa Pyne, Susan Pyne, William Harrison, and Signor Borrani.

engagement in New York was not as a full-fledged opera company but as a vocal-star troupe; supporting parts in La Sonnambula and subsequent operas mounted during the engagement (The Bohemian Girl, Maritana, The Crown Diamonds, and Fra Diavolo) were filled in by William Davidge, Mr. and Mrs. France, William H. Reeves, J. Camoens, and other members of the Broadway stock company. Their opening performance was auspicious.[7] "English Opera was inaugurated last Monday evening at the Broadway by the debut of Miss Louisa Pyne, her sister, Mr. W. Harrison, and Mr. Borrani," announced the Musical Review in its next issue. The lengthy favorable review also included a detailed description of each of the singers' voices, and concluded, "on the whole, we may now congratulate ourselves on having the best English Opera company that has visited New York for many years." (MR & CA, 12 October 1854, 355)

During the company's first year in the States their performances were limited almost entirely to the large East Coast cities: Philadelphia, New York, and Boston (see Table 19). By November the regular troupe included three additional singers--Frederick Meyer (bass), William H. Reeves (tenor), and Joseph Whiting; all of them had been active in this country prior to the arrival of the Pynes and Harrison.[8] For their

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7. Odell, VI:343-344. William Pleater Davidge (1814-1899), a favorite comic actor in New York, made his American debut at the Broadway Theatre in August 1850, and was part of the company at that theatre until the autumn of 1855. Odell, VI:1ff; 342; 424. The others were minor singers and actors. For additional information about Reeves, see below.

8. Odell, VI:345; playbill, Boston Theatre 14-15 December 1854, GA/MWA. Frederick Meyer, a German actor/singer, had appeared in concert and opera performances in and around New York since at least 1842. (See Lawrence, 150, 166, 168, 170, 216-17, etc.) William H. Reeves was the brother of John Sims Reeves, a prominent English tenor active during the middle and second half of the nineteenth century. William sang in Edinburgh and elsewhere in the provinces before making his way to the United States, where (according to his brother) he appeared "with great success." In 1847 Reeves was a member of Anna Bishop's first American opera company; when that troupe collapsed he joined the Seguin troupe. See J. Sims Reeves, My Jubilee, or Fifty Years of Artistic Life (London: London Music Publishing Company, 1889), 6; Spirit, 21 October 1847, 25 March 1848, and 6 May 1848; Lawrence, 473-474, 524, 588; see also Table 18. As mentioned in

engagements in Boston (in November) and in Philadelphia (November, February, and March) the English singers apparently maintained some kind of business relationship with E. A. Marshall, the manager of the Broadway. As already mentioned, Thomas Barry, who had actually recruited the singers for the Broadway, had left that New York theatre in the autumn of 1854 to assume management of the new Boston Theatre (the Federal Street Theatre had burned in 1852). (Durham, "Boston Theatre Stock Company," ATC, 93-94, 99) That Barry also maintained close business connections with this old colleague Marshall is suggested by the fact that when Harrison, the Pynes, and their associates (Whiting, Reeves, and Meyer) showed up for performances at his Boston Theatre they brought with them, according to a playbill, "a largely increased Orchestra, and a powerful Chorus of 49 voices." (Playbill, Boston Theatre, 14 December 1854, GA/MWA) Other playbills were more specific: the "Powerful and Talented Chorus" of the Boston Theatre, one announced, was to be augmented with "additional choristers from New York"; the orchestra, according to another, was to be under the direction of Signor La Manna, "by permission of E. A. Marshall, Esq."[9] When the Pynes and Harrison appeared in Philadelphia, furthermore,

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Chapter 5, Meyer and Reeves later sang with the Lyster and Durand company in 1857. Joseph Whiting (1842-1910) was a singer who flourished around 1852 (see Brown, American Stage).

9. Playbill, Boston Theatre, 27 November 1854, Rare Books, MB; playbill, Boston Theatre, 16 December 1854, GA/MWA. According to the MW, during the company's performances in Philadelphia in November the orchestra likewise had been led "by our old friend, Signor La Mana." (See MW, 18 November 1854, 142) The ubiquitous but historically elusive La Manna had conducted the 1843 Havana Opera Company when that troupe appeared in Philadelphia (see Chapter 3). His name appeared occasionally in connection with various concerts and theatres in New York (and more rarely, Philadelphia); according to Schiavo and Odell, he was the orchestra leader at the Broadway during the 1854-55 season. See Schiavo, 347-8; Odell, VI: 341; he also is named as the "Musical Conductor" on a playbill from the Broadway Theatre, 31 January 1855, GA/MWA. That La Manna was well known to New York audiences is suggested by the fact that he is mentioned prominently in a spoof of the popular (traditional?) tune "Rosin the Bow" in John Brougham's fabulously successful burlesque Pocahontas. In the song La Manna is described (in the verse) as "that harmonious Italian"; the chorus proceeds:

it was at the Walnut Street Theatre--which was under the management of the same E. A. Marshall who controlled the Broadway.[10] The increasing syndication of theatrical management in the United States during the 1850s certainly made it easier for opera companies to move from city to city, especially on the East Coast.

Critics tended to describe this particular English opera company as one of the best to visit the United States. Praise for Louisa Pyne, in particular, was almost universal. John Dwight's comments are typical:

> We were delighted, as was every one, with Miss LOUISA PYNE. Short in stature, blonde, blue-eyed, with an ingenuous, pleasing English face, ease and dignity of movement, perfect self-possession, perfect understanding of her part, and a plenty of pretty archness, she was all one could desire. . . . Her voice, not very powerful, is musical and sweet and flexible and evenly developed, and she executes the most florid music . . . with an ease and liquid evenness and finish that remind one of Sontag. . . . There can be no doubt that she will prove a great favorite here as she has elsewhere. (Dwight's, 2 December 1854, 69-70)

The other principal singer of the company, however, did not meet with such uncritical acclaim. "Mr. Harrison," wrote critic of the Musical Review, "is a tenor of great physical as well as vocal strength." He continued:

> La Manna, come rosin your bow, oh, oh,
> La Manna, come rosin your bow,
> We aint got no forte-piano,
> Old beeswax, come rosin your bow

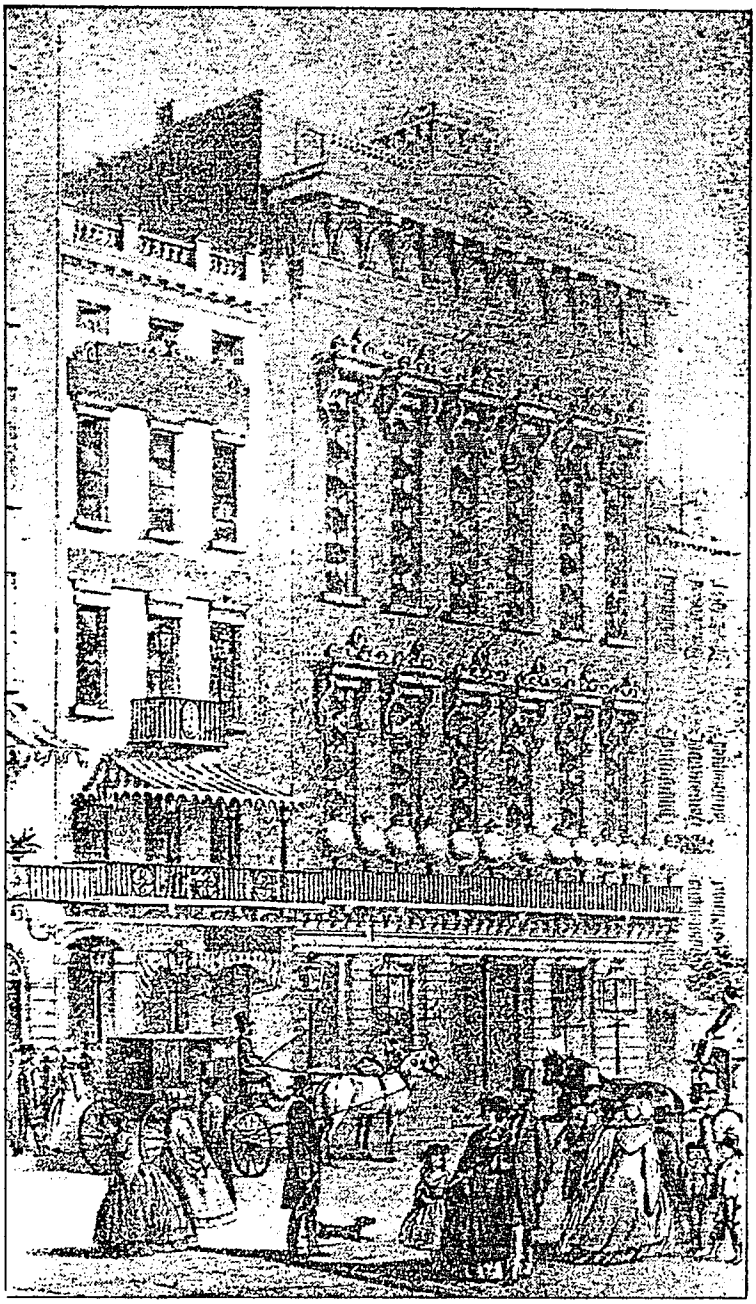
Pocahontas was popular New York and elsewhere; it opened at William Mitchell's Olympic Theatre (New York) in December 1855. See Brooks, "Pocahontas," 31.

10. James Burge, "Broadway Theatre Stock Company," 121-122, and Mari Kathleen Fielder, "[Third] Walnut Street Theatre Company," 534-35, 539, both in ATC.

> In some airs he is very successful, in others, his intonation is uncertain and his voice uneven. He sometimes allows himself the production of hard unpleasant chest-tones in the upper region of his voice, too nearly resembling a yell, while at others, the same notes are taken in a pure resonant chest voice, and beautifully diminished into the falsetto without break, in a manner worthy of Mario himself. The fact that he can sometimes do so difficult a thing well, leaves him without excuse for not always doing it so.

This same critic finished with a prophecy that would be readily fulfilled, writing, "with great excellencies and great defects, radical differences of opinion will, of course, exist in reference to [Harrison], but amid them all, he will have many admirers." (MR & CA, 12 October 1854, 355) Indeed, Harrison's performances garnered both praise and severe criticism from American reviewers. Dwight noted that the tenor's singing was "hard in quality and false continually in pitch, except when he sang occasionally in falsetto, where his tones grew singularly sweet and fine, as well as true." (Dwight's, 2 December 1854, 70) Others were not so kind, and complained that Harrison could neither sing nor act. (MG, 23 December 1854, 50 and 10 March, 1855, n.p.; NYMR, 7 December 1854, 419) Interesting--but hardly surprising--is the fact that Harrison's performances when on tour later in the American interior elicited significantly less criticism and more praise. His intonation problems, however (and later his treatment by a physician for vocal difficulties), were cause for comment in the American musical/theatrical press for the entire length of his stay in this country.

The baritone Borrani, although praised by some as a singer "of excellent taste, and good vocal power and compass" also was the target of



The Broadway Theatre in New York, the house at which the Pyne and Harrison Company first performed in the United States.

criticism: "Borrani's medium tones please--upper tones, unpleasant--lower tones, too weak," wrote a New York critic in 1854. (MR & CA, 12 October 1854, 355; NYMR, 7 December 1854, 419) Susan Pyne, the remaining member of the original foursome, although rarely mentioned in reviews, generally fared well as the seconda donna of the company. Finally, the troupe's orchestra and chorus usually drew praise. After their first appearance in Boston, Dwight described the chorus (which was "unusually large, numbering over forty voices") as "well-blended and euphonious; there was no excessive loudness or harshness, but really a musical blending of voices;--a thing almost unprecedented on our stage." He similarly praised the orchestra, noting that it "played neatly, but scarcely with enough power for the [Boston Theatre]; a most rare fault and on the right side!" The reviewer for the Musical Gazette agreed.[11] "The chorus and orchestra are very good," he wrote in November, "the former especially seems to have been carefully and thoroughly trained and instructed." (MG, 25 November 1854, 17)

The company's popular reception during 1854-55--even in New York--was gratifyingly enthusiastic. "The English Opera now at the Broadway," wrote a critic for the Musical World, "is a living proof of the success of an entertainment in music and English words--the language the unsophisticated and untraveled folk understand." (MW, 21 October 1854, 90) In December a critic for the same periodical expressed amazement at the success of the English opera performers, especially in view of the

11. Dwight's, 2 December 1854, 69. The Pyne and Harrison Company was the first opera troupe to perform in the new Boston Theatre, which had opened on 11 September 1854. See William C. Young, Documents of American Theatre History, vol. 1 Famous American Playhouses 1716-1899 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), 117.

competition: the Italian-opera superstars Giulia Grisi and Giovanni Mateo Mario were performing at the Academy of Music. "We wonder [that] English opera is able to sustain itself at all," he wrote. "That it is able to do so, is, in our opinion, a favorable symptom for English operatic performance." (MW, 16 December 1854, 190)

In Philadelphia, according to a correspondent ("J. S. B.") to the Musical World, the English opera had "all been the rage" during the company's appearances; their engagement overall had been "most successful." (MW, 18 November 1854, 142; 25 November 1854, 154) The same critic, however, expressed bewilderment that the troupe's performances of the old-fashioned Beggar's Opera had drawn two full houses; the plot of the work, he sniffed, "is about as instructive in morals as [the melodrama] 'Jack Sheppard'." His explanation for the work's popularity was that "the applause came generally from the upper tiers; showing conclusively that it did not meet the approbation of the intelligent portion of the audience." (MW, 25 November 1854, 154) In Boston, the management of the theatre attempted to raise prices during the first week and the public balked; Dwight's described the turnout for the troupe's initial performances as "rather less than average." (Dwight's, 9 December 1854, 78) After the management "came to its senses and restored the original prices," however, the engagement proved quite successful; during the second week the theatre was "thronged every evening." (MG, 9 December 1854, 36; Dwight's, 16 December 1854) This reaction on the part of Boston theatre-goers is revealing, especially since little over a month later the Boston public mobbed performances by the Italians Grisi and Mario--despite even higher admission prices. A

critic for the Spirit, apparently disgusted with the behavior of Bostonians, noted this apparent contradiction. "A few weeks ago," he wrote,

> the management attempted to raise the prices from 50 cents to $1, and the public screamed bloody murder. Now the management leases the theatre to someone from outside of Boston [James Hackett, for performances by Mario and Grisi], who raises the prices to $2, and the audience flocks to the theatre, lining the pockets of outsiders. (Spirit, 27 January 1855, 589)

Clearly in the minds of Bostonians English opera still was normal theatrical fare, and hence not worthy of raised prices; the performance of Italian opera by big-name European stars, on the other hand, was sufficiently unusual that the management could charge--get away with--a significantly increased tariff.

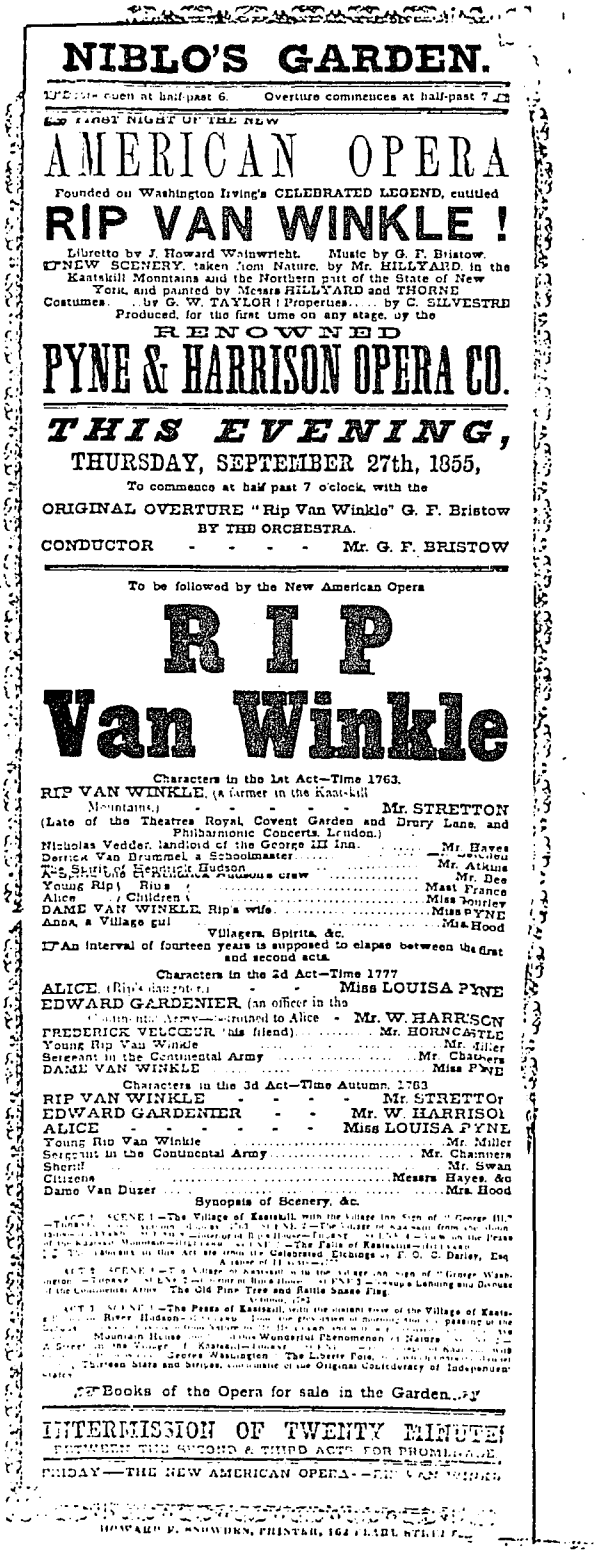
The Pyne and Harrison Company spent its first summer in the United States at Niblo's Theatre in New York, where they performed for over five months under the direction of the American composer and conductor George Frederick Bristow (1825-1898).[12] On 27 September 1855 the troupe mounted the world première of Bristow's opera, Rip van Winkle, which met with considerable critical acclaim. It was performed nightly through

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12. Eight playbills from the Pyne and Harrison Company's engagement at Niblo's have been located; three name no conductor, and five (18 June, 30 August, 8 and 27 September, and 2 November) name Bristow. The playbills are in TC/NN, the Museum of the City of New York, the Music Division of DLC, and GA/MWA. In his dissertation on Bristow, Delmer Rogers noted that at Niblo's during the summer of 1855 the composer conducted other operas between performances of his own, and concluded that this experience "seemingly was the extent of his role as an opera conductor." No other biographical sources on Bristow mention that he was engaged as a conductor at Niblo's on a regular basis, as seems to have been the case. See Delmer D. Rogers, "Nineteenth Century Music in New York City as Reflected in the Career of George Frederick Bristow" (unpublished dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967), 111; Delmer D. Rogers, "Bristow, George Frederick" AG; K. E. Gombert "Leonora by William Henry Fry and Rip Van Winkle by George Frederick Bristow: Examples of Mid-Nineteenth Century American Opera" (unpublished dissertation, Ball State University, 1977); and Waldemar Rieck, "When Bristow's Rip was Sung at Niblo's Garden," Musical America, 5 December 1925, 3, 19.

October 6, and thrice weekly thereafter, for a total of eighteen performances. (Rogers, 107) The overall success of the company during this lengthy engagement clearly indicates the continued appeal of English opera even in New York; the troupe performed six nights per week for most of the summer (the engagement lasted from the end of May until the first week of November), giving an impressive total of 125 performances. In his study of Niblo's Garden, John Blair pointed out that prior to this highly successful run by the English singers the only company that had been able to sustain such a lengthy season at Niblo's had been the Ravel troupe--a family of French acrobats and dancers who were "successful entertainers in a popular form." The Pynes and Harrison, he claimed, were the first artists to "attempt to create an audience in a serious genre." Perhaps Blair's preconceived notions about opera as a serious art form colored his conclusions, however; the evidence strongly suggests that the fare performed by the Pynes and Harrison, although opera, was likewise entertainment in a popular form. (Blair, 155-170)

In early November the Pyne and Harrison Company closed its engagement at Niblo's and the singers announced their intentions to "head South for the winter." This was to be the troupe's first tour away from the well trodden East Coast circuit, and the singers were obliged to engage a business agent, a more-or-less permanent chorus (the tour was to take six months), secondary singers, and a musical director: the Pynes and Harrison, in other words, surrounded themselves with a full-fledged travelling English opera company. William Harrison served as the troupe's "managing director," but for an agent the singers hired



NIBLO'S GARDEN.

Doors open at half-past 6. Overture commences at half-past 7

THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE NEW

AMERICAN OPERA

Founded on Washington Irving's CELEBRATED LEGEND, entitled

RIP VAN WINKLE !

Libretto by J. Howard Wainwright. Music by G. F. Bristow.
NEW SCENERY, taken from Nature, by Mr. HILLYARD, in the Kaatskill Mountains and the Northern part of the State of New York, and painted by Messrs HILLYARD and THORNE
Costumes by G. W. TAYLOR ! Properties by C. SILVESTRE
Produced, for the first time on any stage, by the

RENOWNED

PYNE & HARRISON OPERA CO.

THIS EVENING,

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th, 1855,

To commence at half past 7 o'clock, with the

ORIGINAL OVERTURE "Rip Van Winkle" G. F. Bristow
BY THE ORCHESTRA.

CONDUCTOR - - - - Mr. G. F. BRISTOW

To be followed by the New American Opera

RIP Van Winkle

Characters in the 1st Act—Time 1763.

RIP VAN WINKLE, (a farmer in the Kaatskill Mountains,) - - - - - Mr. STRETTON
(Late of the Theatres Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and Philharmonic Concerts, London.)
Nicholas Vedder, landlord of the George III Inn. ..... Mr. Hayes
Derrick Van Brummel, a Schoolmaster ..... Mr. Atkins
Jos. Skaats, (Governor Hudson ..... Mr. Bee
Young Rip } Rips ..... Mast France
Alice } Children ..... Miss Bourley
DAME VAN WINKLE, Rip's wife ..... Miss PYNE
Anna, a Village girl ..... Mrs. Hood
Villagers, Spirits, &c.

An interval of fourteen years is supposed to elapse between the first and second acts.

Characters in the 2d Act—Time 1777

ALICE, (Rip's daughter) - - - Miss LOUISA PYNE
EDWARD GARDENIER, (an officer in the Continental Army—betrothed to Alice - Mr. W. HARRISON
FREDERICK VELCŒUR, (his friend) ..... Mr. HORNCASTLE
Young Rip Van Winkle ..... Mr. Miller
Sergeant in the Continental Army ..... Mr. Chalmers
DAME VAN WINKLE ..... Miss PYNE

Characters in the 3d Act—Time Autumn, 1783

RIP VAN WINKLE - - - - Mr. STRETTON
EDWARD GARDENIER - - Mr. W. HARRISON
ALICE - - - - - - Miss LOUISA PYNE
Young Rip Van Winkle ..... Mr. Miller
Sergeant in the Continental Army ..... Mr. Chalmers
Sheriff ..... Mr. Swan
Citizens ..... Messrs Hayes, &c
Dame Van Duzer ..... Mrs. Hood

Synopsis of Scenery, &c.

ACT 1. SCENE 1.—The Village of Kaatskill, with the Village Inn Sign of "George III." —Time 1763. SCENE 2.—The Village of Kaatskill from the Mountain Side. SCENE 3.—Interior of Rip's House.—Time 1777. SCENE 4.—View on the Pass of the Kaatskill Mountains.—Time 1783. SCENE 5.—The Pass of Kaatskill.—Rip's Return. The Costumes in this Act are from the Celebrated Pictures of F. O. C. Darley, Esq A Lapse of 11 Years.

ACT 2. SCENE 1.—The Village of Kaatskill in the 1st year of the reign of "George Washington."—Time 1777. SCENE 2.—Interior of Rip's House. SCENE 3.—Alice's Lodging and Dame Autumn, 1783 of the Continental Army. The Old Pine Tree and Battle Smoke Flag.

ACT 3. SCENE 1.—The Pass of Kaatskill, with the distant View of the Village of Kaatskill, River Hudson—Catskill Town on the Hudson and Mountains beyond. passing of the Mountain House ..... the Wonderful Phenomenon of Nature ..... A Sheet in the Village of Kaatskill—Finale ..... Scene, Washington. The Liberty Pole, ... Thirteen Stars and Stripes, emblematic of the Original Confederacy of Independent States.

Books of the Opera for sale in the Garden.

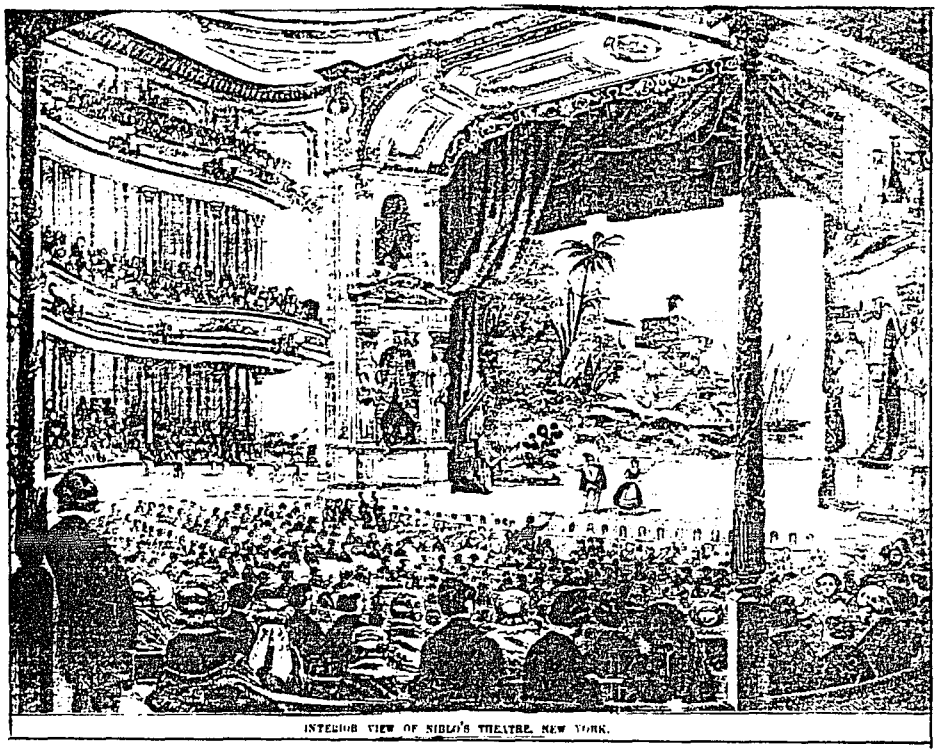
INTERMISSION OF TWENTY MINUTES

BETWEEN THE SECOND & THIRD ACTS FOR PROMENADE.

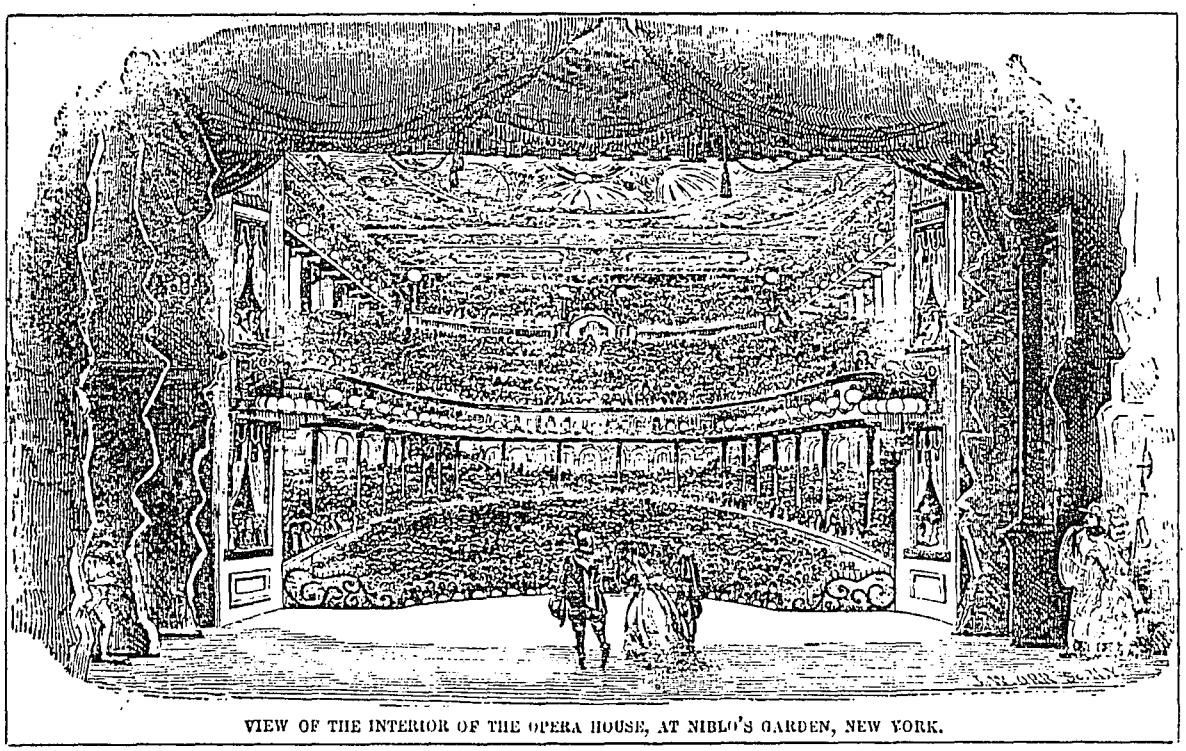
FRIDAY—THE NEW AMERICAN OPERA—RIP VAN WINKLE

HOWARD P. SNOWDEN, PRINTER, 164 FIFTH STREET

Playbill from the première performance of George Bristow's Rip Van Winkle, as mounted by the Pyne and Harrison Company at Niblo's Garden in New York, 27 September 1855. My thanks to Wiley Hitchcock for calling my attention to this playbill.



INTERIOR VIEW OF NIBLO'S THEATRE, NEW YORK.



VIEW OF THE INTERIOR OF THE OPERA HOUSE, AT NIBLO'S GARDEN, NEW YORK.

Two interior views of the theatre at Niblo's Garden. Both were published in the early 1850s in Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion.

William Brough, the ex-vocal star and--since the late 1840s--a "man of business" and "manager of operatic and musical performances generally." (Baltimore Clipper, 14 May 1856; Spirit, 2 October 1852, 396, and Mobile Daily Advertiser, 8 February 1856) This was a particularly astute move. Brough, as we have seen, was familiar with the myriad details of itinerant performing in the United States. Furthermore, he had travelled extensively as a singer and a manager, was well known to both theatre managers and the general public, and was a popular and congenial fellow.[13]

Four singers who had performed with the Pynes and Harrison at Niblo's during the summer (G. H. Warre [or Warrie], Mr. Atkins, Frank R. Swan, and Henry Horncastle), as well as several newcomers (Frederick Lyster, Mr. Gohr, Frank Boudinot, and George Atherton) all signed up for the tour. The bass-baritone Joseph Stretton ("from the Theatres Royal Covent Garden and Drury Lane and the Philharmonic concerts"), who had been hired to sing the role of Rip in Bristow's opera, replaced Borrani as one of the principal singers. (Odell, VI:470; Blair, 165) Horncastle, as we have seen (in Chapters 1, 2, and 5) had long been a familiar face on the American stage; most of the other singers, as discussed in Chapter 5, sang as members of either the Durand or the

13. In 1840 the Spirit described Brough as "a favorite wherever he wanders, both off and on the stage"; Francis Wemyss wrote that he was a "good-natured friend," and Joseph Sill referred to him in a diary entry as "our old friend Brough." Spirit, 1 August 1840; Wemyss, 262, Sill, 13 October 1845. Portions of Brough's American career have been discussed in earlier chapters. Apparently his first stint at managing was as the agent and business manager for Anna Bishop's first American opera company. See Lawrence, 469 and Spirit, 6 May 1848. Evidently Brough also served in some sort of managerial capacity for the Italian soprano Marietta Alboni, for the Spirit reported in the summer of 1852 that he was "at Niagara, discoursing with Alboni as to their future movements, so as to 'head off' Sontag" (their competition). Spirit, 14 August 1852, 312.

Cooper opera companies (or both) in the late 1850s.[14] Finally, a native New Yorker, Anthony Reiff, jr., a sixteen-year-old violinist and keyboard player, was lured away from his job as conductor of the Bowery Theatre orchestra to serve as musical director and conductor of the company. Reiff, whose active and very successful musical career belies the widespread stereotype that Americans of the nineteenth century could not support themselves as musicians, served an important historical function in relation to the Pyne and Harrison tour of 1855-56: he kept a detailed journal during most of the trip. Although his comments and observations are mostly social in nature (he rarely mentions anything about the troupe's performances), they nevertheless provide interesting and useful insights into the daily experiences of a musician connected with an itinerant opera company during the mid-1850s.[15]

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14. The names of most of the singers are from the journal that Anthony Reiff kept during this tour and from various playbills, including two from the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore, 19 November 1855 and 5 May 1856, HTC, and three others from the same theatre, dated 23, 26, and 28 November 1855, from the MdHi. Although the company must have included some women choristers as well, Reiff evidently did not spend time socializing with female members of the troupe, for they are not mentioned in his journal.

    James Henry Horncastle (1801-1869) sang at Drury Lane and the Dublin and Liverpool theatres before crossing the Atlantic. As mentioned in Chapter 1, he came to this country in 1837 as a vocal star at the behest of James Wallack; his American debut was in September 1837 as Elvino in La Sonnambula at the National Theatre. He subsequently had an active career as a singer, appearing in vocal-star companies with the Seguins, Brough, Sherriff, and others, in various English opera troupes, and in the stock companies of Niblo's and the Olympic theatres in New York. He also was the author of works for the stage; in 1840 he collaborated with George Loder, then the music director at the Olympic Theatre, on a burlesque of Rossini's La Gazza ladra, and later adapted Auber's La Bayadere for the English stage. (See Brown, American Stage, Odell, IV:211-212; and "Horncastle, Henry," The National Union Catalogue.) Atkins performed in Rip as the Spirit of Hendrick Hudson; hence, he must have been a baritone. The previous April (1855) he had appeared with Louisa Pyne, Harrison, Horncastle, and Borrani in a concert at the Brooklyn Athenaeum. See Niblo's playbill, 27 September 1855, Music Division, DLC; Odell, VI:421.

15. Anthony Reiff, jr. (1840-1916) evidently started his professional career as a member of Jenny Lind's orchestra at Castle Garden in New York. (Obituary, New York Times, 7 October 1916) By his own admission, he "commenced [an] engagement with [A. H.] Purdy," presumably at the National Theatre in New York, in February 1852, and subsequently moved to the Bowery Theatre, where in 1854 he was conductor of the orchestra. (See Reiff, 9 February 1856; George B. Bryon, "[Purdy's] National Theatre Company," Durham, ATC, 376; Bowery Theatre playbill, 10 November 1854, GA/MWA.) Following his six-month tour with the Pyne and Harrison Company in 1855-1856, Reiff taught piano, violin, and voice in New York and led the orchestra at the New Olympic Theatre there. (MW, 27 June 1857, 409; Odell, VI:585). He subsequently was musical director of a number of opera troupes, including the New English Opera Company, McGuire's

The Tour to the American South and West

On 17 November the following notice appeared in the Boston Musical World:

> The Pyne & Harrison opera company, now playing for a few nights at Providence to crowded houses, will pay us a flying visit on Thursday, the 15th inst., and give a farewell concert, on which occasion they will give selections from the new and successful American opera of Rip Van Winkle, by Bristow, with full chorus. (MW, 17 November 1855, 337)

Business agent Brough also had a local advertisement printed by the Boston Post a day before the concert:

> The Pyne & Harrison English Opera Company Respectfully announce that they will give, on Thursday, November 15th, 1855, A Grand Farewell Concert, at the Music Hall, Being positively their last appearance here this season, previous to their departure for the Western and Southern Cities. (Boston Post, 13 November 1855)

The troupe already was well known to the Boston public, having

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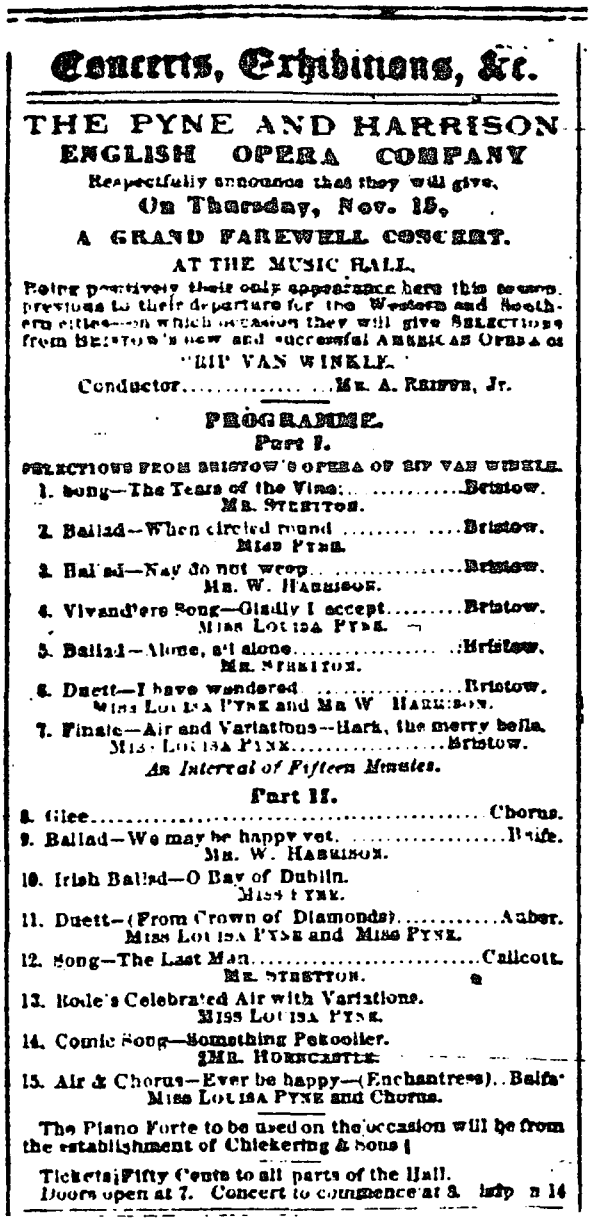
Italian Opera Company, and the Clara Kellogg and Teresa Parepa-Rosa opera companies. (See playbill, New English Opera Company, Walnut Street Theatre, 21 March 1859, Theatre Collection, PP and playbill, MaGuire's Opera Company, Academy of Music (San Francisco) 30 May 1865, San Francisco History Room, CSP) For a time he was reportedly the director of an opera company in Sydney, Australia, and was associated with the first American Gilbert and Sullivan company. (Obit., NYT)

Reiff's father, Anthony sr., was a bassoonist of German birth who was active in New York during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. In 1843 Reiff, sr. co-founded (along with Ureli Corelli Hill) the New York Philharmonic; in 1849 he was named one of the vice presidents of the newly formed American Musical Fund Society. (See Lawrence, 610) Reiff jr., who studied violin with U. C. Hill and piano with the conductor and pianist Henry C. Timm, became a violinist in the Philharmonic in 1857; he later served as Vice President, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Chairman of the Music Committee of the Orchestra. See John Erskine, The Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York: Its First Hundred Years (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), reprinted in Early Histories of the New York Philharmonic, ed. Howard Shanet (New York: Da Capo, 1979), 10; Ludwig Wielich, "The New York Philharmonic's Early Days," (Opera Magazine, February 1914, 26-28), 26.

performed in two different extended engagements there (in November-December 1854 and April-May 1855). On this visit, however, the singers gave only one performance, an operatic concert--the first half of which was comprised of numbers from Bristow's opera. According to local reports the concert was a success; the hall, filled with a "large and enthusiastic audience," was "as full as we have seen it this season." (Boston Evening Transcript, 16 November 1855) The favorable review that appeared the next day in the Boston Chronicle expressed regret that the singers could give only the one concert and wished them godspeed on their tour: "We heartily commend the troupe to our musical friends at the South and West, and bespeak for Miss Louisa Pyne and her assistants the most complete success." (Boston Chronicle, 16 November 1855)

The company left Boston for New York on Friday 16 November, performed there in a benefit concert for their agent William Brough, and the following Monday commenced a season of ten nights at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore.[16] John Ford, the theatre's manager, advertised that the troupe had been engaged at "enormous expense" and promptly doubled his admission prices. (Baltimore Clipper, 19 November 1855) It was not unusual for theatre managers to raise their prices for an engagement by a popular star or company--dramatic, operatic, or otherwise--especially if the attraction had recently enjoyed a great deal of success elsewhere. This was a judgement call by the local

16. MW, 17 November 1855, 337. The "grand farewell concert," featuring the full troupe and entire chorus, was held at the Brooklyn Athenaeum. It was not unusual for managers to stipulate a benefit performance as part of a contract. Brough's wish to have his benefit in New York, and at the beginning of the tour (while local enthusiasm generated by the singers' successful Niblo's engagement was still high) demonstrates the agent's astute business sense. New York Daily Times, 16 November 1855.



Concerts, Exhibitions, &c.

THE PYNE AND HARRISON ENGLISH OPERA COMPANY

Respectfully announce that they will give,

On Thursday, Nov. 15,

A GRAND FAREWELL CONCERT.

AT THE MUSIC HALL,

Being positively their only appearance here this season, previous to their departure for the Western and Southern cities—on which occasion they will give SELECTIONS from BRISTOW'S new and successful AMERICAN OPERA of

"RIP VAN WINKLE."

Conductor.....Mr. A. Reiver, Jr.

PROGRAMME.

Part I.

SELECTIONS FROM BRISTOW'S OPERA OF RIP VAN WINKLE.

1. Song—The Tears of the Vine:.....Bristow.
Mr. STRETTON.
2. Ballad—When circled round .....Bristow.
Miss PYNE.
3. Ballad—Nay do not weep.....Bristow.
Mr. W. HARRISON.
4. Vivandiere Song—Gladly I accept.....Bristow.
Miss LOUISA PYNE.
5. Ballad—Alone, all alone.....Bristow.
Mr. STRETTON.
6. Duett—I have wandered .....Bristow.
Miss LOUISA PYNE and Mr W HARRISON.
7. Finale—Air and Variations—Hark, the merry bells.
Miss LOUISA PYNE.....Bristow.

An Interval of Fifteen Minutes.

Part II.

8. Glee.....Chorus.
9. Ballad—We may be happy yet.....Balfe.
Mr. W. HARRISON.
10. Irish Ballad—O Bay of Dublin.
Miss PYNE.
11. Duett—(From Crown of Diamonds).....Auber.
Miss LOUISA PYNE and Miss PYNE.
12. Song—The Last Man.....Callcott.
Mr. STRETTON.
13. Rode's Celebrated Air with Variations.
Miss LOUISA PYNE.
14. Comic Song—Something Petkooller.
MR. HORNCASTLE.
15. Air & Chorus—Ever be happy—(Enchantress)..Balfe.
Miss LOUISA PYNE and Chorus.

The Piano Forte to be used on the occasion will be from the establishment of Chickering & Sons.

Tickets, Fifty Cents to all parts of the Hall.
Doors open at 7. Concert to commence at 8. [sep n 14

A newspaper advertisement for a concert given in Boston by the Pyne and Harrison Company. The first half of the concert consisted of numbers from Bristow's opera Rip Van Winkle.

manager, however, and it did not always work; an attempt to do the same thing in Boston the previous November, as we have seen, failed. But in the intervening year the fame of the Pyne and Harrison Company had grown; their unprecedented engagement at Niblo's worked wonders for their reputation, and Ford made sure to exploit this fact. "The Pyne & Harrison English Opera Troupe," read one of the theatre's playbills, will be "aided by a Powerful Chorus! Associated with them during the recent unparalleled engagement of one hundred and twenty six nights at Niblo's Theatre, N. Y." (Playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 20 November 1855, HTC) The raised cost of admission in Baltimore, then, did not deter the public.[17] On the contrary, the Baltimore Clipper reported that during the first week the theatre "was always full" of audiences "composed of the elite of Baltimore society"; furthermore "the demand for seats was so great that in some instances [performances] were engaged several nights ahead." (Clipper, 19 November 1855) During the second week reporters commented that the "rush for seats . . . continues unabated, and throngs are turned away nightly unable to gain admittance." (Daily Republican, 22 November 1855) Of course, although Baltimore was hardly a theatrical backwater, even as late as the mid-1850s opera troupes did not visit the Maryland town nearly as often as they performed in, for example, Boston. As a result, opera-loving residents of the former city (and other towns like it) were apt to be more ebullient and effusive about visiting troupes than were theatre-goers in Boston, Philadelphia, or New York. One local critic, in fact,

17. Admission to the troupe's performances in St. Louis and Pittsburgh also was raised. See the St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat, 5-31 March 1856 and the Pittsburgh Post, 7 December 1855. Admission cost to performances in Cincinnati, Louisville, New Orleans, and Washington, however, was not increased.

enthused that the engagement of the Pyne and Harrison Company was "an era in the history of the opera in Baltimore"; in contrast, Bostonian John Dwight had expressed complimentary, but much less effusive sentiments about the same company's performances in Boston. "This is not GRISI and MARIO," he wrote, "but may [the Pyne and Harrison Company] not possibly prepare the way for that!" (Clipper, 19 November 1855; Dwight's, 2 December 1854, 70)

During their two-week engagement, the company mounted ten performances of nine operas: The Crown Diamonds (Auber, Diamants de la Couronne), The Bohemian Girl (Balfe), The Daughter of the Regiment (Donizetti), Maritana (Wallace), Fra Diavolo (Auber), The Beggar's Opera (Gay/Rich), The Love Spell (Donizetti's Elisir d'Amore), The Barber of Seville, and Sonnambula (twice); they also gave a matinee concert. The practice of changing operas nightly would be the predominant pattern throughout the company's entire tour. (For information on their repertory and itinerary, see Table 20.)

On 30 November the troupe performed one night in Philadelphia, then the musicians packed their costumes and music and headed west. They stopped for a one-week engagement in Pittsburgh. There, the theatre was "crowded with one of the largest and most fashionable audiences ever inside the building" for performances of Sonnambula, The Bohemian Girl, The Daughter of the Regiment, Maritana, and The Crown Diamonds. (Pittsburgh Post, 1 December 1855) At the conclusion of that engagement they travelled by river and rail to Cincinnati, intending to proceed from there to points further west and south. Throughout this

entire tour the company--like most other performing troupes of the time--traveled by steamboat or railroad. By the mid-1850s the transportation network in the eastern United States was extensive; the travel by stage that had so fatigued Jane Shirreff and John Wilson some twenty years earlier was an outdated transportation mode--at least east of the Mississippi.

The Pyne and Harrison Company engagement in Cincinnati, at the National Theatre, commenced on 12 December; the advertising excitement had started the previous week, with the Cincinnati Enquirer announcing that "the celebrated Pyne and Harrison Opera Company will commence an engagement at the National on Monday next, when our musical epicures may feast themselves at one of the richest musical banquets ever spread before them." (Enquirer, 8 December 1855) This type of theatrical bombast is easily recognized as public relations hyperbole. Legitimate paid advertisements for forthcoming or current performances (by theatrical, operatic, and instrumental performers alike) appeared in the "Amusements" column of the classifieds. Notices like the example above, however, were not unusual, and show up masquerading as news in the columns of the papers. These enthusiastic notices might actually reflect the attitudes of an editor or critic; many, however, were advertising puffs, reflecting surreptitious payments by the performers' agent.

Newspaper advertisements, broadsides, placards, and playbills were the responsibility of both the company's agent--in this case, Brough--and the manager of the theatre in which the troupe was to perform. As

TABLE 20: ITINERARY AND REPERTORY OF THE PYNE AND HARRISON OPERA COMPANY, NOVEMBER 1855-MAY 1856

BOSTON

15 November	concert

NEW YORK

17 November	concert

BALTIMORE (HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE)

19 November (Monday)	Crown Diamonds
20 November	Bohemian Girl
21 November	Daughter of the Regiment
22 November	Maritana
23 November	Sonnambula
24 November	Fra Diavolo
26 November (Monday)	The Beggar's Opera
27 November	Love Spell
28 November	afternoon: Grand Operatic Concert evening: The Barber of Seville
29 November	Sonnambula (Pyne benefit)

PHILADELPHIA

30 November	concert

PITTSBURGH (PITTSBURGH THEATRE)

3 December (Monday)	Sonnambula
4 December	Bohemian Girl
5 December	Daughter of the Regiment
6 December	Maritana
7 December	The Crown Diamonds

CINCINNATI (NATIONAL THEATRE)

10 December (Monday)	postponed
11 December	Bohemian Girl
12 December	The Crown Diamonds
13 December	Harrison sick: no performance
14 December	Daughter of the Regiment
15 December	Sonnambula
17 December (Monday)	Maritana
18 December	Fra Diavolo
19 December	The Crown Diamonds

20 December	Maritana
21 December	Cinderella
22 December	Cinderella
24 December (Monday)	Cinderella
25 December	Cinderella
26 December	Cinderella
27 December	Cinderella
28 December	Sonnambula
29 December	The Barber of Seville (Pyne benefit)

LOUISVILLE (LOUISVILLE THEATRE)

31 December (Monday)	The Crown Diamonds
1 January	Maritana
2 January	Daughter of the Regiment
3 January	Fra Diavolo
4 January	Bohemian Girl
5 January	Sonnambula (Pyne benefit)

NEW ORLEANS (ST. CHARLES THEATRE)

24 January	The Crown Diamonds
25 January	Maritana
26 January	Bohemian Girl
28 January (Monday)	Bohemian Girl
29 January	Bohemian Girl
30 January	Cinderella
31 January	Cinderella
1 February	Cinderella
2 February	Cinderella
4 February (Monday)	Cinderella
5 February	Cinderella
6 February	Sonnambula (Harrison benefit)
7 February	Daughter of the Regiment (Pyne benefit)
8 February	Daughter of the Regiment (?)

MOBILE (ODD FELLOWS' HALL)

12 February	concert (Gems from Sonnambula)
14 February	concert (Gems from Bohemian Girl)
15 February	concert (Gems from The Crown Diamonds)
18 February (Monday)	concert

NEW ORLEANS (GAIETY THEATRE)

20 February	Sonnambula
21 February	The Crown Diamonds
22 February	Bohemian Girl
24 February (Monday)	Barber of Seville

ST. LOUIS (ST. LOUIS THEATER)

10 March (Monday)	Sonnambula
11 March	Bohemian Girl
12 March	The Crown Diamonds
13 March	Maritana
14 March	Daughter of the Regiment
15 March	Crown Diamonds
17 March (Monday)	Guy Mannering
18 March	Barber of Seville
19 March	Maritana
20 March	Bohemian Girl
21 March	Love Spell
22 March	Daughter of the Regiment
24 March (Monday)	Cinderella
25 March	Cinderella
26 March	Cinderella
27 March	Cinderella
28 March	Cinderella
29 March	Cinderella
31 March (Monday)	Crown Diamonds (Bateman benefit)

LOUISVILLE (MOZART HALL)

2 April	Concert
3 April	Concert

CINCINNATI (BURNET HOUSE)

4 April	Concert

BALTIMORE (HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE)

9 April	Cinderella

WASHINGTON (NATIONAL THEATRE)

14 April (Monday)	Sonnambula
15 April	The Crown Diamonds
16 April	Maritana
17 April	Daughter of the Regiment
18 April	Bohemian Girl
19 April	Barber of Seville (Pyne benefit)

RICHMOND (RICHMOND THEATRE)

21 April	opera postponed (Harrison ill)
22 April	Sonnambula
23 April	The Crown Diamonds
24 April	Bohemian Girl
25 April	Maritana
26 April	Daughter of the Regiment (Pyne benefit)
29 April	concert (Metropolitan Hall)

WASHINGTON (NATIONAL THEATRE)

30 April	The Crown Diamonds
1 May	Cinderella
2 May	Cinderella
3 May	Cinderella

BALTIMORE (HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE)

5 May (Monday)	Cinderella
6 May	Cinderella
7 May	Cinderella
8 May	The Crown Diamonds
9 May	Sonnambula
10 May	matinee: Cinderella evening: Guy Mannering
12 May (Monday)	Maritana
13 May	Daughter of the Regiment
14 May	Bohemian Girl (Harrison benefit)
15 May	The Crown Diamonds
16 May	Maritana
17 May	Barber of Seville (Pyne benefit)

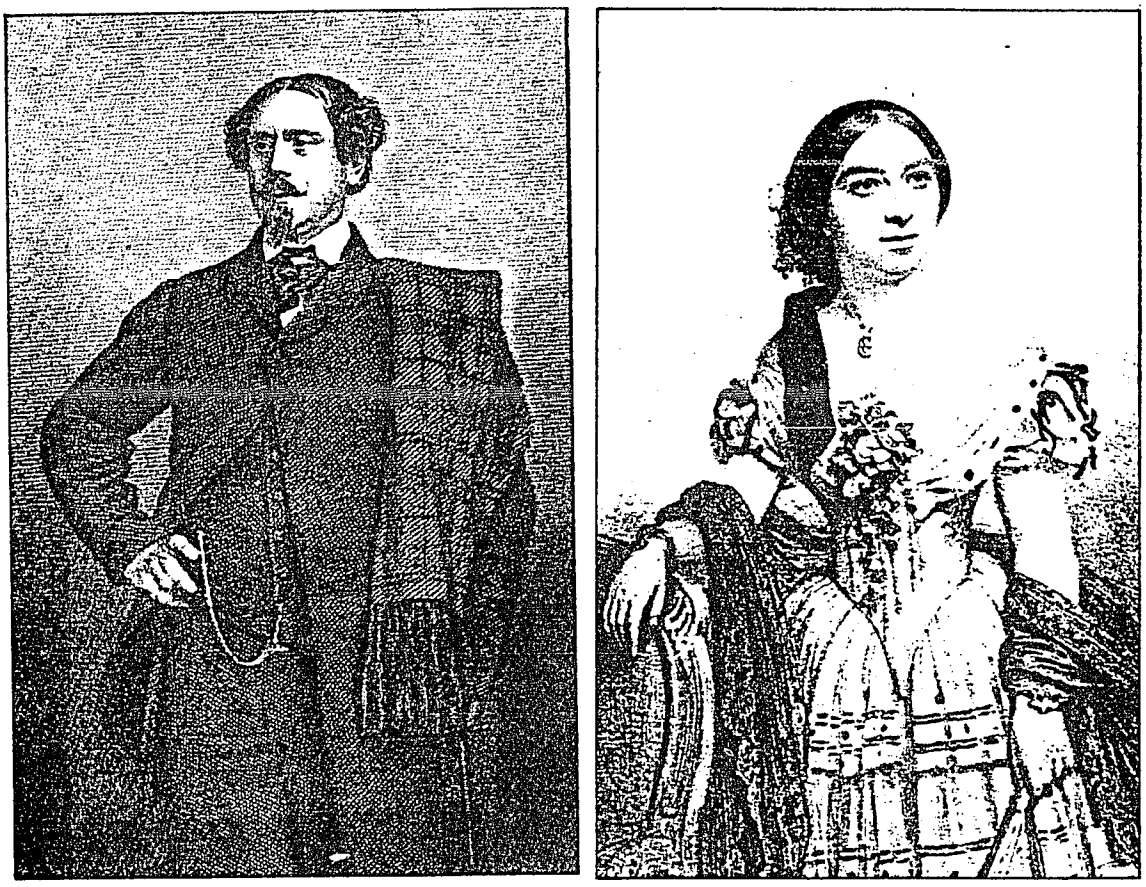
WASHINGTON (NATIONAL THEATRE)

19 May (Monday)	Bohemian Girl
20 May	Cinderella
21 May	Maritana
22 May	Guy Mannering
23 May	Daughter of the Regiment

we saw in Chapter 2, the usual financial arrangement of a visiting star (or company) with a theatre was for the performer to get both a percentage of the proceeds over and above a certain agreed-to amount and a portion of the take from one or more benefits; this arrangement had not changed by the mid-fifties. As a consequence, it was in the best interests of a theatre manager to promote his current engagement to the fullest extent. Many theatres apparently had a regular account with the local newspaper, for their advertisements appeared in the same format and often on the same page every day, week after week.

Company managers and agents themselves, however, also took on some of the responsibilities for advertising their charges. In 1856, Henry Warren, the manager of theatres in Buffalo and Rochester, New York, received a letter from Peter Richings, an actor and the manager of the Richings Opera Company (a vocal star ensemble that later turned into an English opera troupe). In the letter Richings requested that Warren have a local print shop run off "one hundred copies each of the portraits of self and Miss R.," to be used for advertising purposes. Richings intended to pick up the bills on his way through Buffalo to Rochester, and he entreated Warren to "have the kindess not to disappoint, as I am in need of them, or rather shall be at that time."[18] Another extant contemporary managerial letter was written by Nicholas Bochsa, Anna Bishop's manager, in June 1848. In the missive, which was addressed to Messrs. Peters and Field of Cincinnati, Bochsa mentioned that he had already sent notices announcing Bishop's forthcoming visit to the local newspapers. By June 1848, however, Bishop's first English opera company

18. Letter from Peter Richings to Messrs. Carr and Warren, 4 November 1856, Davis Collection, ICHi.



Portraits of William Harrison, tenor, and Louisa Pyne, soprano.

had already disbanded, and she and Bochsa were concertizing. Because they were hiring halls rather than contracting with theatres, the responsibility for advertising details naturally fell on Bochsa's shoulders.[19] Managers of opera companies, however, would have had to do the same when arranging for occasional concert performances by their troupes, and they undoubtedly took an active part in advertising matters even when the company was engaged to perform in a theatre. Later in the Pyne and Harrison Company tour, in fact, the New Orleans Daily Picayune noted the receipt of a "telegraphic dispatch" from William Brough announcing forthcoming performances by the company. (Daily Picayune, 17 February 1856)

Despite the Cincinnati Enquirer's preliminary bombast about the Pyne and Harrison troupe, the company at first drew poorly. On 16 December the newspaper critic complained,

> [This] is, without a doubt, the best opera troupe that ever visited Cincinnati, and yet they have performed but to houses half filled. What is the matter? Parodi, Strakosch, and Madame Strakosch alone . . . drew nearly $4,000 within the walls of Smith & Nixon's Hall in three nights, and here we have a full opera troupe, with choruses and all complete, who don't appear to draw one-third of the money. (Cincinnati Enquirer, 16 December 1855)

The performers to whom the critic referred (Parodi, Strakosch, and Amalia Strakosch) were, of course, another version of the same concert troupe that had vexed Max Maretzek in Charleston in 1851. This ensemble, which played leap-frog with the Pyne-Harrison troupe during much of their 1855-56 tour, is a perfect example of the type of Italian-opera concert

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19. Letter from C. M. Bochsa to Messrs. Peters and Field, Music House, Cincinnati, 19 June 1848, Manuscript Division, ICHi.

companies that became increasing prevalent during the 1850s. If the Pynes and Harrison had continued to draw only "one-third of the money" of the Parodi/Strakosch troupe, the evidence would have suggested that Italian opera was much more popular than the English version in the Queen City. This, however was not the case. Somehow the English troupe managed to overcome the initial audience inertia and lure Cincinnatians to the theatre. For the remainder of their stay, in fact, there were no further complaints or scoldings from the press, only reviews full of gushing and rapturous praise for the singers coupled with descriptions of their enthusiastic reception by the Queen City's music-lovers.

Some overly enthusiastic newspaper reviews also fall into the category of puffs, for they likewise were a result of surreptitious payments to a local journalist. Unless the review contains some criticism along with praise it is sometimes difficult to separate honest reviews from those that were purchased. Some of the more uncritical and enthusiastic reviews found in the newspapers of cities located in the American interior also represent the work of inexperienced critics, for few newspapers in this country (especially in the interior) could justify employing a full-time music or theatre critic in the 1850s.[20] The fact that newspapers in most towns visited by the Pyne and Harrison

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20. For two examples of naive criticism see the reviews of Maretzek's company in Charleston that were cited in Chapter 4. American musical criticism of the antebellum period has been the subject of some scholarly investigation, but these studies have been limited almost entirely to critics working on the East Coast. There are no studies of pre-war musical criticism in any American interior cities (Pittsburgh, St. Louis, or Cincinnati), or even in New Orleans. Two fairly recent dissertations deal with criticism in New York and Boston, and William Treat Upton's book on William Henry Fry discusses his work as a music critic in New York and Philadelphia; the first volume of Vera Lawrence's treatment of George Strong's diaries is invaluable for its information on New York critics. A dissertation in progress on George P. Upton will just barely touch on criticism in the antebellum period in Chicago. The article on musical criticism in AG likewise reflects the current state of research, and for the antebellum years deals only with Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and (briefly) Chicago. See Marica W. Lebow, "A Systematic Examination of the Journal of Music and Art, Edited by John Sullivan Dwight: 1852-1881, Boston, Massachusetts"

Company in 1855-56 managed to review their performances is significant, for it indicates that the visit of an opera company, like the visit of an important dramatic star, was a newsworthy event of interest to the community at large.

Puffs or no, the Cincinnati critics and public alike seem to have been genuinely taken with the Pyne and Harrison Company; even Harrison was praised for his "clear enunciation and impressive acting." (Cincinnati Commercial, 17 December 1855) The reviewer for the Enquirer, who was of the flowery school of criticism, was consistent in his praise of the troupe in general and of Louisa Pyne in particular. He described the soprano's "seraphic notes, floating around and about like the warbling of a celestial melody," and pronounced Pyne's success to be absolute and unconditional. "The die is cast," he wrote,

> the fiat has gone forth, and from this time the name of Louisa Pyne will stand forth chronicled in the hearts of the denizens of the Queen City of the West as par excellence the 'queen of song.' (Enquirer, 20 December 1855)

The audience apparently shared his sentiments. The company remained in Cincinnati for a full three weeks, during which they mounted sixteen performances of eight operas; on 21 December they introduced Cinderella, which was a smash hit: the company gave it for six consecutive nights. (See Table 20.) During the last week of December the Enquirer announced

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(dissertation, UCLA, 1969); Mark C. McKnight, "Music Criticism in the New York Times and the New York Tribune, 1851-1876" (dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1980); William Treat Upton, William Henry Fry, American Journalist and Composer-Critic (New York: Crowell, 1954); Mary Ann Feldman, "The Collected Writings of George P. Upton: A Half Century of Chicago Musical Criticism" (dissertation, University of Chicago, in progress); Edward O. D. Downes and John Rockwell, "Criticism," AG; and Lawrence.

Louisa Pyne's benefit and reported that some private admirers of the prima donna had attempted to arrange an extra concert for their enjoyment and her benefit. This proved to be impossible, however; according to the newspaper, "the engagements of the company positively preclude their remaining in the city" any longer than 29 December. (Enquirer, 27 December 1855)

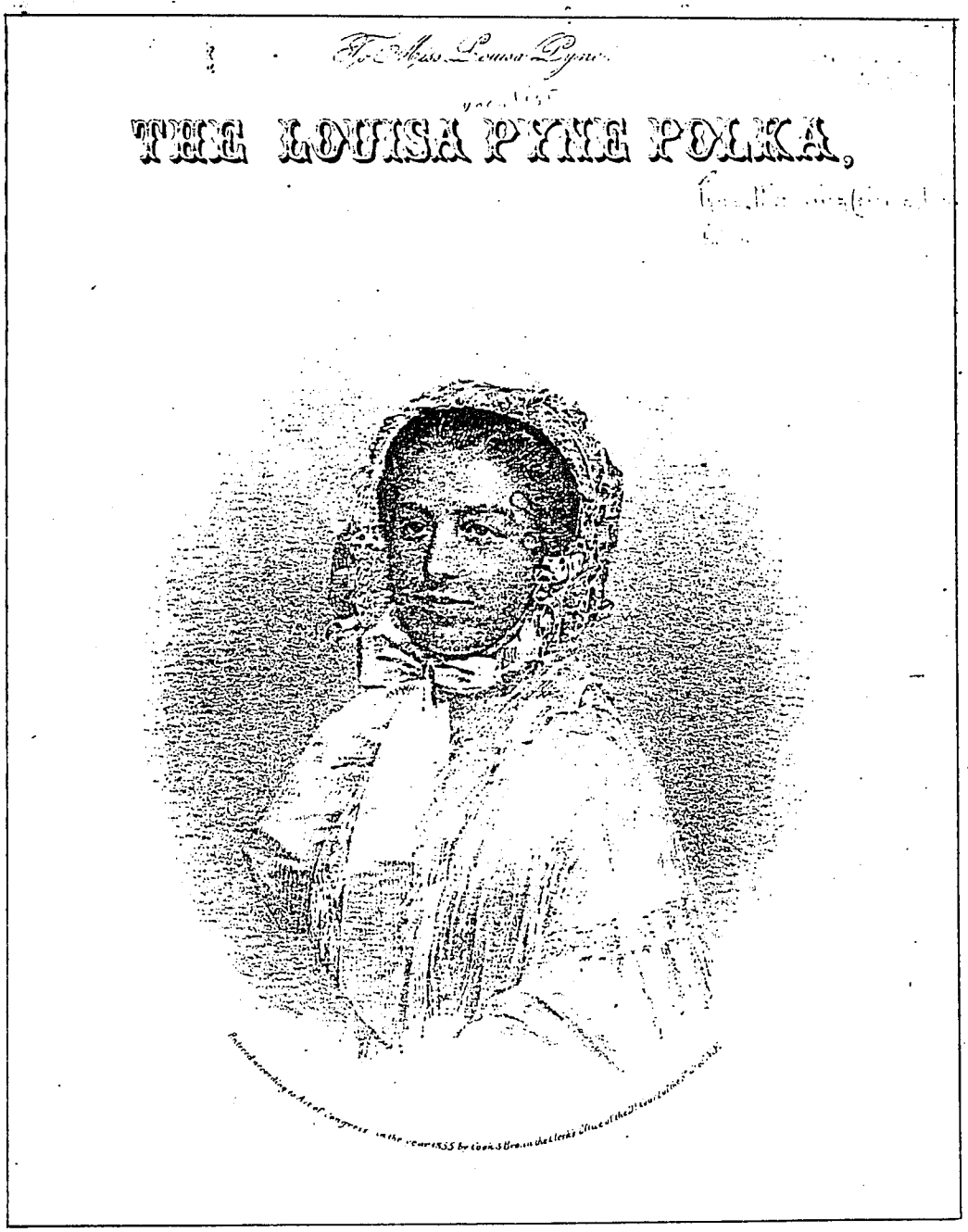
The troupe's next engagement was in Louisville, Kentucky, a short steamer trip down the Ohio River. They performed in the Louisville Theatre from 31 December through 5 January, mounting their usual repertory for the usual full houses. Despite an enthusiastic reception, however (for one performance "every seat was taken, and the aisles and lobby were crowded with persons standing"), there was no question of an extended engagement in Kentucky. (Daily Louisville Times, 5 January 1856) Travel conditions were worsening daily. The entire country was in the grip of a severe cold spell, and the Ohio River--the principal transportation conduit to the south--was freezing. William Brough, responsible for delivering the troupe to the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans by 14 January, must have read the increasingly dismal newspaper reports with growing alarm. On 3 January the river reports were pessimistic: "The last boats from below [Cincinnati] encountered heavy running ice and several sustained considerable injury--the ice being heavy and sharp enough to cut their bows," read the "River and Steamboat News" in one paper. (Cincinnati Daily Commercial, 3 January 1856) On 5 January the Ohio was still open at Louisville, but the Daily Times warned, "the river yesterday and last night was filled with floating ice. . . . The impression was general last night that [it] would be

frozen over by morning." (Daily Louisville Times, 5 January 1856) Undaunted, the company completed its season in Louisville and boarded the steamer Thomas Swan after the last performance on Saturday night. "About midnight," a Cincinnati newspaper reported,

> [the Swan] started for New Orleans, having awaited the close of the theater to take the English Opera Troupe, who are engaged to perform at New Orleans next Monday night. The boat will hardly get out of the river in time, unless the weather moderates. (Cincinnati Daily Commercial, 9 January 1856)

The weather did not moderate, and the steamer made painstakingly slow progress down the river; they did not make Evansville, Indiana (normally a fifteen-hour trip), until Monday the 7th. (Cincinnati Daily Commercial, 10 January 1856, report from Evansville dated 8 January) That evening the crew had to repair the paddle wheel, which had been badly damaged by the ice. On Tuesday the vessel continued to shove through the dangerous floes until about noon, when the captain decided that proceeding was too dangerous, and ordered the crew to lay up. They were stuck fast in the ice. (Reiff, undated entry, page 1, January 1856)

Anthony Reiff found the situation both entertaining and amusing. "It seems as if we were like 'Arctic Explorers' Ice Bound--visiting the Natives Ashore," he wrote in his journal. "We are completely cut off from all communication with the world--nothing but Ice on one side and Forest on the other." (Reiff, 10 January 1856) The New Yorker, along with some of his more adventurous opera-company friends, humorously dubbed themselves the "Arctic Exploring Committee" and went ashore several times to tramp around in the sparsely inhabited and frozen



Portrait of Louisa Pyne from the cover of a contemporary piece of sheet music. New York: Cook & Brothers, n. d.

Kentucky woods. The young musician's descriptions--here and throughout the trip--vividly portray the near-wilderness through which this opera company and its London stars were travelling. "Nothing but a magnificent Forest to be seen," he wrote. "The Trees [are] very large . . . fill'd with most magnificent Birds . . . and abounding in Wild Grape Vines--" When the musicians happened upon some of the "Natives," they discovered them to be living in "Log Cabins--made of Logs and Clay--[with] a rude sort of Chimney at back." One cabin, he wrote, "was rude in the extreme--two beds--but made cheerful by an immense Fire--in the capacious Fireplace"; another residence was "a much more dignified looking Cabin." Many of the passengers, he reported, went out hunting in the woods, shooting at the plentiful "Deer, Birds, Possum, Squirrel &c." (Reiff, undated entry, 9 January 1856)

Those passengers who chose to remain on the marooned steamer amused themselves in less strenuous pursuits: gambling, storytelling, and political discussions. "Any quantity of Gambling going on board the vessel," reported a scandalized Reiff, "even the Pynes & Harrison [and] Stretton." One night two passengers who were amateur musicians--a fiddler and a guitarist--teamed up with Reiff (who was made "Floor Master") and organized a dance; the following evening the opera company stars gave in to the demands of their fellow passengers and "sang some Glees" for their entertainment. (Reiff, 9 January 1856) "Many jokes are cracked at night," recorded Reiff, "some will ask where you are going to spend the Evening--one suggests the opera, another Niblo's, [and all] promise to wind up at Shelly's."[21]

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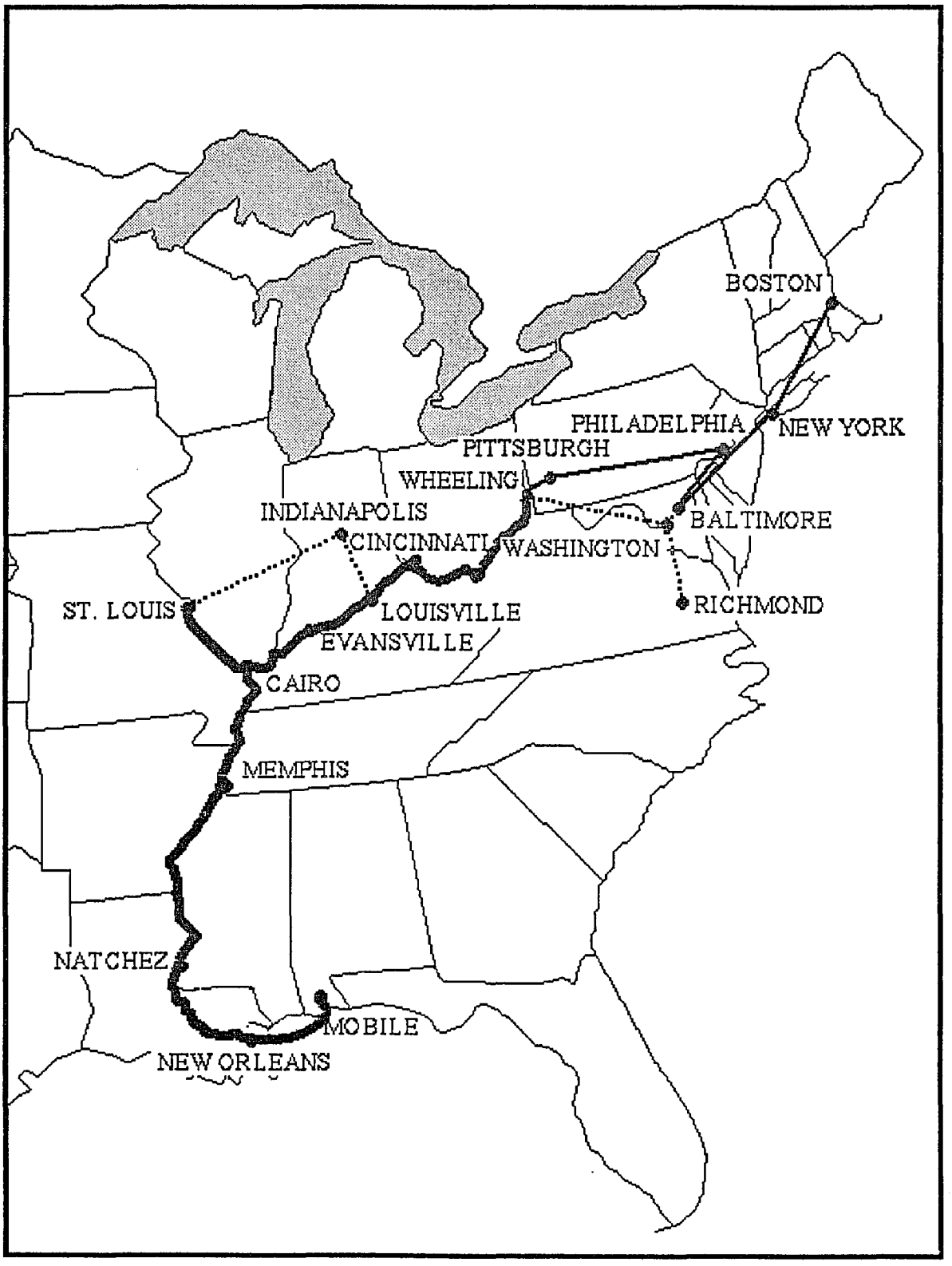
21. Reiff, 10 January 1856. New York city directories from 1855-1859 fail to mention any establishments called "Shelly's"; Reiff probably referred to a tavern or saloon.

After the Thomas Swan had been stuck for five full days the captain decided to try to break free. "At twelve noon we started through the Ice," Reiff wrote. He continued:

> [It] was really dreadful. The Engineer--says he has been running on this river--twenty years--and never saw anything like it before. A man is continually stationed in the Hold--at the Bow to watch for any smash that may occur--I was all through the Hold today--The ice crashing against the Vessel--sounds like Artillery . . . [It is] a Foot thick! some places (in narrow passes) it was piled up Three & Four Feet. . . . An Old Captain who has been running on this river Sixteen years is quite nervous--The Ice Cakes sometimes will not break--but go under--you can then feel it rub against the keel the entire length of the Boat. (Reiff, 12 January 1856)

Reiff thought it all very exciting, but cheerfully admitted to his own ignorance. "[Henry] Horncastle, an old Traveler [was] much frightened . . . [but] I stood on the extreme Bow of the vessel--thinking [about] what we would have for supper--'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise' 'twas so with me, I did not fear any danger--." (Reiff, 12 January 1856) The steamer managed to get through, but was in fact one of the last boats to make it down the river to New Orleans until after the cold spell broke. The Thomas Swan and its passengers indeed were fortunate; in mid-February a newspaper reported that some thirty flatboats, ten steamboats, and "the beautiful steamer Jacob Strader" had been lost to the ice at Cincinnati; ten other boats had sunk at Louisville. (Memphis Daily Appeal, 28 February 1856)

By the time they reached the Mississippi River, the Covent Garden stars William Harrison and Louisa Pyne must have seriously questioned the wisdom and safety of this trip to the American West. After breaking



Map of Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company tour
to the American South and West, November 1855-May 1856.

free of the ice at Evansvile, the steamer was twice more damaged sufficiently by ice floes to require unscheduled stops for repairs. (Reiff, 13, 15 January) Furthermore, the proximity to the lawless frontier must have been unnerving at best. In Cairo, Illinois (the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers), several of the troupe members went ashore, only to discover the body of a man who had been shot to death. "It is said that no one's life is safe at 'Cairo,'" Reiff later wrote. "Our Engineer says he never thinks of going into [town] without his revolver." (Reiff, 15 January) Finally, even on board the steamer Harrison and Brough had to intervene to save a member of their own troupe--Reiff--from being shot. The young conductor had managed to get himself into a dispute with another passenger, and "spoke rather excitedly to him"; as a result, he found himself presented with "the Gentleman's Card (Colonel Young--of California) [and] the request that I would meet him after Dinner--With a friend . . . [to] settle our dispute." Reiff later confessed that the prospect left him "somewhat nervous . . . for [Colonel Young] was too big for me to pummel and being a graduate of West Point I thought possibly a better Shot [than I]--as I have not fired a Pistol Six times in my life." Luckily for the young man, his opera-company colleagues Stretton, Swan, Harrison, and Brough all came to the rescue. In the subsequent discussion with his potential assailant, Reiff discovered that the underlying basis for the dispute had been his challenger's animosity towards foreigners. "The Colonel," he wrote, began to lecture him

> about the Customs in the Country (quite a crowd being now about us and he evidently taking me for an Englishman). [He] said [that] he was a New Yorker by birth. He was quite nonplussed when I told him that I was a native of New York--and as good an American as he was. (Reiff, 14 January)

Eighteen days after they left Louisville (for a trip that, on the average, took slightly over five) the Thomas Swan--and the opera company--finally landed back in civilization at New Orleans.[22] The Daily Picayune heralded their arrival:

> THE PYNE TROUPE ARRIVED.--By the "Thomas Swan," from Louisville, detained by the ice ten days over her time, there arrived here this morning our old friend Brough, with the whole of the celebrated operatic troupe, of which Miss Louisa Pyne . . . is the prima donna. . . . Our welcome friend Brough tells us that the troupe open at the St. Charles theatre on Thursday evening, either in the "Crown Diamonds" of Auber, or the "Bohemian Girl" of Balfe. Their stay with us will probably extend through three weeks to come, during which several of the most popular and favorite English operas will be produced in the most attractive style. (Daily Picayune, 23 January 1856)

This was the troupe's first visit to New Orleans, and they were welcomed with open arms. "The lovers of truly good music, rendered in the vernacular," commented the Daily Picayune,

> have now a 'feast of fat things' provided for them, in the engagement of the Pynes and Messrs Harrison and Stretton, at the St. Charles theatre. Never, since the days of the Woods, have we had so perfect an English troupe of opera singers as this. (25 January 1856)

The company's reception in America's southern operatic capital apparently was even more ebullient than it had been in New York. The enthusiasm of New Orleanians for opera of all kinds and languages had not diminished in the 1850s, and audiences--especially of the English-language theatres in the city's American sector--were still extremely

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22. Information on travel time is from Erik F. Haites, James Mak, and Gary M. Walton, Western River Transportation: The Era of Early Internal Development, 1810-1860 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 68.

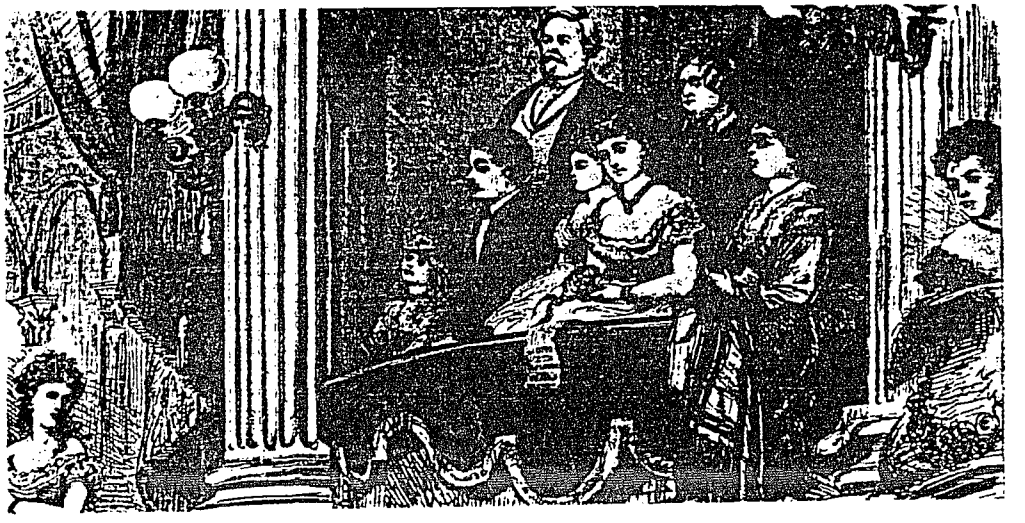
diverse socially. The company attracted houses that were described as "full and fashionable"; as usual, however, this description gives a false impression, for according to historian Joseph Roppolo, "the ladies, the gentlemen, and the distinguished visitors" of New Orleans audiences "formed only a thin circle of elegance between the masses in the pit and the galleries."[23] Profit-conscious theatre managers catered increasingly in the 1850s to the tastes of all of New Orleans society; as one theatre historian explained, Benedict DeBar (the manager of the St. Charles) made sure to "dot his seasons with light musical entertainments, opera, melodrama, spectacles, ballet, and variety fare in order to appeal to a wide spectrum of the New Orleans populace." (C. Alex Pinkston, jr., "St. Charles Theatre Stock Company," ATC, 437) The audiences attracted by this varied fare to the St. Charles, wrote Roppolo, "were as diverse, representative, and romantic as the city of New Orleans itself." In addition to the fashionable and elite, the audiences included

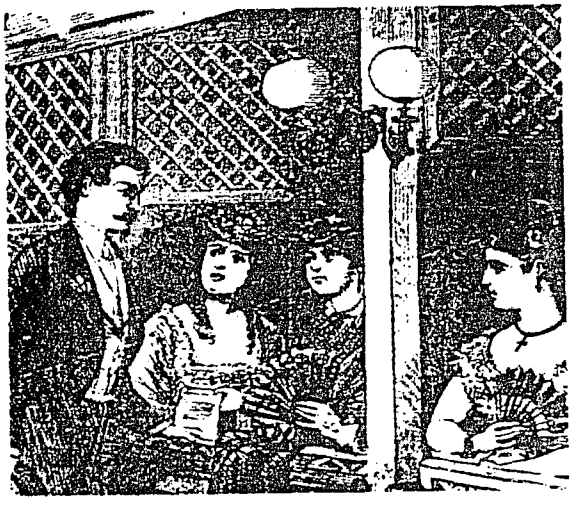
> segments of the French, Spanish, Italian, German, Negro, and American populations; they included the housewives, clerks, salesmen, shopkeepers, prostitutes, vagabonds, and drunks; and they included the colorful (and often profane) longshoremen and steamboaters, the quadroons (usually in boxes of their own and frequently more glittering than the ladies), and the slaves, male and female, armed with passes from their masters so they could ignore the eight o'clock curfew cannon. (Roppolo, 126)

The Pyne and Harrison Company packed them all in. "The box office at the St. Charles theatre," reported the Picayune,

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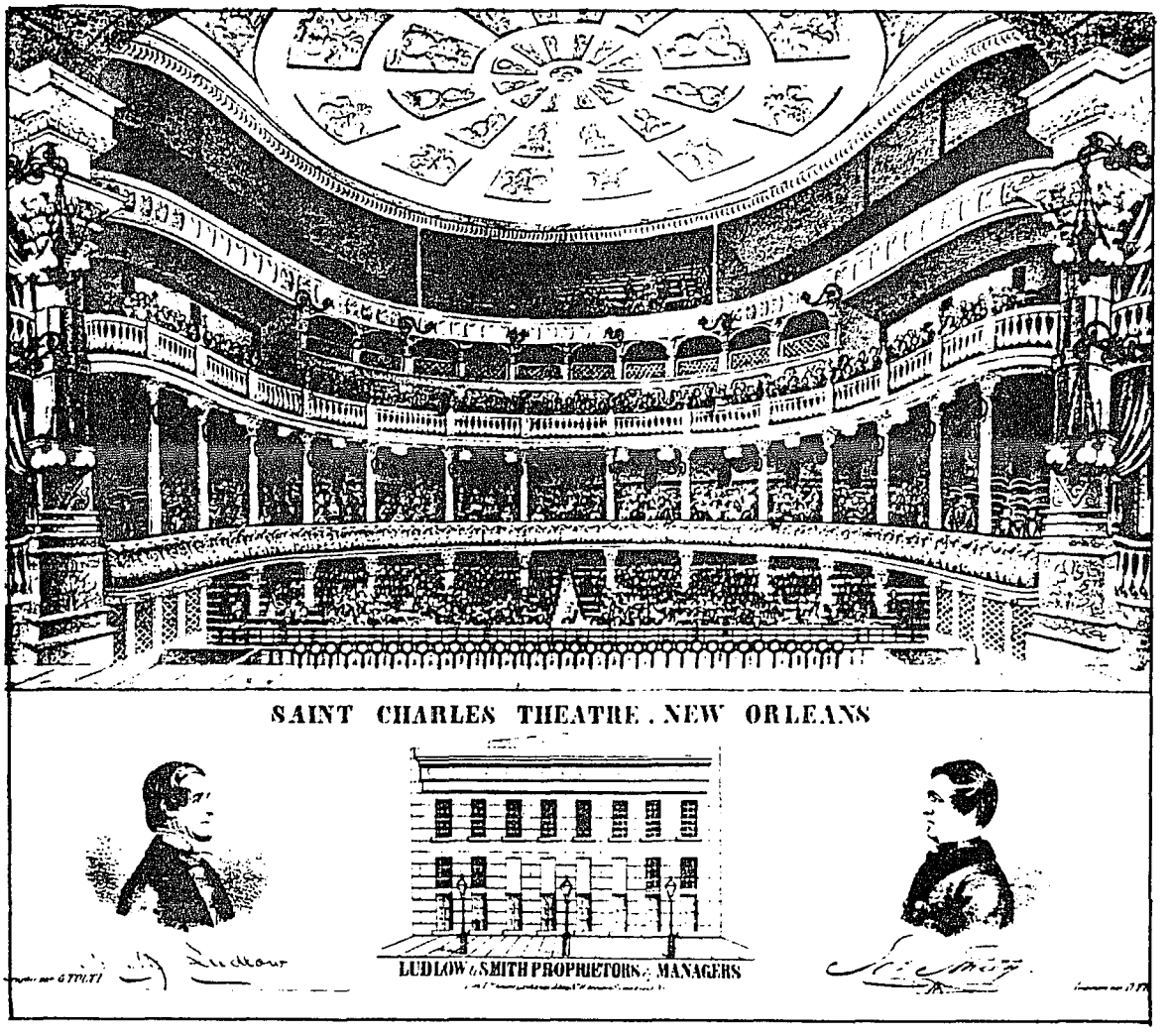
23. Daily Picayune, 8 February 1856; Joseph Patrick Roppolo, "Audiences in New Orleans Theatre, 1845-1861" (Tulane Studies in English, volume II. New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1950), 125.







Audience scenes from the French Opera House in New Orleans: top: "A Creole Family at the Opera"; left middle: the "Loges Grillées"; left bottom: "The Negro Gallery."



Interior of the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans.

> was yesterday besieged from the moment of its opening until its close, by people anxious to obtain seats for the first performance of 'Cinderella,' by the Pyne troupe; and at night the house was crowded from pit to ceiling. (Daily Picayune, 31 January 1856)

In addition to Cinderella (which they performed six times), the company also mounted The Crown Diamonds, Maritana, The Bohemian Girl, La Sonnambula, and The Daughter of the Regiment over the course of fourteen performances. As usual, a farce was given by the stock company as a part of each evening's performance.[24]

By now it should be apparent that the repertory performed by the Pyne and Harrison Company--at least on this tour--was rather circumscribed. According to reports published shortly after their arrival in the United States, the English singers were to appear in some thirty different operas during their visit to this country; in reality, however, this estimate was somewhat high. (NYMR, 12 October 1854, 355) Over the course of their three years in the United States the Pynes and Harrison sang in twenty-two operas: English-language works by William Vincent Wallace (Maritana), Michael Balfe (Daughter of St. Mark, The Bohemian Girl, and Rose of Castile), John Baldwin Buckstone (Queen of a Day), John Barnett (The Mountain Sylph), Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (Guy Mannering), and George Frederick Bristow (Rip van Winkle), and the ballad opera, The Beggar's Opera, as well as works in translation by Auber (Fra Diavolo, Masaniello, and The Crown Diamonds), Halévy (Le val d'Andorre, as The Valley of Andorre), Bellini (Sonnambula), Rossini (Cinderella and The Barber of Seville), Donizetti (The

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24. Beatrice L. Nugent. "Benedict DeBar's Management of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1853-1861" (Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1967), 70-71.

Daughter of the Regiment, The Love Spell, and Lucia di Lammermoor, as Lucy of Lammermoor), Mozart (Le Nozze di Figaro, as The Marriage of Figaro), Flotow (Martha), and Victor Massé (Les Noces de Jeanette, as The Marriage of Jeanette). As Table 20 indicates, during the 1855-56 tour the company used only eleven of these operas as their "warhorses." Of these they relied overwhelmingly on six: Sonnambula and The Daughter of the Regiment (twelve performances each), Maritana (thirteen), The Bohemian Girl (fourteen), The Crown Diamonds (fifteen), and Cinderella (twenty-seven); out of a total of 108 opera performances, 93 (87%) were of these half-dozen works. Italian operas were still unquestionably the favorite of Americans: 59--or precisely half--of the performances on the company's 1855-56 tour were of Italian works. It is also obvious that Sonnambula and (especially) Cinderella, both of which had been perennial favorites with American audiences for over twenty years, were still crowd-pleasers in the mid-1850s.

The Pyne and Harrison troupe mounted a reasonable number of English operas on this tour, but it is clear that a majority of their repertory was "opera with English words." (NYMR, 19 May 1855, 165) Their performance of adaptations and translations--and their success in doing so--added fuel to the continuing conflict in the American musical press over opera in English versus opera in the original language. Most "so-called English opera troupes," groused one critic, perform only "effusions of Auber, Bellini, and Donizetti, wedded to English words." (MG, 30 December 1854, 59) Another journalist was more vehement. "When professing to give us English opera," he complained in 1854, "why not give it, instead of treating us to French opera, and Italian opera,

with balderdash translations?" (NYMR, 23 November 1854, 402) Some critics, as mentioned in Chapter 5, expressed the opinion that it was unwise for English companies to perform adaptations of Italian operas that were already familiar to American audiences in the original language, for by doing so their performances "suffered . . . from comparison with great [Italian] artists with whose rendition of [these operas] the New York public are so familiar." (NYMR, 23 November 1854, 402)

A number of critics who protested the English-opera repertory of adaptations and translations did so on more pragmatic grounds. The Musical Review complained in October 1854 that Louisa Pyne's pronunciation, "like most English singers . . . is indistinct," and the Musical Gazette agreed. (MR&CA, 12 October 1854, 355) "Miss Louisa's pronunciation," wrote a critic for that periodical, "is very disagreeable, [for] we find it impossible to catch more than a word or two here or there, either in her recitative, dialogue, or cavatina." (MG, 23 December 1854, 51) Even some critics who welcomed English translations complained of this problem. A journalist in Washington expressed delight that the Pyne and Harrison troupe's performances there would "afford our citizens an excellent opportunity to hear the 'gems of the great masters' warbled in the English tongue." (National Intelligencer, 14 April 1856) After a performance of The Barber of Seville, however, he admitted disappointment. "It is exceedingly difficult to adopt the remarkably rapid music of this opera to expression in English," he wrote. "The notes are nearly all very vivacious, following each other so rapidly as to make it utterly impossible for any singer to utter them in English words so as to be comprehended." (National Intelligencer, 21 April 1856) Another reviewer

was more blunt. "The greatest farce in modern days," he wrote, "is the English opera; for were it not so written down, from all I heard last evening, the opera might as well have been sung in 'illigant Irish,' or the pure Choctaw." (Spirit, 14 August 1847, 296)

Despite the numerous complaints, opera in English was welcomed by many--especially those who lived away from the urban centers. "The people demand [translated] operas," wrote a critic for the Spirit in 1847, "and care not about hearing them in any other language but the vernacular; they want to listen understandingly to the story, and get all, or at least as much of the original music as can be adapted to English words." (Spirit, 21 August 1847, 308) That this general sentiment had not changed by the mid-1850s is demonstrated clearly by the success of the Pyne and Harrison troupe; as the Musical World pointed out in 1859, "English opera is popular with a large class of our citizens." (MW, 4 June 1859, 3)

English Adaptations in the Pyne Company Repertory

The adaptors of operas to the English stage during the first half of the nineteenth century tended to be musicians connected with the theatre. The adapted works in the Pyne Company repertory, in fact, represent the efforts of a large number of British musicians, many of whom had some association with the London stage.[25] But the adaptation of foreign-

25. The lesser-known among these musicians were William Hawes (1785-1846), musical director of the English Opera House in the 1820s; Henry Brinley Richards (1819-1885), prominent nineteenth-century English pianist; T. H. Reynoldson; George A. A'Beckett; Thomas Attwood (1765-1838), English organist and prolific composer of operas; W. McGregor Logan; and Thomas Simpson Cooke (1782-1848), singer, music director and conductor of the orchestra at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres and later musical manager of Vauxhall Gardens. See: W. H. Husk/Bernard Rainbow, "William Hawes"; Owain Edwards, "Henry Brinley Richards"; Nicholas Temperley, "Thomas Attwood"; and Bruce Carr, "Thomas Simpson Cooke," all in NG.

language operas for English-speaking audiences was not limited to musicians residing in the British Isles; it was a commonplace activity on this side of the Atlantic as well. Theatre orchestra directors, opera company managers, and even some performers constantly tinkered with versions of their favorite operas, tailoring them to suit their own needs or the needs of their companies. For example, Charles Edward Horn, whom we met in Chapter 1, served as the musical director at the Park Theatre in New York in the 1830s, during which time he made adaptations of Rossini's La Cenerentola and Mozart's Der Zauberflöte.[26] Anna Bishop's manager and companion Bochsa also tried his hand at arranging: in the soprano's repertory was an opera titled Judith, which was described as a potpourri of selections from Verdi's operas, "as assembled by Bochsa." (Saroni's, 10 August 1850, 543) Furthermore, the Spirit reported in 1852 that a newly formed Anna Bishop Opera Company planned to mount a production of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, "the whole opera [as] arranged by the indefatigable Bochsa, to suit the English version." (Spirit, 16 October 1852, 420) Thomas Comer (1790-1862), who for many years was the music director and orchestra leader of the Boston Theatre, made an arrangement of La Cenerentola that was performed there in December of 1850; Henry Drayton, later the manager of the Drayton Parlor Opera Company, arranged Halévy's La Juive for a performance in 1854; George Loder (1816-1868), a conductor of various American theatre orchestras and later musical director for the Anna Bishop and Lyster companies, arranged Auber's L'Ambassadrice for a performance in New York in 1851; and the vocal-star John Wilson made an arrangement of Adolphe Adam's The

26. Horn also made a number of other adaptations while he was still in England. See Temperley, "Horn," AG and Edward Ellsworth Hipsher, American Opera and its Composers (Philadelphia: Presser, 1927), 31.

Postillion of Longjumeau in the 1830s.[27] As we have seen, Henry Horncastle made at least one operatic adaptation (of Auber's La Bayadere, cf. Chapter 1), and The Beggar's Opera as performed by the Pyne and Harrison Company was "adapted to the Modern Stage by Mr. W. Harrison" himself.[28]

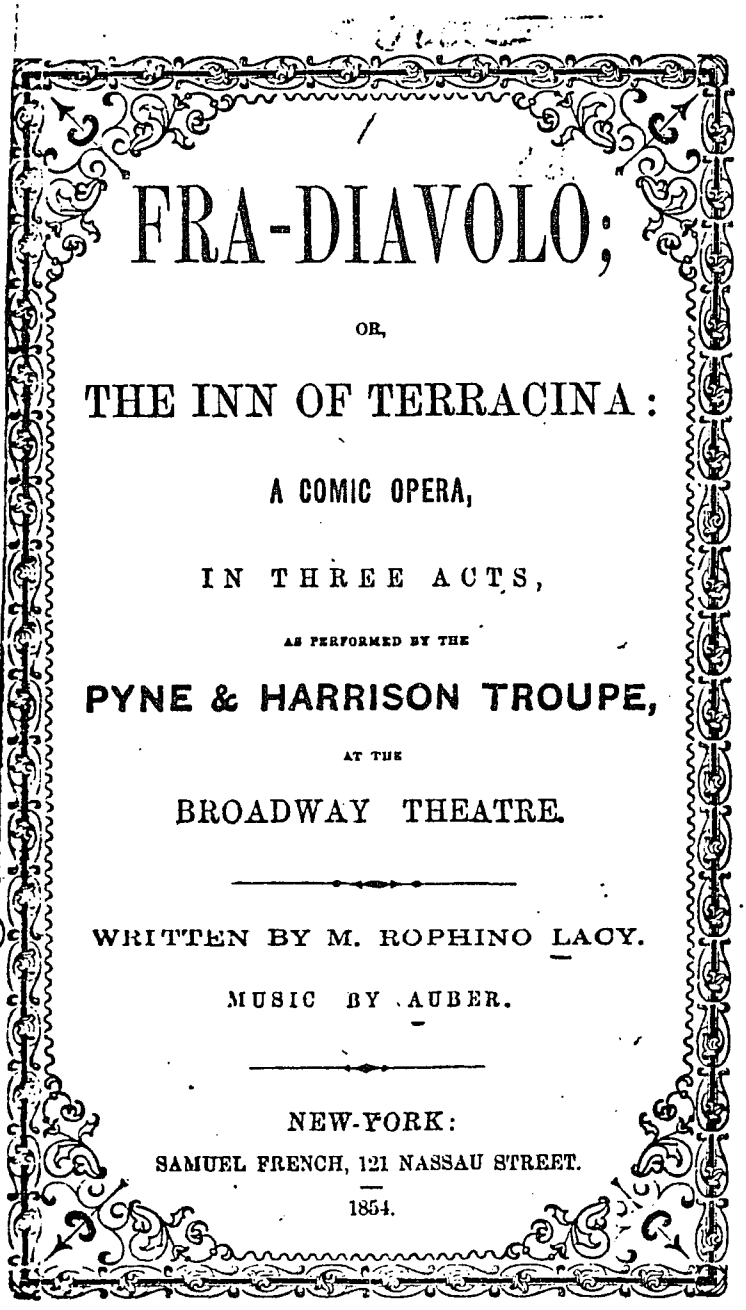
By far the two most important adaptors of works for the English--and American--stage during this period were the British musicians Michael Rophino Lacy and Sir Henry Rowley Bishop. Lacy (1795-1867), a violinist, playwright, actor, and leader of the ballet orchestra at the King's Theatre in London, was responsible for the adapted versions of numerous operas, including Ivanhoé (by Rossini), Il Turco in Italia, Der Freischütz, The Israelites in Egypt, La Sonnambula, and Lucia di Lammermoor. (W. H. Husk/Bruce Carr, "Michael Rophino Lacy," NG; Lawrence, 335) Better known, however, were his versions of Auber's Fra Diavolo and Rossini's La Cenerentola, which he renamed Cinderella; or, the Fairy Queen and the Little Glass Slipper.[29] Published libretti and newspaper advertisements for the latter two works confirm that they were the versions used by the Pyne and Harrison Company during their American

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27. Playbill, Boston Theatre, December [?] 1850, GA/MWA; Loewenberg, col. 766; Nicholas Temperley, "George Loder," NG, Lydia Miller Middleton, "George Loder," DNB, and Loewenberg, col. 786; Lawrence, 99.

28. Playbill, Holliday St. Theatre, 26 November 1855, MdHi. Harrison also adapted Victor Massé's Les noces de Jeanette for a performance in New York by his company in April 1855. See Loewenberg, col. 905. It is worth noting that the adaptation that William Henry Fry and his brother Joseph made of Bellini's Norma in 1840 was of an entirely different breed from the usual. Fry's intention was simply to translate the work, not to adapt it to the popular stage. Consequently, he followed Bellini's music quite closely, made no cuts, and added no extraneous music. See Upton, Fry, 25-27.

29. "Lacy's Version of Cinderella, and the Lyric Drama," [signed "B."], Mirror, 19 February 1831, 259.



Title page from the libretto to Rophino Lacy's adaptation of Auber's Fra Diavolo, as performed by the Pyne and Harrison Company.

tour.[30] Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855), the dominant theatrical composer in England during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, served at various times as the director of music at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres. He had a hand in some 125 works presented on the London stage between 1805 and 1840; of these, some 25 were adaptations, including John of Paris, The Libertine (after Mozart's Don Giovanni), The Barber of Seville, The Marriage of Figaro, Der Freischütz, William Tell, and La Sonnambula.[31] Bishop's well-known and easily obtained versions of these operas were used by many of the English opera troupes--including the Pyne and Harrison Company--that were active in the United States during the antebellum period.[32]

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Italian and French operas, when translated and adapted for the English stage, were essentially transformed into English comic operas. Recitative was replaced with spoken dialogue. Solos, duets, and some choruses were acceptable, but long concerted pieces often were replaced with shorter, simpler songs, sometimes strophic. A song that could be published separately as a piece of sheet music, with the tag "as sung by the celebrated [favorite prima donna] to immense applause at [famous] theatre" was a favored solution. Adaptors sometimes

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30. "Fra-Diavolo; or The Inn of Terracina . . . as performed by the Pyne and Harrison Troupe, at the Broadway Theatre . . . by M. Rophino Lacy" (New York: French, 1854); "Cinderella; or the Fairy [Queen] and Little Glass Slipper . . . as performed by the Pyne and Harrison Troupe at the Broadway Theatre" (New York: French, 1855) Copies of these libretti are in the collections of the Music Division, DLC and the Museum of the City of New York, respectively. See also the advertisement for a performance of Cinderella in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, 30 January 1856.

31. Temperley, "Henry Rowley Bishop," NG; Bruce Carr, "Theatre Music: 1800-1834," in Temperley, The Romantic Age, 290-291; Carr, work-list, "Henry Rowley Bishop," NG.

32. There are a large number of libretti to Bishop's adaptations in the collections of various archives and libraries in the United States.

added music and dances not in the original score, and occasionally tinkered with the text itself. What changes were made, of course, depended to a great extent on the opera--but the end result was closer to a play with many songs and ensemble numbers than to an opera as performed at La Scala, the Royal Italian Opera in London, or the Astor Place Opera House in New York.[33]

Henry Bishop's adaptations utilized music by the original composer of the opera (changed and unchanged), music by other composers, and pieces of his own composition. He automatically turned the recitative into spoken dialogue. This, however, should not be considered a simplification or a technique of "adaptation," for it was a perfectly normal change under the prevailing theatrical conventions; furthermore, it did not significantly alter the musical content of the work. In his adaptation of The Marriage of Figaro, Bishop added ten songs and six dances of his own composition. He also introduced a character (Fiorello from Rossini's Barber of Seville) to sing Almaviva's music, for the actor engaged for the part of the Count at the Covent Garden première was not a singer. (Northcott, 33, 48) The alterations that Bishop made to Don Giovanni, on the other hand, consisted primarily of modifications to Mozart's music, omission of some numbers (especially the complex finales), and shuffling of the order. The first act of Bishop's version, as illustration, is arranged as follows:

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33. It might be worth pointing out that many eighteenth and nineteenth century operas were originally plays--which, under the theatrical conventions of the time, were performed with generous amounts of music. The operatic adaptations by Lacy, Bishop, and their compatriots, then, can be thought of as plays regenerated from operas. The "reclaimed" dramatic works, however, had more of the characteristics of the latter than the former, for they included significantly more (and higher quality) music than had the original versions.

Overture (Overture to Don Giovanni)

1. Come shining forth my dearest (Deh vieni alla finestra)
   Canzonetta (Don Giovanni)
   (from Mozart's DG, number 16, from Act II)

2. Leave me, forever leave me (Fuggi, crudele, fuggi!)
   Duet (Donna Anna and Don Octavio)
   (DG, No. 2)

3. Pretty lasses lover's summer remember (Giovinette, che fatte all'amore)
   Zerlina, Masetto, chorus
   (DG, No. 5)

4. Now place your hand in mind, dear (La ci darem la mano)
   Duet (Zerlina and Don Giovanni)
   (DG, No. 7)

5. Pray behold, ma'am (Madamina, il catalogo è questo)
   Leporello
   (DG, No. 4)

6. Strangers, pray this way bend you
   Leporello, Donna Anna, Donna Maria, Don Octavio
   (from the minuet in DG, No. 14)

7. Chide me, chide me, dear Masetto (Batti, batti)
   Zerlina
   (DG, No. 13)

8. Tremble, traitor! (Trema, trema, scelerato)
   septetto
   (from DG, No. 14)

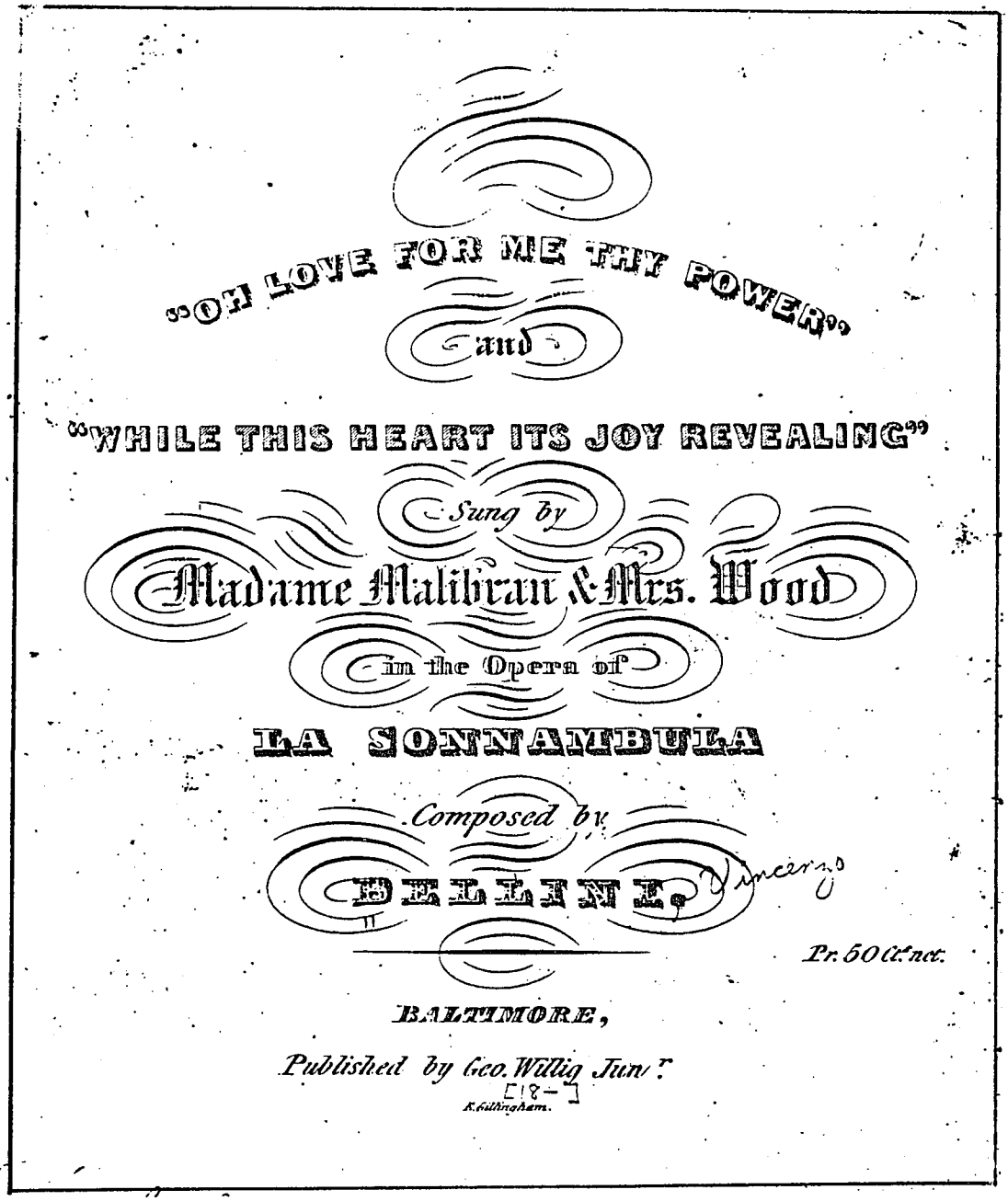
It should be obvious that in Bishop's version there was much less music than in Mozart's; the complex finales, furthermore, has been eliminated. Bishop also inserted into his second act a duet from Die Zauberflöte--"The purest flame this bosom warming" ("Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen").[34]

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34. Northcott, 33. The numbers of Mozart's opera are as in the C. F. Peters edition, as reprinted by Dover, 1974. I am much indebted to Bruce Carr of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for sharing with me information on Bishop's version of Don Giovanni. Carr examined Bishop's score at the British Museum while working on a dissertation (in progress) titled "The Theatrical Music of Sir Henry Rowley Bishop."

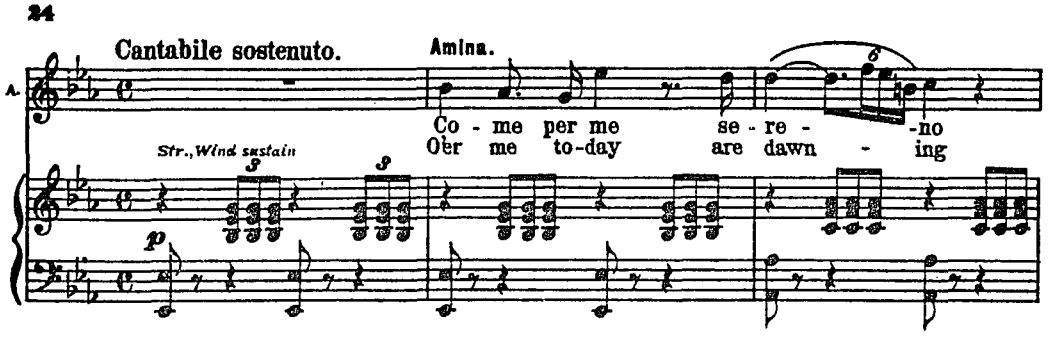
In his adaptations, Bishop apparently left the original composer's music intact whenever possible. This was true even for sheet music publications of arias that were intended for purchase by the general public. An example is his treatment of Scene 3 of Bellini's La Sonnambula. The scene commences with a recitative ("Care compagne"), then proceeds to an aria ("Come per me serena") that is followed by the cabaletta-like "Sovra il sen la man mi posa"; both of the latter are sung by the character Amina. The soprano's two sections are separated by a chorus ("Sempre, o felice"); she is also supported by the chorus during the cabaletta. For sheet-music purposes, this scene consisted of two songs separated by a chorus, and this is precisely how Bishop dealt with the work: the recitative is omitted, the first cavatina is treated as a separate song, "Oh Love Me for Thy Power," and the second becomes another song, "While the Heart Its Joy Revealing." Each of the songs was published separately, and together as a scena; in the latter version the two are connected by a piano interlude for which Bishop used the accompaniment to the choral section. What is interesting about Bishop's "adaptation" is that the music is almost identical with Bellini's. Bishop transposed the songs into a key that was lower and easier to play (F major, from the original A-flat major); aside from that, however, the melody is all Bellini's: it is not "simplified" at all. (See Example 10 for a comparison of Bishop's version with a modern piano-vocal score.)[35]

35. "Oh Love for Me Thy Power" and "While This Heart Its Joy Revealing" as Sung by Madame Malibran & Mrs. Wood in the Opera of La Sonnambula (Baltimore: Geo. Willig Jr., n.d.) and Vincenzo Bellini, La Sonnambula (New York: G. Schirmer, 1901). The published version of the scena does not mention Bishop, but the two songs, as "adapted by Henry Bishop" were published individually (Philadelphia: Fiot, Meignan & Co., n.d.); these versions are identical to those published as the scena. All the sheet music examples are from the Music Division, DLC. The modern piano-vocal version is used with permission from G. Schirmer, New York.
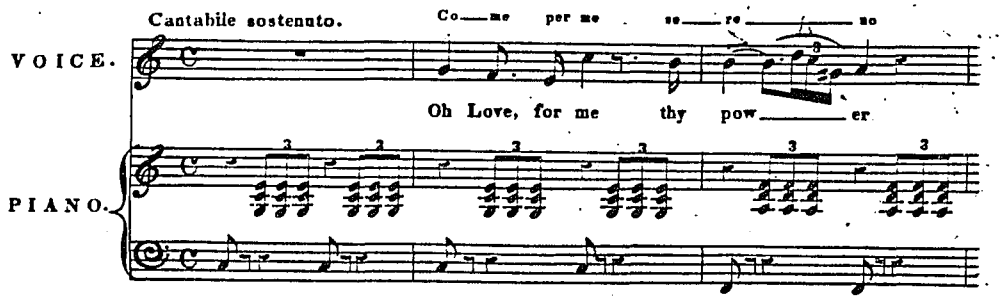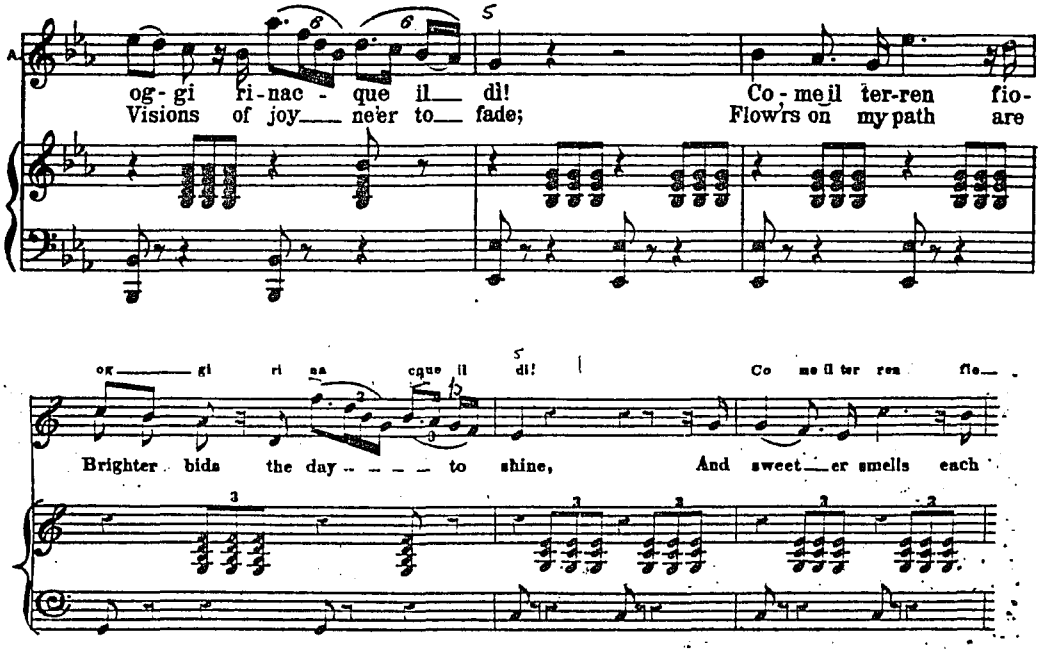


Example 10. A comparison of Bellini's aria "Come per me serena" from Act I, Scene 3 of La Sonnambula with the "adapted" version by Henry Rowley Bishop. The Bishop version was published in sheet-music form as a scena: "Oh Love Me for Thy Power" and the subsequent cabaletta, "While This Heart Its Joy Revealing" ("Sovra il sen la man mi posa"). Bishop used the accompaniment to the intervening chorus to make the transition from the aria to the cabaletta. "Come per me serena" is given in its entirety; only the first several measures of the intervening chorus (or piano) is provided. The modern piano-vocal score is used by permission of G. Schirmer Publishers, New York.
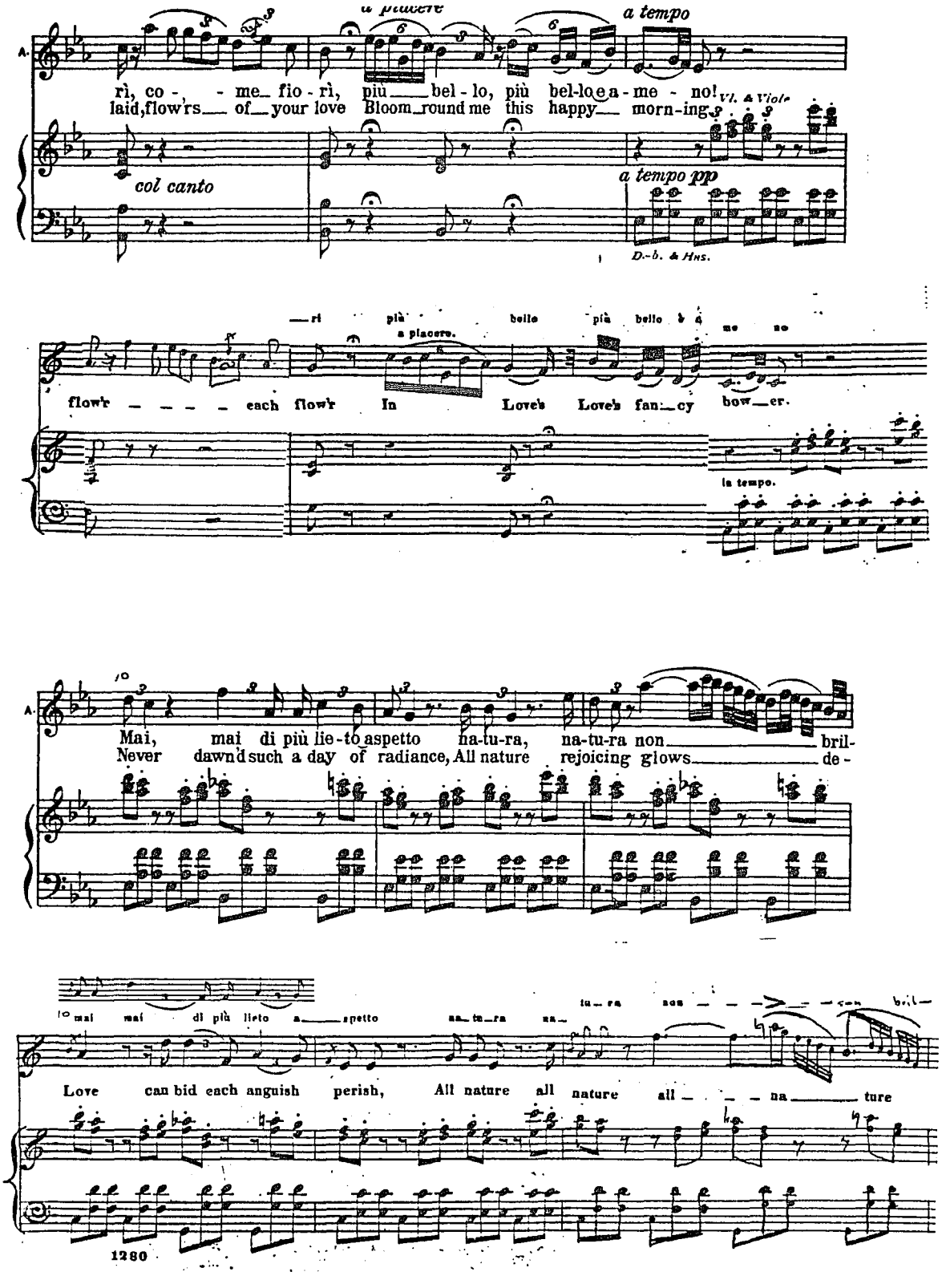
Modern edition:
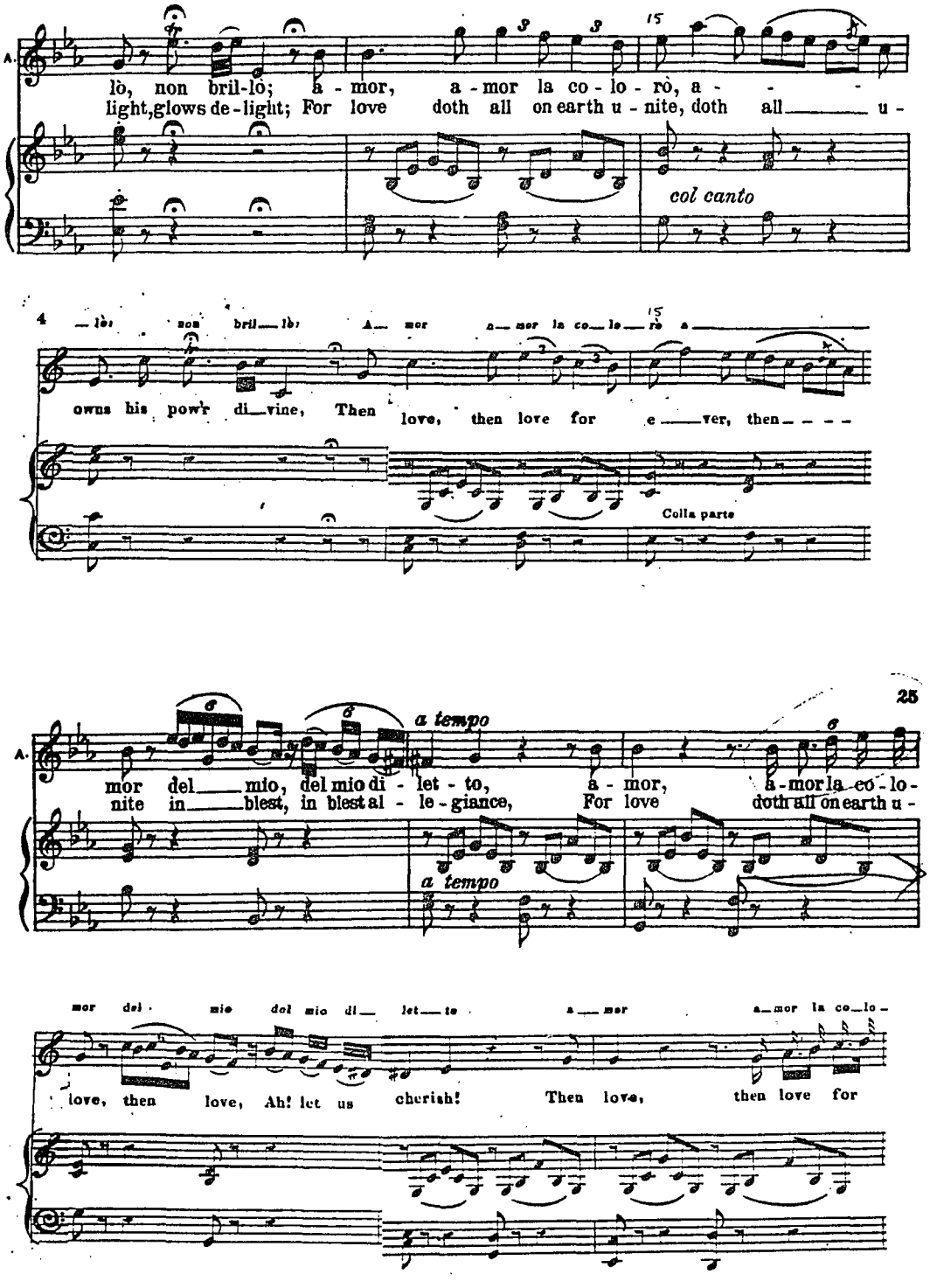


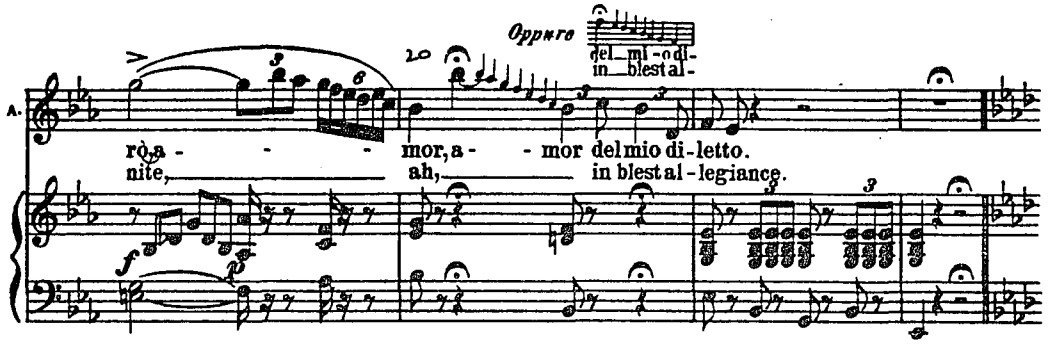
Bishop's version:
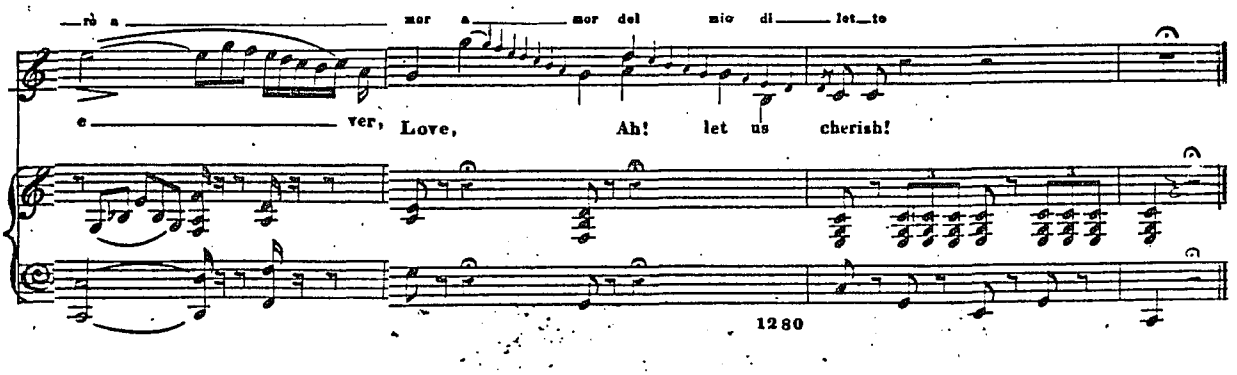


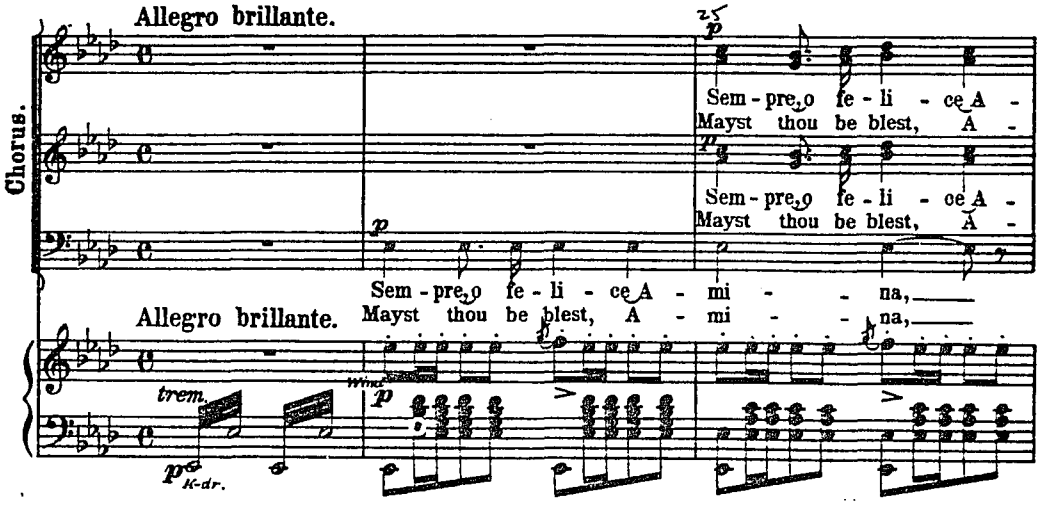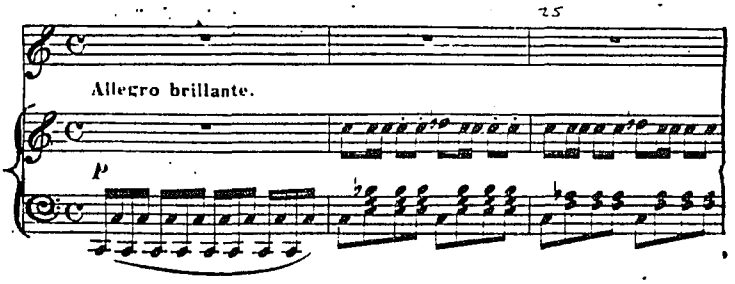



a piacere
a tempo
rì, co - - me fio - rì, più bel - lo, più bel-lo e a - me - no!
laid, flow'rs of your love Bloom round me this happy morn-ing.
Vl. & Viole
col canto
a tempo pp
D.-b. & Hns.
flow'r - - - - each flow'r In Love's Love's fan:cy bow—er.
a piacere.
belle più bello
In tempo.
Mai, mai di più lie-to aspetto na-tu-ra, na-tu-ra non bril-
Never dawn'd such a day of radiance, All nature rejoicing glows de-
Love can bid each anguish perish, All nature all nature all na ture
1280


A.
lò, non bril-lò; a - mor, a - mor la co - lo - rò, a - - -
light, glows de-light; For love doth all on earth u - nite, doth all u -
col canto
owns his pow'r di-vine, Then love, then love for e - ver, then - - - -
Colla parte
A.
mor del mio, del mio di - let - to, a - mor, a - mor la co - lo -
nite in blest, in blest al - le - giance, For love doth all on earth u -
a tempo
a tempo
25
mor del mio del mio di - let - to a - mor a - mor la co - lo -
love, then love, Ah! let us cherish! Then love, then love for


A.
Oppure
del mi - o di -
in blest al -
rò a - - - mor, a - - mor del mio di - letto.
nite, ah, in blest al - legiance.


rò a mor a mor del mio di let te
e ver, Love, Ah! let us cherish!
1280


Allegro brillante.
Chorus.
Sem - pre, o fe - li - ce A -
Mayst thou be blest, A -
Sem - pre, o fe - li - ce A -
Mayst thou be blest, A -
Sem - pre, o fe - li - ce A - mi - - na,
Allegro brillante. Mayst thou be blest, A - mi - - na,
trem.
K-dr.


Allegro brillante.

Rophino Lacy's version of Fra Diavolo, as another example of an adaptation, is fairly close to the original. Opéra comique, of course, lent itself well to translation: the original versions had spoken dialogue rather than recitative, and the airs were more "tuneful" and less florid than the arias of Italian bel canto opera. Lacy left the plot almost unchanged in Fra Diavolo and used most of Auber's music, although he evidently substituted shorter works for the several extended ensembles (the three finales) in the original. His sheet-music publications of some of the numbers, however--like the Bishop example discussed above--are almost identical with Auber's versions. A note-by-note comparison of a nineteenth-century publication of one aria, "On Yonder Rock Reclining" ("Voyez sur cette roche") with a modern piano-vocal score reveals less than a dozen insignificant changes in the popular tenor romanza; all of the modifications, furthermore, are in the piano accompaniment. The song itself is completely unaltered.[36]

Lacy's Cinderella, or the Fairy Queen and the Little Glass Slipper, on the other hand, is vastly different from Rossini's La Cenerentola in both text and music.[37] Rossini's libretto omits two of the elements most familiar in the old fairy tale--the fairy godmother and the glass slipper--substituting an advisor to the Prince for the former and a bracelet for the latter. Lacy's version keeps the prince's advisor, reinstates the godmother (now called the Fairy Queen), and returns the glass slipper to

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36. "On Yonder Rock Reclining," published as one number in Select Pieces from Auber's Popular Opera Fra Diavolo, as Sung by the Pyne Opera Troupe. (Cincinnati: W. C. Peters & Sons, n.d.) and Auber, Fra Diavolo (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1925).

37. Much of the following information on Cinderella is from the previously cited paper by John Graziano.

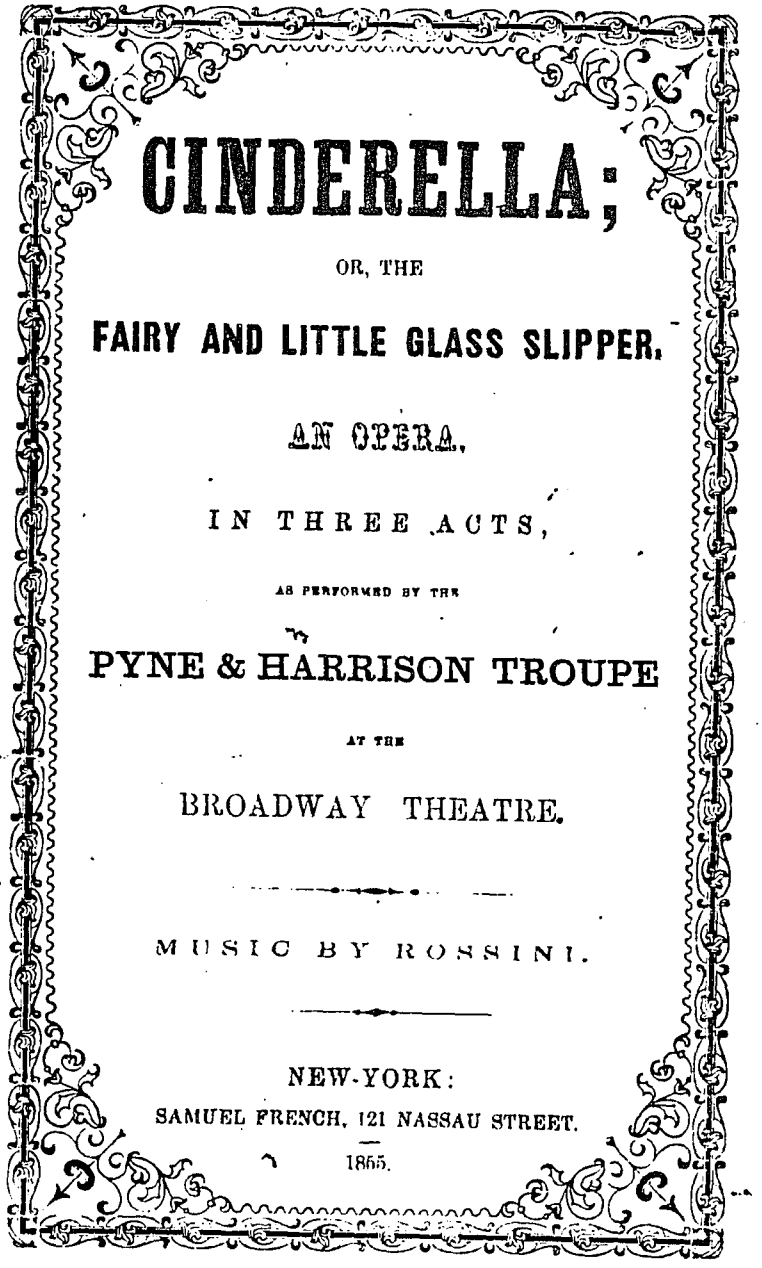
its place of prominence; he astutely drew attention to these alterations by the subtitle he added to his work. (Graziano, 1, 5)

Cinderella, as we have seen, was immensely popular with the American public, and was sung for decades all over the country. Although some companies later altered even Lacy's version (dropping some of the ensemble pieces and interpolating different songs), others continued to use his adaptation, unaltered, as late as the mid-1860s.[38] Cinderella was far better known to American opera-goers than was La Cenerentola; furthermore, it was better liked, even by some members of the musical elite. When Marietta Alboni's Opera Company mounted a production of La Cenerentola in Boston in 1853, for example, no less a musical luminary than John Dwight complained:

> The plot of this Rossini 'Cenerentola' was extremely meagre; it was emptied of all the charm of the nursery story; it had not even half the interest of the English version of Rophino Lacy; we missed the pieces of fine music which he combined into it from other operas, and which form the most abiding charm of the thing as we remember it in the days of the Woods and the Seguins. (Dwight's, 5 February 1853, 143)

The "pieces of fine music" to which Dwight alludes represent Lacy's other abiding change in Cenerentola. Because of the alterations he had introduced in the characters and the plot, the British composer had to find or write additional music. He kept as many of the Cenerentola numbers as possible; although little of Rossini's version remains in Lacy's Act III, his Acts I and II retain much of the original music. For

38. Charles Hamm compared a libretto of Cinderella used by the Caroline Richings Opera Company in 1867 to Lacy's original and discovered that the two were precisely the same. Hamm, Yesterdays, 72.



Title page from Rophino Lacy's version of Cinderella, as performed by the Pyne and Harrison Company.



NIBLO'S GARDEN

Monday, Sept. 3d, 1855,

THE

PYNE

AND

HARRISON

COMPANY.

In Donizetti's Comic Opera, in 2 acts,

DAUGHTER

OF THE

REGIMENT

MARIE, Vivandiere of the Regiment
MISS LOUISA PYNE

MARCHIONESS de BERKENFIELD
.....MISS PYNE

SERJEANT SULPIZIO.... MR. BORRANI

HORTENSIUS, Intendant to the Marchioness
MR. HOLMAN

Corporal Spontine.... } of the 23d. } Mr. Chambers
Corporal Grenadi .... } .....Mr. Hayes
Notary.....Mr. Paul
First Peasant .....Mr. Jones

TONIO------ MR. W. HARRISON

Ladies, Gentlemen, Soldiers of the 23d,
Peasants, Servants, &c

The action is in the Tyrol, during the period of its invasion by the French.

Act I. Mountain Pass overlooking the Plains,
Act II. A Splendid Saloon in the Chateau of the Marchioness de Berkenfeld

Between the 1st and 2nd acts an intermission of 20 minutes will be given for Promenade.

Books of the Opera for sale in the Garden.

NO FREE LIST

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Tickets - - Fifty Cents

The only Seats that can be secured in advance, are

Orchestra Seats.....One Dollar Each
Private Boxes.....Five Dollars Each

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Doors open at seven: Performances commence at 8.
Curtain will rise at eight o'clock precisely

Tuesday, Bellini's Grand Opera of

Sonnambula

By the Harrison Opera Company

Due notice will be given of the next performance of the Grand Romantic Opera of

CINDERELLA

Playbill from a Pyne and Harrison performance of The Daughter of the Regiment at Niblo's Garden in New York, 3 September 1855. At the bottom of the playbill the troupe advertised future performances of two of their most popular works, La Sonnambula and Cinderella.

the other numbers, however, Lacy chose a variety of arias from other operas by Rossini: Maometto, Armida, and Guillaume Tell. His version, then, is an operatic pasticcio--but entirely of music by Rossini. (Graziano, 14 and handout)

A majority of the Pyne and Harrison Company's repertory consisted of these adaptations and translations. The troupe, however, took great pains to advertise that the operas they performed were "without abridgment or curtailment," "complete," "with the original music," or "given with the Whole of the Original Music."[39] Critics all over the country, in fact, regularly commented on this aspect of the Pyne/Harrison troupe's performances. They were contrasted favorably, for example, with unnamed "second class artists [who] emasculate" certain operas, "retaining only that portion which has suited their limited capabilities," and with other "English and Italian artists" who produce "mutilated and garbled portions" of operas.[40] Music lovers were encouraged to attend performances by the Pynes and Harrison, for their troupe supposedly presented "complete opera[s] . . . intact," and offered to the public the opportunity to hear "for . . . the first time" certain operas "without mutilation."[41] The "second class artists" mentioned by the Richmond critic may have been an oblique reference to Anna Bishop and Anna Thillon, the two most prominent English prima donnas active in the United States in the early 1850s. As we saw in Chapter 5, Bishop tended to perform disembodied scenes from

39. These quotes are taken from the following sources: playbill, Holliday Street Theatre, 19 November 1856, HTC; Richmond Enquirer, 19 April 1855; playbill, Boston Theatre, 27 November 1854, Rare Books, MB; playbill, Niblo's Garden Theatre, 21 September 55, GA/MWA.

40. Richmond Enquirer, 26 April 1856; Cincinnati Enquirer, 19 December 1855.

41. Cincinnati Enquirer, 19 December 1855; Washington Evening Star, 16 April 1856.

operas in her concerts; Thillon generally appeared in versions of operas that were so drastically pared-down as to be plays with songs. In comparison, the works performed by the Pyne and Harrison Company, although adapted and changed, would have seemed "intact" and "complete."

* * *

Originally scheduled for a three-week run at the St. Charles Theatre, the Pyne and Harrison Company performed there for a little over two. The singers' arrival had been delayed for over a week, and the theatre's manager Benedict DeBar did what he could to accommodate them. He had contracts of his own to honor, however, and the next performer--the actor James K. Murdoch--was scheduled to commence his engagement on 9 February. (Kendall, 305; Daily Picayune, 9 February 1856) The company's success in opera-happy New Orleans had been so great (one scholar of the New Orleans stage called their engagement "an outstanding attraction," and their performances of Cinderella an "overwhelming success"), that the singers were reluctant to leave. (Nugent, 100, 102) The other English theatre in town, the Gaiety, was a variety house that offered fare (including comedy, vaudeville, farce, and ballet) that was deliberately chosen so as not to compete directly with the productions of the St. Charles Theatre.[42] The management of the Gaiety had recently changed hands, however, and the new actor-manager Dion Boucicault had both a redecorated theatre and a full thirty-piece orchestra at his disposal. As a consequence, although he was reluctant

42. The Gaiety, or Varieties, Theatre was operated along the lines of William Mitchell's popular and very successful Olympic Theatre in New York. In 1856 William H. Crisp took over management, renamed the house Crisp's Gaiety, and recruited Frederick Lyster, Rosalie Durand, and a number of other opera singers from New York to form the "operatic department" of his company. See Chapter 5; see also Pinkston, "Varieties Theatre Stock Company," in ATC, 501-506.

to compete with the St. Charles, when William Brough approached him about engaging the Pynes and Harrison he expressed interest--especially if the other theatre could not accommodate the company. The Gaiety, however, had available in its schedule only a portion of a week--and that was starting on 20 February, which was twelve days hence. If the singers wanted to avail themselves of the chance to mount opera for a few additional nights in New Orleans, then, they had to find something else to do in the meantime.

Brough's next move is a good example of the type of scheduling improvisation that was typical of itinerant companies. Presumably the agent shot off some telegrams to the nearest large town, Mobile, Alabama. Brough discovered that although the Mobile Theatre (and its orchestra) was booked, it was possible to engage the city's Odd Fellows' Hall for four evenings. (Mobile Daily Advertiser, 11-15 February 1856) The receipts from four concerts looked much better than the receipts from laying idle for a week, so on 6 February he left for Mobile to make arrangements for the company's appearances there. The troupe followed him two days later, travelling by rail and steamboat. (Daily Picayune, 6 February 1856; Reiff, 9 February 1856)

Mobile was an important theatre town in antebellum America, with good facilities and a reputation for supporting opera. Brough had performed there numerous times on his various travels as a singer; he was described by the local newspaper, in fact, as a "gentleman . . . well known to our musical citizens from years past." (Kendall, 85; Mobile Daily Advertiser, 8 February 1856) When the Pynes and Harrison announced that they intended to perform only in concert, the local critics expressed resigned disappointment:

> This evening the far-famed . . . Pyne and Harrison Troupe, will make their first appearance in Mobile at the Odd Fellows' Hall, in a Concert and Operatic Entertainment--the latter being selections from the well-known opera of "Sonnambula." Much as we regret that we cannot hear the entire opera (especially as we hear the present party are the best that has appeared in this country), yet, we must feel content with the installment offered to us. (Daily Advertiser, 12 February 1856)

Despite the city's reputation, Reiff was not impressed with either Mobile (he called it "a miserable dirty hole") or the hall in which the company performed, which he described as follows: "nearly square--with a small staging backed by an Arch--through the back of which the performers enter--the Hall . . . has rather too much reverberation . . . [it] will seat between Six and Seven hundred . . . there are no galleries." (Reiff, 11-12 February 1856) Reiff found the countryside, however--especially Mobile Bay--to be unlike anything he had ever seen; he marvelled at the natural beauty and constantly expressed delight at being outside in shirtsleeves in February. He also made numerous friends among the townsfolk, many of whom were eager to entertain a visiting celebrity--the orchestra conductor of the "far famed Pyne and Harrison troupe." The owner of the city's music store, according to Reiff, was "very anxious for me to come here to teach." (Reiff, 11 February 1856) While in Mobile the New Yorker also witnessed his first slave auction (which he thought "absolutely horrible") and was again mistaken for a foreigner--this time in church, by a minister who "preached a sort of Know Nothing sermon and once when he said Foreigner . . . he pointed at me."[43] (Rieff, 18, 17

43. By the early 1850s the xenophobia of American society had reached a peak of sorts with the development of the Know-Nothing movement. The genesis of this political movement was complex, but overt opposition to foreigners was a major party issue. Know-Nothings emerged as a political force around 1852; four years later the party fielded a presidential candidate in the person of

February 1856)

The four performances in Mobile were billed as "Concerts and Operatic Entertainments." Advertisements, reviews, and notices (like the one quoted above) mention only that the first half of each performance was a "concert of miscellaneous vocal music," and the second half "gems" from an opera, sung "in character costume." (Daily Advertiser) The general public crowded the hall in gratifyingly large numbers. Although some Mobilians were disappointed that the company did not mount any operas, the sentiment expressed by the editor of the Daily Advertiser--that a concert was better than nothing--evidently was shared by many. The Mobile critic, who obviously preferred to hear operatic selections in English, wrote favorably of the troupe's performances. "There was no attempt at display," he pointed out, "no assumptions of foreign manners or style--but we had the good old English all the way through." (Daily Advertiser, 15 February 1856) He sent the artists on their way back to New Orleans with "the best wishes of our musical community." (Daily Advertiser, 19 February 1856)

Half-way through their tour, the Pyne and Harrison Company was enjoying a financially successful trip: the troupe had been attracting

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Millard Fillmore who, although unsuccessful, garnered 22% of the total presidential vote.

Reiff himself expressed typically American anti-foreigner sentiments in numerous comments about French New Orleans. "Nearly every person in the Market," he wrote, "seem'd to be talking at once--the chattering of these French people--would do credit to an Army of Monkees." (Reiff, 27 January 1856) He seemed astonished that there were people living in the United States who could speak only French or German. "The children in [the French Quarter] speak French as if it was their Native Language," he marvelled, "and English an acquired one"; even the Negroes "speak French." (Reiff, 22, 23, 24 January) He attended services at the Cathedral with George Atherton one Sunday morning, but the two musicians left prematurely: "Atherton and myself presuming that possibly the Sermon would do us but little good (being in French) got disgusted with these Foreigners--and evaporated--" (Reiff, 3 February 1856)

large audiences wherever they performed. Perhaps as a reflection of this wealth, their accommodations en route--if not first class--were certainly more than adequate. The Thomas Swan, on which they had travelled to New Orleans, was a first-class steamer, and the stars of the company (if not the entire troupe) had lodged at the tony St. Charles Hotel during their stay in that city. (Daily Picayune, 23 January 1856) The singers travelled back to New Orleans from Mobile by way of "a very fine vessel," the steamer Cuba. Their luxurious state rooms, according to young Reiff, were "the most complete things of the kind I ever saw"; his was equipped with a marble-topped washstand, small sofa, chairs, two berths, and a looking glass. (Reiff, 19 February 1856) The stars--Harrison, the Pynes, Horncastle, and Stretton--usually stayed in first-class hotels, while the rest of the troupe was lodged at boarding houses; when Reiff mentioned accommodations, however, his comments were always favorable.[44] Evidently all travel and lodging details were taken care of by Brough; some of the individual musicians (but probably not the stars) were responsible for their own trunks.

Back in New Orleans, the company performed for four evenings at the Gaiety, a theatre that Reiff described as "not as wide as Niblo's but about as deep--having but Two Tiers of Boxes--[it] is beautifully filled up--good seats and well lighted." (Reiff, 23 January 1856) The admission was a uniform 75 cents to all parts of the house: the day after the troupe's opening performance the Picayune wrote that "this

44. About their Mobile lodgings, Reiff wrote: "Put up at Mrs. Ackerman's Boarding House--on St. Louis St--The House stands back from the street about fifty feet--with a fine door yard--it is three stories high--and a garret--with three verandahs in front--which can be enclosed with green blinds--the whole giving the establishment a country aspect--" See Reiff, 11 February 1856.

beautiful theatre was tested as an opera house last evening for the first time, and the result was auspicious." (Picayune, 20, 21 February 1856) After four performances, the company headed north in late February; they were already booked into the St. Louis Theatre for an engagement in March. As usual, Brough left several days earlier than the rest of the troupe.

Heading North and Back East

The trip by steamer from New Orleans to St. Louis was a long one--almost 1200 miles--and Brough intended to break it up by having the company give concerts in Natchez and Memphis. Neither town was large enough to warrant a full opera season, but cities of such size could usually be counted on to supply a large crowd for a concert or two.[45] Earlier in February, in fact, the Daily Picayune had reported that the Parodi/Strakosch concert company had just completed "a tour of most successful concerts in Baton Rouge, Vicksburg, Jackson, Natchez, &c, where, at double our New Orleans prices, they had crowded rooms every night they performed." (Picayune, 7 February 1856) The Memphis townsfolk, in fact, seemed to be intensely interested in a proposed concert by the Pynes and Harrison--especially if the sentiments expressed by the local editor are typical. On 2 March the Daily Appeal trumpeted an announcement:

> Our readers will be pleased to learn that [the] Pyne and Harrison celebrated Opera Troupe will visit our city . . .

45. In 1856 Memphis probably had a population of around 15,000; according to the 1850 census the town's population was 8,841, but by 1860 it had over 22,000 residents. Pred, 26, 94.

> We feared our city would not offer sufficient inducements to make it profitable for them to visit us, but it appears that we are, so prepare, ladies and gentlemen for the great operatic entertainment. Due notice will be given of their arrival. (Daily Appeal, 2 March 1856)

Unfortunately for Brough's well-laid plans (and fairly tight schedule), Louisa Pyne fell ill in New Orleans. The Daily Picayune announced late in the month that "Miss Louisa Pyne, the charming vocalist, remains quite ill, at the St. Charles Hotel in this city, and the troupe of which she is the chief feature are obliged, in consequence, to postpone their western engagements." (Picayune, 26 February 1856)

Feigned illness, as we have seen, was often used as a weapon by Italian vocal stars--in both their struggles with the management and their squabbles with each other. During this period, however, there were no English companies in the United States large enough to hire rival prima donnas, and the spectacular fights in which the Italian artists so often engaged were almost unknown among English singers. Real illness, however, was a constant danger that stalked all itinerant performers. Both Louisa Pyne and William Harrison had been sick in Cincinnati, necessitating a postponement of their first performance there and the cancellation of another. According to Reiff, Pyne often came down with a cold or fever of one kind or another, and she was not alone. At one point early in the tour he commented laconically on the general health of the troupe's stars: "Stretton sick with a slight touch (I reckon of Fever and Augue)--Susan Pyne somewhat recovering from her Neuralgia and Harrison from his Boil--Louisa Pyne laid up with Boils--and Horncastle going about with an enormous stye in his eye. Good party." (Reiff, 19 January 1856) Reiff

betrayed youthful confidence in his own good health at this point, but he did not always feel so well himself. One day in Mobile he complained of feeling "very ill with a severe Colic and Bilious attack," and on another was "very unwell--costive and bilious." (Reiff, 12, 17 February 1856) Later in May, when the company performed in Baltimore and Washington, he complained for two weeks of feeling "very unwell." Several days he was sick enough to necessitate staying in bed; after one rehearsal his friend Atherton told him that he had been "very Morose in the Orchestra this morning." (Reiff, 13, 17 May 1856)

In addition to sickness and ill health, itinerant performers also had to face the danger of accidents that were so common to steamboat travellers. Explosions and fires--with resultant loss of life--were very real (and not uncommon) events, and the Pyne and Harrison troupers had several moments of excitement. When the company left New Orleans for St. Louis, for example, they headed into a serious storm; the pilot had difficulty keeping his steamer on course, for "the wind was blowing a perfect gale, the rain came down in torrents, and the vessel shook terrifically." Furthermore, sparks came out of the smokestacks "in myriads" and were blown all about the boat. "Many of the passengers," Reiff noted, "were much frightened"; the singer Gohr advised him not to go to bed, "for we are in imminent danger" of blowing up. (Reiff, 26 February) The fear on this occasion came to nothing, but the troupe's other adventure could have been a calamity. The steamer Cuba, on which the company travelled from Mobile back to New Orleans, was evidently a packet boat, for during their transit it was loaded with a large quantity of cotton. "Our vessel is loaded with Cotton," Reiff noted,

"which is so piled that it is almost impossible to get about on the mail deck--small passages are left--through which only one man at a time can go--" Such overloading was not uncommon, and presented no real hazard--except that the cotton was flammable, and sparks tended to fly from the smokestacks. As Reiff later wrote,

> [Frank] Swan and I (just after Sundown) were sitting in the Bow, on some Cotton Bales . . . when we were aroused by smelling something burning, upon looking around we saw the Cotton was on Fire! Just inside the doors--(which shut out the forward part of the Vessel)--some men were pulling a Bale from the inside--they got it upon the outside--but were unable to throw it overboard in consequence of its being so much on Fire. Swan made a terrific dash [up] the stairs . . . in the shortest space of time--he dashed through the Cabin, into his State Room--the Passengers, seeing [him], some of them bolted out--and we had quite a panic on the "forward" part of the Vessel--
>
> I was only for an instant a little nervous--it was when I look'd to see how near Land we were--in one direction only could I see land and that was almost imperceptible from the distance it was away--my next glance [was] at the laden Vessel (Cotton, Cotton, and only two small Boats to save us) --However [the nervousness] was only momentarily, for I thought [the fire] would get put out somehow-- (19 February)

Luckily, Reiff was correct. The fire was extinguished, and possible disaster was averted.

* * *

The company's St. Louis engagement was to commence on 10 March, and despite the prima donna's illness Brough was unable--or unwilling--to postpone it. St. Louis was an important theatre town in antebellum America; in the South it was ranked second only to New Orleans. (Dormon,

223) None of the company members wanted to risk a repeat of their New Orleans scheduling problems, and Pyne's prolonged illness was a cause alarm, for it both complicated the travel arrangements and jeopardized the announced concerts in Natchez and Memphis. The citizens of the latter city remained optimistic but became increasingly apprehensive, especially when the stars did not show up for the scheduled performance on 4 March (the rest of the troupe was already in town). (Daily Appeal, 5 March 1856) "We trust our citizens will not be disappointed," wrote the local editor, "and that the troupe will be able to meet their engagement." (Daily Appeal, 4 March 1856) That the company could not perform without Louisa Pyne clearly indicates the overwhelming dependence of this troupe (like many others) on their star singer or singers. When Pyne still did not appear the next day (5 March)--the last date on which a concert could be given--the rest of the troupe left. The Daily Appeal lamented,

> An unavoidable disappointment.--Owing to the sickness of Miss Louisa Pyne, attached to the Opera Troupe of Pyne & Harrison, no concert was given last night. Having exhausted the time allowed for their stay in Memphis, the Troupe took its departure up the river yesterday afternoon. The public regret this. (6 March 1856)[46]

The Pyne and Harrison Company arrived in St. Louis on Saturday, 8 March 1856. To everyone's relief Louisa Pyne rejoined them that weekend, and they were able to commence their engagement on schedule the following Monday. Simultaneously engaged at the St. Louis Theater was the Montplaisir Ballet Troupe, an ensemble of French dancers. As we saw with Maretzek's company, the larger Italian troupes sometimes engaged dancers

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46. Reiff's reaction to this development is unknown, for about thirty days' worth of his journal is missing (28 February-26 March). The missing section covered the troupe's movements between New Orleans and St. Louis and a majority of the company's stay in the latter city.

to add luster and variety to their performances. Few of the smaller companies--and no English troupes--had the resources required for this additional attraction. It was not unusual, however, for the paths of itinerant opera and dance troupes to cross on the American theatrical circuit. When this happened, the two companies often teamed up for joint performances--which is precisely what the Pyne/Harrison and Montplaisir troupes did.[47] On several nights in St. Louis the dancers performed after the opera: the ballet "Capricious Widow" followed Daughter of the Regiment on Friday 14 March, and a "Grand Pas de Deux" was performed after Maritana on the 19th. On other evenings the dancers were featured as part of the opera performances. Mme. Clocca, for example, danced a Grand Pas de Deux during the first act, and a Bohemian Polka during the second act of The Bohemian Girl on 11 March. (Daily Democrat, 5-31 March 1856)

According to newspaper advertisements the Pynes, Harrison, and their entourage were engaged in St. Louis for only one week. The company, however--to the surprise of no one--was "re-engaged" at the conclusion of the first six days. This standard policy of "re-engagement" was a conventional managerial ruse designed to increase attendance.[48] As such it was similar to other techniques already

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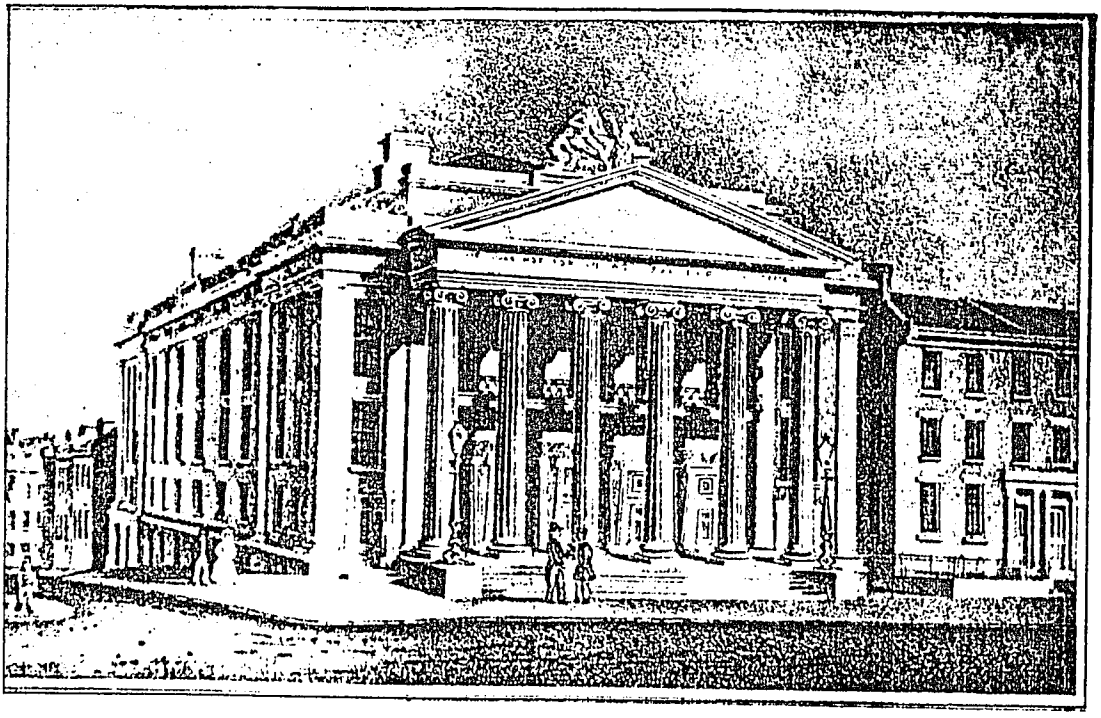
47. At Niblo's Theatre in 1852, for example, the Thillon Opera Company and the Caroline Rousset Ballet Troupe performed on alternate evenings. Opera nights were Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, ballet nights were Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. See Niblo's Theatre playbill, 19 May 1852, GA/MWA. For further information on the Montplaisir Troupe (and on the other major ballet/acrobatic troupe, the Ravel Company) see Brown, American Stage. Ballet companies (most of them itinerant) are another important aspect of the nineteenth (and eighteenth) century musical stage that has been almost entirely neglected by music and theatre historians.

48. In his study of the Rice Theatre of Chicago, James Wilt noted that although performers at that house were always "re-engaged" for the second week, the theatre's account books leave no doubt that the performers had been hired for a two-week engagement from the start. See James Napier Wilt, "History of the Two Rice Theatres in Chicago from 1847 to 1857" (unpublished dissertation, University of Chicago, 1923), 5-6.



Left: M. and Mme. Montplaisir, ballet dancers.

Bottom: The St. Louis Theatre. According to theatre historian William Young, the portico and columns were never added to the main building.



mentioned--the false or misleading announcements of "final" performances, for example, or the much bally-hooed (and endless) "farewell" engagements and tours. The company did prove to be popular in St. Louis and, in fact, was re-engaged a second time, for a total of three weeks. The critics, as expected, were complimentary; one gushed that "such music was never before heard in our city," and concluded that the company "are fully equal to that fame which has preceded them." The engagement of the troupe, he wrote the next day,

> has produced great interest among the public here, whose fine musical taste is well known. Not only do the large and fashionable audiences attest how decided an impression has been created, but the prevailing topic of the day is the beautiful vocalization of Miss Louisa Pyne. (Daily Democrat, 11, 12 March 1856)

Evidently music lovers even in such a remote western city as St. Louis were aware of the current controversy about English versus Italian opera. The same critic attempted to disarm any possible negative reaction to the troupe's English performances. "To our mind--or, better, ear," he wrote,

> it makes but little difference whether the opera we hear is English or Italian, so far as the mere words are concerned; and after all, we cannot pretend to say which of the texts is the more intelligible. . . . The troupe then, now performing at the St. Louis Theater gains nothing in our affections by being an English Opera Troupe. Miss Pyne would sing in any tongue as divinely as in her native accent. Her voice in no wise depends upon the vocabulary of any particular people. Let her sing in what phrase she will, her voice would always to us retain its smoothness, its sweetness, its extraordinary power to sweep the heart strings, and linger in the memory like the poetry of a beautiful dream. (Daily Democrat, 13 March 1856)

The company finally packed up its costumes and headed east on 31

March, via railroad. Reiff's descriptions give glimpses of the vast stretches of near-frontier that separated the pockets of urban culture where the opera singers performed. "In the Woods," he wrote, "[we] passed a cluster of very primitive looking Log huts--the children and women about them were dressed in the rudest, rustic, most wild manner possible--." (Reiff, 1 April 1856) The next day, in Indiana, he described a "dense Forrest--of Beach (or Beech) Poplars--and some Sycamores--occasionally a few acres are cleared and some few common Log Huts or Cabins meet the view." En route from Louisville to Cincinnati he wrote at length:

> the [railroad] has only been through here a short time--
> yet villages are springing up all along--the first one we
> came to will serve as an example--in the midst of the
> Forrest was about two acres cleared--that is to say the
> Trees cut down for the stumps still remained in the
> ground--and the general "debris" had not been taken away--
> a store was erected and three houses--all entirely new--
> not a particle of paint--no fences--nothing in fact--yet
> this may be the commencement of a large town--Stretton
> remarked in 25 years I <u>might</u> be giving a concert here. The
> Rail Road builders--in making this road have cut down an
> <u>immense</u> quantity of the largest Trees--which lie rotting--
> it seems quite shocking--Horncastle says he cannot bear to
> look at it--(the prodigal waste of wood)--it seems <u>too</u>
> bad--Occasionally we pass some Cabins-- (Reiff, 4 April 1856)

The troupe gave two "Grand Operatic Entertainments" at Mozart Hall in Louisville, and the next day they travelled to Cincinnati and gave a "Grand Farewell Operatic Concert" that evening. (<u>Daily Louisville Times</u>, 1-3 April 1856) The local hall, Smith & Nixon's, was otherwise engaged, so the singers were obliged to perform in the dining room of the Burnet House Hotel, which was fitted up as a "concert saloon." (<u>Enquirer</u>, 30 March 1856) Despite the makeshift surroundings, the concert by

Cincinnati's acclaimed "favorite Opera Troupe" was a success; over four hundred tickets already had been sold two days before the performance, and on the evening of the singers' appearance the room was "crowded to its utmost capacity." (Cincinnati Daily Commercial, 4, 5 April 1856) Following this concert the performers had a much-earned weekend off, which allowed them to relax and to bask in the plentiful adulation the local citizens bestowed on the visiting celebrities. (Reiff, 5 April 1856) By this time the troupers had been on the road for four and a half months. Reiff noted on 5 April that he was "quite a happy man"; the next day, however, he wasn't so sure, and commented "I begin to feel anxious to get home." (Reiff, 6 April 1856) The company, however, had yet another six weeks to go.

On April 7 the performers boarded the side-wheeler Pittsburgh for their return trip up the Ohio. Most of their fellow passengers, according to Reiff, were a "rough-looking set--western all over--they 'reckon, mighty smart, thar and bar'--to an awful extent." The members of the opera troupe stood out in such company. "Stretton's dignified mustache, Horncastle's portly form, and my impudent manner--combined with the fact that we are more fastidious and give more trouble than any one else," Reiff noted humorously, "established the fact that we were the people!" (Reiff, 7 April 1856) William Brough had left the troupe in Cincinnati the previous week and by 5 April was already in Baltimore busily arranging for the company's next series of engagements. (Reiff, 5 April 1856) His charges, separated from their agent for almost a week, quickly missed his sure managerial hand and encountered transportation difficulties when they arrived at Wheeling, Virginia. Not only would they have to cross the mountains at night, they discovered, but--worse--there were not enough

seats on the train for all the members of the troupe. The only alternative was for the company to wait until the next day--which was impossible, as they had a performance scheduled in Baltimore on Thursday evening. Both Horncastle and Reiff were very angry, but there was little they could do. That part of the company that could secure passage did so (Reiff took the last seat in the last car), and left the rest--including Joseph Stretton and some of the choristers--behind. They were to follow on Thursday. (Reiff, 9 April 1856; Daily Baltimore Republican, 8-10 April 1856)

The company travelled all night across the Allegheny Mountains. Reiff described scenery that was "wild and rude in the extreme":

> Rude cabins are met with, built in all sorts of extraordinary places--on the steep sides of a hill, on the banks of streams--or in a hollow--the very children belonging to these Cabins seem to partake of the wildness of their Houses--and no wonder for they are completely shut out from the world. (Reiff, 9 April 1856)

As the musicians progressed eastward, the surroundings became more familiar. "We are now running along the Potomac River," he wrote after leaving Cumberland, Maryland. "The face of the Country is large hills . . . frequently farms--looks more eastern--no Cabins." (Reiff, 9 April 1856)

As the tour neared its end the pace of travel became increasingly hectic. The train deposited the company in Baltimore at 10:30 a.m. on the morning of 10 April, and the performers rehearsed all afternoon and presented Cinderella the same evening. The missing choristers made a difference in the performance, for the reviewer of the Baltimore newspaper complained that "the chorus lacked somewhat both in numbers

and melody." (Daily Republican, 11 April 1856.) After this rather uncommon brief engagement (one-night stands, as we have seen, usually were devoted to operatic concerts), the company travelled to Washington, D. C. the next day to commence an engagement at the National Theatre on Monday 14 April. On 12 April the National Intelligencer reported to its readers that "a number of carriages passing up [Pennsylvania] Avenue conveying baggage labelled 'Pyne and Harrison Opera Troupe,' herald the approach of that unrivaled company." (Intelligencer, 12 April 1856) At the National the troupe gave performances of six different operas from their standard repertory (see Table 20). (Evening Star, 14-19 April 1856) The company found itself competing once again with the Parodi/Strakosch concert troupe, which was performing at Odd Fellows' Hall. As before, however, the English opera company held its own against the Italians.[49] The critic for the National Intelligencer was rather self-congratulatory in his comments:

> It is a somewhat remarkable occurrence that in this city, at a season of frequent social entertainments and festivities, two great musical enterprises should experience such decided success; but the import of this popular verdict is that both are eminently worthy of the popular favor. Both indeed were triumphs, and both, or rather each, will at any future time be gladly welcomed back to our city. (Intelligencer, 21 April 1856)

Later in the week the newspaper reported that "Parodi, with Patti and other members of her troupe" attended the company's performance of Maritana. The Italians, the critic noted approvingly, "testified their

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49. In Washington, the other members of the concert troupe were Amalia and Maurice Strakosch, and a Sig. Leonardi. The troupe had just returned from its successful tour of the South; they had been in New Orleans and Mobile around the same time as the Pyne and Harrison Company engagement in those two towns. See National Intelligencer, 11 April 1856.

generous appreciation of the merits of the performance by repeated applause." (Intelligencer, 17 April 1856) The next evening (17 April), according to Reiff, President Franklin Pierce "visited the opera." (Reiff, 17 April 1856)

Saturday morning 20 April found the weary travellers again on the road. They gathered up their trunks, costumes, and music and boarded the steamboat Baltimore to travel down the Potomac to Acquia Creek, thence by rail to Richmond, Virginia. The pressure was beginning to wear on some of the performers. On the way down to Richmond the singers Proctor Kemble, G. H. Warre, and Henry Horncastle got "horribly drunk." Reiff and another singer, Mr. Gohr, "were almost obliged to carry Horncastle to the Broad Street House, by which means my baggage was locked up and I could not get it until next morning." (Reiff, 20 April 1856)

The pressures of constant travelling, coupled with those generated by nightly performances and close contact with the same people over a long period of time, often had predictably disastrous consequences for opera troupes. In Chapter 3 we saw numerous examples of abortive Italian companies that fell apart under the pressure of financial difficulties or simple internal dissension. Neither were English troupes immune from such problems. As already noted, both of the opera companies attempted by Anna Bishop had disbanded after several months on the road. Less is known about the other English troupes, except that the musical/theatrical press occasionally announced that a particular singer had left the folds of one company and had either joined another or had struck off on his or her own. For all its outward appearances of harmony (at least on this tour) the

Pyne Company performers were not without their share of squabbles and strife. In New Orleans the troupe lost its second tenor, who subsequently had to be replaced.[50] In the midst of the tour, furthermore, Reiff mentioned that Louisa Pyne and Harrison had a disagreement (he referred to the two as "Pocahantas and Smith"); in the same entry he noted that "some words occurred between Harrison and Susan [Pyne;] she gave him fits."[51] Reiff himself, something of a hot-head (remember the near-duel), managed to get into a scuffle with Mr. Atkins, another singer, over some derogatory remarks the latter made about Americans. A knock-down, drag-out fist fight was averted only when Joseph Stretton intervened; he kept Rieff company for the entire evening.[52] Despite their occasional problems, however, the Pyne and Harrison Company presented a remarkably harmonious front to the public--especially in comparison with the combative Italians. This no doubt contributed to their phenomenal success.

The company performed operas for a week in the Virginia capital, presenting almost precisely the same repertory as the previous week in Washington.[53] They ended their engagement in the Old Dominion on

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50. Daily Picayune, 29-31 January 1856. Reiff does not mention this, and the identity of the singer is unknown, as are any details about why he left the troupe.

51. This reference to Smith and Pocahontas, coupled with the comment "gave him fits" is interesting in an arcane way, for it strongly suggests that Reiff was more than passing familiar with John Brougham's Pocahontas (as mentioned in relation to Signor La Manna, above). The two main characters of the spoof are Pocahontas and John Smith; furthermore, one of the tunes in the burlesque has a chorus the text of which is "Give him fits." That Reiff would know Brougham's work even before its première performance (24 December 1855) is perfectly plausible given the nature of the small New York musical community, of which he was a born-and-bred member.

52. "Up very late with dear Joe and slept very little," Reiff wrote. "Adkins [sic] sat in the next room purposely to annoy us." See Reiff, 18 April 1856.

53. Harrison was ill and unable to perform on 21 April; there were consequently only five opera nights in Richmond, and Barber of Seville was not performed. Daily Richmond Enquirer, 21-29 April 1856.

Tuesday 29 April with a grand musical entertainment--an operatic concert--at the Metropolitan Hall, given at the request of "many of our most influential ladies, who, with others, were prevented from attending the operas at the Theatre, and who are most desirous of hearing Miss Louisa Pyne and her talented troupe of vocalists ere they leave our city." (Richmond Enquirer, 29 April 1856) Some music lovers--even those who were not barred from theatres for religious reasons--preferred the potpourri of an operatic concert to the more rigorous structure of an opera. One critic, for example, explained that "in the concert room" Louisa Pyne was "unhampered by the requisitions of the opera [and] she [could] make such selections from her repertoire as [to] enable her to display to the fullest extent the wondrous witchery of her powers." (Daily Picayune, 23 January 1856) Performers, both Italian and English, were well aware of this bias on the part of some of their audience, and as a consequence occasionally chose the operatic concert as a format for their benefit performances in order to attract as large a crowd as possible.

The "stars" had yet another technique for "displaying to the fullest extent their powers": adding a few extra songs to the evening's entertainment. As we have seen in earlier chapters, this was a common performance practice with all singers during the period. The principal singers of most English companies--like vocal stars or prima donnas of Italian troupes--either interpolated songs into the opera itself, or sang them after the opera, between acts, or between the opera and a farce. The extra music was an expected part of the evening's

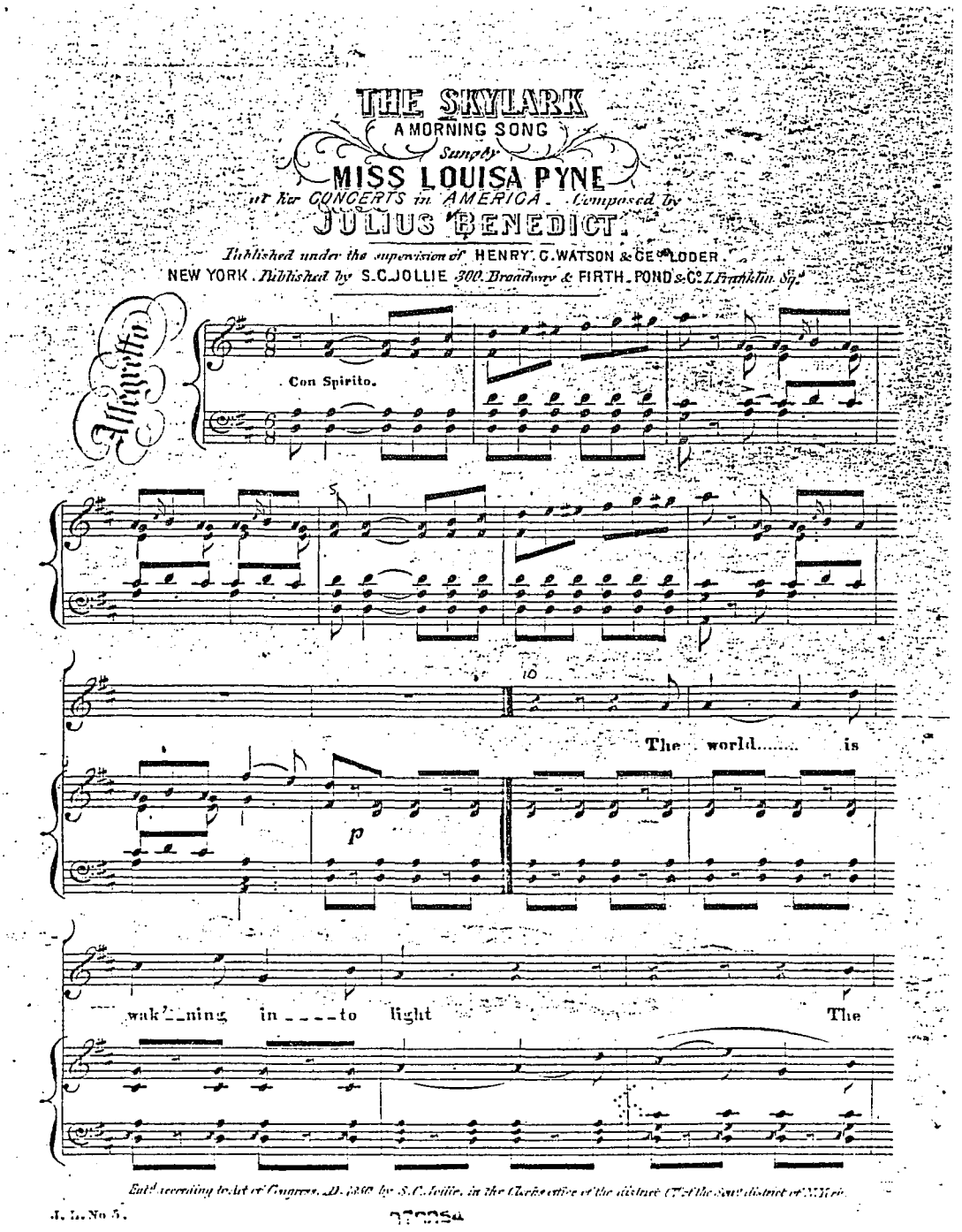
performance, and the songs often were mentioned in advertisements or on playbills. A newspaper advertisement for a Pyne and Harrison Company performance of The Daughter of the Regiment, for example, noted that "In the the course of the opera a choice selection of Songs, Chorusses, Duets, &c" would be sung. (Baltimore Clipper, 19 November 1855) Sometimes specific tunes were named, and a list of those performed by the stars of the Pyne and Harrison troupe indicates that American taste had not changed much since the days of the Shirreff/Wilson/Seguin company tour in 1838-39. The songs tended to be either favorite arias from other operas, songs from the popular repertory ("Home, Sweet Home" was a favorite, as were Irish or Scottish songs), or virtuosic songs designed to bedazzle the audience with the star's vocal skills. William Harrison usually chose a song like "Then You'll Remember Me" or "Tis Sad to Leave Our Father Land" (both from Balfe's Bohemian Girl), "The Bay of Biscay" (from John Davy's 1805 ballad opera Spanish Dollars), or the ballad "Oh! Whisper What Thou Feelest!," allegedly written for him by the English pianist Henry Brinley Richards. Louisa Pyne almost always sang "Lo! Here the Gentle Lark" (by Henry Rowley Bishop), a vocalization of Pierre Rode's Air Varié pour le Violon" (known colloquially as "Rode's Variations") or a song that became her trademark, "The Skylark" (by the English opera composer Jules Benedict). These three latter songs were all typical of the showy fare generally chosen by touring prima donnas.

Benedict's composition, which inspired Pyne's American nickname "The English Skylark," was published in New York in 1850 as "The Skylark, a Morning Song, as Sung by Miss Louisa Pyne at her Concerts in
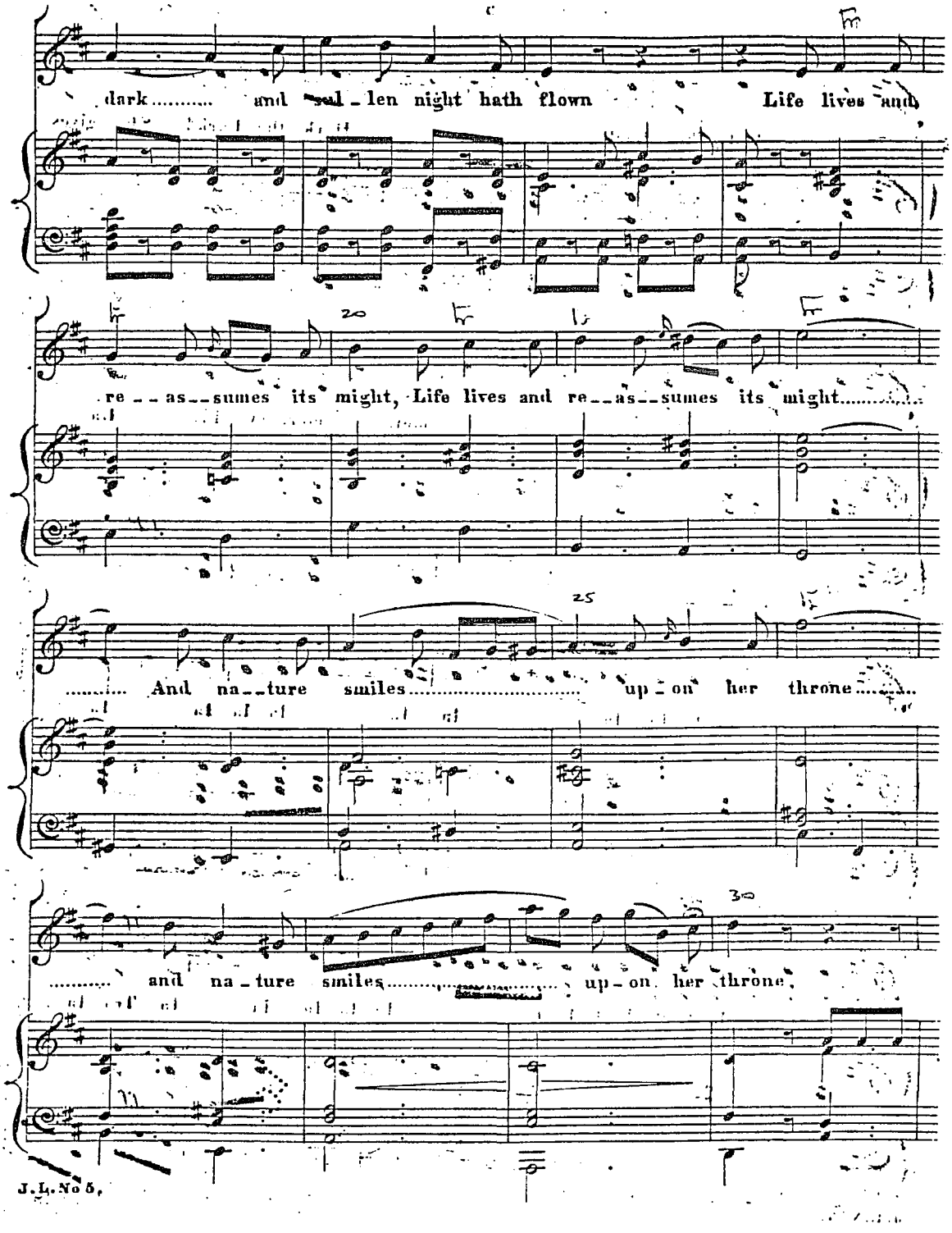
America."[54] It is a strophic setting of two innocuous verses, and obviously was designed as a vehicle for the virtuosic display of a soprano voice. The song has a 9-measure piano introduction, and is in two unequal sections. (The entire first verse is reproduced as Example 11.) The first section, 21 measures long, is a setting of the first four lines of the poem. Lines one and two, to a melody that outlines chords in D major, are sung over a rather static harmony; lines three and four (both of which are repeated) are set to a slightly more chromatic ascending melody (which calls for numerous embellishments), and is sung over an accompaniment that is an ascending sequential pattern of borrowed dominants, moving up by thirds and outlining the secondary dominant (e-g-b) in D. The destination of both the melody and the harmonic movement is a return to D; this is achieved (after a deceptive cadence at m. 26 to F-sharp, the dominant of the relative minor) by measure 30. The second section of the song is a setting of the last two lines of the poem, followed by an abundance of tra-la-las; it is less interesting harmonically, but requires more from the vocalist, especially in embellishments. The fifteen measures 30 through 45 act in an extended-dominant function: the A-pedal in the piano supports a soprano melody that moves upward in stepwise motion starting at measure 33 (a, a-sharp, b, c-sharp, d), finally resolving to the tonic at measure 45. The remainder, mm. 46-61, is fairly straightforward harmonically, with the addition of diminished 7th chords at measures 50-51 and 58-59. Although not particularly complex harmonically, the work is not dull. What harmonic activity there is adequately supports and adds interest to the vocal part.
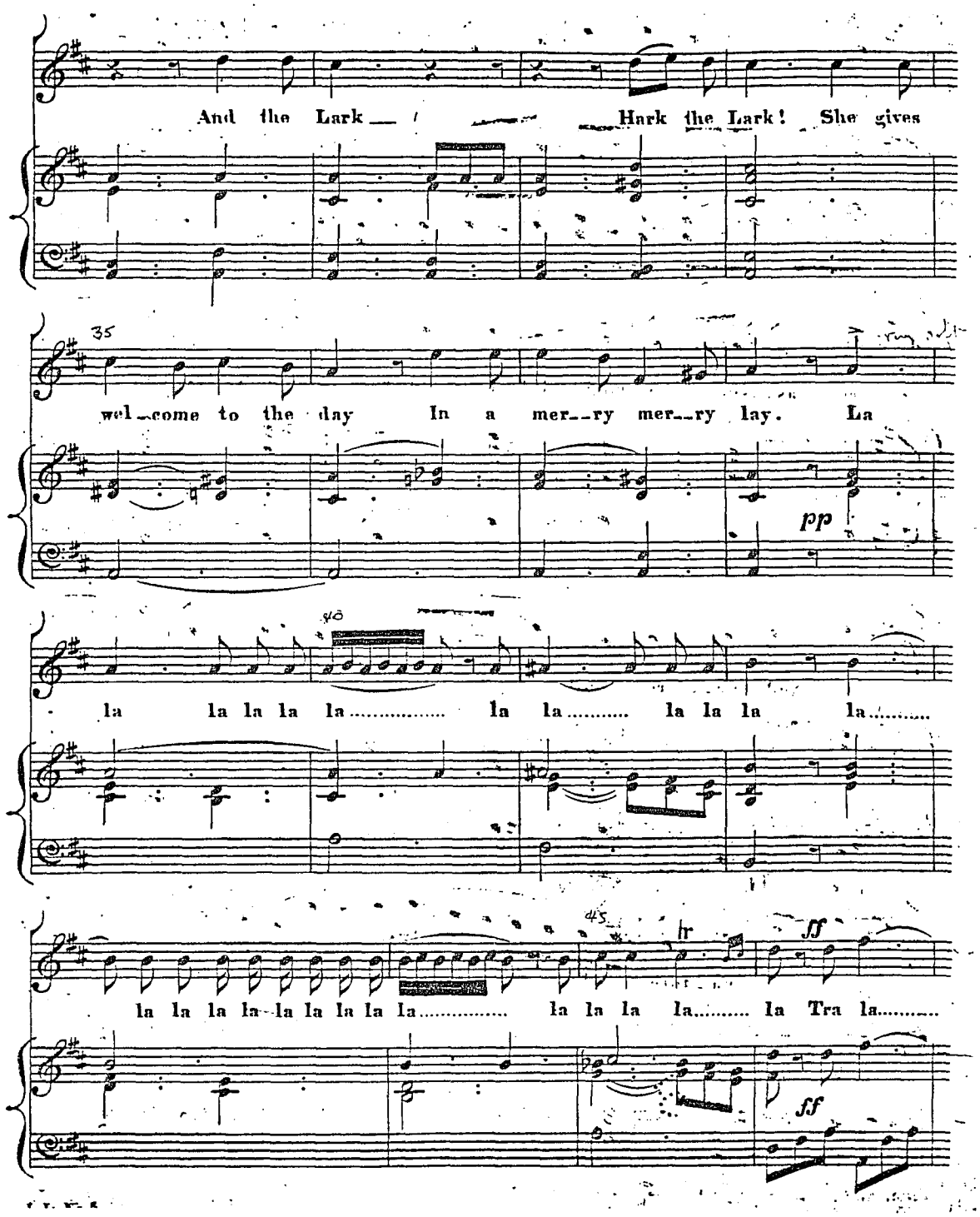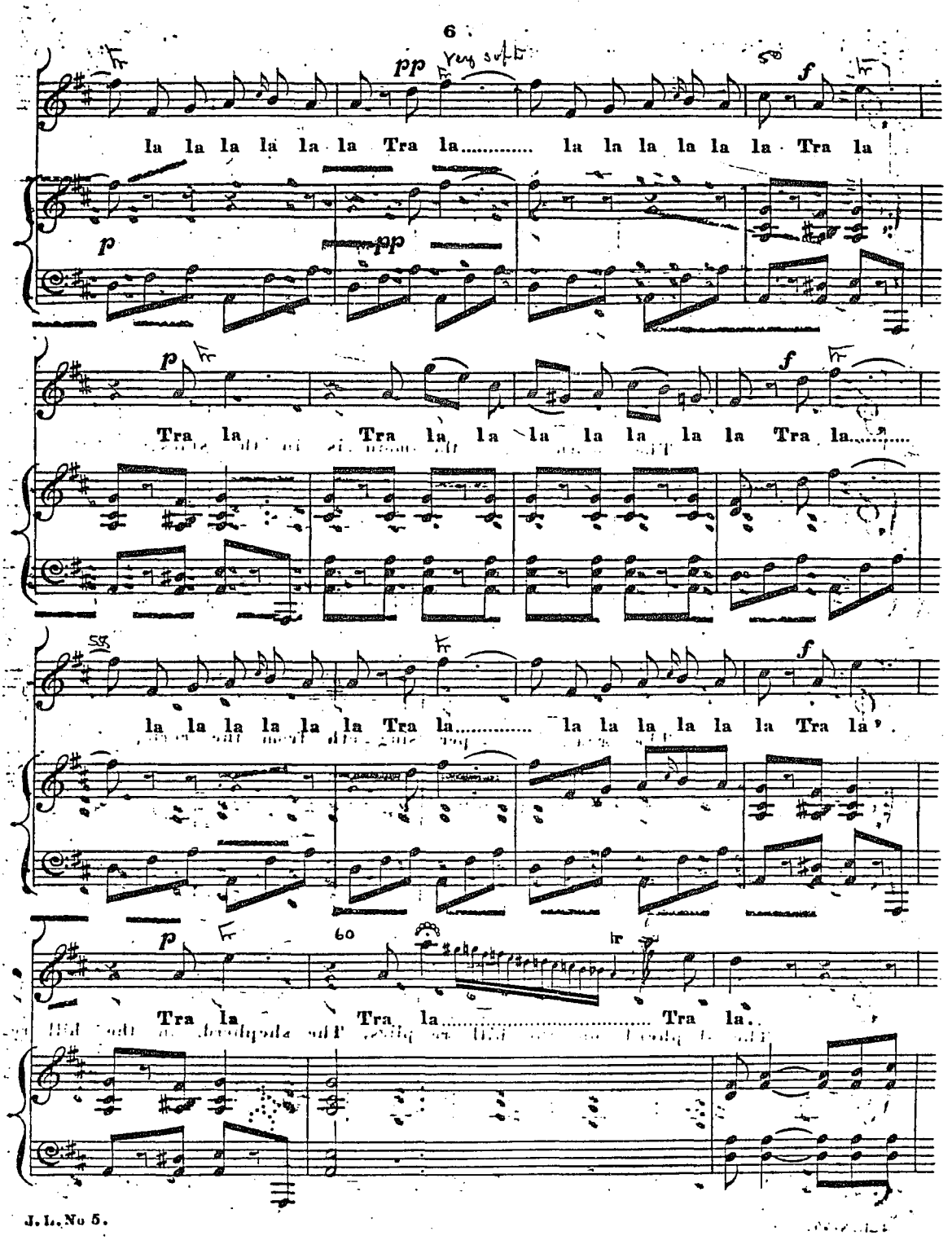
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54. New York: Firth, Pond & Co., 1850. Several copies are in the Music Division, DLC.



Example 11. The first verse of Louisa Pyne's showpiece, "The English Skylark," by Jules Benedict.


dark..... and sol-len night hath flown Life lives and
re--as--sumes its might, Life lives and re--as--sumes its might.....
And na--ture smiles..... up-on her throne.....
and na-ture smiles..... up-on her throne.
J. L. No 5.


And the Lark Hark the Lark! She gives
35
wel-come to the day In a mer-ry mer-ry lay. La
pp
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la
45
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la


pp very soft
la la la la la la Tra la..... la la la la la la Tra la
p
pp
p
Tra la Tra la la la la la la Tra la.....
la la la la la la Tra la..... la la la la la la Tra la
p
60
Tra la Tra la..... Tra la.

J. L. No 5.

The notated melody itself is remarkably free of decoration, but the song, by its very nature, calls out for bird-like trills and other embellishments. One of the several copies in the collection of the Library of Congress, in fact, has embellishments written in pencil on the score; most of them are markings for trills. Since the song was so closely identified with Pyne, it is reasonable to surmise that the markings were made by one of her admirers after hearing her perform the work. Of particular interest are the repeated instructions to perform trills on notes an octave higher than written, and uniformly pianissimo. A performance of such a song, con spirito, with numerous embellishments, and sung (in places) pianissimo would have been stunning.

Pyne's performance, in fact, had precisely this effect on many of her listeners. Her delicate voice--flexible, even, and true of intonation--was perfect for the performance of this type of composition. "The appetite for Louisa Pyne's singing," one critic wrote, "especially of Bishop's [sic] Skylark Song, grows by what it feeds on. We have never known a more decided sensation made upon our audiences than that produced by her performance of this song." (Daily Picayune, 3 February 1856) Her rendition moved some effusive admirers to compare her--favorably--with that mid-century American paragon of soprano beauty, Jenny Lind. "Louisa Pyne's rendering of the 'Sky Lark,'" wrote one critic,

> equalled that of Jenny Lind in similar pieces, if the taste and delicacy with which its wonderful passages were executed by Miss P. did not surpass the execution of the Lind in her Echo Song. [Pyne] has not the Lind's power of voice, but her execution of such passages of music as are

> the gems of the "Sky Lark" touch the heart and charm the ear of a cultivated taste far more than Jenny Lind ever did in rendering her songs of that class. (Washington Evening Star, 19 April 1855)

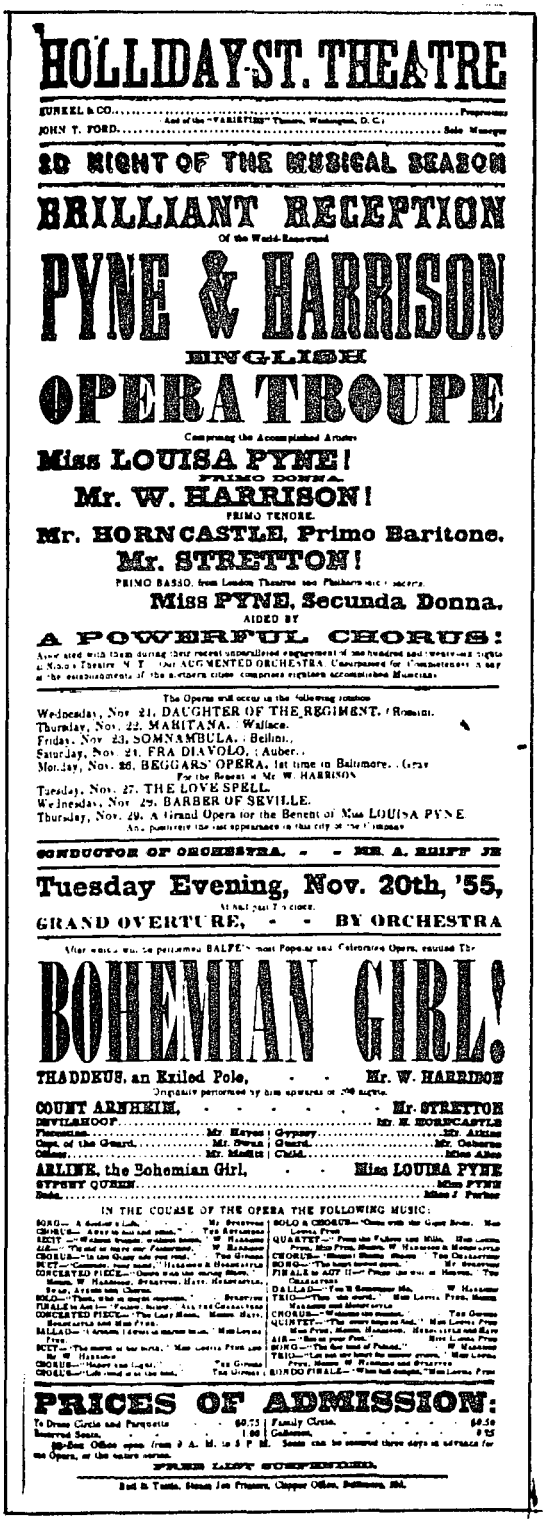
Another was even more assured of the superiority of the "English Skylark." "Whatever may have been said of Jenny Lind and the whole cage of canaries that warbled in her trills," he wrote,

> we defy the Swedish or any other nightingale to hear such notes as Miss Louisa Pyne gave last night in [Rode's Variations] without growing mute with astonishment, or "pining with grief," if not dying with envy, at being so far surpassed. (Cincinnati Enquirer, 20 December 1855)

* * *

After their final grand concert in Richmond, the Pyne and Harrison troupe left Virginia for Washington on 30 April. For the next three weeks they alternated engagements in Washington and Baltimore; their performances (according to the newspapers) attracted some of the "largest and most fashionable audiences . . . ever seen" at the Holliday Street Theatre. (Baltimore Clipper, 6 May 1856) Another critic waxed eloquent about the audience one evening. "The dress circle of the Holliday Street Theatre last night," he wrote,

> presented one of the finest conventions of fashion and loveliness ever seen within the time-honored walls of that ancient temple of the drama. The variegated tissues, the rainbow-hued silks, the charming headdresses, and the gleaming, glittering jewelry with which the array of loveliness was enshrined and ornamented, presented more the semblance of a fairy garden than a mere matter of fact assembly of operatic admirers. (Daily Baltimore Republican, 10 April 1856)



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And of the "VARIETIES" Theatre, Washington, D. C.
JOHN T. FORD. ..... Sole Manager

2D NIGHT OF THE MUSICAL SEASON

BRILLIANT RECEPTION
Of the World-Renowned

PYNE & HARRISON
ENGLISH
OPERA TROUPE
Comprising the Accomplished Artists

Miss LOUISA PYNE!
PRIMO DONNA.

Mr. W. HARRISON!
PRIMO TENORE.

Mr. HORNCASTLE, Primo Baritone.

Mr. STRETTON!
PRIMO BASSO, from London Theatres and Philharmonic Concerts.

Miss PYNE, Secunda Donna.
AIDED BY

A POWERFUL CHORUS:

Also supported by them during their recent unparalleled engagement of one hundred and twenty-one nights at Niblo's Theatre N. Y. the AUGMENTED ORCHESTRA, Composed for the occasion, and at the entertainments of the principal cities comprises eighteen accomplished Musicians.

The Operas will occur in the following rotation

Wednesday, Nov. 21. DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT. (Romani.
Thursday, Nov. 22. MARITANA. (Wallace.
Friday, Nov. 23. SOMNAMBULA. (Bellini.
Saturday, Nov. 24. FRA DIAVOLO, (Auber.
Monday, Nov. 26. BEGGARS' OPERA, 1st time in Baltimore. (Gray
For the Benefit of Mr. W. HARRISON
Tuesday, Nov. 27. THE LOVE SPELL.
Wednesday, Nov. 28. BARBER OF SEVILLE.
Thursday, Nov. 29. A Grand Opera for the Benefit of Miss LOUISA PYNE
On which occasion she will positively appear in this city in the character of

CONDUCTOR OF ORCHESTRA, - - MR. A. REIFF JR

Tuesday Evening, Nov. 20th, '55,

To Start punctually at Seven o'clock.

GRAND OVERTURE, - - BY ORCHESTRA

After which will be performed BALFE's most Popular and Celebrated Opera, entitled The

BOHEMIAN GIRL!

THADDEUS, an Exiled Pole, - - Mr. W. HARRISON
Originally performed by him upwards of 200 nights.

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Capt. of the Guard ..... Mr. Perez | Count ..... Mr. Osborne
Colonel ..... Mr. Medlin | Child ..... Miss Alice

ARLINE, the Bohemian Girl, - - Miss LOUISA PYNE

GYPSEY QUEEN ..... Miss PYNE
Bride ..... Misses J. Parker

IN THE COURSE OF THE OPERA THE FOLLOWING MUSIC:

BORO.—A Soldier's Life. ..... Mr. Perez
CHORUS.—Away to the Land where... ..... The Ensemble
DUETT.—"Where'er you walk," ..... W. Harrison & Miss Pyne
AIR.—"The sad or merry Fountain," ..... W. Harrison
CHORUS.—"In the Quiet Dale you rest," ..... The Chorus
RECIT.—"Comrade, your name," Harrison & Hornecastle
CONCERTED PIECE.—"Down in the valley Stars," Miss Pyne, Mrs. Harrison, W. Haddock, Stretton, Mrs. Harrison, &c.
SONG, Arline with Chorus.
SOLO.—"There, she is seen reposing," ..... Stretton
FINALE to Act I.—"Farewell, farewell" ..... All the Characters
CONCERTED PIECE.—"The Lady Minna," Misses Mary, Somerville and Miss Pyne.
BALLAD.—"I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls," Miss Louisa Pyne.
DUETT.—"The moon is on the wave," Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. Harrison.
CHORUS.—"Happy and Light," ..... The Chorus
CHORUS.—"Let's read it in the text," ..... The Chorus

SOLO & CHORUS.—"Come with the Gipsy Band," Miss Louisa Pyne.
QUARTET.—"From the Palace and Hall," Miss Louisa Pyne, Miss Pyne, Stretton, W. Harrison & Horncastle.
CHORUS.—"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" The Chorus
BORO.—"The hunt is over now," ..... Mr. Stretton
FINALE to ACT II.—"Now Prince the veil is thine," The Characters
DALLA.—"For it Sometimes Ma," ..... W. Harrison
TRIO.—"Then we part," Miss Louisa Pyne, Harrison and Somerville
CHORUS.—"If slander can wound," ..... The Chorus
QUINTET.—"The story begins sad," Miss Louisa Pyne, Miss Pyne, Harrison, Horncastle, Mrs. Harrison and Miss Pyne.
AIR.—"Then at your Feet," ..... Miss Louisa Pyne
BORO.—"The first test of Valour," ..... W. Harrison
TRIO.—"Let me not hear the answer strains," Miss Louisa Pyne, Stretton, W. Harrison and Somerville
BORO FINALE.—"When last assigned," Miss Louisa Pyne

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Reserved Seats	1.00	Gallery	0.25

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PYNE LAST SUPPERS.

Bell & Towle, Steam Job Printers, Clipper Office, Baltimore, Md.

Playbill from a Holliday Street Theatre performance of The Bohemian Girl by the Pyne and Harrison Company, 20 November 1855.

Anthony Reiff, however, confirms what we already know: that these audiences also included ordinary Baltimoreans. The boarding house where he lodged during the troupe's Baltimore engagement was run by a Miss Emily, a "perfect precise affable Old Maid." Reiff gave tickets to her and to another woman who lived in the boarding house. "Miss Emily was much pleased," Reiff recorded, "and Mrs. H. was almost crazy with delight--said she could scarcely restrain herself from jumping on the stage and kissing Miss Pyne--she wants to go to the Opera every night--" (Reiff, 15 May 1856)

The final performance of the tour was on Friday May 23rd. The next day the travellers rose at 4:30 a.m. and caught a northbound train at 6 o'clock. Twelve hours later, the musicians were back in their American home base, New York City, the trip finally over. Anthony Reiff recorded his jubilation at the conclusion of the trip by writing one word on the last page of his journal: "Hurrah!" (Reiff, 24 May 1856)

The Pyne and Harrison Company had been on the road for slightly over six months. They had travelled close to 6,000 miles, and had performed almost nightly, for a total of 108 opera and twelve concert appearances. Often (if the newspapers are to be believed) they played to full houses and enthusiastic audiences. They performed in the increasingly developed and cultured cities of the East Coast, where they successfully challenged those who claimed that opera in Italian was the only viable form. More important, these English singers also took opera to the American interior--to cities that were growing and prospering in an area that was still very much the West and still very close to

wilderness and frontier. They introduced many Americans to opera; they also fulfilled a need and a desire that was already there. Their very popularity clearly indicates that even Americans who lived in new cities that were but a short remove from the frontier were lovers of music and theatre.

The pattern established by Louisa Pyne, William Harrison, and other singers associated with them did not cease with the completion of this tour. After a brief rest in New York and performances at Niblo's and at the Athenaeum in Brooklyn, they left again--headed even further out into the American hinterland--north and west for engagements in Montreal, Chicago, Detroit, and other points in the interior.[55] During their three years in the United States this group of British singers took English opera all over the eastern half of the country, as far west as Madison, Wisconsin, and as far north as Montreal and Quebec. During their American visit they gave over 500 operatic performances and more than 100 concerts.[56] The very success of the Pyne and Harrison Company during their three years in North America--both on the East Coast and in the middle of the continent--slowed the progress of the upper class in their attempt to limit the definition of opera to foreign-language performances with aristocratic overtones. Their success in the hinterland helped to foster a popularity of the genre among ordinary Americans; it also insured that in most places in the country opera

55. Odell, VI:505; Washington Evening Star, 24 May 1856; Upton, "Attractions in Chicago" ICHi, vol. 1, 35; MW, 30 August 1856, 290; MR & G, 1 November 1856, 343.

56. Unidentified printed material, "William Harrison," Harrison folder, Engravings and Illustrations Collection, HTC.

remained a normal part of the theatrical venue. Finally, their success, like the success of so many other companies, tells us a great deal about the importance of opera within the musical culture of the antebellum United States. Completely forgotten today, the Pyne and Harrison Company was a force to be reckoned with in the North America of the 1850s.

EPILOGUE

> [I] had intended to go to the Opera this evening, but it was so rainy and stormy that I concluded it would be more desirable to stay in the house, as we had a comfortable fire to sit by. (Beekley diary, 2 October 1850)

In the late 1850s the New York correspondent to Dwight's submitted a report about Max Maretzek's new Academy of Music opera troupe. After describing the various stars of the company, the orchestra, the manager, the conductor, and so on, he mentioned favorably the troupe's practice of mounting afternoon performances. "A Matinée," he wrote, "is a very nice place to while away a leisure hour--so convenient to just drop in if you are out shopping, such a charming place for a little innocent flirting, and all that sort of thing." (Dwight's, 5 June 1858, 78) The American author and journalist Nathaniel Parker Willis, in a work of fiction written about the same time, expressed sentiments that are remarkably similar. "I was disappointed in the luxury I had allotted to myself for the evening," spoke one of the characters in his novel The Convalescent. "The promised opera was interrupted by the illness of the prima donna; and so my three hours of effortless recipiency--that deliciously reversed process to the day's weary givings-out of thought, talk, and action--were to be otherwise disposed of."[1] These contemporary descriptions of opera performances as pleasant and diverting activity sum up the attitudes of most antebellum Americans--whether aristocrats or common folk--towards the genre: it was theatre; it was entertainment.

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1. The Convalescent (New York: Scribner, 1859), 302. My thanks to historian Stephen Nissenbaum of the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) for this reference.

"The theatre in the first half of the nineteenth century," Lawrence Levine explains, "played the role that movies played in the first half of the twentieth: [as] a kaleidoscopic, democratic institution presenting a widely varying bill of fare to all classes and socioeconomic groups." (Levine, "Shakespeare," 40) It is in this context that opera performed in antebellum America can best be understood.

This proposition is supported not only by the prominent place of opera within the theatrical venue of the time, but also by the American public's fascination with celebrities and by the pervasiveness of operatic music within American culture itself. The first is easy to document, and has already been discussed in previous chapters. The techniques used by antebellum opera managers to advertise their performances, however, both reveal Americans' infatuation with stars, and demonstrate an uncanny similarity to promotional techniques used on behalf of popular rock or cinematic celebrities in the twentieth century. "Up and down Broadway," wrote the Boston Musical Times in 1860, "we have portraits of [Adelina] Patti . . . and inside our hats and neck-ties her name [will] soon [appear]." A month later a correspondent from Baltimore reported to the same journal: "The success of the Opera at the Holliday St., Baltimore, was a glorious triumph. Nothing was talked of but 'Patti'; 'Patti hats,' 'Patti segars,' while one enthusiastic restaurant-keeper advertised 'Oyster-Pattis.'" (BMT, 10 March 1860, 23; 7 April 1860, 56) The celebrity nature of a company's stars, as we have seen, was of paramount importance in the success of an opera troupe; this factor goes a long way towards explaining the popular appeal of opera performances. "The Opera is the rage," pointed out the Spirit in 1853. The critic continued:

> Alboni is THE STAR in whose glory all other stars, however bright they may be 'on their own hook,' cannot help paling. Nobody seems to know a thing about the Opera--it's all Alboni--so [long as] SHE sings, it's the same to the listeners whether the Opera is "Marie" or "Cene"-something, which is the Italian for Cinderella. (Spirit, 19 February 1853, 1)

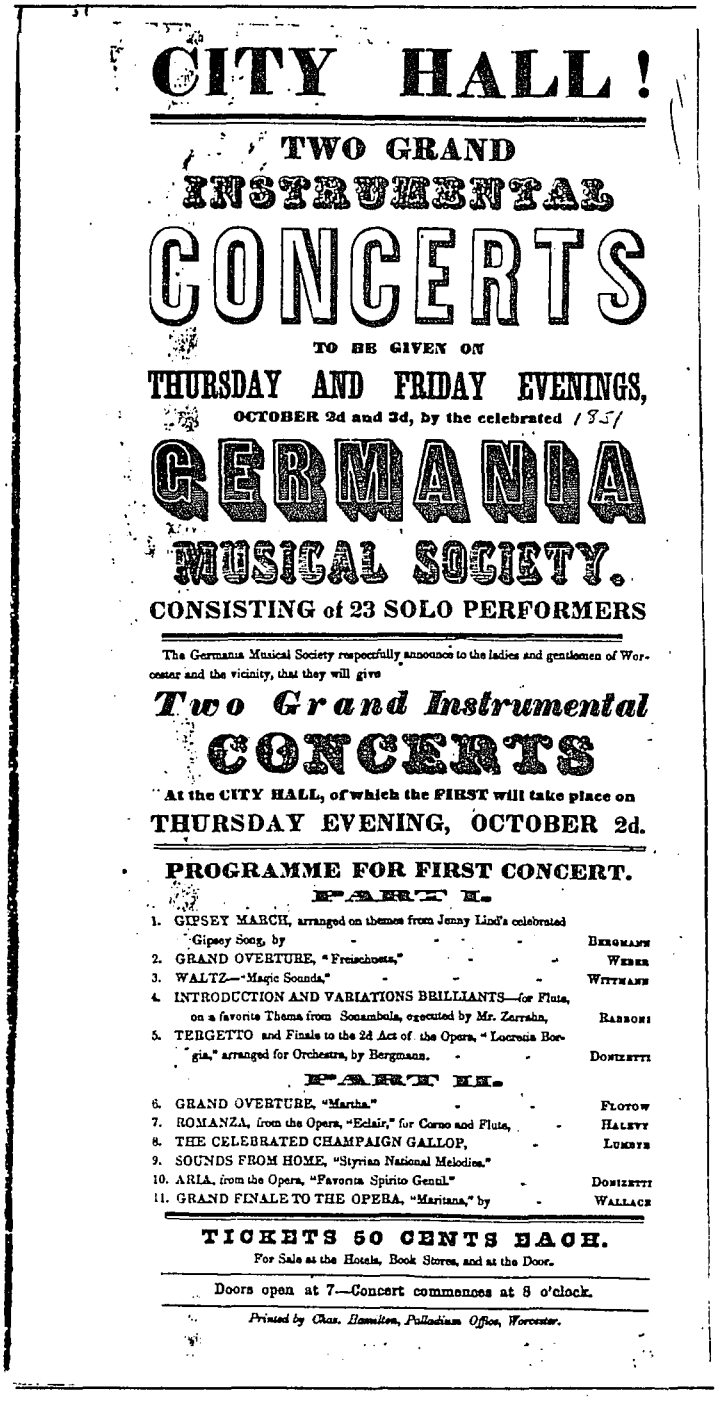
Walt Whitman--the former implacable foe of imported European opera, who had become (by the 1850s) a true convert to performances by Italian companies--described the same phenomenon, about the same artist:

> The best songstress ever in America was Alboni.--Her voice is a contralto of large compass, high and low--and probably sweeter tones never issued from human lips. The mere sound of that voice was pleasure enough.--All persons appreciated Alboni--the common crowd quite as well as the connoisseurs.--We used to go in the upper tiers of the theatre, (the Broadway), on the nights of her performance, and remember seeing that part of the auditorium packed full of New York young men, mechanics, "roughs," etc, entirely oblivious of all except Alboni, from the time the great songstress came on the stage, till she left it again.-- (Quoted in Faner, 59)

Completely aside from the allure of the stars, however, was the popularity--and familiarity--of the music being performed. In March 1847 George Templeton Strong (who, only two months earlier, had finally overcome his moral scruples about dramatic presentations) witnessed his first performance of Il barbiere di Siviglia at Palmo's. "Pleasant evening, rather," he wrote. "Most of the music I'd heard before in some shape or other, and the music is perfect of its kind--lively, sparkling, and thoughtless, like the gabble of a French soirée." (21 March 1847, Lawrence, 432) That Americans who did not attend the theatre were more than passing familiar with operatic music is clear. The numerous concerts by opera singers, of course, were full of it; so, too, were instrumental

presentations by touring orchestras, pianists, and violinists. Many of the concerts given by the Germania Musical Society, an orchestra of young German musicians from Berlin that toured the United States from 1848 through 1854, were in conjunction with such operatic stars as Jenny Lind, Adelaide Phillips, Henriette Sontag, and Catherine Hayes, and as a consequence were heavily dominated by operatic music. (H. Earle Johnson, "Germania Musical Society," AG) Extant programs, however, suggest that even their purely instrumental concerts were of a similar bent. Of eleven works presented during a "Grand Instrumental Concert" given in 1851, for example, seven were operatic in origin: the overtures to Der Freischütz and Martha, an "Introduction and Variations Brilliants, for Flute, on a favorite Thema from Sonnambula"; a "Tergetto [sic] and Finale to the 2d Act of the Opera, 'Lucrezia Borgia,' arranged for Orchestra"; a "Romanza, from the Opera 'Eclair,' for Corno and Flute"; an "Aria, from the Opera, 'Favorita Spirito Gentil'"; and the "Grand Finale to the Opera, 'Maritana.'"[2] Furthermore, the repertories of three European virtuoso pianists who toured the United States during the 1840s and 1850s--Leopold de Meyer (1816-1883), Henri Herz (1803-1888), and Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871)--were full of operatic transcriptions and fantasies on Lucia di Lammermoor, Norma, I Puritani, Lucrezia Borgia, and numerous other well-known and favorite operas. (Lott, 37, 191, 193, 250, 328) These works were not only heard by thousands in concert halls, they were also widely disseminated as sheet music publications. "The Thalberg fantasies were all the rage for a time," remembered George Upton in 1901. "Every little piano thumper tackled them." (Upton, Musical Memories, quoted in

2. Program, City Hall (Worcester, Mass), 2 October 1851, GA/MWA. See the next page for a reproduction of this program.



CITY HALL!

TWO GRAND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERTS

TO BE GIVEN ON

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY EVENINGS,

OCTOBER 2d and 3d, by the celebrated 1851

GERMANIA MUSICAL SOCIETY.

CONSISTING of 23 SOLO PERFORMERS

The Germania Musical Society respectfully announce to the ladies and gentlemen of Worcester and the vicinity, that they will give

Two Grand Instrumental CONCERTS

At the CITY HALL, of which the FIRST will take place on

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2d.

PROGRAMME FOR FIRST CONCERT.

PART I.

1. GIPSEY MARCH, arranged on themes from Jenny Lind's celebrated Gipsey Song, by - - - - - BERGMANN
2. GRAND OVERTURE, "Freischuetz," - - - WEBER
3. WALTZ—"Magic Sounds," - - - - WITTMANN
4. INTRODUCTION AND VARIATIONS BRILLIANTS—for Flute, on a favorite Thema from Sonambula, executed by Mr. Zerrahn, RABBONI
5. TERGETTO and Finale to the 2d Act of the Opera, "Locrezia Borgia," arranged for Orchestra, by Bergmann. - - DONIZETTI

PART II.

6. GRAND OVERTURE, "Martha." - - FLOTOW
7. ROMANZA, from the Opera, "Eclair," for Corno and Flute, - HALEVY
8. THE CELEBRATED CHAMPAIGN GALLOP, - LUMBYE
9. SOUNDS FROM HOME, "Styrian National Melodies."
10. ARIA, from the Opera, "Favorita Spirito Gentil." - DONIZETTI
11. GRAND FINALE TO THE OPERA, "Maritana," by - WALLACE

TICKETS 50 CENTS EACH.

For Sale at the Hotels, Book Stores, and at the Door.

Doors open at 7.—Concert commences at 8 o'clock.

Printed by Chas. Hamilton, Palladium Office, Worcester.

Broadside from two concerts given by the Germania Orchestra at City Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts, 2-3 October 1851. The repertory illustrates the preponderance of opera music in even instrumental concert programs.

Lott, 328) Other instrumentalists--such as guitarists and flutists--also had their choice of operatic arrangements.[3]

The wide dissemination of favorite arias published as sheet music has already been mentioned, as has the fact that young American women played and sang this music. Anecdotes about amateur performances of operatic music abound; copies of arias and other tunes in sheet music collections around the country often show evidence of use.[4] Charles Hamm has persuasively described this facet of American musical culture. When discussing sheet-music publications of numbers from Cinderella, he wrote:

> All evidence insists that [this music] was indeed performed in the American parlor and that these operatic songs became part of the popular song repertory. They were printed and sold in the same form, by the same publishers, in quantities equal to and even greater than earlier successful songs. (Hamm, Yesterdays, 76)

A contemporary observer further supports this assertion. Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, who published an account of a trip to the United States in 1849-1850, described New Englanders as "generally a very quiet people, and very fond of music: we hear them playing and singing a great deal. Some of them sing exceedingly well, too, airs out of Italian operas."[5] The sound of this music became part of American consciousness; as early as 1826 the Mirror pointed out that "we have only to call to our minds many

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3. An example is a piece of sheet music titled "The Opera of Sonnambula Arranged for the Flute and dedicated to the Amateurs of Philadelphia by E. Krakamp." (Philadelphia: Fiot, Meignen & Co., n.d.), in the Music Division, DLC.

4. One example is a copy of Henry Bishop's version of "Sounds so Joyful" (from La Sonnambula), in the collection of DLC. This copy has the Italian text written in above the English words. See "Sounds so Joyful,' a Cavatina from Bellini's Opera La Sonnambula, adapted by Henry R. Bishop" (Philadelphia: Fiot, Meignen & Co., n.d.) in the Music Division, DLC.

5. Lady Emmaline Stuart-Wortley, Travels in the United States, etc, During 1849 and 1850 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851), 43.

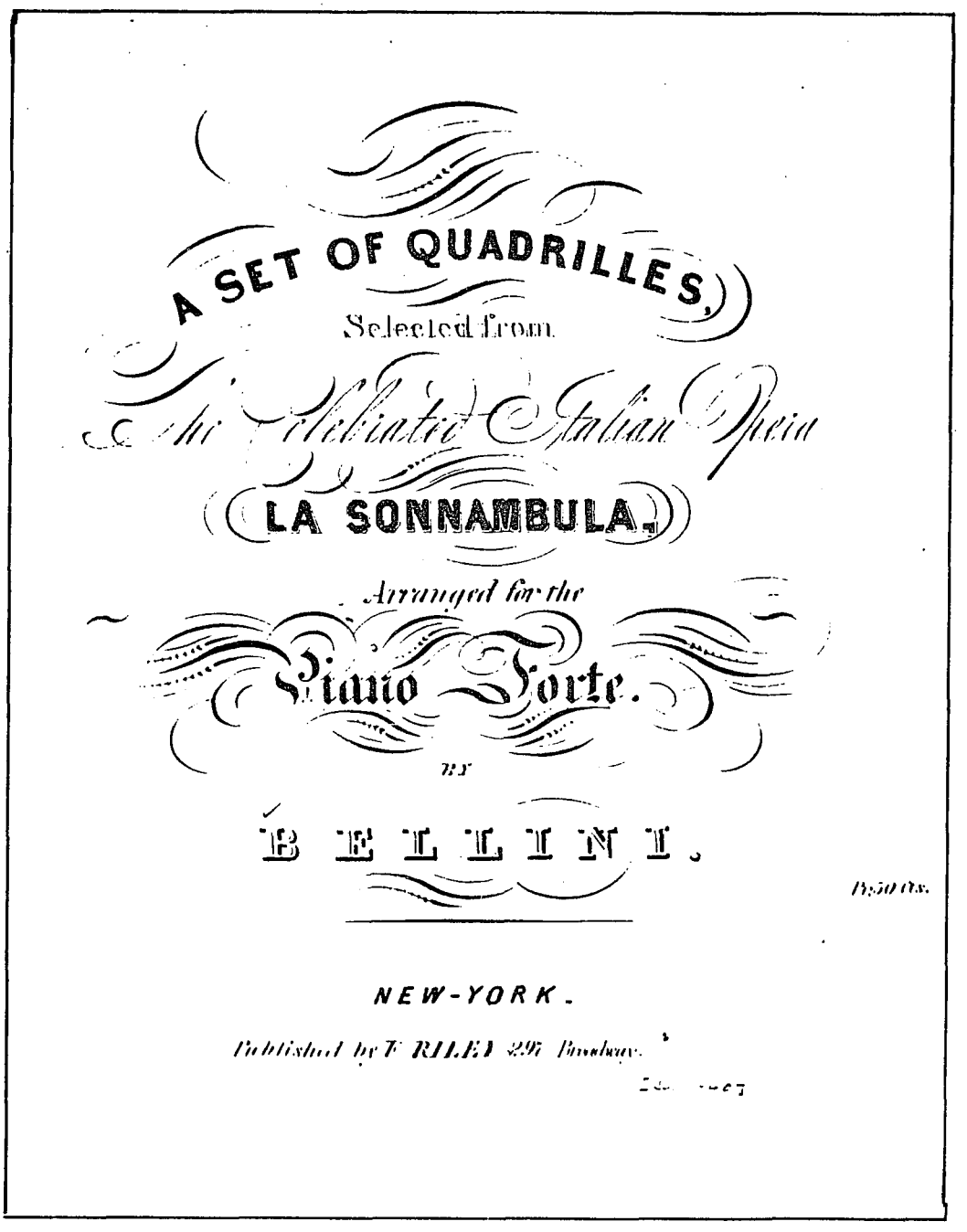
favorite tunes, (and which are familiar and pleasing, because furnished with English words,) and we shall find they have been taken from Italian opera!" (Mirror, 11 March 1826, 262-263) "Italian melody," wrote Hamm, "became the most pervasive musical influence in America since Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies."[6]

The prevasiveness of operatic--especially Italian--music was hardly limited to concerts, informal soirées, or the music racks of parlor pianos. Band concerts, for example, were full of it. In 1857 John Dwight described a series of Promenade Concerts in Boston that featured performances by military bands. The works offered, he wrote, included overtures and "operatic arrangements" such as "the Trio from Lucrezia Borgia, the 'Miserere' from Il Trovatore, and endless potpourris from fashionable operas . . . &c. &c." (Dwight's, 8 August 1857, 149-150) Music performed by bands at the mineral-springs resorts of Virginia included favorite works from the operatic stage; one visitor to Salt Sulphur Springs in 1856, for example, reported that the string band that entertained guests who were lounging and strolling about the grounds played "gems from the operas."[7] The repertory of the Marine Band in Washington during the 1840s, according to Elise Kirk, included a "balance of musical styles represented by polkas, waltzes, quickstep arrangements of popular songs, and especially opera selections." Furthermore, operatic arrangements made by Francis Scala, the leader of the band from 1855-1871,

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6. Hamm, New World, 198. For the influence of Italian melody on American popular-song composers the antebellum period, see Hamm, 182, 235.

7. Quoted in James Kidd, "The History of Salt Sulphur Springs, Monroe County, West Virginia." (Master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1953), 88.



One example of the numerous dances fashioned from opera music and published in sheet-music form.

included works by Auber, Bellini, Boieldieu, Donizetti, Flotow, Gounod, Meyerbeer, Offenbach, Rossini, Verdi, and von Weber.[8] Finally, the music played by orchestras and bands for dances--the most popular form of social recreation in the nineteenth century--was likewise heavily operatic. Although dance cards or programs from the antebellum period are scarce, the plentiful samples of such items from the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s indicate clearly that arrangements from the musical stage--including operas--usually made up over half (and sometimes significantly more) of the music performed at such functions.[9] Furthermore, countless arrangements of operatic music in the form of quadrilles, waltzes, and other dances were published as sheet music during the antebellum years.[10]

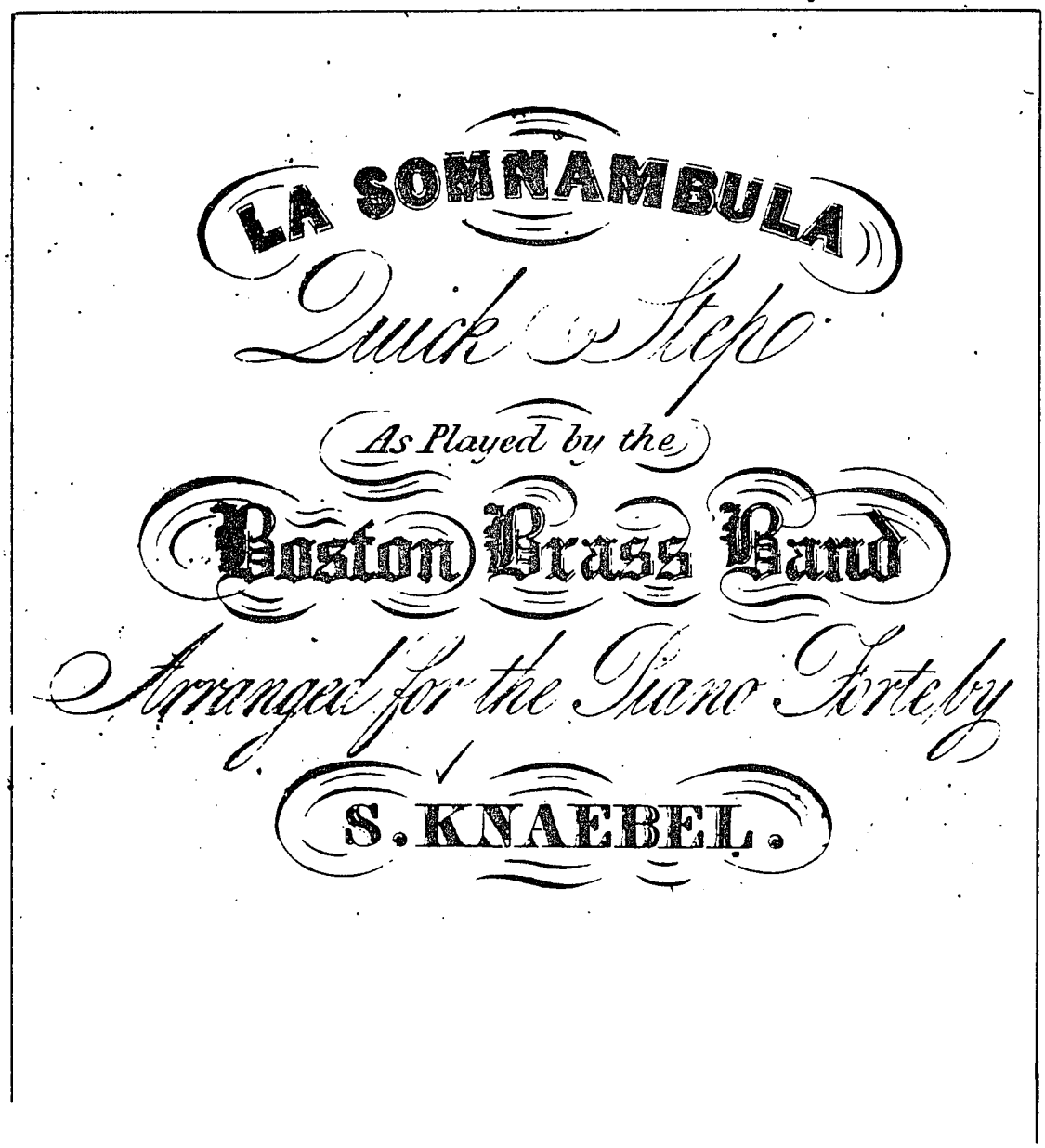
A communication from Stephen Massett to the Spirit in 1852 reveals yet another method of disseminating operatic music. Writing about the forthcoming première of the opera Peri, by the American theatre musician James Maeder, he observed: "three weeks after its production, the popular airs will be heard from every barrel-organ in the country." (Spirit, 20 November 1852, 480) The première of the popular Bohemian Girl in 1845 had created a raft of tunes that soon were "established favorites . . . whistled by every boy . . . and ground by every hand organ"; (Mirror, 29 April 1845) twelve years later the New York correspondent to Dwight's

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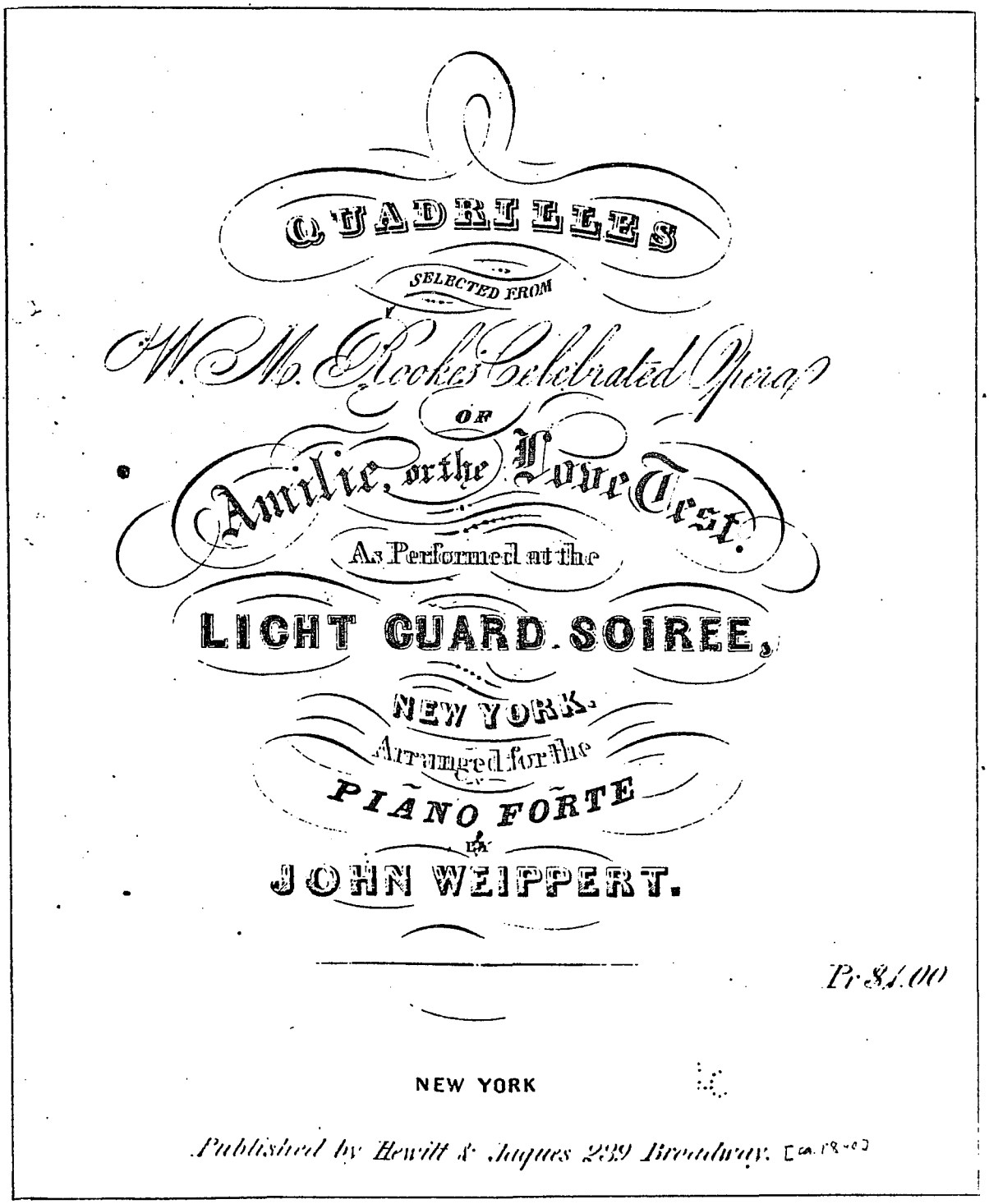
8. Elise Kirk, Music in the White House (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 57.

9. For a discussion of the pervasiveness of music from the stage (including opera) in late nineteenth American life, see Katherine Preston, Music for Hire: Professional Musicians in Washington, D. C., 1877-1900 (New York: Pendragon Press, forthcoming).

10. For example, see "A Set of Quadrilles, Selected from The Celebrated Italian Opera La Sonnambula, Arranged for the Piano Forte by Bellini." (New York: F. Riley, ca. 1840) and "Waltz from the Opera of La Somnambula [sic] arranged for the Piano Forte by S. Knaebel" (Boston: Charles H. Keith, 1836) from the Music Division, DLC.



Title page to a sheet-music publication of "La Sonnambula Quickstep," as played by the Boston Brass Band.



Title page to a set of quadrilles selected from Rooke's Amilie, as performed by a band at the Light Guard Soiree in New York. This version is in a piano arrangement.

Journal discoursed at length, and revealingly, about "popular street-organ music":

> Often, at night, when the streets are still and quiet, on returning from the opera your ear will catch the distant tones of some air you have just heard warbled by Lagrange or Parodi, floating from afar, like a sweet echo. At one corner the death-song in Lucia is wasting its sweetness on the desert air of Broadway, while in the next block the Miserere of Trovatore brings back memories of Brignoli or Tiberini. . . . Then the next moment we hear the Casta Diva, and as we pass on it merges into some of Verdi's passionate arias, till frequently a night walk in Broadway is one continued concert. . . .
>
> There is one air, however, without which a street organ would no more be a street organ than a man without a head would be a man. After Verdi and Donizetti, the street organs fall back upon the inevitable "Mira Norma," of Bellini, as if it were their normal condition. . . . when you hear the tones of a street organ in the distance, but too far off to distinguish the melody, you may be certain that it is "Mira Norma." As a distinguished poet aptly remarks:
>
> > Be weather clear, or damp, or stormy,
> > They're always playing, "Hear Me, Normy."
> >
> > (Dwight's, 14 February 1857, 156)

Yet another example of the ubiquity of operatic music in antebellum America is also about New York, and is likewise from the pages of Dwight's Journal. "Up in the belfry of Trinity," the correspondent wrote,

> the chimes are ringing out their welcome to Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Seven, and their first song is . . . the sweet, familiar tones of "Home, sweet home." Let us stand there in front of the church and listen; all is still save that sweet music. . . . Soon, the melody changes, and the "Sicilian Mariner's Hymn" rings out more gladly . . . but even these fade, as with wild joy the belfry chimes ring out merrily the Brindisi from Lucrezia, and banish all sad thoughts, drive back the starting tear, bring a smile upon the cheek, and reminds us of the many happy, as well as sad moments, the past year had brought us, and of the many happy plans we have formed for the New Year. (Dwight's, 10 January 1857, 115-116)

A final--but very important--guise in which operas and operatic music became known to antebellum Americans was through the incredible profusion of operatic burlesques seen and heard on the American stage. Starting in the late 1830s and continuing unabated through the 1850s and later, parodies with such titles as Amy Lee (Amilie), The Bohea-Man's Girl, He Fries and Shoots! or the Seven Charming Pancakes, Herr Nanny (Ernani), Lucy Did Sham Amour (Lucia di Lammermoor), Mrs. Normer, The Roof Scrambler (La Sonnambula), The Virginian Girl (The Bohemian Girl), Schinder El'ler, and Lend Her the Sham Money (Linda di Chaminoux) were performed in New York and (slightly later, by itinerant burlesque opera and minstrel troupes) all over the rest of the country.[11] Although almost none of the music survives (few of the pieces were published), contemporary criticism suggests that much of the original music was left intact: the humor was in the juxtaposition of familiar operatic music with the ridiculous words and absurd situations of the burlesques. "The travesties on the Italian opera by the Ethiopian company at Palmo's," explained the Spirit in 1845, ". . . give the entire musical features of a piece, although rendered grotesque by a slight distortion not exactly of notes but of the vocalists' countenances." (Spirit, 5 July 1845, 224) According to Vera Lawrence, a version of The Bohea-Man's Girl performed that same year included "such witty vocal satire" as a song titled "I dreamt I had money to buy a Shawl" (a parody of the popular "I dreamt I dwelt in Marble Halls"). (Lawrence, 328) The music

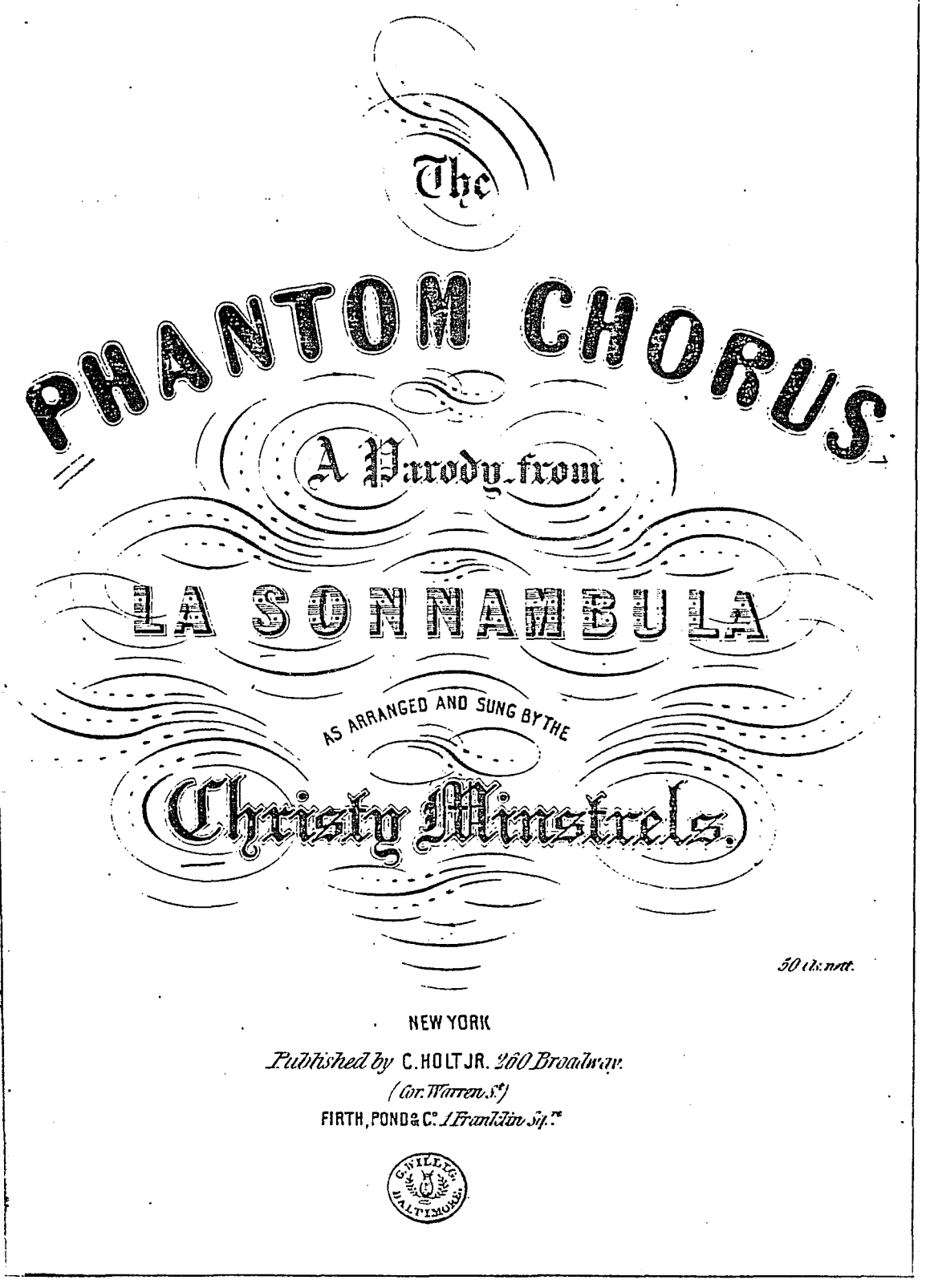
11. Titles are from a variety of sources, including Lawrence; Spirit, 15 July 1854, 264; 22 February 1845, 613; 15 March 1845, 32; 7 November 1840; 22 April 1843; playbills, Adelphi Theatre (New York), 10 February 1848, TC/NN; Chestnut Street Theatre, 5 April, 26 March 1845; Armstrong, 41; and Odell, IV:403, 404, 503-504; V:127, 160, 432.

performed in a burlesque of Cinderella (mounted in the mid-1850s) was described as "in a great measure very faithful to the original, although as relief bits, two or three of the favorite negro melodies are interspersed," and one of the few extant pieces of sheet music from a operatic burlesque--"The Phantom Chorus," a parody on the chorus "A fosco cielo" in Act I of La Sonnambula--is almost identical, on a note-for-note basis, with a piano-vocal version of Bellini's music.[12]

A writer for the Spirit described the process by which an opera became the target of such treatment: "The Christy Minstrels will forthwith proceed to burlesque the 'Enchantress,' as a matter of course," he wrote in 1849, "and as soon as the songs of that opera become popular in the streets, she will come before the audience in a very neat Ethiopian costume." (Spirit, 31 March 1849, 72) The burlesques also sometimes went far beyond parodies of the music and the story. Playbills from some of these productions suggest that the name of the composer, the names of characters, and the names of well-known operatic stars were also fair game. In 1845, according to Lawrence, the singers of the Ethiopian Burlesque Opera Company appeared under such aliases as Madame Pico (Rosina Pico), Madame McBuckwheat (Amalia Majocchi), Signor Aint-a-ninny

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12. Spirit, 1 July 1854, 240; "The Phantom Chorus. A Parody from La Sonnambula as arranged and sung by the Christy Minstrels" (New York: C. Holt jr, 1848). A copy is in GA/MWA. Kathryn Reed-Maxfield, who is studying the music of minstrel-show composers, has found that the published minstrel-show songs often include phrases borrowed from operas, but usually not in any systematic fashion. Their technique apparently was much the same as that used by James Maeder in his arrangement of music for the burlesque Pocahontas. Unless scores or parts from an opera-burlesque production turn up, we will probably never know just how much of the music was left intact and how much it was changed. According to Lawrence, most of the operatic travesties performed at William Mitchell's Olympic Theatre in New York were arranged by George Loder and "closely adhered to the originals." Her source for this information is not revealed; later, in fact, she claims that the supposed adherence to the original scores was "a highly unlikely supposition." See Kathryn Reed-Maxfield, "Songs of the American Blackface Minstrel Show, 1843-1860" (dissertation, University of Michigan, in progress); Brooks, "Pocahontas"; and Lawrence, 135, 342.



"The Phantom Chorus," from La Sonnambula, as arranged by Edwin Pearce Christy.

(Antognini), and Signor De Big-Knees (de Begnis). (Lawrence, 342) Such detailed parody strongly suggests that the audiences of such burlesques were quite familiar with operatic performances in the original versions.

The composition of the audience at Mitchell's Olympic, and at other burlesque houses, in fact, is revealing. For not only were the lower and middling classes attracted to such spoofs, so were the "fashionable and elite." In 1841 the Spirit remarked, "It is not a little singular that the audience in the dress circle of [the Olympic Theatre] is quite the most fashionable that can be collected at any theatre in this city." (Spirit, 6 March 1841) Ten years later the enthusiasm had not abated, as is revealed by an announcement from a manager of a burlesque house that appeared in the Spirit:

> The manager begs to state that the immense encouragement given to his celebrated Concerts, every evening for the last eleven months, by the elite and fashion of this great metropolis, has induced him to engage artists of the very first talent, to produce Burlesque Italian Opera Scenes, Burlesque Concerts and Ballets, in a style equal to the originals produced at the Italian Opera, of this city. (Spirit, 22 March 1851, 60)

The Mirror, at one point, claimed that the audience seen at the Italian opera on any one night was remarkably similar to that seen at Mitchell's Olympic the next.

* * *

The ubiquity of operatic music in the United States, and the variety of forms in which it appeared demonstrate clearly that most Americans of this period did not consider it as art music. It was music that was

simultaneously cultivated and vernacular, to use Wiley Hitchcock's apt terms. But these terms, although wonderfully useful for the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, do not work so well in the antebellum period. This opera music--like most music heard and performed in the United States in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s--does not fit neatly into either category, for the categories themselves were just beginning to form. In this respect, music and opera were of a piece with the rest of American culture of the period: it was heterogeneous, varied, jumbled, wonderfully exciting, and stubbornly resistant to the categorization so characteristic of western culture in the twentieth century.

An example of a similar blurring of the lines between the cultivated and the vernacular--but in another art--is the recent discovery concerning the place of Shakespeare's works in American society of the nineteenth century. Lawrence Levine has shown that the playwright's works were known to and loved by ordinary antebellum Americans to a degree unfathomable today--and to an extent almost precisely analogous to the pervasiveness of opera in the same society. (Levine, "Shakespeare," 40) "From the large and often opulent theaters of major cities," he wrote, "to the makeshift stages in halls, saloons, and churches of small towns and mining camps, wherever there was an audience for the theater, there Shakespeare's plays were performed prominently and frequently." (Levine, "Shakespeare," 40) The playwright's works, like operas, were parodied and burlesqued; the characters and situations he created, like wafts of Italian melody from a church steeple or an organ-grinder, were part of the public consciousness; and well-read copies of his plays, like piles of sheet-music arias, could

be found in countless homes all over the United States. To most Americans of the period, neither Shakespeare's works, nor those of Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti, or Verdi, were Art. They were an integral part of popular entertainment: an everyday part of popular culture.

The removal of opera from the domain of the popular theatre, as we know, eventually succeeded. So did the similar removal of Shakespeare. Both of these developments, in fact, were part of a massive change in American culture that took place gradually over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. Culture was broken down into segments; parts of it continued to function as "popular" culture, other segments became Culture--and hence no longer "popular." The theatre, which early in the century had functioned as a social microcosm presenting widely divergent bills of fare to all ranks of society, gradually became more specialized: different houses were established to cater to different audiences; the drama, dance, farce, acrobatics, melodrama, and opera increasingly were viewed as unrelated and separate. Music, which once had subsumed under its umbrella all sorts of widely divergent styles, likewise became divided--into popular music and art music: music that was vernacular or cultivated--but rarely both.

This quantum change in the function of music was not only a part of a larger cultural process at work in American society, it also is further evidence of a significant movement occurring in Europe at the same time: the transformation of music from a utilitarian craft into an Art. This shift was a long and gradual process; it was, of course, one of the principal achievements of the Romantic period. The process in America was

inextricably bound up with the appearance, by mid-century, of a musical elite, and by their wholehearted embracement of the philosophy and the music of the German Romantics, who were the leaders in this movement. An examination of this change is not the function of this study; it occurred, for the most part, after 1860. But in order to understand the development of American musical culture during the nineteenth century--and through it, to better understand the changes that took place in American society as a whole--we have to thoroughly understand musical culture of the antebellum period. In order to know where we are going, we must know where we have been. This study should serve as a contribution to that end.

APPENDIX: PERSONNAL OF ITALIAN OPERA TROUPES, 1833-1847

1. Montresor Company

New York and Philadelphia: 6 October 1832-11 May 1833

Madame Brichta
Giuseppe Corsetti (bass)
Signora Fabbrica (contralto)
Luciano Fornasari (bass)
Signor Manetti (tenor)
Lorenza Marozzi (soprano)
Giovanni Battista Montresor (tenor)
Ernesto Orlandi (buffo)
Adelaide Pedrotti (soprano)
Alessandro Pedrotti (tenor)
Giuliano Placci (bass)
Emilia Saccomani (contralto)
Francesco Sapignoli (tenor)
Enrichetta Salvioni
Albina Stella (soprano)
Teresa Verducci (soprano)

Orchestra director: Antonio Bagioli
Orchestra leader: Michele Rapetti
Chorus director: Carlo Salvioni
Company director: Giacomo Montresor

Sources: Schiavo, 42; Spirit, 4 August 1832; Odell, III:642-645.

2. Rivafinoli Opera Company

New York and Philadelphia, 18 November 1833-July 1834

A. Bazzani
M. Bazzani
Louisa (or Luigia) Bordogni (mezzo-soprano)
Antonio de Rosa (bass)
Gianbattista Fabj (or Fabi) (tenor)
Clementina Fanti (soprano)
Rosina Fanti (soprano)
Adelaide Ferrero (dancer)
Stefano Ferrero
Tomaso Manetti
Cl. Marozzi
Lorenza Marozzi (soprano)
Signora Maroncelli
Ernesto Orlandi (buffo)

Antonio Porto (bass)
Luigi Ravaglia (tenor)
Signor Richaud
Carlo Salvioni
Francesco Sapignoli (tenor)
Amelia Schneider-Maroncelli (contralto)
Luigi Volta

Chorus director: Piero Maroncelli
Orchestra leader: Michele Rapetti

Sources: Schiavo, 54-55; Mirror, 21 September 1833, 94; Odell, III:690-94.

3. **Porto-Sacchi Company**

New York and Albany, 10 November 1834-May 1835

Clementina Fanti (soprano)
Rosina Fanti (soprano)
Gianbattista Fabj (or Fabi) (tenor)
Stefano Ferrero
Monterasi
Antonio Porto (bass)
Francesco Sapignoli (tenor)
Luigi Ravaglia (tenor)
Julia Wheatley

Directors of the Opera: Antonio Porto, Signor G. A. Sacchi

Sources: Schiavo, 57; AMJ, December 1834, 42; Odell, IV:40-41.

4. **Montresor Opera Company**

New Orleans, 6 March 1836-31 May 1837

Antonio de Rosa (bass)
Lucia Gadenghi
Signor Manetti (tenor)
Lorenza Marozzi (soprano)
Giovanni Battista Montresor (tenor)
Ernesto Orlandi (buffo)
Adelaide Pedrotti (soprano)
Luigi Ravaglia (tenor)
Enrichetta Salvioni
Francesco Sapignoli (tenor)

Source: Kendall, 136.

5. **De Rosa Opera Company**

New Orleans, 4 December 1836-27 February 1837

Antonio de Rosa (bass)
Signor Manetti (tenor)
Lorenza Marozzi (soprano)
Ernesto Orlandi (buffo)
Luigi Ravaglia (tenor)
Mme. Thielmann

Source: Kendall, 143

6. **Havana Opera Company**

New Orleans: 4 April-6 June 1837 (St. Charles)
10 June-14 July (Théâtre d'Orléans)

Cerilo Antagnini (tenor)
Federico Badiali (tenor)
Pietro Candi (bass)
Cassati
Paolo Ceresini
Cerroni
Clorinda Corradi-Pantanelli (contralto)
Gianbattista Fabj (or Fabi) (tenor)
Luigi Fornasari (bass)
Garganti
Grandi
Lazzarini
Tomaso Manetti
Marcucci
Martinelli
Signora Papanti
Elisa Rossi
Teresa Rossi (soprano)
Signor Rossi
Francesco Sapignoli (tenor)
Sorcini
Tartarini

Manager: Francis Brichta
Conductor: Luigi Gabici

Sources: Kmen, 151-158; Kendall, 143-144.

7. Havana Opera Company

New Orleans, 22 February-10 March 1842 (St. Charles)
16 March-18 April 1842 (Théâtre d'Orléans)

Signor Albertazzi
Signora M. Albertazzi
Cerilo Antagnini (tenor)
Federico Badiali (tenor)
Marietta Barbetti
Louisa Balgarelli
Alessandro Cecconi (bass)
Alberto Lozzi (bass)
Lorenza Marozzi (soprano)
Adolfo Montegri (bass)
F. Morians (tenor)
Sigra Pantanelli
Sigra Papanti
Arunta Pardinni (soprano)
Luigi Perozzi (tenor)
Arabella Ober de Rossi (soprano)
Signora Rossi (second one)
Celestino Salvatori (bass)
Arribal Statutti (bass)
Emelina Fantoin Sutton (soprano)
Bartolomeo Thames

Director and composer: Laura Rossi
Orchestra director: Michele Rapetti
Apundator (?), A. Beckerim
Director of Sastreria (?) Ester Mencer
Impresario: Francisco Marti y Torrens

Sources: Belsom, 73-88; Mirror, 5 March 1842, 32; Spirit, 12 March 1842; Smither.

8. **Havana Opera Company**

Itinerary:
New Orleans, 17 April-17 May 1843
Cincinnati, 8-21 June
Pittsburgh, 30? June-3? July
Philadelphia 15-31 July
where? August
New York (Niblo's) 15 September-23 October
Philadelphia, 13-24 November (Schiavo 15-25 November)
Baltimore, December
New Orleans, American Theatre 13 December (Kendall, 233)

Personnel:

New Orleans	Cincinnati	Philadelphia	New York
		M. Albertazzi Ph. Albertazzi	
Cirillo Antognini			yes
		Todoro Brotolone	
Francesco Calvet	Calvetti	yes	yes
			Coadi (Coad?)
Ester Corsini (sop)	yes	yes	yes
Gioacchino Gussinie	yes	yes	
Amalia Majocchi	yes	yes	yes
			T. Maggiori (bass)
Lorenza Marozzi	yes	yes	
Signora Marozzi			
Luigi Perozzi (ten)	yes	yes	Paul Salomoni (ten)
Bartolomeo Thames	yes	yes	yes
Attilio Valtellina	yes	yes	yes
Felice Vittoria			

Orchestra leader: Luigi Gabici
La Manna

Sources: Belsom, 98, 101; Wilson, Wolz.

9. **Palmo's Opera House Company**

Personnel:

3 Feb-25 Mar 1843	29 April-10 June	30 Sept-19? Oct 1843 18 Nov 1843-25 Jan 1844 fall, 1844
first season	(under de Begnis)	
Albani		
Matilda Albertazzi	yes	
Philippo Albertazzi	yes	
Cirillo Antognini		yes
Daniele Benetti	yes	
Eufrasia Borghese	yes	yes
Madame Boulard		
	Giuseppe de Begnis (buffo)	
Giuberneau (bass)		
Majoccchi		
	Louis Martini (buffo)	
Mayer		
Naldi		
Luigi Perozzi (ten)	yes	yes
		Rosina Pico (contr)
	Antonio Sanquirico (buffo)	yes
Salomonski		
		Signor Tomasi (bass)

General director: Attilio Valtellina
Orchestra leader: Michele Rapetti
Chorus master; Mr. Etienne
Stage manager: Mr. Wells

Second season director: Giuseppe de Begnis

Sources: Schiavo, 66-67; White, 874-876; Spirit, 4 May 1844, 118; Spirit, 16 November 1844; Lawrence, 355

10. Sanquirico-Patti Company

New York: Palmo's, 4 January-31 March 1847
7 April-7 June

	first season (4 Jan-31 Mar)	second season (7 April-7 June)
Clotilde Barili (soprano)		yes
Caterina Barili-Patti (soprano)	(?)	[Schiavo includes her, but no other sources do]
Sesto Benedetti (tenor)		yes
Daniele Benetti		yes
Ferdinando Beneventano		yes
Madame Boulard (soprano)		yes
Luigi Martini (bass)		yes
Salvatore Patti (tenor)		
Rosina Pico (contralto)		
Harriet Phillips		
Antonio Sanquirico (buffo)		
Benetti Riese		yes

Management:
Salvatore Patti/Antonio Sanquirico/C. Pogliani
Maestro: Antonio Barili (stepson of Salvatore Patti)
Orchestra leader: Michele Rapetti
Chorus director: H. C. Beames
Prompter: Barozzi
Stage manager: Benetti Riese

Sources: Spirit, 21 November 1846, 468; Schiavo, 69; Lawrence, 425.

11. Havana Opera Company, 1847

Itinerary:

New York (Park)	15-16 April, concert on 17 April
Boston (Athenaeum)	19 April-4 June
New York (Park)	9 June-8 July 12 perfs; 9 July grand soiree musicale (concert)
Philadelphia (Walnut)	12 July-6 August
New York (Castle Garden)	18 August-17 September
Boston	21 September-1 October
New York	farewell concert at Tabernacle, 15 October

Personnel:
72 artists; by July numbered 83.

Federico Badiali (tenor)
Luigi Battaglini (bass)
Pietro Candi (bass)
Luigi di Vita (baritone)
Luigia Caranti di Vita (soprano)
Teodolinda Gerli
Sofia Marini
M. Marini
Pietro Novelli (bass)
Natale Perelli (tenor)
Luigi Perozzi (tenor) (former Palmo's member)
Giuseppe Piemontesi (tenor)
Teresa Ranieri (soprano)
Signor Ranieri
Juan B. Severi (tenor)
Fortunata Tedesco (mezzo soprano)

General director: F. Badiali
Tour manager: Jose Villarino
Co-directors: Luigi Arditi and Giovanni Bottesini

Sources: Odell, V/263, 266, 403; Spirit, 17 April 1847; Armstrong, 54; Lawrence, 434-35; 438, 445-446; BMG, 25 October 1847.

12. Astor Place Opera Company, 1847-48

F. Albertazzi
Attilio Arnoldi
Antonio Avignone (baritone)
Avogadro
Francesco Bailini (principal tenor)
Caterina Barili-Patti (Lawrence, 457: new)
Antonio Barili (bass)
Clotilda Barili (soprano)
Sesto Benedetti (returns 15 December after resolution of monetary dispute)
G. V. Beneventano (baritone)
Eliza Biscaccianti (soprano) (Lawrence, 500: 3-month engagement)
Claudio Bonzanini (bass)
Felix Genovesi
Angiolina Morra
Signor Morra
Amalia Patti
Salvatore Patti
Giuseppe Piamontesi
Giuseppina Lietti Rossi (contralto)
Settimo Rossi (principal bass)
Antonio Sanquirico (buffo)
Severo Strini
Teresa Truffi (soprano)
Adelino Vietti (principal tenor)

Management:
General Managers: A. Sanquirito, S. Patti
Acting Manager: John Sefton
Maestro-director: Antonio Barili
Orchestra leader: Michele Rapetti
Stage manager: Biondi
Costumer: Ravaglia

Sources: Odell, V:381-382; Schiavo, 77-79; Lawrence, 457, 466, 500.

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