AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF BIZET'S *CARMEN*: MELODY, TEXT SETTING, HARMONY, AND FORM

by

ANDREW Y. PAU

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_____	_____
Date	Joseph N. Straus Chair of the Examining Committee
_____	_____
Date	David Olan Executive Officer

William Rothstein, Advisor

_____

L. Poundie Burstein, First Reader

_____

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF BIZET'S *CARMEN*:

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ANDREW Y. PAU

Advisor: Professor William Rothstein

This dissertation examines aspects of the compositional practice of Georges Bizet in his opera *Carmen* (1875), focusing in particular on the composer's treatment of melody, text setting, harmony, and form. The dissertation situates the music of *Carmen* in its historical context by examining the extent to which Bizet follows, or departs from, the diverse musical conventions of nineteenth-century French opera. My analyses draw on both historical treatises and current music-theoretical scholarship in the areas of melody, text setting, rhythm, harmony, and form.

The dissertation begins with a review of the Parisian press reception of the first run of *Carmen*, focusing on critical discussions of Bizet's compositional practice. I then examine Bizet's melodic and text-setting practices in light of treatises by Rousseau, Scoppa, Castil-Blaze, and Benlœw, and operas by Grétry, Auber, Thomas, and Gounod, among others. I argue that like those earlier French composers, Bizet used rhythm and text setting as a way to differentiate between two different kinds of operatic music: non-diegetic music (singing as speech) and diegetic music (singing as song). I examine Bizet's text-setting practices in both lyrical and diegetic numbers from *Carmen* and suggest that the binary distinction between these melodic styles is occasionally blurred in the opera.

The other main part of the dissertation is an examination of Bizet's use of chromaticism, common-tone tonality (including chromatic third relations), and harmonic dualism in *Carmen*, focusing on the three duet numbers between Carmen and Don José (the Act I Séguedille and Duo, and the Act II and Act IV duets). I argue that Bizet's use of semitonal linear motion creates motivic references across numbers in *Carmen*. In addition, these semitonal lines are harmonized throughout the opera in ways that feature different levels of common-tone preservation. Based on my analyses, I suggest that common-tone tonality is associated in *Carmen* with sensuality and the character of Carmen, while abrupt harmonic changes are associated with impetuosity and, ultimately, violence in Don José. Throughout the study, I examine the ways in which Bizet used the musical codes of nineteenth-century French opera to illuminate the dramatic psychology of his principal characters.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One day during my teenage years in Hong Kong, I put on an LP recording from my parents' collection (yes, it was that long ago) and listened transfixed to a selection of highlights from Bizet's *Carmen*, with Maria Callas and Nicolai Gedda in the lead roles. I loved classical music, enjoyed reading plays, and had started taking French classes at the Alliance Française. *Carmen* was a work that spoke to all of these interests, and it became the first of many operas that I have gotten to know and love. This dissertation thus represents the latest stage in a journey of exploration in music, text, and drama that began for me many years ago on the other side of the world.

This journey would not have been possible without the love and support of my parents, Patrick and Po-Yee Pau. They have encouraged and believed in me through all my endeavors in education and in life, and I dedicate this work to them.

My work on the dissertation benefited greatly from the advice of the members of my committee. Bill Rothstein, my advisor, has been a formative influence on my development as a scholar, thinker, writer, and teacher. Bill was the person who first encouraged me to pursue a dissertation on French opera, and many of the ideas contained in this dissertation first took shape during conversations with him, both inside and outside the classroom. His commitment to the values of musicality, clarity, precision, consistency, and sensitivity to historical context has provided me with a model to aspire to in my own scholarship. Ora Frishberg Saloman, who was the original first reader for the dissertation, sadly passed away before its completion. The first chapter of the dissertation was inspired by her work on music criticism in nineteenth-century France, and I shall miss her generosity of spirit. Poundie Burstein kindly agreed to step in as first reader at a late stage and provided quick and constructive feedback with his characteristic

energy and good humor. Joe Straus helped to keep me on track with his practical advice on managing time, completing the dissertation, finding employment, and developing an academic career. I should also thank Joe and Bill for organizing and participating in regular meetings with the music theory dissertators at the Graduate Center. These group meetings provided me with a valuable sounding board for my ideas and helped to keep me moving forward in my research and writing.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support extended to me by the CUNY Graduate Center in the form of a Chancellor's Fellowship (2005–10) that permitted me to pursue my graduate studies, as well as a Dissertation Fellowship (2010–11) that allowed me to focus on this dissertation. I would also like to thank the judges of the 2010 Mannes Theory Essay Award for recognizing a paper derived from my work on the dissertation.

Academic research and writing can be an isolating experience, but I have been fortunate to be able to count on my family, friends, and colleagues for social and moral support. They are too numerous for me to list individually here, but I thank them all for their companionship, camaraderie, and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank Armando Rosario, my partner in life for almost ten years, for his love, patience, and academic outsider's sense of perspective that have kept me anchored through the ups and downs of a career change, graduate school, a move from New York to Oberlin, and now the completion of this dissertation. I look forward to our further adventures together.

NOTE ON EDITIONS

All musical examples in this dissertation have been reproduced from editions in the public domain. All examples from *Carmen* have been checked for accuracy against the critical edition of Bizet's original *opéra comique* version by Robert Didion, published in piano-vocal score by Schott in 2000.[1] All measure numbers from the score to *Carmen* are given according to the Schott edition. In the Act II duet, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5 and refer to in other chapters, the Schott edition contains fourteen measures (mm. 117–130) that were cut before the opera's premiere and do not appear in the first-edition vocal and full scores published by Choudens in 1875 and 1877, respectively.[2] Readers following these first-edition scores, or another edition that preserves this cut, will need to subtract 14 from all measure numbers after m. 131 in all discussions of the Act II duet throughout this dissertation.

The version of *Carmen* discussed throughout this dissertation is the *opéra comique* version with spoken dialogue between the numbers. Following Bizet's death, Ernest Guiraud composed linking sections of recitative that replaced the spoken dialogue for the first performances of *Carmen* in Vienna in the fall of 1875. Although the Guiraud version is often performed today, I have focused on the original conception of the opera by Bizet and his librettists and disregarded the Guiraud recitatives throughout this dissertation.

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[1] Bizet, *Carmen*, édition critique par Robert Didion, partition chant et piano (Mainz: Schott, 2000).

[2] Ibid., 17. In those measures, Carmen mockingly repeats Don José's statement that no woman has ever touched him as deeply as Carmen. Robert Didion speculates that the measures were cut because Carmen's brazen mockery of José was considered too shockingly improper for the middle-class audience of the Opéra-Comique. Ibid. The editorial decisions made by Didion with respect to several other numbers in his edition of *Carmen* do not affect the measure-number references in the dissertation.

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INTRODUCTION

Georges Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) is one of the most popular and frequently performed operas in the repertoire. For a work that is widely performed and admired, however, Bizet's score for *Carmen* has received surprisingly little analytical attention from music scholars. Biographical studies of Bizet have tended to focus more on the details of Bizet's life and social and cultural milieu, and less on his music and compositional practice.[1] Other musicologists have dealt with textual issues raised by the opera's complicated performance and publication history.[2] Some scholars have analyzed the opera's plot and libretto in literary, feminist, or psychoanalytical terms, mostly to the exclusion of the music.[3] To the extent Bizet's music is discussed, it is often examined primarily for its treatment of exoticism and Spanish *couleur locale*,[4] notwithstanding the fact that Bizet never visited Spain or even mentioned the country in any of his surviving letters.[5]

The most comprehensive English-language study of the music of *Carmen* in the past two decades is the one by Susan McClary, which was published in 1992 as part of the Cambridge

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[1] See, e.g., Cardoze, *Georges Bizet*; M. Cooper, *Georges Bizet*; Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*; and Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*. Winton Dean's classic study (Dean, *Bizet*) is a happy exception in this regard.

[2] See, e.g., Dean, "The True 'Carmen'?"; and Wright, "A New Source for *Carmen.*" For a comprehensive discussion of the opera's textual history, see Didion, Preface to *Carmen*, by Georges Bizet, 17–44.

[3] See, e.g., Clément, *Opera, or, The Undoing of Women*; Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*"; Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*; and Maingueneau, *Carmen: Les racines d'un mythe*. To be fair, many of these scholars work in fields other than music.

[4] See, e.g., Bartoli, "L'orientalisme dans la musique française du XIXe siècle"; Laparra, *Bizet et l'Espagne*; Locke, *Musical Exoticism*; Locke, "Spanish Local Color in Bizet's *Carmen*"; Parakilas, "How Spain Got a Soul"; and Julien Tiersot, "Bizet and Spanish Music." In contrast, Donald Jay Grout argues that "the mild Spanish local color" is "[p]robably the least important feature" of the music of *Carmen*. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, 426.

[5] Claude Glayman, Preface to Bizet, *Lettres*, 35 ("non seulement . . . Bizet n'a jamais visité Espagne, . . . dans ses lettres il n'évoque ce pays à aucun moment, le mot même d'Espagne ne vient pas sous sa plume").

Opera Handbook series.[6] McClary situates *Carmen* as "one of a large number of fantasies involving race, class and gender that circulated in nineteenth-century French culture."[7] For McClary, *Carmen* is a paradigmatic work in terms of its depiction of the exoticized racial and sexual Other. Accordingly, she views Bizet's music as a series of coded gestures freighted with implications of race, class and gender. For example, melodic chromaticism in the Act I Séguedille "signifies the 'Orient,' Carmen's beguiling treachery and perhaps also, by extension, the latent treachery of the 'Orient.'"[8] McClary's discussion of the music of *Carmen* is primarily geared towards supporting her view that the musical fabric of *Carmen* is steeped in "the ideological implications of Orientalism and its closely related misogyny."[9]

Although McClary consistently engages with the music of *Carmen*, she considers her approach to be alternative to what she calls "standard" music analysis – not that there are many analyses of the music of *Carmen* ("standard" or otherwise) to begin with.[10] As McClary noted in 1994, "theorists rarely bother with *Carmen.*"[11] That state of affairs has not changed much in the intervening seventeen years. McClary has hypothesized that theorists ignore Bizet's music because "it offers so few challenges to accepted notions of musical procedure[.]"[12] The

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[6] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*. Related (and occasionally duplicative) writings by McClary on various aspects of *Carmen* can also be found in McClary, *Feminine Endings*; McClary, "Paradigm Dissonances"; and McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen.*"
[7] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 29.
[8] Ibid., 56.
[9] Ibid., 57.
[10] McClary, "Paradigm Dissonances," 72.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid. Although McClary attributes this condescending view of Bizet's music to a monolithic community of theorists, she appears to subscribe to it herself. Thus, she states that "chromatic passages abound in Bizet's score, but they are for the most part easily explained." Ibid., 71. Similarly, McClary writes of Don José's "Flower Song" in Act II of *Carmen* that "Don José merely proceeds through a series of enharmonic and chromatic pivots – all fairly easily analyzed." Ibid., 73.

implication is that theorists find the music of *Carmen* too "unchallenging" to be worth their while.

A more persuasive explanation of the relative neglect of *Carmen* by music theorists is that as a number opera reflecting diverse musical traditions and influences, *Carmen* does not respond well to methods of analysis that are heavily biased towards organicism. As William Rothstein has recently pointed out, music analysis, at least in the form most commonly practiced in North American academic circles, is heavily weighted towards using organicist methods of analysis that reflect German Romantic ideology.[13] These modes of analysis work well with works conceived according to organicist premises (most notably instrumental pieces from the Austro-German repertoire), but they may not always fit other repertoires such as Italian Romantic opera (the subject of Rothstein's study) or an eclectic French opera like *Carmen*. It may very well be that theorists have avoided *Carmen* not because they find the music too easy, but because they find it difficult to engage with Bizet's music using only organicist tools.

The aim of this dissertation is to study and analyze different aspects of the music of *Carmen*, including melody, text setting, harmony, and form, using a variety of analytical approaches. As McClary has written, Bizet's opera reflects "extremely diverse musical codes, [including] the conventions of *opéra-comique*, French Wagnerisms, [and] musical practices associated with exoticism."[14] Hervé Lacombe has similarly noted that "*Carmen* synthesizes the most diverse elements of nineteenth-century lyric art."[15] In this study, I examine the ways in

[13] Rothstein, "Common-tone Tonality in Italian Romantic Opera: An Introduction," Section I.
[14] McClary, "Paradigm Dissonances," 72. Thomas Grey similarly notes that the numbers of *Carmen* constitute "a coherent spectrum of characteristic and local styles, buoyant light-opera ensemble (the gypsies), lyrical cavatina (Micaëla, Don José) and proto-veristic melodrama (Carmen, Don José)." Grey, "Opera and Music Drama," 410.
[15] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 684 ("Carmen synthésise les éléments les plus divers de l'art lyrique du XIXe siècle"). For Lacombe, *Carmen* successfully reconciles "tragedy with comedy, exoticism with realism" and "combines the language of passion with the most sinuous harmonies,

which Bizet employed these diverse musical codes with the goal not of imposing organicist judgments but rather with a view towards understanding how Bizet constructed the drama of *Carmen* using the musical elements he had at his disposal.[16]

An important goal of the dissertation is to situate Bizet's music within the context of nineteenth-century French opera and the conventions of its different genres. Other than the three years he spent in Italy as a winner of the Prix de Rome, Bizet spent almost his entire life in the environs of Paris, and he was keenly involved in the French musical culture of his time. In 1881, six years after Bizet's death, Antoine Marmontel, the composer's piano teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, wrote that "[Bizet's] predilection for music of the German and Italian schools did not make him biased against our [French] national school of dramatic music. Auber, Halévy, Gounod and Ambroise Thomas remained his preferred masters."[17] More recently, Hervé Lacombe has suggested that the lyric poetics of Auber and his canon of *opéras comiques* profoundly marked Bizet's musical taste and thought, and that Bizet's compositional style was constructed both out of, and in reaction to, elements of that canon.[18] Drawing on Lacombe's observation, I examine in this dissertation ways in which Bizet's compositional practice in *Carmen* draws on that of French operatic composers who preceded him. I also examine the

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the most refined style with the most harrowing accents" ("Comme la tragédie s'inscrit dans la comédie, ou l'exotisme dans le réalisme, le langage des passions et les mouvements harmoniques les plus sinueux, le style le plus raffiné et les accents les plus déchirants se fondent . . ."). Ibid.

[16] As McClary has argued, "us[ing] our analytical training to interrogate how Bizet 'did things with notes' . . . is as much a project in the theorizing of music as is the production of self-contained systems." McClary, "Paradigm Dissonances," 73.

[17] Marmontel, *Symphonistes et virtuoses*, 254 ("Notons que sa prédilection pour l'école allemande et l'école italienne ne le rendait pas injuste envers notre musique dramatique nationale. Auber, Halévy, Gounod et Ambroise Thomas restaient ses maîtres préférés").

[18] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 58 ("Beaucoup plus profondément qu'on l'imagine ordinairement, la poétique lyrique d'Auber a marqué le goût et la pensée de Bizet, qui s'est construit . . . à la fois de certains éléments de ce canon et en réaction à ce canon"). Roger Parker has similarly noted the influence of the *opéra comique* genre "on composers of serious operas as disparate as Verdi and Bizet." Parker, "The Opera Industry," 109–10.

extent to which Bizet's music conforms to notions reflected in selected French and Francophone treatises on melody, text setting, and harmony. At the same time, I have attempted to expand the scope and repertoire of current music-theoretical discourse by applying recent theoretical scholarship on melody, text setting, harmony, and phrase rhythm to the music of *Carmen*. Finally, since the study of opera necessarily involves drama as well as music, I have tried throughout to find ways in which music analysis can illuminate the dramatic psychology of Bizet's principal characters, Carmen and Don José.[19]

Chapter 1 of the dissertation situates the music of *Carmen* in its historical context by examining Parisian reviews of the first run of performances in March 1875, focusing on critical discussions regarding Bizet's compositional practice. Chapter 2 examines a more specific historical context for Bizet's opera, namely melodic and text-setting practices in French opera from Grétry to Gounod. This discussion in turn informs Chapter 3, which examines Bizet's melodic practice in *Carmen* and other operas and stage works. Chapter 4 discusses Bizet's use of chromaticism, common-tone tonality, and harmonic dualism in *Carmen*, focusing in particular on the Séguedille and Duo from Act I.[20] Chapter 5 applies the analytical tools and concepts developed in the earlier chapters to the music that Bizet wrote for Don José and Carmen in Acts II through IV of the opera. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a brief epilogue that considers potential avenues for further research.

[19] A similar approach is taken by Steven Huebner in a 1993 article, which examines the musical relationship between Carmen and Don José using the metaphor of a Spanish bullfight. See Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*."

[20] Several influential books that address chromatic harmony have been published in the last year. These include Clark, *Analyzing Schubert*; Cohn, *Audacious Euphony*; Rings, *Tonality and Transformation*; and Tymoczko, *A Geometry of Music*. Since these books were published after work on this dissertation was substantially completed, the discussion of chromatic harmony in the dissertation does not engage with their ideas directly.

CHAPTER 1

CARMEN IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: PARISIAN PRESS REVIEWS (1875)

This introductory chapter situates the music of *Carmen* in its historical context by examining Parisian press reviews of the first run of performances in March 1875. The chapter focuses on critical discussions regarding Bizet's compositional practice in order to elucidate the cultural contexts in which Bizet's music was perceived by his Parisian audience. This review of contemporary music criticism will inform and situate the discussion and analysis of the music of *Carmen* in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation.[1]

More than thirty reviews of the first run of *Carmen* from a wide variety of Parisian newspapers and periodicals, all written within a month of the opera's premiere on Mar. 3, 1875, have been collected and published in a volume edited by Lesley Wright.[2] These reviews are listed in Table 1.1, beginning on the following page. Wright notes in her introduction to the *dossier de presse* that these reviews come from twenty-two daily papers (split fairly evenly between the conservative and republican sides of the political spectrum), as well as from representatives of the musical press (*L'art musical*, *Le ménestrel*, *Revue et gazette musicale*), illustrated press (*Le charivari*, *L'illustration*, *Le monde illustré*), and literary press (*Le correspondant*, *Revue des deux mondes*).[3]

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[1] This chapter will focus primarily on the discussion of Bizet's musical practice in the press reviews. For more broad-based accounts of contemporary press reviews of *Carmen*, see Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 394–409; Dean, *Bizet*, 116–21; Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 684–705; and McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 111–20.

[2] Wright, ed., *Georges Bizet, Carmen: Dossier de presse parisienne (1875)* (hereafter cited as Wright, *Dossier de presse*).

[3] Ibid., ix. Three reviews listed in Table 1.1 came from specialized publications: *Paris-Programme* (a short-lived publication for theater goers), *The American Register* (for American expatriates), and *La sylphide* (a fashion magazine targeted at female readers). Ibid.

Critic [pen name]	**Publication**	**Date**
Abraham, Émile	*Le petit journal*	Mar. 6, 1875
Banville, Théodore de	*Le national*	Mar. 8, 1875
Bernard, Daniel	*L'union*	Mar. 8, 1875
Bernard, Paul	*Revue et gazette musicale*	Mar. 7, 1875
Blaze de Bury, Henri [F. de Lagenevais]	*Revue des deux mondes*	Mar. 15, 1875
Boubée, Simon	*Gazette de France*	Mar. 8, 1875
Cardon, Émile	*La presse*	Mar. 9, 1875
Comettant, Oscar	*Le siècle*	Mar. 8, 1875
Deulin, Charles (1)	*Le pays*	Mar. 5, 1875
Deulin, Charles (2)	*Le pays*	Mar. 8, 1875
Escudier, Léon	*L'art musical*	Mar. 11, 1875
Fournel, Victor	*Le correspondant*	Mar. 10, 1875
François, Oswald [François Oswald]	*Le gaulois*	Mar. 6, 1875
Gautier, Eugène	*Journal officiel*	Mar. 16, 1875
Gouzien, Armand	*L'évènement*	Mar. 6, 1875
Guillemot, Jules	*Le soleil*	Mar. 9, 1875
Heugel, Henri [H. Moreno]	*Le ménestrel*	Mar. 21, 1875
Hostein, Hippolyte	*Le constitutionnel*	Mar. 8, 1875
Hyenne, Robert	*La sylphide*	Apr. 1, 1875
Joncières, Victorin	*La liberté*	Mar. 8, 1875
Jouvin, Benoît-Jean-Baptiste [Bénédict] (1)	*Le Figaro*[4]	Mar. 5, 1875
Jouvin, Benoît-Jean-Baptiste [Bénédict] (2)	*Le Figaro*	Mar. 10, 1875
Jullien, Adolphe	*Le français*	Mar. 15, 1875
La Pommeraye, Henri de	*La France*	Mar. 4, 1875
Lasalle, Albert de	*Le monde illustré*	Mar. 20, 1875

(Table 1.1 continued on the following page)

[4] In addition to the two reviews of *Carmen* written by Jouvin, *Le Figaro* also published during March 1875 two gossip-style pieces regarding the opera's premiere in the daily theatrical column of Arnold Mortier (under his pen name "Un monsieur de l'orchestre") and several short items by Gustave Lafargue and Jules Prével. Ibid., 143–58.

Critic [pen name]	**Publication**	**Date**
Lauzières, Achille de [M. de Thémines]	*La patrie*	Mar. 8, 1875
Lavoix, Henri-Michel [M. Savigny]	*L'illustration*	Mar. 13, 1875
Pène, Henri de [Némo]	*Paris-Programme*	Mar. 11, 1875
Pougin, Arthur[5]	*Le ménestrel*	Mar. 7, 1875
Reyer, Ernest (1)	*Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*	Mar. 14, 1875
Reyer, Ernest (2)	*Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*	Mar. 17, 1875
Saint-Victor, Paul de	*Le moniteur universel*	Mar. 8, 1875
Véron, Pierre	*Le charivari*	Mar. 6, 1875
Weber, Johannès	*Le temps*	Mar. 9, 1875
[Unsigned]	*The American Register*	Mar. 13, 1875
[Unsigned]	*La république française*	Mar. 8, 1875

TABLE 1.1. Selected Parisian press reviews of the first run of performances of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique, Mar. 4–Apr. 1, 1875

1.1 Critical Reception of Libretto and Subject Matter

Most of the Parisian critics in 1875 noted that the introduction of the unsavory characters and sensationalistic subject matter of Prosper Merimée's 1845 novella *Carmen* onto the stage of the Opéra-Comique represented a significant act of intrusion into that theater's bourgeois world. Paul de Saint-Victor, for example, began his review in *Le moniteur universel* with the exclamation: "A wolf in the fold!"[6] Similarly, Théodore de Banville in *Le national* noted, with tongue firmly in cheek, that "the Opéra-Comique, the traditional theater of virtuous brigands and languorous maidens with their rosewater loves, has been forced, violated, stormed by a frenzied

[5] Pougin's review in *Le ménestrel* (a weekly journal published by the house of Heugel) was followed by a short postscript written by Henri Heugel (under the pen name H. Moreno).
[6] Ibid., 45 ("Une louve dans la bergerie!").

band of romantics." [7] On the other side of the ideological spectrum, the conservative critic Henri Blaze de Bury in *Revue des deux mondes* lamented the passing of the golden age of *opéra comique*, when Eugène Scribe and others wrote "nice plays in three acts" set to music by composers like Boieldieu, Auber, Hérold, and Adam.[8] As Achille de Lauzières noted in *La patrie*, audiences at the Opéra-Comique's Salle Favart were used to gracious and poetic figures who charmed them and made them smile.[9] In contrast, Carmen was a "true prostitute of the mud and the crossroads."[10] For Lauzières, the presence of this abhorrent character on the stage habitually graced by more charming heroines represented "a debasement of art, an inversion of genres and roles[.]"[11]

Frustrated expectations of genre were also on the mind of reviewers like Émile Cardon in *La presse*, who noted that the drama was too "dark" and "brutal" for the Opéra-Comique, and more suited to a melodrama playing at a boulevard theater.[12] Other critics who remarked on the somber cast of the drama included Oswald François in *Le gaulois* ("C'est un drame absolument sombre"); Émile Abraham in *Le petit journal* ("le sujet soit un peu rude et le dénouement bien

[7] Ibid., 49 ("L'Opéra-Comique, le théâtre traditionnel des brigands vertueux, des demoiselles langoureuses des amours à l'eau de rose, a été forcé, violé, pris d'assaut par une bande effrénée de romantiques").
[8] Ibid., 124 ("Regrettez-vous le temps où . . . Scribe et [autres] écrivaient de jolies pièces en trois actes que Boïeldieu, Auber, Hérold, Adam, mettaient en musique?"). Henri Blaze de Bury was the son of the noted critic, librettist and arranger Castil-Blaze.
[9] Ibid., 55 (. . . cette même salle Favart où l'on nous avait habitués à rencontrer . . . toutes ces gracieuses et poétiques figures . . . qui venaient . . . nous sourire et nous charmer"). De Lauzières provides a long list of such heroines from the *opéras comiques* of Auber, Boieldieu, Halévy, Meyerbeer, and Thomas.
[10] Ibid. ("la véritable prostituée de la bourbe et du carrefour"). The anonymous reviewer for *The American Register* similarly observed that "the heroine . . . is a Spanish gypsy girl, depraved and shameless, and altogether a thoroughly repellant character." Ibid., 107. For a discussion of how issues of race, class, and gender affected the reception of *Carmen*, see McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 29–43 and 111–15.
[11] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 55–56 ("Nous avons tout fait pour abaisser le niveau de l'art; nous avons interverti les genres et les rôles").
[12] Ibid., 81 and 83 ("Ce drame, sombre et brutal, n'est certes fait pour l'Opéra-Comique").

sombre"); and Paul Bernard in *Revue et gazette musicale* ("une donnée . . . triste et un dénouement . . . tragique").[13] Daniel Bernard in *L'union* viewed the denouement of *Carmen* as part of a disturbing tilt towards tragedy at the Opéra-Comique, which had recently presented revivals of Gounod's lyric tragedies *Roméo et Juliette* (1873) and *Mireille* (1874) and the first French performances of Verdi's Requiem (1874):

> one hardly laughs any more at the Salle Favart. There, Roméo and Juliette outdo each other in poisoning themselves; a procession of the drowned marches under the eyes of the horse tamer Ourrias [who is dragged under the Rhône in *Mireille*]; not to mention . . . that one now sings the Mass for the Dead on stage. It is distressing![14]

Blaze de Bury similarly complained that "our *opéra comique* no longer jests, it has become serious."[15]

Many critics nevertheless recognized the efforts made by the librettists Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy (best known for their collaborations on Offenbach's operettas) to reconcile the dark atmosphere of Merimée's novella with the demands of the *opéra comique* genre. When *Carmen* was first conceived, Halévy had reassured Adolph de Leuven, the co-director of the Opéra-Comique, that it would be "softened, toned down," that a "pure *opéra comique* character" (Micaëla) would be introduced, that there would be "comic gypsies," and that the death scene would be "sneaked in at the end of a very lively, very brilliant act . . . with triumphal processions,

[13] Ibid., 17–19 and 25.
[14] Ibid., 75 ("[o]n ne rit plus guère, salle Favart. Roméo et Juliette s'y empoisonnent à qui mieux mieux; une procession de noyés y défile sous les yeux du dompteur Ourrias; . . . sans compter que sur la scène . . . on chante maintenant la messe des Morts. C'est navrant!"). Although unusual, tragic endings were actually not unknown in *opéras comiques*. Examples include Auber's *Marco Spada* (1852) and *Manon Lescaut* (1856). Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 16.
[15] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 124 ("notre opéra comique ne badine plus, il devient sérieux").

ballets, and joyous fanfares."[16] As Paul de Saint-Victor noted in his review, unlike in Merimée, Meilhac and Halévy's Carmen does not steal, lure people to death, or have a one-eyed convict husband.[17] Ernest Reyer similarly noted in his first review in *Journal des débats* that the *Carmen* presented at the Opéra-Comique was a "very softened, very sanitized" version of the novella.[18] However, these sanitizing touches were not sufficient for Victor Fournel, who wrote in *Le correspondant* that despite the librettists' changes, Carmen was still more repugnant on stage than in the book, because "we see her move in the flesh under our eyes."[19]

With regard to the opera's general atmosphere, Henri de la Pommeraye in *La France* praised the librettists for providing "agreeable contrasts" by adding picturesque numbers such as the *Chœur des gamins*, the *Chœur des cigarières*, the *Trio des cartes*, and the entry of the *cuadrilla*.[20] In contrast, Charles Deulin in *Le pays* wrote that Meilhac and Halévy "had found a way to darken the already dark novella of Merimée. Their play is lugubrious."[21]

1.2 Critical Reception of Bizet's Music

The discussion of the music of *Carmen* in the Parisian press reviews of 1875 formed part of an ongoing debate among critics regarding musical practices in French opera in the third

[16] Halévy, "La millième représentation de *Carmen*," 5–6, quoted in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 351.
[17] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 46 ("Elle ne vole plus, elle n'assassine plus en attirant les voyageurs dans les coupe-gorges de sa bande; elle n'est plus la *romi* d'un galérien borgne, échappé du bagne").
[18] Ibid., 114 ("La *Carmen* de l'Opéra-Comique est une édition très adoucie, très expurgée, de la Nouvelle").
[19] Ibid., 100 ("Malgré . . . ces atténuations, la cynique créature nous répugne à la scène beaucoup plus encore que dans le livre, parce que nous la voyons se mouvoir en chair et en os sous nos yeux").
[20] Ibid., 3.
[21] Ibid., 6 ("MM. Meilhac et Halévy . . . ont trouvé un moyen d'assombrir encore la sombre nouvelle de Merimée. Leur pièce est lugubre").

quarter of the nineteenth century. Many of the Parisian critics who reviewed *Carmen* had reviewed one or more of Bizet's previous operas, including most recently *Djamileh*, which premiered at the Opéra-Comique in 1872. Bizet was keenly interested in the press reception of his works and summarized the critical reaction to *Djamileh* in a letter to his student Edmond Galabert:

> *Djamileh* is not a success . . . The press was very interesting, and never has an *opéra comique* in one act been more seriously and, I can say, more passionately discussed. The Wagner refrain continues. Reyer (*les Débats*), Weber (*le Temps*), Guillemot (*Journal de Paris*), Joncières (*la Liberté*) . . . were very warm. — De Saint-Victor, Jouvin, etc., were good in the sense that they note inspiration, talent, etc., all spoiled by the influence of Wagner . . . — What satisfies me more than the opinion of all these gentlemen is the absolute certainty that I have found my path. I know what I am doing.[22]

As we shall see, the press reception of *Djamileh*, as described in Bizet's concise account, foreshadowed the Parisian press reviews of *Carmen* in 1875.

***Conservative critiques: Bizet and* wagnérisme.** Bizet had been on the operatic scene for more than a decade by 1875, and most critics were familiar with his work. In his review of *Carmen*, Armand Gouzien in *L'évènement* characterized Bizet as "a composer of very great talent, who occupies one of the first places in the new school (*la nouvelle école*)."[23] Gouzien had a relatively benign view of this "new school" of composers, but more conservative critics took it for granted that one of the primary aims of this new school was to reform (or destroy) the

[22] Bizet, Letter to Edmond Galabert, June 17, 1872, in *Lettres*, 220–21 ("*Djamileh* n'est pas un succès. . . La presse a été très intéressante, et jamais opéra-comique en un acte n'a été plus sérieusement, et, je puis le dire, plus passionnément discuté. La rengaine Wagner continue. Reyer (*les Débats*), Weber (*le Temps*), Guillemot (*Journal de Paris*), Joncières (*la Liberté*) . . . ont été très chauds. — De Saint-Victor, Jouvin, etc., ont été bons en ce sens qu'ils constatent inspiration, talent, etc., le tout gâté par l'influence de Wagner . . . — Ce qui me satisfait plus que l'opinion de tous ces messieurs, c'est la certitude absolue d'avoir trouvé ma voie. Je sais ce que je fais"). All of the critics named by Bizet in this letter went on to write reviews of *Carmen*.
[23] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 12 ("[u]n compositeur de très grand talent, qui occupe une des premières places dans la nouvelle école").

traditions and conventions of French opera. These conservative critics widely assumed that Bizet and his fellow members of the new school were under the pernicious influence of Wagner (or, as Pierre Véron put it in *Le charivari*, the "poisonous mushrooms of M. Wagner").[24] Indeed, as Lesley Wright has noted and as shown in Table 1.2 below, Wagner's name was invoked more often than that of any other composer in the reviews of *Carmen* listed in Table 1.1.[25]

Composer	No. of reviews
Wagner (-ien, -isme)[26]	16
Auber	9
Massenet	7
Grétry	6
Gounod	5
Adam	4
Mozart	4
Boieldieu	3
David	3
Delibes	3
Hérold	3
Rossini	3
Saint-Saëns	3
Thomas	3

TABLE 1.2. References to other composers in the reviews listed in Table 1.1

The critical attacks on Bizet and *Carmen* in 1875 had a pronounced nationalistic subtext. In an article on the press reception of the famous production of *Tannhäuser* at the Paris Opéra in 1861, Annegret Fauser notes that by identifying certain musical characteristics (such as

[24] Ibid., 9 ("les champignons vénéneux de M. Wagner!").
[25] Ibid., viii.
[26] Wagner is referenced directly in 11 of the reviews listed in Table 1.1 and indirectly in a twelfth as "l'auteur de *Lohengrin*." Ibid., 134. In addition, four other reviews employ the terms "wagnérien/wagnérisme" without mentioning Wagner's name independently.

"symphonic" style and lack of form, melody, or rhythm) as either "German" or idiosyncratically "Wagnerian," critics could define French (and Italian) music "by its past masterworks and timeless rules of clarity, elegance, and form."[27] This strain of musical nationalism took on greater urgency in the 1870s after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Lesley Wright notes that following that defeat, the *opéra comique*, as a genre that was viewed as eminently French, "symbolized independence from a foreign cultural invasion, [which was] feared almost as much as the troops that had besieged Paris."[28]

Several reviews of *Carmen* in 1875 made mocking references to the title of Wagner's 1860 essay "Zukunftsmusik," noting that the promised "music of the future" had still not been found.[29] For instance, Charles Deulin, in his second review in *Le pays*, wrote that Bizet "belongs to the modern school, of which MM. Félicien David, Reyer, Wagner and Gounod are the principal representatives. This school repudiates old models . . .; it searches for the models of the future and M. Bizet does not appear to me to have found them yet."[30] An almost identical appraisal was given by Victor Fournel, who stated that "M. Bizet belongs to this young school of the future that dates the discovery of music from Wagner and treats with disdain the masters that the public has adopted, without letting us see just what it has done to replace them."[31] For Léon

[27] Fauser, "*Cette musique sans tradition*: Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and Its French Critics," 252.
[28] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, viii. See also Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 677.
[29] Wagner's essay "Zukunftsmusik" ("Music of the Future") was published in French translation in 1861 (in advance of the production of *Tannhäuser* at the Opéra) as the preface to a collection of French translations of four Wagner librettos.
[30] Ibid., 62 ("Bizet] appartient à l'école moderne, dont MM. Félicien David, Reyer, Wagner et Gounod sont les principaux représentants. Cette école répudie les anciens moules . . .; elle cherche les moules de l'avenir et M. Bizet ne me fait pas encore l'effet de les avoir trouvés").
[31] Ibid., 100 ("M. Bizet appartient à cette jeune école de l'avenir qui date de Wagner la découverte de la musique et traite de haut les maîtres adoptés par le public, sans qu'on voie au juste ce qu'elle a fait pour les remplacer").

Escudier in *L'art musical*, the great masters that the new school supposedly disdained included Rossini, Donizetti, and Auber.[32]

Perhaps counterintuitively, the accusations of *wagnérisme* leveled against Bizet's music for *Carmen* had almost nothing to do with the music of Wagner himself.[33] As shown below in Table 1.3 (on the next page), Wagner's operas were barely mentioned in the reviews listed in Table 1.1.[34] Instead, reviewers mostly referenced Bizet's earlier works and other French operas, the majority of which were written for either the Opéra-Comique or the Théâtre-Lyrique.

As the French musicologist Hervé Lacombe has noted, for conservative French critics in the nineteenth century, "the pejorative term 'Wagnerian' evoked noise and complexity . . . It was also applied to any music that forsook the traditional relationship between melody and accompaniment."[35] The critic Johannès Weber noted in a review of Bizet's *La jolie fille de Perth* in 1868 that Wagner was most often used by his fellow critics as a "bogeyman . . . to

[32] Ibid., 102. Escudier complained that the new school of French composers treated Rossini as a "vulgar maker of cavatinas," Donizetti as a "maker of cabalettas," and Auber as a "maker of *chansons*." Ibid. ("Rossini, et ils le disent à haute voix, n'a été qu'un vulgaire faiseur de cavatines, Donizetti qu'un faiseur de cabalettes et Auber un faiseur de chansons").

[33] While Bizet regarded Wagner as an "innovative genius" (*génie novateur*), he wrote in 1871 to his mother-in-law Madame Halévy that "if I thought I was imitating Wagner, despite my admiration, I would never write another note in my life. *Imitating* is for the stupid. It is better to do badly following oneself than following others. And besides, the more the model is beautiful, the more the imitation is ridiculous" (emphasis in original). Bizet, Letter to Léonie Halévy, May 29, 1871, in *Lettres*, 207 and 209 ("si je croyais imiter Wagner, malgré mon admiration, je n'écrirais plus une note de ma vie. *Imiter* est d'un sot. Il vaut mieux faire mauvais d'après soi que d'après les autres. Et, d'ailleurs, plus le modèle est beau, plus l'imitation est ridicule").

[34] There were two references to Wagner as "the composer of *Lohengrin*" in the reviews listed in Table 1.1. In addition, there was one reference each to *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in the review by Adolphe Jullien, who pointed out that the critics crying that Bizet was "more Wagnerian than Wagner" ("Il est plus wagnérien que Wagner!") probably did not know either of these works.

[35] Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 78.

frighten big children when they do not behave, that is, when they do not believe what they are supposed to believe, when they do not adore what they are supposed to idolize . . ."[36]

Composer	Work	First Performance	No. of Reviews
Bizet	*L'arlésienne* (incid. music)	Théâtre du Vaudeville, 1872	11
Bizet	*Djamileh*	Opéra-Comique, 1872	10
Gounod	*Faust*	Théâtre-Lyrique, 1859	7
Thomas	*Mignon*	Opéra-Comique, 1866	7
Auber	*Le domino noir*	Opéra-Comique, 1837	6
Bizet	*Les pêcheurs de perles*	Théâtre-Lyrique, 1863	6
Meyerbeer	*Robert le diable*[37]	Opéra, 1831	6
Boieldieu	*La dame blanche*	Opéra-Comique, 1825	5
Auber	*Fra Diavolo*	Opéra-Comique, 1830	5
Bizet	*La jolie fille de Perth*	Théâtre-Lyrique, 1867	5
Massenet	*Don César de Bazan*	Opéra-Comique, 1872	3
Gounod	*Mireille*	Théâtre-Lyrique, 1864	3
Gounod	*Roméo et Juliette*	Théâtre-Lyrique, 1867	3

TABLE 1.3. References to other operas in the reviews listed in Table 1.1

The adversaries of "*wagnérisme*" lamented the inversion of roles between melody and harmony and the introduction of "symphonic" techniques into dramatic music. For them, "opera and symphony were mutually exclusive genres, and to introduce symphonic procedures into

[36] Johannès Weber, review of *La jolie fille de Perth* by Georges Bizet, *Le temps*, Jan. 7, 1868 ("Wagner, c'est Croquemitaine, avec qui l'on fait peur aux grands enfants quand ils ne sont pas sages, c'est à dire quand ils ne veulent pas croire ce qu'on veut leur faire accroire, quand ils ne veulent pas adorer ce qu'on veut leur faire idolâtrer . . ."). Weber similarly stated in his review of *Carmen* that notwithstanding the views of other critics, he believed there to be no trace of *wagnérisme* in Bizet's score. Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 96.

[37] In addition to the six reviews directly referencing *Robert le diable*, there are three other reviews that refer to the character of Alice from that opera. Like Micaëla in *Carmen*, Alice first appears in *Robert le diable* bringing a letter from the lead male character's mother.

opera went against its dramatic essence."[38] All these notes were sounded in Daniel Bernard's review of *Carmen*:

> The school of neo-Germanism in music is certainly the most learned that we have had; . . . by studying the symphonists, Weber in front and M. Wagner in the rear, our young compatriots have neglected the dramatic element in its strict sense; they have forgotten to light their lantern, or rather they have come to believe that the masters of the past did not have any merit and it was useless to consult these ancestors, who were sometimes very poor harmonists, but often very rich melodists.[39]

For conservative critics, Bizet's music for *Carmen* lacked the melodic facility of the composers of *opéras comiques* from earlier in the century. Oswald François wrote that Bizet "replaces with enormous talent and complete erudition the melodic sap that flowed from the pens of composers like Auber, Adam, Hérold, and Boieldieu."[40] As Benoît Jouvin noted in *Le Figaro*, those earlier composers were associated with "a form of melody with contours that were symmetrical and cast in a *square* mold that gave a perceptible, in some way *corporeal*, form to the musical phrase. It was neat, it was clear, it etched itself easily in the memory" (emphases in original).[41] In comparison, Victor Fournel found the phrases in Bizet's music for *Carmen* to be "all broken up, incoherent," concluding that "in front of the *pearls* of M. Bizet I declare that, like

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[38] Fauser, "*Cette musique sans tradition*: Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and Its French Critics," 250.
[39] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 75 ("L'école du néo-germanisme en musique est certainement la plus savante que nous ayons eue; . . . à force d'étudier les symphonistes, Weber en tête et M. Wagner en queue, nos jeunes compatriotes ont négligé l'élément dramatique proprement dit; ils ont oublié d'eclairer leur lanterne, ou plutôt ils ont cru que les maîtres du temps passé n'avaient aucun mérite et qu'il était inutile de consulter ces ancêtres, fort pauvres harmonistes quelquefois, mais fort riches mélodistes souvent").
[40] Ibid., 13 ("M. Bizet . . . remplace par un talent énorme et une érudition complète la sève mélodique qui coulait à flot de la plume des Auber, des Adam, des Hérold et des Boieldieu").
[41] Ibid., 151 ("une forme de chant à contours symétriques et jetés dans un moule *carré* qui donnait une forme saisissable, en quelque sort *corporelle* a la phrase musicale. C'était net, c'était clair, cela se gravait aisément dans la mémoire"). Unlike more conservative critics, Jouvin thought that the "obligation" to write square phrases sometimes limited the ability of those earlier composers to have their imagination take flight.

the cock in [Aesop's] fable, the merest grain of millet, the slightest melody of Auber, — my God, yes, — would suit me much better" (emphasis in original).[42]

Another complaint from the anti-*wagnériste* camp was that Bizet had buried the vocal melodies in *Carmen* with dense harmonic effects in the orchestra, which "chatters all the time, and says an infinity of things not asked of it."[43] Oswald François bemoaned the "unfortunate tendencies of M. Bizet . . . to put the melody in the orchestra and the accompaniment in the voices," noting that "each time a motive detached itself, spirited and rhythmic, from the harmonic cloud that obscures the score, it was applauded with ardor."[44] This line of criticism was echoed by Léon Escudier in *L'art musical*: "[i]ncontestably, there is great learning in this score; one finds charming things in its details, lost in the thickets of harmony, very skillfully conceived no doubt, but through which the ear searches in vain for melodies to seduce it."[45]

Like Escudier, other reviewers found Bizet's music overly intellectual, difficult and learned. Charles Deulin wrote that Bizet's score appeared on first hearing to be "cold, tortured, overworked [and] lacking in real inspiration, with extreme affectation replacing absent ideas . . . It is a fire that smokes and only burns in flashes that are too rare."[46] For Hippolyte Hostein in *Le*

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[42] Ibid., 101 ("tout est morcelé, décousu; . . . devant les *perles* de M. Bizet je déclare, comme le coq de la fable, que le moindre grain de mil, la plus petite mélodie d'Auber, — mon Dieu, oui, — ferait bien mieux mon affaire").

[43] Ibid. 137 (Albert de Lasalle in *Le monde illustré*) ("l'orchestre qui bavarde tout le temps, et dit une infinité de choses qu'on ne lui demande pas").

[44] Ibid., 14 ("les tendances malheureuses [de] M. Bizet . . . à mettre le chant dans l'orchestre et l'accompagnement dans les voix . . . Chaque fois, en effet, qu'un motif se détachait, fringant et rythmé, du nuage harmonique qui obscurcit la partition, il était applaudi avec ardeur").

[45] Ibid., 104 ("Incontestablement, il y a un grand savoir dans cette partition; dans ses détails on y trouve de charmantes choses, perdues dans des touffes d'harmonie, fort habilement conçues sans aucun doute, mais à travers lesquelles l'oreille cherche vainement des chants qui la séduisent"). Katharine Ellis has noted that from its founding, *L'art musical* was "virulently and polemically anti-Wagnerian." Ellis, "Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press, 1852–1870," 62.

[46] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 6 ("La partition de M. Bizet nous a, à une première audition, paru froide, tourmentée, travaillée à l'excès, manquant d'inspiration vraie et suppléant par une

constitutionnel, Bizet's music was emblematic of composers of the young French school, which "replaces ideas, strictly speaking, with harmonic affectation and combinations of sonorities . . . In a word, it is too clever and involves too many devices."[47] Albert de Lasalle in *Le monde illustré* likewise criticized Bizet's use of harmony, "which aims at originality, only to achieve singularity, and appears to be constructed only with exceptions to the rule, and never with the rule itself."[48] Oscar Comettant in *Le siècle*, who wrote one of the most negative and widely quoted reviews of the premiere of *Carmen*, opined that Bizet "thinks too much and does not feel enough," adding that "M. Bizet has not yet found his path. He will achieve his goal, we hope, but he must *unlearn* many things in order to become a dramatic composer" (emphasis in original).[49]

A counter-argument to the conservative camp was presented by Théodore de Banville, who praised Bizet for using the orchestra to depict "the agonies, jealousies, rages, and insane forces" driving "real men and women blinded [and] tortured by passion."[50] Mocking the bourgeois taste and lifestyle of the Opéra-Comique audience, Banville wrote that Bizet "had wanted to inflict the joys and cruel pleasures of music on the honest and sated diners that Auber

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recherche extrême à l'idée qui ne vient pas . . . C'est un feu qui fume et ne flambe que par éclairs, trop rares").

[47] Ibid., 33–34 ("la jeune école française . . . remplace l'idée, proprement dite, par des recherches harmoniques et par des combinaisons de sonorités . . . . En un mot, elle a trop d'ingéniosités, trop de procédés").

[48] Ibid., 138 ("L'harmonie . . ., qui . . . vise à l'originalité, pour n'atteindre qu'à la singularité, ne semble faite qu'avec l'exception à la règle, et non jamais avec la règle elle-même").

[49] Ibid., 70–71 ("[Bizet] pense trop, il ne sent pas assez . . . M. Bizet n'a pas encore trouvé sa voie. Il atteindra le but, nous l'espérons, mais il lui faut *désapprendre* bien des choses pour devenir un compositeur dramatique"). Comettant advised Bizet to try his hand at music that is "simple, expressive, naive and sincere."

[50] Ibid., 50 ("[Bizet] a voulu montrer de vrais hommes et de vraies femmes éblouis, torturés par la passion, . . . et dont l'orchestre . . . nous raconterait les angoisses, les jalousies, les colères, les entraînements insensés").

put to sleep with the sweet, intoxicating sounds of his flute."[51] Victorin Joncières in *La liberté* also defended Bizet, noting that his use of the orchestra to "comment with remarkable precision on what is happening on stage" constituted the "very essence of dramatic music" and was a practice that went back beyond Wagner to the reforms of Gluck.[52]

Bizet's concessions to the* opéra comique *style. As discussed above, the libretto to *Carmen* departs from Merimée's novella in various ways that were intended to accommodate the conventions of the Opéra-Comique and the tastes of its audiences. Bizet's score contained similar concessions, and these were duly noted even by critics in the conservative camp. Achille de Lauzières allowed that "whether in good or bad faith," Bizet had "allowed some melodic ideas to slide into his work, and the public . . . had taken advantage of these rare breaks to applaud."[53] According to Lauzières, the vocal numbers that were most warmly received by the audience were the Toreador song from Act II, Micaëla's air from Act III, the children's chorus from Act I, and the various *airs de danse*. Oswald François noted with satisfaction that it was precisely the number that was "furthest away from the ordinary manner of the composer, . . . the Toreador song, . . . that was most warmly received."[54] Émile Cardon, also citing the Toreador song, similarly noted the positive audience reaction to those numbers that "were furthest removed from the principles of the new school, those with the most precise contours and

[51] Ibid. ("Il a voulu infliger les joies et les cruelles voluptés de la musique aux honnêtes dîneurs repus qu'Auber endormait aux doux sons enivrants de sa flûte . . .").
[52] Ibid., 42 ("l'orchestre, qui commente avec une précision remarquable ce qui se passe sur la scène . . . cette théorie, qui est l'essence même de la musique dramatique, et qui longtemps avant Wagner avait été proclamée par Gluck . . .").
[53] Ibid., 58 ("Bon gré, mal gré, il a . . . laissé quelques idées mélodiques se glisser dans l'ouvrage, et le public . . . a profité de ces rares éclaircies pour applaudir").
[54] Ibid., 14 ("c'est le morceau qui se rapproche le moins de la manière ordinaire du compositeur, . . . l'air du Toréador, . . . qui a obtenu le plus de succès"). The critic for *The American Register* recorded that "the 'Chanson de Toréador' is a spirited morceau, and was much applauded and vehemently redemanded." Ibid., 107.

accentuated rhythms."[55] Paul de Saint-Victor, in contrast, found the Toreador song banal: "if it is a concession to the public by the musician, it is too vulgar."[56]

Among the more progressive critics, Théodore de Banville noted the audience's warm reception for the Toreador song with bemused irony: "is the toreador's air, so applauded, a concession to the old order of things, and are the enraged bravos with which the public greeted it an ironic protest in favor of what used to be called 'melody'?"[57] Adolphe Jullien in *Le français* questioned Bizet's decision to "bend to the tastes of people that he must laugh at from behind," arguing that Bizet had made too many "useless concessions" to cater to "the lovers of square phrases and gracious refrains."[58] For Jullien, *Carmen* represented a disappointingly "long series of compromises, in both libretto and music."[59]

***A new kind of* opéra comique.** We shall end our discussion of Parisian press reviews of *Carmen* by considering four reviews that identified in Bizet's score a new approach to the *opéra comique* genre, an approach that balanced melodic invention with harmonic innovation. This view was neatly summarized by Pierre Véron in *Le charivari*, who wrote that with *Carmen*,

> M. Bizet has . . . reacted against the doctrines in which he had become bogged down, and has returned to musical music. . . . *Carmen*, if we are not mistaken, is the point of departure for a new manner. Without renouncing the harmonic refinements of which I greatly approve when the accessory does not suppress the principal,

[55] Ibid., 83 ("les rares morceaux qui ont été accueillis avec le plus de plaisir et le plus chaleureusement applaudis sont ceux-là mêmes qui s'écartent le plus des principes de la nouvelle école, ceux dont les contours sont plus précis et le rythme plus accentué").
[56] Ibid., 47 ("Si c'est une concession faite au public, par le musicien, elle est trop vulgaire").
[57] Ibid., 53 ("L'air du toréador, si applaudi, est-il une concession au vieil ordre des choses, et les bravos enragés dont le public l'a accueilli sont-ils une ironique protestation en faveur de ce qu'on nommait jadis: la mélodie?").
[58] Ibid., 121 ("Qu'a-t-il servi à M. Bizet de se plier au goût de personnes dont il doit se rire par derrière . . . ?) and 122 ("ses concessions inutiles . . . de ne pas effaroucher les amateurs de phrases carrées et de gracieux refrains").
[59] Ibid., 121 ("cet opéra comique n'est qu'une longue suite de compromis, aussi bien dans le poème que dans la musique . . .").

> without ceasing to prove his science, . . . M. Bizet has shown greater care for melodic ideas.[60]

Paul Bernard in *Revue et gazette musicale* (the periodical founded by François-Joseph Fétis in 1827) gave a sincere, nuanced, and personal account of a sympathetic and curious listener coming to grips with the contradictions embodied in Bizet's score:

> The score of *Carmen* is one of those works that is difficult to appreciate and analyze. The first hearing of it is laborious — and I have only heard it once. One does not know on what ground one is walking. Is it grass or is it ice? Can one stretch out on it while listening to mellifluous melodies, or must one be wary of sliding on it while bouncing around from contact with harsh dissonances? In this land of contrasts, not all the pages come from the same mold, for sure, and a melody that is almost banal brushes against fragments of hazy melopoeia. Unity is lacking, but it makes sense. The ear, a bit disconcerted, finds a phrase to be too easy after having struggled to understand a harmonic texture that is too dense. The numbers, following the same process, are fragmented and seem at times to lack form. But from the middle of this whole, where inspiration often shines through, what emerges in quite an individual way is a constant level of skill [and] a very ingenious manner of understanding the orchestra and voices.[61]

[60] Ibid., 8 ("M. Bizet a quelque peu réagi contre lui-même, contre les doctrines auxquelles il s'était englué, et [il] revient à la musique musicale . . . La *Carmen*, si nous ne nous méprenons, est le point de départ d'une nouvelle manière. Sans renoncer aux raffinements d'harmonie que j'approuve fort quand l'accessoire ne vient pas étouffer le principal, sans cesser de vouloir prouver sa science, . . . M. Bizet s'est soucie davantage de l'idée mélodique").

[61] Ibid., 26–27 ("la partition de *Carmen* fait partie de ces œuvres difficiles à apprecier et à analyser. La première audition en est laborieuse – et je ne l'ai entendue qu'une fois. On ne sait trop sur quel sol on marche. Est-ce du gazon ou de la glace? Peut-on s'y étendre en écoutant de moelleuses mélodies, ou faut-il craindre d'y glisser en tressautant au contact de dissonances plus ou moins dures? Dans ce pays de contrastes, toutes les pages ne sortent pas du même moule, à coup sûr, et telle mélodie presque banale coudoie des lambeaux de melopée brumeuse. L'unité fait défaut, cela se comprend du reste. L'oreille, un peu déconcertée, trouve la phrase trop facile après s'être évertuée à saisir un tissu harmonique trop touffu. Les morceaux, par suite du même procédé, sont hachés et semblent parfois manquer de forme. Mais du milieu de cet ensemble ou l'inspiration se fait souvent jour, ce qui emerge d'une façon tout à fait individuelle, c'est une habileté constante, c'est une manière fort ingénieuse de comprendre l'orchestre et les voix").

Johannès Weber in *Le temps* saw Bizet's score as an honorable attempt to reconcile the conventions of *opéra comique* with the dramatic demands of the libretto. Weber noted that contrary to the accusations of *wagnérisme*,

> M. Bizet has firmly opted for satisfying the public's taste, that is, to give them *opéra comique* melodies to the point of putting in dance tunes in light-hearted situations. That did not commit him to put them in everywhere and he has tried to conform his music to the situations and the characters. Hence the persistent usage of chromatic successions in certain numbers; so it is in the first act in the *couplets* of Carmen [the Habanera], where the chromatic successions produce the effect of a sidelong glance, and in the chorus of factory workers demanding vengeance against the gypsy's misdeeds.[62]

Weber was not convinced, however, that Bizet had been entirely successful in solving the problem of creating a work of true originality out of outdated forms:

> sometimes the music has verve and character, sometimes it attests more to the knowledge of the craft than to invention. The problem remains the same: whether to impart [dramatic] truth and novelty to a bad and worn-out form, or to break it and create a new one. These solutions are equally difficult; the first perhaps more so, but it is less bold, and it is the one pursued by composers like M. Bizet.[63]

[62] Ibid., 96–97 ("M. Bizet a pris le parti bien arrêté de contenter le goût du public, c'est-à-dire de lui donner des mélodies d'opéra comique jusqu'à mettre des airs de danse dans les situations gaies. Cela ne l'engageait pas à en mettre partout et il a voulu conformer sa musique aux situations et aux personnages. De là l'usage persistant de successions chromatiques dans certains morceaux; tels sont au premier acte les couplets de Carmen où les successions chromatiques produisent l'effet des 'yeux en coulisse' et le chœur des ouvrières demandant vengeance contre les méfaits de la bohémienne").

[63] Ibid., 97 ("tantôt la musique a de la verve et du caractère, tantôt elle atteste plus de connaissance du métier que d'invention. Le problème reste toujours la même: il s'agit de donner de la vérité et de la nouveauté à une forme mauvaise et usée, ou de la rompre pour en créer une nouvelle. L'une de ces solutions est aussi difficile que l'autre; peut-être la première l'est-elle davantage, mais c'est la moins hardie, et c'est celle que poursuivent les compositeurs tels que M. Bizet").

Weber was not impressed by Bizet's use of Spanish-style numbers, writing that "this does not provide the least local color, since one puts boleros, polkas, waltzes [and] quadrilles in all *opéras comiques*, no matter where the action takes place."[64]

Benoît Jouvin in *Le Figaro* opined that Bizet and his "school of the future" were engaged in an interesting and rewarding new enterprise that had "multiplied musical sensation by dividing it."[65] In Jouvin's view, *Carmen* was a work that repaid detailed study: "in a work like *Carmen*, the [meaning of the] whole escapes those who neglect the details."[66] Jouvin published a second review of *Carmen* five days after his first one and reported on the pleasures he had derived from analyzing the score:

> A second hearing of *Carmen* . . ., while familiarizing myself with the style of the score, has revealed to me real qualities that do not present themselves to those who do not look for them. Sight-read and played at the piano, *Carmen* will be appreciated more than it is on stage, where one must take into account the perspective of the ear which suppresses the delicate details, the fugitive nuances. There may be very different sensations in a *sharp* or in a *flat* that modifies a chord. A *flat* or a *sharp* in a theater is a small flower in the immensity of the steppes; but the flower reserves its perfume not least for those who bother to pick it! There are plenty of these flowers in M. Georges Bizet's score.[67]

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[64] Ibid. ("les airs espagnols . . . ne donne pas la moindre couleur locale, puisqu'on met des boléros, des polkas, des valses, des airs de quadrille dans tous les opéras comiques, n'importe où l'action se passe"). For a discussion of the depiction of Spain in earlier *opéras comiques*, see Lacombe, "L'Espagne à l'Opéra-Comique avant *Carmen*."

[65] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 151 ("'l'école de l'avenir' . . . a multiplié la sensation musicale en la divisant").

[66] Ibid., 150 ("dans une composition comme *Carmen*, qui néglige le détail voit l'ensemble lui échapper").

[67] Ibid., 155–56 ("Une deuxième audition de la *Carmen* de M. Georges Bizet, en me familiarisant avec le style de la partition, m'en a révélé les qualités réelles, qui ne s'offrent point à qui ne les cherche pas. Déchiffrée et lue au piano, Carmen sera appréciée plus qu'elle ne saurait l'être tout entière à la scène, où il faut compter avec cette perspective de l'oreille qui supprime les détails délicats, les nuances fugitives. Il peut y avoir des sensations très variées dans un *dièze* ou dans un *bémol*, qui modifie l'accord. *Bémol* ou *dièze* dans une salle de théâtre, c'est une petite fleur dans l'immensité des steppes; mais la fleur n'en reserve pas moins son parfum à qui se donne la peine de la cueillir! De ces fleurs-là il y en a beaucoup dans la partition de M. Georges Bizet").

Jouvin went on to note that while the opera-going public tended to prefer obvious melodies and almost never amused themselves by "searching for [melodies] under the grass where the violets grow," there were ample rewards for those who could appreciate both "the music that blooms in the land of light and that which hides itself in the mysterious and veiled depths."[68]

1.3 Entr'acte

The ensuing chapters of this dissertation take up Jouvin's challenge to "look for the violets," "pick the flowers," and otherwise engage analytically with the details of Bizet's score for *Carmen*. We have seen that many French critics in 1875 viewed Bizet's score as "neo-Germanic" (to borrow Daniel Bernard's term). Some prominent German listeners in the late nineteenth century, however, had the opposite view. Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, famously found in *Carmen* an antidote to Wagner: "with [*Carmen*] one takes leave of the *damp* north, of all the steam of the Wagnerian ideal. Even the plot spells redemption from that. From Merimée it still has the logic in passion, the shortest line, the *harsh* necessity; above all, it has what goes with the torrid zone: the dryness of the air, the *limpidezza* in the air."[69] Nietzsche viewed the "cheerfulness" in the music of *Carmen* as neither French nor German, but "African" or "Mediterranean," and Bizet's score prompted him to issue the maxim: "*Il faut méditerraniser la musique* . . . The return to nature, health, cheerfulness, youth, *virtue*!"[70] Brahms, another

[68] Ibid., 156 ("Le public goûte de préférence la mélodie qui lui vient des hauteurs, et il ne s'amuse guère à la chercher sous l'herbe où poussent les violettes. Heureux! qui sait goûter à la fois la musique qui s'épanouit au pays de la lumière et celle qui se cache dans les profondeurs mystérieuses et voilées").
[69] Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, 614.
[70] Ibid., 615–16. For readings of Nietzsche's writings on *Carmen*, see Adorno, "Fantasia sopra *Carmen*"; Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 103–04; and Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 117–24. Nietzsche's annotations in the margin to his score of *Carmen* have been published in *Friedrich Nietzsches Randglossen zu Bizets Carmen.*

prominent German admirer of *Carmen*, wrote to his publisher Simrock in 1882 that "I love [*Carmen*] more than all of the things you publish, which isn't saying much and not enough."[71] For Brahms, Bizet was a composer squarely in the tradition of a French school that stretched back to Cherubini and included Halévy, Auber, and Thomas. The German composer remarked to Richard Heuberger in 1892 that "yes, the French still have a school! Bizet certainly seeks in many places to loosen or broaden the rules, but always as one who knows what's right."[72] Eduard Hanslick similarly placed *Carmen* firmly in the French tradition, writing that Bizet was "Halévy's son-in-law in life and Ambroise Thomas's adoptive son in music."[73] For Hanslick, *Carmen* was "one of the best [operas] out of the post-Auber school and since [Thomas's] *Mignon* (1866) the most notable achievement in *opéra comique*."[74]

We are thus faced with a history of late-nineteenth-century reception in which many French listeners thought Bizet's music for *Carmen* sounded quite German, while some German listeners thought it sounded quite French. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in between. I quoted at length from the four reviews (by Véron, Bernard, Weber, and Jouvin) in the last part of Section 1.2 because they all presented *Carmen* as a work that attempted to combine and reconcile different musical influences. In the spirit of these reviews, we shall now consider in the following chapters the influences of melodic practices in French opera on Bizet's score (Chapters 2 and 3) and Bizet's use of harmonic and chromatic techniques in *Carmen* (Chapter 4).

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[71] Brahms, Letter to Fritz Simrock, June 25, 1882, in *Life and Letters*, 591.

[72] Heuberger, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms*, 54 ("Ja, die Franzosen haben halt noch Schule! Bizet versucht zwar an mancher Stelle die Regel zu verlassen oder auszuweiten, aber immer wie einer, der weiss, was richtig ist"); 94–95. The translation from the German is from Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader*, 114. Brahms was also fond of the music of Delibes, but disliked Gounod and Massenet. Ibid.

[73] Hanslick, *Musikalische Stationen*, 146 ("Bizet, im Leben ein Schwiegersohn Halévys, in der Musik ein Adoptivsohn Ambroise Thomas . . .'"). Bizet married Halévy's daughter Geneviève in 1869.

[74] Ibid., 147 ("[*Carmen*] ist eine der besten aus nach-Auberscher Schule und seit *Mignon* (1866) der namhafteste Erfolg in der *Opéra comique*").

CHAPTER 2

MELODIC PRACTICES IN FRENCH OPERA FROM GRÉTRY TO GOUNOD

As noted in the previous chapter, many of the reviews of the first run of *Carmen* in the Parisian press situated Bizet's music in the context of an ongoing stylistic debate regarding the proper character of melody in nineteenth-century French opera. The issue of melodic style in French opera is closely tied to the way composers treated prosodic accents in the verses in the libretto. The French language has a distinctive system of accents, and Andreas Giger has noted in his study of Verdi's French-language operas that there were "highly diverse and often contradictory theories [of French versification] in circulation during the nineteenth century."[1] These diverse theories were reflected in the diverse ways that operatic composers used to set French verse to music.

This chapter examines the melodic and text-setting practices of composers of French *opéra comique* and lyric opera over the course of a century from Grétry to Gounod, with a view towards better understanding the historical context in which Bizet composed *Carmen*. The chapter will begin with a review of the basic principles of French versification. I will then examine the way in which French composers used different styles of versification to reflect distinct dramatic situations. My examination suggests that French composers often used rhythm and text setting as a way to differentiate between two different kinds of operatic music: "non-diegetic" music (singing as speech) and "diegetic" music (singing as song). Chapter 3 will then explore Bizet's views on melody and text setting, and the way in which the melodies of selected numbers from *Carmen* and other works by Bizet fit within the stylistic gamut discussed in this chapter.

[1] Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 1.

2.1 Basic Principles of French Versification

The libretto to *Carmen*, like that of virtually every other nineteenth-century French opera up to that time, is written in verse.[2] Although nineteenth-century writers held widely differing views on rhythm and accent in French verse, they were in general agreement on the basic principles of syllable counting, verse construction, and rhyme schemes. The following summary of these basic principles is based on the versification treatise of Louis-Marie Quicherat (1850), and can be considered representative of similar summaries reflected in other contemporary versification treatises.[3]

Syllable counting. French verse has a syllabic system of meter, and verses are constituted in regular numbers of syllables. For purposes of syllable counting, each pure vowel sound typically marks a syllable, as in the single-syllable words *la*, *tout*, and *peu*. Adjacent vowels in a single word may indicate diphthongs which are counted as one syllable through the process of syneresis: examples of this phenomenon include the single-syllable words *oui*, *rien*, *lieu*, and *lui*. Alternatively, adjacent vowels may be counted as two syllables through the process of dieresis, as in the two-syllable words *hier*, *cruel*, and *lion* (pronounced *hi-er*, *cru-el*, and *li-on*, respectively). The same vowel group may represent different vowel sounds and thus constitute a different number of syllables in different words. For instance, the letters *ia* constitute one syllable in the word *diable*, but two syllables in the word *mariage*.

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[2] Gounod commenced a setting of a prose libretto for an *opéra comique* based on Molière's *George Dandin* in 1874 but never completed the project. Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 228–9. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century with operas like Massenet's *Thaïs* (1894) and Charpentier's *Louise* (1900) that prose librettos were used successfully for French operas. See Macdonald, "The Prose Libretto."

[3] Quicherat, *Traité de versification française*, 1–19 (syllable counting), 72–83 (rhyme schemes), and 177–205 (verses with various numbers of syllables). According to Andreas Giger, Quicherat's treatise was "one of the most frequently cited nineteenth-century versification manuals." Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 230. For a comprehensive list of other significant French versification treatises written between 1787 and 1912, see ibid., 229–31.

An important special rule in syllable counting in French verse concerns the mute or silent "e" (*e muet*), which is found at the end of many words. The *e muet* typically is not pronounced as a separate syllable in regular speech. In musical settings, however, the *e muet* generally is pronounced and set as a separate syllable, unless it is elided into a following vowel sound.

For purposes of syllable counting, the *e muet* is treated differently depending on where it falls within a line of verse. An *e muet* at the end of a line is *not* counted as a separate syllable. Thus, the first line of Carmen's Habanera — "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" — is treated as having eight syllables, with the final *e muet* in the word "rebelle" pronounced but not counted:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
L'amour est un oiseau rebel(le).

If an *e muet* occurs in the middle of a line, however, it *is* counted as a separate syllable, unless it is elided into a following vowel sound. These principles are illustrated by two other eight-syllable lines from the Habanera:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait;

and

1 2 3 4 5 6 78
Rien n'y fait, menace ‿ou priè(re).

In the first of these two lines, the *e muets* at the end of the words *parle* and *autre* are both counted as separate syllables because they occur in the middle of the line and are not followed by words that begin with other vowels. In the second line, in contrast, the *e muet* at the end of the word *menace*, which similarly occupies the middle of a line, is nevertheless not counted as a separate syllable because it is elided into the vowel sound of the following word *ou*.[4] Finally, as

[4] In traditional French verse, the *e muet* is the only word-ending vowel that can be elided into a vowel at the beginning of the next word. The combination of any other adjacent vowel sounds

discussed above, the *e muet* at the end of *prière* is not included in the syllable count because it falls at the end of the line.

Verses and caesuras. Lines in French verse are classified according to the number of syllables they contain. Every line with nine syllables or more is required to have a caesura, or a pause in the middle of the line. The illustrative examples in this section are all taken from Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's libretto for *Carmen*.[5]

A line with twelve syllables is known as an alexandrine or *grand vers*. In an alexandrine, the caesura (indicated in the examples below and elsewhere in this study by the symbol ||) always falls after the sixth syllable, dividing the line into two hemistichs of six syllables each:

> Mon secret, je le garde, || et je le garde bien;
> J'en aime un autre et meurs || en disant que je l'aime.
> (*Carmen*, Act I, Chanson et Mélodrame)

Lines of eleven or nine syllables are rare in French verse and are not found in the libretto to *Carmen*.

In a ten-syllable line, or *decasyllabe*, the caesura falls after the fourth syllable (as in the first example below) or after the fifth syllable (as in the second example):

> Il y sera, || quand la garde montante
> Remplacera || la garde descendante.
> (Act I, Scène et Chœur)

> Carmen, sur tes pas || nous nous pressons tous;
> Carmen, sois gentille || au moins réponds nous.
> (Act I, Scene V)

Lines with fewer than nine syllables do not have a prescribed caesura. The following are some examples from the libretto of *Carmen* of lines with eight, seven, and six syllables:

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between successive words, as in the words "tu as," is known as a "hiatus" and is forbidden under traditional rules of French versification. Quicherat, *Traité de versification française*, 51.

[5] The libretto is published in Meilhac and Halévy, *Théâtre de Meilhac et Halévy*, Vol. 7, 389–474.

Eight syllables (*octosyllabe*):

Les tringles des sistres tintaient
Avec un éclat métallique,
Et sur cette étrange musique,
Les *zingarellas* se levaient . . .
(Act II, Chanson bohème)

Seven syllables:

Dût-il m'en coûter la vie,
Non, je ne partirai pas,
Et la chaîne qui nous lie,
Nous liera jusqu'au trépas . . .
(Act III, Final)

Six syllables:

Toréador, en garde!
Et songe en combattant
Qu'un œil noir te regarde
Et que l'amour t'attend.
(Act II, Couplets)

Five syllables:

Mettez-vous en garde
Et veillez sur vous!
(Act III, Duo)

Lines with four syllables or fewer rarely stand alone and are most often found in combination with longer lines. The shorter lines often set off a witty internal rhyme scheme. The following are examples of lines with four, three, and two syllables, each of which is combined with a longer line in this manner.[6]

Four syllables (combined with eight syllables):

Quand il s'agit de tromperie,
De duperie,
De volerie . . .
(Act II, Quintette)

[6] In French librettos, changes in meter between verses are usually indicated by a change in indentation.

Three syllables (combined with six syllables):

Sur la place
Chacun passe,
Chacun vient, chacun va . . .
(Act I, Scène et Chœur)

Two syllables (combined with six syllables):

On ne fait jamais rien
De bien.
(Act II, Quintette)

Rhyme schemes. French verses may end either on a syllable containing an *e muet* (a "feminine" ending) or any other vowel sound (a "masculine" ending). There are three basic rhyme schemes for a quatrain, or four-line stanza.[7] These schemes are illustrated below once again using examples from the libretto to *Carmen*.

Rimes embrassées (or *abba*):

Les bohémiens à tour de bras,
De leurs instruments faisaient rage,
Et cet éblouissant tapage
Ensorcelait les *zingaras*!
(Act II, Chanson bohème)

Rimes croisées (or *abab*):

Mais, en attendant qu'il vienne
Voulez-vous, la belle enfant,
Voulez-vous prendre la peine
D'entrer chez-nous un instant?
(Act I, Scène et Chœur)

[7] See Scott, *French Verse-art*, 129–36. Quicherat has a slightly different classification system that excludes *rimes embrassées* but includes *rimes mêlées* (mixed alternations of *a* and *b*) and *rimes redoublées* (use of the same rhyme more than twice in a single scheme). Quicherat, *Traité de versification française*, 72–83.

Rimes plats (or *aabb*):

> La fleur que tu m'avais jetée,
> Dans ma prison m'était restée,
> Flétrie et sèche, cette fleur
> Gardait toujours sa douce odeur.
> (Act II, Duo, *Air de la fleur*)

As a general rule, masculine rhyme-pairs alternate strictly with feminine rhyme-pairs in French verse. In other words, if the *a* rhyme in an alternating pair is masculine, the *b* rhyme will be feminine, and vice versa.

2.2 Theories of Versification and Rhythm in Nineteenth-Century France

The placement and strength of accents in French verse are determined almost completely by context. Since French syllables are only weakly stressed, prosodic accents, or tonic accents, generally default to the end of syntactic units. At the word level, the tonic accent is found on the last syllable of a polysyllabic word (or on the penultimate syllable in the case of a word ending with an *e muet*).[8] When words are strung together in verses, accents may similarly be carried by a syllable (other than an *e muet*) situated at the end of a word group, a hemistich, or an entire line, as the context requires.

The strongest tonic accent in a line of verse typically falls on the last counted syllable of the line (i.e., the syllable that carries the rhyme). In verses of nine syllables or more, the last syllable before the caesura is also accented. Elsewhere within a line, the final syllable of a significant grammatical or syntactical grouping (always excluding any *e muets*) may also receive

[8] Ibid., 12.

an accent.[9] As a result, "accents in French have nothing to do with beat or meter, but rather with cadence and phrase, with measure governed by syntax."[10] As to the quality of those accents, theorists of versification differed on whether accents in the French language involved stress ("strong" vs. "weak" syllables) or duration ("long" vs. "short" syllables). However, Andreas Giger notes that in mid-nineteenth-century France, "the leading theorists emphasized stress over [durational] quantity."[11]

The fluid quality of accentual patterns in French verse has led Frits Noske to opine that "[n]o language of Western Europe presents more difficult problems in the rhythmic relationships between words and music than French."[12] Noske's view has a long historical pedigree. In the polemical *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753), Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that "all national music draws its principal character from its own language, and . . . it is principally the prosody of the language that constitutes this character."[13] For Rousseau, the European language most suited to vocal music is Italian, because it is "more sweet, sonorous, harmonious, and accentuated than any other."[14] In contrast, French music has "neither measure nor melody" because the French language is susceptible to neither, and French singing resembles "constant

[9] Ibid., 133 *et seq*. A table summarizing Quicherat's rules regarding the number and placement of accents within verses with different syllable counts can be found in Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 13 (Table 1.1).
[10] Youens, "Words and Music in Germany and France," 485.
[11] Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 9.
[12] Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 41. Susan Youens similarly writes that "[o]f all poetry in the Romance languages, French . . . is perhaps the most difficult to set to music[.]" Youens, "Words and Music in Germany and France," 485.
[13] Rousseau, *Lettre sur la musique française*, 151 ("toute musique nationale tire son principal caractère de la langue qui lui est propre, et . . . c'est principalement la prosodie de la langue qui constitue ce caractère").
[14] Ibid., 156 ("[la langue italienne] est douce, sonore, harmonieuse, et accentuée plus qu'aucune autre . . .").

barking." As a result, concluded Rousseau, "the French have no music and cannot have any; or . . . if they ever have [a national music], it will be so much the worse for them."[15]

Rousseau's polemic was written in the midst of the *Querelle des bouffons*, a dispute concerning the relative merits of the French and Italian schools of opera in the mid-eighteenth century. Rousseau, a Francophone who was himself a composer of French *opéras comiques*, nevertheless came out on the side of the Italian partisans in the *Querelle*. Perhaps it was fitting, then, that one of the most comprehensive rebuttals to Rousseau's *Lettre* was penned by an Italian, the Sicilian Padre Antonio Scoppa, who entitled his 1811 treatise "The True Principles of Versification, Developed by a Comparative Examination Between the Italian and French Languages."[16]

Scoppa argued *contra* Rousseau that the true principles of versification in French and Italian poetry were in fact identical: "one finds in them the same number of syllables, the same accents, the same caesuras, the same [poetic] feet, the same harmony."[17] As support for his argument that the stress patterns of Italian verse can be duplicated in French, Scoppa provides French verses for Cherubino's aria "Voi che sapete" from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (the accented syllables underlined below are as shown in Scoppa's treatise):[18]

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[15] Ibid., 203 (". . . [i]l n'y a ni mesure ni mélodie dans la musique française, parce que la langue n'en est pas susceptible . . . le chant français n'est qu'un aboiement continuel . . . D'où je conclus que les Français n'ont point de musique et n'en peuvent avoir, ou . . ., si jamais ils en ont une, ce sera tant pis pour eux").

[16] Scoppa, *Les vrais principes de la versification, développés par un examen comparative entre la langue italienne et la française*. In the Preface to this three-volume work, Scoppa explicitly states that he set out to dispel the "chimeras" (*chimères*) set forth in Rousseau's *Lettre*. Ibid., Vol. 1, xviii.

[17] Ibid., Vol. 1, 271 ("Tous les vers de la poésie française sont les mêmes que ceux de la poésie italienne: on y découvre le même nombre de syllabes, les mêmes accen[t]s, les mêmes césures, les mêmes pieds, la même harmonie").

[18] Ibid., Vol. 1, 276.

Voi ch**e** sap**e**te	Mon c**œu**r soup**i**re
Che c**o**sa è am**o**r	La n**ui**t, le j**ou**r;
Donne ved**e**te	Qui p**eu**t me d**i**re
S'io l'h**o** nel c**o**r . . .	Si c'**e**st am**ou**r? . . .
(Lorenzo da Ponte)	(Scoppa)

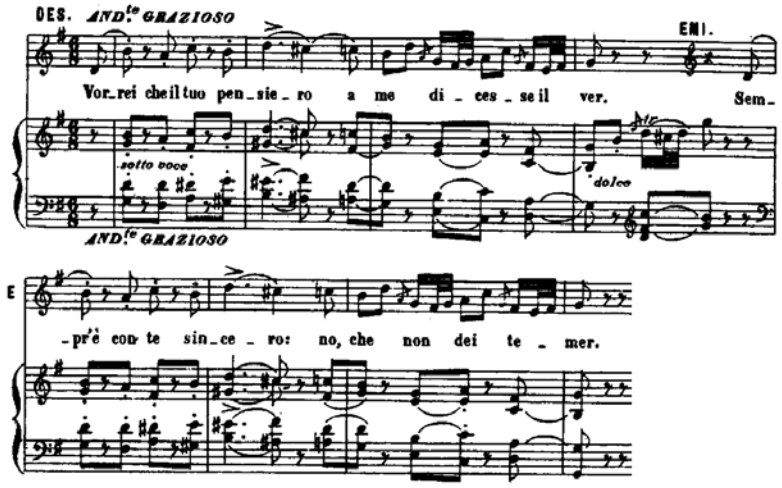
The alternation of *piano* and *tronco* endings in da Ponte's Italian verses is mirrored by the alternation of feminine and masculine verse endings in Scoppa's French analogue.[19] Similarly, the *accenti comuni* on the fourth syllable of each line in da Ponte correspond to the *accents toniques* on the fourth syllable of each line in Scoppa. As shown by the underlined syllables above, Scoppa scanned both the Italian and French verses with alternating accents on even-numbered syllables and went so far as to state that "the rule of accents is better observed in these French verses than in the Italian."[20]

Scoppa's line of reasoning was attractively simple: if (as Rousseau suggested) the regular accentual patterns of Italian verse are conducive to the admirable qualities of melody in Italian opera, a replication of those patterns in French verse would presumably lead to similarly "good" melodies in French opera. This line of reasoning continued to hold force and was echoed several decades later by the critic Castil-Blaze (François-Henri-Joseph Blaze) in his treatise *L'art des verses lyriques* (1858). Ora Frishberg Saloman has noted Castil-Blaze's "predilection for regularly shaped, flowing melody" in his critical writings, and that predilection is reflected in the treatise.[21]

[19] There are three types of line endings in Italian verse: *tronco* (ending on an accented syllable), *piano* (ending on an unaccented syllable following the last accented syllable), and *sdrucciolo* (ending on two unaccented syllables following the last accented syllable). Syllable counts in Italian verse are based on the *piano* ending. For a summary of the rules of Italian versification, see Moreen, "Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas," 1–26.
[20] Scoppa, *Les vrais principes*, Vol. 1, 276 ("La règle des accen[t]s est mieux observée dans ces vers français que dans les italiens").
[21] Saloman, *Listening Well*, 53.

In Castil-Blaze's view, the primary responsibility of a writer of verses for the lyric stage is to produce verses with regularly recurring accentual patterns. Once a pattern is established in the first line of a number or movement (whether that pattern is a product of conscious choice or random chance), it must be followed in all subsequent verses. Addressing his fellow librettists, Castil-Blaze exhorts: "regularity, perfect symmetry, that is what we need."[22]

Castil-Blaze's taste for regularly shaped, Italianate melody may have been influenced by his work as a translator and arranger of foreign operas for the French stage. One of those operas was Rossini's *Otello* (1816), which Castil-Blaze presented in a French translation (as *Othello*) in Lyon in 1823, and at the Théâtre-Royal de l'Odéon in Paris in 1825.[23] In *L'art des verses lyriques*, Castil-Blaze offers up as "model" verses four lines that he wrote for the Act I Duettino from *Otello* (the Italian score for which is shown in Ex. 2.1).



EXAMPLE 2.1. Rossini, *Otello* (1816), Act I, Duettino

[22] Castil-Blaze, *L'art des vers lyriques*, 60 ("Régularité, symétrie parfaite, voilà ce qu'il nous faut"). Castil-Blaze likens the governing accentual pattern to a *serre-file* (an officer who brings up the rear in a troop formation) who forces the intermediate syllables to march in place ("Les accents ainsi distribués sont des serre-file qui forcent les syllabes intermédiaires à marcher au pas . . ."). Ibid.

[23] Everist, *Music Drama at the Paris Odéon*, 224. Castil-Blaze translated and arranged two other Rossini works for the Odéon: *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (as *Le barbier de Séville*) and *La gazza ladra* (as *La pie voleuse*). Both were presented in 1824. Ibid., 228.

Castil-Blaze's French verses are set forth below next to the original Italian verses:[24]

Desdemona:	
Vorr**ei** che il t**uo** pens**ie**ro	Je v**eu**x de m**o**n am**i**e
A m**e** dic**e**sse il v**e**r.	Sav**oi**r la v**é**rit**é**.
Emilia:	
Sempr'**è** con t**e** sinc**e**ro:	Compt**e**z, je v**ou**s en pr**i**e,
No, ch**e** non d**ei** tem**e**r.	Sur m**a** sinc**é**rit**é**.
(F. Berio di Salsa)	(Castil-Blaze)

As with the Scoppa example above, the *piano* verse endings in the Italian text (*pensiero* and *sincero*) are rendered as feminine endings (with *e muets*) in French, while the *tronco* verse endings in Italian (*ver* and *temer*) are rendered as masculine endings in French. Castil-Blaze scans the verses in regularly recurring accents that line up with the beats in Rossini's music. For Castil-Blaze, verses that did not figure this kind of rhythmic regularity were simply "rhymed prose" (*prose rimée*).[25]

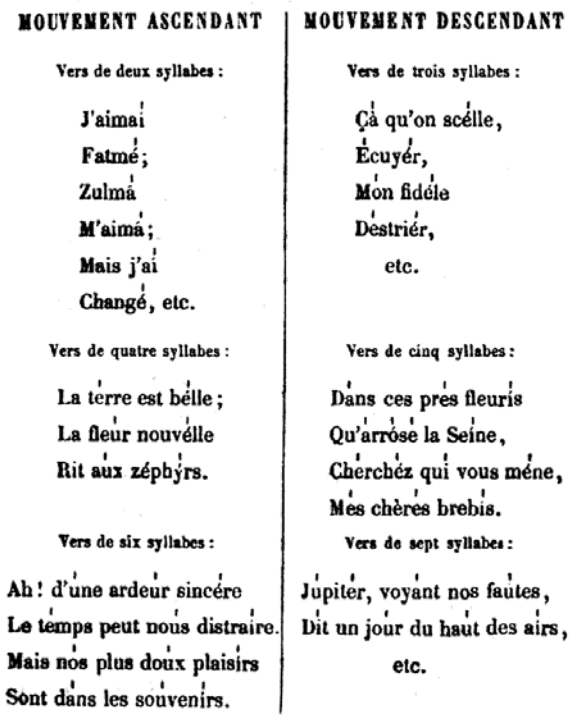
Most of Castil-Blaze's examples of proper versification are derived from his own work as a translator and arranger, perhaps because his theories did not always reflect the actual practice of contemporary French librettists and composers. For one thing, most French librettos were written in what Castil-Blaze would denigrate as *prose rimée*, with irregular internal accents. For another, as we shall examine in greater detail below, prosodic accents in the verses of French librettos were not always aligned with metrical accents when those verses were set to music.

One theorist of versification who *did* account for some of these contradictions in actual musical practice was Louis Benlœw, in an 1862 treatise titled *Précis d'une théorie des*

[24] The French verses can be found in Castil-Blaze, *L'art des vers lyriques*, 66.
[25] Castil-Blaze compared writers of *prose rimée* (for him, the vast majority of French librettists) to Molière's M. Jourdain, who famously learned in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* that without realizing it, he had been speaking prose all his life. Ibid., 10.

rhythmes.[26] Benlœw agreed with Scoppa and Castil-Blaze that the scanning of regular recurring accents in French verse is appropriate and desirable when texts are set to music. Unlike the earlier authors, however, Benlœw argued that musical settings should follow this type of regular scanning even when it would go against the accentual patterns implied by the text.

Benlœw believed that the declamation of sung texts should be governed completely by a strict alternating rhythm that he linked to the alternation of upbeats and downbeats (*levés* and *frappés*) in music. Fig. 2.1 reproduces an instructive table of examples from Benlœw's treatise.[27]



MOUVEMENT ASCENDANT	MOUVEMENT DESCENDANT
Vers de deux syllabes :	Vers de trois syllabes :
J'aimai Fatmé; Zulmá M'aimá; Mais j'ai Changé, etc.	Çà qu'on scélle, Écuyér, Mon fidéle Destriér, etc.
Vers de quatre syllabes :	Vers de cinq syllabes :
La terre est bélle; La fleur nouvélle Rit aux zéphyrs.	Dans ces prés fleuris Qu'arrose la Seine, Chercbéz qui vous méne, Mes chères brebis.
Vers de six syllabes :	Vers de sept syllabes :
Ah! d'une ardeur sincére Le temps peut nous distraire. Mais nos plus doux plaisirs Sont dans les souvenirs.	Jupiter, voyant nos fautes, Dit un jour du haut des airs, etc.

FIGURE 2.1. Benlœw, Examples from *Précis d'une théorie des rhythmes* (1862)

[26] Benlœw's theories are discussed in Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 10–11 and *passim*. Giger notes that "[w]ithout citing any concrete evidence, some sources [nineteenth-century French versification treatises] suggest that [Benlœw's] way of scanning . . . was still commonly taught at schools in the nineteenth century." Ibid., 11.

[27] Benlœw, *Précis d'une théorie des rhythmes*, 23.

In Fig. 2.1, Benlœw works backward from the strong tonic accent at the end of each line and scans each verse in regular iambs or trochees regardless of context. In the left-hand column, all the lines have an even number of syllables and Benlœw suggests an iambic setting for each, starting with an upbeat (or *mouvement ascendant*). For the first of the six-syllable lines at the bottom of the column, therefore, Benlœw suggests the declamation "Ah! d'**u**ne ard**eu**r sinc**è**re" instead of the arguably more natural (but rhythmically irregular) "**A**h! d'une ard**eu**r sinc**è**re."[28] In contrast, the lines in the right-hand column of Fig. 2.1 have accentuated odd-numbered syllables and Benlœw scans them in trochees starting with a downbeat motion (or *mouvement descendant*), as in "Ç**a** qu'on sc**e**lle | **é**cuy**e**r, | m**o**n fid**è**le | d**e**stri**e**r."[29]

For Benlœw, whether or not a syllable falls on a strong beat (or a *temps fort*) in a musical setting is an issue that is completely distinct from whether it is an accented syllable (a *syllabe forte*) in declamation. The two concepts simply have nothing to do with each other:

> The *syllabe forte* is inherent to the word, to the meaning; it is always the same. The *temps fort* is inherent to rhythm, and alights indifferently on *syllabes fortes* or *syllabes faibles* [weak or unaccented syllables], on words with full meaning or empty meaning. The *syllabe forte* has a logical value, the *temps fort* has only a poetic and musical value.[30]

According to Benlœw, the *temps forts* in a musical setting may coincide with *syllabe fortes* in the text, and they generally do coincide at points of strong articulation, such as at the caesura and at the verse-ending rhyme. Elsewhere in the line, however, prosodic accents and musical accents may simply go their separate ways.

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[28] The line is from the libretto to *Joconde* (1814), an *opéra comique* by Nicolas Isouard (1773–1818) , known as Nicolò.

[29] The opening lines of Victor Hugo's poem *Le pas d'armes du roi Jean*, from *Odes et ballades* (1826). The poem was set by Camille Saint-Saëns, among others.

[30] Benlœw, *Précis d'une théorie des rhythmes*, 24 ("La syllabe forte est inhérente au mot, au sens; elle est toujours la même. Le *temps fort* est inhérent au rhythme, et se pose indifféremment sur des syllabes fortes ou des syllabes faibles, sur des mots à sens plein ou à sens vide. La syllabe forte a une valeur logique, le temps fort n'a qu'une valeur poétique et musicale").

As an illustration of the differences between declamation and song, Benlœw considers two lines from a song by Pierre-Joseph de Béranger (1780–1857), suggesting that one would *read*:

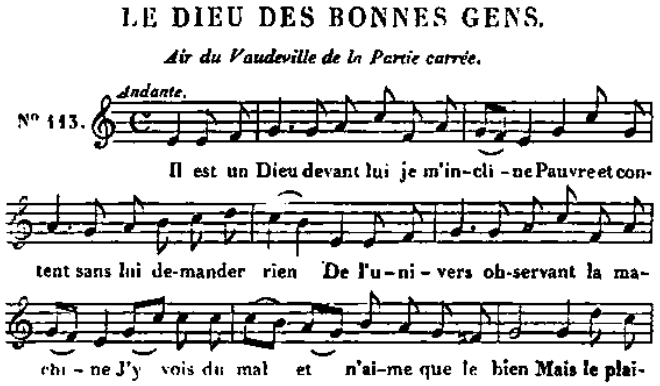
> Il **e**st un D**ieu**, || devant l**ui** je m'incl**i**ne, (2,4,7,10)
> P**au**vre et cont**e**nt, || sans lui demand**e**r r**ie**n; (1,4,9,10)

but one would *sing*:

> Il **e**st un D**ieu**, || dev**a**nt lui j**e** m'incl**i**ne, (2,4,6,8,10)
> Pauvre **e**t cont**e**nt, || sans l**ui** dem**a**nder r**ie**n. (2,4,6,8,10)

(Parenthetical Arabic numerals indicate the position of the accented syllables within the line in each setting.) The *temps forts* in Benlœw's "sung" setting of Béranger's words occur regularly on the even-numbered syllables. As such, they coincide with the *syllabes fortes* in the "declaimed" setting at the caesura and the rhyme (syllables 4 and 10), but not necessarily anywhere else. In the sung setting, the *temps forts* falling on unimportant words like *je*, *et*, and *lui* serve to bring out the rhythm of the song rather than the sense of the word.[31]

An examination of an actual musical setting of Béranger's song, as published in an 1847 anthology (Ex. 2.2), provides some support for Benlœw's theory.[32]



EXAMPLE 2.2. Béranger, "Le Dieu des bonnes gens"

[31] Ibid., 21.
[32] Ex. 2.2 is reproduced from Béranger, *Musique des chansons de P.J. de Béranger*, 76.

In Ex. 2.2, the tonic accents at the caesura and rhyme in each line coincide with downbeats in the music. In addition, each of the other even-numbered syllables in the verses falls on a beat (Benlœw's *temps forts*), while the odd-numbered syllables (other than the first syllable of each line) are metrically de-emphasized, falling on eighth notes off the beat.[33]

It is worth noting that like Ex. 2.1, Ex. 2.2 is an example of a text made to fit a pre-existing melody. In Ex. 2.1, that pre-existing melody was a lyrical duet by Rossini. In Ex 2.2, it was an old vaudeville tune, a folklike melody that typically featured a narrow range and a persistent rhythmic pattern. Vaudeville tunes with newly composed words were widely used in the eighteenth-century stage entertainments that prefigured the *opéra comique*, and Clifford Barnes has noted that "in such light entertainments wit and gaiety were more important than correct declamation."[34] The comparison between Ex. 2.1 and 2.2 suggests that there may be an association between different styles of text setting and the expressive and dramatic qualities of different styles of musical numbers. We shall explore these possible associations below.

2.3 Melody and Text from Grétry to Gounod (Part I): Lyrical Numbers

We have so far focused on theories of versification put forth by writers who were not known for composing music. In the remaining sections of this chapter, we shall examine the melodic and text-setting practices of composers for the French lyric stage during the course of roughly a hundred years, from Grétry to Gounod. This will allow us to establish a historical context for our examination of Bizet's melodic practice in the next chapter.

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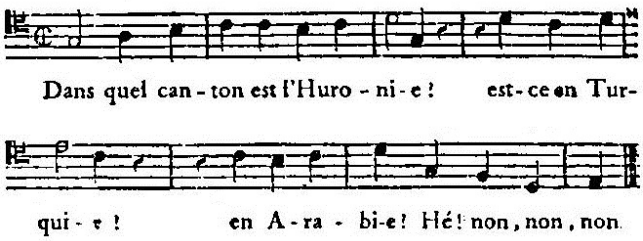
[33] The practice of setting an unaccented syllable at the beginning of the line to a strong beat (as in Ex. 2.2) is a common one in both French and Italian opera. See, e.g., Moreen, "Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas," 23.

[34] Clifford Barnes, "Vaudeville," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed., Vol. 26, 342. See also Section 2.5 below.

When the first volume of Scoppa's *Les vrais principes* was published in Paris in 1811, it included an endorsement letter from the composer André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741–1813), an important figure in the development of the *opéra comique* genre. In the letter, Grétry addresses Scoppa approvingly:

> I think like you when you say that the French language has an accent and a rhythm that must correspond exactly to the musical rhythm; and that in verses, one may consider the rhythmic feet as small caesuras that must always coincide with a good [i.e., rhythmically emphasized] note (*bonne note*).[35]

Grétry's letter to Scoppa, dated December 22, 1810, indicates that the composer was keenly aware of, and interested in, issues related to text setting in French opera. Indeed, Grétry had already written on the issue in his *Mémoires*, which first appeared in 1789 and were expanded in 1797. In the *Mémoires*, after recounting a conversation he had with Voltaire about text setting, Grétry discusses the proper musical treatment of the *e muet* by citing an example from one of his earliest successes, *Le Huron* (1768). This example is reproduced in Ex. 2.3.[36]



EXAMPLE 2.3. Grétry, *Le Huron* (1768), Act I, Air

In the Air from which Ex. 2.3 is taken, the title character of the opera, a Frenchman who was raised by the Huron Indians in North America but has somehow made his way back to

[35] Scoppa, *Les vrais principes*, Vol. 1, xi (" . . . je pense comme vous lorsque vous dites que la langue française a un accent et un rhythme qui doivent répondre exactement au rhythme musical; et que dans les vers on peut considérer les pieds rhythmiques comme une petite césure qui toujours doit rencontrer une bonne note").
[36] Ex. 2.3 is reproduced from Grétry, *Mémoires*, Vol. 1, 135.

Brittany, muses about how nobody in his new environment seems to know anything about the Hurons. They ask him: "in which region is this Huronia? Is it in Turkey? In Arabia?":

Dans quel cant**o**n est l'Huron**i**e? (4,8)
Est-ce en Turqu**i**e? en Arab**i**e? (4,8)

In accordance with a convention that I have adapted from Andreas Giger and will use throughout this study, the parenthetical Arabic numerals after lines of verse refer to the position of accented syllables within the lines. Unless otherwise indicated, all such annotations in this study will indicate accented syllables as if the text were being declaimed or read, in the manner suggested by Quicherat's treatise. In a declamation of the lines from *Le Huron* shown above, there would be the customary tonic accent at the rhyme (on the eighth and last counted syllable of each line), and most likely a secondary accent on the fourth syllable of each line marking the end of a syntactic unit, or word group.

In his musical setting of these lines in *Le Huron*, Grétry followed the procedure that he advocated in his letter to Scoppa, namely that of placing notes carrying tonic accents in metrically strong positions. The tonic accents in the words "cant**o**n," "Huron**i**e," "Turqu**i**e," and "Arab**i**e" (on the fourth and eighth syllables of each line) are set to higher pitches on downbeats, while the weak *e muets* in the words "Huronie," "Turquie," and "Arabie" are set to lower pitches in metrically weaker positions. The musical setting of Ex. 2.3 thus reflects a reasonable approximation of the rhythmic stresses of naturalistic speech, from the metrical emphasis on the tonic accents down to the "trailing off" quality of the *e muets*.[37]

The sensitivity to text setting shown by Grétry in Ex. 2.3 can also be seen in the work of a composer-theorist from the following generation, namely Antoine-Joseph Reicha (1770–1836). Reicha was professor of counterpoint and fugue at the Paris Conservatoire from 1811 to 1836

[37] Notwithstanding Ex. 2.3 and his letter to Scoppa, Grétry candidly admitted in the *Mémoires* that he was not always so scrupulous in his text setting practices. Ibid., 135–36.

and the writer of influential treatises on melody, harmony, and composition. In 1833, Reicha published a treatise on the art of operatic composition entitled *Art du compositeur dramatique, ou Cours complet de composition vocale.* In a reflection of the importance that Reicha assigned to text setting, the first section of the treatise is devoted to prosody and its relationship to music. Indeed, Reicha states that "the first duty of a composer of vocal music is to observe and respect the prosody of the language in which he composes."[38] This precept led Reicha to the general rule that accented syllables are to be distinguished from unaccented ones by the relative places they occupy in the musical measure.[39] In other words, accented syllables in a musical setting should always be placed in a metrically stronger position than unaccented ones. The strongest accents, such as the tonic accent at the end of a multi-syllable word, or at the end of a hemistich or line, should be placed on a downbeat, or on the third beat if the setting is in quadruple meter.[40]

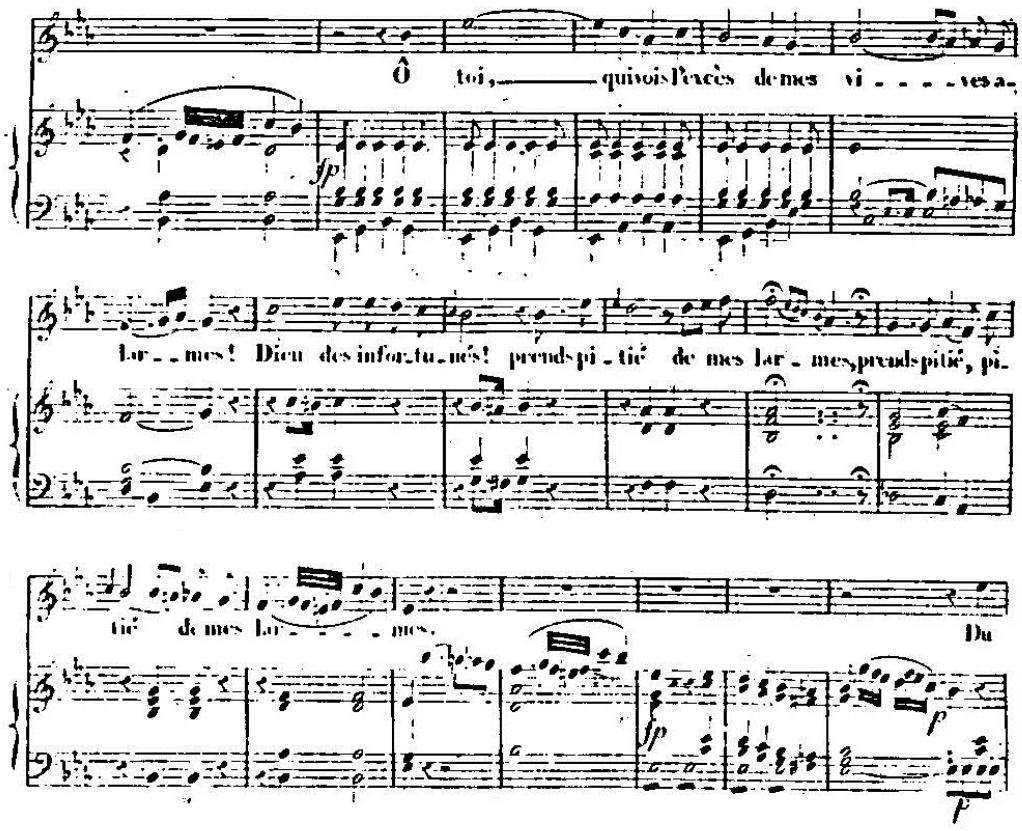
We can observe Reicha's application of these rules to one of his own compositions, a number from Act III of the opera *Natalie, ou La famille russe*, which premiered at the Paris Opéra in 1816 (Ex. 2.4).[41] In this air, the title character, a Russian countess living in exile in Siberia, laments her impending separation from her father and her son and invokes God's pity:

Ô t**oi** qui vois l'exc**è**s || de mes v**i**ves al**a**rmes! (2,6,9,12)
D**ie**u des infortun**é**s! || prends pit**ié** de mes l**a**rmes. (1,6,9,12)

Reicha followed his own prosodic rules to the letter in shaping Natalie's vocal line. Each of the prosodic accents annotated in the text above falls on a notated downbeat, and the variations in accentual patterns in each of the four hemistichs are scrupulously observed. For

[38] Reicha, *Art du compositeur dramatique*, Vol. 1, 2 ("Le premier devoir d'un Compositeur de musique vocale est d'observer et de respecter la prosodie de la langue dans laquelle il compose").
[39] Ibid. ("On distingue en musique les syllabes longues des syllabes brèves *par la place qu'elles occupent dans la musique*") [emphasis in original].
[40] Ibid., Vol. 1, 2–3 and 22.
[41] Ex. 2.4 is reproduced from the volume of examples that accompanies Reicha's treatise. Ibid., Vol. 2, 28 (Ex. 62).

example, the first phrase begins with an upbeat, allowing the accented syllable ***t<u>oi</u>*** to land on a downbeat. In contrast, the second phrase starts with a half-note downbeat to reflect the placement of the accented syllable ***D<u>ieu</u>*** at the beginning of the second line.

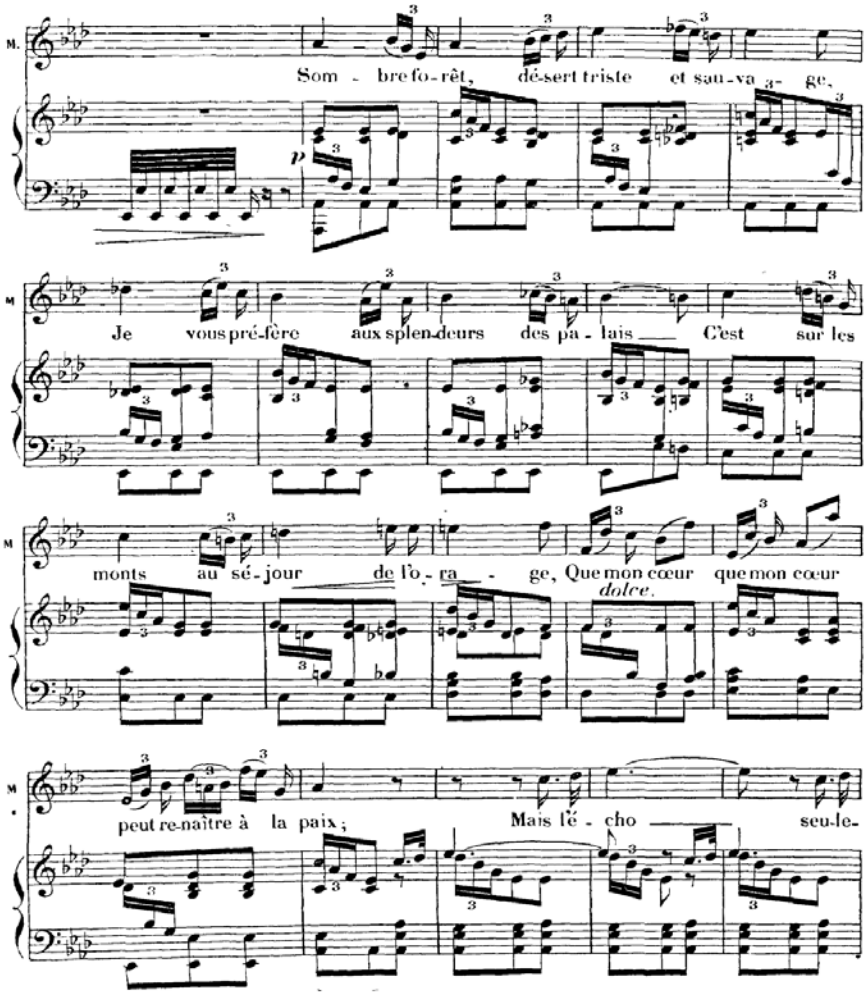


EXAMPLE 2.4. Reicha, *Natalie* (1816), Act III, Air

In addition to receiving metrical emphasis, the accented syllables in Ex. 2.4 are further reinforced by longer note values.[42] The irregular rhythmic emphases on accented syllables (especially the elongated syllable *toi* in the opening line) and the irregular combination of syllabic and melismatic text setting result in a melody that is perhaps even more asymmetrical than the verse rhythms would otherwise suggest.

[42] Reicha refers in his treatise to accented and unaccented syllables as "long" and "short" syllables, terms derived from the durational accents of classical Greek and Latin poetry. See the text above accompanying note 11 to this chapter.

In contrast to Ex. 2.4, Mathilde's *romance* "Sombre forêt" from Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829) (Ex. 2.5) provides an example of the more regularly shaped, Italianate style of melody that would exert a strong influence on French opera starting in the 1820s.



EXAMPLE 2.5. Rossini, *Guillaume Tell* (1829), Act II, Romance

In this entrance aria, the Austrian princess Mathilde reflects on how the dark forest landscape reflects her inner turmoil over her love for the Swiss hero Arnold:

Sombre for**ê**t, || désert t**r**iste et sauv**a**ge,	(4,7,10)
Je vous préf**è**re || aux splend**eu**rs des pal**ai**s;	(4,7,10)
C'est sur les m**o**nts || au séj**ou**r de l'or**a**ge,	(4,7,10)
Que mon c**œu**r || peut ren**aî**tre à la p**ai**x;	(3,6,9)
Mais l'éch**o** seulem**e**nt || apprendr**a** mes secr**e**ts.	(3,6,9,12)

As the annotated text above indicates, the verses of this aria feature accents that regularly recur three syllables apart, in a way that would presumably meet the approval of Castil-Blaze. Rossini takes advantage of these regular accents by setting the first three verses to almost identical rhythms in the first twelve measures of the vocal line, creating three regular, balanced, four-bar phrases. In accordance with the practice advocated in Reicha's treatise, each of the tonic accents in the first three lines falls on a notated downbeat. Rossini only alters the rhythm starting with the fourth line ("Que mon cœur"), with the change in rhythm and the repeated text signalling a drive towards a cadence. The irregular fifth line of the stanza is then set to another cadential progression, reflecting the echo mentioned in the text.

Rossini's melodic style strongly influenced operatic composers of his generation active in France, including Meyerbeer, Auber, and Halévy.[43] As we have seen, it was also strongly influential on the versification theories of Castil-Blaze. However, the regular accentual patterns required for this Italianate style of music arguably went against the essence of French poetry, with its fluid placement of secondary prosodic accents from line to line.[44] Perhaps inevitably, there was a reaction to that style in the work of French composers of the succeeding generation, led by Charles Gounod. Saint-Saëns would later write that one of Gounod's great accomplishments was to "bring French opera back to the grand tradition of the past, by basing his vocal music on justness of declamation."[45] Similarly, Steven Huebner has argued that "at his

[43] See the musical examples by Halévy and Meyerbeer in Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 224–28.
[44] Ibid., 223.
[45] Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et mélodie*, 262 ("La réaction a commencé avec M. Gounod. Ce n'est pas un de ses moindres mérites de nous avoir ramenés vers la grande tradition du passé, en basant sa musique vocale sur la justesse de la déclamation").

best moments Gounod approached melody from a different perspective from French composers of the preceding generation."[46]

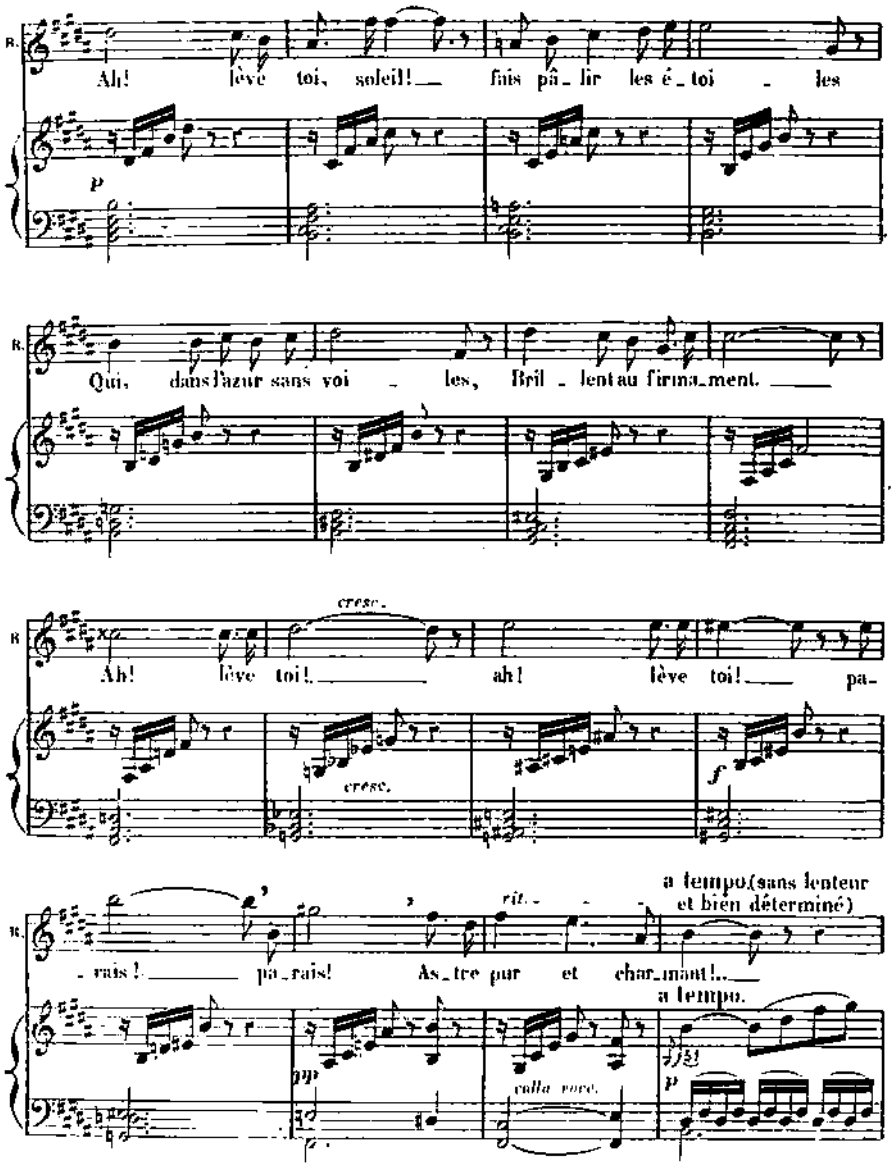
In order to provide a link between Gounod and Bizet, let us consider the *cavatine* "Ah! lève-toi, soleil!" (Ex. 2.6) from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), an opera with which Bizet was intimately familiar. Bizet prepared a reduction for voice and piano four hands published by Choudens soon after the opera's premiere.[47] In addition, a few years later, during Gounod's period of exile in London, Bizet acted as the composer's deputy in supervising the first Parisian revival of *Roméo* at the Opéra-Comique in January 1873, two years before the premiere of *Carmen*.[48]

In Ex. 2.6, Roméo apostrophizes the sun as he waits for Juliette to appear at her balcony:

Ah! lève-t**oi**, sol**ei**l! || fais pâl**i**r les ét**oi**les,	(4,6,8,12)
Qu**i**, dans l'azur sans v**oi**les	(1,6)
Br**i**llent au firmam**e**nt!	(1,6)
Ah! lève-t**oi**, par**ai**s, || astre p**u**r et charm**a**nt!	(4,6,9,12)

For these four lines, Gounod wrote a melody that is sixteen measures long and can easily be divided up into four units of four bars each (corresponding to the four systems in Ex. 2.6). Gounod nevertheless manages to create a melody that evolves in a "fluid and unpredictable manner" within this regular metric structure.[49] The first line of the stanza, an alexandrine, is set in the first four bars of the vocal line. The tonic accent before the caesura, on the word "sol**ei**l," is not set to a downbeat, but is instead emphasized by a leap to a high pitch in the middle of the second measure. The two hemistichs of the opening alexandrine are thus set in a rhythmically

[46] Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 228.
[47] Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 468.
[48] In a letter to Bizet dated October 29, 1872, Gounod reluctantly approved the downward transposition of "Ah! lève-toi, soleil!" from B major to B-flat major for the 1873 revival. Gounod, "Lettres à Georges Bizet," 701.
[49] Steven Huebner has remarked that Gounod often "wrote melodies that evolve in a fluid and unpredictable manner within regularly spaced pillars of four-square phraseology." Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 229.



EXAMPLE 2.6. Gounod, *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), Act II, Cavatine

asymmetrical manner, even though together they form the two halves of a four-bar unit. In contrast, the rhyming groups "fais pâlir les étoiles" (mm. 3–4) and "qui, dans l'azur sans voiles" (mm. 5-6) are given similar melodic and rhythmic profiles, even though they are split up between, and occupy different positions in, two separate four-bar groups. The final line of the stanza, another alexandrine, is then expanded to take up the last eight measures. However, the

verse is not divided up evenly between the eight measures. The break between the two four-bar units comes not at the caesura after the word "parais," as one might expect, but instead after the repeated words "Ah! lève-toi," which occur slightly before the midpoint of the verse. Gounod thus managed to combine in Ex. 2.6 the regular four-bar phrasing of Rossini (Ex. 2.5) with the more irregular declamatory style of earlier composers such as Reicha (Ex. 2.4).

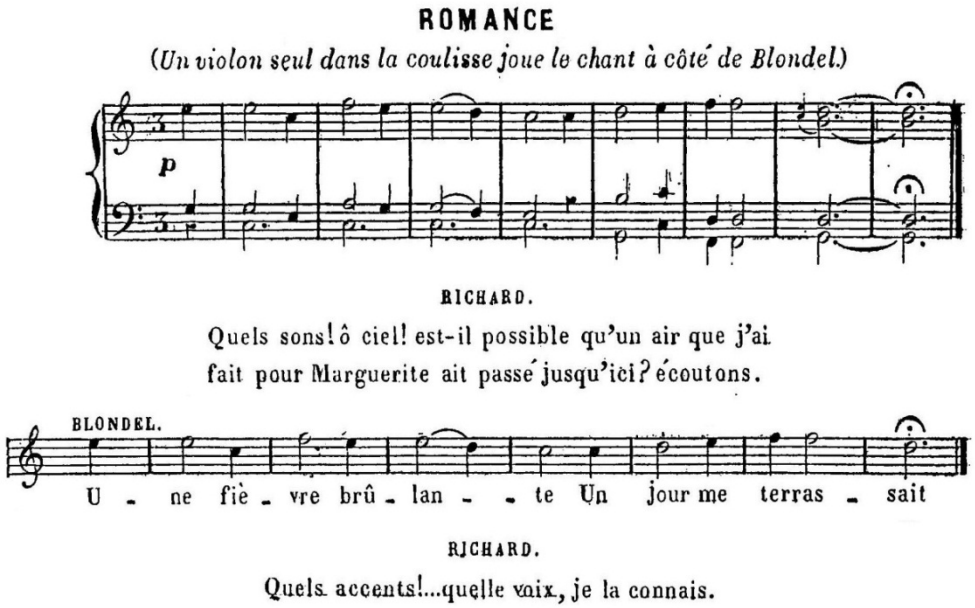
In this section, we have traced the evolution of melodic style through the hundred years that separated Grétry's *Le Huron* (1768) from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). In each of the examples that we have examined (Examples 2.3 through 2.6), the musical settings reflected prosodic accents in the verses relatively faithfully, despite differences in other elements of melodic style. During the same period, however, many of the same composers employed an alternate melodic style that featured a much higher degree of conflict between melody and prosody. We shall now examine that alternate style.

2.4 Melody and Text from Grétry to Gounod (Part II): Diegetic Numbers

We began the previous section with a discussion of Grétry's views on text setting, as expressed in his letter to Scoppa and as reflected in his *Mémoires*. We shall begin this section by retracing our steps back to Grétry. Consider Ex. 2.7, the opening of the *romance* "Une fièvre brulante" from *Richard Cœur-de-lion* (1784), one of the composer's greatest successes. *Richard* continued to be immensely popular throughout the nineteenth century up to the time of Bizet, notching up 302 performances at the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris between 1851 and 1870. This made it the second most-performed work at that theater, after Gounod's *Faust*.[50] In addition,

[50] Ellis, "Systems Failure in Operatic Paris," 55.

Richard received 83 performances between 1873 and 1876 at the Opéra Comique, including 29 performances in 1875, the year of *Carmen*'s premiere at the same theater.[51]



EXAMPLE 2.7. Grétry, *Richard Cœur-de-lion* (1784), Act II, Romance

Ex. 2.7 was popular enough in its day to provide Beethoven with the theme for a set of piano variations written around 1795. Grétry's text setting, however, might strike even a non-French speaker as bizarre. The lines, were they to be declaimed, would imply the following accents:

Une f**iè**vre brûl**a**nte (3,6)
Un j**ou**r me terrass**ai**t (2,6)

Rather than following the implied stresses on the third and sixth syllables in the first line, however, Grétry chose to emphasize alternate even-numbered syllables: the weak *e muets* at the end of the words *une* and *fièvre* are both rhythmically and melodically emphasized, set to long downbeat notes and higher pitches. The resulting declamation (un**e** fièvr**e** brûl**a**nte) sounds

[51] Soubies, *Soixante-neuf ans à l'Opéra-Comique*.

artificial and forced, leading Mathis Lussy to write in his 1874 treatise on musical expression that "it is astonishing that Grétry, whose taste is so refined, could have written such a phrase as this."[52] We have seen above in the discussion of Ex. 2.3 that Grétry had decided views on the setting of *e muets*. Why, then, did Grétry ignore his own rules of text setting so egregiously in Ex. 2.7? It would have been easy enough to start the number with two eighth-note upbeats and to put the strong first syllable in *fièvre* on the first downbeat. Alternatively, the librettist Sedaine could easily have written verses that provided a better fit for Grétry's music.[53] Why were Grétry and Sedaine content to leave the number this way?

The key to this puzzle can perhaps be found in the dramatic situation reflected in Ex. 2.7. In the opera, Richard the Lionheart has been held captive in Austria on his way back from the Crusades. His faithful retainer Blondel the minstrel has been searching for him all over Europe. In the scene from which Ex. 2.7 is taken, Blondel plays and sings a tune ("Une fièvre brûlante") outside Richard's cell, accompanying himself on the violin. Richard recognizes the tune as his own composition and responds to Blondel, and together they put plans for a rescue into place. In his *Mémoires*, Grétry notes that unlike most of the other numbers in the opera, Ex. 2.7 is heard *as music* not only by the audience in the theater, but by the characters on the stage. In other words, the number is an example of "diegetic" music (in the language of film studies) or "phenomenal" music (in the formulation of Carolyn Abbate).[54] As the score excerpt in Ex. 2.7 shows, this

[52] Lussy, *Traité de l'expression musicale*, 52 ("Nous sommes étonné que Grétry, d'un goût si épuré, ait écrit une pareille phrase").

[53] Castil-Blaze characteristically took it upon himself to provide regularized verses to fit the rhythms of Grétry's music: "Je s**u**s, mon b**ie**n supr**ê**me | Mon r**oi**, mon d**ou**x sauv**eu**r!" Castil-Blaze, *L'art des vers lyriques*, 71.

[54] In film studies, the term "diegetic music" is used to refer to music located within the "story-space" of the film. Van der Lek, *Diegetic Music in Opera and Film*, 11. Abbate loosely defines "phenomenal" performance as "a musical or vocal performance that declares itself openly, singing that is heard by its singer, the auditors on stage, and understood as 'music that they (too) hear' by us, the theater audience." Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 5. Other terms for the same

recognition scene alternates music and dialogue in quick succession, with the diegetic character of the music signaled by Richard's word, directed both to himself and to us, the audience: "écoutons" – "listen!"

Grétry was keenly aware of the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic numbers. "Although one sings frequently in *opéra comique*," he wrote in the *Mémoires*, "one does not always sing. There is singing to speak, and there is singing to sing" — "il y a chanter pour parler, et chanter pour chanter."[55] Grétry was tempted to suppress all the other musical numbers in Act II of *Richard* prior to the appearance of "Une fièvre brûlante" in order to bring out the diegetic quality of the *romance* more fully. Having decided against that course of action, he deliberately composed Blondel's *romance* in a distinctive style (*le vieux style*, or the "old style") that would set it apart from the other numbers in the opera.[56]

I submit that the un-naturalistic text setting of "Une fièvre brûlante" is one of the important stylistic pointers that set up the *romance* as a diegetic number, in which Blondel sings not to speak, but to sing – "chanter pour chanter," in Grétry's formulation. In her book *Unsung Voices*, Carolyn Abbate argues that diegetic music in opera is often characterized by a "symbolic musical simplicity."[57] In Blondel's *romance*, this includes the simplification of the number's rhythmic structure into a repeated short-long pattern that supersedes the impulse towards naturalistic text setting.

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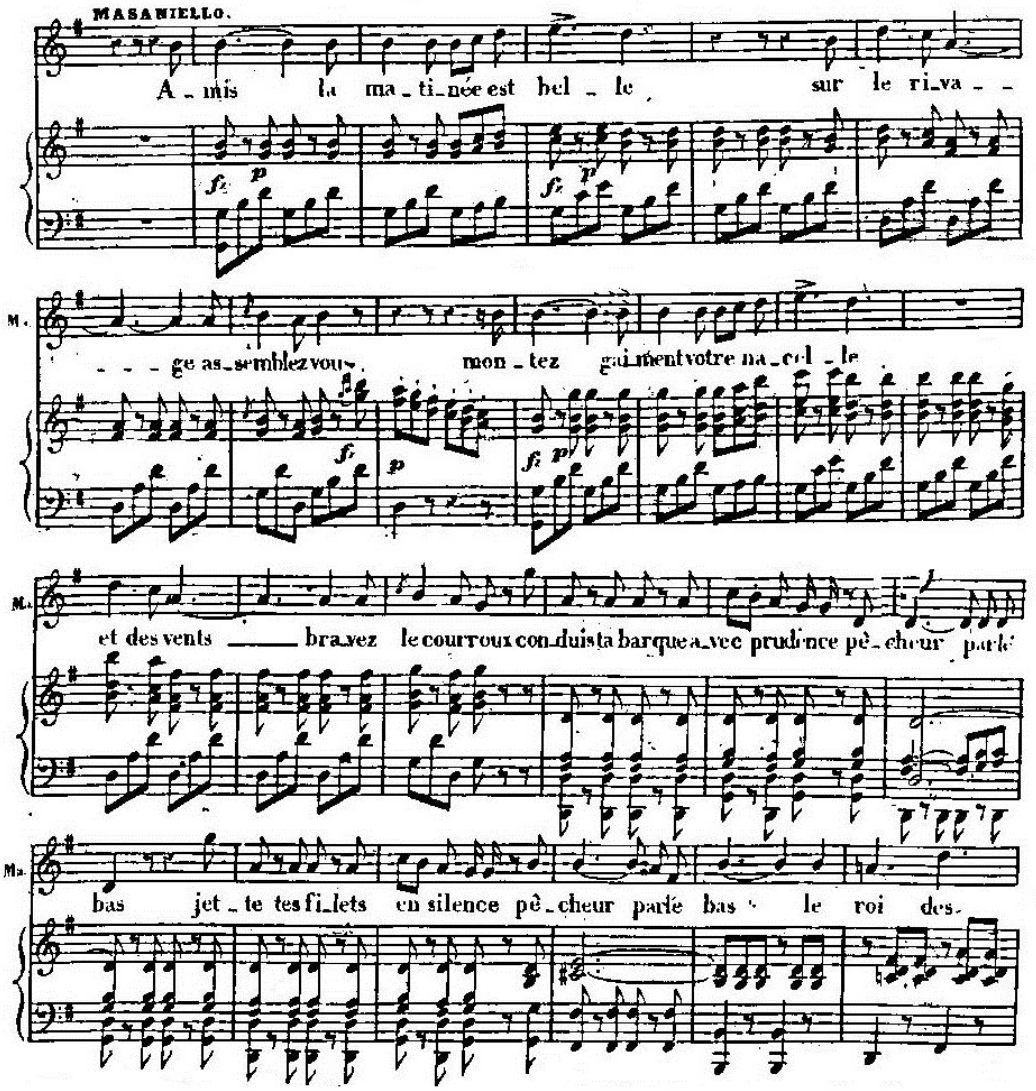
phenomenon include "literal" song (Lindenberger, *Opera: The Extravagant Art*, 85), "realistic" song (Cone, "The World of Opera and Its Inhabitants," 128), and "real" or "on-stage" music (Dahlhaus, *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 90).

[55] Grétry, *Mémoires*, Vol. 1, 439–40. ("Quoique l'on chante souvent dans l'opéra comique, l'on ne chante pas toujours. Il y a chanter pour parler, et chanter pour chanter").

[56] Ibid., Vol. 1, 368 ("Ces . . . réflexions m'engagèrent à la faire dans le vieux style, pour qu'elle tranchât sur tout le reste").

[57] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 76. The quoted words are used by Abbate to describe Raimbaut's ballade ("Jadis régnait en Normandie") from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* (1831), which "marks its reflexivity [diegetic quality] by a symbolic musical simplicity." Interestingly, "Jadis régnait en Normandie," opens with the same short-long iambic rhythm as "Une fièvre brûlante."

A similar simplification of rhythm and text setting can be found in Ex. 2.8, taken from Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's *La muette de Portici* (1828). Auber (1782–1871) served as the Director of the Paris Conservatoire through successive political regimes in France from 1842 until his death, and was arguably the most successful composer of *opéras comiques* in the nineteenth century. *La muette de Portici* is, however, a serious opera set around a historical event, a revolt led by the fisherman Masaniello against Spanish rule in Naples in the seventeenth century.



EXAMPLE 2.8. Auber, *La muette de Portici* (1828), Act II, Barcarolle

Ex. 2.8 is explicitly set up as a diegetic performance in the chorus that precedes it, with the chorus singing "écoutons" ("let us listen"), the same word that Richard the Lionheart used in Ex. 2.7. In this barcarolle, Masaniello sings to his fellow fishermen in a way that "simultaneously disguises and reveals" the Neapolitan people's desire to revolt:[58]

Am**i**s, la matinée est b**e**lle,	(2,8)
Sur le riv**a**ge assemblez-v**ou**s;	(4,8)
Montez gaim**e**nt votre nac**e**lle,	(4,8)
Et des v**e**nts bravez le courr**ou**x!	(3,8)
Cond**ui**s ta b**a**rque avec prud**en**ce;	(2,4,8)
Pêch**eu**r, parle b**a**s;	(2,5)
J**e**tte tes fil**e**ts en sil**en**ce;	(1,5,8)
Pêch**eu**r, parle b**a**s . . .	(2,5)

As shown in the annotated text above, each line of verse in the libretto by Eugène Scribe features a tonic accent on the final counted syllable and an internal accent that varies with syntactic groupings. While the tonic accents at the ends of the lines are always given metrical emphasis in Auber's setting, the lilt of the barcarolle melody also ends up accentuating every second syllable in the text regardless of context. This lends a rhythmic emphasis to syllables that are syntactically weak – the definite article in "l**e** rivage," for example, at the end of the first system.

The second quatrain, which starts in the middle of the third system in Ex. 2.8, is especially noteworthy. Auber's iambic setting of the line "cond**ui**s ta b**a**rque av**e**c prud**e**nce" goes relatively well with the flow of the text, but in the fourth system, the line "jette tes filets en silence," which really should have a different accentual pattern (as shown in the annotated text), is set by Auber exactly the same way, leading to some pretty odd misaccentuations. Instead of "j**e**tte tes fil**e**ts," Masaniello says "jett**e** tes f**i**lets." As Vincent d'Indy later commented,

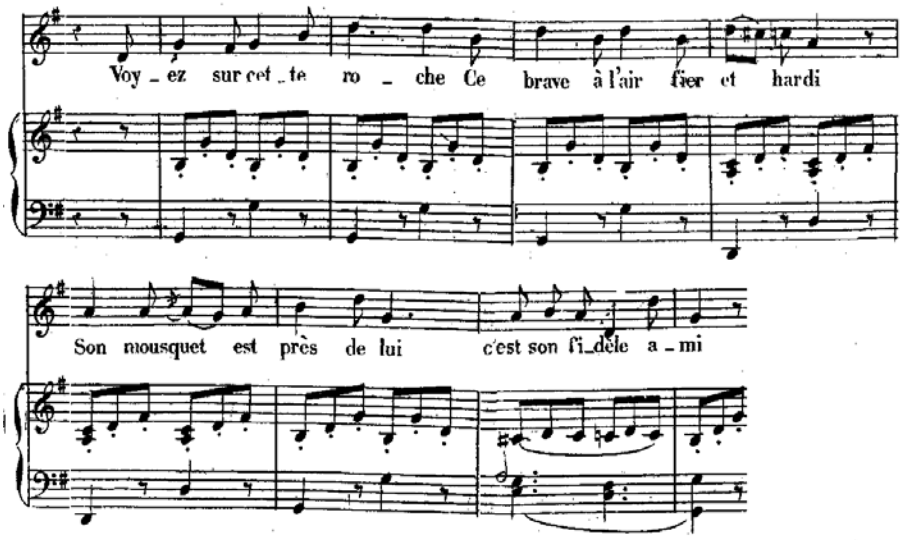
[58] Zoppelli, "'Stage Music' in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera," 32.

Masaniello's barcarolle is remarkable for its "*prosodie fantaisiste*," or whimsical prosody.[59] One cannot argue with d'Indy's appraisal of Auber's text setting, but one should at least be open to the possibility that Auber's relatively simplistic approach to rhythm and text setting in Ex. 2.8 actually highlights its status as a diegetic performance.

As we have seen, both Examples 2.7. and 2.8 are diegetic numbers that feature rhythmic simplification and regular accentuation of syllables in iambic (or short-long) patterns (un**e** fièvr**e** brûl**a**nte; am**i**s, la m**a**tin**é**e est b**e**lle). We have seen this accentuation pattern before, in the left-hand column of Fig. 2.1, taken from Benlœw's treatise. In actual French operatic practice, not every number reflects text setting in the style of Benlœw (Examples 2.3 through 2.6, for instance, do not). However, a fair number do, and many of those that do are diegetic numbers.

In Act I of Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1830), one of the most popular *opéras comiques* of the nineteenth century, the innkeeper Mathéo asks his daughter Zerline to sing a song about the exploits of the infamous bandit Fra Diavolo in order to entertain and inform their guest the Marquis, who is actually Fra Diavolo himself in disguise. The diegetic quality of the song is clearly established in the dialogue and action preceding the number, with the words "chanson" and "chanter" appearing several times and with Mathéo offering Zerline a mandolin to accompany herself (she declines). The song is said by Mathéo to have twenty-two strophes ("Is one obliged to hear them all?" asks the Marquis), but we only get to hear three. We shall examine Auber's setting of the opening quatrain, as shown in Ex. 2.9.

[59] D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale*, Vol. 3, 106 ("La Barcarolle de Masaniello est remarquable par sa prosodie fantaisiste").



EXAMPLE 2.9. Auber, *Fra Diavolo* (1830), Act I, Couplets

The song begins by directing the listener's attention to the menacing figure of Fra Diavolo perched atop a rock:

Voy**e**z sur cette r**o**che	(2,6)
Ce br**a**ve a l'air f**ie**r et hard**i**	(2,5,8)
Son mousqu**e**t est près de lu**i**	(3,7)
C'**e**st son fid**è**le am**i**	(1,4,6)

As in the other diegetic numbers that we have examined, Auber sets the text to a melody that strictly emphasizes alternate even-numbered syllables, leading to a misaccentuation in the second line ("fier **e**t hard**i**" instead of "f**ie**r et hard**i**").[60]

The melody of Zerline's song is carried over unchanged to the next strophe, which starts with the following lines:

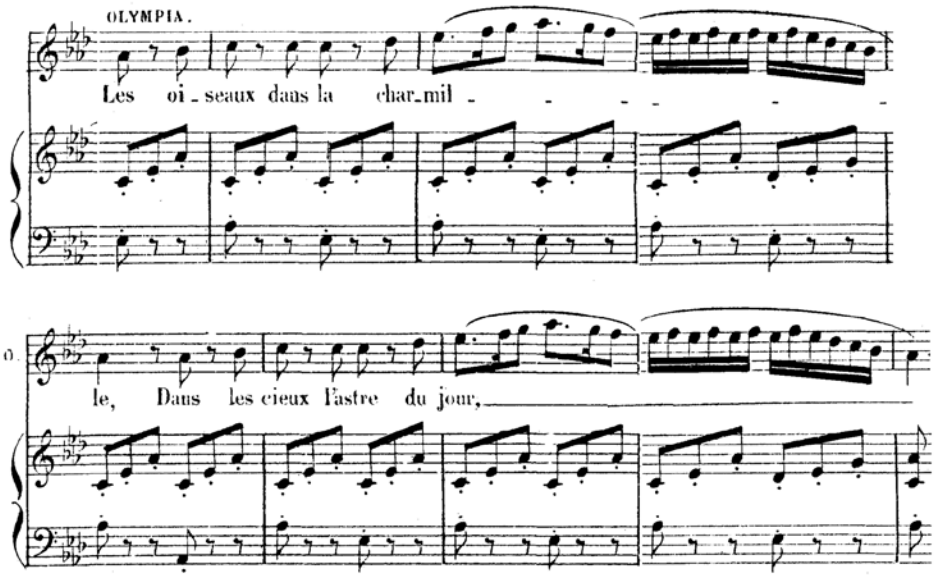
S'il men**a**ce la t**ê**te	(3,6)
De l'ennem**i** qui se déf**e**nd . . .	(4,8)

[60] This misaccentuation is noted in Pendle, *Eugène Scribe and French Opera of the Nineteenth Century*, 156.

As a result of the unchanging melody, Zerline starts off the second strophe with the misaccentuation of the weak syllables (including the *e muet*) in the word "menace": she ends up singing "S'il m**e**nac**e** la t**ê**te." As with other examples of text setting in the style of Benlœw, the rhythmic impulse of the song outweighs the prosodic accents of the verses in Ex. 2.9 (with the exception of the cadence at the end of the example).

The mechanistic quality of Benlœw's approach to text setting is perfectly married to the dramatic situation in Ex. 2.10, the *couplets* sung by the mechanical doll Olympia in Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann:*

Les ois**eau**x dans la charm**i**lle, (3,7)
Dans les c**ieu**x l'astre du j**ou**r, (3,7)



EXAMPLE 2.10. Offenbach, *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (1881), Act II, Couplets de l'Automate

As with Masaniello's barcarolle (Ex. 2.8), the chorus sets up the number as a diegetic performance, this time with the word "*Attention*!" immediately before the number begins. Offenbach's setting emphasizes all the alternate odd-numbered syllables in the seven-syllable

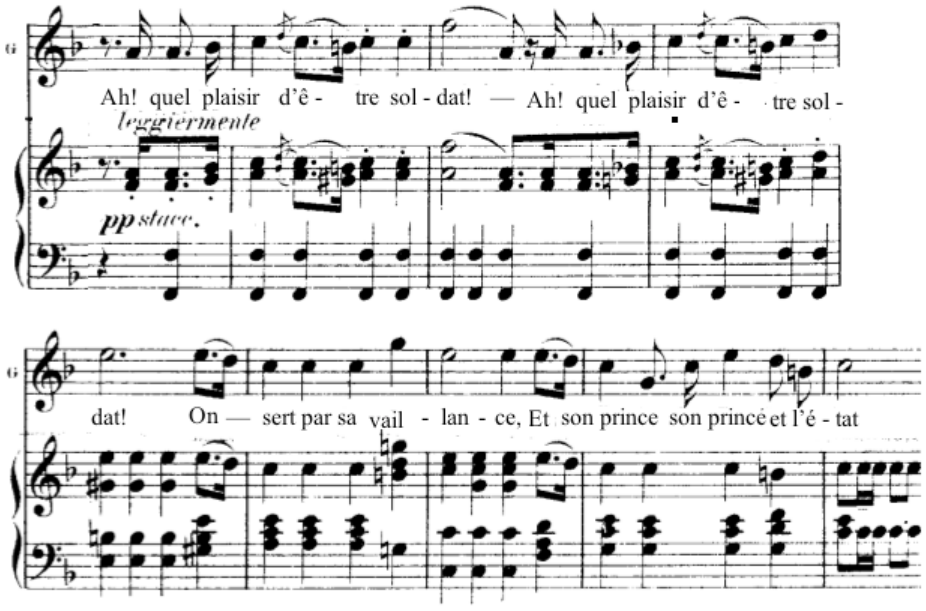
verses, resulting in the misaccentuation of "l'as-tr**e**" in the second line (compare Gounod's more naturalistic setting of the same word in the last system of Ex. 2.6). The simplification of the rhythms and the mechanical alternation of stress patterns in the text reflect both the diegetic nature of the number as an actual song performed by a wind-up doll, and the mechanized and artificial nature of the performer herself.

In his study of Verdi's French-language operas, Andreas Giger suggests that scanning against tonic accents (i.e., in the style of Benlœw) was considered perfectly acceptable in nineteenth-century French opera "in arias intended to convey a lighthearted atmosphere or local color."[61] However, each of Examples 2.7 through 2.10 serves a dramatic purpose that goes far beyond the signification of mere lightheartedness or local color. In *Richard Cœur-de-lion*, Blondel's romance directly sets into motion the recognition and rescue that form the dramatic core of the opera, and the melody itself recurs throughout the opera, providing a unifying thread to the work.[62] In *La muette de Portici*, Masaniello's barcarolle is a "lighthearted" fisherman's song only at the most superficial level. Its real dramatic significance lies in its encapsulation of the mood of deep political discontent, simmering below the surface of the text, that drives the action of the opera.[63] Zerline's song about Fra Diavolo introduces us to the central character of the opera and returns in the finale to round off the action. Finally, Hoffmann's obliviousness to Olympia's mechanical nature, a quality that is completely obvious to the other characters listening to her aria, is crucial to the drama of that act and emblematic of Hoffmann's general air of romantic illusion in the opera as a whole. As Luca Zoppelli has written, diegetic music performs multiple dramatic functions, and the provision of lighthearted diversion or *couleur*

[61] Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 122.
[62] See Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 245–48.
[63] A performance of *La muette de Portici* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels famously sparked riots that marked the beginning of the successful Belgian revolution of 1830.

locale is only the most superficial (Zoppelli labels it the "degree zero") of those functions.[64] I propose, therefore, that one way to view text setting in the style of Benlœw is as a stylistic marker of diegetic performance in French opera that has broader dramatic implications going beyond mere lightheartedness and local color.

It is important to recognize in light of the examples that we have examined that notwithstanding the blandishments of critics like Castil-Blaze, there was simply no single "correct" way of setting French texts in opera. The shortcomings of Castil-Blaze's binary "right or wrong" approach can be illustrated with a comparative analysis of Ex. 2.11, the opening phrase of the air "Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat!" from François Boieldieu's *La dame blanche* (1825), a staple of the *opéra comique* repertoire well into the later decades of the nineteenth century.



EXAMPLE 2.11. Boieldieu, *La dame blanche* (1825), Act I, Air

[64] Zoppelli, "'Stage Music' in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera," 31. Zoppelli's term for diegetic music is "stage music."

In this number, a stranger, Georges, mysteriously appears in a community in the Scottish highlands and introduces himself to the crowd as an officer in the king's army:

Ah! quel plais**i**r d'**ê**tre sold**a**t!	(4,5,8)
On s**e**rt, par sa vaill**a**nce,	(2,6)
Et son pr**i**nce et l'ét**a**t;	(3,6)

If one evaluates Boieldieu's text setting solely against the prosodic accents in the verses, as Castil-Blaze did in *L'art des vers lyriques*, one would find plenty to criticize in Boieldieu's prosody. Among other things, Castil-Blaze carped on Boieldieu's setting of the expressive exclamation "Ah!" as an insignificant sixteenth-note upbeat.[65] A comparison of Gounod's setting of the same exclamation "Ah!" as a half-note downbeat in Ex. 2.6 above illustrates Castil-Blaze's point. The relative metrical emphasis on the *e muet* at the end of of the word "être" in Boieldieu's setting of Ex. 2.11 also spurred Castil-Blaze to fits of outrage :

> This method of torturing the ear belongs uniquely to the French, they own the patent to this invention, they have the incontestable right to a gold medal no. 1, if they ever open an industrial exposition in the kingdom of the frogs.[66]

Using Castil-Blaze's methods, we would no doubt bemoan once again that "French opera and song are replete with examples of mistreated tonic accents."[67]

There is, however, a different, and I would contend a richer, way of evaluating Boieldieu's melody. In this alternate evaluation, we would note in Boieldieu's defense that his setting of the opening line — "Ah! qu**e**l plais**i**r d'êtr**e** sold**a**t!" — brings a highly appropriate quality of diegetic performance, or extroverted performance energy, to the number. Unlike the numbers that we examined in the previous section, Ex. 2.11 is not explicitly set up as a diegetic

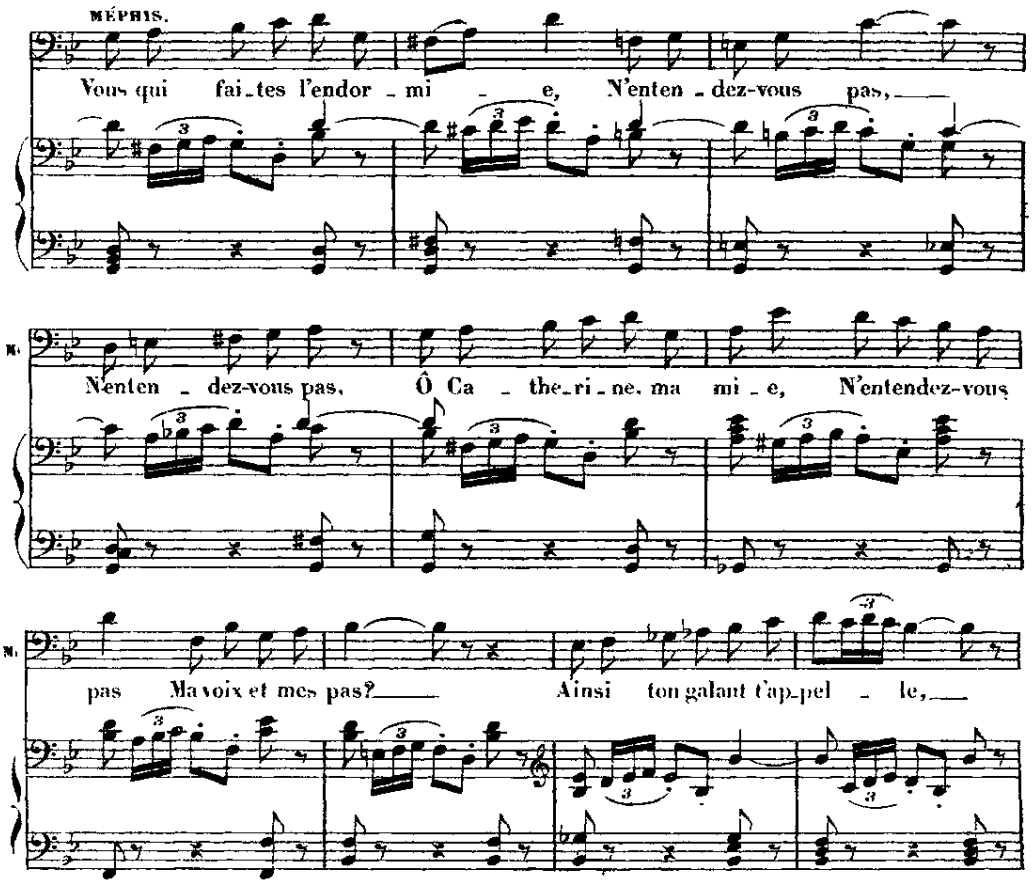
[65] Castil-Blaze, *L'art des vers lyriques*, 88–90.
[66] Ibid., 88 ("Cette façon de déchirer l'oreille appartient uniquement aux Français, ils en conservent le brevet d'invention, ils ont un droit incontestable à la médaille d'or n^{o} 1, si jamais on ouvre une exposition de l'industrie dans le royaume des grenouilles").
[67] Youens, "Words and Music in Germany and France," 489.

number in the libretto. Georges does not turn to the chorus and say "let me sing you a song." The dramatic context does indicate, however, that as a stranger introducing himself to a new community and reassuring them that he means no harm, Georges is indeed "performing" to an on-stage audience. Boieldieu's setting of the text in the manner of a diegetic number indicates that whether or not the chorus actually hears Georges's aria as music, they are almost certainly aware that he is giving a performance.

The idea that Boieldieu is consciously depicting Georges as a performer finds support in the use of the dotted rhythms of the military march topic in Ex. 2.11. *La dame blanche* is set in Scotland in the year 1759, a time in which soldiers in Europe were more interested in ceremonial than in fighting, and "the old heroic mythology had . . . degenerated into the posturing bravado of vain young men."[68] I would argue against Castil-Blaze, then, that the artificial "diegetic" quality of the declamation in Ex. 2.11 sets up Georges quite effectively as a performing, posturing, member of the "elegant, fashionable, cultivated, devil-of-a-fellow" officer class in one of the "strutting, play-acting" armies typical of the time.[69]

For a final example of how diegetic text setting can illuminate a dramatic situation, let us consider Ex. 2.12, the opening of Méphistophélès's mocking serenade to Marguerite in Act IV of Gounod's *Faust*. As we noted in the discussion of *Roméo et Juliette* in Ex. 2.6 above, many of Gounod's lyrical melodies are designed to reflect subtleties in the accentuation of the French text. Ex. 2.12, however, is not a lyrical moment like Roméo's *cavatine*, but a diegetic performance.

[68] Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 148.
[69] Ibid., 147–48. Monelle discusses Ex. 2.11 briefly in his discussion of the use of the military topic in what he calls "toy-soldier marches," such as "Non più andrai" from *Le nozze di Figaro*. Ibid., 175–76.



EXAMPLE 2.12. Gounod, *Faust* (1859), Act IV, Sérénade

Following Faust's impregnation and abandonment of Marguerite, Méphistophélès sings this mocking serenade in front of Marguerite's window:

Vous qui f**ai**tes l'endorm**i**e, (3,7)
N'entend**e**z-vous p**a**s, (3,5)
Ô Cather**i**ne, ma m**i**e, (4,7)
Ma v**oi**x et mes p**a**s? (2,5)

The number is set up as a diegetic performance externally by the orchestral introduction, which imitates the strumming of a guitar or mandolin, and internally once again by the regular accentuation (or misaccentuation) of alternate syllables in the text. Consider the third line of text above: a natural delivery of the line would be "**Ô** Cather**i**ne ma m**i**e." In Gounod's setting, however, Méphistophélès mockingly draws out and misaccentuates the name of the fictional

Catherine (the mirror of Marguerite in the opera): "**Ô** Cath**e**rin**e** ma m**i**e." The perverse text setting underscores the ironic and darkly humorous tone of the song.

Carolyn Abbate has argued that far from being throwaway entertainments, diegetic performances in opera are interesting dramatic moments because they are "reflexive":

> *Being a musical performance*, the song is a sonorous mirror of the greater performance, the arias, ensembles, orchestral flourishes, preening singers, and appreciative applause that is an operatic performance . . . to which we are witness. The song, foregrounding the process of performance, also makes musical improvisation and composition palpable; it forces us to deal explicitly with ourselves as listening subjects, for we – the audience – are mirrored by the rapt listeners on stage (emphasis in original).[70]

In the case of Méphistophélès's mocking serenade, our mirrors as listeners on (or just off) stage are the ruined Marguerite and her outraged brother Valentin, and the diegetic quality of the serenade arguably makes us empathize with their situation even more, because we are hearing this grotesque serenade "through their ears," as it were.[71]

Our examination of Examples 2.7 through 2.12 indicates that there was a rich tradition of setting melodies against tonic accents in French opera, and that this tradition co-existed with another tradition that featured a more naturalistic or lyrical style of declamation. This state of affairs has puzzled some observers. In July 1905, a frustrated Richard Strauss, who was working at the time on a French-language version of his opera *Salome*, asked in a letter to Romain

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[70] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 85. The "song" referred to in the quoted passage is Raimbaut's ballade from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*. See note 57 above in this chapter. Abbate's discussion of reflexivity in opera draws on Lucien Dällenbach's exploration of the technique of *mise en abyme* (a term coined by André Gide to describe self-reflexive forms such as the play within a play in *Hamlet*) in *The Mirror in the Text*.

[71] Luca Zoppelli has suggested that "stage music" [or diegetic music] "wrenches [the audience] from their position as outside observers and induces them to see with the eyes of the character, to identify with his or her reactions." Zoppelli, "'Stage Music' in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera," 33

Rolland: "why do the French sing differently to the way they speak?"[72] In response to Strauss's question, I suggest that when characters in French opera sing differently to the way they speak, they are often engaging in diegetic performance. In other words, they sing in different rhythms than those in which they would otherwise speak *precisely because* they are engaged in "singing as song," in Grétry's formulation, and not in "singing as speech." This phenomenon can be found even in the works of composers like Gounod, who was widely lauded for his "justness of declamation."[73] In French opera from Grétry to Gounod (and onward to Bizet), proper versification often succumbed to the influence of the regular and repetitive rhythms of diegetic song.

2.5 Entr'acte

We have seen that composers of French operas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used different styles of text setting to characterize different kinds of musical numbers. This practice did not originate with Grétry in the mid-eighteenth century, but can be traced back at least to the popular entertainments from the reign of Louis XIV that eventually gave rise to the genre of the *opéra comique*. In his study of various French songs performed in theatrical entertainments by the Comédie-Italienne in late seventeenth-century Paris, Donald Jay Grout notes a stylistic distinction between what he loosely calls *airs*, which "uniformly adapt the melody to the words rather than the converse," and *chansons*, "in which the text is subordinated to the rhythm of the melody – usually a dance rhythm."[74] Grout also identifies in his study a

[72] Strauss and Rolland, *Correspondence*, 36. I am indebted to Carl Schachter for referring me to this volume of correspondence.
[73] See note 45 above in this chapter.
[74] Grout, "The Origins of the *Opéra Comique*," 214, 216. In this section of his study, Grout discusses a collection of plays performed between 1682 and 1697 by an Italian theatrical troupe

third kind of musical number, vaudevilles, in which words were created for music already in existence, in a practice known as "parody."[75] In examining examples of parody from plays performed between 1713 and 1715 at the fair theaters (Théâtres de la Foire) of Saint Germain and Saint Laurent, the immediate precursors to the Opéra-Comique, Grout notes that there are "thousands" of instances of misaccentuation in these vaudeville numbers:

> The matter of fitting the verses to the strait-jacket of a fixed *fredon* [tune] was a prosodic problem which the poets solved in their own way . . . To begin with, the matter of false accents was one which apparently caused them no qualms whatever. When necessary they placed weak syllables on strong beats or long notes with such *insouciance* that in reading the plays one very soon ceases to notice such places at all.[76]

Ex. 2.13, which is one of the examples noted by Grout, is taken from *Les eaux de Merlin*, a one-act entertainment with prologue written by Alain-René Le Sage (1668–1747) and first performed at the Foire de Saint Laurent in 1715. Parts a and b of Ex. 2.13 are reproduced from a collection of Le Sage's plays published in 1737. The character Mezzetin (a traditional character from the *commedia dell'arte*) is given words (Ex. 2.13a) to be sung to a tune known as "*Les filles de Nanterre*," which is cross-referenced and included in the "Table des Airs" at the back of the volume (Ex. 2.13b). Ex. 2.13c is a transcription that combines the text and melody.[77]

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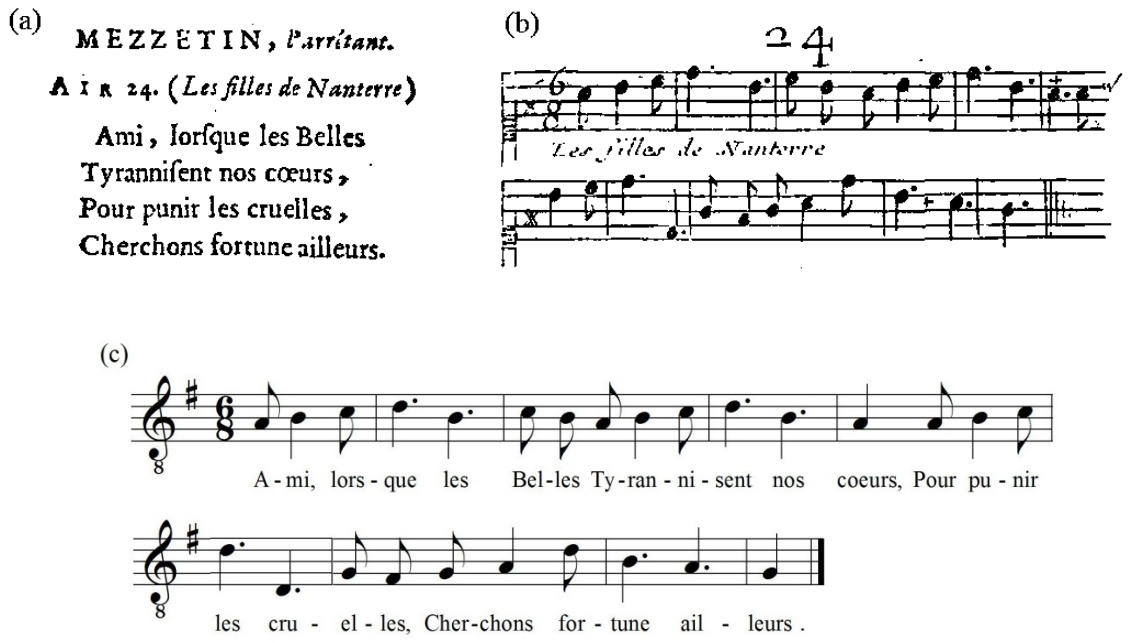
at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris and first published as *Théâtre Italien* by Evaristo Gherardi in 1694.

[75] Ibid., 184.

[76] Ibid., 346.

[77] Ex. 2.13(a) is reproduced from Le Sage, *Le Théâtre de la Foire*, Vol. 2, 86. Ex. 2.13(b) is reproduced from ibid., Vol. 2, "Table des Airs," 6. The tune of Ex. 2.13(b) is adapted to different sets of verses in four different plays in the same volume. Ex. 2.13(c) is based on a transcription in Grout, "The Origins of the *Opéra Comique*," 347.



EXAMPLE 2.13. Le Sage, *Les eaux de Merlin* (1715), Prologue: (a) text; (b) melody; and (c) transcription

As the transcription in Ex. 2.13c shows, Le Sage's six-syllable verses are all scanned mechanically in iambs when the verses are sung, following the practice shown in the left-hand column in Benlœw's table (Fig. 2.1). As a result, all even-numbered syllables, including the *e muets* at the ends of the words "lorsqu**e**" and "tyranni**s**ent," as well as the first syllable of "p**u**nir," are given metrical and melodic emphasis in exactly the same kind of misaccentuation that we have seen in the French operatic repertoire through to the second half of the nineteenth century.

We can see from Grout's account and from Ex. 2.13 that what I have called the "diegetic" style of text setting had deep historical associations with the vaudevilles and other popular musical styles that pre-dated the *opéra comique*. In light of this fact, it is not surprising that the verses used by Benlœw to illustrate his theory of versification (Ex. 2.2) were written to be sung to a vaudeville melody. Similarly, Grétry may very well have been thinking of earlier popular

styles when he said in the *Mémoires* that "Une fièvre brûlante" (Ex. 2.7) was composed in "the old style."[78]

The popular vaudevilles and parodies from the later years of the reign of Louis XIV were written in a "low" style that was intended to contrast, often in a satirical or mocking manner, with the elevated declamatory style of Lully's *tragédies lyriques.* Vaudeville melodies like Ex. 2.13b were typically sung in the carnival atmosphere of the Parisian street fairs and were generally folklike and catchy, often featuring steady, dance-related rhythms.[79] Many of these same melodic and rhythmic characteristics can be found in diegetic numbers composed by later French operatic composers. I suggest that the text-setting practices associated with the vaudevilles and related popular entertainments found their way, either intentionally or by osmosis, into the French *opéras comiques* of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, becoming especially associated with diegetic numbers in which operatic characters sing to entertain onstage audiences.

Table 2.1 below summarizes various facets of the two contrasting styles of melody and text setting discussed in this chapter and noted by Grout in the precursors to the *opéra comique*. I have used Grout's terms "*airs*" and "*chansons*" in the headings in the Table simply as convenient shorthand terms, with no deeper formal or technical meaning.[80] The dualities set forth in Table 2.1 will inform our discussion as we now turn our attention to the melodic language of Bizet and *Carmen*.

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[78] See note 56 and the accompanying text above.
[79] See Isherwood, "Popular Musical Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris," 295–99, and Grout, "The Origins of the *Opéra Comique*," 217.
[80] In Table 2.1, I have collapsed Grout's *chansons* and vaudevilles into a single category. I have also used the term "*air*" in Grout's narrow sense of a number that is faithful to prosodic rhythms, while recognizing that the term was frequently used to refer in a broad sense to *any* musical number (as in Ex. 2.13a).

"*Airs*"	"*Chansons*"
• Melody/rhythm adapted to text • More elevated style • "Singing to speak" • Non-diegetic	• Text subordinated to melody/rhythm • More popular style • "Singing to sing" • Diegetic

TABLE 2.1. Contrasting Melodic and Text-Setting Styles in French Opera

CHAPTER 3

THE MELODIC LANGUAGE OF BIZET AND *CARMEN*

In early 1867, the 28-year-old Georges Bizet accepted a private student, Paul Lacombe, for a correspondence course in musical composition. In a long letter introducing himself and his aesthetic point of view to his new student, Bizet wrote: "Je suis éclectique" — "I am eclectic."[1] As we saw in the previous chapter, nineteenth-century French opera featured a wide range of melodic styles that provided copious models for a self-proclaimed eclectic composer like Bizet to adopt (and adapt) for his own musical and dramatic purposes.

In this chapter, we shall extend the discussion of melodic styles in the preceding chapter to the works of Bizet. The first part of the chapter (comprising Sections 3.1 and 3.2) examines melodic and text-setting styles in various operatic and dramatic works composed by Bizet before *Carmen*. We shall consider the influence of earlier composers on Bizet's melodic style and discuss Bizet's views of other operatic composers, as reflected in his correspondence. The second part of the chapter examines the melodic language of *Carmen*. We shall consider and evaluate Bizet's melodic and text-setting practice in *Carmen* in light of the historical practices of French opera, as discussed in the preceding chapter. I suggest in this chapter that throughout his career, Bizet showed a sophisticated understanding of the mix of styles that characterizes French opera, and that he used these different styles in a way that supports and intensifies the drama in his culminating masterpiece, *Carmen*.

[1] Bizet, Letter to Paul Lacombe, Mar. 11, 1867, in *Lettres*, 225.

3.1 Lyrical Numbers in Bizet's Works Before *Carmen*

Georges Bizet was born into a musical family in Paris, where his father and maternal uncle were both voice teachers. Bizet was a musical prodigy who enrolled as a student in the Paris Conservatoire in October 1848, a few weeks before his tenth birthday. At the Conservatoire, he studied piano with Antoine Marmontel, organ with François-Joseph Benoist, and composition and fugue with Fromental Halévy, winning first prize in the annual juries in each of those disciplines.[2] In 1857, Bizet won the competition for the prestigious Prix de Rome and, as a result, spent the next three years at the Villa Medici, the home of the French Academy in Rome.[3]

The youthful Bizet's letters from his years in Rome reveal his admiration for the operas of Mozart and Rossini. He wrote to his mother in 1858 that "I am more than ever convinced that Mozart and Rossini are the two greatest musicians,"[4] and that "[w]hen I hear *The Marriage of Figaro* or the second act of *Guillaume Tell*, I am completely happy, I feel a complete sense of well-being and satisfaction, I forget everything."[5] Bizet had actually met Rossini at one of the

[2] Bizet won first prize for piano in 1852, and for both organ and composition/fugue in 1855. For a detailed account of Bizet's years at the Conservatoire, see Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 53–140.
[3] The competition for the Prix de Rome required the composition of a dramatic cantata, reinforcing the "commonly held belief in France that dramatic music was the true measure of a composer's talent." Donnellon, "French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates," 1. In another sign of the importance assigned to dramatic music in France, a prominent operatic composer served as the Director of the Paris Conservatoire for most of the post-Napoleonic nineteenth century: Luigi Cherubini (Director, 1822–1842) was succeeded by Auber (1842–1871), who in turn was succeeded by Ambroise Thomas (1871–1896).
[4] Bizet, Letter to his mother, Oct. 8, 1858, in *Lettres*, 73 ("Je suis plus que jamais convaincu que Mozart et Rossini sont les deux plus grands musiciens").
[5] Bizet, Letter to his mother, Dec. 31, 1858, in *Lettres*, 81–82 ("quand j'entends les *Noces de Figaro* ou le second acte de *Guillaume Tell*, je suis complètement heureux, j'éprouve un bien-être, une satisfaction complète, j'oublie tout").

elder composer's famous Parisian salons in 1857, and when Bizet left for his stay in Italy, Rossini gave him two letters of introduction.[6]

The recipients of the Prix de Rome were required to send back to Paris every year a new composition (known as an *envoi*) to be evaluated by a jury. In what may have been a sign of Rossini's influence on him, Bizet chose to write as his first *envoi* an *opera buffa* to an Italian-language libretto. Bizet took Italian lessons in connection with the composition of this opera, *Don Procopio*, and a letter to Marmontel, his piano teacher at the Conservatoire, leaves no doubt as to the importance that Bizet ascribed to words and language in the composition of operatic music: "With Italian words, one must act Italian. I have not sought to avoid this influence."[7] In a similar vein, Bizet wrote to his mother at around the same time: "I am making Italian music. Impossible to make anything else with Italian words."[8]

Ex. 3.1 shows the opening of Ernesto's cavatina from Act I of Bizet's *Don Procopio*, which was never performed in the composer's lifetime.[9] The opera's plot is substantially the same as Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (premiered in Paris in 1843).[10]

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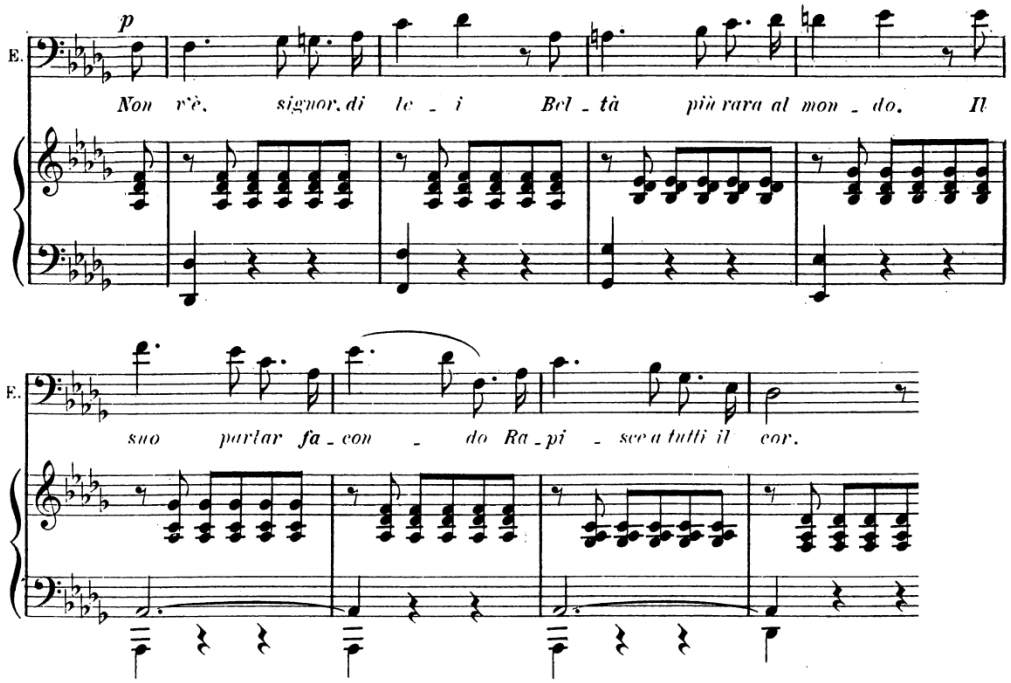
[6] For a description of Bizet's personal interactions with Rossini, see Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 44–48.

[7] Bizet, Letter to Antoine-François Marmontel, Jan. 11, 1859, in *Letters in the Nydahl Collection*, 5 ("Sur des paroles italiennes, il faut faire italien. Je n'ai pas cherché de me dérober à cette influence").

[8] Bizet, Letter to his mother, late Jan. 1859, in *Lettres*, 87 ("je fais de la musique italienne. Impossible de faire autre chose sur des paroles italiennes").

[9] *Don Procopio* received its first performance in Monte Carlo in 1906. The manuscript was found in 1894 among Auber's papers, which had been left to his nieces at his death. Auber had apparently forgotten to file it (along with numerous other *envois* by other Prix de Rome winners) with the Conservatoire library. Lacombe, "*Don Procopio* de Georges Bizet," 61.

[10] Hervé Lacombe has argued that Bizet's cavatina bears the imprint of Dr. Malatesta's aria "Bella siccome un angelo" from Donizetti's opera. Ibid., 81–82. Among other things, Lacombe points out that the two arias share the same key and accompanimental figure.



EXAMPLE 3.1. Bizet, *Don Procopio* (completed 1859), Act I, Cavatina

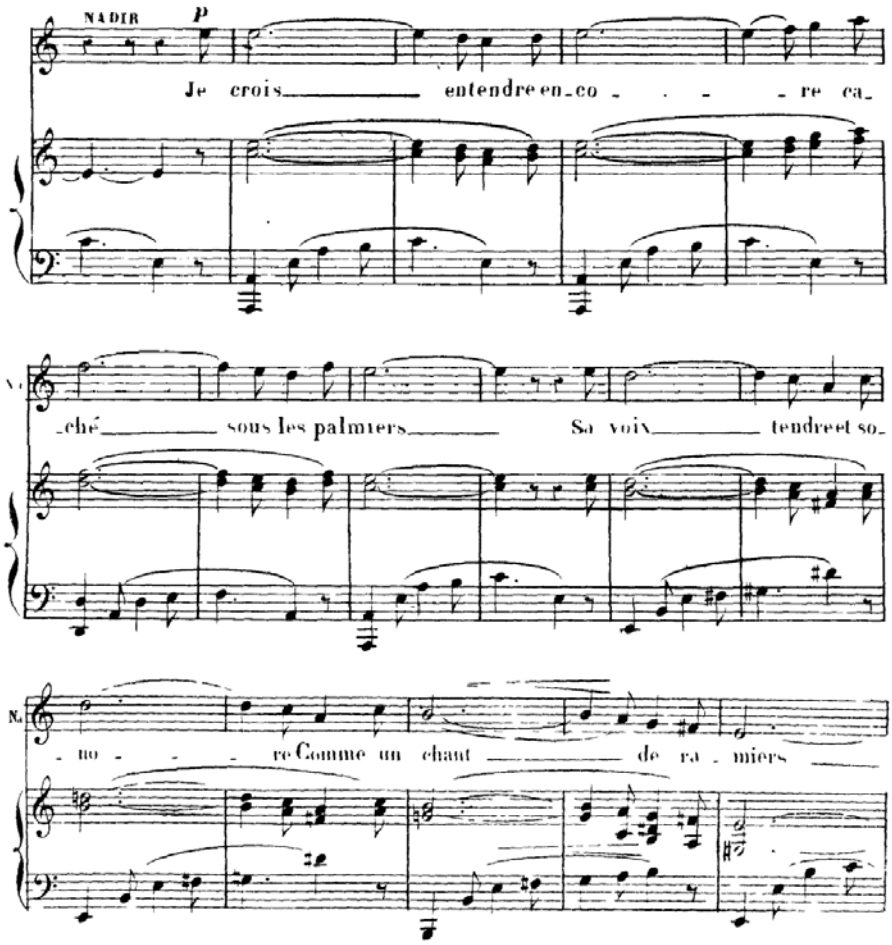
In Ex. 3.1, Ernesto praises the merits of his sister Bettina to the elderly Don Procopio:

Non v'**è**, signor, di l**e**i	(2,6)
Belt**à** più rara al m**o**ndo,	(2,6)
Il s**uo** parlar fac**o**ndo,	(2,6)
Rap**i**sce a tutti il c**o**r.	(2,6)

The verses for the cavatina feature the regularly recurring accents that were characteristic of Italian librettos, and Bizet's melodic setting is meticulously faithful to the rhythms of the text. The accented second and sixth syllables of each line fall on metrical downbeats. As for the remaining weak syllables, the first syllable in each line is set as a short upbeat to the strong second syllable, while the third through fifth syllables in each line form three upbeats (short-long-short) to the *accento comune* falling on the sixth syllable. The regular alternation of long downbeats and short upbeats in Ex. 3.1 is perhaps reminiscent of the melodic rhythm of

Mathilde's aria (Ex. 2.5) from Act II of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, an opera that Bizet is known to have admired.

The accentual patterns found in both verse and music in Ex. 3.1 are replicated almost exactly in Ex. 3.2, Nadir's romance "Je crois entendre encore" from Act I of Bizet's first mature opera, *Les pêcheurs de Perles*, first performed at the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris in 1863, three years after the composer's return from Rome.



EXAMPLE 3.2. Bizet, *Les pêcheurs de perles* (1863), Act I, Romance

In this aria, Nadir recalls being enchanted by the voice of the priestess Léïla:

Je cr**oi**s entendre enc**o**re,	(2,6)
Caché sous les palm**ie**rs,	(2,6)
Sa v**oi**x tendre et son**o**re,	(2,6)
Comme un ch**a**nt de ram**ie**rs.	(3,6)

As the annotated text shows, the accentual patterns in the French verses for Ex. 3.2 are almost identical to those in the Italian verses for Ex. 3.1, and Bizet employs a similar approach in setting the text. Once again, the accented syllables in each line are set to long downbeats. As in Ex. 3.1, the weak opening syllables of each line are set as upbeats to the first strong syllable, and the weak syllables in the middle of the line are set as upbeats (short-long-short) to the tonic accent at the end of the line. The line-ending *e muets* in Ex. 3.2 are set the same way as the *piano* endings in Ex. 3.1, as weak afterbeats.

Taken together, Ex. 3.1 and 3.2 provide some support for the contention of Scoppa and Castil-Blaze (examined in the previous chapter) that Italian principles of versification could be duplicated in French. The examples also illustrate the probable influence of the Italian melodic style, with its rhythmically regular groups of four- and eight-bar phrases, on Bizet's early works. Bizet himself recognized this influence in a letter he wrote to Paul Lacombe in 1867 — the same letter in which he declared his "eclecticism":

> I lived for three years in Italy and got used to [. . .] the temperament of some of its composers. In addition, my sensual nature lets itself be gripped by this music that is easy-going, lazy, amorous, lascivious and passionate all at the same time. I am German by conviction, heart and soul . . . , but I get lost sometimes in bad artistic places . . . And, I admit to you softly, I find infinite pleasure there. In a word, I love Italian music as one loves a courtisan; but it is necessary for it to be charming! [11]

[11] Bizet, Letter to Paul Lacombe, Mar. 11, 1867, in *Lettres,* 225–26 ("J'ai vécu trois ans en Italie et je me suis fait [. . .] au tempérament de quelques-uns de ses compositeurs. – De plus, ma nature sensuelle se laisse empoigner par cette musique facile, paresseuse, amoureuse, lascive et passionée tout à la fois. – Je suis allemand de conviction, de cœur et d'âme . . ., mais je m'égare

It is important to consider the context of this famous quote. For Bizet in 1867, the Italian composer *par excellence* was Rossini, who had stopped writing operas nine years before Bizet was born, and not Verdi, whose more recent works were not always to Bizet's liking.[12] Similarly, the letter to Lacombe makes it clear that Bizet's "heart and soul" belonged not to a German contemporary (like Wagner, for example), but to a German master from the past: "Like you, I put *Beethoven* above the greatest and most famous. The choral symphony is for me the culminating point of our art" (emphasis in original).[13]

Although Bizet thought of Beethoven primarily as an instrumental composer, Ex. 3.3 provides an illustration of the possible influence of Beethoven's instrumental music on Bizet's melodic style. Ex. 3.3 is taken from *La jolie fille de Perth* (1867), an opera that Bizet was working on at the time of his letter to Lacombe. The number, in which the hero Henri Smith laments the supposed infidelity of his beloved Catherine, features short three-syllable lines throughout, in an unusual practice for a lyrical number:

Ô cru**e**lle!	(3)
Infid**è**le!	(3)
Quoi! ton c**œu**r,	(3)
Sans terr**eu**r, . . .	(3)

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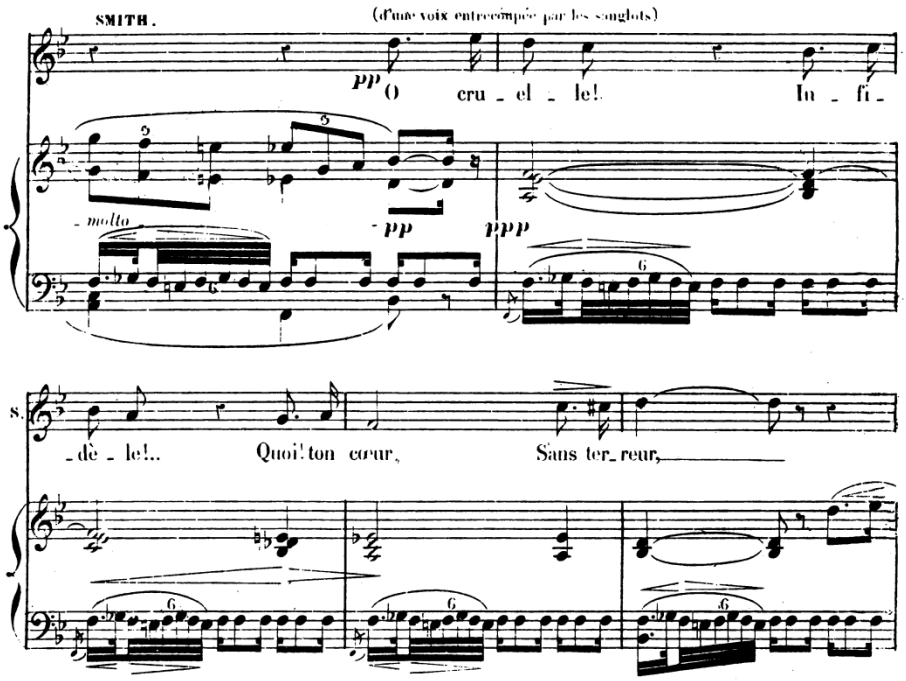
quelquefois dans les mauvais lieux artistiques . . . Et, je vous l'avoue tout bas, j'y trouve un plaisir infini. En un mot, j'aime la musique italienne comme on aime une courtisane; mais il faut qu'elle soit charmante!") (ellipses [other than the bracketed one] in original).

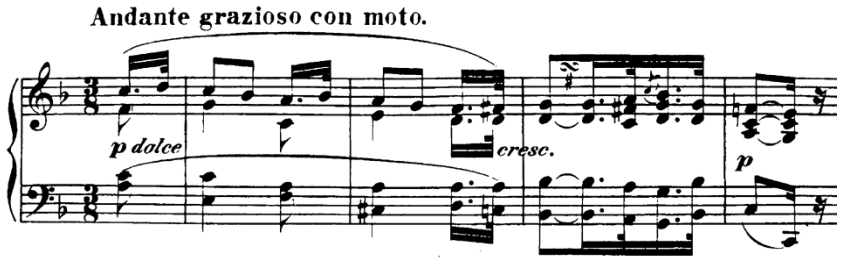
[12] Bizet attended a performance during the first run of *Un ballo in maschera* in Rome in 1859 and found it "foul" (*infect*). Bizet, Letter to his mother, Nov. 26, 1859, in *Lettres*, 117. Eight years later, Bizet wrote that *Don Carlos* was "a kind of compromise [with] no melody or accent, " and that "Verdi is no longer Italian; he wants to do Wagner." Bizet, Letter to Edmond Galabert, Mar. 1867, in *Lettres*, 158 ("*Don Carlos* est une espèce de compromis. Pas de mélodie, pas d'accent"), and Letter to Paul Lacombe, Mar. 11, 1867, in *Lettres*, 231 ("Verdi n'est plus italien; il veut faire du Wagner").

[13] Bizet, Letter to Paul Lacombe, Mar. 11, 1867, in *Lettres*, 226 ("Comme vous, je mets *Beethoven* au-dessus des plus grands, des plus fameux. La symphonie avec chœurs est pour moi le point culminant de notre art").



EXAMPLE 3.3. Bizet, *La jolie fille de Perth* (1867), Act III, Air

These short verses are set to short rhythmic and melodic cells that are reminiscent of motives in an instrumental piece. The melody of Smith's air in fact bears a strong resemblance to that of Beethoven's "Andante favori," the original slow movement for the "Waldstein" piano sonata (Ex. 3.4).



EXAMPLE 3.4. Beethoven, Andante in F Major, WoO 57 (1803), mm. 1–4

The compositional problem of how to construct a longer melodic phrase from short motivic cells (as in Ex. 3.3) was addressed by Bizet in 1868 in a letter to his composition student

Edmond Galabert. Referring to a lyrical number that Galabert had written for a proposed opera, Bizet wrote:

> The motive of the romance is nice, but a bit short. By proceeding like this in small fragments of phrases, you will not be able to produce a real effect. – Look at the long phrases of *Rossini*, *Meyerbeer*, *Wagner*, and sometimes of *Gounod*. Look at the duet from *Hamlet*: "Doute de la lumière."[14] (emphases in original)

The references in this letter to Gounod and to Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet* (premiered at the Opéra earlier that year) indicate Bizet's appreciation of the mid-century lyric style of French opera. Bizet was a lifelong friend and admirer of Gounod, writing to the older composer in 1872 that "[y]ou were the commencement of my life as an artist. I result from you. You are the cause and I am the consequence."[15] The qualified praise in the letter to Galabert ("and sometimes of Gounod") may simply reflect Bizet's dim view of some of Gounod's latest (non-operatic) compositions from around that time.[16] In any event, the duet from Thomas's *Hamlet* cited in Bizet's letter to Galabert (shown below in Ex. 3.5) reveals the same combination of fluid melody and just declamation that characterize many of Gounod's lyrical numbers.

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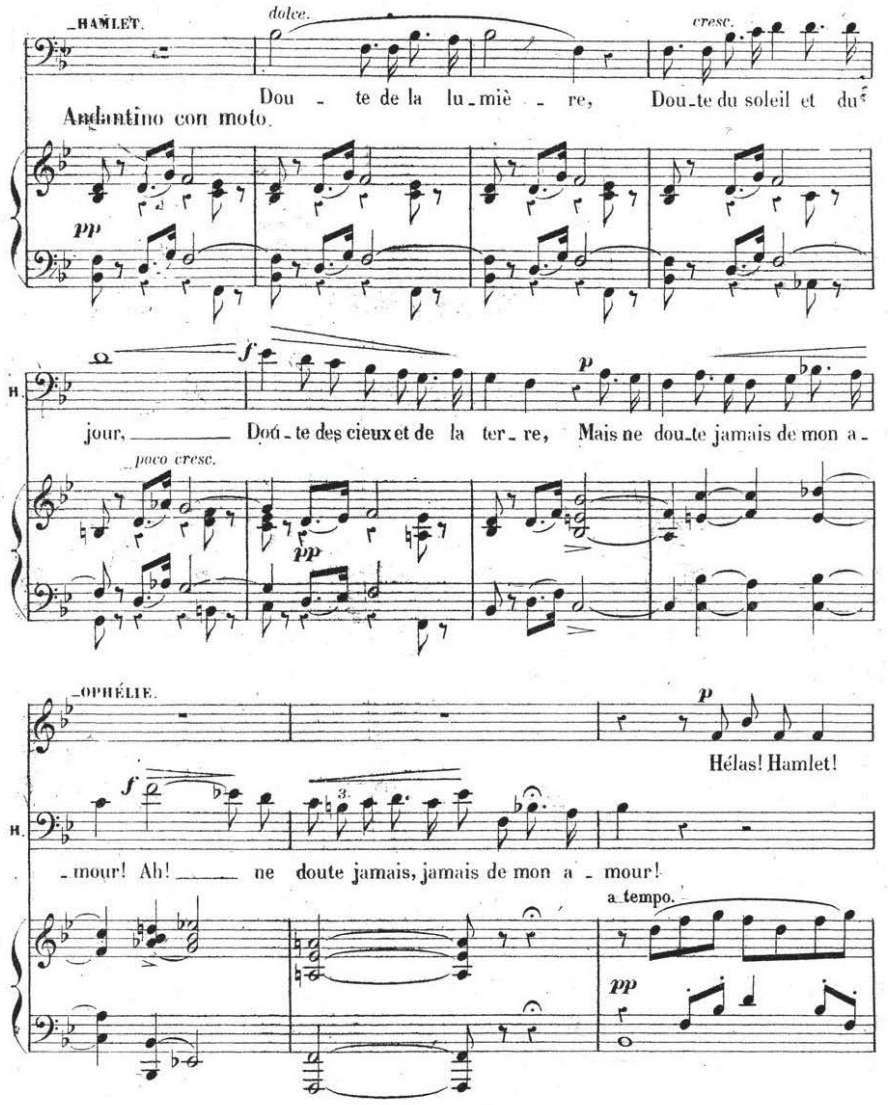
[14] Bizet, Letter to Edmond Galabert, Aug. 1868, in *Études de composition*, 79 ("Le motif de la romance est joli, quoiqu'un peu court. En procédant ainsi par petits fragments de phrases, vous ne pouvez arriver à un veritable effet. – Voyez les longues phrases de *Rossini*, de *Meyerbeer*, de *Wagner* et quelquefois de *Gounod*. Voyez le duo d'*Hamlet*: 'Doute de la lumière'"). Galabert was working on an entry for a competition sponsored by the Paris Opéra, in which composers were invited to set a libretto for an opera titled *La Coupe du Roi de Thulé*. Bizet himself set portions of the libretto before abandoning the project in 1869. The winning entry by Eugène Diaz was premiered at the Opéra in 1873. See Dean, "An Unfinished Opera by Bizet."

[15] Bizet, Letter to Charles Gounod, Oct. 13, 1872, quoted in Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 136 ("Vous avez été le commencement de ma vie d'artiste. Je résulte de vous. Vous êtes la cause et je suis la conséquence").

[16] In an undated letter to Paul Lacombe, written probably in 1868, Bizet wrote that Gounod's latest religious and liturgical compositions were "distressing" (*navrantes*). Bizet, Letter to Paul Lacombe, n.d. [1868?], in *Lettres*, 235.



EXAMPLE 3.5. Thomas, *Hamlet* (1868), Act I, Duo

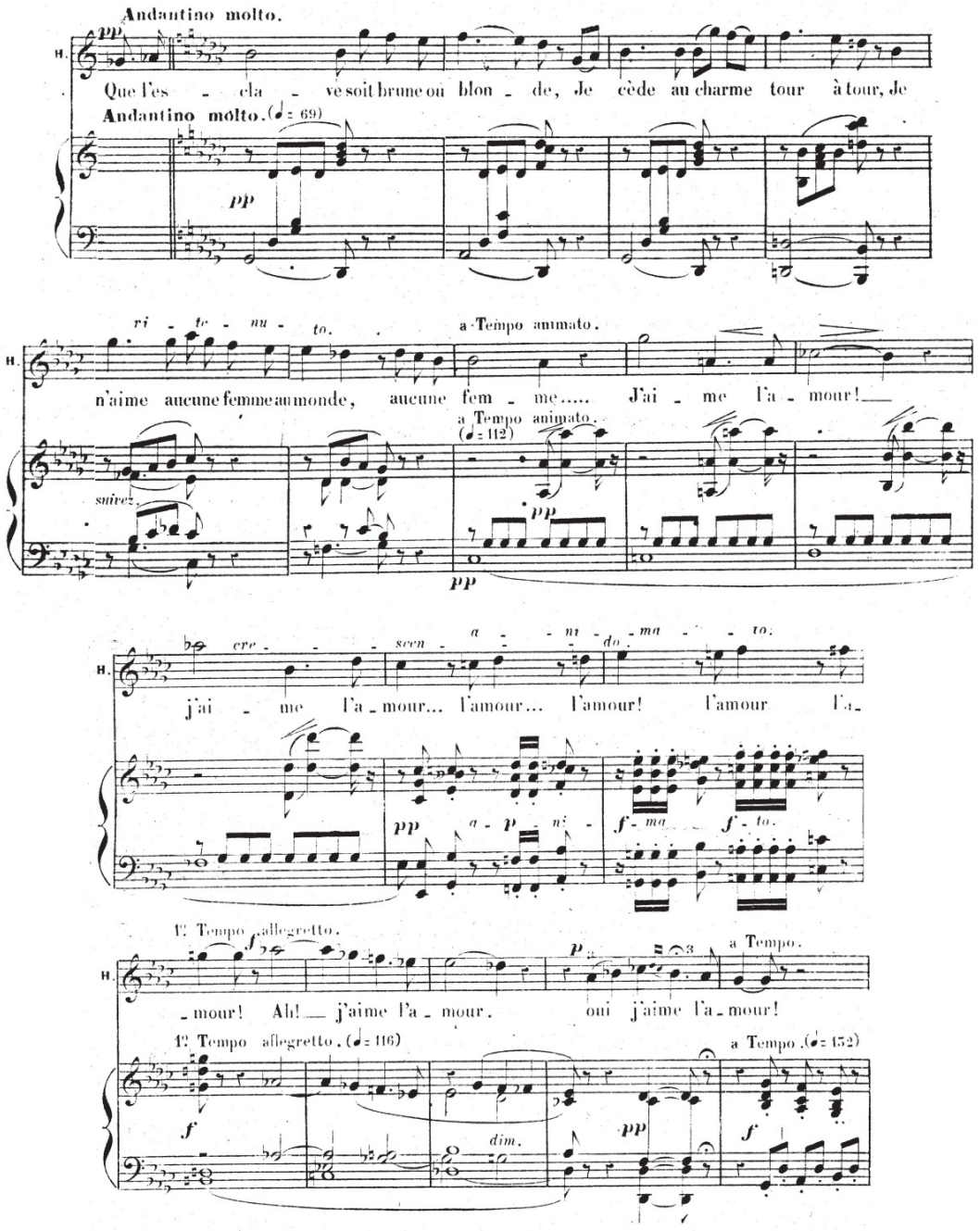
The verses to Ex. 3.5 are based on Shakespeare's lines "Doubt thou the stars are fire; | Doubt that the sun doth move" (*Hamlet*, Act II/ii):

D**ou**te de la lum**iè**re	(1,6)
D**ou**te du sol**ei**l et du j**ou**r,	(1,5,8)
D**ou**te des c**ieu**x et de la t**e**rre,	(1,4,8)
Mais ne d**ou**te jam**ai**s, || jam**ai**s de mon am**ou**r!	(3,6,8,12)

Like Gounod in *Roméo et Juliette* (Ex. 2.6), a Shakespearean opera that is almost an exact contemporary, Thomas is faithful to the fluid prosodic rhythms of the text in his musical setting of this lyrical number, with the strong first syllable in the repeated word "doute" alternating with the line-ending tonic accents on the downbeats of successive measures, and with secondary accents on words such as "soleil," "cieux," and "jamais" occupying the secondarily strong third beats within measures. Thomas also uses harmony and accompaniment to assist in creating the effect of a longer melodic line. The orchestra's repetition of the dotted march-like figure in the first six measures of the vocal line creates a sense of rhythmic motion. The harmonization of the end of the second verse with a secondary dominant (V of C minor, or V/ii, on the word "jour") propels the melody forward onto the beginning of the next verse. Another secondary dominant in the orchestra (V of F major, or V/V) after the completion of the third verse similarly bridges the gap between the third and fourth verses. Finally, the end of the quatrain is harmonized the first time around with an unstable chord (dominant in second inversion), resulting in a "one more time" repetition of the line and the extension of the phrase by two additional measures.

Bizet uses some similar techniques of phrase expansion in Ex. 3.6, which is taken from *Djamileh* (1872), the next opera he completed after coming into contact with *Hamlet.* In this number, Haroun, who is in the habit of acquiring a new slave girl as a lover (and discarding the old one) every month, outlines his philosophy of love to his servant Splendiano in a refrain that concludes "I do not love any woman, I love love":

Que l'escl**a**ve soit br**u**ne ou bl**o**nde,	(3,6,8)
Je c**è**de au ch**a**rme tour à t**ou**r	(2,4,8)
Je n'aime auc**u**ne f**e**mme au m**o**nde,	(4,6,8)
J'a**i**me l'am**ou**r!	(1,4)



EXAMPLE 3.6. Bizet, *Djamileh* (1872), Duo et Couplets

Bizet keeps the figure in the orchestral accompaniment for the first six measures of the vocal line in Ex. 3.6, just as Thomas did in Ex. 3.5. Also as in Ex. 3.5, the end of the second verse of Ex. 3.6 (the fourth measure) is harmonized with a secondary dominant (V/vi) that

carries the phrase forward. Finally, Bizet follows Thomas's example by repeating text ("aucune femme" and "J'aime l'amour") to extend the phrase significantly beyond the eight-measure model that might have been expected.

In this section, we have traced the development of Bizet's melodic style in lyrical numbers from each of the operas that he completed before *Carmen*.[17] As we have seen, Bizet was influenced at various points in his career by both the regular four-square Italian style of Rossini and the more fluid French lyrical style of Gounod and Thomas. In each of the lyrical examples discussed in this section, Bizet was meticulous about observing prosodic accents in the text. We shall now turn to some examples of diegetic numbers in which that practice was often not followed.

3.2 Diegetic Numbers in Bizet's Works Before *Carmen*

In his article on Bizet in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Hugh Macdonald states that "awkward declamation . . . never troubled [Bizet] as it did Saint-Saëns or Massenet," and that Bizet "attached more importance to the sentiment and color of words than to their metrical properties."[18] It is however simply not true that Bizet was "never troubled" by bad declamation. A letter to Galabert, for instance, found Bizet reproaching his student for prosodic mistakes in an aria.[19] In addition, Louis Gallet, the librettist of *Djamileh*, later attested to the fact that Bizet often composed melodies with specific prosodic rhythms in mind, making up his own

[17] In addition to the operas covered in this section, Bizet also completed a few operettas and a substantial part of an opera, *Ivan IV*, which was not performed until 1946.
[18] Hugh Macdonald, "Bizet, Georges," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2d ed.
[19] Bizet, Letter to Edmond Galabert, Aug. 1868, in *Lettres*, 173. ("Votre air renferme de fort bonnes choses. Je vous reprocherai: 1^{o} La prosodie du commencement").

model or mock-up verses that could later be altered or refined by a librettist. Bizet's correspondence with Gallet in 1873 concerning *Don Rodrigue,* a project for the Opéra that was never completed, contains numerous references to Bizet's use of these mock-up verses, which were familiarly called *monstres* ("monsters"). With respect to a prayer to be sung by Don Rodrigue, for instance, Bizet wrote that he had been unable to find a melody to the verses provided by Gallet and had instead composed a melody to his own *monstre*:

> In effect, the first verses of your prayer are human, love plays too great a role in it, and I searched for two days without finding anything — I have therefore abandoned your text and I have composed on the *monstre* that follows a *real prayer* that quite satisfies me — I underline for you using [dashes] — — — the rhythm that is imperative.[20]

Bizet then provides the alexandrines that he composed as a *monstre,* using dashes to indicate caesuras and points of rest, i.e., prosodic accents:

> Dieu clément — Ah! pardonne — à la dernière plainte —
> De celui — qui, demain, — paraîtra devant toi —
> Oui, je veux — obéir — à ta volonté sainte —
> Et mourir — en chantant — ta louange et ta loi.[21]

The meticulous notation of all prosodic accents in Bizet's *monstre* (along the lines of the annotated texts in the present study), as well as Bizet's statement to Gallet that "the rhythm is imperative," demonstrates the importance that Bizet assigned to prosodic rhythms in melody and text setting.[22] It also indicates that where necessary, Bizet was not above wresting control of the

[20] Gallet, *Notes d'un librettiste*, 78 ("En effet, les premiers vers de votre prière sont humains, l'amour y joue un trop grand rôle et j'ai cherché deux jours sans rien trouver — j'ai alors abandonné votre texte et j'ai fait sur le monstre qui suit une *vraie prière* qui me satisfait assez — Je vous souligne par des — — — le rythme qui est impérieux").
[21] Ibid.
[22] Bizet also wrote a *monstre* for another aria for Don Rodrigue with accents and caesuras similarly underlined, noting to Gallet once again that "my rhythm is imperative, and a long syllable [i.e., accent] is indispensable on the third foot [i.e., sixth syllable]." Bizet, Letter to

text from the librettist: a comparison of the *monstre* with the final text for the number as reflected in the manuscript for *Don Rodrigue* shows that Gallet only made minimal alterations to Bizet's original text.

As the examples by Bizet in Section 3.1 indicate, Bizet knew exactly how to compose melodies that faithfully reflected prosodic rhythms. Following French operatic tradition, however, he also saw fit at times to depart from the principles of just declamation. Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, I suggest that Bizet often intentionally departed from naturalistic text setting in numbers that are indicative of diegetic performances.[23]

Ex. 3.7, from Act II of *La jolie fille de Perth*, is a drinking song, one of the most popular diegetic types in opera. The number is sung by the Duke of Rothesay and a group of fellow revellers on the eve of the Carnival and is a witty song with verses that alternate between seven- and six-syllable lines:

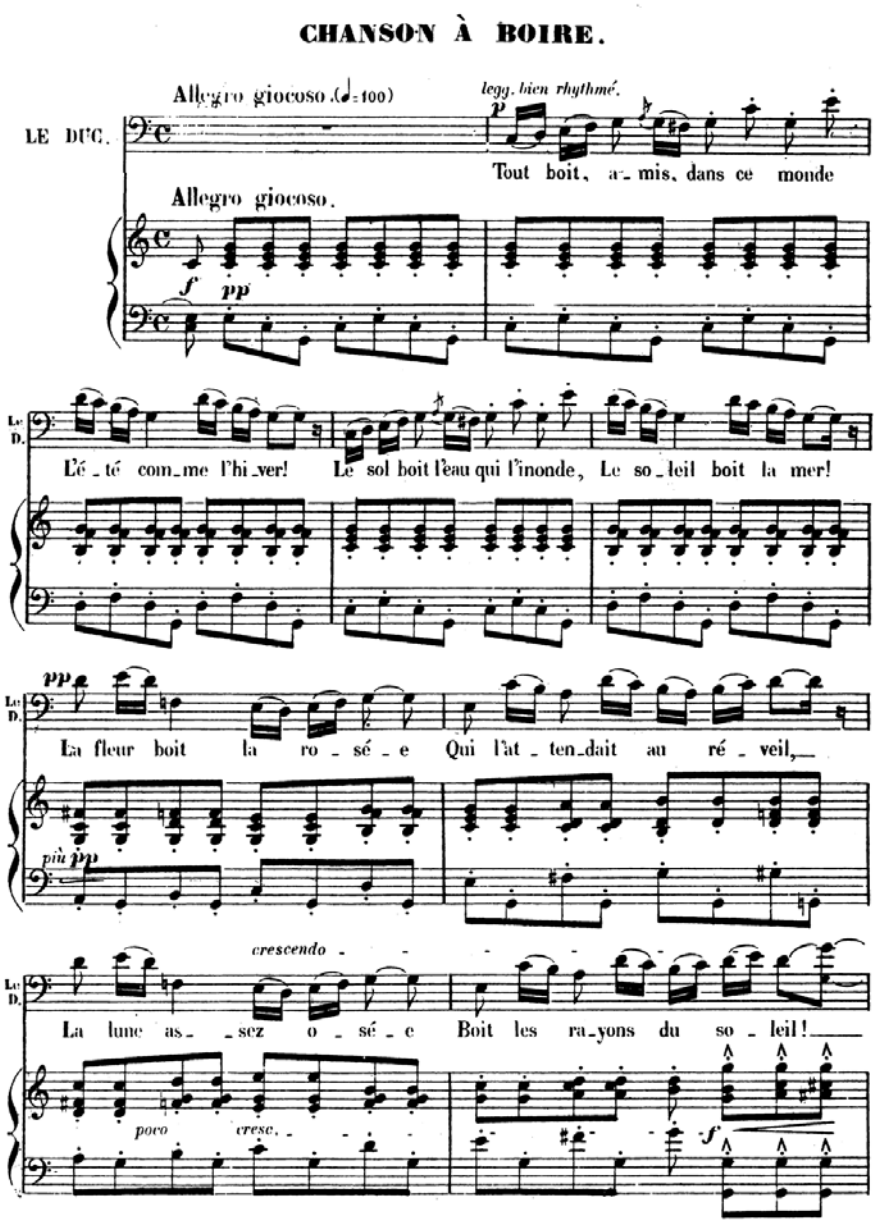
Tout bo**i**t, am**i**s, dans ce m**o**nde	(2,4,7)
L'ét**é** comme l'hiv**e**r!	(2,6)
Le s**o**l boit l'**eau** qui l'in**o**nde	(2,4,7)
Le sol**ei**l boit la m**e**r!	(3,6)

In the second quatrain, the pattern is reversed, with the six-syllable line coming first:

La fl**eu**r boit la ros**é**e	(2,6)
Qui l'attend**ai**t au rév**ei**l,	(4,7)
La l**u**ne assez os**é**e	(2,6)
Boit les ray**o**ns du sol**ei**l!	(4,7)

Louis Gallet, quoted in Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 626 ("Mon rythme est impérieux, et la longue est indispensable sur le troisième pied").

[23] Like other French composers, Bizet was sensitive to the distinction between non-diegetic and diegetic numbers. Criticizing a passage in the opera being composed by Galabert, Bizet noted that Galabert had missed the dramatic nuance of the passage and made a lyrical moment into a "barcarolle." Bizet, Letter to Edmond Galabert, Feb. 1869, in *Études de composition*, 85.

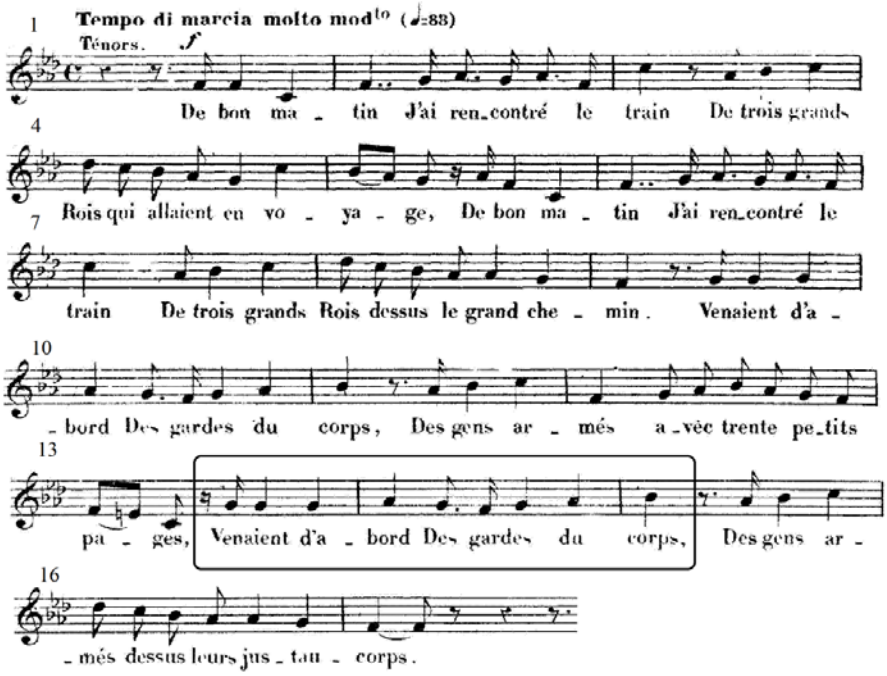


EXAMPLE 3.7. Bizet, *La jolie fille de Perth* (1867), Act II, Chanson à boire

Bizet shows considerable ingenuity in setting these verses. If the principles of Benlœw were applied mechanically to the verses, the phrases would alternate between downbeat openings (for the seven-syllable lines) and upbeat openings (for the six-syllable lines). Bizet avoids this problem by setting the six-syllable lines as compound lines of 3+3 syllables, essentially inserting

a caesura after the third syllable. This allows all of the verses to start on a downbeat and preserves the rhythmic drive of the number. As with other diegetic numbers that we have examined, Bizet's method of scanning the text creates some acute misaccentuations, with the artificially inserted caesura in the 3+3 groupings completely breaking up the sense of the words in "L'**é**té c**o**m- || -m**e** l'hiv**e**r" and "L**a** lune **a**s- || -s**e**z os**é**e."

Another example of diegetic text setting can be found in Ex. 3.8, the "March of the Kings" from Bizet's incidental music for Alphonse Daudet's play *L'arlésienne*.



EXAMPLE 3.8. Bizet, Incidental Music to Daudet's *L'arlésienne* (1872), No. 23, Chœur (tenor line only)

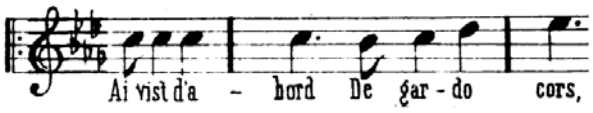
The number is sung to depict a festival celebration offstage. It is a French version of a Provençal carol, the words to which had themselves been adapted to an existing march tune at

some point in the eighteenth century.[24] The first six verses of Ex. 3.8 (up to the downbeat of m. 9) all feature an even number of syllables (four, six, or ten). As might be expected from our discussion of diegetic numbers, the even-numbered syllables are without exception given metrically stronger positions than the odd-numbered syllables. The next section of the number features an alternation between even- and odd-numbered lines:

Ven**ai**ent d'ab**o**rd	(2,4)
Des g**a**rdes du c**o**rps,	(2,5)
Des gens arm**é**s || avec tr**e**nte petits p**a**ges,	(4,7,11)
Ven**ai**ent d'ab**o**rd	(2,4)
Des g**a**rdes du c**o**rps,	(2,5)
Des gens arm**é**s || dess**u**s leurs justauc**o**rps.	(4,6,10)

Let us examine Bizet's treatment of the odd-numbered lines. The single eleven-syllable line is broken up by the caesura into units of 4+7 syllables, with the hemistichs treated essentially as separate units. As a result, the even-numbered syllables are emphasized in the four-syllable first hemistich ("Des g**e**ns arm**é**s"), while the odd-numbered syllables are emphasized in the seven-syllable second hemistich ("**a**vec tr**e**nte p**e**tits p**a**ges").

The alternate odd-numbered syllables are also emphasized in the five-syllable line "Des gardes du corps." This leads to an especially awkward metrical emphasis on the *e muet* in the word "gard**e**s," which falls on the third syllable of the line (see the third beat of mm. 10 and 14 in Ex. 3.8). The analogous line is set differently in Bizet's Provençal source (Ex. 3.9). In Ex. 3.9, the lines "Ai vist d'abord | De gardo cors" (in the Occitan language of Provence) both have four syllables and are set to the same rhythm (compare Ex. 3.9 to the circled measures in Ex. 3.8).



EXAMPLE 3.9. "Marcho dei Rèi," from Vidal, *Lou tambourin* (1864)

[24] See Clamon, "Bizet et le folklore provençal."

In adapting his source material to accommodate the French words, Bizet actually altered the melody to create a misaccentuation where none had existed before. The example illustrates that Bizet, like other French composers, often took an anti-naturalistic approach to text setting in diegetic numbers.

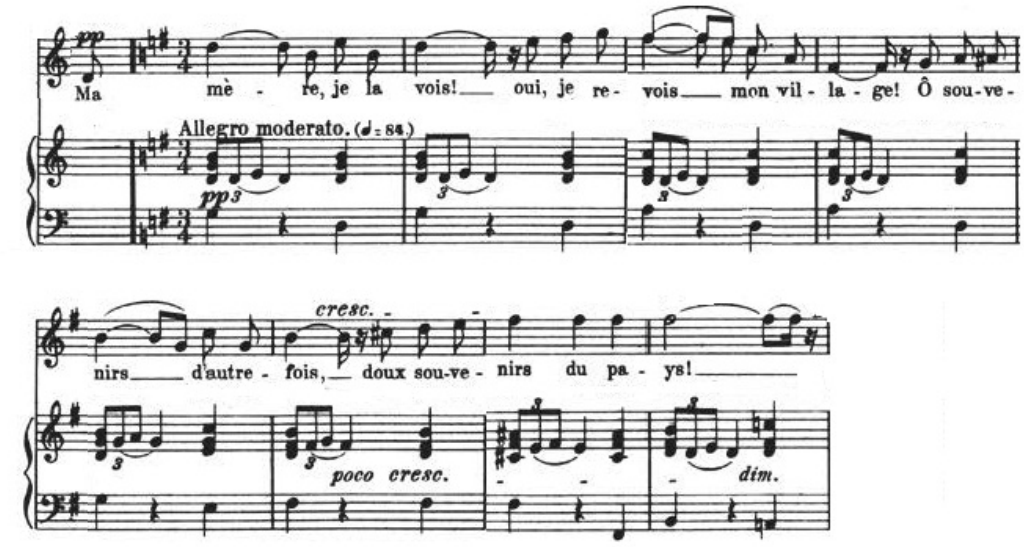
3.3 Modes of Melodic Discourse in *Carmen*

We have dwelled at length on the contrast between the lyrical and diegetic styles of melody and text setting (as summarized in Table 2.1) because an understanding of that contrast is crucial to an understanding of Bizet's music for *Carmen*. In *Carmen*, the interaction and juxtaposition of different melodic and text-setting styles play a large part in creating what Herbert Lindenberger has called a "multiplicity of discourses" within a single work.[25] At the simplest level, one may choose to assign these different styles of melodic discourse to different characters in the drama. Susan McClary, for instance, has pointed out that "[w]ith rare exceptions, Carmen sings what are to be construed – even within the terms of the opera itself – as cabaret song-and-dance numbers, not 'real' utterances," while Don José "bears the Germanic burden of Bizet's split personality," singing in "long, impassioned melodies that avoid regular phrasing and cadences."[26]

[25] Lindenberger, *Opera: The Extravagant Art*, 91. Lindenberger draws an analogy between the multiplicity of discourses that he finds to be characteristic of opera and the "polyphonic" multiplicity of meanings that Mikhail Bakhtin found in the novels of Dostoevsky. Ibid. Susan McClary similarly draws on Bakhtin's "dialogic" models of criticism in her discussion of "the musical languages of Carmen." McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 44–61.

[26] McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen*," 123 and 124. The reference to the "Germanic burden of Bizet's split personality" is a reference to Bizet's 1867 letter to Paul Lacombe ("I am German by conviction, heart and soul"), quoted above on page 76.

While McClary calls Don José "a creature of high German style,"[27] some of Don José's music, for instance in the Act I duet with Micaëla, may be traced back to the Italian and French lyrical influences that informed Bizet's earlier work. Let us consider two examples from this duet. Don José's first true melodic phrase in the entire opera is shown in Ex. 3.10.



EXAMPLE 3.10. Bizet, *Carmen* (1875), Act I, Duo, mm. 83–90

Prompted by Micaëla's delivery of a letter from his mother, Don José recalls his mother and his life before joining the military:

> Ma m**è**re, je la v**oi**s, || je rev**oi**s mon vill**a**ge . . . (2,6,9,12)
> Souven**i**rs d'autref**oi**s, || souven**i**rs du pa**y**s! (3,6,9,12)

Ex. 3.10 is set to two alexandrines. When each alexandrine is broken up further into six-syllable hemistichs, the accentual patterns of the verses in Ex. 3.10 bear a marked similarity to those for Nadir's romance from *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Ex. 3.2), and indeed to those for Ernesto's

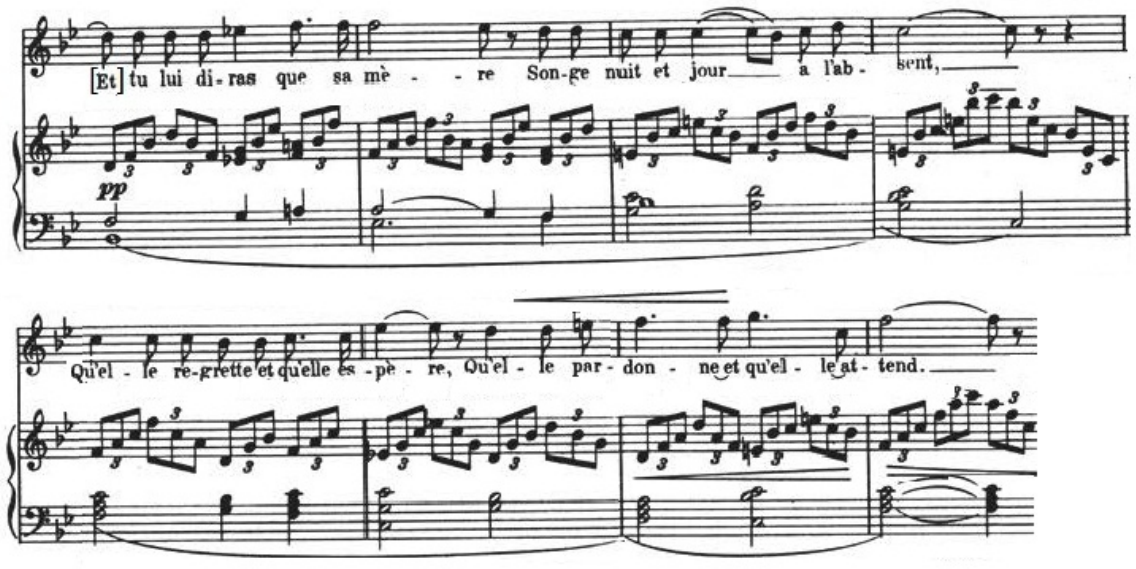
[27] Ibid., 125. It is not easy to decipher from McClary's writings whether her characterization of Don José's music as "Germanic" reflects her own point of view or one that she attributes to Bizet and/or nineteenth-century audiences. Elsewhere, for example, she writes that "[n]o one would mistake [Don José's] music for German, of course, but he carries the burden of what was understood as German influence in the opera." McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 50.

cavatina from *Don Procopio* (Ex. 3.1). Bizet's melodic strategy for all three numbers is identical: syllables carrying prosodic accents are placed on downbeats, while weak syllables are set as upbeats leading to the next measure. Don José's melodies elsewhere in the opera may tend to "avoid regular phrasing and cadences" (to use the words of McClary). However, Ex. 3.10 could not be more regular and foursquare.

Ex. 3.11 is from the same number, and is sung first by Micaëla and then repeated later by Don José. In Ex. 3.11, Micaëla quotes the words of Don José's mother asking her to deliver to him a message of remembrance, regret, hope, and forgiveness:

Et tu lui dir**a**s que sa m**è**re	(5,8)
Songe n**ui**t et j**ou**r à l'abs**e**nt,	(3,5,8)
Qu'elle regr**e**tte et qu'elle esp**è**re,	(4,8)
Qu'elle pard**o**nne et qu'elle att**e**nd . . .	(4,8)

Ex. 3.11 has a longer-spanned melodic line than Ex. 3.10, reflecting the French influence of Gounod and Thomas on Bizet. Like Ex. 3.5 and 3.6, which were similarly spun-out melodies, the ending of the second verse in Ex. 3.11 is harmonized with a secondary dominant (V/V). The



EXAMPLE 3.11. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Duo, mm. 58–65

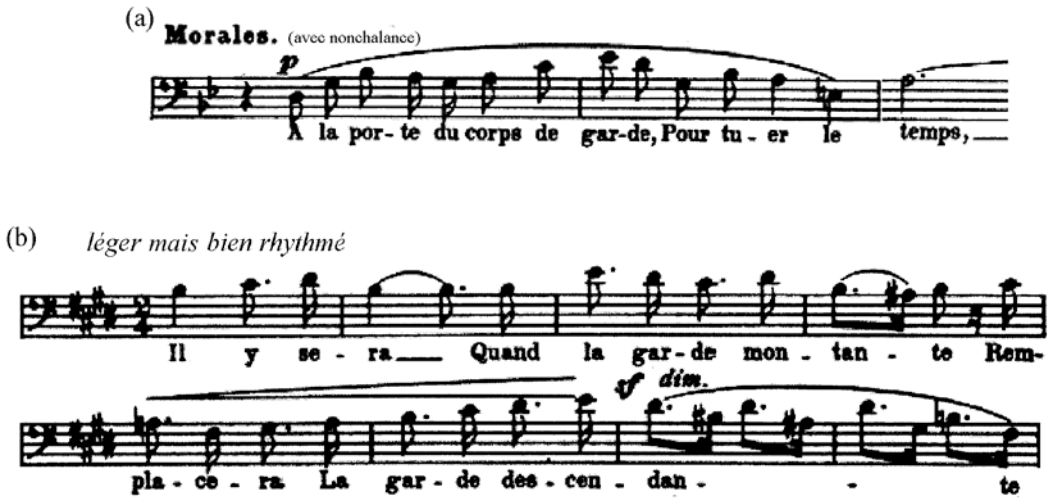
melody is more fluid and less regular. For example, the third and fourth verses, which feature identical prosodic accents, are nevertheless set to different rhythms, and the two verses begin in different parts of the measure.

Some commentators have criticized the Don José-Micaëla duet for what they have viewed as its reactionary melodic style. Vincent d'Indy found the duet to be "frankly boring," while another composer, Raoul Laparra, criticized the music that Bizet wrote for Micaëla throughout the opera to be "a kind of Rossino-Gounodesque ragout."[28] Even Nietzsche, who admired *Carmen* greatly, found the Act I duet not to his taste: "too sentimental, too *Tannhäuser*-like."[29] There may, however, be a valid dramatic reason for the seemingly backward melodic language of the duet. As Hervé Lacombe has suggested, the moral choices that face Don José in *Carmen* (good son vs. bad son, soldier vs. outlaw, mother/Micaëla vs. Carmen) can be mapped onto the stylistic choices that faced Bizet in the opera's composition (conservative vs. reforming, learned vs. popular, serious vs. entertaining).[30] Viewed in this light, since Ex. 3.10 and 3.11 both directly refer to Don José's mother and to his previous life, Bizet's use of the lyrical melodic styles that he employed in *his* own previous (artistic) life is actually quite fitting. Since Micaëla acts as a messenger for Don José's absent mother, it is fitting that the lyrical style associated with the mother should be extended to Micaëla as well. Micaëla's adoption of this lyrical melodic style also points up her limitations as a seductress. Faced with a valuable opportunity to attract Don José's amorous attentions, she can only summon up a "motherly" kiss ("Un baiser de ma mère! | Un baiser pour son fils!") and the sentimental melodic stylings associated with José's

[28] D'Indy, *Cours de composition musical*, Vol. 3, 195 ("Le duo entre Micaëla et Don José est franchement ennuyeux"); Laparra, *Bizet et l'Espagne*, 24 ("ce role de . . . Micaëla ou Bizet . . . va s'amuser à une sorte de ragout Rossino-Gounodesque").
[29] Nietzsche, *Friedrich Nietzsches Randglossen zu Bizets Carmen*, 36 ("Das Duett ist einen Grad unter meinen Geschmack – zu sentimental, zu tannhäuserhaft").
[30] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 726.

mother. Not surprisingly, Micaëla's attempts at seduction turn out to be no match when set against Carmen's.

If the "Rossino-Gounodesque" lyrical style of Ex. 3.10 and 3.11, with its naturalistic speech rhythms, represents one principal mode of melodic discourse in *Carmen*, the diegetic style of what McClary calls the "song-and-dance number" represents the other. The juxtaposition of these styles is set up at the beginning of the opera. Ex. 3.12 contains two examples from the opening number in Act I of *Carmen* and illustrates Bizet's blending of two different types of text setting to illustrate different dramatic situations within the same scene.



EXAMPLE 3.12. Bizet, *Carmen,* Act I, Scène et chœur (two phrases sung by Moralès): (a) mm. 33–35; (b) mm. 93–100

In this opening scene, the sergeant Moralès and his fellow soldiers are casually watching the crowds go by. Ex. 3.12a is Moralès's first line in the opera, indeed it is the first solo line in the entire opera. The line merely describes what the character is doing, namely, killing time at the guardhouse by watching the passers-by:

À la p**o**rte du c**o**rps de g**a**rde,	(3,6,8)
Pour tu**e**r le t**e**mps . . .	(3,5)

Moralès is instructed to deliver the line with nonchalance, and the vocal line is reasonably reflective of naturalistic speech rhythms. Each of the internal accents in the text falls in a metrically strong position (either beat 1 or beat 3) in Bizet's setting. To recall Grétry's formulation from the discussion of *Richard Cœur-de-lion* in the previous chapter, Ex. 3.12a is an example of "singing to speak."

Later in the same number, Moralès flirts with Micaëla in Ex. 3.12b, while informing her that Don José will be arriving with the new guard:

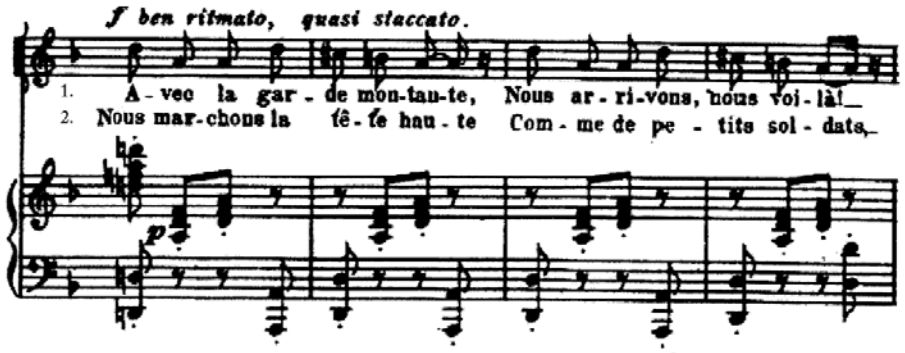
> Il y ser**a**, || quand la g**a**rde mont**a**nte (4,7,10)
> Remplacer**a** || la g**a**rde descend**a**nte. (4,6,10)

Ex. 3.12b combines the dotted rhythms of the military topic with the alternating accentual patterns that are associated with the diegetic style, or "singing to sing." Thus, in each of the ten-syllable lines, the even-numbered syllables are metrically emphasized. Since the word "garde" occupies syllables 7 and 8 in the first line, it is the *e muet* at the end of the word (syllable 8) that ends up being misaccentuated: Moralès sings "l**a** gard**e** mont**a**nte." In contrast, the same word "garde" occupies syllables 6 and 7 in the second line, and the word is thus correctly accented on the first syllable (syllable 6): "la g**a**rde d**e**scend**a**nte." Together, these two lines provide a good snapshot of the vagaries of the diegetic style of text setting.

Ex. 3.12b has a very similar rhythmic profile to "Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat," the aria sung by Georges in Boieldieu's *La dame blanche* (Ex. 2.11). In both cases, the composer uses the diegetic style of text setting in what Raymond Monelle calls a "toy-soldier march" to signify a "performance" by a strutting, posturing soldier.[31] That kind of "toy-soldier" performance is in

[31] Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 175–76. Ironically, Bizet despised *La dame blanche*, calling it "an opera that is detestable, without talent, without idea, without wit, without melodic invention, without anything in the world. It is stupid, stupid, stupid!" Bizet, Letter to Léonie Halévy [widow of the composer of *La juive* and Bizet's mother-in-law], [summer] 1871, in *Lettres*, 214

turn parodied by the street urchins in their chorus from Act I of *Carmen.* Ex. 3.13 is a truncated excerpt from this familiar children's chorus.



EXAMPLE 3.13. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Chœur des gamins, mm. 77–80 and 85–88

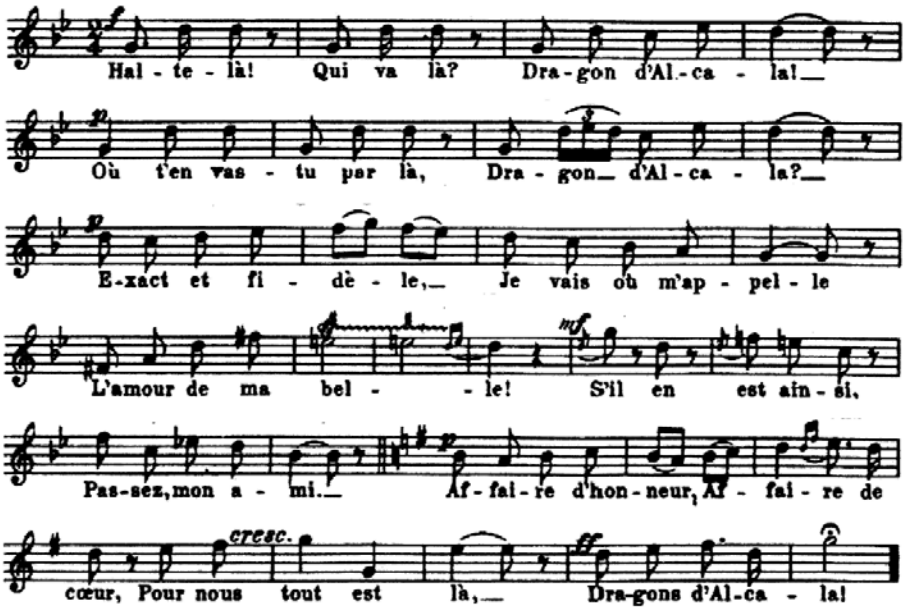
Like the diegetic numbers we have previously examined, the chorus features simplified rhythms and regular accentuation. The verses that are set in Ex. 3.13 actually imply different accentual rhythms:

Av**e**c la g**a**rde mont**an**te,	(2,4,7)
Nous arriv**on**s, nous voil**à**! . . .	(4,7)
Nous march**on**s la t**ê**te h**au**te	(3,5,7)
C**o**mme de pet**i**ts sold**a**ts . . .	(1,5,7)

In Bizet's setting of this diegetic number, however, the march rhythm of the melody homogenizes the accents in the two verses, with the first verse sounding misaccentuated as a result: we get in Bizet's setting "**a**vec l**a** gard**e** mont**a**nte," with a wrongly emphasized *e muet* in the word gard**e** (compare a similar misaccentuation of the same word in two other marches, Ex. 3.8 and Ex. 3.12b).

("C'est un opéra détestable, sans talent, sans idée, sans esprit, sans invention mélodique, sans quoi que ce soit au monde. C'est bête, bête, bête! . . ."). In this letter, Bizet is recounting a conversation he had with Halévy himself.

Even though he is mostly associated with lyrical melody, Don José also gets to perform a diegetic regimental song. The offstage *chanson* in Act II (Ex. 3.14) heralds his arrival at Lillas Pastia's tavern, following his release from prison.



EXAMPLE 3.14. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Chanson, mm. 29–56

As a diegetic song, Ex. 3.14 has a different character from the lyrical music for Don José that we examined above. Since all of the lines in the *chanson* have an odd number of syllables (three, five, or seven), the odd-numbered syllables are emphasized almost throughout. Thus, at the key change to G major, there is a misaccentuation of the *e muet* in the line "**A**ffair**e** d'honn**eu**r." As if to compensate, the prosodic rhythm is accurately observed in the next line "Aff**ai**re de c**œu**r."

As we have seen in this section, Bizet used different styles of melodic discourse in *Carmen* to characterize the music of the principal character of Don José all the way down to the music of a minor character like Moralès. As Susan McClary has noted, however, the character

with the highest degree of "discursive perversity" in the opera is Carmen herself, and it is to her music that we now turn.[32]

3.4 Rhythm and Melody in the Music of Carmen

Bizet's juxtaposition of lyrical and diegetic styles in *Carmen* was not innovative in itself. As we have seen, composers had juxtaposed these same styles from the earliest days of French opera through to the second half of the nineteenth century. Carl Dahlhaus has argued, however, that *Carmen* represented a significant departure from nineteenth-century French lyric drama (as represented primarily by Gounod) in its inversion of roles between the lyrical and the diegetic (or, to use Dahlhaus's term, the "picturesque"):

> [C]ompared with the tradition of the *drame lyrique* (the foil for Bizet's operatic realism), *Carmen* inverts the relation between the lyrical and the picturesque. With Gounod and Massenet, genre painting, fleshed out musically with local color, is merely an additive to the main plot, which unfolds in lyrical-cantabile dialogues and monologues. With Bizet, on the other hand, the lyrical element, borne by an auxiliary figure in the drama, Micaëla, is interpolated into a plot whose picturesque side (the Ibero-Gypsy milieu) is not incidental to the drama but part of its essence. The Habanera and the Seguidilla, far from being mere "inserts" (as they would be in a *drame lyrique*), are exactly those moments where music motivates the plot. In sum, Bizet's "realism" consists historically in a shift of emphasis: a peripheral element (musical genre painting) became central, and a central element (lyrical dialogue and monologue) became peripheral.[33]

Dahlhaus perhaps overstates the "peripheral" quality of diegetic numbers in earlier operas: as discussed above in Chapter 2, diegetic numbers (in *Richard Cœur-de-lion* and *Fra Diavolo*, for example) often served a dramatic function that went beyond the mere provision of local color.

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[32] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 57.
[33] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 281.

However, the point that Bizet's music for Carmen, the principal character, generally lacks the lyricism accorded by Gounod to Marguerite, or by Thomas to Mignon, for example, is well taken.[34]

The melodies of Carmen's most famous solo numbers (the Habanera, the Séguedille, the *Chanson bohème*), all of which are diegetic performances, are driven not by lyricism but by rhythm, in particular dance rhythms. Dance was central to French discourse about Spain in the nineteenth century. James Parakilas has noted that one of the enduring Spanish character types in nineteenth-century France was that of "the Spanish dancer, above all the female Spanish dancer, evoked by music that plays on the rhythm of one or another of the famous Spanish dance types."[35]

The libretto to *Carmen* specifically mentions dancing in the *Chanson bohème* that opens Act II, with a stage instruction for the female gypsies to dance during the refrain ("Tra la la la").[36] The dance is accompanied by a diegetic performance of an actual song sung by Carmen and heard as music by the characters on stage. Of all the numbers in *Carmen*, the *Chanson bohème* comes closest to the "picturesque" depiction of local color contemplated by Dahlhaus. The orchestral introduction establishes an ostinato rhythm of continuous eighth notes in the pizzicato strings that is picked up in Carmen's melody and continued throughout the number, as illustrated in Ex. 3.15, which is taken from the third strophe of the *Chanson bohème*.

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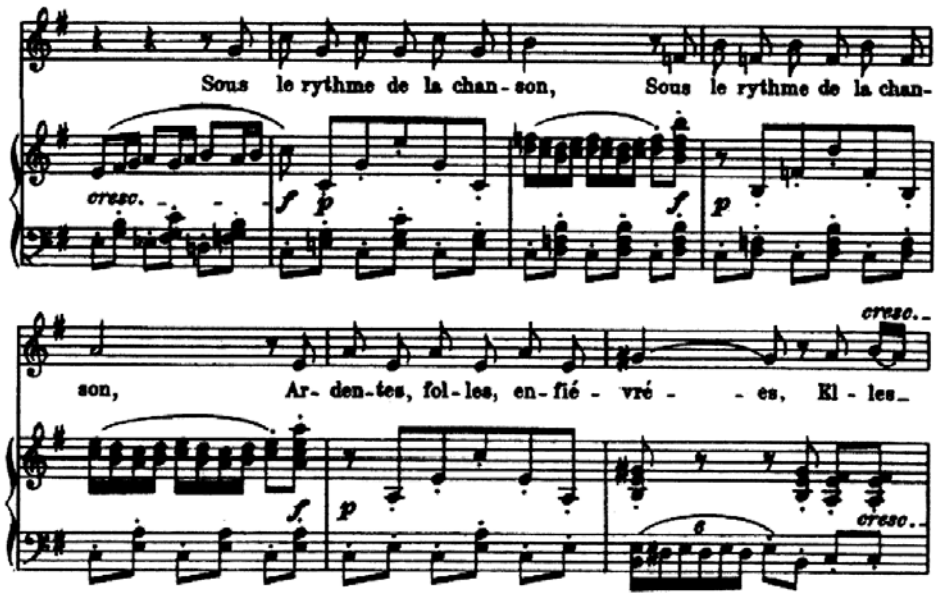
[34] Thomas's *Mignon* (1866) was one of the Opéra-Comique's greatest successes, reaching its thousandth performance there in 1894. The role of Mignon was created by Célestine Galli-Marié, who would also create the role of Carmen in 1875.

[35] Parakilas, "How Spain Got a Soul," 141. For other discussions of the construction of Spain in nineteenth-century France, see Lacombe, "L'Espagne à l'Opéra-Comique avant *Carmen*," and Murphy, "*Carmen*: *Couleur Locale* or the Real Thing?".

[36] Meilhac and Halévy, *Carmen*, 419 ("Sur ce refrain, les bohémiennes dansent").



EXAMPLE 3.15. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Chanson bohème, mm. 138–144

In a reflexive move, Carmen describes in the past tense a scene that is simultaneously unfolding on stage in front of her, a scene in which the gypsy women are carried away by the rhythm of the song (and dance), as if by a whirlwind:

Sous le r**y**thme de la chans**o**n,	(3,8)
Ard**e**ntes, f**o**lles, enfiévr**é**es,	(2,4,8)
Elles se laiss**ai**ent, enivr**é**es,	(5,8)
Emport**e**r par le tourbill**o**n!	(3,8)

The obsessive eighth-note rhythm and regular accentuation of even-numbered syllables in the diegetic melody lead to the metrical emphasis of a succession of weak syllables in the line "sous l**e** rythm**e** de l**a** chans**o**n." The rhythm actually fits the next line in the libretto — "ard**e**ntes, f**o**lles, enfi**é**vr**é**es" — rather well, but as we have seen before, the differences in the internal prosodic rhythms of the lines are smoothed over and homogenized by the rhythm of the song. The first line from Ex. 3.15 — "sous le rythme de la chanson" ("under the rhythm of the song") — perfectly encapsulates the diegetic style of melody in French opera, in which proper

versification often succumbs to the hypnotic influence of the regular and repetitive rhythms of diegetic song. In the *Chanson bohème,* it is only when Carmen reaches the climactic cadence a few measures after Ex. 3.15, on the words "emport**e**r par le t**ou**rbill**o**n," that her declamation finally becomes more naturalistic.

Carmen's solo numbers from Act I, the Habanera and the Séguedille, are more explicitly based on Spanish-associated dance rhythms.[37] The Habanera, Carmen's entrance number, is sung in response to her crowd of admirers, but directed in fact to the silent Don José, who is doing his best to ignore her. As acknowledged in the score, the melody for the Habanera is based on the song "El arreglito" by Sebastián de Iradier (or Yradier) (1809–1865), a Spanish composer who found favor in Second-Empire Paris as the singing teacher of the Spanish-born Empress Eugénie.[38] Although the melody for the Habanera was borrowed, Bizet compensated for that by providing most of the verses for the number himself. In particular, he instructed his librettist Ludovic Halévy not to make any changes to the verses for the refrain and the second

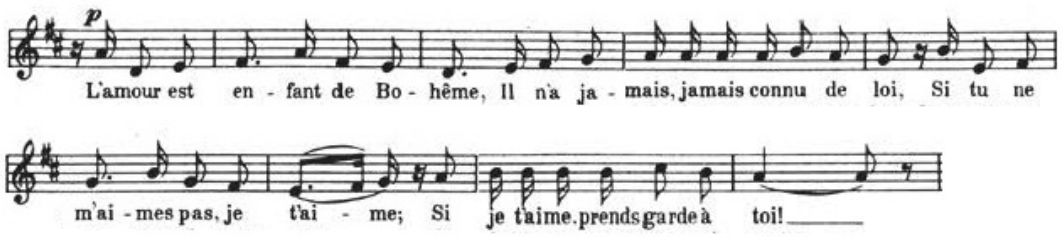
[37] Whether these rhythms are "authentically" Spanish is an issue that goes beyond the scope of this study. In any event, as Kerry Murphy notes, "the whole notion of what represented the 'real Spain' was unclear for the French [in the nineteenth century] and indeed for the Spanish themselves." Murphy, "*Carmen*: *Couleur Locale* or the Real Thing?," 306. For a discussion of the reception of *Carmen* at the opera's first staging in Madrid, see Kertesz and Christoforidis, "Confronting *Carmen* Beyond the Pyrenees."

[38] Notwithstanding Iradier's impeccable establishment credentials, his championship by established singers like Adelina Patti and Pauline Viardot, and the popularity of his music in middle-class salons, Susan McClary seizes on the mere fact that Iradier's music was also performed by less reputable performers in *café-concerts* to assert that the source for the Habanera "brings with it associations not with art music, but with the popular music of the Parisian cabarets: it belongs to a social milieu quite antithetical to that of the Opéra-Comique." McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 52. I find McClary's conclusion to be unwarranted and unconvincing. Ralph Locke has similarly concluded in a recent article that "Spanish music was in no way as disreputable as McClary's presentation might lead one to think." Locke, "Spanish Local Color in Bizet's *Carmen*," 353–55.

strophe.[39] The final version of the refrain is in fact very close to the version Bizet initially sent to Halévy:[40]

L'am**ou**r est enf**a**nt de Bohè**m**e,	(2,5,8)
Il n'a jam**ai**s connu de l**oi**,	(4,8)
Si tu ne m'**ai**mes p**a**s, je t'a**i**me;	(4,6,8)
Si je t'**ai**me, prends g**a**rde à t**oi**!	(3,6,8)

As discussed above in this chapter, Bizet was always meticulous about prosodic rhythm in the verses and *monstres* that he provided to his librettists.[41] However, the first line of the refrain for the Habanera contains what Susan Youens has called a "classic example" of a "mistreated tonic accent," namely the metrical emphasis on the first syllable of the word "enfant" in the line "L'amour est **en**fant de Bohème" (Ex. 3.16).[42]

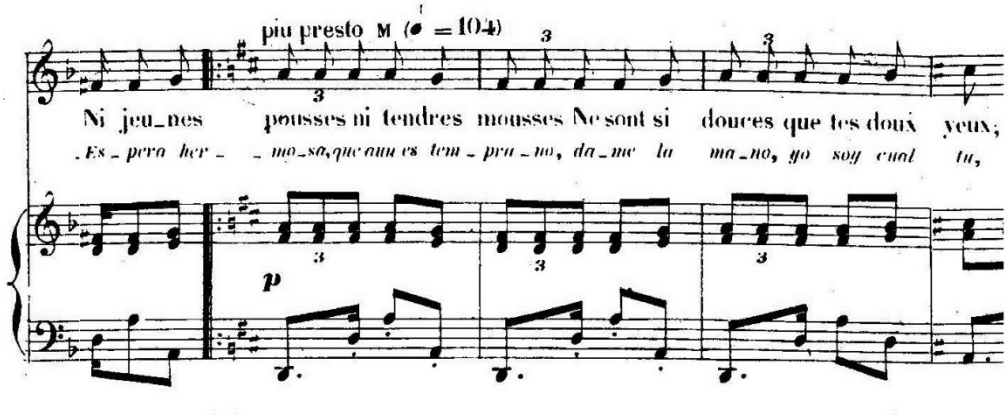


EXAMPLE 3.16. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Habanera, mm. 28–36

One reason for this mismatch between verse and melody may be that Bizet was simply thinking of another melody when he wrote the verses. Bizet's friend and fellow composer Ernest Guiraud (who wrote the recitatives for the first Vienna production of *Carmen* after Bizet's death) later

[39] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 642 ("prière de ne rien changer à tout cela si c'est possible").
[40] Bizet's original verses for the refrain ended with the line "si je t'aime, tant pis à toi!" (if I love you, too bad for you!) instead of "prends garde à toi!" (watch out!). Ibid.
[41] There is no surviving record of any extensive correspondence between Bizet and the librettists for *Carmen* similar to the Bizet-Gallet correspondence for *Don Rodrigue*. Lesley Wright speculates that this was because Bizet, Meilhac, and Halévy all lived in Paris and could easily have met to discuss details of the project in person. Wright, "Bizet Before *Carmen*," 13.
[42] Youens, "Words and Music in Germany and France," 489.

claimed that Bizet went through thirteen versions of the Habanera before settling on Iradier's melody.[43] If that were the case, however, presumably the librettists could have come up with new verses once Bizet settled on the final melody. The fitting of French verses to Spanish melodies was a common exercise in nineteenth-century France. This is illustrated in Ex. 3.17, which is taken from *Échos d'Espagne*, an anthology of Spanish songs published by Durand in 1872, a copy of which was in Bizet's music library.[44]



EXAMPLE 3.17. "La jibara," from *Échos d'Espagne* (published 1872)

The French versifiers for Ex. 3.17 were able to fit the prosodic rhythm of their verses to the regular melodic rhythms of this habanera ("Ni j**eu**nes p**ou**sses | Ni t**e**ndres m**ou**sses | Ne s**o**nt si d**ou**ces | Que t**e**s doux y**eu**x"). Bizet and his librettists would surely have been able to do something similar for Iradier's melody if they had wanted to. The explanation for the "mistreated tonic accents" in Ex. 3.16 must surely be that Bizet did not consider it necessary to remain faithful to prosodic rhythms in this diegetic number. In fact, Bizet's practice of fitting his verses to Iradier's existing melody without regard to prosodic accents is reminiscent of the vaudeville practices (discussed in Section 2.5) that formed the historical foundation for what I

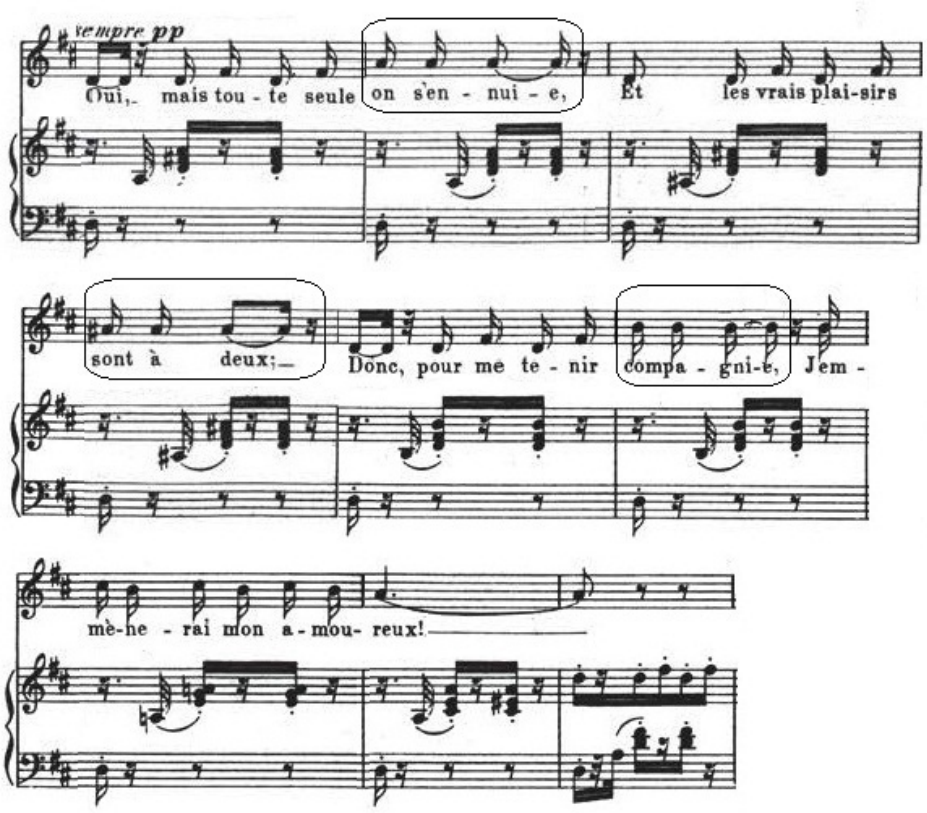
[43] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 653.
[44] Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 472.

have called the diegetic style. Indeed, it is precisely the misaccentuation of words, including in the last line ("si j**e** t'aim**e**"), that effectively emphasizes the diegetic character of the Habanera and Carmen's public persona as a performer.

Carmen's Séguedille, from later on in Act I, is also a diegetic performance. In the dialogue that precedes the number, Carmen attempts to engage Don José in conversation following her arrest for starting a fight in the tobacco factory. Don José rebuffs her and forbids her to speak. Mockingly obeying his command, Carmen stops speaking and sings the Séguedille instead. In the excerpt shown in Ex. 3.18, Carmen muses on how she would like to take a lover with her to the tavern of her friend Lillas Pastia. The eight measures of music are set to the following quatrain:

O**ui**, mais toute s**eu**le on s'enn**ui**e,	(1,5,8)
Et les vrais plais**i**rs sont à d**eu**x;	(5,8)
D**o**nc, pour me ten**i**r compagn**i**e,	(1,5,8)
J'emmèner**ai** mon amour**eu**x . . .	(4,8)

The first words in the first three verses of the quatrain ("oui," "et," "donc") are teasingly emphasized and drawn out. The melody in Ex. 3.18 is otherwise composed of regular sixteenth notes, with regular accentuation of even-numbered syllables in the diegetic style. As might be expected, there are misaccentuations like the *e muet* in "toute" in the first line: "m**ai**s tout**e** seule **o**n s'enn**ui**e."



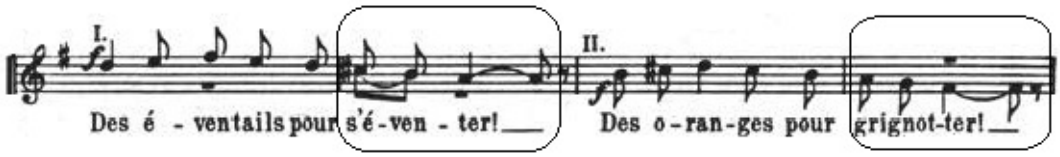
EXAMPLE 3.18. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Séguedille et Duo, mm. 37–45

One unusual aspect of text setting in Ex. 3.18 that sets it apart from most of the other diegetic numbers that we have examined involves the metrical placement of the line-ending tonic accents. In most French melodies, the tonic accent at the end of a line of verse (which as discussed in Chapter 2 is generally the strongest accent in the line) is placed on a metrical downbeat, i.e. the first beat of a measure.[45] As shown in the circled portions of Ex. 3.18, however, the tonic accents at the end of each of the first three verses have been displaced onto the *second* beat of the 3/8 measure, with the antepenultimate syllable of the verses occupying the

[45] This practice is identical to the Italian practice of placing the *accento comune* at the end of a line on the first beat of a measure. Accordingly, William Rothstein has labeled the practice of placing cadences on the first beat of a measure "Franco-Italian" barring. See Rothstein, "National Metrical Types in Music of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" and the discussion accompanying note 15 in Chapter 5 below.

downbeat instead. As a result of this rhythmic displacement, each of the first three two-measure groups in Ex. 3.18 ends with a trisyllabic rhythmic motto.[46] The tonic accent is aligned with a downbeat only in the last verse of the quatrain.

The displacement of the tonic accents onto the second beat in the Séguedille may constitute an attempt by Bizet to replicate the characteristic emphasis on the second beat of a triple-meter measure in many Spanish (or Spanish-sounding) melodies. The rhythmic and text-setting pattern of Ex. 3.18 is in fact replicated by Bizet in the Act IV chorus of vendors and fruit sellers (in 3/4 time) that provides Spanish *couleur locale* for the scene in front of the bullring (Ex. 3.19).

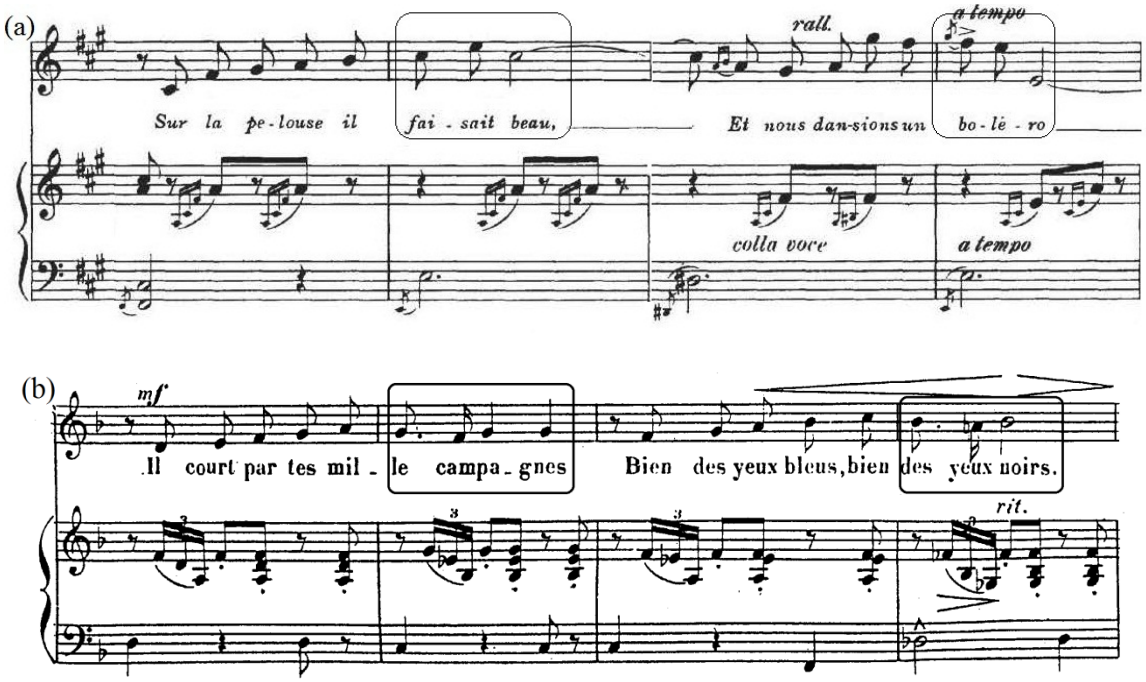


EXAMPLE 3.19. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Chœur, mm. 31–34

Ex. 3.20 shows two additional examples of displaced tonic accents in Spanish-influenced compositions by French composers, taken from *mélodies* by Léo Delibes and Pauline Viardot (née García), respectively. Both songs set Spanish-inspired verses of Alfred de Musset and both are written in the style of a bolero.[47] As the circled portions of Ex. 3.20a and b show, Delibes and Viardot both used in their boleros the same technique that Bizet used in Carmen's Séguedille, namely the placement of the antepenultimate syllable of a line on the first beat and the displacement of the line-ending tonic accent onto the second beat of a triple-meter measure. In

[46] As always, line-ending *e muets* (as in the words "s'ennuie" and "compagnie" in Ex. 3.18) are excluded from the syllable count.
[47] The bolero was a dance form commonly thought to be derived from the seguidilla. See "Bolero" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed.

the second measure of the Ex. 3.20b, this creates an awkward misaccentuation on the *e muet* in the word mill**e**, which happens to be the antepenultimate syllable in that line.



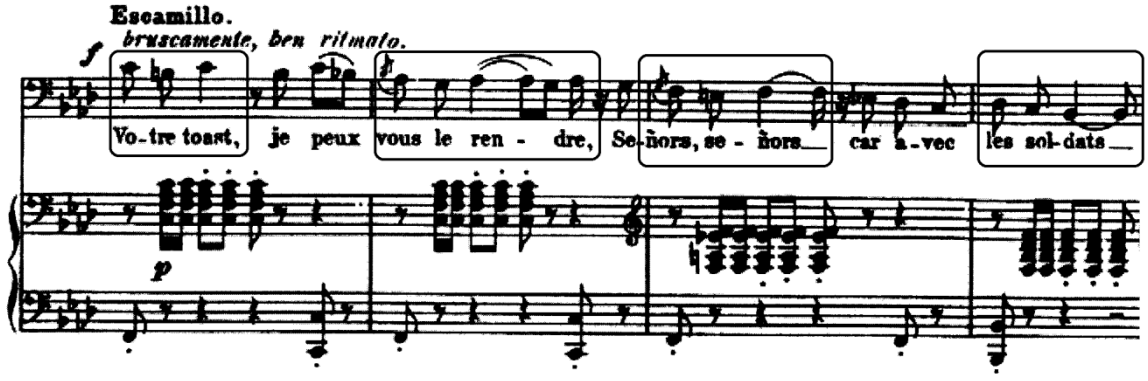
EXAMPLE 3.20. Text setting to "Spanish" rhythms:
(a) Delibes, "Les filles de Cadix" (1874); and (b) Viardot, "Madrid" (1884)

Not surprisingly, the "Spanish" touch exemplified in Examples 3.18 through 3.20 is also found in the music of Escamillo the bullfighter. As James Parakilas has pointed out, there are no boleros in *Carmen*, but there is a "bolerified march" in the opening section of the "Toreador Song" (Ex. 3.21).[48] Escamillo's *couplets* are set to eight-syllable verses (Bizet repeats the word "señors" in the second verse in Ex. 3.21):

Votre t**oa**st, je peux vous le r**e**ndre, (3,8)
Señ**o**rs, car avec les sold**a**ts . . . (2,8)

[48] Parakilas, "How Spain Got a Soul," 164.

As in Examples 3.18 through 3.20, the line-ending tonic accents are displaced to the second beat of the measure. Even the prosodic accents in the middle of the verses, on the words "t**oa**st" and "señ**o**rs," are "bolerified" in Escamillo's melody: they are similarly displaced to the second beat as well. As a result, the trisyllabic motto is found at the beginning of every measure in Ex. 3.21, compared to every other measure in the earlier examples.



EXAMPLE 3.21. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Couplets, mm. 9–12

The Spanish-influenced numbers from *Carmen* that we have examined in this section so far are all from the first two acts of the opera. The received wisdom appears to be that Carmen becomes less "exotic" and less extroverted in the second half of the opera. Ralph Locke, for examples, argues that Carmen "starts out by singing (and . . . sometimes dancing to) exotic music, [but], from the middle of Act II onward, expresses herself musically in more 'universal' ways."[49] Susan McClary similarly notes of Carmen's solo in the Act III "Card Scene" (or *Air des cartes*) that:

> [i]nterestingly, here where we presumably overhear her private thoughts for the first time, she sings not in the style of her characteristic gypsy discourse, but rather in the tongue of "universal" subjectivity. As she faces death, she is no longer

[49] Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 161.

> radically Other; she is just like everyone else — i.e., just like José and his audience.[50]

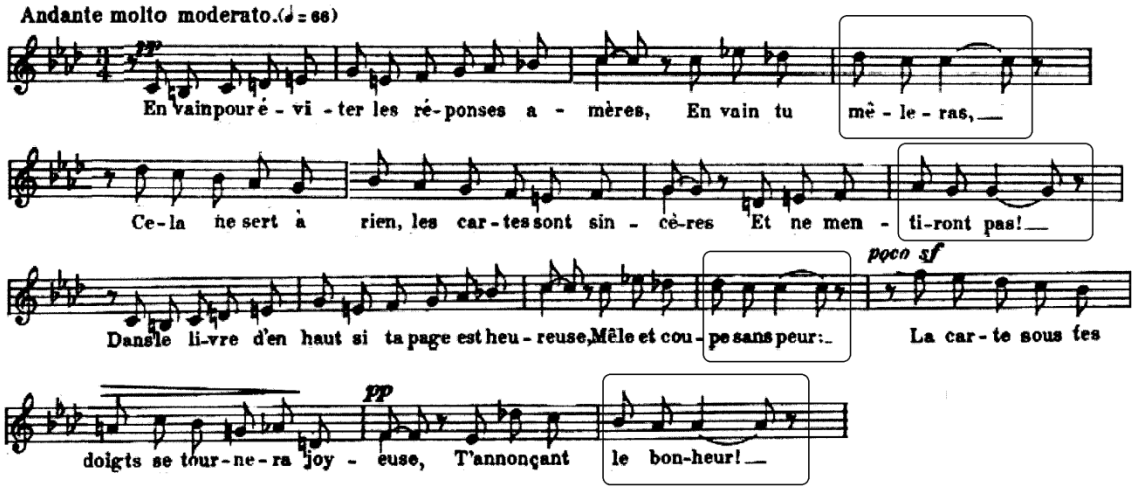
From the accounts of Locke, McClary, and others, one might expect Carmen's final solo number, from the central section of the Card Scene, to be in a consciously different melodic style than her "exotic" numbers from the first two acts. Bizet's music, however, defies such simple categorizations.

Ex. 3.22 shows the first sixteen measures of Carmen's melodic line from that *Air des cartes* from Act III, in which she reads her own fortune and foretells her own death from a deck of cards. Carmen is not obviously performing, singing, or dancing for anyone in this scene, and the text certainly reads as an interior monologue:

En v**ai**n pour évit**e**r les rép**o**nses am**è**res,	(2,6,9,12)
En v**ai**n tu mêler**a**s,	(2,6)
Cel**a** ne sert à r**ie**n, les c**a**rtes sont sinc**è**res	(2,6,8,12)
Et ne mentiront p**a**s!	(6)
Dans le l**i**vre d'en h**au**t si ta p**a**ge est heur**eu**se,	(3,6,9,12)
M**ê**le et c**ou**pe sans p**eu**r:	(1,3,6)
La c**a**rte sous tes d**oi**gts se tourner**a** joy**eu**se,	(2,6,10,12)
T'annonç**a**nt le bonh**eu**r.	(3,6)

As with the Habanera, Bizet wrote the verses for the *Air des cartes* himself.[51] However, he did not reflect the natural prosodic rhythms of his own verses in the melody of Ex. 3.22. In fact, Bizet's text setting for this tragic and interior moment paradoxically reflects the same rhythmic qualities as Carmen's earlier "song-and-dance" diegetic numbers, namely a simple alternation of strong and weak syllables in a way that sometimes goes with, and sometimes goes against, implied accents in the text.

[50] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 101. For other statements in the same vein, see, e.g., Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 9, and Parakilas, "How Spain Got Her Soul," 161.
[51] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 643–4.



EXAMPLE 3.22. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act III, Trio (Air des cartes), mm. 194–209

Indeed, the melody in straight eighth notes in triple meter is very similar to the rhythmic character of the *Chanson bohème*. In addition, the displacement of the tonic accents to the second beat in every fourth measure of Ex. 3.22 (see the circled groups) is identical to what we saw in every second measure of Ex. 3.18 (from the Séguedille), resulting in an especially acute example of "diegetic" misaccentuation around the circled group in the third system: "Mêle **e**t coup**e** sans p**eu**r," with the weakest syllable in the line, the *e muet*, placed in the strongest metrical position.

Ralph Locke has noted the rigid rhythmic pattern and the misaccentuations in Ex. 3.22, arguing that "[t]he grim relentlessness of the Card Aria . . . renders [the] . . . unnatural declamation constricting, even dehumanizing."[52] Cathérine Clément has similarly written that the number has "the rhythm of some inmost, penetrating curse."[53] What many commentators have failed to notice, however, is that the rigid rhythmic patterns and misaccentuations of the *Air des cartes* do *not* represent a departure from Carmen's earlier "carefree" music. In fact, the

[52] Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 172.
[53] Clément, *Opera, or, The Undoing of Women*, 52.

melody of Ex. 3.22 embodies (and indeed combines) many of the melodic and rhythmic characteristics that mark Carmen's diegetic Spanish- or gypsy-style numbers from earlier in the opera. Notwithstanding the obvious differences in affect, there is actually no clear melodic or rhythmic distinction made in Bizet's music between the "gypsy/exotic" discourse of Carmen's earlier solo numbers and the supposedly "universal" style of discourse in the Card Scene. Instead, there is a consistent rhythmic and melodic thread running through all of Carmen's solo numbers in the opera, emblematic perhaps of what Gary Tomlinson has called Carmen's "Dionysian movement with and in the rhythms of life."[54]

3.5 Entr'acte: *Carmen* as an Ambiguous Text

We began the last section with Dahlhaus's observation that Bizet's score for *Carmen* inverts the roles of the "lyrical" and the "picturesque" (or what I have called the diegetic). Dahlhaus was referring to the unprecedented dramatic significance of numbers such as the Habanera and the Séguedille, but as we have seen, the influence of the diegetic style goes deeper than those "song-and-dance" numbers. In particular, the melodic and rhythmic signifiers of Carmen's Spanish-style diegetic numbers from the first two acts (regular accentuation of alternate syllables, misaccentuation of weak syllables, and displacement of prosodic accents onto the second beats of measures) increasingly find their way into dramatic (and arguably non-diegetic) moments in the later acts. This suggests that in *Carmen*, Bizet went beyond the conventions of French opera (and his own earlier works) in blurring binary distinctions between

[54] In Tomlinson's account of a Nietzschean reading of *Carmen*, "[w]hat to [the male characters in the opera] seems effrontery, impertinence, sorcery, finally unforgiveable faithlessness to a romantic ideal is [Carmen's] Dionysian movement with and in the rhythms of life. She embraces these rhythms in a different way than they do, as a participant in them, in part determining rather than helplessly determined by them." Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 124.

melodic styles. To borrow the words of Edward Cone, in *Carmen*, "it is often impossible to demarcate expressive [i.e., lyrical] from realistic [i.e., diegetic] song, . . . because they interpenetrate each other."[55]

The music of *Carmen* thus resists neat divisions into "exotic vs. non-exotic," or "diegetic vs. lyrical," or "performative vs. expressive" styles. Rather, the music is rich in paradox. As Susan McClary has pointed out, even a clearly diegetic number such as the Habanera embodies a "basic ambiguity in . . . dramatic construction: when [Carmen] sings, does she express herself, or is she just performing a number? Do we ever have access to 'Carmen herself,' or only a stage persona?"[56] Similarly, how are we to read the fact that the *Air des cartes*, which Theodor Adorno characterized as lyrically expressive and full of classical grandeur, paradoxically embodies the melodic and text-setting style associated with Carmen's earlier diegetic numbers?[57] In the midst of a tragic and interior moment, is Carmen nevertheless putting on a "performance" for herself or somebody else?

I have followed McClary's example in framing these questions in "either/or" terms, but perhaps the answers can and should be framed in "both/and" terms.[58] As Dominique Maingueneau has written, it is precisely "the radical ambiguity of *Carmen* [that] gives it the

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[55] Cone, "The World of Opera and Its Inhabitants," 132. Cone argues that this difficulty in distinguishing completely between non-diegetic and diegetic instances in *Carmen* is found in all operas and, as a result, Cone advocates abolishing the distinction entirely. Cone's argument has been rejected by Carolyn Abbate, among others. See Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 122. While Cone's point is well taken, I agree with Abbate that the distinction between non-diegetic and diegetic (Cone's "expressive" and "realistic" or Abbate's "noumenal" and "phenomenal") numbers remains a viable and useful one.

[56] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 75.

[57] Adorno, "Fantasia sopra *Carmen*," 59.

[58] Cf. Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," 510 ("Musico-dramatic scenes, as opera critics have long realized, can operate on several levels at once, permitting "both/and" readings rather than a more constraining "either/or"). Thomas Cooper has written that "some aspects of McClary's reading now appear over-simplified in their polarizations of class and gender." T. Cooper, "Nineteenth-Century Spectacle," 29.

capacity to give rise constantly to new interpretations." In fact, "[c]ontradictory readings are possible because the work has the power to suspend unequivocal interpretations [and] to blur signs."[59] In this chapter, I have aimed to demonstrate how Bizet's intertwining of different melodic styles throughout *Carmen* plays an important role in the construction of this widely noted textual ambiguity.

[59] Maingueneau, *Carmen: Les racines d'un mythe*, 139 ("L'ambiguité radicale de *Carmen* contribue également a lui donner la capacité d'engendrer constamment des œuvres et des interprétations nouvelles . . . [D]es lectures . . . contradictoires sont possibles parce que l'œuvre a le pouvoir de mettre en suspens les interprétations univoques, brouiller les signes").

CHAPTER 4

CHROMATICISM AND COMMON-TONE TONALITY IN *CARMEN:* THE ACT I SÉGUEDILLE AND DUO

Having discussed the melodic language of *Carmen* in the context of French operatic practice in the nineteenth century, we shall now examine Bizet's use of harmony and chromaticism in *Carmen*. As discussed in Chapter 1, many of the contemporary reviews of the first performances of *Carmen* commented on the perceived influence of Wagner on Bizet's music. The proponents of this view did not necessarily have a good knowledge or appreciation of Wagner's music. Rather, as Hervé Lacombe has pointed out,

> the musical ingredients that the press called "Wagnerian" in the 1850s through the 1870s, and beyond . . . were "highly learned techniques" and "beauties concealed by harmonic profundities." Wagner's influence was seen "in atrociously harsh dissonances," in "the misuse of violent modulations and of laboriously achieved stunts," in "harmonic eccentricities," and in "melodic recitative."[1]

This chapter will explore Bizet's use in *Carmen* of harmonic techniques that may well have been interpreted as "learned," "profound," "violent," "laborious," or "eccentric" by the critics of his day.[2] As we shall see, Bizet's music often juxtaposes triads that share one or more common tones with each other, reflecting a nineteenth-century harmonic practice based on common-tone relations that David Kopp has called "common-tone tonality." In many instances, these common-tone related triads are linked by chromatic third relations: the triads are modally

[1] Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 78. The internal quotes are taken from various writings by the critics Henri Vignaud, Alexis Azevedo, and Benoît Jouvin (known as Bénédict).

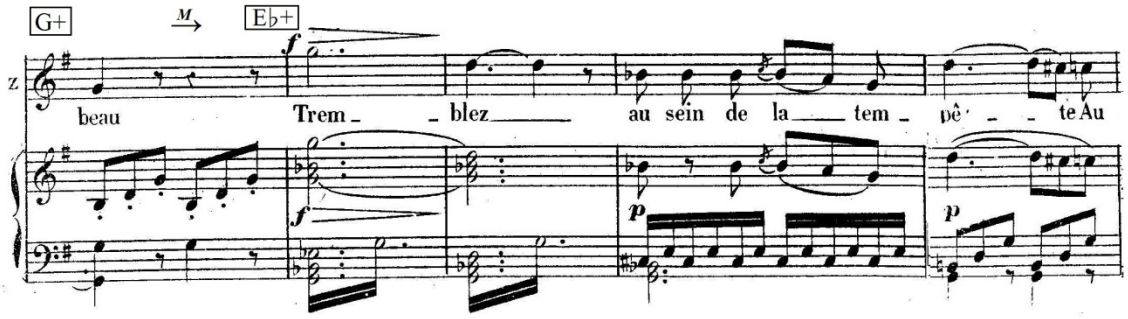
[2] The musical tastes of the French public (and their knowledge and appreciation of Wagner) changed greatly in the two decades following the premiere of *Carmen*, to the point where by 1891, the idea that Bizet was once thought of as a Wagnerian struck his one-time librettist Louis Gallet as absurd. Gallet, *Notes d'un librettiste*, 35 ("Bizet wagnerien! que pensent aujourd'hui de ce jugement ceux qui l'ont prononcé?").

matched, they share exactly one common tone, and their roots are a major or minor third apart.[3] The chapter thus begins with a brief discussion of the use of chromatic third relations in nineteenth-century French opera, with examples from Auber, Gounod, and Thomas. We shall then explore Bizet's use of the same techniques in some of his earlier works and in *Carmen*. The remaining part of the chapter is structured around an analysis of one number from *Carmen* in particular, namely the Séguedille and Duo from Act I. We shall use this analysis to consider Bizet's broader use of chromaticism, harmonic dualism, and common-tone tonality in *Carmen*. As in the preceding chapter, we shall endeavor to derive dramatic insights into the characters of Carmen and Don José from our musical analysis of Bizet's score.

4.1 Chromatic Third Relations in Nineteenth-Century French Opera

Hervé Lacombe has written that in nineteenth-century French opera, "[c]onsistent tonality and consonance signified dramatic stability, while the juxtaposition of different keys, successive modulations, and dissonance indicated trouble and disorder."[4] A straightforward illustration of the opposition described by Lacombe can be found in Ex. 4.1, from Zerline's diegetic song from Act I of Auber's *Fra Diavolo.* We previously considered the opening of this number from a melodic standpoint in Chapter 2.

[3] Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 1–3. Unlike diatonic mediant and submediant triads, which are of a different mode and share two common tones with the tonic triad, upper and lower mediant triads which share only one common tone with the tonic triad "are always triads of the same mode as the tonic, containing one or two pitches outside the diatonic set: thus the name 'chromatic.'" Ibid., 9.
[4] Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 168.



EXAMPLE 4.1. Auber, *Fra Diavolo*, Act I, Couplets

The first sixteen measures of Zerline's song are set mostly to alternating tonic and dominant harmonies in G major (see Ex. 2.9). This tonal stability is disrupted at the second bar of Ex. 4.1, on the word "Tremblez," as the listener is invited to tremble at the mention of the diabolical bandit of the opera's title. The E-flat major triad (♭VI in the key of G major) in the second measure of Ex. 4.1 is a product of modal mixture, with scale degrees 3 and 6 (B♭ and E♭) introduced from the parallel minor mode (G minor) to darken the color of the song. From the standpoint of G major, the E-flat major triad is a chromatic mediant, or a triad of the same mode whose root is a major or minor third away. Each triad has four chromatic mediants, classified as shown in Fig. 4.1 below by David Kopp, whose terminology I shall be adopting in this chapter.[5]

Triads linked by chromatic mediant transformations share exactly one common tone with each other, and David Kopp has proposed that chromatic mediants serve as a cornerstone of common-tone tonality in nineteenth-century music.[6] The two triads shown above G major in Fig. 4.1 feature upward root motion by a minor third and major third, respectively, and are dubbed the upper flat mediant (UFM) and upper sharp mediant (USM) by Kopp. The

[5] The symbols "+" and "-" in Fig. 4.1 and throughout this dissertation denote major and minor triads, respectively. Fig. 4.1 is derived from, and combines various aspects of, Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 9 (Fig. 1.2), 15 (Fig. 1.8), and 166–69 (definitions of mediant transformations).
[6] Ibid., 3.

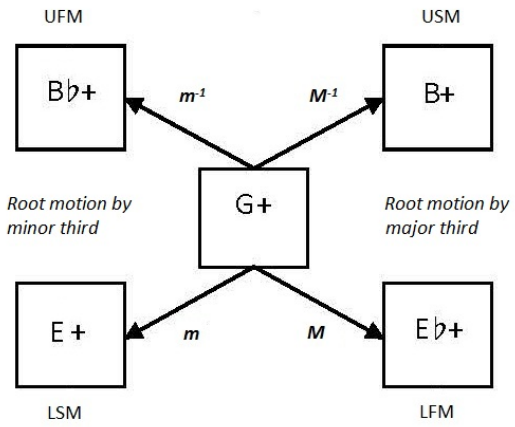


FIGURE 4.1. Chromatic mediants of G major

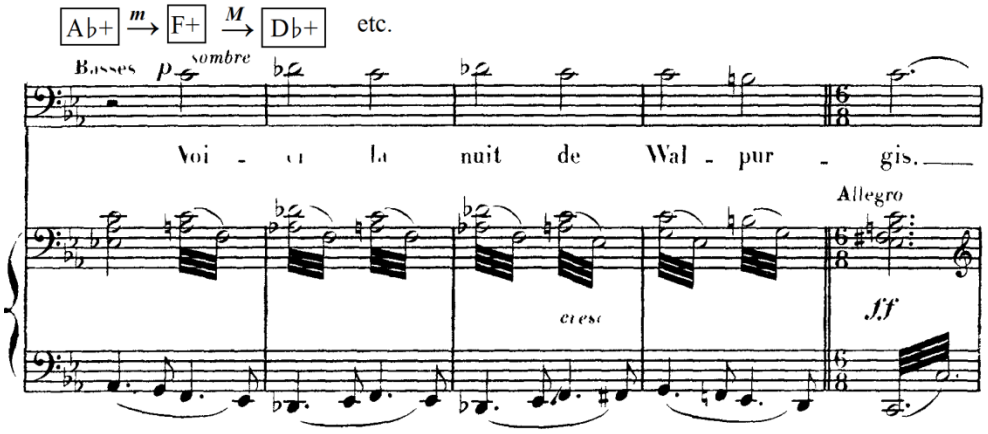
corresponding triads in the lower part of Fig. 4.1 are the lower sharp mediant (LSM) and lower flat mediant (LFM), respectively. In Kopp's formulation, downward movement from a triad to a chromatic mediant is treated as a transformation that comes in two forms: ***M***, with root motion of a major third, and ***m***, with root motion of a minor third. Upward root motion by major and minor third yields the transformations $\boldsymbol{M^{-1}}$ and $\boldsymbol{m^{-1}}$, respectively.[7] These transformations are indicated in Fig. 4.1 using arrows.

Applying Kopp's terminology to Ex. 4.1, the movement from G major to E-flat major in Zerline's song constitutes an ***M*** transformation to the lower flat mediant. From a voice-leading perspective, the ***M*** transformation in Ex. 4.1 involves both a "dominant discharge" (in the formulation of Daniel Harrison) from D to E♭ (semitonal motion from leading-tone to tonic in E-flat major) and a "subdominant discharge" from B (= C♭) to B♭ (semitonal motion from scale

[7] Kopp's use of the abbreviations ***M***/***m*** to signify downward root motion of a major/minor third is analogous to, and derived from, David Lewin's use of ***DOM*** (abbreviated by Kopp to ***D***) to signify downward root motion of a perfect fifth between two modally matched triads. See ibid., 166 and Lewin, *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations*, 176–77.

degree ♭6 to 5 in E-flat major).[8] In Auber's opera, this chromatic move takes place within the context of an expansion of tonic harmony. Zerline's line refers to the center of a storm ("au sein de la tempête") and like a dark cloud in a passing storm, the disorder introduced by the chromatic mediant is quickly resolved in favor of the G major tonic.[9]

Ex. 4.2 is another example of the use of chromatic third relations in an operatic depiction of disorder, the Walpurgis night scene from Gounod's *Faust*.[10]



EXAMPLE 4.2. Gounod, *Faust*, Act V, La Nuit de Walpurgis
(octave doublings in chorus omitted)

The progression at the beginning of Ex. 4.2 can be understood as a V–III♮–I progression that tonicizes the D-flat major triad (or ♭II in C minor).[11] Gounod uses the oscillation between the

[8] See Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music*, 91–93. Harrison's particular "dialect of neo-Riemannian" is noted in Rothstein, "Common-tone Tonality in Italian Romantic Opera," ¶17.

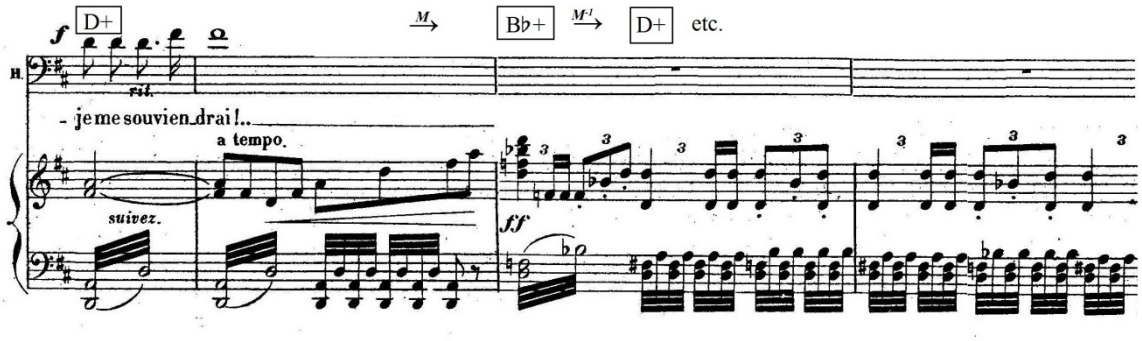
[9] E♭ returns as a melodic pitch in the song at the end of Zerline's refrain, when she intones the name "Diavolo."

[10] Steven Huebner has written about Gounod's "penchant" for the use of chromatic mediants in his operas. Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 255–61.

[11] Heinrich Schenker discusses tonicization by descending-third progressions (including III♯–I) in Schenker, *Harmony*, 265–68. Hugo Riemann recognized major-third chromatic mediant relations (i.e., Kopp's ***M*** and $\boldsymbol{M^{-1}}$) as independent harmonic functions in the sixth edition of his

local tonic (D-flat major) and its upper sharp mediant (F major) to depict the mysterious and disturbing nature of the supernatural celebration on stage.

In Ex. 4.3, Ambroise Thomas similarly oscillates between a tonic triad and a chromatic mediant at the end of another supernatural scene, the end of the Esplanade scene from Act I of *Hamlet*, in which the Ghost appears to Hamlet.



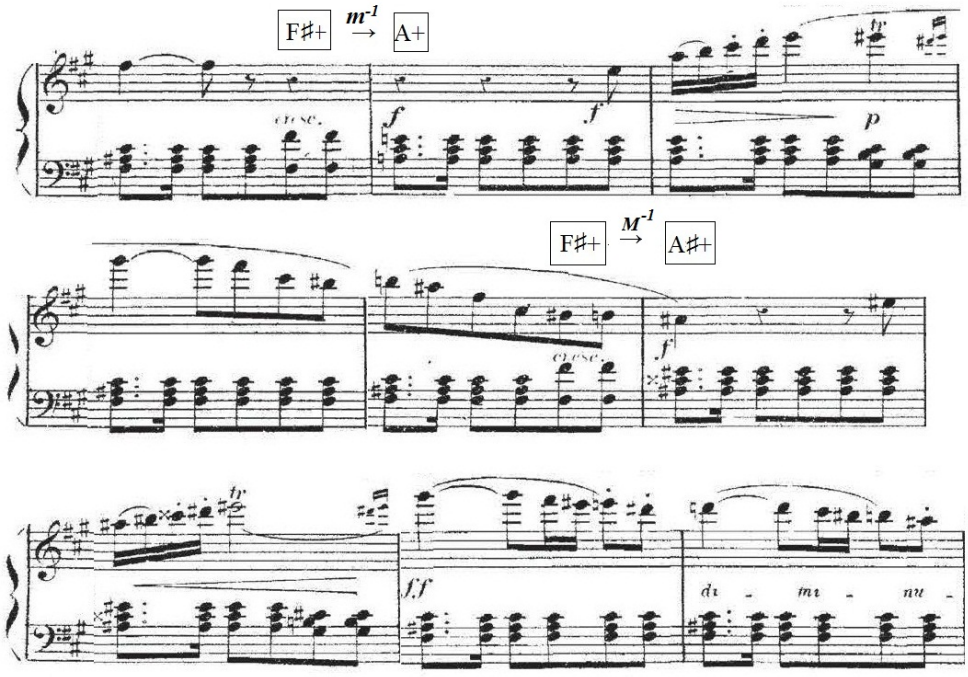
EXAMPLE 4.3. Thomas, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scène de l'esplanade

As in Ex. 4.1, the tonic triad in Ex. 4.3 (D major) moves to its lower flat mediant (B-flat major) over a stationary bass. The juxtaposition of these two triads at the end of the Esplanade scene actually represents an intersection (or clash) of diegetic and non-diegetic music, with the B-flat major fanfares representing diegetic music that is playing in the castle grounds as the King (Claudius) celebrates his coronation, and the D major tonic representing Hamlet's internal emotional state after his scene with the Ghost.

Handbuch der Harmonielehre (1917). See Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 99–102. Under Riemann's post-1917 formulation, the F+ to D♭+ progression in Ex. 4.2 would have the functions "3+" (mediant) and "T" (tonic) in D-flat major.

4.2 Chromatic Third Relations in the Music of Bizet

Bizet made two piano arrangements (for two hands and four hands) of *Hamlet* for the publisher Heugel, and Antoine Marmontel recounts in his recollections of Bizet that "we frequently heard him analyze *Hamlet* of Ambroise Thomas with the most sincere admiration." [12] Hervé Lacombe states that Bizet particularly admired the Esplanade scene.[13] Whether or not he was influenced by Gounod and Thomas, Bizet showed an interest in chromatic third relations prior to the composition of *Carmen*, as shown in Ex. 4.4, taken from the Pastorale from the incidental music to *L'arlésienne*.



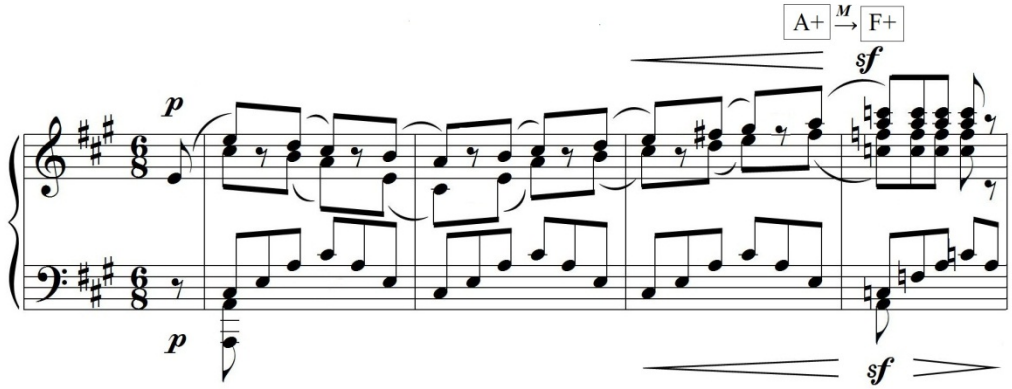
EXAMPLE 4.4. Bizet, Incidental Music to *L'arlésienne*, No. 7, Pastorale

[12] Marmontel, *Symphonistes et virtuoses*, 254 ("nous l'avons souvent entendu analyser avec la plus sincère admiration l'*Hamlet* d'Ambroise Thomas . . ."). Bizet wrote to his mother-in-law in 1871 that "*Hamlet* is a great work that erases all the small musical inadequacies of this honorable and excellent man [Thomas]." Bizet, Letter to Léonie Halévy, May 27, 1871, in *Lettres*, 204 ("*Hamlet* est une grande œuvre qui efface toutes les petites faiblesses musicales de cet homme honorable et excellent").

[13] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 420.

In Ex. 4.4, the tonic triad of F-sharp major is juxtaposed in close succession first with its upper flat mediant, A major, and then with its upper sharp mediant, A-sharp major.[14] In both cases, the juxtaposition is emphasized by a crescendo. The French musicologist Paul Landormy associated Bizet's use of chromaticism in Ex. 4.4 with painterly techniques, describing Bizet as "proceeding a little in the fashion of those painters who juxtapose raw colors without trying to bind them with skillful transitions."[15]

Ex. 4.5, taken from Bizet's suite for piano four hands *Jeux d'enfants* (1871), similarly features a bold and unsubtle juxtaposition of a tonic harmony (A major) and its lower flat mediant (F major) over a stationary bass (compare Ex. 4.1 and 4.3), this time in a depiction of rollicking children at play.

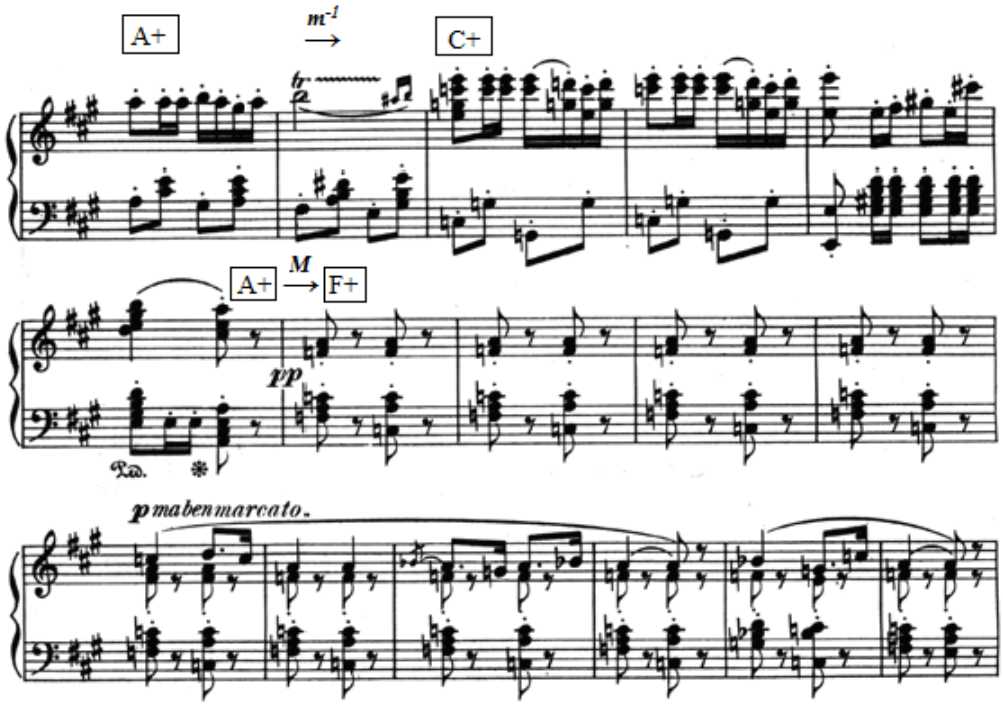


EXAMPLE 4.5. Bizet, *Jeux d'enfants* (1871), "Les chevaux de bois," mm. 77–80

The unexpected chromatic effect, based on a common-tone relation around the tonic pitch A, is once again underlined by a dramatic crescendo buildup, as well as by the sudden *sforzando* clash of chords.

[14] Ex. 4.4 is taken from a vocal score of the incidental music to *L'arlésienne*. In the orchestral score, the excerpt is also played by the piano but the A-sharp major measures are notated in B-flat major.
[15] Landormy, *Bizet*, 94 ("[Bizet] procède un peu à la façon de ces peintres qui juxtaposent des couleurs crues sans chercher à les unir par d'habiles transitions").

Bizet's music for *Carmen* makes similar and ample use of chromatic third relations, starting with the Prelude, whose opening phrase in A major touches on the upper flat mediant, C major, before cadencing in the tonic key (see the first system of Ex. 4.6). In the second system of Ex. 4.6, the Prelude modulates directly (through the shared common tone A) from A major to the key of the lower flat mediant, or F major, for the refrain of the Toreador Song.



EXAMPLE 4.6. Bizet, *Carmen*, Prélude, mm. 45–60

Susan McClary sees in the juxtaposition of A major and C major in the Prelude a depiction of disorder that marks Spain as a land of the exotic other:

> . . . the emergence of the irrationally related key of C major offers the momentary thrill of the unexpected, even if it is pulled back immediately under the control of the tonic. The effect is bold and colorful, though ultimately stable. It also serves as a rapid portrait of the world of the other . . . "Spain" is gaudy, flamboyant,

> irrational, static (i.e., not progressive), unpredictable, potentially treacherous.[16]

The French linguist Dominique Maingueneau has similarly observed that *Carmen* is a drama of primary colors. In the libretto, Carmen is directed to be costumed for her first appearance following the description in Merimée's novella, i.e., in a red petticoat and red shoes; Micaëla is associated with a blue skirt; and Don José is dressed in the yellow uniform of the Spanish dragoons — Carmen calls him a "canari" (canary) in the Act II duet.[17] To adopt Paul Landormy's analogy between music and painting, Bizet's chromatic touches in the Prelude feature a clash of colors that effectively sets the stage for the drama to come.

Bizet's use of chromatic mediants in *Carmen* and other works is not limited to decorative surface effects. He also used chromatic third relations to create larger-scale harmonic structures. Ex. 4.7 below, from the last movement of *Jeux d'enfants,* shows that Bizet was well aware of the role played by chromatic mediants in the equal division of the octave. In Ex. 4.7, the main theme of the movement is treated sequentially, with the C major and A-flat major iterations dividing the E4 to E5 octave equally (E major functions as the dominant of A major in this excerpt). The descending major-third gap between successive chord roots is filled in by a descending chromatic scale in the bass. The apparent V^4_2 chords on the downbeats of the second, fourth, and sixth measures of Ex. 4.7 are not treated as functional dominants. In contrast, the chord on the downbeat of the eighth measure of the excerpt *is* treated as a functional dominant, breaking the sequence and permitting a return to the A major tonic.

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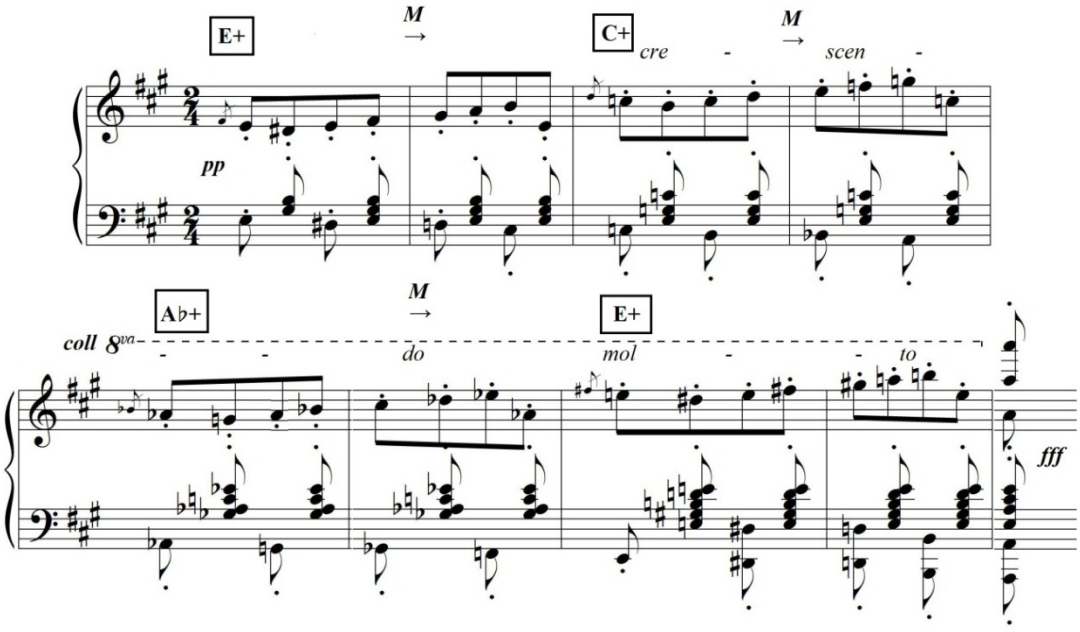
[16] McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen*," 121. The German musicologist Edgar Istel similarly found the direct transition from A major to F major in the Prelude to be "echt spanisch." Istel, *Bizet und* Carmen, 131.

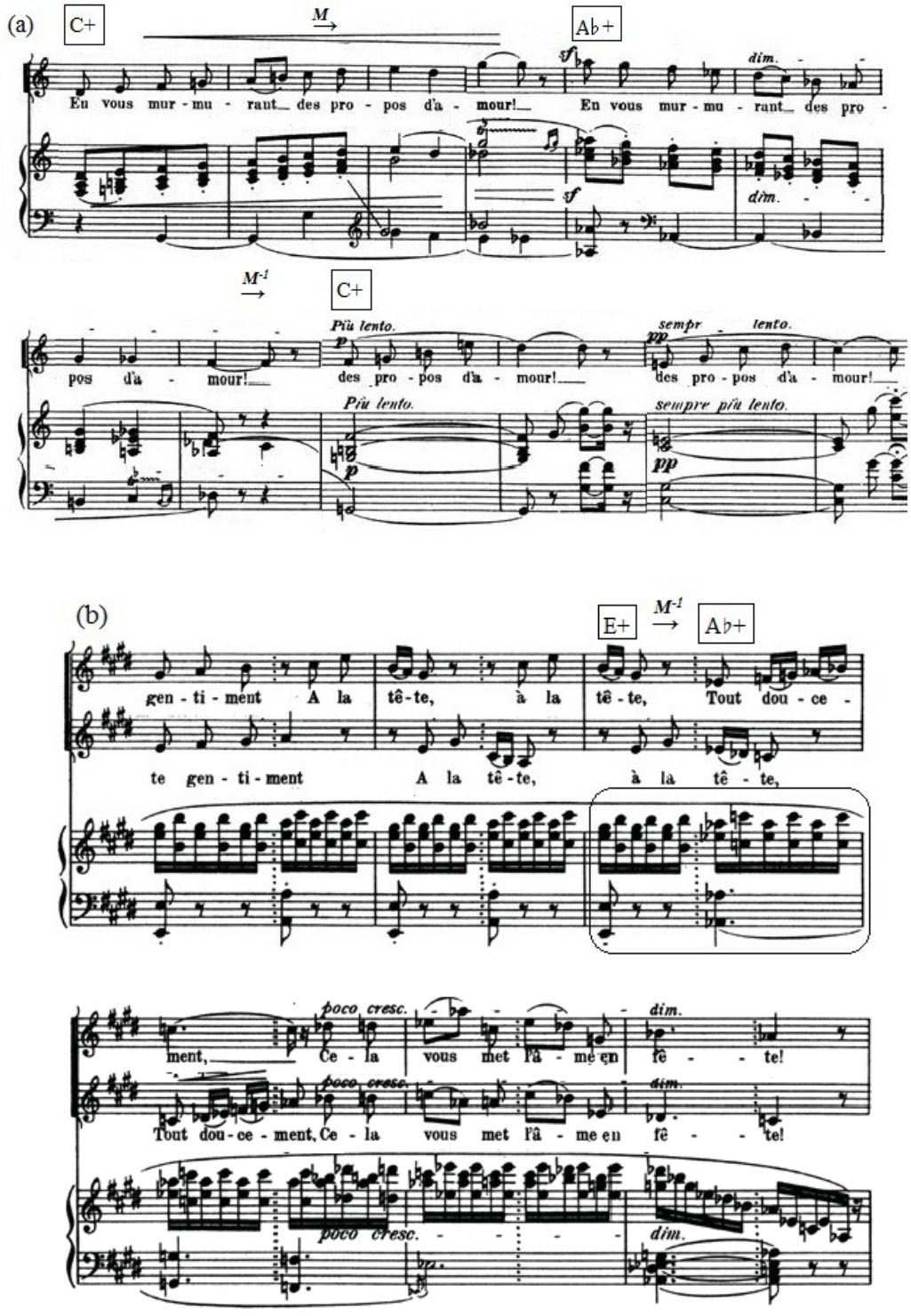
[17] Maingueneau, *Carmen: Les racines d'un mythe*, 68. In Merimée, Carmen tells Don José that he is a "real canary, both in outfit and in character" ("Tu es un vrai canari, d'habit et de caractère"). Merimée, *Carmen*, 77.



EXAMPLE 4.7. Bizet, *Jeux d'enfants*, "Le bal," mm.133–41

Matthew Bribitzer-Stull has suggested that the chromatic major-third collection reflected in Ex. 4.7 (A♭–C–E, or the "A♭–C–E complex") "constitutes a romantic-era prototype — a benchmark for both structural and expressive trends in nineteenth-century music."[18] The major triads built on the members of the A♭–C–E complex are tonicized in succession in the chorus of the cigarette girls in Act I of *Carmen* (Ex. 4.8).

[18] Bribitzer-Stull, "The A♭–C–E Complex: The Origin and Function of Chromatic Major Third Collections in Nineteenth-Century Music," 167. The Appendix to Bribitzer-Stull's article lists numerous pieces that make use of this complex, including works by French composers such as Chausson, Debussy, and Franck, but not Bizet. Ibid., 186–87.



EXAMPLE 4.8. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Chœur des cigarières:
(a) mm. 42–53; (b) mm. 84–89

In this number, the townspeople gather to catch a glimpse of the *cigarières* as they return from their break. The number begins with the tenors in the chorus singing in C major ("La cloche a sonné"). The climax of the tenors' phrase features a tonicization of A-flat major, the lower flat mediant, that Paul Landormy states "must have appeared completely disconcerting to the French public of 1875" (Ex. 4.8a).[19] Nietzsche was much taken by this effect, noting the "beautiful inflection" (*schöne Wendung*) in Ex. 4.8a in the margin to his score of *Carmen*.[20] In Ex. 4.8a, A-flat major is then reinterpreted as the dominant of D-flat major (♭II), on the way to a cadence in C major.[21] Immediately after Ex. 4.8a, there is a key change to E major, the upper sharp mediant of C major. As shown in Ex. 4.8b, there is a prominent common-tone modulation from E major to its own upper sharp mediant of A-flat major in the cigarette girls' melody, pivoting around the common tone G♯/A♭. Ex. 4.8 thus illustrates harmonic motion in the cigarette girls' chorus structured around Bribitzer-Stull's A♭–C–E complex.

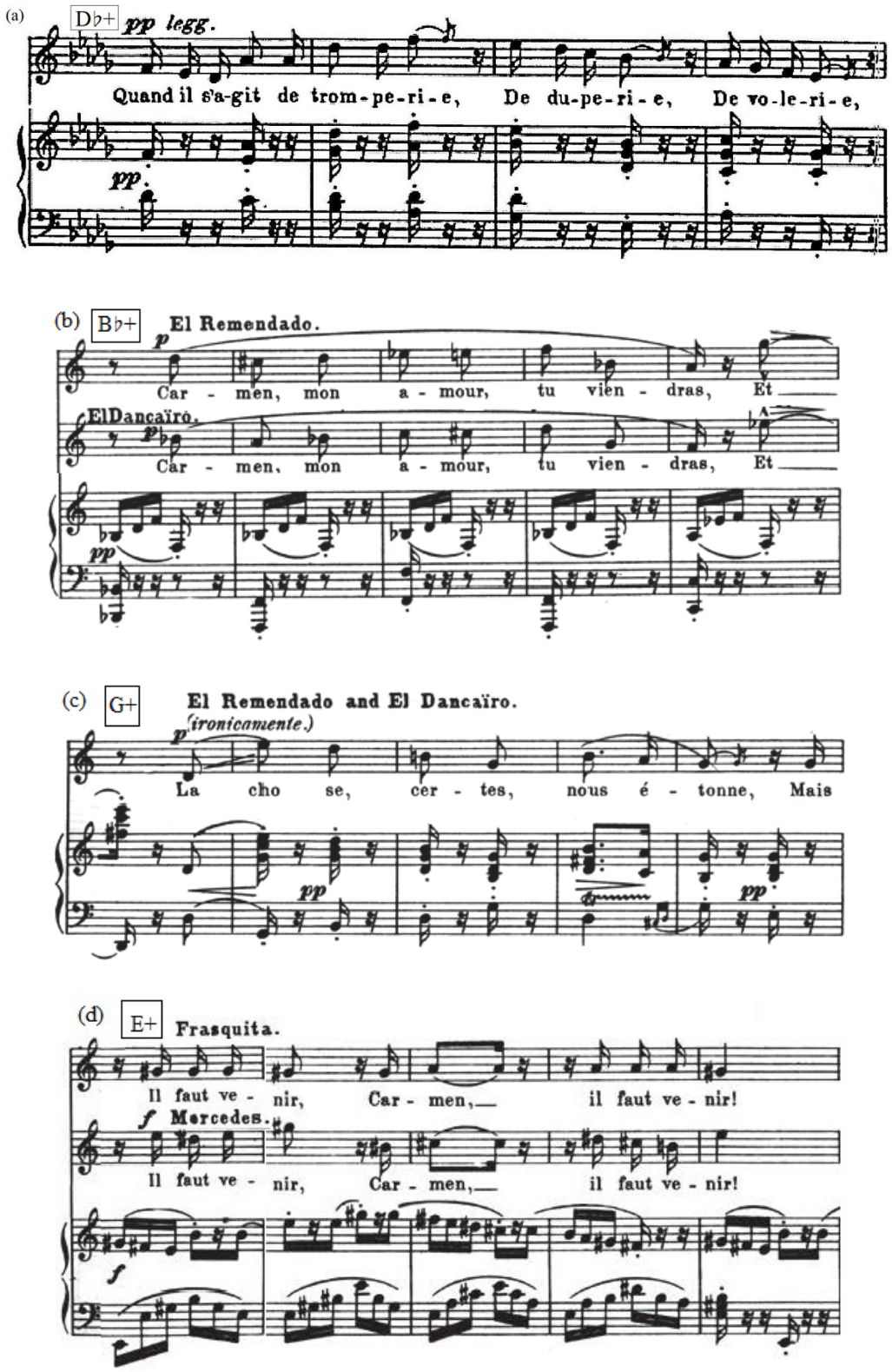
There are other numbers in *Carmen* that are structured around key areas that lie a major third apart. The short Act I finale, for example, starts in F minor before reprising the melody of the Habanera in D-flat major and finally effecting a common-tone modulation to A major, the key in which the act ends.[22] As we shall see in Chapter 5, Don José's "Flower Song," which is

[19] Landormy, *Bizet*, 121 ("voici qui dut paraître tout à fait déconcertant au public français de 1875"). Susan McClary, in contrast, puzzlingly refers to this phrase as "marked by the chic harmonies one might expect to hear in a light musical revue." McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 72.
[20] Nietzsche, *Friedrich Nietzsches Randglossen zu Bizets Carmen*, 31.
[21] Following the *sforzando* arrival on the tonicized A-flat major triad in Ex. 4.8a, the phrase appears to veer towards the sharp side of the circle of fifths (note the D♮'s in the descending melody and orchestral accompaniment) before making an abrupt swerve back toward the flat side, with D-flat major tonicized through the introduction of G♭ in the melody and the reintroduction of D♭ in the accompaniment.
[22] The Act I finale is discussed further below in Ex. 4.21 and Ex. 5.10.

in D-flat major, is structured around a similar D♭–F–A complex, tonicizing A major and F major at significant moments along the way.

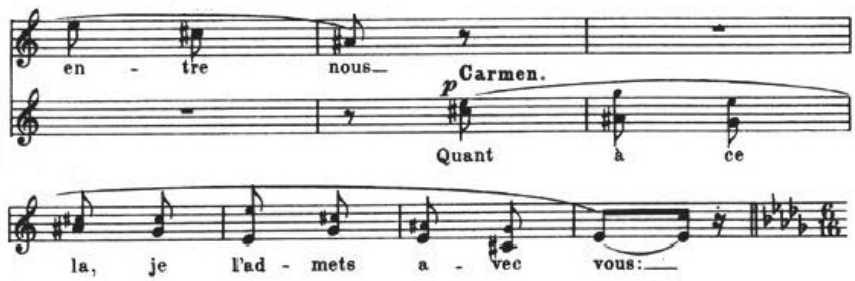
Bizet also used chromatic minor third relations (Kopp's ***m***) to create larger harmonic structures in *Carmen*. The Act II quintet has an episodic structure that Susan McClary has suggested is constructed through nested formal symmetries.[23] Ex. 4.9 (on the next page) shows that the harmonic structure of the number traces a different kind of symmetry, that of an equal division of the octave by minor thirds. Starting from D-flat major, the main key of the number (Ex. 4.9a), successive attempts by the smugglers to convince Carmen to follow them tonicize first B-flat major (Ex. 4.9b) and then G major (Ex. 4.9c). Finally, there is a transition to E major as Carmen's female companions join in to try to convince her (Ex. 4.9d). The succession of keys in the quintet thus traces a descending chain of ***m*** transformations (D♭+ → B♭+ → G+ → E+).

[23] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 93.



EXAMPLE 4.9. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Quintette:
(a) mm. 48–51; (b) mm. 142–146; (c) mm. 211–215; mm. (d) 268–272

Although Carmen refuses her companions' entreaties, she acknowledges their harmonic exertions by arpeggiating the diminished-seventh chord outlining the four successive tonics before effecting a common-tone transition back to D-flat major (Ex. 4.10).[24]

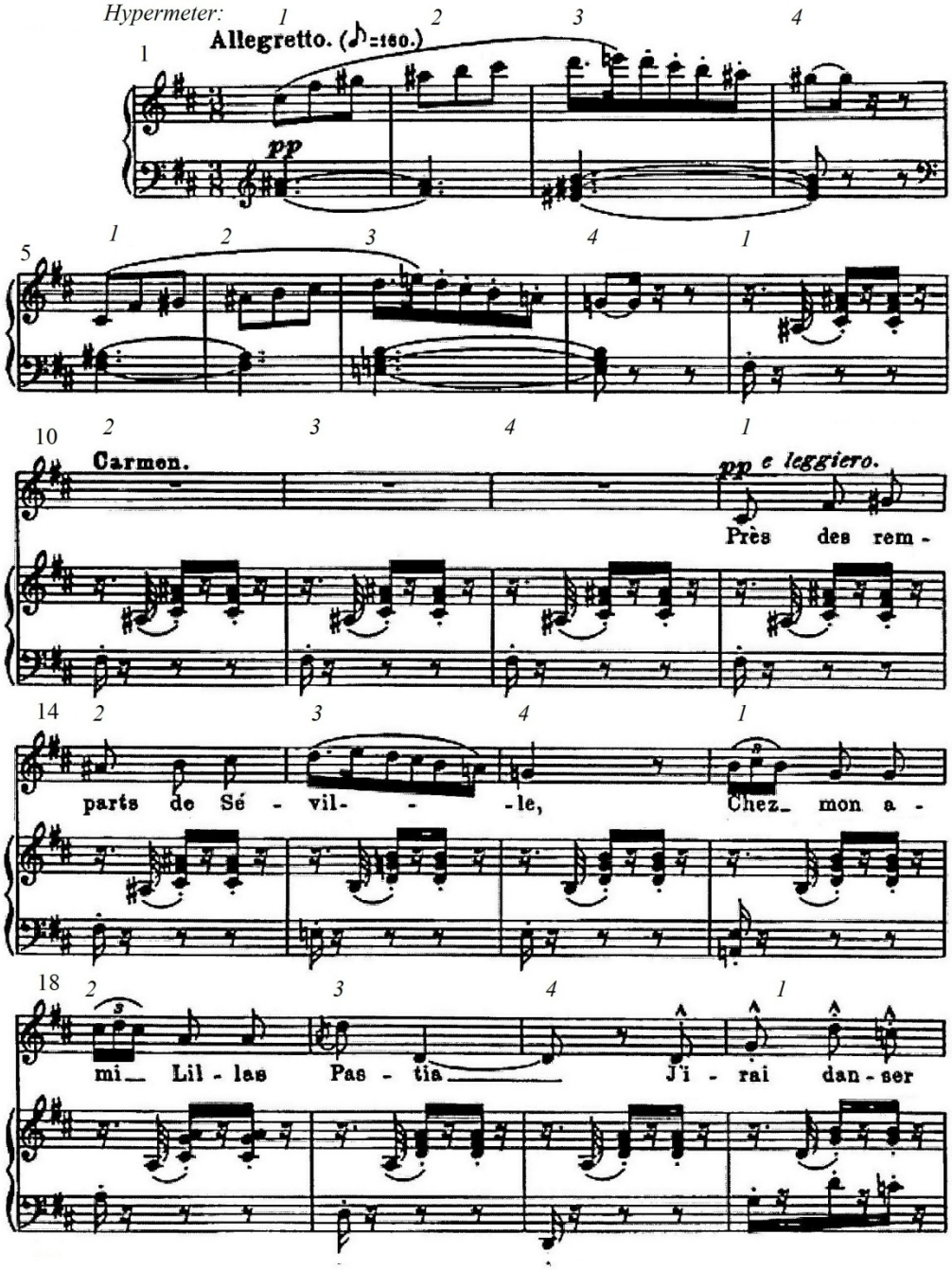


EXAMPLE 4.10. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Quintette, mm. 279–285

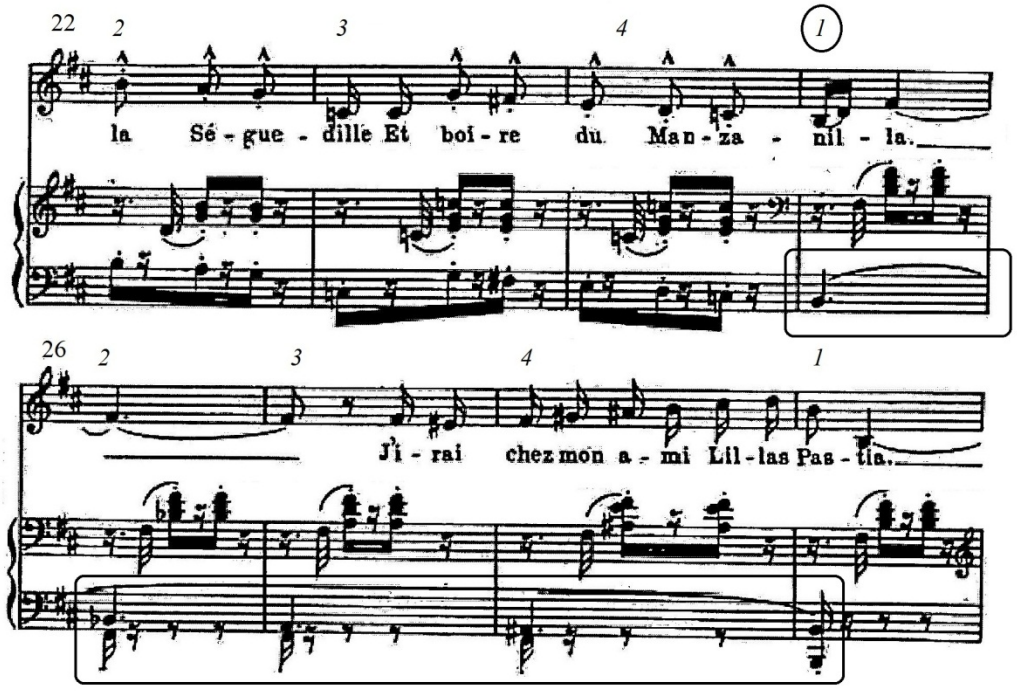
4.3 Chromaticism and Harmonic Dualism in *Carmen*

We have discussed Bizet's use of chromatic third relations in *Carmen* to create contrasting colorful sonorities at a local level (as at the beginning of the Prelude) and to create larger harmonic structures (as in the Act II quintet). As noted in our discussion above, the use of chromatic third relations implicates both chromaticism (through the introduction of non-diatonic pitches, often through modal mixture) and common-tone tonality (through shared common tones between triads). I would now like to turn to an examination of Bizet's broader use of chromaticism and common-tone tonality in *Carmen*, using as a case study the Séguedille and Duo from Act I. Ex. 4.11 below shows the opening section of the Séguedille and Duo. The prevailing tonality of the number is not immediately apparent. Susan McClary, for example, has written that modal ambiguities "make the song slippery, difficult to define tonally."[25]

[24] Ex. 4.10 includes an optional version of Carmen's line for higher-voiced singers.
[25] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 51.



(Ex. 4.11 continued on the next page)



EXAMPLE 4.11. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Séguedille et Duo, mm. 1–29

The first four measures of the orchestral introduction tonicize F-sharp major. The sense of F-sharp major as a tonic is arguably weakened by the substitution of E♮ for E♯ in the bass in mm. 7–8. However, the whole-tone bass descent from F♯ to E♮ in mm. 5–8 is evocative of the descent from tonic to subtonic in modally influenced "Spanish" or "gypsy" music and one could thus argue that F-sharp major is meaningfully tonicized in these measures despite the absence of the leading tone E♯. The rhythmic accompaniment that precedes the vocal entrance suggests the continued centrality of F-sharp major and Carmen's vocal line also begins with an arpeggiated F-sharp major triad. However, the melody quickly veers off to tonicize D major on the second line of text ("chez mon ami Lillas Pastia"). From there, the harmony follows a sequence of descending fifths before finally reaching a perfect authentic cadence in B minor, the real tonic key of the number, in m. 29.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Séguedille is a diegetic number: Carmen sings it in response to Don José's command not to speak. In the Séguedille, Carmen sings about her intended visit to the tavern of her friend Lillas Pastia, where she will amuse herself by dancing and drinking:

Près des remparts de Séville,[26]	(1,4,7)
Chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,	(1,4,7)
J'irai danser la séguedille	(2,4,8)
Et boire du manzanilla.	(2,7)

Carmen's melodic line adapts to the triple meter of the seguidilla dance form by emphasizing every third syllable of the text, instead of the alternate-syllable accentuation that we have seen in many other diegetic numbers. As is customary, the line-ending tonic accents are placed in metrically strong positions, on the first beats of the relevant measures.[27]

For this excerpt, we shall go beyond the discussion in the previous chapters and examine how Bizet lines up the verses with hypermeter, or strong-weak metrical hierarchies at the measure (as opposed to the beat) level.[28] The score excerpt in Ex. 4.11 includes an annotation of a four-measure hypermeter in italicized Arabic numerals. This hypermeter is clearly established by the eight-measure orchestral introduction and the four measures of rhythmic accompaniment that precede Carmen's vocal entrance. For the first two lines of text, the tonic accent at the end of each line, on the penultimate syllables of the words "Séville" and "Pastia," respectively, line up with hyperbeat 3 in mm. 15 and 19, respectively.

[26] The printed libretto has a slightly different first line, "Près de la porte de Séville," which has eight syllables and conforms with the syllable count in the other verses. Meilhac and Halévy, *Carmen*, 416.
[27] In an exception to the rules discussed in Chapter 2, the tonic accents in the foreign word "manzanilla" and the foreign name "Pastia" fall on the penultimate syllables, even though the final syllables in those words are not *e muets*.
[28] See Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 8–14.

After these first two lines, however, Bizet varies the rhythms of Carmen's vocal line to reflect the combined sense of the third and fourth lines of text ("I will dance the seguidilla and drink manzanilla").[29] As a result, by the time Carmen reaches the end of the first quatrain, the tonic accent on the penultimate syllable of "manzani**l**la" has been made to line up with hyperbeat 1 instead of hyperbeat 3 (see the circled number 1 at m. 25 in Ex. 4.11). It is precisely at this point that the cadential dominant to B minor is reached, over an "inverted cadential 6/4" harmony (with an implied F♯ in the bass).[30] The actual appearance of that F♯ is delayed to m. 26 and continues through m. 28. The bass F♯ (and the dominant function that it implies) thus occupies one complete hypermeasure (mm. 25–28).

One more significant thing happens in m. 25. For the first time since Carmen's entrance in this number, the orchestra introduces a new motivic idea: a chromatic motive (B–B♭–A–A♯–B) played by the cellos. This chromatic motive is circled in mm. 25–29 of the score excerpt in Ex. 4.11. The motive's salience is further reinforced by the legato articulation of the cellos, which contrasts with the staccato orchestral accompaniment up to that point, and by the lack of any competing interest in the vocal line, which mostly sustains the single pitch F♯ in mm. 25–27.

Immediately following the excerpt shown in Ex. 4.11, the chromatic motive reappears, as shown in Ex. 4.12.

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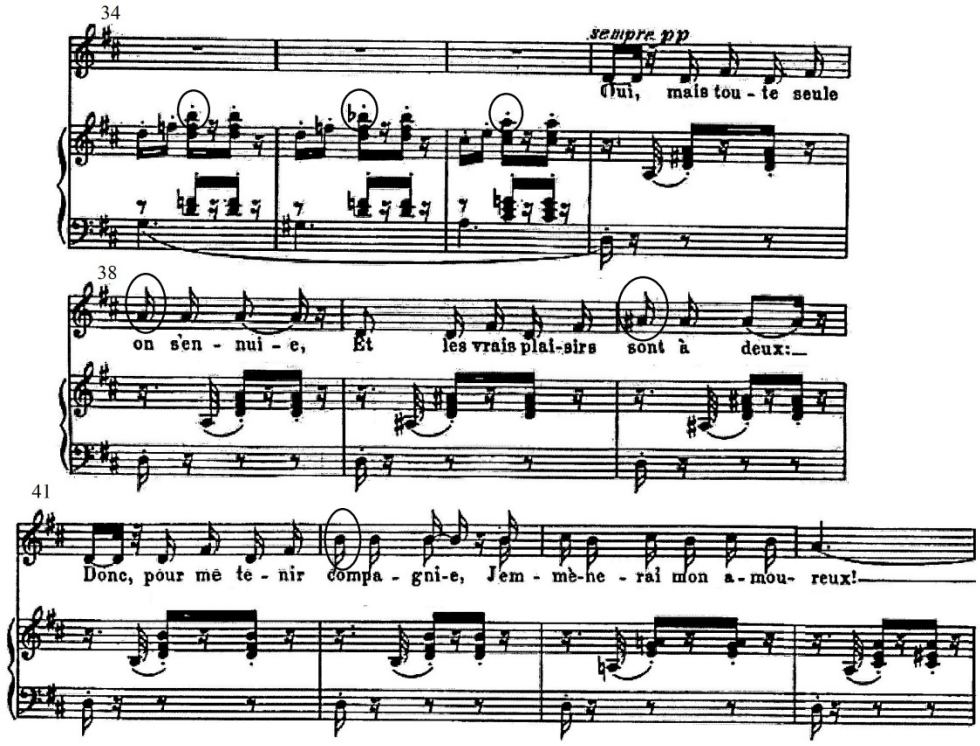
[29] Rhymes on words ending in "-ille" (such as "séguedille") were a commonplace in nineteenth-century French *opéras comiques* on Spanish themes. The practice was ridiculed by the critic Leon Lespes in 1857: "n'allons plus dans ce pays où l'œil d'une jeune *fille brille* sous la *mantille*" (italics added) ("let us no longer go to that land where the eye of a young girl shines under the mantilla"). Murphy, "*Carmen*: *Couleur Locale* or the Real Thing?", 305.

[30] "Inverted cadential 6/4 chords" do not feature scale degree 5 in the bass, and thus appear on the surface as tonic chords in root position or first inversion. Cutler, "Inverted Cadential Six-Four Harmonies." A contrasting reading is taken by Felix Salzer, who takes the B in the bass of m. 25 at face value and reads the measure as constituting a true tonic arrival. Salzer, *Structural Hearing*, Vol. 2, 174–75, Ex. 408a and b.



EXAMPLE 4.12. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Séguedille et Duo, mm. 34–44

The descending form of the motive (B–B♭–A) is in the orchestral modulation to D major in mm. 34–36, while Carmen's vocal line, doubled by the orchestra, clearly marks the ascending form of the motive: from A (in m. 38) to A♯ (in m. 40) to B (in m. 42) over a tonic pedal in D major.[31] As discussed above in Section 3.4 (see Ex. 3.18), it is also at this point in the opera that Carmen

[31] The chromatic motive can also be found transposed to other pitches and scale degrees (and featuring other harmonizations) in the Séguedille and Duo. In mm. 34–36 in Ex. 4.12, for instance, the descending B–B♭–A motive is heard against a rising chromatic motive (G–G♯–A) in the bass. In mm. 53–55 and 57–60 (not shown), the descending B–B♭–A motive in the orchestral bass is heard against D–D♯–E in the vocal line. In mm. 69–77, the pedal tone D is decorated by ascending and descending chromatic motives heard against each other (D–E♭–E♮–E♭–D in the vocal line against D–C♯–C♮–C♯–D in the orchestral bass) in a passage that Huebner analogizes to a "matador's most brilliant cape work." Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 16.

first exhibits her melodic mannerism of shifting the line-ending tonic accent to the second beat of the measure.

The use of the descending and ascending chromatic motives in Ex. 4.11 and 4.12 has been noted by Steven Huebner in an essay that considers the relationship between Carmen and Don José using the metaphor of matador (Carmen) and bull (Don José).[32] Taking Huebner's observation one step further, if we compare these two manifestations of the chromatic motive to each other, we can see that the descending form of the motive in mm. 25–27 from Ex. 4.11 and the ascending form in mm. 37–42 from Ex. 4.12 not only feature the same pitch classes, they are in fact dualistic inversions of each other.

Fig. 4.2 below illustrates Bizet's dualistic use of the chromatic motive using Hugo Riemann's notational system.[33]

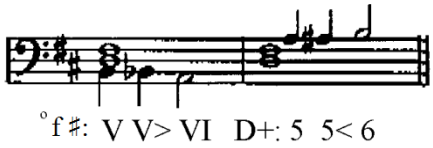


FIGURE 4.2. Dualistic chromatic motive (Séguedille, mm. 25–27 and mm. 37–42)

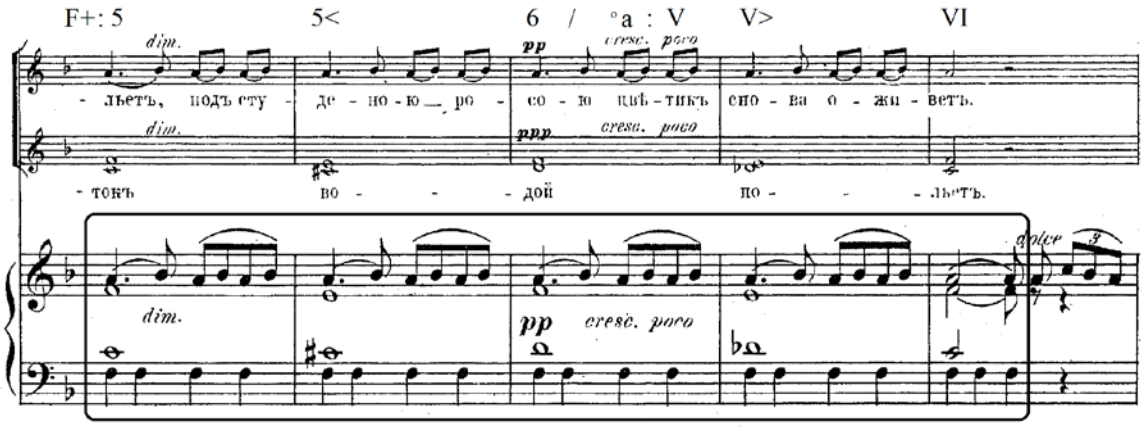
Following Riemann's convention, the three notes in the descending motive B–B♭–A against a sustained F♯-D dyad are figured with the Roman numerals V, V> (lowered V), and VI, indicating intervals of a perfect fifth, augmented fifth, and major sixth *below* the minor prime F♯ (Riemann conceived of the minor triad as being generated downward from an upper prime). On the right side of Fig. 4.2, the ascending notes A–A♯–B, against the same dyad, are figured with the Arabic numerals 5, 5< (raised 5), and 6, indicating intervals of a perfect fifth, augmented fifth,

[32] Ibid., 15–19.
[33] For a concise summary of Riemann's notational system for intervals, see Riemann, *Allgemeine Musiklehre*, 66–67.

and major sixth above a major prime (i.e., it is equivalent to the figures 5–♯5–6 above the root of a major triad). Fig. 4.2 shows that Bizet's chromatic motive has two characteristic harmonic forms: descending/ minor and ascending/major.[34]

What does this chromatic motive signify? Ralph Locke has pointed out that chromatic sliding between the fifth and sixth scale degrees is "a frequent mid-nineteenth-century symbol of yearning and sexual desire."[35] Locke discusses Bizet's use of this technique in the cigarette girls' chorus from Act I of *Carmen*. The use of this chromatic device is of course by no means limited to *Carmen*. Richard Taruskin, for example, has identified what he calls the "reversible chromatic pass between the fifth and sixth [scale] degrees" as an essential element in exoticized Orientalist music by Russian composers.[36] According to Taruskin, this device was used by composers from Glinka to Borodin, Anton Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninoff to suggest the promise or experience of *nega*, a Russian word denoting voluptuousness, lassitude, and gratified desire. Ex. 4.13 reproduces one of Taruskin's many examples, taken from the Chorus of the Polovetsian Maidens from Act II of Borodin's *Prince Igor*, featuring essentially the same motive we have been discussing in *Carmen*, albeit with the addition of a fourth (alto) voice that oscillates between F and E.

[34] The dualistic relationship shown in Fig. 4.2 is noted in passing in Henri Reber's *Traité d'harmonie*, which was approved as the official harmony textbook of the Paris Conservatoire in 1862. Reber notes that "the descending [chromatic] alteration of the [non-Riemannian, i.e. conventionally understood] root of a minor triad . . . gives an identical result to the ascending alteration of the fifth of a major triad." Reber, *Traité d'harmonie*, 114, §294 ("L'altération descendante de la fondamentale d'un accord parfait mineur . . . donne un résultat identique à celui de l'altération ascendante de la quinte d'un accord parfait majeur").
[35] Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 165.
[36] Taruskin, "'Entoiling the Falconet': Russian Musical Orientalism in Context," 266.

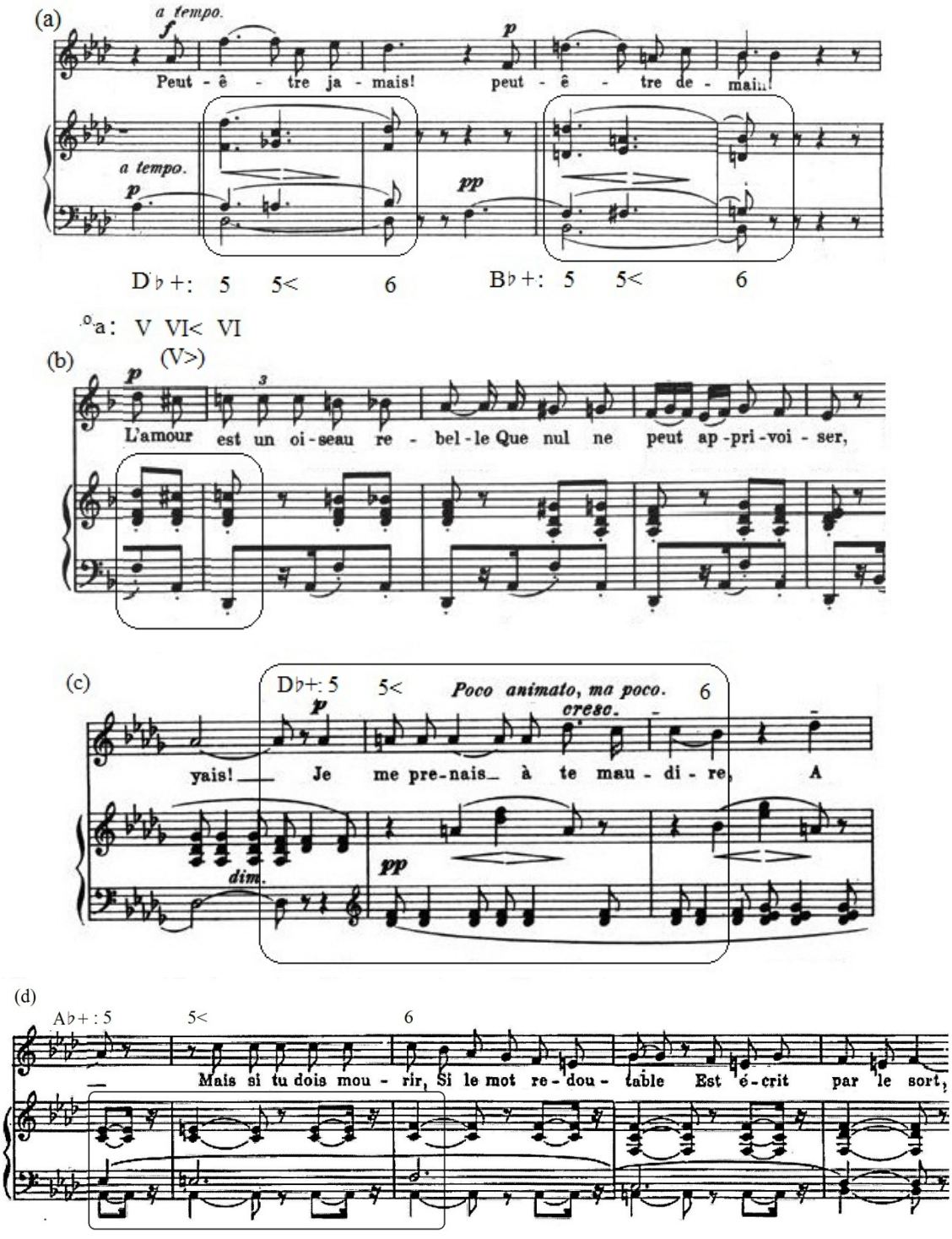


EXAMPLE 4.13. Borodin, *Prince Igor* (composed 1869–87), Act II, Chorus of the Polovetsian Maidens

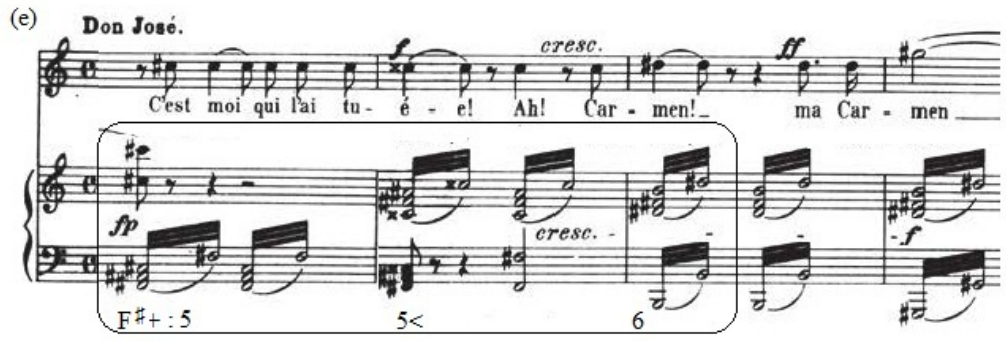
Locke and Taruskin both describe the chromatic motive only in terms of a passing motion between the fifth and sixth scale degrees in the major mode. There is, after all, no room to insert a chromatic passing tone between the fifth and sixth degrees in minor. As shown in Fig. 4.2, however, Bizet uses the principle of inversional symmetry to create a dualistic minor form of the motive in *Carmen*, with a descending 5–6 chromatic passing motion under a stationary major-third dyad. When these dualistic motives are deployed in a pair of relative major and minor keys, as in Fig. 4.2, the same pitch classes can be used.[37]

Example 4.14 (on the next page) shows Bizet's use of this dualistic chromatic motive in five numbers, taken from each of the four acts of *Carmen*. Ex. 4.14a is taken from Carmen's first entrance in the opera, where her flirtation with her numerous admirers is accompanied by the ascending 5–5<–6 motive over a major prime D♭.

[37] Steven Laitz points out this relation in his article on the use of the chromatic motive composed of scale degrees 5–♯5/♭6–6 (which Laitz calls the "submediant complex") in the songs of Schubert. Laitz points out that the submediant-complex scale degrees in major can be reinterpreted as scale degrees ♮7, ♯7, and 8 in minor, and vice versa. Laitz, "The Submediant Complex," 132.



EXAMPLE 4.14. Motivic references across numbers in *Carmen*:
(a) Act I, Scene V (Carmen's entrance), mm. 191–194; (b) Act I, Habanera, mm. 4–8;
(c) Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 188–190;
(d) Act III, Trio (Air des cartes), mm. 209–213



EXAMPLE 4.14. Motivic references across numbers in *Carmen* (continued): (e) Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 204–207

Shortly thereafter, Carmen sings the Habanera. As shown in Ex. 4.14b, the Habanera features the descending (minor) version of the motive: D–C♯(D♭)–C, or V–VI<(V>)–VI under the minor prime A.[38] It is worth noting in this regard that that while the melody of the Habanera was borrowed from Iradier, the characteristic harmonization of the descending chromatic melody with a sustained tonic minor triad is Bizet's original contribution.[39] Ex. 4.14c is taken from Don José's "Flower Song" from Act II, in which he describes the conflicted feelings he had for Carmen while he was in prison. Ex. 4.14d is from Carmen's solo in the Card Scene from Act III, in which she contemplates the tragic fate that her cards have foretold.[40] Finally, Ex. 4.14e shows the ascending major form of the motive from the final minutes of the score, as Don José tells the

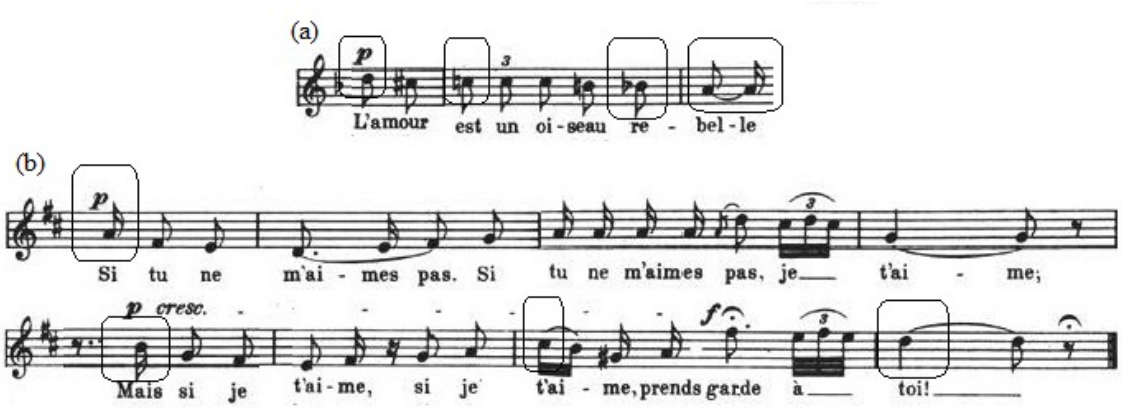
[38] Bizet changed the notation of the second note in the melody of the Habanera from D♭ in the original source (Iradier's "El arreglito") to C♯ even though it is part of a descending chromatic scale. Steven Huebner has noted the connection between the opening of the Habanera (Ex. 4.14b) and the descending chromatic motive at m. 25 of the Séguedille (Ex. 4.11). Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 15.

[39] See the discussion of the adaptation of the Habanera from Iradier's "El arreglito" in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4).

[40] Ex. 4.14d initiates a chromaticized ascending 5–6 sequence. The chromatic ascent in the bass (A♭–A♮–B♭) in the second half of the system forms part of that sequence.

guards to arrest him for Carmen's murder.[41] Taken together and in conjunction with the Séguedille, these examples suggest that Bizet used the dualistic chromatic motive to create motivic references across numbers and to create a distinctive sound world for this opera that is different from that of Bizet's other works. To borrow a term from Verdi scholarship, the chromatic motive, in its dualistic harmonic contexts, forms an essential element of the *tinta musicale* of *Carmen*.

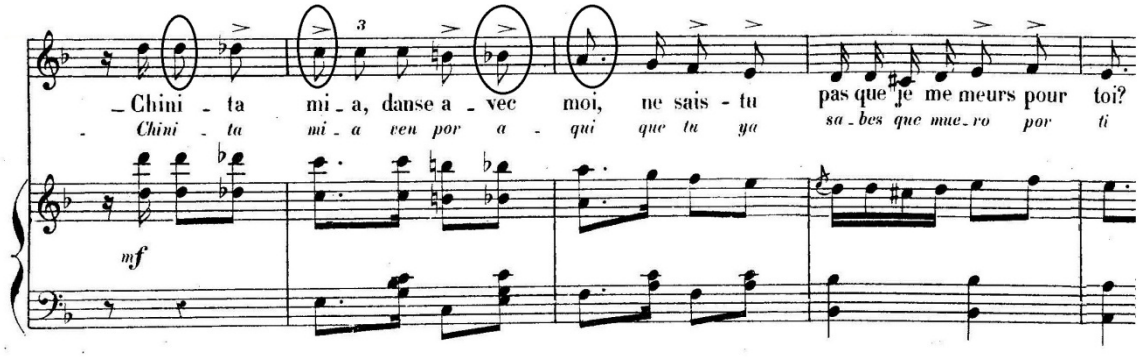
If the chromatic nature of the motive signifies exoticism and sexual desire, as Taruskin suggests, the dualistic nature of the motive reflects perhaps the dialectics of desire, from the pleasures of flirtation and seduction to the dangers of infatuation, jealousy, obsession, and violence. Carmen refers explicitly to this double-sided view of love in the refrain to the Habanera, in verses written by Bizet himself: "Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime; | Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!" In light of these verses, it is possible to interpret the Habanera itself as reflecting the dualistic opposition of descending/minor and ascending/major forces, as illustrated in Ex. 4.15.



EXAMPLE 4.15. Harmonic dualism in the Habanera

[41] Ex. 4.14e is used to illustrate the derivation of an augmented triad from a major triad in Aldwell, Schachter, and Cadwallader, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 597.

Ex. 4.15a shows that the opening of the Habanera outlines a descending minor tetrachord (D–C–B♭–A) in D minor, which can be interpreted as intervals V, VI, VII>, and VIII below the Riemannian minor prime of A.[42] The inference of this diatonic substructure from the chromatic melody is supported by the prominent placement of C♮ on a downbeat and by the harmonic context (i.e., the arpeggiated D minor triad in the lower strings) against which the melody is heard. The diatonic substructure is heard even more clearly in the source for the Habanera, Iradier's "El arreglito" (see Ex. 4.16), in which the first full measure of the melody is harmonized with the dominant seventh of F major, and C and B♭ in the descending melody are clearly understood as diatonic pitches and chord tones.



EXAMPLE 4.16. Iradier, "El arreglito," mm. 8–12

Ex. 4.15b shows the dualistic ascending/major form of this scalar motive in the parallel major, or D major, at the end of the Habanera: A–B♮–C♯–D, or intervals 5, 6, 7<, and 8 above

[42] A harmonized version of this descending tetrachord, ending with a Phrygian half-cadence (also known as an "Andalusian cadence"), is often found in Spanish-influenced French music. Le Bordays, "L'hispanisme musical français," 48. As discussed above, the bass descent F♯–E in mm. 5–8 of the Séguedille alludes to this practice by harmonizing the first two notes of the descending tetrachord. Susan McClary has written that the C♮ in Ex. 4.15a is a "rather funky chromatic inflection" that Carmen "rubs our noses in . . . to make sure we get it." McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 58. I would contend that C♮ is not a chromatically inflected note in this context, but part of a descending (diatonic) minor tetrachord.

the major prime D (which is heard as a bass pedal in the orchestral accompaniment). In this dualistic reading of the Habanera, the descending/minor version of the motive at the beginning of Carmen's melody is counterbalanced by the ascending/major version at the end. A similar view could also be taken of the *Chanson bohème* from Act II, which similarly starts with a descending Phrygian tetrachord in minor and ends with the inversional ascending major tetrachord in major.

On a related note, Carl Schachter has noted Bizet's dualistic juxtaposition of the ascending and descending forms of the tetrachord C–D♭–E♭–F in the climax to Carmen's *Air des cartes* in Act III in an article on ascending and descending motion in musical space. Schachter notes that "the mirror form [in the *Air des cartes*] is literally a retrograde, but many listeners, I imagine, would call it an inversion despite the different position of the half step."[43] In Schachter's reading of the *Air des cartes*, the ascending tetrachord makes for a "rather unfulfilled arrival on F [from E♭]," underscoring "Carmen's description of human impotence in the face of a hostile destiny." In contrast, the descending Phrygian tetrachord functions as "an age-old musical symbol of death," underlining Carmen's repeated cries of "la mort!"[44]

As Carl Dahlhaus has argued, *Carmen* is "a tragedy not because of its outcome, but because both Carmen and Don José, with a courage born of despair, shoulder . . . an inescapable joint destiny in which each is the victim of the other."[45] Nelly Furman has similarly suggested that "whether we see José as victim or Carmen as martyr, we are forever caught in the mirror image of a master/slave relationship, where the two main characters are reflections of each other."[46] I would suggest that Bizet's use of dualistic oppositions (major-minor, ascending-

[43] Schachter, "Schoenberg's Hat and Lewis Carroll's Trousers," 334–35.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Dahlhaus, *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 89.
[46] Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*," 172.

descending, sharps-flats) provides us with an effective musical lens through which to contemplate the dialectics of the tragedy of Carmen and Don José.[47]

4.4 Common-tone Tonality in the Séguedille and Duo

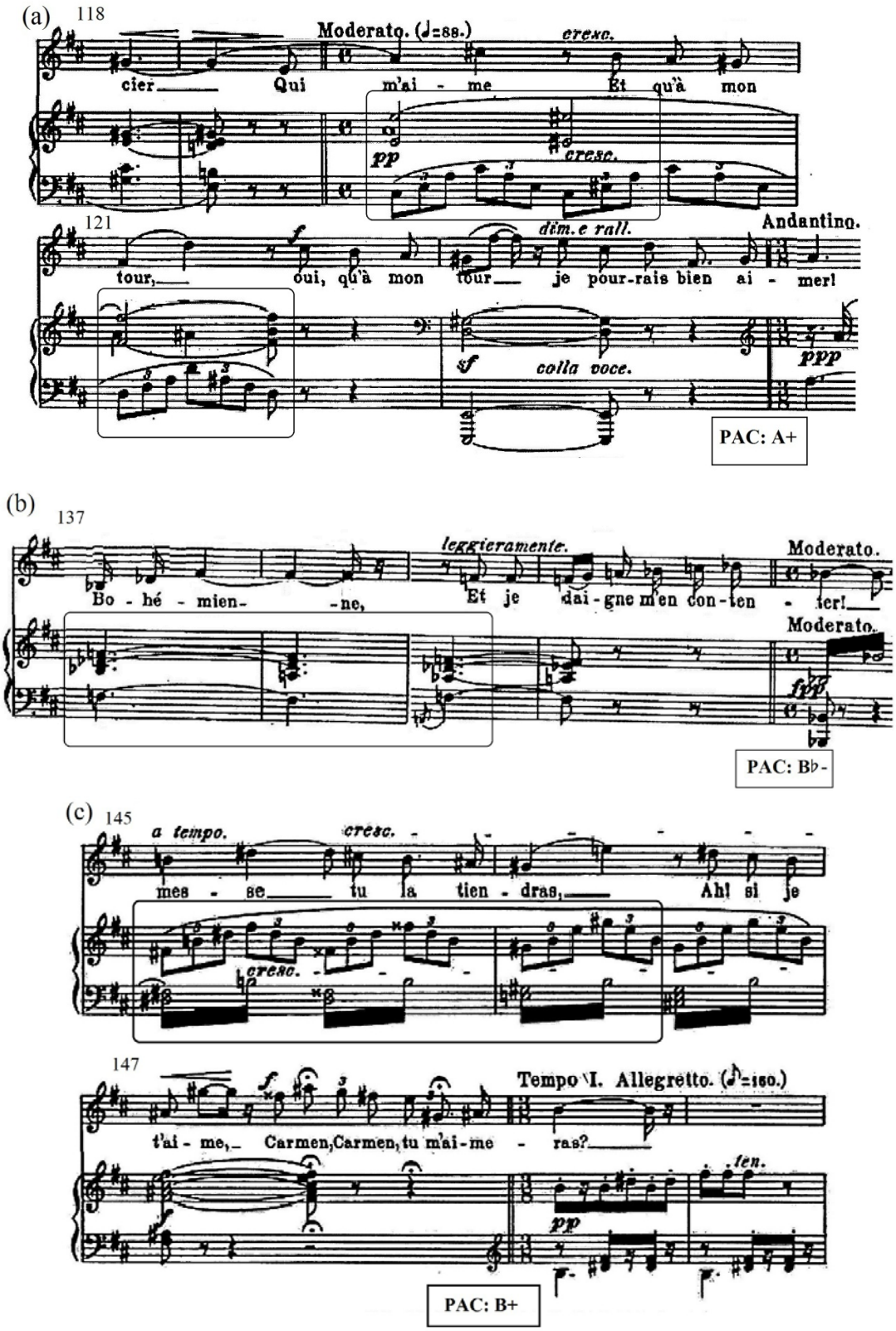
We have discussed Bizet's use of chromaticism and harmonic dualism in the opening section of the the Séguedille and Duo. I would now like to examine Bizet's use of common-tone tonality in the same number. Table 4.1 below summarizes the ternary (***ABA***) structure of the number, with Carmen's Séguedille framing a central duet with Don José. The lower-case labels in Table 4.1 show that thematic material is repeated throughout the number. The opening Séguedille section (***A***) is itself a ternary form (***aba***), while the central duet section (***B***) features both new thematic material (***c***) and transposed or reworked versions of the ***a*** and ***b*** subsections from the Séguedille. In the course of the loosely structured, at times recitative-like, duet between Carmen and Don José, she successfully seduces him and persuades him to help her escape by hinting not very subtly at her amorous feelings towards him.

[47] Other (non-musical) oppositions that structure the opera include "freedom and possessiveness, northern ethics and southern mores, Spaniards and gypsies, bourgeois values and bohemian life styles, etc." Ibid., 173.

Sections / Subsections	Measures	Ending Harmony / Cadence
A (Séguedille)		
a ("Près des remparts de Séville")	1–33	PAC in B-
b ("Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie")	34–81	D^7 (apparent V^7 of G+ reinterpreted as German augmented sixth in F♯+)
a ("Près des remparts de Séville")	82–102	PAC in B-
B (Duo)		
c ("Tais toi! . . ." / "Je ne te parle pas . . .")	102–123	PAC in A+
a ("Mon officier n'est pas un capitaine")	123–141	PAC in B♭-
c ("Carmen, je suis comme un homme ivre")	141–148	PAC in B+
(Retransition)		
b ("Oui, nous danserons la séguedille")	148–161	A♯+ (apparent V of D♯- reinterpreted as III♯ of F♯+)
A (Séguedille)		
a ("Près des remparts de Séville")	162–182	PAC in B-

TABLE 4.1. Formal structure of the Séguedille and Duo.

The right-hand column of Table 4.1 shows that the successive stages of Carmen's seduction of Don José in this central duet are marked by three successive perfect authentic cadences. These cadences, marked by tempo changes in the score, are shown in Ex. 4.17, on the following page.



EXAMPLE 4.17. Motivic tonality: successive cadences outlining the motive A–A♯[B♭]–B: Bizet, *Carmen*, Séguedille et Duo, (a) mm. 118–123; (b) mm. 137–141; (c) mm. 145–148

Ex. 4.17a shows the perfect authentic cadence in A major that punctuates the end of Carmen's sweeping melodic phrase, in which she coyly refers to a certain officer "who loves [her], and whom [she] in turn could very well love."[48] Following a tempo change and a brief interjection from Don José, Carmen continues her seduction by reprising the main melody of the Séguedille, ending with a cadence in B-flat minor, as shown in Ex. 4.17b. Finally, Don José succumbs and repeats Carmen's sweeping phrase from Ex. 4.17a at a higher pitch level, ending with a cadence in B major, as shown in Ex. 4.17c. The successive cadences in the keys of A major, B-flat minor, and B major recall what Robert Bailey has called Wagner's "expressive" use of tonality, in which passages are repeatedly transposed to higher pitch levels to underscore intensification.[49] Steven Huebner has noted Gounod's use of the same device in *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*.[50]

But there is more to say about these cadences in Ex. 4.17. The successive tonics A, B♭, and B not only signify emotional intensification, they also spell out the same chromatic motive that plays such a significant part in the Séguedille proper and that we discussed at length in the previous section. As Steven Huebner has noted, the central Duo thus represents a "composing out" of the A to A♯ to B chromatic motive established early on in the Séguedille.[51] In other words, Bizet employs a kind of "motivic tonality" in this number. The chromatic motive that is originally presented with clarity on the musical surface is sublimated to form part of the

[48] Susan McClary describes Carmen's change of melodic style here (from diegetic to lyrical) as emblematic of her mastery of multiple discursive practices. As Carmen sings of love, she "pivots into the mode of lyric urgency that marked José's and Micaëla's interchanges" and "José swallows this simulacrum of 'authenticity' hook, line and sinker." McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 88.
[49] Bailey, "The Structure of the 'Ring' and Its Evolution," 51.
[50] Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 251–54.
[51] Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 16–17.

underlying harmonic structure in a way that takes us far beyond the realms of decorative chromatic inflection and exotic local color.

We shall now consider large-scale harmonic motion in the Séguedille and Duo in greater detail. In order to compose out his chromatic motive, Bizet needed to get from B minor to A major to B-flat minor to B major within a relatively small number of measures. How, and how well, did he accomplish this task?

I propose to use the theoretical writings of Vincent d'Indy as a guide to this inquiry. As a student in César Franck's organ class at the Paris Conservatoire in 1875, d'Indy won a lottery drawing for a ticket donated by Bizet to the premiere of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique. In fact, d'Indy was one of the first people to congratulate Bizet, prematurely as it turned out, during one of the first two intermissions.[52] Years later, in discussing the music of *Carmen* in the posthumously published final volume of his *Cours de composition musicale*, d'Indy singled out the tonal progression in the Séguedille and Duo for praise, pointing out that the succession of keys in the number is both "simple and logical," even though it was harshly criticized by harmony professors at the time.[53] In contrast, in his study of Bizet, Henry Malherbe describes how the music of the Séguedille launches itself towards "wide-apart, dissident, unusual, constantly changing keys" and how it "leaps and wriggles," resembling in its modal indecision "a flame, a flamenco dancer, Carmen herself, so cruelly inconstant."[54]

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[52] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 668–69.
[53] D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale*, Vol. 3, 195 ("[o]n rencontre des successions tonales bien simples et logiques, que pourtant les professeurs du temps condamnaient à qui mieux mieux").
[54] Malherbe, *Bizet*, 248 ("la Séguedille s'élance vers des tonalités écartées, dissidentes, inaccoutumées et toujours changeantes . . . La Séguedille bondit et se tortille, dans son indécision modale, comme une flamme, comme une danseuse de flamenco, comme Carmen elle-même, si cruellement inconstante").

What made the succession of keys in the Séguedille and Duo that appeared "cruelly inconstant" to Malherbe a "simple and logical" one for d'Indy? The clue to d'Indy's thinking can be found in the first volume of the *Cours de composition musicale*, in which d'Indy sets forth his views on key relations. In the chapter on "Expression," d'Indy sets forth his view that all keys whose tonic triads share at least one common tone share a first-order, or direct, relation to each other. D'Indy calls keys whose triads are linked by common tone *tonalités voisines*, or "neighbor keys."[55]

Fig. 4.3 below reproduces d'Indy's "Table of Neighbor Keys."[56] The table is divided into four columns. The second and third columns show the eleven neighbor keys for C major and A minor, respectively.

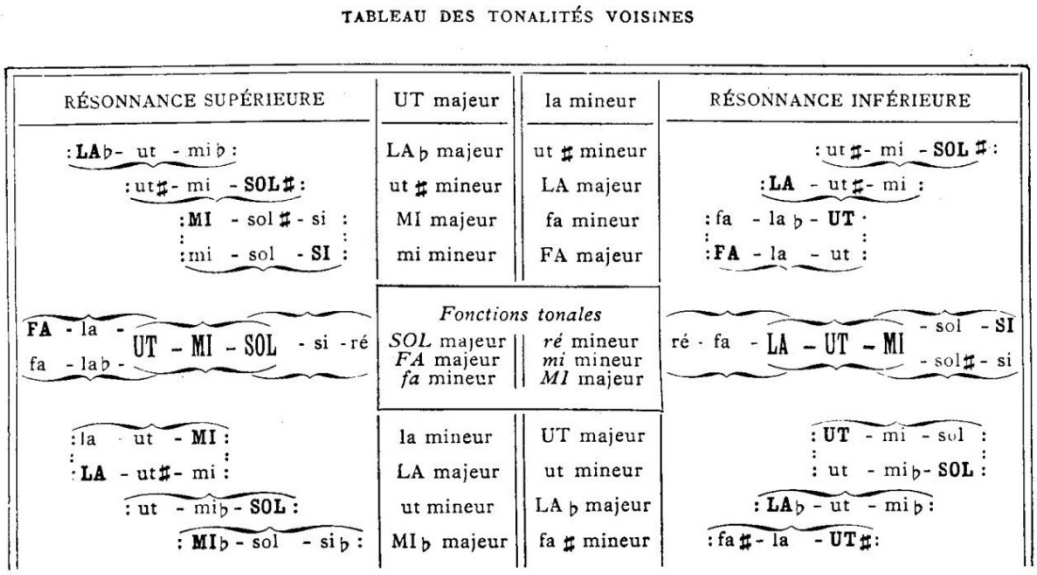


FIGURE 4.3. Vincent d'Indy's Table of "Neighbor Keys"

[55] d'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale*, Vol. 1, 127–30.

[56] The table in Fig. 4.3 can be found in ibid., 129. The original table mistakenly spells the C♯ minor triad as C♯–E–G (instead of G♯, or SOL♯). This typographical error has been corrected in Fig. 4.3

The first and fourth columns of d'Indy's table lay out the members of the tonic triad for each of the neighbor keys, with common tones (and their chromatic inflections) lined up vertically. The bolded upper-case pitches give the primes for each of the neighbor keys. D'Indy subscribed to Riemann's dualistic view of the major and minor modes. The minor triads in d'Indy's table thus have Riemannian upper primes. The triads in the three central rows under the caption "*Fonctions tonales*" have tonal functions under d'Indy's harmonic theory. In the key of C major (the second column of Fig. 4.3), G major has a dominant function, while F major and F minor share a subdominant function. D'Indy's dualistic view of the modes extended to tonal function. Accordingly (and contrary to both Riemann's theory of harmonic function and modern North American usage), in the key of A minor (the third column of Fig. 4.3), it is the D minor triad that serves a *dominant* function and E minor and E major that share a *subdominant* function (note the placement of these triads in the same row of the table as their major-mode counterparts).[57] Although they all have a common-tone relation to the tonic, d'Indy stated that the neighbor keys that do not serve a tonal function are, in a sense, secondary to those that do.[58]

As we can see from Fig. 4.3, d'Indy lists only eleven neighbor keys for each tonic. There should actually be twelve common-tone related neighbor keys for each key, but d'Indy excludes the minor dominant of C major (i.e., G minor) and the major dominant of A minor (D major

[57] The cadential progression E+→A- is thus a *plagal* cadence in A minor for d'Indy: it is the dualistic equivalent of F-→C+ in C major . For d'Indy, the major and minor variants of the subdominant are derived through simple modal mixture ("une simple substitution de mode"). Ibid., 111. For an explanation of why there is only one chord with dominant function in d'Indy's table, see note 59 below. D'Indy's theory of harmonic function is more thoroughly dualized than Riemann's and anticipates Sigfrid Karg-Elert's later work in *Polaristiche Klang- und Tonalitätslehre (Harmonologik)* (1931). See Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music*, 313–20. As Harrison notes, Karg-Elert's approach reaches back beyond Riemann to the dualistic theories of Arthur von Oettingen and, in doing so, addresses a perceived shortcoming in Riemann's function theory identified by the Dutch theorist Ary Belinfante in 1904. Ibid., 273 (note 37) and 307.

[58] Ibid., 129 ("les autres tonalités voisines sont, ainsi pour dire, secondaires").

under d'Indy's system) from his table, on the grounds that they fundamentally contradict the character of the prevailing tonic mode.[59]

I shall abstract from d'Indy's table the broader principle that all keys whose tonic triads share at least one common tone can be considered to be related to each other. This principle of common-tone tonality (which incorporates the chromatic mediant relations discussed in the first part of this chapter) is illustrated graphically in Fig. 4.4.

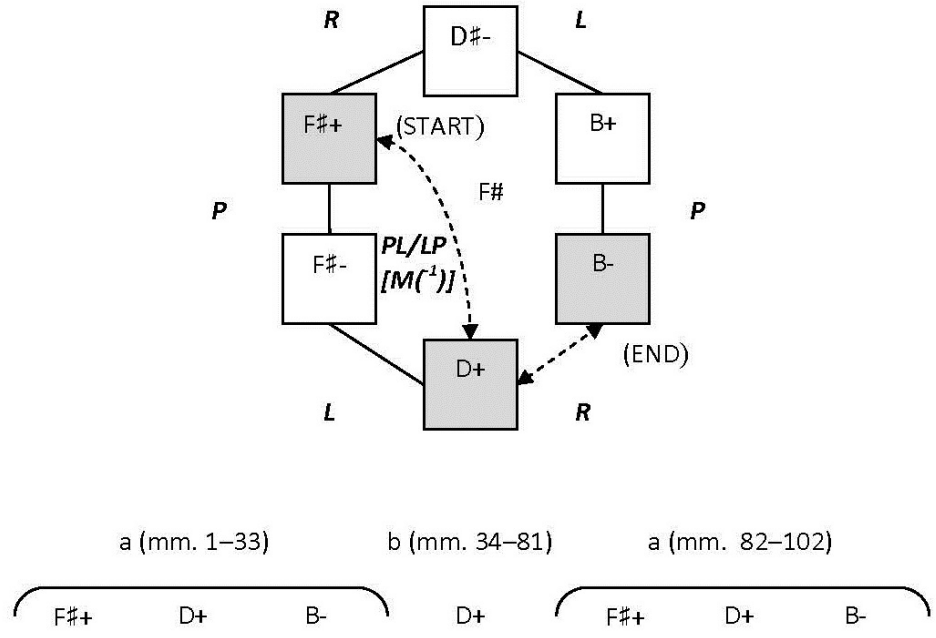


FIGURE 4.4. Foreground keys in the first section of the Séguedille (mm. 1–102)

The hexagonal network in Fig. 4.4 shows the six major and minor keys that are related through the presence of the common tone F-sharp in their tonic triads, namely F-sharp major and

[59] D'Indy points out that the minor dominant of C major (G minor) contains the pitch B♭, which contradicts B♮, the leading-tone (*sensible*) that is characteristic of the dominant function in major. Likewise, the major dominant of A minor (D major under d'Indy's definition) contains F♯, which contradicts F♮, the "descending leading-tone" (*sensible descendante*) that is characteristic of the dominant function in minor. Ibid., 128–29. In d'Indy's dualistic system, the *sensible descendante* in minor stands in the same relation to the minor prime as the *sensible* does to the major prime.

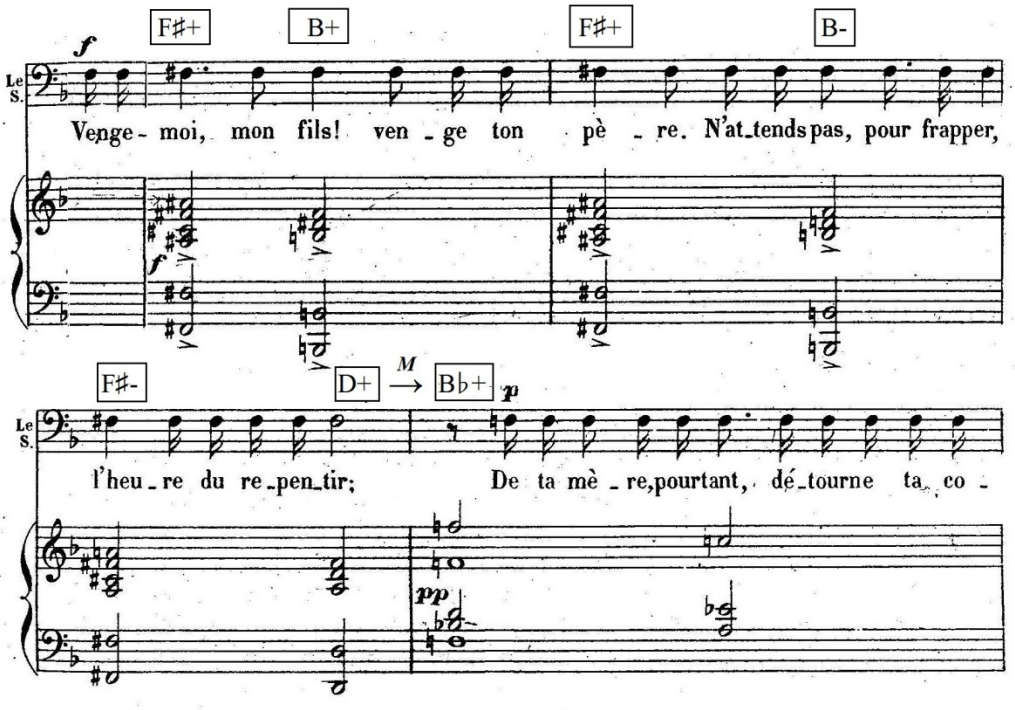
minor, D major, D-sharp (or E-flat) minor, and B major and minor.[60] The common pitch shared by these triads (F♯) is shown in the center of the network. The lines along the edge of the hexagon connect triads that are linked by one of the three neo-Riemannian ***PLR*** transformations.[61] Vertical lines denote the ***P*** (parallel major-minor) transformation, diagonal lines with a positive slope denote the ***R*** (relative major-minor) transformation, and diagonal lines with a negative slope denote the ***L*** (*Leittonwechsel*) transformation. Chromatic mediant and other non-***PLR*** relations can be expressed either as unitary transformations (following David Kopp's practice) or as compound ***PLR*** transformations on the network (***M***=***PL***, ***m***=***RP***, $\boldsymbol{M^{-1}}$=***LP***, $\boldsymbol{m^{-1}}$=***PR***, etc.).[62] I shall use a space (or map) composed of an interlocking series of these hexagonal networks to investigate Bizet's use of common-tone tonality in the Séguedille and Duo.[63]

At the bottom of Fig. 4.4, I have set forth the succession of foreground keys in the opening section of the Séguedille, mm. 1–102. As we saw in Table 4.1, this section has a ternary, or ***aba***, structure. As we have already discussed, the opening ***a*** subsection tonicizes F-sharp major and D major, before finally establishing B minor. The central ***b*** subsection is essentially in D major, and the ***a*** subsection returns to round off the ***A*** section. This succession of keys has

[60] Since my analysis in the remainder of this section no longer focuses on the inversional properties of the major and minor modes, I have not followed the practice of Riemann and d'Indy in labelling minor triads in Fig. 4.4 or the remaining figures in this chapter. Thus, the B minor triad is abbreviated in Fig. 4.4 as "B-" and not as "^{o}f♯."
[61] See Cohn, "Neo-Riemannian Operations" for definitions of the ***PLR*** transformations.
[62] In Figures 4.4 through 4.8, all compound ***PLR*** transformations are also labeled in the alternative in brackets as single transformations (e.g., ***PL=[M]***) following Kopp's system, as summarized in Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 172 (Table 7.2).
[63] The same map of networks has been used in other studies, including Siciliano, "Two Neo-Riemannian Analyses" (analyzing two Schubert lieder), and Jones, "Lowinsky's Scarlet Letter" (on the Prologue to Orlando di Lasso's *Prophetiae Sibyllarum*). Daniel Harrison has similarly charted "key itineraries" in the music of Liszt, Mahler, and Richard Strauss using a differently configured *Klangnetz*. See Harrison, "Nonconformist Notions of Nineteenth-Century Enharmonicism."

been mapped onto the network in Fig 4.4. The three shaded boxes represent the three foreground keys. Starting from F-sharp major, the dotted arrows trace the succession of these keys in Carmen's music. I have labeled in the figure the transformations between the successive tonic triads. Since I am charting transformations between triads representing successive foreground keys, the transformations shown in my diagrams may not actually occur in direct succession on the musical surface. Fig. 4.4 shows that the common tone F♯ is constantly being reinterpreted in the opening section of the Séguedille, functioning first as the root of F-sharp major, then as the third of D major, and finally as the fifth of B minor.

Bizet's use of common-tone tonality in *Carmen* may have been influenced by the Esplanade scene from Thomas's *Hamlet*, which as noted above he much admired. Ex. 4.18 provides an example of the use of common-tone-related triads in the Esplanade scene to harmonize the single pitch F♯.



EXAMPLE 4.18. Thomas, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scène de l'Esplanade

In the Esplanade scene, the Ghost mostly declaims in monotones, first on D3, then on F3, and finally on F♯3 (shown in Ex. 4.18), before subsiding back to F3 and D3. Ex. 4.18 thus marks the highest point of this arc and contains the most intense part of the Ghost's speech, the exhortation to Hamlet to avenge his father. As illustrated in Ex. 4.18, the Ghost's melodic pitch of F♯ is harmonized by five out of the six triads that contain that pitch (refer back to Fig. 4.4): F-sharp major and minor, B major and minor, and D major. In his recent study of common-tone tonality in Italian Romantic opera, William Rothstein points out that in that repertoire, a focal melodic pitch (dubbed a *sonorità* by Pierluigi Pietrobelli) can often function as an organizing principle. Rothstein notes that "the *sonorità* de-privileges the bass of a musical texture, using melodic pitches (not tonics) as the principal agent of coherence."[64] Ex. 4.18 illustrates the use of F♯ as a *sonorità* in *Hamlet*, with the triads in the first three measures linked purely by a common-tone relation to F-sharp, and not by reference to any prevailing tonic key.[65]

Returning to *Carmen*, we can note that the character of Carmen is musically associated with the reinterpretation of common tones from her first appearance in the opera, in the scene that immediately precedes the Habanera (Act I, Scene V). In that scene, following Carmen's entrance ("la voilà, voilà la Carmencita!"), her male admirers ask her (in F minor) to tell them when she will love them back ("Carmen, dis-nous quel jour tu nous aimeras!"). Susan McClary describes in a characteristically colorful way what follows next:

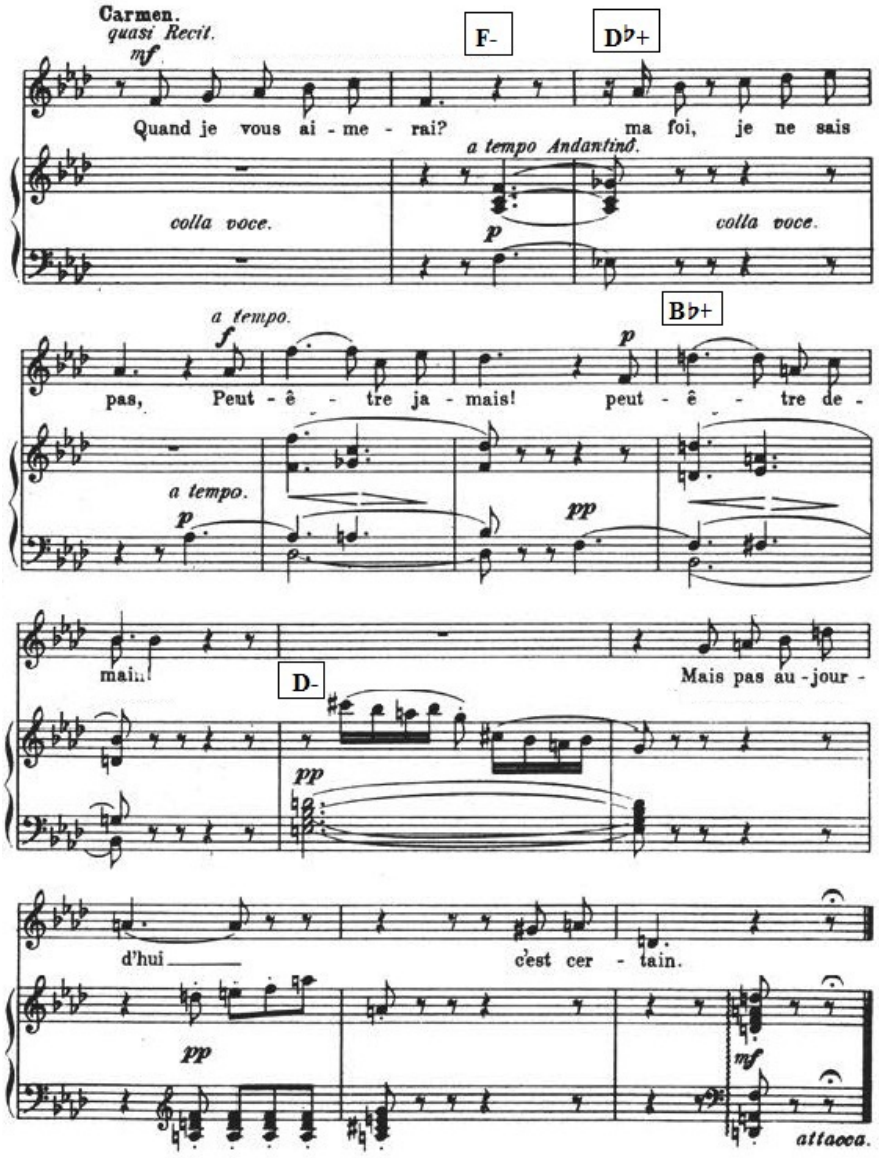
> For her first utterance, Carmen picks up the question posed by the men ("Quand je vous aimerai?") and also their F minor tonality. But she quickly takes control of both tonality and the right to sexual aggression. She toys with expectations by harmonizing the

[64] Rothstein, "Common-tone Tonality in Italian Romantic Opera," ¶12–13. Rothstein cites the earlier work of scholars such as Pierluigi Pietrobelli, Martin Chusid, Harold Powers, and David Rosen in his discussion of *sonorità*.

[65] The ***M*** (or ***PL***) transformation of D major to B-flat major at the end of Ex. 4.18 prefigures the juxtaposition of those triads at the end of the Esplanade scene, as shown in Ex. 4.3.

> pitch [F] — which they had extended so hopefully — in as many ways as possible: she displays herself in D♭ major with a languorous melodic arch up to [F5], then subtly pivots and arouses the desire for B♭ major, before slamming the door with her refusal in an unambiguous D minor[.][66]

A score excerpt for this scene is shown in Ex. 4.19.



EXAMPLE 4.19. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Scene V (Carmen's entrance), mm. 188–200

[66] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 73–74.

Fig. 4.5 below is a graphical depiction of McClary's verbal account of how Carmen "takes control of tonality," using the same hexagonal network as Fig. 4.4, but this time with F as the common pitch in the network.

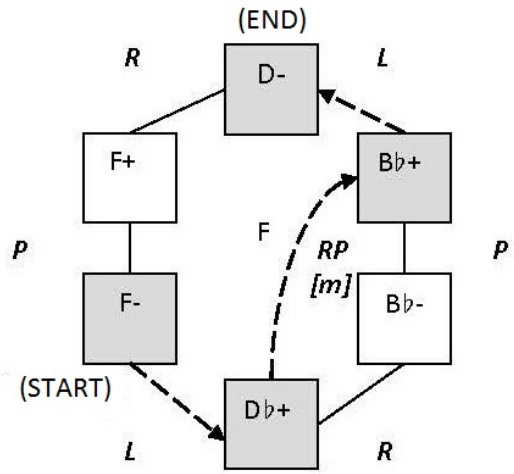


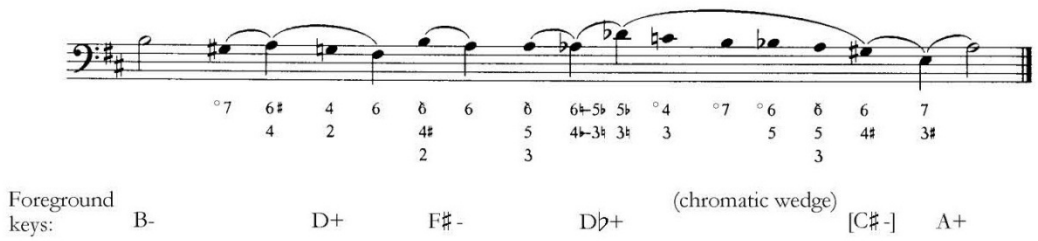
FIGURE 4.5. Succession of foreground keys, *Carmen*, Act I, Scene V
(from Carmen's entrance up to the Habanera)

The dashed arrows in Fig. 4.5 trace Carmen's traversal of common-tone-related foreground keys, from F minor to D-flat major, then to B-flat major and finally to D minor, the key of the Habanera. Fig. 4.5 reveals that Carmen takes a roundabout "counter-clockwise" route to get from F minor to D minor, even though there is a more direct "clockwise" route (through F major) available.

The central section of the Séguedille and Duo can be thought of as a large-scale manifestation of Carmen's use of common-tone tonality, a harmonic technique that McClary associates with the "right to sexual aggression." Fig. 4.6 below extends this mode of analysis to mm. 102–123 of the Séguedille and Duo. Fig. 4.6a is a figured-bass reduction for the first section of the central Duo, up to the cadence in A major. Various triads are tonicized in the course of these highly chromatic measures, primarily through the use of applied dominants and

leading-tone chords. The succession of these tonicized triads is given below the staff in Fig. 4.6a.[67] The succession of keys in Fig. 4.6a has in turn been mapped onto the adjacent

(a)



(b)

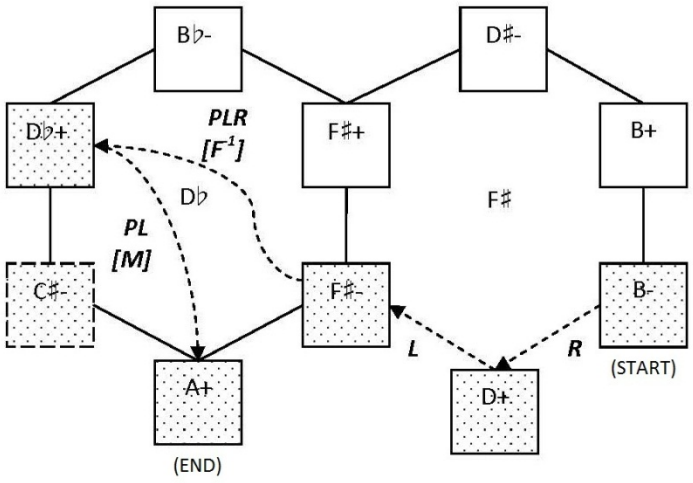


FIGURE 4.6. (a) Bass-line reduction; and
(b) map of foreground keys in mm. 102–123 of the Séguedille et Duo

common-tone networks shown in Fig. 4.6b. Starting with B minor on the far right (which is where we left off in Fig. 4.4) and following the arrows, Carmen's music successively tonicizes D major, F-sharp minor, and D-flat major, before finally reaching a cadence in A major.[68] Each

[67] C-sharp minor is bracketed in Fig. 4.6a and placed in a dashed box in Fig. 4.6b because it is tonicized (by an apparently cadential six-four chord) but not sounded. Instead, the apparent cadential six-four chord resolves to the dominant of A major instead.

[68] The move from F-sharp minor to D-flat major (***PLR*** under neo-Riemannian theory) features upward root motion by a perfect fifth combined with a change of mode and is labeled an inverse

successive tonic triad is related to the preceding one by a common-tone relation. F-sharp minor acts as a kind of common-tone pivot between D major, which precedes it, and D-flat major, which follows it. Just as in the scene preceding the Habanera, Bizet has made use of the "slippery" sounds of common-tone tonality in the Séguedille and Duo to depict Carmen's seductive wiles. Even though the starting and ending tonic triads in Fig. 4.6 (B minor and A major) do not share any common tones, Fig. 4.6 shows a "logical" way (to use d'Indy's term) to get from B minor to A major through the tonicization of an intermediate series of common-tone-related triads.

Fig. 4.7 on the following page maps out the succession of keys in the next stage of the Duo, up to the perfect authentic cadence in B-flat minor in m. 141. I have also shaded in the keys that were previously traversed in Figs. 4.4 and 4.6, leaving out the arrows to avoid clutter. The arrows in Fig. 4.7 start at A major at the bottom, which is where we left off in Fig. 4.6. For reasons of space, I pick up the thread with the A-major node at the top left corner instead (we can think of the top and bottom rows of Fig. 4.7 as wrapping around each other). Picking up from the top left corner, then, the music traces a path through the darkly shaded boxes of F major and D-flat major to B-flat minor, the key of Carmen's next cadence and the middle stage in the composing-out of the A–B♭–B chromatic motive. Once again, each foreground key is related to the preceding one through a common-tone relation, this time with F major acting as the pivot between two common-tone networks centered on A and F, respectively. Note that F major is both approached and left through a chromatic mediant ***M*** transformation.

"fifth-change" transformation ($\boldsymbol{F^{-1}}$) by David Kopp. Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, 170. The same relation between triads was labeled *Seitenwechsel* by Arthur von Oettingen and Hugo Riemann, and *nebenverwandt* by Carl Friedrich Weitzmann. See Cohn, "Weitzmann's Regions," 92.

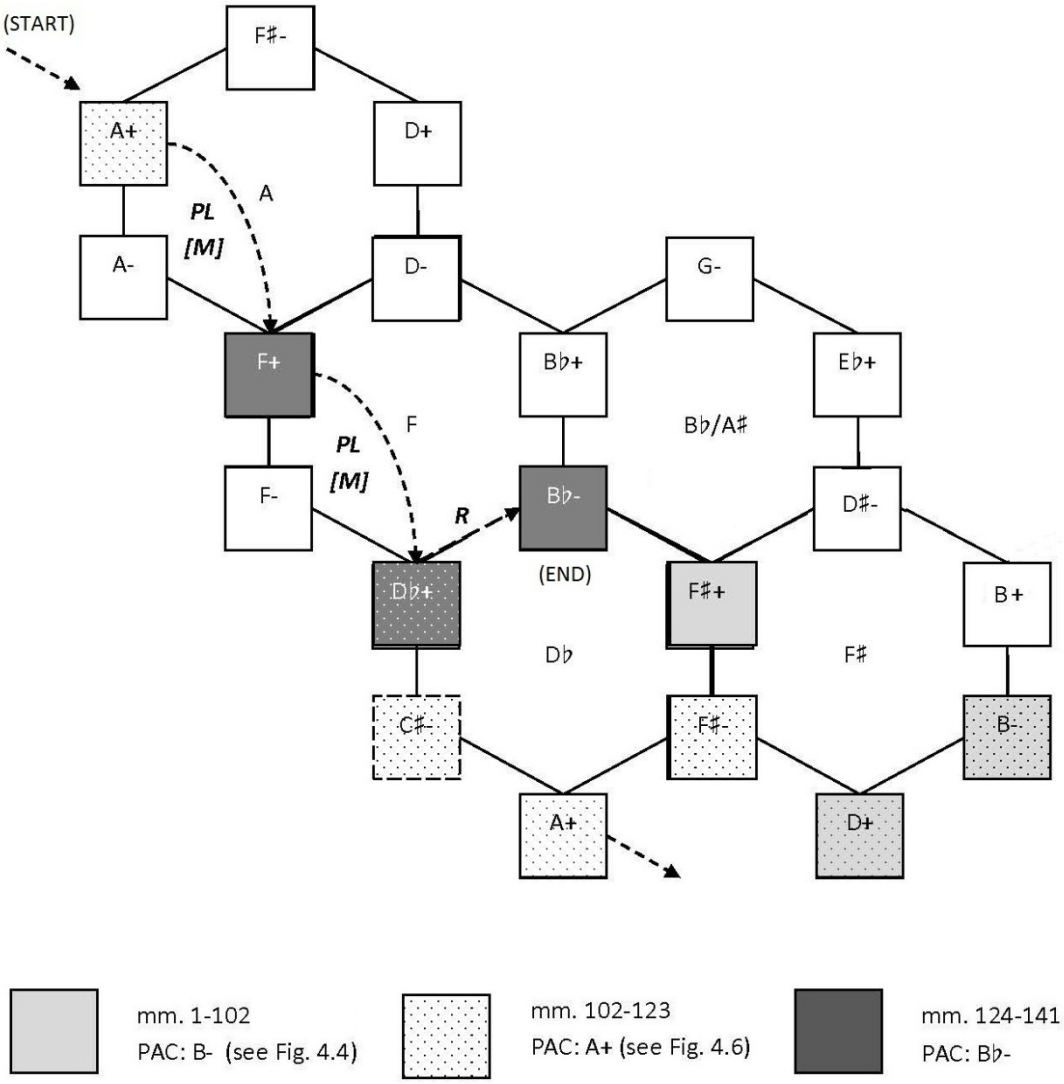
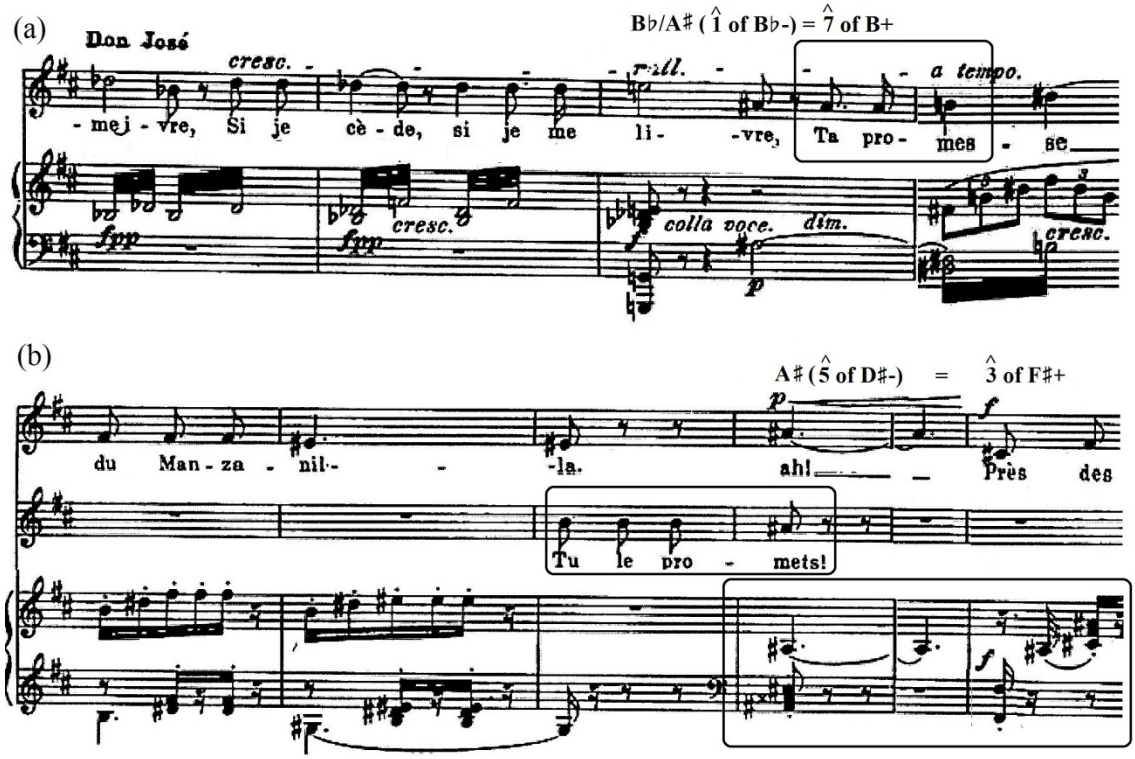


FIGURE 4.7. Succession of keys in the Séguedille et Duo (to m. 141)

Although the starting and ending triads in Fig. 4.7 (A major and B-flat minor) share the common tone C♯/D♭, Bizet's music does not move directly from one to the other, tracing instead an alternate route through other common-tone-related triads.

Following Carmen's cadence in B-flat minor, Don José succumbs to Carmen's seduction with a climactic phrase in B major. It is at this crucial dramatic juncture that the meticulously

prepared chain of "logical" key transitions based on common-tone relations is broken. This is shown in Ex. 4.20 below.



EXAMPLE 4.20. Bizet, *Carmen*, Séguedille et Duo, (a) mm. 142–45; (b) mm. 157–162

Don José's move from B-flat minor to B major in mm. 142–45 is not prepared by the tonicization of any intermediate common-tone-related triad. Instead, as we can see from Ex. 4.20a, Don José takes the note B♭ and reinterprets it, not as a stable chord tone — the root, third, or fifth of a common-tone-related triad — but enharmonically as a tendency tone: A♯, the leading-tone to B major. In other words, Don José effects a harmonic move that is inconsistent with the ones previously effected by Carmen in this number.

Fig. 4.8 below illustrates graphically the incongruity of Don José's harmonic move. As shown in Fig. 4.8, there are no common tones between the tonic triads of B-flat minor (the key of the last cadence in Fig. 4.7) and B major/minor (the final stage in composing out the A–B♭–B

chromatic motive). According to the logic of common-tone relations established previously by Carmen, one might have expected the tonicization of intermediate common-tone-related triads (e.g., F-sharp major or D-sharp minor) before a final cadence in B major/minor. Instead, Don José's direct modulation to B major (shown by the solid curved arrow at the top of Fig. 4.8) bypasses these hypothetical intermediate stages entirely.

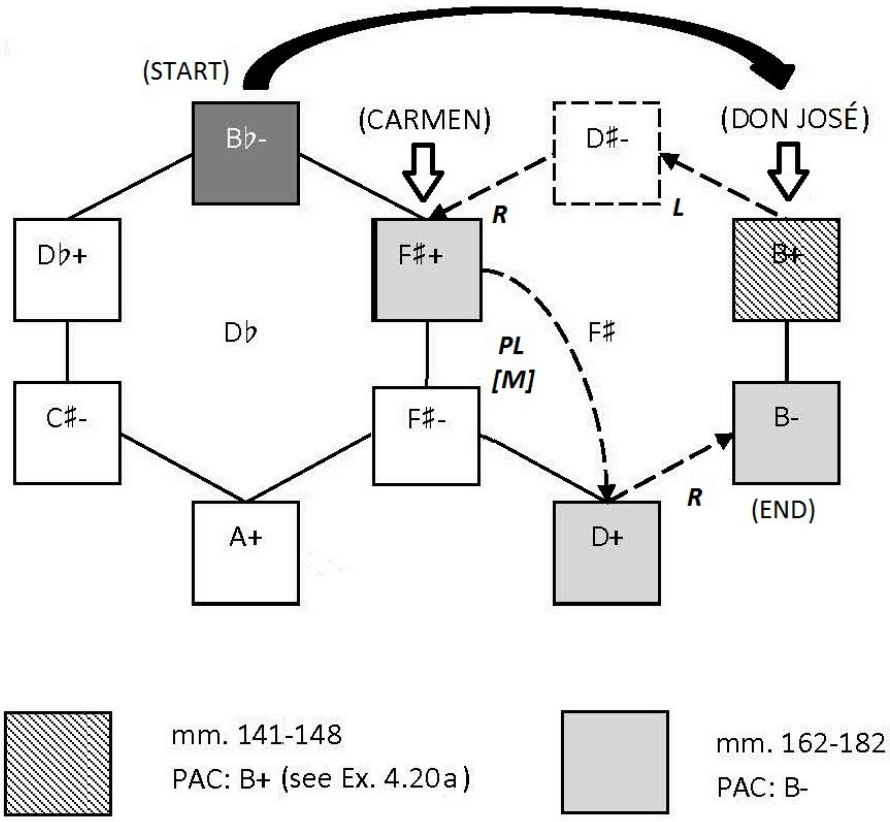


FIGURE 4.8. Succession of keys in the Séguedille et Duo (m. 141 to end)

In this light, Carmen's retransition to F-sharp major for her triumphant recapitulation of the Séguedille can be considered as effectively walking back or undoing what Don José has done. As shown in Ex. 4.20b, Carmen takes away the leading-tone character of A♯, reinterpreting the A-sharp major triad first as an apparent dominant of D-sharp minor, and finally as the upper

sharp mediant of F-sharp major.[69] These harmonic moves are reflected in the dashed straight arrows starting at B major on the top right of Fig. 4.8.[70] As shown in Fig. 4.8, it is F-sharp major that provides a logical common-tone link between B-flat minor and B major/minor, allowing Carmen to close the final loop in her traversal of common-tone related keys.

What has this analysis of the Séguedille and Duo revealed? It has shown that even though Carmen's highly chromatic music may sound "slippery" or "shifty," common-tone tonality provides, as noted by d'Indy, a clear underlying logic to it all. Table 4.2 summarizes the succession of keys from the beginning of the Duo section to the end of the number (previously shown in Figs. 4.6–4.8) into a single chart.

Measures	Character	Succession of foreground keys (PAC in last key)	Note
102–123	Carmen	(B-) → D+ → F♯- → D♭+ → [C♯-] → A+	Fig. 4.6
123–141	Carmen	(A+) → F+ → D♭+ → B♭-	Fig. 4.7
141–148	Don José	(B♭-) → B+ (!!)	Fig. 4.8
148–end	Carmen	(B+) (retransition) → [D♯-] → F♯ (resumption of Séguedille) → D+ → B-	

TABLE 4.2. Succession of keys in the Séguedille and Duo, mm. 102–end

[69] In light of the discussion of chromatic motives and harmonic dualism earlier in this chapter, it is also worth noting that Don José's final interjection in Ex. 4.20b (B–A♯) represents a descending motion from ^6 to ^5 in the implied tonic of D♯ minor. This descent from upper leading tone to prime in ^{o}a♯ (to revert to the terminology of Riemann and d'Indy) represents a dualistic counterpart to Don José's earlier melodic ascent from A♯–B, or leading tone to prime in B+, shown in Ex. 4.20a. This motivic parallelism echoes a similar parallelism in the text ("Ta promesse . . ." / "Tu le promets!"). I am indebted to William Rothstein for this astute observation.

[70] As in Fig. 4.6, the dashed box around D-sharp minor in Fig. 4.8 indicates a triad that is tonicized by its dominant but not sounded.

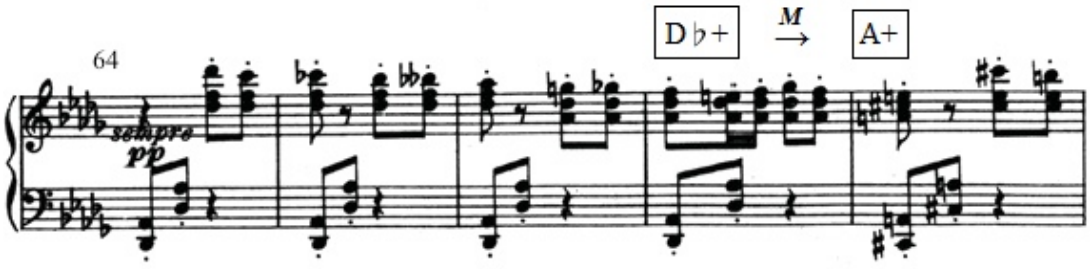
Table 4.2 shows that Carmen's chromatic moves as she weaves her web of seduction around Don José are meticulously planned and based on d'Indy's logic of common-tone relations. As shown in Table 4.2, each of Carmen's cadences (in A major, B-flat minor, and B minor, respectively) is preceded by the tonicization of a series of common-tone-related neighbor keys that links it all the way back to the key of the preceding subsection. In contrast, Don José, with his bravura outburst in the remote key of B major, shows that he is either oblivious to, or heedless of, the logic of Carmen's harmonic moves. As Evlyn Gould as written (with reference to Merimée's novella), "[p]sychologically, José . . . is a bad reader of signs, the result being that he . . . idealizes and is seduced by his own personal version of Bohemia."[71] In Bizet's opera, Don José is a bad reader of musical signs as well. Once he decides to give in to his passion (or rather to his fantasy vision of Carmen), he has no time for the niceties of common-tone transitions. Tellingly, Carmen remains completely unperturbed by Don José's excursion to a remote harmonic territory. She just calmly picks up from where she left off, as if she had never been interrupted, and effects a common-tone-based retransition back to the Séguedille.

4.5 Entr'acte

The foregoing analysis of the Séguedille and Duo provides us with a musical framework within which to re-examine popular stereotypes about Bizet's opera. Carmen, the exotic gypsy and vaunted free spirit, is revealed to be the one with a logical harmonic plan, while Don José, the strait-laced representative of the patriarchal order, is shown to be an impetuous romantic prone to bravura outbursts. Such are the dialectics of Bizet's opera.

[71] Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 81.

The analysis may also be used to evaluate non-musical readings of *Carmen* and its characters. One could argue, for example, that Carmen's fluid use of common-tone tonality expresses what Evlyn Gould has called "a Lacanian form of desire . . . productive of an endless substitution of new objects of desire," in contrast to José's mode of discourse, "the goal [of which] is satisfaction and closure."[72] Alternatively, following Nelly Furman, we could argue that José's reinterpretation of B♭/A♯ as a functional leading-tone in Ex. 4.20a embodies his "engineering mind," in which "everything has a set function." In contrast, Carmen's almost haphazard traversal of common-tone-related keys calls to mind the world of Claude Lévi-Strauss's *bricoleur* (tinker, or do-it-yourself person), who uses any materials she has available on hand.[73] Furman's description of Carmen as a *bricoleuse* beautifully captures the character of the orchestral transition in Ex. 4.21, from the Act I finale, the number that immediately follows the Séguedille and Duo in *Carmen*. The reinterpretation of the D-flat major triad as the upper sharp mediant of A major in Ex. 4.21 echoes the similar reinterpretation of A-sharp major as upper sharp mediant of F-sharp major in the retransition to the Séguedille (Ex. 4.20b).



EXAMPLE 4.21. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Final, mm. 64–68

[72] Ibid., 108–09.
[73] Furman, "The Languages of Love in *Carmen*," 181–82. Furman's reading draws on the distinction drawn by Lévi-Strauss between the *bricoleur* and the *ingénieur* in *The Savage Mind*.

The use of common-tone tonality in general (and chromatic mediants in particular) is thus carried over from the Séguedille (during which Carmen starts planning her escape) to the Act I finale (in which she continues to improvise the finishing touches to her plan until it is successfully executed).[74]

Finally, in light of the ultimate tragedy, our analysis of the Séguedille and Duo could also be used to support Susan McClary's reading that Don José's "high-minded denial of sensuality, his incessant push for something other than the pleasure of the moment cause him to be musically violent."[75] In this reading, Carmen's world of common-tone tonality represents sensuality and pleasure, and José's departure from, or rejection of, it in Ex. 4.20a represents an act of "musical violence" that prefigures the later events of the opera. We shall now explore Carmen and Don José's further musical interactions in the next chapter of this study.

[74] The modulation from D-flat major to A major shown in Ex. 4.21 also accomplishes two musical goals. It allows Act I to end in the same key as the beginning of the Prelude. As discussed above in Section 4.2, it also completes a traversal of the major-third cycle F–D♭–A over the course of the Act I finale, which begins in F minor.

[75] McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen*," 125.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYTICAL APPLICATIONS: THE ACT II AND ACT IV CARMEN-DON JOSÉ DUETS

The preceding chapters discussed aspects of Bizet's melodic and harmonic practices in *Carmen*. With respect to melody, we have examined Bizet's use of different melodic and text-setting styles to characterize diegetic music, on the one hand, and lyrical or emotionally expressive music, on the other. With respect to harmony, we have focused on Bizet's use of techniques of chromaticism and common-tone tonality that may have appeared advanced to the more conservative music critics of his time. We have already seen how these aspects of Bizet's compositional practice interacted in the Act I Séguedille and Duo, a dramatically important number in which Carmen seduces Don José. This chapter will draw on the material developed in the preceding chapters to examine the music that Bizet wrote for Carmen and Don José in the remaining acts of the opera. The chapter will focus in particular on the musical interaction between Carmen and Don José in their duets in Act II and Act IV. As in the analysis of the Séguedille and Duo in the preceding chapter, we shall examine the ways in which Bizet used melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic techniques to illuminate the dramatic relationship between his principal characters as the tragedy unfolds and concludes.

5.1 The Act II Duet

Each of the four acts of *Carmen* features an accelerating dramatic rhythm. Numbers that occur earlier in the acts tend to set the scene without furthering the drama (e.g., the *Chanson bohème* that opens Act II and the smugglers' chorus that opens Act III). In contrast, the duets between the principal characters generally occur towards the end of each act and play a

significant role in the rapid unfolding of the dramatic action.[1] Like the Séguedille and Duo in Act I, the duet between Carmen and Don José in Act II is the penultimate number in the act and leads directly into the finale. In the Act II duet, Don José is once again faced with the conflicting demands of love and duty.

Form. Table 5.1 on the next page is a summary of the formal structure of the Act II duet. The Roman-numeral headings in the first column of the table (I through V) are based on an analysis by Steven Huebner.[2] The alphabetical sub-headings and the contents of the second and third columns in Table 5.1 are my own. As Huebner has noted, the Act II duet is based on a relatively conventional formal archetype with four main sections (labeled I through IV in Table 5.1), followed by a final section (V) of "sung dialogue" that links the duet with the Act II finale.[3]

Sections I through IV bear more than a passing resemblance to the four movements of the *solita forma* of Italian Romantic opera: *tempo d'attacco*, *adagio*, *tempo di mezzo,* and *cabaletta*.[4] Harold Powers has noted that the opening *tempo d'attacco* movement in grand duets in Italian Romantic opera emphasizes the dramatic component and "is the musical embodiment of the active aspects of confrontation," while "[t]he *adagio* movement that follows is typically "a lyric

[1] The sole exception is the Micaëla–Don José duet in Act I, which occurs roughly at the midpoint of the act.
[2] Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 20 (Fig. 2).
[3] Ibid., 19. Huebner notes that the same formal archetype underlies the Micaëla-Don José duet in Act I. Ibid., 15 (Fig. 1).
[4] The "*solita forma*" (usual form) of Italian operatic duets was described by Abramo Basevi in his 1859 study of Verdi's operas. Basevi, *Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi*, 191. Harold Powers has examined the use of that formal framework in Verdi's operas, while Steven Huebner has examined the Italian influence on the form of duets in Meyerbeer's French grand operas. See Powers, "'*La solita forma*' and 'The Uses of Convention,'" and Huebner, "Italianate Duets in Meyerbeer's Grand Operas." Huebner does not, however, refer to these formal antecedents in his article on *Carmen*.

expression of the emotional position or positions, momentarily stabilized, that were reached during the confrontation."[5]

Sections / Subsections	Measures	Ending Harmony / Cadence
I. Sung dialogue		
A. Introduction (recitative) (Carmen: "Je vais danser dans votre honneur")	1–12	V^7 of B♭+
B. Carmen's dance (and offstage fanfare)	13–68	PAC in B♭+ (in fanfare only)
C. Transition (Carmen: "Au quartier! . . . pour l'appel!")	69–70	V^7 of G+
D. Dialogue / Argument	71–165	
a (Carmen: "Ah! j'étais vraiment trop bête!")	71–99	PAC in G+
b (José: "C'est mal à toi, Carmen")	100–131	B+ (= V/vi in G+)
a (Carmen: "Ta ra ta ta . . .")	132–147	PAC in G-
c (José: "Ainsi, tu ne crois pas . . .")	147–165	PAC in D-
II. Flower song (*Air de fleur*) (José: "La fleur que tu m'avais jetée")	165–222	III♮–I cadence in D♭+
III. Sung dialogue (Carmen: "Non! tu ne m'aimes pas")	222–239	V pedal in C+
IV. *Cabalette* (Carmen: "Là-bas, là-bas dans la montagne")	239–337	PAC in C+ (m. 329), but orchestra continues on with progression ending on $F\sharp^{o7}$
V. Additional sung dialogue (José: "Non! je ne veux plus t'écouter")	337–365	PAC in C- (m. 361), but orchestra shifts suddenly to $F\sharp^{o7}$ at m. 365 (*attacca* Act II finale)

TABLE 5.1. Formal structure of the Act II duet
(Roman-numeral headings from Huebner 1993)

[5] Powers, "'*La solita forma*' and 'The Uses of Convention,'" 70.

Applying these concepts to the Act II duet from *Carmen*, we can see that the lengthy opening section establishes the dramatic confrontation between Carmen and Don José, based on their disagreement as to whether he should stay with Carmen at the tavern or return to his barracks. I have further subdivided this section into four subsections (labeled I. A–D in Table 5.1). This kinetic section is immediately followed by José's Flower Song, which fulfills the function of a lyrical (and dramatically static) *adagio* section.[6] Following the conclusion of the Flower Song, Carmen's negation of José's lyrical sentiments ("Non! tu ne m'aimes pas") can be thought of as a brief *tempo di mezzo*: a moment of transition that disrupts the lyrical mood. In the *cabalette* that follows ("Là-bas, là-bas dans la montagne"), also primarily a solo passage, Carmen attempts to persuade Don José to desert the army. The final fifth section of the duet, in which Don José rejects her plea, functions both as a coda to the duet and a bridge to the Act II finale.

Critical reaction. Although the Act II duet has a relatively conventional form for a nineteenth-century French opera, it is unconventional in that the characters, Carmen and Don José, rarely sing together.[7] In a way, it is thus more of a test of wills than a traditional love duet. This fact was noted in contemporary press reviews of the premiere production of *Carmen*, although critics were divided as to the duet's merits. Writing in *L'union*, Daniel Bernard wrote of the Act II duet that "[t]here is everything in the number in question: imprecations and supplications, prayers and despairs, threats and audacities; only one small thing is absent:

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[6] Steven Huebner has noted that there were precedents in French opera for the practice of substituting an extended solo section for the more usual parallel strophes in the lyrical second section of a grand duet. The examples cited by Huebner include the second sections of the Valentine–Raoul duet (Raoul's solo "Tu l'as dit") from Act IV of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and the Fidès–Jean duet (Fidès's *cavatine* "À la voix de ta mère") from Act V of the same composer's *Le prophète*. Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 19–20.

[7] Ibid., 20. Huebner notes the contrast between the Act II duet and the Act I Micaëla–Don José duet in this regard. In the Act I duet, there are sustained passages of duo singing.

passion; yes, that passion without which a love duet cannot be sensibly distinguished from a recipe for a useless remedy or a course on feudal rights."[8] In contrast, Armand Gouzien wrote approvingly in *L'évènement* that "[t]he passionate duet . . . is made of contrasts that the composer has outlined wonderfully, and he has expressed with rare effect the struggle between the passion that has seized Don José and the duty that calls him."[9]

Bizet's melodic and harmonic practices in the Act II duet bewildered some critics. Albert de LaSalle, for instance, wrote in *Le monde illustré* that the duet was nothing but "a succession of phrases with no cohesion or logical connection. The [sense of] tonality is also very vague, as it is mobile: there are modulations on top of modulations and, most often, the composer leads them through such strange devices that one has no time to get used to them."[10] We shall now examine the innovative musical construction of this number in further detail.

Introduction (recitative). In Bizet's original *opéra comique* version, the Act II duet is preceded by a passage of spoken dialogue between Carmen and Don José. Following José's release from prison (to which he had been sent as a result of the events of Act I), he joins Carmen at Lillas Pastia's tavern. Carmen reveals that she has just performed a dance (the *Chanson bohème*) for José's superior officer, Lieutenant Zuniga. José reacts with jealousy and, in order to appease him, Carmen announces that she will perform a dance for Don José alone.

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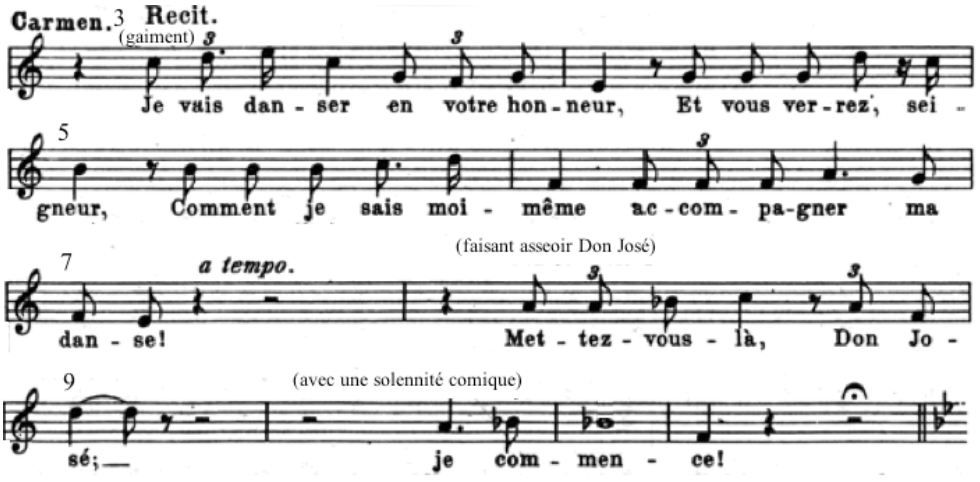
[8] Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 77 ("Il ya de tout dans le morceau en question, des imprécations et des supplications, des prières et des désespoirs, des menaces et des audaces; une seule petite chose est absente: la passion; oui, la passion sans laquelle un duo d'amour ne se distingue pas sensiblement d'une recette pour l'onguent miton-mitaine ou d'un cours de droit féodal").
[9] Ibid., 12 ("Le duo passioné . . . est fait de contrastes que le compositeur a merveillusement soulignés, et il a exprimé avec un rare bonheur la lutte entre la passion qui envahit Don José et le devoir qui l'appelle . . .").
[10] Ibid., 138 ("le duo d'amour du seconde acte de *Carmen* . . . n'est qu'une succession de membres de phrase sans cohésion ni enchaînement logique. La tonalité en est aussi très vague, tant elle est mobile: ce sont modulations sur modulations et, le plus souvent, l'auteur les amène par des procédés si étranges qu'on n'a pas le temps de s'y faire").

The opening recitative section of the duet (mm. 1–12) functions as a hybrid medium (musical speech, or spoken music) that effectively bridges the qualitative gap between the spoken dialogue (speech as speech) that precedes it and the diegetic music of Carmen's dance (music as music) that follows.[11] Carmen's recitative covers four lines of text, with each line containing a different number of syllables:

Je vais dans**e**r en votre honn**eu**r,	(4,8)
Et vous verr**e**z, seign**eu**r,	(4,6)
Comment je s**ai**s moi-m**ê**me || accompagn**e**r ma d**a**nse!	(4,6,10,12)
Mettez-vous l**à**, Don Jos**é**, || je comm**e**nce!	(4,7,10)

Ex. 5.1 below shows Bizet's musical setting of these lines.



EXAMPLE 5.1. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, mm. 3–12 (voice part only)

We can see from Ex. 5.1 that the final accented syllable of each line falls on a notated downbeat (in mm. 4, 5, 7, and 11, respectively). The tonic accents in the verses are thus

[11] The measures of recitative discussed here were written by Bizet and form part of the number in all versions of the score. As discussed above, this recitative section was preceded by spoken dialogue in Bizet's original version. In the version of the opera prepared by Ernest Guiraud after Bizet's death, the recitative section in mm. 1–12 of the Act II duet is preceded not by spoken dialogue, but by another section of recitative written by Guiraud. The analysis here focuses only on the recitative section written by Bizet. See also note 12 below.

reinforced by metrical accents in the music. The prosodic accents before the caesuras in the middle of the third and fourth lines are similarly marked with metrical accents on the downbeats of mm. 6 and 9, respectively. The least important prosodic accents within the various lines are marked not by strong metrical placement, but by longer note values and/or higher pitches, as in the final syllables of "dans**e**r" in m. 3 and "verr**e**z" in m. 4.

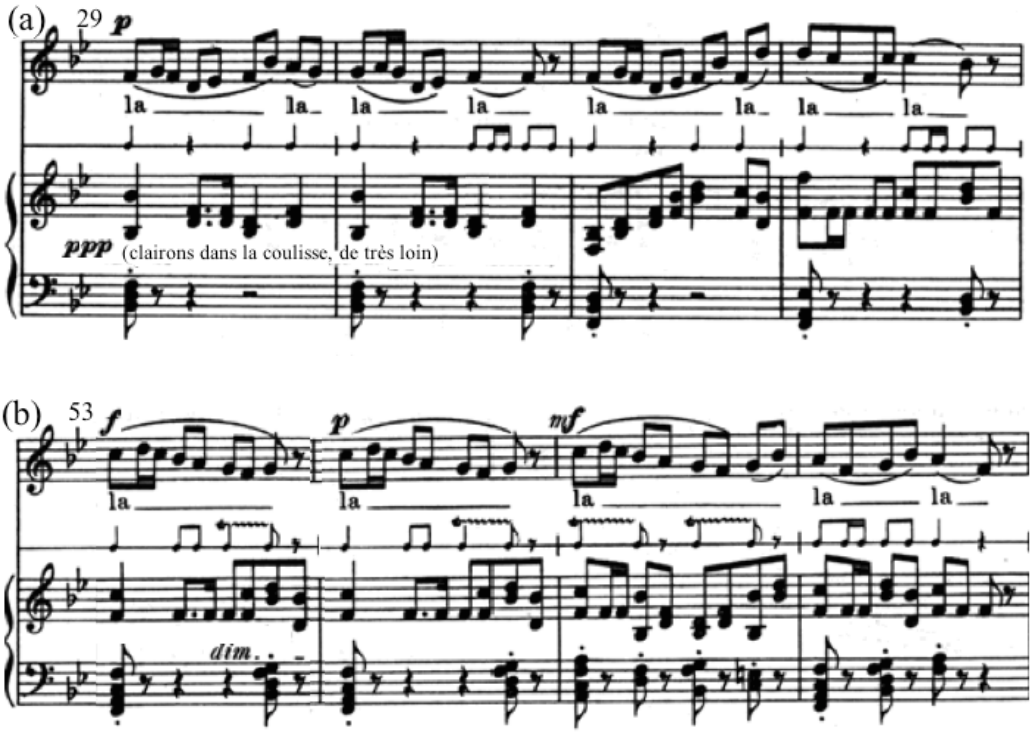
These introductory lines present an example of Bizet's flair for naturalistic word setting (a clear example of Grétry's "*chanter pour parler*") in an *opéra comique* that otherwise contains few examples of recitative.[12] They also provide a useful baseline which we can use to evaluate Bizet's use of melody and text setting in the duet proper.

Carmen's dance. Carmen's dance (mm. 13–68), to which she provides her own song and rhythmic accompaniment on the castanets, is a diegetic number. As such, it is qualitatively different from the musical speech of the opening recitative. We have seen that in *Carmen*, as in other French operas, different styles of text setting were often used to differentiate between diegetic and non-diegetic music. However, Carmen's song for her dance presents a problem in this regard: it has no text and consists purely of the syllables "la la la la." How was Bizet able to mark the diegetic quality of this particular "song-and-dance number" (to use Susan McClary's description) in the absence of a sung text?[13] The answer to this question lies, I believe, in Bizet's use of rhythm and meter.

The song for Carmen's dance features the repetition and alternation of two four-bar patterns. Starting in m. 29, she is joined in counterpoint by a diegetic offstage bugle call or

[12] As discussed in the Note on Editions on page viii above, the recitatives that replaced the spoken dialogue for the performances of *Carmen* in Vienna in the fall of 1875 were composed after Bizet's death by Ernest Guiraud. I have disregarded the Guiraud recitatives throughout this dissertation.
[13] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 95.

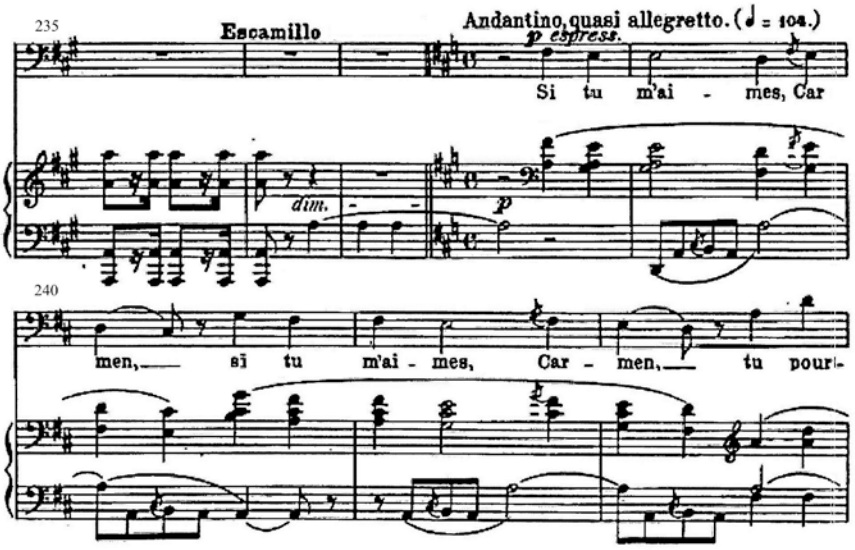
fanfare summoning Don José and his fellow soldiers back to their barracks. The two four-bar units of Carmen's song are shown below in Ex. 5.2, along with the offstage fanfares that accompany it starting in m. 29.



EXAMPLE 5.2. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, (a) mm. 29–32; and (b) mm. 53–56 (Carmen's song with offstage fanfare)

As we can see from Ex. 5.2, the melodic phrases in Carmen's song and dance begin on notated downbeats and end with cadences falling in the middle of measures. That placement of the cadences on the final syllable "la" in the middle of the last measures in Ex. 5.2a and b is not inconsequential: I would argue that it is a rhythmic marker of the diegetic quality of the music. As we have seen in our discussion of melodic practices in French opera, phrase endings and cadences in French (and Italian) melodies generally fall on the *first* beat of a measure, in order to provide verse-ending accents (*accents toniques* in French, *accenti comuni* in Italian) with

metrical emphasis.[14] Ex. 5.3, taken from Act IV of *Carmen*, provides a good illustration of this prevailing practice, which William Rothstein has labeled "Italian" (or "Franco-Italian") barring. According to Rothstein, "[t]he identifying characteristic of [Franco-]Italian barring is the frequent use of upbeats lasting half a bar or longer; the regular placement of cadences on downbeats is a secondary feature."[15] In Ex. 5.3, Escamillo's melodic phrase starts in the upbeat part of the measure, allowing the prosodic accents in the hemistich "Si tu m'a**i**mes, Carm**e**n" to line up with metrical downbeats.

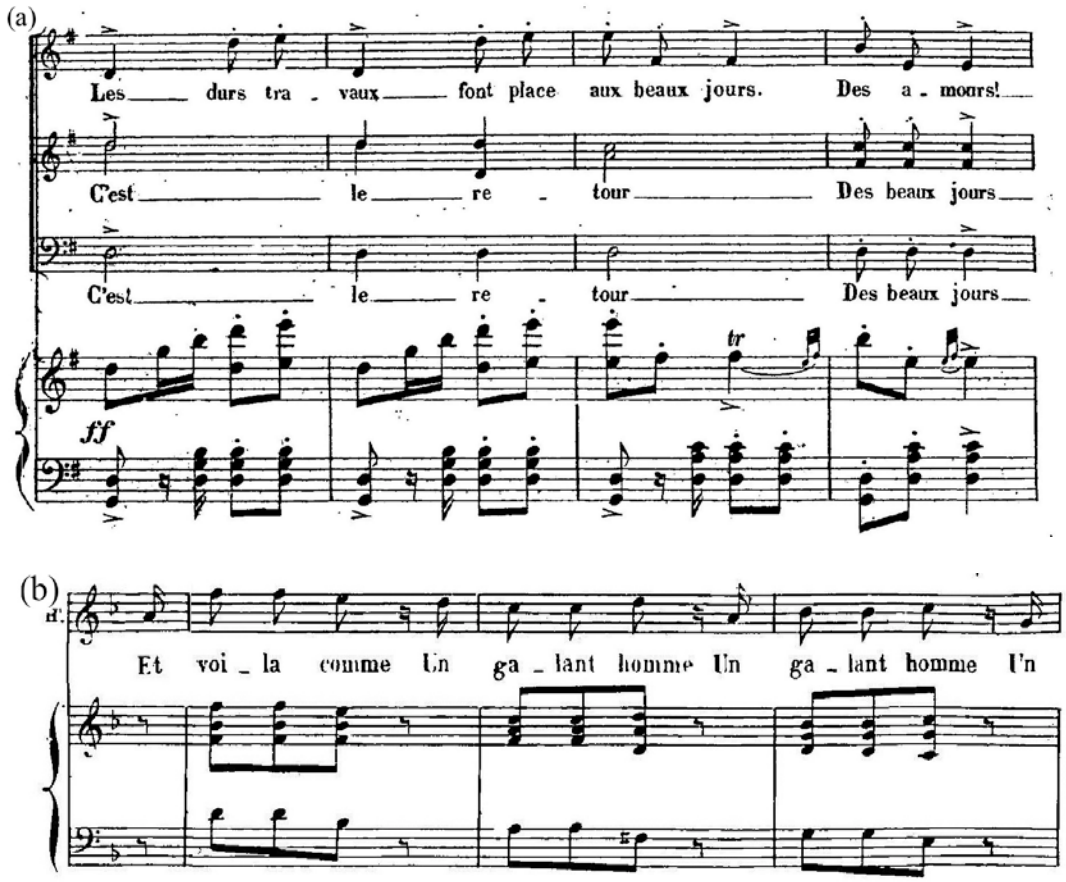


EXAMPLE 5.3. An example of Franco-Italian barring:
Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Marche et chœur, mm. 235–242

In contrast, the melodic phrases in Carmen's song and dance in Ex. 5.2 begin on notated downbeats and end with cadences falling in the middle of measures. They are thus beginning-accented phrases that reflect the practice that Rothstein calls "German" barring. According to

[14] See the discussion accompanying note 45 in Chapter 3 above.
[15] Rothstein, "National Metrical Types in Music of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," 116. It should be noted that Rothstein applies his definitions of national metrical types only to music of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and does not suggest that national differences in metrical practices applied in an essentialist manner across different historical periods.

Rothstein, "[t]he identifying feature of German barring is the regular placement of cadences on relatively weak beats; a lack of long upbeats is a secondary feature."[16] Ex. 5.4 below shows examples of German barring from other French operas, in each case in a number that highlights dance-based rhythms.



EXAMPLE 5.4. Examples of German barring associated with dance rhythms:
(a) Thomas, *Hamlet* (1868), Act IV, Danse villageoise
(b) Offenbach, *La belle Hélène* (1864), Act II, Couplets

In Ex. 5.4a, from the ballet scene from Thomas's *Hamlet*, the melody of the *danse villageoise* begins on the first beat of a 2/4 measure and ends on a weak beat. The use of German barring in this dance number means that the line-ending tonic accents in the choral part (". . . aux beaux

[16] Ibid. Rothstein's definition of German barring thus encompasses both phrases that start on downbeats (e.g., Ex. 5.2 and Ex. 5.4a) and phrases that start with short upbeats (e.g., Ex. 5.4b).

j**ou**rs / Des am**ou**rs") fall on weak beats as well (compare the different metrical placement of the tonic accents in Ex. 5.3). Similarly, in Ex. 5.4b, the German barring associated with the polka rhythm of Hélène's famous couplets from Offenbach's *La belle Hélène* leads to the weak-beat placement of the tonic accents in the lines "Et voilà c**o**mme / Un galant h**o**mme."[17]

I would suggest, then, that even in the absence of words and text setting, the German barring of Carmen's dance in Ex. 5.2 marks it as a dance, and therefore as a diegetic performance. German barring was also characteristic of march rhythms, as reflected for example in the *Chœur des gamins* from Act I of *Carmen* (see Ex. 3.13 above). It is thus entirely fitting that the offstage (and equally diegetic) military fanfare in Ex. 5.2 shares the same beginning-accented metrical profile as Carmen's dance. As many writers have noted, the juxtaposition of Carmen's dance (representing the feminine body and its attendant sensuality) and the offstage bugle call (representing patriarchal duty and military discipline) symbolizes the opposing pull of the forces of desire and duty on Don José.[18] Bizet's music emphasizes the rhythmic discipline that underlies both Carmen's seductive and sensual dance and the military world represented by the bugle call.

Carmen's outburst and Don José's protest. Carmen's dance and the accompanying fanfare break off in m. 68 of the Act II duet. In mm. 69–70, Carmen expresses her stupefaction that Don José has to leave her so soon. This change in tone is accompanied by a change in key:

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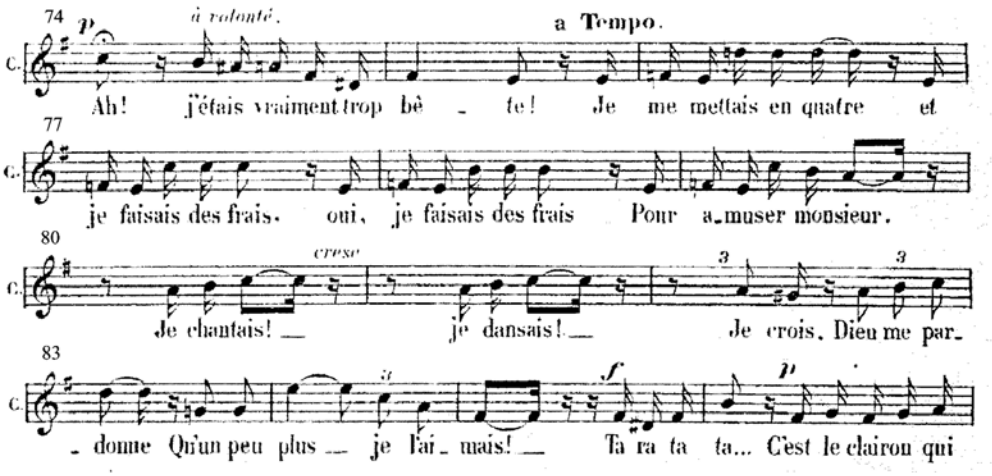
[17] Offenbach's prosody, specifically in Ex. 5.4b, was strongly criticized in 1885 by Camille Saint-Saëns, who explicitly associated it with Offenbach's German origins. Saint-Saëns wrote that Offenbach "has, without meaning to, applied German rhythms to French words." Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et mélodie*, 262 ("[Offenbach] a, sans le faire exprès, appliqué à des paroles françaises des rythmes allemands"). In 1894, the musicologist Jules Combarieu in turn characterized Saint-Saëns's views on text setting as a form of "exaggerated purism" ("un purisme exagéré"). Combarieu, *Les rapports de la musique et de la poésie*, 272.

[18] See, e.g., Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 133; Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 727; and Maingueneau, *Carmen: Les racines d'un mythe*, 57.

Carmen effects a modulation from B-flat major to G major, its lower sharp mediant. The modulation is effected by the reinterpretation of the common tone D from scale degree 3 of B-flat major in m. 69 (on Carmen's disbelieving repetition of José's words "Au quartier!") to scale degree 5 of G major in m. 70 (in the orchestral accompaniment to the words "Pour l'appel!").

Carmen's repeated exclamation "**A**h! j'étais vraiment trop b**ê**te" ("Ah! I was so stupid") signals a return to a non-diegetic form of discourse and therefore to Franco-Italian barring. As shown in Ex. 5.5 below, the line-ending tonic accent is aligned with a metrical downbeat in m. 75 (and also in m. 73, not shown).



EXAMPLE 5.5. Bizet, *Carmen,* Act II, Duo, mm. 74–86

Even so, Carmen briefly reverts to beginning-accented (or German-barred) phrases in mm. 76–81, where she describes the efforts she had just put herself through to entertain Don José:

Je me mett**ai**s en qu**a**tre || et je fais**ai**s des fr**ai**s (4,6,10,12)
Pour amus**e**r mons**ieu**r || je chant**ai**s! je dans**ai**s! . . . (4,6,9,12)

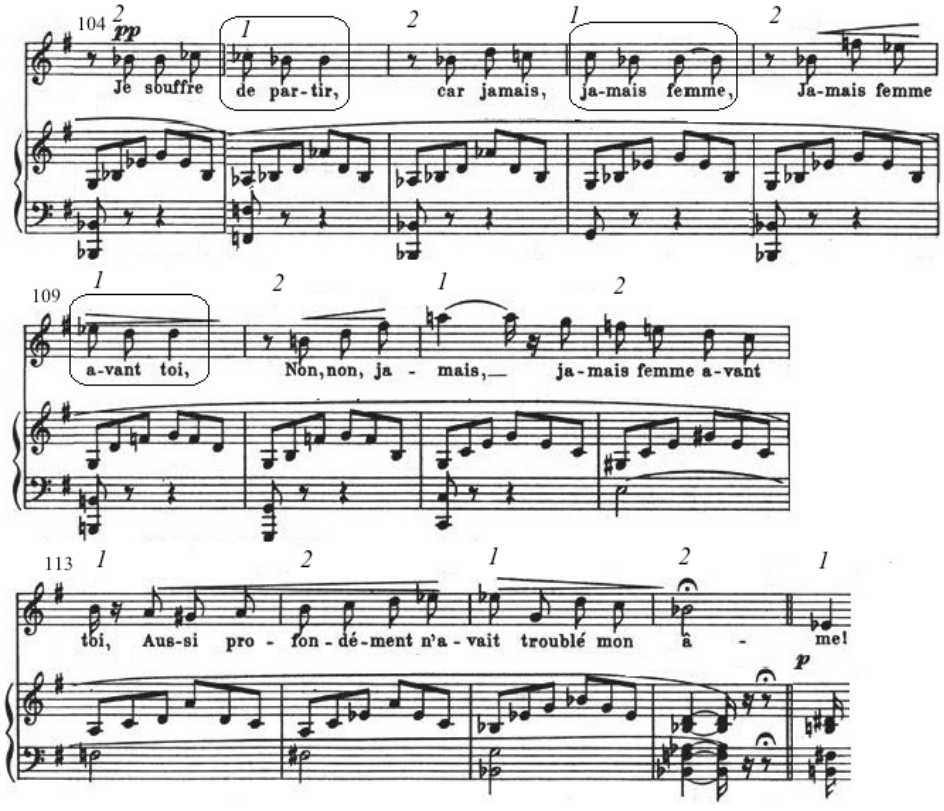
Each of the tonic accents and prosodic accents in these lines falls not on a metrical downbeat, but on a weak beat in the middle of a measure. In contrast, inconsequential words such as "me" and "je" are given metrical emphasis. In describing her diegetic performance after the fact, Carmen

briefly recapitulates the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the performance itself. As she works through her anger, however, her prosodic rhythm gets straightened out by the downbeat of m. 83, and her phrases remain in the naturalistic (or non-diegetic) mode through to the G major cadence in m. 99.

Don José's response to Carmen's outburst is first to rebuke her for mocking him ("C'est mal à toi, Carmen || de te moquer de moi") and then to protest that it upsets him to have to leave because no woman has ever disturbed his soul the way she has:

Je s**ou**ffre de part**i**r, || car jam**ai**s jamais f**e**mme	(2,6,9,12)
Jamais f**e**mme avant t**o**i	(3,6)
Auss**i** profondém**e**nt || n'avait troubl**é** mon **â**me.	(2,6,9,12)

Bizet's setting of these verses is shown in Ex. 5.6.



EXAMPLE 5.6. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, mm. 104–117

The triplet figure in the orchestral accompaniment in Ex. 5.6 (which begins on a strong hyperbeat one bar before the beginning of the example) is similar to that underlying the lyrical section from the Act I Micaëla–Don José duet (Ex. 3.11 above). Unlike in that earlier duet, however, Don José's declamation in Ex. 5.6 is neither lyrical nor naturalistic. Instead, in describing how Carmen has touched his soul, he appropriates Carmen's characteristic "diegetic" habit (discussed in Chapter 3) of declaiming in regularly accentuated eighth notes. As the circled measures in Ex. 5.6 indicate, for the first two verses, Don José also appropriates Carmen's habit of displacing prosodic accents to a long note on the second beat of the measure, a rhythmic gesture (one might call it a mannerism) first heard by José in the Séguedille in Act I (see Ex. 3.18). In José's phrase in Ex. 5.6, this displacement leads to an exaggerated emphasis (both metrical and hypermetrical) on the weak antepenultimate syllables of "d**e** partir" (m. 105), "j**a**mais femme" (m. 107), and "**a**vant toi" (m. 109).[19] The metrical emphasis on the misaccentuated syllables in this phrase is further strengthened by the upper-neighbor melodic figuration on the downbeats of mm. 105, 107, and 109, as well as by the dynamic marking in mm. 108–09, in a way that arguably outweighs or overshadows the durational emphasis given to the prosodic accents on the second beats of those measures.

The misaccentuated phrases in Ex. 5.6 may indicate the influence that Carmen and her diegetic rhythms have exerted on Don José. To paraphrase José's own words, it is as if the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of Carmen's music have left a mark on him.[20] In light of

[19] The hypermetrical analysis in Ex. 5.6 is based on harmonic rhythm: measures projecting the same harmony (e.g., mm. 109–110 and 115–116) are grouped together. See Lerdahl and Jackendorff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 84 (MPR [Metrical Preference Rule] 5f).
[20] In further support of the argument that Carmen's music has left an imprint on Don José, note also the appearance of the 5–♯5–6 chromatic motive (previously associated with Carmen from her entrance and from the Séguedille) in C major in the orchestral accompaniment at mm. 111–113.

the associations we have made between the diegetic style and the act of performance, Bizet's text setting in Ex. 5.6 may also contribute to an effective portrayal of Don José's essentially histrionic nature when placed under emotional stress.[21]

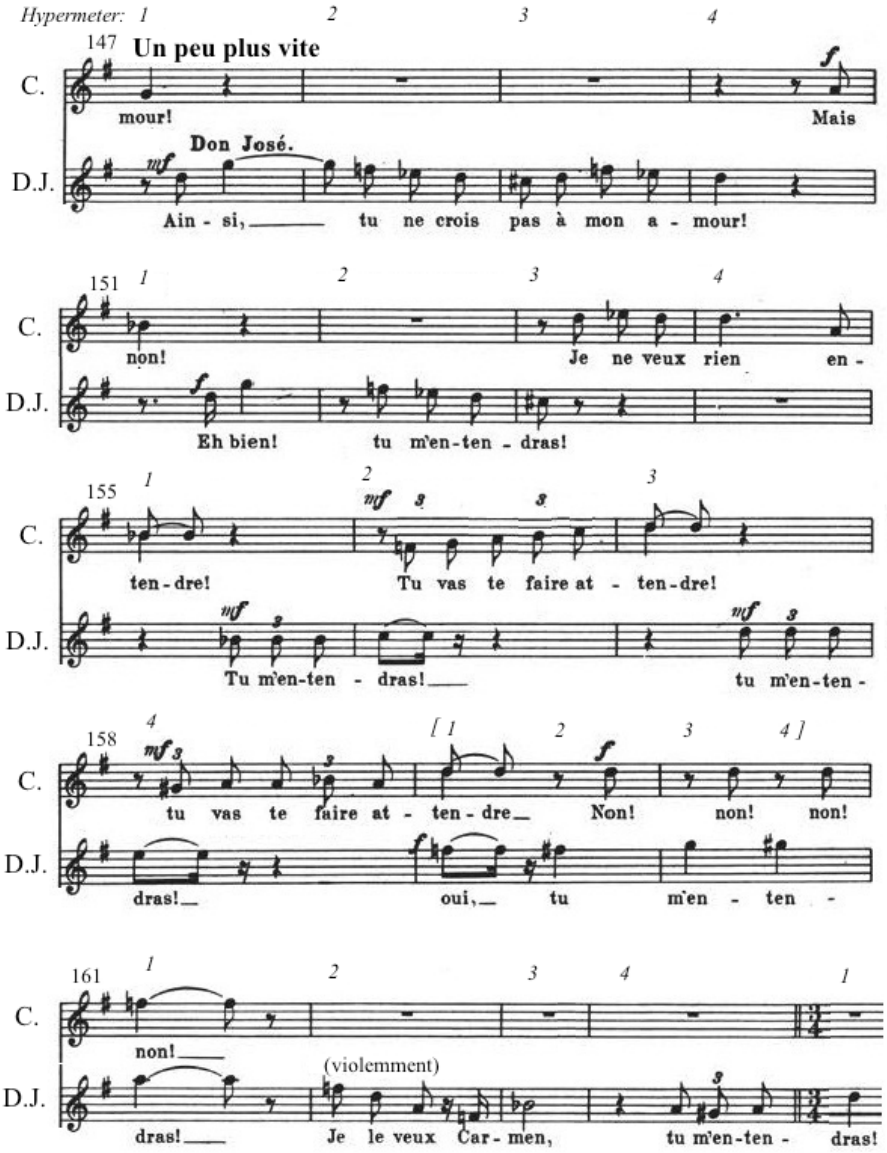
Intensification of Argument. Starting at m. 131, Carmen reprises most of her music from mm. 85–99, ending with a cadence in G minor at m. 147.[22] As with the reprise of the Séguedille in Act I, Carmen once again reacts to an impassioned interruption by Don José by picking up from where she had previously left off, as if she had never been interrupted at all.

The opening confrontation section of the Act II duet closes with a stretto section starting at m. 147, in which Carmen and Don José both try to gain the upper hand in their argument. Their vocal lines are shown in Ex. 5.7 below. The four-bar hypermeter annotated above the staves in Ex. 5.7 shows that initially, it is Carmen who has the upper hand. It is she who manages to get the last word in at each of the hyperdownbeats in mm. 147, 151, and 155. In contrast, Don José's lines end on the downbeats of hypermetrically weaker measures (mm. 150 and 153).

---

[21] Ralph Locke has written that "Don José . . . is as irascible and (in the last act) as unhinged a tenor hero as French opera of the era offers. His passionate excess would make him a caricature of Spanishness, were the portrayal not carried out in such idiosyncratic, realistic-feeling detail." Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 163.

[22] In some editions of Bizet's score, Carmen mockingly repeats Don José's words from mm. 104–17, transposed from E-flat major to B major, in mm. 117–130. These measures were cut before the opera's premiere. See the Note on Editions on page viii above. When the measures are reinstated (as in the 2000 Schott edition, on which the measure numbers in this dissertation are based), Carmen's common-tone modulation from E-flat major to B major completes a series of tonicizations of triads whose roots lie a major third apart: G major/minor (mm. 71–102), E-flat major/minor (mm. 103–118), and B major (mm. 119–131). The return to G minor in the following section (with a cadence in that key at m. 147) completes a traversal of the major-third cycle. Readers following a score that preserves the cut to mm. 117–130 will need to subtract 14 from all measure numbers after 131 in all discussions of the Act II duet throughout this dissertation.



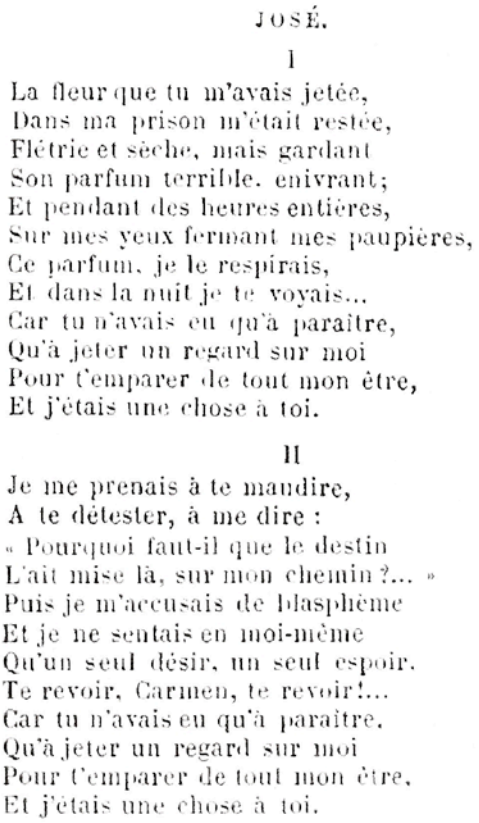
EXAMPLE 5.7. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, mm. 147–165 (voices only)

Starting in m. 156, the argument leaves G minor behind, tonicizing first B-flat major (mm. 156–157), and then D minor (mm. 158–165). Carmen's phrase ending on the downbeat of m. 157 is still hypermetrically stronger than Don José's phrase endings at mm. 156 and 158, but at the hyperdownbeat in m. 159, Don José finally manages to take charge of both meter and hypermeter, dislodging Carmen's repeated word "non" to the weakest parts of the measure. In

mm. 159–160, the rate of harmonic change is accelerated: there is a new harmony every half measure, compared to every two measures in mm. 147–154 and every measure in mm. 155–158. Accordingly, I have shown mm. 159–160 in Ex. 5.7 as an accelerated four-bar hypermeasure, with four hyperbeats taking up the space of only two actual measures. Don José thus gets to have the last word at a hyperdownbeat at m. 161, with a climactic high note over a cadential 6/4 harmony in D minor on the final syllable of "tu m'entendras." "You will listen to me," he says, and she does, but Ex. 5.7 shows that Don José's (temporary) victory is achieved with some effort: he has to violently wrench control of the hypermeter (and the argument) away from Carmen.

The Flower Song. The lyrical second section of the Act II duet is Don José's Flower Song. Fig. 5.1 (on the next page) shows the original text for the Flower Song, as published in the complete works of the librettists Meilhac and Halévy.[23] Fig. 5.1 reveals that the librettists originally contemplated a strophic number for Don José with a four-line refrain. From this strophic design, one might well have expected from Bizet a traditional *opéra comique* number for Don José along the lines of Carmen's Habanera or Escamillo's Toreador Song, with "a clear form, a simple and straightforward rhythm, lucid tonality without elaborate chromaticism and with modulations that are few and simple."[24] Instead, Bizet chose to reuse music for a number he had written in 1870–1 for an unfinished opera, *Grisélidis*, suppressing the four-line refrain in the first strophe of the text in Fig. 5.1 and ending up with "a piece in five quatrains, quite original in form and melody."[25]

[23] Meilhac and Halévy, *Carmen*, 442–43.
[24] Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 229 (quoting a 1932 article by Raoul Duhamel on the musical characteristics associated with the *opéra comique* genre).
[25] Wright, "Bizet Before *Carmen*," 147. The librettist for *Grisélidis* was Victorien Sardou, who was later to find a firm place in operatic history as the author of *La Tosca*, the play on which Puccini's opera was based. The section of the Flower Song setting the last quatrain of text



JOSÉ.

I

La fleur que tu m'avais jetée,
Dans ma prison m'était restée,
Flétrie et sèche, mais gardant
Son parfum terrible, enivrant;
Et pendant des heures entières,
Sur mes yeux fermant mes paupières,
Ce parfum, je le respirais,
Et dans la nuit je te voyais...
Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître,
Qu'à jeter un regard sur moi
Pour t'emparer de tout mon être,
Et j'étais une chose à toi.

II

Je me prenais à te maudire,
A te détester, à me dire :
« Pourquoi faut-il que le destin
L'ait mise là, sur mon chemin ?... »
Puis je m'accusais de blasphème
Et je ne sentais en moi-même
Qu'un seul désir, un seul espoir.
Te revoir, Carmen, te revoir!...
Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître,
Qu'à jeter un regard sur moi
Pour t'emparer de tout mon être,
Et j'étais une chose à toi.

FIGURE 5.1. Meilhac and Halévy's original verses for Don José's Flower Song (from *Théâtre de Meilhac et Halévy*, Vol. 7)

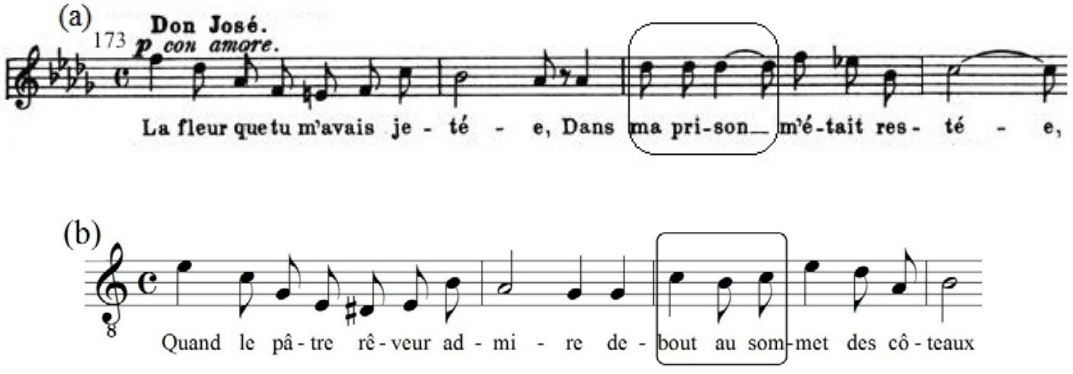
The text to the corresponding number in *Grisélidis* contains an extended metaphor about a shepherd admiring a shining star, and ends with the protagonist comparing himself to the shepherd and his beloved to the star. In comparing the Flower Song to its original source, Lesley Wright has written that "in each case the male protagonist has been drawn helplessly toward the object of his desire, although other dramatic analogies that might have triggered the borrowing are not immediately apparent."[26]

(beginning "Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître") does not have a counterpart in the source material in *Grisélidis*. Ibid., 148.

[26] Ibid.,147.

Some commentators have latched onto the "self-borrowed" origin of the Flower Song as an explanation for Bizet's perceived improprieties in text setting in the number. Lesley Wright, for example, notes that "melodic changes were introduced . . . to fit the borrowed melody to the demands of the new text. The result is not entirely satisfactory, but then prosody was not Bizet's greatest concern even when borrowing was not involved."[27] In a similar vein, Hugh Macdonald has written that "[Bizet's] habit of self-borrowing is a reflection of his uncertain, even casual, attitude to the setting of texts. From *Don Procopio* to *Carmen* he constantly pilfered his scores for pieces to re-use in later settings. The result can be awkward declamation (as in Don José's Flower Song)[.]"[28]

Let us compare the first four bars of the vocal line in the Flower Song and its source in light of this criticism (see Ex. 5.8 below).[29] The verses for both numbers are eight-syllable lines (*octosyllabes*), with the customary tonic accent on the final counted syllable, as well as a variably placed secondary prosodic accent in the middle of the line.



EXAMPLE 5.8. (a) *Carmen,* Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 173–176; (b) the analogous measures from the manuscript to Bizet's unfinished opera *Grisélidis*

[27] Ibid.,148.
[28] Hugh Macdonald, "Bizet, Georges," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2d ed.
[29] Ex. 5.8b is based on Lesley Wright's transcription from the manuscript of *Grisélidis* in Wright, "Bizet Before *Carmen*," 151.

In the opening lines from the Flower Song, the secondary accents are found on the second syllable of the first line and the fourth syllable of the second line:

La fl**eu**r que tu m'avais jet**é**e,	(2,8)
Dans ma pris**o**n m'était rest**é**e . . .	(4,8)

In *Grisélidis*, the secondary accents fall in different places, namely, the third syllable of the first line and the second syllable of the second line:

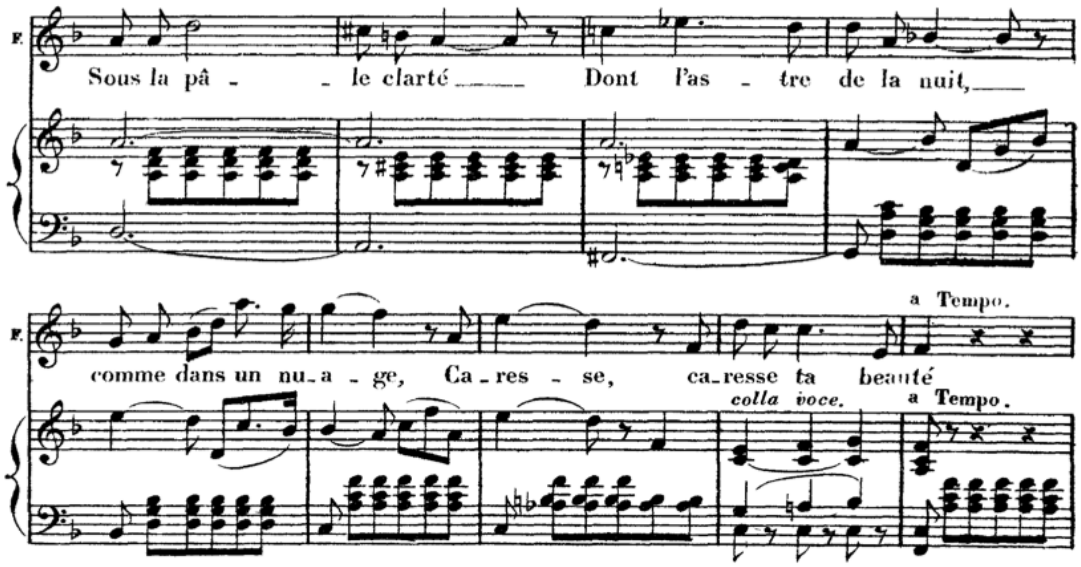
Quand le p**â**tre rêveur adm**i**re	(3,8)
Deb**ou**t au sommet des côt**eau**x . . .	(2,8)

In both Ex. 5.8a and b, Bizet begins by setting an unaccented syllable at the beginning of the line to a strong beat. Although this opening gambit does not strictly reflect metrical proprieties, it was nevertheless a common practice for opening phrases in both French and Italian opera.[30] Furthermore, the tonic accents at the ends of the two verses are correctly placed on the downbeats of mm. 174 and 176 in the Flower Song and in the corresponding measures in *Grisélidis*. So far, then, the declamation of Bizet's characters does not exceed the bounds of accepted practice.

That leaves us with Bizet's treatment of the secondary prosodic accent in the second line. In *Grisélidis*, that secondary accent is found on the second syllable of the word "deb**ou**t," and Bizet fittingly places that syllable on the downbeat of the third measure in Ex. 5.8b. When Bizet altered the rhythm in Don José's corresponding phrase in the Flower Song, however, he did not align the accented syllable in the new text (in the word "pris**o**n") with the downbeat of m. 175. Instead, the prosodic accent is given durational (instead of metrical) emphasis, as a long note on

[30] See Moreen, "Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas," 23. Familiar examples of this practice from Verdi's operas cited by Moreen include the opening phrases of "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto*, "Parigi, o cara" from *La Traviata*, and "Celeste Aida" from *Aida*, each of which begins with an unaccented syllable on a downbeat. Examples of similar downbeat openings from *Carmen* include the *Chœur des cigarières* from Act I ("La cloche a sonné") and the *Morceau d'ensemble* from Act III ("Quant au douanier").

the second beat. As discussed in Chapter 3, this displacement of an accented syllable to the second beat of a measure (as the third of three eighth notes) is a melodic mannerism found in Carmen's Séguedille and other Spanish-influenced numbers in the opera. However, since the Flower Song is a lyrical number, perhaps a more persuasive precedent for José's declamatory practice here may be found in Gounod's operas. Steven Huebner has noted that Gounod had a "propensity to bestow durational rather than metrical emphasis upon prosodic text accents" in expressive and lyrical passages such as Ex. 5.9 below (taken from the love duet from *Faust*).[31] In Ex. 5.9, the prosodic accents in the line "Sous la p**â**le clart**é**" and the hemistich "Dont l'**a**stre de la n**ui**t" are all displaced to the second beat of the measure but given durational emphasis. A similar marking of prosodic accents with durational, instead of metrical, emphasis is found in the Flower Song in Ex. 5.8a.



EXAMPLE 5.9. Gounod, *Faust*, Act III, Duo

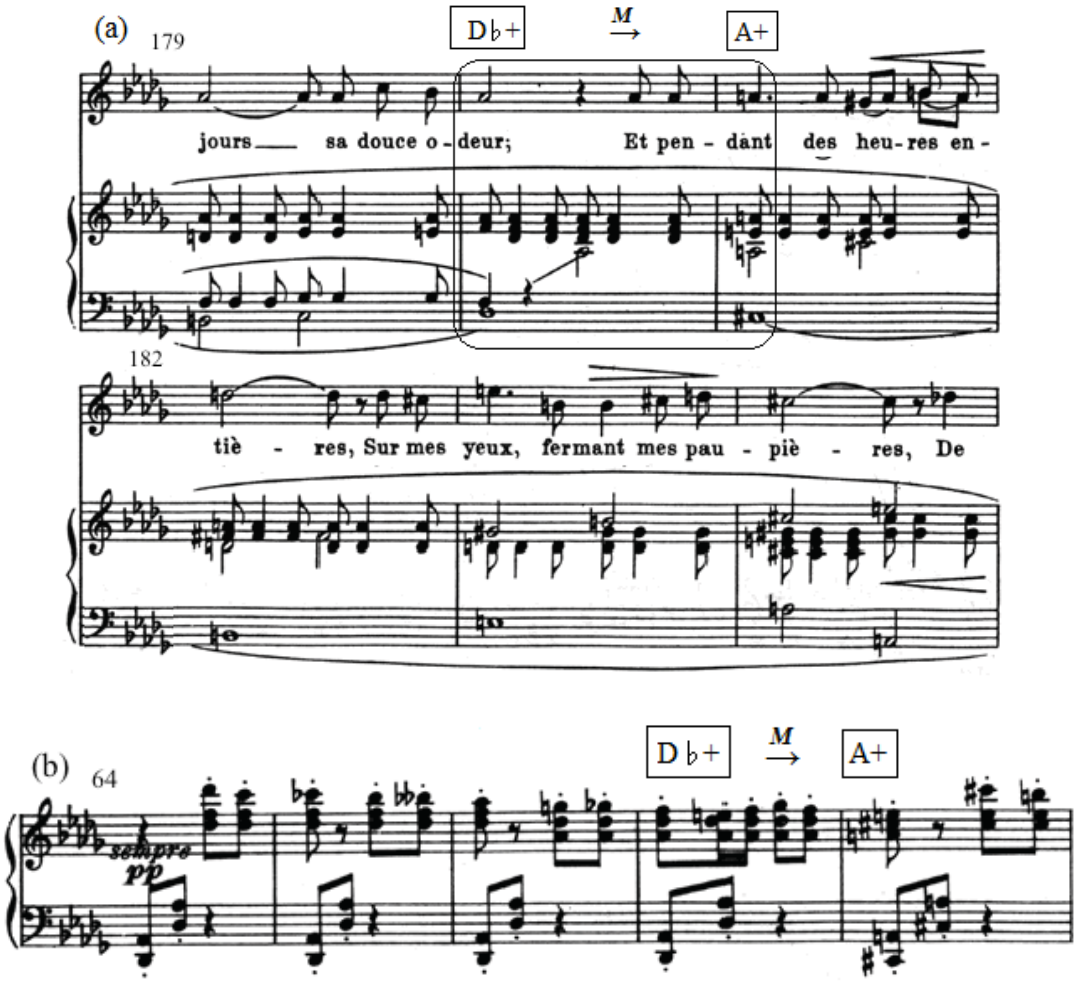
[31] Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 232. Huebner notes of Gounod's text setting in Ex. 5.9 that "there is a subtle dynamic between prosodic and oratorical accent, or, to use the composer's own terms of reference, between 'the exactitude of language' and 'the expression of truth.'" Ibid.

Elsewhere in the Flower Song, the prosodic accents in the word groups "de cette od**eu**r" (m. 185), "je me pren**ai**s" (m. 189), "pourquoi faut-**i**l" (m. 193), and "je ne sent**ai**s" (m. 199) are similarly displaced to the second beat and given a compensating durational emphasis. In light of Ex. 5.9, Don José's style of declamation in the Flower Song should not necessarily be considered "awkward": it may actually reflect the more flexible (or, to use Huebner's words, "more expressive") way of treating prosodic accents pioneered by Gounod in his lyrical works.[32] In any event, in response to the criticism of Wright and Macdonald, we should note that the use of durational accents in place of metrical accents in the Flower Song is in no way directly attributable to Bizet's self-borrowing from *Grisélidis*. A comparison with the source material in *Grisélidis* shows that the relevant rhythms in the Flower Song were altered from the source in each of those phrases.

In terms of harmonic organization, the Flower Song reflects Carmen's powerful and intoxicating influence on Don José. As we saw in Chapter 4, the music accompanying Carmen's entrance in Act I and her subsequent seduction of José in the Séguedille and Duo was strongly associated with the use of common-tone tonality. We also saw that in the Act I finale, Carmen's escape from custody was accompanied by a common-tone modulation from D-flat major to its lower flat mediant, A major (Ex. 4.21, reproduced for ease of comparison in Ex. 5.10b below).

[32] Ibid., 231. The level of awkwardness in the declamation greatly depends on how one perceives hypermeter at the two-bar level in the Flower Song. Bizet generally sets one line of text to two bars of music in the number. If one hears the first measure of the number (and every subsequent odd-numbered measure) as strong (i.e., in beginning-accented, or "German," hypermeter), one will probably notice a greater number of incongruously accented syllables, since those occur mostly in the middle of verses. In contrast, a hearing of even-numbered measures as hypermetrically strong ("Franco-Italian" hypermeter) would likely result in the perception of fewer instances of bad declamation, since Bizet generally follows the conventional Franco-Italian practice of placing the line-ending tonic accents on the downbeats of even-numbered measures.

That same modulation (featuring David Kopp's ***M*** transformation) is effected between the first and second quatrains of the Flower Song (Ex. 5.10a). In both Ex. 5.10a and b, the bass note D♭ in a tonic triad in D-flat major is enharmonically reinterpreted as C♯ supporting a I^6 chord in A major, and the modulation to A major is later confirmed by a cadence in that key. It is not too fanciful, perhaps, to imagine that in revisiting his time in prison in the Flower Song, Don José is also revisiting musically the event that put him there, namely Carmen's escape in Act I.



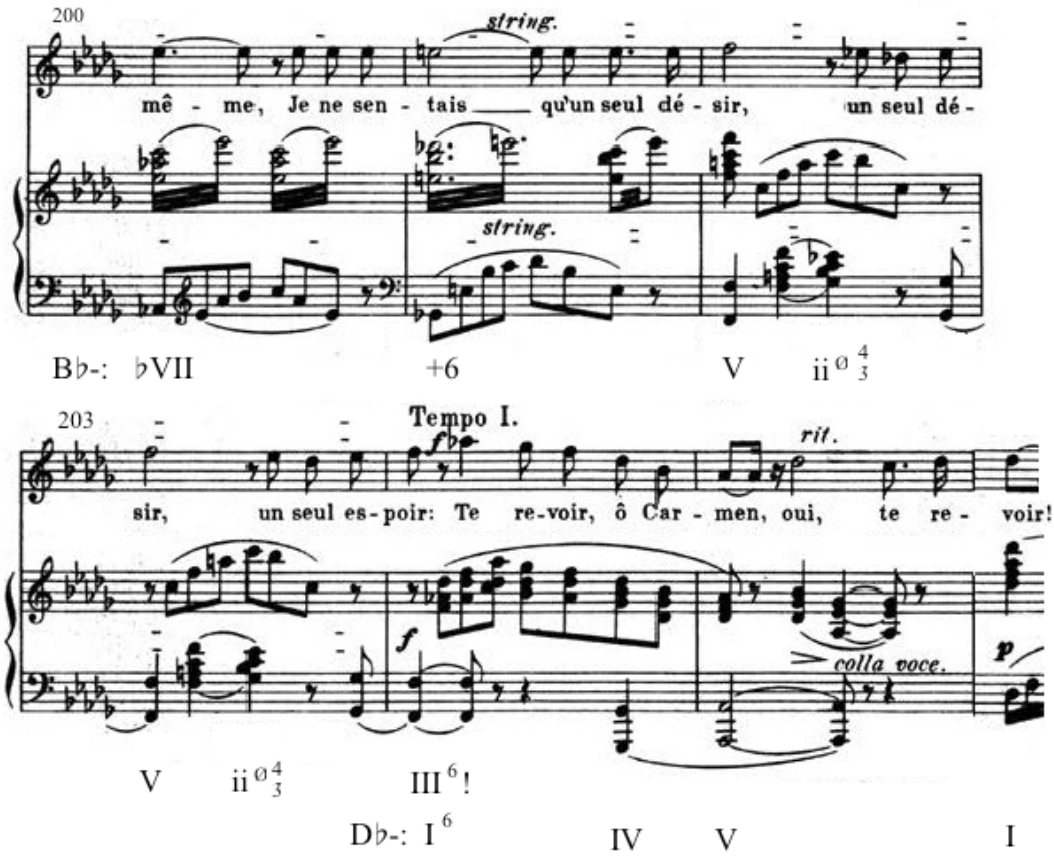
EXAMPLE 5.10. (a) Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 179–184; (b) Bizet, *Carmen*, Act I, Final, mm. 64–68

Lesley Wright has noted that the Flower Song is "organized harmonically so that each quatrain departs more radically from the tonic [D-flat major] than the one preceding it," until the final quatrain reaffirms the tonic above a sustained tonic pedal.[33] As we have seen in Ex. 5.10a, the second quatrain features a modulation to A major, the key of the lower flat mediant, before returning to the tonic. The third quatrain ("Je me prenais à te maudire") begins with an appearance of the 5–♯5–6 chromatic motive in mm. 188–190 (see Ex. 4.14c), perhaps another indication of the seductive influence of Carmen, and ends in m. 196 on the dominant of F major, the key of the upper sharp mediant. The Flower Song thus tonicizes in turn the triads of D-flat major (tonic), A major (LFM), and F major (USM), traversing the major-third cycle D♭–A–F.[34]

The relationship between D-flat major and F major is further explored in the fourth quatrain, which begins in m. 197 ("Puis je m'accusais de blasphème") with F major as a local tonic. By mm. 201–202, it is clear that F major, preceded by an augmented-sixth chord, has been reinterpreted as the dominant of B-flat minor (see Ex. 5.11 on the following page).

[33] Wright, "Bizet Before *Carmen*," 147.

[34] A similar cycle is traversed in the Act I finale, which begins in F minor, moves to D-flat major, and ends in A major. As mentioned above, there is a dramatic connection between the two numbers: the events in the Act I finale lead to Don José's stay in prison, which in turn is the subject of the Flower Song.



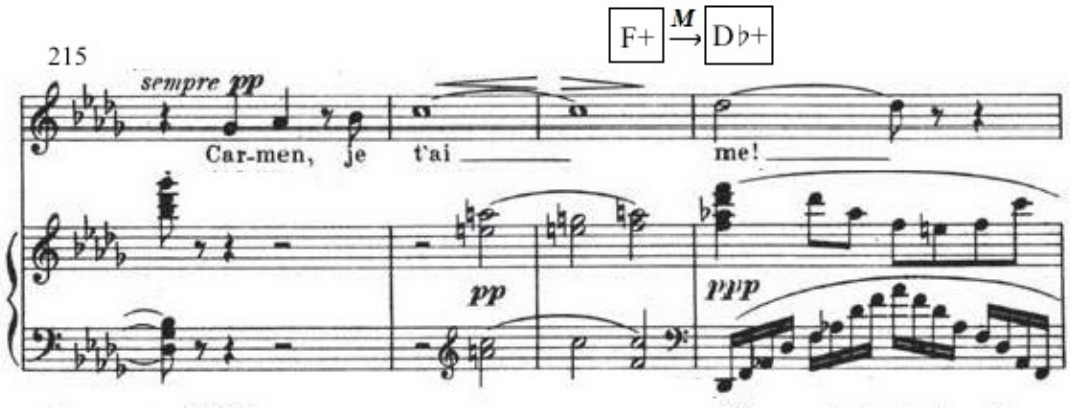
EXAMPLE 5.11. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 200–206

As Susan McClary has observed, at mm. 202–203, on the words "un seul désir, un seul espoir," the vocal line is "apparently incapable of pushing beyond" the pitch F, until Don José "reaches climax . . . by calling out explicitly for Carmen" in m. 204.[35] It is exactly at this moment that a D-flat major triad in 6/3 position is substituted for F major (i.e., III^6 of B-flat minor substituting for V). That D-flat major triad then becomes a pivot chord for a modulation back to the original tonic.

Although the tonic is re-established in the coda to the Flower Song, it is not confirmed by an authentic cadence at the end. Instead, the leading tone C in mm. 216–217 is harmonized in

[35] McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 97.

succession by three of the six triads that share it as a common tone (A minor, C major, and F major), rather than the expected dominant harmony (A-flat major) (Ex. 5.12).



EXAMPLE 5.12. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 215–218

The final progression from F major to D-flat major (III♮–I, or another ***M*** transformation) in mm. 217–218 recalls the interplay between those two triads in Ex. 5.11 and echoes the similar ***M*** transformation from D-flat major to A major earlier in the number (Ex. 5.10a).[36] As Steven Huebner has noted, the final progression is thus a "tonal encapsulation of José's entire argument in the Flower Song."[37]

José says at the conclusion of the Flower Song that Carmen need only throw him a glance in order for her to "take over [his] entire being" ("t'emparer de tout mon être"). I would argue that the pervasive influence of Carmen over José is reflected in the music of the Act II duet, most notably in the Flower Song. As we have seen, harmonic devices that were characteristic of

[36] As noted in the discussion of chromatic third relations in Chapter 4, note 11, both Schenker and Riemann contemplated chromatic-mediant-to-tonic progressions in their work. In the III♮–I cadence in the Flower Song, F is held as a common tone, while the semitonal voice-leading motions from C to D ♭ and from A♮ (=B♭♭) to A♭ represent Daniel Harrison's "dominant discharge" and "subdominant discharge," respectively. Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music*, 91–93. See also the discussion accompanying Fig. 5.3b below.
[37] Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 21.

Carmen (and not of José) in the Séguedille and Duo, most notably the use of common-tone tonality, find their way into José's musical vocabulary in the Act II duet.

The first few rows of Table 5.2 below summarizes the succession of keys in José's music from selected sections of the duet that we have already considered.

Measures	Character	Succession of foreground keys	Common tones	Note
100–117	Don José	G- → E♭+	B♭+, G	Ex. 5.6
147–165	Don José	G- → B♭+ → D-	D	Ex. 5.7
165–173	(Orchestra)	D- → (B♭+/-) → D♭+	F	(Prelude to Don José's Flower Song)
223 et seq.	Carmen	D♭+ → C+ (!!)	None	Ex. 5.13

TABLE 5.2. Succession of keys in selected sections of the Act II duet

As set forth in the first row below the headings in Table 5.2, following the conclusion of Carmen's first outburst in m. 99, José effects a common-tone transition from G minor to E-flat major for the lyrical passage shown in Ex. 5.6, with a cadence in E-flat major at m. 117. Carmen does not accept his argument and reprises her outburst, returning eventually to G minor again in m. 147. The next row of Table 5.2 summarizes the succession of keys shown above in Ex. 5.7. As discussed above, Don José pushes the music in his argument with Carmen first to B-flat major (mm. 156–157) and then to D minor (mm. 157–165), the tonic triads of which are both connected to that of G minor through the common tone D. The third row of Table 5.2 shows the succession of keys in the eight-measure prelude to the Flower Song (mm. 165–173). This orchestral section follows directly from the cadence in D minor in m. 165 and is tonally indistinct. It may be considered to suggest B-flat major/minor before it reaches a cadence in D-

flat major, the key of the Flower Song. The tonic triads of all keys in this row are linked by the common tone F. We shall discuss the last row in Table 5.2 in our discussion of the *Tempo di mezzo* section below.

Fig. 5.2 below maps the successions of keys summarized in Table 5.2 on to a network similar to the ones used in the analysis of the Séguedille and Duo in Chapter 4. The arrows in Fig. 5.2 chart the common-tone connections in Don José's music in these sections of the Act II duet and show the extent to which Don José has adopted Carmen's techniques of common-tone tonality, either subconsciously because she has "pervaded his being" or consciously as a way of persuading her of his love.

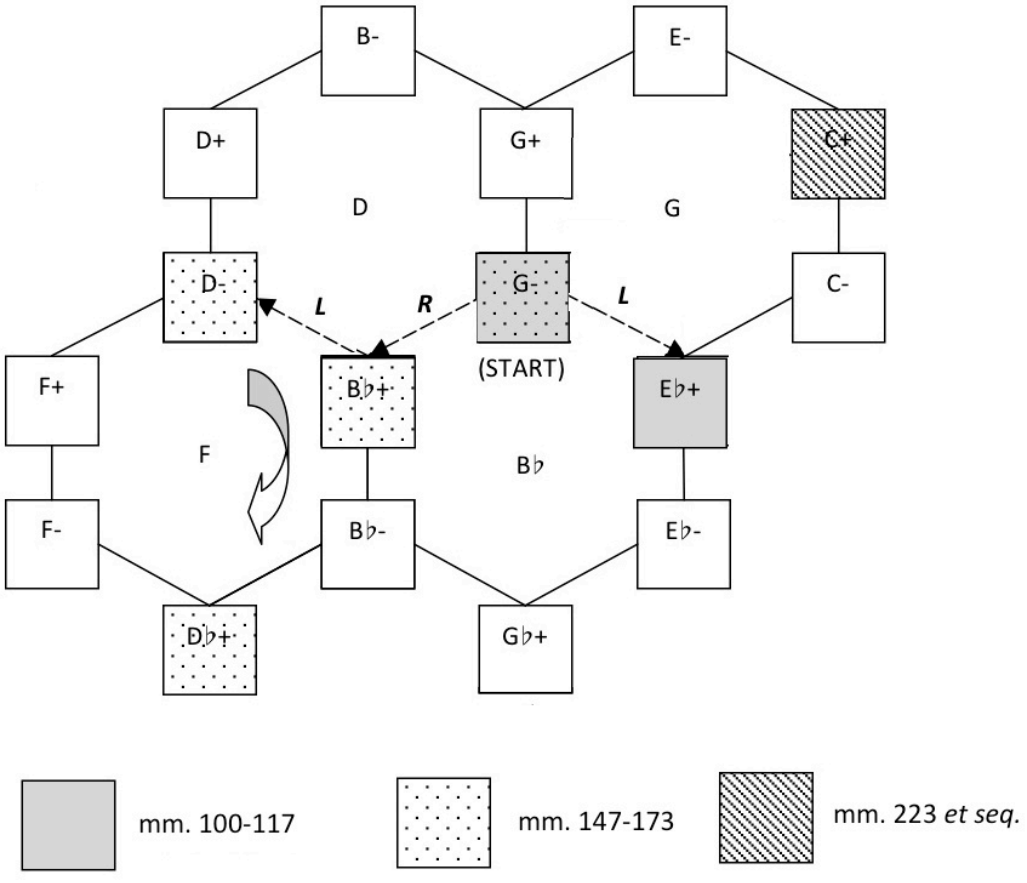
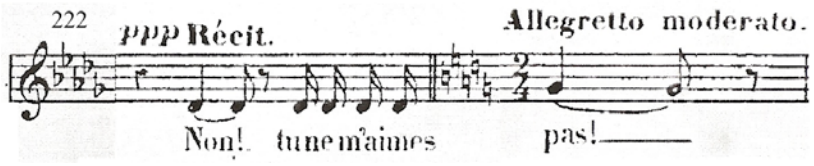


FIGURE 5.2. Succession of keys in selected sections of the Act II duet

Tempo di mezzo. In response to Don José's declaration of love at the end the Flower Song ("Carmen, je t'aime!"), Carmen flatly replies "non, tu ne m'aimes pas!" (Ex. 5.13).



EXAMPLE 5.13. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, mm. 222–223

This negation is declaimed on notes that are a tritone apart, D♭ (following from the end of the Flower Song) and G, which turns out to be a dominant preparation for C major, the key of the *cabalette* (see the last row of Table 5.2 and the shaded box near the upper-right corner of Fig. 5.2).[38] The abrupt transition from D-flat major to the dominant of C major is not mediated by any intermediate common-tone-related step (note the distance between those keys in Fig. 5.2). In a sense, therefore, the pair have reversed roles from the Séguedille et Duo in Act I (compare Fig. 4.8): there, it was Carmen who engaged in key transitions linked by common tones and José who engaged in abrupt modulations. However, the pitch G in m. 223 may also be thought of as connecting back to Carmen's previous cadences in G major/minor in mm. 99 and 147. Following each of those earlier cadences, Don José pursued the argument away from the key of G and towards other common-tone-related keys. Carmen's return to the pitch G in m. 223 and her subsequent adoption of the key of C major for the *cabalette* may thus be thought of as a rejection of José's intervening harmonic moves shown in Table 5.2 and Fig. 5.2. In effect, Carmen, ever the contrarian spirit ("si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime"), charts her own course by

[38] A similar sequence of harmonic events takes place at the same formal juncture in the Act IV duet from Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. In that duet, the end of Raoul's *cantabile* section in G-flat major is followed by a *tempo di mezzo* that emphasizes the pitch C, as dominant preparation for the *cabalette* in F minor.

connecting her previous utterances in G major/minor to her new key of C major (a common-tone-related move in a different direction), disregarding José's interruptions in between.[39] Once again, in a recurring pattern that started in the Séguedille and Duo, Carmen picks up from where she had left off, as if José had not said anything at all.

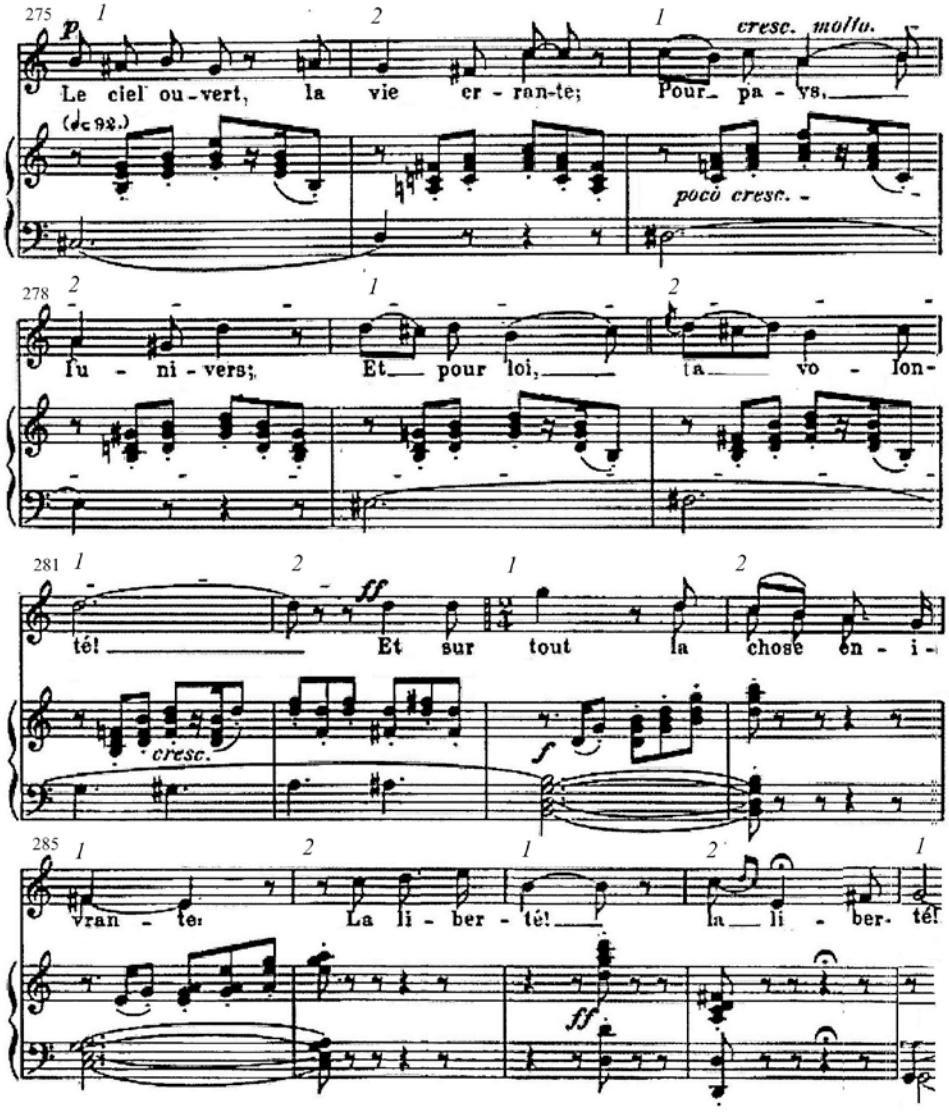
Cabalette. In the *cabalette* ("Là-bas, là-bas dans la montagne"), Carmen attempts to persuade José to desert from the army by extolling the virtues of a life in the mountains with its attendant liberty. Carmen's extended solo, starting at m. 239 and extending through to m. 336, falls quite squarely into two- and four-bar groups, causing Daniel Albright to note that this "hymn to liberty . . . is sung to a tune so . . . rigidly trotting, that it almost derides the freedom that it celebrates."[40] Indeed, the *cabelette*, with its regular phrase rhythm and uncomplicated harmonic structure, was highly praised by the Parisian critics attending the premiere, with various writers noting that the setting of "Là-bas, là-bas dans la montagne" was "an enchantment that did not escape our ears" (Henri de la Pommeraye in *La France*), "an apt phrase" (Paul Bernard in *Revue et gazette musicale*), and "a deliciously stated phrase" (Henri Blaze de Bury in *Revue des deux mondes*).[41] Nevertheless, a closer examination of Carmen's melodic line reveals that there is more rhythmic flexibility than first appears.

Ex. 5.14 (on the next page) shows the build-up to the cadence in the middle section of the *cabalette*, ending with the words "la liberté." The text is given below:

[39] In Merimée's novella, Don José describes Carmen's contrarian behavior as resembling that of "women and cats who do not come when they are called, and come when they are not called." Merimée, *Carmen*, p. 61 ("elle, suivant l'usage des femmes et des chats qui ne viennent pas quand on les appelle et qui viennent quand on ne les appelle pas, . . .").
[40] Albright, Review of *Georges Bizet: Carmen* by Susan McClary, 582.
[41] Ibid., 5 ("un enchantement qui n'a point echappé nos oreilles"); 28 (une phrase bien venue"); and 126 ("cette phrase délicieusement dite").

Le ciel ouv**e**rt, la vie err**a**nte,	(4,8)
Pour pa**y**s l'univ**e**rs, || et pour l**oi** ta volont**é**,	(3,6,9,12)
Et surt**ou**t la chose enivr**a**nte,	(3,8)
La liberté! la liberté! . . .	(4,8)

The first four measures in the example (mm. 275–278) exhibits elements of the "rigid trotting" noted by Albright. The melodic line in these measures reflect a dance-like German meter, starting on metrical and hypermetrical downbeats and ending with accented syllables (underlined in the text above) on weak beats.



EXAMPLE 5.14. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo, mm. 275–89

Starting in m. 279, however, there is a gradual metrical modulation: the hemistich "et pour loi ta volonté" is stretched to occupy three measures instead of two, so that by the time Carmen reaches the last word "volont**é**," the line-ending accent once again falls on a metrical and hypermetrical downbeat in m. 281. The more naturalistic-sounding declamation of Franco-Italian meter has been restored and continues through the end of Ex. 5.14. As Carmen describes how free José's life would be if he escaped with her, her melodic line descriptively frees itself from the rigidities imposed by German meter and reaches the declamatory flexibility afforded by Franco-Italian meter.

Coda. Towards the end of the duet, at m. 337, Don José tries again to break free of Carmen's spell, and a further argument ensues. Carmen once again starts out by claiming the metrical high ground in the argument at the downbeats of m. 345 and mm. 347–350, but this time, Don José responds with a hypermetrically reinforced "adieu pour jamais" at mm. 357–361 (starting with the *cabalette*, odd-numbered measures are hypermetrically strong). This seemingly final "adieu" is interrupted, however, and instead of a post-cadential confirmation of C minor at m. 365, we get a diminished-seventh chord signaling the unexpected arrival of Don José's lieutenant Zuniga, and a direct segue into the next number, the Act II finale.

5.2. Interlude: Don José in the Act II and Act III Finales

At the end of Chapter 4, I suggested that the analysis of the Séguedille and Duo in that chapter could be used to support a reading, based on Susan McClary's writings, that Carmen's world of common-tone tonality represents sensuality and pleasure, while José's modulation without the mediation of common tones in that number represents an act of "musical violence" that prefigures the later events of the opera.

In this chapter, we have seen that José's bravura instincts are tempered somewhat in the Act II duet. In order to convince Carmen that she has "taken over his being" (in the words of the Flower Song), he adopts some of her melodic mannerisms, as well as her characteristic use of common-tone tonality. However, José's quick temper returns to the fore in the Act II finale and in the later numbers of the opera. In order to evaluate José's music in the Act II finale and beyond, it will be useful first to step back and review Bizet's treatment of semitonal motion throughout *Carmen*.

In Chapter 4 and in this chapter, we have identified several characteristic ways in which Bizet employed ascending and (less frequently) descending chromatic motion in *Carmen*. Figure 5.3 summarizes a few of these characteristic chromatic gestures, all featuring a semitonal ascent from A♭ to A♮. In Fig. 5.3a, that semitonal ascent forms part of an ascending 5–5<–6 line over a stable D♭–F dyad, with the A♮ functioning as a passing tone that forms part of an augmented triad.[42] We previously examined instances of this specific semitonal ascent in Carmen's entrance and in Don José's Flower Song (see Ex. 4.14a and c above).

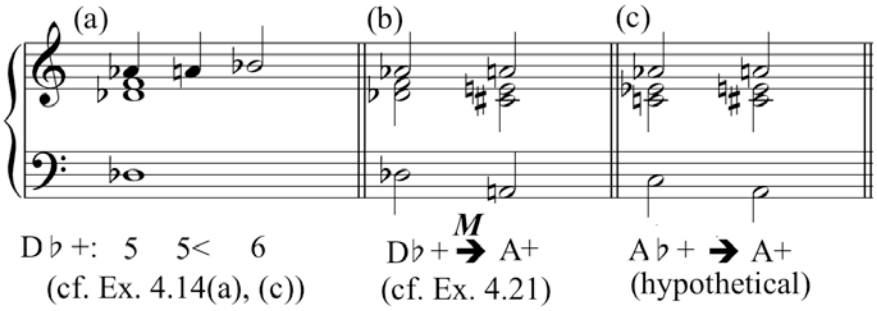


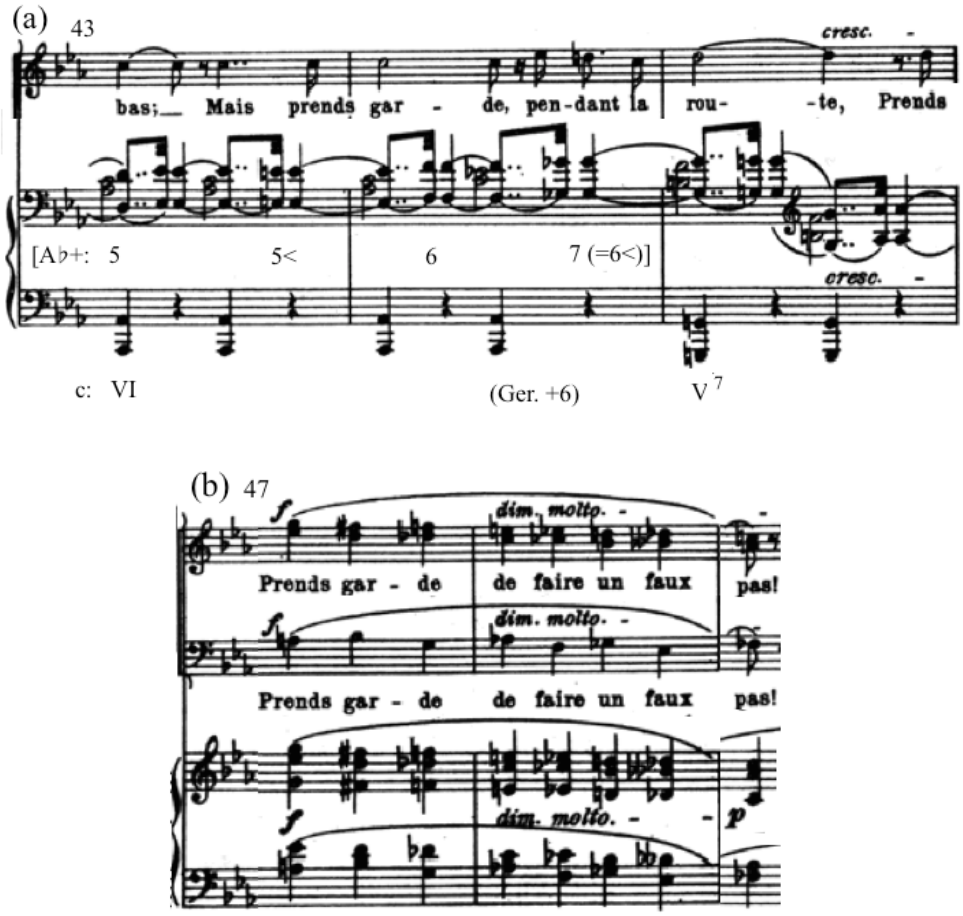
FIGURE 5.3. Three categories of ascending semitonal motion

[42] As discussed above in Section 4.3 (see the text accompanying Fig. 4.2), the notation "5–5<–6" is derived from Hugo Riemann's notational system for intervals and denotes intervals of a perfect fifth, augmented fifth, and major sixth above a major prime (i.e., it is equivalent to the figures 5–♯5–6 above the root of a major triad). While I used the Riemannian notation system specifically to indicate harmonic dualism in Chapter 4, I have used Riemannian (5–5<–6) and figured-bass (5–♯5–6) notation interchangeably when discussing the motive in this chapter.

In Fig. 5.3b, the same A♭–A♮ ascent is featured as part of a chromatic mediant transformation (***M***) from a D-flat major triad to an A major triad. As in all ***M*** transformations, the ascending semitonal motion (or dominant discharge) from A♭ (=G♯) to A♮ is balanced by a descending semitonal motion (or subdominant discharge) from F to E. The common tone D♭/C♯ is preserved. As discussed above, a prominent example of this particular transformation, featuring the A♭–A♮ ascent in the melodic line, can be found in the melodic line in the Flower Song (Ex. 5.10a), as well as in an inner orchestral part in the Act I finale (Ex. 5.10b). Finally, one could imagine the A♭–A♮ ascent harmonized by an upward wrench (or upshift) from A-flat major to A major, without any preservation of common tones (Fig. 5.3c). The ascent from A♭ to A♮ here would be analogous to Don José's ascent from A♯ to B in the Séguedille and Duo (Ex. 4.20a).[43]

The three categories shown in Fig. 5.3 (with their differing levels of common-tone preservation) provide us with a framework for considering the different types of semitonal ascents and descents that can be found throughout the score for *Carmen*. In Ex. 5.15, for example, taken from the opening number of Act III, two different types of semitonal motion accompany the chorus of smugglers as they negotiate their mountainous route. As they sing of the fortune that awaits them at the end of their expedition, they warn each other against making a false step on the physically perilous path ("Écoute, compagnon, écoute! | La fortune est là-bas, là-bas. | Mais prends garde dans la route, | Prends garde de faire un faux pas!").

[43] Milan Pospíšil has examined examples of wrenching chromatic ascents in the operas of Verdi, arguing that they were derived from similar instances in the operas of Meyerbeer. See Pospíšil, "Verdi — 'Harmoniste à la façon de Meyerbeer'?"

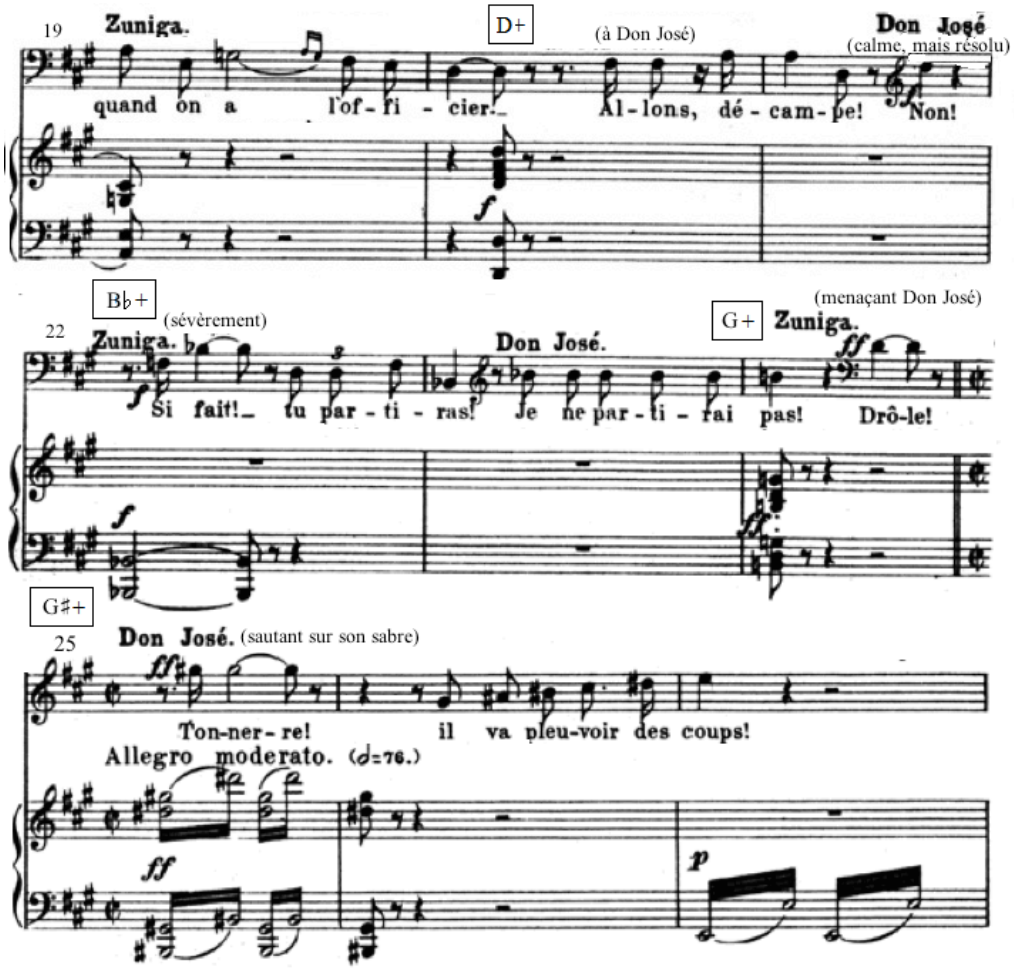


EXAMPLE 5.15. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act III, Sextuor et chœur: (a) mm. 43–45; (b) mm. 47–49

Both Ex. 5.15a and b, which occur a few measures apart in the number, feature linear semitonal motion. In Ex. 5.15a, the ascending semitonal line in the upper strings (E♭–E♮–F, etc.) sounds against sustained or repeated common tones (A♭ and C) in the other instruments in mm. 43–44. It is thus another instance of the 5–5<–6 motive summarized in Fig. 5.3a and discussed at length in Chapter 4. In contrast, the semitonal descent in Ex. 5.15b features a kind of musical free fall in both the choral and orchestral parts, forming a sequential pattern with alternating half-diminished seventh chords and augmented triads that do not share any common tones. If the semitonal motion against a stable common-tone backdrop in Ex. 5.15a hints at the potential for

peril, Ex. 5.15b provides a depiction of peril realized, should one indeed make a false step ("faire un faux pas").

Let us now apply these observations on the different types of semitonal motion shown in Fig. 5.3 to the Act II finale of *Carmen*. The Act II finale begins with the unexpected entrance of Lieutenant Zuniga, who seeks a meeting with Carmen and orders José to leave. Ex. 5.16 shows Zuniga's commands and José's responses.



EXAMPLE 5.16. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Final, mm. 19–27

In m. 20, Zuniga orders José to leave ("Allons, décampe!"), in a melodic line that arpeggiates a D-major triad. José refuses (on D4), and Zuniga repeats his command in m. 22, at the same time

effecting a move to B-flat major, the lower flat mediant of D major. In response, José picks up the pitch B♭3 in m. 23 and pushes it up to B3 in m. 24, harmonized by a G major triad in the orchestra, which continues to preserve the common tone D. However, when Zuniga continues to threaten and insult him ("Drôle!" on D4 in m. 24), José finally breaks free of any common-tone moorings in m. 25, exclaiming "Tonnerre!" over an inverted G-sharp major triad in the orchestra.

Fig. 5.4 provides a graphical depiction of the four harmonies outlined by the vocal and orchestral parts in mm. 20–25. The graph shows the vocal pitches (in register) from those measures. Notes in parentheses are from the orchestral part.

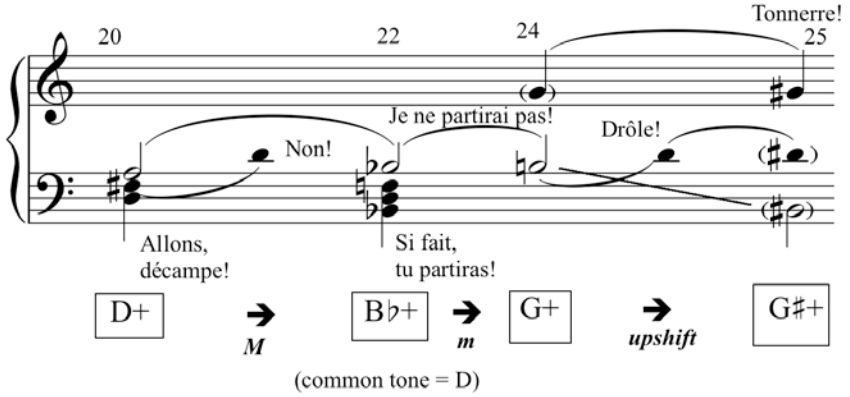


FIGURE 5.4. Harmonic motion and semitonal ascents in the Act II finale, mm. 20–25

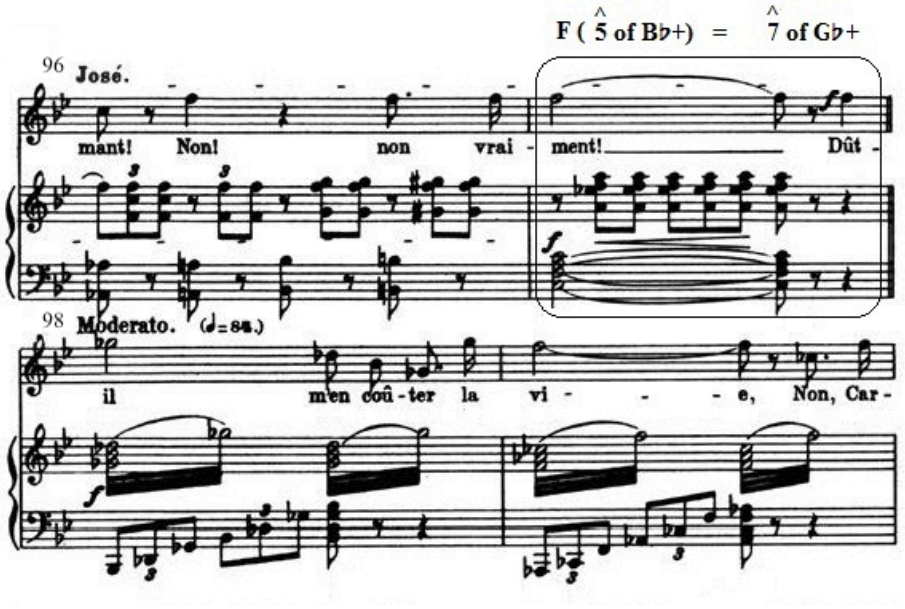
As the hollow noteheads in Fig. 5.4 show, the build-up to this confrontation features a semitonal ascent from A3 in m. 20 to B♭3 in m. 22, those two notes forming the high points of the two chords arpeggiated by Zuniga in his commands to José. This ascent continues to B3 in José's part in mm. 23–24 ("Je ne partirai pas!"). The A–B♭–B ascent in mm. 20–24 (cf. the various instances of the same ascent in the Séguedille and Duo discussed in Chapter 4) is accompanied by two chromatic mediant transformations (first from D major to B-flat major, and then from B-flat major to G major) that preserve the common tone D throughout. The point of no return in

the argument between the two characters is reached only with an upshift to G-sharp major, a triad sharing no common tones with any of the preceding three triads, in m. 25. As the treble-clef staff in Fig 5.4 shows, the move to G-sharp major is effected when the pitch G4 (from the orchestra's G-major chord in m. 24) is reinterpreted by Don José it as a leading-tone to G♯4, a note that is significantly higher than the previous vocal pitches in the passage, for his exclamation of "Tonnerre!" The move recalls José's excitable reinterpretation of B♭/A♯ as a leading tone in the Séguedille et Duo (Ex. 4.20a). Here in the Act II finale, however, Don José's emotional intensification is accompanied by an explicit threat of violence: "il va pleuvoir des coups!" ("it will be raining blows").[44] This moment of rupture is further emphasized by two other semitonal ascents between mm. 24 and 25. The D4 of Zuniga's exclamation "Drôle" in m. 24 moves up by semitone to D♯4 (doubled at two higher octaves) in the orchestra in m. 25. Meanwhile, the semitonal ascent A3–B♭3–B3, previously carried in the vocal parts (with doublings in the orchestra), is continued on to B♯2 (doubled at the lower octave) in the orchestral bass. The activation of the higher and lower registers of the orchestra with the G-sharp major chord at m. 25 further highlights the startling nature of Don José's violent harmonic upshift.

In the Act II finale, the impending fight between Don José and Zuniga is broken up by Carmen. José is forced to join Carmen and her smuggler friends, but by Act III, she has started to tire of him. At the beginning of the Act III finale, a knife fight between José and Carmen's new suitor, Escamillo, is similarly broken up by Carmen. When Carmen dismisses José later on

[44] Don José's propensity towards excitability and violence predates the events of the opera. In both the Merimée novella and in the opera (in the dialogue in Act I, Scene III), José reveals that he joined the army after being forced to leave his home town in Navarre following a quarrel and fight over a ball game (*jeu de paume*, probably played by José and his countrymen in the Basque version known as *pelota* or *jai alai*). Merimée, *Carmen*, 57; Meilhac and Halévy, *Carmen*, 400.

in the Act III finale and tells him to leave her and go back to his mother, Don José declares excitedly that he will not leave even if it costs him his life (Ex. 5.17). As in Ex. 5.16, the buildup of tension is marked by a semitonal ascent (in the orchestral bass in m. 96) against a common-tone backdrop (a sustained F in the vocal and orchestral parts). In this argument as well, there is a moment of rupture that is effected when Don José abandons a previously established common-tone framework.



EXAMPLE 5.17. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act III, Final, mm. 96–99

As shown in Ex. 5.17, in m. 97, José reinterprets F, the root of a dominant-seventh chord in B-flat major, as an active leading tone, effecting an abrupt, or "violent," modulation to G-flat major in another example of what Robert Bailey called the "expressive" use of tonality to intensify emotion.[45] From the perspective of motion between successive foreground keys, the move from B-flat major to G-flat major in mm. 97–98 is a common-tone-preserving ***M*** transformation. However, since the music actually moves from the dominant (rather than the

[45] Bailey, "The Structure of the 'Ring' and Its Evolution," 51.

tonic) of B-flat major to the tonic of G-flat major, the common-tone connection between the two keys (based on the pitch B♭) is not evident on the musical surface and the motion from F^7 to G-flat major manifests itself as a violent upshift. In a sense, therefore, the harmonization of the semitonal ascent from F to G♭ in José's line in mm. 97–98 may be thought of as encompassing elements of both Fig. 5.3b and 5.3c above.[46] José repeats this harmonic maneuver nineteen measures later in the Act III finale, wrenching the music up a further half-step at m. 117 by reinterpreting F♯, the root of a dominant-seventh harmony in B major, as an active leading-tone to G major.[47] Even though Micaëla leads José away from his confrontation with Carmen in the Act III finale, the seeds of the violence to come in Act IV have been sown.

5.3 The Act IV Final Duet

The final act of *Carmen* is set outside the bullring in Seville. The action is well known to almost all opera goers. Following two scene-setting choral numbers, Escamillo and his entourage enter the bullring. Don José appears from the shadows and Carmen stays behind to confront him, even though her companions warn her to stay away. The Act IV duet, the last number in *Carmen*, represents the final encounter between Carmen and Don José and ends with Carmen's murder.[48]

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[46] José's G-flat-major phrase "Dût-il m'en coûter la vie" (starting at mm. 97–98 in Ex. 5.17) was originally written by Bizet for the abandoned opera *La Coupe du Roi de Thulé* (1868). The two versions are compared in Dean, "An Unfinished Opera by Bizet," 359.

[47] José's F♯4 in m. 117 is of course enharmonically equivalent to his G♭4 in m. 98.

[48] The entire scene outside the bullring in Seville, including the murder of Carmen in a public space, is the invention of Bizet and his librettists. In Merimée's novella, Carmen has a brief dalliance with Lucas, a picador (cf. Escamillo, a matador), that fatally provokes Don José's jealousy. José subsequently kills Carmen in a solitary gorge in the mountains before galloping back to Córdoba (not Seville) to turn himself in for the murder. Merimée, *Carmen*, 102–108.

Form. Table 5.3 below is a summary of the formal structure of the Act IV duet.

Sections / Subsections	Measures	Ending Harmony / Cadence
I. First part (quasi-conventional form)		
A. Introduction (recitative and scene) (Carmen: "C'est toi")	1–33	PAC in C+ (Carmen) elided into modulation to A♭+ (LFM)
B. Lyrical section / parallel strophes (José: "Carmen, il est temps encore")	33–71	PAC in A♭+
C. Transition (José: "Tu ne m'aimes donc plus?")	72–80	HC in B- (^5 not harmonized)
D. *Cabalette* (José: "Mais moi, Carmen, je t'aime encore")	80–105	PAC in B♭-
II. Second part (formal breakdown)		
A. Carmen's declaration of liberty (Carmen: "Jamais Carmen ne cédera")	105–110	PAC in G+ elided into Interruption 1
B. Interruption 1 (Chorus: "Viva! Viva!")	110–130	PAC in G+
C. Dialogue (José: "Où vas-tu?")	130–150	PAC in D♭+ (Carmen) elided into modulation to A+ (LFM)
D. Interruption 2 (Chorus: "Viva! Viva!")	150–161	V of A+ (m. 161) leading directly to C+ (UFM)
E. Dialogue; Interruption 3; Dialogue/Murder (José: "Ainsi le salut de mon âme")	162–189	Direct modulation to F♯+
F. Interruption 4 (Chorus: "Toréador, en garde")	189–201	PAC in F♯+
G. Coda (José: "Vous pouvez m'arrêter")	201–212	Confirmation of F♯+

TABLE 5.3. Formal structure of the Act IV duet

The text for the Act IV duet does contain passages derived from the pair's final confrontation in Merimée, most notably José's plea to Carmen: "laisse-moi te sauver et me sauver avec toi" (see Ex. 5.18b and Ex. 5.19).

Steven Huebner has noted that the duet "begins conventionally enough," with a short introductory recitative section (cf. the Act II duet), followed by a lyrical section with two parallel strophes sung by José ("Carmen il est temps encore").[49] As Section I in Table 5.3 shows, this relatively conventional formal structure continues with a short transitional section (or *tempo di mezzo*), beginning with José's question "Tu ne m'aimes donc plus?" (cf. Carmen's statement "Non, tu ne m'aimes pas," that formed the transitional section in the Act II duet). This *tempo di mezzo* in turn leads into a more agitated section ("Mais moi, Carmen, je t'aime encore"), roughly equivalent to a *cabalette*, in which José makes one last appeal for Carmen to return to him.

Carmen's response to Don José's pleas is to state the she will not yield ("Jamais Carmen ne cédera"), and at this point, the formal structure of the duet breaks down. The escalating confrontation between the two characters is interrupted several times by diegetic interruptions from inside the bullring featuring elisions of cadences and abrupt changes of harmony, until José finally kills Carmen and surrenders to the authorities ("Vous pouvez m'arrêter").

Like the finales to the other acts of *Carmen*, the Act IV duet moves at a taut dramatic pace.[50] In his 1955 study of the opera, the French writer Henry Malherbe described the final duet as follows:

> No ornamentation. No oratorical display. Each note arrives through an internal necessity. Each note has its meaning in the evolution of the drama and hints at what lies secret in the characters of the two Andalusian lovers. And if one searches hard enough, each note has a theoretical, as well as a psychological, purpose.

[49] Huebner, "*Carmen* as *Corrida de Toros*," 24.
[50] This taut dramatic pacing was not to all tastes. Following the premiere of *Carmen*, Jules Guillemot, the critic for *Le soleil*, lamented the absence in the opera of "grand scenes that form culminating points and lend themselves to beautiful ensembles and sweeping finales," and found himself wondering what Meyerbeer and his librettist Scribe could have done with the same material. Wright, *Dossier de presse*, 88 ("quelques grandes scènes formant des points culminants et se prêtant aux beaux ensembles, aux larges finals").

> [Even] the most abnormal and the most daring harmonic relations
> have their own subtle justification.[51]

Folllowing the observation of Malherbe, the analysis below attempts to derive musical meaning in the Act IV duet from "the evolution of the drama" and from "the characters of the two Andalusian lovers" by drawing on melodic and harmonic practices previously noted in the analyses of the other two duets between Carmen and Don José (the Act I Séguedille and Duo and the Act II duet).

First part. In the first part of the Act IV duet, Don José pleads with Carmen one last time to leave Escamillo and return to him. Ex. 5.18 (on the next page) contains two excerpts from this first part of the Act IV duet. In Ex. 5.18a, from the introductory recitative section, Don José assures Carmen that he is not threatening her, and that he is willing to forget their past arguments:

> Je ne men**a**ce p**a**s . . . || j'impl**o**re, je suppl**i**e! (4,6,8,12)
> Notre pass**é**, Carm**e**n, || notre pass**é**, je l'oubl**i**e! (4,6,10,12)

In the setting of the second line in Ex. 5.18a, prosodic accents are displaced to the second beat of the measure twice, both times on the words "notre passé" (our past), and given durational instead of metrical emphasis. As we saw in the Flower Song (see Ex. 5.10a), this metrical displacement was characteristic of Don José's lyrical style when he pleaded with Carmen in an earlier part of the opera.[52]

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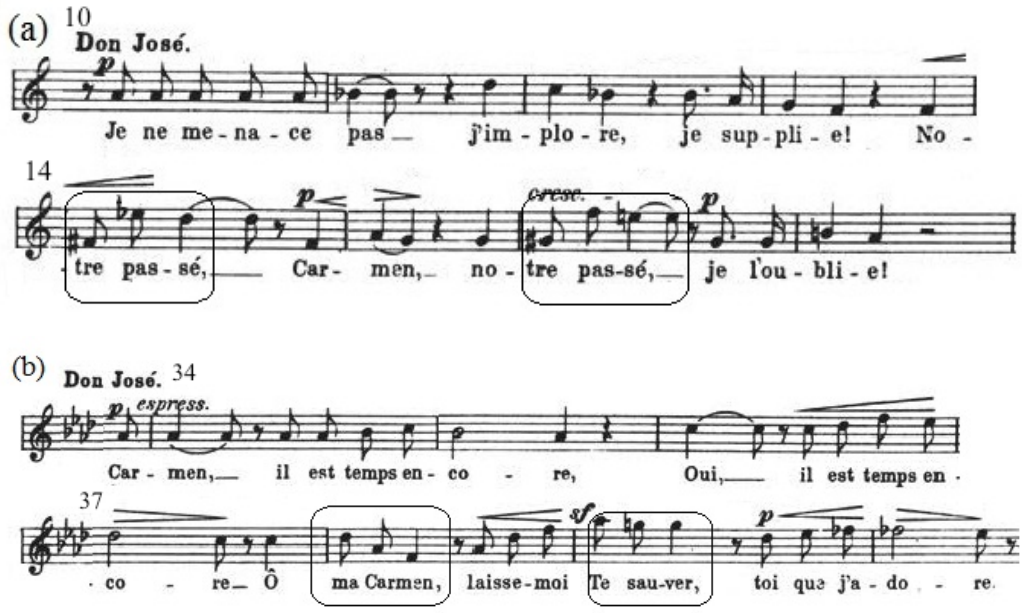
[51] Malherbe, *Carmen*, 273 ("Aucune fioriture. Aucun faste oratoire. Chaque note arrive par une nécessité interne. Chaque note a sa signification dans l'evolution du drame et fait deviner ce qui est secret dans les caractères des deux amants d'Andalousie. Et si l'on cherche bien, chaque note a sa raison d'être théorique ainsi que sa raison d'être psychologique. Les relations d'harmonie les plus anormales, les plus risquées trouvent leur justification subtile").

[52] Susan McClary labels Don José's melodic style in this portion of the Act IV duet as "a perfect instance of lyrical bourgeois discourse" McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 109.



EXAMPLE 5.18. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final:
(a) mm. 10–17; and (b) mm. 34–40

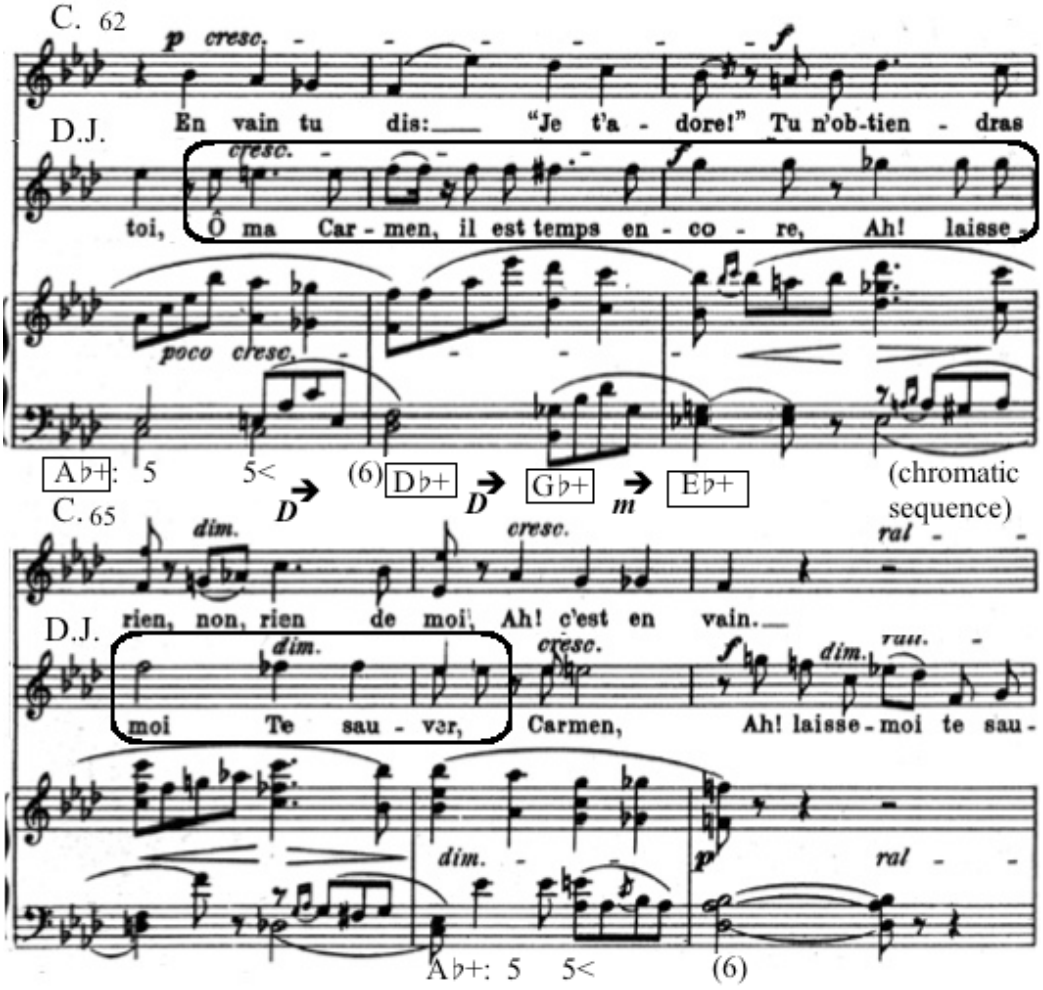
Carmen rejects this opening sally by José, saying that all is finished between them ("Entre nous, tout est fini"). In response, José begs Carmen to allow him to "save" her, and him along with her:

Carm**e**n, il est temps enc**o**re	(2,7)
Ô ma Carm**e**n, laisse-m**oi**	(4,7)
Te sauv**e**r, toi que j'ad**o**re,	(3,7)
Et me sauv**e**r avec t**oi**!	(4,7)

As the circled groups in Ex. 5.18b indicate, José once again displaces the prosodic accent to the second beat twice in this phrase (on the words "ma Carmen" and "te sauver"). The metrical placement of the words "ma" and "te" on the downbeats of mm. 38 and 39 gives those pronouns an unexpected expressive or oratorical emphasis that reveal the extent to which José has personalized his failed relationship with Carmen.

Don José's plea to Carmen in this passage incorporates an expanded version of the chromatic 5–♯5–6 motive heard first in Carmen's entrance and then in the Séguedille (see Ex.

5.19). In Ex. 5.19, this chromatic line starts from scale degree 5 in A-flat major, and moves chromatically all the way up to the leading tone (5–♯5–6–♯6–7) before making its way back down. It is a motive that we have heard numerous times before

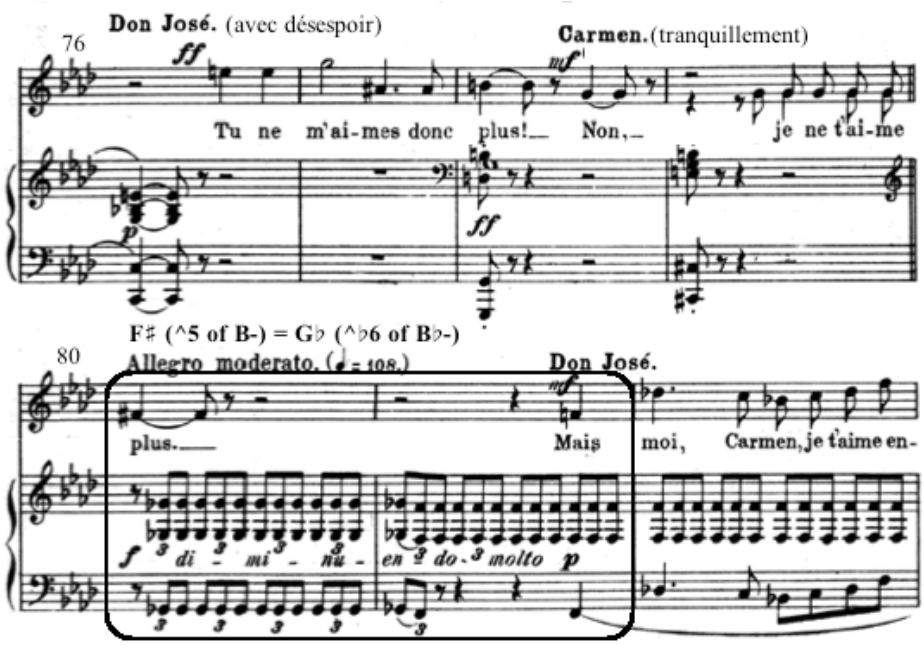


EXAMPLE 5.19. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 62–67

in the opera. In Ex. 5.19, however, the semitonal ascent and descent are heard in varied harmonic contexts that incorporate all three of the chromatic techniques summarized above in Fig. 5.3. The beginning of Don José's chromatic ascent (E♭–E in m. 62) takes place against a common-tone backdrop of an A♭–C dyad. The next phase of the ascent (F–G♭–G in mm. 63–64)

is harmonized by three triads (D-flat major, G-flat major, and E-flat major), each of which shares exactly one common tone with the preceding one. Finally, the semitonal descent G♭– F–F♭–E♭ (mm. 64–66) is harmonized by a chromatic sequential pattern featuring applied leading-tone seventh chords.[53] The varied harmonic context for the ascending and descending semitonal motive in Ex. 5.19 (compared to the simpler harmonies accompanying the use of similar motives in, say, the Séguedille) reflects the rich complexity that the relationship between Carmen and Don José has accrued between the opening and closing ends of the drama.

The final section of the first part of the Act IV duet begins with an abrupt modulation by José to B-flat minor, following an implied half cadence in B minor at the end of Carmen's line "Non, je ne t'aime plus" in m. 80 (see Ex. 5.20).

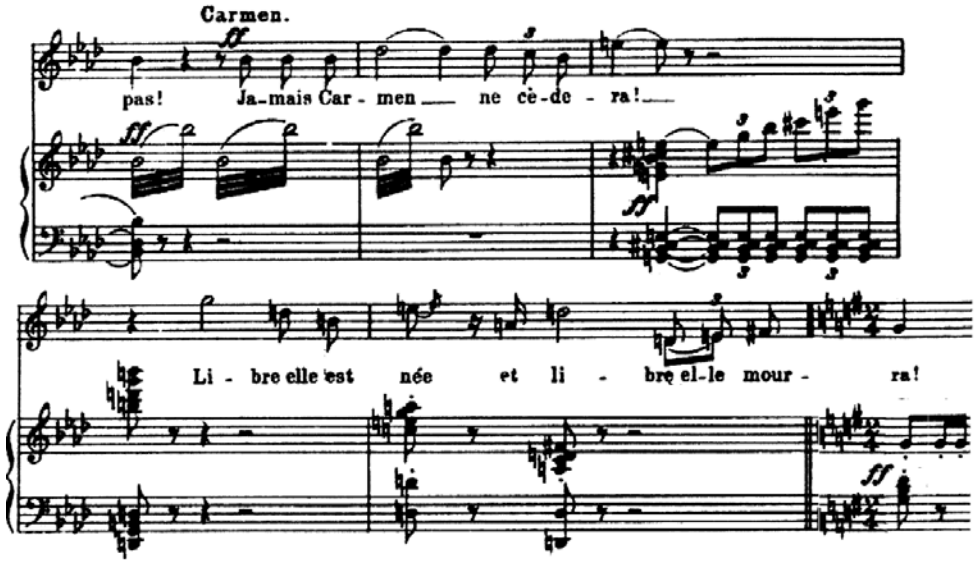


EXAMPLE 5.20. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 76–82

[53] Towards the end of Ex. 5.19, Don José commences an abridged version of the same semitonal motive, making an E♭–E♮–F ascent in mm. 66–67, and a F–F♭–E♭ descent in m. 68 (not shown in the example).

José accomplishes this modulation by reinterpreting Carmen's pitch F♯ (scale degree 5 of B minor) as G♭ (scale degree 6 of B-flat minor). I would suggest that this reinterpretation is a dualistic counterpart to the one effected by José in the Séguedille and Duo, when José first succumbed to Carmen. The reader may recall that at the climax of the Séguedille and Duo, José reinterpreted Carmen's melodic pitch of B♭ as A♯, the leading tone to B major (Ex. 4.20a). In contrast, in Ex. 5.20, José reinterprets Carmen's melodic pitch of F♯ as G♭, or the dualistic (or Riemannian) "upper leading tone" to F, the (upper) prime of the B-flat minor triad.[54] The beginning and ending of the relationship between Carmen and Don José is thus book-ended by these dualistic leading-tone reinterpretations.

Second part. Carmen rejects José's final entreaties in Ex. 5.21, even though she knows it will lead to her own death.



EXAMPLE 5.21. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 105–110

[54] As discussed above in Section 4.3, Riemann and d'Indy, among others, conceived of the minor triad as being generated downward from an upper prime. F is thus the prime of what we could conventionally call the B-flat minor triad.

In contrast to the diegetic rhythms of her solo numbers (and of José's increasingly desperate pleas), the text to Ex. 5.19, Carmen's declaration of freedom, is set almost completely naturalistically:

Jam**ai**s Carm**e**n ne céder**a**! (2,4,8)
L**i**bre elle est n**é**e || et l**i**bre elle mourr**a**! (1,4,6,10)

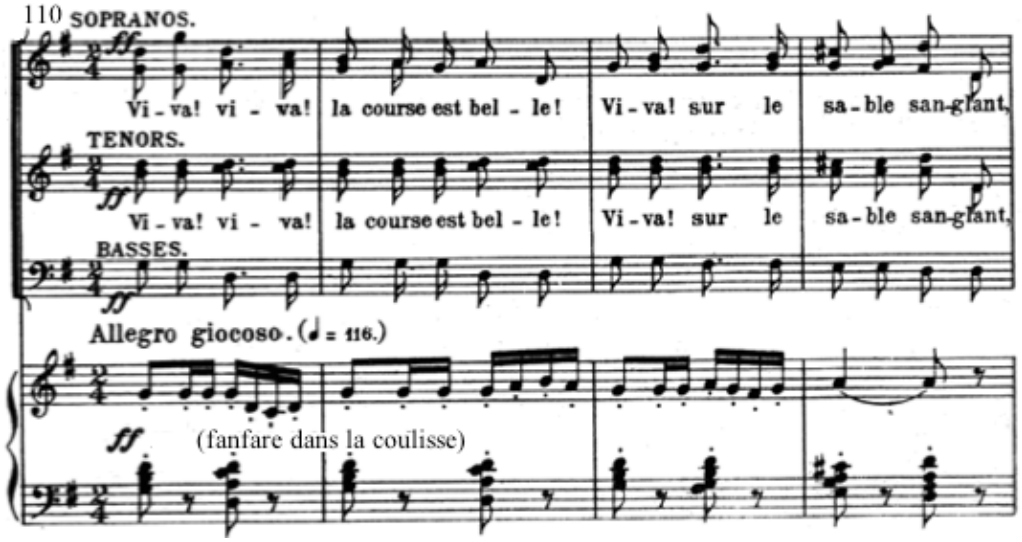
"Carmen will never give in to you," she exclaims. "She was born free and she will die free!" The rhythms of the text are scrupulously followed in Ex. 5.21. Each of the prosodic accents in the text (underlined in the annotation above) is placed in a metrically strong position. Carmen's adoption of a declamatory style (or Grétry's *chanter pour parler*) indicates that she is no longer performing (or singing) for an audience, she is declaring (or speaking) from a place of deeply felt emotion. It also indicates her complete rejection of Don José's entreaties.

Carmen's final rejection of Don José is accompanied by a modulation from B-flat minor to G major. In her resolve to go her own way, Carmen has also abandoned her commitment to triads related by common tones. The German composer and musicologist Edgar Istel singled out the modulation shown in Ex. 5.21 as "one of Bizet's brilliant dramatic and musical transitions."[55] As noted above in Table 5.3, Carmen's declaration in Ex. 5.21 leads to a breakdown of the formal structure of the duet. In the words of Paul Landormy, following this declaration of liberty by Carmen, "doubt suddenly gives way in the spirit of Don Jose to a clear vision of reality. There is no heavier fall."[56]

[55] Istel, *Bizet und* Carmen, 209 ("wieder kommt einer jener genialen dramatisch- musikalischen Übergänge Bizets").
[56] Landormy, *Bizet*, 170 ("C'est que le doute a tout d'un coup fait place dans l'esprit de Don José à la claire vision de la réalité. Il n'est pas de plus lourde chute").

It is at this point that the duet is interrupted for the first time by the diegetic cries of the offstage spectators in the bullring (Ex. 5.22):

V**i**va! v**i**va! la c**ou**rse est b**e**lle! (1,3,6,8)
V**i**va! sur le s**a**ble sangl**a**nt, . . . (1,5,8)



EXAMPLE 5.22. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 110–113

In contrast to Carmen's naturalistic declamation style in Ex. 5.21, the diegetic nature of the choral interruption in Ex. 5.22 is emphasized by the misaccentuation of weak syllables (e.g., "l**a** course est belle" in m. 111), as well as by the use of German barring associated with march rhythms (tonic accents falling on weak beats in mm. 111 and 113).

The chorus interrupts from offstage three more times during the course of the last part of the duet. These interruptions are contrasted vividly with the drama on stage both melodically and harmonically. In contrast to the diegetic march rhythms coming from inside the bullring, the dialogue between Carmen and Don José in the final part of the duet becomes increasingly fragmented and recitative-like (the marking "Récit." appears over Don José's part three times in this closing section, in mm. 163, 167, and 182). At the same time, a series of gradual semitonal

ascents, accompanied mostly by common-tone-related transitions but punctuated by several harmonic upshifts, marks the emotional intensification that continues up to the end of the drama.

Fig. 5.5 below is a graphical reduction of the orchestral part in mm. 125–150, from the end of the first offstage interruption in G major to the beginning of the second interruption in A major (corresponding roughly to section II.C in Table 5.3). I have chosen to focus on the orchestral part in this graph since the fragmented vocal lines generally track (and occasionally arpeggiate) the chords in the orchestral accompaniment in this section.

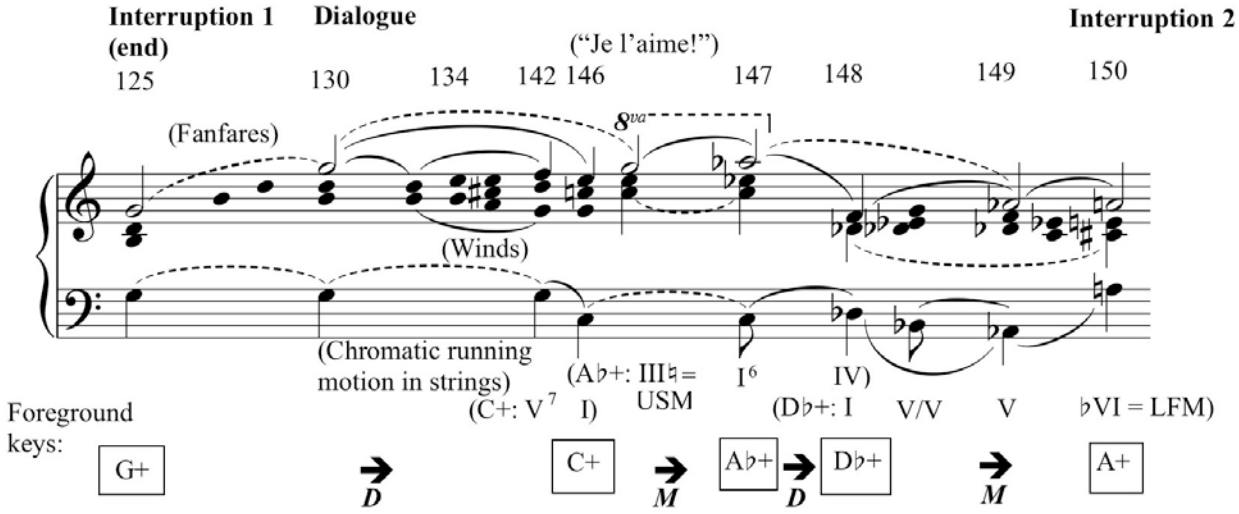


FIGURE 5.5. Voice-leading graph of the Act IV final duet, mm. 125–150 (orchestral part)

The first choral interruption (set to the opening theme of the Prelude) reaches a perfect authentic cadence in G major at m. 125, and the brass fanfares accompanying the exclamation "Victoire!" take the upper orchestral instruments up an octave to G5 at m. 130. From m. 130 to m. 145, as Carmen attempts to enter the bullring and José bars her way, the orchestral strings play continuous eighth notes that run up and down the chromatic scale, with the pitches G and D♯ marking the downbeats of alternate measures. This passage is reduced to the single note G3 in the bass-clef staff in Fig. 5.5 (the viola line in this register is doubled at the upper and lower

octaves in this passage by the violins and cellos, respectively). Meanwhile, the winds and brass play chords that punctuate the passage at regular rhythmic intervals, and the vocal lines of Carmen and Don José take the form of short outbursts that arpeggiate notes in these changing chords. As shown in the treble-clef staff in Fig. 5.5, the highest voice in these wind chords (played by the first oboe) traces a linear ascent from D5 in m. 130 to E5 in m. 134 and finally to F5 in m. 142. With the appearance of this F5, the G major tonic triad of the first choral interruption has been converted to a dominant-seventh chord, and the expected resolution to a C major triad accompanies Carmen's words "Je l'aime!" ("I love him [Escamillo]!") in m. 146. The F5 in the oboe is resolved down to E5 at the downbeat of m. 146. However, the flutes take over as the highest orchestral part on the second beat of that measure, effecting another shift in register up to G6. In Fig. 5.5, I have treated this registral shift to G6 as a continuation of the registral shift from G4 to G5 in mm. 125–130 (see the hollow noteheads).

At m. 147, the orchestra effects an ***M*** transformation from a C major triad to an inverted A-flat major triad, with the common tone C preserved in the bass. This ***M*** transformation is accompanied by a dominant discharge from G6 to A♭6 in the flutes. As Carmen commences her next line (a repetition of her declaration of love for Escamillo) in A-flat major, the flutes drop out and the first oboe resumes its role as the highest orchestral part. The D-flat major wind chord at the downbeat of m. 148 features another abrupt registral shift in the orchestra, this time downward: the highest note is now F4 in the oboe. This D-flat major harmony initially appears to be a subdominant harmony in A-flat major, but the cadential six-four in m. 149 makes it clear in retrospect that it is a pivot chord to D-flat major. As Carmen is about to cadence in D-flat major with a descending A♭5–D♭5 fifth in her vocal line, the chorus suddenly interrupts at m. 150, and the expected perfect authentic cadence in D-flat major is instead elided into a deceptive

resolution into A major, the key of the lower flat mediant (or ♭VI). This transition is marked by yet another registral shift in the orchestral accompaniment, this time in the bass register from A♭2 (orchestral cellos) up to A3 (third trombone in the offstage band). As in Ex. 5.17, from the Act III finale, even though there is a common-tone relation between the foreground keys in mm. 149 (D-flat major) and 150 (A major), that common-tone connection is not reflected in the upshift motion on the musical surface from A-flat major (=V of D-flat major) to A major.

As we can see from the hollow noteheads in Fig. 5.5, this passage between the first two choral interruptions is accompanied by a semitonal pitch-class ascent from G to A♭ to A in the highest orchestral parts, broken up among several different instruments and registers. This gradual semitonal ascent is accompanied by shifting harmonies, with the different foreground keys forming a chain of common-tone ***D*** and ***M*** transformations, with the roots of successive keys tracing an alternating pattern of descending perfect fifths and major thirds (G+ → C+ → A♭+ → D♭+ → A+). These patterns of voice leading and harmony provide a framework for a passage of music that may appear fragmented and disorganized on the surface.

The same combination of semitonal ascent and common-tone-related transformations can be found in the final section of the Act IV duet, leading up to the death of Carmen. As the second choral interruption in A major fades out and we are drawn back to the characters on stage, the music switches abruptly to C major (the key of the lower sharp mediant in A major) at m. 162.[57]

[57] The second choral interruption in A major recalls the opening of the Prelude, where the same melody is presented in the same key. As discussed in Chapter 4, in the Prelude, the A-major melody features a swerve to the upper flat mediant, C major, before cadencing in the tonic (see Ex. 4.6). On the theme's final appearance in the Act IV duet, however, the orchestra interrupts the offstage chorus precisely at the point where we expect the chorus's A-major melody to swerve to C major (at m. 162), and we never hear the chorus reach its cadence in A major.

Fig. 5.6 below presents a graphical reduction of the Act IV duet from mm. 162–190, i.e., from the end of the second choral interruption to the beginning of the fourth and final choral interruption (corresponding to section II.E in Table 5.3).

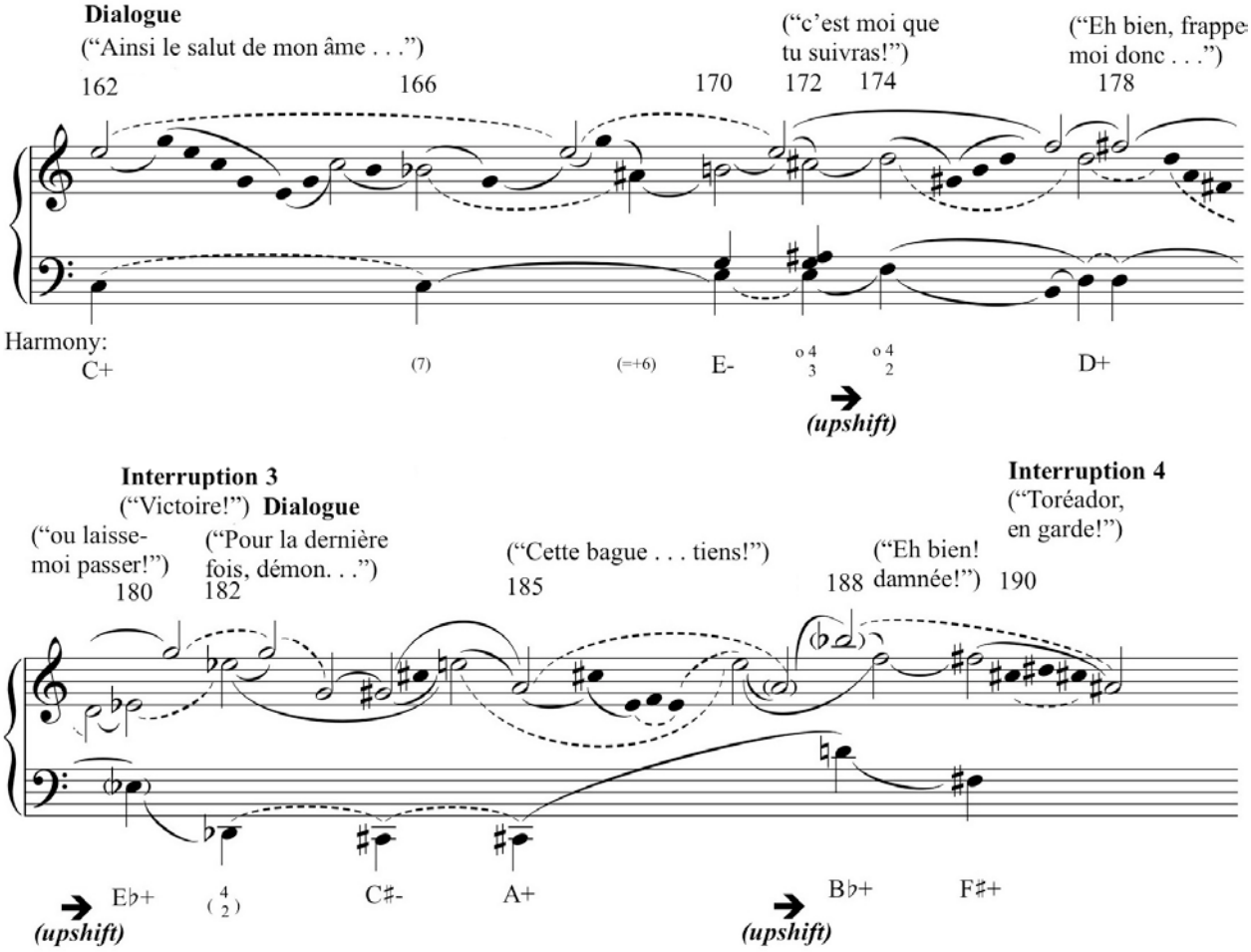


FIGURE 5.6. Voice-leading graph of the Act IV final duet, mm. 162–190

The notes in the treble-clef line in Fig. 5.6 (other than the two parenthetical notes taken from the orchestral part in mm. 187–188) are all taken from the vocal lines of Carmen and Don José in this passage, with José's line transposed up an octave from the sounding pitch. José's sounding pitch of F4 at m. 177, for instance, is reflected as F5 in Fig. 5.6. For purposes of the following discussion, that note will be referred to as F4, but considered as equivalent in register to

Carmen's sounding pitch of F♯5 in m. 178. The bass-clef line in Fig. 5.6 reflects bass notes from the orchestral part, as well as additional harmonic pitches from the orchestral accompaniment where appropriate.

As Fig. 5.6 shows, Don José initiates his final confrontation with Carmen by arpeggiating the notes of a C major triad in mm. 163–165. The first note of this vocal arpeggiation is E4 and the last note is C4. In Fig. 5.6, those notes are shown as E5 and C5 with hollow noteheads, and I have attached an upward and a downward stem to them, respectively. José's melodic descent from C4 to B♭3 at m. 166 changes the harmony to a C dominant-seventh chord, which is reinterpreted enharmonically as a German augmented-sixth chord leading directly to the tonic of E minor (without any intervening dominant harmony) in m. 170.[58] José's B♭3 in m. 166 is similarly reinterpreted as A♯3 in m. 169, leading up to B3 in m. 170. The linear motion from C4 to B♭/A♯3 and back up to B3 is traced by the downward-stemmed hollow notes in Fig. 5.6. The common tone E is preserved throughout these harmonic changes, and José's arpeggiated vocal line returns to E4 in m. 168 and m. 171 (see the upward-stemmed E5's in the graph). At m. 172, the orchestral accompaniment shifts from E minor to a diminished-seventh chord over the retained common tone E in the bass, with José now declaiming on C♯4, a pitch that represents a stepwise linear ascent from B3 in m. 170.

In m. 174, at the end of the line "Carmen, c'est moi que tu suivras" ("Carmen, it is I that you must follow"), the first of three wrenching harmonic upshifts in this final section occurs. The diminished-seventh chord on E is wrenched up by a semitone, without any common-tone mediation, to another diminished-seventh chord on F. This harmonic upshift is reflected in the

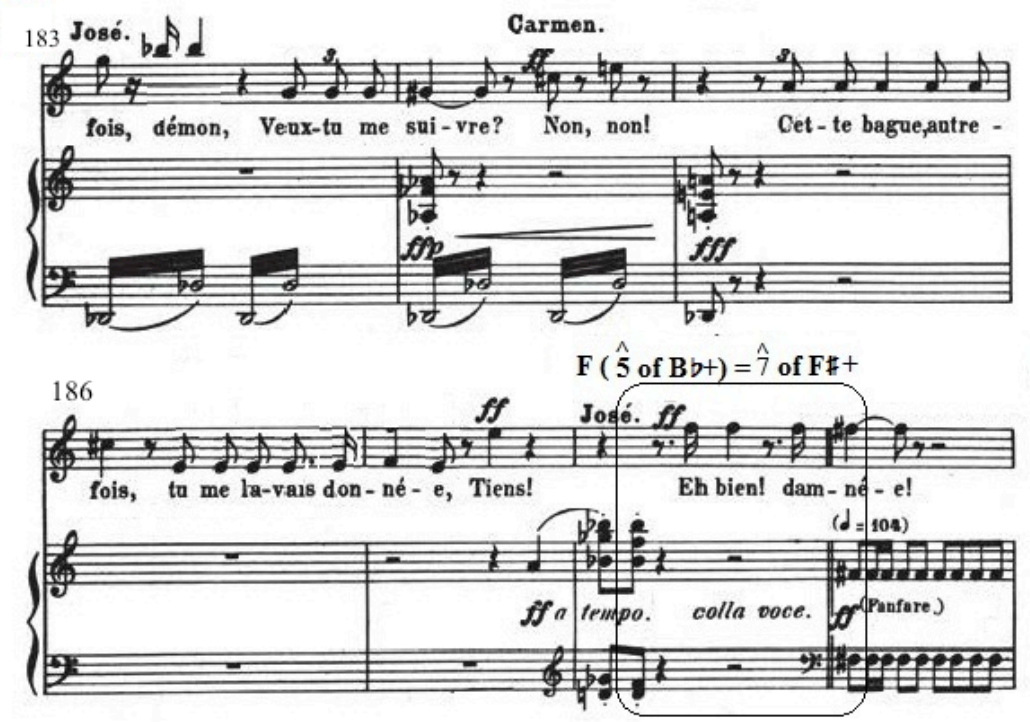
[58] Although the bass of the augmented-sixth chord over C is only heard in m. 166, I have treated it as being implied through m. 169.

vocal line by José's move from C♯4 in m. 173 to D4 in m. 174, from where he arpeggiates up to F4 in m. 177.

Carmen's response is to ask José to strike her, or otherwise to let her pass ("frappe-moi donc, ou laisse-moi passer!"). Carmen's escalation of the confrontation is accompanied by two semitonal shifts. The first one is mediated by the common tone D. In mm. 177–178, Carmen picks up José's arpeggiated D4–F4 from mm. 175–177 and moves the higher note up by semitone, arpeggiating the notes D5–F♯5 on the exclamation "Eh bien!" This is accompanied by a common-tone-based shift in the orchestral harmony to D major. Carmen then arpeggiates down from D5 to D4 and effects yet another semitonal ascent, this time from D4 to E♭4 in her lower register. Unlike the ascent from F to F♯ in the higher register, the D4–E♭4 ascent is not accompanied by any common-tone-related harmonic shift in the orchestra. The end of Carmen's ultimatum to José is instead marked by a harmonic upshift from D major to E-flat major, marking the boldness (or recklessness) of Carmen's challenge to José.

At this point, the offstage chorus interrupts the duet for the third time, this time in the key of E-flat major. The ascending brass fanfares in mm. 180–182 help to reverse Carmen's downward registral shift. In Fig. 5.6, I have treated the G5 in the soprano line of the chorus's exclamation "Victoire!" (mm. 180–182) as representing a semitonal ascent from Carmen's F♯5 in m. 178.

Ex. 5.23 shows the final measures of this section of the Act IV duet, up to the point at which José kills Carmen.



EXAMPLE 5.23. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act IV, Duo et chœur final, mm. 183–189

In mm. 182–183, José picks up the two highest pitches from the chorus's E-flat major exclamation with his arpeggiation of E♭4 to G4 in mm. 182–183 (only the last note of which is shown in Ex. 5.23). Like Carmen before him, he then transfers G4 down an octave to G3 before effecting a semitonal move to G♯3 at m. 184. This G3–G♯3 ascent marks José final ultimatum to Carmen ("Pour la dernière fois, démon, veux-tu me suivre?"). This ascent is marked by a shift in harmony from an E-flat dominant-seventh chord to a C-sharp minor triad, with the common tone D♭/C♯ retained in the bass.

Carmen's final response to Don José is to take the ring that he had given her and to throw it at him ("Cette bague, autrefois, tu me l'avais donnée . . . Tiens!"). This act of provocation is accompanied by yet another pair of semitonal ascents in the vocal line. Carmen's pitch E5 in m. 184 (transferred down an octave to E4 in m. 186 and taken back up in m. 187)

represents a semitonal ascent from José's E♭4 in m. 182. Meanwhile, Carmen's pitch A4 in m. 185 ("Cette bague") represents the continuation of José's G3–G♯3 ascent in mm. 183–184.

These semitonal ascents continue beyond Carmen's last lines in the opera, and the culmination of the ascents coincides with the culmination of the tragedy. In m. 187, the high woodwinds in the orchestra (flutes, oboes, clarinets) pick up the pitch A4 from Carmen's vocal line in m. 185 and move it up by a minor ninth to B♭5, thus effecting a semitonal ascent and registral shift simultaneously. This move is accompanied by the last harmonic upshift in the orchestral accompaniment, from A major to B-flat major, reflecting the definitive point of no return in the drama. As part of this upshift, Carmen's final melodic pitch (E5 in m. 187) is moved up semitonally by José first to F4 in m. 188. Finally, in m. 189, Don José moves up to F♯4 as he finally kills Carmen. This move completes the last step in the series of semitonal ascents begun in m. 162 and effects a final modulation to F-sharp major, the key in which the opera ends.

Fig. 5.7 below is a deeper "middleground" reduction of Fig. 5.6, with the hollow noteheads normalized to the same register and vertically stacked with shifts in the orchestral bass.

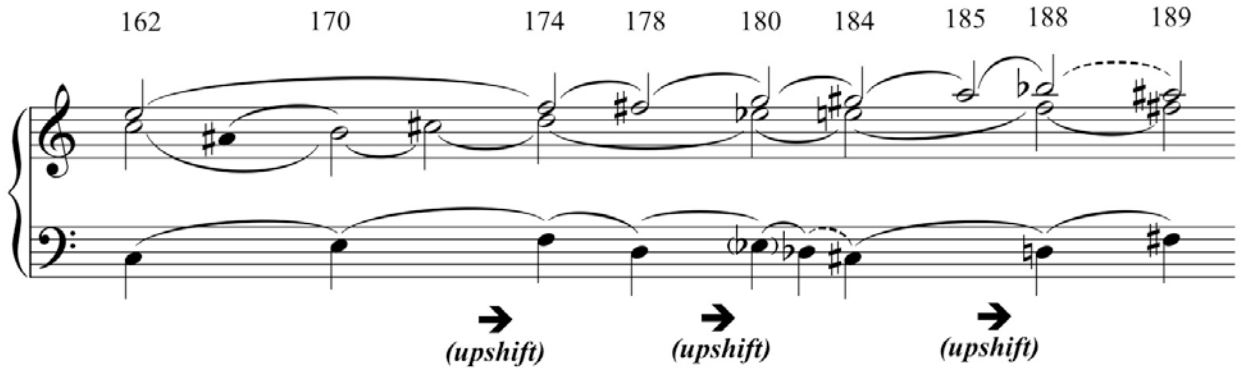


FIGURE 5.7. Middleground sketch of the Act IV final duet, mm. 162–190

As Fig. 5.7 shows, the final section of the Act IV duet is marked by a pair of ascending semitonal lines in the vocal parts of Carmen and Don José (represented by the upward- and downward-stemmed notes in the graph). This pair of lines begins a major third apart on E5 and C5 (in the graph), and ascends irregularly by semitone (with an initial downward detour in the case of the lower line), gradually at first and then accelerating in pace, over the interval of a tritone, ending a major third apart on B♭/A♯5 and F♯5, respectively. As in the rest of the opera, this final series of semitonal ascents in the opera is accompanied by harmonic shifts that feature different levels of common-tone preservation (refer back to Fig. 5.3). Most notable in this regard are the three wrenching upshifts shown in Figs. 5.6 and 5.7, which mark successive points of no return in the tragedy. In retrospect, this final musical confrontation between Carmen and Don José, with its chromatically ascending lines, has been prefigured by similar chromatic ascents effected by Don José in the Séguedille (Ex. 4.20a), the Act II finale (Ex. 5.15), and the Act III finale (Ex. 5.17), with increasingly violent implications and, finally, violent results.[59]

And what of the opera's ending in F-sharp major? Susan McClary has written that the opera ends arbitrarily in the "wrong key." According to McClary, "the concluding key of F♯ (with all its aggressive, spiky sharps) is not the key from which this opera began its trek, and thus it cannot unambiguously establish rational narrative closure."[60] And yet, as with the succession of keys that we have traced in portions of all three Carmen-Don José duets (the Act I Séguedille

[59] Don José's final ascent from F4 to F♯4 in mm. 188–189 reverses the orchestral G♭–F descent in m. 188 that immediately precedes it, as well as the descent from G♭ (enharmonic F♯) to F that introduced Don José's desperate final plea to Carmen in m. 81 (see Ex. 5.20). It thus provides a dualistic accompaniment to José's transformation from desperate lover to violent killer.

[60] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 63. McClary's formulation is based on the dubious assumption that there was a universally understood "right key" in which to end an opera in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

and Duo, the Act II duet, and the Act IV duet), there might be a common-tone-related logic to it all.

Fig. 5.8 below sets forth the keys used by Bizet at the beginning and end of the two halves of *Carmen*.

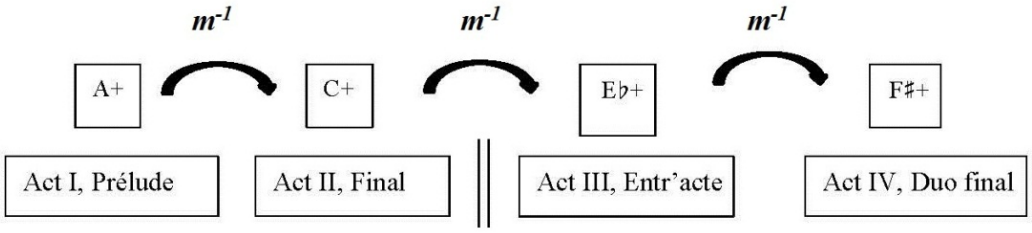
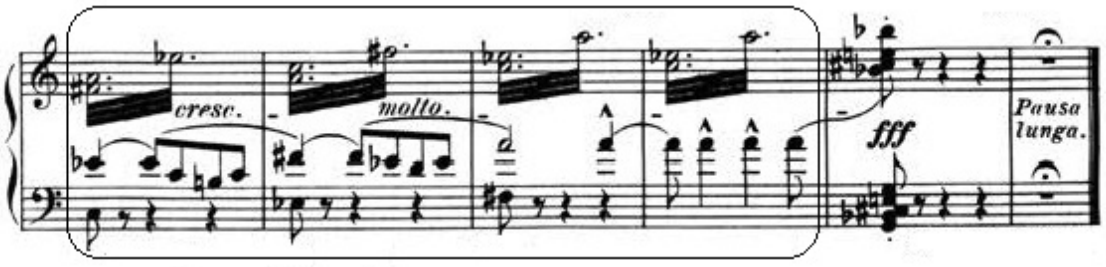


FIGURE 5.8. Key relations in the two halves of *Carmen*

The first half of the opera starts in A major, with the orchestral Prelude, and ends with Carmen's hymn to liberty ("la liberté!") in C major at the end of the Act II finale. The second half begins with another orchestral piece, the Act III entr'acte in E-flat major, and ends with McClary's "wrong key" of F-sharp major. As Fig. 5.8 shows, this traversal of keys traces a path through a chain of chromatic mediants separated by root motion of minor thirds. They also "compose out" the diminished-seventh chord (A–C–E♭–F♯) heard in the "Fate" section towards the end of the Prelude (Ex. 5.24).[61]

[61] The same diminished-seventh chord is famously composed out (in clearer foregound detail) in the Wolf's Glen scene from Weber's *Der Freischütz*, in which the chord represents the evil Samiel. See Bailey, "Visual and Musical Symbolism in German Romantic Opera." Susan McClary has noted the resemblance between the "Fate" motive in *Carmen* and the Samiel motive in *Der Freischütz*. McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 66. For further information on the reception and influence of Weber's opera in France, see the text accompanying Ex. 6.1 below.



EXAMPLE 5.24. Bizet, *Carmen*, Prélude, mm. 143–148

McClary reads the end of *Carmen* as signifying "the resolution of dissonance, the purging of chromaticism, [and] the return to diatonicism."[62] However, Fig. 5.8 suggests that perhaps it is the spirit of Carmen, as expressed through the use of chromatic third relations and common-tone tonality, that triumphs after all.

[62] Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

EPILOGUE

In a "deconstructive postscript" to *Reading Opera*, a volume of essays devoted to close readings of opera libretti (including Nelly Furman's essay on the libretto to *Carmen*), Paul Robinson wrote that "[t]he master question for any interpreter of opera must be not What does the text say, but How is the text realized, or at least addressed, in the music? How does it embed itself in the opera's musical fabric?"[1] Following Robinson's prescription, I have made an attempt in this dissertation to address this "master question" with respect to *Carmen* by focusing on selected aspects of Bizet's music, viewed in light of the melodic and harmonic practices and conventions of nineteenth-century French opera. As noted in the Introduction, my aim in undertaking this study was not to present an organicist master-plan that would "explain" every note in the entire opera, but to explore Bizet's use of diverse musical codes, deriving potential insights into musical and dramatic meaning along the way. This is of course but one approach to this multi-faceted work, but I hope that the reader will find it a valid and rewarding one.

It is a commonplace to note that as dramatic characters, Carmen and Don José belong to different worlds (female vs. male, gypsy vs. Christian, exotic/"Oriental" vs. Western, lower-class vs. bourgeois, etc.). Following the example of Susan McClary, Steven Huebner, and others, I have attempted to explore how the differences between these characters are constructed in the music that Bizet wrote for them. Thus, I have suggested that the melodic phrases in Carmen's music, which is often diegetic, is frequently underpinned by the repetitive and rigorous rhythms that characterize diegetic song and dance. In contrast, the more lyrical utterances of Don José

[1] Robinson, "A Deconstructive Postscript: Reading Libretti and Misreading Opera," 341.

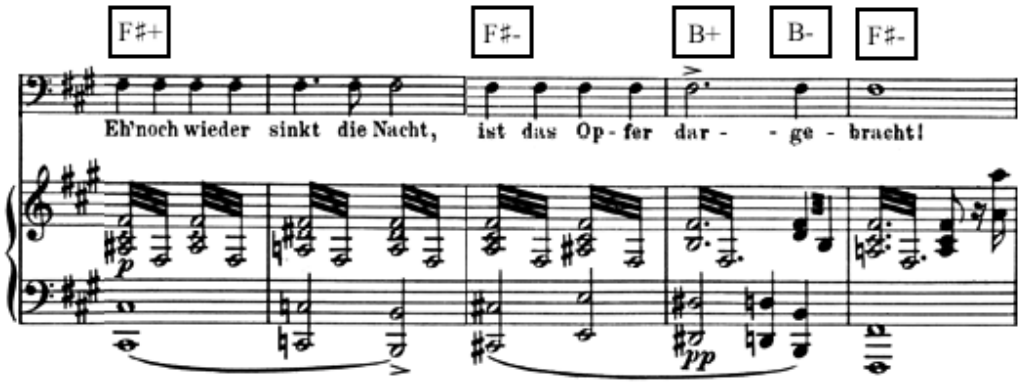
often feature freer and more naturalistic declamation of the French text.[2] From my analysis of the Séguedille and Duo, I also suggested that Carmen's sensual nature is associated with common-tone tonality, while Don José's impetuous desire for action manifested itself in abrupt and unprepared modulations, which recur in the opera with increasingly violent results. Based on my analyses, I believe that Bizet employed these musical distinctions not with rigidity, but with the flexibility demanded by the drama. Thus, we have discussed how Don José adopts certain of Carmen's rhythmic mannerisms, as well as her affinity for common-tone tonality, in the course of describing his own infatuation with her in the Act II duet. Conversely, we saw how Carmen breaks free of her own musical style when she makes a heart-felt declaration of liberty towards the end of the opera. My analyses of various numbers from *Carmen* may shed some light on the skillful way in which Bizet used techniques of melody, text setting, harmony, form, and rhythm to express qualities both profound and paradoxical about the characters of Carmen and Don José, making them perhaps more interesting than the cardboard stereotypes they are sometimes made out to be.

My focus in this study has been on situating *Carmen* in its historical context as a nineteenth-century French opera. In that regard, I have considered the influence of French composers such as Auber, Gounod, and Thomas on Bizet's melodic and harmonic practice. Further research on Bizet might focus on the influence of other nineteenth-century operatic composers in the traditions of both grand opera (Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Verdi) and operetta (Offenbach). Another potentially productive avenue of research might be the influence of

[2] This observation supports Daniel Albright's argument that, at least from a rhythmic point of view, "Carmen is the instinctive conformist, while Don José . . . is the instinctive rebel." Albright, Review of *Georges Bizet: Carmen*, 50.

German and central European Romantic composers on Bizet's music. I am thinking here not so much of Wagner, but of composers like Weber, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Schumann, and Chopin.[3]

One might wish to examine, for example, the possible influence of excerpts like Ex. 6.1 (taken from Weber's *Der Freischütz*) on the use of common-tone tonality by composers such as Thomas and Bizet, as discussed above in Chapter 4.



EXAMPLE 6.1. Weber, *Der Freischütz* (1821), Act II, Finale (Wolf's Glen Scene)

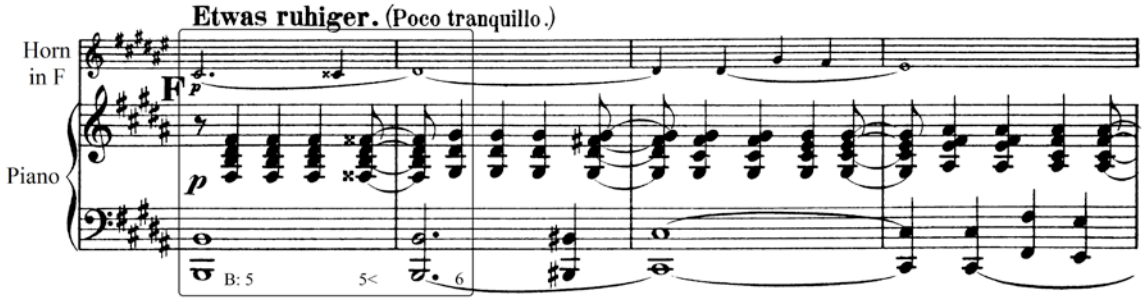
Weber's opera was first performed in France in 1824 and continued to be popular in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, receiving 201 performances at the Théâtre-Lyrique over ten seasons between 1855 and 1868, first in Castil-Blaze's arrangement as *Robin des bois* and, beginning in 1866, in a new French translation as *Le Freischütz*. It was playing at the Théâtre-Lyrique when Bizet's *La jolie fille de Perth* was premiered there in 1867.[4] As Hervé Lacombe has noted, Ambroise Thomas's music for the Esplanade scene from *Hamlet* (Ex. 4.18) was likely influenced

[3] As Nietzsche recognized (and many Parisian critics did not), Carmen's brand of sensuality, underpinned as it is by the discipline of dance rhythms, is distinguishable from, and indeed opposed to, the brand of sensuality represented by Wagner's "infinite melodies." See Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 102–106 for a discussion of Nietzsche's views of *Carmen*.

[4] Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 211; Walsh, *Second Empire Opera*, 306. See note 61 in Chapter 5 for a discussion of other connections between *Der Freischütz* and *Carmen*.

by Weber.[5] In both Ex. 4.18 and Ex. 6.1, a focal melodic pitch F♯ is harmonized using a series of common-tone-related triads. As we saw in Chapter 4, the opening section of the Séguedille from *Carmen* was similarly centered around a series of triads sharing the common tone F♯. While I have drawn connections between the use of common-tone tonality by Bizet and Thomas in this dissertation, further research might extend this line of inquiry back to Weber and beyond.

Another likely German influence on Bizet was Schumann.[6] In that regard, we might consider Ex. 6.2 as a possible precursor of the 5–♯5–6 chromatic motive in *Carmen* discussed in Chapter 4.



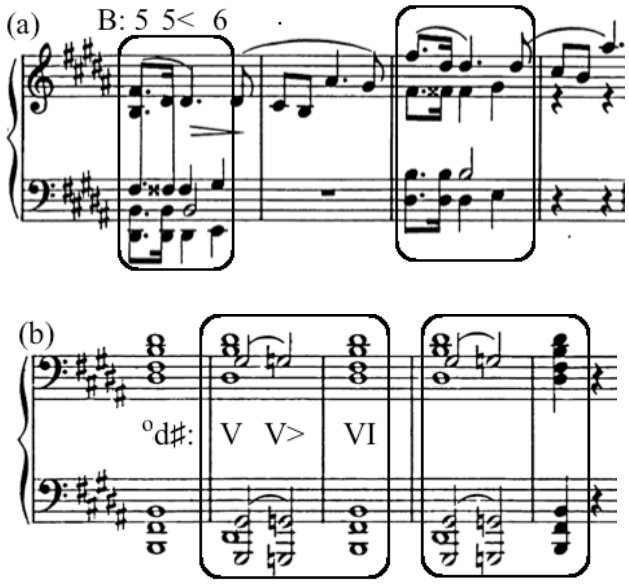
EXAMPLE 6.2. Schumann, Adagio and Allegro for Horn and Piano, Op. 70 (1849), mm. 120–123

In the same vein, one could consider the dualistic use of that same chromatic motive in Ex. 6.3, taken from Liszt's Sonata in B minor (a work dedicated to Schumann), in juxtaposition

[5] Lacombe, 420. Although only four triads sharing the common tone F♯ are shown in Ex. 6.1, Weber uses a fifth triad (D major) to harmonize the melodic pitch F♯ elsewhere in the Wolf's Glen scene. The same five triads are used by Thomas to harmonize the same melodic pitch F♯ in Ex. 4.18.

[6] Hervé Lacombe has written that "Bizet's love for Schumann . . . must not be ignored if we are to understand his rich harmonic language, as in *Carmen*." Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 300. Louis Gallet, Bizet's librettist for *Djamileh*, noted Bizet's affinity to Schumann in the form of a rhetorical question: "didn't [Bizet] belong to the family of Schumann rather than that of Wagner, and most of all wasn't he just himself?" Gallet, *Notes d'un librettiste*, 35 ("N'était-il pas plutôt de la famille de Schumann que de celle de Wagner, et surtout n'était-il pas bien lui-même?").

with Bizet's use of the same technique in the Séguedille.[7] After all, as we saw in Chapter 1, conservative French critics thought of *Carmen* as a "Wagnerian" opera, and those same critical circles often grouped Schumann and Liszt together pejoratively with Wagner as purveyors of musical "systems" (*systèmes*).[8]

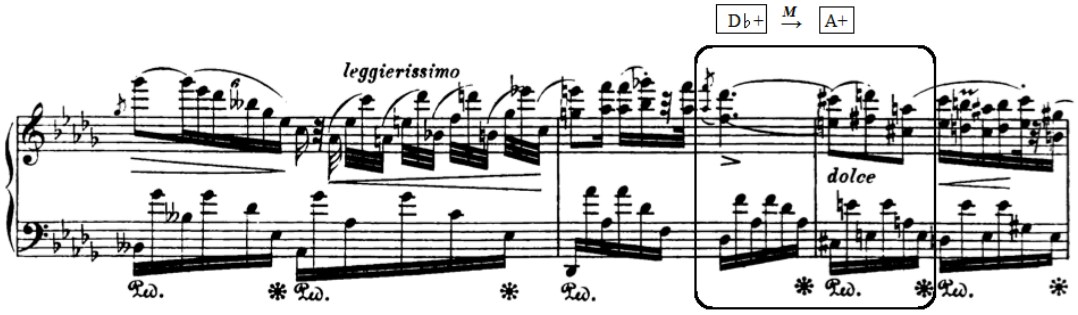


EXAMPLE 6.3. Liszt, Sonata in B Minor (1853): (a) mm. 716–19; and (b) mm. 744–48

As a virtuoso pianist, Bizet was also intimately familiar with the works of Chopin, and Hervé Lacombe has suggested that Chopin had a greater influence on Bizet's musical language that is often thought, including in works that appear to exist far from Chopin's universe.[9] Harmonic techniques such as the chromatic-third-related transitions between D-flat major and A

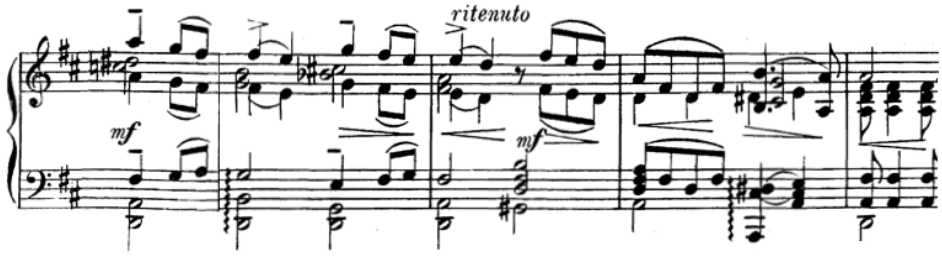
[7] Bizet met Liszt at the home of Fromental Halévy (his teacher and future father-in-law) in Paris on May 24, 1861, and impressed Liszt on that occasion with his piano playing. Lacombe, 271–72.
[8] Ellis, "Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press, 1852–1870," 57.
[9] Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 82. As a 12-year-old student at the Paris Conservatoire, Bizet won the second prize in the piano competition in 1851 with a performance of a solo excerpt from Chopin's F minor Piano Concerto. Ibid., 86.

major in *Carmen* (Ex. 5.10) may derive from Bizet's knowledge of similar passages in Chopin (see Ex. 6.4).



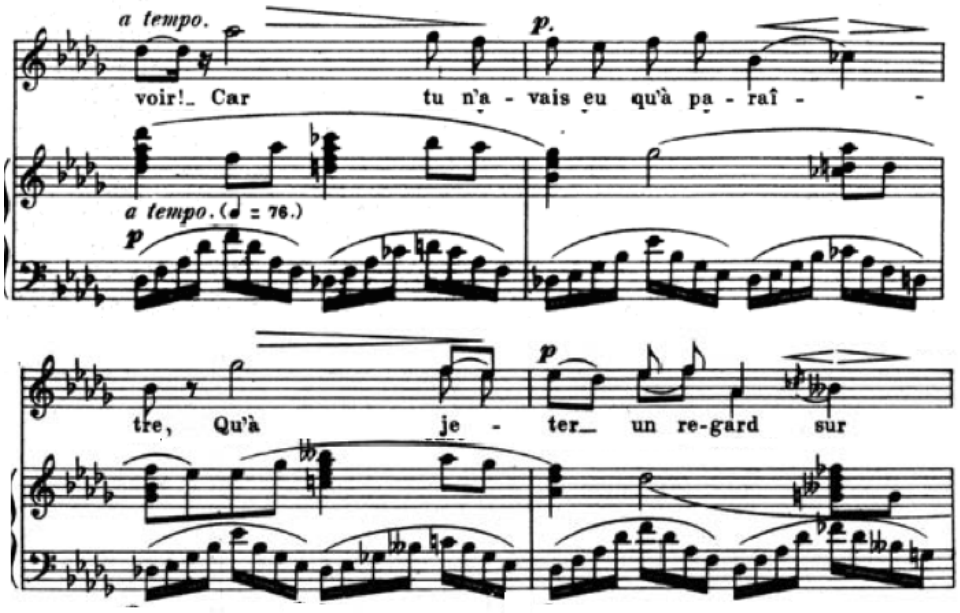
EXAMPLE 6.4. Chopin, Nocturne in D-flat Major, Op. 27/2 (1835), mm. 32–34

In addition to tracing the influences of earlier composers on Bizet, further research could also focus on Bizet's influence on other contemporary and later composers. Winton Dean, for example, was surely right to point out the striking resemblance between an excerpt from Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony (Ex. 6.5) and the coda to Don José's Flower Song (Ex. 6.6), and connections between the two composers merit further study.[10]



EXAMPLE 6.5. Tchaikovsky, Symphony no. 6 (1893), first movement, mm. 93–97

[10] Dean, *Bizet*, 246. In a letter to his patron Madame von Meck written in July 1880, Tchaikovsky wrote that he considered *Carmen* a "masterpiece in the full meaning of the word." Lacombe, *Georges Bizet*, 684.

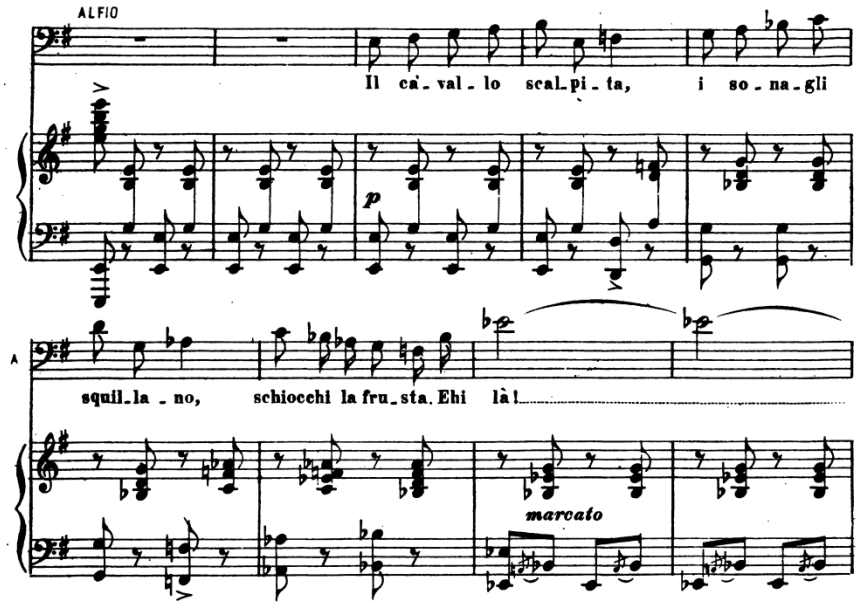


EXAMPLE 6.6. Bizet, *Carmen*, Act II, Duo (Air de la fleur), mm. 206–209

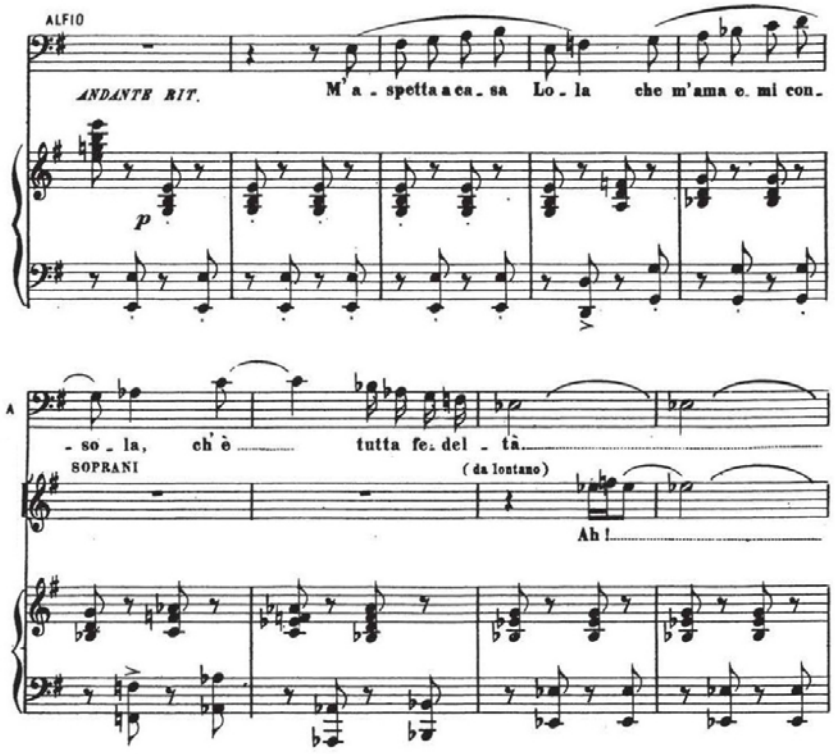
Finally, from the standpoint of melodic practice, Andreas Giger has suggested that "many of the characteristics traditionally associated with French opera [most notably by Bizet and Massenet] continue to play a prominent role in [Italian] operatic verismo."[11] *Carmen* is often cited as an early example of a "veristic" opera, and in describing the influence of Bizet and other French composers on Italian verismo, Giger has in mind a style of operatic declamation that is "ever more varied, free, and thus realistic."[12] However, Ex. 6.7 below shows that the deliberately artificial "diegetic" style of text setting discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 also made its mark on Italian veristic composers like Mascagni. Ex. 6.7 shows the beginning of the two strophes of Alfio's aria from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a diegetic number in which the character sings about his carefree life as a carter.

[11] Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, 223.
[12] Ibid., 224.

(a)



(b)



EXAMPLE 6.7. Mascagni, *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), Alfio's aria: (a) first strophe; (b) second strophe

The first two lines of each strophe are presented side by side below:

Il cav**a**llo sc**a**lpita	(3,5)	M'asp**e**tta a casa L**o**la	(2,6)
I son**a**gli squ**i**llano	(3,5)	Che m'**a**ma e mi cons**o**la	(2,6)

As the annotations above make clear, the two strophes begin with lines that contain different stress patterns.[13] However, Mascagni sets them to the same melody, in a manner that is familiar from our discussion of French diegetic numbers in Chapters 2 and 3. In the first strophe, the stresses on the odd-numbered syllables line up properly with the music. In the second strophe, however, the character of the melody taken by itself would appear to emphasize the weak odd-numbered syllables instead: "M'**a**spett**a** a cas**a** Lol**a**." If Mascagni were a French composer, that would probably be the end of the story. However, Mascagni does not fall completely under the influence of French diegetic text-setting practices here. Instead, he shifts the melody and accompaniment one eighth-note to the left in the second strophe, so that the *accenti comuni* continue to line up on notated downbeats!

In this Epilogue, I have endeavored to identify threads through which the diverse musical elements identified in my study of *Carmen* lead away from French opera, the main focus of my study. These threads connect Bizet and his music to operatic and instrumental composers who lived in different parts of Europe at different points in the nineteenth century. An exploration of any one of these threads could provide interesting material for further research. Bizet was intimately involved in the musical life of his time, and *Carmen* was admired by many of his peers, from Massenet and Saint-Saëns to Brahms and Tchaikovsky. In examining the musical connections that lead to and away from Bizet and *Carmen*, we stand to gain interesting insights

[13] The different stress patterns arise from the different verse forms used for the two couplets. Although all the lines contain seven syllables, the couplet from the first strophe consists of *senari sdruccioli* while the couplet from the second strophe consists of *settenari piani*. See Chapter 2, note 19 above for a brief discussion of Italian versification.

and a more multi-faceted understanding of compositional practice across countries and genres in the nineteenth century.

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