

CAMMARANO's NOTES for the staging of

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

J.N.Black

Salvadore Cammarano was employed by the management of the S Carlo theatre in Naples as "Poeta e concertatore" from about 1834 till his death in 1852. In this capacity he was required not only to write and revise libretti, but also to see operas on to the stage. The exact duties of a "concertatore" are not now easy to define, but probably most nearly coincide with those of the modern producer. In 1848, in an article in the Neapolitan weekly literary paper "L'omnibus" (Volume 16, issue 25 of 26 April 1848), the editor Vincenzo Torelli described Cammarano's post as "Un poeta con l'obbligo di mettere in iscena" (a poet with the duty of putting (operas) on the stage). Some years later in a letter to di Giacomo, Cammarano's eldest son - the painter Michele, wrote that his father was "direttore del palcoscenico" (stage director), (quoted by Viviani, Storia del Teatro Napoletano, Naples, 1969, p 540).

Salvadore Cammarano was well equipped for this dual role. He came from a prominent theatrical family, which had given Naples some of its best loved comic actors, particularly in the vernacular tradition. His father started on the stage but became a painter, and it was his intention that his son, too, should be a painter. Salvadore studied with this career in mind, but eventually decided to become a dramatic writer. The manuscript of his first known libretto (BELISARIO) is dated October 1832, when he was 31: his first printed libretto appeared 2 years later.

A number of documents concerning Cammarano's duties as a producer survive: lists of costumes, diagrams for the positioning of characters at important moments; some striking drawings of MACBETH (he was entrusted with mounting the first Neapolitan performance of Verdi's opera in 1849). The most interesting of all these documents is a set of notes for the production of LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, preserved in the library of the Conservatorio S Pietro a Majella in Naples. He was, of course, the librettist of this famous opera, first performed in Naples on 26 September 1835: it was his fourth libretto.

These notes extend to four small pages, and are hastily scribbled down, almost certainly as a draft. Cammarano normally took great pains over his handwriting, and every completed manuscript libretto, synopsis or letter I have examined bears witness to this. All are written with great care, even elegance, with an artist's eye to lay-out and appearance. Although in manuscript libretti with many corrections (such as BELISARIO or PIA DE' TOLOMEI) there is plenty of hasty writing, there is never any in a fair copy or a posted letter. There is internal evidence, too, that these notes on LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR are in draft form: there are many abbreviations, some of which would need to be expanded for clarity, and at least one sentence which, as it stands, is quite incomprehensible, and which he would surely have wished to revise at a later stage.

The notes seem to have been written for the use of a colleague in another theatre. At one point Cammarano writes "Assuming the set is designed more or less the same as in Naples" suggesting a theatre outside Naples, (within a few years of its first performance LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR had been produced at all the 6 theatres regularly giving opera in Naples; their producers would have known the S Carlo scenery at first hand, and Cammarano would have known, or could easily find out, what theirs was like). Similarly, he mentions at the end that he does not know who was to take the part of Raimondo, and this, too, suggests a performance outside Naples. My assumption is that we have here the draft of a letter he wrote to a "concertatore" in another city, advising him on the production of LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, and that the notes reflect his own practice as the producer of that work. They are thus of exceptional interest. As may easily be seen, they are intensely logical and practical. It is clear that Cammarano knew perfectly well what he was about, and many of his recommendations are imaginative and effective. Above all, he was obviously concerned for dramatic truth and consistency.

The notes are presented in plates 1-4, which are rather larger than the originals. They are followed by an English translation, in which I have expanded the abbreviations and normalised grammar and punctuation. I have then added a commentary, in particular relating the notes to the libretto, using the text printed by the firm of Flautina for the first performance in 1835, and expanding certain points of significance.



Lucia atto 2. di Lammermoor

scena 1. Lac sparsi in diversi gruppi - Nor
sopraggiunge dalla destra (intendi sempre
dell'attore) i cacciatori partono dall'oppo=
sto lato - Enrico e Rai= vengono dalla
dritta i cac= ritornano dalla sinistra
finita la cavatina tutti rientrano dalla
dritta.

11. Supposta la decorazione dipinta approssi=
mativamente come quella di Ragguardi
Lucia ed Alisa vengono dalla dritta
Edgardo dall'altro lato. - alle parole
Egli m'odia Edgardo ch'era alla sinistra
di Lucia percorrendo smaniosa la scena
trovasi alla dritta di lei e dicendo il
mio cor con si avvia come per partire
) quindi ripigliando la prima situazione, (
cioè alla sinistra di Lucia.

scena II. — Nor= dalla sinistra - parte dal lato
opposto - Lucia dalla sinistra - Enrico parte
per la dritta - Rai= dalla sinistra dove rien=
tra con Lucia.

Scena IV. Verrà collocato un tavolino verso il lato
dritto sul quale un recapito da scrivere dalla parte
sinistra del tavolino una gran seggiola a brac=
ciuoli - gli armigeri escono dalle porte late=
rali formando due ali a dritta e sinistra presso
le quinte contemporaneamente s'avanzano
dalla porta in fondo i cavalieri ciascuno
conducendo a mano la sua dama, e giunti
alla metà del palco si dividono restando le dame
a destra e gli uomini a sinistra s'inoltra
guardi Enrico dando la destra ad entrambi e
sono seguiti da d'Hormanno dai paggi di
entrambi che di Enrico, e dagli abitanti di
Lammermoor i quali restano in fondo senza
però coprire la porta, che viene subito ri=
chiusa. — L. et e R. vengono dalla sinistra —
alle parole Qual dna Chi giunge? tutti si
accostano alla porta, ed al comparire di E.
retrocedono tornando ciascuno al suo posto ed
gli uomini cacciandosi il cappello in testa
lasciano correre la destra alle impugnature
delle armi ma si trattengono dal uccidere L.
che cade svenuta sulla seggiola. — Dopo il
largo E. depone tabarro e cappello sulla
sedia. Quando E. co' suoi si scaglia contro
E. le loro spade toccandosi quella di E. onde
R. sia costretto ad abbassar le lame con le
proprie mani. — Nella stretta R. et e le
coristi formano un gruppo intorno a L. gli altri
incalzano E. si procuri che l'azione dei coristi
sia molto animata. Consiglio E. a non riprender
di il cappello ed il tabarro essendo inverisimile
di pensarvi in un momento di tanta disperazione:
Da un notajo col contratto nell'altro atto l'attore si
rimetterà il tabarro e diverse

A — S. 1. La tavola non sia lontana dalla porta d'ingresso, onde Enrico appena giunto possa gettarvi il mantello; quale mantello vien da lui ripreso nel partire.

Scena.. Tutti vengono dalla sinistra: metà delle coriste come ancora metà dei coristi si piazzano a destra le altre e gli altri a sinistra: le comparse ~~composta~~ di Paggi ed abitanti di Lam: rimangono in fondo.

Scena. R. N. ed alcune comparse vengono dalla ~~sinistra~~ dritta - appena giunti sulla scena N. fa un cenno alle comparse che vennero seco e queste partono rapidamente dalla sinistra.. Quando Raimondo comincia il racconto tutti lo circondano da presso: finito il racconto si formano in diagonale e così veggono L. che sopraggiunge dalla dritta — Avvertano i coristi di mostrarsi compresi di pietà e di terrore per la sciagura di Lucia, ed A. di starle sempre accanto e tenerle d'occhio come è solito a farsi con gl'infelici che hanno smarrita la ragione. — En: giunge dalla sinistra seguito dalle comparse a cui Normanno fa cenno di partire, e che supponesi siano andate in traccia di lui. — Quando L. resta quasi estinta nelle braccia di A. le coriste le si fanno d'intorno con attitudine di dolore in modo ch'ella resta nascosa allo spettatore ed intanto A. la tragge dentro per la dritta.

Scena ultima — Edgardo trae la spada per uccidersi e vien disarmato, allora si ferisce rapidamente con lo stile.. — Qui cade in acconcio di avvertire che i Coristi ~~son~~ vestiti in questa scena sono abitanti di Lam, quindi debbono vestire abiti affatto compagni a quelli delle comparse che figurarono nel finale e nell'aria di L. dovendo supporsi che siano sempre gli stessi. Credo anche di farlio cosa grata di ~~arti~~ darti nel notamento ~~pard.~~ coloro che hanno più d'un abito.

Enrico un abito alla prima parte, altro più ricco per la seconda. — Lucia un abito per la prima parte, un altro per la seconda, ed un terzo bianco per l'aria - Edgardo un a - - due tabarri ~~coda~~ Alisa — I coristi da Cac= da Cav: da abi: Io non so quale artista è destinato a sostenere la parte di R: ma se per avventura non fosse atto a cantar la sua aria trovo indispensabile ch'egli dica almeno il recitativo che la precede, come trovo in = ch re- ed aria siano stampate nel libro onde non ne resti vulnerata la condotta.

Dunque

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ACT I (1)

Scene 1 - The huntsmen are scattered in several groups. Normanno arrives from the right (always meaning the actor's right or left). The huntsmen leave from the opposite side. Enrico and Raimondo enter from the right. The huntsmen return from the left. At the end of the cavatina, everybody goes out from the right. (2)

Scene 4 (3) - Assuming that the set is designed more or less the same as in Naples, (4) Lucia and Alisa enter from the right. Edgardo from the other side. At the words Egli m'odia, (5) Edgardo, who was on the left of Lucia, runs agitatedly across the stage, finding himself on her right. When he says, il mio cor con, (6) he makes as if to leave, (7) then takes up again his first position, that is, on the left of Lucia.

ACT II (8)

Normanno enters from the left, (9) and leaves from the opposite side. Lucia enters from the left. Enrico leaves from the right, Raimondo enters from the left, from which side he goes out (10) with Lucia.

Scene 4 (11) - A small table is to be placed towards the right side. (12) On it some writing materials. To the left of the table, an armchair. The men-at-arms enter through the side doors, forming two lines, to right and to left, up against the wings. At the same time the gentlemen come forward from the door at the back, each one leading his lady by the hand. On reaching the middle of the stage, they separate, leaving the women on the right and the men on the left. Enrico then comes forward,

leading Arturo by the right hand, followed by Normanno, by a notary with the contract, by the pages of both Arturo and Enrico, and by the inhabitants of Lammermoor, who remain at the back, without however blocking the door, which is immediately closed. Lucia, Alisa and Raimondo enter from the left. (13) On the words ~~Qual Fragor~~ Chi giunge?, everybody moves towards the door, and at the appearance of Edgardo they all draw back, each one returning to his place. (14) The men thrust their hats on to their heads (15), letting their right hands fall on to the hilts of their swords but they stop when they see Lucia falling onto the chair in a faint. After the largo, (16) Edgardo puts his cloak and hat down on the chair. (17) When Enrico and his men fling themselves on Edgardo, (18) let their swords touch his, so that Raimondo is obliged to lower their blades with his own hands. (19) In the stretta, (20) Raimondo, Alisa and the women of the chorus form a group around Lucia; the rest pursue Edgardo. (21) Make sure that the actions of the chorus are very animated. I recommend that Edgardo should not pick up his hat and cloak, it being unlikely that he would think of doing so in a moment of such desperation. For the next act, the actor will collect them from Alisa and the others. (22)

Act - Scene 1 (23) The table should not be far from the entrance door, so that as soon as Enrico arrives he can throw down his cloak on it, which cloak he has to pick up on leaving. (24)

Scene - (25) Everybody enters from the left. (26) Half of the chorus women, similarly half of the chorus men, place themselves on the right, the rest on the left. The supers, as pages and inhabitants of Lammermoor, remain at the back.

Scene (27) Raimondo, Normanno and some supers come from the right - as soon as they are on the stage, Normanno makes a sign to the supers who came with him, and these leave quickly from the left. (28) When Raimondo begins his narrative, everybody gathers closely around him. At the end of the narrative, the chorus forms up diagonally and thus see Lucia, who enters from the right. (29) Let the chorus be sure to show themselves full of pity and

terror over Lucia's ordeal, and Alisa to keep herself always near at hand, following her with her eyes, as we usually do with unfortunate people who have gone out of their minds. (30) Enrico enters from the left, (31) followed by some supers, to whom Normanno makes a sign to leave, and who may be supposed to be going in search of him. (32) When Lucia remains as if lifeless in Alisa's arms, the chorus women group themselves around her in attitudes of grief, in such a way that she remains hidden from the audience, while Alisa carries her off to the right. (33)

Final scene (34) Edgardo takes his sword to kill himself and is disarmed; he then stabs himself quickly with his dagger. (35) This is the right moment to mention that in this scene, the chorus represent inhabitants of Lammermoor, so that they should wear costumes precisely matching those of the supers who appeared in the finale and in Lucia's aria, it being supposed that they are the same people. (36) I also believe that it would be nice to make costumes specially for those who have to wear more than one. (37)

Enrico, one costume for the first part, another richer one for the second. Lucia, one costume for the first part, another for the second and a third, a white one, for the aria. Edgardo, one costume, two cloaks. Alisa, -, the chorus as huntsmen, gentlemen, inhabitants of Lammermoor. (38)

I do not know what singer is destined to take the part of Raimondo, but if by chance he is not up to singing his aria, I consider it essential for him to sing at least the recitative which comes before it, just as I consider it essential that the recitative and aria should be printed in the libretto, so that his conduct may not be queried. (39)

COMMENTARY

1 The printed libretto is set out not in acts but in parts. Part I, in one single act; Part II in 2 acts. Cammarano here calls Part I, Act I; Part II Act I becomes Act II; when be comes to Part III, he leaves out the number - perhaps in haste rather than by design.

2 The stage directions in the libretto merely say "Hall in the castle of Ravenswood". There is nothing to suggest any particular significance of left or right. Cammarano here seems to suggest that the right side gives access to the rest of the castle and the left to the park, since the huntsmen leave to search for the unknown man, and later return, from the left side.

3 The scenes are numbered conventionally, a new one beginning when the characters on the stage change. Scene 4 is where the set changes to the park, at the fountain of the Siren.

4 The stage directions require a wall of the castle at the back of the stage, with a small practical door, in front of which is the fountain; Lucia and Alisa come from the castle. Cammarano here says they come from the right, suggesting that in Naples the set was built with the castle on the right, instead of (or perhaps as well as) at the back. Edgardo arrives, as would be expected, from the other side, ie the park.

5 The printed libretto does not include the words "Egli m'odia". The text at this point reads:

Edg Ei mi abborre .....

Luc Ah! no .....

Edg Mi abborre

and this may be taken to represent the text in

Cammarano's manuscript. Donizetti's manuscript full score has the first three words as "Egli m'odia", which he presumably chose himself to avoid the repetition in the original.

6 Luc Il mio cor con te ne viene.

Edg Il mio cor con te qui resta.

The passage comes just before the cabaletta of their duet, "Verranno a te sull'aura".

7 The invention of some stage business here (he makes as if to leave etc) presumably arose from a need to create some dramatic raison-d'etre for the cabaletta, following an important bridge passage in which Lucia and Edgardo exchange tokens of betrothal.

8 This part of Cammarano's text covers the first 3 scenes of this act, until the change of set.

9 The stage direction is merely "A private room in Lord Asthon's appartments". Normanno comes from the left, announcing that Lucia is just coming. Presumably he comes from her rooms, as she too enters from the left. Later Raimondo enters from "her" side, and goes back there with her. Enrico goes out on the other side.

10 Cammarano twice used "rientra" when people leave the stage, ie, not when they re-enter or return on to the stage, but with the meaning "go back inside", ie off the stage.

11 This is the "contract" scene, beginning with the chorus, "Per te d'immenso giubbilo".

12 The libretto describes the set as a magnificent hall, lavishly decorated, with a massive stairway at the back, a door at the top, and with side doors. Cammarano here adds a table and a chair: in fact it would appear that at least two chairs are needed.

13 Those people who live in the castle come in from the side doors - the men-at-arms (non-singing supers) and, later, Lucia, Alisa and Raimondo. On the other hand, the relatives and guests come in down the stairway, from the entrance door; so does Arturo, led down by his host. So, too, do the villagers, who are warned not to get in the way of the closing door - it has to be broken open when Edgardo arrives.

14 The words in the libretto are "Qual fragor! ... Chi giunge? ..." but it looks as if Cammarano began to write "Qual fragor" to indicate the moment at which the action was to take place, then crossed it out and placed it - more appropriately - at "Chi giunge" as Edgardo bursts in.

15 The men have to put their hats on here, since they were carrying them in their right hands, now needed for their swords.

16 The "largo" is the slow, concerted passage of the central finale of an Italian romantic opera. In Lucia it is better known as the "sextet", "Chi mi frena in tal momento".

17 Lucia has already fallen fainting on the armchair. Unless we can imagine Edgardo putting down his hat and cloak on the same chair - surely rather unlikely - there must have been other chairs in the hall.

18 In Cammarano's text this reads "Quando E. co'suoi si scaglia contro E.", and is incomprehensible without a knowledge of the context: the first E refers to Enrico, the second to Edgardo. This may be taken as evidence that Cammarano was intending to make a fair copy for the recipient.

19 The direction that the swords are to touch, so that Raimondo has to lower them with his own hands, makes for a most imaginative and effective moment. It is not indicated in the libretto, where he merely steps in between the adversaries.

20 The "stretta" is the fast, closing section of the finale, here the section beginning "Esci, fuggi il furor che mi accende".

21 The actions of both women and men are quoted from the libretto, except that it is there stated that the men pursue Edgardo right up to the threshold.

22 The note about Edgardo not picking up his belongings is apposite, though there is no reference in the libretto to his needing them later in the opera.

23 This is the "Wolfcrag" scene (often misspelt in contemporary libretti as "Wolferag"), frequently omitted in performance today.

24 The table is mentioned in the libretto, "A table bare of all ornaments"; the door is to be at the back. Cammarano here indicates that the table must be near the door since, as the libretto notes, Enrico must open and throw down his cloak as he comes in, so that the identity of the unexpected visitor can be suddenly revealed.

25 Scene 3, the assembly "Di vivo giubbilo".

26 Cammarano's notes need to be read in conjunction with the stage directions in the libretto: "From the adjoining room is heard the music for cheerful dances. The back of the stage is crowded with pages and inhabitants of Lammermoor. Many groups of Ladies and Gentlemen enter, radiant with joy; they come together in a group and sing the following". As they all come from the left, this is presumably where the ballroom is.

27 Scene 4, Raimondo's narrative.

28 The libretto makes no mention of supers here, merely stating that Normanno runs across the stage and exits rapidly. Note that Raimondo, Normanno and the supers enter from the right, which comes to be associated with Lucia.

29 Lucia, too, enters from the right, presumably from the bedroom. The placing of the chorus is well thought out, to give Lucia's entrance the greatest possible impact.

30 The advice as to how Alisa and the chorus are to behave here is imaginative and, again, adds to the effectiveness of Lucia's entry.

31 That is, Enrico enters from the ballroom, not from "Lucia's" side, which is now associated with her attack on Arturo.

32 "In search of him" - who "him" is is not stated, but can only be Arturo. This incident is not mentioned in the libretto.

33 Cammarano solves the problem of getting Lucia off the stage at the end of the "mad" scene (which he always refers to as her "aria") by having the women surround her, hiding her from the audience, whilst Alisa takes her off. A few seconds earlier, Lucia had been "quasi estinta" ("quasi priva di vita" in the libretto), in Alisa's arms: to cover her exit with a milling throng of ladies is both effective and neat. She is taken out on "her" side (despite the murdered Arturo) and not to the ballroom side.

34 The final scene in the opera begins at the point where Raimondo enters saying "Ove corri sventurato?": technically, at the end of the bridge passage in Edgardo's double aria, just before the cabaletta "Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali".

35 The libretto states that Edgardo plunges his dagger into his heart, and that the bystanders go to disarm him but are too late. These notes provide a more effective staging.

36 The way the chorus are dressed in these last scenes is important. In the finale (of the central act) and in Lucia's aria (ie the "mad" scene) the chorus are dressed as ladies and gentlemen, relatives and others who have come as guests for the wedding, while the non-singing supers are the pages and villagers. Now, in the final scenes, it is the chorus who are dressed as villagers, and consequently must wear the same sort of clothes as the supers did earlier, since they must appear to be the same people.

37 This sentence is syntactically obscure. Cammarano seems to have written "Credo anche di farli cosa grata di farli (next word cancelled) notamente (next word cancelled) di coloro che hanno più d'un abito". Then he interlined "di darli" above the second "di farli" without cancelling the latter. Perhaps he intended to go back and revise this sentence, which as it stands is incomprehensible. I suspect that what he wanted to say was that it would be nice to provide a second set of costumes so that chorus and supers would not have to share the same ones, though this is sheer conjecture.

38 This list does not add much to the understanding of the staging, though why Edgardo needs two cloaks is not clear; perhaps an ordinary one for the first and last acts, and a heavy, travel-stained one for his return from France.

39 Clearly the problem of Raimondo's aria, "Cedi, o cedi, o più sciagure" in Act II scene 3 is as old as the opera itself. (Cammarano wrote "Deh! t'arrendi", but Donizetti's manuscript full score clearly has "Cedi, o cedi"). Cammarano's insistence that he must sing the recitative, and that the text of both recitative and aria be printed in the libretto demonstrates his concern for dramatic consistency. Remember that the libretto was designed to be followed during the performance, and often contained passages (marked with commas at the beginning of the line) either not sung at a particular performance or never even set to music in the first place.



Fanny Tacchinardi-Persiani as LUCIA