ROSEMONDE

TRAGÉDIE EN CINQ ACTES

Par M. Emile de Bonnechose

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REPRÉSENTÉE,
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AVERTISSEMENT.

PLUSIEURS critiques d'un talent distingué m'ayant reproché d'avoir trop précipité les évènemens dans ma tragédie, j'avouerai que j'ai cru devoir sacrifier le développement des situations à la rapidité de l'action; mais je n'ose me regarder encore, à cet égard, comme justifié par l'accueil favorable que ma pièce a reçu du public. J'ai rétabli dans l'ouvrage imprimé les nombreux passages supprimés à la représentation. J'avais reçu le conseil de retrancher tout ce qui était susceptible de ralentir le mouvement théâtral : le lecteur jugera si j'ai eu raison ou tort de partager cette opinion.

Les caractères italiques indiquent les vers rétablis à l'impression.

Une indisposition de M. David a fait suspendre les représentations de ma tragédie. Cet évènement est d'autant plus fâcheux pour moi, que M. David avait mis plus de zèle dans l'étude difficile du rôle de Henri. Je m'acquitte d'un devoir en lui témoignant toute ma satisfaction, ainsi qu'à M. Desmousseaux, à Mmes Bourgoin, Paradol et Menjaud : tous ont acquis des droits à mes sincères remercimens, et je me plais à rendre à leur talent la justice qu'il mérite.

ENGLISH LEGEND, *FRENCH PLAY*

TWO ITALIAN COMPOSERS

Alexander Weatherson

Two operas by Donizetti were written to libretti earlier set by Carlo Coccia. Both were supplied by Felice Romani. One of them, *La figlia dell'arciere* which became Donizetti's *Adelia*, was based on an unidentified source, its subject was "taken from a chronicle of the time of Charles the Bold" and unless something comes up to throw a light on the chronicle in question this is likely to be all we shall ever find out about it.

Not quite a decade earlier, however, another of Coccia's libretti had attracted the Bergamasc maestro; unlike *La figlia dell'arciere* which was a curiously truncated plot, in need of considerable expansion, Coccia's *Rosmonda* was an overlifesize drama, packed with incident, requiring extensive pruning to be adapted to the powerful gestures and simplistic dramaturgy of Donizetti's maturity. A study of the changes in this text sums-up - not just the compositional make-up of two rival composers - but the gains and losses as Italian Romantic opera comes of age.

The source for this libretto was quite as romantic as any of the operas which were based on it. 1 As so often it was derived from a French play, in this case a play by a soldier and his second published work.2 François-Paul-Émile Boisnormand de Bonnechose (1801-1875) came of a fervently royalist stock and had been born in exile at Leyendorp in the Netherlands. His *émigré* parents were colourful characters, the entire family seems to have been voluble, headstrong, and full of religious zeal (but of various antagonistic factions); in a rather pig-headed way they were more than representative of the party of Ultras thrown-up by Revolutionary excess. It could be argued that Émile swam against this tide. He was educated at S. Cyr (the *Restauration* having conveniently coincided with his adolescence) and was still a soldier in 1826 when his one-and-only play 'Rosemonde', a *tragédie en cinq actes*, was staged at the Théâtre Français in Paris. An unwonted literary strain seems to have prevailed under the képi of this unusual *Lieutenant au Corps Royal d'État-Major*, so much so that in 1828 he was given the job of librarian at the Royal Chateau of S. Cloud, at which point he resigned his commission, settled down at his desk, and remained there through several successive monarchies and régimes. While the rest of his family devoted themselves



CARLO COCCIA

1782 - 1813

to outré political activities of one kind or another, this soldier-become-librarian applied himself to obscure medieval history, writing histories both of France and England. 3 A poem 'La mort be Bailly' was *couronné* by the French Academy in 1833.

There can be no doubt that 'Rosemonde' was a modish subject in 1826. Stories hostile to the victorious British were popular in the reign of Charles X. Frenchmen found the character of Éléonore de Guyenne unconducive to national pride and rather hoped that the English monarch who gained both her heart and her estates in France (thus unleashing several hundred years of war) was led to regret having snatched her from the bed of the French King (as indeed he was). The play's setting was troubadouresque, every character in it was impassioned, ruthless; everyone - except Rosemonde - was viewed in a distinctly unflattering light, and her murder by the Queen (and the murder of Rosemonde's father by the King) resulted in a pyrrhic dismissal of both these royal miscreants that must have been deeply satisfactory to audiences. Bonnechose himself commented on the *"accueil favorable"* that his play received at its première on the 28th October 1826.

But if this soldier-author had a nationalistic axe to grind in adapting this legendary tale of Fair Rosamund to the French stage, Romani had nothing of the kind. For him the play simply invoked a suitable *ménage-à-trois*, Rosmonda was an innocent *vittima*; Enrico a besotted and deceitful lover; Leonora a jealous and vengeful wife.

The characters in Bonnechose's play are as follows:

HENRI II	*roi d'Angleterre*
CLIFFORD	*ancien gouverneur du roi, un des chefs de son armée*
ARTHUR	*jeune page agé de 16 ans*
ÉLÉONORE DE GUYENNE	*femme de Henri II*
ROSEMONDE	*fille de Clifford*
SUFFOLK	*chef des gardes, personnage muet*

Those of Romani's libretto for Carlo Coccia's *Rosmonda*:

ENRICO II	*re d'Inghilterra*
LEONORA DI GUIENNA	*moglie di Enrico II*
ROSMONDA	*amante di Enrico e figlia di Clifford*
CLIFFORD	*antico governatore del re*
ARTURO	*giovine paggio d'Enrico*
NORCESTO	*uffiziale di Leonora*
SUFFOLK	*capo delle guardie*

('Norcesto' was a stock name for a comprimario Englishman and probably an Italianisation of 'Worcester': he sings a few words only and was dropped in Romani's text for Donizetti).

Romani's libretto was written in response to a commission for a new opera for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice and staged there on 26th February 1829. Carlo Coccia had only recently returned to Italy after a long exile in Portugal and England and the subject of this *melodramma serio in due atti* was much to his taste. 'English' subjects were a growth industry in the Italian theatre, Coccia composed no less than four operas with 'English' settings in as many years: *Maria Stuart, regina di Scozia (1827); Rosmonda (1829); Edoardo in Iscozia (1831);* and *Enrico di Monfort (1831).* He had become something of an authority on these unknown islands, a factor not quite so certain in Romani's extensive education - indeed a factor which needed to be remedied by extensive camouflage.

The *avvertimento* which prefaces the printed libretto spreads a thick syrup of pseudo-historical fact over the events in the play with the intention, probably, of both supporting his pretensions to scholarship and disguising his source. 4 Thus, Leonora's *'imprudent conduct in Antioch'* is quoted as the reason for her *'repudiation by the French King'*; her *'treasure'* is described as the means by which Enrico *'acquired'* the throne of England. He supplies local colour in the form of Rosmonda's *'fountain'* near to which, he insists, the unfortunate maiden was murdered and which is *'famous still in our day, and visited by travellers'*. These divergations, derived from popular legend, have no part in the play.

Bonnechose's play is much more subtle than Romani's pastiche. It is full of labyrinthine allusions, timeshifts, and tortured confrontations; duets and trios in embryo to be sure but all of too complex a motivation for easy transfer to the operatic stage. His cast is morally indefensible, everyone has a tremendous verbosity at his disposal. Romani had to cut them off in full spate; as a result, scant justice was done both to the plot and to the characters as they were conceived.

*

Like all other romantic libretti in this period, Romani's libretto both enhanced and diminished the source on which it was based. The setting was elaborated - by the addition of picturesque detail, by statutory emotional situations, by the sighs, expletives, and pious exhortations in which libretti abounded - and reduced by the need for a transparently simple motivation.

Thus, Coccia's *Rosmonda* begins with a scene which does not exist in the play.

Romani meticulously describes the location:

> *A vast forest in the neighbourhood of Woodstock. The sky is covered and threatening. The sound of distant horns announces an approaching hunt; various riders struggle through the woods: thunder and lightning. A band of huntsmen emerge from the thicket and approach.*

These outriders, led by Norcesto, reveal that a sudden tempest has scattered the royal party and that the Queen has somehow become separated from the rest of the hunt. This *coro (a sine qua non of every well-conducted opera opening in this period)* then disperses in search of the royal wanderer

> Coro *Sola, errante, pel bosco smarrita,*
> *Chi sa mai se riparo trovò!*

leaving the stage empty. Queen Leonora di Guienna is thus permitted to enter alone (like all the better conducted *prime donne*) and sing her *cavatina di entrata*, another mandatory feature of the early romantic score. The storm is opposing her design, heaven prevents her from revenging herself on her detested rival, the anger of all the elements bears no comparison with the fury in her heart. Though calm will follow the tempest, no such peace will assuage her jealousy and unhappiness.

The chorus returns to find the Queen, telling her joyfully that they are in the vicinity of Woodstock Castle, at which news Leonora launches into her *cabaletta* of vindictive anticipatation, relishing the opportunity of confronting her hated rival face-to-face.

In complete contrast to this standard *Introduzione* - the counterpart of so many others - Bonnechose's play begins quite cooly. The Queen Éléonore is already <u>in</u> Woodstock Castle: there is no hunt or storm. She questions the page Arthur on the rumours she has heard that the King has concealed a mistress in the castle: the page's embarrassment confirms that these rumours are true. Arthur jumps to the defence of this unknown mistress and declares that she has been seduced by Henri who has concealed identity, calling himself *Edgar*

> Arth. *Auprès d'elle Henri sut employer la feinte;*
> *Sous le faux nom d'Edgar il lui promit sa main.*
>
> Éléon. *Le traître!*

This same exchange is reproduced in the opera in the shape of the *gran'duetto* which immediately follows Leonora's *cavatina di entrata*. In this version too, Arturo defends Rosmonda's innocence

> Art. *Ah! non lei, ma il re ne incolpa...*
> *Nome e stato ha finto il re,*
>
> Leon. *(Traditor)*

But in the opera the Queen then forces Arturo to admit that he too is in love with Rosmonda and their various responses to this enforced confession form the content of the *cantabile* and *stretta* of this duet. (Romani was solely responsible for this infatuation on the part of the page, in the play Arthur is deemed too young for any such thing).

Libretto and play part company here. The opera has a *coro* followed by Enrico's very unremarkable *sortita*: the play has an eight-line monologue by Éléonore. Both are followed by an interview with Clifford: the opera here has yet another *gran' duetto* whose content is derived from a later episode in the play (Acte II ScIV), an episode in which the King and his former tutor quarrel: the play has a dialogue between Éléonore and Clifford of which only an echo finds a place in the libretto. Clifford begs the Queen to extend her patronage to his lonely daughter and the former - unaware of course that his daughter is the hated mistress - agrees, an ironic twist which Romani refers to in the *finale primo* when Leonora comments, with undisguised menace

> Leon. *Figlia tua? Si, fia salvata:*
> *Le offro un braccio protettor.*

Acte II of the play (atto I ScIX of the opera) opens with the heroine alone in her hidden appartment at Woodstock. In the play she has a soliloquy of seven rhymed couplets, the first half-line of which only finds a place in the recitative of her *aria di sortita* in the opera

> Rose. *Edgar! Il ne vient pas* Ros. *O Edegardo! Edegardo!*
> *Se non tornassi più...*

Throughout his play, Bonnechose endows Rosemonde with a certain dignity, she is an innocent in love. Romani, however, pulls out all the emotional stops. Rosmonda looks moodily into the night through an open window

> Ros. *Volgon tre lune, ahi lassa! e il dì ricorre*
> *Il fatal dì che in queste mura il gemo*
> *Di rimorso e d'amor...*

Her impassioned sighs (borrowed of course from Shakespeare) come to an end when she sits to accompany herself on her harp

> *Perchè non ho del vento*
> *L'infaticabil volo?*
> *Lunge in estraneo suolo,*
> *Ti seguirei mio ben,*
> *Dove tu sei...sen volino*
> *I miei sospiri almen.*

At which point the lovelorn Arturo overhears Rosmonda's song in an adjacent room and echos her *canzone* accompanying himself on a lute: a third *strophe* follows *unisone*. This well-crafted and unconventional *sortita* has a delicious theatrical effect.

It was an effect which Coccia underlined with great subtlety by casting both these roles as mezzo-sopranos, a combination of spacial effects, poetic sentiment, harp and lute together proved to be something of a masterstroke and was a good example of poet and composer both at their best.

In the libretto there follows a duet for Rosmonda and Arturo, then, with the arrival of Clifford, a trio in which the angry father reveals the name and status of his daughter's lover. Then the stage fills as the King arrives, offering her a crown, the Queen bursts-in bitter and taunting, surrounded by a host of courtiers to complete the expected *concertato* which ends the first act.

The play has a far more pungent showdown. Immediately after Rosemonde's brief soliloquy in her chamber the King arrives for an emotional scene in which, exalted by love, he admits his deception but fails to reveal his rank. This is succeeded by the noisy quarrel with Clifford: the latter has taken it upon himself to defend Éléonore whose position is compromised by the unknown mistress. (Some of the tongue-lashing the relentless tutor imposes on his erstwhile pupil was really too much for the Royal Censor in Paris in 1826: many of the more scabrous passages were cut out. Not even Charles X could permit this sort of thing addressed to a fellow monarch no matter how perfidious

Cliff. *Achevez, faible roi, poursuivez ces projets;*
Chassez Éléonore, oubliez ses bienfaits.
Offrez à votre amour de sanglans sacrifices,
De festons couronné, plongé dans les delices.)

As a result of this acrimonious interview Henri determines to punish the old man

Cliff. *(à part) Quelle est donc cette femme,*
Dont la beauté perfide a subjugé son ame?
(Haut) Quand doit-elle et me voir et m'entendre?

Henri *Aujourd'hui*

This revenge is sweet and strong if not quite as intended: Rosemonde has been warned of her father's arrival and overhears his outrage on discovering that she has been seduced - she begs for forgiveness only to be informed that her lover is none other than the King. Henri arrives (Acte III ScIII) to offer her a consort's crown which her father, beside himself, forbids her to accept. Rosemonde is almost literally torn between two furious men, she faints, Henri - in a towering rage calls his bodyguard and Clifford in full ranting abuse is dragged-off as the curtain falls.

Had Romani been bolder, a *trio finale* based on the above would fully have dismissed the mediocre *concertato* he put in its place.

*

A mid point has been reached of both opera and play. The libretto recommences - after the obligatory chorus - with a recriminatory duet between Enrico and Leonora which appears as Acte IV ScV of the play. Romani has discarded an extensive dialogue between Éléonore and Arthur from the beginning of this act and it features only in a reduced form as the brief ScIV of atto II; a dramatic encounter between the Queen and Rosemonde has also been displaced and will appear as ScV. In the meantime the opening Enrico/Leonora duet of recrimination is a cruder but still recognisable version of the same scene in the play; Bonnechose took tremendous pains to build up a theatrically convincing climax here, King and Queen circle each other like boxers sizing-up, the text is alternately compressed into terse understatement and then violently released into vehement flights of rhetoric. After a flurry of verbal blows Éléonore contrives a massive *coup-de-grace* with a protracted vituperative dismissal of Henri which sends him off with his tail between his legs.

Little of this gets into Romani's libretto. Instead of the political blow to the solar plexus, the elaborate feints, the devastating character assassination practised by Éléonore de Guyenne there is a marital row between a bourgeois couple on the basis of 'You did', 'I didn't', 'You did' and so on. The Queen, like Medea and Norma before her, mixing insults with declarations of love

Leon. *Caro, sebben colpevole*
Sento che ancor mi sei:
Io non ti posso perdere,
Non so partir da te.

an expression of sentiment remote indeed from Éléonore's shocking contempt.

It is this burgeoning love or frustrated love which colours the rest of the libretto. ScIII of this act is a *scena* for Arturo *solo*, a dispensible sentimental rêverie which transpires to be, alas, an excellent example of the terrible doggerel of which a great librettist could be capable. There is, of course, no sign of this scene in the play.

Both play and opera now, however, embark on the critical confrontation between the heroine and her royal antagonists (Acte V of the play; atto II ScV of the libretto). Romani has split this scene into two halves so that his sorely-tried Rosmonda can test her vocal stamina on both parties and he gives

an attractive musical flow to the whole by creating a *trio* Rosmonda/Leonora/Arturo, divided by a brief *solo* (Rosmonda), from a *gran'duetto* Rosmonda/Enrico. The text for all this is quite new and owes nothing or nearly nothing to the play. Rosmonda has a second *solo*, however (ScIX), which for the one-and-only time in this act translates directly from the French text. Rosmonda is seated alone in the gardens of the castle on a marble bench

Rose. *Que ce marbre est glacé! que cette nuit est sombre!*
Mes noirs pressentimens croissent avec son ombre.

Ros. *Oh! come freddo*
Son questi marmi! ... Come densa e cupa
La notte che mi cinge! Ogni funesto
Pressentimento mio cresce coll'ombra ...

But this is Romani's last flirtation with Bonnechose's text, opera and play now part company for good. The libretto compresses Rosmonda's *aria finale* and murder into one page of verse; Leonora makes one vocal flourish before she stabs her rival and the opera ends immediately with her *'Io regno ancor'*. 5 The play has an infinitely more complex dénouement. Éléonore discovers Rosemonde in the garden and accuses her of flouting her order to leave the court: the King - off-stage - encountering Clifford hurrying to escort his daughter to safety, stabs him: Éléonore, hearing the King's voice and believing that he has come for a rendezvous with Rosemonde, stabs her. Both are terrified by what they have done. Dazed they join hands in a most mysterious flux of shared emotion. The dying Clifford staggers on to the stage with the assistance of Arthur and falls before the body of Rosemonde. Aware of her death for the first time Henri screams at Éléonore

Henri *Éloigne toi, va-t-en, ôte-toi de mes yeux.*
Le crime nous sépare

to which Clifford responds

Cliff. *Il vous unit tous deux ...*
Je meurs; pour vous punir il ne reste que Dieu.

(There is no mention of *'Io regno ancor'*, words which, in the play are said only by Henri (Acte IV ScV).

Romani's 1829 libretto for Coccia's *Rosmonda* was not unsuccessful. The bad parts of his text were remarkably feeble it is true, but the good parts were very good indeed. Its situations were conventional, to be sure, but the opera had momentum and forward drive. Though Bonnechose's play had been abjectly bowdlerised this was no more than current practice; Romani seldom paid more than lip-service to his source, his usual proceedure was to take only the title, the characters, some of the argument and a modest portion of the text from his source-novel or play. Was it usual for him to conceal this source? No, in most cases the source was announced boldly, but, when as with 'Rosemonde' he had supplied so much of the text, he did not see the necessity. This notwithstanding, his libretto is a travesty. No real attempt has been made to give flesh and blood to Leonora's insensate fury, she could of course, be expected to subject Enrico to her attacks but her murder of Rosmonda is more or less pointless. In contrast, Bonnechose's proud, offended, coldly unprincipled Éléonore who takes life as a kind of royal peculiar has a real theatrical dimension. Henri - petulant, immature, effeminate (wherever did Bonnechose get that idea?), a nineteenth-century masher with the morals of a pig, comes out in the libretto as a rather more articulate (but not much) Pollione. Rosmonda's innocence, even, is compromised by the commonplace assumption of Italian romantic opera of a female susceptibility to anything in trousers - even those of Arturo, whose trousers are a stage fiction.

* * *

Coccia's contacts with Donizetti were few but amicable. They must often have met in the theatrical round but encounters between maestri were seldom recorded. Donizetti classified Coccia amongst the innovators as the notes he made for a lecture make perfectly clear. 6 Both composers hastened slowly towards change, Donizetti could have had no urgent imperative to ammend the outlines of the text already set by the older maestro. As soon as it became clear that Coccia's opera had fallen by the wayside (Coccia's music was powerful but rather austere and Venetian audiences found this opera to be insufficiently melodious at key moments) the libretto was deemed to be available. Why such a libretto was so soon available is not clear, perhaps no one had paid for it - a familar excuse for the rapid re-use of a viable text. In the period, however, between Coccia's version, and the version of Donizetti whose opera *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* would be performed at Florence in 1834,

the operatic kaleidoscope had been shaken, Rossinian *canto fiorito* had become a thing of the past, real cumulative drama swam suddenly into the sights of all composers together with a sensible improvement in orchestral standards. There was a new search for concision in libretti, for an economy of effect, for heightened emotion, the more decorative aspects of romanticism - the exotic settings, as exemplified by Pacini's *Amazilia* of 1825, the social outcasts, as exemplified by Carafa's *Il paria* of 1826, the semi-seria compromises between tragedy and comedy, as exemplified by *Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo* of 1833 - were now on the wane, Donizetti asked Romani for changes simply to bring Coccia's libretto up-to-date. Had Donizetti read the play? The most urgent change removed the cliché-ridden Hunt and Storm which had launched the 1829 version, with the result that - *coro* apart - the opera now begins in the same way as Bonnechose's drama.

On 21st May 1832 the Florentine impresario Alessandro Lanari signed a contract 7 with the composer for two operas, one for La Pergola and another for the Teatro La Fenice. In the event the two operas which transpired, *Parisina* and *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* were both staged in Florence and subjected to unusual delay. This was not unfavorable to the composer, in these years Donizetti took the temperature of audiences with every score; in the early 1830's every opera became a little more daring. Though not a new plot *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* dared a new kind of immediacy, there were no qualms about bloodshed or murder on the stage, about royal profligacy (the much-maligned Grand Duke of Tuscany was quite unstuffy in this respect); there was every encouragement to restore the scandalous amorality of the original play.

Coccia had cast his opera with a rare sensibility for low voices (his three *prime donne* were Giuditta Grisi, Clorinda Corradi-Pantanelli, and Marietta Brambilla), Donizetti, more modestly cast his *Rosmonda* around the sound of two sopranos disputing the same man, thus the opera was refashioned in the clash of timbres which had become the rage after *Norma*. 8

Donizetti also redressed the male vocal balance. Coccia's Enrico had been a weak tenor, 9 Donizetti's was perhaps the best tenor then singing in Italy 10 and his role was correspondingly uprated in terms of content. Both composers, such were the quirks of the *stagione* system, used the same singer for Clifford 11 but Donizetti gave him more to sing.

Many of the changes in the libretto no doubt reflect these different strengths. For example, though the *prima donna's* opening *canzone* was retained more-or-less as written for Coccia Donizetti followed it up with the kind of modish *cabaletta* audiences now expected, thus maintaining the musical pace while allowing Fanny Tacchinardi-Persiani to display her extraordinary agility. She also won a six-line addition to the *stretta* of the first finale thus giving it something of the character of the trio which had completed the comparable moment in the play (though not, of course, with the same characters). In atto II the scene of confrontation between Queen and mistress was delayed until later in the score with the result that it became part of a cumulative climax instead of being one of a series of peaks. This climax too, omitting Arturo (in

the original version of the libretto, it will be remembered, this confrontation took the form of a trio) begins now to resemble the comparable scene in 'Rosemonde'. Leonora's role has now become more concentrated; instead of the unfocussed anger of her *entrata* in Coccia's opera with its Medea-like fury and self-pity, she meets her two antagonists squarely with no holds barred (meeting Enrico in atto II ScII; Rosmonda in atto II ScX). Whereas Enrico's role here is scarcely changed (but see the composer's letter to Felice Romani quoted below where it is made clear that he had intended Enrico to sing the aria finale), Clifford's is considerably enhanced by the omission of Arturo from the first act trio (ScXI of Coccia's version) and in that he has obtained a half share in a new *stretta*.

The most significant changes concern, however, the pacing of the text. Romani has tightened passage after passage of generalised sentiment in order to achieve the concise drama Donizetti now had in mind. The opening Leonora/Arturo dialogue is a good example; even after the Hunt and Storm sequence has been dropped Coccia still takes 81 lines to say what Donizetti does in 35. Of the stand-and-sing formal *arie* in the two versions, Leonora's has been omitted in Donizetti's opera: Arturo's is cut by 8 lines (that it remains at all appears to be due to Giuseppina Merola 12): Enrico not only loses 4 lines of the *recitativo* from his *aria di sortita* but its *cabaletta* is shortened by a third. Rosmonda only is the winner. By 1834 the soprano as *vittima* was clearly in the ascendent, the heroine's role in this opera paves the way for Lucia the following year, also with Fanny Tacchinardi-Persiani in the title role.

Verbal changes too are most revealing. Clifford's violent exchange with Enrico was pruned of several purely rhetorical insults, the *stretta* however of this duet has been turned from crude dismissal to high romantic drama

Coccia

a 2

Cliff. *Taci, taci: gli occhi miei*
Tanta colpa non vedranno:
Prima al sol si chiuderanno,
Che mirar la tua viltà.

Enr. *Va, crudel; che padre sei*
I suoi pianti a te diranno:
Se il tuo cor non è tiranno,
Sentirai di lei pietà.

Donizetti

a 2

Cliff. *Tanto con te colpevole*
Non isperar ch'io sia;
Spinta all'Abisso orribile
Ella per me non fia ...
La sua virtute a scuotere
Tuonar mia voce udrà.

Enr. *Va: tu primier dimentico*
Sarai d'un lieve errore:
Tu la vedrai con giubilo
Sposa del tuo Signore ...
E padre a lei, non giudice
Te questo onor farà.

Throughout the opera Romani now says more with far less effort

Coccia

Enr. *Qual grido?*
Tu Clifford!

Cliff. *Osserva ...*

Enr. *Ahimè!*

Donizetti

Enr. *Che veggio?*

Cliff. *La tua vittima,*
Mira.

He also makes the tragedy between lovers far more explicit by a subtle distribution of the dialogue

Coccia

Ros. *Fuggi, involati,*
Sposo di Leonora.

Enr. *Lo fui.*

Cliff. *Lo sei. Va barbaro:*
Non l'oltraggiar di più.

Donizetti

Ros. *Fuggi, involati,*
Sposo di Leonora.

Enr. *Lo fui.*

Ros. *Lo sei, va, barbaro.*

Cliff. *Non l'oltraggiar di più.*

Indeed, the liason between Enrico and Rosmonda becomes much more the central focus with the removal of Arturo from the lists.

There is every reason to believe that Donizetti might have wanted to go even further on behalf of his lovers: the undated letter to Romani below spells out what must have been his initial thoughts on this libretto

To Felice Romani,
Take out Arturo completely.
Make Rosmonda's part longer and give her a Cavatina interrupted by no one
Finish the opera with an aria for the tenor.
Make the Act I trio between Rosmonda, Clifford and Arturo into a duet.
Don't leave Rosmonda out of the finale [primo] or at least out of the stretta.
The Introduction shorter if possible -
And anything else which pleases my friend Romani to take in or leave out
Donizetti

Although many of these demands were fulfilled, thus leaving the opera much more like the play, paradoxically the sole remaining fragment of Bonnechose's text was put into *virgolati* and not sung ... Rosmonda trembled; she froze; but not because she was seated on a marble bench. Or not at least where Donizetti was concerned as he did not set these words to music

Ros. *Primiera io giungo - Chi trattiene Arturo?*
Quale inciampo il ritarda? - Avria qualcuno
Penetrato il disegno? Ah! tolga il Cielo
Che ci sorprenda Enrico! ... io tremo ... io gelo.

"Sediam. Oh! come freddi
"Son questi marmi! ... come densa e cupa

"La notte che mi cinge! Ogni funesto
"Presentimento mio cresce coll'ombra ...
"Rio presagio di morte il cor m'ingombra.

Bonnechose, had he heard the opera, might well have commented with Enrico (atto II ScVII)

Tanto sei tu cambiata!



NOTES

1. This list should include the following operas, all based on the same libretto by Felice Romani

ROSMONDA	Carlo Coccia	Venezia 1829
ROSMONDA	Luigi Majocchi	Milano 1831
ROSMONDA D'INGHILTERRA	Gaetano Donizetti	Firenze 1834
ROSMONDA	Anselmo Belisario	Rovigo 1835
IL CASTELLO DI WOODSTOCK	Pietro Tonasi and Pietro Collavo	Venezia 1839
ENRICO II	Otto Nicolai	Trieste 1839

2. His first publication, it appears, was a *dithyrambe, Corinthe vengée*, published in Paris in 1823.
3. These works included
Histoire de France, depuis l'invasion des Francs sous Clovis jusqu'à l'avénement de Louis-Philippe Ier Paris 1834
Abrégé facile de l'histoire de France, depuis l'origine jusqu'en 1830 Paris 1840
Les quatre conquêtes de L'Angleterre, son histoire et ses institutions sous les Romains, les Anglo-Saxons, les Danois et les Normands, depuis Jules César jusqu'à la mort de Guillaume-le-Conquérant Paris 1852
Histoire d'Angleterre depuis le temps les plus reculés Paris 1858-59
4. This need for disguise became much more appropriate later, at the time of Donizetti's opera: only two months earlier Romani had 'borrowed' the plot of *Lucrezia Borgia* from Victor Hugo who threatened a lawsuit.
5. Both Coccia's and Donizetti's operas originally ended thus. Note, however, that the Belfast (1975) revival of *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* included music written for a later version. Donizetti had projected an *Eleonora di Guienna* in 1837-38 which was never staged, it concluded with a dramatically superfluous *cabaletta* for Eleonora to end the opera after her *Io regno ancor* and which was used to end the Belfast version.
6. See:Arrigo Gazzaniga *Appunti di Donizetti per una conferenza* Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana 1985 p296
7. Museo Donizettiano, Bergamo IV 5º BI
8. The *musico* role of Arturo was retained, it is true, but *perhaps* against the composer's purely musical instincts. The story goes that his emotional entanglement with the mezzo-soprano Giuseppina Merola was sufficient to persuade him to change his mind, which was the remove the page completely. See:Guido Zavadini *Donizetti. Vita. Musiche. Epistolario* Bergamo 1948 p343, letter No. 130. This letter is quoted in full later in this paper.
9. Giovanni-Battista Verger; later to become an impresario.
10. Gilbert-Louis Duprez.
11. Carlo Ottolini Porto.
12. Merola's *scena* was more-or-less paraphrased (at the last moment?) from a similar show-piece affair he had composed for the 1833 Genovese *rifacimento* of *Il diluvio universale*. It gives the impression of being an *aria di baule* which the Bergamasc composer, never one to resist a cynical poke at every kind of operatic *convenienze teatrale*, was prepared to pull-out for a singer who had taken his fancy.