Ivanhoé
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Is it authentic Rossini?

Reto Müller

We know so little about *Ivanhoé*. It seems that it was Bernard, Director of the Théâtre de l'Odéon – which aspired to become Number Four among Parisian theatres - after the Opéra, the Théâtre-Italien, and the Opéra Comique – who had the idea of arranging a new work out of Rossini's best pieces of music, with Walter Scott's 'Ivanhoe' (1820) as a basis. Emile Deschamps and Gabriel-Gustave Wailly prepared a libretto, treating the Scottish author with little respect (even the French pronunciation of the hero's name being a profanation). Walter Scott, after seeing *Ivanhoé*, wrote:

> *"Evening at the Odéon, where we saw Ivanhoé. It was delightfully arranged... The number of actors and the accomplishment of their performances was remarkable. It is an opera, and of course the plot was considerably mutilated, the dialogues being mostly nonsensical"*

With this statement, Scott showed an attitude completely different from that of Victor Hugo later on, when he vehemently criticised the much more minor adulterations of his intellectual property in the operas of Verdi.

The plot of *Ivanhoé* is described in detail in Jerome Mitchell's book 'The Walter Scott Operas' (Alabama, 1977). I shall content myself with mentioning that some of the subordinate characters - Gurth, Wanda, Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Robin Hood - are omitted, and that Athelstane only finds mention as Olric. In a Paris then dominated by Jewish bankers, Isaac and Rebecca diplomatically become Muslims and are called Ismaël and Léila, this latter is a conflation both of Rebecca and Lady Rowena and in the end turns out to be Olric's daughter and accordingly can become Ivanhoé's wife. The alliance between the Saxons and Normans against the invading French makes nonsense both of hisory and Walter Scott, but it seems quite effective operatically.

The music, so we are told, was arranged for the French stage by the musician and editor Antonio Pacini (not to be confused with the more famous Giovanni), and who was responsible for publishing the complete orchestral score. To judge by its form, *Ivanhoé* is an *opéra-comique*, not just because of its typical division into three acts, but because of its spoken dialogue. The borrowed pieces of music are usually kept in their original form, that is to say, an aria remains an aria, a duet a duet, an Introduction is used as an introduction, and so on. It is a remarkable fact that for each of the three finali of this *pasticcio*, the borrowed pieces are all *finali primo*, even for the closing finale he did not borrow a *finale secondo* (Vaudeville or rondo finale). This is not too Rossinian but sounds very impressive in that choral scenes are more important than virtuosity in singing. The voice registers are mostly unchanged, while ornaments are mostly reduced. This is due to an adaptation to French styles and has nothing to do with less skilled performers. There is only one female role (Léila, soprano) and, not unexpectedly, there are no trouser-roles, which had no tradition in French Opera. There are, however, three bass roles (Boisguilbert, Beaumanoir and Ismaël), two tenor roles (Ivanhoé and Malvoisin), and one baritone role (Cédric). The cast consisted of some experienced singers, such as Mme Lemoule (Léila) and Lecomte (Ivanhoé), as well as the beginner Gilbert Louis Duprez (Malvoisin).

The first performance took place on 15 September 1826 and the opera seems to have been a great success. As a correspondent of the Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung reported, a large number of Complimentary Tickets had been handed out. The *pasticcio* won popularity and was performed in Strasbourg that same year, in 1827 it was heard at Ghent, Lille and other places. An English version was given in LOndon in 1829, and later at New York, Philadelphia and Dublin. A German adaptation was sung at Coburg in 1833.

It is certain that Rossini had given his consent for this pastiche. As to his actual collaboration, however, we know but little. In Philip Gossett's listing in Luigi Rognoni's 'Gioacchino Rossini' (RAI, 1968) we find the following:

> *"The British Museum in London [...] has some* [autograph] *pages of Rossini, especially for this adaptation. They include a short recitative and an introduction for orchestra. So it is possible that Rossini, with a view to a performance of this opera, has taken part in its arrangement, though perhaps only to an insignificant degree."* (p502)

The recent concert performances of *Ivanhoé* at Montpellier (with a speaking part replacing the dialogues) encourages the hypothesis that Rossini's cooperation went beyond an "*insignificant degree*", and that, apart from giving his consent, supervising the work and completing some passages, included the choice of pieces used. This choice has not, up to now, been spelled out; Radiciotti mentioned *Semiramide, Cenerentola, Gazza ladra, Mosé, Tancredi* and *Zelmira*, whereas Weinstock added "*...and possibly other operas*". The Montpellier *Revisori* correctly stated that nothing had been borrowed from *Zelmira*, but were unable to identify the origin of the pieces not already mentioned by Radiciotti. Knowing 36 of his operas (all except *Sigismondo, Eduardo e Cristina* and *Ricciardo e Zoraide*) I was able to recognise about 90% of the music. In fact I was able to identify excerpts from *Bianca e Fallero, Torvaldo e Dorliska, Armida, Maometto II* and *Aureliano in Palmira*.

The following table shows *Ivanhoé*'s construction:

Origin	*Ivanhoé*
Semiramide	
Overture	Overture
	Act I
Cenerentola	
11/6 Storm music	No 1 Introduction
1/1 Introduction 'Un tantin di carità'	Sc1 Cédric, Choeurs
1/6 Quintet-Stretta 'Se tu più mormori'	Sc2 les mêmes, Léila, Ismaël 'Seigneur, dans votre demeure, par pitié, recevez-nous'
11/1 Aria Don Magnifico 'Se qualunque delle figlie'	No2 Air Ismael et Choeur 'Boisguilbert dont la vengeance fut toujours l'unique loi'
Bianca e Falliero	
1/8 Aria Contareno 'Figlia mia, se forza al cuore'	No3 Air Ivanhoé 'Blessé sur la terre étrangère'

New?	Horn tune
Armida 1/3 Quartet 'Or che faró, ceder dovró'	No4 Quatuor et Choeur Cédric, Ivanhoé, Léila, Ismaël 'Ah point d'alarmes, séchez vos larmes'
New?	Intervention héraut
Quartet 'Germano, se togli al campo'	suite Quatuor
Maometto II II/5 Finale II Female chorus 'Sventurata, fuggir sol ti resta'	No5 Choeur 'Quel tumulte! Ah pourquoi ces alarmes'
Aureliano in Palmira 1/? Introduction, bridge passage 'Senti...ahimè'	No6 Finale I 'Hélas! O douleur, o jour funeste'
La gazza ladra II/11 Quintet-Largo 'Che abisso di pene'	
Armida I/13 Finale I, Stretta 'Un astro di sangue'	
	Act II
possibly *Sigismondo* * I/5 Aria Aldimira 'Oggetto amabile'	No7 Air Léila 'Ah! Mon âme en vain espère'
Torvaldo e Dorliska 1/5 Duet Dorliska, Duca 'Ella, o ciel'	No8 Duo Léila, Boisguilbert 'Que vois-je? Oh ciel!'
New?	Horn tune
Mosé in Egitto II/3 Quartet-Largo 'Mi manca la voce'	No9 Trio Léila, Boisguilbert, Malvoisin 'Souffrance cruelle'
Quartet-Stretta 'Fiera querra mi sento nel seno'	et Choeur 'Suivez-nous, le conseil vous demande'
La gazza ladra II/9 Coro dei Giudici 'Tremate o popoli'	No10 Finale II 'Race infidèle, à Dieu rébelle'
Semiramide I/13 Finale I, Largo 'Qual mesto gemito'	'Quel coup m'accable, nuit effroyable, arrêt coupable'
Mosé in Egitto I/7 Finale I 'Padre...'	'Que vois-je?'
	Act III
Semiramide I/1 Introduction chorus	No11 Marche militaire

New?	Bridge passage
Tancredi	
II/16 Coro di Cavalieri	No12 Choeur des Chevaliers
'Regna il terror nella città'	'Faisons silence'
Semiramide	
II/9 Aria Assur	No13 Scène et air Boisguilbert
'Ah! Che miro?'	'Combat terrible! Ah! que résoudre?'
Bianca e Falliero	
II/7 Chorus	No14 Marche et Choeurs
'Ah! qual notte di squallor'	'Dieu signale ta clémence'
Passo doppio for military band**	Fanfare
Torvaldo e Dorliska	
I/11 Finale I (abridged)	No15 Finale III
	'Victoire'

* *Though Léila's aria includes some tunes from Dorliska's second aria, there are so many differences between the two that it might be a new composition, but this would be quite unusual in a pasticcio. To judge from the text, it could well be Aldimira's aria from Sigismondo. It could also be taken from an unknown cantata.*
** *This flourish features in the Guillaume Tell overture. Radiciotti indicates its source in a Viennese 'Passo doppio' of 1812. If Radiciotti was mistaken, we must assume that the fanfare was specially composed for Ivanhoé, and re-used in Guillaume Tell.*

This assemblage of pieces is quite amazing. How could any expert in Paris - except Rossini himself - have been familiar with all these operas? The following list of Paris *prime* might help in finding an answer:

Paris *prima*	Title (* used in *Ivanhoé*)
1817 1 February	L'italiana in Algeri
1819 13 May	L'inganno felice
1819 16 October	Il barbiere di Siviglia
1820 23 May	Il turco in Italia
1820 21 November	Torvaldo e Dorliska*
1821 5 April	La pietra del paragone
1821 5 June	Otello
1821 18 September	La gazza ladra*
1822 10 March	Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra
1822 23 April	Tancredi*
1822 8 June	La Cenerentola*
1822 20 October	Mosé in Egitto*
1823 9 November	(Rossini's first arrival in Paris)
1824 25 May	Ricciardo e Zoraide (Rossini in London)
1824 7 September	La donna del lago (Rossini in Bologna)
1824 16 November	(appointed Director of Théâtre Italien)
1825 19 June	Il viaggio a Reims
1825 6 December	Semiramide* (prepared by Rossini)
1826 14 March	Zelmira (prepared by Rossini)
(mid-1826: Rossini resigns as Director of Théâtre Italien)	
1826 15 September	IVANHOÉ
1826 9 October	Le Siège de Corinthe

Bianca e Falliero, *Armida*, *Maometto II* and *Aureliano in Palmira* could only have been known to Pacini by their scores, *Armida* had been issued at Leipzig (1823/4) and by Pacini himself in Paris (1823/5); *Maometto*

had been published by Artaria in 1823; *Sigismondo* had been published by Ricordi in 1826 and is likely to have been known by Pacini (hence the Aldimira hypothesis). Yet there are numbers from *Bianca e Falliero*, *Aureliano in Palmira*, and the *'Passo doppio'* fanfare that could scarcely have found their way into *Ivanhoé* without Rossini's active cooperation. It was certainly in his interest to arouse audience expectations with a well-arranged pasticcio in Paris, on the other hand, he could not have had his name directly involved with a minor work, performed on an 'obscure' stage, while he was preparing *Le Siège de Corinthe*.

I venture to conclude that Rossini collaborated with Pacini in the role of advisor, helping with the selection of pieces and writing certain bridge-passages, while Pacini undertook the necessary adaptations and eventually publishing the complete orchestral score. This, however, does not justify calling *Ivanhoé* an authentic Rossini opera. Even a comparison with *Eduardo e Cristina*, which contains about one-third new music, is not appropriate. Yet *'authentic'* - according to the norm in the critical editions of Rossini - is used whenever the composer positively took part in a work either as revisor, arranger, director or author of the music. By this yardstick, *Ivanhoé* may be regarded as "an *authentic Rossini pasticcio*"!

(Translation: Nicole Höchli-Baeriswyl)

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