Jacopo Foroni: an Italian maestro in Stockholm

In the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* of 1980 there is no entry for Jacopo Foroni, nor was he considered of sufficient importance to be included in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* from 1992 or Amanda Holden's excellent *The New Penguin Opera Guide* of 2001.[1] For *Grove On-Line* there is finally a brief entry by Antonio Rostagno, but he is concerned mostly with Foroni as a composer of instrumental music.[2] This inattention to Foroni has not always been the case: a good article about the composer is to be found in Schmidl.[3] Nor is the silence likely to endure much longer: in 2007 the performance of Foroni's opera *Cristina, Regina di Svezia* at the Vadstena Festival in Sweden caused quite a positive stir[4].

Foroni was not Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, or Verdi, although some say he could have developed an important career, even to have rivaled Verdi, had he not died of cholera in 1858 at the young age of thirty-three. Yet, like other Italian musicians who have suffered similar silences (composers such as Giovanni Tadolini, Alessandro Nini, Alessandro Mazzucato, or even the Fratelli Ricci), knowing more about their careers ultimately gives us a context for our understanding of the principal Italian composers. How can we truly know what it meant for Verdi to perform *La forza del destino* in St. Petersburg in 1862 when we know almost nothing of Jacopo Foroni's years as a stalwart of the Stockholm opera in the 1850s, not to mention of Alessandro Nini's time in St. Petersburg during the 1830s. And there will be more than one occasion in which modern listeners will come away from a performance of one of

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[1] See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols. (London, 1980): the entry on Foroni *should* have appeared in vol. 6, but didn't. The absence was not rectified in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 4 vols. (London and New York, 1992): the entry *should* have appeared in vol. 2. Nor is an entry to be found in *The New Penguin Opera Guide*, ed. by Amanda Holden (London, 2001). Foroni did better in the German encyclopedia, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* [*MGG*], ed. by Freidrich Blume, 16 vols. (Kassel, etc., 1949-79): although there is no entry for him in the main text, there is one in the Supplement (vol. 16, columns 336-8), prepared by Enrico Paganuzzi.

[2] Rostagno is known for his fine *La musica italiana per orchestra nell'Ottocento* (Firenze, 2003). The 2001 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary* included an essay on Foroni by Rostagno, which then was made available through *Grove Music On-Line*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/52038>, where I consulted it on 18 December 2009. This article is already out-of-date, however, since it does not mention the fundamental biographical study by Angelo Tajani, *Jacopo Foroni. Dalle barricate al Regio Podio* (Sarno, 2002).

[3] See Carlo Schmidl, *Dizionario Universale dei Musicisti*, 2 vols. (Milano, 1887-9, 2/1926, 3/1938). In the second edition, the article is found on 1: 556.

[4] See the report by Geerd Heinsen in *Donizetti Society Newsletter*, 102 (October 2007), 5-10.

the operas by these "minor" composers with the sense of having heard an important musical voice.

What can be learned? We would be foolish to imagine that without extensive research into the life and works of Jacopo Foroni we could hope to understand very much about him. But the availability of two recent documents, thanks to the generosity of an autograph dealer in the United States, who shared these items with me when he owned them, has focused my attention on Foroni and I hope that I can provide some useful hypotheses about the composer. Only much more extensive work would make it possible to verify these hypotheses.

We know from biographical sources that Foroni was born on 25 July 1825 in Valeggio sul Mincio, near Verona.[5] He studied at first with his father, Domenico, then continued his formal education at the Conservatory in Milan, working particularly with Alberto Mazzucato, who began to teach at the Conservatory in 1839. In his early twenties, Foroni published music with Casa Ricordi, largely piano pieces, the earliest of which—as far as we know—was entitled *Bien peu de chose*: capriccio-polka per pianoforte, issued by Ricordi in 1847 (Pl. no. 19715). Soon afterwards there followed a piece, *Sogno melanconico*: studio per pianoforte (Ricordi, Pl. no. 19996), dedicated "al chiarissimo maestro di musica Alberto Mazzucato." This is a period in which Foroni also wrote several operatic "Broderies," "Ricordanze," and "Reminiscenze" (on Gualtiero Sanelli's *Luisa Strozzi* of 27 May 1846, Saverio Mercadante's *Gli Orazj ed i Curiazj* of 10 November 1846, and Verdi's *I masnadieri* of 22 July 1847[6]).

But perhaps more significant for his future life was the work he did arranging for piano solo the *Inno popolare* of Gaetano Magazzari,"composto in augurio di felicità per l'anno 1847 al sommo Pontefice Pio Nono" (Ricordi, 1848, Pl. no. 20768, but the version for piano solo, arranged by Foroni, was issued in 1847, Pl. no. 19995). As we know, hymns to Pius IX in 1847 anticipated the role patriotic Italians hoped he would play as the leader of a

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[5] According to Tajani, the best source concerning Foroni's youth is the short monograph by Arturo Pomello, *Jacopo Foroni musicista* (Verona, 1897, 2/1958), but I have not been able to study Pomello's book directly. According to the Italian national library database (OPAC SBN), the only copy is found in the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina in Palestrina, but I find it unlikely that there is no copy in Verona. There is apparently some uncertainty about the date of birth among contemporary sources (see Tajani, 14): *MGG* favors 26 July 1824.

[6] Although Tajani provides a useful list of Foroni's compositions (119-24), he does not give sufficient bibliographical detail to serve the purposes of this study. The information about these publications provided here is derived in part from entries in the Italian national library database (OPAC SBN), in part from personal research. See also Paganuzzi's entry in *MGG*, the only listing to provide information about relevant manuscripts.

party to promote Italian independence, and Magazzari was a composer whose hymns became ever more seditious as the revolutionary movements developed that led to the *Cinque giornate* (Five days) of rebellion against the Austrians in March 1848.[7] In fact, the version of Magazzari's *Inno popolare* printed by Ricordi in 1848, with full text, was among the editions the Austrians destroyed (by having the copper plates from which the music had been printed melted down and by stopping distribution of music already in print) when they returned to power after August 1848.

Immediately after the *Cinque giornate* Foroni himself wrote at least two patriotic hymns. One, published with the title, *L'Italiana. Grido di guerra all'unisono:*"All armi, all'armi, Itale genti" (Ricordi, Pl. no. 20595), which figured among the "edizioni distrutte," although a copy survives in the library of the Milan Conservatory. Another was published with the title *Ai Lombardi. Canto di guerra:* "Su Lombardi, all'armi all'armi" (Lucca, Pl. no. 6992), a copy of which also is found in the library of the Milan Conservatory. Although I am unaware of evidence that the Austrians destroyed the plates of the patriotic hymns published by Lucca in the aftermath of the *Cinque giornate*, it seems unlikely that they would have been more lenient with Ricordi's rival publisher than with Ricordi. The Lucca hymn, written in three strophes and a refrain, for two tenors and bass, accompanied by piano and snare drum, has a text by Antonio Zoncada:

(Refrain) Su Lombardi, all'armi, all armi, della gloria è surto il dì.	Rise Lombards, to arms, to arms, the day of glory has dawned.
Non udite ne' campi feroce del Tedesco abborrito la voce che alle madri sugl'occhi furente viene i figli innocenti a svenar. Su concordi moviam cittadini della patria le mura a salvar.	Don't you hear in the battlefields the ferocious voice of the hated German, who, with furious glances, has come to kill the innocent children of mothers. Let us move together, citizens, to save the walls of our country.
Questa infame caterva di schiavi sgombri alfine le Italiche sponde, il servaggio è serbato agl'ignavi, dei concordi al valor libertà.	May this infamous hoarde of slaves finally abandon Italian shores, servitude is reserved for cowards, peace for those who value liberty.

[7] For full details concerning the Magazzari hymns and the *Cinque giornate* (18-22 March 1848), see Philip Gossett, "'Edizioni distrutte' and the signficance of operatic choruses during the Risorgimento," in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. by Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher, and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge, 2007), 181-242. A version in Italian appeared as *"Le 'edizioni distrutte' e il significato dei cori operistici nel Risorgimento,"* in *Il saggiatore musicale* XII (2005), 339-88.

Non più tregua, Lombardi, al fuggente, finché l'alpi varcate non ha.	Let there be no truce, Lombards, for those who flee, until they have crossed the Alps.
Santo amor della patria, tu spira nuova lena ne' petti Lombardi, tu gli spingi fra l'impeto e l'ira della pugna il nemico a fugar. Per te torni d'Italia il vessillo fra le genti temuto a brillar.	Let holy love of the fatherland inspire new vigor in Lombard breasts, may it push them through impetuosity and rage to compel the enemy to fly. Let the standard of Italy return through you to shine among a feared populace.

The cover of the edition, furthermore, shows a representation of a female Italy bearing the standard "Italia libera," with a Papal staff in one hand (featuring the words "Viva Pio IX") and a sword in the other, with which she has killed the Austrian double eagle, on which she treads triumphant. The presence of the words "Viva Pio IX" makes clear that the image predates the end of April 1848, when Pius IX dissociated himself from the war with Austria and lost his standing among Italian revolutionaries.[8]

It should come as no surprise, then, that Foroni was *persona non grata* to the Austrians, nor that he should have accepted an offer to be part of an opera company traveling to Scandinavia, organized by Vincenzo Galli (the company also included the soprano Rosina Penco and the bass Giovanni Casanuova). Galli has often been identified as a "Roman impresario[9]," which may well have been true in the late 1840s, but it seems likely that this is the same Vincenzo Galli described by Schmidl as a "famous buffo, brother of Filippo Galli [a bass known to all scholars of Rossini, since he was the first Batone in *L'inganno felice* (1810), Count Asdrubale in *La pietra del paragone* (1812), Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1813), Selim in *Il Turco in Italia* (1814), Duca d'Ordow in *Torvaldo e Dorliska* (1815), Fernando in *La gazza ladra* (1817), Maometto in *Maometto II* (1820) and Assur in *Semiramide* (1823)].[10] Vincenzo is found among singers at the Teatro alla Scala of Milan from 1824 (when he took the role of Giorgio in Rossini's *Torvaldo e Dorliska*) through 1836 (when he played Capellio in Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*). At La Scala he was the first

[8] Apparently Lucca arranged to have this hymn orchestrated and, despite assurances that the orchestration would not appear with Foroni's name, brazenly advertised a performance of the orchestrated version as being by Foroni. The composer published an angry letter denouncing Lucca in the pages of Ricordi's *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* (see Tajani, 39-40).

[9] In the Wikipedia entry for Jacopo Foroni, for example, <http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacopo_Foroni>, consulted 19 December 2009, but also in Tajani (40).

[10] See Schimdl, *op. cit.*, 1: 587.

Michelotto in Luigi Ricci's *Chiara di Rosembergh* (11 October 1831) and the first Tomaso in Ricci's *Un'avventura di Scaramuccia* (8 March 1834).[11]

Galli may well have found Foroni an attractive person to join his traveling troupe. By that point Foroni had begun to develop a fine reputation as a young musician. Tajani (25) reproduces the program of a "Grande accademia di argomento sacro" led by Foroni and his father in Verona on 12 February 1847, in which Jacopo performed on the keyboard a Fantasia by Thalberg. At the concert was performed a piece entitled "Melodie Religiose con Allegro Finale," supposedly the work of "i Signori Foroni, padre e figlio." More important, just before the *Cinque giornate* a *melodramma semiserio* in two acts entitled *Margherita* by Jacopo Foroni, to a libretto by Giorgio Giachetti, was performed at the Teatro Re of Milan. The work was very well received and a vocal score of 307 pp. was issued early in 1848 (Lucca, Pl. Nos. 6603-6626). Mazzucato himself wrote a very favorable notice of the work in Ricordi's *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* on 15 March.[12] In it he praises in particular what he refers to as the triumph of "eclecticism," stressing how Foroni's approach to composition fuses various national schools.[13]

According to Tajani (44), the company (not yet including Foroni, who had temporarily returned to Verona) arrived on 16 June in Stockholm, where they performed that autumn and during the spring of 1849 largely at the Mindre Teatern (the "Smaller Theater"), with some evenings at the Royal Opera House between 3 October and 28 November. The Italians presented Verdi's *Ernani* at the Mindre Teatern with great success on 23 August 1848 (Tajani, 44).

Tajani does not mention a performance of Verdi's *Attila*,[14] but there must have been conversations about that opera, for a manuscript deriving from those conversations does

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[11] Information about Vincenzo Galli's performances at La Scala is derived from Carlo Gatti, *Il teatro alla Scala: cronologia dalle origini al 1963*, 2 vols. (Milano, 1964), 2: 31-3 and 36-9.

[12] This article is reproduced in full by Tajani (27-35), but there is some confusion here. Tajani refers to the theater as closing on 13 March, after 17 performances of *Margherita*, but how could there have been 17 performances between March 8 and March 13?

[13] Several sources mention a musical voyage Foroni took to Holland, Belgium, France, and Spain between 1846 and 1847, without providing any details.

[14] Nor is any such performance alluded to in the important reference work by Thomas G. Kaufman, *Verdi and His Major Contemporaries: a Selected Chronology of Performances with Casts* (New York and London, 1990), whereas Kaufman does include the *Ernani* performances in Stockholm, first at the Mindre, then at the Royal Opera House (see 301-2). On the other hand, Kauffman does mention a performance of *Attila* at the Royal Theater in Oslo on 1 October 1849 with several participants from the Vincenzo Galli troupe, including the conductor who originally accompaniede the group, Paolo Sperati, and the singers Ettore Caggiati and Giovanni Casanova.

exist. Presumably the company brought with them a faulty score of *Attila*. When they arrived at the Romanza for Foresto in Act III ("Che non avrebbe il misero"), they found themselves with only a printed vocal score, and so they turned to Foroni (who had, according to Tajani [43 and 57], arrived in Stockholm to join the company at the end of November 1848) for an orchestration of the piece. What resulted was the Camner manuscript, with the vocal lines in the hand of a copyist and the orchestral parts entirely in the hand of Foroni. Foroni's orchestration, however, is somewhat different from Verdi's: he divides the notes differently among the strings and involves the wind instruments more often than did Verdi (the piano reduction does not make clear where wind instruments participated in Verdi's score). At the top of the score is the phrase "Partitura originale di J. Foroni." Beneath is the following amusing statement: "Strumentata da Foroni, in collera, perché non voleva, ma finalmente disse 'dammi un Sigaro!' / E avendo finire [sic] il sigaro, l'aveva strumentata. 1848 a Stokholm. Compagnia: [Rosina] Penco, Bosio,[15] [Ettore] Caggiati, [Francesco] Ciaffei, [Luigi] Della Santa, [Giovanni] Casanova, Vincenzo Galli, [Jacopo] Foroni." [Orchestrated by Foroni, who was angry, because he didn't want to do it, but finally said "Give me a Cigar!" / And having finished the Cigar he orchestrated it. 1848 in Stockholm. Company: Penco, Bosio, Caggiati, Ciaffei, Della Santa, Casanova, Vincenzo Galli, Foroni]. In fact, according to a cover sheet, the manuscript was the "Property of Francesco Ciaffei," a member of the Galli troupe, and the piece was "divinely orchestrated by Maestro Foroni."

The Galli company again played exclusively at the Mindre Teatern beginning on 2 January 1849. Since the original conductor of the company, Paolo Sperati, had taken a position at the Oslo opera house, however, Foroni became the troupe's new conductor. It was for the Galli company that Foroni composed a new opera, *Cristina, Regina di Svezia*, to a libretto by the bass of the company, Giovanni Casanova, first performed at the Mindre Teatern on 22 May 1849 (Tajani, 58). No complete score of the opera was ever printed, although Ricordi (which, according to Paganuzzi, owns the autograph manuscript of the opera) did publish several extracts in 1851. The success of the new opera was so great that it earned for Foroni the position as director of the Cappella Reale, with responsibility also for all musical performances, both in opera and in concert, of the opera orchestra.

In his new position, independent of the Galli company (which was soon to break up), Foroni was responsible primarily to the Swedish royal household. This meant incorporating into his stylistic universe not just music from his Italian homeland, but also an ample mixture of music from Germany, France, and northern Europe more generally. He became very interested in orchestral music, and composed three "Sinfonie" (really extended overtures),

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[15] This performer is not otherwise identified in the documents cited by Tajani, etc.

whose publication Ricordi announced in October 1851 (Pl. nos. 22657-22659).[16] Although Foroni fulfilled his tasks admirably, performing works by Meyerbeer and Wagner, the Beethoven *Eroica Symphony*, etc., and composing several new instrumental or celebratory works for the Swedish royal family, he suffered nostalgia for Italy. In 1851 he received permission to visit his homeland and during the trip he staged a new opera on 7 October 1851, *I gladiatori*, to a text by Giovanni Peruzzini, at the Teatro alla Canobbiana of Milan. This opera, too, was soon issued in a reduction for voices and piano (Lucca, Pl. nos. 8151-8165). Although it had some difficulties with Austrian censors (its original title, *Spartacus*, for example, was rejected), the opera was permitted in a somewhat censored form and earned a considerable success for Foroni. After a visit with his parents in Valeggio sul Mincio, he returned to his position in Stockholm and continued his efforts there.

It had long been thought that—occupied with his work as director of the Royal Theater—Foroni did not return to the composition of opera until he wrote a one-act comic opera in Swedish, *Advokaten Pathelin*, first performed on 4 December 1858, a few months after his unexpected death from cholera on 8 September 1858. But this is not quite true. A letter from Foroni to a "Pregiatissimo Sig.r Maestro" demonstrates that he was not forgotten by his friends in Italy. The context suggests strongly that an invitation to participate in an opera composed by multiple hands must have come from a mutual acquaintance of both Foroni and Mazzucato. This is the letter, transcribed from a copy of the original:

Pregiatissimo Sig.r Maestro Stockholm 2 Luglio 1857	Most worthy Sig.r Maestro, Stockholm, 2 July 1857
In risposta alla gentile e per me lusinghiere lettera vostra del 25 p.p. non posso rispondervi altro, che se mi fate l'onore di credermi capace ch'io possa misurarmi coi più accreditati compositori d'Italia, e partecipare ad un'opera da scriversi in così buona compagnia, io ben volontieri farò il mio possibile per non restare troppo al di sotto degli altri; tanto più trattandosi di cooperare ad un opera di carità. Mandatemi adunque quando credete opportuno il testo dei due pezzi in questione, nonché una	In response to your kind and flattering letter for me of 25 June I can only respond that if you honor me by believing me capable of measuring myself against the most accredited composers of Italy and participating in writing an opera in such fine company, I will willingly do my very best not to remain too far below the others; especially since it is a matter of cooperating in a charitable cause. Send me therefore when you think it appropriate the text of the two pieces in question, as well as a detailed description of

[16] These are the pieces discussed by Rostagno in *La musica italiana per orchestra*, 131-8.

dettagliata descrizione del resto dell'argomento: non posso per ora decisamente dirvi se mi atterrò all'uno, od all'altro pezzo; credo però che mi converebbe meglio di scrivere il Finale, attesoché un siffato pezzo richiede meno la conoscenza speciale dei mezzi di cui si può disporre, mentre un duetto oppure qualunque altro pezzo a solo, deve essere più particolarmente adattato agli esecutori. Datemi pure notizia della tessitura di cui si sono serviti gli altri che hanno cooperato a questa composizione prima di me, per potervimi conformare, come pure ditemi se avete idea su qual teatro, e da quali cantanti quest'opera sarà per essere eseguita la prima volta.	the rest of the subject: I cannot now tell you definitely whether I am more inclined to the one or the other piece; I believe, however, that it would be better for me to write the Finale, since such a piece would require less special knowledge of the means at my disposal, while a duet or any other solo piece must be particularly adapted to the performers. Give me information, in particular, about the tessitura used by the others who participated before me in this composition, so that I can conform myself to them, and likewise give me some idea about the theater and the singers who will perform it for the first time.
Debbo poi prevenirvi che fra un paio di settimane approfitterò delle mie vacanze per fare un giretto a Londra ed a Parigi, e non sarò qui di ritorno che verso la metà di Settembre. Se farò una corsa in Italia in questo tempo, come non è impossibile, avrò il piacere di vedervi. Se puote in Venezia, di cui Ricordi potrà in tutti i casi informarmi; se no io non potrò essere pronto col mio lavoro avanti la fine di Settembre. Vi prego dire ai Signori della Commissione ch'io sarò molto sensibile per quel tanto di stima o di gratitudine, ch'essi vorranno avere per me, ma che li prego di non volessi distubare né con scritti di cerimonia, né altro, perché i complimenti non mi attagliano punto. Se avete occasione di vedere Mazzucato vi prego di salutarlo tanto alla parte mia, ed accettare voi stesso i miei più cordiali saluti.	I must also alert you that in a few weeks I will profit from my vacation to make a little trip to London and Paris and do not expect to be back here until the middle of September. If I make a stop in Italy during this period, as is not impossible, I will have the pleasure of seeing you. If you can in Venice, about which Ricordi will in any case keep me informed; if not, I will be unable to be ready with my work until the end of September. I beg you to tell the gentlemen of the commission that I will be very moved by the esteem and gratitude they have shown toward me, but I beg you to tell them not to disturb themselves with ceremonial writings or others, because compliments do not suit me at all. If you have the opportunity to see Mazzucato, please greet him on my behalf, and please accept my most cordial greetings.

It seems likely that the work to which Foroni refers in this letter is *La vergine di Kermo*, described in a libretto printed for its first performance, at the Teatro della Concordia of

Cremona during the Carnival of 1870 as a " melodramma romantico in tre atti di Francesco Guidi."[17] The work is explicitly purported to be written by a group of musicians for the "Pia Istituzione Musicale" of Cremona (i.e., a charitable organization). Among the composers listed, in addition to Foroni, are Giovanni Pacini, Alberto Mazzucato, Lauro Rossi, Amilcare Ponchielli, Antonio Cagnoni, and Carlo Pedrotti. Except for Verdi's absence, the list reads like a who's who of Italian opera in 1857. As far as I can tell, however, no musical source exists for this opera, which means that the contributions by Foroni are unknown.[18] In some ways, however, the plan to which Foroni agrees in his lettter, anticipates the kind of team effort that Verdi had hoped to accomplish with the *Messa di Rossini* he planned after the death of Rossini in 1868.[19]

While I recognize that this article is hardly an exhaustive statement about the life and career of Jacopo Foroni, I hope it also demonstrates how much we have to learn about Italian composers working in the shadow thrown by Verdi and his predecessors, composers who played a crucial role in the history of opera all over Europe and in the Americas as well, not to mention in their native land.

Philip Gossett

[17] The relevant libretto is found at the Milan Conservatory (Libretti X.39, according to the OPAC SBN data base).

[18] Licia Sirch, librarian of the Conservatory of Milan, informs me that a great deal of material related to this opera is to be found in the Museo ponchielliano in Paderno Ponchielli (province of Cremona). It has not yet been studied in depth.

[19] Verdi's project for Rossini is described fully in the fifth *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Studi Verdiani*, entitled *Messa per Rossini: La storia, il testo, la musica*, ed. by Michele Girardi and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Parma and Milan, 1988). The composers figuring in both projects were Lauro Rossi, Carlo Pedrotti, and Antonio Cagnoni. Alberto Mazzucato was one of the organizers of Verdi's project, of course, and as such was excluded from participating. I know of no evidence that Verdi was asked to participate in preparing *La vergine di Kermo*.