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Teaching Prospective Verdi Baritones: A Repertoire-Based Approach

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Abstract

The Verdi baritone is one of the most sought-after voice types in the professional operatic sphere due to its leading presence in the Verdi repertoire. However, there exists a gap in the published scholarship about the introduction of the repertoire to younger baritones as a means of teaching the style and performance practice while still in the shelter of the post-secondary environment. This introduction to the repertoire can be a valuable tool in training potential Verdi baritones. The research goals of this monograph are threefold: 1) to establish prerequisite criteria of technical proficiency for young baritones to begin limited study of Verdi baritone repertoire, 2) to identify a selection of arias that can be studied by such a baritone, and 3) to analyze these arias from a technical perspective in order to give these baritones and their teachers insight into challenges faced in the arias and possible teaching solutions.

The monograph begins with a discussion on voice-type classification in males, and the use of tessitura-based classification to determine appropriateness of the Verdi baritone repertoire for a given student. The early chapters establish the technical characteristics of the repertoire and the extent to which these characteristics are explored in the later chapters. These later chapters present technical analyses of three arias: “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte” from Luisa Miller, “Per me giunto è il dì supremo...Io morrò, ma lieto in core” from Don Carlo, and “La sua lampada vitale...Tremate o miseri” from I masnadieri. The analyses comprise both the presentation of technical challenges faced in the aria and some possible teaching approaches to overcome these challenges.

The monograph establishes that certain Verdi baritone arias can be used with advanced younger baritones, whether as a didactic tool to develop specific technical skills or in preparation for a professional career in Verdi. However, teachers need to take care to use appropriate aria selections so that healthy singing is still possible. This can be the first step towards breaking down the perception of Verdi baritone repertoire being too difficult for the advanced post-secondary student, and bring the repertoire into university studios when appropriate.
Keywords

Giuseppe Verdi, Baritone, Verdi Baritone, Vocal Pedagogy, Voice Classification, Repertoire Study, I Masnadieri, Luisa Miller, Don Carlo
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Preface

I was always the baritone who didn’t quite feel at home with Mozart – Even an aria as simple as Masetto’s aria from Don Giovanni was a very difficult sing for me. Although I had workable agility in my voice, singing Donizetti or Handel was a chore. Even Gerald Finzi, widely regarded as being innately singable repertoire for the baritone voice, has always posed an undue challenge to me. It was a happy accident, perhaps, that I was cast into a scenes program in the role of Renato for a staging of the end of Act II of Verdi’s Un ballo in maschera when I was only 22 years old. As we began to rehearse the piece, I discovered an ease to my singing that hadn’t been there in the lighter, more traditional repertoire I pursued in my undergraduate study.

It was some years later that I was working with my coach, who happened to be the same person who conducted that original scenes program, and he suggested a return to Verdi. He cautiously suggested that I study “Eri tu che macchiavi quell’anima” also from Un ballo in maschera. This is widely considered to be one of the most difficult, demanding arias from the Verdi baritone repertoire, but my voice found an unprecedented amount of ease in the extended sostenuto phrasing and the dramatic declamation that is so typical of Verdi’s writing for the operatic voice. It was at this point that I realized that repertoire for the Verdi baritone would be at the core of my monograph topic.

I devised a program of Verdi baritone arias for my third performance event: a lecture-recital detailing Verdi’s use of bel canto form and its progressive breakdown into more through-composed structures as his compositional style evolved over his lifetime. As I was talking about the recital to my colleagues and mentors, I noticed a prevalent theme in their reactions, mainly their surprise that I was studying Verdi baritone operatic repertoire at the post-secondary level. This stigma was intriguing to me and was at odds with my own experience, since I had found and continued to find so much vocal ease in the repertoire for my own voice. This formed the basis for my thesis: that despite stigma in post-secondary institutions surrounding Verdi baritone repertoire as heavier and ill suited to the student singer, the repertoire can still be used with caution in this setting. In the preparation for the lecture-recital, I came to the realization that there were some arias that were inherently
simpler in their demands than others, and these would be much more suitable introductions to the form. This gave me the opportunity to examine what makes these arias simpler, and how we can approach them in the relative safety of the post-secondary environment. By doing so, I hope that I can ease the transition of others in my position who are struggling with the lightness in conventional post-secondary repertoire, so that they too can experience the joy that came from being able to sing repertoire that was so suited to my voice.
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1 Introduction

“In today’s opera world, the most coveted low-voice male instrument is the Verdi baritone.”¹

The sentiment of this single sentence is felt by every young baritone who has operatic aspirations. The evidence supports this statement, as Verdi alone has been one of the most performed composers in opera houses globally. His operas accounted for 17.6% of professional operatic productions from 2011 to 2016, and each opera requires at least one baritone voice.² Due to the taxing nature of the repertoire, it is often relegated to more mature singers whose voices have developed beyond those of the typical advanced post-secondary student. Despite this, however, there are occasionally students who will benefit from studying excerpts of the repertoire due to their advanced vocal development or specific timbre, which could predispose them to singing the full repertoire in the future.³

Credit is due to these students’ teachers, who will often wade into this territory almost completely unassisted by the current pedagogical literature. Baritone anthologies that target students are notoriously light on Verdi repertoire, and the few vocal pedagogy texts that address the topic directly often take only a single paragraph to do so. There exist very few pedagogical guides to the repertoire, and those that exist fail to address two of the most important questions: with which selections can a younger singer begin in the repertoire, and how do teachers establish what technical proficiency is required for a young singer to begin studying this repertoire? This monograph will provide answers to these questions in the form of technical analyses of three potentially appropriate arias for such students. The selections are “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte...Ah fu giusto il mio

³ This project was born out of my own experience as a graduate student who was urged to sing from the Verdi baritone repertoire.
sospetto” from *Luisa Miller*, “Per me giunto è il di supremo...Io morrò ma lieto in core” from *Don Carlo*, and “La sua lampada vitale...Tremate o miseri” from *I masnadieri*.

It would be to the discredit of these teachers to assume that they have no skill in determining appropriate repertoire for their students. After all, they are well-educated vocal pedagogues who have presumably been selecting and assigning repertoire to their students for years, sometimes decades. This monograph does not attempt to challenge the capacity of teachers to decide on these matters, nor will it claim that there is some special teaching or pedagogy required specifically for the Verdi baritone repertoire. Rather, it seeks to offer support to teachers and students who find themselves in need of a technical guide to the repertoire and each selection’s specific considerations.

1.1 Research Context

Although a more extensive literature review will follow in Chapter 2, it is important to highlight some specifics about the context of this study. In this section, I will provide a brief description of the term Verdi baritone, drawing from a few significant existing resources that this study will complement, and will provide some additional aria selections that are already covered in the existing resources.  

The first consideration of this monograph is the classification of the Verdi baritone. The concept of voice classification is confusing among pedagogues. Whether using the German *Fach* system or some other classification, however, the concept of the Verdi or dramatic baritone is virtually always present. The Verdi baritone is defined as having “a powerful, rangy instrument. It must have size and power that competes with full orchestral sound, authority in complex ensembles and duets, the ability to present a low range that is capable of ‘projection,’ the ability to keep up a sustained voce media

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4 A brief discussion of nomenclature is necessary here for clarity. By using the term Verdi baritone without the second capitalization, I refer to the broader category of baritones who can or do sing Verdi. This is in contrast to the nomenclature Verdi Baritone (with both capitals), referring to the label as a specific Fach or voice type, the exploration of which is outside the scope of this monograph.
tessitura and an upper range capable of brilliance and power." Consequently, the repertoire puts higher technical demands on its singers than those of repertoire for lighter voices.

Because of these technical requirements, there exist very few resources available to teachers who wish to use Verdi as a didactic tool with their younger baritones. One of the few arias that is covered in the literature is “Di provenza il mar, il suol” from La traviata. The piano score is available quite readily in the Schirmer anthology, Arias for Baritone.\(^6\) Richard Miller also provides a brief analysis of several passages from this aria that traverse the passaggio.\(^7\) Although there exists no empirical data, I imagine that this results in “Di provenza il mar, il suol” being an attractive choice since there exists an analysis of some more difficult passages, and it exists in an anthology that is widely available to students, one that they likely already own. This monograph will not study “Di provenza il mar, il suol” because of this ready availability and accessibility, despite the fact that it is absolutely appropriate for the type of student being discussed herein—the advanced post-secondary student. Instead, the monograph will focus on three arias that may be less recognizable in name to the average teacher, but are at least equally appropriate for the student who is beginning a study of the Verdi baritone repertoire.

The need for this kind of a study can be found by contrasting the formal training environment, in which the focus is on the developing voice and artist, with the professional environment, in which repertoire selection is often based more on commercial appeal than impact on the voice. Based on statistics available on Operabase, the composer whose works are most commonly performed in worldwide opera houses is Giuseppe Verdi,\(^8\) yet his operatic oeuvre is often considered too technically demanding to

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5 Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices, 9-10.


7 Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices, 72-75.

be introduced in the post-secondary environment. There is good reason for this, as Verdi’s operatic orchestras are typically larger than those of his predecessors. Because of this, voices require more volume and projection in the repertoire, thereby resulting in a potential increase in risk of fatigue from a young singer whose voice has not yet evolved physiologically for the heavier tone production. In addition, Verdi’s baritone repertoire is set in a higher tessitura than that of Bellini, Mercadente, Donizetti, and his other predecessors, which necessitates increased stamina and greater flexibility and dynamic control in the upper range. Both of these qualities are cultivated most consistently through the development and aging of the physical instrument beyond the point at which the average student singer would traditionally exit an undergraduate post-secondary program. Despite this, there is still room for certain selections in the post-secondary environment, especially for students whose voices are more suited to the sostenuto and bravura of Verdi than the florid coloratura of Verdi’s predecessors.

Singers who are not suited for this strenuous repertoire have the luxury of cultivating and developing their voices with their professional repertoire within the context of an established institutional curriculum. Potential Verdi baritones do not have that luxury, instead needing to identify teachers and coaches after their post-secondary years who specialize in training young baritones toward the Verdi baritone voice type.9 Students who are lucky enough to pursue Artist Diplomas, Masters degrees, or even doctoral study may be limited by teachers who lack experience with Verdi’s operatic repertoire because they teach primarily younger students under the philosophy described above. This monograph can assist these singers and teachers, especially those teachers who are inexperienced with potential Verdi baritones, by providing analysis that assists teachers in a similar direction as Miller’s short analysis of “Di provenza il mar, il suol.” It will not, however, concern itself with what teachers and potential Verdi baritones should or should not do with respect to the Verdi baritone repertoire. Rather, it will

9 A distinction here needs to be made between students whose professional career paths may take them to the operatic stage as a fully-developed Verdi baritone and the technical demands of the repertoire in question. Although there is certainly physiological proclivity towards the Verdi baritone voice type in some students, this does not preclude the technical requirements of the repertoire nor the technical capabilities that must be in place prior to attempting the repertoire covered in this monograph.
provide an avenue for those teachers who have decided that a Verdi aria would be an appropriate choice for a student, but are not familiar enough with the repertoire and style to select a specific aria or teach with the repertoire.  

1.2 Construction of This Monograph  

Chapter 2 of this monograph consists of a literature review and a brief discussion of the identification of students who may be developmentally and technically prepared to embark on a study of Verdi baritone repertoire. The literature review will establish the current literature on voice classification and the specific vocal qualities that are desired in the Verdi baritone. Although the focus is on male voice classification, specifically whether or not a voice in question could be a Verdi baritone, much of the existing literature concerns female voice classification. The overall arguments of classification based on range, tessitura, agility, and timbre within this literature are still relevant, however, to the male voice. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of who is ready to embark on a study of this repertoire.

Chapter 3 is an exploration of the methodology proposed in the monograph. In this chapter, I distill the qualities of the Verdi baritone established in Chapter 2 to specific, identifiable categories that form the basis of the subsequent analyses. These qualities are in no way a complete representation of all the technical processes used in teaching repertoire, but the aim is to highlight some of the ways in which the Verdi baritone repertoire can be especially challenging to younger singers.

Chapters 4 through 6 comprise the analyses of the three arias. Chapter 4 is an analysis of “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte...Ah! fu giusto il mio sospetto” from Luisa Miller, Chapter 5 “Per me giunto...Io morrò” from Don Carlo, and Chapter 6 “La sua lampada vitale...Tremate, o miseri!” from I masnadieri. In Chapters 4 and 5, the focus of the discussion is the ways in which these arias are approachable to students who have the

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10 There are many reasons why a teacher may choose to assign Verdi, including a physiological barrier within the floridity of Bellini or Donizetti, or an exceptionally physiologically mature instrument that may flourish in Verdi repertoire, to name two. This monograph does not seek to champion Verdi repertoire over other repertoire, but rather to offer a guide to the repertoire once that decision has been made.
necessary technical skills but are approaching Verdi for the first time. The aria studied in Chapter 6, “La sua lampada vitale,” is presented as slightly more advanced than the previous two, bridging the gap between the beginner arias presented in the monograph and the many more advanced arias that are present in the wider literature.

Finally, Chapter 7 offers some generalizations and next steps for pedagogues and students who have completed the arias in this study and who are prepared for more advanced literature. This can include additional aria study or movement towards study of full roles. The chapter will also evaluate the analyses presented in the monograph in terms of benefits and shortcomings.

1.3 Summary

This monograph will answer research questions related to younger singers and Verdi, particularly aimed at teachers of these singers. These two questions are “with which selections can a younger singer begin in the repertoire,” and “how do teachers establish which of these selections is appropriate for a given student?” The monograph presents analyses of three arias that answer these questions. Furthermore, the study fills the need for a teacher’s guide to introducing students to the Verdi baritone repertoire. In the analyses, the discussion is limited to specific technical challenges that may arise in each aria, with a goal of supplementing the already excellent general knowledge and skill in vocal pedagogy that teachers possess to develop a greater understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the Verdi baritone repertoire. This monograph will attempt to pave the way for the introduction of entry-level Verdi baritone repertoire within the advanced post-secondary environment.
2 Literature Review and the Identification of Appropriate Students to Sing Verdi Baritone Repertoire

There are very few contributions to the pedagogic literature that specifically address the technical concerns of the Verdi baritone voice type. These contributions are from extremely prolific authors and comprise small sections—often less than a page—of larger books.\textsuperscript{11} These references briefly describe the general characteristics required of the Verdi baritone and contextualize the voice type within the complete spectrum of voice types, but the information is generic. Venerated and trusted pedagogy scholars such as Miller and Barbara Doscher devote only small sections of their vast literature to this subject, although the concepts in their writing can be applied to all voice types.\textsuperscript{12} Despite their methodology and credibility being impeccable, these kinds of outlines fail to address in depth the specific technical focal points required by singers of this voice type.\textsuperscript{13}

The remaining contributions to the Verdi baritone literature are divided into two main categories: those that address the historical evolution of the Verdi baritone as a voice type, and those that discuss the dramaturgical and musical implications of Verdi’s writing for the baritone as a leading player. Although these are both valuable in teaching voice, neither fills the need for discussion of vocal technique and pedagogy that is left by the conventional wisdom. This need is partially addressed in a patchwork of general

\textsuperscript{11} The two primary resources that contain specific reference to the Verdi baritone are Miller, \textit{Baritone, Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices} and Barbara Doscher, \textit{The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.} (The Scarecrow Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{12} This monograph does not aim to invent a methodology for voice training that applies only to the Verdi baritone, nor does it imply that students should bypass a solid foundation of less demanding repertoire. Rather, it aims to synthesize existing conventional wisdom on general technical development and apply it to the specific repertoire of the Verdi baritone. This will be done in an effort to illuminate and explore the specific technical challenges presented in that repertoire.

\textsuperscript{13} Although there is an assumption of the physiological maturation from singers who might sing Donizetti or Bellini to the music of Verdi, the issue remains that the technical demands of Verdi repertoire are quite different from that of his predecessors. Additionally, no materials specifically address the technical demands of this specific material.
pedagogical resources. I will focus on the resources that pertain to three essential concepts: male voice-type classification, technical demands of the Verdi baritone repertoire, and in-context applications of general technical concepts in singing. By bringing the literature in these areas together, I will establish a framework for my methodology, and provide examples of this methodology in original analyses of the selected arias.

2.1 Voice-Type Classification of Male Singers

To begin, I will draw largely on the model that Sandra Cotton has established for the classification of female voices and extend her ideas to the classification of male voices and repertoire as it applies to the determination of when to embark on this study.\(^\text{14}\) In her dissertation, Cotton enumerates “range, tessitura, agility, and timbre” as “significant criteria for voice classification, though the extent to which each plays a role can differ depending on the teacher.”\(^\text{15}\) These criteria form an effective foundation on which to balance the classification of voices.

Although voice classification is important to the development of a singer’s career, the means by which we determine this classification is highly controversial among voice teachers. It is worth briefly exploring this process, however, as it relates to the Verdi baritone. This can help determine when a student is ready to begin the course of study that I am proposing in this document.

2.1.1 Identifying Range in Male Voices

The role of overall range in the classification of voices is a contentious issue. For beginning students, it can be helpful in determining appropriate repertoire, but the most

\(^{14}\) Sandra Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach: Recent, Historical, and Conflicting Systems of Voice Categorization” (DMA diss.: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2007). Cotton has effectively synthesized the piecemeal conventional wisdom about voice classification into a consistent model that addresses head-on the controversies that abound in the practice of classifying voices, and so any attempt on my part to examine voice classification comprehensively would be a duplication of her excellent work.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 11.
prolific pedagogues are skeptical about the relevance of this factor in the classification of voices beyond this beginning stage. According to Miller, “voice category is not based merely on how high or how low the singer can comfortably negotiate a scale. In both genders, the overriding consideration is the general character of tonal quality. How the singer handles the *tessitura* of the standard literature is another important determinant.”  

Cotton breaks this down further:

> With the most extreme voices as an exception...the range of well-trained female singers will probably not inhibit them from singing repertoire belonging to a few of the neighboring [secondary] voice classifications. This complicates the possibility of using range as a determinant and it arises from the shift towards many sub-classifications of voice that developed during the twentieth century. If range was the primary tool for classification in the nineteenth century, it was a more probable tool when used to distinguish between two or three concepts of the female voice, as opposed to today’s necessity of distinguishing between eight or twelve categories.

Cotton asserts that range was used in the nineteenth century to distinguish between the two or three primary voice types of the time, rather than today’s multitude of secondary types. This is an effective counterpoint to Miller’s contention that range should never be used in determining voice type. However, the goal of this study is not to identify primary voice types, but rather to assist in the identification of the secondary Verdi baritone type within the overall category of baritone. Therefore, range does not play a primary role in the active identification of the potential Verdi baritone.

Overall range does play a part, however, in the determination of whether a student can begin the study of an aria in the Verdi baritone repertoire. Students who cannot yet achieve the range required of the arias that I present in this study should not yet attempt to sing them. However, this is not necessarily an indication of some alternative voice

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17 Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 13-14. In her dissertation as well as her further body of work, Cotton distinguishes between primary classification—the broad categories of soprano, mezzo, contralto, tenor, baritone, bass—and secondary classification within each of these voice types.
classification. It can be an indication that a student is not technically, physiologically, or musically ready to begin the study of this repertoire, even though other factors could still point to a Verdi baritone voice classification at some point in the future. This is supported by Barbara Doscher’s claim that “a conclusive range is almost always a product of vocal maturity and, as such, is of little use as a tool to classify voices during training.”\(^\text{18}\) However, tessitura is an important factor in the classification of male voices.

### 2.1.2 Identifying Tessitura in Male Voices

In the conventional wisdom, there exists some disagreement and controversy about determining comfortable tessitura in singers. Cotton makes a compelling argument about the source of this controversy:

> When it comes to tessitura, the disagreement in the field tends to have less to do with its significance for voice classification than with the question of how exactly to determine the more comfortable zones. It is fairly safe to say that a singer has a particular range of frequencies within which he/she can sing for prolonged periods with relative ease, and that the exact range of frequencies which make up the tessitura for a given singer will correlate with a predictable tessitura according to the voice type. Yet it is also evident that at progressive stages in a singer’s training, certain zones of the voice will become less musically cumbersome and therefore less fatiguing. If the degree to which pitches are fatiguing or easy is dependent upon technique, how are we to determine the true zones of ease at relatively early stages in the vocal training? ...The stakes are high in this debate, since the longevity of a singer can be affected if that singer continually spends prolonged periods of time vocalizing in areas of the voice in which the ease of production is reduced.\(^\text{19}\)

Cotton makes two claims here, both of which put the main considerations of the tessitura identification into an objective light. The first is the question of how to determine the “more comfortable zones” in a singer’s voice. The discovery of these zones relays a great deal on the internal sensations within the singer, which can at times be difficult for a teacher to perceive.


\(^{19}\) Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 18.
I take issue with Cotton’s use of the term comfort, however, as it implies a great deal of subjectivity on the part of the singer. In a general sense, there exists no definable, consistent characteristic by which to evaluate level of comfort. For example, a singer who is physically tired may find it difficult to summon the necessary energy or may be less comfortable singing in his upper range with the ease he would have were he well-rested. Someone with an undiagnosed vocal fault or dysphonia can find even the most simple of vocal tasks to be more or less difficult depending on the short-term status of this fault. Neither of these examples has any bearing on the pitch zone in question, and yet they both will affect the singer’s subjective interpretation of comfort. This can lead to poor evaluation of “comfortable zones,” which, as Cotton declares, have a lasting impact on vocal longevity. Furthermore, singers who are embarrassed or otherwise mentally affected can ignore or fail to report sensations of discomfort for fear of losing face, or feeling weak. It falls to the teacher to evaluate comfort and efficiency based on aural and visual cues in the singer’s vocal production rather than relying on the singer’s internal perception alone. This is the dual problem with evaluating tessitura on the matter of comfort: it is subjective—heavily reliant on the current mental and physical state of the singer—and there is no consistent, objective baseline upon which to evaluate comfort that gives the teacher a satisfactory picture of relative comfort level among pitch zones.\(^\text{20}\)

Cotton’s second claim expands on the perceived level of comfort in a very important way, specifically as it relates to this monograph on the Verdi baritone. She illustrates that a singer’s level of technique, as it progressively develops, plays a role in the perceived comfort level of the same pitch zones. I would extend this argument to the application of vowel and dynamic variation to consistent pitch zones. For example, at certain pitch levels, a full palette of dynamics can be difficult to achieve for a singer who is still undergoing shifts in basic technique.

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\(^\text{20}\) Although teachers can rely on indicators of tension—changes in timbre, difficulty navigating register shifts and body tension for example—it can be difficult to rely exclusively on these indicators as an evaluation of comfort. However, these indicators point to an increased effort in the singer and should of course be heeded if present, especially if it is possible that the singer has a false sense of what comfort is.
In her claim, Cotton identifies an important concept in recent scholarship about the identification of vocal tessitura: the traditional criteria are problematic at best. However, she elaborates, “singing within an appropriate tessitura is essential for the health and longevity of any singer.” Singers whose tessitura is not matched with that of the repertoire they are singing will phonate more laboriously, causing fatigue and possible injury if not corrected. Therefore, it becomes vital for a student’s vocal health to have a more objective scale by which to identify their tessitura without relying solely on an individual student’s feedback.

### 2.1.2.1 Defining Tessitura Based on Passaggi

Cotton’s call for an objective means of identifying tessitura is echoed across the literature of the past twenty years. She names the passaggi as objective indicators of a singer’s comfort level and tessitura:

[The] group of contiguous frequencies in which a singer is most comfortable is often contingent on the exact location of the passaggi, or transition points. These passaggi, in turn, are determined by the physiognomy of the given singer; in particular, by the acoustical relationship between the fundamental pitch produced at the folds, the natural acoustical tendencies of the vocal tract, and the vowel in need of articulation. To some extent, the passaggi influence tessitura because these frequencies are often more difficult to negotiate and tend therefore to cause unnecessary and unhelpful muscular activity. In other words, a comfortable tessitura for a singer is usually not in or encompassing the passaggi.

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22 Cotton’s argument relies on the understanding that both the singer and the repertoire possess a tessitura. The singer’s tessitura represents the pitch ranges that encompass the most naturally free singing in a singer’s individual voice, while that of the repertoire represents the pitch ranges where the most singing is required. By matching the tessiturae of the singer and the repertoire, one can assure that the singer is doing the most singing in pitch ranges where there is natural freedom in the singing, thereby reducing the extra muscular effort needed.


This is a logical extrapolation of the conventional conceptualization of vocal technique. Cotton’s claim that the *passaggi* are difficult to navigate is well-founded, as negotiation through the *passaggi* involves the co-ordination of vocal registers, rather than the use of just one, and thus is reserved for the singer who has achieved some mastery over this co-ordination. For this reason, Cotton demonstrates that “the *passaggi* are easier to pinpoint with certainty than the proper *tessitura* for a singer, and are equally as informative for both primary and secondary classification. Because of our ability to pinpoint these transition points, they have become a favorite tool for the justification of both primary and secondary classification.”

Cotton’s description of the *passaggi* is consistent with Miller’s, except that Miller approaches the subject with a detailed description of the physiology of the *passaggi* instead of the aural perception from a teacher. However, his conclusion is the same: “The category of male voice is determined by the location of the *passaggi* phenomena.”

Since the comfortable *tessiturae* for a singer are those which do not encompass the *passaggi*, the *tessiturae* can be deduced as the ranges below and above the *passaggi*.

### 2.1.3 Identifying Levels of Agility in Male Voices

Cotton expresses that “*all voices can and should be able to execute* fioratura *passages with relative ease* [italics added], [but] it is evident that some voices are simply endowed with a greater ability to execute those passages.” The demands of the Verdi repertoire do not call for an overwhelming amount of *fioratura* beyond a few cadenzas. Because of the universal requirement for relative ease in *fioratura* passages, an individual baritone’s advanced ability in these passages has little bearing on his ability to sing the Verdi repertoire.

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25 Ibid., 31.

26 Miller, *Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 9. Miller’s chart of the specific passaggi for different voice types will be addressed later in this monograph.

27 Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 29

28 For an explanation of the technical demands, see Chapter 3: Methodology.
2.1.4 Identifying Timbre of Male Voices

Timbre is perhaps the most subjective criterion in classifying voices, but it is directly affected by the stage of technical development and age of the singer. As James McKinney explains, it “is the most intangible criterion used...because the teacher must hear the voice as it sounds now and picture in his mental ear how it will sound when it is fully developed.” Further complicating the intangibility of timbre is the inherent subjectivity in the concept of beauty as it applies to timbre. As Miller argues,

Some singers have many of the tools required for successful singing, but lack a viable concept of beautiful vocal timbre.... This concept of timbre is the result of cultural conditioning. Techniques of singing can be identified according to cultural preferences, at least to some extent... The human body is the vocal instrument; its most freely produced sounds (the result of functionally efficient coordination) most closely adhere to the Western ideal of beauty.

Miller emphasizes the importance of sounds being freely produced as a tenet of our perception of the beauty of these sounds. Thus, the “ideal” sound quality, according to Miller, is free of excess tension or other vocal faults.

2.1.5 Synthesizing Male Voice Classification

The identification of range, tessitura, agility, and timbre in male voices are only the first steps in determining voice classification. Pedagogues disagree on how to synthesize these criteria to determine voice classification, as outlined by Cotton. The conventional

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31 In Chapter 3, I will discuss some necessary timbre considerations for the Verdi baritone repertoire, both due to cultural expectation and as a result of other technical processes employed in the repertoire. As discussed in Chapter 1, however, the goal of this monograph is not to outline the inherent quality of Verdi Baritone as Fach, but rather to present some strategies for using Verdi baritone repertoire for the advanced post-secondary student. In this regard, the natural Verdi Baritone timbre can be seen to be a result of physiological maturity and not a specific technical skill. Therefore, the goal of teachers and students in this study can only be to elicit a natural timbre free from specific aesthetic impositions, with the understanding that the Fach-appropriate timbre will develop with time and maturation.
wisdom outlines three primary models for the classification of voices: the range-dominant model, the timbre-dominant model, and the *tessitura*-dominant model. As discussed above, range is no longer considered an effective determiner of voice type, especially for secondary classification, and so the focus of this discussion will be on the other two models.

Although a popular method of classifying voices, reliance on timbre as a dominant classification method has an inherent flaw: it is affected by physiological limits of the voice, “personal imaging” on the part of the singer, and technical challenges that are still being negotiated by the singer, especially the emerging singer. These last two factors are inherently subjective and subject to variation, even among the same singer as his or her tastes and technique develop. How are we to objectively define an appropriate physiologically developed voice classification based on a primary factor that has the potential to change dramatically over time through technical development and personal or cultural taste? Despite this shortcoming, some pedagogues use timbre as a distinguishing characteristic for primary categories (tenor vs. baritone). This can cause misclassification, which results in, at best, potential that is never realized, and, at worst, permanent vocal damage as a result of the misclassification. However, Cotton argues that timbre can be used for sub-classification with much less risk for error, explaining:

> When timbre is considered a tool for sub-classification, such errors are not likely, for the question would not be whether this singer with a darker timbre is a mezzo or a soprano, but rather, what type of soprano she might be. These darker or ‘larger’ voices tend to be the cause of most disagreements [on primary classification by timbre], both because of their rarity and because they complicate our notions of classification. A dramatic soprano may indeed have a range that more closely resembles our expectations of a mezzo range than that of a soprano. Furthermore, the passaggi may lie in between the expected passaggi for soprano and

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32 Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 28-29. Cotton describes “personal imaging” as tonal ideal or muscular choice on the part of the singer to fit some predetermined ideal or preference.

mezzo, or they may shift during and after college, since the dramatic voices are the last to mature.\textsuperscript{34}

Cotton’s evaluation points to the use of timbre as a secondary determiner for voice classification. It is \textit{tessitura} that she argues should be the main determiner of voice types.

By eliminating timbre and range as primary indicators of voice classification, we are left with \textit{tessitura} as an indicator of voice type. As discussed above, the pitches of the \textit{passaggi} most clearly establish a singer’s comfortable \textit{tessitura}: the areas above and below the \textit{passaggi} are more comfortable to the singer than the \textit{passaggi} themselves. From this, we can determine various voices based on the \textit{passaggi}. Miller presents a table for typical \textit{passaggi} for baritone and bass voices, which is reproduced below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Primo passaggio</th>
<th>Secondo passaggio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyric baritone</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>E4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic (Verdi) baritone</td>
<td>B-flat3</td>
<td>E-flat4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass-baritone</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>D4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric bass</td>
<td>A-flat3</td>
<td>D-flat4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basso profundo</td>
<td>G3</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Table 2-1: Richard Millers' table of passaggi for low male voice types.}\textsuperscript{35}

From this table, we can identify the Verdi baritone’s \textit{zona di passaggio} as the range between B-flat3 and E-flat4. This means that the substantial \textit{passaggi}, or registration breaks or shifts, occur at B-flat3 and E-flat4. The \textit{zona di passaggio}, between these two

\textsuperscript{34} Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 26.

\textsuperscript{35} Miller, \textit{Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices}, 9. Note that the \textit{zona di passaggio} of the ideal Verdi baritone is B-flat3 to E-flat4.
passaggi would be considered a difficult range to maneuver, and thus would not be a “comfortable” tessitura as described by Cotton.

2.2 Verdi Baritone Classification and Repertoire

The term Verdi baritone must be defined before it can be explored in a repertoire study. As an example of the conventional wisdom on the topic, Miller describes the Verdi baritone as a sub-type of the larger baritone voice type that often sings “not only the operas of Verdi but of most of the composers who came after him.... The baritone verismo school of singing, so fully exploited by composers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, became the heart of the operatic literature for the low-voiced male.”

According to the conventional wisdom, the repertoire written for this voice type demands power and control in the upper range of the baritone voice, robustness of sound, and stamina to sustain both of these qualities throughout an entire aria or role.

Although Miller’s definition of this voice type is a sound one, it fails to address the disparity between the Verdi repertoire and other similar repertoire, especially in terms of reputation and assignment to developing singers. Teachers commonly assign such arias as “Avant de quitter ces lieux” from Faust or “Questo amor, vergogna mia” from Edgar but shy away from some of the lighter Verdi selections, such as those found in this study. This shying away might be due to heavier orchestrations, a lack of supporting aids to the teacher for the repertoire, a need for more stamina, higher tessitura, or other technical or practical considerations. However, if these considerations can be addressed by teacher and student alike, there is no reason to shy away from the repertoire as a didactic tool.

2.2.1 The Evolution of the Verdi Baritone Voice Type

Cotton describes the process of voice classification as it relates to the baritone voice:

36 Ibid., 10.
Voice classification at present is different than when much of today’s canonical literature was composed. Putting current categories and notions into historical context achieves two important ends: first, one may better understand the present system when viewed together with previous notions of classification (i.e. the genesis of various categories, the pros and cons of the system, and to what degree categories are scientifically justifiable); second, one can make sense of historical role assignation and descriptions of historical singers if one does not attempt to place current notions of terminology on these roles or singers.\footnote{Cotton, “Voice Classification and Fach,” 32.}

By Cotton’s description, the term Verdi baritone is a relatively recent development in the evolution of voice classification. Even the term baritone was not a typical voice classification before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Miller explains this quite succinctly:

The term baritone did not come into widespread usage until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Before that, regardless of range or dramatic stipulations, opera and oratorio roles for low-voiced males were listed as the property of the bass singer. A number of roles composed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and those by Handel and Mozart and his contemporaries, were originally indicated for bass voice but are eminently suitable to the baritone or the bass-baritone.\footnote{Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices, 3-4.}

According to Miller, composers did not distinguish the baritone voice as separate from the bass prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although the qualities that we now perceive as indicators of a baritone voice did exist, composers did not distinguish this specific type from other low male voices prior to the early 1800s.\footnote{A similar claim is made by Geoffrey and Ryan Edwards in The Verdi Baritone: Studies in the Development of Dramatic Character (Bloomington, IN, 1994). This claim does not prevent baritones from singing such roles as Count Almaviva in Le nozze di Figaro or the title role in Don Giovanni, but rather it is simply a statement of the increasing distinction of voice types as the nineteenth century progresses.} The first of these distinctions was the separation of the bass and baritone voice-type:

The process of establishing the baritone voice as a distinct genre seems to parallel closely the demise of the castrati... The opera’s loss of the castrato’s combination of facility, range, and power created a vocal
vacuum. That vacuum was filled to a degree by the appearance of more roles for mezzo-soprano but also in some measure by virtuoso baritones. 40

As the nineteenth century progressed, further distinctions were made. The most important of these distinctions is that between the “lyric” baritone and the “dramatic” baritone. Miller characterizes the lyric baritone repertoire as a unification of the “bel canto poles of agility and sostenuto,” and the voice type as a staple of the early-Romantic Italian and French operatic literature. 41

Evidence of this distinction is seen in the work of Giuseppe Verdi, who “clearly defined the baritone as a distinct and unique voice category from the bass baritone by frequently requiring the singer to use the upper fifth of the baritone’s normal range.” 42 In addition to the technical demands, the composer also brought dramatic gravitas to his baritone roles. This in turn demanded the singers possess the sensitivity to handle these dramatic situations, which required—in Verdi’s opinion—an exacting command of their voice technique. “The more dramatic and passionate Verdi found the character, the more adamant he was about the capability of the singer performing the role.” 43 These new technical requirements distinguished the baritone as a separately named voice type from the bass or bass-baritone, and elevated the Verdi baritone voice type to the domain of the more physiologically developed and experienced singer who has a solid foundation of technical, musical, and dramatic skill, as well as a rich vocal timbre and size. Verdi “saw the opening for a new, more dramatically forceful type of male singer and moved to fill it with what is now recognized as the ‘Verdian baritone.’” 44

41 Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices, 9.
42 John Clayton Seesholtz, “The Origin of the Verdi Baritone,” Journal of Singing 68, no. 5 (May/June 2012): 522. Further discussion of other demands of this voice type will ensue in the following sections.
43 Ibid., 523.
This traditional narrative is a convenient explanation of the development of the Verdi baritone as a voice classification. However, it does not address the concept of voice sub-classification as a twentieth-century phenomenon, as described by Cotton:

A very general agreement exists among current pedagogues as to the meanings [of the primary categories]. The secondary categories, considering sub-categories of the primary groupings, developed over the last century.... Although these categories have only come to exist during the twentieth century, they have become a necessity in voice classification of young singers hoping to sing professionally and therefore a concern of voice teachers.45

How then can we reconcile the development of the Verdi baritone as a distinct voice type in the nineteenth century when the very means by which we identify it did not develop until the twentieth? The answer lies in the specifics of the repertoire. Although Verdi did not have a label for his new baritone voice type, his writing for baritone placed unprecedented demands on the singers. It is by examining these demands that I intend to isolate difficulties in the repertoire and make it more accessible to advanced post-secondary students who have a solid foundation in vocal technique.

2.2.2 The Technical Demands of the Verdi Baritone Repertoire

The primary demands of the repertoire on the prospective Verdi baritone are related to the strength, stamina, and bravura of the voice. Miller enumerates these primary demands:

“In today’s opera world, the most coveted low-voice male instrument is the Verdi baritone. Verdi expanded expectations of the elite baritone voice. The Verdi baritone must have a powerful instrument. It must have the size and power that competes with full orchestral sound, authority in complex ensembles and duets, the ability to present a low range that is capable of ‘projection,’ the ability to keep up a sustained voce media tessitura, and an upper range capable of brilliance and power.”46

46 Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices, 10.
We can immediately draw several definable technical demands on the Verdi baritone from Miller’s characterization. They are: the power to compete with both the full orchestrations and other singers on the stage, command of resonance—especially in the lower registers—to maximize the efficiency of the voice’s natural amplification, full control of the voice through the zona di passaggio (voce media), and technical stability through the upper range. William Goold enumerates another demand on the voice: the ability to sing sotto voce, as this appears frequently in the repertoire. It is clear that the composer was aware of these requirements, as he was meticulous about the selection of singers in the performance of his operas, as shown by John Seesholtz:

[Verdi] was very particular about who could and should perform his roles and would not tolerate bribery or relinquish his stance on his principles of singer selection. The necessity of legato, power, control, range, endurance, extreme tessitura, and mastery of timbre, which exemplifies a foundation in vocal technique, is imperative. Verdi depended on singers who had astounding technique in order to accomplish his dramatic goals.... As Verdi’s letters clearly establish, he would not write a role without having the ideal vocalist to perform it in mind. Before Verdi would compose a single page of music Verdi would have identified and confirmed the singer. The regimen and technique of the great master teachers of this time period encompassed the technical building blocks and microelements that allowed the dramatic and lyric baritone to clearly delineate from the bass baritone and become the ‘greatest vehicle of power in Italian opera.’

These points can be seen in a few examples from Verdi’s letters themselves:

Varesi is the only singer in Italy who can play the role I am thinking of, not only because of his singing, but also by virtue of his temperament and his appearance. All the other singers, even those better than he, would be less suitable.

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47 Goold, “The Verdian Baritone,” 11. For example, Jago’s arietta “Era la notte” from Otello encompasses a range of sotto voce colours and dynamics.


I lose no time in accepting the offer you make me [a commission for *Alzira*], on the following conditions: ... 4. The singers will be chosen by me from the resident company, so long as the company includes Tadolini, Fraschini and Coletti.  

Cotton eloquently matches the demands presented by the repertoire to potential singers:

Just as voice classification depends primarily on ease of *tessitura*, timbre and agility, so too can various roles be distinguished as appropriate for various voice types according to the demands inherent in the score. As tastes change, however, casting trends emerge which have little to do with the actual demands of the score. Our collective expectations of vocal timbre for the portrayal of particular characteristics (femininity, masculinity, promiscuity, chasteness, etc.) shift, and the casting trends for particular types of roles shift accordingly. Compounding the problem are technological advances, which now allow opera fans to view singers at close range via DVD, making this shift in expectations not just one of vocal timbre, but also of body type. These demands on casting to satisfy shifting socio-cultural expectations move roles about in the *Fach* listings regardless of the roles’ *tessitura*, agility, or orchestration demands.

In this passage, Cotton also introduces the well-founded idea of the shifting cultural expectations that don’t always line up with the technical demands found in a score. We can only determine whether a student can embark on the repertoire presented in this monograph based on his ability to achieve the technical demands of the repertoire. These demands are: the vocal and breath stamina to sustain long sostenuto phrases, consistency in laryngeal stability through the *zona di passaggio*, skill in amplification of the singer’s formant to be heard through a large orchestra, maintenance of proper vocal function in upper registers, and sufficient musical skill to execute the unaccompanied measures correctly. In addition, proper dynamic control, including the *messa di voce*, is a hallmark of the Verdian style.


52 These cultural demands have very little bearing on the work of this monograph, which has to do with an introduction to the repertoire, and not the professional demands of singing entire roles. Therefore, although it is an interesting point that can be the subject of many a future dissertation, I will refrain from discussing it further in this monograph.
2.3 When to Embark on This Study

There can be no one universal method to determine every student’s suitability to embark on advanced repertoire such as that for the Verdi baritone. A good deal of this determination will rely on the experience and advice of voice teachers and coaches. “Each singer follows a distinctive learning continuum.... A knowledgeable teacher, and the performer himself, will keep constantly in mind at what point on the developmental scale the singer has arrived, and will adapt accordingly.” Prior to embarking on the repertoire in this monograph, students should have proficiency in breath management to handle the long phrases of these selections, and comfort and flexibility in their upper range to minimize tension and over-engagement of the laryngeal musculature in this range.

Without contradicting the generality of this concept, it is important to note the definition of proficiency in this monograph. The term as used here refers to a competency in overcoming these technical challenges rather than expertise in doing so. The latter would render this monograph redundant, as singers who have expertise in all of the technical areas enumerated above are surely prepared to embark on unassisted study of this repertoire. This monograph does not seek to patronize such singers by outlining concepts with which they are already familiar. Instead, it strives to assist those students and teachers who are competent in overcoming challenges related to breath management, upper range flexibility and laryngeal engagement by pointing out the moments that may require special attention.

2.3.1 Counter-indicators

Although there are few positive indicators that singers are ready to embark on this repertoire, there is one clear concrete counter-indicator that point to a singer not being ready for this study: vocal fatigue. As Miller states when introducing the goals of any vocal literature study, “If any of the suggested examples from the literature cause a singer

53 Miller, Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices, x.
to experience vocal weariness those items should be discarded immediately until further development makes them appropriate." This will apply throughout my analysis, but especially in the later selections, where care must be taken to advance through these selections only when ready, and not before.

It is up to the individual teacher, in consultation with the student, to determine whether that student is ready to embark on the repertoire in this study. It is advised that teachers read the individual chapters of an aria (Chapters 4-6) in order to determine the relevant technical considerations for that aria and evaluate the demands based on their own pedagogy. This study will outline these considerations, but only a teacher can make decisions about his or her students’ readiness. Students should only begin and continue working on this repertoire through consistent consultation with their teachers. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

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54 Ibid., viii.
3 Methodology

The following analysis of each aria is structured around the basic skills outlined in Chapter 2, exploring challenges faced in each area in the arias as well as possible solutions. The specific skills that will be addressed are breath management and stamina of the vocal mechanism, *sostenuto*, flexibility of the upper range, difficult tessitura, dynamic control, resonance, and *aggiustamento*, vocal timbre, and performance practice. This list of skills has been compiled from the characteristics of the Verdi baritone repertoire as outlined by Miller, Doscher, Goold, and Seesholtz in Chapter 2.

The three selected arias can serve as good introductions to the Verdi baritone literature and assist students and teachers alike with some of the more difficult passages. In addition, I lay out below some counter-indicators in each category that, if present, are indications that a student is not yet ready to sing these selections from the Verdi baritone repertoire. Finally, in each section below I indicate the kinds of concerns I will address in the analyses to clearly lay out the methodology of this study.

3.1 Breath Management and Stamina of the Vocal Mechanism

Breath management and stamina are especially interconnected in the performance of Verdi baritone repertoire, as in all repertoire. A singer requires good use of the breath in order to develop stamina without over-fatiguing the voice. Used here, stamina involves the physical stamina of sustaining healthy singing over time and the stamina of the laryngeal mechanism to withstand sustained singing over a period of time without resorting to tension or gripping. Stamina is vital to the maintenance of proper breath management in the performance of arias, especially towards the end of longer selections. This is inherent in Miller’s definition of breath management: the elongation of the “phonatory portion of the breath cycle by reducing the rate of breath emission and by automatically adjusting resistance to the exiting breath.”\(^{55}\) As he states, “It is a mistake

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\(^{55}\) Ibid., 18.
to assume that fatiguing or driving the voice can build stamina."\(^{56}\) Instead, the buildup of stamina is a long-term activity, to be undertaken through years of study and continued singing.

As Barbara Doscher states: “Considering the variability of breathing practices, it is probably well-advised to admit that from an empirical point of view, and probably from a scientific one as well, there is no set formula for ideal breathing that will fit every singer.”\(^{57}\) For this reason, it is best to assess preparedness for this repertoire based on counter-indicators. The most important counter-indicators for preparedness to sing Verdi is a lack of appropriate breath management for the length and scope of the phrases present in the Verdi oeuvre and the lack of comfort through the *passaggi* and elevated tessitura.

In *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices*, Miller presents some useful, repertoire-based exercises that can be used as a litmus test for development of breath management.\(^{58}\) These exercises involve singing short passages from repertoire of various languages as a means of developing breath management facility. Selected examples of these exercises include the melody of Copland’s *Shall We Gather By the River* and Caldara’s *Come raggio di sol*. If a student has significant difficulty with any of these exercises, this is a strong indication that he is not ready for the arias covered in this monograph, as the arias herein place a much higher demand on breath control and stamina than the exercises presented by Miller.

Although overall stamina is important for singing this repertoire, my analyses will also examine specific difficult passages in terms of breath management and vocal stamina. I will discuss long, sustained phrases where ideal breath placement is not clear, breath management and location at faster tempi, especially in the *cabalettas*, breath

\(^{56}\) Ibid., viii.


\(^{58}\) Miller, *Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 27-34.
management in cadenzas, and other isolated incidents that arise in each aria. The focus of the breath management discussions will be limited to the scenario-specific ways in which breath management can lead to greater stamina and ease of production, especially for the student who is less experienced with the repertoire. I will also show ways in which the phrasing and opportunities for breathing contribute to the appropriateness of each aria as an introduction to the repertoire.

3.2 Sostenuto

*Sostenuto* is one of the hallmarks of the Verdi baritone’s technical palette. Where Bellini and Donizetti often concerned themselves with *fioratura* and vocal acrobatics as cornerstones of style, Verdi uses a sustained style that demands good control of the legato line. This skill is intrinsically linked to breath management, as Miller demonstrates:

> Legato requires mastery of *appoggio*.... The relationship between diction and breath management is such an intimate one that only pedagogical scrutiny demands that they be separately considered. When legato singing is mastered, both listener and singer have the impression that words and syllables ride lightly and distinctly on a foundation of secure breath management.\(^{59}\)

Although in practice the vocal legato line is intrinsically linked to breath management, this monograph presents the very kind of pedagogical scrutiny that Miller refers to as demanding separate consideration. As such, considerations of diction and breath management as they relate to legato singing will be treated separately in the individual aria analyses.

Since *sostenuto* is demanded throughout the Verdi repertoire, there are specific technical issues related to *sostenuto* that can be examined in the selected arias. These include difficulties related to large leaps in the melodic contour, incorporating non-sustained articulations such as *staccato* and *marcato* into an otherwise legato line, and especially difficulties surrounding consonants and consonant clusters that break up

otherwise straightforward phrases. These technical issues will be addressed in the analyses and potential solutions will be offered from the pedagogical canon.

3.3 Upper Range

Consistent facility in a singer’s middle and upper range, including the *zona di passaggio* outlined in Chapter 2, is a vital prerequisite before embarking on any of the arias in this document. As Miller states, “building an even, stable scale [through the *zona di passaggio* and into the upper range] is primary to the art of singing.” According to Miller:

“Success in developing acceptance of the physical possibilities of the top voice (in the healthy instrument) is often achieved by attention to several concepts:

1. Continuity
2. Unity of the Musical Phrase
3. Centeredness
4. Function
5. Commitment to Textual Immediacy.”

By Miller’s account, the use of *aggiustamento*, or vowel modification, begins at the *primo passaggio* (B-flat 3 for a Verdi baritone) and gradually becomes more pronounced at higher pitch levels. Perhaps the most important claim of his, however, is the maintenance of vowel integrity during *aggiustamento*. Miller does not advocate a dramatic change of vowel at different pitch levels, but rather a slight variation in the shape of the vowel, so as to maintain the integrity of the vowel required by the text, in so doing maintaining point 5 above—commitment to textual immediacy.

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60 Miller, *Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, 56.
61 Miller, *The Structure of Singing*, 166.
62 This is in stark contrast to Berton Coffin, who advocates a shift of overall vowel shape throughout the spectrum based on the acoustic properties of the voice at different pitch levels. See Berton Coffin, *Coffin’s Sounds of Singing: Principles and Applications of Vocal Techniques with Chromatic Vowel Chart* (Metuchen, NJ, 1987).
Inasmuch as Miller defines concepts for success in the upper range, the contravention of any of these concepts are de-facto counter-indicators of preparedness in upper range singing.\textsuperscript{63} Students who have difficulty maintaining tonal continuity or unity of the musical phrase above the \textit{zona di passaggio}, or who have impaired function or breath management in that range should not undertake this repertoire. In addition, success in the first four of Miller’s areas at the expense of textual immediacy should also be considered as a counter-indicator.

In the individual analyses, the discussion of range will be limited to those passages that traverse the \textit{zona di passaggio}. In practice, this will follow the example set by Miller, in which he presents range considerations in a selection of aria climaxes, noting:

Climaxes in arias for baritones, bass-baritones, and basses generally occur in \textit{tessituras} where \textit{aggiustamento} is necessary. Clearly, the items a singer chooses should be undertaken only after good breath management, vowel differentiation, registration, vowel modification, sostenuto, and agility have been mastered, and after stamina has been established. (It would be vocal suicide for the inexperienced baritone, bass-baritone, or bass to embark on these demanding aria segments.)\textsuperscript{64}

As I will demonstrate, the climax of each aria is where the most care needs to be taken with regard to continuity across range to be maintained with \textit{aggiustamento}. I will maintain Miller’s argument of the importance of textual immediacy and the integrity of the vowel in my discussions of \textit{aggiustamento}. The analysis of the upper range in the arias will centre on this concept of \textit{aggiustamento} as well as technical considerations in passages that traverse the \textit{zona di passaggio}.

\textsuperscript{63} As with the discussion of \textit{tessitura}, teachers who are considering the arias in this monograph should compare the overall range and amount of upper range singing for the specific aria to the level of achievement of the student in question as part of the evaluation for suitability of this repertoire.

\textsuperscript{64} Miller, \textit{Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices}, 68-69.
3.4 Difficult *Tessitura* and Registration

Chapter 2 of this monograph contains an exploration of *tessitura* and *passaggi* as they relate to the voice as an instrument, but this is only half of the concept. The other half is identifying the *tessitura* of the repertoire itself. By comparing a singer’s *tessitura* and *passaggi* to the *tessitura(e)* of an aria, teachers can predict the frequency with which their students will encounter potential registration-related difficulties and make decisions about the suitability of that repertoire for that singer.

For Cotton, “the *tessitura* of a single song, aria, or even a full role is relatively easy to determine as it requires merely reference to the score: the range in which the bulk of the notes fall can be apparent at first glance.” However, defining the concept of the “bulk of the notes” is problematic. What proportion of the notes is considered the bulk? Is the proportion measured by the number of occurrences or by the aggregate duration of each pitch? How large of a pitch range is acceptable to define a *tessitura*? What if the bulk of the notes were split between two contrasting pitch ranges?

Although the answers to these questions could prove a valuable study in their own right, this document is not solely focused on *tessitura* as such. Instead of a quantitative approach as Cotton suggests, I will present a qualitative approach in my analyses of the arias in this document, presenting areas of potential difficulties in *tessitura* for teachers to evaluate against specific registration difficulties faced by each individual student. The focus of these analyses will evaluate general trends in the *tessitura* of each aria rather than a definitive, quantitative evaluation of the *tessitura* itself. I will also make note of short sections that traverse the *zona di passaggio*, and point to some existing exercises that address the specific contexts of these passages. This small-scale treatment of *tessitura* will be used to support the small-scale analysis of the arias, rather than sidetracking the specific goals of the analysis with an overarching philosophical discussion on *tessitura*. As discussed in Chapter 2, all of the arias traverse the entire *zona*.

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di passaggio and lack of skillfulness in this pitch zone is a counter-indicator to student preparedness for this repertoire.

The way for a singer to address difficult tessitura is through appropriate coordination of vocal registers. Cornelius Reid establishes that “a register is neither exclusively pitch related nor a pitch range...nor is it a special kind of vocal fold conformation..., but a condition which finds whether one of two muscle systems drawing them into tension functioning in relative isolation.”66 As a vocal function, then, registration can help the singer to navigate a difficult tessitura, and proficiency in vocal registration is an important prerequisite to beginning this course of study.

Embarking on a discussion of vocal registration can be a dangerous proposition. The subject is difficult to discuss in any meaningful depth, due to the level of contention it inspires among pedagogues with differing views. It is not enough for this study to simply use the three-register model that was in use in Verdi’s time, since teachers using this study will be operating within the context of their contemporary pedagogy. Nonetheless, there is an elegant simplicity to the dual register view.67 In this monograph, however, I will discuss registration only in a generic manner, seeking to link teachers’ pre-existing conceptions of registration to the demands of the repertoire, especially in and around the zona di passaggio. The analyses will only seek to point out passages where registration may need specific attention according to the understanding of the teacher and singer, and does not seek to define or evaluate differing models of registration.68

3.5 Dynamic Control, Resonance, and Aggiustamento

One of the concerns for dynamics and resonance in these arias lies in Verdi’s large orchestrations. Although most of each selected aria is accompanied by light

68 Students or teachers who would like a more detailed discussion of registration may consult Miller, The Structure of Singing or Scott McCoy, Your Voice: An Inside View, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 2012).
orchestration, such as light strings with a few woodwinds, there are some sections—especially tempi di mezzo—that rely on heavier orchestrations. This is especially important for these analyses because these heavier orchestrations are not self-evident in most piano scores. In this way, the discussion of dynamics and resonance will rely almost exclusively on information found in the full scores. However, in the analysis of dynamics, there is a great deal of information that can be gleaned from the piano score due to Verdi’s meticulous use of dynamics and articulations in his writing.

Figure 3-1 an excerpt from the second section of Jago’s aria, “Era la notte,” from *Otello*, Verdi demonstrates his use of specific dynamic markings.

![Figure 3-1: Jago’s aria, “Era la notte” from *Otello*.](image)

Not only does Verdi mark the vocal part as *pppppp*, but he also notes half-bar *decrescendi* and *crescendi* resulting in subtle downbeat accents in the orchestration, which leaves little room for personal adjustment in interpretation. Similar specific

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69 Giuseppe Verdi, *Otello. Vocal Score* (Milan, 1894): 187. This aria is not one of the selected arias for study, but serves as an excellent example of Verdi’s insistence on specific dynamic markings.
markings in the selected arias in this study will be noted in the analyses as well as the technical implications implicit in their performance. \textsuperscript{70}

Doscher outlines the common wisdom on vocal resonance, projection, and textual intelligibility succinctly:

The first two formants have a vital effect upon vowel color and intelligibility. They also have a major effect upon overall tone quality. In fact, there is increasing evidence that vowel quality and musical timbre are similar facets of a common acoustical base. Even small changes in the two vowel formants make large differences in timbre. By tuning these formants of the resonating tube, better quality and greater intensity can be achieved with less effort. \textsuperscript{71}

As Doscher asserts, an increase in vocal intensity or volume can be attained through the manipulation of vocal resonance, especially the first and second formants. \textsuperscript{72} Because of the dense orchestrations and huge variation of written dynamics in Verdi, it is important for singers to have efficient projection before embarking on this repertoire.

### 3.6 Vocal Timbre

Even though it is a general concept, appropriate timbre can also be viewed as a direct consequence of technical skill. As Doscher explains, “timbre or tone color is an amalgam of the fundamental, the number and distribution of its harmonics, and the respective amplitudes of these harmonics. The sound wave which determines timbre is the result of breath management, vocal fold function, and resonator adjustment.” \textsuperscript{73} An

\textsuperscript{70} In this passage, for example, one such implication is the search for an appropriate vocal colour that portrays the six p’s while maintaining enough volume and projection to be heard throughout the hall. Verdi operas are typically staged in halls with capacities of 2500-3000 or more, so it is impractical to interpret dynamic markings such as this one in a literal fashion, since a singer would not be heard.

\textsuperscript{71} Doscher, \textit{The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice}, 148.

\textsuperscript{72} For a comprehensive but clear discussion on resonance and vowel formants, see McCoy, \textit{Your Voice: An Inside View}.

\textsuperscript{73} Doscher, \textit{The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice}, 196.
appropriate timbre for Verdi is a direct result of success in the other areas of this monograph. As an example:

Brighter or darker resonance timbres are obtained primarily by the relationship between the soft palate and the larynx, which always move in opposing directions. When the larynx rises, the soft palate descends, and vice versa. Thus the high arch of the palate produces the darker timbre, and the lower arch the brighter one.\(^74\)

According to Doscher, in order to obtain the darker tone that is so characteristic of the Verdi baritone, the singer must raise the palate to create the larger resonance space, which is a direct result of the formant manipulation outlined in the previous section. This in turn arises out of the presence of a stable, lowered larynx.

As discussed in Chapter 2, timbre does play an important role in the classification of voices, but there is little to discuss beyond this application. At an earlier stage of development, a richer vocal timbre from healthy vocal production can predispose a voice towards this or other heavier repertoire. As Miller states, “each voice has its own distinguishing characteristics. General technical principles are valid for all voices, but each singer must realize his own tonal ideal.”\(^75\) Because the bulk of this monograph focuses on the technical challenges of individual arias and not on timbre expectations, there will be very little discussion on timbre in the analyses.\(^76\) In this way, timbre can be seen as a more advanced concept that can be a long-term goal on the temporal horizon rather than a short-term challenge to be overcome in the study of a specific aria.

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\(^74\) Ibid., 128.

\(^75\) Miller, *Baritone, Bass-Baritone, and Bass Voices*, x.

\(^76\) Although timbre plays an important role in professional casting for Verdi baritone roles this usually happens much later in the physiological development of the singer. Thus, the priorities for the student who is beginning this repertoire for the first time should be in the technical challenges presented in the repertoire over timbre, which changes with physiological development and maturation of the voice.
3.7 Performance Practice

The final consideration in my analyses of the arias will be the established performance practice in the canon of recordings that are available. This involves three general considerations: the alterations of cadenzas for more manageable or compelling delivery, the elimination of repeats in the cabaletta portions of the arias, and the alteration of final phrases to ensure proper breath management. A brief discussion of possible alterations in each aria, along with the technical implications of each, will be a vital part of the analyses, especially as these alterations affect the difficulty level of each aria. This discussion will also include options for singing just a cavatina, a cabaletta, or cutting down the tempo di mezzo to ensure that any cut to the full aria is a viable solo selection.

3.8 Summary

The analysis of each aria in this monograph will draw on the seven established criteria of breath management and stamina, sostenuto, upper range and aggiustamento, registration and tessitura, dynamic control and resonance, vocal timbre, and general performance practice. In many cases, specific exercises will be presented as possible solutions to the challenges presented in the analyses. This study aims to contextualize these principles within the Verdi baritone repertoire and apply appropriate exercises from established pedagogy to assist newer teachers and students in the exploration of this less familiar style.
4 Luisa Miller: “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte”

“Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte” is in a traditional scena form and is an excellent early aria from the Verdi baritone repertoire. The scena form is a structure in four parts: recitative, cavatina, tempo di mezzo, and cabaletta. The recitative serves to set the dramatic context for the expressive cavatina. The tempo di mezzo moves the dramatic action along and increases the pacing for the much faster cabaletta, which ties together any loose ends in the scene. This structure was typical of early Verdi and of his predecessors.

In this aria, the structure of the cavatina and cabaletta is conducive to each being performed individually or together, as the stamina of the performer allows, and the short phrases of the cavatina are especially good for developing stamina in singers. Also, the tessitura of the aria is lower than the other selections in this monograph, making it an ideal first Verdi aria for a potential Verdi baritone.

4.1 Plot Summary and Dramatic Contextualization

This aria is taken from the first scene of Act I, which takes place outside of Miller’s house, a peasant under the rule of Count Walter. Miller’s daughter Luisa is in love with a man she knows as Carlo, who is really Count Walter’s son Rodolfo in disguise. Before this aria, Luisa has shown up to her birthday party anxiously looking for Carlo, and Miller warns her to be careful about her love. The count’s henchman, Wurm, arrives and asks Miller for his daughter’s hand in marriage. The aria opens with Miller declaring that he will not force his daughter’s hand and will allow her to marry for love. However, Wurm reveals Carlo’s true identity as the son of Count Walter, and Miller laments the fate of his daughter’s love.

77 In some texts, the cavatina is more generally called a cantabile or cantilena section, only being referred to as a cavatina if it is the character’s first appearance in the piece. Since both arias in this monograph that follow this structure are the first appearances of their respective characters, I use cavatina to avoid confusion.
In the complete opera, “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte” is staged as a conversation between Miller and Wurm. However, the complete aria can be performed by Miller alone by making some cuts to the recitative and the *tempo di mezzo*. In the recitative, cut Wurm’s vocal lines and all resulting empty measures. After the end of the *cavatina*, the singer can cut directly to rehearsal mark 22, shown in Figure 4-1, without any intervening lines from Wurm.

![Figure 4-1: "Sacra la scelta è d'un consorte" tempo di mezzo.](image)

Finally, the *cabaletta* can be cut down if desired by omitting the first repetition, cutting from Rehearsal mark 23 to Rehearsal mark 25.

### 4.2 Text and Translation

The text and line-by-line translation are given in Table 4-1, as an original adaptation of Salvatore Cammarano’s libretto for solo performance, as translated by Nico Castel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recitative</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ah cessa! Il mio paterno assense promisi, Ove la figlia t’avesse amato. ...</td>
<td>Ah stop! I promised my consent as a father If my daughter had loved you. ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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79 Ibid., 66-68. This is consistent with the common practice of cutting the second repetition of the *cabaletta*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Che dici mai?</th>
<th>What are you saying?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cavatina</strong></td>
<td>The choice of a husband is sacred,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte,</td>
<td>It must be made completely freely;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esser appieno libera deve;</td>
<td>A knot that only death can dissolve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodo che sciorre sol può la morte</td>
<td>Is badly ruled by force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mal dalla forza legge riceve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non son tiranno, padre son io.</td>
<td>I am not a tyrant, I am a father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non si comanda de’ figli al cor.</td>
<td>Our child’s heart cannot be commanded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In terra un padre somiglia Iddio</td>
<td>A father resembles God on earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per la bontade, non pel rigor.</td>
<td>By his kindness, not by his strictness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tempo di mezzo</th>
<th>...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... O ciel! È suo figlio?</td>
<td>Oh heavens! He is his son?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... Ei m’ha spezzato il cor!</td>
<td>He has shattered my heart!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabaletta</th>
<th>Ah! My suspicion was just!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ah! Fu giusto il mio sospetto!</td>
<td>My heart is filled with anger and grief!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ira e duol m’invade il petto!</td>
<td>Of all my possessions, I want my honour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’ogni bene il ben più santo,</td>
<td>To be without blemish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senza macchia io vo’ l’onor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’una figlia il don soltanto,</td>
<td>You heavens have given me a gift of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciel mi festi e pago io son,</td>
<td>single daughter and I am satisfied,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma la figlia, ma il tuo dono</td>
<td>But keep my daughter, your gift,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serba intatto al genitor.</td>
<td>Safe for her father.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4-1: Text and translation of "Sacra la scelta è d'un consorte" from *Luisa Miller***

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80 The text implements the suggested cuts upon which my analysis is based. The symbol ‘...’ indicates where text or music has been cut.

81 Although this section plays out as a conversation in the dramatic context, it could be interpreted as the reading of a letter in a concert context. The original reads “O ciel! Dicesti figlio?” meaning “You said son?”

82 For a complete word-by-word translation as well as phonetic transcription, see Nico Castel, *The Complete Verdi Libretti*, vol. 3 (Geneseo, NY, 1994): 78-80.
4.3 Technical Analysis

This aria provides an excellent starting point for the singer who is new to Verdi. The short bursts of *sostenuto* punctuated by brief rests in the *cavatina* can be used for stamina training because of the frequent opportunities for taking breaths. In addition, the *tessitura* of the *cavatina* is lower, allowing the young baritone to focus on extension into the upper range rather than sustaining the *tessitura* in the *zona di passaggio* for a prolonged period of time.

4.3.1 Breath Management and Vocal Stamina

The difficulties of breath management and stamina are different between the *cavatina* and the *cabaletta*. In the *cavatina*, the primary concern is the building up of vocal stamina through long, *sostenuto* phrases frequently punctuated by brief rests. In the beginning of the study of this aria, it is important to choose a tempo that is not dictated by the abilities of the pianist or orchestra to play the sextuplets. Beginning students may even want to choose a tempo that is faster than conventional recordings indicate in order to reduce the difficulty of the long phrases. As Julian Budden states, “despite the quaver rests which give it a fragmented look on study the cantilena [*cavatina*] is extraordinarily long-breathed, each pair of lines in the double quatrain furnishing the basis of a complete musical sentence.”\(^8^3\) This means that a singer must keep the long lines in the forefront of the musical phrasing, despite any breaths necessary for technical reasons that might intervene. This can be seen in Figure 4-2. In this example, the first pair of lines traverses a single musical journey from the tonic D-flat major through the phrase, ending back on an authentic cadence to the text “libera deve.” This supports Budden’s analysis of the pair of lines as the musical phrase length.

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4.3.2 Sostenuto

The *cavatina* presents two immediately apparent vocal pitfalls related to *sostenuto*. The first is the rhythmic discrepancy between the vocal melody and the

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orchestral texture. Care should be taken to continue a long legato line over the bubbling sextuplets of the orchestra. The individual teacher’s preferred exercises for *sostenuto* and legato can be used, but suggested exercises include the use of singing the phrases on a single vowel or continuant voiced consonant, taking care to keep the legato line and vocal vibrancy, in spite of frequent interruptions for breathing. Once this is accomplished, move to an exercise that involves singing the aria on the vowels of the text without the intervening consonants. Teachers may find different levels of success in this legato phrasing by either doubling the dotted rhythms, or de-emphasizing the dot, depending on the student in question.

The second pitfall of this *cavatina* is the brevity of the vocal phrase segments. As Budden states above, it is important that each one-measure segment not be interpreted as an entire phrase. Although he argues this claim on a musical basis, it also needs to be considered on a technical basis, lest the breath flow become stilted and overactive. This can be seen in the above example, showing three opportunities for breaths in a passage that has been established as an entire phrase.

In addition to the musical and technical considerations, dramatic considerations also need to be taken into account. The flow of the *cavatina* must be unobtrusive and long-phrased to reflect the text and the dramatic sentiment of the aria, namely Miller’s assertion that a father be defined by his gentleness and kindness. This should be reflected by a warmer timbre and smoother phrasing in performance.

The brevity of the phrase segments as set against the longevity of the musical phrases, however, is precisely why this *cavatina* is an excellent starting point for the potential Verdi baritone. It demands the rigor and breath control of long, legato phrasing, while providing an opportunity for singers new to the repertoire to build up the skills required with frequent opportunities for breath intake: the rests.

### 4.3.3 Upper Range and *Aggiustamento*

In the second section of the *cavatina*—“In terra un padre somiglia Iddio”—care should be taken to sustain the vowels and shorten consonants as much as the Italian
phonology will allow (“tiranno,” for instance needs to keep the doubling). The F-flat on “per la bontà,” shown in Figure 4-3, can pose some difficulty for some students, as this is a common pitch for the secondo passaggio.

Figure 4-3: “Non son tiranno” and "Per la bontà" can cause some difficulty around the secondo passaggio.

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Two possible exercises to ease this section include rounding the lips slightly to create more of an [æ] or [ʊ] vowel, and singing the passage to the vowels from the text without the intervening consonants. This will help to connect the resonance space between the /ɔ/ of “non” and the /a/ of “tiranno,” maintaining an even tone production across the range difference within the word.

4.3.4 Registration and Difficult Tessitura

Another difficulty in registration occurs at the end of the recitative, on the text “Che dici mai,” as shown in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4: "Che dici mai?" from "Sacra la scelta è d'un consorte"\(^\text{87}\)

This can be a difficult phrase for some singers as, depending on the specific voice, either the F-flat or the E-flat of “mai” will fall on most baritones’ secondo passaggio. The leap up of a minor sixth from /i/ to /a/ can also make this a tricky maneuver for some singers.

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\(^{86}\) Verdi, *Luisa Miller*, 62.

\(^{87}\) Ibid., 59.
If this is not a desirable challenge for the teacher, it can be avoided by singing the *cavatina* alone without the preceding recitative.

If the recitative is to be sung, however, three exercises can help here. The first is the modulation down of the passage in a comfortable range to get ease of breath flow and release any restrictive tension in the larynx. Once this is achieved, the passage can be gradually modulated up to pitch. The second is a “filling in” of the gap between the A-flat and the F-flat as shown in Figure 4-5. This would involve the three quarter notes progressing upwards from C-flat (C-flat, D-flat, E-flat) to avoid the sixth leap. Some singers may find it useful to modify the /a/ more towards [ɔ]. Once this is comfortable, the third exercise would be to elevate “Che dici” to be sung all on the F-flat in order to find the correct vocal production for these words at that pitch level, again looking at vowel modification as necessary. Once singers have found a free production on this exercise, revert to the passage as written. Depending on the level of the student and the pedagogical use of the repertoire (didactic exercise vs. audition repertoire, for example), Exercise 2 can be used as a final product, if the leap of a sixth becomes insurmountable. The entire exercise is summarized in Figure 4-5.

![Figure 4-5: Exercise options for "Che dici mai"](image)

In this last phrase of the recitative, it is also important to ensure that the /i/ of “mai” does in fact fall to the E-flat and land solidly on the pitch, as this leads into the dominant preparation for the *cavatina*. This kind of resolution is of a different sort than other falling semitones in the recitative, in which it is important to give emphasis on the dissonant note with a light, almost baroque treatment of the *appoggiatura*. In this case, because it so directly sets up the harmonic resolution, the E-flat must be a landing point from the F-flat.
The final challenge of this passage is the /m/ of “mai.” It is important to ensure that airflow continues through the consonant (and during the leap upward), while neither forcing pressure nor holding back the air through the leap to create an over- or under-accented F-flat on “mai.” The singer must ensure that tension does not permeate through the vocal tract from an overly tense closure of the lips on /m/. It is also important that the leap be completed quickly enough that it is not heard as a portamento, as that would dismantle the strength of the dramatic sentiment of the question. In Exercise 2 above, ensure that the /m/ retains its resonance and continues the sound. This resonance should continue to be present as the singer transfers back to the written melody with the leap upward.

4.3.5 Dynamic Control and Articulation

Verdi does not implement accent marks until the word “libera,” halfway through the A section of the cavatina, despite the earlier leap upward to the D-flat in the phrase on “è d’un consorte.” This latter phrase is shown in Figure 4-6, below. In this passage, the word “è” translates to “is,” and as a minor word should be de-emphasized in the phrase. One way to achieve this is, as an exercise, to eliminate the rests and have the student sing the entire 4-bar phrase completely legato without breath or break, with a conscious effort to keep the level of breath flow and dynamic level even and smooth all the way through the phrase. In contrast, the accent on “libera” later in the phrase is an accent of textual emphasis rather than an interruption of the legato line. Thus, the accent applies to the entire word, not just the first syllable. “Libera” means “free,” and is the dramatic focal point of the cavatina. It is also the only statement of the word in the aria.

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88 As discussed in Chapter 3, Verdi was meticulous in his dynamic and articulation markings, so this absence can only be seen as a deliberate choice.

89 The argument could be made that this word is the predicate and is therefore an important part of the sentence syntax. Contextually and semantically, however, the emphasis is on the sacredness of the choice, rather than the choosing itself, and there is little semantic emphasis on the word “is” in this context, making it a relatively minor word in context. However by the inclusion of the dynamic marking, Verdi indicates an expressive choice to emphasize the word despite its lack of semantic importance.
It can be tempting for students to sing “forza” (“force”) with too much force. However, the textual context states that force is not ideal in raising a child. It is critical, therefore, that the passage not be sung with force. As an exercise, eliminate the /f/ to ensure the legato line continues through the F [pitch], then add it back when the singer is able to sing through the line smoothly. In this passage, it is critical that the legato airflow and tone be present throughout the approach to the F, so that the lack of force in the leap upwards can be a natural result of a healthy production beforehand. Some singers who have difficulty in this range may need to breathe before “legge riceve.” It is equally important that this breath does not stilt the line or sense of length in the phrasing. This phrase is shown in Figure 4-7.

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90 Verdi, Luisa Miller, 59.
The three marcato accents on the E-flats of “legge riceve” are indications of two simultaneous harmonic voices that have been arpeggiated. The use of these articulations emphasizes the separation between these two voices by creating a disparity in the articulation. Unfortunately, the voice cannot phonate these notes simultaneously to make the voice-leading that leads into the cadence clear. However, the lines can be sung individually. Have the student sing “legge ri-“ all on E-flat as one exercise, then on the lower voice (D-flat, C, B-flat) as a second, both in an eighth-note triplet rhythm. Once both have been completed individually, have the student sing both together, keeping the voice leading at the forefront of the articulation. This is illustrated in Figure 4-8.

Figure 4-8: Voice leading and exercises for "legge riceve" in "Sacra la scelta è d'un consorte" from Luisa Miller

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91 Ibid., 60.
4.3.6 Vocal Timbre

To ensure an adequately round vocal timbre as described in Chapter 3, care
should be taken to maintain a flexibly stable larynx and open resonance space. Particular
care should be taken in the ascending phrases of “In terra un padre somiglia Iddio” that
the use of the tongue, jaw, and lips in articulating the consonants does not interfere with
the flexibility and stability of the larynx. Singing on vowels can be especially useful to
help this. Another difficulty for timbre and laryngeal stability is the last page and a half
of the cavatina, specifically the phonetic progression of “per la bontà.” This progression
is shown in Figure 4-9.

![Figure 4-9: Phonetic progression of "Per la bontà" in "Sacra la scelta" from Luisa Miller](image)

Unless there is an excellent, free rolled /r/ in place, the multiple occurrences of the
progression of /r/ to /l/ will cause difficulty for any singer. There are a few stopgap
measures that can be taken, but nothing will take the place of a full freely rolled /r/. This
can be achieved by singing the entire phrase on [r] to free up the tongue. Singers who
have specific difficulty coordinating the tongue’s transition from the rolled position of /r/
to the lateral position of /l/ may choose to insert a shadow vowel between the two
consonants. While this is an excellent pedagogical tool for the studio, its use in a
performance or audition may not be warranted, depending on the context. Nothing can

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92 Ibid., 62.
truly take the place of a free rolled /r/ in this situation, so any other solution can only be used as a stopgap until this skill is developed.

### 4.3.7 Performance Practice

There are two considerations for performance practice modifications: the *cadenza* at the end of the *cavatina* and the repetition of the *cabaletta*. Both can be modified to ease stamina. In addition, the beginning Verdi baritone can choose to sing the *cavatina* or *cabaletta* alone, without linking the two.\(^\text{93}\)

### 4.4 Summary

“Sacrà la scelta è d’un consorte” is an appropriate first choice for an aspiring Verdi baritone. Although it presents challenges in breath management and stamina, these challenges can be temporarily mitigated by inserting additional breaths where necessary for each student. The tessitura is reasonable for advanced post-secondary study, and the aria can be segmented as the technical limitations of the student require. As such, it is a good bridge between simpler repertoire and the more advanced repertoire covered in the following chapters.

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5  **Don Carlo:** “Per me giunto...Io morrò”

The segmentation presented in Chapter 4 is also possible for Rodrigo’s aria, “Per me giunto...Io morrò” from Act IV of *Don Carlo*. While not in *scena* form—the scene lacks a *cabaletta* due to the tragic death of the scene’s main character—this scene still offers a four-part structure: a recitative section to establish the scene, a lyrical *cantabile* section that develops the characters, a *tempo di mezzo* in which the main action of the scene takes place, and a second lyrical section, albeit at a slower tempo than a *cabaletta*. This alteration from the expected form of the scene is done to reflect the gravitas of the dramatic action. Almost more so than the aria from *Luisa Miller*, this aria lends itself exceptionally well to segmentation for the singer who may have difficulty with the stamina required in more advanced arias. This possibility for segmentation, coupled with shorter, lower singing above the *zona di passaggio*, makes this an ideal choice for newer singers to the repertoire, but still offers a more intricate challenge than “Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte,” covered in Chapter 4.

5.1  **Plot Summary and Dramatic Contextualization**

Like many of Verdi’s earlier works, *Don Carlo* is a story of unrequited love, but this one is set against the political backdrop of the Spanish inquisition. Don Carlo, the son of King Philip II of Spain, is in love with Elisabetta, but she has married the king as a term of a peace treaty between France and Spain. Spurned by his father, and with his secret love threatened by one of the queen’s vengeful handmaids, Carlo turns on his father, and is promptly arrested and sentenced to death by his childhood friend Rodrigo, now a duke in the king’s service.

“Per me giunto è il di supremo...Io morrò ma lieto in core” is taken from the second scene of Act IV, set in the prison cell where Carlo is locked up.\(^{94}\) Wracked with guilt over his role in condemning his friend, Rodrigo arrives and tells Carlo that he has

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*94* The 1883 version of the opera cuts Act I, and thus this scene occurs in Act III of that version. However, the substantive portion of this monograph remains unchanged between versions of the opera, and so the arbitrary choice was made to base the analysis on the five-act version.
saved his friend from execution by incriminating himself, even though it will mean his own certain death (“Per me giunto”). That death occurs quickly as Rodrigo is shot in the chest in the ensuing \textit{tempo di mezzo}. As he dies he entrusts Carlo to save the oppressed region of Flanders and the kingdom of Spain as a whole (“Io morro”).

Much like the aria from \textit{Luisa Miller} analyzed in Chapter 4, this aria plays out as a conversation in the context of the staged opera. Therefore, some cuts do need to be made in order to perform both halves of the scene out of context as a single selection. There are many appropriate ways to do this. \textit{Don Carlo} is more central to the contemporary Verdi canon than any of the other operas studied in this monograph. For the ease of teachers who are unfamiliar with the piece, however, I suggest a few specific cuts when assigning it to a singer who is newer to the Verdi oeuvre.

The first consideration is whether to sing one of the two arias or the complete scene. Only the individual teacher can make the determination of whether a student is prepared for the entire scene. The whole piece can be a taxing sing on both vocal and breath stamina. Admittedly, each individual aria is more technically straightforward than the aria from Chapter 4, but the full scene relies almost exclusively on long \textit{sostenuto} phrasing, which can be more tiring on the vocal and breathing mechanisms. However, each half is an excellent stand-alone aria for a potential Verdi baritone, especially if the two parts will eventually be strung together once the requisite stamina is in place.

The second consideration in assigning this selection is the consideration of cut location, particularly if the whole scene is being performed as one. However, even if only one aria is selected, the question remains of where to begin the selection. The introduction into “Per me giunto” is compelling and a strong start to the scene if started at “felice ancor io son” as shown in Figure 5-1:
I suggest beginning with the orchestral figure immediately preceding these words, which is particularly attractive as this is also the rhythmic and harmonic motive that begins the complete scene. It is also an attractive length for a recitative of an aria taken out of context.

There are many more options for the starting point of “Io morrò,” as the tempo di mezzo is much more focused on Rodrigo, with Carlo offering interjections. However, the first half of the tempo di mezzo does not make much dramatic sense without Carlo’s interjections. This points to an obvious beginning at the E-major “Assai Moderato” leading into “O Carlo, ascolta.” This is shown in Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2: Assai Moderato in "Io morrò ma lieto in core" from Don Carlo

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95 Giuseppe Verdi, Don Carlo (Milan, 2009): 295. This edition of the score contains no rehearsal numbers, but this moment occurs approximately two pages after the beginning of Act IV, Scene 2.
These starting points can be used regardless of whether a student is singing the entire scene or a single aria within it. For the entire scene, the singer should cut from “morrà per te” at the end of “Per me giunto” to the point indicated in Figure 5-2.

### 5.2 Text and Translation

The text and line-by-line translation, adapted from Nico Castel’s translation of Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle, is given in Table 5-1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recitative I</th>
<th>Aria I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felice ancor io son</td>
<td>Per me giunto è il di supremo,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se abbracciar ti poss’io!</td>
<td>No, mai più ci rivedrem;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Io ti salvai!</td>
<td>Ci congiunga Iddio nel ciel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>Ei che premia i suoi fedel’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convien qui direi addio!</td>
<td>Sul tuo ciglio il pianto io miro;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O mio Carlo!</td>
<td>Lagrimar così, perché?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am happy again</td>
<td>My last day is here,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can embrace you!</td>
<td>We will nevermore see each other again;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saved you!</td>
<td>May God reunite us in Heaven,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>He who rewards his faithful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We must say goodbye here!</td>
<td>I see tears in your eyes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh my Carlo!</td>
<td>Why weep like that?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recitative II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O Carlo, ascolta...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La madre t’aspetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A San Giusto doman;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutto ella sa...</td>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh Carlo, listen...</td>
<td>Oh Carlo, listen...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your mother waits for you</td>
<td>Your mother waits for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At San Giusto tomorrow;</td>
<td>At San Giusto tomorrow;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She knows everything...</td>
<td>She knows everything...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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96 Ibid., 302.
Ah! La terra mi manca... Carlo mio, a me porgi la man!...

Ah! The earth leaves me... My Carlo, give me your hand!...

**Aria II**

Io morrò, ma lieto in core,
Che potei così serbar
Alla Spagna un salvatore!
Ah!... di me... non ti scordar!

I die, but happy in my heart,
That I could keep
A saviour for Spain!
Ah!...do not forget me!

Regnare tu dovevi
Ed io morir per te.

You had to rule,
And I had to die for you.

Ah! Salva la Fiandra!
Carlo addio... ah!

Ah! Save Flanders!
Carlo, goodbye... Ah!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5-1: Text and translation of &quot;Per me giunto...Io morrò&quot; from <em>Don Carlo</em>[^1]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5.3 **Technical Analysis**

The technical challenges in these arias are centered on the vocal and breathing stamina required for the extended portions of *sostenuto* in each aria. However, like the selection from *Luisa Miller*, “Io morrò” has short phrase markings, giving the option for frequent breaths as a didactic tool to help build up this stamina. These short phrases are also a common dramatic device to portray Rodrigo’s breathlessness as he lies dying on the prison floor. For this reason and others outlined in detail this section, I recommend “Io morrò” as a tool to develop stamina, leaving “Per me giunto” as a slightly more advanced aria only for singers who can handle two-bar phrases in this extended *sostenuto* style. However, the ascensions up to G-flat make “Io morrò” more difficult if a student has difficulties in registration.

5.3.1 **Breath Management and Stamina**

Although the overall lyrical style in both arias in the scene is similar, the breath management required for each is markedly different from the other. In “Per me giunto,” Verdi marks the phrases in two-measure sections, while in “Io morrò” there is by and

[^1]: For a complete word-by-word translation as well as phonetic transcription, see Castel, *The Complete Verdi Libretti*, vol. 2, 102-105.
large a phrase marking for each measure. These one-measure phrases contribute to a sense of realism, since Rodrigo is shot and dying, and has difficulty taking big breaths. Although the experienced singer does not require such frequent breathing, it is nonetheless available to the less experienced singer who is still developing stamina for the aria.

An interesting conundrum in “Per me giunto,” meanwhile, is the placement of breaths in the final passage of this section, on the final “l’estremo spiro lieto è a chi morrà per te,” as shown in Figure 5-3.

![Figure 5-3: The final phrase of "Per me giunto" from Don Carlo](image)

At first glance, there are two options for breath placement in this section: after “spiro” or after “chi.” Neither of these choices is particularly attractive, however, for a less

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98 Verdi, Don Carlo, 298.
developed singer. The former offers slightly more clarity for the language—translating roughly to “The final breath (breath) happy is for he who will die for you”—but this is still awkward in its delivery. The latter option offers a breath that is physically less taxing, but it occludes the structure of the text even further. It is clear that for a mature singer singing this role in one of the world’s great opera houses that the only choice is to carry the phrase through, but this may not be possible for the younger singer.

The solution that I propose might be seen as controversial, given the highly specific nature of Verdi’s phrasing and articulation markings. I suggest a breaking of the phrase marking over “lieto è a chi” to give enhanced clarity to the text while simultaneously providing a breathing option for the less experienced singer. This is outlined in Figure 5-4.

![Figure 5-4: Breathing option for "lieto è a chi morrà per te" in "Per me giunto" from Don Carlo](image)

The primary reason for this breath placement is maintaining clarity of the text; “spiro lieto” (happy breath) belongs together grammatically, as does “a chi morrà per te” (for he who will die for you). Although this goes against Verdi’s marking, it is necessary to provide a viable breathing option in a passage where there is clearly none present.99

### 5.3.2 Sostenuto

In such a lyrical sostenuto style as this scene offers, an impeccable legato technique is necessary for a host of technical reasons. This is a generally supportive aria

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99 This argument represents a personal tendency on the part of the author to maintain textual integrity whenever possible. However, many of the recordings offer a breath between “spiro” and “lieto.” Although the argument given is a preference, especially for students to more immediately relate to the text, both choices for breath placement are acceptable.
to this endeavour, as both parts contain mostly stepwise motion or at least a smooth melodic contour, but with one critical exception. The B section of “Per me giunto” contains two short passages that have more disjoint contours. The first, “Sul tuo ciglio il pianto io miro,” is reproduced in Figure 5-5.

![Figure 5-5](image)

**Figure 5-5:** "Sul tuo ciglio il pianto io miro" in "Per me giunto" from *Don Carlo*\(^\text{100}\)

The leaps in this passage are not particularly large, but the augmented fourth at the beginning of the phrase is aurally challenging, which can lead to a breakup of the legato line at the outset of the phrase. This can lead to long-term difficulty maintaining the legato throughout the ensuing phrases, culminating in the second disjoint phrase, shown in Figure 5-6.

![Figure 5-6](image)

**Figure 5-6:** "A chi morrà, morrà per te" in "Per me giunto" from *Don Carlo*\(^\text{101}\)

Of particular note in this second passage is the leap upward to the marcato D in a dynamic of *pianissimo*. The upward leap lends itself well to the additional emphasis, but not the sudden dynamic shift. The effect of the leap is the stylistic emphasis of the unaccented high note, a common affect within the Verdi style.

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\(^{100}\) Verdi, *Don Carlo*, 296-97.

\(^{101}\) Verdi, *Don Carlo*, 297.
The other considerable difficulty in this passage is the octave displacement of the C on “a,” which would be a much simpler and more conjoined melody if it contained a C4 instead of C3. This can be used as an exercise for any students that have difficulty with this passage. First, have the student perform the passage with the change noted in Figure 5-7.

![Figure 5-7: Suggested exercise for "a chi morrà" in "Per me giunto" from Don Carlo](image)

Once this can be achieved with a smooth legato line, have the student drop the C down again as written, but maintaining the smooth line established through this exercise.

Overall, the challenges in *sostenuto* are not individually overwhelming, but it is rather the duration of long-phrased *sostenuto* singing that present the challenge in this aria. The majority of the challenges are in “Per me giunto,” and therefore students who struggle with a smooth legato line should begin study of this scene by singing “Io morrò.”

### 5.3.3 Upper Range and *Aggiustamento*

The singing in the upper range is limited in duration in this aria, making it an ideal choice for students who are still developing a comfortable upper range. There are four instances of F4 in “Per me giunto” and four instances of F-sharp/G-flat4 in “Io morrò,” using the suggested cuts from Section 5.1. Never is either of these sections higher than these upper limits and never do any of these notes last longer than a dotted quarter note. This points to “Per me giunto” as the easier aria for students who are not yet comfortable with singing much above the *zona di passaggio*, in contrast to the recommendation for those struggling with a sustained legato line identified in Section 5.3.2.
Despite this relative simplicity, there are two passages that warrant attention, both dealing with high notes that lack a smooth melodic lead-up. The first is in the A section of “Per me giunto,” on the text “Ei che premia i suoi fedel’.” The passage is shown in Figure 5-8.

![Figure 5-8: "Ei che premia i tuoi fedel" in "Per me giunto" from Don Carlo](image)

Great care needs to be taken in this passage to prevent the /pr/ of “premia” from interrupting the overall legato line. This is exacerbated by the leap upwards through the entire zona di passaggio, so extra care should be maintained to ensure consistent breath flow, laryngeal stability, flexible and open resonance space, and smooth legato transition.

The second passage that warrants attention is the first statement of “Ah la terra mi manca,” directly preceding the beginning of “Io morrò.” This passage contains the first F-sharp in the aria, and furthermore it begins the phrase with nothing but a vocalic onset separating it from the preceding rest. It is illustrated in Figure 5-9.

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102 Verdi, *Don Carlo*, 296.
This requires a different skill, namely, the ability to create a completely balanced onset with laryngeal and resonator stability above the *zona di passaggio*. One possible exercise to help ease the singer into this would involve transposing the passage into a comfortable range where the onset can be established, then gradually bringing it back up to the original key. This would allow the muscle memory of proper onset and breathing to be established in a comfortable range, to be gradually extended to the high register of the original passage.

### 5.3.4 Registration and Difficult Tessitura

The *tessitura* of “Per me giunto” lies between G3 and B-flat3, while that of “Io morrò” is a larger G-flat3 to D-flat4. Although the two are similar, the *tessitura* in the former is entirely outside the Verdi baritone’s *zona di passaggio* while the latter overlaps. This places “Per me giunto” in a significantly easier *tessitura* than “Io morrò,” which should be kept in mind when selecting a segment of this scene to assign students. However, they are similar enough to use the same skill set when a singer sings the scene in its entirety.

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103 Ibid., 303.
5.3.5 Dynamic Control and Resonance

Generally, the orchestration in both arias is light, but does increase in intensity slightly in correlation with a higher singing range or increased dramatic intensity. The recitative is accompanied by sustained strings, moving into “Per me giunto,” in which the strings become more active. However, throughout this first section of the aria, the second violins are tacet, leading to a thinner texture in the strings than in the recitative. As Julian Budden highlights, “Per me giunto” is “touching by reason of its restraint, especially where the regular flow of the melody is broken by gestures of helpless affection.” As the first section of the aria progresses, more instruments are gradually added, though only culminating in a brief eleven-piece woodwind chorale accompanying the text “lieto è a chi morrà per te,” discussed earlier in Section 5.3.2. The absence of any brass in this entire aria points to the lighter nature of the moment, and allows a lighter or slightly less developed baritone to perform “Per me giunto” out of context, even with orchestral accompaniment.

In the second aria, the orchestration is just as light, albeit more dense in texture. The suggested section of the tempo di mezzo is very thin with low strings, bassoon and cornet, while the proper section of “Io morrò” continues to explore the woodwind chorale texture, but with accompanying harp arpeggiation. It is not until the final Allegro (“Ah! La terra mi manca...”) that the full strength of the brass section is presented, but the vocal range of this four-measure section is in a comfortable but elevated range. However, students who have difficulty harnessing vocal formant resonance to project through a dense orchestration will need to pay some attention to this passage.  

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104 Budden, The Operas of Verdi, vol. 3, 139. The “gestures of a helpless affection” refer to the sections underpinned by the text, “No, fa cor,” in which the stream of two-measure segments is broken to emphasize the importance of the text.

105 In a professional situation this may preclude a singer from accessing this repertoire. However, in most advanced post-secondary settings, in which only piano accompaniment is typically used, this can be downgraded to a passage requiring attention rather than one which precludes the singing of the entire aria.
The other passage in “Io morrò” that requires some specific treatment in dynamic expression and resonance management is the bridge section, in which the text “Di me non ti scordar” is repeated from the previous phrase over a reprise of Rodrigo and Carlo’s duet theme from Act II. As shown in Figure 5-10, the vocal line for the first four measures is exclusively on E3:

![Figure 5-10](image)

Figure 5-10: "Di me non ti scordar" in "Io morrò" from Don Carlo

Although the orchestra’s dynamic marking is piano, it is still required of the singer to keep the tone resonant and the larynx stabilized for maximum projection. The marking of parlato is also present, indicating a speech-like quality required of the singer.

5.3.6 Performance Practice

As explored above, the scene is not as challenging as others in this study. As such, there are no specific performance practices that can make the aria more accessible to the student who is new to Verdi, save for the many options the aria presents for segmentation. In review, these options are:

- “Per me giunto” with or without the recitative, suitable for those who have good command of legato line due to its two-measure legato phrases. The tessitura is higher than “Io morrò” but the upper range extension is not as high.

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106 Verdi, Don Carlo, 305.
• “Io morrò” with the *tempo di mezzo*, suitable for those who have more heft to the voice to compete with the slightly thicker orchestral texture, as well as a higher range (G-flat4). However, the tessitura is lower than “Per me giunto.”

• The complete scene with or without cuts discussed in Figure 5-2, suitable for those who have proficiency in areas required for both arias.

5.4 Summary

The two arias offer different challenges, and therefore should be customized to each student. “Per me giunto” requires longer breath stamina in the *sostenuto* passages and skill in disjoint legato singing, while “Io morrò” requires comfort in a slightly higher range and *tessitura*, the latter of which overlaps with the *zona di passaggio*. “Io morrò” also requires a greater command of resonance-related projection, as the orchestration is slightly more involved and active. Both excerpts, however, can serve as excellent introductions to the repertoire of the Verdi baritone.
6  \textit{I masnadieri}: “La sua lampada vitale”

“La sua lampada vitale” is easily the most difficult of the arias studied in this monograph. At 15 pages in the Ricordi score, it is also the longest that we have seen, and therefore requires the most stamina of the arias studied thus far. However, singers who have been successful at one or both of the previous arias can use this aria as a tool for their further development. This aria is a complete dramatic scene on its own and is an ideal transition into the rest of the Verdi literature for students who will continue in the Verdi repertoire. Like the other arias studied to this point, this aria can be divided in half. However, if segmentation is desired, the \textit{cavatina} is the only strong choice to be used on its own, since the \textit{cabaletta} makes less dramatic sense as an excerpt.

6.1  Plot Summary and Dramatic Contextualization

Translated literally as “the bandits,” \textit{I masnadieri} recounts the tale of Carlo, a nobleman who has fallen in with a group of bandits. Feeling remorse, he has written home to beg for his father’s forgiveness so that he can be welcomed back into the family and into the home. Little does he know that his younger brother Francesco, wanting the family title for himself, has intercepted the letter and replied to Carlo. In his reply, Francesco states that their dying father has not forgiven him and intends to imprison him. Carlo decides to renounce his life as a noble in order to stay a bandit.

This soliloquy aria takes up the entire second scene, immediately following the previous scene, and takes place back at the castle. Francesco reveals that his father has no knowledge of Carlo’s begging for forgiveness and lays out his plan to speed along his ailing father’s death and keep the estate and title for himself. He sends the servant Arminio to his father’s room in disguise to bring “news” of Carlo’s recent death. The scene finishes with a warning that the world should be afraid of him. This plays out in a \textit{scena} form: the plan is laid out in the \textit{recitativo} and \textit{cavatina}, Arminio is summoned and briefed in the \textit{tempo di mezzo}, and Francesco’s final words of warning are stated in the \textit{cabaletta}. 
Aside from the brief exchange with Arminio in the *tempo di mezzo*, this aria is a soliloquy, unlike the other arias studied so far in this monograph. This means that it is well structured for solo performance, and requires little cutting of material to be sung out of context. There are, however, two recommended cuts, the first to eliminate the two lines of singing belonging to the servant Arminio. Due to their brevity, I suggest simply omitting them without eliminating any of the accompanying music. The second cut is akin to the cut from “Sacra la scelta,” in which the second repetition of the *cabaletta* be eliminated for the sake of time and/or singer stamina.\(^{107}\) These details are covered in Section 6.3.6, below.

### 6.2 Text and Translation

The text and line-by-line translation, adapted from Nico Castel’s translation of Andrea Maffei, is given below in Table 6-1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Recitative</strong></th>
<th><strong>Translation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vecchio!</td>
<td>Old man!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiccai da te quell’odiato primogenito tuo!</td>
<td>I plucked that hated firstborn from you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La piangolosa lettera ch’ei ti scrisse</td>
<td>The whiny letter that he wrote you:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Io l’ho distrutta:</td>
<td>I destroyed it:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una mia ne leggesti,</td>
<td>You read one of mine,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ove tel pinsi</td>
<td>In which I painted him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con si cari colori...</td>
<td>In such dear colours...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfin la colpa della natura</td>
<td>At last for the natural fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Che minor mi fece,</td>
<td>That made me lesser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castigai nel fratello:</td>
<td>I have punished my brother:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ora nel padre punir la debbo...</td>
<td>Now I must punish it on my father...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il dritto! La coscienza!</td>
<td>Rights, conscience!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spauracchi egregi per le fiacche animucce.</td>
<td>Eminent scarecrows for little feeble souls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osa, Francesco! Spàcciati del vecchiardo...</td>
<td>Dare, Francesco! Dispose of the old man...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>È vivo a stento questo logoro ossame:</td>
<td>He is barely alive, that faded pile of bones:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un buffo... è spento.</td>
<td>One puff of wind...he dies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{107}\) In addition to this pedagogical argument, there is also the argument of conventional wisdom for the cutting of the *cabaletta* repeats, as this is a common practice in performance. However, this monograph focuses on the pedagogical argument over the performance argument.
### Cavatina

La sua lampada vitale

Langue, è ver, ma troppo dura.
Se va lenta la natura, Giuro al ciel! L’affretterò.
Mente mia, trova un pugnale Che trapassi il core umano, Nè svelare possa la mano Che lo strinse e lo vibrò.

His lamp of life burns low, but it lasts too long.
If nature moves slowly, I swear to heaven, I will speed it up!
Oh my brain, find a dagger That will puncture the human heart Without being able to reveal the hand That held it and wielded it.

### Tempo di mezzo

Trionfo! Colpito ho nel segno. Arminio, t’avanza!
Mi sei tu fedele?
(...)
Or ben! Secondarmi tu devi un disegno.

Triumph! I have his the bulls-eye. Arminio, come here!
... Are you faithful to me?
... Well then! You must help me in my plan.

Travèstiti in modo Che niun ti ravvisi; Poi vanne a mio padre, Gli narra che spento sul campo di Praga Fra un monte d’uccisi Lasciasti il suo Carlo.

Disguise yourself so that nobody can recognize you. Then go to my father, Tell him that you left his beloved Carlo dead on the battlefield in Prague among a heap of corpses.

Berrà la tua nova, me’l credi. Fornirti vogl’io di tale una prova, Che l’uom più sagace Cadrebbe in errore. Fra poco, Francesco, sarai qui signore!

He will swallow your news, believe me. I want to give you such proof That the smartest man would fall for this error. Soon, Francesco, you will be master here!

### Cabaletta

Tremate, o miseri, voi mi vedrete Nel mio verace terribile aspetto; D’un vecchio debole che non temete, Più non vi modera la stanca man.

Tremble, oh wretches, you will see me In my true terrible image, You no longer live under the rule of a weak, old man you don’t fear.

Al riso, al giubilo succederanno Singulti e lagrime, timor, sospetto; L’inedia, il carcere, l’onta, laffanno, Strazio ineffabile di voi faran.

From laughter and joy will follow Sobs and tears, fear, suspicion, Starvation, prison, shame, anguish To cause your unspeakable destruction.

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**Table 6-1: Text and translation of "La sua lampada vitale" from *I masnadieri***

108 For a complete word-by-word translation as well as phonetic transcription, see Castel, *The Complete Verdi Libretti*, vol. 3, 223-26.
6.3 Technical Analysis

This aria, unlike the previous two, is ideally suited to the student who is still relatively new to Verdi but has had some experience with repertoire that is taxing on vocal and breath stamina. The style is less legato, but still requires a *sostenuto* line throughout. The orchestration is heavier, and the *tessitura* is much less consistent than in the previous arias.

6.3.1 Breath Management and Stamina

At first glance of the *cavatina*, the short phrase structure seems similar to that in “Sacra la scelta.” However, the consistency of the phrase markings is missing in this aria, which points to the phrasing being used herein as a mode of expression and articulation, rather than as more traditional indications of phrase arcs. This is especially true for the text “giuro al ciel! L’affretterò,” shown in Figure 6-1.

![Figure 6-1: "Giuro al ciel l'affretterò" in "La sua lampada vitale" from *I masnadieri*](image)

In this phrase, which is representative of many others in the *cavatina*, there are no slurs or phrase marks of any kind. The lack of slurs points to the use of the marking as purely an expressive articulation mark indicating legato and not as a requisite indication of phrasing.

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and points of breath. It also encourages *sprezzatura* to be used as an expressive contrast to the legato line that pervades the arias presented in Chapters 4 and 5.\textsuperscript{110}

This conclusion is further supported by the unconventional use of slurs later in the *cavatina*, in which the interaction of the slurs and the word division are at odds with each other. Consider the example shown in Figure 6-2.

![Figure 6-2: "Trova un pugnale" in "La sua lampada vitale" from *I masnadieri*\textsuperscript{111}](image)

The placement of the slur break in the middle of “pugnale” again points to the slur marking being unaffiliated with the breath in this aria. This can be very freeing, as breath placement then is not reliant on consistency with the markings in the score. For a younger or less experienced singer, breaths can be taken at liberty with the frequency the

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\textsuperscript{110} *Sprezzatura* is defined as the use of “expressiveness and *rubato* in the composition and performance of monodic music.” As applied to voice technique in Verdi, it involves the singer’s small-scale expression of the music and text to reflect dramatic circumstance. Nigel Fortune, "*Sprezzatura,*" *Grove Music Online* (1 Mar. 2018): http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026468.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 28.
singer requires. This freedom allows the difficulty level of the *cavatina* to scale to the student singing it.

A second consideration of this aria is breath placement in the climactic phrase of the *cavatina*. This is illustrated in Figure 6-3.

![Figure 6-3: The climactic phrase of "La sua lampada vitale" from I masnadieri](image)

It is clear from the length of this phrase that a breath is needed somewhere between “la natura” and the last “l’affrettò.” This is echoed in the final phrase of the B section as the music is identical, but the text is different. There are three viable options for breath...

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112 This does not preclude general good breathing practices such as breathing between words rather than within a word, or breathing where textual context can be maintained.

location in this phrase. The first is after “guiro al cielo” in the ascending line, although care must be taken in this breath to properly and quickly release the breath support mechanism to avoid taking a tense catch breath. The second, though seemingly inappropriate due to the articulation markings, is after the “ciel” on F4. This can be especially useful for students who need frequent breaths and excel at breath release in the upper part of their register. The final is the most obvious choice: after “l’affretterò” on the middle C. This is an example of how the breath placement can be customized to adjust the level of challenge for students of different levels.

6.3.2 Sostenuto

As discussed in Section 6.3.1, the use of slurs is more linked to expression than to overall phrase shape in this aria. As such, there are several moments in which the articulation is more specific than in the previous arias, but still, care should be taken to maintain a smooth legato line even when written slurs are not present. The following paragraphs highlight some of these moments.

The first example of this is Figure 6-1, above, in which the accents appear on the sixteenth notes. The eager student can very easily over-emphasize the accents, breaking the legato line. This should be avoided at all costs. In addition to legato exercises proposed in the previous chapters, I would suggest an exercise that seeks to slow down the passage, turning each accent into a *messa di voce* (Exercise A in Figure 6-4, below). After the student achieves comfort, gradually increase the tempo, ensuring the gesture remains a *messa di voce* and consistent breath involvement is maintained. Once the singer reaches approximately an eighth note tempo, the *messa di voce* can be halved, leaving only the diminishing half (Exercise B in Figure 6-4), and continuing to increase the tempo gradually until full tempo is reached. The consistency of breath involvement is vital to the success of this exercise; if the breath flow starts to become broken, decrease the tempo until the exercise can be performed successfully, then attempt to increase the tempo again. The same exercise can be used for every moment that involves accented sixteenth notes with a syllabic text setting. This includes the areas mentioned in Figure 6-3 above.
In the cabaletta, similar difficulty can be encountered with accents, although these accents are not successive in the same way. The accents in the main theme of the cabaletta fall on the second beat of each bar to the weakest syllables of text. An example of this is shown in Figure 6-5.

Great care must be taken here for two reasons. The first is akin to the examples from the cavatina: although emphasis is indicated by the accent on the second beat, it is for expressive purposes and should not interrupt the legato line. The second reason is that

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114 Each should be gradually sped up until it can be performed at full tempo without breaking the legato line.
115 Ibid., 33.
overemphasis of the accent can lead to an obstruction of the musical and textual clarity, as the accent is on the weak final syllable of each word. The accent, however, should not be underplayed either, as its presence is likely intentional to the dramatic development of the character. Budden states that “one method of conveying irony in music is to score a phrase inappropriately, so as to either make the listener chuckle or to set his teeth on edge.” Clearly the accents shown here are intended to do the latter, but this cannot be taken so far as to block the meaning of the text. This contrasts with the B section of the cabaletta, in which the accents that are written appear at moments that are consistent with our expectation of the phrase direction and climax, as shown in Figure 6-6.

Figure 6-6: The opening bars of the B Section of "Tremate, o miserì" from I masnadieri

116 Budden, The Operas of Verdi, 324.
117 The accents on beat 2 subvert the expected strong-weak-weak rhythmic pattern that is naturally present in a 3/4 time signature.
118 Verdi: I masnadieri, 37.
6.3.3 Upper Range and Aggiustamento

Despite the difficulties noted above, this aria has very little difficulty in the upper range. The top pitch attained is an F4, and it appears four times if the cut of the cabaletta repeat, as suggested in Section 6.3.6 is observed. In all cases except the example shown in Figure 6-7, the vowel on each of these occurrences is an open /a/, and so the experienced teacher should be able to find a vowel colour for each student that optimizes the resonance at this pitch. However, the final cadence before the coda is set to the text “di voi faran,” and requires some special attention for two reasons.

Figure 6-7: "Di voi faran" in "Tremate, o miseri!" from I masnadieri

The first difficulty faced in this passage is the leap upwards through the continuant /v/. Although this kind of leap has been explored in previous chapters, the voiced continuant in this context may instinctively draw more breath pressure or bring about more constriction of the resonance tract in less experienced singers than in the previously discussed contexts. Care should be taken that the breath flow remains legato and does not disrupt the vocal folds with an undue increase in pressure even through the continuant.

The second difficulty faced in this passage is the diphthong /ɔː/ı/. This diphthong moves the tongue from a back/mid-low position to a front/high position, the farthest

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119 Ibid., 35.
single movement of the tongue in a diphthong within Italian phonology. This means that if *aggiustamento* is required, it must be addressed in a dynamic way in order to serve the entire diphthong. I would suggest either a forward adjustment to [œːi] or a more open one to [ɔːi], depending on what would better serve the singer in question.

### 6.3.4 Registration and Difficult *Tessitura*

There are three passages in this aria that require special attention in the *zona di passaggio*. The first is the B section of the *cavatina*, under the text “Mente mia, trova un pugnale...che lo stringe e lo vibrò.” This section traverses the *zona di passaggio* throughout, making it more difficult for less experienced singers to maintain an even registration.

In particular, the octave leap in the coda of the *cavatina* requires special attention. It is shown in Figure 6-8, below, to the words “corpo umano.” For heavier voices, the leap is the cause for concern, as the melody leaps an entire octave directly to the *secondo passaggio*. For lighter voices who might have a *secondo passaggio* on E4—see Table 2-1 in Chapter 2 for more details—this may be even more difficult, as the next measure contains a *sforzando* on the F-flat without a break in the line to reset and rejuvenate the mechanism. As such, the passage requires specific consideration to registration on each of these three notes. As mentioned in Chapter 3, it is difficult to discuss specifics in registration because there are so many different models for the physiological function of registration. However, I can suggest some generic concepts and exercises to use in the teaching and coaching of this passage that can be applied with whichever registration model a given teacher relies upon in his or her teaching.

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120 Although one could make the argument of /uːi/ being as far or farther, /u/ and /i/ are on the same plane open-closed plane, rendering the diphthong less of a change than /ɔːi/ as discussed in the text. For a discussion of Italian phonology, especially relating to diphthongs and triphthongs, see Leslie De’ath, “Italian Vowel Clusters in Singing, Part I: Syllable, Vowel Length, and Stress,” *Journal of Singing* 65, no. 3 (January/February 2009): 333-49.

121 This passage can be found in Verdi, *I masnadieri*, 28.
Figure 6-8: The octave leap requiring specific attention in "La sua lampada vitale"
from I masnadieri

Singers who have difficulty with this passage can be divided into two groups. For the purposes of argument, let us call them Groups A and B. Group A comprises those students who struggle with the leap itself, while Group B comprises those who have no difficulty with the leap, but struggle to maintain vocal stability through the transition to the F-flat. The difficulties of these two groups should be addressed differently from each other.

122 Ibid., 29.
123 Note that students who have difficulty with both sections should be considered part of Group A. Once the difficulties with the leap are resolved, the transition to the F-flat will either be similarly resolved as a result of adequate technical preparation or the student can then be transferred to Group B.
For students in Group A, for whom the difficulty is the leap itself, several exercises from previous chapters can be repeated here, be it transposing the passage down and gradually moving it back up until the student is comfortable with the leap as written, or filling in the gap as shown in Exercise 2 of Figure 4-5 in Chapter 4. This exercise could transfer to the passage from “La sua lampada vitale” in two possible ways, as shown in Figure 6-9.

![Exercises](image)

**Figure 6-9: Two possible exercise mappings of "che trapassi il core umano" in "La sua lampada vitale" from *I masnadieri***

Both are appropriate exercises, but Exercise 1 eliminates all descending notes from the passage. Some students may respond well to this, while for others this will cause them to add more tension to the ever-ascending line. In both exercises, however, the E-flat and F-flat are set up in stepwise motion, allowing the student to find appropriate resonating space without the difficulty of the octave leap. Once the leap is re-introduced the singer will already have a strong conception of resonance and registration through that range. It is up to the individual teacher to identify which of these exercises will be more useful for eliminating undesirable tension.

The second area of consideration with regards to *tessitura* is the brief *arioso* section during the *tempo di mezzo*, “travestiti in modo...lasciasti il suo Carlo.” There are difficulties in both breath management and *tessitura* in this section. This is especially true in the second phrase, which extends the initial motive into a long, rambling melody that makes its way gradually up through the *zona di passaggio*, then again back down. In addition, all of the rhythmically obvious places to breathe in the music—after the dotted half notes—would be unacceptable due to their being in the middle of a word. This is illustrated in Figure 6-10.
This seemingly points to a requirement that the phrase be sung in a single breath. However, a student who has difficulty maintaining the entire phrase on one breath has two options for breath placement. Both options involve a very fast breath to be placed after a dotted eight note and both are logical due to the presence of commas in the text. The first is after “Praga” and the second after “d’uccisi.” This will also allow the singer to reset the larynx and avoid tension that may naturally come from traversing the zona di passaggio so liberally in this phrase. An example of this is demonstrated by Matteo Manuguerra.  

Finally, the coda of the cabaletta, reproduced in Figure 6-11, is a test of maintaining constant tessitura in the zona di passaggio. The range of this entire page of music encompasses B-flat3 to E-flat4, the exact range of the zona di passaggio in a Verdi baritone. This, at the end of a nine-minute solo scena is the most difficult challenge presented in any of the arias in this monograph, and is a true litmus test of whether the student is equipped to continue to more advanced repertoire in the Verdi oeuvre. 

\[124\] Verdi, I masnadieri, 32. The lack of openness of the dotted half notes is a result of a poor printing plate in the original edition, and not of poor replication in this monograph.  

negotiate this passage, a singer must continue to ensure flexibility and stability in the laryngeal posture and breath management. Although the approach is similar to those established throughout this monograph, this page of music represents the most difficult passage of all the music presented herein.

Figure 6-11: The coda of "Tremate, o miseri" from I masnadieri

126 Ibid., 38.
6.3.5 Dynamic Control and Resonance

The major consideration with regard to dynamics and resonance is the orchestration, which is much larger and denser than those that we have seen until this point. As Julian Budden states, “the scoring throughout [the cabaletta] is particularly coarse.” This requires even more attention to the use of the singer’s formant to “cut” through the orchestra rather than overpower it, especially in the cabaletta.

In addition, in the cabaletta, there are several moments, such as the one shown below, where a dynamic marking of pianissimo is marked, but the heavy texture of the accompaniment would render a true pianissimo inaudible with an orchestra—or even with a piano. An example of this is shown in Figure 6-12.

Figure 6-12: Pianissimo dynamic marking with a thick orchestral texture in “Tremate, o miseri” from I masnadieri

In these cases, it is useful to rescale the singer’s dynamic range so that the pianissimo is the softest singing level that can be heard over this thick texture, while the fortissimo of the coda, discussed in Section 6.3.4 is the loudest singing level that still has flexibility and stability of the vocal mechanism and relies on resonator tuning to project rather than

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127 Budden, The Operas of Verdi, vol. 1, 324.
128 Verdi, I masnadieri, 37.
sheer power. This rescaling of the dynamic range will result in a much smaller range of dynamic expression than either of the other arias explored previously.\footnote{\textsuperscript{129}}

### 6.3.6 Performance Practice

There are three elements of performance practice that can assist with the technical difficulty of this aria. Unfortunately, they are all relatively minor and cannot substitute for any of the aforementioned specific passages. They can however help to ease the overall difficulty of the aria. The first is the cadenza of the \textit{cavatina}, the written version of which is shown in Figure 6-13.

![Figure 6-13: The written cadenza of “La sua lampada vitale” from \textit{I masnadieri}]{130}

Matteo Manuguerra offers an excellent simplification of this cadenza in his 1982 recording with the Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera. It is transcribed below:

\footnote{\textsuperscript{129}} It is also possible for the dynamic markings to be more indicative of moods than sonic levels, but this still results in the narrowing of the dynamic range as discussed.\footnote{\textsuperscript{130} Verdi, \textit{I masnadieri}, 30.}
The appeal of this cadenza is immediately apparent. Not only is it shorter, but it also eliminates the back-to-back figures of the turn followed by the leap of a major ninth in the written cadenza. The drawback of this alternative, however, is that it involves an extension to G4 in an aria that previously stopped at F4. Although many singers at this level will not have much difficulty with this extension, those who do may prefer the original cadenza.

The second way that the aria can be made more accessible is in the cut of the cabaletta repeat, as discussed above. This cut is exceptionally clean in the aria, and can be made in a number of places, but I suggest the first repeat be cut, and that the performers move directly from the grand pause in the ninth measure of the introduction to the accompaniment figure in the entry measure for the second repeat. As stated in Section 6.3.3, this reduces the number of occurrences of F4, the highest note in the cabaletta, to four.

Finally, the final three sung measures of the cabaletta can be modified to suit the singer in question. If the singer has a strong high A-flat, it can be interpolated into the

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132 In Verdi, I masnadieri, this amounts to a cut from the end of the first measure of the third line of p. 33 to the beginning of p. 36.
phrase, or even perhaps replace the phrase entirely as transcribed from Manuguerra in Figure 6-15.

![Figure 6-15: Transcription of Manuguerra's final notes of "Tremate, o miserî" from I masnadieri](image)

This modification, while highly satisfying if sung successfully, is completely optional and subject to the technique of the student attempting it.

### 6.4 Summary

“La sua lampada vitale...Tremate o miserî” represents a significant leap forward in difficulty from the previous selections in this monograph. The overall length of the aria and its specific technical demands require more advanced technical skill to achieve successfully. For this reason, it is an excellent bridge from the more straightforward arias covered earlier in the monograph to the wider Verdi repertoire for baritone. Although it has challenges, its overall range and *tessitura* are lower than the previous selections, making it the perfect choice to increase the overall difficulty without overtaxing students who are prepared for this increase in difficulty.

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133 Transcribed from “Matteo Manuguerra ‘La sua lampada vitale’ I Masnadieri (Verdi).”
7 Conclusions

In this monograph, I set out parameters for establishing readiness to embark on Verdi baritone repertoire, including technical challenges in the repertoire, to better understand the classification of the voice type. I then conducted a teaching-oriented analysis of three arias in an attempt to supplement the general knowledge of teachers in an advanced post-secondary environment who are ready to embark on a study of this repertoire with one or more of their students. I did this by conducting a small-scale examination of each aria under the lens of specific technical concepts: breath management and stamina, *sostenuto*, upper range and *aggiustamento*, registration and difficult *tessitura*, dynamic control and resonance, and performance practice. In the examination, I highlighted both general remarks about each aria and specific passages for the young singer who is newer to Verdi to consider in an effort to demystify the requirements of the Verdi baritone repertoire.

From these analyses, it became apparent that these arias are more accessible than the conventional wisdom on Verdi baritones would seem to imply, provided that the technical requirements are achievable in each singer that attempts these arias. The greatest difficulties faced in these arias revolve around three main areas: *tessitura* that crosses through the Verdi baritone’s *zona di passaggio*, long passages of *sostenuto* singing, and increased orchestration density requiring more focused vocal resonance to be heard through the texture. Although these represent the greatest difficulties, the other four areas identified in the analyses are still important elements in learning the arias effectively. Breath management, ease and flexibility through the upper range, co-ordinated registration, and performance practice are still vital to the teaching and singing of the repertoire, but will typically present less of a challenge to the advanced post-secondary student than the *zona di passaggio*, *sostenuto*, and resonance demands.

Because of the increased accessibility of the repertoire, we can now say that these arias constitute an appropriate starting point for study by students at the advanced post-secondary level looking to begin a study of Verdi repertoire. However, students who begin this course of study must be able to meet the technical demands, with proficiency
in breath management and comfort and flexibility of both the zona di passaggio and the upper range to avoid discomfort through the higher passages of the arias.

Despite the similarities found between the three arias in this monograph, we cannot generalize these trends to include other arias in the Verdi oeuvre. Each aria has its own merits and challenges and may be more or less difficult than the arias presented in this study. In particular, we cannot make any sort of claim of difficulty level of the entire Verdi baritone repertoire based on these analyses, as these arias represent an appropriate course of study from entry-level to slightly more advanced arias within the repertoire.

The style of analysis in this monograph can be extended to other Verdi baritone selections for two purposes. The first purpose is to flesh out this method of entry to the Verdi baritone repertoire. Whether it is used to find other appropriate entry-level selections or to continue the trajectory into the repertoire set by this study, this type of analysis can continue to be used to demystify the Verdi baritone repertoire for the less experienced singer.134

The second, and perhaps more long-reaching, extension of this study is a more systematic approach to the wider Verdi baritone repertoire, which could lead to a comprehensive guide similar to other operatic repertoire guides. In this type of a guide, the arias—and perhaps eventually entire roles—can be catalogued based on a number of factors, including those covered in this monograph, to better assist singers in repertoire selection, prediction of technical challenges faced in repertoire, and appropriateness of repertoire choices for their current technical abilities.

Regardless of the future use of these analyses, perhaps the most important implication of this study is the breaking down of stigma associated with the use of Verdi

134 This approach to demystifying the Verdi baritone repertoire is not intended to be a specific “technique” for this repertoire or voice classification. Rather, it is intended to highlight specific challenges within this repertoire and present some aria selections that are more accessible as entry points to the repertoire within a more global understanding of voice technique. Where individual teachers’ models for or solutions to some of the technical challenges presented in this monograph differ from my own, they can easily be substituted without sacrificing the nature of the specific challenges.
baritone repertoire at the advanced post-secondary level. Although students at this level may not be physiologically developed enough to perform any of these roles professionally, the repertoire can still be used didactically, provided the technical wherewithal is present to study excerpts from the roles healthily. The result of creating such excerpts will be to prepare those students who could become true Verdi baritones later in life for the kinds of technical challenges the repertoire presents, and prepare them for the performance style that the repertoire requires. If nothing else, we can better prepare these singers for their later professional lives in the same way that we already prepare singers with lighter and higher voices: by presenting carefully selected excerpts of the actual repertoire for their voice type in a controlled environment that is conducive to their overall technical and musical development.
Appendix – Performance Event Programs

Performance Event 1 – Solo Recital

Friday March 2, 2012
8pm, von Kuster Hall
Andrew Rethazi, baritone
Blair Salter, piano

Kindertotenlieder

“Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n”
“Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen”
“Wenn dein Mütterlein”
“Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen”
“In diesem Wetter”

Gustav Mahler
(1860-1911)

- Intermission -

Soirées d’automne a l’Infrascata

“Oblak a mrákota jest vukol neho”
“Skryse má a pavezá má Ty jsi”
“Slys, ó Boze, slys modlitbu mou”
“Hospodín jest muj pastyr”
“Boze! Boze! Písen novou”
“Slys ó Boze, voláni mé”
“Pri rekách babylonských”
“Popatriz na mne a smiluj se nade mnou”
“Pozdvihují oči svých k horám”
“Zpívejte Hospodínu píšen novou”

Antonin Dvorák
(1841-1904)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance degree.
Performance Event 2 – Opera Role

March 13-14, 2013
8pm, Paul Davenport Theatre
Timothy Nelson, director
Simone Luti, musical director

*The Consul* (Role: John Sorel)  
Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911-2007)

Performance Event 3 – Lecture Recital

**VERDI’S DESTRUCTION OF FORM**  
A Lecture-Recital

Andrew Rethazi, baritone  
Simone Luti, piano

*Monday, April 28, 2014*  
8:00pm  
*Talbot College, Room TC100*  
*Western University*
“Eterna la memoria...Quanto un mortal può chiedere”
Aria for Gusmano from Alzira
Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

“La sua lampada vitale...Tremate o miseri”
Aria for Francesco from I masnadieri

“Sacra la scelta è d’un consorte...Ah, fu giusto il mio sospetto”
Aria for Miller from Luisa Miller

“Fuggi, regal fantasima”
Scena and Aria for Macbeth from Macbeth

“Per me giunto è il di supremo”
Aria for Rodrigo from Don Carlo

“Io morrò ma lieto in core”
Aria for Rodrigo from Don Carlo

“L’onore, Ladri”
Aria for Falstaff from Falstaff

This lecture-recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts: Voice Performance.
Performance Event 4 – Solo Recital

Tuesday August 30, 2016
6pm, Paul Davenport Theatre
Andrew Rethazi, baritone
Judith McCrea, piano

Cupo è il sepolcro e mutolo
Giuseppe Verdi
(1813-1901)

Three Sonnets of Petrarch (1883 setting)
Sonnet XXXIX “Benedetto sia il giorno”
Sonnet XC “Pace non trovo”
Sonnet CV “Io vidi interra angelici costumi”

Three Sonnets of Petrarch
Sonnet 63 “Casting eyes upon my newfound paleness”
Sonnet 164 “Now that sky and earth and wind are hushed”
Sonnet 300 “What I a grudge I hold against you, selfish earth”

- Intermission -

Soirées d’automne a l’Infrascata
La lontananza
L’amante spagnuolo
Amore e morte
Amor marinaro

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797-1848)

Il pescatore canta
Chitarrata abruzzese
Tristezza
L’ultima canzone
L’alba separa dalla luce l’ombra

Francesco Paolo Tosti
(1846-1916)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance degree.
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Recordings and Online Streams


Curriculum Vitae

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