

a ciò che può mancare a questa traduzione...", 1 page, oblong 8vo (12.2 x 17.4cm), rust-stain to lower edge from a paper clip

THE LETTER IN WHICH VERDI PRESENTS ONE OF HIS GREATEST WORKS TO CAMMARANO, CALLING IT "IL TROVATORE" FOR THE FIRST TIME. Based on Antonio García Gutiérrez's play *El Trovador* (1836), Verdi's original intention was to rename it "The Gypsy" (Mossa no.77, p.180), hence transferring the opera's centre of gravity from Manrico to Azucena. Julian Budden suggested that Giuseppina Strepponi might have translated it, since it was otherwise unknown in Italy (see Budden, ii, 59, Mossa, p.181n), but this letter suggests that it was undertaken by the composer himself. *Il trovatore* is a magnificent fusion of operatic archetypes. Budden sums up Verdi's collaboration with Cammarano: "Take a composer at the height of his melodic vitality: fire his imagination through an extravagant and bizarre plot [in which the translation relied mainly on intuition]; then channel it through the most conventional of libretto structures—such is the recipe for one of the strangest and most powerful phenomena in the world of Italian opera" (Budden, ii, p.67).

28) *Busseto, 11 February 1851*—Verdi encloses the last two acts of his translation of García Gutiérrez's play, repeating that the Italian text is more intuition than translation, expressing the hope that he likes it as much as he does, asking him to draft a scenario as soon as possible, so that he can study the outline, and to send him the poetry bit by bit, giving carte blanche to find suitable Italian equivalents for the Spanish names ("...Eccovi il resto del *Trovatore*... Vi ripeto che questo dramma è piuttosto indovinato che tradotto...scrivetemi a Venezia e ditemi se questo dramma piace a voi come piace a me. Se vi piace mandatemmi a più presto la selva onde io la possa studiare..."), 1 page, 8vo

29) *Busseto, 21 July 1851*—Verdi acknowledges receipt of the text of the *terzetto finale* to Act 1 of *Il trovatore*, praising Cammarano's work and predicting that the opera will be successful if such high standards are maintained, discussing the activities which have prevented his work on the opera, though he does not mention the death of his mother, reporting requests for operas from Rome and Venice, listing the singers available in Rome, which would be better suited to *Il trovatore* than Naples, albeit lacking a suitable Azucena, discussing the merits of [the mezzo soprano Rita] Gabussi for that role, and wondering about her availability for Naples or elsewhere; Verdi states that, were she free, he would be inclined to secure her for *Il trovatore* at Rome, but if the San Carlo has her, then he could possibly reconsider his refusal to compose for Naples, suggesting that the librettist might intervene for him (...La compagnia di Roma sarebbe più addattata pel *Trovatore*, ma vi manca l'attrice per l'Azucena, per quell' Azucena a cui io tengo tanto! La Gabussi parmi farebbe benissimo quella parte, ma non so se sia scritturata o libera, a Napoli or altrove...). 2 pages, 8vo, integral autograph address leaf, postmarked ("22 Luglio 1851"), annotated by the recipient ("T.12 ritardata"), traces of red seal, thin paper with some show-through

A famous and oft-quoted letter which up to now has always been published incomplete, lacking the last ten lines, and with completely the wrong date. (Mossa, no.98). It is highly important, dealing for the first time with the casting of the singers for *Trovatore*, of which Caruso famously remarked that "all it needs is the four greatest singers in the world".

The singers working at Rome included Teresa De-Giuli Borsi, Gaetano Fraschini and Filippo Colini (all used by Verdi in *La battaglia di Legnano*). Venice offered Erminia Frezzolini and Filippo Colini (both sang in *Giovanna d'Arco*). Yet the decision

seems to revolve around who would sing the contralto role of the gypsy Azucena. Verdi once said "if I were a primadonna (a fine thing!) I would want to sing that role". This is significant as Verdi's original idea for the title was "The Gypsy". Rita Gabussi never created any role for Verdi, and Azucena was sung by the otherwise obscure Emilia Goggi.

Absent from the published version are Verdi's words of praise for Cammarano's Act 1 finale: ("Infida! Qual voce... Ah! dalle tenebre tratta in errore io fui"). The 1913 editors of *I copialettere*, using Giuseppina Strepponi's transcript, misdated it September 1851. The postmark confirms Verdi's dating of this letter to 21 July; it is in fact the earliest of three delayed letters that Cammarano reports receiving only on 23 September. See the following letters: 16 August and 1 September (Mossa no.99, but cf Mossa, no.91, p.208). For this reason, Verdi sent another version in September based partly on Giuseppina's transcript. Cammarano apparently received nothing from Verdi for about three months. See Mossa no.98, p.221; F. Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi*, (1959) II, p.142; *I copialettere*, p.125; C. Osborne no.70; J. Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, II (1978), p.62.

30) *Busseto, 16 August 1851*—Verdi expresses consternation that he has received text for Leonora's aria [i.e. the celebrated 'Miserere' scene at the start of Part 4], but not Parts 2 and 3 of the opera, declaring that he has never met the man who was supposed to have delivered the libretto, urging him to find out what happened and to send him Parts 2 and 3 again, explaining that all he has received are the two numbers for Part 1, which he has composed and now the aria for Part 4 ("...In fine io non ho ricevuto del *Trovatore* che due pezzi che compongono la prima parte, e quest' aria d' Eleonora della parte quarta. E voi avete ricevuta una mia lettera in cui vi diceva che sarei disposto rianodare le trattative con Napoli per poter fare eseguire la parte d' Azucena alla Gabussi?..."), 1 page, 8vo, integral autograph address leaf, postmarked, annotated by the recipient ("T.13. ritardata"), ink staining along folds, address-leaf with darker staining

Cammarano had sent Part 2 of his libretto in July, to be delivered by hand, but, not hearing anything from Verdi, he guessed it had gone astray and sent him another copy on 23 August. Meanwhile, Verdi had just received the text of Leonora's "Quel suon, quelle preci solenni funeste...Tu vedrai che amore in terra", with the monks' chorus and Manrico's cries from the tower, in the 'Miserere' scene at the beginning Part 4 (cf. Mossa, no.94, pp.209-210). The cantabile, "D'amor sull'ali rosee" was only added later, after Cammarano's death.

31) *Busseto, 1 September 1851*—VERDI PROVIDES ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS OF TWO SEPARATE SCENES IN THE OPERA, suggesting new words, underlined for emphasis, complaining that Luna's Act 2 aria "Ora per me fatale" may be great poetry but has no dramatic impetus, and that the finale to Act 2 has departed from the original scenario [of April 1851] where Leonora takes the veil, producing a very conventional slow ensemble with a *stretta*, halting the flow of the dramatic action; Verdi suggests a different structure to these scenes, with brief and cogent dialogue for all the characters, avoiding conventional ensembles with an adagio and cabalettas, describing in detail a grand recitative in the scene for Azucena and Manrico, giving prominence to the gypsy, suggesting several lines and phrases as examples, apologising for his brusqueness and saying he not passing judgement but merely expressing his opinion, 3 pages, 4to, integral autograph address panel, annotated by the recipient ("T.14 ritardata"), traces of red seal, postmarked ("Borgo S. Donnino, 2 Sett. 1851"), light overall browning, creasing at folds