

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LETTERS BY VERDI TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED FOR SALE AT AUCTION. Verdi constructs whole scenes, outlining the verses needed for each character, visualizing the staging, coordinating on-stage and off-stage characters, indicating which verses relate to arias, duets or ensembles and even suggests the wording required. Throughout, he is intent on pent-up dramatic action, and in avoiding conventional cavatinas and cabalettas (especially in ensemble scenes) to bring about something wholly original. Although the eventual finale to Part 2 differs markedly from Verdi's outline, it does avoid conventional structures and "the effect of this after the short action-packed interlude in faster time is to crown the finale far more effectively than any stretta could have done" (Budden, ii, p.92).

"..Se voi aveste fatto un semplice e breve Recitativo del Trovatore con Ruiz, la sortita d'altra parte della scena del Conte (prima o dopo poco importa) il canto corale interno delle religiose che continuasse fino alla fine, unito a questo canto (per fare concerto) una strofa interna d'Eleonora che ricordasse il suo amore od altro, et[c], un' altra strofa al Trovatore sulla scena, un' altra al Conte (ciò avrebbe formato il pezzo concertato) et. et...Dopo sorte Leonora colle religiose dalla chiesa passando avanti il Trovatore, questi alza la visiera —Non m'inganno!...è desso. Il conte a suoi:—questo è il momento!...coraggio!—Il Trov[atore:]. Vieni col tuo Manrique. Tutti atterriti. Il Trovatore!! Così questa scena avrebbe avuto più carattere, e soprattutto più novità

32) [Busseto], 9 September 1851—Verdi confirms that all he has received of Cammarano's libretto is Part 1, the finale to Part 2 and Leonora's aria in Part 3, returns a copy of *Teresa e Foscarini*, and repeats, largely verbatim, his enquiry about the possibility of Rita Gabussi singing the role of Azucena (see Letter no.29), pointing out that Rome and Venice had requested operas from him, Rome offering the singers De-Giuli, Fraschini and Colini, Venice Frezzolini and Coletti, remarking that the company at Rome would be better suited to *Il trovatore*, albeit lacking a suitable Azucena, discussing Gabussi's suitability for the role ("...per quel Azucena a cui io tengo tanto. La Gabussi parmi farebbe benissimo quella parte..."), and suggesting, were she free, that he could possibly reconsider his earlier refusal to compose for Naples, asking the librettist to intervene for him ("...lo saprete trattare in modo che la mia dignità d'uomo e d'artista non abbi ad essere offesa per nulla..."), but not to commit him to anything definite, since after two months delay and letters lost, he has had to make other commitments and does not know if he will be free by the time he receives an answer, 2 pages, 4to, integral autograph address-leaf, the transcribed passage marked by Verdi with quotation marks, annotated by the recipient ("T.11"), postmarked ("Cremona, 13 Set[...]"). overall light browning, slight splitting at folds

Partly published in Mossa, no. 98 (cf. letter 29)

33) Busseto, 3 November 1851—Verdi observes that Cammarano's letter of 18 October contained the text for two numbers, one of which appears to be unfinished, explaining that he cannot continue composing *Il trovatore* with the libretto sent piecemeal, as it prevents him being able to view the work as a whole, and to assess the characters and atmosphere ("colorito") without falling into convention and monotony; he asks whether Cammarano has finished the libretto and

suggests that he send the scenario to Rome to test the approval of the censors, retaining the libretto itself until Verdi has signed a contract (".....vi ho trovato due pezzi uno de' quali, parmi, non finito. Io non ho scritto ancora una nota di questo Trovatore perchè così a sbalzi come me lo mandate, non posso formare nella mia idea un quadro, e distribuire i colori onde non cadere in monotonia...."). 1 page, 8vo, integral autograph address leaf, postmarked and annotated by the recipient, some smudges, traces of red seal

34) Busseto, 15 November 1851—Verdi repeats that his work has been held up and *Il trovatore* may never be completed because Cammarano only sends the libretto piecemeal, outlining two specific concerns: Cammarano's wish to omit the convent scene, which Verdi finds extremely effective and that Colini might be unsuited to the role of Luna; Verdi finally reports that the Ronzi brothers had written to him on behalf of the Naples administration, but that there was no assurance as to what singers would be available there ("...io non ho scritto ancora una nota, e vi confesso candidamente che colla poesia a sbalzi non capisco niente, e mi è impossibile scrivere. Per me vi è un' altra difficoltà se si volesse levare la scena in cui Leonora vorrebbe monacarsi (mi piaceva tanto nell' originale..."). 2 pages 8vo, integral autograph address leaf, annotated, traces of red seal, seal-tear, postmarked, a few stains

35) Busseto, 25 November 1851—Verdi notes that the Rome censors have requested some alterations in the libretto, in particular the use of the sacred words in the 'Miserere', but have granted him the right to compose the music as he wishes; Verdi comments sardonically on the latter concession but urges Cammarano to take back the scenario and complete the libretto as soon as he can, since he has given up on the idea of composing for Rome, and has no doubt that another opera house will produce it ("...di più di evitare parole sacre nei cori interni, lasciando però a me la facoltà di fare quel genere di musica che voglio. Sono gratissimo a tanta degnazione, ma ... non dubitate, io troverò il sito per farlo rappresentare..."). 1 page, 8vo, integral autograph address-leaf, postmarked light overall browning, splitting at folds to address leaf

36) Genoa, 12 December 1851—Verdi urges Cammarano to complete the libretto, expressing agreement with his proposal to revise the 'Introduzione' as he wishes, confident that, wherever it is produced, it will not encounter the same problems with the censors as in Rome; he announces his immediate departure for Paris, requesting he send all the poetical drafts to him there, and explaining that he wishes to have the opera completed by the time he returns, 1 page, 8vo, integral autograph address panel

Despite wranglings with the censors, *Il trovatore* was staged at the Teatro Apollo, Rome, on 19 January 1853, beginning its triumphant march throughout the operatic world.

Julian Budden's assessment reflects the tension between Verdi's quest for originality and his librettist's attachment to traditional forms: "If it is not the composer's supreme masterpiece, it is none the less without parallel in the whole operatic literature—a late flowering of the Italian Romantic tradition possible only to one who had seen beyond it" (Budden, ii, 112). Mossa published three later letters by Verdi to Cammarano: 20 February 1852 (commiserating on the librettist's illness); 3 July (asking about Rosina Penco, the