Donizetti's Operas

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1816-1825

Il Pigmalione (1816), one act opera

Librettist: Adapted from A. S. Sografi

First performed: Believed not to have been performed until October 13, 1960 at Teatro Donizetti, Bergamo.

Recordings: The Golden Age of Opera EJS – 296 D (LP) is a live recording of that production. Bongiovanni GB 2109/0-2 is a more modern performance and includes fragments from two early, probably uncompleted, Donizetti operas, *L'Olimpiade* and *La bella prigioniera* as well as the much later one act opera buffa *Rita*.

L'ira d'Achille (1817), fragments

Librettist: Scenes from a libretto, possibly by Romani, originally done for an opera by Nicolini.

First performed: Possibly at Bologna where he was studying. First modern performance in Bergamo, 1998.

Recordings: Live 1998 performance from Bergamo available on Celestial Audio CA483.

Enrico di Borgogna (1818), opera semiseria

Librettist: Bartolomeo Merelli

First performed:November 14, 1818 at Teatro San Luca, Venice.

Recordings: A recording of the first modern revival of the opera at Vadstena is now available on Celestial Audio CA 1397. Enrico's Act 1 entrance aria sung by Della Jones is included in A Hundred Years of Italian Opera, 1810-1820, Opera Rara ORCH103. The same recording is also included on Della Jones sings Donizetti, Opera Rara, ORR 203 and The Young Donizetti, Opera RaraORR 299.

Una follia (1818), farsa, score and libretto have been lost.

Librettist: Bartolomeo Merelli

First performed:December 15, 1818 at Teatro San Luca,Venice.

Recordings: None

Le nozze in villa (1819), opera buffa

Librettist: Bartolomeo Merelli

First performed: During Carnival 1820-21 at Teatro Vecchio, Mantua.

Recordings: None known but one number is included on The Young Donizetti, Opera RaraORR 299.

Il falegname di Livonia (also known as *Pietro, il grande, tsar delle Russie*) (1819), opera buffa

Librettist: Gherardo Bevilacqua-Aldobrandini

First performed:December 26, 1819 at the Teatro San Samuele, Venice.

Recordings:Live Martina Franca 2004 performance on Dynamic CDS 473. The Act 2 sextet is included in A Hundred Years of Italian Opera, 1810-1820, Opera Rara ORCH103.

Zoraida di Granata(1822), opera seria
Librettist: Bartolomeo Merelli

First performed: January 28, 1822 at the Teatro Argentina, Rome.

Recordings: Opera Rara, ORC 17. It also includes pieces written for the 1824 revision of the opera.

La zingara (1822), opera semiseria
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed:May 12, 1822 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Dynamic CDS 396/1-2. Live performance from Festival della Valle d'Itria, Martina Franca

La lettera anonima (1822), farsa
Librettist: Giulio Genoino

First performed: June 29, 1822 at the Teatro del Fondo, Naples.

Recordings: On Stage 4702 and on One for you label, 1972 live recording from Naples with Panerai.

Chiara e Serafina (also known as *I pirati*) (1822), opera semiseria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed:October 26, 1822 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: None known but one number is included on The Young Donizetti, Opera RaraORR 299.

Alfredo il grande (1823), opera seria
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed: July 2, 1823 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: None known. Della Jones sings an aria from it on Della Jones sings Donizetti, Opera Rara, ORR 203 and Bruce Ford also on Romantic Heroes, Opera Rara ORR 201 and on The Opera Rara Collection, Volume 2, ORR 209.

Il fortunate inganno (1823), opera buffa
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed: September 3, 1823 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Dynamic CDS 228/1-2. Live performance from Festival della Valle d'Itria, Martina Franca

L'ajo nell'imbarazzo (1824), opera buffa (also known as *Don Gregorio*)
Librettist: Jacopo Ferretti

First performed:February 4, 1824 at the Teatro Valle, Rome.

Recordings: Melodram MEL 152 (LP). Live performance (October 30, 1957) from Bergamo.

Emilia di Liverpool (later revised as *L'eremitaggio di Liverpool*) (1824), opera semiseria
Librettist: not known, later revision by Giuseppe Checcherini

First performed:July 28, 1824 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 8. Includes both the original and the revised version. There is a rather curious recording on VOCE-30 (LP), of the revised version broadcast on September 8, 1957 for the 750 th anniversary of the granting of Liverpool's charter. It has a spoken commentary by Bernard Miles and its main claim to fame is a young Joan Sutherland as Emilia.

Alahor in Granata (1825), opera seria
Librettist: Initials M.A

First performed: January 7, 1826 at the Teatro Carolina, Palermo.

Recordings: 1998 concert performance on Alma Viva DS 0125.

1826-1829

Elvida (1826), opera seria
Librettist: Giovanni Schmidt

First performed: July 6, 1826 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2370-2, Opera Rara ORC 29. The latter includes the aria for Alfonso.

Gabriella di Vergy (1826, revised 1838), opera seria
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed: Original version in November 29, 1869 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples. Revised version in August 1978 for Opera Rara recording, London

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 3.

Olivo e Pasquale (1826), opera buffa
Librettist: Jacopo Ferretti

First performed: January 7, 1827 at Teatro Valle, Rome.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2005/7.

Otto mesi in due ore (also known as *Gli esiliati in Siberia*) (1827), opera romantica. There is also a revised French version *Élisabeth, ou la fille de l'exilé*, see here for an article on the interrelationships.
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: May 13, 1827 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Actes Sud OMA 34108.

Il borgomastro di Saardam (1827), opera buffa
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed:August 19, 1827 at the Teatro del Fondo, Naples.

Recordings: Myto 991202. Recording of a performance done in Zaandam (Saardam) in 1973.

Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali (1827, revised in 1831), farsa. Nowadays opera companies, particularly outside Italy, sometimes try to give it a snappier title, one of the most popular being *Viva la Mamma*.
Librettist: Gaetano Donizetti

First performed: November 21, 1827 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Now available in several recordings, e.g. Bongiovanni 2091/2-2 which also includes Betly. Bella Voce BLV 107.322 is a live recording from Bregenz, 1976 featuring two stalwarts of Italian opera of that era, Giuseppe Taddei and Leo Nucci. However, this is definitely an opera that needs to be seen rather than just heard.

L'esule di Roma (also known as *Il proscritto*) (1827), opera seria
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: January 1, 1828 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2045/6-2

Alina, regina di Golconda (1828), opera semiseria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed: May 12, 1828 at the Teatro Carlo Fenice, Genoa.

Recordings: Nuova Era 6701.

Gianni di Calais (1828), opera semiseria
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: August 2, 1828 at the Teatro del Fondo, Naples.

Recordings: None known. The sextet from it is included in Donizetti Scenes and Overtures, Opera Rara, ORR 207 and on The Opera Rara Collection, Volume 2, ORR 209.

Il giovedi grasso (also known as *Il nuovo Pourceaugnac*) (1828), farsa
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: February 26, 1829 at the Teatro del Fondo, Naples

Recordings: Foyer 1-CF 2036, Live recording from 1970 Wexford Festival. A more modern performance is Nuovo Era 1131.

Il paria (1828), opera seria
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: January 12, 1829 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2300/1-2, live performance from Teatro Masini di Faenza, 2001.

Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth (1829), opera seria
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed:July 6, 1829 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: Fonit Cetra RFCD 2005.

I pazzi per progetto (1829-30), farsa
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed:February 6, 1830 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2070-2.

Il diluvio universale (1829-30, revised 1833-4), azione tragica-sacra
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed:February 28, 1830 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: VOCE-100 (LP), Italian Opera Rarities LO 7736-37 (CD), the revised version in a 1985 live recording from the Teatro Comunale dell'Opera di Genova. A more modern recording is from Opera Rara, ORC 31.

1830-1833

Imelda de' Lambertazzi (1830), opera seria
Librettist: Andrea Tottola

First performed:September 5, 1830 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: Nuova Era 6778/79, Opera Rara ORC36.

Anna Bolena (1830), opera seria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed: December 26, Teatro Carcano, Milan

Recordings: Several recordings, including Gencer, Gruberova, Scotto, Sills, Souliotis and Sutherland. The most important historically is that ofthe April 1957 revival at La Scala with Callas in the title role BJR109/3 (LP). This revival was a major influence on the rediscovery of Donizetti's hitherto forgotten operas by demonstrating their dramatic potential rather than just demanding singing ability.Dynamic have released a DVD of the 1840 version from the 2013 Rieti Festival.

Gianni di Parigi (1831), opera buffa
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed:September 10, 1839 at La Scala, Milan

Recordings: Nuova Era 6752/53. Taken from live recordings of a 1988 Bergamo production.

Francesca di Foix (1831), opera semiseria
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: May 30, 1831 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: Opera Rara, ORC 28.

La romanziera e l'uomo nero (1831), farsa
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni

First performed: June 18, 1831 at Teatro del Fondo, Naples.

Recordings:Opera Rara, ORC 19. Bongiovanni GB 2287/88-2, live performance Teatro Sociale di Rovigo, 2000.

Fausta (1831), opera seria
Librettist: Domenico Gilardoni, Gaetano Donizetti

First performed: January 12, 1832 at Teatro San Carlo, Naples

Recordings: HRE 381-3(LP), Gala GL 100.617, Italian Opera Rarities LO 7701-03 (CD) live performance from 1981 Rome Opera production.

Ugo, conte di Parigi (1831-2), opera seria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed:March 13, 1832 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 1

L'elisir d'amore (1832), opera buffa
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed: May 12, at the Teatro Canobbiana, Milan.

Recordings: Many recordings. One of historical interest is Eklipse Records EKR CD 8, a live recording from the Teatro San Carlo, Naples in January, 1953 with Beniamino Gigli as Nemorino and his daughter Rina as Adina.

Sancia di Castiglia (1832), opera seria
Librettist: Pietro Salatino

First performed: November 4, 1832 at Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: VOCE-103(LP). A live recording with Caballé has also been advertised, for example, Celestial Audio CA436.

Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo (1832), opera semiseria
Librettist: Jacopo Ferretti

First performed: January 2, 1833 at Teatro Valle, Rome.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2056/8-2.

Parisina d'Este (1833), opera seria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed: March 17, 1833 at Teatro della Pergola, Florence.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2212/3-2. There is also a 1974 live recording from New York with superb singing from Caballé on Myto 984193, previously released on LP as BJRS 134-3.

Torquato Tasso (1833), opera semiseria
Librettist: Jacopo Ferretti

First performed: September 9, 1833 at Teatro Valle, Rome.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2028/0-2. There is also a live recording from the 1974 Camden Festival on Raritas, OR 9(LP) and Celestial Audio CA247(CD).

Lucrezia Borgia (1833, revised in 1839 and 1840), opera seria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed:December 26, 1833 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: Several recordings, the best known of which is probably with Sutherland in the title role,Decca 421497, D93D 3 (LP). This includes elements of both the original and revised versions but with the 1833 finale and its infamous cabaletta "Era desso il figlio mio" that was included on the demand of the primadonna, Henriette Méric-Lalande. Sutherland's performance (Royal Opera House, London, 1977) is also available on DVD.

1834-1838

Rosmonda d'Inghilterra (1834, revised as *Eleonora di Gujenna*, 1839), opera seria
Librettist: Felice Romani

First performed:February 27, 1834 at Teatro della Pergola, Florence.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 13.

Maria Stuarda (1834, revised as *Buondelmonte* in 1834 in response to the censors' refusal to allow *Maria Stuarda*), opera seria
Librettist: Giuseppe Bardari

First performed: December 30, 1835 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: Increasing number of recordings including an English version, Mary Stuart, with Janet Baker singing one of her favourite roles (Chandos 3017) as well as a DVD/video.

Gemma di Vergy (1834), opera seria
Librettist: Emanuele Bidèra

First performed: December 26, 1834 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: Allegro OPD-1379, 1975 live performance with Caballé. Myto 952124, 1976 live recording from Paris with Caballé. Another 1976 live recording from Carnegie Hall, New York, also with Caballé, was issued on CBS 79303 (LP).

Marino Faliero (1835), opera seria
Librettist: Emanuele Bidèra

First performed: March 12, 1835, Théatre-Italien, Paris.

Recordings: Agorà 229. There is a live recording of the first 20th century revival at Bergamo in October, 1966 on Raritas OR 4 (LP)

Lucia di Lammermoor (1835, revised for Paris as *Lucie de Lammermoor* in 1839), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed:September 26, 1835 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: Innumerable recordings of Donizetti's best known serious opera. For sheer singing, Sutherland, Polygram (Decca) 410193, is still the measure but for expressiveness then Callas is possibly to be preferred with her live recordings conducted by von Karajan (Virtuoso 2697273, Berlin; Legato SRO 831-2, Milan), generally thought the best of several versions from her. Over the years, sopranos have wrought havoc with the score, transposing and adding to it with the goal of increasing its effectiveness as a showpiece. Two recordings claim to go back to the original score and keys:- Caballé on Universal 470421 (was on Philips) and Rost on Sony 63174. Unfortunately, virtue is not really rewarded in either case. Sills on Westminster (Universal) 471250-2 uses a glass harmonica in the Mad Scene. This was Donizetti's original intention but he replaced it by the flute, probably because of the difficulty of finding players. Recently, two recordings of the French version, Lucie di Lammermoor, have appeared with Ciofi on Dynamic 204 and Dessay on Angel Classics 45528.

Belisario (1835-6), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: February 4, 1836 at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice.

Recordings: ARKADIA CDHP 586.2, Gencer in an October 7, 1970 live performance from Bergamo with excerpts also from two May 1969 live performances in Venice. Opera d'Oro OPD 31258 has the complete May 14 Venice recording.

Il campanello di notte (1836), farsa
Librettist: Gaetano Donizetti

First performed: June 1, 1836 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2207-2

Betly (also known as *La capanna svizzera*) (1836), opera buffa
Librettist: Gaetano Donizetti

First performed: August 21, 1836 at the Teatro Nuovo, Naples.

Recordings: Bongiovanni GB 2091/2-2, also includes Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali.

L'assedio di Calais (1836), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed:November 19, 1836 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 9.

Pia de'Tolomei (1836-7), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: February 18, 1837 at the Teatro Apollo, Venice.

Recordings: Melodram MEL 37017 is a live recording of the first staging in the 20th century at Siena in 1967. Also includes a 1962 live recording from Naples of Maria di Rohan. On Stage OS 4709 has an RAI Milan performance, 1976, also reissued on Bongiovanni 2379/80-2. Recent recordings include Opera Rara (ORC 30) that includes both endings and Dynamic (DVD 33488 and CD CDS 488) taken from the 2004 production at La Fenice, Venice

Roberto Devereux (1837), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: October 28, 1837 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: FONIT CETRA DOC 65 (LP) is a live recording of the first 20th century staging in Naples in 1964 with Leyla Gencer in the role of Elizabeth giving arguably her best performance on record during a period of two decades when she was a mainstay of bel canto opera with several live recordings of several rare Donizetti operas to her name.

Beverly Sills also gives the best "queen" of her recordings of the so-called "Three Queens" – Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda and Roberto Devereux- a New York City Opera marketing concept rather any intention on Donizetti's part. This set has recently been re-released on Polygram (Decca) 465967. There is also a DVD/video of her performance in a 1975 Wolf Trap production.

Maria de Rudenz (1837), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: January 30, 1838 at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 16

Poliuto (1838, revised in 1839 as a grand opéra, *Les Martyrs*, for Paris after the censors in Naples refused to allow it to be staged), opera seria
Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: November 30, 1848 at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: Nuova Era 6776/77, created from a live 1989 Rome Opera production. For sheer atmosphere, Callas, in a live 1960 La Scala performance, takes a lot of beating, particularly the extended ovation on her entrance, as the audience welcomed her back after an absence from La Scala caused by disagreements with the management.
The French adaptation, *Les Martyrs*, has been recorded with Gencer as Pauline on Italian Opera Rarities LO 7716, a live performance from La Fenice, Venice. She is also featured in a 1975 live performance from Bergamo on Myto 972154 with some additional excerpts from *Lucia di Lammermoor*.
Opera Rara, Orc52, is a modern recording.

1839-1843

Le Duc d'Albe (1839, not performed. Completed and revised by others as *Il Duc d'Alba*), grand opéra. The original French version was completed by Giorgio Battistelli and premiered in Gent by Opera Vlaanderen in 2012.
Librettists: Eugène Scribe and Charles Duvéyrier

First performed: As Il Duc d'Alba on March 22, 1882 at the Teatro Apollo, Rome

Recordings: Opera D'Oro OPD 1178 is a live recording of a revival of Il Duc d'Alba from the1959 Spoleto Festival. There is a live recording of the Gent performance on Dynamic CDS7665. Opera Rara (ORC 54) have recorded the incomplete French version without the Battistelli additions.

La Fille du régiment (1839, later revised as an opera buffa, *La figlia di reggimento*), opéra comique.
Librettists: Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean-Francois-Albert Bayard

First performed: February 11, 1840 at the Opéra Comique, Paris.

Recordings: Several recordings of both language versions are now available, of which Sutherland/Pavarotti, Polygram (Decca) 414520, is perhaps the most recommendable. Also of historic interest and highly enjoyable is that with Lily Pons from a Metropolitan Opera, New York, production of December 1940 (Naxos 8110018-9). Both Sills and Sutherland have made very watchable videos of it.

L'Ange de Nisida (1839, not performed but some of it reworked as *La Favorite*), opera semiseria. In 2018 a critical edition of the opera was made by Candida Mantica.
Librettists: Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vae

First performed: July 18, 2018 - first performance of the new critical edition at the Royal Opera House, London.

Recordings: Opera Rara will be issuing a recording stemming from the premiere.

La Favorite (1840, also revised in Italian as *La Favorita*), grand opéra
Librettists: Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaez

First performed: December 2, 1840 at the Opéra, Paris.

Recordings: Both versions have been recorded several times particularly the Italian version despite the fact that the original French version is considered much superior. A recent French version is on RCA 66229. Of particular historic interest is a 1912 recording of a Paris Opéra production (Marston Pathé Opera Series Volume 2 (CD), Bourg, BG 4001-2-3 (LP)).

Adelia (also known as *La figlia dell'arciere*) (1840), opera seria
Librettists: Felice Romani and Girolamo Marini

First performed: February 11, 1841 at the Teatro Apollo, Rome.

Recordings: RICORDI RFCD 2029

Rita (also known as *Le mari battu*) (1841), opéra comique
Librettist: Gustave Vaez

First performed: May 7, 1860 at the Opéra-Comique, Paris

Recordings: Nuova Era 7045, *Rita* only. Bongiovanni GB 2109/0-2 is a 2 CD set that also includes *Il Pigmalione* as well as fragments from two early, probably uncompleted, Donizetti operas, *L'Olimpiade* and *La bella prigioniera*.

Maria Padilla (1841, revised 1842), opera seria
Librettists: Gaetano Rossi and Gaetano Donizetti

First performed:December 26, 1841 at La Scala, Milan.

Recordings: Opera Rara ORC 6

Linda di Chamounix (1841-2, revised 1842), opera semiseria
Librettist: Gaetano Rossi

First performed: May 19, 1842, at the Kärntnertorteater, Vienna.

Recordings: Several recordings, including Mariella Devia on ARTS 47151-2 and Edita Gruberova on Nightingale NC070561-2 and Eglise Gutiérrez on Opera Rara (ORC 43).

Caterina Cornaro (1842-3), opera seria
Librettist: Giacomo Sacchero

First performed:January 18, 1844, at Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

Recordings: There are at least two live recordings of Caballé in the title role, with Carreras as Gerardo on Opera D'Oro 1266 and with Aragall (1973) on Estro Armonica EA 049 (LP). There is also a live recording from Naples with Gencer on Myto 92153. Opera Rara have issued a modern recording (ORC 48) with Carmen Giannattasio.

Don Pasquale (1842), opera buffa
Librettists: Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti

First performed: January 3, 1843, at the Théâtre-Italien, Paris.

Recordings: Many recordings, although a definitive one has proved elusive. Schipa on Opera D'Oro 1224 is still the yardstick for Ernesto despite the recording being now around 70 years old.

Maria di Rohan (1843), opera seria
Librettists: Salvatore Cammarano

First performed: June 5, 1843, at the Kärntnertorteater, Vienna.

Recordings: Nuova Era 6732/33 with Mariana Nicolesco, Nightingale 070567-2 with Edita Gruberova, Opera Rara (ORC 44) with Krassimira Stoyanova and Melodram MEL 37017, a 1962 live recording from Naples with Virginia Zeani, which also includes a 1967 live recording from Siena of *Pia de' Tolomei*

Dom Sébastien, roi de Portugal (revised in German as *Dom Sebastian* and in Italian as *Don Sebastiano*) (1843), grand opéra
Librettists: Eugène Scribe

First performed: November 13, 1843, at the Opéra, Paris.

Recordings: A few live recordings of the Italian version, such as Kicco Records KC018CD and Cetra LO 20-3 (LP). Newsletter 77 recommended the former. A live performance conducted by Eve Queler of the French version can be found on Legato Classics LCD 190-2. Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York have resurrected many rare operas in concert versions over the years, including some by Donizetti, such as the *Parisina d'Este* referred to above. Opera Rara has produced a modern recording of the original French version (ORC 33).