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2. Gioachino Rossini and the Conventions of Composition

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Studying the creative process must always remain a frustrating endeavour. No matter how many documents survive pertaining to a musical composition or its composer, they reveal an infinitesimal fraction of the thought, feeling, and instinct which generated the work of art. Despite our certainty that the results we achieve will be partial at best, however, the workings of the artistic imagination continue to tantalize us. The external aspects of creation are more easily grasped. With the aid of letters, dated or datable musical sources, and notices of performances, we can usually learn when a work was commissioned, when begun, when completed, when performed. Who has not heard that Rossini wrote the entire score for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in less than three weeks, or that Beethoven filled notebook after notebook with sketches for his late quartets? Such information may be amusing or impressive in turn, but rarely is it made to illuminate, except in a trivial way, the problems of musical creation.

Although in some instances it is possible to study these questions for composers of earlier periods, it is fitting that documentation first becomes generally available in the nineteenth century. Pivotal in all manifestations of the Romantic movement was attention to the artist as an individual, worship of the mysteries of creation, and the desire to penetrate and expound these mysteries.[1] Whatever bibliographical lacunae may exist, and there are depressingly many, rare is the nineteenth-century composer for whom extensive autograph material for the study of compositional technique cannot be collected. The nature and availability of such material varies with each composer, sometimes because of decisions by a composer or his heirs. Brahms systematically sought to destroy all but fair copies of his compositions, though some sketches have been recovered.[2] Sketches for many Verdi operas exist, but his heirs have jealously kept them from public scrutiny.[3] Apart from such extraordinary cases we can probably assume that, even when a composer made no attempt to preserve his papers intact, a representative sample of the varieties of actual sheets of music written down during his creative life will survive.

There are nonetheless few composers whose creative process has been studied with care. Scholars have naturally been drawn to those who left extensive documentation

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[1] Stories such as E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der goldene Topf (1814)* treat the artist as a being apart from ordinary mortals, one who must renounce the world to enter into metaphysical union with the sacred harmony of nature, from which springs the true creative spirit. Numerous musical compositions too celebrate the artist or conflicts within the soul of the artist; for example, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Lélio*, Schumann's various piano compositions featuring his alter-egos Florestan and Eusebius, Liszt's pseudo-biographical *Années de Pèlerinage*, etc.

[2] There are brief discussions of some surviving sketches in: Karl Geiringer, *Brahms: His Life and Work*, 2nd English edition (New York 1947), pp. 221—323, passim. See also Hans Gal, *Johannes Brahms: His Work and Personality* (New York 1963), pp. 155—182, but Gal does not deal with surviving sketches or changes in the autograph manuscripts.

[3] Only the sketches for *Rigoletto* have been published, by Ricordi (Milan 1941). The manuscript is analyzed by Gino Roncaglia, *L'abozzo del "Rigoletto" di Verdi*, in: *Rivista Musicale Italiana* XLVIII (1946), pp. 112—129.

of stages in their compositional procedures. We do obeisance to the sketchbooks of Beethoven though few have been transcribed or analyzed.[4] We are aware of the steps each mature opera of Wagner underwent, though little effort has been expended to understand their importance for the individual work of art or, more generally, for Wagner's own development.[5] We must base our inquiry on autograph sources, even when they are less obviously significant than the Beethoven sketchbooks, but these sources should also be understood in context.

When we inquire how a composer worked, we must remember the categories of music he cultivated, the nature of his audience, his relationship to the performance and the performers, the conventions of the prevailing musical style, and so forth. Despite the vision of the solitary artist cultivated by *romanciers*, most composition in the Romantic era was specifically tied to external circumstances. The compositional process of Liszt the composer and performer of virtuoso piano music could not conceivably be that of Liszt the composer of oratorios.[6] Beethoven's technique of sketching is not the same for a symphony as for a string quartet.[7] Compositional material for an opera differs from that for a piano concerto. From another viewpoint, the total autograph material for a work to be performed by the composer will probably differ significantly from autograph material when other performers are involved.[8] These observations are basic, but even in the literature dealing with Beethoven sketches, nowhere is the nature of sketch process differentiated according to musical genres. For Gioachino Rossini too, none of these questions has been asked.

Anecdotes about Rossini abound, and if we give them credence, serious concern with his compositional process might seem bizarre, to say the least. Everyone has heard of the famous sheet of music paper that blew out of Rossini's hands while he sat composing in bed. Too lazy to fetch it back again, the story continues, he took another piece and began anew. The original Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Geltrude Righetti-Giorgi, knew Rossini well and relates that he composed surrounded by friends

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[4] A survey of available facsimiles and transcriptions, as well as a description of the problems surrounding them, is given by Lewis Lockwood in his review of Dagmar Weise's edition of the sketchbook British Museum, Additional MS 31766, in: *The Musical Quarterly* LIII (1967), pp. 128—136.

[5] For a summary of Wagner's compositional technique, see Edgar Istel, *How Wagner Worked*, in: *The Musical Quarterly* XIX (1933), pp. 38—44. A detailed study of one group of sketches is Robert Bailey, *Wagner's Musical Sketches for Siegfrieds Tod*, in: *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk* (Princeton 1968), pp. 459—494.

[6] Although the problem of Liszt's creative process does not seem to have been treated in any detail, some facsimiles of Liszt sketches have been published. See, for example, Rudolf Kókai, *Franz Liszt in seinen frühen Klavierwerken* (Leipzig 1933) and Peter Raabe, *Liszts Leben, Liszts Schaffen*, 2 volumes, 2nd edition (Tutzing 1968).

[7] In particular, it has not been generally noticed that most of Beethoven's sketches for his late quartets are in score.

[8] See, for example, the autograph score of Mozart's Piano Concerto in C minor, KV 491, published in facsimile by the Robert Owen Lehman Foundation (Washington 1964) from the original manuscript in the Royal College of Music, London. Mozart himself performed this concerto for the first time on April 3, 1786. Examination of the facsimile clearly shows that, although the orchestral parts have been written out completely with few alterations, the piano line actually consists of two layers. The first is merely a sketch, from which presumably the composer played. At a later date he must have filled in the details of the piano part, usually writing directly on top of the original sketch, but sometimes using a separate staff, so that the layers are clearly visible.

engaged in spirited discussion, singing, and drinking.[9] The composite anecdotal portrait is not flattering: laziness, artistic nonchalance, surrender to the whims of singers or impresarios. On closer examination, however, this portrait is scarcely tenable. It is meaningless to charge with laziness a composer who wrote nearly forty operas within twenty years. The autograph scores, neatly written and carefully prepared, scarcely show nonchalance. And Rossini's willingness to adapt his operas to changing theatrical conditions was no different from the attitude of Verdi. How then did he work? What evidence exists? And, more important, how can his compositional practice illuminate and be illuminated in turn by the conventions of his style and the nature of Italian opera in this period?

The factor most influential in Rossini's creative process was probably time. Italian operatic life was organized into seasons. Composers were as itinerant as singers, going from contract to contract, from theatre to theatre, Milan to Rome, to Venice, to Naples. Even while he held a steady positions in Naples, from 1815 through 1822, Rossini continued to spend part of each year working for other theatres. Though contracts might be signed a year in advance, they would usually specify only when an opera was to be ready, not its subject. Rossini regularly contracted to set whatever libretto might be supplied him by the impresario, and in numerous instances the libretto itself had not been determined a month before the scheduled premiere.[10] His legendary speed in composition, then, was the product of a theatrical system which demanded rapidity as the price for fulfilled contracts and continued success. This is reflected in surviving musical sources. Only the most minor erasures or changes are found in autograph scores of Rossini's operas. Furthermore, only two short sketches pertaining to the operas are known to exist, one for a duet in *Le Siège de Corinthe* (Paris 1826), the other for the first part of the trio "A la faveur de cette nuit obscure" from Act II of *Le Comte Ory* (Paris 1828).[11] Both date from his French period, when he was freer of external pressures; from his Italian period no sketches survive, if indeed any ever existed.

The absence of independent sketch material or erasures in the autograph scores might theoretically reflect Rossini's having recopied his initial drafts and destroyed all prior layers. This would explain why the sources are so clean and would radically alter our approach to the study of Rossini's creative process. But considering the speed at which he was compelled to work, there was hardly leisure for even a moderately complicated series of steps from initial conception to completed manuscript. The first installment of the libretto for *La Cenerentola*, for example, was given Rossini by Jacopo Ferretti on December 25, 1816. The opera had its premiere on January 25,

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[9] See her pamphlet, *Cenni di una donna già cantante . . .* (Bologna 1823), reprinted in LUIGI ROGNONI, *Rossini* (Parma 1956), particularly pp. 304—305.

[10] Surviving contracts for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola* are published in GIUSEPPE RADICIOTTI, *Gioacchino Rossini: Vita Documentata, Opere ed Influenza su l'Arte*, 3 volumes (Tivoli 1927—1929), Vol. I, pp. 178—180, 265n—267n.

[11] The sketch for *Le Siège de Corinthe* is found in the Fondo Piancastelli of the Biblioteca Comunale of Forlì; that for *Le Comte Ory* in the Fonds Michotte of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique of Brussels.

1817, exactly one month later.[12] The autograph manuscript contains about 650 pages in orchestral score written by the composer, even granting that all the recitative and three short pieces were prepared by one Luca Agolini.[13] The sheer labor of copying that much music in so short a time, especially since copyists still had to extract orchestral parts from the score, would have been prohibitive for Rossini.

These observations lead us to hypothesize that the autographs are simultaneously first and final drafts. Musical ideas may have been worked out in Rossini's head or at the piano, but no significant amount of music, if any at all, was written down before Rossini began preparing what we identify as the autograph scores of his operas. Direct evidence for this hypothesis is provided by the only manuscript Rossini is known to have left incomplete.[14] It is a manuscript of twelve folios, intended for full orchestra, male chorus, and soprano and bass soloists, identified as Teodora and Ricciardino.[15] Located in the collection of the Fondazione Rossini in Pesaro, this composition has conventionally been called "Teodora e Ricciardino" and identified, without evidence, as a "sketch for a cantata scene."[16] We know neither when the manuscript was written nor the occasion, but we can make some reasonable guesses. None of the Pesaro autographs predate Rossini's Neapolitan period, so that it should fall between 1815 and 1823, when Rossini left Italy.[17] The piece is labelled "Introduzione," and, as we shall see, was probably intended to serve as the introduction to a projected semi-serious opera, in which Teodora and Ricciardino would have been secondary characters. Additional evidence will place it around 1815—1816.

The manuscript paper contains sixteen staves and is ruled for full orchestra, but Rossini has filled in only the most essential lines, normally the first violin when it carries the melody, the bass of the harmony, and all vocal lines.[18] Occasionally brief traces of orchestration or accompaniment figures are indicated. In the course of 199 measures, there are only two minor alterations, one a vocal line brought in a measure too early for the harmonic rhythm, the other a bass note altered from the root to the third of a dominant seventh chord. It seems clear that this manuscript is a composing score, and its clean appearance suggests this was Rossini's normal mode of composition.

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[12] Our information concerning the genesis of this opera comes from the memoirs of the librettist, JACOPO FERRETTI, published by ALBERTO CAMETTI, *Un poeta melodrammatico romano . . .* (Milan [1898]). Most of the relevant passages are reprinted in RADICIOTTI, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 268—274.

[13] A facsimile edition of the full autograph score, located in the archives of the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna, is being published by FORNI (Bologna) in the series *Bibliotheca Musica Bononiensis*, Sezione IV, N. 92, with an analytic introduction by PHILIP GOSSETT.

[14] I refer here to Rossini's active operatic career, through 1829. Later in his life he was often called upon to produce occasional compositions and he normally prepared them only in outline, leaving their completion to associates. The *Cantata in onore del Sommo Pontefice Pio Nono* (1846—1847) and the *Coro della Guardia Civica di Bologna* (1848) are among the pieces prepared in this way.

[15] Ricciardino's part is prefaced by a tenor clef, but it is actually notated throughout in the bass clef.

[16] See, for example, HERBERT WEINSTOCK, *Rossini: A Biography* (New York 1968), pp. 518, 531.

[17] Examination of manuscript evidence, paper, watermarks, etc., might enable us to specify this more precisely. As yet, however, no such study of Rossini's autographs has been undertaken.

[18] The staves, in descending order, are assigned to Violini (1 and 2), Viole, Flauto, Oboè, Clarinetti, Corni in G, Trombe in C, Fagotti, Trombone, Teodora, Ricciardino, Coro (tenors and basses), Violoncelli, and (Bassi). See Plate I.

Having completed a sketch of the entire piece, or a large portion of it, in this manner, he would return to the beginning and fill in the remainder of the orchestration and accompaniment. If we blanked out all but essential lines in the autograph of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, it would resemble the manuscript of "Teodora e Ricciardino."

This method of composition is hardly unique to Rossini. Erich Hertzmann, and before him Alfred Einstein, pointed out that Mozart's autograph scores bear witness to a similar method of composition.[19] But while Mozart left numerous sketches for complicated passages and more than a hundred incomplete fragments, Rossini had time for neither. Each gesture had to generate its own development, ideas could not be wasted, if the score was to be copied, learned, rehearsed, and produced on schedule. As Einstein has indicated, this method of composing demands the acceptance of conventional procedures, no matter how felicitously realized in any specific work.[20] This is true of Rossini too, and is demonstrable for our "Introduzione."

Although it should be apparent that Italian opera of the first half of the nineteenth century is based on the acceptance of numerous conventions, no one has yet attempted to define these in more than a perfunctory way. Questions as simple as the difference between aria forms in the operas of Rossini and Bellini have rarely been examined.[21] As a result we are ignorant about the structure and development of operatic forms during the nineteenth century. Yet one can describe with precision, for example, the standard Italian opera introduction as used by Rossini. Though there are of course exceptional pieces, a surprisingly large number of them are formally indistinguishable. Let us first look at the "Introduzione" to "Teodora e Ricciardino", and then relate it to the more general model.

The text preserved in the manuscript can be arranged in the following way:

Ricciardino:	Intendeste! V'innoltrate	8	a
	Per la selva al gran dissegno,	8	b
	Quando lunge la mirate . . .	8	a
Teodora:	Qualche strana novità.	7	c
	Io da voi saper vorrei	8	d
	Se si può la verità.	7	c
Ricciardino:	Un mistero!	4(?)	
	Date tosto il noto segno.	8	b
	Voi signori poi sapete	8	e
	Qualche allor dovrete far.	7	f
Coro:	Voi fidarvici potete	8	e
	Non avete a dubitar.	7	f
Ricciardino:	Veggo certi movimenti,	8	g
	Certe voci ascolto intorno.	8	h
	Tutti annunzia in questo giorno . . .	8	h

[19] See Erich Hertzmann, *Mozart's Creative Process*, in: *The Musical Quarterly* XLIII (1957), pp. 187—200. Also, Alfred Einstein, *Mozarts Handschrift und Niederschrift*, in: *Die Musik* XXIV (1931/1932), pp. 7—11, and the same author's *Mozart: His Character, His Work* (New York 1945), pp. 135—143.

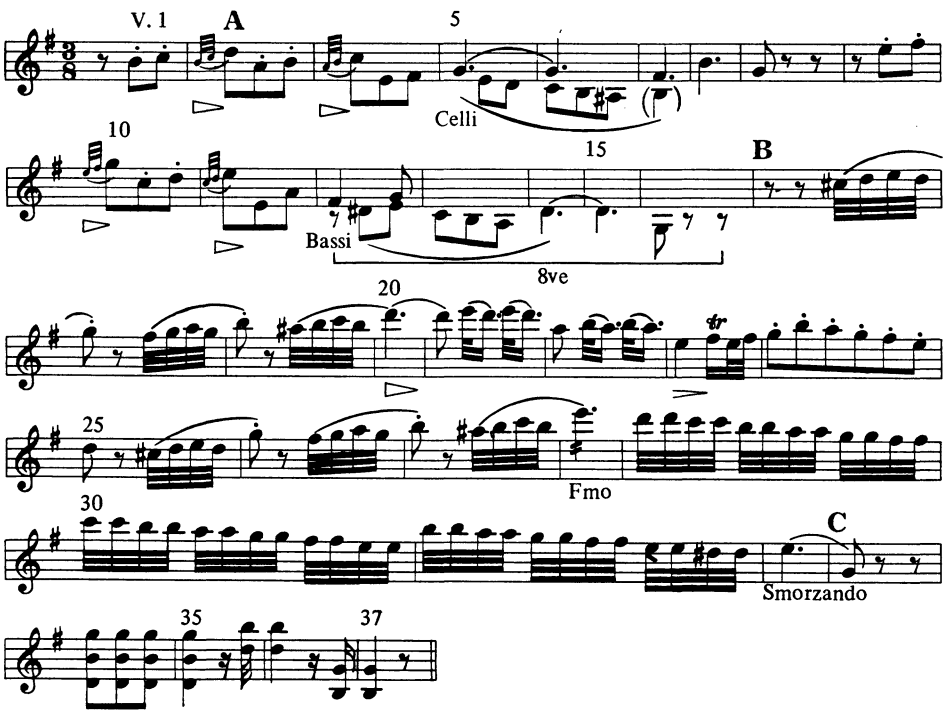
[20] Einstein, *Mozart*, pp. 140—141.

[21] Formal studies of arias in the first part of the nineteenth century form part of Friedrich Lippmann's dissertation, *Studien zu Libretto, Arienform und Melodik der italienischen opera seria im Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Kiel 1962). Concerned chiefly with Bellini, a revised version of this dissertation is in the course of publication.

The first two sets of six verses are surely intended as matching strophes, despite the peculiarity of verse seven. Syllable count and rhyme structures are similar, and the cross rhyme between verses two and eight is certainly intentional. Although the three eight-syllable verses thirteen through fifteen parallel one through three, the internal rhyme scheme is different and no cross rhymes are preserved. One might therefore consider this the start of a poetically contrasting section.

Rossini treats it precisely in that way. While not emphasizing the parallelism between the first two strophes, he does start the next section of text (verse thirteen) with a change in musical content, so that verses one through twelve cohere musically. Example I presents the orchestral introduction to the piece, which forms the basis for Rossini's setting of the first two strophes.

Ex. 1 All° con moto



Having stated his introduction, Rossini immediately repeats all of phrase A and the first half of phrase B in the tonic. Here he decides to modulate to bVI without completing phrase B. A short, new melodic element is introduced to effect this modulation, but having arrived in the new key Rossini returns to phrase B, now given complete in Eb major. His next decision is to return to the tonic, which he does using essentially non-thematic, transitional material. After several cadences for chorus and soloist, with the inevitable two-fold repetitions of cadential elements, the composer finally produces cadence C, concluding this section.

In apportioning the text, Rossini follows the alternation of characters rather than the stanzaic structure. Ricciardino's opening lines are given in the tonic, Teodora's

entry prompts the modulation to Eb major, while Ricciardino's return marks the return to the tonic. Verses nine through twelve are reserved for the closing cadences. Only a small portion of the section beginning with verse thirteen was composed. Rossini apparently decided to utilize the theme introduced to modulate to bVI in the first section. The passage is in the dominant, with a characteristic accompaniment indicated at the beginning, but otherwise only a bass line and vocal part are present. After a few measures the manuscript comes to a halt. For the opening section, then, very few significant compositional decisions were required. In the orchestral introduction Rossini established melodic material for the entire section. He had only to decide how often to repeat this material, determined by the amount of text to be declaimed under this orchestral background, and whether and where to modulate internally. The vocal lines form simple counterpoints to the theme, while the missing orchestral parts, probably melodic doublings or simple chordal accompaniment, would have been easily supplied. The main compositional activity, in short, was the invention of the orchestral introduction and the apportioning of this material during the remainder of the section. Although less fully worked out, and hence less clear, the passage in the dominant would probably have involved no more complex decisions.

Comparing Rossini's procedure here with other of his introductions, we see that even these few decisions were determined largely by convention. We learn how much of the piece Rossini actually wrote and how he probably would have continued it. Even the roles of the characters are predictable, though the specific intrigue of the projected libretto remains obscure. In its simplest form the Rossini "Introduzione" consists of three parts: a) an opening movement for chorus, sometimes with solo parts for minor characters; b) a slow movement, often introducing a major character; c) a final cabaletta for the major character, with assistance from the chorus and others on stage. Brief passages of preparation are employed to justify the attitudes and positions assumed during the more static elements of this scheme.[22] The operas following this model in a relatively pure form include most of Rossini's Italian operas, among them *La Pietra del Paragone, Tancredi, L'Italiana in Algeri, Sigismondo, Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra, Torvaldo e Dorliska, La Gazzetta, Otello, La Gazza Ladra, Armida, Zelmira,* etc. Simple variants or expansions of the type include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Semiramide,* and even the French *Le Comte Ory.*[23] Agreements among most of these compositions go farther than the simple tripartite form, and the internal structure of the elements themselves are similar. This applies to the first two sections as well as to the thoroughly conventional cabaletta.

The opening section begins with an orchestral introduction, normally followed by a three-part, ABA' form. A is based on the material of the orchestral introduction, B is a short contrasting section, while A' is an abbreviated version of A, sometimes

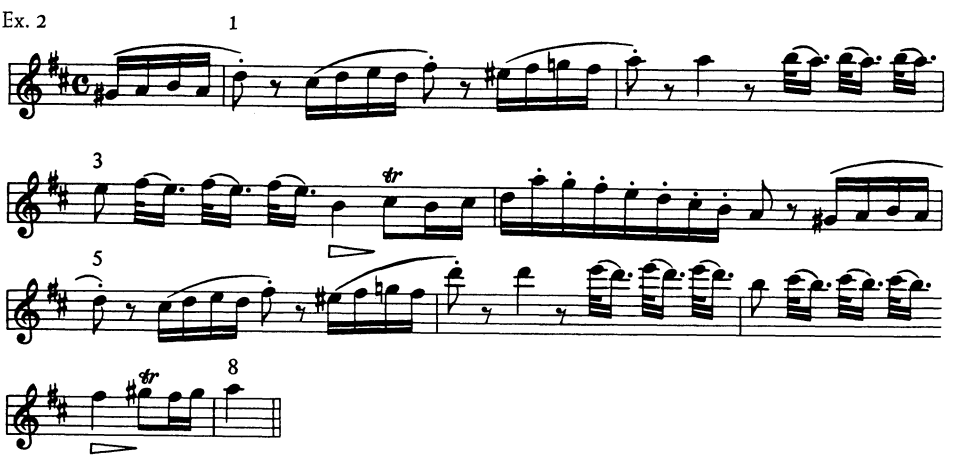
[22] The normal use of the term "cabaletta" to mean any relatively quick, concluding movement of a composition is highly imprecise, since cabalettas have specific structural properties. As the "Introduzione" to "Teodora e Ricciardino" breaks off before this point, however, I shall not pursue this question here.

[23] The introduction of *Le Comte Ory,* however, was actually written for *Il Viaggio a Reims,* a "dramma giocoso" prepared to an Italian text for performance at the Théâtre-Italien of Paris in honor of the coronation of Charles X in 1825.

with additional cadences. The chorus typically sings alone in part A. If soloists participate they will enter in part B, while in part A' all forces are joined. When no soloists are used the orchestral introduction may be expanded and the whole reduced to A (orchestra) A' (chorus), concluding with additional cadences. Dramatically the opening section presents a choral mass, often associated with minor characters as well, with which the major character or characters to be introduced in the last two sections can interact. One variation of this scheme occurs when the opening section is given primarily to soloists with choral assistance. The composition most like our present "Introduzione" in this respect is the introduction to *Torvaldo e Dorliska* (1815), where the formally conventional introduction [orchestral introduction (A) A B A' cadences] is headed by the servant Giorgio, who comments together with the chorus on the peculiar events of the day. This prefaces the entrance of the Duke in the second section and with him a presentation of the main dramatic conflict to be worked out in the opera.

From this we can conclude that the incomplete "Introduzione" of "Teodora e Ricciardino" incorporates the orchestral introduction (A), AB (fragment) of the projected opening section. Had Rossini finished the piece he would have brought B to a quick close and continued with a shortened reprise of A and cadential material. A major character would then have entered, perhaps the character being searched for, perhaps he who ordered the search, the "gran dissegno" would have been explained, and the dramatic conflicts established. The nature of the thematic material points to opera buffa or semiseria. This texture, with a vocal line superposed on an orchestral theme, usually is found among these genres, and the mock serious tone, the mysterious forces at work point to the semiseria designation. Indeed theme B is essentially identical to an orchestral theme used in much the same way within the duet "Un soave non so che" from *La Cenerentola.*

Ex. 2



Rossini rarely borrowed melodies from a popular opera, so that the sketch for "Teodora e Ricciardino" probably precedes the composition of *La Cenerentola.*[24]

[24] Rossini mentions his self-borrowing in a letter to Tito di Giovanni Ricordi of December 14, 1864, commenting on the complete edition of his works in arrangement for piano and voice issued by

This would place it approximately in 1815—1816, the same period as *Torvaldo e Dorliska* (1815) and *La Gazzetta* (1816), a semiserious and comic opera whose introductions are most similar to it.

We have indicated how Rossini worked, brought forth evidence for our hypothesis, and further showed how the musical conventions to which he adhered made possible this compositional process. Such confidence in the handling of musical materials must depend on the composer having to make a relatively small number of primary compositional decisions. This could easily be demonstrated too for other parts of Rossini's operas. Serious duets are uniformly constructed in one of two closely related ways, no matter how diverse the layout of the text, no matter whether the characters are swearing eternal love or eternal enmity. The same could be said of Rossini's arias, which become progressively more stereotyped as his career continues. Larger ensembles, however, demonstrate somewhat freer attitudes towards musical structure, and in the French operas there is a serious attempt at creating musical forms to mirror dramatic situations.[25]

A careful examination of complete autograph scores does not alter this picture. In the autograph of *La Cenerentola*, for instance, there are extraordinarily few places where more than one layer is visible, with the implications such places have for the creative process. In the entire finale of Act I, which includes 131 pages of music in Rossini's hand, there are fewer than twenty-five instances of alterations, and of these only two involve primary compositional decisions. By primary decisions I refer to melodic shape, harmonic progressions, or formal structure, etc., as opposed to alterations in the spacing of a chord, details of orchestration, or the like, which are secondary aspects of composition.[26]

Since this discussion has dealt primarily with form, we shall examine two incidents of alterations involving form from *La Cenerentola*. In the duet "Un soave non so che," precisely in the section using the theme originally sketched for "Teodora e Ricciardino," we find Plate II. The full eight-measure theme, modulating from I to V (Example II), had been presented in the first violins with the text declaimed beneath. After a short transitional passage returning to the tonic, Rossini decided to proceed conventionally and repeat his theme. He wrote the theme out for the first violins, continuing through the fifth measure. Here he stopped, deciding to truncate the

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Ricordi. He writes: "L'edizione da voi intrapresa darà luogo (con fondamento) a molte critiche, poichè si troveranno in diverse opere gli stessi pezzi di musica: il tempo e il denaro che mi si accordava per comporre era si o m e o p a t i c o, che appena avevo io il tempo di leggere la così detta poesia da musicare . . ." The letter is given in G. Mazzatini, and F. and G. Manis, *Lettere di G. Rossini* (Florence 1902), p. 284. See also the conversation with the architect Doussault, reported in the *Revue de Paris* of March 1, 1856 and cited by Weinstock, *op. cit.*, p. 334, in which Rossini allegedly said: "I believed that I had the right to retire from my whistled-at operas those pieces which seemed to me the best, and to save them from shipwreck by placing them in new works . . ."

[25] I do not mean to suggest that any direct progression is visible. Developments of this sort do not occur in straight lines, and many compositions in the Neapolitan operas are highly experimental, given the conventions within which the composer was working. Analysis of Rossini's development as a dramatic composer must be reserved for another occasion.

[26] A similar division is proposed by Hertzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

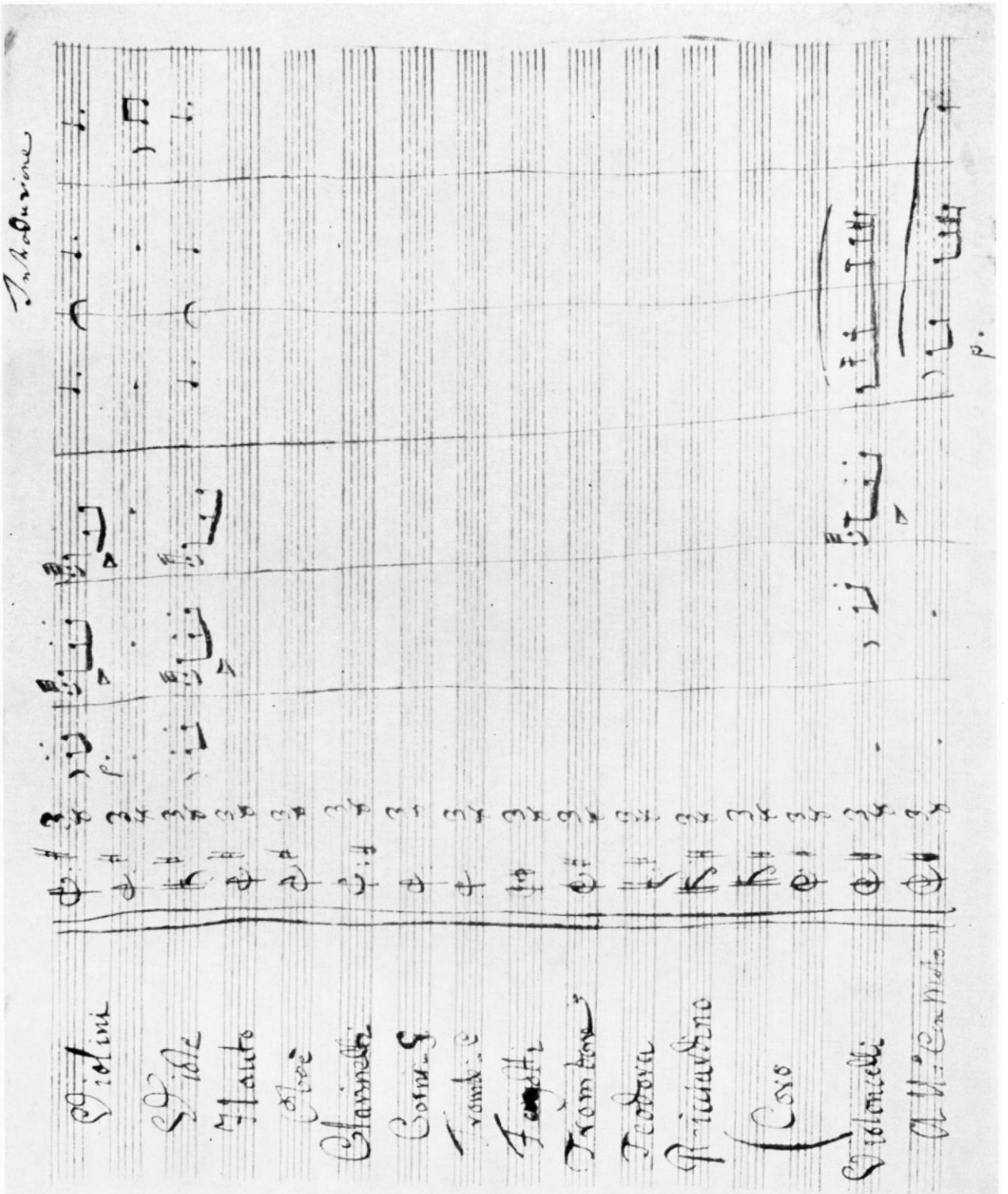


Plate I: Rossini, *Teodora e Ricciardino*, first page of the autograph. Brussels, Fonds Michotte.

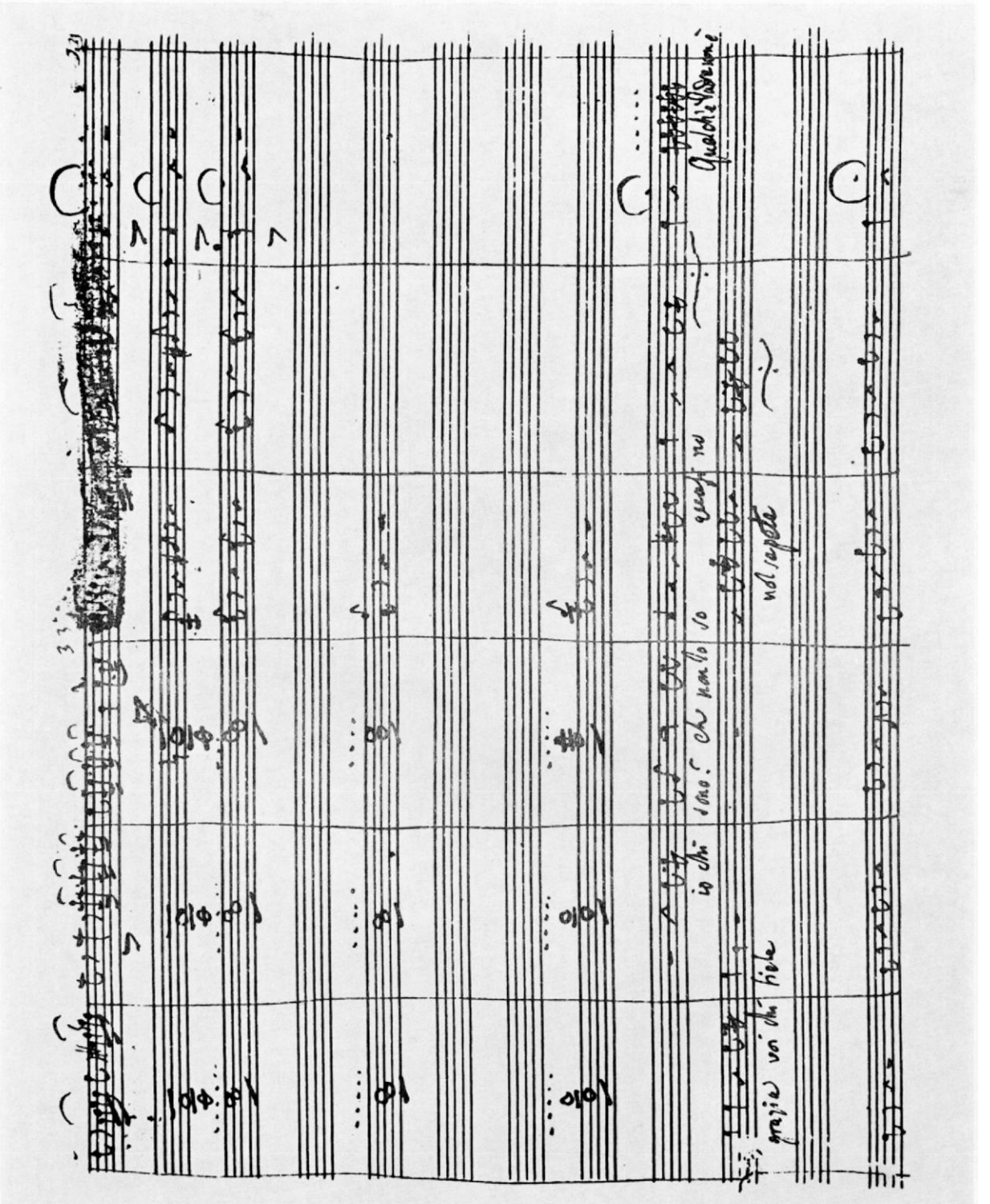


Plate II: Rossini, *La Cenerentola*, from the autograph of the duet *"Un soave non so che."* Bologna, Accademia Filarmonica.

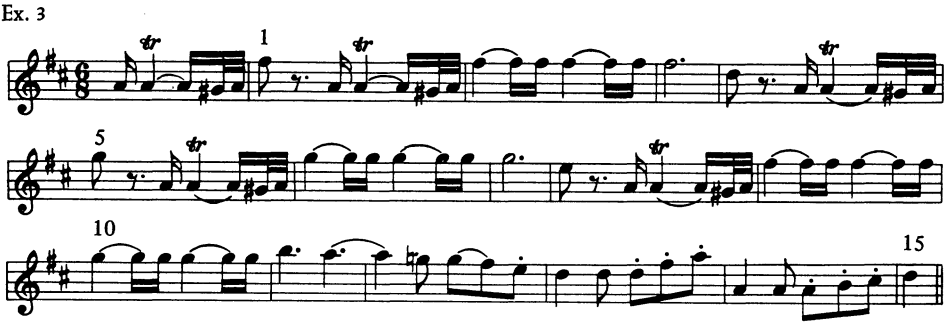
theme. This decision arose directly from the nature of the text, which had been simple dialogue but at this point gives way to Cenerentola's confused explanation of her background:

Quel ch'è padre non è padre . . .
Onde poi le due sorelle . . .
Era vedova mia madre . . .
Ma fu madre ancor di quelle . . .

Instead of having this text declaimed under an orchestral theme, Rossini emphasizes the confused naiveté of the girl by using rapid, simple declamation without the distraction of an orchestral theme. Line runs into line as she tries to relate her story, eager to speak yet afraid to reveal everything. Rossini adopted this procedure, however, only after having written out most of the original theme. The convention of dialogue under an orchestral theme had been operative, and Rossini was prepared simply to continue it. When he altered his decision, seeking to portray musically Cenerentola's disquietude, he was obliged to alter the original conventional continuation.

To cite another brief example, Don Magnifico's aria in the first act finale is based largely on this same technique. An orchestral theme is repeated over and over, with short transitions, passages of arioso, etc., between its appearances, the vocal line superposed on this orchestral fabric:

Ex. 3



The original melody begins and ends in the tonic, but it can also be adapted to effect various modulations, modulations giving the piece direction and shape. After its first appearance Rossini immediately repeats it, modulating from the tonic, D major, to the dominant, A major. Here he had no trouble. Next he transfers the theme into the clarinet and bassoon, and uses it to modulate from A major to F major. In working out the necessary alteration, however, he briefly lost control and condensed the equivalent of measures 9 and 10 of the melody into a single measure. Quickly becoming aware of his error, he corrected it. Significantly, though, the error came at a moment involving a compositional decision, a moment in which the basic pattern was altered.

To summarize, Rossini's autograph scores are remarkably clean.[27] The evidence of "Teodora e Ricciardiano" makes it clear that his surviving autographs are nonetheless composing scores. This was possible because of the stylistic conventionality

[27] There are, however, many problems concerning the contents and layers within these autographs. See PHILIP GOSSETT, *Le fonti autografe delle opere teatrali di Rossini*, in: *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* II (1968), pp. 936—960.

of his operas, forced on him by the conditions of Italian operatic life in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. When he had more leisure to compose, particularly in Paris, but also in some Neapolitan operas, he continued to work within the same frameworks but interpreted them more freely. The stylistic conventions ensured him that compositional cruxes, places where significant decisions are necessary, would be limited, and that even there the number of possible choices would be small. And it is at these cruxes that significant alterations are visible in the autograph scores. Understanding of Rossini's creative process, in short, is intimately tied to understanding the social context of his composition and the conventions of Italian opera during the period.[28]

While this paper has attempted to elucidate some aspects of musical composition, in one sense Rossini's "creative process" has not been discussed at all. We have analyzed how Rossini wrote down his operas and the factors giving rise to these procedures, but have hardly suggested the "thought, feeling, and instinct which generated the work of art." The creation of the orchestral introduction, for example, is the most crucial event in the formation of the "Introduzione" to "Teodora e Ricciardino." Whether Rossini arrived at this music effortlessly or developed it slowly at the keyboard we do not know, but to the best of our knowledge he did not work it out on paper. Had we sketches for melodic lines such as Beethoven used, we could witness the gradual shaping of an idea and begin to see which elements were added and which omitted, but no such evidence exists. We can analyze this passage, to be sure, compare it to other similar passages, and establish a typology for Rossini's melodies, but this involves theorizing on the basis of completed products. Here analysis of the creative process becomes dangerously dependent on our own theoretical preconceptions and our own aesthetic beliefs. But in dealing with a composer who left so few traces of his compositional procedures as Rossini, we may have no alternative.

On est prié d'envoyer toutes suggestions, additions et commentaires concernant ces textes à:

Please send all suggestions and comments concerning these texts to:

Bitte alle Hinweise, Zusätze und Anmerkungen bezüglich der beiden Texte senden an:

Dr. Ursula Günther, 19 Boulevard Magenta, Paris Xe (France), (jusqu'au 1er avril 1970), *207 Ahrensburg/Holstein, Hansdorferstraße 5, Allemagne Fédérale,* (ensuite).

Ces contributions seront de préférence rédigées dans l'une des trois langues: anglais, français ou allemand.

Contributions should be submitted preferably in one of these three languages: English, French or German.

Bitte diese Beiträge möglichst in einer der drei folgenden Sprachen abfassen: englisch, französisch oder deutsch.

[28] It has often been said that Rossini was responsible for codifying formal procedures in Italian opera of this period. Too little is known of the work of his contemporaries to justify such a statement. For the moment we must be content to recognize the existence of the conventions without knowing how to apportion responsibility for their development.