



A hitherto Unknown Leaf from Bellini's Autograph Full Score of *Beatrice di Tenda*

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The purpose of this brief report is to highlight and to describe a hitherto unknown autograph leaf containing part of the Coro d'armigeri from Act One of *Beatrice di Tenda*. The manuscript is unsigned, but, apart from a few annotations, it is wholly in the hand of the composer. The manuscript is now in the British Library (GB-Lbl, MS Mus. 1810) and, although relatively brief, it is, along with a sketch for *Bianca e Fernando* (GB-Lbl, Zweig ms.16), the most significant autograph from a Bellini opera to be found in Britain. The manuscript has been owned by the British Library only since 2007. Previously, it was on deposit at the library as part of a private collection, designated anonymously as "Music Loan 91" (see below).

This is an early version of part of the final section of the Coro, «Lo vedeste? Sì: fremente [...] Arte egual si ponga in opra», which ultimately leads into the Finale Primo. The British Library leaf contains a rejected passage preceding the section marked "stretto" in the final version found in Bellini's complete autograph full score, now at the Bibliomediateca of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome.¹ This early version of the "stretto" section is not found in the Rome autograph, nor in the early printed vocal scores, nor in Pietro Pittarelli's lithographed full score (c. 1840).² The present writer does not know of any other similar drafts or sketch-leaf by Bellini containing music for this number, although a few sketches for *Beatrice di Tenda*, also described below, do survive at the Museo Belliniano in Catania. In this rejected passage, Bellini sets the second quatrain of the text already used in the chorus («Vel non fia, per quanto il copra, / che da noi non sia squarciato, / s'ei si stima inosservato, / s'ei si crede in securtà...»). The manuscript appears to have been hitherto unreported; it is not discussed by Brauner,³ nor by Lippmann.⁴

Physical description

The British Library leaf comprises two pages, large oblong *in quarto* (28,5 cm x 41 cm), on 20-stave paper, and is apparently a rejected leaf from Bellini's composing score, foliated by

¹ I-Ra, G.Mss.3.

² *Beatrice di Tenda, tragedia lirica di Felice Romani posta in musica dal Cav. Vincenzo Bellini*, Roma, Pittarelli, ca. 1840; facsimile edition in *Early Romantic Opera*, ed. by Philip Gossett, vol. 5, New York, Garland, 1980 (hereinafter referred as Pittarelli).

³ CHARLES S. BRAUNER, *Textual Problems in Bellini's Norma and Beatrice di Tenda*, «Journal of the American Musicological Society», xxix, 1976, pp. 99-118.

⁴ FRIEDRICH LIPPMANN, *Vincenzo Bellini e l'opera seria del suo tempo. Studi sul libretto, la forma delle arie e la melodia*, in MARIA ROSARIA ADAMO, FRIEDRICH LIPPMANN, *Vincenzo Bellini*, Torino, ERI, 1980, pp. 542-543 [second revised edition of *Vincenzo Bellini und die Italienische Oper seiner Zeit. Studien über Libretto, Arienform und Melodik*, Köln-Wien, Böhlau, 1969 («Analecta Musicologica», Bd. 6)].

him at the top left of the first page «5/1». It is in generally good condition, with two stitching holes to the left-hand margin (one with a small tear), two small old rust-stains, and a light central vertical crease. There are two non-autograph annotations in the left margin, echoing Bellini's autograph tempo marking («Rall:to»), and an inscription in red crayon at the foot of the first page also in another hand: «Segnar / A.B.». We may presume that the manuscript dates from early 1833, as the opera was premiered in Venice in March that year.

Analysis

This single manuscript leaf was originally part of Bellini's autograph full orchestral score of *Beatrice di Tenda* and not a separate preliminary sketch. It is written on 20-stave paper, apparently similar to that used for this number in his complete autograph score. Evidence for this can be found in Bellini's foliation at the top left corner of the first page («5/1»), which shows that this leaf was originally intended as part of a much longer manuscript, in this case probably beginning the fifth gathering of this particular number. However, the music it contains is radically different from Bellini's final version, revealing that his full score is in fact a composing score rather than merely a final fair copy. There does not appear to have been any earlier continuous composing draft, reflecting a working method that was typical for Bellini's Italian contemporaries, but quite different from the practice of most nineteenth-century symphonic composers. Before writing his composing full score, Bellini regularly wrote sketches and indeed a number survive for *Beatrice di Tenda*. We can surmise that he may possibly have made sketches for the Coro d'armigeri too, although the majority of his sketches are for arias and duets, and none apart from this one apparently survive for this number. In this regard, Bellini worked somewhat like Donizetti, but quite unlike Rossini, for whom working sketches of any kind are practically unknown, especially for his Italian operas (only in an exceptional and complex case, as with the Terzettone in *Maometto Secondo* and the Finale Primo in *Semiramide* did Rossini make preliminary sketches).

The music in this leaf from Bellini's composing score begins with the four-bar lead-back to the repeat of the chorus «Arte equal si ponga in opra» in B-flat major, found on page 229 of Pittarelli's edition of the full score and on page 100 of the current vocal score published by Ricordi.⁵ The first four bars also differ only in small details from the corresponding page in Bellini's autograph full score (f. 113r of the complete autograph in Rome), and include the cue for the repeat. In the British Library leaf, Bellini marks the passage «Rallentato», which is repeated below by another early hand (in the Rome autograph and the vocal score, this reads «più lento p[er] rimettersi al p[rim]o tempo»). After the cue for «Arte equal si ponga in opra», there is a double bar in both versions and an instruction to repeat the twenty-eight bars («Da capo dalla lettera A. a B e poi segue»; the same formula is used in both versions). Whereas the continuation in the Rome autograph f. 113v is blank and the music continues on f. 114r, in the British Library leaf the rest of this page contains the start of a nine-bar choral passage in B-flat minor, the tonic minor («Vel non fia, per quanto il copra»). This music is

⁵ Cfr. VINCENZO BELLINI, *Beatrice di Tenda*, Milano, Ricordi, s.d. [ca. 1883], plate number 45541 (hereinafter referred as Ricordi).

different from what follows in the Rome autograph (on f. 114r) and any printed score of *Beatrice di Tenda*. This distinctive passage in B-flat minor does not obviously derive from one of Bellini's earlier operas such as *Adelson e Salvini*, *Bianca e Gerlando* or *Zaira*, nor have we traced it elsewhere.

In the definitive version of *Beatrice di Tenda*, the repeat of the Coro d'armigeri concludes with a prominent interrupted cadence (start of f. 114r in the autograph; end of p. 233 in Pittarelli; start of p. 103 in Ricordi) – not on the submediant, but instead on its dominant seventh resolving on the subdominant (#III⁷-IV), thus neatly leading to the “stretto” in B flat major. There is apparently no such interrupted cadence here in the British Library leaf, since the music continues directly, and on the same page, with the first two bars of the subsequently deleted passage in B-flat minor. There is no trace of this newly-discovered passage in the Rome autograph, and it seems to have been cut completely rather than replaced. It is true that, directly before the “Stretto” in Rome, there are two bars that Bellini has deleted, but these do not show any apparent connection with the British Library leaf. The two deleted bars in Rome appear instead to be part of an aborted version of the fifth bar in the ensuing “stretto”, setting the words «[an]diam, andiam».

Friedrich Lippmann lists a number of *schizzi* for *Beatrice di Tenda*,⁶ but does not distinguish between i) sketches, where Bellini makes an initial draft of the vocal line, occasionally with bass accompaniment, and ii) partially or fully-orchestrated pages, more like the British Library leaf, and which may also have been originally part of Bellini's complete autograph full score. The Museo Civico Belliniano in Catania preserves both types of materials for *Beatrice di Tenda*, including several not described by Lippmann. Among type i) are some preliminary sketches for Filippo's *cavatina* in the Introduzione to Act One, «Come t'adoro, e quanto»⁷, and his Aria in Act Two, «Qui mi accolse oppresso, errante»⁸, the latter written on 24-stave paper. The London manuscript is more akin to those discarded pages in type ii), among which is a partially-scored passage for Coro e Cavatina di Beatrice in Act One («Respiro io qui... Fra queste piante ombrose [...] – (Ma la sola, ohimé! son io)»;⁹ this is written on 20-stave paper like the present leaf. It is an early version of Beatrice's opening arioso («[Respiro io qui...] Tra queste piante ombrose» *sic*, instead of «Tra queste ombrose piante» as in the autograph), with parts for violins and bass, as in the final version.¹⁰ However, the choral continuation, with the text «a voi dolente ed egra», introduces music from the final part of the Act One duet for Beatrice and Filippo.¹¹ In that women's chorus, Bellini is essaying material that he ultimately uses, but only later, suggesting that he was still engaged in the overall design of his

⁶ *Vincenzo Bellini e l'opera seria* cit., p. 543.

⁷ I-CATm, MM.7.164.2, p. 34. These sketches were entered on a previously discarded skeleton-score page. Cfr. Pittarelli, vol. I, p. 44; Ricordi, p. 21.

⁸ I-CATm, MM.7.164.1, p. 7. Cfr. Pittarelli, vol. II, p. 132; Ricordi, p. 222.

⁹ I-CATm, MM.7.164.2, pp. 23-29, 33.

¹⁰ Cfr. Pittarelli, p. 107; Ricordi, p. 50.

¹¹ Cfr. Pittarelli, pp. 190-192; Ricordi, p. 83.

opera. Moreover, these leaves do not bear any sign of ever being part of a larger manuscript, such as Bellini's characteristic numbering of signatures or gatherings. The British Library leaf does bear the evidence of gathering, and the first page also reflects very closely the layout and details of the choral *da capo* in Bellini's complete autograph full score, and we might conclude from this that it originally formed part of the complete manuscript, even though it also contains music quite unlike anything else in the score.

A note on the provenance

The British Library leaf was unrecorded before being put on deposit there as part of *BL Music Loan 91*. This Loan was in fact the largely unknown personal collection of the Music Librarian at the British Library, Mr O.W. («Tim») Neighbour (1923-2015). He was an unusually scholarly librarian, and a leading English musicologist in his own right, specializing in music as diverse as that of Arnold Schoenberg and William Byrd. In fact his sympathies were very broad and, although primarily employed to curate and catalogue printed music, he had a profound knowledge of the music manuscripts at the British Library, one of the most wide-ranging collections of any national library in the world. As a private collector, Tim Neighbour personally acquired more than two hundred music manuscripts, mainly autograph, amongst them pieces by Stravinsky, Scriabin, Bartók, Berg, Schoenberg, Ravel and Satie. For years, the very existence of his important collection was only divulged to a select circle of friends and dealers, such as Albi Rosenthal and Richard Macnutt, from whom this manuscript may derive (it was certainly not acquired at auction). After putting his collection on deposit anonymously for several years, he quietly donated it to the Library in 2007, before his death in January 2015.

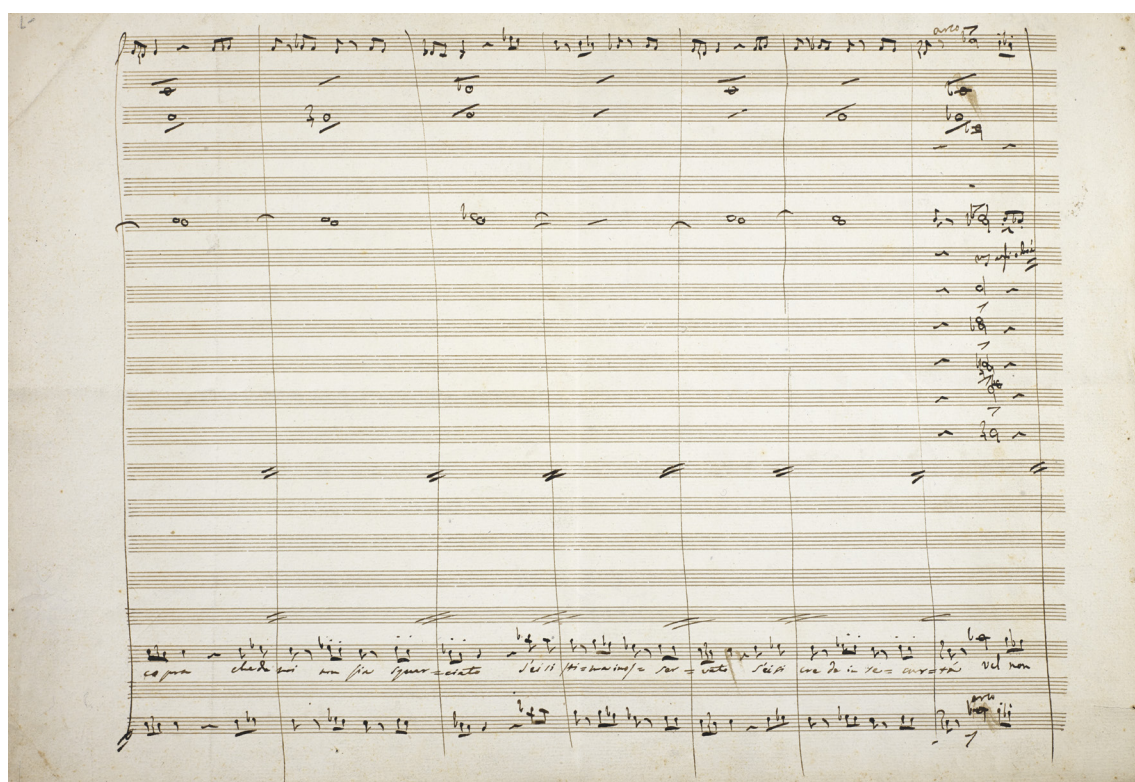


Fig. 1. VINCENZO BELLINI, *Beatrice di Tenda*, Coro d'armigeri, autograph manuscript, 1833, London, British Library, MS Mus. 1810 (by gracious permission).