

## 2 | Viardot sings Handel (with thanks to George Sand, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Gounod, and Julius Rietz)

ELLEN T. HARRIS

No one has surpassed Handel – no one ever will surpass him. . . . Handel is superior, even in the opera, to all composers past or present.

George Sand, *Consuelo* (1842)

Opera in the *Ottocento* was not always nineteenth-century in origin nor were its fashions wholly romantic in nature. The revival of Gluck's operas by Berlioz paralleled Mendelssohn's recovery of Bach's vocal music, and one finds, in addition to many operas based on romantic epics and dramas, a small but significant return in newly written operas to topics based on classical history and mythology. Arias and *scenas* by Lully, Marcello, Handel, and Pergolesi were performed and studied, and these had an important impact on both instrumental music and opera. Among the composers of nineteenth-century opera most affected by these classicizing trends, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, and Gounod stand out in particular. But probably no one was more significant to the legacy of eighteenth-century opera in the *Ottocento* than the singer Pauline Garcia Viardot (1821–1910).

Viardot's veneration of the music of the eighteenth century is well documented. Her depiction of Orpheus in Gluck's opera *Orphée*, which role Berlioz adapted especially for Viardot, became, perhaps, her signature operatic role; this was followed by the title role of Gluck's *Alceste*, also adapted by Berlioz. A devotee of Bach, she shared this deep interest at first with Chopin and Mendelssohn and, later, with her Berlin friend Julius Rietz, a conductor, composer, and editor of Mendelssohn's complete works for Breitkopf & Härtel. She and Chopin enjoyed playing through the Psalms of Benedetto Marcello, and these pieces became a regular part of her recital repertoire; the Psalms also left an indelible impression on George Sand, who in her thinly veiled biographical novel based on the life of Viardot, *Consuelo*, described the rapturous effect of hearing them sung.<sup>1</sup> Viardot was also a well-known collector of music manuscripts. She purchased the autograph of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in 1855 after the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, the Königliche Bibliothek in Berlin, and the British Museum in

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London declined the opportunity, and she created a shrine for the manuscript in her house where friends, including such disparate composers as Rossini, Fauré, and Tchaikovsky, came to pay obeisance.<sup>2</sup> In 1858 Rietz presented Viardot with the autograph of the Bach cantata “Du Hirte Israel, höre” (BWV 104), as a gift.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1840, when the Viardots were in Rome on their honeymoon, the Abbé Fortunato Santini gave her a manuscript containing twenty-nine Italian, mostly late seventeenth-century arias for voice and continuo.<sup>4</sup> Santini’s extraordinary library of music manuscripts and printed music was a treasure trove for someone like Viardot. She is known, for example, to have copied Pergolesi’s *Sicilienne* at this time from Santini’s collection,<sup>5</sup> and his gift of a manuscript was an acknowledgment of her musical knowledge and curiosity.<sup>6</sup> The presence of three Handel extracts in the Viardot materials now housed in the Houghton Library of Harvard University provides yet more evidence of her musical interests: the collection includes a recitative and two arias from Handel’s chamber cantatas copied out by Viardot herself; an aria from the opera *Alcina*, reorchestrated by Gounod; and a *scena* from the secular oratorio *Hercules* copied by Rietz.<sup>7</sup>

The operas of George Frideric Handel had no place in the operatic repertory of the nineteenth century. From the moment Handel himself stopped producing his operas in 1741 to the twentieth century, the exceptions are so few as can be counted on one hand. In 1743 and 1748, Handel’s *Alessandro* was adapted and produced under the title *Rossane*, and in 1754, his *Admeto* was revived, the last performance of an opera by Handel during his lifetime.<sup>8</sup> In 1787, Samuel Arnold, editor of the first collected works of Handel, prepared a version of *Giulio Cesare*, but this was less a revival than “a pasticcio from various Handel operas put together.”<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, performances became even rarer, unless one includes productions of Handel’s English secular works, such as *Acis and Galatea*.<sup>10</sup> The only production of an *opera seria* by Handel in the nineteenth century was a condensation of his first opera, *Almira* (composed in Hamburg), into one act as part of a triple bill in 1878 “to celebrate the bicentenary of the Hamburg Opera.”<sup>11</sup>

If Handel’s operas were little known, the cantatas were largely unknown, and the oratorio *Hercules* was not among the cherished, English-language works of Handel regularly performed: it was revived at Oxford in 1766 and 1768, and not apparently heard again until a revival at Düsseldorf in 1875.<sup>12</sup> The Handel Commemoration of 1784 and “The Works of Handel, in Score; Correct, Uniform, and Complete” published between 1787 and 1797 under the editorial direction of Samuel Arnold (hereafter the Arnold edition) provide a good indication of the corpus of music by Handel that did survive into the early years of the nineteenth century.

The Handel Commemoration consisted of three, discrete concerts.<sup>13</sup> The first focused on Handel's ceremonial music and was repeated "by Command of his Majesty." The third presented *Messiah*, and this was also repeated. The only concert to feature operatic arias was the second, and this was the only one not repeated. The selections included single movements from *Ottone*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Rodelinda*, *Riccardo primo*, *Tolomeo*, *Ezio*, *Sosarme*, *Orlando*, and *Atalanta*. Nothing from the cantatas was performed at the commemoration.

The same preferences govern the volumes published in the Arnold edition.<sup>14</sup> The orchestral and ceremonial music is privileged, and twenty-four oratorios of various types (biblical and secular dramas, English odes) appear complete. Of the operas, however, the edition publishes only five: *Sosarme*, *Teseo*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Agrippina*, and the revised *Il pastor fido* with its prologue, *Terpsicore*. And there were other ellipses. Of the more than 100 Italian chamber cantatas, the edition offers only fourteen, twelve with continuo accompaniment and two with additional instruments. Of course, the Arnold edition, despite its omissions, was a remarkable achievement for its time and served to disseminate much music by Handel that was no longer performed. Beethoven treasured his set,<sup>15</sup> and Mendelssohn writes of receiving his in 1835 when Chopin was visiting: "My collection of Haendel's works arrived before Chopin's departure and were a source of quite childish delight to him."<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the Arnold edition offers no explanation for Viardot's interest in specific operatic arias by Handel and provides the source only for those movements she copied from the cantatas.

I am unable at this point to offer definitive dates for any of the manuscript scores that survive in the Viardot papers at Harvard, but the outline of her life offers a likely chronology that is supported as well by some aspects of the scores themselves. The cantata movements in Viardot's hand, for example, probably date from around 1840, when she was spending a good deal of time with Chopin and George Sand at their home in Nohant and was also in contact with Mendelssohn in Leipzig. The cantatas are copied directly from the Arnold edition of Handel's works, and Mendelssohn writes of his copy in the same letter quoted above:

they really are so beautiful that I am charmed with them, thirty-two great folios, bound in thick green leather, in the usual distinguished English fashion, and on the back, in big gold letters, the title and contents of each volume; ... on picking up "Samson" at random, just at the very beginning I found a grand aria for Samson which is quite unknown and which yields in beauty to none of Haendel's; so you see what pleasure is in store for me in all the thirty-two volumes.<sup>17</sup>

*Cantata III*

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for Handel's Cantata III. The score is written on multiple staves, with lyrics in Italian. The piece begins with a recitative section, followed by an aria. The lyrics include: "Sento la che voi tratto nell'acqua un... di l'ingombro... l'imputa... la già protetta libertà... come s'ignora per l'ingrate... come bella rena dell'acque... come quasi di siffa all'ora...". The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings like "piano" and "molto".

Figure 2.1 Handel, recitative and aria from *Sento là che ristretto*, in Viardot's hand (Houghton Library MS Mus 232 [78]); by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University

Both Mendelssohn and Chopin appreciated older music, considering the scores of Handel and Bach in particular as a kind of classical ideal. Chopin, for example, wrote to his family from Berlin in 1828 that he had heard “with satisfaction” a certain amount of standard repertory, “however the oratorio *Caecilien fest* by Handel more approached the ideal that I had formed.”<sup>18</sup> One imagines Viardot sharing Chopin’s “childish delight” in discovering musical treasures during the reading sessions they had together at the piano. When one reads that the title character of George Sand’s *Consuelo* “suddenly” begins “to sing a stanza of Handel’s *Te Deum*, which she had recently read and admired,” or perform Marcello’s psalm “I cieli immensi narrano,”<sup>19</sup> one glimpses some of the riches that Chopin and Viardot must have discovered together.

Viardot’s earliest introduction to Handel’s cantatas may have come in Santini’s library, as the abbé possessed a particularly fine collection of Handel’s Roman compositions.<sup>20</sup> Without doubt, however, her immediate source for the extracts she copied was the Arnold edition. Viardot specifically labels the excerpts Cantata III and Cantata VII, as they appear in that publication.<sup>21</sup> Further, she writes out the movements in the keys given by Arnold (who transposed the originals) and copies tied half notes in the bass (instead of one whole note) at points where this occurs, due to a line break, in the Arnold edition (see Fig. 2.1, third system, m. 2).<sup>22</sup> Her choice of movements makes an odd grouping: the opening recitative and aria of *Sento là che ristretto* (“Sento là che ristretto – Mormorando esclaman l’onde”) and the opening title aria of *Sei pur bella*. The opening recitative-aria pair, in E minor and A minor, leads directly into an aria in D minor with no intervening recitative. I think it unlikely that these movements were copied for the purpose of performing them as a unit, and I have found no evidence that Viardot ever performed publicly any part of this selection. The transcriptions are interesting primarily as one of the earliest indications of attention to Handel’s cantatas, a genre even less known than his operas, and for their confirmation of Viardot’s musicianship.

A first-rate pianist, she omits most of Arnold’s figures, and a simple harmonic realization is penciled into only the first seven measures of the vocal line. She consistently adds vocal slurs, however, whereas Arnold provides none. At one point, she properly amends Arnold’s underlay, and she seems intuitively to fix errors. In the first aria, for example, she corrects Arnold’s measure of five eighth notes to a quarter note followed by four eighth notes (see Fig. 2.1, fourth system, m. 12). At the close of the A section (see Fig. 2.1, last system), she makes a rare error, her eye having slipped down a system in the Arnold edition (the bass line is at first identical); as

a result, she skips five measures, adding them in the blank staff between the voice and the bass and cueing the ritornello in the continuo part.

The transcription of the aria “Verdi prati” from *Alcina* is both more interesting and more mysterious; its title page reads: “Verdi Prati | Aria di Contralto | (Nell’Alcina.) | Haendel.” Reorchestrated by Charles Gounod, the arrangement probably dates from about 1850, during the period of Viardot’s close association with the composer.<sup>23</sup> In 1849 Viardot arranged for Gounod to write his first opera based on a libretto by Emile Augier with the promise that she would sing the leading role.<sup>24</sup> The next year, as he was working on the opera, Gounod and his mother moved in to the Viardots’ house in Courtavenel. In 1851 *Sapho* premiered with Viardot in the title role. In 1852, however, there was a definitive rupture in their relationship after Gounod snubbed Viardot at the time of his marriage. The most likely period for Gounod to have worked on “Verdi prati,” therefore, would have been during his time at Courtavenel. One imagines that Viardot explored musical scores with Gounod in much the same way she had with Chopin. At least George Sand, who had recently visited Courtavenel, seemed to think this would have been a natural pursuit for them when she wrote on 16 March 1851 asking if they could arrange some music by Lully for the production of her play *Molière*.

Ma Mignonne, I am doing a *Molière* in three acts with a prologue for the Théâtre de la Gaîté.<sup>25</sup> ... Ask Gounod, ask yourself, if you will have the time, between the two of you, as a pastime in a spare hour, to disinter for me and to arrange for me (for a wretched orchestra, probably) some motifs of Lully or of Mr. Championnet [Charpentier?] who, I believe, wrote the music for the comedies of Molière.<sup>26</sup>

Viardot responded that Gounod was “delighted” to oblige and already working on “this little task.” In fact, Viardot was performing Lully publicly at just this time (9 March and 6 April 1851), the only time she appears to have done so. Nevertheless, the project came to naught, for the conductor at the theater refused to perform Lully unless, as was the custom, he were to arrange it himself.<sup>27</sup> Viardot’s inclusion of the tenor aria for Meduse, “J’ai perdu la beauté,” from Lully’s *Persée* in the *École classique du chant* (1860), may, however, be the result of this period when she and Gounod made arrangements of Lully’s music for Sand.<sup>28</sup>

Orchestral arrangements provided a means of resuscitating “old” music for audiences during the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. With the addition of woodwinds and brass, it was possible not only to enhance orchestral color, but also to fill in harmonies that would originally have been left to the continuo. Mozart’s reorchestrations of Handel

for Gottfried van Swieten represent, in some respects, the touchstone of this practice,<sup>29</sup> but even his arrangements were not universally praised. The English composer William Shield in his *Rudiments of Thorough Bass for Young Harmonists; and Precepts for their Progressive Advancement, ... with Annotations, Anecdotes, Fac-similes, and a Harmonical Synopsis* (London, 1815) devoted two pages to quotations from Mozart's orchestration of *Messiah*, offering both criticism and praise.<sup>30</sup> He allows, for example, that Mozart's obbligato accompaniment for violas in two parts added to the "divine" duet "O Death, where is thy sting," which Handel had composed with a continuo accompaniment, "is admirable, and renders solemnity more solemn." His criticisms, however, are more numerous. To take only one example, he writes of the first vocal melisma in the tenor aria "Every Valley" (on the word "exalted") that Mozart's addition of two flutes and two bassoons in alternation with Handel's punctuated string accompaniment would have rendered "the chaste style & sweet voice of a well remembered & much regretted Oratorio Singer ... inaudible by this intrusion of wind Instruments during a division."

As the nineteenth century progressed, opposition to added accompaniments increased as efforts were made to establish a complete collected edition of Handel's work with accurate and original musical texts. In 1838 Mendelssohn proposed to his publisher Simrock, and later to Breitkopf & Härtel, that an edition be prepared of "the original scores of some of Handel's greatest oratorios ... [so that] we would at last have in Germany the authentic Handel."<sup>31</sup> Clearly, however, Viardot and Sand were not similarly averse to arrangements and reorchestrations. Nor apparently was Gounod. His willingness to make adaptations of earlier music is apparent both in his arrangements of Lully for Sand's *Molière* in 1851 and in his numerous versions between 1852 and 1859 of J. S. Bach's first prelude in C major, including, finally, the Ave Maria text. Furthermore, by reorchestrating a Handel aria for Viardot, he followed in the footsteps of one of his operatic models, Giacomo Meyerbeer.

The Handel aria that Viardot seems to have sung more than any other is "Lascia ch'io pianga" from *Rinaldo*. It was a particular favorite of Sand, as is evident in the letter she wrote to Viardot on 1 December 1847 following the rupture in her relationship with Chopin:

I fled Paris, but I would like to see you were it only for two days. I would not like to die without having heard you sing one more time for me *Lascia ch'io pianga* ... It seems to me that I would then be able to cry, which has not happened to me for a long time. I have not been able to shed a tear over my distresses and it's still as if

I have a block of marble on my breast. It's very heavy, and it stifles me. Your voice, your divine vocal timbre, would make it melt and instead of going mad like the gloomy Saul at the sound of young David's harp, I would be cured as was the king of Spain by Farinelli's singing.<sup>32</sup>

Viardot had included the aria in her first concert tour of 1838, and it became a regular feature of her concerts, including one arranged in 1843 by Meyerbeer. Her professional relationship with Meyerbeer from this time led, ultimately, to her creation of the role of Fidès in *Le prophète*. In the years immediately leading up to the premiere of this work at the Paris Opéra in 1849, Viardot and Meyerbeer remained in touch with each other, and her musical input had an effect on the final state of the opera. Apparently, like Chopin and Gounod, Meyerbeer too explored early repertory with Viardot, and one of his gifts to her was a reorchestration of "Lascia ch'io pianga." In a concert at Covent Garden on 12 May 1848, in which both she and Chopin performed, Viardot was "rapturously encored in Handel's *Lascia ch'io pianga* from *Rinaldo*, beautifully scored by Meyerbeer expressly for her."<sup>33</sup> (I have not located a copy of this score.)

Gounod's arrangement of "Verdi prati," in contrast to Mozart's more elaborate reorchestrations, eschews counterpoint and harmonic enrichment. Rather, the flute, clarinet, horns, and contrabass amplify and color Handel's string accompaniment, which already provides a complete harmonization. The new orchestration is characterized by having the first violins double the voice at pitch, resulting in a warmer accompaniment, especially for a rich mezzo-soprano voice, than Handel's violin doubling of the voice an octave higher.<sup>34</sup> As a result of this change in register, and to maintain the violin on the higher line, the first and second violins sometimes switch parts, thus shifting the doubling to the second violin. Gounod includes the vocal line, with its text "Verdi prati," only for the first two measures; yet it seems that the arrangement was intended to be sung. Whereas Handel's original aria begins and concludes with an orchestral ritornello, Gounod's reorchestration eliminates the concluding ritornello, so that the aria ends with the voice. Fermatas over each beat of the penultimate measure indicate a marked *rallentando* and probably signal an elaborate cadenza.<sup>35</sup>

It is not clear on what source Gounod based this reorchestration. *Alcina* was not published in the Arnold edition, and "Verdi prati" was not performed at the Handel Commemoration, but the aria continued to circulate in single prints, and some of these would surely have been available to Viardot.<sup>36</sup> The aria was also published in the first volume of Domenico Corri's anthologies of songs and duets.<sup>37</sup> Corri's detailed discussion of



performance practice would probably have interested the Garcia family: in addition to performing themselves, Viardot's parents were seriously engaged in training singers, and her brother, Manuel Garcia, became renowned as a vocal pedagogue. The three volumes of Corri's *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duets, &c.* appeared in the 1780s. There is no added instrumentation in Corri's version of "Verdi prati." As in Gounod's arrangement, however, the first violin doubles the voice at unison, and elaborate cadenzas for the voice and first violin in the penultimate measure of the vocal part are suggestive of what Viardot might have added at that point. Corri's version retains the final ritornello. Friedrich Chrysander's edition of *Alcina* (1858) does not seem musically to have been a source for Gounod, and further, it postdates his close relationship with Viardot, which ended in 1852.

"Verdi prati" is a rondo, and Gounod's specific scoring decisions throughout the aria are often unexpected in relation to the form, but intriguing. The text describes how Alcina's magic island reverts to its natural desert state when her power is vanquished. In the voice of the previously enchanted knight Ruggiero, the aria expresses lingering regret for the destruction of such delights.<sup>38</sup>

Verdi prati, e selve amene	Verdant meadows, pleasant shade,
Perderete la beltà.	All your beauties soon shall fade.
Vaghi fior, correnti rivi	Fragrant flow'rs, crystal rills,
La vaghezza, la bellezza	
Presto in voi si cangerà.	Soon your Sweets will all decay,
	And your pride will soon away.
Verdi prati, <i>etc.</i>	Verdant meadows, <i>etc.</i>
E cangiato il vago oggetto	Each gay prospect now we see
	Rising in its full delight
All'orror del primo aspetto	In its first horror soon shall be
Tutto in voi ritornerà	A rude unpleasing sight.
Verdi prati, <i>etc.</i>	Verdant meadows, <i>etc.</i>

The aria opens with Handel's orchestration for the first four measures of the ritornello (the antecedent phrase).

The extended consequent phrase (beginning with the same first measure as the antecedent), provides a contrast by using all of the added instruments (see Fig. 2.2). At the entry of the voice, these drop out once again, remaining *tacet* through the first statement of the refrain (which, as in the Corri version, is not repeated as it is in Handel). There is no immediate change of instrumentation at the outset of the B section, but on the word "fior," there is unexpectedly a little burst of color with the addition of the bassoon.

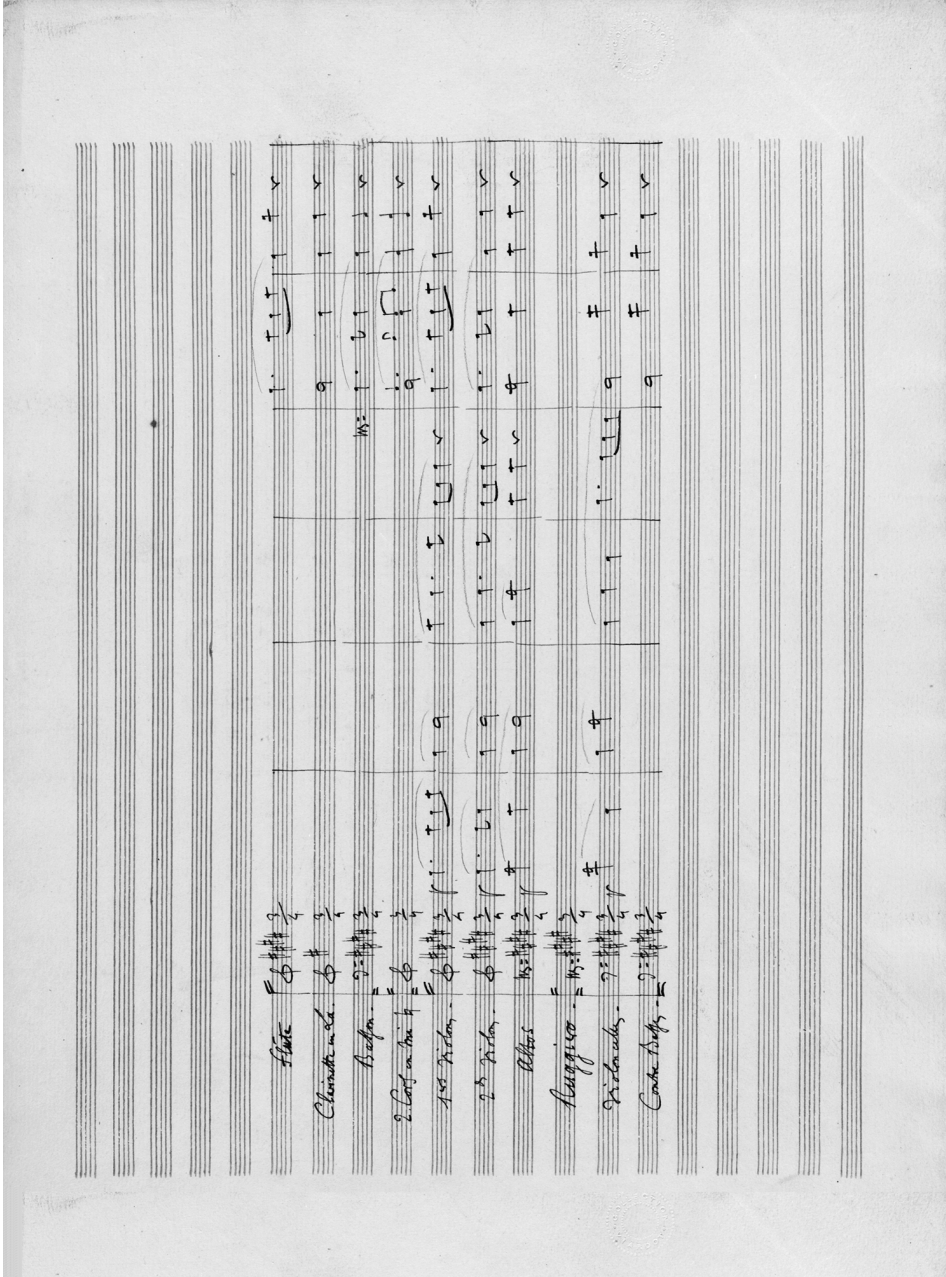


Figure 2.2 Handel, "Verdi prati," arranged by Gounod and in his hand (Houghton Library MS Mus 232 [76]; by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University)

Then on “La vaghezza, la bellezza,” treble winds provide sonic ornamentation of the loveliness described. Finally, on “presto” the contrabass adds a somewhat ominous note. For the return of the refrain, the orchestra is at first reduced to strings and bassoon, but at “perderete la beltà” all of the instruments enter, each part marked *piano*. The C section returns at first to Handel’s string accompaniment. At “all’orror” there is a large *forte* indication above the score. Two measures later at “del primo...” the bassoons enter, and then one measure later at “aspetto” all the other instruments join in. A *decrescendo* marks the end of this section, and the final refrain begins, *piano*, with only strings. At the repetition of the final three words, “perderete la beltà,” Handel takes the opportunity to withdraw the string accompaniment, leaving only continuo and an opportunity for a cadenza. Gounod, in contrast, brings in the entire orchestra at this point, adding three fermatas in the penultimate bar (as mentioned above), thus concluding the aria. In Handel’s setting, the string orchestra returns for a final ritornello. Gounod uses the orchestra to distinguish the refrains from the episodes, to heighten word painting, and to enhance the climaxes, especially in section C at the text “all’orror ...” and at the final cadence.

“Verdi prati” is the only piece among Viardot’s Handel materials to include a reorchestration. In contrast, the copy of the *scena* from *Hercules* for Dejanira, “Where shall I fly? – See the dreadful sisters rise,” is a close facsimile of the original. It was probably copied for Viardot by Julius Rietz around 1860.<sup>39</sup> The two maintained a very active correspondence between 1858 and 1861. The score is not taken from the Arnold edition, but is copied directly from Chrysander’s edition of 1859 – either before or immediately after publication. Rietz was involved with the edition of Handel’s complete works as a contributing editor to *Susanna* (1858), and his access to the *Hercules* score may well indicate participation in that volume as well.

Whereas the Arnold edition of this *scena* provides full figuring and repeated indications of *tasto solo* at points where the orchestra is playing *tutti unisoni*, the Chrysander edition contains few figures and no *tasto solo* indications.

Rietz follows all of the markings of the Chrysander edition (or perhaps he himself provided them to Chrysander), including the use of double bars at specific points, the addition of *adagio* indications at two cadence points, and an *ossia* for the voice in the first measure of the *furioso*. Unlike the published score, Rietz uses abbreviations where there is repetition in a single part and when multiple parts play *unisono*. The score includes extensive dynamic indications lightly added in red pencil, including *crescendo* and *decrescendo* wedges and a few tempo indications, which may have been added by Rietz or, possibly, by Viardot herself (see Fig. 2.3).<sup>40</sup> The manuscript overall is

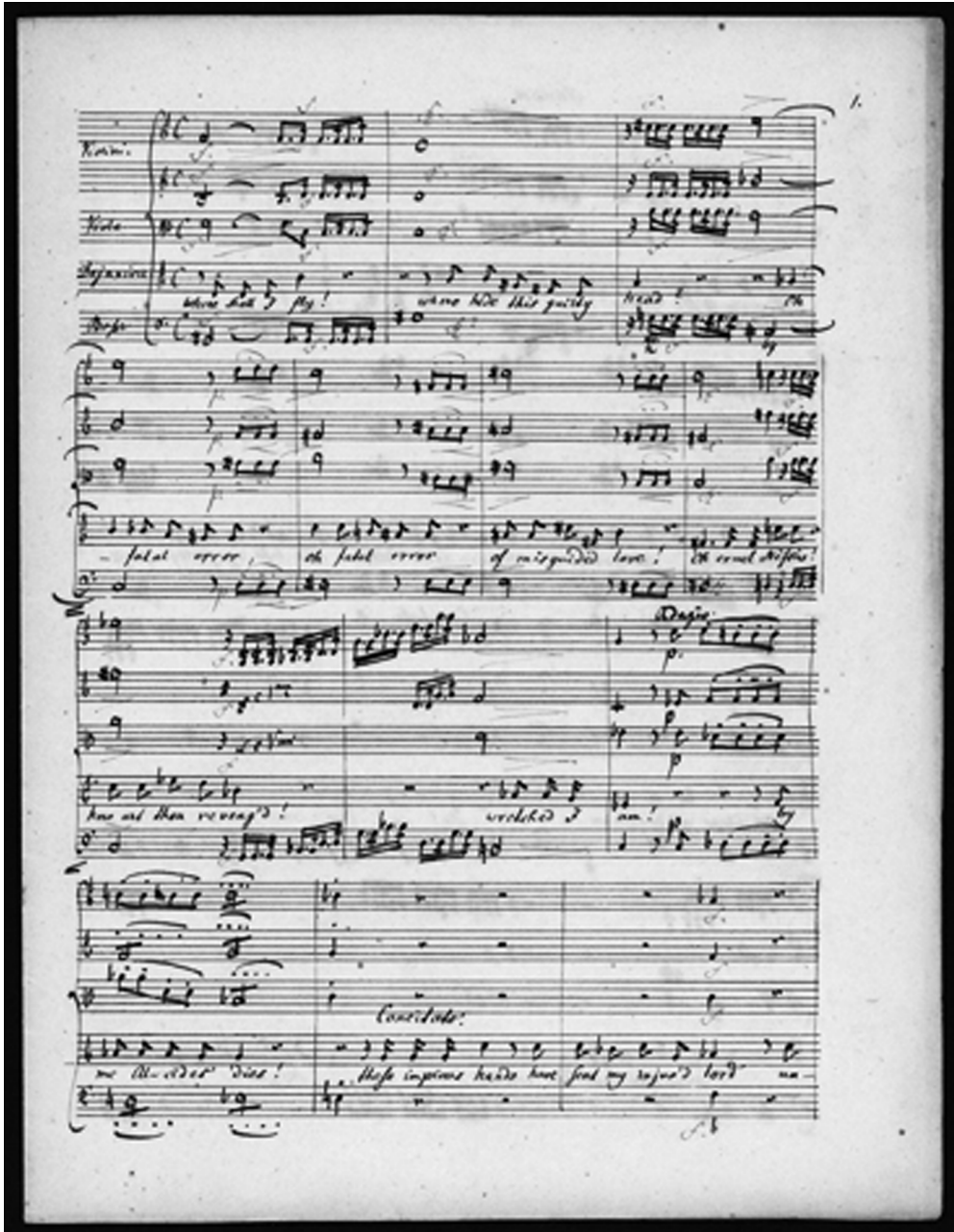


Figure 2.3 Handel, scene for Dejanira from *Hercules*, in Rietz's hand (Houghton Library MS Mus 232 [77]; by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University)

beautifully prepared, including a full title page stating: “Scene der Dejanaira/ aus dem dritten Theil des Oratoriums/ Hercules// G. F. Händel.”

The assortment of Handel items in the Viardot collection does not form any kind of coherent unit, but it does seem to offer, with its apparent decade-by-decade chronology, continuing evidence of interest in Handel’s music among the best composers and performers of the period. It also indicates the impact that the Arnold edition, the Chrysander edition, and even single sheet publications had on the musical imaginations of receptive minds. Further, the specific choice of repertory suggests interesting ties to contemporary thought. Although it is not at all clear to me why Viardot copied the movements she did from the twelve cantatas published by Arnold, the singling out of “Verdi prati” and “Where shall I fly? – See the dreadful sisters rise” from among the more than 1,000 arias by Handel has more resonance. Both follow a rondo pattern rather than the standard Baroque *da capo*. “Lascia ch’io pianga,” reorchestrated for Viardot by Meyerbeer, is also a rondo; although it is written out as a *da capo*, the A section follows an ABA pattern, and the “B” section thus becomes C in the overall ABACABA shape. The rondo incorporated two elements that played an important role in nineteenth-century arias: striking contrast for dramatic effect coupled with sufficient repetition to allow for elaborate variation. Of course, rondo form itself was not necessary to the pairing of these two elements. One thinks immediately of such arias as Rosina’s “Una voce poco fa” from Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, a *cavatina* that gives full range to both. The role of Rosina was one of Viardot’s specialties. Perhaps, however, the closest parallel to these Handel selections is the rondo “J’ai perdu mon Eurydice” from Gluck’s *Orphée*.<sup>41</sup>

Gluck’s opera, adapted by Berlioz for Viardot in the title role, created a sensation at its premiere in November 1859. As early as June 1859, Viardot discussed the opera in her correspondence with Rietz, peppering him with questions about the Italian version, specifically asking for information on differences between the contralto and tenor, settings of the role of Orpheus, intervals of transposition, and keys. After the premiere, she joyfully wrote to him about the performance, giving him this description of the rondo:

the number which marked the culminating point was the air “J’ai perdu mon Euridice [sic].” I think I have discovered three good ways of delivering the *motif*. The first time, sorrowful amazement, almost motionless. The second, choked with tears (the applause lasted two minutes, and they wanted an encore!!!). The third time, outbursts of despair. My poor Euridice remarked, as she arose: “Mph! I thought that would last forever!”<sup>42</sup>

Berlioz himself described the performance of this rondo in the *Journal des Débats*:

It now remains for us to mention the culminating chef-d'œuvre of the great artist in this creation of the rôle of Orphée; by this I mean her execution of the celebrated air

J'ai perdu mon Eurydice.

Gluck somewhere made the remark: 'Change the least nuance of this air in movement or accent, and you turn it into a dance-tune.' Mme. Viardot treated it as it ought to be treated, that is to say, as what it is, one of those prodigies of expression which are wellnigh incomprehensible for vulgar singers, and which are, alas, so often desecrated. She delivered its theme in three different manners: at first in a slow movement, with suppressed grief; then, after the episodical Adagio:

Mortel silence!  
Vaine expérance!

*Sotto voce, pianissimo*, with a trembling voice choked by a flood of tears; and finally, after the second Adagio, she took up the theme in a more animated movement, withdrawing from the body of Eurydice, beside which she had been kneeling, and rushing away, mad with despair, toward the other side of the stage, the very picture of frenzy in her outcries and sobs. I shall not attempt to describe the excitement of the audience at this overwhelming scene. Certain maladroit auditors even so far forgot themselves as to cry 'Bis!' before the sublime passage:

Entends ma voix qui t'appelle,

[that is, after the second refrain] and great difficulty was experienced in imposing silence upon them.<sup>43</sup>

I think it likely that Rietz sent the *rondo-scena* from Handel's *Hercules* to Viardot in direct response to her success in performing Gluck's rondo. Further, Viardot's differentiation of each refrain in a rondo, assuming that this practice predated her performance of *Orphée*, may also have influenced Gounod's varied orchestrations of the refrain in the adaptation of Handel's "Verdi prati." Certainly, Viardot's extraordinary ability to communicate strong contrasts and to reinterpret music on repetition influenced her choice of repertory and may explain the unusual number of rondos among the Handel arias Viardot is known to have sung or collected. She seems to have been uninterested in the typical *da capo*, choosing instead those with strongly contrasting middle sections, such as

“Farewell, ye limpid streams” from *Jephtha*. In a review from 1848, her performance of the contrasts in this aria is given special notice: “The genius of Viardot then asserted its supremacy by the splendid interpretation of *Farewell, ye limpid streams* (from *Jephtha* by Handel). The fervour with which she poured forth the movement *Brighter scenes* [the B section], her exquisite musical accent and her refined intellectual conception of the sublime composition, created an altogether prodigious sensation.”<sup>44</sup>

Another thread that seems to connect the Handel selections in Viardot’s collection to nineteenth-century repertory and to each other is their relationship to the classics or to classical literature. “Lascia ch’io pianga” comes from *Rinaldo*, based on Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*. “Verdi prati” is from *Alcina*, one of three operas by Handel based on Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. And “Where shall I fly – See the dreadful sisters rise” comes from *Hercules*, which was derived from an amalgam of classical sources, including Sophocles and Ovid. Viardot, like many of her musical contemporaries, found great inspiration in literature. She and Rietz correspond about reading Goethe, and she tells him of her “creation of the role of Lady Macbeth” that “it will be all the more a creation because, although I know Shakespeare’s drama by heart, I have never seen it on the stage.”<sup>45</sup> Viardot writes that Homer is her passion and that her “children know Homer as other children know fairy tales.”<sup>46</sup> The description she gives Rietz of her “great salon” is particularly evocative:

I have put my upright piano in it, and an étagère containing the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Byron, the four great Italian poets; Don Quixote, Homer, Eschylus, Uhland, the Bible, Heine, *Hermann und Dorothea*, the 2 vols. of Lewes on Goethe. With the exception of Homer, of whom I have the translations by Jacob and Monjé (I prefer the former), all these works are, be it understood, in the original language.<sup>47</sup>

If we identify, as I think we can, the “four great Italian poets” as Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and Ariosto, then Viardot’s library contains the sources of most of the Handelian repertory she chose to sing: the Bible, Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*, and Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. These choices also reflect the interest in classical literature evident in much of nineteenth-century opera, but especially the Gluck revivals, Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* (in the composition of which Viardot for a time played an important role),<sup>48</sup> and Gounod’s first opera, *Sapho*. By contrast, Handel’s many historical operas, such as had been featured at the Handel Commemoration or in the Arnold edition, including *Sosarme*, *Ottone*, or *Riccardo primo*, attracted practically no attention from Viardot at all.

Viardot's publication in 1860, under the title *École classique du chant*, of select arias from the "classical period" sums up her interest in earlier music. The collection contains fifty selections ranging from Lully to Rossini, each introduced by Viardot in a paragraph which describes, with a psychological insight not normally associated with mid-nineteenth-century operatic singers, how the emotional content of each should influence the interpretation. She also provides a keyboard accompaniment and detailed performance directives for the singer.<sup>49</sup> Not surprisingly, Mozart leads in her choices with nine selections, but Handel follows closely with eight. The collection includes an aria from Lully's *Persée*, which may be a remnant of the period 1850 to 1851 when Sand asked Viardot and Gounod for arrangements of Lully's music, as well as Pergolesi's *Sicilienne*, which she had copied in the library of the Abbé Santini in 1840. Her inclusion of a bass aria for Lucifer from Handel's *La resurrezione* may also derive from her study in Santini's library, but this work was published in the Arnold edition as well.<sup>50</sup> Her choice of an aria from *Susanna*, "Ask if yon damask rose be sweet," probably relates to Rietz's involvement with Chrysander's edition of this work. Rietz may also have been the source for the bass aria from *Joshua*, "Shall I in Mamre's fertile plain," as he was involved in editing that work as well.<sup>51</sup> Rounding off these three selections from Handel's oratorios and ceremonial music is a Latin "verset" from a *Te Deum* by Handel. In addition, Viardot includes four theatrical selections, which, not surprisingly, emphasize classical and epic sources. They include Polyphemus's "I rage – Oh, ruddier than the cherry" from the ever-popular *Acis and Galatea* (Viardot calls it a "mythological oratorio"), two selections from the epic *Rinaldo* (the duet for the sirens, "Il vostro maggio," and "Lascia ch'io pianga"), and "Piangerò" from *Giulio Cesare*. Although the choice of an aria from an historical opera is unusual, the particularly strong contrast in "Piangerò" must have attracted Viardot. She writes of the aria being "divided into two sections, which differ not only in rhythm, but also in feeling and expression." She then explains how this contrast should be expressed: "The first section, very slow, needs to be sung *sotto voce*, with sweetness, with a calm sadness, and as if resigned. The second section, much more animated, needs to express the bitterness of a reproach, the fury of a curse. Then, with the reprise, the emotion of sweet sadness returns."<sup>52</sup> The presentation of diametrically opposed emotional states was one of Viardot's greatest strengths.

Viardot's interest in Handel's work, especially his operas, is as intriguing as it is revealing. During a period when Handel's theatrical work was essentially unknown, Viardot and some of the most brilliant composers of the nineteenth century took delight in exploring his music. In part their



interest in earlier music was historical, as illustrated by Viardot's collection of autographs, her transcription of cantata arias, her publications, her score-reading with Chopin and Gounod, and her musical exchanges and written correspondence with Julius Rietz. But her interest did not stop there. In collaboration with Meyerbeer, Gounod, and Rietz, and with the special encouragement of George Sand, Viardot and her friends recreated the music of Handel for audiences that had otherwise lost touch with his operatic works. Older music for them was not merely a silent artifact to be preserved, but a living, oral tradition with which to engage. That is, while honoring earlier composers through the preservation of manuscripts and the establishment of critical editions, this elite group of musicians also took the musical substance into their own hands and made it their own, melding the fashions and legacies of the operatic past and present.

### Notes

1. See Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, "Placing Chopin: Reflections on a Compositional Aesthetic," in *Chopin Studies 2* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 102–39, here p. 121; Barbara Kendall-Davies, *The Life and Work of Pauline Viardot Garcia*, vol. I: *The Years of Fame, 1836–1863* (Amersham, Bucks.: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2003), pp. 106–7 and 110–11; George Sand, *Consuelo* ["facsimile of the original edition," n.d., n.p., trans. Anon.] (Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2004), pp. 51–53.
2. See Mark Everist, "'Don Giovanni' and the Viardot Circle," *19th-Century Music* 25 (2001–2002), 165–89. I am extremely grateful to Professor Everist for reading this article in draft form and providing invaluable commentary and advice.
3. See Theodore Baker (ed. and trans.), "Pauline Viardot-Garcia to Julius Rietz (Letters of Friendship)," *Musical Quarterly* 1 (1915), Pt. 1: 350–80, Pt. 2: 526–59; 2 (1916), Pt. 3: 32–60; here Pt. 1: 364–65. Baker provides the correspondence in the original languages and in English translation on facing pages; in all quotations from this correspondence, the page range includes the original language as well as the translation.
4. The manuscript given to Viardot by Santini has recently been acquired by the Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, MS 1376, University of California, Berkeley. It is inscribed "Fortunato Santini insegno di altissima stima alla Siga Paolita Viardot Garcia li 25 Giugno 1840." Of the twenty-nine arias, only two are attributed, one each to Alessandro Scarlatti and Bernardo Pasquini. I am grateful to John Roberts for informing me of this purchase and for providing the details above.
5. April FitzLyon, *The Price of Genius: A Life of Pauline Viardot* (London: John Calder, 1964), p. 129.
6. Almost fifty years later Viardot included five arias from this manuscript in a published collection of anonymous eighteenth-century Italian arias with her own

- harmonizations and ornamentation: *Airs italiens du XVIIIe. siècle. Auteurs inconnus, Accompagnement, harmonie et variations de P. Viardot. Traduction française de L. Pomey* (Paris: Heugel, 1886).
7. Houghton Library, MS Mus 232 (item 76: “Verdi prati”; 77: Scene from *Hercules*; 78: cantata movements), Harvard University. The collection was purchased by Harvard in 1999. A complete and thorough guide to the collection by Barbara M. Wolff, “Viardot-Garcia, Pauline, 1821–1910. Papers: Guide” (2001), can be accessed from the Harvard Library online Hollis Catalogue through the document record. I am grateful to Ms. Wolff for alerting me to the Handel materials in the collection and to the entire staff of the Houghton Library for their assistance to my research over many visits.
  8. Winton Dean, *Handel’s Operas: 1726–1741* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), p. 53; see also William C. Smith, “The 1754 Revival of Handel’s *Admeto*,” *Music & Letters* 51 (1970), 141–49. The librettos of *Rossane* (1743 and 1747) and *Admeto* (1754) are published in facsimile in Ellen T. Harris (ed.), *The Librettos of Handel’s Operas*, 13 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1989), vol. XIII.
  9. Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas: 1704–1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 507.
  10. Winton Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 662, for example, lists eight staged revivals of *Acis and Galatea* between 1829 and 1871.
  11. Dean and Knapp, *Handel’s Operas: 1704–1726*, pp. 67–68.
  12. Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*, p. 432.
  13. For details of these performances, see Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey and the Pantheon, May 26th, 27th, 29th; and June the 3d, and the 5th, 1784 in Commemoration of Handel* (London: T. Payne and Son / G. Robinson, 1785).
  14. See J.M. Coopersmith, “The First Gesamtausgabe: Dr. Arnold’s Edition of Handel’s Works,” *Notes*, 2nd Ser., 4 (1947), 277–91, 438–49, and Paul Hirsch, “Dr. Arnold’s Handel Edition (1787–1797),” *Music Review* 8 (1947), 106–16.
  15. Elliot Forbes (ed.), *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven* (Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 1024 and 1035.
  16. Felix Mendelssohn, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830 bis 1847 von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, ed. Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1878), p. 63; as translated in Felix Mendelssohn, *Letters*, ed. Gisella Selden-Goth (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), p. 247 (6 October 1835). See also Eigeldinger, “Placing Chopin,” p. 121, where the date of the letter is erroneously given as 1836.
  17. Mendelssohn, *Briefe*, p. 63, as translated in Mendelssohn, *Letters*, p. 247.
  18. Eigeldinger, “Placing Chopin,” p. 107, citing Frederic Chopin, *Korespondencja Fryderyka Chopina*, ed. Bronisław Edward Sydow, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1955), vol. I, p. 83a; the translation given here was kindly

provided by Professor Jeffrey Kallberg, for whose advice and assistance I am most grateful.

19. Sand, *Consuelo*, pp. 311 and 51–53.
20. Santini's library of more than 5,900 items is preserved at the Bischöflisches Priesterseminar, Bibliothek in Münster. One of its treasures is a large collection of Handel's Roman compositions; see Rudolf Ewerhart, "Die Händel-Handschriften der Santini-Bibliothek in Münster," *Händel Jahrbuch* 6 (1960), 111–50.
21. I am grateful to the Harriet M. Spaulding Library of the New England Conservatory for making their complete copy of the Arnold edition available to me. I would like to thank Richard Vallone in particular for his generous assistance.
22. Both cantatas exist in multiple versions, but Arnold in each case presents the earliest: *Sento là che ristretto* (HWV 161b) was probably written for Naples in 1708; *Sei pur bella* (HWV 160a) was written in Rome in 1707. See Ellen T. Harris, *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 271–73 and 278–80, for chronological information.
23. Wolff ("Viardot-Garcia: Guide") identifies the hand as Gounod, and this seems confirmed by comparison to other Gounod autographs in the collection; of particular interest are two movements (one incomplete) from a Requiem other than the known Requiem in C: Houghton Library, MS Mus 232 (75), Harvard University.
24. See Thérèse Marix-Spire, "Gounod and His First Interpreter, Pauline Viardot," *Musical Quarterly* 31 (1945), 193–211 and 299–317; here 193–94. In all my citations of this article the page range includes both the original French and the English translation, which Marix Spire provides successively in the text.
25. Sand's *Molière*, ultimately in five acts, premiered at the Théâtre de la Gaieté on 10 May 1854.
26. Marix-Spire, "Gounod," 203–8.
27. *Ibid.*, 206, n. 30.
28. Pauline Viardot, *École classique du chant: Collection de morceaux choisis dan les chefs-d'oeuvres des plus grands maîtres classiques italiens, allemands et français* (Paris: E. Gérard, 1861). I am enormously grateful to Mark Everist for bringing this work to my attention and for sharing with me his handlist of the table of contents. See below for further commentary on this work.
29. Between 1788 and 1790, Mozart reorchestrated Handel's *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Alexander's Feast*, and *Ode for St. Cecilia*, adding woodwinds and horns and revising the trumpet parts. He was not the first. Johann Adam Hiller, for example, reorchestrated *Messiah* for a performance in Berlin in 1786; he later made similar "improvements" in Mozart's *Requiem*.
30. "A few extracts out of the Messiah with additional Accompaniments," pp. 48–49.

31. As quoted in Bernd Baselt, "Early German Handel Editions during the Classical Period," in Terence Best (ed.), *Handel Collections and Their History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 238–48; here p. 245.
32. Thérèse Marix-Spire (ed.), *Lettres inédites de George Sand et de Pauline Viardot: 1839–1849* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1959), p. 240: "Je fuis Paris, mais je voudrais vous voir, ne fût-ce que deux jours, et ne pas mourir sans vous avoir entendu chanter encore une fois pour moi – Lascia ch'io pianga ... – Il me semble que je viendrais à bout de pleurer, ce qui ne m'est pas arrivé depuis bien longtemps [*sic*]! Je n'ai pas pu verser une larme sur mes malheurs, et j'ai encore comme un bloc de marbre sur la poitrine. Il est bien lourd et il m'étouffe. Votre voix, votre accent divin le feraient fondre, et au lieu d'entrer en fureur comme le sombre Saül aux sons de la harpe du jeune David, je serais guérie comme le roi d'Espagne par le chant de Farinelli." I am grateful to Michael Ouellette for his assistance with the translation given here.
33. Review quoted without citation in Kendall-Davies, *Pauline Viardot Garcia*, p. 253.
34. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Charles Shadle for discussing with me the orchestration of this aria and for making the point about the effect of the change of register for the first violins.
35. For examples of some of Viardot's cadenzas, see Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Berlioz's Version of Gluck's *Orphée*," in Peter Bloom (ed.), *Berlioz Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 189–253; here pp. 204–14.
36. For example, the aria was published in *Piano-forte Magazine* in 1802; this version also has the first violin double the voice at pitch, but includes the final ritornello. I am enormously grateful to Nancy Taylor, Library Specialist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Music Library and to MIT Interlibrary Borrowing Service for making a copy of "Verdi prati" from *Piano-forte Magazine* available to me. For further information on publications of "Verdi prati," see William C. Smith, *Handel: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Early Editions* (London: Cassell & Co., 1960), and Karlheinz Schlager (ed.), *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales: Einzeldrucke vor 1800*, 13 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), vol. IV: Haack-Justinus.
37. See Richard Maunder (ed.), *Domenico Corri's Treatises on Singing*, 4 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993–1995), vol. I, pp. 75–76.
38. Text and translation from the original libretto (original capitalization omitted and with the translation realigned to clarify its relationship to the Italian); Harris (ed.), *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, vol. VII, pp. 190–91.
39. Wolff ("Viardot-Garcia: Guide") tentatively makes this identification, but it can, I believe, be confirmed by comparison to an autograph letter with music written by Rietz on 19 July 1865 (Theatre Collection, \*2004 MT-142, Harvard University).
40. The markings closely parallel the performance indications provided by Viardot in *École classique du chant*.

41. See Fauquet, “Berlioz’s version of Gluck’s *Orphée*,” for a detailed discussion of this adaptation and Viardot’s role in its creation.
42. As quoted and translated in Baker, “Letters of Friendship,” Pt. 3: 46–47.
43. As quoted and translated in *ibid.*, Pt. 3: 46–49.
44. *Illustrated London News* (16 September 1848) as quoted in Kendall-Davies, *Pauline Viardot Garcia*, p. 267.
45. As quoted and translated in Baker, “Letters of Friendship,” Pt. 2: 544–45.
46. As quoted and translated in *ibid.*, Pt. 1: 374–75.
47. As quoted and translated in *ibid.*, Pt. 3: 34–35.
48. FitzLyons, *The Price of Genius*, pp. 345–48; see also Fauquet, “Berlioz’s version of Gluck’s *Orphée*,” pp. 197–99.
49. Of the Handel selections included, I have been able to see the arias from *Acis and Galatea* and *Susanna* at the Boston Public Library (respectively, M.416.57.32 and M.416.57.11). The Newberry Library, which holds a complete copy (VM 1619 .V619e ser. 1), very graciously rushed me copies of “Lascia ch’io pianga,” “Piangerò,” and “Shall I in Mamre’s fertile plain.” I am grateful to a number of people at the Newberry Library for their assistance, but I would like to thank William Hanson in particular for expediting the entire process.
50. See Ewerhart, “Die Händel-Handschriften,” 116–18, on *La resurrezione* (Ms 1873 and 1873a); 142 on *Sei pur bella* (Ms 1899, fol. 123–130); and 143 on *Sento là che ristretto* (Ms 1898, fol. 1898, fol. 35–45).
51. A score of the oratorio reorchestrated by Rietz is preserved at the Openbare Bibliotheek, Amsterdam; he also prepared a German translation of the libretto of *Hercules* (Amsterdam: Van Heteren, 1879).
52. *École classique du chant*, “Air de l’opéra Jules César”: “L’air se divise en deux mouvements, qui diffèrent, non-seulement [*sic*] par le rythme, mais aussi par le sentiment et l’expression. Le premier mouvement, très large, doit être dit à demi-voix, avec douceur, avec une tristesse calme et comme résignée. Le second mouvement, beaucoup plus animé, doit exprimer l’amertume du reproche, la fureur de l’imprécation. Puis, avec la reprise, revient le sentiment de douce tristesse qu’expriment les paroles du premier mouvement.”