

The letter opposite was received from Patric Schmid of Opera Rara, one of the most knowledgeable - if not *the* most knowledgeable - inhabitants of the wilder shores of forgotten opera. The immense library and resources of this organisation are borne witness by the discs we all have on our shelves. A list of the recordings currently available from Opera Rara was printed in Newsletter 77. Some corrections and additions are due: **Zoraida di Granata**, now available ORC17 is on **4 CD's** and is priced at £46.99 from *Opera Direct*, 134-146 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3AR: **Otello** (Rossini) with Bruce Ford, Elizabeth Futral, William Matteuzzi, Enkelejda Shkosa, José Lopera, Ildebrando d'Arcangelo cond. David Parry was not included, as ORC18 3CD's it will be issued in January 2000, available as above; and **La romanzesca e l'uomo nero** ORC 19 1CD has a the remarkable cast of Elisabetta Scano, Bruno Praticò, Alfonso Antoniozzi, Pietro Spagnoli, Adriana Cicogna, Elena Monti, Paul Austin Kelly, Bruce Ford, cond David Parry with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields it will be available in about twelve months time. The third volume of **Il Salotto** will be Pauline Viardot's chamber opera **Cendrillon**, composed in 1904 when she was still an active personage on the Paris scene, if in her last decade.

4 June, 1999

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Dear Alex –

ALAHOR IN GRANATA and L'ORFANELLA DI GINEVRA

The story of this relationship is based on two sources:

1. Two duets by Donizetti exist in autograph for the characters Amina, Everardo and Carlo. They have piano accompaniment. This music is in Bergamo and we have had photocopies for a long time. These are considered, by someone, to be from *La bella prigioniera*, which, as we know, is one of the lost operas of Donizetti. (This title on the two manuscripts is not in Donizetti's hand. What is the authenticity of this attribution?) They are, for whatever reason, Donizetti's settings of two sections of the libretto which Romani wrote for Giusuppe Rastrelli's opera *Amina ovvero L'innocenza perseguitata* (La Scala 1824). The search for further information on these pieces coincided with work on another opera.
2. In the library of Santa Cecilia, in Rome, there is an incomplete manuscript fullscore which is catalogued as an anonymous work, possibly by Donizetti and which no one could identify with any certainty. *La bella prigioniera* (again, who thinks this to be so?) had been mentioned. Annalisa Bini at the Santa Cecilia asked me to look at it and sent me a microfilm of the score.

With the character of Amina in mind (and the fond hope that I might discover the orchestral scoring for Donizetti's duets) I worked through the score. When I came to the entrance of Amina something about the cabaletta seemed familiar. I remembered the copy we had of the manuscript of *Alahor in Granata* and the entrance aria of Zobeida. The cabaletta is the same in both scores.

In fact, with the help of the printed libretto, this manuscript in Santa Cecilia turned out to be Ricci's *L'orfanella di Ginevra*, composed to a libretto by Ferretti (Rome, Teatro Valle 1829). It seems to be a reworking of Romani's text for Rastrelli, as the characters are the same in both operas. I checked the incomplete score with a reliable score of the Ricci opera and it is the same. (Naturally, of course, I did not encounter either of the Donizetti pieces.)

Your supposition that Annetta Fischer, having sung the cabaletta in the Ricci piece, borrowed it for the revival of *Alahor* is a good one, I think. It certainly conforms with 19th century practice.

Ideally, Donizetti's two pieces should be checked against Rastrelli's score to be sure he hasn't just copied Rastrelli's music some reason. Short scores in autograph are relatively rare from Donizetti. Rastrelli's opera will, of course, be difficult to find.

I hope this explanation is clear enough!

With best wishes,

