

VERDI STUDIES IN RILM-ITALIA

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English Abstract

2013: among the many events related to the history of music, there is the centennial of Italian musicologist Claudio Sartori's birth and Sartori is a protagonist in RILM history. But I also want to remember another founder of RILM-Italia: Pierluigi Petrobelli. After some personal memories, this report looks at Giuseppe Verdi in 2013, in the bicentennial of his birth.

Verdi is present in the Italian bibliographic repertoire, in both retrospective and "classic" RILM. The older records, particularly from 1938–41, are very interesting in putting Verdi in a political context. Since the 1970s, Verdi research started to expand to cover not only his activities in Milan or Parma but also in other Italian towns; this recent trend of interpretation was driven by the increasing interest in minor theatres. Verdi's morphology and dramaturgy can be investigated through RILM-Italia. After reviewing the state of research in a large number of RILM citations and abstract, we imagine the future trends in Verdi studies.

French Abstract

2013: parmi les nombreux événements liés à l'histoire de la musique figure le centenaire de la naissance de Claudio Sartori, un protagoniste de l'histoire du RILM. Mais je tiens aussi à rappeler un autre fondateur du RILM-Italia : Pierluigi Petrobelli. Après quelques souvenirs personnels, ce rapport se penche sur Giuseppe Verdi en 2013, année du bicentenaire de sa naissance.

Verdi est présent dans le répertoire bibliographique italien, à la fois dans le RILM rétrospectif et le RILM « classique ». Les notices les plus anciennes, en particulier des années 1938–1941, sont très intéressantes en ce qu'elles placent Verdi dans un contexte politique. À partir des années 1970, la recherche sur Verdi a commencé à s'étendre pour couvrir non seulement ses activités à Milan ou à Parme, mais aussi dans d'autres villes italiennes, motivée en cela par l'intérêt croissant pour les plus petits théâtres. La morphologie et la dramaturgie de Verdi peuvent être étudiées au moyen du RILM-Italia. Après avoir examiné l'état de la recherche dans un grand nombre de notices et de résumés du RILM, je tenterai d'imaginer quelles seront les tendances futures dans les études verdiennes.

German Abstract

Neben vielen anderen musikgeschichtlichen Gedenktagen wurde 2013 in Italien der 100. Geburtstag des Musikwissenschaftlers Claudio Sartori gefeiert, der in der italienischen Geschichte von RILM eine herausragende Persönlichkeit war. Außerdem soll an Pierluigi Petrobelli, einen weiteren Mitbegründer von RILM in Italien, erinnert werden. Im Anschluss an diese persönlichen Würdigungen lenkt der Aufsatz sein Augenmerk auf Giuseppe Verdi und dessen 200. Geburtstag. Literatur zu Verdi aus Italien ist selbstverständlich sowohl in RILM (classic) als auch in RILM retrospective zu finden. Ältere Datensätze, vornehmlich aus den Jahren 1938–41, sind von besonderem Interesse, da Verdi in dieser Zeit in einen politischen Kontext gesetzt wird. Seit den 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts hat die Verdi-Forschung begonnen, Verdis Aktivitäten über Mailand und

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Parma hinaus zu untersuchen. Diese neue Ausrichtung der Betrachtung wurde von dem aufkommenden Interesse an kleinen Theatern befördert. Auch Verdis Gestaltungselemente und Dramaturgie können mit Hilfe von RILM-Italien erforscht werden. Nach einer kritischen Präsentation des aktuellen Forschungsstandes mit Hilfe zahlreicher RILM-Zitate und -Abstracts wagen wir einen Ausblick auf die zukünftige Entwicklung der Verdi-Forschung.

2013 was an important year for the history of music: there were many anniversaries, from Corelli to Verdi and Wagner, to Britten; 2013 also had two very important anniversaries for Italian music history: the centennial of Claudio Sartori's birth and one year after Petrobelli's death. Both musicologists had an outstanding role in the history of the foundation and development of the activity of the RILM Italian Committee.

Let me start with a personal memory. My university professor Francesco Degrada, many years ago, invited me to join in the RILM Italian Committee; he sent me to the Ufficio Ricerca Fondi Musicali, founded and headed by Claudio Sartori, presenting him as an absolute magician in bibliographic research and in music bibliography. During this period the RILM seat was based by the URFM in Clerici Road, before moving to the Conservatory. In the Clerici Palace and later in the Conservatory Library, Sartori was always surrounded by cigarettes, a portable radio, piles of title cards, and two Olivetti typewriters, a Lettera 22 and a Lettera 32, so that he could work both at his desk or standing near the catalogue. A cloud of smoke and the crackling, loud sound of outdated popular songs were permanent. At the time, I began gradually to write up some abstracts, then I started to work under the auspices of the national research council (later the RILM office was directed by Mariangela Donà); that is how I was gradually more and more involved in RILM, and I started considering it as a fundamental tool for the dissemination of the Italian musicological work, and finally I became an active member of the Italian Committee.

I want to remember also Pierluigi Petrobelli, another founder of RILM-Italia. He insisted always on one point: continuous research of musical sources is essential for music historians, in order to avoid repetition, and in order to receive every time a sort of "springboard" for their research. The music historian, just like the artist—he noted—does not repeat but transforms. . . .

Now I turn to a new topic, dedicated to Giuseppe Verdi, as he appears from the Italian repertoire in RILM. The RILM Retrospective catalogue has identified some significant Italian publications about Verdi. One of these, by Ferdinando Resasco, dates back to 1901; Resasco identified clearly what, at that time, studying Verdi could mean: not a critical-analytical approach, but the "glorification" of a legendary Verdi. Resasco, who was an expert of the history of Genoa, was mainly interested in searching traces of the composer's life in the city, and wrote many anecdotes going back to his childhood and demonstrating the uniqueness and the precocity of Verdi's genius.

Another historically significant period reported in the RILM retrospective and also concerning Verdi studies, seems interesting to point out. It concerns the years from 1938 to 1941. Those years saw the beginning of the tradition of celebrating anniversaries, typical of post-unitary Italy. After the promulgation of the racial laws in 1938 and after the entry of Italy into the war, an extreme nationalism appeared. In 1942, the *Sindacato nazionale dei musicisti fascisti*, the National Union of Fascist Musicians, promoted the publication of a commemorative volume for the fortieth anniversary of Verdi's death. The musicians

and musicologists were Raffaele De Rensis, Adriano Lualdi, Giuseppe Mulè, Alberto Magni Dufflocq, Alceo Toni, Federico Mompellio (who wrote an article on Italian and French publishers), Guglielmo Barblan (The quartet and chamber music), Massimo Bontempelli, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Federico Ghisi, Guido Pannain, Ulderico Rolandi, Luigi Ronga, Giovanni Tebaldini, and Ottavio Tiby. The book explored Verdi as a genuine “Italic” cultural icon, including the “rural” Verdi (the title of an article by Renato Liguori was *Verdi rurale*). Verdi was then no longer considered as a patriot, heir of the ideals of the Risorgimento, but as a leading composer of a new Fascist Italian spirit.

Beyond this, the historical-critical interests expanded, covering also chamber music compositions.

Ten years later the studies published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Verdi’s death were focused vice versa on his relationship with the capital, Rome, where the commemoration took place on 27 January 1951; in the same year the opera season of the Scala theater started for the first time in the day of Sant’Ambrogio, Milan’s patron, with a memorable *Un ballo in maschera*.

Verdi’s operas are now ascribed to the “national-popular” conception, theorised by Antonio Gramsci, and musicologists raise the big questions of the relationship between music, society and individuals.

Leaving the RILM retrospective, one sees an increasing attention to Verdi’s characters, considered as a mirror of the great ethical and psychological issues (the conflicts between politics and religion, between “sense and sensibility”). There is also a slowly increasing attempt to take out the composer from his national context: the dialectic of a European Verdi is gradually emerging.

The attention shifts from simply examining Verdi and the various Italian cities, and how Verdi lived in Italy to looking at how Verdi lived in different countries of Europe and around the world.

One of the first abstracts of the current RILM (1971) concerns the fortune of Verdi in Japan from 1875 to the first uncut performance of an opera, *La traviata*, in 1918. Scholars start focusing on Verdi in and outside Europe: in Poland and in Chile, Russia, Venezuela and in the whole Latin America.

In the 1970s and 1980s, studies concerning Verdi again increased. Scholars discovered new relationships, and new documents are abstracted: Verdi appears in the first popular serials, such as the *Storia della musica* published by Fabbri Editori, that issued biographies and critical studies together with LPs. The “Verdi voices” of the renown singers at the Scala and at the most important Italian theatres, arouse interest. Verdi appears in series of biographies dedicated to the genius in the music history: Vivaldi, Berg, Haydn, Debussy. Sometimes translated from foreign studies, the books were issued by publishers which were not specialised in music. The translation of Julian Budden’s studies dates back to the mid-1980s. The perspective of the historical and musicological studies expands, catching the relationship between Verdi and the collective imagination of the Nineteenth century Italian society.

In the years where publications on Verdi grow, and RILM-Italia increases the range of abstracts, the Istituto di studi verdiani, established in Parma in 1959 by Mario Medici, becomes the “National institute for Verdi studies”.

The first issue of the serial *Studi verdiani* appears in 1989, directed by Pierluigi Petrobelli: the focus is on Verdi’s connections with publishers, on his correspondence, on his honoraries, on the copyright, and on the analysis of his works.

The dramatic forms in Verdi's operas are very important: their classification, compared with the forms established by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, but also Pacini, Mercadante and others, raises the question: is the focus form or dramaturgy? This close relationship between the structure of the form and its dramatic function, leads us to see an important aspect of the current studies. Verdi in this regard is remarkable, like all composers that cannot be labeled.

In the last period – in the last ten or twelve years – new types of research have come out in the Italian RILM records. Some of them had already appeared: the link with popular music and oral tradition, already focused in the 1980s by Marcello Conati, or the links with the publishers, already anticipated by Mompellio. More and more attention is given to the philological orchestration in relation to the pitch, or to the period instruments. Above all, scholars tend to expand the analysis to German culture, not only Wagner, but also, as already suggested by Petrobelli, Beethoven or Mozart.

Echoes of the past and curiosity become engines of change in Verdi's works. Verdi but also about Verdi: the last entries in RILM-Italia focus on the reception of Verdi and his obstinate being present and appreciated in different ways. It seems that there remain just a few paths for searching; but since research has no end, one may investigate Verdi's links with the world of women around him: to go back to Sartori, he published in 1972 under the pseudonym of Arturo di Ascoli a reconstruction of a 19th-century Milanese quartet, formed by Verdi, Clara Maffei, Giuseppina Strepponi, and Carlo Tenca, reporting an intimate correspondence that reread today offers once more the deepest motives of interest.

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