Operatic Versions of The Bride of Lammermoor

Jerome Mitchell

University of Georgia

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Available at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol10/iss3/3
Operatic Versions of
The Bride of Lammermoor*

The operas based on The Bride of Lammermoor, Ivanhoe, and Kenilworth make up almost half the total number of Walter Scott operas. While Ivanhoe and Kenilworth inspired librettists and composers from shortly after the time they were written until the end of the century, the Bride of Lammermoor operas were all written within a period of eight years — from Adam's Caleb de Walter Scott (1827) to Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor (1835). Since everyone is familiar with Lucia, the emphasis of this paper falls on its precursors. Some of them are occasionally cited in connection with Lucia, but I have yet to see an article in which the author shows even the slightest degree of familiarity with the three or four works he lists; each critic immediately dismisses them with the not so profound observation that they are now properly forgotten. In the following discussions I am primarily concerned with what happens to the novel when it is changed into an opera and how that opera compares with the others. My subject matter enables me to comment on the novel's structure and characters from a new perspective, and in conclusion I discuss Donizetti's Lucia in a context not heretofore explored.

Le Caleb de Walter Scott

Le Caleb was first performed in Paris, at the Théâtre des Nouveautés, on 12 December 1827. It is better described as "vaudeville" or "operetta" or, as the title-page of the libretto says, "comédie . . . mélée de couplets," but for the sake of convenience I shall continue to call it an opera. The text is by Achille d'Artois and Eugène de Planard, and approximately one-third of the music is by Adolphe Adam. The rest of the music has been borrowed from the works of such composers as Boieldieu, Méhul, and Rossini. Thus Le Caleb is in part a pastiche. The libretto was printed

* I had the pleasure of reading this paper in Edinburgh at the Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference, August 15-21, 1971. Since then I have read it in Bonn, Erlangen, and Strasbourg. It is a condensed version of a chapter from my larger study, now in its final stages, of some fifty operas based on Scott's works.

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at least twice,¹ but Adam’s music is still in manuscript. As the title would lead one to suspect, the story of the opera is not the love-story of Lucy and Edgar. In fact Caleb is the only character in the dramatis persona that has an exact counterpart in the novel. The other characters are Henri, the Count of Douglas, young officer; Édouard, his friend, young officer; Clara, sister of Édouard; Jaket, carpenter of the village; Krik, innkeeper; Emmy, shepherdess; and the Registrar to the Justice of the Peace. The opera has only one act, and the setting remains the same throughout — in front of the house of Jaket, with the Scottish Highlands in the background.

The operatic Caleb is clearly Scott’s Caleb, and the main incident of the opera involves Caleb’s stealing a roasted wild-fowl from Jaket’s kitchen — clearly suggested by the similar incident in the novel. In other respects the story of the opera has little resemblance to the novel. Interestingly, however, the love-story of Lucy and Edgar does appear by way of a *ballade* sung by Emmy:

> Un beau jeune homme était  
> Qu’Henri l’on appelait;  
> Était fille jolie  
> Que l’on nommait Lucie.  
> Le sort les rapprocha,  
> Et leur cœur s’alluma...  
> Ah!...  
> Jeune fille pressée  
> D’être à l’amour,  
> Songe à la fiancée  
> De lam Mermour!

D’être bientôt unis,  
Contre un cruel rival  
Tous deux s’étaient promis;  
Henri court à cheval;  
Ce jour qu’ils devaient l’être,  
Tout brûlant de vengeance,  
Refusa de paraître;  
Sur le sable il s’élança...  
Mais le jour arriva  
Mais un gouffre était là;  
Où l’on les sépara...  
Son cheval s’enfonça...  
Ah!...  
Jeune fille pressée, etc.  
Jeune fille pressée, etc.

I have quoted the entire *ballade* because it is the only part of the opera that touches on the novel’s main concern. The cavalier’s name is Henri,

¹. I have used the text included in *La France dramatique au dix neuvième siècle*, XVIII, 511-527. It is dated 1837.
who of course in the novel is Lucy’s younger brother, not her lover. The music is Adam’s, and in atmosphere it is reminiscent of Boieldieu’s Jenny’s ballade about “la dame blanche.” Such is not surprising, for as a young man Adam studied under Boieldieu and even assisted him in composing the overture to La Dame Blanche, an opera which incidentally is based on two Scott novels: Guy Mannering and The Monastery.

*Le Caleb de Walter Scott* ends happily. The opera is noteworthy because of its excellent depiction of a character who does not figure at all in Lucia di Lammermoor. Adam’s Caleb does not have quite the tragic dignity that he has in the novel, but his genuine affection for Henri and his loyalty to the Douglas family are brought out convincingly throughout, especially in the scène in which he learns from Clara that his young master is on his way home. Interesting too is that the opera’s main event — Caleb’s stealing of the wild-fowl — is something that Scott, in a later edition of the novel, felt necessary to justify in a long footnote because of adverse criticism which the passage had received. The memorable incident does not occur in any of the other operas based on The Bride, but, as Hans Christian Andersen explains in his preface to Bruden fra Lammermoor (see below), it would be out of place in a tragic opera — and all the other operas are tragic.

*Le Nozze di Lammermoor*

Among the many operas by Michele Carafa are two that derive from Scott: *Le Nozze di Lammermoor* and *Le Prison d’Edimbourg* (Scribe’s version of The Heart of Mid-Lothian). Giuseppe Luigi Balbochi wrote the libretto for the former, and its première took place in Paris, on 12 December 1829, at the Royal Italian Theatre.2 The cast of characters includes Lord William Ashton, Lady Ashton, Lucia, Elisa (young widow, friend of Lucia), Edgardo, “Colonel” Bucklaw, Caleb Balderston, Misa, Bidebent, and Donaldo (confidant and secretary to Lord William). Donaldo has little resemblance to Scott’s Lockhard, and Elisa has no resemblance besides her name to Alice, but the other characters are fairly close to their originals. (In the novel Lucy’s brother Sholto holds the rank of colonel, not Bucklaw.)

The sombre opening measures of the opera bring to mind the opening of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, but unlike what we have in *Lucia* they lead into a formal overture. The restless A-theme of the sonata-allegro suggests the tragic events that will unfold:

2. A vocal score was published in Paris by Charles Perriot. There is also a separately printed libretto (Paris, 1829), with a parallel French translation.
We hear it again in the last scene of the opera, at the point where Edgardo voices the belief that Lucia has betrayed him. The rather trite B-theme —

— is the melody of the final part of the love-duet (Act 1).

The curtain opens on a wild Scottish landscape, with the Tower of Wolfcrad (sic) to one side. As in many a Walter Scott opera, including Lucia, the opening number is a rousing chorus of hunters in 6/8 time. Donald and the hunters are in pursuit of a wild bull. As soon as they have departed, Caleb Balderston and Misia come out from the tower. Caleb is glad that they have gone, for if they had stopped to refresh themselves he could not have provided for them and thus could not have upheld the honor of the family. Misia tells him that he is a bit silly on the subject of “the honor of the family.” The hunters return seeking Edgardo, who they say has valiantly saved a young lady from the wild bull. They call out, “Edgardo! Edgardo!” and receiving no answer they ride off to continue their search. (Musically and dramatically the number owes much to Rossini’s chorus of hunters in La Donna del Lago.) In a passage of recitative Donald relates to Caleb the details of Edgardo’s slaying of the bull. It seems that Lord William’s life was also in danger, and Lord William is anxious to locate Edgardo so that he can thank him in proper fashion. (One might note that Balochi has compressed Scott’s story by amalgamating the events of ch. v (the slaying of the bull) with those of ch. ix (the hunt near Wolf’s Crag).)
When Donaldo and Caleb have departed, Edgardo enters in an agitated condition. In orchestra-accompanied recitative he tells of having sworn vengeance at the tomb of his father against the Ashtons; he realizes, however, that he is procrastinating because of his love for Lucia. In the aria that follows he implores the shades of his ancestors to blot out this culpable emotion and make the desire for revenge reign in his soul.

The scene changes to a Gothic room in Wolfcrag. On the wall over the main door is a portrait of Sir Malise di Ravenswood, which bears the caption “L’istante attendo.” (In the novel this portrait is at Ravenswood Castle. When Edgar visits Ravenswood in ch. xviii, young Henry Ashton is frightened at his resemblance to the portrait of his renowned ancestor, who had patiently bode his time and then slaughtered his enemies in the very castle which they had usurped from him.) Outside a fierce storm is raging. Suddenly Caleb and Misia hear knocking at the door. Caleb looks out and sees a charming young lady accompanied by a gentleman. The honor of the family demands that he let them in. They turn out to be Lord William and Lucia, who seek protection from the storm. When Lucia expresses fear of the tower’s unfriendly aspect, her father tries to calm her. Edgardo enters and is both surprised and angry at seeing Lord William and Lucia at Wolfcrag. We now have an elaborate quinter: Edgardo giving vent to his fury, Lucia expressing her fear, William singing that love will calm Edgardo, and Caleb and Misia singing that Edgardo will not be able to contain the fury that agitates him. When Edgardo becomes extremely rude to Lord William, Lucia tries to pacify him and succeeds temporarily in doing so. (All this is based on ch. x, with the omission of Bucklaw’s attempt to gain admission to the tower; Bucklaw is not introduced until later, and then not in the company of Craigengelt, who is omitted altogether from the dramatis personae.) In a passage of recitative based loosely on material from chapters xiv and xv, Lord William tries to convince Edgardo that he is not his enemy. He shows him certain papers as proof — but remarks aside that the party of Sir Athol (Scott’s Marquis of A----) may triumph and that there may be a new inquiry into the legal dispute between the heir of Ravenswood and the Ashton family. When Lord William sees that Edgardo is convinced of his feigned good will, he invites him to come for a visit at Lammermoor (i.e. Ravenswood). He then sings an aria in which he outwardly expresses his joy at the reconciliation, but in an aside praises himself for his political skill.

The scene changes to the grand park at Lammermoor, with the “fontana della Sirena” near by, and begins with a chorus of cavaliers, who sing in anticipation of Lady Ashton’s return. (From here until the end of the act the libretto is based loosely on chs. xx-xxii.) Colonel
Bucklaw enters and sings an aria in which he boasts of his good fortune; he has inherited a great deal of money from his late lamented aunt. When he and the cavaliers depart, Edgardo enters. He is agitated at being at Lammermoor, since he feels that he is forgetting his oath of vengeance. Just when he has convinced himself that he ought to leave, Lucia enters — and of course he stays. He tells her it is said that this place has always been fatal to the Ravenswoods, and he reminds her that it was here that he first saw her. (Note that the librettist has moved Scott’s fountain from the forest to the castle grounds, but not much is made of it.) When he is again on the point of leaving, she tells him, for the first time, that she loves him. Departure now is out of the question. They pledge their troths, despite Lucia’s momentary hesitation about doing so away from the altar. Edgardo solemnly breaks a ring (instead of a coin), giving her half and keeping the other half for himself. As the duet ends, they both ecstatically express the hope that heaven will vouchsafe to favor their vows. (This meeting of Lucia and Edgardo is Carafa’s equivalent of Donizetti’s fountain-scene duet, which concludes the first act of Lucia di Lammermoor.)

The scene changes to a magnificent gallery in Ravenswood Castle. The chorus sings in celebration of the arrival of Lady Ashton, who soon enters along with Bucklaw, Donaldo, and others in her entourage. She sings a difficult, florid aria for contralto in which she tells of the victory that has come to her party. Later in the scene she severely upbraids Lord William for going to Wolfcrag. He replies that he did so in the best interests of their family and tries to prove his point by showing her dispatches that refer to impending danger for their party. She is not convinced. She says furthermore she has heard that Edgardo is at the castle, and she wants him to leave immediately. William tries to pacify her, but to no avail. During most of their duet they argue about whether or not Edgardo may remain. The duet leads into the finale to the act. Bucklaw and Donaldo, who had left the stage for a few moments, re-enter — Donaldo announcing to Lady Ashton that Edgardo wants to offer homage to her. In high dudgeon she says that she will not receive him, but William countermands her desire and says that he may indeed enter. After a brief trio of Lady Ashton, Bucklaw, and Lord William, Donaldo leads Edgardo in, and in the quintet that ensues Lady Ashton becomes extremely angry. Suddenly Caleb bursts in (a departure from the novel) with an important message for Edgardo: his noble cousin Sir Athol has arrived at Wolfcrag and awaits him. Lady Ashton sarcastically tells Edgardo to fly to his cousin — to go ahead and betray his fatherland, his faith, his honor. Edgardo seethes with rage. As the chorus menacingly orders him to depart, Lucia and Elisa enter. Lucia
announces to all present that she is Edgardo’s fiancée (another departure from the novel). The ensemble soon develops into an elaborate octet with chorus, everyone giving vent to emotions appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the tempo changes from *andante* to *vivace*. Lady Ashton asks Edgardo how he could have dared to hope that she, Lucia’s mother, would consent to such a union. Edgardo replies that Lucia has sworn an oath. Lucia is agitated; indeed, all are. The act ends in another huge ensemble, all singing that the air holds nothing but horrible cries of rage and dolor. (Lady Ashton’s homecoming, along with its immediate aftermath, is one of the most memorable scenes of the novel; it is the turning point in the plot; it obviously is perfect source material for a typical early nineteenth-century Italian operatic finale, as Balordi and Carafa have proven. Yet, interestingly, it does not figure at all in Donizetti’s masterpiece.)

There is an interval of two months between the first and second acts. A note in the libretto assures us that this small infraction of theatrical rules by which the librettist was able to preserve the principal situations of the novel does not in any way harm the unity of action. The curtain rises on the burial-ground of the Ravenswood family. Caleb, Missia, and a chorus of retainers tell the shade of Sir Allano, Edgardo’s late father, to rest in peace. They assure him that the sword of vengeance is suspended above the heads of his enemies. (There is no exact parallel to this in the novel, but it was no doubt suggested by the account of Allan Lord Ravenswood’s funeral, ch. ii.) Later, alone on stage for a few moments, Caleb wonders why Edgardo has not arrived in time to commemorate the anniversary of his father’s death. Suddenly he does arrive, and Caleb is beside himself with bliss. Edgardo, however, is in a doleful mood; he tells Caleb that he must return to Ravenswood Castle. Horrified, Caleb asks him if he has not perhaps forgotten the old prophecy:

"Dè Ravenswood se l’ultimo
Indito augusto Erede
Nell’usurpata sede
Incauto inoltra il piè,
Feral sterile vincolo
Ei qui invocerà,
E l’almo augusto stipite
Seco si spengerà."

(Notice that this version of the prophecy does not specify that the last lord will die in the Kelpie’s flow.) Edgardo replies that one cannot appease the fury of inexorable destiny. In the remainder of the duet he sings that his spirit loses its way, all his efforts are futile, nothing can save him, an invincible power draws him despite himself into an abyss,
nothing equals his despair and bad luck. (This is one of the most
effective numbers in the opera. It is based mainly on a conversation
between Edgar and Caleb in ch. xviii, which, incidentally, takes place
before Edgar's first visit to Ravenswood, i.e. the visit which Balochi and
Catrì have dramatized in Act I. It may also owe something to the
unforgettable parting of Edgar and Caleb in the last chapter of the novel.)

The scene changes to a garden at Ravenswood Castle. Lucia is upset
that her lover has not returned. In a *romanza* she calls on sweet hope to
descend to her from heaven. Afterwards, in recitative, Elisa informs her
that she has no news of Edgardo; she has seen Caleb, who has told her
that he does not know what has become of his master. Lucia is afraid
that he has died. Elisa tells her that there is a possibility that his letters
have been intercepted. Lucia replies that she entrusted her last letter
to the minister, who sent it by a faithful messenger (as in the novel).
Bidebent enters. He tells Lucia that Edgardo has not responded to the
letter, that the allotted time having expired she can no longer oppose
marriage to Bucklaw, and furthermore that rumor has it Edgardo has
married a young French lady of illustrious family. "O Dio!" Lucia
exclaims. Bidebent advises her to respect the will of heaven. Alone on
stage Lucia sings a recitative and aria. In the former she expresses her
dismay at Edgardo's faithlessness; her spirit loses its way; she realizes
that the altar is being prepared for her marriage to Bucklaw. She then
mentions poison which one Alisia has left her as a means of ending
her difficulties. It seems that Alisia had been employed by Lady Ashton
to watch over Lucia, and to spy on her, but was then suddenly dismissed.
To get revenge on Lady Ashton she has left Lucia a vial of poison. (This
complication is suggested by Ailsie Gourlay's machinations, ch. xxxi,
but in the novel no poison is involved.) In the aria Lucia declares that
she will never become the spouse of another man; she will not betray
her oath to Edgardo. While she is singing cavaliers and ladies enter and
announce to her that Bucklaw has come. They wonder why she is so
sad.

For the finale the scene changes to the grand salon of the castle. It
begins with fine festive music in the orchestra, and soon a chorus of
cavaliers and ladies sing in joyful anticipation of the occasion. They greet
Bucklaw warmly when he enters, in the company of Lord William,
Bidebent, Donaldo, and a notary. (In the novel there are no well-wishers
at the signing of the contract.) Lucia then enters, in the company of her
mother and Elisa. She is so emotionally upset that she does not realize
when Bucklaw addresses her. He tells her that, if she does not want
him, she must speak freely. She replies that she will obey her mother.
*After* Bidebent has pronounced a few words appropriate to the occasion
and all have prayed for God's blessing on the young couple, the principal personages approach the grand table for the final signing. Lord William signs, then Lady Ashton (rather than Sholto), then Bucklaw. When Lucia's turn comes, she signs without first dipping the pen in the ink. Lady Ashton does this for her and returns the pen to her. She signs, singing *aide* to Elisa, "Ah! mancanco il cor mi va!" At this moment Edgardo forces his way into the salon. A large ensemble develops (Lucia, Elisa, Lady Ashton, Edgardo, Bucklaw, Lord William, Bidebent, and the chorus, including Donaldo), all singing *aide* words appropriate to the situation. *(This is Carafa's equivalent of Donizetti's famous Sextet.)* Afterwards Bucklaw cries out for vengeance. Edgardo holds up a letter and tries to find out whether Lucia wrote it of her own free will. *(In the opera the letter's contents are not made explicit; Scott's Lucy questioned the wisdom of her relationship with Edgar in this letter.)* Bidebent tries to calm things down. It is agreed that Edgardo may speak with Lucia in the presence of only Bidebent and Lady Ashton. Accordingly, everyone exits except these four principals. At first Lucia is silent when Edgardo addresses her, but finally, *con sentimento di dolore*, she sings, "Mia madre! mia madre!" Both Lady Ashton and Bidebent insist that Lucia's decision was not forced upon her. When they show Edgardo the signed contract, he believes that Lucia has betrayed him. He takes from his pocket their signed promise of marriage and the half of the broken ring from a ribbon around his neck, and he places both on the table, saying in bitter irony that he renders them back to her. We hear in the orchestral accompaniment the restless minor theme of the overture *(see Example #1)*. Lucia says that she deserves his pity, but he demands her half of the ring. As in the novel, he is astonished when he sees that she still wears it next to her heart.

Up to this point the finale has followed Scott's events of chapters xxxi-xxxiii rather closely. But now comes a radical departure: Lucia suddenly announces that she has taken poison! Lady Ashton, Edgardo, and Bidebent are thunderstruck. Lady Ashton cries out for help. In a few seconds Elisa, Donaldo, Bucklaw, Lord William, and even Caleb, together with the numerous cavaliers, ladies, and servants are back on stage. Addressing her mother, Lucia explains that the poison was given to her by Alisia. Edgardo furiously upbraids Lady Ashton, and Bucklaw challenges him to a duel. They are about to rush out to fight when Lucia cries out for both of them to stop. She tells Bucklaw that she could never have made him happy, and she tells Edgardo that she has ever remained faithful to him. She implores them both to live in peace. Everyone present is deeply moved by her nobility of character. She slowly succumbs to the poison, pressing Edgardo's hand to her heart:
"Addio! ah! senti . . . / Del mio cor gli estremi palpiti . . . / Per te solo . . . io moro . . . ahime! . . ." Unable to contain his grief, Edgardo stabs himself and falls down next to her. The remaining principals and the chorus solemnly sing, "O funesto orrendo evento! / O spectacolo d’orrore!" and the curtain falls.

Following the signing of the contract there is no marriage night during which Lucia stabs Bucklaw; he is alive and well at the end and sings in the final brief ensemble. There is no mad scene. Edgardo neither meets death in the quicksand near Wolf’s Crag nor stabs himself fatally at the burial-ground of his ancestors. Thus the ending of Le Nozze di Lammermoor differs markedly from the novel and from Donizetti as well. Although Caleb Balderston is retained, he is not at all the dominant figure that he is in Adam’s opera, nor the tragi-comic old retainer of the novel (Ballochi and Carafa virtually do away with the comic side of his personality). Despite the many changes, a great deal of the novel is retained — more of it than in any other Bride of Lammermoor opera except Andersen and Bredal’s Bruden fra Lammermoor. There are no Scottish folk melodies anywhere in the score.

Rieschi’s La Fidanzata di Lammermoor

Luigi Rieschi’s Fidanzata di Lammermoor, with words by Calisto Bassi (who translated into Italian Royer and Vaëz’s libretto for the Rossini pastiche Robert Bruce, another Walter Scott opera), was first performed in Trieste, in the autumn of 1831. The libretto was published (by Michele Weis), but the score apparently not. I have not been able to find any trace whatever of the music. The same libretto was set also to music by Giuseppe Bornacci and performed in Venice, at the Teatro di Apollo, in the autumn of 1833. It bears the title Ida (or Ida di Lammermoor), after the heroine in Bassi’s version of the story. I do not know whether the complete score still exists. I did locate one printed excerpt, an aria for Ida, in an archive in Italy. A revised version of Rieschi’s work entitled Ida di Danimarca was presented as if it were a new opera in Milan, at the Carcano, in the summer of 1854. It seems not to have been successful.

La Fidanzata has only six principals: Guglielmo Ashton, Ida (Scott’s Lucy), Edgardo, Lord Hayston di Bucklaw, Gualtiero (friend of Guglielmo; has little resemblance to Scott’s Lockhard), and Alina (friend of Ida; has no resemblance to Alice). Acts I and II prepare the way for the climactic and exciting third act, to which my discussion must be limited because of the exigencies of space. The curtain rises on a room in Ravenswood Castle. Everyone is congregated for the signing of the marriage contract, and the chorus sings of the joy of the occasion. As
the concerned personages sit at the table and prepare to sign, Alina fixes her eyes on the door, as if she were awaiting someone. Bucklaw notices Ida’s extreme dejection and says something about it to Guglielmo. As Ida is in the very act of signing, a commotion is heard from without. Edgardo bursts in, sees Ida with pen in hand, and cries out “Tarresta!” Furious that Edgardo has come, Guglielmo gives an order for him to be dragged forcibly from the room. At this Edgardo whips out a dagger and a pistol and threatens immediate death to anyone who lays hands on him. A large ensemble involving Ida, Alina, Edgardo, Guglielmo, Bucklaw, and the chorus then begins with the words “Oh! qual g elo al cor me piomba!” All express emotions appropriate to the situation. (This is Rieschi’s equivalent of Donizetti’s Sextet.) After this ensemble Edgardo asks Ida whether she has indeed betrayed him. At first speechless, she finally admits that she has signed the contract. Edgardo is beside himself with rage. He demands the pledge of their faith (i.e. the broken coin) which she is still wearing. Guglielmo (assuming a function of Scott’s Lady Ashton) assists her in removing it and hands it over to Edgardo. When Ida begs for his pity, he scorns her in the utmost rage. Again Guglielmo orders Edgardo out. He says he will leave, but adds the wish that the wedding may surge with a thousand pains. There is another large ensemble, after which Ida is led out by Guglielmo and Bucklaw, who look at Edgardo with an air of triumph.

The remainder of the opera takes place in a beautifully adorned and illuminated salon of the castle. A staircase leads up to a loge and other rooms. A full chorus is on stage, singing in celebration of the wedding of Ida and Bucklaw. Suddenly a prolonged groan is heard from one of the upper rooms. In a few moments Ida appears, holding a bloody dagger in her hands. It is obvious to all that she is mentally deranged. She slowly descends the stairs. In broken phrases she asks her father to go upstairs and find out whether Bucklaw is still alive. He does so, soon returning with the news that Bucklaw is dead. Ida seems relieved. She sings that now Edgardo will be her husband, but when her mind wanders to the subject of their love-token she becomes distressed, realizing that she no longer has it. Suddenly Edgardo bursts in, not knowing, of course, what has just occurred. He has come, he says, to avenge himself and then die. Ida tells him that the monster who took her from him is dead—and that she herself killed him! Everyone present is astonished. She sings to Edgardo of the fountain which brought sorrowful memories to him and asks whether it still makes him sad, now that it smiles beneficently at their love. The chorus laments her derangement, and Edgardo blames Guglielmo for what has happened. When Ida again becomes aware of her misery, Guglielmo tries to
console her, but she will not allow him to approach her inasmuch as she is tainted with crime. Yet, she says, heaven has given her a just penalty: she has taken poison. She asks her father and Edgardo to forgive her and to live henceforth in peace with one another. They agree to do so. "Ah! ..." she replies, "son ... felice ... ancor. / Edgardo ... io ... mo ... ro ..." She dies. Edgardo swoons over her lifeless body, Guglielmo is grief-stricken, and the chorus sings "Ahi! ... quel terrore!—" as the curtain falls.

Ida's suicide by means of poison probably owes something to Le Nozze di Lammermoor. Also, her dying wish that Edgardo and her father be reconciled reminds one of Carafa's Lucia's similar wish with respect to Edgardo and Bucklaw. Ida's stabbing of Bucklaw on her wedding night comes from Scott, but unlike what we have in the novel, the stabbing is fatal (as it is in Donizetti). Bassi and Rieschi's Fidanzata is the first Bride of Lammermoor opera to have a mad scene, which is suggested by the discovery of Lucy Ashton, in a deranged state of mind, hiding in a corner of the chimney in the room where she stabbed Bucklaw — she does not descend the stairs in the novel and display her madness before the wedding guests. Interestingly, Edgardo is apparently alive at the end, although unconscious. With the omission of Caleb Balderston, Bassi completely does away with the comic aspect of the story. Guglielmo takes on much of Lady Ashton's personality and performs some of the functions which Scott assigns to her. He also resembles Lucy's older brother, Sholto. His refined, subtle way of getting revenge on Edgardo by pretending friendship and then doublecrossing him, his deepseated hatred for him, and his disregard for his daughter's feelings make him quite a different person from weak-willed, vacillating William Ashton of the novel and of Le Nozze di Lammermoor. Despite Bassi's drastic reduction in the number of characters, the plot seems unduly complicated and is sometimes contradictory. The events prior to the time of the opera which caused the enmity between Edgardo and Guglielmo are not well explained. The forcing of Scott's narrative to conform to the unities of time and place adds to, rather than detracts from, the confusion, and it makes some of the incidents seem rather incredible.

Some of these and other structural problems have been partially solved in the revised version, Ida di Danimarca. As the title indicates, the setting has been moved from Scotland to Denmark. The names of the six principals are now Gustavo Jutland (who corresponds to Guglielmo Ashton); Ida; Olvardo, Lord of Nordemberg (Edgardo); Arturo, count of Alsen (Bucklaw); Roggiero (Gualtiero); and Alvina (Alina).

3. The libretto was published in Milan by Redaelli.
Ida is divided into four acts rather than three. Several scenes are abridged in comparison with their counterparts in Fidananza, and several are altered; three are omitted. Collation of the two librettos reveals many interesting differences, but without acquaintance with Rieschi’s music (which may or may not still exist) it is sometimes difficult to say just why certain changes have been made.

**Bruden fra Lammermoor**

*Bruden fra Lammermoor* was first performed on 5 May 1832, in Copenhagen. The lengthy text, which has much spoken dialogue, is the work of Hans Christian Andersen, and the music is by the Danish composer, Ivar Frederik Bredal. Andersen categorizes the work as “et romantisk Syngestykke,” to borrow a phrase from his preface to the separately printed text. Although several individual musical numbers were published (by C. C. Lose) with piano or guitar accompaniment, there is no complete vocal score. The orchestral score exists only in manuscript. The opera seems to have had a fairly satisfactory critical reception, but it was not produced outside Denmark. Nor was it ever revived, to my knowledge.

The overture contains material heard during the course of the opera. Most important to the musical structure is a familiar Scottish tune:

![Musical notation](image)

[Example #3]

All of us know this as “Charlie Is My Darling.” We hear it again in Act I, sung by the witch Ailsie and beginning with the line “Et Dyb og dog Guds Himmel”; in the second stanza the last eight measures have ominous words (Andersen’s version of the old prophecy):

> "Naar sidste Laird til Ravenswood,
Faer sig en Død til Brud,
Den Havfrue fanger ham paa Stand,
I Strandens Flyvesand."

4. **Bruden fra Lammermoor: Originals romantisk Syngestykke i fire Aeter** (Copenhagen, 1832).
Sometimes sung and sometimes in the orchestra, this part of the tune recurs, functioning as a leitmotiv having to do with Edgar’s ultimate fate. Andersen has retained most of the novel’s important characters; among the dramatis personae are Sir William Ashton, Lady Ashton, Lucie, Henrik, Edgar, Bucklaw, Craigengelt, Bidetliebent (spelled without hyphens), Caleb and Misie, and even two of Scott’s old hags: Annie and Ailsie. In some of the long passages of spoken dialogue he has followed the novel almost verbatim (or more precisely, the Danish translation that was at his disposal).

The final scene of the opera deserves close examination. The curtain rises, revealing the grand hall of Ravenswood Castle. A full chorus sings in celebration of the forthcoming wedding, and Bidetliebent brings forth the marriage contract which is to be signed. When Bucklaw wonders why Lucie is so pale and silent, Lady Ashton tells him that she is afraid of even the name bride. Lucie sits at the table, signs the document, but suddenly utters a cry and drops the pen. “Han kommer!” she says; “ham det er.” Edgar bursts in. The music stops, and there are several moments of silence, as in the novel. The spoken dialogue (rather than a musical ensemble) that follows is very close to Scott’s dialogue in chapter xxxiii. The main difference is that the role of Bucklaw is enhanced as a result of Andersen’s omission of Sholto Ashton from his dramatis personae. When Edgar insists on hearing from Lucie’s lips what has occurred, all the wedding guests except Lady Ashton and Bidetliebent retire temporarily from the room. To Edgar’s questions Lucie can only reply, “Min Moder—!” Bidetliebent tells Edgar that she signed the contract of her own free will. Upon hearing this, Edgar returns to Lucie her ring, while her mother clips the ribbon she wears that bears Edgar’s ring and returns it to him, saying, “Alt er nu til Ende!” At this point Edgar sings a short, poignant aria (“Du var min Tanke, var min Drøm”) — the first music we have had since before his entrance. Afterwards he leaves the room abruptly, and Lucie sinks down unconscious. With the re-entrance of the wedding guests, the finale begins. They sing of an approaching duel between Edgar and Bucklaw, and they notice how pale Lucie is, lying on the floor. When she revives, her reason has completely left her, and a conventional mad scene begins. It is made up of sung and spoken fragments of earlier passages in the opera. The spoken fragments usually are accompanied, in “melodramatic” fashion, by diminished seventh tremolos in the strings. At the conclusion of the mad scene Bucklaw re-enters with news of Edgar’s death. He explains that he arrived first at the place where he and Edgar were going to fight their duel. (In the novel Edgar is to fight against Sholto Ashton.) He saw Edgar approaching on horse-
OPERATIC VERSIONS OF LAMMERMOOR

back, but the next moment both horse and rider were swallowed up
by quicksand. He went up to the spot where he had last seen him but
could find no trace of him other than a black feather from his cap.
Upon hearing Bucklaw’s words Lucie cries out, “Edgar af Ravenswood!”
and falls down dead. Everyone on stage is horror-stricken. In the final
pages of the score Annie and Ailsie move forward from amidst the
servants and sing the opera’s chief leitmotiv (see Example #3) in a
low register. Biderheben and the chorus sing a few appropriate last
words as the orchestra plays a solemn andante maestoso. The curtain falls.
— The closing scene differs interestingly from the novel in that Lucie
does not stab Bucklaw, and her death comes after Edgar’s death. The
main events of the novel’s final chapters — the signing of the contract,
the wedding, Lucy’s madness, her death, Edgar’s death — are telescoped
into a single operatic scene.

Andersen’s retention of Scott’s domineering Lady Ashton is wel-
come on one hand, but at the same time it presents something of a
problem for the composer. A second equally important female principal
must of course have music in keeping with her importance. The result
is that her two arias, which come earlier in the opera, detract from the
impact of Lucie’s mad scene. Thus Lucie must share the honors of the
evening with her mother, who is also a soprano. Carafa was wiser than
Bredal on this last point: his Lady Ashton is a contralto. A unique feature of the Anderson-Bredal opera, in comparison with other Bride of
Lammermoor operas, is the retention of two of Scott’s three beldams.
Their very presence in a three-hour opera would give them a position
more emphatic than what they have in the novel, and here, in addition,
they are assigned new material. Thus the Gothic aspect of the novel,
which Scott is careful to keep in the background, becomes prominent in
the opera. Of the Bride of Lammermoor scores that I have been able
to examine, Bredal’s alone contains Scottish folk melodies.

Mazzucato’s La Fidanzata di Lammermoor

This second opera bearing the title La Fidanzata di Lammermoor
was first performed in Padova, at the Nuovissimo, on 24 February 1834.
Its composer, Alberto Mazzucato, was only twenty-one years old, yet
he was four years older than librettist Pietro Beltrame. The opera had a
satisfactory reception, and in the autumn of the next year it was per-
formed in Milan, at the Carcano, with equal success. I have no records
of subsequent productions, despite the fact that Mazzucato was active
in the musical life of Milan until the 1870’s. A libretto was published
concurrently with the production at the Carcano. Unfortunately, I have

5. Published in Milan by Dova.
not been able to locate any music other than the fine quartet, "Appena il vidi," which corresponds to Donizetti’s Sextet and which comes at the end of Act I (at an earlier point than the parallel ensemble in any of the other Bride of Lammermoor operas). Mazzucato’s opera has only five principals: Guglielmo, Lord Ashton; Malvina, his daughter; Ernesto, Lord Bucklaw; Edoardo, lord of Ravenswood (a mezzo-soprano); and Adele, companion to Malvina. This is the same line-up as in Rieschi’s Fidanzato, with the omission of the uninteresting Gualtiero. Also, as in Rieschi, the unities of time and place are strictly observed.

I shall begin my discussion in the middle of Act II. The scene has just moved from inside Ravenswood Castle to the outside; it is night. A chorus of armed men sing that Edoardo will be found no matter where he is hiding; that the sword of vengeance will fall on him. When they are gone, Edoardo enters. Seeing the festive torches, he wonders what is happening in the castle. He finds himself unable to leave the vicinity despite the danger for him in remaining. He wonders whether Malvina has been forced to undergo an undesired marriage, and he is vexed by the uncertainty of it all. Hearing a chorus within singing of joy and love, he becomes extremely agitated and decides to enter the castle. Ernesto meets him at the atrium, prevents him from entering, and tells him that Malvina is now his wife. A duet begins. Ernesto declares that a bond no longer exists between them; that neither is beholden to the other any more. They both express the desire to fight. Edoardo in fact draws his sword and wants to settle the issue on the spot. Ernesto says that the time and place are not right — that Guglielmo might come and interrupt them. He tells Edoardo to meet him early the next morning at the dunes. Finally, each expresses the hope that his desire to do away with his rival may be fulfilled. (The normally omitted scene at Edgardo’s castle in Donizetti’s Lucia involves a similar encounter, but it is between lover and brother rather than lover and rival. Both opera librettos owe something to the conversation of Sholto Ashton and Edgar at Lucy’s funeral.)

Act III takes place at the dunes by the sea. The tower of Ravenswood Castle, which the librettist places at the seacoast, is at one side of the stage. The opening number is a chorus of fishermen, who sing of the approaching storm and notice that the birds are flying toward the left (a bad omen). Ernesto arrives at the place decided on for his duel with Edoardo. He observes that the very elements are conspiring against them. Perhaps he waits for Edoardo in vain, for he sees that a beach divides Edoardo’s castle from their place of rendezvous and that it is

6. Published in Florence and Milan by Ricordi.
covered with swollen surge. He thinks of Malvina and of her great grief at the altar. Hearing a bell toll from somewhere in the castle, he asks the fishermen what this signifies. They reply that a boat has been wrecked in the surging waters. They urge everyone to lend a hand in saving whoever may be in it. Some of them look out at the sea and in fact witness someone struggling and soon being overcome. Ernesto looks out from a height and realizes that the victim must be Edoardo. The chorus observes that he is now hidden from their view; that he has found death in the surging waters. At this point Malvina comes out from the castle, followed by Guglielmo, Adele, and guards. Quickly grasping the fact that Edoardo is dead, she falls into Adele’s arms. When she frees herself and begins to sing, it is immediately obvious to all that she is emotionally disturbed. She does not fully understand where she is, and she is hot and cold at the same time. She thinks that she sees Edoardo smiling lugubriously on her. She wants to go to him. Guglielmo urges her to calm herself, but to no avail. She sees Edoardo again and believes that he has prepared an angelic dwelling for her. She longs for death. Suddenly she seizes a dagger from Ernesto and kills herself. All present cry out in horror, and the curtain falls.

Edoardo’s death scene is close to what it is in Scott, and it gives Mazzucato the opportunity to work in a chorus of fishermen, which is unique among the operas based on The Bride of Lammermoor. (In Brudren fra Lammermoor Edgar meets his death exactly as in Scott, but we are not present at the scene: Bucklaw merely tells us, along with the wedding guests, what has happened.) One wonders whether this final scene might have had some influence on Cammarano and Donizetti in the working out of their final scene, even though the basic situations are totally different. Nevertheless Edoardo, like Malvina, fatally stabs himself shortly after he learns of the death of his beloved. Moreover, both final scenes involve the rolling of a bell from the castle. In Mazzucato it signifies that some poor wretch is being drowned in the storm; in Donizetti, that Lucia is dead. To sum up, Beltrame and Mazzucato’s Fidanzata di Lammermoor represents a greatly simplified version of Scott’s story. The cast of characters is cut to the bone. Both Lady Ashton and Caleb Balderston are omitted. In comparison with other Bride of Lammermoor operas, the most interesting and remarkable feature about Fidanzata is that it comes closest to depicting Edgar’s death as Scott conceived it.

Lucia di Lammermoor

Lucia was first performed in Naples, at the Teatro Fondo, on 26 September 1835, and was enthusiastically received. Since everyone is familiar with the story of the opera, I shall focus my attention only on
aspects of it that compare interestingly with the novel and with the other *Bride of Lammermoor* operas. The cast of characters shows that Cammarano has taken a middle-ground approach to his subject matter. More of Scott's characters are to be found in *Lucia* than in Rieschi, Bornaccini, or Mazzucato, but fewer than in Carafa and Bredal. Lord Enrico Ashton is a composite of four Ashtons: the Lord Keeper, Lady Ashton, and their two sons, Sholto and Henry. He owes his chief personality traits to Lady Ashton and Sholto, and only his name to young Henry. Lucia is Scott's Lucy, but more passionate in temperament and not so easily manipulated by others. Edgardo resembles Edgar in almost every way except in Edgar's brooding, unspoken discontent: the operatic protagonist is all too ready to display his emotions when an occasion presents itself. Lord Arturo Bucklaw is a pastyboard replica of Scott's hot-headed, rather stupid, but likeable, Hayston of Bucklaw. Raimondo Bidebent, "tutor and confidant of Lucia," is mainly the Reverend Mr. Bide-the-bent of the novel, but he owes something in Edgardo's death-scene to Caleb Balderston. Alisa, Lucia's companion, has no resemblance other than in name to Scott's blind Alice; her function is the same as that of Elisa in *Le Nozze di Lammermoor*, Alina in Rieschi's *Fidanzata di Lammermoor*, and Adele in Mazzucato's *Fidanzata*. Normanno, "Captain of the Guard at Ravenswood," owes at least his name to Norman the park-keeper, who figures briefly in an early chapter of the novel.

An opening chorus of hunters in 6/8 time is a staple of the Walter Scott operas, and *Lucia* is no exception. Moreover, models exist in the earlier *Bride of Lammermoor* operas. Cammarano and Donizetti were almost certainly unacquainted with *Bruden fra Lammermoor*, but they probably did know *Le Nozze di Lammermoor*, and they could easily have seen the printed libretto, if not the music, to Rieschi's *Fidanzata di Lammermoor* (Bornaccini's *Ida*), which all open in this way. In the accompanied recitative following the chorus of hunters Bidebent attempts to excuse Lucia's reluctance to marry on the grounds that she is still mourning the death of her mother. This singularly ironic twist in Scott's story appears first in Mazzucato's *Fidanzata*, the libretto to which would have been easily accessible to Cammarano. In view of a number of parallels that can be pointed out, I believe that he knew and was influenced by all three of the earlier Italian librettos.

The famous Sextet (which involves Lucia, Alisa, Edgardo, Bucklaw, Enrico, and Bidebent) follows closely the parallel material in the novel. There is even a complete pause for a few moments before it begins. All the other Italian operas that I have examined include this dramatic

7. I have used the Schirmer vocal score (It.-Eng.) and compared it here and there with the Peters edition (It.-Ger.).
scene of confrontation and use it as the basis for a large ensemble. Carafa follows Scott most closely in having all the wedding guests leave the room so that Edgardo can speak with Lucia in the presence of only Lady Ashton and Bidebent. Rieschi, Mazzucato, and Donizetti keep everyone on stage during Ravenswood's questioning. Everyone observes the heroine's shame and her lover's anger when he is convinced that she has been faithless. Scott's Edgar does not end his remarks by cursing Lucy, but a conventional operatic cursing scene can convincingly be added in light of the situation that has developed. We have this in Lucia, but the model was already present in Rieschi's Fidanzata. The usually omitted scene at Wolf's Crag, in which Enrico visits Edgardo and challenges him to a duel, may owe something to the similar scene in Mazzucato's Fidanzata; it is much closer to Mazzucato than to the brief episode in the novel that suggested it. There are models for the celebrated mad scene in Rieschi and Mazzucato. Moreover, in Rieschi's Fidanzata, Ida stabs Bucklaw to death, and this is exactly what we have in Lucia, whereas in the novel Bucklaw survives the ordeal. The last scene of Lucia is the most radical departure from the novel, but Cammarano and Donizetti's conception of it is not altogether original. I think that they got the idea for the setting — the burial-ground of the Ravenswood family — from the opening scene of the second act of Le Nozze di Lammermoor, in which the principals involved are Caleb, Bidebent, and Edgardo; in Lucia we have Edgardo and Bidebent, Edgardo commits suicide by stabbing himself, as in Carafa — and like Madalena in the Mazzucato opera. The ominous tolling of the bell which signifies that Lucia is dead is reminiscent of bell-tolling for a different purpose in Mazzucato, as I have already indicated.

There are several interesting minor deviations from the novel. When Normanno tells Enrico and Bidebent about the wild bull incident, it seems that Edgardo had saved Lucia from certain death, but she was alone. Lucia's account of her mysterious experience at the fountain does not follow the old legend about a former Lord of Ravenswood and his demon lady-love so much as it does Edgar's experience of seeing an apparition of the recently deceased Alice, when he passes by the fountain after having been evicted by Lady Ashton from Ravenswood (ch. xxiii). During the course of the fountain-scene duet Lucia and Edgardo exchange rings rather than divide a gold coin. These and other minor alterations I could mention do not make the general character of the opera markedly different from that of the novel. Other alterations do, especially the omission of Caleb Balderston and Lady Ashton from the Dramatis personae, and even of Sir William Ashton, who, although weak in personality, is an excellent portrait on Scott's part. Moreover,
the omission of Alice and the three beldams pretty much does away with Scott's carefully handled Gothic atmosphere, of which there is only a trace in Lucia's cavatina at the fountain. What Cammarano and Donizetti have done instead is to concentrate on the love-story of Edgar and Lucy and to omit everything in the novel that is not obviously related to it. They capitalize on effective scenes already in the novel — the picturesque, quiet scene at the fountain where Edgar and Lucy plight their troths and the dramatic confrontation between Edgar and the signers of the marriage contract — and they create effective scenes from material that Scott does not fully develop: the meeting of Edgardo and Enrico at Wolf's Crag and especially the celebrated mad scene. Finally, in the circumstances of Edgardo's death they have created something altogether different from what we have in Scott, but very effective in the musical idiom in which Donizetti worked.

To Cammarano and Donizetti the love-story was the emotional core of the novel. They knew that this was conducive to good, effective opera as it had evolved in Italy in the 1830's. They borrowed ideas from earliest Bride of Lammermoor operas and avoided their weaknesses. No Scottish local color is manifest in either text or music. For all the disparaging things that have been said about the way Scott's story and its characters turn out in the operatic rendition, the test of time has proven that Cammarano and Donizetti knew what they were about. Of the whole large and significant group of operas which were inspired by the works of one writer, Sir Walter Scott, and which well-nigh dominated the operatic scene in the nineteenth century, Lucia di Lammermoor is the grand and glorious vestige. Its permanent place in the standard operatic repertoire keeps alive a fascinating chapter in the history of modern European culture.

University of Georgia