

# **‘The power of Gluck, and of his interpreter’<sup>1</sup> Pauline Viardot’s Part in the British Gluck Revival**

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Since the ‘cultural turn’ and its impact on musicology it is clear that music history embraces much more than composers and their works. Peter Burke described the change of approach in cultural studies in the second half of the twentieth century whereby cultural historians turned from focussing on ‘heroic individuals’,<sup>2</sup> and started to look at ‘practices’.<sup>3</sup> This would mean that, in music, historians would look not just at the artefacts themselves, but also at matters such as their creation, exhibition, preservation and transmission.

In the nineteenth century music historians had concentrated on *creative* genius and tended to ignore the important practical contributions made by persons of influence (especially women). Hence, until recently the name of Pauline Viardot (1821–1910) was hardly known in musicology, although in her time she was perceived as a multi-talented *artiste* who greatly influenced music life. She was not only a singer of international fame,<sup>4</sup> but composed, arranged, managed, taught and presided over salons in Paris, Baden-Baden and London. Her choice of repertoire set her apart from other singers and reflects her aesthetic and artistic attitude, which evinced an equal treatment of musical genres, eras and styles rather than treating them hierarchically. She was interested in modern compositions, and, as Charles Graves has put it: ‘[...] was not only abreast of her time, but positively ahead of it. Brand-new music never frightened her, but was sure of a sympathetic hearing.’<sup>5</sup> At the same time, she was an advocate of early music and included unknown or rarely sung compositions from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century in her programmes.

Although the activities by which Viardot contributed to and influenced the musical life of the nineteenth century were very numerous,<sup>6</sup> I shall focus in this article on the role she played in the revival of Gluck’s (1714–1787) music in Britain in the second half of that century. In Viardot’s repertoire, the music of Gluck occupied a special position. The music of this composer had never gained ground in Britain during his lifetime and almost all of his compositions were buried in oblivion shortly after his death in 1787.<sup>7</sup> Viardot’s endeavours to revive and revitalise his music were noted in the *Athenaeum* by the influential music critic Henry Chorley,<sup>8</sup> who propagated and supported her intention with insistent and continued calls for performances of Gluck at the London opera houses. It was in the version of Gluck’s opera *Orphée*, arranged by Viardot and Berlioz, revived in Paris in 1859, that Viardot celebrated one of the greatest triumphs of her career. (To avoid confusion, in this article the original version from 1762 is designated by the Italian title, *Orfeo*. The second version written by Gluck for Paris in 1774 is indicated by the title *Orphée* followed by its date in brackets. The ‘Berlioz-Viardot version’ is simply called *Orphée*.)

In what follows, Viardot's role in the British Gluck renaissance and the way she influenced public taste and thus musical life will be examined by using concert reviews and letters, for the most part unpublished, with interdisciplinary glances at the reception of Viardot's interpretation of *Orphée* in other arts also. The principal aim of this study is to rescue from obscurity those of Viardot's activities which had an essential influence on music life.

### **Viardot's commitment in the concert hall**

In the 1840s and 1850s Viardot was engaged for the operatic seasons at Her Majesty's Theatre or at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden. However, she not only appeared in operas but also performed in countless concerts. Already in 1841 she caused a sensation with her repertoire – not, like other singers, with virtuoso arias from famous operas<sup>9</sup>, but with the music of Gluck.<sup>10</sup> In the Ancient Concert on 28 April 1841 she sang music by Gluck, namely the recitative 'Andiamo, andiam' and the arietta 'Invano alcun desir' from the opera *Armida*.<sup>11</sup> The music critic Henry Chorley, who became the most ardent admirer of Viardot, wrote in his review of the concert: 'And we must ask, and ask aloud, for Gluck's "Armida," well aware that it contains music as grand, as the *arietta* sung by Madame Viardot-Garcia is fascinating.'<sup>12</sup> Queen Victoria, who attended this concert, was impressed by the simplicity and purity of the music and by the voice of the 19-year-old singer. In her diary she wrote:

An important event in the musical world in 1853 was the opening St Martin's Hall on 1 December. It was inaugurated by a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music under the direction of John Hullah<sup>13</sup>. In the second part of the concert, act II of *Orfeo* was performed in its entirety with Viardot in the lead role. The critics were enthusiastic about the choice of Gluck's music.<sup>14</sup> According to the critic of the *Examiner*, the performance had sharpened the desire to hear the whole opera:

[...] and the second act of Glück's [sic] *Orfeo*, a work that we have long desired to hear in its completeness, and for which our desire is greatly augmented by the experience of Thursday night. How good an Orpheus Madame Viardot made, need any critic tell!<sup>15</sup>

In a concert of the Philharmonic Society on 26 May 1856, Viardot sang arias taken from *Armida*. Both critics and audience had by then become aware that the operas of Gluck possessed many musical treasures and would be worth producing in their entirety on the London stage.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Orphée* in Paris**

After having heard Viardot in a benefit concert for his wife, the director of the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris, Léon Carvalho, commissioned Berlioz to arrange the opera *Orfeo* for a revival. Viardot, who had been the first female interpreter to sing arias and scenes from *Orfeo* in concerts, was to sing the lead part.<sup>17</sup> Numerous letters of Berlioz to Viardot<sup>18</sup> give an insight into their close

cooperation in the production of this ‘Berlioz-Viardot version’<sup>19</sup>. Unpublished letters of the German conductor Julius Rietz to Viardot reveal her major contributions to the new version.<sup>20</sup> This version of *Orphée* was performed for the first time on 18 November 1859 in Paris and the premiere was a sensation in the world of opera. On 14 January 1860, Chorley wrote in the *Athenaeum*:

It would have been absurd to attempt such a revival without the presence of a competent artist to animate it – to ‘restore Eurydice to life.’ But we cannot dream of any fulfilment of such desire more consummate than is to be found in the Orpheus of Madame Viardot. There is nothing on the modern musical stage that can approach it; there has been nothing on the musical stage of any day that can have surpassed it. As a piece of acting, it must rank with the *Medea* of Pasta, with the noblest antique creations of Rachel or Madame Ristori [...]. Antique, but neither cold nor mannered, – no composition of set postures and effects, but of passion and pathos, of tenderness and inspiration, – this great singer’s performance of ‘Orpheus with his lute’ will remain, with all who have seen it, so long as memory shall remain.<sup>21</sup>

Viardot’s interpretation of *Orphée* inspired not only musicians and musical connoisseurs but also, notably, writers<sup>22</sup> and artists.

### **Impact on Charles Dickens**

Charles Dickens and Viardot met each other at the latest in autumn 1855 when the author sojourned for several months in Paris. From 1855 to 1856, Dickens had his portrait painted in Paris by Ary Scheffer.<sup>23</sup> There is a strong indication that he had met Viardot in the painter’s studio. She was a very close friend of Scheffer and loved to work in the spacious studio, where she performed sometimes in spontaneously arranged concerts. Dickens in turn was often asked to hold readings there. Each could thus benefit from the presentations of the other.<sup>24</sup> Dickens, who had given Viardot one of his novels as a present, wrote to her: ‘I have had such delight in your great genius, and have so high an interest in it and admiration of it, that I am proud of the honor of giving you a moment’s intellectual pleasure.’<sup>25</sup> From that moment Dickens was a regular Thursday guest in Viardot’s Parisian salon.

On 19 November 1862, the winter season at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris was opened again with *Orphée*. Chorley, the young Arthur Sullivan, Frederick and Nina Lehmann<sup>26</sup> and Dickens were amongst those who made the journey from London especially to attend this performance. After the final curtain, they all encountered Ivan Turgenev, Louis Viardot and the opera manager Carvalho. When the last-named caught sight of Dickens drenched in tears, he brought him to Pauline Viardot, saying: ‘Madame, I present to you a fountain.’<sup>27</sup> The next day, Dickens wrote to the singer as follows:

Dear Madame Viardot, / I cannot help it. I must thank you for that wonderful performance of last night. When Monsieur Viardot came upon me by accident, I was holding forth about the

first act, to my daughter and sister in law, with tears rolling down my face. I came to you in hardly a better condition. I went away when all was done, in a worse. Nothing can be more magnificent, more true, more tender, more beautiful, more profound! / Faithfully yours always / Charles Dickens.<sup>28</sup>

The performance had a direct impact on Dickens's work as an editor.<sup>29</sup> Thus articles on operatic subjects published in Dickens's weekly magazine *Household Words* had previously contained mainly stereotypes and clichés, resting on the assumption that the institution of opera was of interest as a place of social interaction and not on account of the music dramas performed there.<sup>30</sup> From the early 1860s onwards, a change of attitude is discernible in Dickens, now editor of the weekly literary periodical *All the Year Round* that he had founded in 1859. This manifests itself in the editor's readiness to include in his journal serious articles on operas and on the influence and emotional power of the music drama.<sup>31</sup> According to Robert Bledsoe, two operas from the early 1860s had caused this change of attitude: *Orphée* with Viardot in the leading part and *Faust* by Gounod. Both operas centre on the themes of loss and resurrection, themes that play a decisive role in many novels by Dickens.<sup>32</sup> The actual return of Eurydice to the living in *Orphée* and the interpretation of Viardot whom he admired so much must have deeply impressed the writer. In the years that followed, Dickens published many articles dealing with the influence and development of the music drama. The singer and her art were the subject of at least three articles in *All the Year Round*.<sup>33</sup>

Dickens continued to write to Viardot and sent her copies of his latest novels. His last surviving letter to the singer ends with the following words: 'I have not been to the Opera these four years, missing you. When you were in the *Prophète*<sup>34</sup>, I went perpetually. And if you were to do *Orphée*, in London, I believe I should go every night.'<sup>35</sup>

### **Impact on Frederic Leighton**

The painter Frederic Leighton became acquainted with Viardot not later than 1856, when he visited Paris for study purposes. He quickly became a regular guest in Viardot's salon. In 1855–6 Leighton had painted *The Triumph of Music: Orpheus, by the Power of Art, Redeems his Wife from Hades*, which was generally considered a failure. In 1864 he tackled the theme of Orpheus again and his *Orpheus and Eurydice* was one of the paintings to which he owed his membership of the Academy.<sup>36</sup> The subject matter of the paintings differs in one essential aspect. In the first version, Leighton, true to the story in Virgil and Ovid, depicted a dolorous Orpheus in the depths of despair who is begging to have Eurydice restored to him. By contrast, in the 1864 painting Eurydice is desperately clinging to Orpheus who is trying to loosen her hold and avoid her imploring look. Thus, whereas in the first version Orpheus is the active partner and Eurydice is quite passive, the second version interprets myth differently and gives Eurydice a much more active role.<sup>37</sup>

Why did Leighton return to the topic and give it a different twist? A closer look at the libretto of Gluck's opera<sup>38</sup> indicates that the painter was guided by

this later version of the myth. In the opera, Orpheus is conjured by Eurydice to look at her ('un sguardo solo'), whereas in older versions of the myth the lovers do not exchange any words. Leighton was a great music lover, went to the opera and to concerts frequently and knew many famous musicians.<sup>39</sup> In later years he was known for his annual grand musical soirées. In 1860 he attended a performance of *Orphée* in Paris and wrote afterwards to his sister:

My dear Gussykins, – You may have heard from Mamma that I went to Paris to hear Madame Viardot in 'Orphée.' What wonderful singing! what style! what breadth! what pathos! [...] Madame Viardot's acting, too, is superb – so perfectly simple and grand, it is really antique. [...] She enters heart and soul into her work; she said it was the only thing she ever did that (after fifty performances) had not given her a moment's ennui. I am afraid there is no chance of her singing it in England this year, if at all; I don't believe the Covent Garden audience would sit through it. [...]<sup>40</sup>

According to Catherine Maxwell it is clear that this experience was formative for Leighton's later work: 'The liking Leighton had for Gluck, a liking which becomes an influence on his work, seems inseparable from the part Pauline Viardot plays in the revival of the composer's music at this time.'<sup>41</sup>

### **Impact on British musical life**

One can only assume that the performances of *Orphée* in Paris which caused such a stir in the international opera world were the reason for an increased interest in Gluck's operas in Britain. 1860 seems to mark the beginning of a Gluck renaissance: on 25 January, Charles Hallé conducted a concert performance in Manchester of *Iphigenia in Tauris* in the English translation by Chorley.<sup>42</sup> The *Athenaeum's* critic described this concert as 'one of those successes which may possibly mark a period in this country's music'.<sup>43</sup> He went on: 'In this Manchester has outstripped London. So long as the cause of great music marches, no matter where the march begins!'<sup>44</sup> The concert was attended by 3,000 spectators and its success was such that it had to be repeated on 8 February. A concert performance of the same opera was given in London in St James's Hall, again conducted by Hallé. This performance was as great a success as the concerts in Manchester.<sup>45</sup> At the close of the year 1860, Chorley wrote that new ground had been broken in terms of music in Britain. It had been, in his words, 'the year, for England, of Gluck's disinterment'.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Orphée* at the Royal Italian Opera**

It was most probably the success of *Orphée* in Paris and of *Iphigenia in Tauris* in Manchester that finally persuaded the manager of the Royal Italian Opera, Frederic Gye, to stage a Gluck opera there in 1860. It was to be the 'Berlioz-Viardot version' of *Orphée*, though not in French but in Italian. As Viardot

was singing at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris until the end of June 1860 and was not available Gye cast Róza Csillag<sup>47</sup> for the part of Orpheus.

In his review in the *Athenaeum*, Chorley first of all expressed his delight in the fact that the London public was finally given the chance to see *Orphée*. He reported that the audience had been deeply moved by the music, which would be a great achievement because it was difficult to win them over. Then he moved on to the most severe point of criticism:

We are now constrained to state that this revival was effected here with one important drawback, in the principal personage of the drama. [...] It is true that Madame Czillag, the *Orfeo*, must be credited with good intentions: having taken, we cannot but think, Madame Viardot's wonderful impersonation of the character for her model; but fascination is wanting to her voice, which has little tone, except when it is forced, and then only in its uppermost notes, – and good method to her singing. – [...] the amount of *make-believe* in her step, gesture, attitude is too obvious; her anxious, conscious reference to the public too perpetual to permit of our forgetting the lady in the emotion she desires to present. The characters in Gluck's operas require purity of singing, poetry and articulation, a noble simplicity of action in no common degree. However effective Madame Czillag may prove in music of a lower style, which less betrays the singer, it would be treason to the mighty master whose renown we have so much at heart, to conceal the fact that she is not equal to the requirements of 'Orfeo'.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly Chorley was an ardent admirer of Viardot's artistry. In his eyes she was irreplaceable. Other critics, however, described the event in a similar vein albeit less obviously. None of the critics dedicated more than a few lines to Csillag and these contained nothing but commonplaces. Viardot had attended the performance of *Orphée* after which she wrote to Rietz:

I stayed another 2 days in London to hear Orfeo at the opera. Now I wasn't surprised anymore that people didn't recognise the work -- All the tempos were so slow and dragged on, everything went one after another monotonously, without nuances, truly boringly old-fashioned, in such a way that it seemed to me as if one could smell an odour of mould in the house...No, I didn't recognise the powerfully moving work either – Orfeo was so mediocre, so dull! Always turned towards the audience, whether he was at the grave of Eurydice, in Tartarus or in Elysium, it was all the same to him, he sang his song to the audience – and the audience yawned heartily --- isn't that awful? – I had to yawn, too!!!!!! I returned home really melancholy – and I only thought what a terrible responsibility the interpreter has towards a great masterpiece! You can't but agree: we can kill a masterpiece with our impotence! But how beautiful it is as well to be able to carry its weight!<sup>49</sup>

The opera was performed only four times in London. By contrast, in Paris it was given with Viardot more than a hundred times from the end of 1859 until the beginning of 1861 and all the Parisian performances were well attended.<sup>50</sup> From Chorley's point of view, only Viardot could help to get the opera established in England.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Orphée* at Lord Dudley's**

On 16 July 1860, Viardot did indeed sing in *Orphée* in London, but not at one of the opera houses. William Ward, 1st Earl of Dudley, who had admired and supported Viardot for many years, evidently did not intend to miss her interpretation of Orpheus at any cost. He invited her to give a concert performance of the opera in his town house, where concerts took place on a regular basis. Viardot came especially for this event from Paris and received a fee of £150.<sup>52</sup> The choir and the orchestra were hired from the Royal Italian Opera.<sup>53</sup> Back at her country house, Courtavenel, in France she wrote to the German conductor Julius Rietz:

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, I travelled to London, only to sing the *Orphée* at Lord Dudley's once. What a great luxury! It went very well – and people could hardly believe that it was the same music as is being given at the moment at the Italian Opera Covent Garden with Ms Csillag (from Vienna).<sup>54</sup>

Naturally, Chorley seized this unique opportunity to see Viardot in London in *Orphée*. He even reviewed this private concert in the *Athenaeum*, which was not common practice.<sup>55</sup>

### ***Orphée* in Dublin, Manchester and Liverpool**

Whereas in London only an exclusive circle was privileged to see Viardot in *Orphée*, the artist inspired a larger and more diversified public in other cities of Britain and Ireland. In September 1860, Viardot went on tour together with other opera singers. They travelled to Dublin, Manchester and Liverpool. In Dublin, where this work had not previously been known in either of the versions, the performance was rated as an 'event of importance in the world of art'.<sup>56</sup> Although in Dublin it was apparently seen as risky to stage an unknown opera from the previous century, Viardot convinced the critics with her performance:

All praise is due to Madame Viardot for her highly wrought and classical representation of *Orphée* [sic]. It required a vocalist at once eminent in the florid, modern style of music, familiar with the ancient models, and an actress possessing the very height of ideal conception, to sing and personify *Orphée*. Madame Viardot accomplished this, – at times simple, pathetic, and impetuous, as in the air which terminated the first act, which but for her perfect execution would probably prove of little effect.<sup>57</sup>

The opera was an enormous success even though it was performed in French. Viardot was loaded with superlatives by the Irish critics and celebrated with flowers and shouts of joy by the Irish public:

Never, perhaps, was a triumph so manifest, so brilliant on any stage. The house rose, one and all, to greet her with every imaginable manifestation of delighted applause. Bouquets, in unparalleled number, were flung on the stage at her feet.<sup>58</sup>

In the review of the *Freeman's Journal* it was reported that there had been an exceptionally great number of connoisseurs in the audience, who were not present at performances of contemporary works such as Verdi's operas, but who would not want to miss out on Viardot's interpretation of a 'classic lyric drama'.<sup>59</sup>

The opera company then travelled on to Manchester where *Orphée* was performed on 6 October. The critic of the *Manchester Guardian* put Viardot on a pedestal next to the famous actresses Sarah Siddons, Rachel and Adelaide Ristori. In comparison with these, Viardot's interpretation of Orpheus was even more sublime, according to the critic:

Yet it is greater than any of these; because they had simply to act and declaim; while Garcia<sup>60</sup> has to act, to declaim, and to sing; and it is impossible to say in which she is greatest. In acting and declamation she is Ristori herself; in singing, she is – Viardot Garcia; for no one has ever excelled her, if, indeed, they have approached her, in this element.<sup>61</sup>

*Orphée* was performed in Liverpool on 12 October 1860. By then, news of the opera's success had reached London. Several newspapers and periodicals reported on the sensation caused by *Orphée* in the North.<sup>62</sup> But the public never had a chance to enjoy a Gluck opera starring Viardot on the public London stage.<sup>63</sup>

### **Familiarizing the public with Gluck**

It is not an easy task to discern the actual extent of Viardot's influence, as against that of others such as Chorley or Hallé, in changing the taste of audiences and thereby advancing the revival of Gluck's operas. An article by Charles Villiers Stanford from 1921 on the occasion of the centenary of Jenny Lind, Viardot and George Grove sheds some light on the matter. Stanford divided musicians into two categories: 'those who work for their art, and those who work for themselves'.<sup>64</sup> According to Stanford, the task of every true artist – such as Viardot and Jenny Lind – is as follows:

[...] their business is to direct taste, not to follow it, to give the lead to their hearers of what they ought to like to hear, and not to play flimsy or inferior work merely because the public, perhaps after one hearing, momentarily prefers it.<sup>65</sup>

In her book *Interpreting the Musical Past* (2005) Katharine Ellis specifies 'four overlapping concerns' which can be seen as explaining the popularity of a composition of early music: 'stylistic value (the museum spirit), technical/educational value, ritual value, and familiarity. These forms of value influenced modes of listening [...], modes of signification among those who claimed to represent, while guiding, public taste [...].'<sup>66</sup> By regularly including Gluck's music in her concert programmes, Viardot gradually created familiarity with music that the public had previously found strange. She did not hesitate to confront her listeners with new or in fact rather old and unfamiliar sounds: 'She followed a path diametrically opposed to that of routine, and despised the hackneyed "effects" which the habitués looked forward to at certain places in her roles.'<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

Viardot's endeavours to popularize the music of Gluck had already begun to bear fruit in the concert hall. The public became acquainted with this forgotten music and was enthusiastic about the original interpretation of the singer. By performing longer continuous parts of *Orphée* in England she aroused public interest in this opera and awakened the desire for complete performances. When the opera was finally performed in London, it was a failure. Csillag could convince neither audience nor critics. In Ireland and the North of England, in contrast, the opera was the climax of the season and initiated a Gluck renaissance. This shows the vital importance of the artist who mediates between the composition and the audience, indeed that the success of the work may well turn on the quality of the interpreter. This was already clear during the rehearsals of *Orphée* in Paris as early as 1859: 'What interested the amateurs most, was the fact that it was Mme Viardot who was rehearsing the part of Orphée, the only singer of today who has the understanding of music of the past.'<sup>68</sup> Viardot was able to convince a large public as well as the connoisseurs that Gluck's music was worth reviving. She was the Gluck interpreter par excellence, as Chorley aptly summed up when he wrote in the *Athenaeum* of 'the power of Gluck, and of his interpreter'.<sup>69</sup>

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## References:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 1 June 1861, p. 736.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (2nd edn, Cambridge/Malden, 2008), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Burke, *Cultural History*, p. 59.

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<sup>4</sup> See Gustave Dulong, *Pauline Viardot, tragédienne lyrique*, 2nd edition (Paris: Association des amis d'Ivan Tourgueniev, Pauline Viardot et Maria Malibran, 1987); April FitzLyon, *The Price of Genius. A Life of Pauline Viardot* (London: John Calder, 1964); Barbara Kendall-Davies, *The life and work of Pauline Viardot Garcia, The years of fame 1836–1863* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2004); Michael Steen, *Enchantress of Nations: Pauline Viardot – soprano, muse and lover* (Thriplow: Icon, 2007). These biographies all focus on Pauline Viardot as a singer.

<sup>5</sup> Charles L. Graves, *Post-Victorian Music. With other Studies and Sketches* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> There will shortly be published a book on Pauline Viardot's cultural activities in Great Britain and Ireland by the author of this article: Melanie Stier, *Pauline Viardot-Garcia in Großbritannien und Irland. Formen kulturellen Handelns*, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms-Verlag, forthcoming 2011).

<sup>7</sup> George Hogarth, *Memoirs of the Opera in Italy, France, Germany, and England*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), pp. 130–1, pp. 143–4.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808–1872), from 1830 until 1868 music critic of the weekly literary periodical *The Athenaeum*, author of novels, drama and poetry.

<sup>9</sup> See the concert programmes of 1841 in: *Concerts of Antient Music as performed at the New Rooms, Tottenham Street (1783–1848), being programmes of the Concerts, with the words of the songs and choruses*, 65 vols. (London, 1783–1848); henceforth *Antient Concerts*.

<sup>10</sup> In one of her very first concerts in Paris, on 3 February 1839, Viardot had already sung the duo 'Viens, suis un époux qui t'adore' from *Orphée (1774)*: see *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 24 March 1839.

<sup>11</sup> See the programme of the concert on 28 April 1841 in: *Antient Concerts*, vol. 58, 1841.

<sup>12</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 1 May 1841, p. 346.

<sup>13</sup> John Pyke Hullah (1812–1884), English composer, singing teacher and conductor.

<sup>14</sup> One can assume that the singer had chosen this piece of music. John Hullah knew her very well and following her suggestions, he had included four sacred compositions of Charles Gounod, a composer completely unknown at that time, in one of his Monthly Concerts in 1851. This concert had launched the career of the French composer who was in more than one way indebted to the support of Viardot. She had amongst other things collaborated on his first opera *Sapho* and had sung the lead part in it; see Melanie Stier, 'Pauline Viardot Garcias Einfluss auf Entstehung, Aufführung und Rezeption von Charles Gounods erster Oper *Sapho*', *Musik-Stadt, Traditionen und Perspektiven urbaner Musikkulturen, Bericht des XIV. Internationalen Kongresses der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung Leipzig 2008*, vol. 4: *Freie Referate*, ed. Katrin Stöck and Gilbert Stöck (forthcoming 2011).

<sup>15</sup> *The Examiner*, 3 December 1853, p. 772.

<sup>16</sup> See for example the critic of this concert in *The Athenaeum*, 31 May 1856, p. 689.

<sup>17</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Correspondance Générale. Vol. 6: 1859–1863*, ed. Hugh J. Macdonald and François Lesure, (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), p. 16, footnote 2.

<sup>18</sup> Berlioz, *Correspondance Générale*, Letters no. 2396, 2402, 2403, 2408, 2409, 2413, 2414.

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<sup>19</sup> Patrick Waddington, 'Pauline Viardot-Garcia as Berlioz's counselor and physician', *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3 (1973), pp. 382–398, here p. 395.

<sup>20</sup> In one letter he writes, for example: 'Will you tell me some time or other how far you've come with the Orfeus, which changes you've made and to what extent the tenor Orfeus has been combined with the alto?' ('Erzählen Sie mir gelegentlich wie weit Sie mit dem Orfeus sind, welche Veränderungen Sie damit vorgenommen u. in wie weit der Tenor mit dem Alt Orfeus verschmolzen worden ist?'). Autograph letter of 16 October 1859, Pn, Département des Manuscrits Occidentaux, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, Papiers Pauline Viardot (henceforth *Papiers Viardot*), Naf 16272, 584v.

<sup>21</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 14 January 1860, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> George Sand's novel *Consuelo* and George Eliot's poem *Armgart* are also modelled on Viardot but are not treated here.

<sup>23</sup> Ary Scheffer (1795–1858), Dutch painter, lived and worked in Paris and became a French citizen in 1850.

<sup>24</sup> Waddington, 'Dickens, Viardot, Turgenev', p. 56–6.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of 3 December 1855, quoted from *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Madeline House et al., vol. 7 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–2002), p. 759.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Lehmann (1826–1891), German industrialist, who lived in London from 1859, and was in close contact with many prominent musicians. Nina Lehmann, née Chambers (1830–1902), was the wife of Frederick Lehmann.

<sup>27</sup> 'Madame, je vous présente une fontaine.' Adolphe Brisson, *Portraits intimes*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Paris: A. Colin, 1901), p. 131.

<sup>28</sup> Letter of 20 November 1862, quoted from Dickens, *Letters*, vol 10, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> See Robert Terrell Bledsoe, 'Dickens and Opera', *Dickens Studies Annual. Essays on Victorian Fiction*, vol. 18 (1989), pp. 93–118.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103. The articles are 'Shakespeare Music' (18 March 1863), 'German Opera and its Makers' (part 2, 15 July 1865) and 'Music About Music' (22 July 1865).

<sup>34</sup> Opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer from 1849. Viardot had sung the female lead part, Fidès, at the première and in performances all over Europe.

<sup>35</sup> Letter of 15 August 1865, quoted from Dickens, *Letters*, vol 11, pp. 82–3.

<sup>36</sup> Catherine Maxwell, 'Robert Browning and Frederic Leighton: "Che farò senza Euridice?"', *Review of English Studies*, New Series vol. 44, no. 175 (1993), pp. 362–372, here p. 362.

<sup>37</sup> Maxwell, *Browning and Leighton*, pp. 363–4.

<sup>38</sup> Gluck used the version by Euripides, but modified it: see Maxwell, *Browning and Leighton*, p. 369.

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', *Frederic Leighton: Antiquity Renaissance Modernity*, ed. Tim Barringer and Elizabeth Prettejohn (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 295–314.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from 12 March 1860, quoted from: Mrs Russell Barrington, *The Life, Letters and Work of Frederic Leighton*, vol. 2 (London: George Allen, 1906), pp. 52–3.

<sup>41</sup> Maxwell, *Browning and Leighton*, p. 367.

<sup>42</sup> *The Lady's Newspaper*, 28 January 1860, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 21 January 1860, p. 100.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 23 June 1860, p. 861.

<sup>46</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 22 December 1860, p. 879.

<sup>47</sup> Róza Csillag (1832–1892), Hungarian mezzo-soprano.

<sup>48</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 7 July 1860, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> 'Ich blieb in London noch 2 Tage um Orfeo im Theater zu hören. da wunderte es mich nicht mehr daß die Leute das Werk nicht erkannten -- Alle tempi waren so langsam geschleppt, alles ging so hintereinander so monoton, ohne nüancen wahrhaftig langweilig perrückenhaft, daß es kam mir vor als ob ein Geruch von Schimmel sich im Haus spüren ließ...nein, auch ich erkannte das mächtig rührende Werk nicht – Orfeo war so unbedeutend, so dumm! Immer zum Publikum gewendet, sei er bei dem Grabe Euridices, sei er im Tartarus, oder im Land der ewigen Ruh, es war ihm allerlei, er sang sein Lied am Publikum – und das Publikum gähnte herzlich --- ist das nicht schlimm? – auch ich mußte gähnen!!!!!! Ich kam nach Hause ganz traurig wieder – und dachte nur *la terrible responsabilité qu'a l'interprète d'une grande œuvre! il n'y a pas à dire, nous pouvons tuer un chef-d'œuvre sous notre impuissance! Mais aussi comme il est beau d'en pouvoir porter le poids!*' Autograph letter from Courtavenel, 25 July 1860, Pauline Viardot-García letters to Julius Rietz [microform], New York Public Library, New York, Performing Arts, Music, ZB–3389, extracts published in: Theodor Baker, 'Pauline Viardot-García to Julius Rietz (Letters of Friendship)', *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1916), pp. 32–60, here p. 53. For the quotation above, the original letter was consulted, which differs in some points from the version in the *Musical Quarterly*.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, *The Athenaeum*, 23 March 1861, p. 403.

<sup>51</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 28 July 1860, p. 132.

<sup>52</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 20 August 1860.

<sup>53</sup> According to a witness, Lord Dudley had undertaken similar extravagant efforts many years before: In Rome, he had asked the cardinal in whose palace he occupied a furnished suite, whether he could borrow the cardinal's famous antique statues to decorate the stairs leading to the ballroom with. This he wasn't accorded. See Rudolf Lehmann, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894), p. 214.

<sup>54</sup> 'Am 12.<sup>ten</sup> bin ich nach London gereist blos um den Orphée bei Lord Dudley einmal zu singen. Voilà un luxe de grand seigneur! es hat sehr gut gelungen – und die Leute wollten gar nicht glauben daß es die selbe musik war die auf die Italienische Oper Covent Garden von Fr. Csillag (aus Wien) jetzt gegeben wird. Die Chöre gingen sehr gut, so wie das kleine Orchester – die kamen alle vom Theater – Obwohl kein Costüm noch Scene da war, da es ein Concert war, war der Eindruck ungeheuer groß.' Autograph letter from 25 July 1860, *Viardot-Rietz*, extracts published in: Baker, 'Viardot to Rietz', part 2, 53.

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<sup>55</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 21 July 1860, p. 101.

<sup>56</sup> *Daily Express*, 22 September 1860, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 22 September 1860.

<sup>59</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 28 September 1860.

<sup>60</sup> Garcia is Pauline Viardot's maiden name.

<sup>61</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 6 October 1860.

<sup>62</sup> Note, for example, *The Athenaeum*, 13 October 1860, p. 489; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 21 October 1860, p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> Yvette Sieffert-Rigaud writes misleadingly of the great success of Viardot's Orpheus at Covent Garden, see Yvette Sieffert-Rigaud, 'Pauline Viardot: Mythe et Réalité', (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rouen, 1991), p. 252. She passes on a mistake made by Mrs Russell Barrington whose memories in this point are incorrect: 'Orphée was produced at Covent Garden, and the great artist, Madame Viardot, sang in it superbly. The opera was given after one or two acts of a well-known work, and I can vouch for the fact, having been one of the audience, that the house was very nearly empty at the close of "Orphée," Lord Dudley and a very few true lovers of music only remaining in the stalls to the end.' Barrington, *Frederic Leighton*, vol. 2, annotation to p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford, 'Three Centenaries: Jenny Lind, Pauline Viardot-Garcia, George Grove', *Music & Letters*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1921), pp. 29–34, here p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past. Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Charles L. Graves, *Post-Victorian Music. With other Studies and Sketches* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1911), p. 174.

<sup>68</sup> 'Ce qui intéressait le plus les dilettanti, c'était que Mme Viardot répétait le rôle d'Orphée, Mme Viardot, la seule cantatrice d'à présent qui ait l'intelligence de la musique d'autrefois.' *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, no. 47, 20. November 1859, p. 385, quoted from: Sieffert-Rigaud, 'Pauline Viardot', p. 108.

<sup>69</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 1 June 1861, p. 736.