

Plot and Tonal Design as Compositional Constraints in *Il trovatore*

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Although almost two decades have passed, Joseph Kerman's response to Sigmund Levarie's essay in *19th-Century Music* on tonal relations in *Un ballo in maschera* remains a landmark in the analysis of Verdi's operas.¹ Arguing that "Verdi was less interested in tonal absolutes . . . than in what could impress *his* naive listener," Kerman questioned the relevance of analyses that seek long-range relationships between non-adjacent keys—relationships which depend on the perception of absolute pitch—particularly when such relationships ignore the immediate tonal contexts and temporal sequences of those keys.² Kerman stopped short of condemning such studies entirely and even acknowledged that they can produce exciting results. Nonetheless, his polemic is troubling if we accept it, for it suggests that many of our most prominent analytical edifices—for example, studies which explain tonal designs as long-range cadential progressions, as systems of keys centered on single tonics, or as networks of associations between specific keys and protagonists or dramatic concepts—and their implications regarding tonal structure tremble on shoddy foundations.

By directing our attention away from background relationships to those in the foreground and middleground, Kerman has lent his support to a productive line of investigation that has illuminated Verdi's efforts to reach his audience and to stage successful operas. And Kerman's assumption that Verdi was too savvy to expect his listeners to appreciate long-range tonal connections seems reasonable enough. However, we can hardly conclude that Verdi's attention to the expressive surface of his music led him to ignore completely such deeper levels of its design. Like other compos-

¹ Joseph Kerman, "Viewpoint," *19th Century Music* 2, no. 2 (1978): 186–91; Sigmund Levarie, "Key Relations in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*," *19th Century Music* 2, no. 2 (1978): 143–47. See also the responses to Kerman by Guy A. Marco and Levarie in *19th Century Music* 3, no. 1 (1979): 83–89. I am grateful to Professors Leonard B. Meyer, Roger Parker, and Gary Tomlinson for reading an early draft of this essay and making many helpful suggestions. Another version was read at the conference "*Il trovatore* and *Le trouvère*" held at the American Institute for Verdi Studies, New York University, 25 May, 1991.

² Kerman, "Viewpoint," 187–89. The issue of audibility has come up most recently in Roger Parker's assessment of Allan W. Atlas's analysis of keys and meanings in Puccini. See Parker, "Counterpoint: A Key for *Chi*? Tonal Areas in Puccini," *19th-Century Music* 15, no. 3 (1992): 231, and Allan W. Atlas, "Crossed Stars and Crossed Tonal Areas in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*," *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 2 (1990): 186–96.

ers, he faced compositional problems and made decisions that would not have directly affected the aesthetic experiences of his listeners.

Verdi's choices of keys involved just these sorts of decisions. Most likely they were guided by a complicated network of influences and constraints which varied in importance from one instance to the next. This network probably included such factors as the keys of other music recently heard, personal or idiomatic tonal preferences or aversions, conventional or idiosyncratic associations between affect or topos and key or mode, and the vocal ranges of his singers.³ And tonal schemata—even the abstract designs rejected by Kerman—could certainly have functioned as conscious or subconscious compositional constraints, facilitating Verdi's selection of keys by limiting options. Several studies have indicated, in fact, that Verdi experimented with long-range tonal schemata as early as the 1850s. David Lawton has shown that *Rigoletto* incorporates long-range bass-line arpeggiations of D \flat major and D major triads and "double cycles" of parallel tonal progressions which correspond to various aspects of the libretto. Martin Chusid's argument that *Rigoletto* is governed by a network of relationships centered on D \flat —whether or not we agree that D \flat functions as a tonic for the entire opera—tends to corroborate Lawton's findings. Similarly, Edward Cone has suggested that the deep structure of *Simon Boccanegra* depends partly on a long-range arpeggiation (a broadly deployed augmented triad E/C/A \flat) which Verdi clarified in revising the work and which contributes to dramatic cogency through its relationship to the plot.⁴ Since the existence of such schemata in his scores would suggest that tonal planning played a role in his conception of operatic structure at some level—especially since Verdi offered no conflicting testimony—we should hardly ignore them. Instead, we should treat them as integral elements of

³ The last consideration could at best have provided a partial constraint. That is, the vocal range of a specific singer, coupled with the range of a given melody would have confined Verdi's choices to a single key only if 1) that melody reached both the lower and upper limits of the singer's range (otherwise the melody could have been moved down or up); 2) he had conceived the entire melody before determining the key in which it would ultimately be set (otherwise he could have avoided the problematic contours); and 3) he was unwilling to adjust the extremes of his melody to fit the singer's range or to situate its principal ideas—its thematic block—effectively in the singer's tessitura. It is unlikely that this combination of criteria pertained to many of Verdi's melodies. Consequently, in most cases, vocal range would at most have restricted the number of possible keys without determining the particular key chosen.

⁴ David Lawton, "Tonality and Drama in Verdi's Early Operas," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1973), 175–211; Edward T. Cone, "On the Road to 'Otello': Tonality and Structure in 'Simon Boccanegra,'" *Studi verdiani* 1 (1982): 72–98; Martin Chusid, "The Tonality of *Rigoletto*," in *Analyzing Opera, Verdi and Wagner*, eds. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 241–61.

his style, of his development as a composer and, more broadly, of the intellectual history of Italian opera in the nineteenth century.

Although these analyses raise the possibility that Verdi's other middle-period operas might follow similar designs, to date those works have resisted attempts to find patterned progressions or single tonics. *Il trovatore* seems particularly troublesome in this respect, since Verdi juxtaposed distantly related keys in successive scenes without adhering to any obviously conventional arrangement. Perhaps the analytical intractability of *Il trovatore* explains the vigor with which scholars have instead pursued apparent associations between keys or pairs of keys and the *personae* of individual characters.⁵ For example, connections have been drawn between E minor and Azucena's love for her mother (her filial love) and consequent vindictiveness, between G major and Azucena's love for Manrico (her maternal love), between A♭ and Leonora's heroism, between F minor and her despair, and so on. Despite the initial appeal of this method, however, the evidence for presumed associations between key and aspects of persona in *Il trovatore* seems equivocal at best.

The relationship proposed by Pierluigi Petrobelli between E minor and Azucena's filial love and vindictiveness, a relationship for which perhaps the strongest evidence can be cited, will serve as an example. Table 1 lists and gives the lengths of all passages in which E minor is tonicized and summarizes concurrent events in the plot.⁶ It shows that seven of nine passages involve Azucena (as either the singer or subject) or her mother, while five of them (marked with asterisks in column 2) present some aspect of their relationship. At least a general connection with E minor seems evident—and I will later suggest that E minor is one component of a network of keys associated with Azucena. However, in several of these instances Verdi's choice of key may have been influenced by other factors. "La fattucchiera perseguitata," the second verse of Ferrando's *racconto*, conventionally stays in the same key as the first. And since the E minor passages in Azucena's act 2 *racconto* and the act 4 finale are linked to quotations of "Stride la vampa," they may have resulted secondarily from

⁵ See Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, vol. 2, *From Il Trovatore to La Forza del destino* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 70; Pierluigi Petrobelli, "Towards an Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," trans. William Drabkin, *Music Analysis* 1, no. 2 (1982): 129–141, see pp. 131–37; William Drabkin, "Characters, Key Relations, and Tonal Structure in *Il trovatore*," *Music Analysis* 1, no. 2 (1982): 143–53. See also Marcello Conati's presentation of a complex network of associational and schematic relationships in *Rigoletto: Rigoletto di Giuseppe Verdi: Guida all'Opera* (Milan: Mondadori, 1983), 124–37.

⁶ I have noted in column 2 that Ferrando's melody fluctuates between E minor and G major.

thematic recapitulation. So only two independent cases exist of an association between E minor and Azucena's relationship with her mother ("Sarebbe tempo presso la madre" and "Stride la vampa"). Even more importantly the specific associations proposed by Petrobelli appear infrequently. None of the passages cited in table 1 explicitly discusses either Azucena's love for her mother or her present quest for revenge, and only two allude to her attempted murder of the Di Luna baby ("La fattucchiera perseguitata" and "Quand'ecco agl'egri spirti"). In addition, several of them broach absurdly unrelated issues: in the act 1 trio, Leonora affirms her love for Manrico in E minor; the E minor passage in the act 2 chorus attests that liquor bolsters gypsy courage; and E minor is associated with Azucena's maternal love (for Manrico), not her filial love (for her mother) in the slow movement of the act 3 trio. While these last three examples are not the longest in E minor, they cannot be deemed inconsequential, since they are comparable in length to other passages cited in table 1 (see column 5).

Table 2 approaches the evidence from the opposite direction, examining all references to Azucena's filial love and vindictiveness in conjunction with the accompanying keys.⁷ Here the case for associations between key and persona seems even cloudier. Again, while the general connection between E minor and Azucena is apparent, the more specific one between that key and her filial love and vindictiveness is not. In five of thirteen passages, texts involving Azucena and her mother's death are associated with E minor. However, the aforementioned second verse of Ferrando's *racconto* and two recapitulations of "Stride la vampa" (II, 5, Allegretto, and IV, 14), in which Verdi's choice of E minor may have occurred coincidentally, comprise three of those five examples. More significantly, only one of Azucena's four cries of "Mi vendica"—the phrase that Pierluigi Petrobelli has asserted was "meant to identify what Verdi calls Azucena's '*amor filiale*'"—is unambiguously oriented toward E minor (the one in her act 2 *racconto*).⁸ And in this instance, although the diminished seventh chord that accompanies her outburst is preceded by a dominant pedal in E minor, it resolves not in that key but in F# minor. Both of Azucena's own accounts of her efforts to avenge her mother ("La mano convulsa stendo," II, 5, Allegro, and "Oh se ancor ti spinge il fato," II, 6, *Tempo d'attacco*) occur in keys other than E minor. Strikingly, "Condotta ell'era in ceppi"

⁷ In table 2, secondary keys within passages dominated by primary ones are given in parentheses; straight horizontal lines indicate a progression (the following key supersedes the preceding one); horizontal arrows indicate tonal instability.

⁸ Petrobelli, "Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," 130–31.

Table 1
E minor in *Il trovatore*

(1) Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Action or Topic	(5) No. of Meas.	
I, 1	Introduzione	Ferrando's <i>racconto</i> , verse 1 (e / G)	"Abbietta zingara, fosca vegliarda"	The gypsy was expelled from the Count's nursery	48
		Ferrando's <i>racconto</i> , verse 2 (e / G)*	"La fattucchiera perseguitata"	The gypsy was burned, the Di Luna baby assumed killed by her daughter	52
		<i>Tempo di mezzo</i> *	"Sarebbe tempo presso la madre"	Di Luna's men want to kill Azucena, just as they had killed her mother	8
I, 3	Scena Romanza e Terzetto	<i>Tempo d'attacco</i>	"Qual voce"	Leonora has mistaken Di Luna for Manrico; she loves Manrico	17
II, 4	Coro e Canzone	Gypsy chorus	"Versami un tratto: Lena e coraggio"	Drinking gives gypsy men courage	12
II, 4	Coro e Canzone	Azucena's <i>canzone</i> (e / C)*	"Stride la vampa"	Azucena recalls her mother's execution: the crowd's reaction, her mother's appearance, and her "shout of death"	118
II, 5	Racconto d'Azucena	Allegretto*	"Quand'ecco agl'egri spirti" (musical reprise of "Stride la vampa")	As Azucena wavered about killing the baby, she had a vision of her mother's torture	32
III, 10	Trio	Slow movement (e / G)	"Giorni poveri vivea"	Azucena was poor yet happy until Manrico deserted her	34
IV, 14	Finale	<i>Scena</i> *	"Un giorno turba feroce" (musical reprise of "Stride la vampa")	Azucena tells Manrico that his grandmother had been executed	14

Table 2
Filial love and key in *Il trovatore*

(1) Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Action or Topic	(5) Key	(6) No. of Meas.	
I, 1	Introduzione Ferrando's <i>racconto</i> , verse 2	"Ma rimaneva la maledetta"	The daughter became her mother's avenger	G	8	
		*	"Compì quest'empia nefando eccesso"	The daughter killed the Di Luna baby	e (#)	28
II, 4	Coro e Canzone	<i>Canzone</i> *	"Stride la vampa"	Azucena recalls her mother's execution: the crowd's reaction, her mother's appearance, and her "shout of death"	e(C)	118
II, 5	Racconto d'Azucena	Recitative	"Mi vendica"	—————	Dim. 7/D ⁷	4
		Andante	"Condotta ell'era in ceppi"	Azucena recalls her attempted interaction with her mother before the execution	a	34
			"Mi vendica!' sciamò!"	—————	a/dim.7/d	2
			"La vendicasti?"	Azucena stole Di Luna's son, but wavered	a—>G	11
	Allegretto*	"Quand'ecco agl'egri spirti" (musical reprise of "Stride la vampa")	Azucena had a vision of her mother's torture	e—>	32	

Table 2 (cont.)
Filial love and key in *Il trovatore*

(1) Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Action or Topic	(5) Key	(6) No. of Meas.	
	Allegro*	"Mi vendica"	————	dim. 7 [V/e]	4	
		"La mano convulsa stendo"	Azucena tried to kill the Di Luna baby, but instead killed her own	a—>	61	
II, 6	Duetto	<i>Tempo d'attacco</i>	"Oh se ancor ti spinge il fato"	Azucena wants Manrico to kill Di Luna	C (a)	29
		<i>Tempo di mezzo</i>	"Mi vendica"	————	c	2
IV, 14	Finale	<i>Scena*</i>	"Un giorno turba feroce" (musical reprise of "Stride la vampa")	Azucena tells Manrico that his grandmother had been executed	e	14
		<i>Conclusion</i>	"Sei vendicata, o madre"	Azucena declares her mother avenged	e♭	5

(II, 5, Andante), her most personal account of the execution and most moving expression of filial affection—certainly one piece that Verdi should have set in E minor according to the hypothesis under consideration—appears instead in A minor.⁹ And she attains her revenge in yet another key, E♭ minor. One additional related passage not cited in table 2 occurs in the *tempo di mezzo* of Manrico's aria in act 3. It sets Ruiz's reference to Azucena's impending execution by fire ("Accessa è già la pira")—recalling her mother's death—in E major, although that key is weakly tonicized, its mode is wrong, and the text focuses on Manrico's relationship to Azucena instead of her relationship to her mother. Moreover, when the image of fire returns moments later in Manrico's *cabaletta* ("Di quella pira") he sings in C.

It would be unreasonable to expect Verdi to have maintained associations between key and persona with complete consistency. However, lacking Verdi's testimony and faced with strange incongruities at crucial mo-

⁹ As William Drabkin has argued, dramatic similarities between Azucena's two solos in act 2 and the opening scene of the opera (both provide descriptions of the gypsy's death) explain to some degree the tonal parallel between those scenes (both move from E minor to A minor) and might partly account for Verdi's choice of A minor for "Condotta ell'era" (Drabkin, "Characters, Key Relations, and Tonal Structure," 145). However, if the link between E minor and filial love had been dear to Verdi he would certainly have set "Condotta ell'era" in E minor, preserving the correspondence between filial love and that key at its most salient point. If the parallel motion across both the act 1 *introduzione* and Azucena's two arias were also deemed necessary, he could have maintained it by reversing the progression in both scenes, setting Ferrando's *racconto* and "Stride la vampa" in A minor, the chorus of Di Luna's men and "Condotta ell'era" in E minor. (Naturally, adjustments of the present melodies—or even different melodies—would have been necessary.)

Martin Chusid's recent attempt to relate E♭ as the dominant of A♭ to "Manrico's cruel or evil destiny, or to the idea of death, sometimes to both" and A♭ to "Leonora's love and sacrifice" suffers from similar problems ("Death and Destiny: The Sonority of E♭ in *Trovatore*, read at the conference "Verdi's *Trovatore* and *Trovère*," American Institute for Verdi Studies, New York, 1991; Professor Chusid has urged me to take his arguments into consideration and has graciously provided me with a typescript of his essay). Although Chusid cites numerous incidents where these concepts and keys coincide, the evidence again suggests that such specific relationships may have resulted indirectly from more general affinities between characters and keys. For example, because Leonora sings frequently in A♭ and is preoccupied virtually to the exclusion of other sentiments with the issues noted by Chusid, the proposed associations occur frequently. However, Leonora's fixations also carry over into substantial passages in other keys. The *cabaletta* "Tu vedrai che amore in terra" of her act 4 aria—in F major—includes all four concepts (love, fate/destiny, death, and sacrifice): "You will see that no love stronger than mine ever existed on earth; fate won in a fierce battle, it will conquer even death. Either with the price of my life I shall save your life, or united with you forever I shall descend to the tomb!" Similarly, her *risposta* "Un istante almen dia loco" from the D♭ *stretta* of the act 1 finale mentions death, love, and sacrifice.

ments (which could only have compounded his audience's task of tracing connections) we have to wonder whether he gave them much consideration and whether the correspondences that do occur might have resulted accidentally from other relationships between key and text. These conclusions regarding *Il trovatore* are seconded by Kerman's evaluation of similar associations in *Un ballo in maschera*. As he so aptly observed, "on the face of it, it does not look as though the composer who dealt this mess expects to win many contracts in the great game of key relations."¹⁰

While analyses of this sort present substantial problems, they bring us closer to understanding the structure of *Il trovatore* by suggesting that we view the libretto as a primary rationale for tonal design. That is, in contrast to analyses that seek tonal coherence in such purely musical sources as bass-line arpeggiations, parallel progressions, and close circle-of-fifths relationships, associational analyses can treat aspects of the libretto as the principal framework for the distribution of keys.¹¹ In particular this approach can lead to a more convincing interpretation if we shift our focus from relationships between key and *persona* to relationships between key and *plot*. Close study of *Il trovatore* indicates that its tonal design may reflect Verdi's interpretation of the plot structure of the libretto. His distribution of primary keys and the nature of relationships among them seem to correspond to 1) connections between related scenes, sections of scenes, or events, and 2) distinctions among and convergences of separate subplots or arenas of action.

Within this design, primary keys are those given preponderant emphasis and stability within individual scenes. Usually they are presented in such lyrical pieces as one-movement arias or choruses and the *tempi d'attacco* (opening movements), slow movements, and cabalettas or strettas (concluding movements) of multi-movement lyric numbers, the landmarks of operatic design that would have commanded Verdi's attention. These correspondences between key and libretto involve the arrangement of plot elements, which is independent of affect, rather than the elements them-

¹⁰ Kerman, "Viewpoint," 190.

¹¹ Previous writers who have traced such associations have not recognized this potential and have instead attributed structural coherence to purely musical factors. For example, Petrobelli has argued that "the plot of *Il trovatore* is static, since none of the characters 'grows' in any way during its four acts. . . . The cohesion and the enhancing powers of the opera must therefore be found exclusively in the music, or to be more precise, in the constructive principles and relationships which the composer establishes in the score" ("An Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," 130). Drabkin has argued that the principal keys of *Il trovatore* are united through common-tone relationships. See "Characters, Key Relations, and Tonal Structure," 149.

selves, that is, the personalities, situations, or ideas that evoke particular moods and thereby suggest either major or minor mode. Consequently, Verdi's long-range design might well have dictated tonics only, and not modes, the latter instead reflecting surface events. Thus, in contrast to analyses which view key as an aspect of *persona*, and which consequently must regard mode as an essential element of that expressive relationship, an analysis of key and plot structure can dissociate tonics from their modes and treat parallel major and minor keys as interchangeable. By attending to parallels between key and plot, this approach traces the roots of tonal ordering to the text's principal source of dynamic cohesion. In doing so, it gives priority—as Verdi might have—to progressive features of the mid-nineteenth century libretto, that is, to a new emphasis of linear aspects of drama and the infusion of action into lyric numbers.¹² And by regarding the arrangement of keys primarily as a compositional constraint, and secondarily—if at all—as an aspect of the aesthetic experience that could be appreciated only by precocious listeners, it avoids unreasonable assumptions regarding Verdi's assessment of his listeners' capabilities.

Il trovatore has been judged remarkable for the symmetry of its libretto. Gabriele Baldini, for example, noted formal parallels between acts 1 and 2 and acts 3 and 4, involving the durations of acts, the relative complexity and "organicity" of their construction, the distribution of their numbers, and the disposition of their emotional climaxes.¹³ While these symmetries are real enough, I believe that the tonal design of this work has at least as much to do with asymmetries of plot that we have as yet taken for granted. That is, many of Verdi's choices of key seem to reflect differences between the plot structures of the first and second halves of the opera caused by the progress of the action across those two sections.

As John Black has remarked in his study of the genesis of Cammarano's libretto, although Verdi initially viewed Azucena as the principal female role, his conception changed as work on *Il trovatore* progressed, and he

¹² I have discussed these issues in "Analytic Contexts and Mediated Influences: The Rossinian *convenienze* and Verdi's Middle and Late Duets," *Journal of Musicological Research* 10, no. 1 (1990): 19–45, and in "Aspects of form in the *Ottocento* libretto," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7, no. 1 (1995): 23–35.

¹³ Gabriele Baldini, *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi: Oberto to Un ballo in maschera*, ed. Fedele d'Amico, trans. and re-ed. Roger Parker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 213–15. Other scholars have seconded aspects of Baldini's analysis and have taken it as a point of departure for their own observations. See Petrobelli, "Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," 131–32; Drabkin, "Characters, Key Relations, and Tonal Structure," 145; and Roger Parker, "The Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," *Music Analysis* 1, no. 2 (1982): 157–59.

gradually enlarged Leonora's role until it almost equaled Azucena's.¹⁴ This shift in the balance between female leads is paralleled by the bifurcated dramatic structure of the first half of the opera, in which two essentially disconnected subplots develop concurrently, their scenes presented in alternation. During acts 1 and 2, Azucena and Leonora inhabit separate and dissimilar dramatic worlds, which comprise both the scenes in which they appear and the scenes in which they serve as the focus of discussion or action (see tables 3 and 4). Azucena's world includes the *introduzione* of act 1, which contains Ferrando's account of her mother's death, and her two solo numbers and duet with Manrico in act 2. Leonora's scenes include her *cavatina* and trio with Manrico and Di Luna in act 1, Di Luna's love aria in act 2, and the act 2 finale. During this first half of the opera the two women neither meet nor refer to one another (although Manrico of course mentions Leonora when he ends his reunion with Azucena by rushing off to save her in act 2, scene 6).

In their libretto, Verdi and Cammarano underscored this isolation of the female leads with noteworthy contrasts of dramatic style. In Leonora's scenes, characters mark time in a traditional Bellinian operatic world of static conflicts. As in an opera of the 1820s or 30s, those scenes tend to focus on a conventional, inert love triangle and tend to underscore the ineffectuality of attempted actions. Manrico and Di Luna squander at least two opportunities to kill one another: the duel following the act 1 trio, in which Manrico spares Di Luna, and the battle occurring between acts 1 and 2, in which Di Luna leaves Manrico for dead without finishing him off. Their renewed confrontation in the act 2 finale only prolongs the standoff. Di Luna fails to kidnap Leonora as promised in his act 2 aria. And Leonora even misses the chance to end her suffering by taking holy vows.

Azucena's scenes, in contrast, emphasize actions taken, their motivations, and their results. Thus they depict a more up-to-date operatic world of effectual antagonists typical of Verdi's librettos of the 1850s. Azucena exacerbates a chain of events begun prior to the start of the opera—her mother's execution, her botched attempt to kill the Di Luna baby, the unintended death of her own son, and her abduction of the surviving infant—by rescuing Manrico from the battlefield and making him her avenger. Similarly, her duet with him stresses consequential aspects of his fight with Di Luna: Manrico spared his enemy deliberately and not through poor swordplay; Di Luna succeeded in taking Manrico to the point of

¹⁴ John N. Black, "Salvadore Cammarano's *programma* for 'Il trovatore' and the Problems of the *finale*," *Studi verdiani* 2 (1983): 78–107, see p. 80.

Table 3
Azucena's keys in acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore*

(1) Act, Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Key	
I, 1	Introduzione	<i>Racconto</i> Ferrando	"Abbietta zingara, fosca vegliarda"	e
		Chorus	"Sull'orlo dei tetti"	a
II, 4	Coro . . . e Canzone	<i>Canzone</i>	"Stride la vampa"	e
II, 5	Racconto d'Azucena	<i>Racconto</i>	"Condotta ell'era in ceppi"	a
II, 6	Scena e Duetto	<i>Tempo d'attacco</i>	"Mal reggendo all'aspro assalto"	C
		<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Perigliarti ancor languente"	g/G

Table 4
Leonora's keys in acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore*

(1) Act, Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Keys	
I, 2	Cavatina Leonora	Slow Movement	"Tacea la notte placida"	A \flat
		<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Di tale amor, che dirsi"	A \flat
I, 3	Scena Romanza e Terzetto	<i>Romanza</i>	"Deserto sulla terra"	e \flat /E \flat
		<i>Stretta</i>	"Di geloso amor sprezzato"	d \flat /D \flat
II, 7	Aria Conte	Slow Movement	"Il balen del suo sorriso"	B \flat
		<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Per me ora fatale"	D \flat
II, 8	Finale	Chorus	"Ah! se l'error t'ingombra"	E \flat
		<i>Concertato</i>	"E deggio e posso crederlo"	A \flat

death (Azucena almost buried him); and Azucena's skill as a nurse—rather than Di Luna's incompetence—saved Manrico. In this dynamic context, Di Luna and his henchmen seem formidable, their threats to find Azucena and kill her seem credible.

Unlike acts 1 and 2, acts 3 and 4 avoid this bifurcated structure. There the fates of Azucena and Leonora are interlocked through Di Luna's intrigues, although the two women still fail to realize it. His plottings have their most visible roots in act 2, where he declares his love and first at-

tempts to kidnap Leonora; and they proceed in acts 3 and 4 through his preparations for a second abduction, his capture of Azucena and discovery that she is Manrico's mother, Manrico's unsuccessful attempt to rescue her and his subsequent imprisonment, Di Luna's insincere negotiations with Leonora, and the deaths of the hero and heroine.

We can find parallels for various aspects of this dramatic design in the tonal structure of *Il trovatore*. Verdi's choice of keys for the three scenes in which Azucena and Leonora are introduced (two scenes for Azucena, one for Leonora) reflect both the functional similarity of those scenes and the separation of their characters (again see tables 3 and 4). Those scenes are the act 1 *introduzione*, in which Ferrando paints Azucena as a crone, Azucena's *canzone* and *racconto* in act 2 (in effect an idiosyncratic double aria) which present her as a loyal daughter, and Leonora's *cavatina* in act 1, which depicts the heroine as a devoted lover. Here the correspondence between scenes elicited the same tonal cliché. That is, all three fall by fifths from beginning to end: the *introduzione* from E in its *scena* and Ferrando's *racconto* to A in its concluding chorus, Azucena's solo scene from E in its opening chorus and her first aria movement to A in her second, and Leonora's from E♭ at the start of her *scena* to A♭ in the two movements of her aria. Yet despite the parallel modulations, the keys of the two women (E and A versus E♭ and A♭) are as distantly related as possible—that is, they share the minimum number of pitches—emphasizing the separation of the two women.

Corresponding to the divisions of plot and style in acts 1 and 2, two distinct arrays of keys develop concurrently for the worlds of Leonora and Azucena. As others have noted, Leonora's primary keys are drawn from the flat side: E♭, A♭, D♭, and B♭. Azucena's are drawn from the sharp side: E, A, C, and G.¹⁵ Moreover, different types of tonal motion within these arrays correspond to the contrasting styles of action through which the two women are presented. Leonora's keys form a symmetrical progression (the second half mirrors the first) which diverges from A♭ alternately in both directions around the circle of fifths and returns to that key by retracing its steps (see table 3 and figure 1). After bringing Leonora onstage in E♭ in her *scena*, Verdi established A♭ as a stable point of departure by devoting both movements of her *cavatina* to that key. Subsequently, her

¹⁵ Budden has also discussed this polarization of the female leads through musical means (see *From Il Trovatore to La forza del destino*, 70). Parker has noticed this dichotomy between flat and sharp keys, but has emphasized their sequential relationships rather than their role in articulating alternating planes of action: in each of the first two acts, sharp keys give way to flat keys, and flat keys dominate acts 3 and 4, ("Dramatic Structure," 159).

progression moves up a fifth to $E\flat$ in Manrico's *romanza*, down a fifth below $A\flat$ to $D\flat$ in the *stretta* of the act 1 trio, and up a fifth above $E\flat$ to $B\flat$ in the slow movement of Di Luna's aria in act 2. At that point the progression reverses, returning to $D\flat$ in the *stretta* of Di Luna's aria, to $E\flat$ in the nuns' chorus of the act 2 finale, and to $A\flat$ in the slow movement of that finale.

Figure 1. Leonora's keys

	I, 2	I, 3	II, 7	II, 8
			$B\flat$	
		$e\flat/E\flat$		$E\flat$
$A\flat$			$D\flat$	$A\flat$
		$d\flat/D\flat$		

In its cyclical, formulaic nature, Leonora's tonal progression mirrors both the stasis of her love triangle and the conservative, Bellinian dramatic style of her scenes in acts 1 and 2. More specifically, the points of greatest tonal discontinuity between adjacent keys, the two juxtapositions of $E\flat$ and $D\flat$, coincide with the two most obvious dramatic disjunctions. One of these points of discontinuity separates Manrico's *romanza* in $E\flat$ minor/major, which he sings unaware of Di Luna's presence, from the crystallization of their confrontation in the trio's *stretta* in $D\flat$. The other marks the change of scene and mood between Di Luna's cabaletta in $D\flat$ and the nun's chorus in $E\flat$ which opens the act 2 finale. These relationships seem to explain in part the deflection of Leonora's direct cycle of fifths— $A\flat$ to $E\flat$ to $B\flat$ —by incorporating $D\flat$. It also seems significant that both movements in $D\flat$ develop Di Luna's animosity, first toward Manrico, then toward a "rival God." He is out of place with respect to both society and key.

One element in Leonora's schema—Manrico's $E\flat$ minor *romanza*, heard during the *scena* of the act 1 trio—deserves special attention, since analyses of this scene by Roger Parker and James Hepokoski make its inclusion as a primary tonal center seem questionable. Briefly, Parker has proposed that across the entire *scena* "there is an underlying arpeggiation of C minor."¹⁶ C major is established first by an instrumental introduction and several opening lines of recitative, Manrico's *romanza* ("Deserto sulla terra")

¹⁶ Parker, "Dramatic Structure," 160–61.

introduces E \flat minor and also provides striking references back to C major at “è sola speme un cor” and “è d’ogni re maggior,” G appears briefly in the ensuing recitative at “Ella scende,” and finally a decisive cadence in C major ends the *scena* prior to the *tempo d’attacco* (“Infida! Qual voce! Ah dalle tenebre”). Hepokoski has taken this interpretation farther, arguing that “tonal motion . . . , at least through the opening of the *tempo d’attacco* . . . is governed by the initial C tonic.”¹⁷ According to this formulation, which treats the *scena* as a middleground prolongation of C major/minor, the scene as a whole would move to D \flat in the *stretta* not from E \flat , as I have suggested, but from C, disrupting the symmetrical progression that I have proposed. This long-range association of C and D \flat is foreshadowed in microcosm by a prominent inflection to D \flat in the eighth measure of the instrumental introduction.

In my view this interpretation is questionable, particularly if we examine harmonic motion in this scene as we hear it in prospect. I prefer to regard the E \flat of Manrico’s *romanza* as the stable harmonic goal of the preceding recitative. This *scena* moves directly toward E \flat down the circle of fifths from its initial C to F at “Ah! . . . l’amorosa fiamma,” and then to B \flat , which functions initially as a tonic when Manrico’s harp is first heard, then as a dominant shortly before he sings (“Il trovator, io fremo”). Verdi’s transposition of the instrumental introduction from its original F major to C, a revision discovered by Hepokoski, reinforces the sense of linear motion in this passage by lengthening the cycle of fifths and by avoiding extended emphasis of F as a conflicting tonic, which might have made ambiguous the role of E \flat as a structural downbeat.¹⁸ Once E \flat has been established as a primary tonic, it serves as the most audible context for subsequent tonal motion. Consequently, the brief inflection to C following Manrico’s *romanza* (before “Infida! Qual voce!”) functions more as an unstable digression than as a stable point of return.

Read in this manner, tonal resolution and deflection in this passage present a plausible interpretation of the concurrent action. The abortive return to C parallels Di Luna’s attempt at ignoring Manrico’s presence and believing again, as he had at the start of the scene, that Leonora loves him. Although she mistakenly confirms his tonal gambit with a full cadence, her acquiescence is short-lived. Manrico’s entrance exposes their errors, both emotional and tonal, as he seizes Leonora and the key, usurp-

¹⁷ James A. Hepokoski, “Compositional Emendations in Verdi’s Autograph Scores: ‘Il trovatore,’ ‘Un ballo in maschera,’ and ‘Aida,’” *Studi verdiani* 4 (1986–87): 87–109, see p. 95.

¹⁸ Hepokoski, “Compositional Emendations,” 96.

ing the pitch E from C major as a common-tone pivot to E minor for the start of the lyric trio. Moreover, the inflection in the *scena*'s instrumental prelude not only to D \flat but also to A \flat —the key in which Leonora's *cavatina* has just ended—casts Di Luna's entrance into her tonal world as an unwanted intrusion and foreshadows conflicts that will come to a head in the D \flat *stretta*.

Azucena's progression E/A/C/G resembles Leonora's in its reliance on motion by fifths, E/A and C/G (table 4). And like Leonora's, it has a cyclical element. As noted earlier, the keys of Azucena's two aria movements (E minor and A minor) restate the principal tonics of the *introduzione* (also E major/minor and A minor), reflecting a similarity of dramatic function. In contrast to the long-range symmetry and tonal return of Leonora's progression, however, Azucena's provides an open-ended tonal design which corresponds to her more active ethos. The background tonal stasis created by the *introduzione* and her own first scene ends in her duet with Manrico, which replaces E/A with C/G. This shift to forward tonal motion occurs when the action begins to move, that is, when the characters turn their attention from the remote past to more recent events and future plans: Manrico describes his fight with Di Luna, promises to act ruthlessly next time, learns that Leonora intends to become a nun, and resolves to stop her.

Leonora's and Azucena's progressions lead from opposite directions toward F major/minor, a tonal center which will dominate acts 3 and 4, connecting events stemming from Di Luna's intrigues. One key from each of their progressions provides a link to F: Leonora's B \flat as its subdominant; Azucena's C as its dominant. Verdi introduced these pivot keys precisely when connections between events in acts 1 and 2 and Di Luna's stratagems first become apparent. And he introduced them explicitly in the context of F, making plain the harmonic relationships. B \flat is the key of Di Luna's only love song, his act 2 *romanza*, which crystallizes his motivation for subsequent intrigues. Di Luna had prefaced this movement by staking his claim to Leonora in a passage that cadences squarely on F (at "Leonora è mia"), and he hears the bells summoning her to the convent in F minor shortly afterward. C is established in the *tempo d'attacco* of Azucena's duet with Manrico, where he explains that he spared Di Luna's life because he felt a presentiment of their brotherhood, revealing a crucial miscalculation that will open the way to catastrophe and alluding to a central element of Azucena's revenge, Di Luna's eventual murder of his own brother. Eleven measures prior to this movement, Azucena had reminded her son of Di Luna's treachery in F minor (at "Ecco mercede ai giorni").

Unlike Leonora's progression, for which the pivot key, B \flat , represents the point of maximum divergence from the starting and concluding key

of Ab, Azucena's tonal motion proceeds beyond her pivot, C, to G in the cabaletta of her duet with Manrico. Although this arrangement reduces the prominence of the pivot by embedding it within an ongoing progression rather than making it an endpoint, it has an arguable relationship to the plot. As indicated above, the *tempo d'attacco* of the Azucena-Manrico duet provided an obvious moment to present C as a primary key because of the dramatic ties between that movement and Di Luna's intrigues in acts 3 and 4. Verdi could not have exchanged Cammarano's text for the *tempo d'attacco* with that of the cabaletta to put C at the end of the progression, since the present cabaletta's text ends with Manrico's departure. Returning to A or E for the cabaletta, or even repeating C, might have seemed unacceptable, since these alternatives would have produced a cyclical arrangement or middleground tonal stasis and a resulting similarity to Leonora's progression that Verdi probably wanted to avoid. Thus it was advantageous to introduce a new key in the cabaletta, and G maintained the characteristic motion by fifth seen in previous stages of the tonal design. Moreover, by overreaching the pivot, Verdi added a separate tonal analog for a new subplot—Manrico's conflict with Azucena over his divided loyalties—that begins with his decision to abandon his mother and save Leonora. The key of G returns when Azucena discloses her search for Manrico in the slow movement of the act 3 trio (at "Io, deserta, vado errando"); it is the key in which mother and son are reunited in the act 4 finale (at "Sì; la stanchezza m'opprime, o figlio"); and it is the key in which Manrico questions Leonora's loyalty in that finale (at "Parlar non vuoi?"), before the lovers are reconciled.

During acts 3 and 4 the two arrays of keys devoted originally to Leonora and Azucena are still associated with those characters, serving as sources of primary keys juxtaposed against the F axis (see table 5). As in acts 1 and 2, Azucena's tonal plan is more event-oriented than Leonora's: tonics chosen for actions in the second half of the opera are the same as those chosen for similar actions in the first. The C major soldier's chorus that begins act 3 resembles in its combative mood the C major *tempo d'attacco* of the Azucena-Manrico duet in act 2, in which Manrico had described his fight with Di Luna. Azucena's E minor-major slow movement in the act 3 trio, in which she laments her poverty and loneliness and discloses her maternal ties to Manrico, parallels the gypsy chorus and her *canzone* in act 2, also in E: both scenes describe aspects of gypsy life, characterize her situation, and convey her emotional attachments to her kin. Manrico's cabaletta in C major, after which he abandons Leonora at the altar to save Azucena, relates to his moment of bonding with his mother during their C major *tempo d'attacco* in act 2. Finally, as explained above, G major links the events through which Manrico's conflict of loyalty is developed and resolved.

Table 5
Primary keys other than F in acts 3 and 4 of *Il trovatore*

	(1) Act, Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Azucena's Keys	(5) Leonora's Keys
III, 9	Coro	Movement 1	"Or co'dadi, ma fra poco"	C	
III, 10	Terzetto	Slow Movement	"Giorni poveri vivea"	c-E	
III, 11	Aria Manrico	Slow Movement (f—D \flat)	"Ah s \grave{a} , ben mio, coll'essere"		D \flat
		<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Di quella pira l'orrendo foco"	C	
IV, 12	Aria Leonora	Slow Movement (f—A \flat)	"D'amor sull'ali rosee"		A \flat
IV, 13	Duetto	Slow Movement	"Mira, d'acerbe lagrime"		A \flat
IV, 14	Finale ultimo	Slow Movement 1	"S \grave{a} ; la stanchezza m'opprime, o figlio"	g—G	
		Slow Movement 2	"Parlar non vuoi?"	G	
		Slow Movement 3	"Prima che d'altri vivere"		E \flat /e \flat

In contrast, Leonora's keys follow a conventional, purely musical schema—as in the first half of the opera—and do not connect parallel situations. Her keys again move upward by fifths, in a progression that extends through single movements in four numbers: 1) the slow movement of Manrico's act 3 aria, predominantly in $D\flat$ (though it begins in F minor), in which he anticipates a spiritual reunion with Leonora; 2) the slow movement of Leonora's act 4 aria, primarily in $A\flat$ (though it too begins in F minor), in which she affirms her love for Manrico; 3) the slow movement of her duet with Di Luna in act 4, also in $A\flat$, in which she pleads for Manrico's life; and 4) the last slow movement of the act 4 finale, in $E\flat$ major-minor, in which Leonora and Manrico are reconciled. Yet Leonora's open-ended progression contrasts with her closed, cyclical one in acts 1 and 2, reflecting her new involvement in Azucena's world of action. Moreover, its eventual arrival on $E\flat$ causes the opera to end in one of the keys most distant from that in which it began (E major/minor), reflecting the substantial progress of the plot. At the same time, arrival on the key in which both she and Manrico had originally made their entrances corresponds to her physical and anticipated spiritual reunion with her lover.

During the second half of the opera F major/minor, the intersection between Leonora's and Azucena's tonal worlds established in act 2, mediates among keys associated with Leonora and Azucena (see table 6). Three of the five scenes in acts 3 and 4 begin in F, and four of them end there. In addition, each scene includes one or two lyrical movements (a slow movement and/or cabaletta/stretta) that begins in F major or minor. This axis serves as a tonal parallel for the chain of events set in motion by Di Luna's intrigues. That is, virtually all of the events leading to the final disaster are set to music centered on F. Di Luna discovers Azucena's relationship to Manrico over a dominant pedal in F during the *tempo di mezzo* of the act 3 trio (beginning "E tu non vieni, o Manrico") and realizes in the ensuing F major *stretta* ("Deh, rallentate, o barbari") that he can punish Manrico by killing her. During the *tempo di mezzo* of Manrico's aria in that act, he and Leonora pledge their devotion in F ("L'onda de'suoni mistici"), and in a modulatory passage that begins in F Ruiz reveals that Azucena has been captured, his music eventually moving to E major (recalling the tonic of "Stride la vampa") when he mentions that she will be burned (beginning "Manrico?/Che?/La zingara...vieni..."). Leonora first discloses that she will rescue Manrico in F minor during the *scena* of her act 4 aria ("Salvarlo io potrò, forse"), then affirms her intentions in her F major *cabaletta* ("Tu vedrai che amore in terra"); and finally, Di Luna vows to kill both Azucena and Manrico in F major during the *scena* of his duet with Leonora ("Come albeggi, la scure al figlio"). Di Luna and Leonora

Table 6
F major and f minor in acts 3 and 4 of *Il trovatore*

(1) Act, Scene	(2) Scene Begins in F/f	(3) Scene Ends in F/f	(4) Movement(s) wholly in F/f or Beginning in F/f	(5) First Line of Text
III, 9 Coro	—	X	<i>Stretta</i>	"Squilli, echeggi la tromba guerriera"
III, 10 Scena e Terzetto	X	X	<i>Stretta</i>	"Deh, rallentate, o barbari"
III, 11 Aria Manrico	—	—	Slow movement (f-D \flat)	"Ah sì, ben mio, coll'essere"
IV, 12 Scena ed Aria Leonora	X	X	Slow movement (f-A \flat)	"D'amor sull'ali rosee"
			<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Tu vedrai che amore in terra"
IV, 13 Scena e Duetto	X	X	<i>Cabaletta</i>	"Vivrà! Contende il giubilo"

make plans to betray one another over a dominant pedal in F during their *tempo di mezzo* ("Olà/M'avrai . . . ma fredda"), and she again promises to save Manrico in their F major cabaletta ("Vivrà! Contende il giubilo"). Thus, having established the F major/minor axis just as the fates of the two women are drawn together by Di Luna's plottings, Verdi kept it in effect until the climactic moment in act 4 when Di Luna and Leonora set courses of action that ensure the final disaster.

I turn now to the manifold relationships among secondary tonics, those established for relatively brief periods of time with less emphasis and stability than the primary ones that have occupied us so far. Explaining tonal relationships at this local structural level presents a thorny problem, since the aesthetic impact of audible harmonic progressions can hardly be regarded as insignificant. Verdi's decisions must have depended upon many different considerations, among them his intuitive judgments regarding the character and importance of particular dramatic moments and the intensity of their accompanying harmonic progressions. Nonetheless, I believe that we can take a tentative step toward understanding this level of design by examining two ways in which Verdi's long-range network of primary keys may have limited his choices of secondary keys in acts 1 and 2.

Tables 7 and 8 show ways in which secondary keys serve a process of modulating the tonal palette by phasing keys in and out of focus. Keys that eventually reach the status of primary tonics frequently appear initially as prominent secondary tonics within scenes dominated by other keys. Less often, primary tonics reappear in later scenes as prominent secondary keys.¹⁹ This device is most apparent in Azucena's scenes in acts 1 and 2 (see table 7). The shift to C and G in act 2, scene 6, is prepared by the prior introduction of those tonics as secondary keys against A and E in act 1, scene 1, and act 2, scenes 4 and 5, and by the pronounced increase in emphasis of C and G across those earlier scenes. Conversely, when C and G become primary keys, A major/minor still serves as a secondary tonal center.

Although the same approach is also evident in Leonora's scenes in acts 1 and 2 (table 8), her secondary tonal references are shorter than Azucena's, perhaps because her primary keys fall into a more conventional pattern. Nonetheless, D \flat and E \flat do appear in act 1, scene 2, before they become primary keys in the next scene (act 1, scene 3). And B \flat is touched in act 1, scene 3, before reaching the foreground in act 2, scene 7. Moreover, conjunctions between each of the earlier occurrences of those three keys and

¹⁹ This characteristic may relate to Verdi's gradual introduction of keys distant to the initially primary ones of A \flat and D \flat in *Rigoletto*. See Chusid, "Tonality of *Rigoletto*," 247.

Table 7
 Primary keys used as secondary keys in Azucena's scenes,
 acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore*

	(1) Act, Scene	(2) Number of Measures / Percentage of Scene			
		E or e	A or a	C or c	G or g
I, 1	Introduzione	155/47%	88/26%	5/2%	9/3%
II, 4 and 5	Coro e Canzone and Racconto d'Azucena	124/40%	88/24%	36/10%	58/16%
II, 6	Duetto	————	15/5%	66/25%	148/47%

Table 8
 Primary keys used as secondary keys in Leonora's scenes,
 Acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore*

	(1) Act, Scene	(2) Number of Measures / Percentage of Scene			
		A \flat	E \flat or e \flat	D \flat	B \flat
I, 2	Cavatina Leonora	147/72%	10/5%	7/3%	————
I, 3	Romanza e Terzetto	17/5%	45/14%	157/49%	3/1%
II, 7	Aria Conte	16/8%	————	103 / 52%	31/16%
II, 8	Finale	66/41%	45 / 28%	————	————

aspects of plot that adumbrate their later occurrences affirm the significance of those connections. E \flat major as a secondary key accompanies Leonora's complaints about her loneliness in act 1, scene 2 ("Un'altra notte ancora"); E \flat minor functions later as a primary key in Manrico's troubadour song, in which he expresses a similar sentiment. D \flat follows E major with startling effect when she explains that civil war separated her from Manrico ("Civil guerra intante arse—nol vidi più!"); as noted previously, the next instance of that key in the *stretta* of their trio with Di Luna polarizes the antagonists. B \flat appears briefly in act 1, scene 3, when Di Luna's drive to see Leonora ("Ch'io ti vegga e d'uopo") foreshadows his avowal of love in act 2, scene 7 ("Il balen del suo sorriso"), set in the same key.

Verdi's separation of primary tonics into separate arrays for Azucena and Leonora may have also contributed to his choices among secondary keys. That is, aside from the examples discussed above, in which primary keys from within the dominant array serve temporarily as secondary keys, *all* of the prominent secondary keys in acts 1 and 2 are drawn *only* from the opposite tonal array (and *never* from the four keys that belong to neither array). Thus, Azucena's tonal array provides all the remaining secondary keys in Leonora's scenes and vice versa, linking the two tonal systems through a system of cross-references (see table 9).²⁰ Moreover, these divergences from the prevailing tonal system virtually always coincide with and heighten unexpected, often shocking moments in the plot: painful memories, dangerous plans, ominous foreshadowings, and unwelcome realizations and revelations. Most notably, they occur when Ferrando recalls the Di Luna baby's sudden illness and Di Luna's vow to hunt down Azucena (both in I, 1), when Ines predicts disaster for the lovers (I, 2), when Leonora realizes that she has mistaken Di Luna for Manrico (I, 3), and when Manrico learns that Leonora will become a nun (II, 6). These inflections seem not to serve specific semantic functions, since they seldom accompany references to the opposite character (that is, references in Azucena's scenes to Leonora and vice versa). Instead, Verdi's choices of keys represent efforts to match the abruptness of harmonic progressions to the emotional intensity of particular dramatic moments.

The *stretta* of the soldiers' chorus which begins act 3 ("Squilli, echeggi la tromba guerriera") was the only section of *Il trovatore* transposed by Verdi—from F to E—for the Parisian *Le trouvère* in 1857. Lawton has sug-

²⁰ Table 9 lists all of these distantly related secondary keys in acts 1 and 2 (under the brackets in column 5), shows their harmonic contexts (column 5), and gives the number of measures for which they are relatively stable (column 6). Vertical double lines denote a sudden shift toward or away from the new key; horizontal arrows represent gradual modulations.

Table 9
Secondary keys in acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore* drawn from the opposite tonal array

(1) Act, Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Action or Topic	(5) Keys	(6) No. of Meas.	
I, 1	Introduzione	Transition between stanzas of <i>racconto</i>	"Lenta febbre del meschino"	The gypsy had lied, the child fell ill	B → $\overbrace{>c\#(db)}$	9
		<i>Tempo di mezzo</i>	"Bramò che il signor nostro"	Di Luna swore to find Azucena	C → $\overbrace{>db/c\#}$	10
I, 2	Cavatina Leonora	<i>Scena</i>	"Al vincitor sul crine"	War divided Leonora and Manrico	$\overline{E \parallel D\flat}$	5
		<i>Tempo di mezzo</i>	"Quanto narrasti di turbamento"	Ines fears Manrico will bring trouble to Leonora	$\overline{A\flat \parallel E \rightarrow C \rightarrow A}$	21
I, 3	Scena Romanza e Terzetto	First <i>scena</i>	"Tace la notte!"	Di Luna realizes Leonora is awake	$\overline{C \rightarrow F \rightarrow B\flat \rightarrow e\flat}$	26
		Second <i>scena</i> and <i>tempo d'attacco</i>	"Anima mia!" mistaken Di Luna for Manrico	Leonora realizes she has	$\overline{E \quad c-C \parallel e}$	27
II, 4	Coro e Canzone	—————	—————	—————	None	—
II, 5	Racconto Azucena	<i>Scena</i>	"La incolpò superbo conte"	Azucena's mother was accused of witchcraft	$\overline{f \parallel D\flat} \quad A$	2

Table 9 (cont.)
 Secondary keys in acts 1 and 2 of *Il trovatore* drawn from the opposite tonal array

(1) Act, Scene	(2) Movement	(3) First Line of Text	(4) Action or Topic	(5) Keys	(6) No. of Meas
II, 6 Scena e Duetto	<i>Scena</i>	“Che portai nel dì fatale”	Only Manrico resisted Di Luna in battle; Di Luna wounded him	V/G E♭ V/A♭ f	12
	<i>Tempo di mezzo</i>	“In nostra possa è Castellor”	Castellor has been captured; Leonora will enter convent	C D♭ b♭	3
II, 7 Aria Conte	—————	—————	—————	None	—
II, 8 Finale	<i>Scena</i>	“O dolce amiche”	Leonora has no future, is eager to take her vows; Di Luna enters	E♭ V/c c-C	15

gested that Verdi might have made the change to prepare more smoothly the new ballet that follows this chorus in the Parisian version, which begins in A minor/major.²¹ While this relationship could certainly have played a role in Verdi's decision, motion from F major to its mediant A minor would scarcely have posed a problem in his harmonic idiom, and by retaining the original key he could have avoided rewriting the recitative that connects the *stretta* with the preceding chorus in C major ("Or co'dadi, ma fra poco"). Likewise, tessitura seems an unlikely reason for the transposition down a half step. The prevalent ranges of the vocal parts are comparable to those of the other choruses in the opera, and the contours of the tenor part could easily have been adjusted to eliminate the few high As that occur toward the end of the piece, if they had really presented a problem. (High As for the tenors also occur in the act 1 *introduzione* and the act 3 trio.)

Consequently, I suspect that other factors may have contributed to Verdi's revision. By setting the *stretta* in F originally, he had tied this chorus, in which Di Luna's men anticipate attacking Manrico's castle, to the F axis associated with Di Luna's intrigues. Because the attack never takes place—Azucena falls into Di Luna's hands unexpectedly and his plans change—this chorus ultimately plays no consequential role in later developments. Verdi's transposition acknowledges this functional distinction between a number that sets the stage and others that advance the plot by eliminating the tonal connection. In addition, the return to E affirms the role of this scene in the second half of the opera as a dramatic counterpart to the act 1 *introduzione*, a relationship noted by Baldini.²² Finally, by returning to the opera's initial key Verdi brought the endpoints of tonal motion across the entire opera (E and E \flat) into closer proximity, framing the section of the opera (Acts 3 and 4) in which the action proceeds to its climax and resolution.

While relationships between tonality and plot structure in *Il trovatore* can be supported by evidence from the score, Verdi's reasons for choosing specific keys must remain subject to reasoned conjecture. However, it seems plausible that he took as a point of departure a particular key or sonority—perhaps one in which an especially important number had already been visualized for a given singer—from which other keys could be derived through the system of relationships outlined above. One such key might have been E minor. It is the key in which Azucena sings her first

²¹ David Lawton, "Le trouvère'. Verdi's Revision of 'Il trovatore' for Paris," *Studi verdiani* 3 (1985): 79–119, see pp. 92–94 and 98–99.

²² Baldini, *Story of Verdi*, 213.

important solo "Stride la vampa," an aria which Verdi had apparently conceived relatively early in the compositional process.²³ And it is the key which defines, according to Petrobelli, the association of the sonority of B with the image of fire and the immolation of her mother.²⁴ Having established one or more such starting points and developed (consciously or unconsciously) principles governing tonal and textual correspondences, in conjunction with such other constraints as the vocal ranges of his singers, Verdi would have substantially limited his own choices of keys and arrived at either the existing arrangement or one similar to it.

This analysis suggests that Verdi's apparently irregular sequence of keys in *Il trovatore* likely resulted from an unexpectedly sophisticated tonal design. Tied closely to the libretto, it incorporates systems of static associations between keys, characters, and subplots as well as dynamic progressions in which the nature of those progressions and disjunctions within them parallel the arrangement of onstage events. All primary occurrences of keys fit into this inclusive, consistent arrangement. And secondary occurrences of those same keys also seem to function in relation to this long-range structure. That is, increasing and decreasing emphasis of keys within the prevailing array (either Leonora's or Azucena's) brings primary keys gradually into and out of focus; and abrupt intrusions of keys from the opposite tonal array serve at the background level to unify the two arrays and at the foreground level to reinforce dramatic shocks. Evidence also suggests that once *Il trovatore* was completed its tonal schema had a meaning for Verdi that surpassed its role purely as a compositional constraint. As early as his Parisian revision, long range tonal planning seems to have represented more than a practical exercise for Verdi, more than an expeditious step in the compositional process. Once in place, the tonal design became part of his conception of the opera. By articulating and clarifying relationships in the action and by providing an elegant rationale for his distribution of keys, it may well have been viewed by Verdi as a cornerstone of the dramatic architecture of *Il trovatore*.

²³ Budden, *From Il trovatore to La forza del destino*, 66.

²⁴ Petrobelli has argued that the sonority of B, which in his view serves as a fulcrum for E minor and its relative major, is central to the tonal structure of this opera. See "Explanation of the Dramatic Structure of *Il trovatore*," 134–35.

ABSTRACT

For more than a decade, *Il trovatore* has served as a focus of scholarly investigations into Verdi's treatment of tonal structure. To date, its tonal plan has been viewed primarily from three directions: 1) as a long-range prolongation of a cadential harmonic progression (Levarie); 2) as a system of tonal double cycles and short-range symmetries (Parker); or 3) as a network of associations between keys and characters (Baldini, Petrobelli, Drabkin).

I wish to suggest an alternative way in which Verdi used long-range key relationships in *Il trovatore* to interpret and reinforce its plot structure. By establishing separate constellations of keys for Azucena and Leonora and by moving within and between these constellations in specific ways, his music distinguishes independent plot lines, underscores their convergences, articulates shifts from one event to the next, and connects related events. This analytic approach explains tonal relationships in *Il trovatore* consistently and comprehensively, accounting for all primary keys. Moreover, by attending to parallels between key and plot, it connects tonal ordering to the text's principal source of dynamic cohesion, giving emphasis—as Verdi might have—to linear aspects of drama and the infusion of action into lyric numbers.