Musical Self-Borrowing in *Ottocento* Opera and the Composer's Toolbox

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Self-borrowing was a common practice in primo ottocento *opera. Even though commentators of the era could find it somewhat troublesome, composers indulged in the practice. Drawing on existing scholarship, and reflecting on the work of my co-contributors to this journal issue, I ponder a few sundry notions about the procedure and its context, addressing theoretical, historical and practical perspectives relating to composers, historical commentators, listeners and modern-day scholars. I begin with a survey of terminology that has been applied in discussions of self-borrowing and a review of the manner in which selected present-day scholars have characterized the practice. I then consider the nature of self-borrowing in the* ottocento *opera repertory against a backdrop of contemporaneous theoretical discussions about how to compose opera, and I contemplate the extent to which self-borrowings in this repertory can be deemed to bear meaning. I conclude by raising the possibility of applying concepts from cognitive theory to operatic encounters with self-borrowing, proposing that the practice served as a tool for composers to fuel expectation, predictability, anticipation and even surprise to enhance musical pleasure. My purpose is to prompt reflection on the reasons behind as well as an appreciation for the value of this oft-maligned compositional 'tool' in the interest of gaining insight into its impact on the listening experience and the evaluation of musical works.*

'[E]ven if everybody is owner of his own [work] I would still prefer that he [Rossini] repeat some of his favourite passages a little less, since once he has offered them to the public, he no longer has the right to reclaim them in order to regift them repeatedly.'[1] So commented Rossini's staunch supporter Giuseppe Carpani in 1824 concerning repetitions across the composer's oeuvre. Rossini's habit of self-borrowing also elicited the following comment from a local critic following the Milanese premiere of *La Cenerentola*: '[Rossini's] melodies are beautiful, sweet, well-structured […] but I have heard them so often in his previous operas, that from now on, the announcement of a new opera by this maestro will mean to me the revival of an old one.'[2] Remarks such as these attest that commentators of the *Ottocento* found self-borrowing in the contemporary operatic repertory somewhat

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[1]   Giuseppe Carpani, *Le Rossiniane ossia Lettere musico-teatrali* (Padua: Minerva, 1824; reprint, Bologna: Forni, 1969): 156: '[M]algrado l'essere ciascuno padrone del suo, pure amerei ch'ei ripetesse un po' meno certi suoi passi prediletti, perché quando una volta ne fe dono al pubblico, egli non ha più il diritto di riprenderseli per regalarglieli più volte ancora.' Passage cited, in a different translation, in Emanuele Senici, *Music in the Present Tense: Rossini's Italian Operas in Their Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019): 56.

[2]   Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, cit. from *Gazzetta di Milano*, 23 August 1817. Here and elsewhere in this article, ellipses in quotations are in the original unless they are in square brackets.

troublesome. Despite this kind of negativity, however, composers indulged in the practice, a phenomenon that begs reconsideration.

Indeed, as Candida Mantica points out in her introduction to the present collection of essays, in recent years this widespread compositional device has begun to receive attention of various kinds, especially with regard to individual composers and particular works. Here, drawing on existing scholarship as well the work of my co-contributors to this journal issue, I adopt a slightly different approach to the topic. Rather than examine specific cases of self-borrowing in *ottocento* opera, I ponder a few sundry notions about the procedure and its context, addressing theoretical, historical and practical perspectives relating to composers, historical commentators, listeners and modern-day scholars. I begin with a survey of terminology that has been applied in discussions of self-borrowing and a review of the manner in which a sampling of present-day scholars have characterized the practice. I then consider the nature of self-borrowing in the *ottocento* opera repertory against a backdrop of contemporaneous theoretical discussions about how to compose opera, and I ponder the extent to which self-borrowings in this repertory can be deemed to bear meaning. I conclude by considering the feasibility of applying concepts from cognitive theory to operatic encounters of this nature, proposing that self-borrowing served as a tool for composers to fuel expectation, predictability, anticipation and perhaps even surprise to enhance musical pleasure. My purpose is to prompt reflection on the reasons behind this oft-maligned compositional 'tool', as well as an appreciation of its value, in the interest of gaining insight into the impact of the practice on the listening experience and the evaluation of musical works.

Self-Borrowing: Nature and Terminology

The term 'self-borrowing' was defined in the call for papers for the symposium that generated this journal issue as 'the re-use of pre-existing music in a new work by the same author'.[3] In existing scholarship general descriptions of the practice, as well as specific descriptions pertaining to individual composers, works and traditions, have been put forward. For the *ottocento* opera repertory self-borrowing can generally be identified as a composer's transfer of music from one of his operas to another; more specifically, as the appropriation of thematic formulas, rhythmic formulas, cadential phrases; thematic material in its entirety; musical passages set with a different text; and musical passages reused with the same text.[4] The practice might thus involve a single musical component such as melody or the full musical context including rhythm, key, metre, orchestration, tempo and so forth; and the re-use can be literal or, as is more frequently the case, transformed. This has also been explained, for Rossini, as 'the re-use of themes, phrases, movements and

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[3]   Posted on the Maynooth University Department of Music website: 'Self-Borrowing in Nineteenth-Century Opera: A Reconsideration'; www.maynoothuniversity.ie/music/events/self-borrowing-nineteenth-century-italian-opera-reconsideration (accessed 21 September 2020).

[4]   This useful taxonomy is put forth in Marco Spada, '*Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* di Gioachino Rossini: Fonti letterarie e autoimprestito musicale', *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 24 (1990): 147–82, here 165–73. Spada sees 'formula tematica o frase cadenzale' as the most important category further specifying 'spunti tematiche, formule ritmiche, formule cadenzali' which he notes are at times transformed to such an extent that they become little more than 'tratti stilistici' ('stylistic traits'). Cf. also Andrea Malnati, 'La pratica dell'autoimprestito nell'opera italiana del primo Ottocento', *Estetica* 4/1 (2014): 71–82.

entire numbers, which the composer made use of with some regularity, reclaiming such elements from earlier works, at times leaving them intact and at other times modifying them'.[5]

Self-borrowing in music has a lengthy history, and techniques used at other times and in other genres align with those discussed here for *ottocento* opera.[6] This said, the nature of the borrowed material, the extent to which it is reused, and the manner in which it is treated upon re-use are all crucial considerations for distinguishing 'types' of self-borrowing, and consequently for determining appropriate terminology to describe as specifically as possible associated processes in particular time periods, genres and musical traditions. Indeed, precise terminology seems essential, especially since for the *ottocento* opera repertory we do not have a full understanding of the extent of this practice. Existing scholarship, owing to its focus largely on selected composers and works, provides snapshots that reveal a variety of manifestations of the practice, many of them subtly nuanced. Yet at times authors of valuable studies seem to choose descriptors indiscriminately, and thus scholarly vocabulary may not always effectively convey the subtleties of the techniques implemented by composers.[7] The nuances of

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[5]   Emanuele Senici, '"Ferrea e tenace memoria": La pratica rossiniana dell'autoimprestito nel discorso dei contemporanei', *Philomusica online* 9/1 (2010): 69–99, here 71: 'il riuso di temi, frasi, movimenti e interi numeri cui il compositore fece ricorso con una certa frequenza, riprendendo tali elementi da suoi lavori precedenti, a volte lasciandoli intatti, altre modificandoli'. Another description applied to Rossini – 'arrangements of his own music for new operas or revivals of old operas' – can be found in Philip Gossett, 'Rossini in Naples: Some Major Works Recovered', *The Musical Quarterly* 54 (1968): 316–40, here 322. A specific phenomenon of self-borrowing for Bellini as 'the practice of pairing a single melody with two (or more) unrelated poetic texts or dramatic situations' has been identified by Mary Ann Smart, 'In Praise of Convention: Formula and Experiment in Bellini's Self-Borrowings', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53/1 (2000): 25–68, here 25.

[6]   The techniques of Handel, perhaps the most written-about composer (before Rossini) with regard to self-borrowing, have been summarized by more than one scholar. As one example, Berndt Baselt lays out three main categories of 'parody', which George Buelow refines and relabels: the use of an entire movement with ('re-use') or without ('parody') the same text; the use of 'an especially expressive musical movement with a pregnant theme' which is treated to insertions, extensions and other kinds of modifications to shape a 'quasi new piece' ('reworking'); and the use of individual themes, accompanimental figuration, or other brief melodic motives, to create a completely new section/movement ('new work'). Berndt Baselt, 'Zum Pariodieverfahren in Händels frühen Opern', *Händel Jahrbuch* 21/22 (1975/76): 19–39; and George J. Buelow, 'Handel's Borrowing Techniques: Some Fundamental Questions Derived from a Study of *Agrippina* (Venice, 1709)', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge* 2 (1986): 105–28. In the twentieth century, Charles Ives's self-borrowing took on multiple profiles; among the 14 categories in J. Peter Burkholder's taxonomy, five seem germane for *ottocento* opera: the use of a composition or a section of a composition in a pre-existing work, embracing its structure, assimilating some of its melodic material, duplicating its form or processes, or otherwise using it as a template ('modeling'); use of a pre-existing melody to devise a new melody, theme, or motive ('paraphrasing'); use of a work in a new medium ('arranging'); use of a pre-existing melody with a new accompaniment ('setting'); and use of a pre-existing melody as the basis of a paraphrase for an entire work or section of a work ('extended paraphrase'). J. Peter Burkholder, 'The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field', *Notes* 50/3 (1994): 851–70, here 854; see also the discussion of Burkholder in Mantica's introduction to the present journal issue.

[7]   The nature and meaning of the appropriate application of the term 'self-borrowing', with regard to Rossini, has been addressed by Marco Beghelli in 'Dall'"autoimprestito"

individual instances could, to some extent, be more fittingly captured by the judicious application of clear terminology.

A brief and selective overview of terminology, findings and perspectives drawn from a sampling of the published scholarship for various repertories and composers (alongside those for *ottocento* opera) reveals a striking variety of word choices for discussing both the concept and the practice of self-borrowing.[8] Table 1 contains a partial collection of terms that have entered the conversation along with others that might be applied when appropriate.

'Re-use' could be considered an 'umbrella' covering each term in Table 1: it is generic enough to encompass use of existing material in either literal or varied form, as well as with or without intentionality. Other words in Table 1 have specific requirements pertaining to varying degrees of sameness/difference, ethos, technique, complexity, purpose, and plan in the re-use of music. Some of these terms could be applied interchangeably; some terms may be considered as subcategories of others; a few of them may, in fact, prove less useful or even inappropriate. Heeding the inherent nuances of terms may, however, assist in conveying a clearer understanding of self-borrowing in specific instances. Precision in choice of vocabulary could clarify the circumstances of the self-borrowing at multiple levels, as a few examples illustrate. Transformations to an extreme level may suggest 'recomposition'.[9] If there is an identifiable reason for the re-use, perhaps 'adaptation' or 'repurposing' would be appropriate. There might also be situations in which one could say that a composer is 'reclaiming' his music: this may be suitable especially if a composer is borrowing from a work that was not published or publicly/professionally performed (as was often the case). For conscious re-use,

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alla "tinta": Elogio di un "*péché de jeunesse*"', in *Gioachino Rossini, 1868–2018: La musica e il mondo*, ed. Ilaria Narici, Emilio Sala, Emanuele Senici and Benjamin Walton (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 2018): 49–92. Beghelli proposes that nuanced descriptors such as 'autocitazione' ('self-quotation'), 'prelievo' ('withdrawal, sampling'), 'trasferimento' ('transfer'), 'reimpiego' ('re-use'), 'riutilizzo' ('re-utilization'), or others, may be more fitting than 'auto-imprestito' (literal translation of 'self-borrowing'), carefully applying terms throughout his study to illustrate his point (p. 51).

[8] In addition to the scholarship on *ottocento* opera cited throughout this essay, see, for example, Burkholder, 'The Uses of Existing Music'; George J. Buelow, 'The Case for Handel's Borrowings: The Judgment of Three Centuries', in *Handel Tercentenary Collection*, ed. Stanley Sadie and Anthony Hicks (London: Macmillan, 1987): 61–82; id., 'Handel's Borrowing Techniques'; Winton Dean, 'Bizet's Self-Borrowings', *Music & Letters* 41 (1960): 238–44; Hugh Macdonald, 'Berlioz's Self-Borrowings', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 92 (1965–66): 27–44; Graham Sadler, 'A Re-Examination of Rameau's Self-Borrowings', in *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque: Essays in Honor of James R. Anthony*, ed. John Hajdu Heyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 259–89.

[9] The literary term 'transformative imitation' has been applied to Handel's approach to self-borrowing. The concept, which originated with the Romans, involves gathering material from worthy sources and transforming it into something new and admirable. Such practice was accepted theoretically and aesthetically (in certain situations) in Handel's day though reproached practically and pedagogically. For an informative discussion of transformative imitation and its application to Handel's works, see John T. Winemiller, 'Recontextualizing Handel's Borrowing', *Journal of Musicology* 15/4 (1997): 444–70; the term is discussed in George W. Pigman III, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980): 1–32. See also David Ross Hurley, 'Handel's Transformative Compositional Practices', *Journal of Musicology* 38 (2021): 479–502.

Table 1   Terminology

Term	Definitions/ Considerations (all phrases in quotation marks are cited from *OED Online*[a])
re-use	to reuse is: 'to use for a second or further time; to make use of again'
reprocessing	to reprocess is: 'to process again; to subject (something) to a process for a second time'
reconceptualization	based on 'conceptualize': to form again a concept ('an idea underlying or governing the design or content of a product, work of art, etc.') or idea of something
recycling	to recycle is: 'to reuse, frequently in a slightly altered form' 'to process (waste) so as to convert it into a usable form'; 'to reclaim (a material) from waste so that it may be reused'
reclamation	to reclaim is: 'to make reusable, to recycle' 'to retrieve, recover' 'to re-evaluate or reinterpret […] in a more positive or suitable way' 'to reappropriate'
reappropriation	to reappropriate is: 'to reclaim [take back] for one's own use'
reinterpretation	to interpret is: 'to render clear or explicit'; 'to explain'; 'to bring out the meaning of' to reinterpret is: 'to interpret again in a different way'
recontextualization	to recontextualize is: 'to reinterpret or refresh (an idea, work of art, etc.) by placing it in a new or different context'
reworking	to rework is: 'to subject to a process of change by further effort' 'to remake or refashion' 'to adapt or update' 'to alter the original form of (a literary or artistic work, or an aspect of such a work), esp. by revising or rewriting'
repurposing	to repurpose is: 'to convert or adapt for a different purpose or for use in a different way'
recomposition	to recompose is: 'to rewrite' 'to put together again in a new form or manner' 'to rearrange'
revision	to revise is: 'to improve or alter (text) as a result of examination or re-examination' 'to alter so as to make more efficient, apposite, or effective'
adaptation[b]	to adapt is: 'to modify' 'to make suitable for a new purpose or to a different context or environment'; 'to alter or amend so as to make suitable for a new use or purpose'
translation	to translate is: 'to express (a thing) in a different manner or medium' 'to convert or adapt (an idea, an artwork, etc.) from one form, condition, system, or context into another'
transcription	to transcribe is: 'to copy or reproduce the matter or statements of (a writing or book) without regard to the wording'

(*Continued*)

Table 1   Continued

Term	Definitions/ Considerations (all phrases in quotation marks are cited from *OED Online*[a])
	in music: 'to adapt (a composition) for a voice or instrument other than that for which it was originally written'
arrangement	to arrange (in music) is: 'to adapt (a composition) for instruments or voices for which it was not originally written'
plagiarism, self-plagiarism	to self-plagiarize, based on OED 'plagiarize': to take and reuse one's own thoughts, writings, or inventions
	to copy one's own ideas or material improperly or without acknowledgement
quotation, self-quotation	based on 'quote'/'quotation': to repeat (a passage), usually with an indication that one is using it
	in musical composition: to reproduce or repeat (a passage or tune from another piece of music)
reminiscence	to reminisce is: 'to recollect, remember; to recall'
parody,[c] self-parody	to parody is:
	'to produce or constitute a humorously exaggerated imitation of; to ridicule or satirize'
	'to copy or mimic for comic or derisive effect'
	self-parody: 'intentional or inadvertent parody of one's own literary or artistic style'

a Definitions are derived from *OED Online*, www.oed.com (accessed 18 September 2019).
b On various theories of adaptation, see Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
c On parody, see Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (New York: Methuen, 1985; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

which is referential and presumably intended to be openly recognized, 'self-quotation' could be applied. Even in the light of only these isolated examples, it seems clear that a greater degree of specificity in descriptors should hinge on the nature and the extent of the transformation of the borrowed material, as well as the reasons that may have prompted the borrowing.

True versus Perceived Self-Borrowing: The Characteristics of *Ottocento* Opera

Transferring or re-using music across scores seems to have been a fairly common practice at the time under discussion.[10] But determining what constitutes self-borrowing, or more precisely when self-borrowing is truly present, in *ottocento* opera, especially works of the *primo ottocento*, can prove challenging because of what Emanuele Senici has marked as 'the tension between individual style and common compositional idiom, or, better, the perceptual and discursive challenges thrown up by distinguishing between the two'.[11] The idea that 'individual style and common idiom are conceptually based on repetition' is integral to Senici's observation that commentators of the time found it problematic to distinguish

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[10]   As Beghelli remarked: 'il riutilizzo di pensieri verbali e musicali era […] all'ordine del giorno negli anni di Rossini' ('re-use of verbal and musical ideas was […] the order of the day in Rossini's time'); 'Dall' "autoimprestito" alla "tinta"', 62.
[11]   Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 5.

'between repetition that generated style and repetition engendered by self-borrowing', so much so that many of them even talked of self-borrowing when none was present.[12] The extent to which resemblances and echoes of previous works were in their day and are now deemed definable markers of an individual style and thus acceptable, and the point when they might then have been or may now be judged breaches of originality or signals of derivative techniques and thus unacceptable cannot easily be discerned. In part, the difficulty lies in the highly conventional nature of this repertory, in which 'conventions, shared codes, and repetitive formulas have often prevailed over the pursuit of innovation'.[13] Consequently, it is to be expected that some recurrence of musical material would have been intrinsically unintentional, even part and parcel of a compositional style, for, as the *primo ottocento* composer Pietro Guglielmi noted, it 'is not difficult for a composer, who has formed a style, to unwittingly duplicate some small things'.[14]

Theoretical evidence from the period sheds light on why such opera teemed with repetitive characteristics that could be confused with borrowing of material. In his composition treatise *Il maestro di composizione*, the pedagogue and composer Bonifazio Asioli expounded at some length on how to write dramatic music.[15] In Book 3, article IV, 'Confronto tra le Frasi Musicali e i Diversi Metri Poetici', Asioli addresses technical aspects of text setting; proceeding systematically with brief subsections for each metrical type found in poetic verse (*endecasillabo, decasillabo, novenario, ottonario, settenario, senario, quinario, quaternario* and *ternario*), he explains, through copious music examples, how and why specific metrical types are set to music in particular metres and to certain rhythmic patterns.[16] Then in articles V and VI, he turns his attention to 'imitazione' ('imitation', the term applied at the time to the relationship between music and words), specifically expression of sentiment through imitative musical gestures,[17] such as accompanimental

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[12] Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 73, 58–60.

[13] Fabrizio Della Seta, 'Some Difficulties in the Historiography of Italian Opera', in his *Not without Madness: Perspectives on Opera*, trans. Mark Weir (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 119–30, here 119–20.

[14] Letter from Guglielmi to the editor of the *Corriere milanese*, original published in *Corriere delle dame*, 25 September 1813, cit. in Senici '"Ferrea e tenace memoria"', 82: 'non essendo cosa difficile che un maestro, che si è formato uno stile, non volendo si riproduca in qualche piccola cosa'. Cf. Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 64, for a different translation.

[15] Bonifazio Asioli, *Il maestro di composizione, ossia Seguito al Trattato d'armonia* (Milan: G. Ricordi, [1836]).

[16] The formulaic setting of characteristic Italian verse structures has been studied by scholars Friedrich Lippmann, who discussed rhythmic-musical typologies as they pertain to specific Italian poetic metrical schemes and the impact of musical-poetic rhythm on musical style, and Robert Moreen, who focused on the relationship of text to expected norms and basic formal patterns in Verdi's early operas. See Friedrich Lippmann, *Vincenzo Bellini und die italienische Opera Seria seiner Zeit: Studien über Libretto, Arienform und Melodik*, Analecta musicologica, vol. 6 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1969), Italian trans. by Lorenzo Bianconi as *Versificazione italiana e ritmo musicale* (Naples: Liguori, 1986); and Robert A. Moreen, *Integration of Text Forms and Musical Forms in Verdi's Early Operas* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1975). On melodic conventions and self-borrowing, see also Smart, 'In Praise of Convention'.

[17] Stereotypical musical gestures (such as crying, laughing, reading, singing, fainting, dying and similar) and ritual acts (such as prayers, curses, hymns and oaths) in *ottocento* opera and their musical depiction through semiotic emblems have been studied in depth by Marco Beghelli, especially with regard to the operas of Verdi; see his *La retorica del rituale nel melodramma ottocentesco* (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2003); 'L'emblema

figuration and instrumentation but also associations with extramusical ideas, fixed by tradition, for example, the pastoral. As Asioli states, his primary goal is to instruct on 'the adaptation of the sounds [including pitch and instrumental timbre] and the rhythmic motions that imitate and express to the quality of the passions' conveyed by the verses.[18] He separates imitation into two main types: 'imitazione sentimentale' (article V), 'the expression of the sentiments of the soul' ('l'espressione degli affetti dell'animo'), for example, happiness, anger, excitement and so forth; and 'imitazione fisica' (article VI), either the representation of visual objects that have no sound, such as sunrise/sunset, or the approximation of indeterminate sounds, such as the rumbling of thunder, bird song, flowing water, a galloping horse and so forth. For both categories, he provides music examples drawn from works by Cimarosa, Haydn, Mayr, Mozart, Paisiello and Rossini.[19]

If followed, his recommendations could have yielded formulaic melodic types, rhythmic figurations and orchestral palettes.[20] Assuming then that these principles are truly representative of the thinking behind composing expressive dramatic music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (and there is no reason to doubt that they are), they may account for a number of commonalities in this repertory and perhaps particularly in the output of an individual composer who, through these techniques, may have developed effective means of dramatic expression and relied upon them repeatedly. In other words, some instances of perceived self-borrowing may simply be symptomatic of a genre that at its core thrived on prescribed and desirable similarities across works.

Asioli also briefly mentions the formal aspects of Italian opera of the era (Book 3, article VII); other authors of the time, notably Carlo Ritorni, analyse the genre's forms and structures in greater detail. In his *Ammaestramenti alla composizione d'ogni poema e d'ogni opera appartenente alla musica*, Ritorni extensively comments on the norms for the contemporary operatic repertory with regard to internal layout and forms, especially during the *primo Ottocento*.[21] He describes in detail how solo arias, duets, concerted ensembles, *introduzioni* and finales follow conventional formal structures and often appear in specific positions within a musical-dramatic

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melodrammatico del lamento: Il semitono dolente', *Verdi 2001: Atti del Convegno internazionale, Parma, New York, New Haven, 24 Gennaio–1 Febbraio 2001*, ed. Fabrizio Della Seta, Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Marco Marica, 2 vols (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003): 1: 241–80; 'I buoni e i cattivi: Cori di congiurati a confronto', *Studi verdiani* 15 (2000–01): 29–75; 'Per un nuovo approccio al teatro musicale: L'atto performativo come luogo dell'imitazione gestuale nella drammaturgia verdiana', *Italica* 64 (1987): 632–53; *Atti performativi nella drammaturgia verdiana* (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Bologna, 1986).

   [18] Asioli, *Il maestro di composizione*, Book 3, article V: 'l'addattare i suoni e i movimenti ritmici alla qualità delle passioni che imita od esprime'.

   [19] On the ways in which contemporary commentators deemed Rossini's expressive musical practices and imitative devices often to go against the grain, see Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 23–30.

   [20] Verdi's familiarity with Asioli's treatise and the ways in which it was manifest in the composer's earliest opera are discussed in Roberta Montemorra Marvin, *Verdi the Student – Verdi the Teacher* (Parma: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, 2010), chap. 2; an earlier version of the study appeared as 'Verdi Learns to Compose: The Writings of Bonifazio Asioli', *Studi musicali* 36 (2007): 469–90.

   [21] Carlo Ritorni, *Ammaestramenti alla composizione d'ogni poema e d'ogni opera appartenente alla musica* (Milan: Giacomo Pirola, 1841).

work, much of which is governed by the dramatic situations and customary organization of librettos.[22] Critical of the uniformity in dramatic circumstances and musical forms (though acknowledging a legitimate role for them), Ritorni remarks that all modern operas 'resemble twin sisters' and have 'a single physiognomy',[23] aptly summarizing one reason why the genre is conducive to self-borrowing techniques.

Asioli (through prescription and examples) and Ritorni (through description and critique) both make it clear that conventionality is part and parcel of opera of the era. The characteristics they discuss – the formulaic formal nature of the music, the homogeneity of dramatic situations, the ease of fitting new versified text to existing music – would have facilitated both large-scale and small-scale transplantation of music between one work and another.

Rationale and Meaning in Self-Borrowings

That, as a consequence of the conventionality of the genre, ambiguities may arise about what truly constitutes self-borrowing, makes respecting matters of ethos, focus, purpose and context when defining, identifying and describing the practice essential. By necessity, these criteria would vary in each instance, but intentionality would seem to be required as a measure for differentiating instances of true self-borrowing from those of 'repetition' that is a consequence of the genre's common idiom or of a composer's stylistic consistency. Assessing the level of intentionality is fraught, however, for it compels us to consider that some rationale or meaning accounted for the re-use of a passage. This may or may not have been the case. A number of scholars have adopted the position that the self-borrowings in this repertory may be no more than similarities and they thus bear no meaning.[24]

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[22] These conventions have been addressed in detail by Scott L. Balthazar, 'Ritorni's *Ammaestramenti* and the Conventions of Rossinian Melodramma', *Journal of Musicological Research* 8 (1988–89): 281–311; and Harold Powers, '"La solita forma" and the Uses of Convention', *Acta Musicologica* 59 (1987): 65–90; cf. Malnati, 'La pratica dell'autoimprestito', esp. 74–5.

[23] See Ritorni, *Ammaestramenti*, I, LXI, p. 55: 'il maggior difetto vien dalla sazievole uniformità d'ogn'opera; perché, composte tutte di parti d'una determinata struttura, e delle stessissime situazioni e parole, risolvesi poi la maggiore importanza in un assieme tutto colle stesse situazioni, colle stesse frasi, onde tutte l'opere sono sorelle di gemelli sembianti. Veduta una le conosci tutte. E l'uniformità de' libretti convien che trasfondasi negli spartiti, quindi tutte le musiche moderne hanno una sola fisonomia'. ('The greatest defect comes from the excessive uniformity of every opera; since, composed entirely of parts of a predetermined structure and of extremely similar situations and words, the majority thus are completely made up of the same situations and the same phrases, so that all operas resemble twin sisters. Having seen one of them, you know all of them. And the uniformity of librettos is necessarily infused into the scores, so that all modern music has a single physiognomy'.) See also Balthazar, 'Ritorni's *Ammaestramenti*', 281, for a different translation of this excerpt and 294–98 on the nature and context of Ritorni's criticism of the conventions of opera.

[24] Melina Esse has remarked that self-borrowing is 'resistant to explanation, interpretation, and the hermeneutic enterprise'; 'Donizetti's Gothic Resurrections', *19th-Century Music* 33/2 (2009): 81–109, here 84. Roger Parker has mused that, although the desire to find meaning in moments of musical similarity between a composer's works (what he refers to as 'musical doubles') can be powerful, such connections, resemblances, or cross-references may have 'no meaning' or may 'resist stubbornly being co-opted to the meaning field that we wish to maintain' despite giving us 'an enticing glimpse of secret workings' which through

The absence of meaning may be part and parcel of the genre, for as Mary Ann Smart commented (with regard to Rossini's habitual repurposing of music in different contexts), 'much of what we see and hear in nineteenth-century Italian opera was conceived for immediate, visceral effect, short-circuiting any patterns of symbolic or political interpretation'.[25] And this kind of effect also accounts in part for why self-borrowing could be practiced across works in this repertory.

In many instances of self-borrowing, attempting to identify precise discursive meanings or patterns may indeed be unproductive. Perhaps because of the potential futility of the exercise, it is key to consider additional reasons why a composer may have deemed it acceptable to reuse existing material from his own works. There were certainly both practical and aesthetic reasons. As is often noted, borrowing pre-existing music was, in some cases, a simple timesaving tactic, especially given the temporal and financial exigencies of the *ottocento* opera world. As Rossini commented about his works, 'the same pieces of music will be found in several operas: the time and the money I was given to compose were so *homeopathic* that I barely had the time to read the so-called poetry to be set to music'.[26] Moreover, routinely faced with time constraints and consequently often composing at a fever pace, in the face of creative incapacity, composers may well have been tempted – out of necessity – to turn to their previous works as repositories of musical ideas.[27]

Beyond practical benefit, engaging in self-borrowing, when done strategically, might also have had artistic value. Revisiting already composed music gave a composer an opportunity to explore the inherent potential of a rich design more fully, and recontextualizing a passage or transforming it allowed him to realize an alternative version of something in which he had a special investment or to refine or experiment with a favoured musical idea.[28] For some composers, the practice apparently could become a type of salvage operation for music that had been unfinished, unsuccessful, unpublished or unperformed. In many cases, geography was a consideration: music would be reused in works that had their premieres in different cities, the borrowed music to some extent recomposed, both strategies serving to minimize audience recognition.[29] Such strategies were possible in the

'happy recognition […] confound us pleasurably'; *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006): 38–41.

[25] Mary Ann Smart, *Waiting for Verdi: Opera and Political Opinion in Nineteenth-Century Italy, 1815–1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018): 79–81.

[26] Rossini to Tito Ricordi, 1864, cited in Senici, '"Ferrea e tenace memoria"', 70 (Italian), and *Music in the Present Tense*, 67–8 (English): 'si troveranno in diverse opere gli stessi pezzi di musica: il tempo e il denaro che mi si accordava per comporre era sì omeopatico, che appena avevo io il tempo di leggere la così detta poesia da musicare.'

[27] See also Philip Gossett, 'Compositional Methods', in The *Cambridge Companion to Rossini*, ed. Emanuele Senici (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 68–84, here 81; Malnati, 'La pratica dell'autoimprestito', 74–5.

[28] See Marco Emanuele, 'L'autoimprestito in Rossini: Alcune ipotesi', *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 31 (1997): 101–14, esp. 102, 107. There was a risk that, rather than improving upon a previously used musical idea, a composer might instead weaken or spoil it, as Esse has commented: 'On the one hand, the re-use of previously composed music is a kind of reanimation of dead material; composers must infuse old forms, gestures, and melodies with new life, new meaning. But on the other hand, music borrowed from earlier works seems dangerously poised to devolve into inert matter – to be easily rendered a meaningless iteration of what has been done before'; 'Donizetti's Gothic Resurrections', p. 84.

[29] For Rossini, studies of individual operas have suggested that self-borrowing (in Senici's summary) 'tended to affect either works that failed to circulate (from which to

primo Ottocento because of general artistic milieu and business practices in the operatic sphere. Operas, at least in the first quarter of the century, often disappeared after their premiere season; those that survived normally did so for only a few revivals. During this period full scores circulated in manuscript, and operas were often issued in piano-vocal scores of *pezzi staccati*.[30]

All of this suggests that composers were inclined to reuse music that had experienced a restricted or incomplete life, usually for geographical or qualitative reasons.[31] Temporal distance could also have been advantageous. An example from the music of Verdi seems to demonstrate this last consideration fairly clearly (Ex. 1). I am not the first to point out that echoes of the composer's 1838 set of *romanze* – his first published work and thus his introduction as a composer to the broad musical public – resonate in his later music. In many instances, it is difficult to pinpoint precisely where, and it is often more of what might be called a sonic profile or even a stylistic element, that reappears in an opera, a shadow of the earlier composition.[32] But one phrase presents a particularly distinctive case, seemingly a true instance of self-borrowing: a melodic fragment from Verdi's 1838 *romanza* 'In solitaria stanza' (Ex. 1a) found a new home in 'Tacea la notte placida' in *Il trovatore* (Ex. 1b) fifteen years later.

In Verdi's treatment of this passage, although the metres vary – common time in the song and 6/8 in the opera – the key and the pitches remain the same. Quoting music from a chamber work published in Milan and composed before his first opera would have been 'safe' in 1853, for the likelihood that Verdi's Roman audience for *Il trovatore* would have known those early songs was slim. It is indeed tempting to ponder why Verdi would have returned to this phrase pretty much verbatim. The texts (in Table 2) furnish little insight beyond a celestial reference at one occurrence of the phrase in each work (see boldface verses), and there is no explicit dramatic context for the song text to shed light on a possible connection,

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borrow) or that were not expected to circulate (into which to insert borrowed material), or both'. See Emanuele Senici, 'Rossinian Repetitions', in *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 236–62, here 248. As Philip Gossett observed, 'Rossini was usually wise enough to limit his self-borrowing to works having premieres in different cities'; 'The Overtures of Rossini', *19th-Century Music* 3 (July 1979): 3–31, here 8. Elsewhere Gossett noted that as Rossini worked 'he was both borrowing and recomposing' vocal lines and orchestration; and he 'would sometimes address a new audience by drawing on music he valued from operas that were less effective in their entirety'; 'Compositional Methods', 82 and 81 respectively. Selected studies of self-borrowing in individual operas include Marco Mauceri, '*La gazzetta* di Gioachino Rossini: Fonti del libretto e autoimprestito musicale', in *Ottocento e oltre: Scritti in onore di Raoul Meloncelli*, ed. Francesco Izzo and Johannes Streicher (Rome: Pantheon, 1993): 115–49; Arrigo Quattrocchi, 'La logica degli autoimprestiti: *Eduardo e Cristina*', in *Gioachino Rossini, 1792–1992: Il testo e la scena. Convegno internazionale di studi, Pesaro, 25–28 giugno 1992*, ed. Paolo Fabbri (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1994): 365–82; Spada, '*Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*'.

[30] See the discussions of these phenomena in, for instance, Gossett, 'Compositional Methods', 80, and Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 206.

[31] On the various criteria, see, for instance, Malnati, 'La pratica dell'autoimprestito', 75–8.

[32] Of these songs, Julian Budden remarked: 'it is clear from their nature that he [Verdi] was determined to present himself as a composer of tragic operas *in posse*'; *Verdi*, 3d ed., The Master Musicians (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 316. On similarities and anticipations in these songs of features and passages in Verdi's operas, see Ibid., 316–22.

Ex. 1a   **Giuseppe Verdi,** *Sei romanze* **(Milan: Giovanni Canti, 1838), no. 3 'In solitaria stanza', bars 26–30 (the figure is repeated at bars 38–42 with different text; see Table 2) (***Giuseppe Verdi Musica da Camera***, comp. and ed. Victor DeRenzi, 2 vols (Brooklyn: Arista, 2000): I: 12–13)**
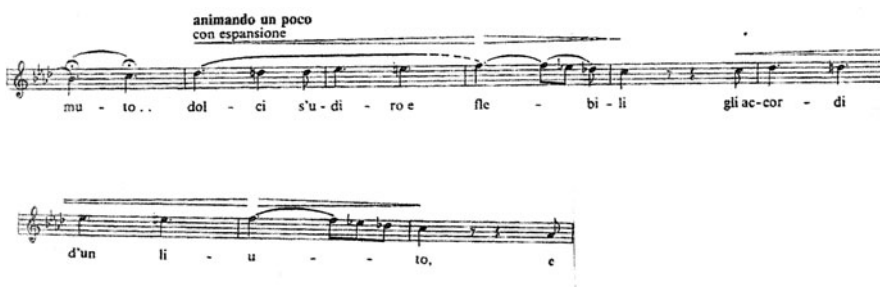
Ex. 1b   **Giuseppe Verdi,** *Il trovatore* **(1853), Act I, scene 2, 'Tacea la notte placida', bars 88–95 (bars 57–64 are the same music set to different text; see Table 2) (Giuseppe Verdi,** *Il trovatore* **(New York: G. Schirmer, n.d.), plate #14140)**

although feminine suffering underpins both situations. If Verdi had some personal preference for or special attachment to the phrase, it is lost to history. The intriguing reappearance of this melodic passage easily passes as an example of pure repetition; like one of Parker's so-called 'musical doubles' more stylistic or generic than meaningful. Nonetheless, this example should at the least give us pause, especially in the works of a composer who is not routinely linked specifically with the practice of self-borrowing.

Acceptability and Aesthetic Considerations

Composers' attention to minimizing the possibility of listener recognition of reused music raises questions related to the acceptability of self-borrowing. Several scholars writing about self-borrowing in *ottocento* opera have drawn on contemporaneous critical commentary for insights into views on and experiences of the practice. Frequently disapproving (as citations at the opening of this essay suggest), such commentary focuses largely on aesthetic considerations related to originality, organicism, progress and even at times national identity. It also reveals the importance of considering various aspects of self-borrowing within a relatively specific temporal context.

Understanding how negative and positive critical assessments of the techniques of musical borrowing might be balanced is difficult, for perceptions change across

Table 2   Texts of Verdi's *romanza* 'In solitaria stanza' and of his 'Tacea la notte placida' from *Il trovatore*. Text in bold is set to the musical phrase discussed here

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Verdi, 'In solitaria stanza', text by Jacopo Vittorelli, from *Anacreontiche ad Irene* of 1784 (*Jacopo Vittorelli: Poesie*, ed. Attilio Simioni (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1911)): 83 (my translation).

In solitaria stanza	In a lonely room
Langue per doglia atroce:	She languishes in dreadful pain:
Il labbro è senza voce,	Her lips are silent,
Senza respiro il sen:	Her breast without breath:
Come in deserta aiuola	As in a forsaken flower bed
Che di rugiade è priva,	That is devoid of dew,
Sotto alla vampa estiva	In the summer heat
Molle narcisso svien.	A fragile narcissus wilts.
Io, dall'affanno oppresso,	I, oppressed by worry,
Corro per vie rimote,	Run across distant paths
E grido in suon che puote	And cry out with sounds that could
Le rupi intenerir:	move the cliffs.
Salvate, o dei pietosi,	**Save, O merciful gods,**
Quella beltà celeste:	This heavenly beauty;
Voi forse non sapreste	**You perhaps would not know**
Un'altra Irene ordir.	How to make another Irene.

Verdi, *Il trovatore*, Act I, scene 2 (No. 2 Cavatina Leonora), text by Salvadore Cammarano (*Giuseppe Verdi: Il trovatore*, ed. David Lawton, Study Score from the Critical Edition, The Works of Giuseppe Verdi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Milan: Ricordi, 1992; study score edition, 2016)): 41–46 (my translation)

Tacea la notte placida	The peaceful night was quiet
e bella in ciel sereno,	and beautiful in the tranquil sky,
la luna il viso argenteo	the moon her silvery face
mostrava lieto e pieno;	showed happy and full;
Quando suonar per l'aere,	When sounding in the air,
infino allor sì muto..	that until then had been still..
dolci s'udiro e flebili	**were faintly heard the sweet**
gli accordi di un liuto,	**notes of a lute,**
e versi melanconici	and melancholy verses
un Trovator cantò.	sung by a Troubadour.
Versi di prece, ed umile	Verses prayerful, and humble
qual d'uom che prega Iddio;	like a man who prays to God;
in quella ripeteasi	in them song was repeated
un nome … il nome mio!	a name…my name!…
Corsi al veron sollecita…	I rushed to the balcony quickly…
Egli era! egli era desso!	It was he! it was he himself!…
Gioia provai che agli angeli	**Joy I felt that angels**
solo è provar concesso!	**alone are allowed to feel!…**
Al core, al guardo estatico	To my heart, to my ecstatic gaze
la terra un ciel sembrò.	the earth seemed like a paradise.

the nineteenth century in step with evolving systems, structures and styles. The importance of temporal context is illuminated by Smart, who with regard to Bellini has discussed how the relatively positive discourse of the 1830s (some of the most active years of his compositional activity), concerned mainly with novelty in the composer's works, conflicted with the more negative commentary of the 1880s (nearly 40 years after his death), debating the violation of the very nature of a musical artwork and its essence in the light of the composer's musical self-borrowings.[33] Even during a composer's lifetime, perceptions of his engagement with self-borrowing could shift in a similar direction: as Alexandra Wilson has noted in relation to Puccini (though much later in the century), for critics there was only a small difference between elements of repetition and those engendering style, and what they once praised in the composer's operas as indicative of a well-defined individual style eventually came to be perceived as 'hackneyed'.[34]

Despite some uneasiness over recognition and public criticism of reused music, a number of composers bought into compositional approaches related to self-borrowing, albeit to greater and lesser degrees. Bellini had a 'relaxed attitude to reusing material' manifested in widespread borrowings from most of his early operas; he was not defensive about self-borrowing to his colleagues, although he attempted to conceal his practice from journalists and audiences; and he engaged in self-borrowing fairly judiciously.[35] Rossini found a need to justify having engaged liberally in self-borrowing, at least after the fact and when his music became widely available in print for all to see and study. To his publishers Giovanni and Tito Ricordi Rossini admitted to having indulged freely in reusing his own music, expressing concern upon the publication of his collected works that with the widespread availability of his entire output the presence of the same musical passages in multiple operas could be proven through score study and thus provide fodder for negative criticism.[36] Despite these seemingly minor reservations, many composers of the era who engaged in self-borrowing seem to have regarded it as a handy and worthwhile compositional tool.

Self-Borrowing and the Listening Experience

While (as noted) a few particulars related to composers' and critics' perspectives on self-borrowing during the *Ottocento* can be retrieved, capturing the thoughts or reactions of general listeners of the era is more elusive. One way to begin to

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[33] Smart, 'In Praise of Convention', 28–36.

[34] Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), for this idea see esp. 55 and 108. Discussion of Puccini's self-borrowing can also be found in Francesco Cesari, 'Autoimprestito e riciclaggio in Puccini: Il caso di *Edgar*', in *Giacomo Puccini: L'uomo, il musicista, il panorama europeo: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi su Giacomo Puccini nel 70° anniversario della morte (Lucca, 25–29 novembre 1994)*, ed. Gabriella Biagi Ravenni and Carolyn Gianturco (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997): 425–52.

[35] Smart, 'In Praise of Convention', 31–2. For additional views on Bellini's self-borrowing, see, for instance, Marco Uvietta, 'Da *Zaira* a *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*: Preliminari di un'indagine filologica sui processi di ricomposizione', in *Vincenzo Bellini: Verso l'edizione critica*, ed. Fabrizio Della Seta and Simonetta Ricciardi, special issue of *Chigiana: Journal of Musicological Studies* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2004): 101–39.

[36] Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 68, and id., '"Ferrea e tenace memoria"', 70; Beghelli, 'Dall' "autoimprestito" alla "tinta"', 54.

understand how the public might have perceived a composer's re-use of music is through pondering aspects of the listening experience. In doing so, it seems important to keep in mind both the historical and social context of listening (the 'auditory culture' of the era) in relation to the intertwining of 'musical object' and 'listening subject'[37] and the experiences, associations, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that the listener would have brought to the musical encounter (what Pierre Bourdieu would have us understand as 'cultural capital').[38]

Emanuele Senici has done this insightfully in various writings where he elucidates issues to consider in interrogating listeners' possible understandings of and reactions to self-borrowings in the works of Rossini and his predecessors. As part of his illuminating and multifaceted discussions, Senici has observed that in listening and critical judgment the role of memory emerges prominently in discourse about self-borrowing in the operas of the *primo Ottocento* (in particular those of Rossini).[39] One of his incisive observations is that the 'repetition' related to and inherent in Rossini's music, resulting from frequency of performance and consistency of style, coupled with the social and cultural conditions of the musical milieu of the time, including audience patterns of consumption through attending multiple performances of the same opera in a single season, availability of *pezzi staccati* and eventually piano-vocal scores for domestic music-making, the possibility of hearing transcriptions and arrangements of 'popular' selections from operas in venues outside the theatres, all contributed to the acquisition of 'knowledge' of specific musical works.[40]

In support of his comments, Senici points to *primo ottocento* writings by the Italian poet and essayist Giacomo Leopardi. In his *Zibaldone di pensieri* (written in 1823) Leopardi reflected on the role of memory in musical listening, connected repetition and pleasure in explicit and meaningful ways (the only writer to do so, Senici notes), and discussed the need for a combination of that to which a listener would have been accustomed to hearing and those elements that would have been novel.[41] In short, repetition makes music memorable, thereby resulting in familiarity and creating pleasure.[42]

In modern times, theories of musical listening, drawn in particular from cognitive theory, might provide a similar backdrop against which to consider listeners' perceptions with regard to self-borrowing, for Leopardi's notions resonate within

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[37] See the discussion by Georgina Born, 'Listening, Mediation, Event', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135 (2010), special issue no. 1 on 'Listening: Interdisciplinary Perspectives': 79–89, here esp. 80–81.

[38] See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[39] Senici, '"Ferrea e tenace memoria"', 88; see also id., 'Music and Memory in Rossini's Italy: 'Di tanti palpiti' as Folksong', in *Gioachino Rossini, 1868–2018: La musica e il mondo*, 253–82, and chap. 11 '"Di tanti palpiti"', in *Music in The Present Tense*.

[40] See Senici, '"Ferrea e tenace memoria"'; id., *Music in the Present Tense*, in particular 'Memory', 203–14; cf. Beghelli, 'Dall' "autoimprestito" alla "tinta"', 53.

[41] Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone di pensieri*; English trans. as *Giacomo Leopardi: Zibaldone*; ed. Michael Caesar and Franco D'Intino; trans. Kathleen Baldwin et al. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). On Leopardi and the linking of repetition and pleasure, see Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 216. Senici (Ibid., 317n3) notes that Carpani, *Le Rossiniane*, made some tentative observations on the pleasures of repetition. On Leopardi and habituation and novelty, see Senici, Ibid., 208–10.

[42] See Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, especially the chapters on 'Memory' and 'Pleasure'.

the comments of authors such as Leonard B. Meyer, David Huron and Elizabeth Margulis.[43] Meyer posited that: 'If a work has been heard already, we will know what is going to happen and, in later rehearings, the improbable will become probable, the unexpected will be expected, and all predictions will be confirmed. […] The better we know a work – the more often we have heard it – the more we enjoy it and the more meaningful it becomes.'[44] Extending Meyer's foundational ideas, both Huron and Margulis have drawn on neurophysiological research about how people experience the world in general and music in particular to provide scientific evidence of listening phenomena. It is not possible in a short essay to delve in depth into the lengthy, complex and nuanced arguments of these authors, but a brief summary of a few applicable points may provide a preliminary frame within which to continue thinking about the perception and the impact of self-borrowing in listening experiences and to further understanding some of the ways in which Meyer's ideas play out in a broad context.

Repetition – both in repeated hearings of compositions or substantial portions therein and in smaller-scale repetitions internal to a musical work – is an essential characteristic of music, as both Huron and Margulis emphasize.[45] Given that recycling pre-existing music is, of course, a manner of repeating it, there is perhaps much to be gleaned here with regard to musical self-borrowing.[46] Musical repetition at various levels sets up expectation and anticipation making music predictable,[47] and by making music increasingly predictable, repetition enhances enjoyment, interest and involvement, thereby significantly affecting musical pleasure,[48] for one reason because the known is preferable to the unknown.[49] Pleasure is a key component here. Meyer acknowledged the fundamental connection between a listener's musical pleasure and expectation, proposing that much of music's emotional context results from the composer's choreographing of expectation. Self-borrowing might be considered one way in which a composer can choreograph expectation, in that for those familiar with the source work, it creates a specific kind of opportunity for anticipation and predictability – psychological mechanisms that lie at the heart of the pleasures of musical experience.[50]

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[43] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); id., *Music, the Arts, and Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Elizabeth Margulis, *On Repeat: How Music Plays the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[44] Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas*, 46. See also Senici on 'Pleasure' in *Music in the Present Tense*, 215–29.

[45] For example, Huron observes that 'more than 99 per cent of all listening experiences involve listening to musical passages that the listener has heard before' (*Sweet Anticipation*, 241); and Margulis asserts that repetition is 'a fundamental characteristic of what we experience as music' (*On Repeat*, 5).

[46] On self-borrowing and repetition, see also Senici, *Music in the Present Tense*, 31–53.

[47] Chapter 13 of Huron's *Sweet Anticipation* is devoted to ways of creating predictability in music; see also Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas*, chap. 3 'On Rehearing Music', 42–53, and Margulis, *On Repeat*, chap. 5 'Relistenings', 95–116.

[48] Margulis, *On Repeat*, 95.

[49] Huron puts it this way: 'A striking fact about music is our tolerance – indeed our desire – to listen to the same music again and again'; *Sweet Anticipation*, 267.

[50] See Huron's discussion of five types of such mechanism in *Sweet Anticipation*. This kind of predictability, expectation or familiarity might also have been a consequence of

But there is a risk that repeated hearings can over-satiate a listener and that satiation can diminish the enjoyment, turning pleasure to boredom, irritation, or habituation.[51] Deviation within repetition can help to minimize the risk of boredom: it might add to the pleasure a new layer – the element of surprise.[52] Surprise, which in effect thwarts expectation, cannot only help avoid habituation, it can also amplify a pleasurable experience by its contrast.[53] The transformation of pre-existing material, typical of many instances of self-borrowing, presents a type of deviation while still preserving certain expectations. It sets up 'paradoxical expectation', a combination of the expected and the unexpected, that is, the music is the same but different.[54] The multi-layered perceptions of anticipating or expecting and then being surprised by a transformation, and the appeal of contemplating what a composer may have cleverly managed to pull out of his musical material upon retooling it forestalls boredom and can make the experience and the music increasingly pleasurable.

Conclusion

All of this said, the complex of questions that musical self-borrowing in Italian opera of the nineteenth century raises should encourage further thought on the what, how and why behind the practice. And consequently, with broadened understanding we may find new ways to confront some of the elusive qualities and to appreciate the formulaic nature of some of the most enduring operas in the repertory. But, of greater importance, by probing beyond the music, we might develop alternative approaches to viewing the culture that nurtured these operas, a culture in which self-borrowings were tolerated – even enjoyed – while frequently condemned by critics. The perspectives we may potentially gain promise to provide a firmer grasp of the concepts and contexts surrounding the creation of operatic works in nineteenth-century Italy. And finally, contemplating the ways in which listeners may have experienced the transformed repetitions of musical passages might also help us comprehend some of the pleasure audiences experienced in a by-gone era when (re)listening on demand was not possible. In so doing, we may become better informed and more discerning scholars and listeners. And we may learn that, despite what commentators of the time might have us believe, self-borrowing was not a crime. Rather, in the hands of composers such as Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Puccini, it could be a well-developed practice and a subtly refined approach to composing, one that had value we may just be beginning to uncover fully.

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the formulaic nature of *primo ottocento* opera, especially in the concepts put forth by Asioli (discussed previously).

[51] See Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*, 240; also Margulis, chap. 5 'Relistenings', on 'habituation'.

[52] On deviation see also Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, esp. chaps 7 and 8.

[53] On surprise, see Huron, *Sweet Anticipation*, esp. chaps 2 and 14 (the latter on creating surprise).

[54] For a definition of 'paradoxical expectation', a concept Huron discusses in *Sweet Anticipation*, see 417.