

Recondite Harmony: the Operas of Puccini

Chapter 12: *Il Trittico*: amore, dolore—e buonomore

“Love and suffering were born with the world.”

[L'amore e il dolore sono nati col mondo]

Giacomo Puccini, letter to Luigi Illica, 8 Oct 1912¹

Puccini's operatic triptych, *Il Trittico*, is comprised of the three one-act operas: *Il tabarro*, a story of illicit love; *Suor Angelica*, a tale of a nun's suffering at the loss of her illegitimate child; and *Gianni Schicchi*, a dark comedy in which both love and loss are given a morbidly humorous twist. The *Trittico*² was always intended by the composer to be performed in a single evening, and it will be treated as a tripartite entity in this chapter. The first two editions, from 1918 and 1919, group all three works together, which was at Puccini's insistence. In an unpublished letter to Carlo Clausetti, dated 3 July 1918, the composer reveals how he clashed with publisher Tito Ricordi over this issue:

There remained the question of the editions—that is, [Tito Ricordi] spoke of them immediately and pacified me by saying that they will publish the works together and separately. But I think that he was not truthful because the *separated ones* will never see the light of day. And what will happen with the enumeration? There will certainly not be two types of *clichets* [printing plates], one with numbers progressing through the three operas, and the other with numbers for each score, starting from number *one*. So, he deceived me.³

¹ Eugenio Gara. ed. *Carteggi Pucciniani*. (Milan: Ricordi, 1958), 404-405.

² Marotti claims credit for the title “Trittico,” which was never actually used in any edition. See Guido Marotti, *Giacomo Puccini Intimo*, 175-7. Cited in Julian Budden, *Puccini: His Life and Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 375.

³ [Rimase la questione delle edizioni - cioè se ne parlò subito e mi acquietò dicendomi che editaron le opere unite e divise. Ma io penso che non si e' stato veritiero perche' le *divise* non vedranno la luce - E come farà per la numerazione? Certo non sarà due tipi di clichet - uno di numeri progressivi per le 3 opere e l'altro coi

Although Puccini's thoughts about a triple bill—progressive for its time⁴—began as early as 1904,⁵ it was not until 1916, when Puccini contacted playwright Didier Gold for rights to his work *La Houppelande* (which he had seen in 1912 at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris, and which became *Il Tabarro*), that the project began in earnest.⁶ The other two libretti were supplied by Giovacchino Forzano,⁷ who, for *Gianni Schicchi*, drew upon a few lines of Dante's *Inferno*⁸ and a more elaborate account from an anonymous 14th-century Florentine.⁹ The work had its premiere on 14 December 1918 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.¹⁰

numeri per ciascuno spartito a partire dal numero *uno*. Dunque mi ha imbrogliato.] From the catalogue of the Kenneth Rendell Gallery (New York and Massachusetts,) January 1994, original seven pages, octavo.

⁴ Girardi notes that other Italian opera composers followed Puccini's example and wrote one-act trilogies: Malipiero's *Orfeide* (1925) and Respighi's *Maria Egiziaca* (1932). Michele Girardi, *Puccini: His International Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 374n.

⁵ William Ashbrook, *The Operas of Puccini*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170.

⁶ Puccini also contacted Dario Niccodemi, then resident in Paris, to get an Italian version of Gold's Parisian argot for *Il Tabarro*, and Pietro Panichelli for verses for the angels in *Suor Angelica*. Budden, *Puccini*, 373-4.

⁷ Giovacchino Forzano (1884-1970), after studying violin and medicine, had careers as a baritone, journalist, playwright, the first stage director in Italy, and, later, film director. He wrote libretti for Wolf-Ferrari, Leoncavallo, Lehár, Mascagni, Franchetti, Riccitelli, Giordano, Marinuzzi and Peregallo, and was the stage director for the posthumous premiere of Puccini's *Turandot* at La Scala in 1926. Forzano worked directly with dictator Benito Mussolini on the "heroic" trilogy: *Campo di maggio* (1930), *Villafranca* (1932) and *Giulio Cesare* (1939). *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, s.v. Forzano, Giovacchino.

http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovacchino-forzano_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29. Girardi adds that Forzano was an apostle of Gabriele D'Annunzio, directed the fascist propaganda film *Camicia Nera*, and was stage director for the posthumous premiere of Boito's *Nerone* in 1924. Girardi, *Puccini*, 366. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco relates an anecdote of meeting Puccini who said: "Forzano is a man who always has a hundred ideas. In general, ninety-nine of them are wrong, but one is right: you have to know how to choose the right one." Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario. "From a Lifetime of Music: Puccini, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Others." Trans. Harvey Sachs. *Grand Street* 9/1 (Autumn 1989), 151.

⁸ Longfellow's translation of the Dantean passage (Canto XXX) reads: "And the Aretine, who trembling had remained / Said to me: That mad sprite is Gianni Schicchi / And raving goes thus harrying other people. / O, said I to him, so may not the other / Set teeth on thee, let it not weary thee / To tell us who it is, ere it dart hence. / And he to me: That is the ancient ghost / Of the nefarious Myrrha, who became / Beyond all rightful love her father's lover. / She came to sin with him after this manner, / By counterfeiting of another's form; / As he who goeth yonder undertook, / That he might gain the lady of the herd, / To counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati, / Making a will and giving it due form." http://www.divinecomedy.org/divine_comedy.html, accessed 8 August 2011.

⁹ Forzano probably had access to the edition published by Pietro Fanfani, 3 voll., (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1866), vol. I, 637-9, the text of which can be accessed at <http://www.puccini.it/cataloghi/anonimo.htm>. Slightly different information on the characters can be found in *Dizionario storico, geografico, universale della Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri: contenente la biografia dei personaggi, la notizia dei paesi, e la spiegazione delle cose più difficili del sacro poema* (Turin: Paravia, 1873), accessible at books.google.com. On 216-217, Gianni Schicchi is described thus: "he was from the Florentine family of the Cavalcanti and famous for mimicking other people. [...] Buoso Donati, having died intestate, Gianni, induced by the prize promised him by Simon Donati, of the most beautiful of his mares, lifted the cadaver of the dead man from bed and hid it. Then, he got into the same bed and tricked the notaries and witnesses making them believe he was Buoso Donati. With this prank he made a will completely in favor of Simone and gained the

Treating *Il Trittico* has a single entity is not quite the same as searching therein for that ever-elusive quality, “unity.” While it is certain that the operas were intended to be performed together, the question of their interrelatedness has been hotly debated in the academy. Witness the following two statements:

“Puccini has always considered *Il Trittico* organic [...] It is an opera of three different acts, but unitary in spirit and conception.” (Claudio Sartori)¹¹

“Puccini writes a triptych that has, as a purpose, to show that he can write three operas having nothing in common but this: to be completely different from each other.” (Fedele d’Amico)¹²

And we should distinguish between judgments of overall dramatic coherence and those of musical integrity. In regard to the former, several scholars have noted that all three operas deal with the theme of death.¹³ While this is certainly the case, one would be hard put to find an opera that did not. Some have noted a progression in mood from darkness to

mare ‘the lady of the herd.’ Pietro di Dante affirms that Gianni Schicchi suffocated Buoso Donati before mimicking him [...] but this new and atrocious crime is not sufficiently certain.” [Fu della famiglia fiorentina de’ Cavalcanti e famoso nel contraffare le altrui persone [...] Essendo morto senza aver fatto testamento messer Buoso Donati, Gianni indotto dal premio promessogli da Simon Donati della più bella tra le sue cavalle, fece levar di letto e nascondere il cadavere del defunto; quindi messosi egli nel medesimo letto, ingannò i notai e i testimoni facendosi loro credere per Buoso Donati. Con questa gherminella fece testamento tutto in favore di Simone, e guadagnò la cavalla donna della torma. Pietro di Dante afferma che Gianni Schicchi soffocò Buoso Donati prima di contraffarlo [...] ma di questo nuovo e atrocissimo delitto non vi è bastante certezza..]

¹⁰ After a revival at Bologna in 1921, Puccini replaced the baritone aria in *Il Tabarro* “Scorri, fiume eterno!” and for the La Scala performance in January 1922, he removed the so-called “aria dei fiori” from *Suor Angelica*. Budden, Puccini, 378-9.

¹¹ Claudio Sartori, “*Il Trittico* di Puccini o tre uguale a uno” *460 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino* [House program.] (1983), 87 [Puccini ha sempre considerato [IT] organica [...] È opera di tre atti diversi, ma unitaria nello spirito e nella concezione.]

¹² Fedele D’Amico, “Conferenza: Vacallo (Mendrisio) 15 Luglio 1985)” *Quaderni pucciniani* (1996): 19. [Puccini scrive un trittico che ha come scopo di far vedere che lui scrive tre opere che non hanno in comune che questo: di essere completamente diverse tra loro.]

¹³ See, for example, Mario Morini, “Gianni Schicchi?, l’ultimo saggio dell’umorismo operistico italiano,” *Teatro La Fenice* [House program.] (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1979-80): 115-120. or Ashbrook, who adds: “if these three operas present diverse views of death, each contains its varied affirmation of life. In *Il Tabarro*, Luigi and Giorgetta speak nostalgically of the crowded, bustling life of their suburb, Belleville. They both hope to escape the dreary life on the barge and go to another place where they can feel more intensely alive. [...] *Suor Angelica* is concerned more with spiritual life. [...] In *Gianni Schicchi*, the final emphasis on the young lovers and their future affords the strongest possible contrast with the grief and torment of the barge-master and his wife and of Angelica.” William Ashbrook, *The Operas of Puccini*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 178.

light, or from negative to happy emotions.¹⁴ Another link has been forged by both Girardi and Hepokoski, who have noted the retrograde time line of the three operas' settings: 20th-century Paris, a convent in the late 17th century, and Florence of 1299.¹⁵ Puccini seems to have given special emphasis to the modernity of the first opera, which opens with updated sounds of a tugboat siren and a car horn, while the "city sounds" of the original play were made by horses stamping and shaking their bells, and their drivers cracking their whips.¹⁶ Perhaps Greenwald's observation regarding the extraordinary silent beginning of the first opera could be a support for the Girardi/Hepokoski thesis: "*Il tabarro* begins with silence because it begins at the end."¹⁷ Additionally, one might note that in all three operas, the action catalyzes around figures who have lower voices (Michele, the Princess-Aunt and Gianni Schicchi)—the two males are the central protagonists, which is quite unusual for Puccini.

Hepokoski further suggests a parallelism in the conclusions of *Il tabarro* and *Suor Angelica* that can lead us to an even more circumscribed dramatic connection: both of these operas end with a guilt-ridden woman asking for pardon.¹⁸ It is hardly a great leap from there to the realization that, since Gianni Schicchi also asks for if not a pardon then leniency at the

¹⁴ See Girardi, *Puccini*, 375.

¹⁵ Girardi, *Puccini*, 375-6 and James Hepokoski, "Structure, Implication and the End of *Suor Angelica*." *Studi Musicali* 3 (2004): 262. Girardi also points out that the use of time is essential to each opera: in *Tabarro* the dialogue and the language is focused on the past; in *Suor Angelica*, the characters make note of time passing and in *Gianni Schicchi*, the main character defies eternity. Hepokoski's article focuses on the rotational aspect of much of the opera, from rehearsal numbers 61 to 66: "The cyclic repetition of this music, with some variants and interpolations, begins immediately and continues to the end of the opera, which thus closes with an enhanced restatement of the music that has led us into rehearsal no. 66. Such an obvious double-cycling at the close can trigger the suspicion that a more generalized impulse toward circularity and rotation might also have been at work, albeit less self-evidently, in earlier portions of the opera" [243]. He relates this to the "obsessively circular madness and suicide of Angelica" [264].

¹⁶ Didier Gold, *The Cloak: One Act in Prose* (Paris: G. Oudet, 1910). The Futurist movement had already been exalting the use of noise onstage. Their 1910 *Manifesto of Futurist Artists*, which bears some striking similarities to the creed of the scapigliati, can be accessed at: <http://futurismo.freesevers.com>.

¹⁷ Helen M. Greenwald, "Puccini, *Il tabarro*, and the Dilemma of Operatic Transposition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Autumn, 1998), 535.

¹⁸ Hepokoski, "Structure, Implication," 262.

conclusion of the third opera during the *licenza*,¹⁹ then all the characters Giorgetta, Angelica and Gianni Schicchi beg forgiveness. It then follows that they all must have all committed, or felt they committed, sins (adultery, suicide and fraud, respectively.)

What if there were, then, a common source to their transgressions? Let us turn to the musically undulating opening of the first opera, *Il tabarro*—a “navigational topos, an andante in compound rhythm over pizzicato basses,” as Budden writes,²⁰ that represents the river Seine. The parallel fifths and octaves make a clear reference to Debussy’s *Cathédrale Engloutie*²¹ and other works that exhibit planing.²² [See Ex. 3.24a] The constant rocking of rhythmic threesomes in 12/8, 9/8 and 6/8²³ suggests a barcarolle, perfectly suited to the watery setting. But it also calls forth another *topos*: the lullaby. Lullabies almost always appear in triple rhythm²⁴ and a quick look at all three scores shows evidence of triple rhythms and

¹⁹ A *licenza* is a standard device in Italian theater in which a character addresses the audience directly at the end of a work. See Andrew Davis, *Il Trittico, Turandot and Puccini’s Late Style* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 148.

²⁰ Budden, *Puccini*, 380: “The rise and fall of the melodic line is calculated to suggest the irregular swirl of a busy waterway, while the widely spaced quavers of the double basses, reaching down to the bottom of their compass, convey a sense of depth, within the hollow.”

²¹ As Sartori writes, Puccini does not describe the Parisian river but “recalls the Seine of his musician friends. He rehears it and renews it, and behold that the heavy river knows of sunken cathedrals, and around it echoes of Stravinskian grimaces echo playfully.” [Ricorda la Senna dei suoi amici musicisti, la riascolta e la rinnova, ed ecco che il fiume pesante sa di cattedrali inghiottite e che intorno echeggiano scherzosi gli echi di sberleffi stravinskiani.] Sartori, “Il Trittico,” 87. Alberto Gasco, writing in *La tribuna* after Italian premiere of *Trittico*, 11 January 1919 immediately recognized the influences of Debussy and Stravinsky: “Nothing that contemporary art has produced escapes the studious and astute Giacomo Puccini. From Debussy to Stravinsky, every exceptional composer has been the subject of his fertile investigations. But (a miracle even more surprising than that of *Suor Angelica*), our composer has lost none of his own personality through his assiduous contact with dangerous foreign composers, the feared sirens of France and Russia; he has seized their secrets and used them to construct new and solid structures of a markedly national style.” (13 January 1919) Gara, *Carteggi*, 477. Quoted in Girardi, *Puccini*, 369-70.

²² “Planing” is a term used to describe the use of parallel fifths and octaves in the music of the French Impressionists, although Puccini had used the technique as early as his first opera, *Le Villi*. See, for example, William E. Benjamin, “Pour les Sixtes’: An Analysis” *Journal of Music Theory* 22/ 2 (Autumn, 1978), 253-290 or Peter DeLone, “Claude Debussy, Contrapuntiste Malgré Lui,” *College Music Symposium* 17/2 (Fall, 1977), 48-63. For its application to Puccini, see Davis, *Il Trittico*, 39, and chapter 2 of this volume.

²³ See Helen Greenwald, “Dramatic Exposition and Musical Structure in Puccini’s Operas” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1991), 56, for the metric structure of the opening scene.

²⁴ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, s.v. “lullaby,” Accessed 31 August 2011. See also Aldo Nicastro, “Reminiscenza e populismo nella poetica di Puccini (appunti sul *Tabarro*)” *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* (November-December, 1968): 1099, who writes, “It is interesting to note how the opera begins with a movement in 12/8 [...]: the meter in 12/8 is a typical ‘cradling’ one.” [E] interessante notare come l’opera inizi su un movimento in 12/8 [...]: il tempo in 12/8 è un tipico tempo ‘cullante.’”]

meters being linked to imagery of cradling. A theme closely related to the opening one appears at *Tabarro*'s rehearsal number 80, when Michele tries to win back his adulterous wife Giorgetta, recalling the happy days when they and their child would rest in his cloak, at "Resta vicina a me!"²⁵ In *Suor Angelica* the *only* extended triple meter occurs in two places: from rehearsal numbers 55 to 58, where there is mention of her child and his death (this section is the most dissonant of the opera, like a nightmarish version of a lullaby), and during the aria "Senza mamma," which is also clearly about the boy. *Gianni Schicchi* also has a quasi-lullaby moment, when the female trio of Zita, Ciesca and Nella dress the trickster for bed, starting at 61/1, in a lulling 6/8 meter and close harmony.

And children are central to these operas. The *Trittico*'s main female protagonists, Giorgetta and Angelica, are alike not only in their perorative requests for clemency, but they are both mothers who have lost sons. It was the death of Giorgetta's child (a boy named Georges in the play) that has made her life on the houseboat suffocatingly unbearable, which in turn has led to her alienation from her husband, and finally to adultery. In *Gianni Schicchi*, this tragic image is turned on its head (as good comedy should do), and the triptych finishes, not with a mother losing a son, but with a father saving, or at least helping, a daughter. In sum, these three operas revolve around the love between parents and children.

Nevertheless, these works have such different affects (*tinte*) and effects on the audience that any attempt to demonstrate dramatic coherence seems strained. But what can seem like a large leap from the tragic to the comic is actually a small step: *lachen und weinen* are

²⁵ A similar point was noted in Marcello Conati, "Lettura del *Tabarro* di Giacomo Puccini," in "*Il tabarro*" di Giacomo Puccini. *Il Maestro a Pescaglia, atti della Prima Giornata Pucciniana: Monsagrati di Pescaglia, Villa Mansi, 15 settembre 2002*. Michele Bianchi, ed. (Lucca, Promolucca editrice, 2003), 154. A revised version of this article was published as "Il *Tabarro* ovvero la "solita" insolita forma," *Studi pucciniani* 3(2004): 265-281.

closer than most of us believe, and laughter can often be a reaction, or defense against, to pain.²⁶

Puccini was (and is) known for his ability to provoke tears in his audiences. Giulio Ricordi wrote to him on 19 July 1899 to find for *Tosca* “one of those beautiful Puccinian moments in his operas that have the power to move half the world! [...] Ahead then, Master Giacomo! to make thousands and thousands of people weep, from whose number, ahimè!...I myself will not be absent!”²⁷ Puccini placed great value on those lachrymose moments, and stressed their value to librettist Luigi Illica: “I told you to want to make them weep: that is everything. But do you think it is easy? It is horribly difficult, dear Illica.”²⁸

And Puccini was no stranger to laughter in the face of misery. When completing the scoring of one of the most lachrymose moments of his *oeuvre*, the death of Mimì at the end of *La bohème*, he drew a skull and cross bones in the manuscript. [Ex. 12.0] In *Il Trittico*, the conclusion of *Suor Angelica* is another tearful moment for many audience members—the nun dies and is miraculously reunited with her son, (if actually staged according to the composer’s wishes²⁹)—one that is soon followed by the opening of *Schicchi* with its mocking lament.³⁰ The joke, in other words, is on the audience. It also says much that one of the

²⁶ As Freud writes: “Defense processes are the psychic correlates of the flight reflex and follow the task of guarding against the origin of pain from inner sources. [...] Humor can now be conceived as the loftiest variant of this defense activity.” Sigmund Freud, *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*. Trans. A. A. Brill. (New York: Moffat, 1916), 380.

²⁷ Copialettere, Archivio Ricordi, Milan. [uno di quei bei momenti Pucciniani, che hanno avuto il potere di commuovere mezzo mondo nelle opere sue! [...] Avanti dunque, Sor Giacomo!...a far lagrimare migliaia e migliaia di persone, fra le quali, ahimè!...non manderò io pure!!] “Sor Giacomo” was Ricordi’s pet name for Puccini and could be an ironic reference to the comic character in Molière’s *L’avare* [The Miser], Maître Jacques, cook and coachman, who confronts his master’s stinginess. Puccini, quite poor in his early days, often requested extra funds from Ricordi.

²⁸ Gara. *Carteggi*, 404-5, letter of 8 Oct 1912 [Ti dissi di voler far piangere: e’ qui tutto. Ma credi che sia facile? E’ orribilmente difficile, caro Illica.]

²⁹ There is a trend in both the theater and in academic studies of this opera to problematize whether the miracle is real, or real only to Angelica in a hallucinatory state. It is curious why other such scenes, such as the fiery descent to hell at the conclusion of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, have not garnered such skepticism.

³⁰ A traditional marker for laments is the appoggiatura, or accented descending minor or major second, which has been utilized, for example, in Dido’s lament, Pamina’s “Ach, ich fühl’s,” and Tosca’s “Vissi d’arte,” in imitation of sobbing. By rhythmically displacing the two-note figure by an eighth-note, Puccini borrows from

funniest moments in this last opera is Zita's weepy aside after discovering the greedy relatives had been disinherited, at 22/7: "(Who would have ever thought that when Buoso went to the cemetery, he would have made us weep for real!)"³¹ And the entire family is delighted and sings "requiesat in pace" *allegromente* when they discover that the tolling church bell is not for Buoso's death but for that of the captain's moor,³² at 58/3.

Example 12.0: Puccini's autograph score of Mimi's death in *La bohème*, with skull and crossbones.



The interconnectedness of pain and laughter is also not unrelated to Puccini's overall tonal strategy for the *Trittico*, as we shall see below.

* * * * *

another musical tradition: that of the scherzo, in which the joke is on the listener who assumes the wrong metrical structure, and whose foot-tapping is soon discovered to be off: this is known as metrical reinterpretation. A well-known example of metrical reinterpretation is found at the beginning of the scherzo movement of Beethoven's *Symphony no. 9*. For more on the opening of *Gianni Schicchi*, see Davis, *Il Trittico*, 148. As this opening proceeds, the tempo slows by more than half from Allegro at 132 beats per minute to Largo at 60, while the same appoggiatura figures continue. This tempo change forces a mimetic shift from imitating laughter to mimicking tears, highlighting again how close those emotions can be.

³¹ [(Chi l'avrebbe mai detto / che quando Buoso andava al cimitero, / si sarebbe pianto per davvero!) (piagnucolosa)]

³² Davis points out that the captain's moor, like other characters in *Gianni Schicchi*, is derived from the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Davis, *Il Trittico*, 143.

Is there musical coherence in *Il Trittico*? An anonymous commentator³³ wrote in the *Idea Nazionale* (January 1919) that there was, and that it resided in the modern sound of the music: “Puccini’s three acts can constitute a united show. And the unity, if that is the case, is gotten from the character of the contemporary music.”³⁴ That writer takes a critical stance, complaining that there is too much uniformity of the contemporary sound, which “equalizes the characters, whether they are boatmen of the Seine or nuns in a convent.”³⁵

But of what are these “modern” sonorities comprised, and are they special to *Il trittico* in Puccini’s *oeuvre*? Budden identifies a “second-encrusted language”³⁶ in the opening of *Suor Angelica*, a term that can apply to much of the *Trittico*. Giacomo Setaccioli, a contemporary of Puccini, identified these “wrong notes” as unresolved appoggiaturas (in *Suor Angelica*) and as “changed” notes [nota cambiata], derived from Basevi’s concept, in *Gianni Schicchi*.³⁷ Puccini uses half-step relationships with chords and keys as well: examples include the “slide” from E major to F minor (G#/Ab is the common pitch-class) at 39/6, and the bitonality that appears at 85/1 with A minor and Bb major. [See Ex. 1.6d above]

³³ Pinzauti suggests that the writer could have been Fausto Torrefranca. Leonardo Pinzauti, “Il ‘Trittico’ di Giacomo Puccini” Teatro Comunale di Firenze, *46o Maggio Musicale* [House program.] (1983): 591-593. Rep. Teatro Comunale di Firenze [House program.] *51o Maggio Musicale*, 1988: 67-80.

³⁴ [I tre atti pucciniani possono costituire uno spettacolo unito. E l’unità, se mai, è data dal carattere della musica contemporanea.] Gara, *Carteggi*, 478.

³⁵ Ibid. [il carattere della musica contemporanea e’ quello di averne uno di uniformità’ [...] che uguaglia i personaggi, siano barcaioli della Senna o suore di un convento]

³⁶ Budden, *Puccini*, 403. Budden does not feel, however, that the three operas have a common musical vocabulary, and writes that *Gianni Schicchi* is “quite distinct from that of *Il tabarro* or *Suor Angelic*: diatonic with no trace of modality, sparing of chromatic inflection, quick-paced, and rhythmically vigorous. Violent dissonance is not altogether avoided, but it is never of the searing, anguished variety.” Ibid., 405.

³⁷ Giacomo Setaccioli, *Note ed appunti al ‘Trattato di Armonia’ di Cesare De Sanctis in rapporto allo sviluppo della armonia moderna* (Milan: Ricordi, 1923). Quoted in Giorgio Sanguinetti, “Puccini’s Music in the Theoretical Literature of Its Day.” In *Tosca’s Prism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 234. Basevi’s concept of “nota cambiata” developed into “nota supplente” or “replacement note.” Ibid.

By implication, this “language” might also include inversions of half-steps—diminished octaves (the enharmonic equivalents of major sevenths).³⁸ Diminished octaves, written as such, most famously appear in the out-of-tune barrel organ of *Tabarro*, reminiscent of Stravinsky’s *Petrouchka*³⁹ and also are heard later in *Tabarro*, at 63/13 and repeated with variation at 65/7, during Giorgetta’s and Luigi’s duet about their adulterous love. [Exx. 12.1a and b]

Example 12.1: *Il tabarro*, diminished octaves

a) 13/4, imitating an out-of-tune barrel organ

b) 63/13

In *Suor Angelica*, diminished octaves rear up in several spots. At 4/9 and 11, at the words “afflicted” and “sin” [afflitti, peccato], there are diminished octaves between G#-G and D#-D; the inclusion of a D in the former and an A in the latter, turns these sonorities

³⁸ Ashbrook and Powers discuss half-step relationships small and large in regard to *Turandot*. William Ashbrook and Harold Powers, *Puccini's 'Turandot': the End of the Great Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 102-3

³⁹ Budden points out that Leoncavallo’s *Zazà* [1900] uses simultaneous major sevenths (equivalent to diminished octaves) to represent an out-of-tune instrument. Ibid., 382. Stravinsky himself noted a quote from the tuba solo in *Petrouchka* at 77/9. Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), 157.] Quoted in Girardi, *Puccini*, 432-3.

whole-tone dim. 8ve whole-tone

"Cercate di sal - var - ci!"

The operas of *Il Trittico* also all exhibit the use of tone clusters, which might simply be a result of Puccini's developing harmonic technique: he first used them in *La rondine*, composed concurrently with *Il tabarro*. In the latter opera, at 51/9, a cacophonous cascade of clusters follows the mention of "noisy Sundays" [domeniche chiassose]. [Ex. 12.4] Puccini also uses parallel whole-tone clusters at 67/10 that descend, over a pedal, by alternating whole step and half step; this motivic pattern appears also at 77/4 over a diatonic bass of repeated Gs and Ds,⁴² and at 87/6-7, where the parallel clusters develop into half-diminished seventh chords.

Example 12.4: *Il tabarro*, tone clusters, 51/9

tone clusters

Suor Angelica has whole-tone clusters (alternating whole-tone collections 0 and 1) at 54/3 when Angelica demands news of her son, and over a pedal at 80/0, in the climactic

⁴² The combined sonority heard at 77/5 is a half-diminished seventh chord (EGBbD).

final scene. But syncopated *diatonic* clusters (in D major) are also present at 75/0, when she happily (at first) takes her leave of mortal life. [Ex. 12.5]

Example 12.5: *Suor Angelica*, tone clusters, 75/0

In *Gianni Schicchi*, tone clusters decorate a diatonic alternation between C dominant seventh and its tonic F at 20/31. Later, at 31/23, a repeated tonic F in the tenor’s vocal line is accompanied by additive chromatic pitches that form clusters, as a transition to the diatonic progression ii-V-I in F major, at 32/0. [Ex. 12.6] A similar additive chromatic process grows from a unison Eb at 39/0, to tone clusters, to whole-tone and half-diminished sonorities at 39/7, and finally to Eb major at 39/10.

Example 12.6: *Gianni Schicchi*, tone clusters, 31/23

Musical zoological mimesis plays a role throughout the *Trittico* as well. In *Il tabarro*, Puccini writes “cu cu” [cuckoo] in the horn part at 51/10, and where he imitates Frugola’s cat Caporale at 35/12 (the score says “imitando il gatto” [imitating the cat]) [Ex. 12.7a], 37/0

and 47/10. And *Suor Angelica* contains musical depictions of birds (1/4), sheep (19/12), wasps (25/3) and a donkey (29/1). [Ex. 12.7b]

Example 12.7: zoological mimesis

a) *Il tabarro*, 35/12, cat



b) *Suor Angelica*, 29/1, donkey⁴³



But Puccini's mimetic skills are utilized for more than faunal imitation in the *Trittico*: imagery of bodily functions is called up as well. In *Suor Angelica*, laughter is suggested at 20/9, as is Angelica's heartbeat in the accompaniment at 40/0, 62/0 and 69/0. Girardi even claims to hear rhythmic chewing at 34/10.⁴⁴ In *Gianni Schicchi*, the opening displaced appoggiaturas convey the (mock) weeping, while, according to Girardi, the word "benefissio," [bowel movement] is indicated by a rapid descending run at 46/8.⁴⁵

⁴³ The donkey, like many of Puccini's heroines, is heard before she is seen.

⁴⁴ Girardi, *Puccini*, 404. The proper Italian term is "beneficio."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 425.

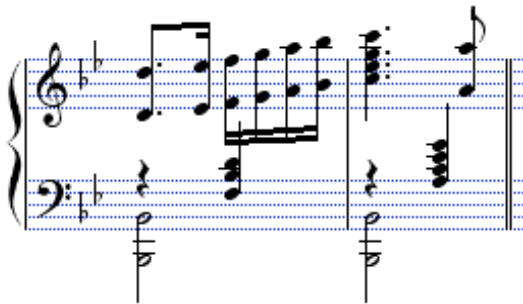
As in all other Puccini operas, musical reminiscences of Wagnerian operas make appearances here as well.⁴⁶ In *Il Trittico*, however, all recall the same opera, *Die Meistersinger*. In *Il tabarro*, the opening accompanimental motive of Giorgetta's wishful description at 48/1 of a different life (and husband), "My dream is quite different." [È ben altro il mio sogno!] is derivative of Eva's outpouring to Sachs in Act III, scene 4 of her own wish for a different man: "for, if I had the choice, I would choose none but you; you would have been my husband."⁴⁷ [Exx. 12.8a and b]

Example 12.8:

a) Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act III, scene 4



b) Puccini, *Il tabarro*, 48/1



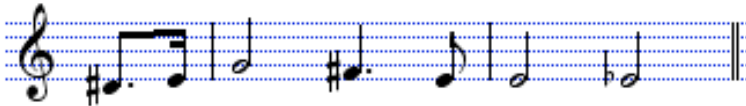
⁴⁶ Setaccioli, in a pamphlet on the music of *Gianni Schicchi*, published with the approval of Ricordi, attempts to make the case that Puccini's leitmotivic technique is not Wagnerian, defining a distinction between Wagner's "leading motives" [motivi conduttori] and Puccini's "dominant motives" [motivi dominanti]. Giacomo Setaccioli, *Il Contenuto Musicale del Gianni Schicchi di Giacomo Puccini: con la esposizione e la illustrazione dei motivi tematici* (Rome: De Santis, 1920), 29.

⁴⁷ [Denn, hatte ich die Wahl, nur dich erwählt' ich mir; du warest mein Gemahl] Online at <http://www.rwagner.net/libretti/meisters/e-meisters-a3s4.html>, accessed 9/6/11.

The “Sorge” [grief] theme from *Meistersinger* (Act I, scene 3), as noted previously, appears barely disguised in *Suor Angelica* at 53/2, as she begs to hear news of her son. An earlier, thematically related version can be heard at 43/9. [Exx. 12.9a-c]

Example 12.9

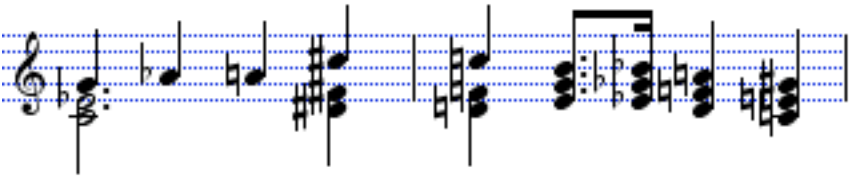
a) Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act III, scene 4, “Sorge” leitmotive



b) Puccini, *Suor Angelica*, 53/2



c) Puccini, *Suor Angelica*, 43/9



Budden writes that the C major theme from *Gianni Schicchi*, first heard at 13/15, is reminiscent of *Meistersinger*,⁴⁸ and perhaps he is referring to an “academic” theme that appears in Act II, scene 6, which has similar scalar motions. [Exx. 12.10 a and b]

⁴⁸ Budden, *Puccini*, 407.

Example 12.10:

a) Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act II, scene 6



b) Puccini, *Gianni Schicchi*, 13/15



In addition to these diverse, but somewhat superficial, links among the three operas of *Il trittico*, it is possible also to individuate some structural connective tissue. In her article on *Il tabarro*,⁴⁹ Greenwald explores the importance of pitch class C# in relation to the final tonic of the opera, C minor. The pitch class C is present at many critical moments of the opera: the quasi-brindisi in C major, (7/0), Giorgetta asking Luigi to dance in C minor (12/5), Michele's "Nulla! Silenzio!" in C minor (86/1) and, of course, the dramatic conclusion. In its original version, the second Giorgetta-Luigi duet was also in C minor, but was later transposed to C# minor by the composer; this made the duet, in Greenwald's view, "'incompatible' with the premeditated monochromaticism of the framework," creating a tritone with the opening G-based sonority that highlights the tonal tension of the work.⁵⁰ Greenwald also notes many instances of the C/C# conflict on the musical surface, such as at 72/9, and concludes that the C# is ultimately revealed to be Db, the Neapolitan (here, as Db

⁴⁹ Helen M. Greenwald, "Puccini, *Il tabarro*, and the Dilemma of Operatic Transposition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Autumn, 1998), 521 -558.

⁵⁰Ibid., 532.

minor not major), moving (in parallel motion) to C as Luigi is murdered at 96/0. [Exx. 12.11a and b]

Example 12.11: Puccini, *Il tabarro*, C/C#

a) 72/9, alternation of C and C#

Musical notation for Example 12.11a, showing an alternation of C and C# chords in the bass line. The notation is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The bass line consists of four measures, each with a single note: C, C#, C, C#. The notes are written on a bass clef staff with a sharp sign at the beginning of the line. The treble clef staff is empty.

b) 96/0, parallel harmonic motion from Db minor to C minor

Musical notation for Example 12.11b, showing parallel harmonic motion from Db minor to C minor. The notation is in Db minor (three flats) and 2/4 time. The bass line consists of two measures. The first measure is labeled "Db minor" and the second measure is labeled "C minor". The notes are written on a bass clef staff. The treble clef staff is empty.

Greenwald also notes a similar pitch-related tension in *Suor Angelica*, where “C# once again supplants C to italicize a profoundly emotional exchange.”⁵¹ In another article, she further explores the large-scale tonal relationships of C and C# in this second opera, suggesting that there is a tonal unfolding of the augmented triad F-A-C# over the first half of the work, following by a “corrected” unfolding of F-A-C.⁵² This analysis is not too dissimilar to the one presented above in Chapter 3 (see Ex. 3.19), in which the unfolded augmented triad with C# resolves to C earlier, at rehearsal 66, where there is a perfect authentic cadence in C major, followed by a long pause.

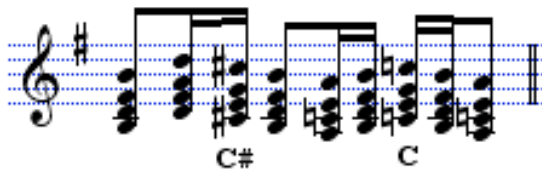
⁵¹ Ibid., 548-9.

⁵² Helen Greenwald, “Verdi’s Patriarch and Puccini’s Matriarch: ‘Through the Looking-Glass and What Puccini Found There,’” *19th-Century Music* 17/3 (Spring 1994): 232.

C and C# also conflict on the musical surface of *Suor Angelica*. For example, at 10/7, there is a Lydian-flavored C# in the context of a G-major passage, quickly returning to C, and at 62/8, Puccini adds a C diminished chord to a whole-tone bass containing C#. When Angelica nearly swoons at the shocking news of her son, in a whole-tone passage on C, there is a repeated figure C-Bb-E in the higher wind and lower string parts; just afterward, at 57/0 this figure changes to C#-B-E over a C# minor seventh chord. [Exx. 12.12a and b]

Example 12.12: Puccini, *Suor Angelica*, C/C#

a) 10/7



b) 57/0

Musical notation for Example 12.12b, showing a whole-tone passage on C with a C# minor seventh chord. The notation is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The bass line features a whole-tone passage on C (C, D, E, F, G, A) and a C# minor seventh chord (C#, B, A, G, F, E). The treble line features a whole-tone passage on C (C, D, E, F, G, A) and a C# minor seventh chord (C#, B, A, G, F, E). The C# minor seventh chord is marked with 'C#' below it.

But the most dramatic occurrence of this motivic clash is at 42/0, when Angelica is about to meet her Princess Aunt; here, a C#-minor figure is repeatedly juxtaposed with a C minor chord.⁵³ [See Ex. 3.16a]

⁵³ In the excised “aria dei fiori,” which originally appeared in the score of *Suor Angelica* at rehearsal number 70, there is a layering of a whole-tone sonority in the bass (G-C#-D#-A) with a pentatonic melody above (C#-D#-F#-G#). At what was rehearsal 71, this combination is transposed up a perfect fourth to C-F#-G#-D in the bass and the pentatonic melody F#-G#-B-C# above: here too, we hear C and C# in conflict.

The C#/C conflict is not lacking in *Gianni Schicchi* either. Budden notes an anomalous “Lydian C#” in the aria “Addio Firenze” at 64/0, followed by C two bars later.⁵⁴ Indeed, the opera’s opening gesture, at 0/0, is a diminished seventh chord containing C#, over an F dominant pedal, resolving to a Bb major theme, in which C is frequently iterated; and at 71/21, Db appears over a C pedal. Thus, it is possible to read these juxtaposed occurrences of C and C#, as demonstrated here, as evidence of a motivically related “issue” in the musical superlices of each member of the triptych.

However, one can also identify a deeper structural struggle in *Gianni Schicchi* between C and C#/Db, which becomes apparent at the end of the opera, and which affects how we understand the tripartite work as a whole. After the dirty deed is done, the notary leaves with the false will, accompanied by pure C major; at 80/0, the voices of the family erupt in anger on unison Cs, accompanied by rising chromatic parallel triads that return to C major at 80/10. This theme is reiterated at 81/0, again in C, after which comes the ironic leitmotive of familial love, a layering of whole-tone scales 0 and 1 (based, respectively, on C and C#) [see Ex. 1.13d]. To this is soon joined a low pedal on G, sounding very much like the dominant of C major, and which alternates with Gb, seemingly a neighbor note.

At this point, Puccini could very well have ended the opera in C, which would have allowed all three operas to conclude on the same “tonic”—a very traditional move. But what occurs instead is that Gb becomes the eventual tonic, with pitch class C#/Db emerging as the dominant of Gb major just before 84/0. This begs the question of why Puccini did not tie it all up with a C-major bow. As it stands, the overall tonal plan of *Il trittico* is C minor-C major-Gb major. And, with that final leap of a tritone, C to Gb, the tonal world of the

⁵⁴ Budden, *Puccini*, 413.

trilogy is overturned in the most radical way possible—a musical equivalent of the dramatic twist from tragedy to comedy.⁵⁵

* * * * *

“I have been begun to translate *La Houppelande* into notes.”

- Giacomo Puccini, 30 October 1915 to Tito Ricordi⁵⁶

Puccini’s statement calls forth issues of musical narration and depiction, if not echoes of Wagnerian concepts of musical prose. Yet just a few years earlier Puccini wrote that music is “that divine art which begins or ought to begin where the words cease.”⁵⁷ Can one translate into a new medium where “words cease”? And if one could indeed translate cross-media, any narratological strategies would have to be adapted to the altered exigencies of the new “language.”

Music, unlike language, is inherently multivalent: it can present numerous events simultaneously and coherently, where spoken text cannot. And *Il trittico* is not short of such moments. In *Il tabarro*, for example, at rehearsal numbers 3-6, we hear, as Conati writes, “three synchronic planes”.⁵⁸ set to simultaneous music, we hear a conversation between Michele and Giorgetta, the song of the stevedores in the background, and the sounds representing the river below. Similar layerings occur when a song vendor passes by and a tugboat whistles in the distance (19/0), and at rehearsal 84-85, as Michele ruminates on his

⁵⁵ One might also consider the deliberate thwarting of tonal coherence as a modernist gesture.

⁵⁶Gara, *Carteggi*, 439. [mi sono messo a tradurre in note l'*Houppelande*.]

⁵⁷ Letter to Sybil Seligman, 8 February 1911. Printed in English translation in Vincent Seligman, *Puccini Among Friends* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 206. Quoted in Italian in Conati, “Lettura del *tabarro*,” 1.

⁵⁸[piani sincronici] Conati, “Lettura del *tabarro*,” 10.

painful situation, two lovers pass by⁵⁹ and a bugle sounds the “All quiet.”⁶⁰ For the latter case, Puccini uses bitonality to express two co-existing but vastly different worlds.

This layering, noted by Leukel in regard to *Il trittico*,⁶¹ is part and parcel of Puccini’s technique. As we have seen, dissonant pedal points were in Puccini’s toolbox from the beginning, as was proto-bitonality.

It comes as bit of a surprise, then, that a salient feature of *Gianni Schicchi*— not of the other two members of the triptych—is a narrative technique that rejects simultaneity for discontinuous alternation. As Leibowitz writes,

I am referring above all to the technique used by the composer to interrupt a dramatic event (and consequently a specific musical structure), and to continue the initial event (completing the corresponding musical structure) only later, so to speak.

[...] In *Gianni Schicchi* this will become then the fundamental structural principle of the opera in its totality.⁶²

⁵⁹ The passing-by of unrelated characters was suggested to Puccini many years earlier, for the third act of *La bohème*, by Luigi Illica, whose unpublished sketches for such a scene can be found among the papers of Giuseppe Giacosa in the Archivio famigliare Giacosa: “from the Boulevard d’Enfer are heard, distant at first, voices that sing as they get nearer. They are masked couples a little tipsy who are coming from the gardens of the Grand Charnière and cross the stage.” [dal boulevard d’Enfer si odono dapprima lontane voci che cantano avvicinandosi. Sono coppie di maschere un po’ alticcie che vengono dai giardini de la Grande Charnière e attraversano la scena.] Illica also suggested a similar occurrence in *Manon Lescaut*, where the lamplighter enters in Act III. [See Chapter 7 above.]

The couples sing the following verses and, as Illica notes below, the asterisks indicate places for ritornelli.

Vien me baiser, Titine,
cela me rend content;
* ne me fais pas la mine.
* Hélas! je t’aime tant!
Laisse ma main caline
Sur ton sein palpitant;
* cela n’est pas, Titine,
* Pour toi bien important!

(Gli * possono essere ritornelli)

⁶⁰ This bugle call is also known as the “tattoo.” More information can be found at:

<http://www.music.vt.edu/musicdictionary/appendix/buglecalls/Buglecallslist.html>, accessed 9/1/11.

⁶¹ Jürgen Leukel *Studien zu Puccinis ‘Il Trittico’: Il Tabarro-Suor Angelica-Gianni Schicchi* (Munich: Katzbichler, 1983). On pages 65ff, Leukel discusses Puccini’s use of layering, pedal point and their relation to bitonality.

⁶² Leibowitz, René, “L’arte di Giacomo Puccini,” *L’Approdo Musicale* 6/11 (April-June 1959): 21. [mi riferisco innanzi tutto alla tecnica assai precisa usata dal compositore per interrompere un avvenimento drammatico (e conseguentemente una specifica struttura musicale), e per continuare l’avvenimento iniziale (completando la

It is not just structures that are interrupted, however, but swaths of music juxtaposed with others in completely different styles.

The issue of *stylistic plurality* in the *Trittico* has been explored in depth by Davis, who defines it as: “heterogeneous music in which diverse styles are exploited to such a degree that the contrasts among them—rather than the styles themselves—become the focal point for the listening audience.”⁶³ The abrupt shifts from a modernistic “second-encrusted language” to the fauxbourdon of “Requiesat in pace” at 58/3, to one of Puccini’s most *zuccherate* (“sugary” as he termed them) arias, “O mio babbino caro,” is striking, given that the composer has shown himself a master of smooth transitions. Some contemporaries of Puccini certainly did not appreciate the stylistic shifts. The younger composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco⁶⁴ relates:

I played [my opera] *La mandragola* for [Puccini] in a number of sessions [...] After I had played the first act, he said, “Don’t you think that right here”—pointing to the middle of the act—“after so much dialogue, an aria for the tenor would go well?” [...] I then had the nerve to tell him: “Maestro, I’m sure you’re right, because no one has as much theatrical experience as you. But don’t you think that if, in *Gianni Schicchi*, you had left out that aria, ‘O mio babbino caro,’ the opera’s stylistic unity would have gained by it?” He smiled and said, “Perhaps you’re the one who’s right, in this case.”⁶⁵

corrispondente struttura musicale) solo in un secondo tempo, se così si può dire. [...] In *Gianni Schicchi* diventerà insomma il principio strutturale fondamentale dell’opera nella sua totalità.]

⁶³ Davis, *Il Trittico*, 4.

⁶⁴ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: (Florence, April 3, 1895 - Los Angeles, March 16, 1968) Italian-born American composer, studied piano and composition with Ildebrando Pizzetti. He attained considerable eminence in his native country between the wars, until political events and his Jewish heritage forced him to leave Italy. In 1939, he settled in the USA. He wrote film scores in Hollywood but also continued to teach and to write operas, oratorios, orchestral and chamber music. His opera *La mandragola*, after Macchiavelli, won the Italian National prize in 1926.

⁶⁵ Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario. “From a Lifetime of Music,” 152.

One can only wonder whether Puccini had been smiling at the younger man missing the point, and *Gianni Schicchi*'s lack of stylistic unity completely intentional.

One of the moments of greatest discontinuity in *Gianni Schicchi* is at 42/2, when Schicchi exclaims that nothing can be done about Buoso's will. Without any transition, the young lovers Lauretta and Rinuccio lament the situation. Ten bars later, at 43/1, Schicchi repeats his exclamation and the lovers reiterate their impassioned outburst. [Exx. 12.13a and b] Davis writes about this scene in regard to filmic techniques, as has this writer,⁶⁶ and the technique seems to function as a cognate of cinematic intercutting, known as the *alternating syntagma*, in which simultaneity is implied through quick the alternation of opposing shots.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Davis, *Il Trittico*, 153-156. Deborah Burton, "Ariadne's Threads: Puccini and Cinema," *Studi Musicali* (forthcoming).

⁶⁷ For example, if person A is repeatedly seen speaking and person B is repeatedly shown listening, the *alternating syntagma* leads us to conclude that A and B are having a conversation. The term is from Noël Burch, *Life to those Shadows*. Trans. Ben Brewster. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. Prior to the development of the alternating syntagma, simultaneity in film had to be shown through multiple events in the same image, or superimposition (double exposure).

Ex. 12.13: *Gianni Schicchi*, “intercutting” or “alternating syntagma”

a) 42/2

Ex. 12.13a shows a piano accompaniment for the scene. The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line enters with the lyrics "Addio, speranza bella" in a softer (*p*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern, and the vocal line continues with the lyrics "Niente da fare!" and "Addio, speranza bella". The score includes dynamic markings *f* and *p*, and a bracketed ellipsis [...].

b) 43/1

Ex. 12.13b shows a different piano accompaniment for the same scene. The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line enters with the lyrics "Addio, speranza bella" in a softer (*p*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern, and the vocal line continues with the lyrics "Niente da fare!" and "Addio, speranza bella". The score includes dynamic markings *f* and *p*, and a bracketed ellipsis [...].

Because music’s multivalency can obviate the need for an equivalent of the *alternating syntagma*, it would seem that the discontinuities in these scenes were conscious choices.⁶⁸ But the question is not, as Davis writes, whether stylistic plurality is present but “rather *how* and *for what expressive purpose* the various styles are used.”⁶⁹ In *Gianni Schicchi*, we have bits of various styles juxtaposed seemingly for some artistic end, what Davis terms *stylistic integration*.⁷⁰ But what is that end?

The answer may lie not in the presence of discontinuity of the styles itself, but rather in the speed and abruptness with which that discontinuity is carried out. As the decelerating

⁶⁸ In fact, Puccini employs, throughout his oeuvre, innovative musical techniques that can be compared to contemporary developments in cinema. For example, in *Tosca* (1900), Act I/4/0 contains a short phrase accompanying Angelotti’s “gesture of discouragement,” which is not unlike a *close-up*; and in *Manon Lescaut*, at III/10/5, we hear a *dissolve*—Manon’s descending, stepwise four-note theme fragmenting as she becomes quiet and a lamplighter enters singing a song. See Burton, “Ariadne’s Threads.”

⁶⁹ Davis, *Il Trittico*, 10.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

opening of *Schicchi* has shown us, tempo is quite powerful: it can turn comedy into tragedy and vice-versa. Perhaps, then, the speedy shifts of *Gianni Schicchi* suggest fast-paced comedic timing.

On a global scale, one could read the arrangement of operas within the *Trittico* as a variation on the same principle of stark and swift contrast. At the seams of the triptych there are shifts in *tinta*, time period and temperament. Yet, as we have seen previously, the same structural materials—both musical and dramatic—continue to return throughout the work.