

The “hache sanglante” of the Duke of Alba

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Poised for a big splash on arrival in Paris from Naples, begun in 1838, *Le Duc d'Albe* was the very first of Donizetti's four *grands opéras* but the very last to see the light of day. Put aside, half-composed, it fell by the wayside. He had come intent on conquest - to take the city by storm - but fell prey to its most powerful inhabitant, the diva of the day.

The work of that insuperable duo Scribe and Duveyrier and with the composer at the very apex of his fame, the argument of *Le Duc d'Albe* may well have been the most persuasive he was ever to set to music, a perfect triad, the three actors at its heart sharing an equilibrium of passions, fears and despair, all are victim of the same nemesis. With real history as its excuse, as credible and compassionate a plot as any and with no loose ends, it is no wonder that it survived its Donizettian check and reappeared - a curious bonus, but diluted and disclaimed - on an as yet un-guessable Verdian horizon as *Les Vèpres siciliennes*.

The initial contract between the composer and the Paris Opéra was signed as early as 16 August 1838 and intermittently during the following eighteen months he was working on the score. Being the maestro he was, however, caricatured as writing two operas at the same time, one with each hand, he was also engaged in adapting for the Paris stage at least three more. A change of management at the Académie royale de Musique was the undoing of *Le Duc d'Albe*, a new and impulsive director, Léon Pillet, arrived to take over and with him his mistress, the redoubtable mezzo-soprano Rosine Stoltz, *primadonna assoluta* as soon she made clear. The lady had a problem, Donizetti was writing *Le Duc d'Albe* for a lyric soprano, there was one available, her detested rival Julie Dorus-Gras, so the opera was doomed - no one was going to open *her* reign with a brand-new opera for a rival, so she got *La Favorite* in its place, not quite new, but one of the biggest successes of the Paris stage where it remained a favorite to the end of the century (although she herself was nothing of the kind), and then later, the starring role of Zayda in *Dom Sébastien, roi de Portugal* of 1843. (While La Dorus-Gras had to be content with Pauline in *Les Martyrs* (an adaptation), too sacred a role, maybe, for her sacred-monster of an antagonist). The incomplete score of *Le Duc d'Albe*, though not forgotten, stayed under the composer's desk until his death.

In 1848 the Opéra made a determined attempt to retrieve and perform this important, expensive and abortive commission, but dismayed by the state of the manuscript gave up the idea. Others, later, had the same idea. In 1875 the city of Bergamo appointed a commission to examine the music, it reported that though the first act was orchestrally complete and a second act almost complete, the third and fourth acts were merely skeletal with a vocal line to the end but only an indication of the rest. Even more disturbingly, as they commented wryly, the tenor aria ‘Ange des cieux’ had been removed to become ‘Ange si pur’ in *La Favorite*. Other sections had clearly been recycled. *Le Duc d’Albe* went back into his box.

In 1881 Donizetti’s heirs offered the manuscript to the famous music publishers, the Casa Ricordi, but Ricordi with Victorian virtuousness rejected the offer on the grounds that completion by other hands “*would damage the name and art of the famous composer*”. Such a statement was nothing but red-rag-to-a-bull to the immediate competitor of the Casa Ricordi, and the resurrection of *Le Duc d’Albe* begins with a second formidable woman, this time the imposing widow of the rival milanese publisher Francesco Lucca, Giovannina Strazza (1810-1894) an outsize protagonist both mentally and physically who would much exceed La Stoltz in changing the course of Italian opera of her day. She purchased the manuscript forthwith. With strategic cunning she too engaged a commission, at least she asked the Milan Conservatory to do so, to select a trio of distinguished composers to look-at the manuscript, a suitably non-Verdian trio (Ricordi being synonymous with Verdi), the Conservatory named Antonio Bazzini, Cesare Dominiceti and Amilcare Ponchielli. This unimpeachable caucus duly reported that the lyrical integrity of the opera was intact, that the number of completed items in the score, together with those that could be made performable with small additions, was sufficiently in evidence that if a “*sure, expert hand*” could be found then “*Le Duc d’Albe could be offered to the public as an undoubted work of Donizetti*”

The time-schedule for the realisation of this music, the speed with which it emerged as *Il duca d’Alba* suggests that the flair of Signora Lucca went far beyond this. That shrewdly she had already recruited a fellow Bergamasc former-pupil of Donizetti, the highly competent Matteo Salvi (1816-1887) to undertake the necessary research and tailoring of the score. That Salvi masterminded *Il duca d’Alba* under the critical eye of Bazzini, Dominiceti and Ponchielli we know well, so that no “*damage*” to “*the name and art of the famous composer*” could even be contemplated.

The Scribe-Duveyrier livret was handed over to Angelo Zanardini for translation and refashioning as an Italian opera in four acts, losing as little as possible of its original quality. This was not easy, Italian versions of French grands opéras did not have a good reputation, *Guglielmo Tell*, *La favorita*, *I martiri*, *Gli ugonotti* and *Il profeta* for example all are more-or-less painful confections with real losses both in meaning and content and 1838 was a critical step in Donizetti's maturity, with one foot still in Italy and another in France, *Le Duc d'Albe* was a *carte-de-visite* on the threshold of his major musical re-evaluation. Such Italian transcriptions invariably ducked French candor and specificity preferring that kind of evasive librettospeak originally adopted to defeat the impositions of a monstrous regiment of official censors.

And the music? Fear that after forty years the music might sound dated certainly blunted an absolutely literal re-use of those portions of *Le Duc d'Albe* that had been inherited relatively intact from the composer. As a result, in 1882, when *Il duca d'Alba* finally won the stage, *all* the music had been tampered-with to some extent; Salvi (and Bazzini, Dominicetti and Ponchielli) found themselves balancing on a tightrope between Donizetti's tentative gallicisms and the triumphalist instincts of the Signora Lucca, orchestration, dynamics, sequence and tempi all have been manipulated and enhanced in the completed score for which Salvi took the blame; the colour of the music betrays its later nineteenth-century origin - a factor that did not jarr at the time of emergence (but has jarred since). This is not to say that Salvi and his overseers failed to respect Donizetti's score, it is obvious that they bent over backwards to live-up to the challenge of completing this opera and many of their adaptations and additions are not only beautiful but inspired.

The moving *Preludio* for instance. Who wrote it? Or at least, who compiled it? Which of the above maestri? There is no sign of this heartrending opening in the autograph pages to be found today, Donizetti left merely a list of motives he could use. The autograph manuscript (irony of ironies the archive of the Signora Lucca was acquired by the Casa Ricordi in 1888 a year or two before her death!) begins with the chorus of Spanish soldiers 'Espagne, Espagne, mon pays'. Nor can this prelude be unearthed in the Bibliothèque Nationale where a host of surviving fragments and sketches include this *Choeur d'Introduction* above but nothing earlier. Had the manuscript score prepared by Salvi remained accessible we might have been able to answer questions like this but this historic document has never been

traced. Thus, the question “Who wrote what?” has been on the lips of every researcher ever since. This prelude, however, is a key to the emotional content of all the rest, evoking in succession both the sinister shade of the Spanish Governor of the Low Countries (by opening with the fearful footfall of his armed guard) followed by the sweet paternal anguish of Hélène d’Egmont (who has been re-named Amelia d’Egmont in *Il duca d’Alba*) by launching the theme we hear when she stands on the spot where her father was decapitated (on the orders of the Duke). The parameters of the plot are made clear immediately: the opera is about fatherhood: the irreconcilable Hélène/Amelia intends to revenge herself for the death of her father; the terrible Governor is prepared to spare her if his long-lost son Henri/Marcello will acknowledge his paternity; the son dies defending him from the woman he loves. Did Donizetti intend a leitmotif? Perhaps he did but the fragmentary state of the music leaves it an open question and it was the age of Ponchielli that invested in leitmotifs.

The Salvi *Il duca d’Alba* proved to be an inordinately long score, indulging in every kind of audience-rousing device, deafening choruses, overwhelming *cabalette* replete with reprise after reprise to such an extent that its future as a viable repertory item was compromised even from the start.. But its first appearance was truly an extended triumph for Giovannina Lucca: with a prima at the Teatro Apollo in Rome on 12 March 1882, before an overflowing house, the seat prices doubled and with the Queen of Italy suitably enthroned in the centre of the first row of boxes, the cast included Abigaille Bruschi-Chiatti as Amelia d’Egmont; with the sensational Spanish tenor Julian Gayarré as Marcello di Bruges; Leone Giraldoni as the Duke of Alba and the smaller fry Daniele and Sandoval sung by Alessandro Silvestri and Igalmer Frey. Everything was received with rapture. Revivals followed in quick succession - at Naples, Bergamo, Turin, and abroad at Barcelona and Malta and then it vanished, vanished completely, there was no further sign whatsoever of *Il duca d’Alba*. No one seems even to have remembered its existence, until, that is, Fernando Previtali discovered the battered full-score used by the conductor at that momentous *prima* on a market stall in Rome in the 1950’s.

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The structure of the opera holds few surprises. Act I, set in the Grand Place of Brussels consists of an Introduction, an entrance aria for the prima donna, a trio for Amelia, Daniele and the Duke, and a duet for the Duke and Marcello. Act II, set in the Brasserie of Daniele, is predominantly choral,

there is another aria for Amelia, a duet for Amelia and Marcello and ends with a *concertato*. Act III set within a room in the *Hotel de Ville* of Brussels with a view over the Grand Place opens with an aria for the Duke, followed by a duet for the Duke and Marcello, there is a trio for Marcello, the Duke and Sandoval, and it ends with a quartet and *concertato*, while Act IV is set in Amelia's Oratory with the big aria for Marcello, followed by a duet for Marcello and Amelia, after which the scene changes to the Port of Anvers; there is a chorus, a march, an arioso of farewell for the Duke. the attempted assassination, and the tragic ending with its wholly irresistible trio-finale and choral envoi. These last two acts including some music selected by Donizetti himself from his earlier operas but very extensive tailoring by other hands.

As a whole *Il duca d'Alba* conforms effortlessly to the spectacular recipe expected of grand opéra in the Paris of his day, except that the mandatory ballet - projected to follow the Introduction to Act I - is missing, the allotted pages in the autograph manuscript are blank (so it would seem that the music was never composed - rather than that the ballet music was re-appropriated for use elsewhere). In detail there are surprises: large sections of the *livret* by Scribe were never set to music, it would seem that the literary integrity proposed by the poet got short shift from the composer at the very start and that a predictable series of romantic Italian set-pieces with elaborate repetitions took its place even at the earliest stages of composition. Thus the progress of Donizetti towards a Parisian *modus vivendi* was less in evidence than might have been expected. True, the major arias in *Il duca d'Alba* are much plainer than usual, there is very little *fioriture*, and even in the Italian version recitatives tend to be declamatory (but few of these were written by Donizetti!). What vocal elaboration there is, is transparently the work of Salvi and/or his trio of experts. It is clear that Donizetti made considerable efforts to blunt those self-indulgent Italianate *cabalette* likely to upset French sensibility but, in *Il duca d'Alba*, Salvi simply put them back in the score, and with an almost indecent enthusiasm (and with the unhappy side-effect in our day that *cabalette* or *strette* actually composed by Donizetti have been eliminated by eager-beaver *revisori*)

A breakdown of the above items is as follows:

Act I

Coro d'Introduzione

'Espagne, Espagne...O mon pays! Je bois ^ toi!' (the Scribe original text)

'Espagna, Espagna...o suol natal, io brindo a te!' (Salvi)

[usually reduced to a fragment in modern performances]

Cavatina Amelia

'Au sein des mers et battu par l'orage' (Scribe)

'In seno al mar, preda all'atra tempesta'(Salvi)

[an elaborate vocal sequence supplied by Scribe and set by Donizetti, including a cantabile, a tempo-di-mezzo and a cabaletta 'Coll'audacia l'uom risponda' with a vast choral reprise divided by a staccato choral bridge-passage, this second section almost invariably cut in modern editions of the opera despite the fact that it is mostly original Donizetti]

Terzetto Duca /Amelia/Daniele

'Race faible et poltronne' (le Duc) (Scribe)

'Popol flacco, vil, abbietto' (Duca) (Salvi)

[Scribe envisages a quartet to follow this between the Duc/Henri/Daniel/Hélène but this has been eliminated in the Salvi score]

Duetto Duca/Marcello

'Punis mon audace!'(Henri) /'J'aime son audace' (le Duc) (Scribe)

'Un vil io non sono'(Marcello) /'Dei baldi ardimenti' (Duca) (Salvi)

[Donizetti has compacted the two main sections of Scribe's text into one cantabile but has set the stretta conceived by Scribe]

'Je suis libre et sur la terre'(Henri) /'Téméraire! Téméraire! Par le ciel, obéis moi' (le Duc) (Scribe)

'Di me stesso io son signore'(Marcello) /'Di perdono torna degno. Obbedir tu devi a me!. (Duca) (Salvi)

Act II

Coro

‘Liqueur traitresse’ (Scribe)

‘Liquor, che inganna’ (Salvi)

[This chorus, merely sketched in the autograph but completed by Salvi, is, with slight variations, repeated frequently in this act as in Scribe’s original]

Scena e terzettino della Ronda

[This is a fleeting trio, often cut, but unmistakably by Donizetti]

Aria Amelia

‘Ton ombre murmure, ô mon père’ (Scribe)

‘Ombra paterna, a me perdona’ (Salvi)

[Donizetti composed this touching *Romance* in accordance with Scribe’s text, that is, without a cabaletta but with a contrasting centre-section]

Duetto Amelia/Marcello

‘Oui lomgtemps en silence’ (Hélène/Henri) (Scribe)

‘Ah! si, l’ardente affanno. (Marcello) ‘Anch’io pietade eguale’ (Amelia) (Salvi)

[Scribe’s text proposes many quasi-unison passages between the lovers, these survive only in the jaunty *stretta* to this duet but whose music is improbably by Donizetti]

‘Noble martyr de la patrie’ (Hélène/Henri) (Scribe)

‘Del patrio suolo’ (unison Marcello/Amelia) (Salvi)]

Concertato: (Scena della congiura)

‘Les derniers feux meurent dans l’ombre’ (Trio et chœur) (Scribe)

‘E spenta omai l’estrema face’ (Terzetto con coro) (Salvi)

‘Des armes...Des armes...Nous le jurons’ (Tous) (Scribe)

‘Dell’armi! ah si... dell’armi...Noi lo giuriamo’ (Tutti) (Salvi)

[This oath-taking scene is the longest concerted scene of the opera, its principal themes are certainly by Donizetti - the Hymn to Liberty is derived from *Maria Stuarda* - but much elaborated, orchestrated, and augmented by other hands, it is followed by the arrival of the Duke’s soldiers and the arrest of the dissidents]

Act III

Aria Duca

‘Au sein de la puissance’ (le Duc) (Scribe)

‘Nei miei superbi gaudi’ (Duca) (Salvi)

[The beautiful introduction and recitative that precedes this important aria were not supplied by Donizetti; the vocal line of the cantabile ‘Nei miei superbi gaudi’ was derived by Donizetti from the cantabile of the aria of Zarete ‘Qui pel figlio una madre gridava’ from *Il paria* (1829) whose emotional substance presumably struck a chord when he was composing *Le Duc d’Albe* so many years later, Salvi apparently based the missing orchestration of this cantabile upon the score of *Il paria*. Scribe conceived this aria as a Romance in three strophe, the Salvi/Zanardini version of *Il duca d’Alba* has added an unconvincing cabaletta ‘Mi arridon vittorie’]

Duetto Duca/Marcello

‘Je venais pour braver sa rage’ (Henri) (Scribe)

‘Ne volea sfidar lo sdegno’ (Marcello) (Salvi)

[The Duke shows his son the letter from his dead mother]

*‘Toi. qui n’épargnes rien, si ta hache sanglante,
Rencontre Henri de Bruge, honneur de son pays,
Epargne au moins cette tête innocente,
C’est celle de ton fils!’* (Scribe)

*‘Tu, per cui nulla è sacro - se la fatal scure
Scontra Marcel di Bruge - onor del patrio suol,
Risparmia il capo suo - è quel del tuo figlio!’* (Salvi)

[Sections missing from this duet in the autograph were in fact present in the collection of Donizetti papers assembled by Charles Malherbe - now in the Bibliothèque Nationale - which may have been used by Salvi to complete his version of the music but the whole is much shorter than the Scribe original]

Terzetto Marcello/Duca/Sandoval

‘O sort fatal! O peine extrême’ (Henri)

‘Oh sorte ria! - fatal martoro!’ (Marcello)

[This trio of consternation on the part of Marcello, pity on the part of the Duke, and anger on that of Sandoval, has been amplified once again it would appear, possibly finding fragmentary endorsement in the Malherbe

collection]

Quartetto and Concertato /Tutti

‘Terrible lumière’ (Hélène, Daniel, Conjures)

‘Squarciato è il mistero!’ (Amelia, Daniele e i Congiurati)

[The vocal line of the autograph has been inordinately extended, maybe making use of sketched material found elsewhere in the Malherbe collection]

Act IV

Aria Marcello

‘Ange des cieux’ (Henri) (Scribe)

‘Angelo casto e bel’ (Marcello) (Salvi)

[‘Ange des cieux’ having been taken out of the unfinished score to become ‘Ange si pur’ in *La Favorite*, its replacement has been the ex-novo ‘Angelo casto e bel’, which together with its highly effective prelude and recitative, is one of the very few items in *Il duca d’Alba* that has no Donizettian source: its real author is not known]

Duetto Marcello/Amelia

‘Ecoute un instant ma prière’ (Henri) (Scribe)

‘Ascolta! Ascolta!’ (Marcello) (Salvi)

[The duet is present in the autograph manuscript but without recitative or orchestration]

Coro

‘O rive chérie/De l’Andalousie’ (Scribe)

‘Qual vaga fanciulla’ (Salvi)

[Not composed by Donizetti who has merely noted possible themes]

Arietta

‘Je pars! Adieu donc ma conquête’ (le Duc) (Scribe) [Originally:

‘Je pars adieu donc’]

‘Addio! addio, conquistata mia terra’ (Duca) (Salvi)

[Vocal line only composed by Donizetti]

Finale ultimo (Marcello/Amelia/Duca)

‘La gloire vous appelle...L’Espagne vous attend’ (Henri) (Scribe)

‘Con le tue labbra a florami’ (Marcello) (Salvi)

[The theme of the arioso for the dying Marcello was recycled by Donizetti from the arioso of the dying Ghino in Act II of *Pia de' Tolomei* (1837), but both he and Scribe intended an *aria finale* for the Duc to follow it, a larghetto 'Mon fils, Espoir de ma vieillesse' an aria not present in the Salvi version of the opera but the autograph music of which exists in outline in the Bibliothèque Nationale, seemingly detached from the score in the Casa Ricordi. As a compensation, the final imprecations of the Duca and the joy of the Flemish throng at his departure are more virulent and effective in *Il duca d'Alba* than in Scribe's original]

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Performance history maintains that it was under the baton of Fernando Previtali that the treasured score of *Il duca d'Alba* was brought back to life, complete, in a concert performance in that same city of Rome where it had been discovered on that famous market stall, on 12 January 1952. But this is far from correct. That rebirth version was already abridged, the opera was given in three acts, not four, its two opening acts with musical roots undoubtedly by Donizetti were compressed; there were important omissions, indeed it was cut to pieces, large sections were missing, repeats and strettas were absent almost throughout the opera, the coro 'Liquor, che inganna' for example, opening Act II (here called Act I), had been replaced by an orchestral interlude (composed by whom?), the dialogue leading to Amelia's 'Ombra paterna' was abbreviated into inexistence as was half of the finale to Act III (here called Act II), and so on and on. Worse, most of the more felicitous orchestral touches of the Salvi realisation were simply eliminated, together with the whole of the key aria 'Angelo casto e bel' (a piece encored at the 1882 prima) which was replaced crudely by 'Spirto gentil' ('Ange si pur') ie the tenor showpiece removed by Donizetti from the manuscript score for insertion into *La Favorite*. The whole, despite the musicality of Maestro Previtali turned out to be the worst kind of omen for the future of *Il duca d'Alba*. Indeed, it was this manipulated initial revival that encouraged the American conductor Thomas Schippers to make an even more radical reduction. At the Teatro Nuovo of Spoleto on 11 June 1959 was staged a further purported revival of the Donizetti/Salvi opera, again in three acts, the orchestra reduced throughout to "Donizettian" sound-bites (as though the Paris Opéra of his day would have been deficient in instrumentation), with preludes and recitatives

dropped (the Duke began his cantabile 'Nei miei superbi gaudi' of Act III - now Act II - without any introduction whatsoever), and pared-down codas. 'Spirto gentil' once again making an inappropriate appearance in place of 'Angelo casto e bel'. This 1959 cut-price version outlined the merest skeleton of the composer's musical plan, Mr Schippers, it would seem, had no taste for *grand-opéra* and tried to rewrite Donizetti's score as if it was a *melodramma romantico* such as he might have composed some ten years before his Paris adventure.

Alas it was this edition of *Il duca d'Alba* that began to circulate. There was a handful of staging's some of them, like that of Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie of Brussels in 1979, enhanced by the magnificent 1882 sets of Carlo Ferrario which had miraculously survived two wars in storage in Italy, replete with a wonderful depiction of the Grand Place in Brussels (big applause) and with the singers in late-nineteenth-century costumes blighted by inauthentic music and travestied action (but with 'Angelo casto e bel').

Now and then in the next years there were revivals by organisations unhappy with the wholesale betrayal of the music of this beautiful opera and where attempts were made - not entirely consistently - to correct the situation, like that at New York, for example, under the baton of Eve Queler in 1985 where there were cuts galore but also the restitution of many of the more characterful sections of the Salvi score. The situation was not to be rectified completely until there was a further attempt, once more at the Teatro Nuovo in Spoleto (Festival dei Due Mondi) on 1 July 1992, this time under the baton of Alberto Maria Giuri, when the Donizetti/Salvi *Il duca d'Alba* finally made an appearance in an edition at last musically worthy of its original dimensions and dramatic character, far more complete now, the Duca sung by Alan Titus, Marcello by César Hernández, Amelia by Michaela Sburati, Sandoval by Marco Pauluzzo and Carlo by Dennis Petersen. More than forty years in fact after Previtali's momentous discovery, much of Giovannina Lucca's posthumous enterprise finally reached modern ears.

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There is a postscript. The opera begs several questions. Was its abandonment wholly without regret on the part of Donizetti? Both he and Verdi were failed fathers, maybe *Le Duc d'Albe* was simply too painful to continue? Its theme of fatherhood too near the bone for the composer left without wife, three dead children, rootless, and pessimistic about his future?

But Donizetti made something of a corner in redemption: in the same way that *Lucrezia Borgia* is redeemed by love for her incestuous (and hostile) son Gennaro, the Duke of Alba is redeemed by love for his illegitimate (and hostile) son Henri/Marcello. Maybe he hoped for redemption himself with this theme? The demise of his unfortunate offspring purged by the hope of the opera's own triumphant musical outcome?

Synopsis

One man and two events precede the opera, which is set in Brussels and Anvers in 1573. The man is the patriot Count of Egmont (1522-1568) [cfr Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven etc] and the first of the events is his decapitation in the Grand Place of Brussels by the famous despotic Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba (1508-1582). This execution has taken place the evening before the action of the opera opens (historically it took place five years before). The second event is less factual: it is the receipt by the Duke of a letter from a former mistress at the point of death informing him that he is the father of a hitherto unknown son, and demanding clemency for this youthful firebrand of the Flemish Résistance to Spanish domination.

Act I With the complicity of Daniele, a dissident innkeeper, Amelia d'Egmont visits the very spot on which her father lost his head; taunted into singing a song in honour of the hated Duke she invokes her fellow citizens into defiance, provoking an uproar which is quelled only by the arrival of the Duke himself. A young man bursts in, full of revolutionary insults paying no attention whatsoever to the Governor standing quietly by. He is the fiancé of Amelia. But the tyrannical Governor fails to react; to the astonishment of his soldiers he merely sends the others away and questions the young man, he already knows the answers, he has recognised the features of this hot-headed youth, it is his son. The Duke invites him to join the Spanish soldiers, but Marcello refuses indignantly, amazed of course at the nature of the invitation. Once again the Duke is restrained, simply warning him to keep away from the rebels but Marcello defies him to the last and turns away to enter Daniele's tavern.

Act II Amelia who has dedicated herself to vengeance for her father is joined by Marcello, for whose safety she prays for her father's protection - and a company of patriots under the leadership of Daniele; together they swear a solemn Oath to free their country from the Spanish yoke but this has hardly been accomplished when Spanish soldiers burst in and arrest them all - with the exception of Marcello. When he asks why he has not been arrested with the others, Sandoval replies that the "*Duke does not wish it*". The boy almost pleads to be arrested but Sandoval replies coldly "*You are free!*" To the horror of the young man, his fiancée, Daniele, and his friends are led away all eyeing him with the utmost suspicion.

Act III In his study overlooking the Grand Place the Duke re-reads the letter from his former mistress, with regret for his past but overjoyed to recover a son he never knew existed. Told that the conspirators are being prepared for execution he asks that Marcello

should be sent to him immediately.

Marcello, still appalled to be singled-out for clemency is shown into the study with its vast windows and is completely devastated when the Duke hands him a miniature of his dead mother, and then the letter itself. Overwhelmed, horrified, Marcello can only cry out that he has lost all his friends and the love of his life. The Duke, while moved at the distress of his son, is relentless; they hear the sound of a *De profundis*, the conspirators are being led in procession to the scaffold mounted in the Square outside, Amelia at their head. Marcello pleads for them, the Duke says he can do nothing for rebels against his King but a father can do everything for a son: all he has to do is to acknowledge the Duke as his father. As Amelia sets foot on the scaffold in desperation Marcello falls at the feet of his implacable genitor crying "*Father! father! pity!*" With a sign the Duke calls-off the execution. Brought before the appalling Governor Amelia and her friends treat Marcello with contempt.

Act IV Marcello goes to try to find Amelia in the chapel where she prays daily for her dead parent, she is almost persuaded of his innocence but when she hears that the Duke of Alba is his father they separate with mutual malediction.

At the port of Anvers the Governor hands over his powers to a replacement, he is returning to Spain taking Marcello with him. A procession of girls brings flowers as a last tribute to the Duke but his son keeps an eye on Amelia who is among them. Hidden in the flowers is a dagger, when Marcello sees her approach and raise the dagger to strike the Duke he pushes himself between them and she stabs Marcello instead. The Duke cries "*What have you done?*" He replies "*I was doing my duty: she was avenging her father, I was defending mine!*" As Marcello dies, with Amelia weeping over him, the Duke curses the land he has governed amid the cries of joy of the populace at his departure.