



# Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance (AMS Studies in Music)

*Hilary Poriss*

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## **Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance (AMS Studies in Music)**

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This study seeks to explore the role and significance of aria insertion, the practice that allowed singers to introduce music of their own choice into productions of Italian operas. Each chapter investigates the art of aria insertion during the nineteenth century from varying perspectives, beginning with an overview of the changing fortunes of the practice, followed by explorations of individual prima donnas and their relationship with particular insertion arias: Carolina Ungher's difficulties in finding a "perfect" aria to introduce into Donizetti's *Marino Faliero*; Guiditta Pasta's performance of an aria from Pacini's *Niobe* in a variety of operas, and the subsequent fortunes of that particular aria; Maria Malibran's interpolation of Vaccai's final scene from *Giulietta e Romeo* in place of Bellini's original setting in his *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*; and Adelina Patti's "mini-concerts" in the lesson scene of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

The final chapter provides a treatment of a short story, "Memoir of a Song," narrated by none other than an insertion aria itself, and the volume concludes with an appendix containing the first modern edition of this short story, a narrative that has lain utterly forgotten since its publication in 1849. This book covers a wide variety of material that will be of interest to opera scholars and opera lovers alike, touching on the fluidity of the operatic work, on the reception of the singers, and on the shifting and hardening aesthetics of music criticism through the period.

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