

Life and Work of Pauline Viardot Garcia, vol. I

Life and Work of Pauline Viardot Garcia, vol. I:
The Years of Fame 1836-1863

Second Edition

By

Barbara Kendall-Davies

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Life and Work of Pauline Viardot Garcia, vol. I:
The Years of Fame 1836-1863 Second Edition,
by Barbara Kendall-Davies

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2013 by Barbara Kendall-Davies

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-4736-4, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4736-0

To Chris Davies, My beloved husband and fellow traveller.



Maria Malibran (left)
Pauline Viardot Garcia as Amina in La Sonnambula (right)



Maria Callas as Amina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	x
Acknowledgements	xviii
Preface	xx
Foreword	xxiii
Prologue.....	xxiv
Chapter One..... Antecedents	1
Chapter Two	15
First Steps	
Chapter Three	27
On Tour	
Chapter Four.....	36
Seeds of Friendship	
Chapter Five	53
Paris, Alfred de Musset	
Chapter Six	71
Clara Wieck	
Chapter Seven.....	83
Opera Debut, London	
Chapter Eight.....	104
Opera Debut Paris, Louis Viardot, Marriage	

Chapter Nine.....	121
Italian Honeymoon, No Opera Engagements	
Chapter Ten	148
England, Rivalry with Grisi	
Chapter Eleven	171
Holidays at Boulogne sur mer and Nohant	
Chapter Twelve	191
Brussels, Spain, <i>Norma</i> , <i>Consuelo</i>	
Chapter Thirteen.....	210
George Sand, Chopin, Maurice Sand	
Chapter Fourteen	227
Russian Debut, Meeting with Turgenev	
Chapter Fifteen	247
Courtavenel	
Chapter Sixteen	269
Royal Tour	
Chapter Seventeen	292
Berlin	
Chapter Eighteen	308
Meyerbeer, Revolution, Covent Garden	
Chapter Nineteen	339
<i>Les Huguenots</i> ; Indisposition of Mario, Roger to the Rescue!	
Chapter Twenty	355
<i>Le Prophète</i>	
Chapter Twenty-One	376
Gounod and “A Month in the country”	
Chapter Twenty-Two.....	403
Infatuation, Premiere of <i>Sapho</i> , Coup d’état, Danger	

Chapter Twenty-Three.....	426
Duns Castle, Quarrel with Gounod	
Chapter Twenty-Four	446
Return to Russia	
Chapter Twenty-Five	466
British Premiere of <i>Il Trovatore</i> , Birth of Paul Viardot	
Chapter Twenty-Six.....	495
Warsaw, Return of Turgenev, Death of Ary Scheffer	
Chapter Twenty-Seven	511
English Tour, Budapest, Visit to Liszt in Weimar	
Chapter Twenty-Eight	525
British Premiere of <i>Macbeth</i>	
Chapter Twenty-Nine	534
Berlioz and <i>Orfeo</i>	
Chapter Thirty	556
<i>Fidelio</i>	
Chapter Thirty-One	564
Wagner	
Chapter Thirty-Two.....	575
Farewell to France	
Appendix: The Accompanying CD	588
List of Pauline Viardot's Roles	593
Bibliography	594

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FRONTISPIECE

Maria Malibran, Pauline Viardot Garcia as Amina in La Sonnambula, Maria Callas as Amina.

PROLOGUE

Bellini welcoming Maria Malibran to the Elysian Fields

King Frederick William III of Prussia BKD

The soprano, Clara Novello

The violinist, Charles de Bériot, with the bust he sculpted of Malibran ATVM

Joaquina Garcia, the mother of Maria Malibran and Pauline Viardot ATVM

Portrait of Maria Malibran at Bougival ATVM

Malibran as Amina BKD

CHAPTER ONE

Pauline Garcia, the Gallerie de la Gazette Musicale

The Marquis de Lafayette

The German soprano, Henrietta Sontag

The tenor and teacher, Manuel Rodrigo Garcia ATVM

The baritone and teacher, Manuel Patricio Garcia ATVM

The Italian composer, Gioacchino Rossini BKD

CHAPTER TWO

Pauline Garcia, self portrait

Franz Liszt

A diligence outside a Continental inn BKD

The home of Malibran and de Bériot at Ixelles ATVM

CHAPTER THREE

The German composer, Robert Schumann

Clara Wieck MEPL

Fanny Hensel Google

The Gewandhaus at Leipzig

CHAPTER FOUR

View of Wiesbaden BKD

Festung Hohen Salzburg BKD

Prince Archbishop Wolf-Dietrich von Raitenau Google

St. Sebastian's Church, Salzburg BKD

Mausoleum of Wolf-Dietrich BKD

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
A room in Mozart's birthplace BKD
Countess Marie d'Agoult
A fashionable evening toilette

CHAPTER FIVE

Alfred de Musset, former lover of George Sand
Caroline Jaubert, eminent society hostess Google
George Sand smoking a cigar MEPL
Ajasson de Grandsagne, former lover of George Sand
The Polish pianist, Frederick Chopin, lover of George Sand MEPL
The monastery of Valdemossa where Chopin and Sand spent a winter together BKD
The Irish pianist, George Alexander Osborne
The composer, Hector Berlioz
Rachel as Roxanne BKD
A fashionable Parisian salon

CHAPTER SIX

View of Bougival BKD
Malmaison
The Empress Josephine
The auditorium of Her Majesty's Theatre in London
The Italian soprano, Giulia Grisi

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pauline Garcia as Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*
Giovanni Battista Rubini in the role of Otello
The conductor, Michael Costa BKD
The Italian tenor, Giovanni Mario di Candia BKD
The bass Luigi Lablache
The Italian baritone, Antonio Tamburini
The Austrian dancer, Fanny Elssler
Lady Blessington, The Wallace Collection
Lady Blessington's salon
Queen Victoria as a young woman
Lord Melbourne
Backstage chaos MEPL
The exterior of Her Majesty's Theatre BKD

CHAPTER EIGHT

Louis Viardot ATVM
Choristers learning their parts
George Sand
Pauline at the age of 19 by Ary Scheffer, courtesy of Dordrecht Museum
Wedding cartoons, private collection

CHAPTER NINE

Charles Gounod drawn by Ingres
 King Louis Philippe BKD
 The painter, Ary Scheffer MEPL
 Ary Scheffer painting in his studio BKD
 Bartolomeo Merrelli
 The interior of the opera house of La Scala, Milan
 Exterior of Milan Cathedral Google
 The Dome Church, Les Invalides, Paris, Google
 The soprano, Laure Cinti Damoreau
 The mezzo, Eugénie Garcia

CHAPTER TEN

The writer and politician, Richard Monckton Milnes
 A dressing room MEPL
 Giulia Grisi as Norma
 Franz Liszt
 The conductor, Julius Benedict BKD
 A sketch of Pauline drawn by Alfred de Musset ATVM
 A cartoon lampooning Berlioz's opera *Benvenuto Cellini*
 Giovanni Battista Rubini,
 Pauline in the role of Tancredi
 Pauline and Persiani in *Tancredi* sketched by Pauline ATVM

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A gathering of friends at Nohant ATVM
 The Viardots' bedroom at Nohant BKD
 Chopin teaching Pauline ATVM
 George Sand's bedroom at Nohant BKD
 The garden front of Nohant BKD
 A front wing of Nohant BKD
 Maurice Sand as a youth ATVM
 Pauline's sketch of Chopin ATVM
 Nohant Church en fete BKD

CHAPTER TWELVE

Front cover of the first edition of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*
 Brussels Cathedral Google
 A modern edition of Consuelo Google
 Moorish architecture Google
 A view of the Alhambra Google
 A courtyard in the Alhambra Google
 A convent in Cordoba Google
 Pauline at the piano ATVM
 Pauline as Norma ATVM

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Eugene Delacroix
Marie Aurore de Saxe, George Sand's grandmother
Le Maréchal de Saxe, George Sand's great grandfather
A room at Nohant
Frederick Chopin by Delacroix
Solange Sand as an adult
A sketch of the front of Nohant
The dining room at Nohant BKD
A portrait of Pauline by Neff ATVM

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Bolshoi Theatre, St. Petersburg
The composer Glinka at the piano in a Russian salon
Ivan Turgenev ATVM
Pauline Viardot
Pauline as Rosina
Giovanni Battista Rubini in costume, Paris Opera Bibliothèque

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Kärntnerthor Theater in Vienna Google
An advert for the sale of Courtavenel ATVM
A letter to Turgenev with sketches by Pauline ATVM

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Crown Prince William and Crown Princess Augusta of Prussia MEPL
Giacomo Meyerbeer
Joseph Aloys Tichatschek
Jenny Lind
Queen Victoria
Along the Rhine Google
Unveiling Beethoven's statue
Schloss Brühl
The Hall of Guards
Schloss Stolzenfels, Rhineland
Courtavenel with its bridge ATVM

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Opera House, Berlin BKD
The Royal Palace in Berlin BKD
Unter den Linden BKD
Ivan Turgenev with beard ATVM
Pauline as Valentine in *Les Huguenots* ILN
An article about Robert Schumann's opera
Sans Souci at Potsdam BKD
The New Palace at Potsdam BKD

A room in Sans Souci BKD
 A scene from *Robert le Diable*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The tenor Gustave Roger
 Viardot and Marini in *Les Huguenots* ILN
 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Covent Garden ILN
 Cliffden Villas, the house the Viardots rented in 1848/9 BKD
 The bass, Ignazio Marini
 Benjamin Lumley of Her Majesty's Theatre BKD
 Clairville, Jenny Lind's home at the Boltons BKD
 Finale, Act V *Les Huguenots*
 Viardot and Alboni in *Les Huguenots*
 Pauline's self portrait ATVM
 The soprano, Fanny Persiani

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A Parisian scene BKD
 Jenny Lind in the *Daughter of the Regiment* BKD
 Richard Wagner
 Buckingham Palace from St. James's Park
 A cartoon of Charles Hallé
 Sheet music for La Sonnambula
 William Hay of Duns Castle, courtesy of Mr. Alexander Hay
 Pauline by Maurice Sand ATVM
 The front façade of Duns Castle BKD
 A side view of Birmingham Town Hall BKD
 A newspaper picture of Pauline BKD
 Gustave Roger singing Pauline's patriotic song, *Pour la Patrie*

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Paris Opera
 The Coronation scene, *Le Prophète*, ILN
 The conflagration in *Le Prophète* ILN
 Pauline in the costume of the mendicante ATVM
 The salon at Nohant BKD
 Set design for London production of *Le Prophète*
 The Irish soprano, Catherine Hayes, courtesy Basil Walsh
 The skaters in *Le Prophète* ATVM
 Charles Santley
 Antonia di Mendi ATVM
 Prince Louis Napoleon
 A terminally ill Chopin

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Charles Gounod by Pauline ATVM

Turgenev by Pauline ATVM

Spasskoye ATVM

Berthe Viardot ATVM

The execution scene in *La Juive* ILN

A wing of Courtavenel by Maurice Sand ATVM

Pelagaya Turgenev, known as Paulinette ATVM

Pauline's sketch of herself as Zerlina ATVM

A morning rehearsal

Pauline as Fides in the costume of a townswoman

A miniature of Pauline ATVM

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Pauline as Sapho ILN

The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace

Marietta Alboni as Tancredi

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Entrance lodge at Duns Castle BKD

Duns Castle BKD

The drawing room at Duns Castle BKD

The dining room at Duns Castle BKD

The novelist Charles Dickens as a young man

Charles Dickens' house at Devonshire Terrace

Anna Zimmerman

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Pauline in 1853

Conviviality in Russia after a hunt

Pauline's song *Le Chêne et le Roseau*

Hanover Square Concert Rooms, London BKD

The Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden

The graveyard scene from *Don Giovanni* at Covent Garden

The tenor John Sims Reeves

Hector Berlioz

The Irish actress, Harriet Smithson

A house in Harley Street where Berlioz lodged BKD

Countess Elizabeth Lambert, intimate friend of Turgenev ATVM

The front entrance of Ary Scheffer's house BKD

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Italian composer, Giuseppe Verdi

Pauline as Azucena

Scene from *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden ILN

Lamphooning operatic conspirators

The State Visit of Emperor Napoleon III and his wife ILN
 Buckingham Palace Reception, ILN
 The soprano, Angiolina Bosio ILN
 The mezzo, Charlotte Dolby Google
 The soprano, Clara Novello
 The conductor and composer, William Sterndale Bennett
 The Irish baritone and composer, Michael Balfe
 Malibran as the Maid of Artois, courtesy of Basil Walsh
 Malibran in a scene from the *Maid of Artois* by Balfe BKD
 Bourton House, Bourton-on-the Hill, home of Sir James Buller East BKD

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

A box at the opera with foreign royalty
 Prince Frederick William of Prussia BKD
 Princess Victoria, Princess Royal of Great Britain
 The wedding of Vicky and Fritz in 1858
 King Frederick William IV of Prussia
 Queen Elisabeth of Prussia
 The conductor, Julius Rietz ATVM
 A photograph of Pauline Google
 Crown Princess Augusta Google
 The palace in Potsdam BKD

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

A photograph of Ivan Turgenev ATVM
 The Russian anarchist, Alexandre Herzen ATVM
 Drury Lane Theatre
 Frederick Gye, manager of Covent Garden theatre
 The impresario, Colonel Mapleson
 A cartoon of Sims Reeves reluctant to leave his bed
 The Joachim Quartet
 Franz Liszt
 Princess Caroline von Sayn Wittgenstein
 The Theatre at Weimar with statues of Goethe and Schiller
 The National Theatre, Budapest
 The Theatre Royal, Newcastle

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Mario
 An Irish form of transport
 A slice of Irish life
 The Italian baritone, Francesco Graziani
 Pauline Viardot
 Mario as Nemorino
 A letter from Julius Rietz to Pauline, ATVM

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Pauline as Orféo ATVM

The painting *Les Bergères d'Arcadie* by Poussin Google

Louis Viardot ATVM

A fashionable crowd

The theatre Baden Baden opened 1862 BKD

The Kurhaus and Casino in Baden Baden BKD

The Lichtenthaler Allee in Baden Baden BKD

Clara Schumann

Richard Wagner

Tichatschek as Tannhäuser

CHAPTER THIRTY

A photograph of Charles Gounod

Claudie Viardot as a young woman ATVM

Malibran as Fidelio BKD

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Franz Liszt

A scene from *Die Meistersinger* BKD

The composer, Georges Bizet

Pauline playing her Cavaillé-Coll organ ATVM

The auditorium of the Paris Conservatoire

Wagner's song *Les Deux Grenadiers*

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

The Trojans, Act One, Troy

The ballroom, Dudley House, Park Lane BKD

Pauline at home Google

View of Baden Baden Google

Pauline as Orféo ATVM

Pauline as Alceste Google

Maurice Sand ATVM

A concert at Villa Viardot, Baden Baden

NB Where possible accreditation for illustrations is given.

Abbreviations

ATVM Amis d'Ivan Tourguéniev, Pauline Viardot et Maria Malibran

MEPL Mary Evans Picture Library

ILN Illustrated London News

BKD Barbara Kendall Davies

Google Google Images

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people in the research and writing of this book, namely Alexandre Zviguilsky, the Turgenev scholar, who first encouraged me to write about Pauline Viardot and published my monograph about her English career in French in the Cahier No. 22, 1998, of the Amis d'Ivan Tourguéniev, Pauline Viardot et Maria Malibran; the late April Fitzlyon, author of the *Price of Genius*, the first English biography of Viardot; Professor Patrick Waddington for his chronology of Viardot songs, for permission to use his unpublished doctoral thesis *Courtavenel, The History of an Artist's Nest and its Role in the Life of Turgenev*; for supplying the drawing, *Night-time ablutions at Courtavenel*, a portrait of Pauline Viardot and a sketch of Turgenev by Viardot; Carole Russell Law, founder of the Malibran Society, Los Angeles; Joan Boytim of the Voice Studio, Pennsylvania, and Madame Véronique Ayroles of the Musée de la Vie Romantique, Paris, all of whom supplied me with Viardot songs; Professor Nicolas Zekulin of Calgary University for his encouragement and advice; Dr. Robert Ignatius Letellier, the Meyerbeer scholar, who was instrumental in getting this book published; Dr. Célines Peslerbes who allowed me to read her unpublished thesis, *La Musique française à Londres sous la régence de la reine Victoria Ière*, Vols. I and II; the music critic Andrew Porter for information on Viardot's preparation for the role of Lady Macbeth; Brian Thompson, the author of a *Monkey Among Crocodiles*, for sharing his views on the romantic life of Charles Gounod; my original editor, Dr. Andy Necessian; the librarian Tom Gilmor, for his patience and courtesy in leading me through the labyrinth of the Mary Evans Picture Library; Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Hay of Duns Castle, Scotland, for their hospitality and for supplying me with the picture of William Hay; my late singing teachers, Mary Parsons and Professor Walter Gruner of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, both of whom passed on valuable information about the Garcia family; Madame Mohini Singh, for sharing her wide knowledge of French language and culture with me; the mezzo soprano Jean Hornbuckle, and Patricia Cole Turner, who read early drafts of the work; the mezzo soprano, Hazel Wood, Chairman of the Association of Teachers of Singing, who invited me to talk about Viardot and sing her songs at their Conference in 2001, before the first volume was published; my dear friend and pianist, Jillian Skerry

who has been a tower of strength and drove me around France in search of Pauline Viardot, she also recorded the CD of Viardot songs with me which accompany the book; my husband, Christopher Davies, for his knowledge of singing and vocal repertoire and his never failing support; my son, Giles Davies, who prepared some of the illustrations, and wrote the preface for the revised edition; my nephew, Steven Gonzales Lloyd, Jason Gerhard, Ray Richiardi; Ian Hackett and Alexandra Vella who all helped me to understand the mysteries of the computer; and the authors Harold Bruder in New York and Basil Walsh in Florida who sent me books and gave me valuable advice which assisted me in the revision of this volume. I am also grateful to my sister, Mary Kendall, and my many friends and colleagues who encouraged me at all times.

PREFACE

BY GILES DAVIES

The first volume of the *Life and Work of Pauline Viardot Garcia* by Barbara Kendall-Davies has been extensively revised by the author for the paperback edition. As with Volume II, *The Years of Grace*, iconography is crucial to this work and several transparencies from the Mary Evans Picture Library were specifically prepared for the initial publication in 2003. Other images are from the author's own collection, as well as that of the Amis d'Ivan Tourguéniev, Pauline Viardot et Maria Malibran.

Viardot Garcia's connection with England, particularly London, is central to the first volume, alongside key figures in the operatic and musical worlds such as Liszt, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Gounod and Wagner. Numerous contemporary quotes from the theatre of the time greatly add to our understanding of Viardot Garcia's stage roles and travels, and her close friendships with the writers Turgenev and George Sand, alongside Robert and Clara Schumann. The memory of her sister, Maria Malibran, and the importance of her eminent musical family, the Garcias, cannot be over estimated. Many opera stars of the era appear here such as Giulia Grisi, Giovanni Battista Rubini, Luigi Lablache, and English singers such as Martha Williams, Charlotte Dolby, Henry Phillips and John Sims Reeves. The celebrated Swedish soprano, Jenny Lind, who also had many admirers, features in the London musical scene of the 1840s.

From the revolutionary composer, Hector Berlioz, we hear of the 'claqueurs' in theatres, and their fine art of public manipulation, much like our tabloid newspapers today. Viardot Garcia's biography includes an impressive array of major personalities, all of whom attested to her "genius". These included the poet and critic Alfred de Musset, who launched her career, Franz Liszt, her piano teacher, who wrote a glowing monograph of her in 1859, Hector Berlioz, who called her the finest singer of the day, and Adolphe Adam, who maintained that she wrote songs that they all would have been proud to have written. Her musical skills were such that she transcribed Berlioz's full score of *Les Troyens* for piano. Meyerbeer specifically wrote the role of Fidès in *Le Prophète* for her, which brought her international acclaim.

Rossini was a family friend and the first five operas in which Viardot Garcia sang from the time of her London début in 1839 were all by him. She dazzled as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Covent Garden, although she was criticized for over embellishing her 'coloratura'. She was acclaimed in performances of Gounod's first opera, *Sapho*, in which she sang the title role in Paris and London, although both music and libretto came in for some harsh criticism. For Giuseppe Verdi she created the roles of Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* in their British premieres and was the model for Dalilah in Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalilah*.

Her success in Russia in 1843 was phenomenal. The young writer, Ivan Turgenev, saw her in St. Petersburg as Rosina and from that time, devoted his life to her, though she was married to the writer and art historian, Louis Viardot, for forty years. The two men became good friends and literary collaborators but the unique relationship between Turgenev and Viardot Garcia remains enigmatic to this day.

The singer had a great gift for friendship and numbered among her closest friends, the French woman writer, George Sand, the Polish pianist, Frederick Chopin, the German conductor, Julius Rietz, and the painter, Ary Scheffer. In 1842, Sand took Viardot Garcia as the model for the heroine of her novel *Consuelo*. Chopin was very ill when he was in London in 1848 but he played for Viardot Garcia in a concert at Covent Garden, accompanying her in her vocal arrangements of two of his Mazurkas, and a critic wrote: "Mme. Viardot was rapturously encored in Handel's *Lascia ch'io pianga* from *Rinaldo*, beautifully scored by Meyerbeer expressly for her, and in one (sic) of Chopin's quaint pianoforte Mazurkas, arranged by herself for the voice, a marvellous exhibition of skill in fioriture".

She first met Wagner in Paris in 1839 and their paths crossed throughout their lives. In 1861, in an effort to assist him in bringing *Tristan und Isolde* to the stage, she arranged an audition at her house to which she invited a patron of the arts, Madame Marie Kalergis, in the hope that she would make a large donation. Viardot Garcia sight-read the role of Isolde in the second act and Wagner sang that of Tristan. In a letter to the soprano Teresa Tietjens, who was resisting learning Isolde because she considered it impossible to sing, he recalled how 'Mme. Viardot surprised me by reading everything from the sheet, so it proved it could be sung'.

In a story that takes us from France to England, Spain, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Russia, Hungary, Austria and Bohemia, the book places social history, political upheavals and historical context against the dramas of an

artistic life and will appeal in particular to singers, opera lovers, musicians, musicologists and social historians.

As Viardot Garcia was a gifted composer a CD of six of her songs in French and German is included with the publication.

The author, who enjoyed a long and highly active career in the performing arts as an opera and concert singer, designer, artistic director, teacher, adjudicator and now broadcaster, sings the songs, accompanied by her long time accompanist, Jillian Skerry.

FOREWORD

It is ten years since the first Viardot volume, *The Years of Fame*, appeared in hardback and it was quickly followed by a revised second edition, also in hardback. I have now taken the opportunity to extensively revise the 2004 version for the paperback edition and have added more illustrations than in the original version. The CD of six of Viardot's song compositions is also included.

PROLOGUE

The famous, wealthy, beautiful, charismatic, opera singer, Maria Malibran, the elder sister of Pauline Garcia, was dead, the victim of a riding accident at the age of twenty eight, mourned not only by her husband and family, but by a devoted public across the whole of Europe.

During May and June, 1836, she had been singing in London, but in July she visited the Surrey home of her friend, Lord Lennox. She was pregnant and her second husband, the young Belgian violinist, Charles de Bériot, had forbidden her to ride, but when a group of friends asked her to join them, she was too tempted to refuse. Although she was a fine horsewoman, her borrowed mount was mettlesome, and difficult to control. Suddenly he took to his heels, she was unseated, her foot caught in a stirrup and she was dragged several hundred yards before the horse was finally brought to a halt by one of her companions. Badly shocked and bruised, particularly about the face and head, she swore her friends to secrecy. Back at home, she told Charles that she had fallen down stairs, and he believed her. Despite her injuries, she insisted on fulfilling all her engagements during the next few weeks, performing roles that would have taxed a woman in the best of health.

When their engagements in London ended, the de Bériots returned to their home at Ixelles near Brussels. As Maria's bruises were now fading, her mother Joaquina Garcia and fifteen year old Pauline, who lived with her and Charles, were unaware of how badly she had been hurt. She could not deceive herself, however, and realized that there was something terribly wrong. The only person she confided in was Pauline, who was sworn to secrecy. Maria was a volatile creature and had always experienced sudden mood swings but now her behaviour became totally unpredictable. Everyone blamed this on the effects of pregnancy, not realizing the extent of the devastating internal injuries she had so recently sustained.

Pauline Garcia was also a talented musician, whose ambition was to become a concert pianist. On the 14th August, at Liege, she gave her first public concert with Maria, and de Bériot, who was well known in the region, having first performed there in 1825. Maria was extremely proud of Pauline, who accompanied her at the piano, and played a duet with Charles. The King of Prussia, Frederick William III, was on holiday at Aix la Chapelle (Aachen), 40 km from Liege, and he requested Maria,

Pauline and de Bériot to give a concert, and for Maria to perform the role of Amina in two performances of *'La Sonnambula'*. Maria was treated like royalty herself, as the King sent the band of the Royal Guard to greet her arrival.

The de Bériots had a country house at Roissy-en-Brie in France, near Pontoise, which they had intended to visit, but leaving Aix, they made a detour in order to give a concert on August 27th in Lille in northern France. This had been announced in the *'L'Echo du Nord'* on the 20th, and it was more convenient to spend a couple of days resting at Ixelles before setting out for Lille.

The concert took place at the Académie Royale de Musique, and despite Maria's indisposition was an enormous success. Of course no one knew that this would be the last time she would appear in France, and indeed, she sang the Cavatina from *'Ines de Castro'* by Persiani, and the closing scene of *'La Sonnambula'*, with all her customary élan and brilliance, and Pauline and de Bériot played the duet he had composed on themes from the same opera. The second part of the concert began with the overture *'Les Francs Juges'* by Berlioz, and ended with French romances sung by Maria. At the finale of such a delightful evening of music, no one could possibly have suspected that her career was drawing to its premature close.

At the beginning of September, the de Bériots were at last able to go to Roissy, where they enjoyed a few days of well earned rest, then, on September 14th, they left for England where they were engaged to take part in a music festival in the northern city of Manchester. Another singer who had been engaged for the festival was the eighteen year old soprano, Clara Novello, a member of the famous publishing family, who was chaperoned by her mother. Mrs. Novello had not seen Maria for a while and was shocked by her appearance; she looked so dreadfully ill that the older woman insisted that she should see a doctor. His diagnosis was that Maria had suffered internal injury, but he couldn't confirm if the baby was still alive, and asked for a second opinion.

In the meantime, Maria carried on with her concerts, in one of which she sang a duet with Mme Caradori-Allen which was encored, but she turned to the conductor, Sir George Smart, and whispered: "If I sing again it will kill me," thoroughly alarmed, Sir George exclaimed: "then dear madame, please do not". Assured that she could not disappoint her audience, he took up his baton, and the orchestra began the opening bars of the duet, but all her strength had finally left her, and she collapsed.

Charles was backstage, waiting to play his next solo, unaware that his unconscious wife was being carried out of the hall. Never was the term

‘the show must go on’ more fully realized, and the performance continued as Maria was taken to the Mosley Arms Hotel where she and her husband were staying. Mrs. Novello accompanied her and sent for the doctor, who arrived with a colleague. As the singer had no maid with her, the landlady acted as nurse. The medical men examined the patient and ascertained that the baby was dead, and that, in their considered opinion, the young mother was beyond help. She died at five minutes to midnight, on the 23rd September, without re-gaining consciousness.

Charles de Bériot’s reaction to his wife’s death was desperate; driven almost mad with shock and grief, he went completely to pieces. The doctors, concerned for his state of mind, advised him to go home immediately, and within a very short time, he was well clear of Manchester, leaving the authorities to make plans for the funeral. This precipitous behaviour, when it became known, caused a great deal of gossip in the city; some people declared that it showed a guilty conscience, particularly as he had left orders that no death mask was to be made, and rumours spread that Charles had poisoned Maria for her fortune.

When her mother learned what had happened, she realized that despite her grief, she would have to go to England to sort out the mess that Charles had left behind. His sister agreed to look after his three year old son and the household, and Joaquina prepared for the long journey, only pausing to write a letter informing her son, Manuel Garcia, who lived in Paris, of his sister’s death.

Once the news became public, there was a palpable outpouring of grief by Maria’s loyal admirers. Everyone had taken this rare spirit to their hearts; she had charmed them, made them laugh or weep with equal skill, excited them, uplifted them, transported them, and they worshipped her. Even the people who knew nothing about opera knew about Mme Malibran, of her concern for the poor, and her generous charitable gifts.

By the time Joaquina Garcia arrived in Manchester, Maria’s funeral had already taken place. The weather had been dismal and wet, but it had not deterred several thousand people from lining the streets to see the sad cortege pass on its way to the cemetery. The burial took place, and the authorities considered that they had done their best for Maria. When Joaquina told them that she desired to take her daughter’s body back to Belgium, they were extremely reluctant to give permission for an exhumation, and she had a difficult time trying to persuade them. At last her persistence paid off and she was allowed to take Maria to her last resting place in the cemetery of Laeken near Brussels. Charles, as a way of assuaging his grief, carved a marble bust of his young wife with a laurel wreath on her head. This was placed on a plinth, at the base of which sat

an angel playing a lyre, within a monument decorated with classical motifs – his last gift to the remarkable woman he had loved.



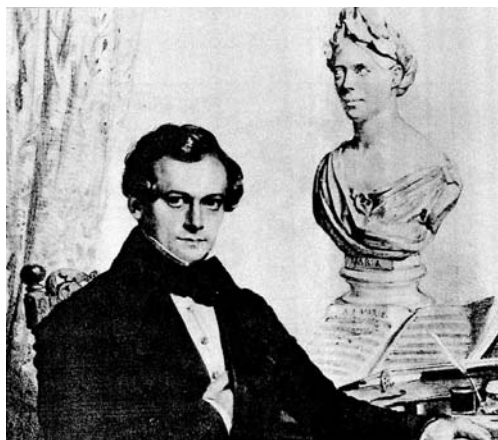
Bellini welcoming Maria Malibran to the Elysian Fields



King Frederick William III of Prussia BKD



The soprano, Clara Novello



The violinist, Charles de Bériot, with the bust he sculpted of Malibran ATVM



Joaquina Garcia, the mother of Maria Malibran and Pauline Viardot ATVM



Portrait of Maria Malibran at Bougival ATVM



Malibran as Amina BKD