

**21st Quinquennial Congress of the International Musicological Society at Athens, Greece**  
(Wednesday, August 24, 2022  
Session “Analyzing Nineteenth-Century Opera”)

**Title:** How Do Characters “Speak” with Melodies in Verdi’s and Boito’s *Simon Boccanegra* and *Otello*? Analyzing the Relationship between Musical Elements and Dramatic Situations

**Author:** Inori HAYASHI (Ochanomizu University)

**Abstract:**

This study clarifies the theatrical functions of vocal melody in Giuseppe Verdi’s later dramaturgy by analyzing *Simon Boccanegra* (1881) and *Otello* (1887), two successive works by the composer and Arrigo Boito. Previous studies on Verdi have approached the vocal melody as a vocal line, focusing on shape transformation or compositional functions for a set piece. Recently they have also shed light on the theatrical function of the vocal melody from various perspectives (e.g., Beghelli, Henson, and Campana). This study proposes that different vocal melodies represent different ways of speaking. To analyze characters of vocal melodies in depth, I recorded every single phrase in a work according to musical elements like interval, duration, and velocity, and examined how it reflects the versification. I also classified orchestral textures into several types because the actual melody we hear during singing is a fusion of vocal and orchestral sounds. In my previous studies, I have clarified that musical elements of the vocal melody in *Simon* represent the characters’ wording (*dicitura*) and tone (*tono*), sometimes in preference to versifications. Furthermore, vocal melodies that combine different orchestral textures relate to different dramatic situations, even if they have the same melodic shape. In the current study, I identify the similarities and differences in *Simon* and *Otello*, with examples from analytical observations. For example, the villains Paolo and Jago have a similar vocal melody that has little undulation in interval and velocity. In *Otello*, however, the musical elements vary increasingly depending on situations, intentions, and the person with whom Jago speaks. The quality of interpretational remarks in scores and production books is also different for each work. I also refer to *Don Carlos* (1884), which was revised significantly in the interim between *Simon* and *Otello*, to analyze Verdi’s revisions without any participation from Boito.