



As I continue to develop my understanding of astrology, I am invariably intrigued by the evidence that comes to light, both through interactions with my clients and my continuing researches, concerning the undeniable effect of natal planetary placements upon individual destiny. One of the perennial sources of fascination for me (and many astrologers) is the phenomenon of astro-twins—i.e., individuals, not related, who are born at more or less the same time (although not necessarily at the same location), on the same day, and the compelling parallels that seem to manifest in the trajectories of two lives that otherwise do not ordinarily intersect.



The congruence of events and the timing of the same that invariably seem to characterize the interrelationships between these cosmic “clones” also provide further evidence for the validity of the astrological paradigm, since there can be no causal connection, either via nature or nurture, such as might be found with biological twins, between the two disparate lives.

A very interesting case came to my attention about a year ago involving two operatic tenors, each of Italianate extraction, but born on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and the parallels and divergences manifest in the unfolding of their careers as professional classical musicians.

See their two birth-charts, separated in time by approximately 18 hours.

These two men share the same birthday, August 17, but as chronological age is often a sensitive issue with people who are in the public eye, we will withhold the precise details.¹

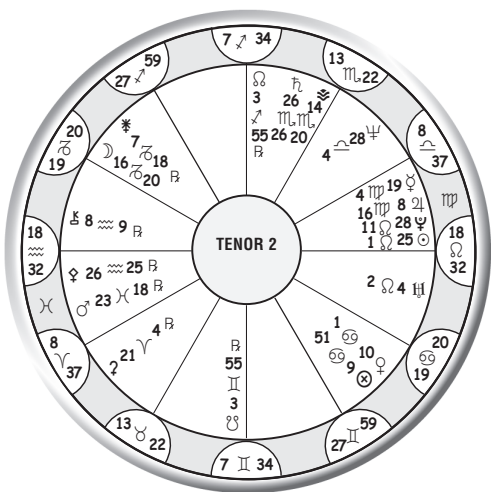
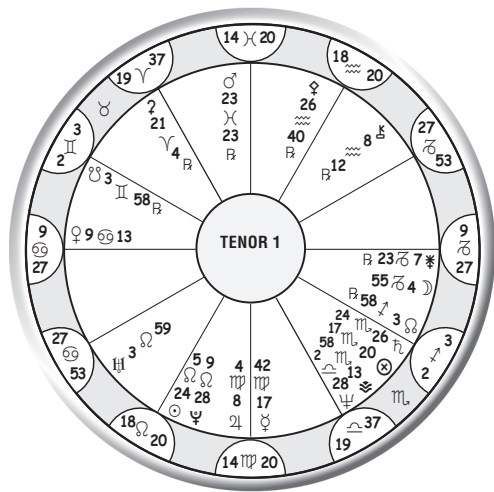
We should point out at the outset that Tenor 1 (August 17: 1:45 A.M., Genoa, Italy [AA Rodden rating]; year withheld for reasons of confidentiality) has achieved a high degree of professional success, having performed leading roles in most of the major international opera houses and established a considerable reputation as a recording artist, even appearing in a featured role, albeit somewhat comedic, in a major Hollywood movie. Tenor 2, a client of mine, by comparison, while having early shown the promise of a major career, has not risen to the same level, despite any number of successful international engagements. Both sing the same repertoire, although Tenor 2 (August 17: 7:54 P.M., Niagara Falls, New York, U.S. [A Rodden rating], rectified by the astrologer; year withheld for reasons of confidentiality), who is of Italian/German/Anglo-Saxon/Irish extraction, unlike Tenor 1, has a considerable background with German opera.

It is certainly of note that both these individuals found their vocation as that most sought after of classical vocal artists (at least since the heyday of Lu-

ciano Pavarotti), the leading Italian tenor. One might argue that it would not have been so remarkable for a young Italian man born in Italy, Tenor 1, to have found this particular vocation. Conversely, Tenor 2 had no exposure to opera as an art form while growing up in upstate New York, although his passion for singing manifested itself at an early age.

There is, additionally, a compelling and quite astonishing synchronicity involving these two singers; although they have never formally been introduced, they were, in fact, both involved with the same open-air festival production of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in Brescia, Italy, in the summer of 2001. Consistent with the dissimilar nature of their fortunes, Tenor 1 had been engaged to perform the leading role of Manrico, and Tenor 2 was invited, at the last minute, at the behest of the high-profile Italian conductor, the head of Italian opera at the Wiener Staatsoper, with whom he had established a very cordial working relationship in the U.S., to travel from Zurich, where he had flown to coach with *another* famous Italian conductor, to understudy Tenor 1!!

In addition, both artists had performed leading roles at different times with Italian conductor #1 for his opera company in Florida; however, Tenor #2 was con-



signed to the second cast of his production, and did not receive any significant attention from the local media, or in the PR for the event, for the engagement that was probably the most significant of his career. In this remarkable instance, a few years later, however, the ongoing trajectories of their lives coincided, somewhat tangentially, for a period of about two weeks; this occurred approximately 16 years ago, and it will be interesting to examine the planetary transits at the time.

Let us summarize the salient shared characteristics; as the birth-charts are close in time, the planetary placements are essentially similar, although not identical:

	Tenor 1	Tenor 2
Sun (♁)	24°05'	25°01'
Mercury (♃)	17°42'	19°04'
Venus (♀)	9°13'	10°01'
Mars (♂)	23°23' R	23°18' R
Jupiter (♃)	8°04'	8°16'
Saturn (♄)	26°24'	26°26'
Uranus (♅)	3°59'	4°02'
Neptune (♆)	28°02'	28°04'
Pluto (♇)	28°09'	28°11'
Chiron (♁)	8°12' R	8°09' R

The crucial variations may be discerned in the following:

Moon (☾)	4°55'	16°20'
Asc	9°27' (♋)	18°32' (♌)
MC	14°20' (♏)	7°34' (♎)

The differences that can be attributed to the impact of the different angles of the charts, and the placement of the Moon, we shall come to a bit later.

To begin our analysis, what elements are present in both these charts that might indicate to us the pursuit of a career in one of the most rarefied of the fine arts, Italianate *bel canto*?

THE ARTISTIC PATH

Leo is considered by most to be the sign of the natural performer, and each has three planets in that sign, including

a dynamic Sun-Pluto conjunction. The Leo/Capricorn Sun-Moon blend that both share is one that is frequently found in the charts of those individuals who rise to the top of their professions; the blending of the Sun and Saturn, via their rulership of those signs, brings the ability to persevere in the face of seemingly insurmountable hurdles, a quality that is certainly crucial to achieving distinction in the field of opera. The classically trained voice is the slowest to ripen, and those voices that, in the fullness of their maturity, possess the capacity to embrace the primo tenor roles are comparatively rare in the general population worldwide. Given this, it takes a great deal of patience to defer one's ambitions at a younger age. This Sun/Saturn signature is a notable feature of those individuals born within this 24-hour period, and both tenors have, in addition, the Sun square Saturn.

For the signature of a singer, one need venture no further than the Ascendant of Tenor 1's map; Venus, the planetary hallmark of the artist, rises, in Cancer, being less than half a degree (14 minutes) from an exact conjunction with the Ascendant. His identity, and the vehicle whereby he portrays that to the world, is cheerfully unambiguous, and inextricably linked with the artistic path.

The placement of Venus in watery Cancer suggests that the form of artistic expression may be less concrete, more "fluid"—i.e., emotional in nature, the latter quality of which is the *sine qua non* of popular Italian opera. It is indeed idiosyncratic of high-voiced male singers in general, but notably of tenors in Italian opera, that they display characteristics that might be properly categorized as more androgyne, incorporating a marked degree of feminine expressiveness and vulnerability (in the quality of their vocal utterances) within the role of the romantic, masculine hero.

The unmistakable benison of Venus, the

Lesser Benefic, here probably indicates that this is an individual whose talent was easily recognized and nurtured; he graduated from a major conservatory in his hometown, and has said that he wanted to become an opera singer very early in his life. Venus rising would also lend him the patina of charm and attractiveness, which certainly would not hinder his ascent.

A very interesting case came to my attention about a year ago involving two operatic tenors, each of Italianate extraction, but born on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean, and the parallels and divergences manifest in the unfolding of their careers as professional classical musicians.

Tenor 2, in a similar fashion, early discovered his passion for singing, and upon reaching high school, quickly excelled as a choral soloist, and with leading roles in musicals (and plays) as well as the obligatory vocal competitions that were held annually. After failing to secure a scholarship at any number of prestigious universities to which he had applied and been accepted, having received a scholarship from New York State, he attended a state school in his area, and drifted into the opera world during his sophomore year (via the chorus of *La Boheme*) while simultaneously nurturing a brief flirtation with popular music, playing keyboards and singing lead vocals in a couple of rock bands. While he later attended an opera academy, he did not finish his studies there, leaving to pursue other professional opportunities.

As previously mentioned, he had no awareness of opera while growing up, despite his Italian heritage, although his

home was full of music, as his three sisters all played wind instruments. He was given piano lessons for a period of two-plus years; his last teacher opined to his mother that he had the potential to become a concert pianist. He has reported to me that he must have sensed, on an intuitive level, that this career path, with its endless hours of practice, would not have been a

welcome choice in his home. In fact, not long after this revelation, he quit playing the piano entirely, and the family piano was sold. It was only during his university years, with easy access to pianos around the clock in the music department, that he began playing piano non-stop, and has developed quite a high degree of self-taught technical facility. Since 1994, he has become a composer of more than 160 classical art songs, the early fascination with popular song, particularly those of Elton John, having evolved into something more in alignment with his career track.

Tenor 1 relates in an online interview that, like Tenor 2, there have been no professional musicians in his family for several generations, although his brother has likewise become a well-known musical figure (conductor) and has conducted his brother in any number of operatic productions.

It is not that common for opera singers to be pianists (even less to become composers), and it should be noted that public-relations photos of Tenor 1 exist that show him playing Giacomo Puccini's piano in Torre del Lago, Italy; this is another interesting parallel, although I cannot discern from available sources online as to whether he has pursued the study of the instrument to any significant degree.

We should note that the dynamic Sun-Pluto conjunction is situated in Tenor 1's third house, and that he possesses, as well, using a standard orb of 10 degrees, a Jupiter-Pluto conjunction, albeit out of

sign (9°55'). This signature is often found in the charts of those individuals who become extremely wealthy through their endeavors,² and strongly suggests that he will accrue a great deal of financial success through the medium of communication (third house). In fact, Tenor 1 has four planets in his second and third houses, both of which I customarily associate with the throat chakra.

With the Sun, Pluto, and Jupiter located here, Tenor 1's third house is quite power-packed, and Mercury, too, is found in this area of the chart, although just over the cusp of the fourth. Conversely, Tenor 2's



Sun-Pluto conjunction is strongly angular, being positioned in the seventh house, but with the slightly later birth time, using the same orb of influence, Jupiter is not (technically) conjunct Pluto (difference: 10°05'). It is indeed the case that he has not been able to generate a comfortable or consistent living from his primary vocation hitherto in his career.

Tenor 2's same Venus in Cancer is tucked away in a non-angular house, and less manifest, being below the horizon; however, we should note that, despite this lack of prominence, it is, nevertheless, in the creative fifth house, and has dominion over the third house of communication, the cusp of which is Taurus, an association which is traditionally associated with a beautiful voice. Tenor 1's Venus is similar in this respect, insofar as it is connected with the fifth, but here via its co-rulership of that house. It is, however, also widely trine the MC, thus possessing the capacity to make greater contact with the public arena. Tenor 2's Venus, although conjunct the Part of Fortune,³ has no connection with the MC.

Apropos of this, however, it is interesting to observe that, of the two, Tenor 2 has the more stereotypically "extrovert" chart, with seven planets above the horizon, compared to Tenor 1's single planet, Mars, which is, however, the most elevated planet in the map, widely conjunct the MC, although Mars is retrograde in the tenth. Mars is also the han-

dle of a bucket chart,⁴ making it all that more important in the map.

Tenor 2's similar Mars as bucket is situated, appropriately enough, in the Arian first house, but makes no direct contact with either the Ascendant or the MC. For both men, Mars in Pisces is positioned in the sign of its traditional night rulership, so this is quite a dignified Mars, although perhaps less assertive and extroverted than if it were in either of its diurnal domiciles, Aries or Scorpio. This is reinforced by its retrograde motion. These placements suggest that either would be at ease appearing before the public; in recent years, Tenor 2 has embarked, with his life partner, on the teaching of seminars in various international locations, in addition to periodic performances, mostly centered on his own compositions. He is currently in the process of recording all his art songs for archival purposes.

VENUS AND RELATIONSHIP

Another interesting parallel in the lives of these two men is that both are involved in long-term relationships with women whom they met in the opera house; Tenor's 1 spousal partner, recently deceased, was a similarly famous soprano with whom he was often paired in productions. Tenor 2's life partner, of

25 years, is also a soprano, whom he met at a U.S. opera festival, but they have never performed opera together, although he has composed a number of his art songs for her, which they have premiered in recitals in a variety of locations. She has latterly established herself on an international level in recent years as an expert in the field of Oriental medicine and a highly accomplished educator and author. With four planets in the seventh house, we would expect relationship and creative partnership to be a high priority for Tenor 2; however, this is perhaps echoed in Tenor 1's chart by the presence of the asteroid Juno, associated with fidelity and commitment, near the seventh-house cusp, as well as his prominent Venus.

It seems indisputable that both individuals would appear to have been astrologically suited to the artistic life, although Tenor 1's chart is more strongly tilted in favor of a high degree of prominence.

We have observed the angularity of Tenor 2's Sun-Pluto in the seventh, but he has no other planets in those favorable positions, in contrast to Tenor 1, for whom Venus rises, the Moon sets, Mars culminates, and both Mercury and Jupiter are on the IC. Thus, the two key oppositions in these maps—Moon-Venus and Mercury-Mars—are strongly prominent in Tenor 1's case; not so for Tenor 2, whose Moon-Venus opposition is in the succedent fifth and eleventh houses, and Mercury-Mars, albeit on the angular first/seventh axis, is far away from the house cusp.

THE HARE VS. THE TORTOISE: THE SAME RACE, DIFFERENT TRACKS

Let us examine, in turn, a couple of crucial turning points in their separate careers:

1. In 1988, both began to make an impact internationally, although Tenor 1 had already secured several engagements outside Italy in 1987 following his debut in

1986 in a leading role right around the time of his first Saturn Return. He has been regarded as a "late bloomer" in this regard, consistent with his (their) Capricorn Moon. Before this (in 1985, most likely), he won two major international vocal competitions;

2. Tenor 2 had made a surprise debut in 1982, stepping into a prominent role, although not the tenor lead, in a world premiere production at a major U.S. summer opera festival, where he had apprenticed during the previous two summers, just prior to the start of rehearsals. Immediately prior to this, as a graduate student, he sang consecutive performances of the demanding leading role of Hoffman in *Tales of Hoffman* at his university; he in fact received a direct call from the head of the company in question about this possible debut on the day of his final performance in his home town. This coincided with a Uranus transit of his North Node, a Jupiter transit of the Sun-Moon midpoint at 29°30' Libra, and a transit of his fifth-house Venus and Part of Fortune by the North Node. Due to his success in the portrayal, and some good reviews, he secured several subsequent engagements, including a return to that same company in 1984, in the same year that Tenor 1 made his professional debut in a leading role in a Verdi opera. Tenor 2 did not sing his first Verdi role until several years later, as Alfredo, in *La Traviata*, in Canada in 1989;

3. In 1985, Tenor 2 was a finalist in a major international competition for tenors held in the U.S., but he did not win or place in the top 3 (he received an Honorable Mention). He was, however, singled out after the semi-finals by the three international opera stars, including two famous Italian tenors, Franco Corelli and Giuseppe di Stefano, who were the judges, both of whom said that they felt he had tremendous potential. This parallels a similar occurrence in Tenor 1's life,

as we have seen, although he won his competitions; both were having their initial Saturn Returns during the period, followed by a transit of the North Node. However, Tenor 1 also experienced a transit of his Part of Fortune;

4. It certainly would seem as if 1987-88 was a turning point for both;

a. Tenor 1 had the transiting North Node cross his MC in 1988, a transit that can be likened to a Jupiter transit of the same. The North Node is believed to be catalytic in its effect, drawing energy to the area of the chart that it traverses, and its movement into his tenth house, with a subsequent transit of Mars, certainly served to move Tenor 1's career forward with a great deal of impetus;

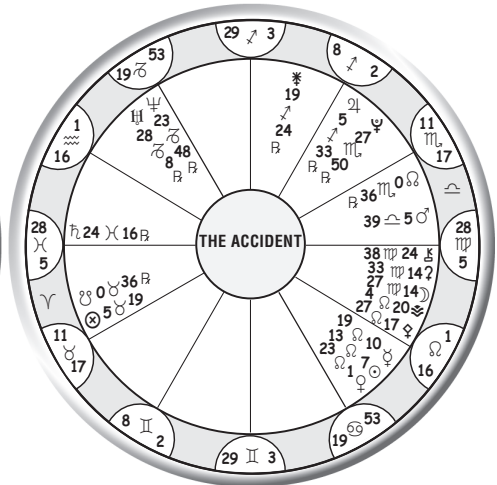
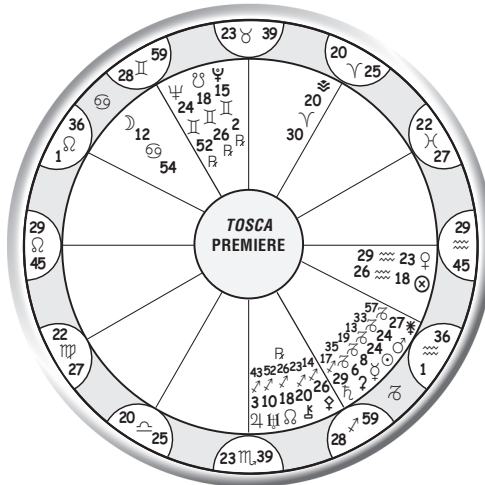
b. Tenor 2 had Saturn transit his MC in 1988, a movement that, according to commentators like Erin Sullivan,⁵ is generally associated with an increase in visibility in the vocational area, and he, too, secured several international engagements at the time, although not with the consistency of Tenor 1. It was during this transit that he first sang his first leading roles internationally in Ireland and Australia;

c. Both artists would have experienced the outer-planet transits of Uranus and Neptune through Capricorn in a fairly personal way due to their shared Capricorn Moon.

THE CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE: PLANETARY ANGULARITY AND FIXED STARS: A "HAPPY" ACCIDENT

A pivotal event for Tenor 1, one that may have, to a certain extent, defined his career, was an accidental shooting during Act 3 of Puccini's *Tosca*, in July 30, 1995, at a festival in Macerata, Italy. This act of one of the most popular of all operas features an execution by firing squad of the tenor hero, Mario Cavaradossi,⁶ at the order of the Roman Chief of Police, Baron Scarpia, the baritone and de facto villain of the opera, whom the soprano, Floria Tosca, has murdered at the end of the previous act. Prior to taking his life, she implores Scarpia to spare the life of her lover, Cavaradossi, enacting a bargain in which she would submit to his advances in exchange. Scarpia, in a particularly nefarious act of duplicity, informs Tosca that it will be a simulated execution, but instructs his underling, Spoletta, to make it the real thing by using a coded phrase.

Accordingly, the simulated execution becomes all too real, and Cavaradossi dies in a hail of bullets, prompting the heroine, Tosca, to commit suicide by hurling herself from the parapet of the Castel Sant'Angelo rather than be captured by Scarpia's minions and face the con-



Malefic, squarely on the Ascendant. The Ascendant is regarded as analogous with the body in medical astrology, and we could certainly view this rising Saturn as portending some limitation of the feet, which did indeed prove to be the case. Saturn is also the handle of a bucket chart, and it seems indisputable that what is “swinging” the bucket at this juncture is karma, with a capital K.

Opposing Saturn, almost to the minute, is the similarly difficult Chiron, and Mars, at 5° Libra, is also in the picture. Saturn is virtually isolated in the eastern hemisphere of the chart, and I am tempted to say that it very much suggests Cavaradossi unwittingly awaiting his doom; arrayed against Saturn is a veritable phalanx of the other planets, a 124-degree arc from Venus to Jupiter, the stand-ins for his thuggish executioners. Double-dealing Neptune in the eleventh is in close proximity to Uranus, the architect of sudden catastrophe, and one can almost see in them Scarpia’s lieutenants, the comprimario tenor Spoletta, Scarpia’s agent in this scene, and the transmitter of the duplicitous order, and baritone Sciarrone, calmly awaiting the carnage that is to ensue, perhaps catching a quick smoke, before giving the command to fire.

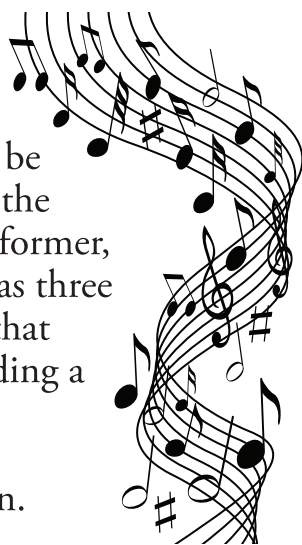
Archetypally, we have a blending of Chiron-Saturn (with Mars), with Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto thrown into the mix. Violence is certainly in the air, with death waiting in the shadows. This chart certainly seems to encapsulate perfectly this moment in the drama.

However, when this map is then considered as the transiting planetary background to Tenor 1’s natal chart, the seeming inevitability of his “accident” becomes all too apparent. All the outer planets are in play, and even a dignified Jupiter, in its own sign of Sagittarius (albeit retrograde), and in trine with the Sun, Mercury, and Venus in Leo, would appear to have been powerless to ameliorate Tenor 1’s fortune on this specific evening in the theater.⁸

MARS/URANUS AND ACCIDENTS

It has been suggested by any number of astrological authors that a signature involving Mars and Uranus is often highlighted at the time of accidents. One might even posit that, in and of itself, the combination Mars-Uranus would suggest gunfire. The event chart for Tenor 1’s accident presents us with a debilitated Mars in Libra, in an angular house, and although there is no hard aspect to Uranus, it is the impact of the transiting planetary configurations upon Tenor 1’s natal chart that seem particularly resonant:

Leo is considered by most to be the sign of the natural performer, and each has three planets in that sign, including a dynamic Sun-Pluto conjunction.



1. Tenor 1 is having his Uranus opposition, although at the time the opposition is not as tight as it would have been previously. Nevertheless, this is a challenging developmental transit, one that often puts real pressure on the native. This is a very significantly Uranian signature;

2. In fact, Tenor 1 is experiencing all three of his major midlife transits—Pluto square Pluto and Neptune square Neptune—as well the Uranus opposition;

3. Transiting Mars, at 5° Libra, is in sextile relationship with Tenor’s 1 natal Uranus at 3° Leo, so we have an occurrence of the

relevant configuration; it is also in a minor aspect⁹ with transiting Uranus;

4. It may be that the concurrence of these two transits might not have been enough to provoke the event in question. However, beyond the simple equation of Mars-Uranus with accidents previously mentioned, noted medical astrologer Dr. Cornell further associates the synergy of Mars-Uranus with Mars, the Sun, the Moon, or the Ascendant with the tendency to be accident-prone,¹⁰ and, Uranus, in particular, with explosions.¹¹ Examining Tenor 1's chart, we find no significant interaction between Mars and Uranus by natal position; however, the Mars-Uranus midpoint, at 28°41' Taurus-Scorpio, is conjunct natal Saturn and square the Sun-Pluto conjunction. Thus, we have an occurrence of the relevant planetary combination, according to this criterion;

5. It is also interesting to examine the synastry between the accident chart and one erected for the premiere of *Tosca*, on January 14, 1900, in Rome (assuming a curtain time of 8:00 P.M.). Here is the chart for the opera: Although we cannot see it here, the two charts look alike, although the bucket handle, similarly conjunct the ASC (not shown) for the *Tosca* premiere is Black Moon Lilith, which is not a planet, but is certainly dire in its implications. There is a similar arc of planets from Venus to Jupiter, and a remarkable clustering of planets around 23°-29° of various signs. Notably, there is almost a partile conjunction of the Sun with Mars at 24° Capricorn (only 20 minutes of arc separate them). Venus is at 23°, Neptune at 24°, Saturn at 29° (Chiron is at 20°). The Sun-Mars conjunction at 24° Capricorn makes an inconjunct with Tenor 1's Sun at 24° Leo and similarly involved with both transiting Neptune, at 24° Gemini, and the Saturn-Chiron opposition of the accident chart.¹²

Additionally, assuming a slightly larg-

er than one degree of orb, the *Tosca* premiere chart makes significant contact with two powerful and potentially malevolent fixed stars, Regulus, one of the four Royal Stars of Persia, at 28°27' Leo, and Algol, the most evil fixed star, at 24°47' Taurus. The influence of Regulus, the King Star, the most powerful of the Royal Stars, on the Ascendant of the *Tosca* chart, would certainly seem to be indicative of the opera's memorable melodic inspiration, dramatic power, and perennial popularity; it is widely regarded as one of the best operas ever written, perhaps only second to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Algol, the brightest star in the head of Medusa, squares Venus in Aquarius. The baleful Algol "causes misfortune, violence, decapitation, hanging, electrocution, and mob violence, and gives a dogged and violent nature that causes death to the native or others."¹³ The draconian nature of the violence in *Tosca*—a product of Puccini's particular psycho-pathology, what he referred to jokingly as his "Neronic instinct"¹⁴—in which all three of the principal protagonists die before the final curtain (two murders and one suicide)—is one of its hallmarks. The aspect of the *Tosca* premier chart that seems most germane to the discussion at hand is the Mars-Uranus midpoint at 2°42' Capricorn, which is conjoined Tenor 1's Capricorn Moon at 4°55' (although his Sun, 24° Leo, is likewise square Algol). This is once again Dr. Cornell's signature for accident-proneness, strongly suggesting that, given the right circumstances, Tenor 1 could be injured during a performance of *Tosca*.

6. While Tenor 1's natal chart itself does not make a huge number of contacts with fixed stars, there are at least three that are relevant to this situation: Alhena, conjunct Venus-Asc; Achernar, conjunct the MC; and Markab, conjunct Mars;

a. According to Robson, Alhena, in the

constellation of Gemini, bestows eminence in art¹⁵; furthermore, it is conjunct both Venus and the Ascendant and is a potent indicator of the success that Tenor 1 has achieved thus far in his career;

b. Achernar, whose name means “end of the river”—i.e., the river Eridanus, which flows through the heavens—is believed to have the effect of Jupiter upon the area of the chart that it contacts,¹⁶ and Tenor 1 has it positioned right at his Midheaven (MC), in the house of his vocation, and opposite his natal Mercury-Jupiter conjunction in Virgo at the IC (and widely conjunct Mars at 23° Pisces);

c. Finally, Tenor 1 has his highly elevated, dignified, but retrograde, Mars conjunct the fixed star Markab, located in the shoulder of the constellation Pegasus. According to Robson, Markab bestows “honor, riches, and fortune,” and, once again, this is in the department of life, the tenth house, relating to Tenor 1’s vocation;

d. Given the powerful influences of these stars, and the prominence of their placements, at the Ascendant and MC, it is reasonably easy to see their influence as it relates to Tenor 1’s achievements on the world stage. Of the three, Tenor 2 only shares Markab, and as his Mars is far away from the Ascendant, it does not seem to have had as significant an effect thus far;

e. However, as is the case with many fixed stars, each of these three luminaries has its negative attributes:

i. Markab signals a propensity to accidents involving danger from fire—i.e., “gun”-fire, fever, blows, etc.¹⁷;

ii. Achernar also signifies accident-prone tendencies;

iii. Finally, the coup de grace: Alhena is located in the left foot of Pollux, the left twin in Gemini; according to various sources, it can lead to a propensity to incur accidents, especially those involving the feet!! Moreover, in the footage of the accident that I viewed on YouTube, it is painfully obvious (pun intended) that Tenor 1 was shot in his

left foot!! The name “Alhena” means “hurt, wounded, or afflicted,” and relates specifically to the wound of Achilles;¹⁸

iv. At the time of the accident, transiting Saturn was on Mars and conjunct Markab. The Moon, at 14°27’ Virgo, was at the IC, and opposite Achernar. Mars at 5° Libra, was square natal Venus-Ascendant, widely squaring Alhena. So each one of these “accident-prone” stars was being triggered by planetary transits;

v. We also cannot overlook the fact that, despite the “down side” of Tenor 1 having suffered this injury during a production, the accident brought him a notoriety and attention that he might not otherwise have achieved for some time thereafter, despite his success within his field. As they say, “There is no such thing as bad publicity,” and many people in the opera business opine that Tenor 1 subsequently exploited the event to maximum effect for self-promotion. Thus, the three fixed stars also bestowed their benison of enhanced eminence through this “happy” accident;

vi. We should also note, as we did with Tenor 2 earlier, that this accident occurred at a time when Saturn had just transited Tenor 1’s MC, and, thus, this event, in keeping with a Saturn transit of the tenth, despite its occurrence at a relatively obscure opera festival in Italy (at least to the outside world) brought worldwide attention to Tenor 1;

vii. Tenor 2 is not one-hundred percent sure about the precise events on this date, but, as he is not in the least accident-prone historically, and, of course, would have experienced the same planetary triggers, he would certainly have remembered anything remotely resembling such an occurrence. It was around this time that he debuted his first art songs in a small recital in New York City. In contrast, not long prior to this particular incident, Tenor 1 had been injured by a sword in a production of *Carmen*.

viii. It seems reasonable to conclude

then, that the individual character of Tenor 1's chart, with its strongly angular planets and notable contact with fixed stars, triggered by any number of stressful planetary transits, is the principal catalyst of this high-profile incident.

Finally, let us examine the astrological and historical backdrop to the occasion of these two artists, with their widely divergent fates, being involved in the same opera production in Brescia, Italy, which occurred in the summer of 2001.

a. By this time, Tenor 1's international career is in full flight; he made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1993 as Manrico in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, the role that both men will share in Brescia, at a time when Tenor 2's career momentum seemed to grind to a halt (upper Saturn square, Pluto transit of Saturn, Uranus/Neptune conjunct Moon).

b. It is only in 2001 that, in a manner consistent with previous career highlights, Tenor 2 makes a surprise debut at Lincoln Center in a concert performance of an operatic rarity. As was the case with his professional debut, he has stepped in following the departure of another artist who could not or would not learn the role and receives very good notices in the New York press, including the *New York Times* (Jupiter transit of the fifth, opposite Moon, Uranus into the first house, Saturn trine MC, SA Jupiter to the Sun/Moon midpoint).

c. Concurrently with this event, he is rehearsing to make his debut with the aforementioned Italian conductor at his opera company, having been engaged for the role of Pollione in Bellini's *Norma*. This engagement occurs principally because, after being recommended by his then-agent, Tenor 2 had provided a great service to that same company earlier in 2001 by filling in for two other tenors during the rehearsal period of Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, having learned the very demanding role in two days. This was his first engagement in almost 9 years, and the Italian conductor

(who is either unaware of, or indifferent to, this fact) is sufficiently impressed with his voice and professionalism as to hire him for *Norma*.

THE "CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN"

a. In June/July of 2001, Tenor 1 has several engagements in Italy, the last of which is the *Trovatore* in Brescia; the transiting Nodes are activating his Moon;

b. Tenor 2 is invited to come to Zurich, Switzerland, to coach with another famous Italian opera conductor, the father of his agent, in connection with possible engagement for a Swiss production of *William Tell*. Saturn is poised to transit his IC, and Jupiter to enter his fifth house, an auspicious transit for his artistic life. While he is in Zurich, Italian conductor #1, telephoning his agent, invites him to Brescia, because he doesn't feel confident about the other tenor understudy;

c. In both charts, Venus has been activated by a favorable Jupiter transit, and Venus is transiting the South Node. By the time of the performance on July 19, Venus will transit Tenor 1's IC, and join Saturn in the fourth house;

d. However, it is the precise timing of this second Saturn transit of the IC, which does not coincide with Tenor 1's sojourn in Brescia, which is particularly significant for Tenor 2. It is his first trip to Italy. He is only the second member of his immediate family to set foot on the ancestral soil. And, on a beautiful sunny afternoon, after a voice coaching, while listening to the orchestra rehearse, he is struck by the quintessentially "Italian" nature of the experience, i.e., listening to Verdi in the open air in a small Italian city, in the same manner as the locals, who have assembled beyond the ropes that cordon off the piazza for the opera rehearsals;

e. Then, *mirabile dictu*, despite his lowly (and unofficial) status, he is invited by the Italian conductor to sing one of the tenor set pieces, the famous cabaletta,

“Di quella pira,” with the orchestra as they are rehearsing in the piazza for the open-air production of *Trovatore*. The citizens of Brescia hear him sing, and several are quite complimentary;

f. He feels a distinct connection to his Italian roots in this moment, the archetypal nature of which is entirely consistent with Saturn transiting the IC, as the symbolism of this transit can refer to the reclamation of a family legacy that has been lost. Erin Sullivan equates it with finding a hidden treasure.¹⁹ It is half a Saturn cycle since the onset of his international career. Tenor 2, perhaps because of his mixed lineage, never really has felt an identification with his Italian-ness, despite his choice of career;

g. This is the extent, then, of his success in this all-too-resonant environment; Tenor 1 goes on to sing the performances, receives his customary acclaim, and continues the progress of his artistic life. Tenor 2 has a few more voice coachings, returns to the United States, and, within a year, the Italian conductor who brought him to Brescia, and was, in large part, the stimulus for this resuscitation of his career, dies after conducting *Otello* in Saint Gallen, Switzerland. Had he lived, he might have proven to be a real and consistent advocate of Tenor 2, but that door is now irrevocably closed, and no other champion appeared. Tenor 2 has persisted in his studies, but, as of the writing of this article, despite reporting enormous growth in vocal technique and accomplishment, has been able to make no further inroads back into the professional circles of his initial vocation. However, he sings all the time...sometimes six or seven days a week. Professionally, though, it seems that this was his ultimate moment...he has not returned to Italy, either, although he has traveled to Europe on various occasions to teach seminars. In a parallel universe, it might have been that Tenor 1 would have incurred some significant indispo-

sition during the rehearsal period in Brescia (he is accident-prone, after all), and a peculiar concatenation of circumstances could have thrust Tenor 2 into the limelight. But he himself would probably tell you that he would not have been ready professionally at that juncture for such a fairy-tale ending to his Italian adventure. His moment had yet to, and would not, arrive...

CONCLUSION

The importance of astral timing in our lives seems paramount; whether we are cognizant of the fact or not, planetary influence sounds an ever-present counterpoint to our quotidian endeavors, and the interaction between our birth maps and certain significant instants in time seems inescapable.

I believe that the parallel lives that I have cited above are illustrative to a remarkable degree of the idiosyncratic nature of our fates, vividly demonstrated in the polarities of success achieved by these astro-twins tenors. The positive pole of this phenomenon engendered a singular congruence of their life paths, dictated by the similarities in the large-scale architecture of their planetary maps; these motive forces then contrived to transport them, over a 16-year period, in very different ways, to the same location to work on the same role in the same opera!!

The anti-pole is evidenced in the extreme divergence in their individual progress that occurred thereafter. One continued uninterrupted his path of international artistic recognition, and the other disappeared into comparative obscurity (at least from the perspective of that profession). I can only attribute this to the seemingly minute, but apparently highly influential, differences between their birth-charts, involving the angularity of planetary positions and contact with fixed stars, which are the impartial agencies of destiny.

The incarnating soul has its own agen-

da, which is often inscrutable to the fragile ego that navigates the conscious world, with its hopes and dreams, lofty achievements and crushing defeats. One might contradict Shakespeare's Cassius here, and opine the following:

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in ourselves, But in our stars, that we are underlings."²⁰



An opera singer, classical composer, pianist, astrologer, healer, diviner and writer, MichelAngelo served as Advisor, Astrological Medicine & Musical Studies to Acutonics® Institute of Integral Medicine, LLC, for whom he co-authored the book From Galaxies to Cells: Planetary Science, Harmony and Medicine. He has written several articles on medical astrology for Oriental Medicine Journal. He has created a three-part certification series in which he synergizes Western medical astrology with Oriental medicine theory and practice, introducing a variety of vibrational methods of remediation to address constitutional disharmony. He is currently compiling a book of astrological essays for publication and will appear as a presenter at the 28th Institute of Vedic Culture astrology conference in Kolkata, INDIA in February 2018.

FOOTNOTES:

1. It should be comparatively easy for inquiring minds to ascertain the year in question, based upon my following observations.

2. Ebertin associates this combination with the "desire for power"; thus, we can certainly read into this conjunction more than a modicum of ambition; Ebertin, Reinhold, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, AFA Publications, Tempe, AZ, 1997, p. 176.

3. The fifth house place of Pars Fortuna with Venus illustrates how much additional importance individual creativity as a composer and author, in addition to re-

productive creativity—i.e., that of the performer—has for Tenor 2.

4. <http://www.myastronomybook.com/Bucket-planetary-pattern-astrology.htm>; accessed 8/15/17.

5. Sullivan, Erin, *Saturn in Transit: Boundaries of Mind, Body and Soul*, Penguin Arkana, London, UK, 1991, pp. 170-181.

6. This role is the one that Tenor 2 has sung the most in his career, and for which he received consistently rave reviews, especially in his Australian debut in 1988.

7. One can find video footage of the accident on YouTube.

8 Although it is arguable, despite the seeming appearance of calamity, that this was indeed a fortunate event for the native, given the sudden boost to his visibility as an artist worldwide.

9. A 5/16 aspect, according to my Sirius 2.0 software.

10. Cornell, H. L., M. D., *Encyclopedia of Medical Astrology*, Weiser Books, York Beach, ME, 1985, pp. 6-7.

11. Ibid.

12. I had thought to include here a bi-wheel of the *Tosca* chart and the accident chart, but the interception of Capricorn in the fifth house with the significant placements skews the graphics in such a way that the relationships cannot easily be indicated.

13. Robson, Vivian, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology*, Sun Books, Santa Fe, NM, 1995, p. 124.

14. See Carner, Mosco, *Puccini: A Critical Biography*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, 1959, pp. 239-52. (Kindle version)

15. Robson, p. 126.

16. <http://astrologyking.com/achernarstar/>; accessed 8/16/17.

17. Robson, Vivian, op. cit., p. 174.

18. Ibid., p. 126.

19. See Sullivan, Erin, *Saturn in Transit: Boundaries of Mind, Body and Soul*, Samuel Weiser, York Beach, ME, 2000, p. 210 ff.

20. Original quote found in *Julius Caesar*, Act 1, scene 2, line 135.