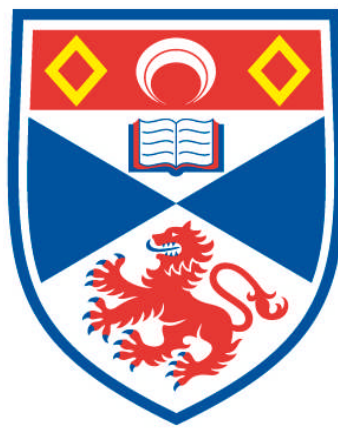


**THE VIENNESE VOGUE FOR OPÉRA-COMIQUE 1790-1819
: VOL 1.**

Carolyn Kirk

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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The Viennese vogue
for
opéra-comique
1790-1819

submitted by
Carolyn Kirk

In fulfilment of the requirements
for Ph.D. degree
of
the University of St. Andrews,
November, 1983



ABSTRACT

In the mid-eighteenth century, Vienna, like other European cities, began to manifest the influence of modern French culture. In 1752, a troupe of French players was appointed to the Austrian court to entertain the aristocracy. Four years later, links were forged between the Parisian and Viennese stages via Favart who corresponded with Count Durazzo in Vienna and sent opera scores and suggestions about personnel. In 1765 problems with finance and leadership led to dismissal of Vienna's first French troupe but others performed there for shorter periods between 1765 and 1780. Opéra-comique was introduced to Vienna by French players.

Occasional performances of opéra-comique in German translation took place in Vienna during the 1770s. When, in 1778, the Nationalsingspiel was founded, French opera formed part of the repertoire because of a lack of good German works.

A renewed interest in opéra-comique began in about 1790 when fear of revolutionary France and the reigns of Leopold and Franz led to a return of interest in Italian opera at the court theatres, and the virtual disappearance of opéra-comique from its repertoire. Once an aristocratic entertainment, opéra-comique now enjoyed popularity at the suburban theatres. Many recent and historically important French operas were performed in Vienna during the next

thirty years, putting Italian opera temporarily out of fashion and having an important influence on the emergent German Romantic opera. After 1802 the Theater an der Wien and the court theatres engaged in serious competition. Over 120 French operas were performed in Vienna between 1790 and 1819.

Printed French scores and textbooks were purchased from Paris; they were hastily translated by salaried members of the Viennese theatres. Before 1790 Viennese versions of opéras-comiques had usually remained close to the originals. Later, in order to make them more appealing to Viennese audiences, the opera texts and music were often altered. Authentic performance was not a concern of the theatres.

After 1803, following successful Viennese premières of several great operas by Méhul and Cherubini, Vienna was flooded with operas by lesser men whose entertaining texts and tuneful music were good for the box office.

The vogue for French opera caused some resentment among German musicians, though few contemporary German operas could match the popularity of the French ones. Opéra-comique reminded a Viennese public nourished during the eighteenth century mostly on Italian opera, of the literary importance of opera.

Viennese interest in opéra-comique began to decline in 1816 with the rise to fame of Rossini. By 1820 Italian opera was back in fashion.

DECLARATION

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 on 10 October 1976 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. on 10 October 1977; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1976 and 1983.

date *11 November 1983* signature *Carolyn A Kirk*

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate to the degree of Ph.D. of the University of St Andrews and that she is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date *14 February 1984* signature of supervisor *Peter B Macintosh*

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For
my wonderful
parents

Behold, the nations are like a drop
from a bucket,
and are accounted as the dust on
the scales;
behold, he takes up the isles like
fine dust.
It is he who sits above the circle of
the earth
and its inhabitants are like
grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a
curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?
He who brings out their host by
number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the
earth.
He does not faint or grow weary,
his understanding is unsearchable.

Isaiah:40.

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PREFACE

Opéra-comique is recognised as having been the most important impetus behind the emergence of German Romantic opera. During the eighteenth century it spread from Paris throughout Europe, first in the repertoires of travelling French players, and later, as a result of excellent French publishing, in the form of scores and textbooks which were purchased from Paris by foreign theatres and translated for performance abroad.

Opéra-comique found easier acceptance in some German cities than in others. It achieved particular success and popularity in Vienna where there was an important vogue for French revolutionary opera between 1790 and 1819.

In some ways, Vienna's musical and theatrical life was similar to that of some smaller German towns. In others, as the cosmopolitan capital of a large empire, Vienna was obviously exceptional. Its importance in the history of music makes the study of opéra-comique there particularly important.

This dissertation attempts to account for the success of opéra-comique in Vienna and to map out the various stages of public interest and disillusionment it underwent. The vogue for revolutionary opera has been considered in the context of both earlier and later interest in French opera, and the social background. I have tried to show

how French opera scores reached Vienna, how they were prepared for performance in German, and have given examples of several Viennese versions of opéras-comiques from a study of contemporary performance material. The appendices include a list of over 300 opéras-comiques which were performed in Vienna between 1750 and 1850. Their original French titles have been traced from the often obscure German names given to the operas by Viennese translators.

Several theatre historians have studied the history of French drama in Vienna. Robert Haas, with his work on the collaboration between Gluck and Count Durazzo (covering the years 1750 to 1765), is the only writer to have undertaken a major survey of the performance of French opera in Vienna. Other writers have done detailed studies covering short time spans, and concentrating mainly on spoken drama. Julia Witzenez has researched the French troupes in Vienna between 1752 and 1772; Karlhans Reuss's thesis examines French drama performed in Vienna during the reign of Joseph II, and Gisela Schlientz has written about the theatre in Vienna during the French occupation of 1809. Other, more general studies mention the French theatre as part of a wider study. For example Harald Kunz, in his dissertation on theatre at the Austrian court during the time of Maria Theresia, and Gustav Zechmeister, in his study of the court theatres before the foundation of the Nationaltheater.

There is as yet no sequel to Michtner's book Das Burgtheater als Opernbühne which is a detailed study of all the operas performed at the Burgtheater from 1776 until 1792. Michtner's book confines itself to a study of the Burgtheater and concludes with the death of Leopold II; it is a theatre history rather than a musical study.

For the most part, the study of the performance of opéra-comique in Vienna has been neglected. A study of French opera in the repertoire of the Viennese theatres is long overdue.

The lists of French operas which are included in the appendix reveal the hitherto unknown and perhaps surprising extent of the Viennese vogue for opéra-comique. Concerning the Viennese production of celebrated operas such as Cherubini's Les deux journées, the extent to which foreign (particularly French) operas were altered and distorted for production in the Austrian capital has not hitherto been appreciated.

In the past, much attention has been paid to the rôle of the Italians in Vienna: their influence on Austrian composers is widely recognised. Zeno and Metastasio, the revered court poets, the ambitious Salieri, and the feuds and factions against which Mozart struggled, have been the subject of numerous books. Italian musicians replaced the Flemish at the Imperial court at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They brought opera with them and dominated Austrian music for

nearly two centuries. This dissertation describes the short time at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Italian opera went out of fashion and when, in order to keep their positions, Italian singers had to learn to sing French operas in German for their benefit performances.

I have hesitated to present a dissertation of such great length. Chapter II, though redundant for experts on the Austrian theatre, was retained for the benefit of students who, like me, approached the subject from a musical background and had little knowledge of Austrian history or the social setting. It might have been neater to omit the material about the French troupes and the performance in Vienna of opéras-comiques in French. This would have been convenient and have provided a shorter dissertation but it would have deprived the study of the description of how interest in opéra-comique evolved in Vienna: from being an aristocratic entertainment, to opera carefully and exactly translated into German for performance at the Nationalsingspiel, to popular entertainment for wartime which was freely altered for each new Viennese audience.

In the first chapter, I have attempted to put the nineteenth century vogue for French opera into context and to connect the findings of earlier writers who have made a closer study of a shorter period. Karlhans Reuss, for example, writing about French drama performed at the Nationaltheater during the reign of the Emperor Joseph II, writes that the French Revolution, which marked the end of

an era in European history, also marked the final decline of French dramatic influence in Vienna. This is a misleading statement in the light of the upsurge of interest in French opera after 1801. Reuss, however, corrects the impression given by Witzenez that the departure of the French players in 1765 marked the beginning of a new and creative era for Austrian actors and playwrights: French players and French drama continued to be important in Viennese theatrical life after 1765. The influence of French theatre on the Austrian stage lasted longer than both these writers anticipated.

After a chapter about the social and political background, chapter III resumes the chronological survey of opéra-comique in Vienna beginning with the year 1790. In her fine and detailed account of the Viennese theatres in 1809, Gisela Schlientz has been too ready to believe I. F. Castelli's claim that Sebastian Meyer was the first person to introduce Dalayrac and other French composers to the Viennese stage after 1801. Chapter III of this dissertation shows how the first Dalayrac operas were seen in Vienna during the 1790s, alongside operas by Méhul and Grétry (the first Grétry opera had reached Vienna in 1770.) Schlientz fails to acknowledge that the then prevalent interest in French opera during 1809 had roots which went back over half a century.

The remaining three chapters deal with the purchase and translation of opéra-comique for Vienna, its adaptation

and performance. It is my hope that the information and background material which this study tries to provide outweigh its length.

I have been particularly stimulated in my research by the work of Edward Dent on Romantic opera and by Winton Dean and David Charlton on the significance of French revolutionary opera. I was also challenged by the research of John Warrack on the state of opera in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century.

I owe a deep personal debt to my research supervisor at the University of St. Andrews, Professor Peter Branscombe. His extensive knowledge was a help and inspiration to me, as was his patient advice and sense of humour. I am grateful for his kindness and generosity.

Many friends and colleagues gave valuable advice and encouragement during the course of my study. I have reason to be especially grateful to Dr. David Charlton, Professor Cyril Ehrlich, Dr. Roger Hellyer and to H. C. R. Landon for inspired bibliographical advice. Drs. Peter and Elizabeth Manning of Durham University and Professor Sam Taylor of St. Andrews University gave generous friendship and encouragement during the early stages of my research.

I should like to express my gratitude to certain libraries, especially the Musiksammlung and the

Theatersammlung of the Austrian Nationalbibliothek; to the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels and particularly to Dr. Yves Lenoir from the music department there; to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna and to Frau Dr. Mittringer for her help; to the Library of the University of St. Andrews and the Germanic Institute in London and to William Abbey who aided me in both places. Special thanks are due to Susan Tucker and her staff at the Inter-Library Loan Service at the library of the University of Western Kentucky: Their ability to obtain unusual books was remarkable.

I am grateful to the University of St. Andrews for a three year research scholarship which supported my research in Scotland between 1976 and 1979; to the Austrian government for a bursary for study in Vienna during the summer of 1978; to the St. Leonards post-graduate research fund for a grant to travel to Vienna in the summer of 1978 and to the travel fund of the University of St. Andrews for several travel grants.

Without the help and encouragement of friends and family I would have lacked the courage to complete this dissertation. I am grateful to Charles and Laura Gradwell who helped me with my first visit to Vienna, and to my parents, who were generous in every way. My widely scattered family in Belgium, Brazil, England and USA were always kind and supportive. Robert Redwood made his first transatlantic flight with a heavy suitcase of A4

paper to enable my typing to begin. Members of the Smiths Grove Baptist Church helped with proof reading.

Lastly, I acknowledge the help of Tom, who for the first two years of his marriage, had a student for a wife and the patience of Job.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SPELLING

The original spelling of quotations in French and German (which often contain errors and misprints) has been retained.

Occasionally, library references are included in bibliographical information in footnotes:

GMF	Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde
StB	Stadtbibliothek (Vienna)
VMsmlg	Musiksammlung of the Austrian Nationalbibliothek
VThsmlg	Theatersammlung of the Austrian Nationalbibliothek

Periodicals are abbreviated as follows:

<u>AMZ</u>	<u>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</u>
<u>JAMS</u>	<u>Journal of the American Musicological Society</u>
<u>ML</u>	<u>Music and Letters</u>
<u>MQ</u>	<u>Musical Quarterly</u>
<u>OmZ</u>	<u>Österreichische Musikzeitschrift</u>
<u>PRMA</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association</u>
<u>TZ</u>	<u>Wiener Theaterzeitung</u>
<u>WAMZ</u>	<u>Die allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den Österreichischen Kaiserstaat</u>

A more complete list of abbreviated theatre names can be found in the appendix (see page 687). Occasionally theatres are referred to in footnotes thus:

BTh	Burgtheater
KTh	Kärntnerthortheater

MONETARY VALUES

It is difficult to establish monetary equivalents between eighteenth or early nineteenth century prices and prices today -- or between currency in France and Austria in the early nineteenth century. The following is only a general guide.

France

In eighteenth century France, the principal coins were the louis (gold), the écu (silver) and the sol (silver and copper, or copper).

1 louis (gold)	15 livres
1 pistole	10 livres
1 écu (gold)	6 livres
1 écu (silver)	3 livres
1 livre	20 sols
1 sol	12 deniers

In 1775, a man's court suit cost 15,000 livres; a horse 80-100 livres; a seat at the parterre of the Opéra 2 livres 8 sols; a place at the parterre of the Comédie Française 1 livre. In 1786 the score of the 3-act opera Richard Coeur-de-lion cost 12 livres, and the separate orchestral parts cost 9 livres. Other scores contemporary with Richard cost between 15 and 24 livres and the parts ranged from 9 to 12 livres. In 1788, a pound of coffee cost about 1.5 livres. A larger opera score: that of Cherubini's Lodoiska, which was published in 1791, cost 60 livres. At that time, the daily wage of a workman at the Gobelins factory was 4 livres; a good meal for an English traveller 4.5 livres and the best seats at the Salle Favart cost 10 livres 10 sols. In 1796, the basic currency was changed from livre to franc. The new French franc was worth almost the same as the old livre: 1 franc equalled 1 livre 3 deniers. In 1799, the score of Méhul's Ariodant cost 40 francs.

Austria

The gulden (fl. florin) in use throughout the Austrian empire generally consisted of 60 kreuzer, but its value varied from region to region. The thaler, when not specified, may be either the Reichsthaler (Imperial thaler -- 1.5 fl or 90 kr), or the Spezies- or Konversations-thaler (2 fl or 120 kr). In about 1800, Castelli was paid 30 fl for translating a French play. Court archives show that between 45 and 250 fl were paid for newly-composed ballets, texts or operas in 1799 to 1800. Vigano, the ballet master at the court theatre, was paid 4500 fl a year, over twice as much as the leading actors.

From 1785 to 1804, prices in Vienna doubled. The budget of a Viennese bachelor in 1785 included 60 fl for rent, 24 for wood and light, 180 fl for food. In 1804, 128 fl were required for rent, 40 for wood and light and 500 for food.

In 1810, there was severe depreciation in Austria. In 1811, imperial decree ordered the exchange of Banco-Zettel for Einlösungsscheine (redemption certificates). 1 gulden Einlösungsschein equalled 5 gulden Bancozettel (Wiener Währung). Circulation was thus reduced from 1,060 million to 212 million gulden. In 1813, new inflation occurred with the issue of Anticipationsscheine. In 1816, there was 60% devaluation. 2.5 paper gulden then equalled 1 silver gulden. In 1816, the Österreichische National Zettel Bank was created as the central bank and Austrian bankruptcy was finally averted.

In newspaper reports, the franc was still often referred to as the livre. In 1801, Steibelt was reported in German papers to have been paid 3600 livres for arranging Haydn's Creation for performance in Paris and for playing the continuo in it.¹ Madame Molée was reported in 1807 to have made 60,000 livres from her translation of Kotzebue's Menschenhass und Reue, through payment and copyright dues.² To Germans and Austrians, French salaries often appeared to be scandalously high. They were sometimes quoted in support of justified claims that German and Austrian artists were poorly remunerated. It is likely that reports of French earnings were sometimes exaggerated or misleading.

In an article in the Wiener Theaterzeitung, Kotzebue reckoned that 25-30,000 livres, a pension for a prominent French actor, was equivalent to about 1,400- 1,500 gulden in 1807. If his calculation is correct, we may assume that at that time, 20 livres equalled 1 Austrian gulden.³

1. AMZ, 22 April, 1801, column 39.

2. TZ, 4 July 1807, p. 94.

3. TZ, 4 July 1807, p. 94. Other sources referred to: W.H. Bruford, Germany in the eighteenth century (Cambridge, 1935, rpt. 1971); David Charlton, "Orchestration and Orchestral Practice in Paris, 1789-1810". (Diss. Cambridge, 1973); O.E. Deutsch, Mozart: A documentary biography (London, 1965), "Wiener Musikhonore seit 200 Jahren", GmZ, ix (1963); Pierre Peyronnet, La mise en scène au XVIII^e siècle, (Paris, 1974); Franz Pick and René Sédillot, All the monies of the world (New York, 1971).

INTRODUCTION

Opéra-comique

Opéra-comique is the French equivalent of English ballad opera and German Singspiel, being a popular entertainment in which a spoken play is interspersed with light musical numbers. Performed in the vernacular, it offered to eighteenth and nineteenth century audiences an easily accessible alternative to the Italian operas being performed throughout Europe. The plots of opéra-comique were, during the eighteenth century, frequently taken from the short stories of writers such as Marmontel; they usually centered on contemporary situations, were light and often witty. Opéra-comique "arias" often resembled folk-song, being simple in construction and popular in character.

As an entertainment which combined speech and music, opéra-comique went back a long way. One of its ancestors was a spectacle called Le jeu de Robin et de Marion, given at the French court in Naples in 1283;¹ a closer relation taken by some authorities as the first "real"

¹. Georges Cucuel, Les créateurs de l'opéra-comique français (Paris, 1914), p. 9ff.

opéra-comique, Les forces de l'amour et de la magie, was performed in Paris in 1678.¹

The large Paris fairs, the Foires St. Germain, St. Laurent and St. Ovide -- popular places of entertainment for people from all walks of life -- were an important influence on the development of opéra-comique in the first half of the eighteenth century.²

Alongside their stalls for tightrope walkers and performing bears, their pleasure gardens and refreshment halls, the fairs had a small theatre where light dramatic entertainments could be provided. Opéras-comiques were performed there, and although music at first played a relatively minor role in these entertainments, the fair theatres, from about 1718, had a small orchestra. The opera music, originally unaccompanied melody, became gradually more complex and, by the mid-eighteenth century, included ensembles and choruses.

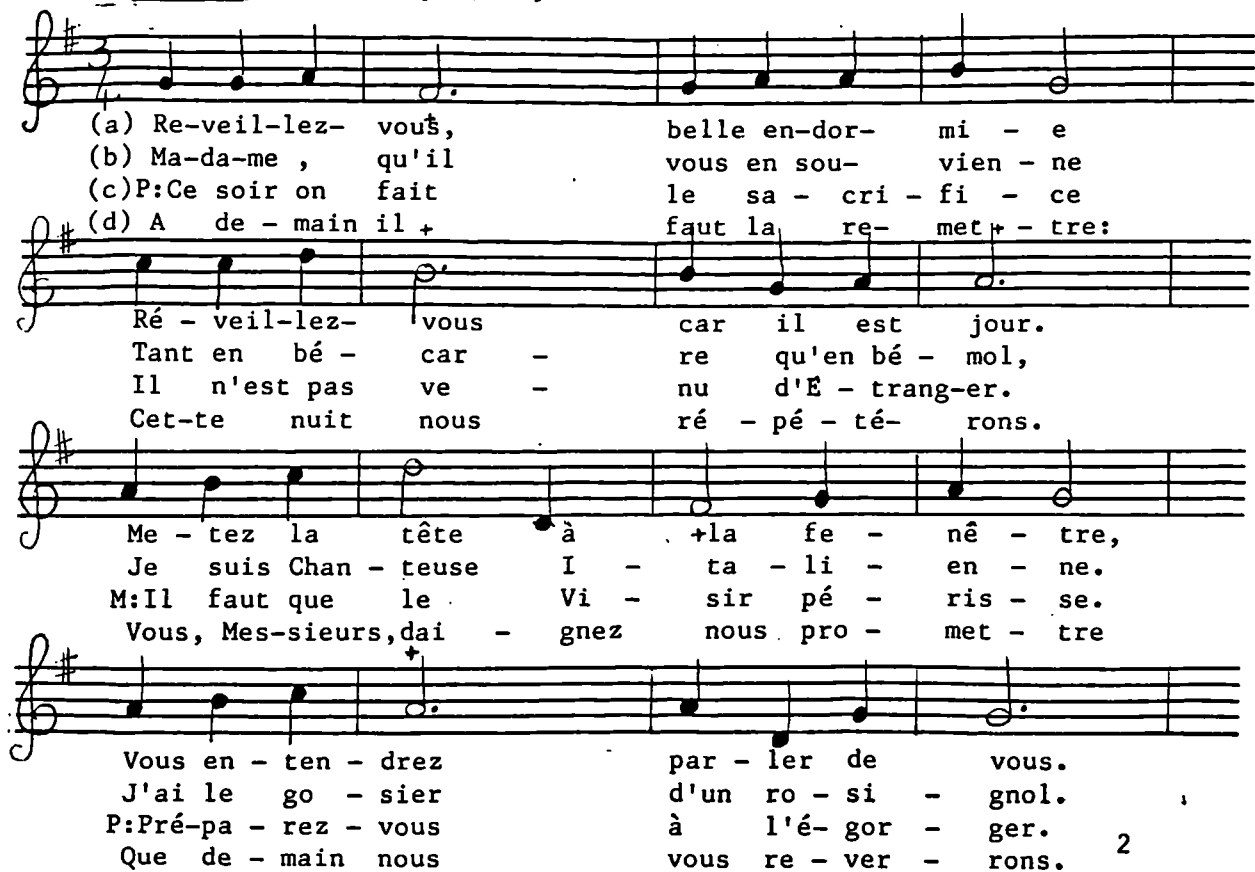
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1. Max Aghion, Le théâtre à Paris au 18e siècle, (Paris, 1926), p. 57.
 2. A. Iacuzzi, The European Vogue of Favart, (New York, 1932), pp. 6-8.

There were three types of song in the opéra-comique of the first half of the eighteenth century.¹

The most common one in the early opéras-comiques was the vaudeville, a strophic song where new words, to suit the plot, were set to old familiar melodies. These melodies were often distinctive in their use of irregular bar lengths and preference for minor keys and some of them became absorbed into folk song.

An example of how a vaudeville melody might reappear with different words in several operas is given below:

- (a) vaudeville with original words
- (b) L. Fuzelier: Le pharaon, in Le Sage: Le théâtre de la foire, ii (Amsterdam, 1722), 437
- (c) dialogue song between Pierott and Mezzetin in Le Sage: Arlequin roy de Serendib, Act I scene xi, in Le théâtre de la foire, i (Amsterdam, 1722)
- (d) vaudeville final for Pannard: La répétition interrompue, in Pannard: Théâtre, ii (Paris, 1763), 444



(a) Re-veil-lez- vous, belle en-dor- mi - e
 (b) Ma-da-me, qu'il vous en sou- vien - ne
 (c) P: Ce soir on fait le sa - cri - fi - ce
 (d) A de - main il + faut la re- met - tre:

Ré - veil-lez- vous car il est jour.
 Tant en bé - car - re qu'en bé - mol,
 Il n'est pas ve - nu d'E - trang-er.
 Cet-te nuit nous ré - pé - té- rons.

Me - tez la tête à la fe - nê - tre,
 Je suis Chan - teuse I - ta - li - en - ne.
 M: Il faut que le Vi - sir pé - ris - se.
 Vous, Mes-sieurs, dai - gnez nous pro - met - tre

Vous en - ten - drez par - ler de vous.
 J'ai le go - sier d'un ro - si - gnol.
 P: Pré-pa - rez - vous à l'é - gor - ger.
 Que de - main nous vous re - ver - rons. 2

1. Napoleon - Maurice Bernardin, La Comédie Italienne en France et les théâtres de la foire et du boulevard (1570-1791), (Paris, 1902, rpt: Geneva, 1962), p. 70.

2. As quoted in the article "Vaudeville" in The New Grove.

Arias might also be taken from the serious operas of composers like Lully (1639-1687), indeed the fair theatres worked in direct competition with the Paris Opéra, which took repeated measures to curb the success of its plebeian rival: use of music from these serious operas amounted to a kind of parody. Lastly, came the specially composed new music: "airs nouveaux" to which a composer rather than an arranger could be ascribed. This third type of song gradually became the most common kind in the opéras-comiques written after the middle of the century.

Opéra-comique closely reflected the age for which it was written. After the death of Louis XIV in 1715, Paris became an openly licentious place; and if the description of the city in the 1730s given by the Abbé Prévost is to be believed,¹ the French capital, despite its charm and artistic reputation, had more than its share of cheats, bawds, elderly gentlemen seeking pleasure and courtesans willing to gratify them.

The opéras-comiques written before about 1745 reflected this spirit of abandon with their bawdy songs, double entendres and careless joie de vivre. Their low moral tone did not however preclude visits to the fair theatres by people of high rank,

1: Antoine-François Prévost d'Exilés, Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, vol. VII of, Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du Monde, 7 Vols. (Paris, 1731).

who would go there incognito. Opéra-comique was raised to public respectability largely through the works of Charles Simon Favart (1710 - 1792) who, working with the fair theatres, became a distinguished playwright. Favart's wife, the actress Madame Chantilly, became famous for her part in the reform of eighteenth-century theatrical costume. In Favart's parody of Le devin du village, Les amours de Bastien et de Bastienne (1753), she appeared as Bastienne in a simple linen dress and unpowdered hair.¹

Favart's writing had a delicacy which enabled him to transform the old opéra-comique into an entertainment whose plots were of a gently pastoral nature. There were intrigues of a discreetly romantic kind, tales of Eastern adventure and lost identity. Favart's dimpled shepherdesses and portrayal of the countryside were highly stylised. On 3 October 1775, Voltaire wrote to Favart to congratulate him on his achievements: "Vous embellissez tout ce que vous touchez" he wrote, "C'est vous qui le premier formâtes un spectacle regulier et ingénieux du théâtre qui, avant vous, n'était pas fait pour la bonne compagnie. Il est devenu, grâce à vos soins, le charme de tous les honnêtes gens."² Voltaire was probably exaggerating when he

1. "Charles Simon Favart", The New Grove, 1980 ed.

2. Voltaire, letter to Favart, 3 October 1775. François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, Correspondance. Ed. Theodore Besterman. 107 vols. (Geneva, 1953-65), XCII.

claimed in 1770 that opéra-comique was all that was to be heard in the French provinces,¹ but it did soon become very popular and it was given all over France by touring companies.²

By 1750 the fairs were on the decline, but French comic opera was being performed in permanent theatres with better musical facilities;³ despite fierce competition in Paris from both the supporters of Italian and serious French opera, it continued to flourish. The performance of opera buffa had given rise to controversies in the French capital about the alleged supremacy of French or Italian opera. As a result of their performance side by side, opéra-comique absorbed some characteristics of its rival, particularly an Italian lyricism.

The composers of opéra-comique became increasingly important; previously the arranger or librettist had played the most significant part in its creation. Duni, born in Italy in 1709, was one of the earliest serious musicians to take an interest in opéra-comique.⁴ He wrote his first French opera in 1755 and the following decade saw the rise of the composers

1. Humphrey Burton, "French Provincial Academies," in Music and Letters, xxxvii (July, 1956), p. 269.

2. And also in other countries, see p. 3.

3. Cucuel, p. 54.

4. Martin Cooper, Opéra-Comique (London, 1949), p. 30.

Philidor, Monsigny and Grétry. Opéra-comique was now a courtly entertainment, not merely in Paris, but at courts all over Europe.

Opéra-comique was changing rapidly; the musical organisation of the operas was becoming highly developed. By 1770, composers were making sophisticated use of reminiscence motif, expressive orchestration and fine dramatic timing in their works. The libretti became more serious: the pastoral tone of Duni's works, the bourgeois subjects set by Philidor, and Monsigny's sentimentality, gave way to serious texts tackling such subjects as freedom from oppression and injustice. The French Revolution exercised a great influence on opéra-comique, the style of which now became increasingly indistinguishable from that of grand opera; by the mid-nineteenth century opéra-comique as a separate genre almost ceased to exist. The alternation of speech with song, which had been the hallmark of the genre, made way for through-composed music, and the music took over the role of the spoken dialogue as vocal numbers became more intricate and operas more of an organic whole. Cherubini's opéra-comique Les deux journées, first performed in Paris in 1800, was to be one of the works most admired by Beethoven.

The French operas considered in greatest detail in this dissertation are those which were first

performed in Paris from 1770 until 1818, and which were given in Vienna in German translation between 1790 and 1819.

Most of them are opéra-comiques. However, French composers whose works enjoyed popularity in Vienna did not always confine themselves to this one kind of opera, and occasionally Viennese theatres experimented with mounting French grand operas or French ballets: works which were described variously by their composers as "ballet héroïque", "drame", "opéra", "opéra-ballet", or "tragédie lyrique". In order to complete the picture and avoid giving the erroneous impression that opéra-comiques were the only French operas to have been performed in Vienna, I have included in this study the small group of exceptions.

CHAPTER I

I. French troupes in Vienna 1752-1772

In later years, Goethe vividly remembered the visit during his childhood of a troupe of French players to his home town of Frankfurt. As he wrote in Dichtung und Wahrheit "Ich kann mir die bebänderten Buben und Mädchen und ihre Bewegungen noch jetzt zurückrufen".¹ In 1759, the troupe performed the first French plays and operas he had ever seen: Le devin du village by Rousseau, Blaise's Annette et Lubin and

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Dichtung und Wahrheit, vol. IX of Goethes Werke, ed. Erich Trunz, (Munich, 1974; rpt. 1978), Pt. I, Bk. 3; p. 91.

Monsigny's Rose et Colas.¹ Recognising the boy's interest, Goethe's grandfather gave him a season ticket, enabling him to attend every performance, and this first encounter with French opera and drama inspired Goethe to experiment with the writing of works of his own in French.²

A young composer was returning from Italy in 1766.³ In order to earn enough money for his travels, he spent some months in Geneva on his way home and took 20 private singing pupils. During his stay in Switzerland he heard opéra-comique for the first time—modern French operas: Tom

1. Le devin du village, text and music by J. J. Rousseau, 1st pfd Fontainebleau, 18 October 1752; Rose et Colas, text by J. M. Sedaine, music by Monsigny, 1st pfd Paris Comédie Italienne, 8 March 1764; Annette et Lubin, text by C. S. Favart, music by Blaise, 1st pfd Paris, Comédie Italienne, 15 February 1762. Goethe gives the date of the French troupe's visit as 1759 (when he was 10 years old). Its arrival in Frankfurt coincided with French occupation of the town and a French officer was billeted in Goethe's home: as a result, Goethe acquired a fluent knowledge of French. The French army stayed in Frankfurt until 1762, but two of the operas Goethe recalls having seen at this time were not given in Paris until 1762 and 1764. Possibly he saw them performed by French players in Germany on a later occasion.
2. Goethe, Dichtung und Wahrheit, Pt. I, Bk. 3; p. 90.
3. Grétry recalls leaving Rome on 1 January 1767. A.E.M. Grétry, Mémoires, ou Essais sur la musique, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1797), pp. 127-128. But The New Grove says he left before the carnival in 1766. "Grétry", The New Grove, 1980 ed.. The three operas Grétry recalls having seen were performed in Geneva in French in 1766. A. Loewenberg, Annals of Opera, 3rd ed. (Totowa, N.J., 1978).

Jones, Le maréchal ferrant and Rose et Colas¹, performed by a visiting troupe of players. After he had become accustomed to French singing and to the combination of spoken dialogue and music, this young man, so recently impressed with Italian opera, became convinced by the superiority of spoken dialogue in opera and determined to try out his talent for writing similar works. He made his home in Paris, and despite early difficulties there and fierce competition, worked under a conviction that he would be able to compete successfully with those composers whose works he had heard by chance when travelling through Switzerland.² Grétry became one of the most important eighteenth century composers of opéra-comique.

Opéra-comique was introduced to many European towns by groups of French actors. They played a significant part in the diffusion of modern French ideas. Travelling throughout Europe during the eighteenth century they brought excitement to provincial towns, and prestige to foreign courts. And in spreading early opéra-comique, they prepared the way for the larger and more significant opéras-comiques of the French Revolution, destined to be an important influence in the development of Romantic opera in Germany.

1. Tom Jones, text by Poinsinet and Devesne, music by Philidor, 1st pfd Versailles 20 March 1765; Le maréchal ferrant, text by Quétant, music by Philidor, 1st pfd Fontainebleau, 3 November 1762; Rose et Colas, text by Sedaine, music by Monsigny, 1st pfd Paris Comédie Italienne, 8 March 1764.

2. Grétry, Mémoires, pp. 127-134.

French troupes played in Vienna between 1752 and 1790; the length of their stay varied, and so did the quality of their performance. The first two troupes have been well documented,¹ but those which played in the Austrian capital in 1775, 1776, and the winter of 1780 to 1781, have received scant attention despite their importance for having brought works by Monsigny and Grétry to Vienna. The activity of these troupes is briefly described in this first chapter and the repertoires of these different players are given in the appendix.

A. Austria in the eighteenth century

Although ineffectually governed for most of the eighteenth century, France was the most powerful state in continental Europe, and its cultural dictator. Members of the middle classes -- as well as the aristocracy of the courts -- looked to France as their model for tastes in literature, art, fashion and music. A French architect commenting on the prevalence throughout Europe of French building styles, wrote in 1765 that Paris was to Europe what Athens had been to ancient Greece.² Germany, impoverished by long wars, was weak, divided and especially receptive to foreign influence.

1. Robert Haas, Gluck und Durazzo im Burgtheater, (Vienna, 1925); Richard Henn, "Das Wiener Théâtre français près de la cour," Diss; Vienna, 1937; Harald Kunz, "Höfisches Theater in Wien zur Zeit der Maria Theresia," Diss, Vienna, 1954; Julia Witzenez, Le Théâtre français de Vienne (1752-1772), Diss, Szeged 1932 (Szeged, 1932); Gustav Zechmeister, Die wiener Theater nächst der Burg und nächst dem Kärntnerthor von 1747 bis 1776, (Vienna, 1971).

2. Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment, (Harmondsworth, England, 1968), p. 53.

The situation in Vienna was paradoxical. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the name "Habsburg" had come to be associated with grandeur. Some of the most celebrated buildings in Vienna date from this time and the large-scale festal performances of Italian baroque operas at the court of Emperor Karl VI were famous. Yet when Maria Theresia succeeded her father to the throne in 1740 she realised how much sixty years of almost continuous warfare had drained the country and stunted its development. The treasury was now empty and the country in need of reforms. The War of Austrian Succession followed, from 1741 to 1748, and then from 1756 to 1763 the Seven Years War. The thirty years of comparative stability after this last conflict finally allowed the Empress and her two sons, Joseph II and Leopold II who succeeded her on the Austrian throne, to accomplish change and modernisation.¹ Nevertheless, Austria still lagged behind France, England and other European countries.

And so some travellers, who had heard sparkling reports of the Viennese court and come to the Austrian capital expecting to find "the Athens of Germany",² were disappointed. The poor economic situation cast a gloom over the city. Austria's main industries, textiles and porcelain, were undeveloped and until at least the 1760's, were regarded as oddities.³ In 1772 when Dr. Charles Burney visited Vienna, he remarked on the "wretched

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1. See Ernst Wangermann, The Austrian Achievement, (London, 1973), for a study of these reforms.
 2. Like, for example, Baron Riesbeck, Travels through Germany, trans Rev. Mr. Maty, (London, 1787), I, p. 280.
 3. Wangermann, The Austrian Achievement, p. 107.

goods, ill manufactured and ill fashioned".¹ Taxes were high in order to support the army and provide revenue, making accommodation expensive. A French soldier who visited Vienna in 1773 noted:

logements excessivement chers, plus qu'à Paris. Etiquettes sévères ... peu de société et d'esprit de société ... point de galanterie, encore moins de passions -- les hommes n'ont point assez d'esprit pour se rendre aimables, ni assez d'énergie pour aimer. 2

Baron Riesbeck who stayed in Vienna in 1787 found the people apathetic, lacking in mental alertness, and ill-informed.³

The intellectual gloom of which visitors complained (as well as the actual darkness of the centre of Vienna caused by the tall buildings)⁴ was not improved by a harsh system of repression and censorship. Dr. Burney reported being very carefully searched for forbidden "dangerous" books on entering Austria in 1772.⁵ Some travellers⁶ report that such measures were always ineffectual; whether they were or not, freedom of speech was not officially

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1. Charles Burney, The present state of music in Germany and the United Provinces, (London, 1775), I, p. 210.
 2. G.A.H. Guibert, Journal d'un voyage en Allemagne fait en 1773, (Paris, 1773) I, p. 286.
 3. Riesbeck, I, p. 287.
 4. The centre of Vienna was enclosed by defensive walls and building space inside the city was limited.
 5. Burney, I, p. 208.
 6. For example, Riesbeck, I, p. 219 (in 1787); Carl Anton Postl [Charles Sealsfield], Austria as it is, (London, 1828), p. 185 ff; Peter Evan Turnbull, Austria, (London, 1840), p. 271.

encouraged in Austria until the 1780s¹ and then it was only a few years before the harsh measures were reintroduced.

The critical Baron Riesbeck found something to praise in Vienna, however: the theatres, which he noted were both popular and of a good standard. "When the conversation takes a more serious turn" he wrote, "it is always about the theatre, which is the utmost length to which criticism or observation ever extend in this country".²

B. The Viennese theatres

In 1752, Vienna possessed two public theatres, the Burgtheater and the Kärntnerthortheater. Both had been granted a royal privilege and bore the title "Imperial and Royal" (K.K.); but the Burgtheater, because actually situated within a courtyard of the Burg, was the theatre more closely associated with the court.

The Kärntnerthortheater, near to one of the entrances to the walled city, the Carinthian Gate, had been built in 1709 and was leased to a German troupe in 1712. If, as an eighteenth-century visitor to Vienna looking forward, like Dr. Burney, to an evening of good Italian opera, one had ordered a cab to the "court theatre" but been taken to the wrong one,³ a pleasant surprise might have been in

1. See Leslie Bodi, Tauwetter in Wien (Frankfurt, 1977), about this brief period of freedom.

2. Riesbeck, I, p. 238.

3. Burney, I, p. 211.

store. During most of the time between 1752 and 1772, the Kärntnerthortheater was the home of German players who specialised in "Volkskomödie", Viennese farce of an earthy nature centring on traditional characters known as Hanswurst, Crispin or Bernadon, who were dim-witted but sly; cowardly but intent on obtaining the good things of life. These comedies, full of slapstick fun and often unashamedly vulgar, were popular with the aristocracy as well as the lower classes.

The other court theatre, the Burgtheater, had been opened by a private individual, Karl Selliers, for use as an imperial opera house in 1742. Because of its close association with the court it was not allowed to play on Catholic saints' days, during periods of royal mourning, or during Lent. The Habsburg court made exacting demands on the theatre, which was required, for example, for the entertainment of foreign dignitaries, but was very unwilling to pay a reasonable subsidy towards this amenity.

By 1747, Selliers found the financial strain too great and his place was taken by a nobleman, Lopresti, to whom the royal privilege for the performance of opera was transferred. Lopresti received 40,000 fl. from a group of noblemen towards his venture and he used this money to bring new Italian singers into the company.¹ In 1751 he also took over the lease of the Kärntnerthortheater, and under his management Italian opera, especially Jomelli, Galuppi and Hasse; tragedy, burlesque and "regular drama", alternated on a weekly plan.² The Empress became increasingly concerned about the low morals of the improvised German comedy.³

1. Heinz Kindermann, Theatergeschichte Europas, V (Salzburg, 1962), p. 30.

2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 31.

3. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 32-33.

In early 1752, however, Lopresti also had to announce his bankruptcy, and this second failure, apart from being an indictment of the court, was significant because it showed that a private individual could not now hope to mount Italian operas profitably. The birthday celebrations for Karl VI which had taken place on 1 October 1740, coming to a climax with a grand festal performance of Il Natale di Giove, proved to have been the last Viennese festivities in full Italian baroque style.

The Emperor Karl died three weeks after his birthday, and the contrast between the heavy baroque Karlskirche with its fat pillars, reminiscent of the monuments of ancient Rome, and Schönbrunn Palace, lighter and simpler, in the Rococo style, built for Karl's daughter, is a good example of the changes in taste which became apparent during the new reign.

Aspects of baroque opera such as changes of complex scenery, use of machines for special effects, a fondness for display, and the frequent intervention into human affairs of supernatural beings, were to live on healthily in the Viennese theatrical tradition well into the nineteenth century in the Zauberstücke of Perinet, Gleich, Bäuerle, Raimund and Nestroy. And of course Lopresti's successors at the court theatres continued to mount Italian operas which enjoyed immense and lasting success: Gluck, Mozart, Martín y Soler and Weigl composed operas in Italian; singers from Italy performed in the Austrian capital throughout the nineteenth century; and during the 1820s and 1830s Rossini and Donizetti filled the Viennese theatres.

But during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Italians of the old school, like the poet Metastasio, must have begun to realise that they could no longer presume to have total musical control of the theatres in Vienna. Metastasio is reported by Burney in 1772 as having refused to write an article about

opera for the Encyclopédie "supposing it impossible that his sentiments on the subject should be pleasing to the French nation".¹ He died in 1782, an old man. He had lived in Vienna for 50 years and had never learnt to speak German.

Another country whose influence on Austria had previously been strong, but was now weakening, was Spain. Links with the Spanish Habsburgs had formerly been firm and the court ceremonial in Vienna was based on Spanish traditions; Austria had been in close contact with Spain also through the Habsburg territories in the Netherlands. The Spanish Riding School, commissioned by Karl VI, was to be a nostalgic reminder of Austrian contacts with Spain. The Habsburgs were badly shaken by the loss of the imperial lands in Italy to the Bourbon rulers of Spain and the loss to the Bourbons of Spain itself.

C. French culture in Vienna

Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736) had been one of the first people to bring to Vienna an intelligent and informed appreciation of France. French by birth and descended from the houses of Savoy, Bourbon and Habsburg, he had been prevented by his sickly appearance from pursuing his chosen military career in France. So in 1683 he had come to Vienna where he distinguished himself as a politician and military leader. In addition to his considerable services to the Habsburgs, which earned him prestige and respect, the Prince was a connoisseur of the arts and a man of letters. His standing at court must have meant that his opinions about artistic matters were listened to seriously; and he was decidedly francophile.² In the year of Prince

1. Burney, I, p. 232.

2. Gyula Müller, ^{La} Culture française littéraire à Vienne au XVIII^e siècle, (Vienna, 1930), pp. 79-82.

Eugene's death, Maria Theresia married Franz of Lorraine. French was already the normal language of court and diplomacy in Vienna but the acquisition of Lorraine (from France) encouraged French culture.¹ Maria Theresia was to give her daughters French Christian names. Lastly, the improvement and modernisation of Austria's old-fashioned institutions brought the country closer to recent developments in other countries, and especially to France.

The wars against France in the first half of the eighteenth century do not seem to have aroused in the Austrians any personal antagonism towards the enemy. The people of Germany and Austria could even regard the billeting of French soldiers in their towns as a welcome relief from the dullness of everyday life: Goethe,² and Josef Lange,³ the Burgtheater actor, both recall it as a happy and exciting part of their childhood. But if the wars themselves did little to sour the good feelings of the people of one nation towards those of another during the eighteenth century, the political alliances, territorial gains or losses made as a result, probably did affect cultural trends. The long enmity between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs finally came to an end in 1756 with the defensive alliance between Austria and France.

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1. French was also the language of the Austrian army, Müller, p. 79. Müller identifies the French vogue as having begun around 1730.
 2. Goethe, Dichtung und Wahrheit, Part I, Bk. 3, pp. 90-91.
 3. Joseph Lange, Biographie, (Vienna, 1808), p. 8.

From 1740, French comedies were performed at the Viennese court: the works of Favart, le Sage and Chaussée made their first appearance in Vienna at this time, many of them in amateur performances in which members of the imperial family participated.¹ Performances of French plays were also given by pupils of Viennese schools such as the Theresianische Collegium.² Firm plans for closer artistic links between France and Austria were introduced a year later by Kaunitz who, as envoy travelling between London, Paris and Vienna, had excellent opportunities for visiting foreign theatres and for assessing for himself the value of modern European theatre.³ In 1753, Count Kaunitz was made Imperial Chancellor, acquiring full responsibility for foreign affairs and for all matters relating to the Imperial House. In this capacity he played an important part in forging the alliance of 1756.

After the middle of the eighteenth century a French vogue was strongly established in Vienna. At the time of declining interest in Italy and Spain, Austria had not yet a strong enough sense of identity or enough satisfying music, drama or literature to exist without a steady flow of art and ideas from abroad. Vienna followed the example of other European cities in turning to France.

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1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 19; for example on 23 and 24 August 1749, works by Le Sage and Favart were performed at the Austrian court, Haas, p. 7.
 2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 18.
 3. Haas, p. 6.

It was the beginning of a vogue which lasted well into the nineteenth century and which was to have an important influence on Austrian dialect.¹ Travellers during the second half of the century were to comment on the idolisation of the French, in all parts of Germany. G.A.H. Guibert (see page 6 above) reported in 1773 that the ladies of Berlin he met on his journey followed French fashion "à la fureur" and spoke French among themselves. The same was true of Vienna, and women from Warsaw would travel to the Austrian capital to purchase their garments from the French seamstresses there.² Viennese imitation of the ^{French,} and 'the Austrians' - sometimes shallow understanding and poor observation of them, was often commented on and became a favourite subject for Viennese satirists. Baron Riesbeck, who visited southern Germany during the 1780s, remarked on the peculiarity of the French-influenced clothing: French styles appeared in the bright mixed colours traditional for south German costume. The men, especially, spoilt the effect by wearing too much gold, and the general impression was tasteless and not French at all.³ By the time Riesbeck was writing, the Empress's reforms had given Vienna several good schools, but he was surprised to observe that parents preferred to allow their children to learn bad French:

so many families still prefer to trust their children to the private education of French women (who are commonly cast-off strumpets, or foolish chamber-maids, who prefer being governesses here to making fires and warming beds in France); ... such swarms of French and Italian abbés are still allowed to educate the young men .⁴

1. See Félix Kreissler, Le Français dans le théâtre viennois du 19^e siècle, (Paris, 1973).

2. Guibert, I, p. 184; II, p. 32.

3. Riesbeck, I, p. 102.

4. Riesbeck, I, p. 281.

The discrepancy between the opinions and tastes of the general public, who had never been to France and who knew very little about it, and the vision and informed judgement of certain well-travelled statesmen and diplomatists (who had the power to affect artistic policy) was to create tension in the Viennese theatres as far as the production of opéra-comique was concerned. The personal preferences of the aristocracy counted less when the rising middle class became the most powerful part of the audience.

D. The first French troupe

Few Viennese commoners could have seen the performances at court given by the first troupe of French players which finally arrived in Vienna in 1752, although attempts were made to attract a wider audience because of the large losses to the players incurred.¹ They were employed to entertain the Austrian nobility and travelled with the court to its different palaces. For over ten years the Habsburg government which had been unwilling to subsidize Italian opera was to pay large sums for a resident French theatre.²

When Lopresti's management had failed in 1752, Count Franz Esterhazy took over responsibility for the theatres, the Genoese ambassador to Vienna becoming his assistant. This Italian, Count Durazzo, a lover of art and especially of French art, had moved to Vienna in 1749 and become a favourite at court having secured a foothold in the Viennese aristocracy by marriage.³ According to an early Austrian

1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 37.

2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 36.

3. Haas, pp. 6-7.

He left Vienna for a short time in 1752 and did not return until after the first performance of the French troupe.

historian, Oehler, he could not speak German;¹ as an Italian he was never a champion of German culture. Like his later collaborator Gluck, Durazzo was an opportunist. Having begun as Esterhazy's assistant, in 1754 he assumed full charge of the programme and collaborated with Kaunitz in bringing French artists to the Austrian capital. Count Starhemberg, the Austrian emissary for Poland in Paris, and Charles Simon Favart, the French playwright, helped Count Durazzo secure suitable players. Favart agreed to continue to correspond with Durazzo, giving him information about the Paris theatres, news about the latest opéras-comiques, and advice about new singers for Vienna. The presence at the Habsburg court of a troupe of French actors was good for Austria's reputation and a symbol of its aspirations. Berlin had had a troupe of French actors at court since 1702.² With the arrival of French players imminent, the Wiener Wirtschaftscommission issued a decree on 3 March 1752 to the effect that "anstatt der angetragenen Italienischen Oper nunmehr eine französische Komödie dahier abgehalten...werden solle".³ Another significant change affecting the management of the theatres took place in 1752. Empress Maria Theresia, who had been becoming increasingly concerned about the low morals of the improvised German comedy

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1. Oehler, Geschichte des gesammten Theaterwesens zu Wien, (Vienna, 1803), p. 147.
 2. J. J. Olivier, Le comédiens français dans les cours d'Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle, (Paris, 1901 - 1905), II, p. 3.
 3. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 34, quoting "Hofdekret der Wiener Wirtschaftskommission", 3 March 1752.

(whose contents it was almost impossible to control), passed a ban on German comedy. German works, like those of Weiskern, which did not fall under the ban, were subject to the closest scrutiny. The law was unpopular and ineffectual (the Emperor himself is reported to have objected to it); legally, however, only French, Italian or Spanish comedies (which included the popular works of Goldoni and Gozzi¹) were allowed in Vienna, in addition to ballet.²

The French troupe was ostensibly managed by a society called "La haute Direction Impériale Royale", but in fact by Count Esterhazy, and its primary task was to entertain the Austrian court. In this capacity, the troupe played not only at the Burgtheater in the centre of Vienna (where performances were also open to commoners), but also at the two country palaces used by the Empress:³ Schönbrunn, to which the court moved in the summertime, and Laxenburg, a hunting lodge, 25 miles from the capital.⁴

1. See Magdalena Weingeist, "Goldoni, Gozzi und das Wiener Theater," Diss. Vienna, 1938.

2. Haas, p. 12.

3. Haas, pp. 52-53.

4. Schönbrunn possessed a beautiful and well-equipped little theatre still occasionally used today. That belonging to Laxenburg was reported by Zinzendorf in his diary as being "plus petit encore que celui de Schönbrunn, mais fort mignon, de très jolies decorations, mais à cause qu'il est trop venté et qu'il y a tant de portes la voix se perd. La famille impériale est assise devant l'orchestre par consequence elle est mieux à portée d'ecouter qu'au théâtre de Vienne."

Count Karl von Zinzendorf, "Journal", Ms. Haus-Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna; diary entry, 3 May 1761. Zinzendorf was an eminent Austrian aristocrat and statesman who kept a private diary for 51 years; it contains much useful information about the theatres, of which he was an avid supporter.

The repertoire of the French players also included tragedies by Voltaire, and by other eighteenth century writers such as Lemierre, Longepierre, and Guymonde de la Touche, the comedies of writers such as Regnard, Boissy, La Chaussée, Destouches and Marivaux, with their ballets ("sehr gut besetzt"¹) and songs. The Burgtheater had its own ballet troupe with a French choreographer² and several French-trained dancers; at least two ballets were given each evening, and Count Durazzo, in a letter he sent to Favart in Paris describing the theatrical conditions in Vienna, said that the ballet in the Austrian capital was better than its equivalents in Paris.³ Maria Theresia's hunting parties usually ended with a theatrical presentation, usually a French comedy followed by two ballets.

The French troupe, which became known officially as "Le Théâtre Français près de la Cour" had its own orchestra, whose players were mostly Germans.⁴ Its personnel are listed in the Répertoire de la ville de Vienne 1752-1757 as having consisted of: 12 violins; 2 violas; 2 cellos; 2 double basses; a flute; 2 oboes; one bassoon and 2 horns. On Saints' Days, the orchestra was enlarged and gave *concerts or "academies"*.⁵

1. Haas, p. 18.

2. Pitrot ("Pitrau") came to Vienna from Dresden in 1750. Haas, p. 18.

3. Favart, Mémoires, I, p. 3.

4. Witzenez, p. 19.

5. E. Hanslick, Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien, 2 vols, Vienna 1869-1870) I, pp. 5-6.

Information about suitable works for Vienna's French troupe, as well as text books and music, were sent to Count Durazzo from an Austrian emissary in Paris, Count Starhemberg, and some alterations were carried out by the French playwright, Vadé. In a letter to Starhemberg of 2 June 1756 Durazzo gave some guidelines as to what to avoid in the works to be sent to Vienna: Italian airs, which were mixed freely with French songs in Parisian opéra-comique, but not as popular in Vienna as the light new French numbers; the works with large casts; dialogue in prose rather than couplets; allusions easily grasped by a French audience,¹ but not likely to be understood in Vienna; and, most important, any sort of immoral innuendo. Maria Theresia was likely to forbid, at the last minute, the performance of any work she deemed unsuitable for her subjects.

The French actors (the company consisted of twenty actors and a prompter) were paid salaries considerably higher than those of their German counterparts. The actors Ribou and his wife (Khevenhüller considered them to be the star attraction of the company) earned 6,000 florins a year between them, whereas Kurz and Prehauser, the directors of the German troupe, had a salary of only 2,000 florins. The French theatre cost 30,500 florins in 1752, but its takings were only 25,250 florins; the German company at the Kärntnertheater cost 13,847 florins but brought in 68,418 gulden.²

Because the French troupe was employed by the court, the loss was not treated as seriously as it might have been. However, it was a disappointment

1. Haas, pp. 30-31, pp. 73-75.

2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 36.

to the administrators that audiences were not bigger: it was, in fact, only a small sector of the people living in Vienna who took advantage of the amenity. Some of the aristocracy complained that the repertoire was not sufficiently varied, whereas the commoners had language difficulties.

From 1755 to 1756, Count Durazzo decided to revitalise the repertoire of the French troupe to include more opéras-comiques:¹ he hoped thereby to attract more townspeople and improve the takings of the company. Musical entertainments with an easily followed plot, whose French dialogue was relieved by songs and orchestral pieces, were more accessible to people with a poor knowledge of French than the Voltaire tragedies or spoken comedies where enjoyment depended on the ability to catch the sense of fast speech.²

Although every effort had been taken to secure for Vienna as good a troupe as possible, the actors, versatile though they were, were not primarily singers, and do not seem to have been appointed with the performance of opéra-comique specifically in mind. Also, they had come, with their director, Hébert, from the Hague (an important centre of French culture, Vadé's works were first published there, for example). The troupe's repertoire was old-fashioned by Paris standards.³ Witzenez's claim:

1. Haas, p. 17.

2. Haas, p. 35ff.

3. "Die Truppe war offenbar nicht im ständigen Kontakt mit den Pariser Theatern". Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 37.

ainsi les spectateurs viennois avaient
directement connaissance avec les tendances
très à la mode à l'époque ¹

seems over-optimistic. The Netherlands were a long way from Paris by eighteenth-century standards and tastes there were different. Grimm, for example, reports that the talented Aufresne went with his troupe to the Hague because his style did not suit contemporary Parisian taste.²

However, it is fair to point out that the two members of the company who gave the most delight to the Viennese were, according to Khevenhüller, Ribou and his wife. Former members of the Comédie Française, they had been compelled to leave the French capital because of an unfortunate scandal in which Ribou had stabbed his counterpart.³

With the aid of Starhemberg in Paris, Durazzo then tried to appoint new members of the troupe who could assume singing roles. As well as the Austrian emissary and Vadé (who, as already mentioned, helped arrange works for performance in Vienna), Gluck was

1. Witzenez, p. 52.

2. Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique, adressée à un souverain d'Allemagne, depuis 1753, (Paris, 1813), IV, pp. 473-474. Aufresne came on to Vienna with his troupe of actors in 1768. In his diary, Zinzendorf wrote: "Je fus enchanté d'Aufresne". Zinzendorf diary entry, 5 May 1771.

3. This happened in 1750. In 1759, Ribou was to die of fever in Vienna and the Empress of Austria granted his widow a pension. Haas, p. 30.

involved in the task of preparing opéras-comiques for the Vienna stage.¹ From 1754 Gluck seems to have worked for Durazzo on a casual basis; however, from 1758 his position became more official. A report concerning the French theatre in Vienna that year stated:

-Comme d'ailleurs l'opéra-comique réussit ici, il n'est point difficile d'en faire de nouveaux ou d'en rajuster d'anciens en corrigeant ce qu'il est à corriger. Le Sr. Gluck a mille florins pour la composition des musiques.²

The financial situation of the French theatre in 1758 was extremely precarious; the decision to rearrange existing opéras-comiques and make them a still more important part of the repertoire was taken in the hope, once again, of improving it. Harsh economic measures were proposed to Durazzo this year, including the restriction of expenditure on new costumes, machines and sets; the uniting of the Burgtheater ballet company with that from the Kärntnertheater, and the uniting of the two orchestras; and the abandonment of the experiment, begun earlier in the year, of performing Italian intermezzi.³ By this means the Empress hoped to pay only 20,000 florins in subsidy to the French theatre instead of the 45,691 florins needed the previous year.⁴

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1. Other people also were delegated to arrange French opéras for performance in Vienna: among them, Dancourt, Haas, pp. 89-90, and (from 1763) La Ribardiére, Witzenez, p. 15; Haas p. 91. Main aspects of these alterations are summarised in Chapter IV, pp. 367-370.
 2. Haas, p. 35.
 3. Maria Theresia's resolution to the Kammeral-Kommission, Haas, p. 36.
 4. Haas, pp. 34-35.

E. Durazzo's correspondence with Favart

In 1759, Durazzo sought to strengthen his links with Paris; perhaps the tenuous link with the busy diplomat Count Starhemberg was not producing the results he had hoped.

The previous year, Charles Simon Favart had been made director of the successor to the fair theatres, the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Near the end of 1759, Durazzo wrote to him asking whether he would be prepared to act as Parisian advisor to the Viennese Théâtre Français: to send information about new operas, advice on suitable ones for performance in Vienna (and to obtain the necessary music and textbooks) and, perhaps the most urgent, to help Durazzo obtain the singers and actors needed to improve the Vienna troupe. Letters sent by Favart (who readily agreed to write to Durazzo) reveal how difficult it was to fulfil the last request.¹

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1. Favart, Mémoires: letter of 24 June, 1760: "il est difficile de trouver un sujet qui puisse tenir les premiers rôles dans le tragique, le comique et les opéras bouffons", p. 48; letter of 4 July 1760: "il n'est plus question, pour cette année, de Mademoiselle Martin. On vient de m'apprendre qu'elle a été enlevée à Lille.... Il y a à Paris une actrice bourgeoise qui n'a pas plus de dix sept ans ... je crois qu'il seroit possible de leur faire entendre raison, en leur représentant que leur fille seroit attachée à une cour respectable". (Favart is here referring to a young woman whose parents were reluctant to let her travel to Austria), p. 54. See also Haas pp. 86-87 about the difficulties of recruiting personnel for Vienna. In Favart's letter to Durazzo of 7 September 1760, Favart accused Durazzo of making matters harder for him by his differences of taste and by giving Favart insufficient information about Vienna. Favart, Mémoires, pp. 89-90.

Several operas whose scores were sent to Vienna (and no doubt paid for) could not be performed at the Austrian capital, simply because a singer or two were lacking.¹ Durazzo seems to have taken personal delight in this correspondence (although it was marred by an unfortunate incident in which Favart tried delicately to explain that he had not received sufficient payment for his service)² for it continued after the Count had ceased to have responsibility for the Vienna theatres. Favart examined a total of 187 works for Durazzo, with a view to their performance in Austria.³

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1. For example, Favart's opera Soliman Second, 1st pfd Paris 1761, was sent to Vienna promptly, but could not be given there until 1765 when suitable singers had been secured. Even then, the duet between Roxelane and Soliman had to be omitted because it was too difficult. Haas, p. 90 and p. 125. (This libretto -- the original music was by Gibert -- was popular in Paris into the nineteenth century being one of the few Favart texts not to be quickly forgotten. In Germany, it became popular as a play, and was performed in Vienna during the 1770s at court and, in a new translation by Perinet, as Roxelane oder die drei Sultaninnen at the Theater auf der Wieden in 1799. In the same year, Süßmayr set the libretto as a German opera. The story was also used as the subject of ballets: for example, Noverre produced a ballet in 1772 entitled Die 55 Sultaninnen.) Süßmayr's opera is discussed on p. 538.
 2. Haas, p. 93ff.
 3. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 37; See Haas pp. 83-85, for example, for the list of French operas which were submitted to Vienna, via the Austrian ambassador in Paris between 1760 and 1764. Many were not performed in Vienna.

It was an exchange which probably amounted to the closest and most prolonged contact that ever existed between the Vienna and Paris stages. It is disappointing then that this correspondence, with such potential for Vienna, should begin at a time of economic uncertainty which meant that new productions had to be limited. Favart had gallantly replied to Durazzo's initial request that he did not expect financial remuneration for his services, which was obviously not to be taken seriously, but Durazzo could not be assured of being able to pay him a fixed amount. Fewer new French works appeared on the Vienna stage in 1760, 1761, and 1762 than in 1756, 1757, and 1758 and the number of operas revived rose sharply. In 1761 there was the very high number of ten revivals. Durazzo may have hoped that the financial position in Vienna would improve, and that he would be less constrained. Personal ambition, a search for prestige, and lack of confidence in Starhemberg, may have played a part in his decision to correspond with Favart. Most likely, perhaps, he thought that the expert advice of Favart would prevent the needless sending to Vienna of costly scores which proved unsuitable¹ and increase the chances of success of works which, carefully chosen, were produced in Vienna.

Durazzo sent Favart instructions for the task: there was no point, said the Count, in Favart's coming to Vienna, because he would not learn in a few weeks all that he needed to understand about Austrian customs, taste and manners, and that he would not anyway obtain entrance into literary circles or

1. For example, Starhemberg had sent La Niçaise corrigée to Vienna in 1756 and Durazzo wrote back on 2 June to Favart himself to explain why the opera was unsuitable for Vienna in its original form. Haas, p. 31.

court (for men of letters were not yet accepted by the Austrian aristocracy in the same way as they were in France). Reading between the lines, one can imagine Count Durazzo wondering how he would ever be able to meet Favart's expenses if such a journey happened to be arranged; and anyway, how an ex-pastry cook who had been associated with a fair would get on among the Vienna courtiers. Favart was told that the French troupe in the Austrian capital consisted of the best players Durazzo had been able to obtain; that the French actors received very good treatment, including royal protection. Although the *spectators were* fewer than in Paris, the theatre was charming and the ballet better than its French equivalent.¹

The French troupe existed more to entertain the noblemen than to instruct them: "improving" works were not wanted. The didactic role played by the French players in Vienna has often been stressed; however, they were brought to the Austrian capital primarily for the purpose of entertaining a minority audience. Durazzo warned Favart that the Austrians were sensitive about their own foibles and not as ready to laugh at themselves as were the French. Also, any hint of immorality, mention of religion or disrespect to the Austrian house, would be regarded by Maria Theresia, if not by her subjects, as highly inappropriate.²

1. "Lettre de M. le C. de Durazzo à M. Favart, 1759, Vienne, 20 décembre", Favart, Mémoires, I, pp. 1-6.

2. Favart, Mémoires, I, pp. 1-6.

Favart frequently complained that he was not given enough information, and Durazzo showed signs of impatience, claiming that their tastes differed. There is an interesting incident involving Durazzo's attempt to mount a French festal opera for the marriage of the archduchess (ten year earlier an Italian work would have been chosen), where Favart misunderstood Durazzo's requirements and offered a piece which Durazzo knew to be quite unacceptable. As a result an Italian work had to be hastily mounted instead.¹

F. The repertoire of the first French troupe

As was mentioned earlier, the first French troupe to play in Vienna did not, at first, perform many opéras-comiques. Spoken dramas were given, both

1. "Lettre de M. le C. de Durazzo à M. Favart, 1760, Vienne, 23 Août, Favart, Mémoires, I, p. 87.

tragedies and comedies, but the first reactions of the Viennese nobility to serious French drama was mixed.¹ Khevenhüller noted in his diary that the actors alienated some of the audience because they made "gar zu ridicules gestes und contorsions".² The troupe was better received when performing comedies. Comedy was, from the beginning, more popular than tragedy, and most successful of all were the ballets and small operas.³ With Favart's help new singers were added to the troupe, enabling it to make opéra-comique a more important part of the repertoire. Between 1752 and 1762 over thirty opéras-comiques were performed in Vienna, including works by Favart, Gluck, Duni, Pergolesi (La Serva Padrona translated into French as La servante maitresse), Blaise, Champée and Dauvergne.

Many of the opéras-comiques given in Vienna during the first decade of the French theatre, 1752-1762, were revived during the following years. Gluck's adaptations generally proved popular. L'isle de Merlin (3 October 1758), along with some works by Pannard, Blaise, Favart and Vadé, were never repeated. The only works during the first decade that survived in the repertoire for more than ten years are those that received later alteration: Favart's Les amours de Bastien et de Bastienne

1. Haas, p. 16; Witzenez, p. 6.

2. Rudolph Graf Khevenhüller-Metsch and H. Schlitter, eds., Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias. Tagebuch des Fürsten J. J. Khevenhüller Metsch. 1742-1776. (Leipzig, 1907-25), diary entry for 14 May 1752. The works which prompted this comment were Corneille's Le Comte d'Essex and St. Foix's L'Oracle which opened the French troupe's stay in Vienna on 14 May 1752.

3. Haas, p. 16.

(5 July 1755, at the Burgtheater) lasted into the 1780s in Weiskern's German adaptation;¹ Duni's On ne s'avise jamais de tout became popular in Monsigny's version, after 1763; Gluck's L'arbre enchanté was performed in German at the Theater auf der Wieden in 1794 as Der bezauberte Baum (it was the longest-lasting of Gluck's early opéra-comique adaptations). It seems that all the other works, though popular for a limited period, dated quickly, or at least were superseded by more modern and more attractive works. Some of the operas seen in Vienna at this time were already old: like Pannard's Le magasin des modernes (first performed at Paris, on 3 February 1736) and Les petits comédiens (Paris, 27 August 1731). They probably seemed old-fashioned to the Vienna of the mid-50s.

Most of the new opéras-comiques which appeared in Vienna in 1761 and 1762 were more recent: most of them dated from around 1755. La veuve indécise, given in Paris at the Foire Saint-Laurent on 24 September 1759, and at the Burgtheater in Vienna two years later, did not survive for more than one year. It was a parody of Mouret's La veuve coquette, and contained recitative, unusual in opera-comique; that may have accounted for its unpopularity in Vienna. Gaviniés' Le prétendu, another work given in Vienna fairly soon after its Paris performance (it had been first seen in Paris in the November of 1760 and its first performance in Vienna was two years later), also seems never to have been revived. Favart admitted to Durazzo that the work was weak but that it was saved by the music.² It was composed by one of Paris's most

1. It was also set to music by the young Mozart and perhaps staged privately at the home of Mesmer.

2. Haas, p. 122.

celebrated violinists, Gaviniés. (which might have accounted for a success in Paris which could not be repeated in Vienna).

G. The first French troupe's brief period of success

It was not until 1763 that advantages of Favart's correspondence with Durazzo were seen in Vienna: the years from 1763 to 1765 were very successful years for opéra-comique in Vienna, just as they were in Paris.

The reception in 1763 of Monsigny's opera Le roi et le fermier, given at the Burgtheater (its Paris première had been only in the November of the previous year) surpassed Durazzo's wildest expectations. Durazzo wrote to Favart that it was the most successful opéra-comique ever seen in Vienna.¹

The opera, based on a libretto by Sedaine, tells about a king on a hunting expedition who meets by chance a peasant couple. They do not realise who he is and tell him about their fears that a self-seeking lord living in the vicinity will prevent their marriage. He intends to marry the girl himself. The king, filled with pity and *admiration for their* character, ennobles the peasant boy, allowing him to marry his girl and to live comfortably.

1. Gustav Zechmeister, Das Wiener Theater Nächst der Burg und nächst dem Kärntnerthor von 1747 bis 1776, Vienna, 1971, p. 488.

Like other operas written in Paris at this time, the work reflects some of the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers: its point being that a simple life on the land forms better and happier people than a life of luxury in the castles of the aristocracy.¹ Les deux chasseurs et la laitière by Duni, given in Paris on 21 July 1763 and at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1764, was also a great success. Le roi et le fermier was apparently given at least eleven times from 1763-1764 and it was revived in 1780 in French. The Duni opera on the other hand was translated into German by Faber and formed into two acts, receiving revivals in German in Vienna in 1776, 1779, 1783 and 1787. La rencontre imprévue by Gluck, first performed on 7 January 1764, also lived on in Vienna in German translation.²

Le sorcier, which had been one of Philidor's most popular operas in Paris, was probably never revived in Vienna (it might have been performed again in Vienna by a French troupe in 1780)³ and shows some of the difficulties Durazzo faced in trying to transfer operas from one city to the other. Philidor, when writing this opera, had been correcting proofs of Gluck's music in Paris, and helped himself to music from Gluck's Orphée.⁴ In Vienna, the work was never revived by Durazzo after its first performance: the plagiarism, and the scandal surrounding it, might easily have had something to do with it.

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1. Nevertheless, it is amusing to note that in this case these worthy peasants were rewarded by being made members of the aristocracy.
 2. Performances on 3 January 1764, and 22. and 26 February 1764.
 3. See pp. 47-50 and appendix I.
 4. "Philidor", The New Grove, 1980 ed.

On 18 May 1765, Gilbert's setting of Favart's Soliman Second was performed at the Burgtheater. Its performance earlier had been prevented by a lack of suitable singers. Even in 1765, the duet between Roxelane and Soliman was omitted.¹

Lessing had not recommended Soliman Second for the German stage because of its cool assumption that only the French were truly civilised (indeed, he said he would hardly have found it bearable if Roxelane, the girl who finally wins Soliman's hand, had been German), however, it did meet success.

This is perhaps surprising. The Austrians, as noted above, were sensitive about what they considered to be any display of poor taste or impropriety. When a version of Soliman was given in Vienna in 1770, Eva König reported to Lessing that Sonnenfels lost his job as censor and was warned never again to meddle with theatrical matters. The pretext for this was that the handkerchief given to Roxelane by Soliman was an offensive object. When this had been made plain to the producer, it was replaced by a mirror, but the Empress did not like that either and had the work banned completely.² In 1799 the text was reset by Süßmayr and performed in German at the court theatres (see p. 538).

H. The dismissal of Durazzo

The financial situation of the French theatre was, in 1765, in a state of crisis, and Durazzo was finally dismissed. He was sent away ostensibly to become Austrian ambassador to Venice. In reality, he was dismissed to a small unimportant place, in disgrace for his poor financial management of the theatres. A scandal had also arisen in which it was reported that Durazzo had not been paying Favart properly. It was also reported that the Count had formed a highly improper attachment with a singer from the troupe.³ Maria Theresia warned her daughters

1. Haas, p. 125.

2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, p. 72. Kindermann writes that Sonnenfels was generally disliked because "sein Stolz und seine Eigenliebe überschreiten alle Grenzen".

3. Haas, p. 102; another unfortunate incident was the attempt made by Gluck to meet Favart. Gluck set out for Paris but turned back when he heard that the Opéra-Comique had burnt down. Favart, Memoires, I, p. 279.

on their future visits to Venice not to have anything to do with him.¹

After the impresario's fall from grace, the days of the French theatre in Vienna were numbered. On 18 August 1765, Maria Theresia's husband, Kaiser Franz, died, and a period of court mourning followed, during which the Burgtheater had to remain shut; the actors received no pay during the break and the French troupe was disbanded.² When the Burgtheater opened again on 11 November 1766, both theatres were put under the direction of Count Wenzel Sporck who had been nominated K. K. Hofkammer-Musik und General-Spektakel Direktor der beiden Hoftheater. (Between the dismissal of Durazzo and the death of Kaiser Franz, Count Sporck had revived several old French operas by people such as Favart.) The Kärntnerthortheater was, from 1766, leased to the ballet impresario Hilverding, and the programme of the Burgtheater was managed by Afflisio. Under his direction the Burgtheater possessed an opera buffa troupe led by Gassmann, a large ballet company, and a German troupe. Kaunitz, the original *agitator* for the bringing of French players to Vienna, acted as advisor to Afflisio (but Maria Theresia is reported to have been reluctant to give him too much power in the theatre because of his weakness for the ladies³).

No French opéra-comique was given at the public theatres in Vienna for two years, although a German adaptation by Weiskern of the Gluck and Philidor opera Le diable à quatre was given at the Kärntnerthortheater in 1767.

1. Haas, p. 103.

2. Haas, p. 104-105.

3. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 61ff.

Afflisio restricted himself mostly to Italian opera and, unable to mount French works without French actors,¹ he tried to improve the regular German drama, not an easy task. Hilverding mounted splendid ballets and when he fell ill, Noverre took over (in November 1767), appearing every night on the stage of both the Burg- and Kärntnerthortheater, in either a full ballet or short divertissement to conclude the evening. Ballet and comic Italian opera were the most successful parts of the repertoire at this time. But in April 1767, Kaunitz had to write to the Empress personally, to explain that the aristocracy of Vienna was dissatisfied with the theatre and asking for her financial help in securing another French troupe.² Looking back on the situation, the Theatralkalender von Wien reported that at that time:

der Adel schätzte das französische
Schauspiel und verachtete das deutsche
meistens mit recht . 3

I. The second French troupe

Afflisio himself, who had taken over Sporck's position with complete responsibility for the theatres, was not himself particularly artistic, liking nothing so much as bull-fighting.⁴ When the predictable reply came back from court that no money could be made available, it was Kaunitz again who did most of the persuasion. On 3 May 1768, a

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1. Performance of opéra-comique in German in Vienna did not become common until the 1770s.
 2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte V, pp. 60-62.
 3. Theatralkalender von Wien (Vienna, 1772), p. 11.
 4. Witzenetz, p. 29.

good troupe of French actors was brought to Vienna: they opened with a performance of a Voltaire tragedy at the Burgtheater.¹ It appears that the company required a period of adjustment and some changes before it reached its full potential, but by 1771 it is agreed that Vienna probably possessed a fine troupe, versatile enough to perform well both classical French tragedies and opéra-comique.²

In 1770, however, Afflisio departed, dissatisfied with the takings of the theatres, and leaving behind him a doubtful reputation. The French actors had been very expensive to bring over from France; Afflisio doubted their worth. He had involved two rich associates in his enterprise: Lopresti and Gluck. The latter ended up having to pay off Afflisio's debts.³

There was less emphasis on opéra-comique than during the presence of the previous French troupe; perhaps because there was now an Italian opera company too, and the fine ballets of Noverre, to compete with.

Le bûcheron ou les trois souhaits given in 1765, by the first French troupe, according to one authority,⁴ was revived in 1768, but apart from this, all the French operas given by these players were new to Vienna. Some had been sent by Favart several years earlier, most were modern works

1. Witzenetz, pp. 39-36, Haas p. 105.

2. By 1771 it was one of the finest French troupes in Europe according to Kindermann. Kindermann Theatergeschichte V, p. 68. Zinzendorf praised the troupe: diary entry, 5 May, 1771; Lange, a Burgtheater actor, was impressed by their ensemble, Biographie, p. 27.

3. Witzenetz, p. 36.

4. Loewenberg. But the Österreichische Musikzeitschrift and Zechmeister do not list any performance of the opera in Vienna until 1768.

which the troupe either brought with them or had sent. The aim for variety was the chief characteristic of theatre policy during these years. They were vintage years in Paris and almost all of the opéras-comiques performed in the French capital during the 1760s and 1770s made their way to Vienna over the following two decades. Those now responsible for deciding on which operas were actually done in Vienna had a wide variety to choose from. The five operas which appeared in Vienna for the first time in 1770-1772, for example, held the stage for an average of 15 years, in various revivals.

But the French troupe was the most unprofitable part of the theatre organisation, and in 1772, when theatre finances were in a bad way, and Afflisio's successor, Koháry,¹ and his family stood on the brink of ruin, he and Kaunitz asked Maria Theresia for permission to dismiss the troupe. It had cost more than originally intended² and although of the highest rank artistically, it had been increasingly badly supported.³

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1. Koháry, a nobleman, was a rich Hungarian landowner.
 2. Witzenez, p. 36; Kindermann points out the enormous cost of bringing the actors from France. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V pp. 62-3; 68-71.
 3. A gentleman in the service of the French ambassador, the Prince de Rohan, reported in 1772 that although when he had arrived in the Austrian capital from Strasbourg in the January of that year he had been impressed by the dancers and the sets of the French theatre: "Quoique dans la première société on ne parle que le français, ce spectacle n'est pas trop fréquenté". Baron Zorn de Bulach, L'ambassade du Prince Louis de Rohan à la cour de Vienne 1771-1774 (Strasbourg, 1901), pp. 11-12.

There had been several successful attempts to perform German plays at the Kärntnertheater¹, and the need for French opera seemed temporarily less urgent, although the aristocracy regretted the dismissal of their players. There was a plan suggested by Koháry for a Burgtheater lottery or a coffee monopoly but Kaunitz nevertheless saw it as essential that the French players should go. The French theatre closed after a production of Goldoni's Le bourru bienfaisant and Boursault's Le Mercure Galant on 27 February 1772.² Opéra-comique as a genre was becoming more bourgeois in tone; for example Blaise le Savetier, in act II, portrayed the inside of a shop.

J. The end of the permanent French theatre in Vienna

No subsequent French players stayed in the Austrian capital for as long as the first two companies which I have called "the first" and "second" French troupes; probably no later French actors received as much government attention, were as good or as well paid. From 1772 to at least 1826, the French players who performed in Vienna stayed only a few months, usually on their way to other destinations (for example, St. Petersburg). For a short time from 1752 to 1772 the Austrian court was willing to pay a high price to keep up with European theatrical fashions. Other courts had French theatres; the Habsburgs followed suit.

Efforts were made to secure good artists and to develop a well-rounded company. Great care was taken in the preparation of the repertoire and operas were prepared for performance by specially appointed experts; opéras-comiques were, from their earliest appearances in Vienna, subject to substantial alteration due to different theatrical conventions and taste.

1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 64.

2. Witzetz p. 45.

Viennese interest in French drama and opera occurred alongside a highly successful ballet programme which used many French dancers and was directed most of the time by the Frenchman Noverre; French orchestral music was played in Vienna by the orchestra of the Théâtre français; French literature was published in Vienna -- including the libretti of opéra-comiques performed there. French drama was cultivated in Vienna during these years at the expense of German drama and it enjoyed more prestige. Austrian audiences were, for the first time, introduced to foreign opera which was not Italian. By 1772 operas by Duni, Monsigny, Philidor and Grétry were known in Vienna.

The main purpose of the troupes was entertainment. Durazzo frequently stressed this in his letters to Favart when discussing repertoire. But their continued presence in Vienna had important consequences. Josef Lange, an actor and painter, later one of the pillars of the Nationaltheater and to become Mozart's brother-in-law, saw performances by French players in 1771 in Vienna. Although he criticised their performance of tragedies for often being unnatural and exaggerated, he also praised their grace and polish; and in his opinion the Viennese were indebted to the French for showing them the nobility of tragedy as well as the vivacity of comedy.¹ The French theatre in Vienna played a significant part in Gluck's career, for as well as the familiarity Gluck acquired with opéra-comique, Durazzo's contact with Favart helped smooth the way for Gluck in Paris.

1. Lange, Biographie, p. 27.

II. Opéra-comique in Vienna 1772-1790

Introduction

The period after 1772 could be seen as the second phase for opéra-comique in Vienna. Witzenetz has concluded her study by saying: "En 1772 donc, la tâche des Français était déjà terminée, ils n'avoient plus qu'à disparaître de la scène viennoise".¹ That statement needs qualifying, but before doing so, this seems a convenient place to consider some of the changes which had been taking place in France and Austria.

Whereas, in many respects, France during the 1770s was a nation in decline,² with high inflation and the mood of discontent steadily growing, there was in Austria a sense of idealism and hope: a realisation that although the country was still poor and divided, things were improving and a distinctly German culture was slowly developing. In 1765, Joseph II, who was incidentally in his spare time an accomplished cellist and keyboard player, had become co-regent to the throne on the death of his father, and he took a considerable interest in the Viennese theatres. From 1770 onwards he passed a series of laws regarding authors' rights, for example.³ There was a growing campaign, in which Sonnenfels took an important role, for the foundation in Vienna of a national German theatre to encourage and support German actors and writers.

When the second French troupe had left Vienna in 1772, there was no immediate attempt to replace the French actors by German ones performing the same repertoire in translation. At first the variety offered

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1. Witzenetz, p. 75. Witzenetz is here quoting Müller (see p. 53).
 2. Although the intellectual atmosphere was still brilliant, with the voice of the people unmuffled by harsh censorship as in Germany.
 3. Perhaps they were not as effective as they could have been, as Austrian playwrights still complained bitterly that they were poorly treated in comparison to their French counterparts, and campaigned for better conditions.

by Koháry's direction was so varied that the public was well diverted and did not miss the French actors. Koháry gave the Italian troupe permission to produce Italian opera in the Burgtheater three times a week, which was successful; and Noverre remained in Vienna and, on a diminished grant, continued to mount his lavish productions.

But at court, at least, opéra-comique was not completely pushed aside. In September 1772 two important Grétry operas were performed in French at Laxenburg Palace. Le tableau parlant was seen there by Viennese courtiers on 10 September; Lucile almost two weeks later. Both performances were Viennese premières and are substantiated by Loewenberg. It is entirely possible that a troupe of travelling players performed at the imperial hunting lodge (before the court returned to Vienna for the winter) on its way to some other destination. But a reliable source¹ says that these Grétry operas were performed in Vienna by amateurs (presumably noblemen); in which case these were the first opéras-comiques apart from Le Huron two years earlier (performed in German translation by C. L. Reuling) of which the French performance material was expressly obtained for performance by Austrian natives. The scores of these works could have been purchased by a nobleman on a recent trip to Paris. Neither Le tableau parlant nor Lucile had been performed in Vienna before. How, one wonders did Viennese courtiers react to Blaise, the humble and uneducated peasant in Lucile, and how well did they capture the gaiety and vivacity of both operas?

1. Witzenez p. 40ff.

A. The third French troupe

Despite the popularity of Noverre's ballets, the ballet company failed to pay, and whereas the Italian opera made a profit at this time, the German drama only just broke even. Koháry was left in debt and in 1773 he had to resign. After he left, the theatre programme lacked variety and left audiences dissatisfied. There was another move to start French performances again, and the initiative towards the realisation of these hopes was taken by Count Carl von Lichtenstein, who in the winter of 1774 discussed with other noblemen the possibility of bringing French players to Vienna. In December they reached an agreement whereby a French troupe could perform opéra-comique at the Kärntnerthortheater on Mondays and Wednesdays and at the Burgtheater on Thursdays.¹

This was the first time, apart from the one Gluck performance of 1767 and Bastien und Bastienne in 1764, that opéra-comique had appeared outside Schönbrunn, Laxenburg and the Burgtheater. The Kärntnerthortheater, traditionally the home of popular German comedy, was usually frequented by more of the commoners of Vienna. It is significant that this third troupe was engaged to perform only opéra-comique.

There was not the awkward period of adjustment suffered by the troupe's two predecessors who soon came to realise that classical French drama was not what Viennese audiences wanted, so much as entertaining comedies and music. The players were French, but nothing is known about their origins. The repertoire included several operas new to the Viennese stage.

1. Their opening performance on 4 January 1775. Otto Michtner, Das alte Burgtheater als Opernbühne, (Vienna, 1970) p. 21.

Grétry's Zémire et Azor began its long and glorious career in the Austrian capital this year in a performance at Schönbrunn Palace. Loewenberg lists Dézède's opera Julie as having been given in French in Vienna in 1775: if so, it was performed in October or November by this troupe.

But the results of this enterprise were not nearly so impressive as the plans had been and few operas were actually performed. The quality was so low that in November 1775 Joseph II withdrew the permission he had granted; the troupe, no longer allowed to play, apparently left Vienna.¹

Its departure heightened the Emperor's growing sense of dismay about the dismal level of entertainment offered by Vienna theatres. He issued a recommendation that the standards of all genres given at the court theatres in Vienna be improved; that poor singers be replaced by better ones from Italy; and that the weak ballet company of the Kärntnerthortheater be dismissed. He requested the formation of a company capable of performing both French, Italian and German opera, and the German prose repertoire.

Count Keglevich, who had taken over the directorship of both court theatres in 1773, was unable to fulfil these almost impossible demands without financial assistance, and went bankrupt. On 16 March 1776 the opera buffa, ballet and orchestra were sacked.² The Burgtheater remained shut for almost a year and the Kärntnerthortheater was granted an allgemeine Spektakelfreiheit, meaning that any good visiting company (or troupe of local players) was allowed to perform

1. Michtner, p. 21.

2. Michtner, p. 22.

there, free of charge.¹

B. The fourth French troupe

Another troupe of French players came to Vienna in December 1775 and, led by a M. Hamon, it gave an impressive season of new opéras-comiques. The French singers from Count Lichtenstein's troupe had been recently dismissed, and it is possible that some of those players remained in Vienna. But it is more likely either that Kohary sent for new singers or that Hamon's troupe, passing through Vienna from elsewhere, was engaged on a temporary basis. A performance of Grétry's Lucile was to be performed at the Kärntnertheater in German. Hamon's troupe gave the Viennese premières of many important opéras-comiques; their performances form a link with the performance of opéra-comique in German which was soon to begin at the Viennese court theatres. The last performance given by Hamon's troupe was on 19 February 1776.²

C. Opéra-comique in German in Vienna

In the meantime, a sense of nationalism was growing in Germany and Austria. Sonnenfels and his supporters were clamouring for more interest and aid for native German regular drama and condemning the spread of foreign theatre of all genres. Discussions were taking place to consider the possibility of founding a national theatre. The climax came in March 1776 when

1. The Spektakelfreiheit was effective from 23 March 1776. Troupes which took advantage of this facility were the Böhm-Noverre troupe and Wäser's troupe (for 6 weeks from 18 June). Böhm was a famous actor and singer from Brunn who had directed a celebrated ensemble there 1770-1771 and from 17 April 1776 in Vienna in conjunction with Noverre. But all thoughts were directed towards the success of the Nationaltheater, and this last enterprise did not do well.

2. Zechmeister, p. 359.

the emperor issued guidelines for the direction of the Burgtheater and announced that: "das Theater nächst der Burg hinfort das deutsche Nationaltheater heissen soll".¹ The Burgtheater, for so long the home of foreign dramatic art, was to be devoted to German drama.

From 1776, most opéras-comiques were seen in Vienna in German. Performance of French opera in German was already common in such German cities as Frankfurt and Hamburg. In the winter of 1775 to 1776 operas had been given at the Kärntnertheater in French; in May, the Noverre and Böhm administration mounted several of the same opéras-comiques in German.

These were not the first Viennese performances of opéra-comique in German. The first French opera translated for performance in the Austrian capital appears to have been Les amours de Bastien et de Bastienne, a parody by Favart of Le devin du village which was first performed in French in Vienna in 1755 and performed in German in May 1764 in Weiskern's adaptation probably without music; Gluck's Le diable à quatre received a production in translation at the Kärntnertheater three years later. Also, Moulinghem's La servante justifiée (Das unruhige Reichthum), translated by Kurz from Favart, was performed at the Kärntnertheater in 1769.

The first actual translation of a French opera performed in Vienna as opposed to adaptation (though such a distinction is very hard to make because translation usually involved some sort of alteration) may have been made by C. L. Reuling for Grétry's Le Huron and, according to one source, given in Vienna in April 1770.²

1. Zechmeister, p. 359-360.

2. Loewenberg, Annals. Loewenberg does not name the theatre; Bauer, ÖMZ, Zechmeister do not mention this performance.

Apart from Isabelle et Gertrude, a slight one-act work with words by Favart, written in 1767, Le Huron was Grétry's first French opera. It enjoyed great success in Paris, but when given in Vienna two years later (it was first performed in Paris at the Comédie Italienne on 20 August 1768), its composer would have been completely unknown. It was altogether a pioneering venture; most of the other Parisian works of the mid sixties and early seventies were done in French in Vienna or were performed in German only after German translations had successfully been used in other cities (especially Frankfurt or Hamburg); this opera, however, does not seem to have been given elsewhere in Germany first. An attractive work with a witty dialogue, touches of local colour and passages of extraordinary vocal coloratura, it tells of an Indian who engages the attention of two noble Breton ladies. They are impressed by his physique and unaffected manners, and when it is discovered that he is at least half French, his marriage to the younger girl is considered possible.¹ Le Huron was revived several times in Vienna in French during 1780.

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1. Le Huron, libretto by Marmontel, was based on a tale by Voltaire, L'ingénu ou Le Huron. Grétry was surprised and delighted by the success of this, his first Parisian opera; the singer of the title role, Cailleau, had a vocal range which astonished Grétry when he first heard it at the Comédie Italienne: he could sing alto, tenor and bass parts with equal ease. In his Mémoires, Grétry records that it was this first impression of Cailleau's voice which led him to compose the part of the Huron in too high a register. The decision to perform this opera in Vienna is particularly surprising when one considers the vocal demands it makes and the fact that its composer was then almost unknown. Grétry, Mémoires, pp. 142-146, pp. 155-172.

But 1776, the year of the founding of the Nationaltheater and the transition to German translation, was important for opéra-comique in another respect: it was the first year that it appeared (in translation) in a public theatre other than the two court theatres. The director of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt chose shrewdly when he mounted productions of Zémire und Azor and die beyden Geitzigen (Les deux avarés), both by Grétry and both to enjoy lasting success in Vienna. The translations used for these performances were by J. H. Faber who worked in Frankfurt. The Fasan theatre also performed die beyden Geitzigen; Der Fassbinder (Le tonnelier); and Lottchen am Hofe (Ninette à la cour) translated by Faber. Les deux avarés was given at a court theatre and in the suburbs in French and German respectively, within four months of each other; Lucile, Le tonnelier and Toinon et Toinette were also performed in Vienna in German a few months after they had been produced there in French. With the Burgtheater giving German plays and the Böhm-Noverre troupe having left in the summer of 1776 (it is interesting to note that the evenings of French opera they had provided had used some singers from the disbanded Italian troupe) no new French operas were given in Vienna at all during 1777, after a year of intense theatrical activity.

But an important incentive towards the production of opéra-comique in German came from the founding of the Nationalsingspiel in 1778. The performances of Umlauf's Die Bergknappen in the December of 1777 proved so popular that Joseph II, who had been seriously concerned about the poor standard of music offered in Vienna, considered that there was sufficient potential for the founding of a Nationalsingspiel: pressure for the founding of such a company had come from many parts of Germany.¹ The Emperor's journey to Paris

1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, p. 105.

in the early months of 1777, to visit his sister, had given him the opportunity to see for himself the flourishing condition of French theatres, with which the Viennese ones compared unfavourably.

Gebler wrote to Nicolai at this time that the operatic taste of the Austrian capital was limited to Anfossi, Paisiello, Piccini and Grétry: all of them foreign composers.

News that a German opera was going to be founded in Vienna caused great excitement among German composers. On 23 January 1778, Franz von Heufeld wrote to tell Leopold Mozart of the Emperor's decree (17 December 1777), hoping that the establishment of the new theatre might lead to some much-needed employment for his son Wolfgang.²

Umlauf was appointed Kapellmeister of the Nationalsingspiel and an enlarged orchestra of 37 was engaged, in addition to a large choir and as good soloists as possible. But by the Easter of 1778 only four German libretti had been received as suggestions for performance in the first season of the Nationalsingspiel; there were several months of the season left: non-German works had to be sought to fill in the programme.³

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1. "Gebler an Nicolai", Aus dem Josephinischen Wien, Geblers und Nicolais Briefwechsel während der Jahre 1771 - 1786, ed. R. M. Werner, (Berlin 1888), letter dated 9 February 1778.
 2. "Franz von Heufeld to Leopold Mozart", 23 January 1778, Otto Erich Deutsch, Mozart a documentary biography, trans. Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble, (Stanford, 1965), pp. 169-171.
 3. For more detailed information about this period, the reader is referred to Otto Michtner, Das Burgtheater als Opernbühne, (Vienna, 1970).

During its first year then, six opéras-comiques, carefully adapted and translated, entered the repertoire of the Nationalsingspiel.¹

In 1779, the repertoire of the Nationalsingspiel included six more opéras-comiques in translation including a work new to the Vienna stage: La rosière de Salenci (Das Rosenfest von Salenci) probably by Philidor. The other five had already been seen in French in Vienna. Revivals of three older opéras-comiques took place at suburban theatres this year: Le maréchal ferrant, by Philidor (as Der Hufschmied), first given in Vienna in 1763, two years after its first appearance at the Foire Saint-Laurent in August 1761; Les deux chasseurs et la laitière (as Das schöne Milchmädchen), the Duni opera first seen in French in Vienna in 1764, both of these operas in the Bauernfeindischen Saal; and Les amours de Bastien et de Bastienne, first given in Paris in 1753 and in Vienna two years later.² This last opera was given at the Theater in der Josefstadt. In 1781 it was also performed at the Leopoldstadt.

All of the French operas given at the popular suburban theatres at this time were works which had already been seen in Vienna. They were not yet well enough organised or sufficiently motivated to obtain new French scores for themselves or arrange for them to be translated.

D. The fifth French troupe

In the summer of the following year (1780) more French players arrived in Vienna. The Allgemeiner Theater Almanach for 1782 lists over fifty French

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1. Rose et Colas by Monsigny, L'ami de la maison, La fausse magie, Lucile and Sylvain by Grétry, and L'amoureux de quinze ans, had been performed in Vienna before in either French or German.
 2. In addition to the 1779 performance, it is likely that the opera had been seen at (unspecified) "Vienna suburban theatres" in 1775. See Loewenberg Annals and E.K. Blüml and G. Gugitz, Alt-Wiener Thespiskarren (Vienna, 1924), p. 481.

operas performed by them¹ but repertory lists of the Viennese theatre either fail to mention French performances for this season, or give an incomplete list, omitting many mentioned in the almanac. Bauer's Opemund Operetten lists all but 13 of the operas. ÖmZ only mentions a performance in French of Gluck's Orphée on 30 June 1781.² Hadamowsky³ does not mention any of the French operas and neither does Michtner in his book on the Burgtheater. Apart from Orphée no exact performance dates are known. In the appendix to this dissertation operas given by this troupe are merely listed under the season 1780 to 1781. Most if not all of the operas were performed at the Kärntnerthortheater.

In an article entitled: "Nebenspektakel 1. Französische Schauspiel im Kärntnerthortheater", the Allgemeiner Theater Almanach tells how the players opened at the Kärntnerthortheater during the summer of 1780 under the direction of M. Delainval and M. Beaubourg. They began their season with Voltaire's Sémiramis and at first gave only French tragedies and opéra-comique. Then a ballet company was engaged from the Scherzer company in the Josefstadt suburb and Herr Asselin was appointed Balletmeister. The repertoire list at the end of the article also claims the company gave French comedies: Le père de Famille; Les fourberies de Scapin; and Tartuffe.

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1. Allgemeiner Theater Almanach, 1782, pp. 155-160.
 2. The almanac list does include a work called Orphee et Euridice, but gives no author and fixes it with c (for comédie) rather than o (operette): this may be a misprint.
 3. Franz Hadamowsky, Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater) 1776-1966 :Verzeichnis der aufgeführten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweis und täglichem Spielplan. 2 vols. I. 1776-1810; II. Die Wiener Hofoper (Staatsoper) 1811-1974, (Vienna, 1966 and 1975)

At first the company had enjoyed immense success:

Teils/sic/ die Neuigkeit des Schauspiels--
Wien hatte lange kein französisches Schauspiel gehabt!~ theils einige Schauspieler von auszeichnenden Talent erwarben dieser Truppe den Beifall des Publikums, und die Herren Dalainval und Beaubourg schienen sich recht gut bei ihrer Entreprise zu stehen¹.

The chief actors of the company were : Monsieur Delainville who played noble fathers and droll old men; Monsieur Duport who took the part of fiery lovers or character roles; Monsieur Lysy who played lovers in operas; and Monsieur Galle who played old men in operas. Among the women, Dem. Laurent was especially popular because of her pleasant voice and "naïve" acting, and Madame Banti, who also had a good voice. The almanac continues by saying that Monsieur Lysy and Madame Banti left Vienna, and the rest of the company remained behind, limiting themselves largely to opera. Although successful at first, the troupe little by little lost its appeal and its directors had to flee Vienna in order to escape heavy debts. The troupe left Vienna on 8 September 1781 but some members of the company remained behind and called themselves the "new French players": at the time of publication of the almanac (new year 1782), they were still in Vienna. On 31 October 1781, they gave a free performance to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin.²

It is difficult to tell how trustworthy this particular article is; other information given by the almanac is reliable and there is no reason to doubt the presence in Vienna of French players during this time. However they may not have performed all the operas listed. A carelessness about detail; scant or

1. Allgemeiner Theater Almanach, 1782, p. 160.

2. Allgemeiner Theater Almanach, 1782, p. 160.

incorrect information concerning composers and librettists; the use of incomplete titles which makes works hard to trace; finally, the occasional wrong genre designation all give the impression that this list was hurriedly compiled or even written by memory, and leads one to doubt the veracity of some of the information. Works listed in this almanac but not given by other repertoire sources are marked in the appendices with a question mark.

Theatres posters giving detailed information about performance dates and casts do not survive for the Kärntnerthortheater until the late 1780s.

In 1780 and 1781, at the same time as French operas were being given in French at the Kärntnerthortheater, French opéras-comiques were being seen in translation at the Burgtheater, including: Le tonnelier (Audinot); La rencontre imprévue (Gluck); Les fausses apparences (Grétry); L'amitié à l'épreuve (Grétry); La Colonie (Sacchini). Gluck's Iphigenia in Tauris was seen for the first time in Vienna at the Burgtheater on 23 October 1781, in a translation by Alxinger; but three other French operas tried this year were never revived: two by Grétry (L'amitié à l'épreuve and Les événements imprévus) and one (La paysanne curieuse) by Julie Dèzède, the young daughter of one of the composers already familiar to Viennese audiences.

E. Opéra-comique in Vienna during the reign of Joseph II

At the court theatres, the experiment of the Nationalsingspiel was not proving successful. In 1780, the emperor, who took an interest in the stage, had recommended that the actors cut out those songs which they could not manage, for it was better to leave them

out than spoil the whole by tackling something too difficult.¹ The singers of the Nationalsingspiel studied singing for six years but never learnt to act, which made performance of Singspiel difficult.² Internal strife, lack of money and the slender interest of the Burgtheater in musical plays led to the decline of comic opera, and the Nationalsingspiel, like the Nationaltheater, had to be disbanded. In the season 1781 to 1782, works by German composers received a total of only 44 performances at the Burgtheater; Italian works 35 and French works 22. In 1783 the Nationalsingspiel was finally disbanded.

For fifteen years, since the death of his father, Joseph had acted as co-regent with his mother. When he assumed sole control, the speed of reform increased, covering education; the conditions of peasants; religion (especially the abolition of some closed orders); and the relaxation of censorship. A young man, Joseph was impatient and perhaps intolerant; the tone of his government was sharp and authoritarian.

Joseph's policy towards the theatre disappointed many people. After the failure of the Nationalsingspiel and Nationaltheater, the two court theatres, much to the regret of the supporters of German letters, were once again leased to private individuals. The repertoire of the Burgtheater during these years has been studied by Michtner. A trickle of French operas was given, mainly at the Kärntnerthortheater, until the end of the decade.

1. Michtner, p. 92. The opera which gave rise to this comment was L'amant Jaloux by Grétry, pfd. Vienna 12 October 1780.

2. Michtner, pp. 58-59, 90-91.

In the autumn of 1783 a Grétry opera was revived in German at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt: Le huron was seen there on October 25, 1783. In 1770, this work had been performed in German at the Kärntnerthortheater; the remarkable nature of the production and the vocal difficulty of the parts has already been commented on. In 1770, Grétry had been a rather obscure young Frenchman; thirteen years later his reputation was established and 14 of his works had already been seen in Vienna. The performance of this opera in the suburbs is nevertheless surprising but it shows that interest in opéra-comique was not now confined to court circles.

The most popular French opera given at the court theatres during the 1780s was Richard Coeur-de-Lion, by Grétry, first performed in Vienna in 1788 and revived there many times during the next thirty years. Its first Viennese production, which opened at the Kärntnerthortheater on 7 January 1788, used a translation by J. André; this and subsequent performance versions will be described in a later chapter. Later in 1788, however, opera sung in German received a severe setback in Vienna with the dismissal of most of the German singers from the court theatres. With resources strained, the disappointing failure of the Nationalsingspiel, and the preference of some influential people for Italian opera, opera sung in the vernacular was to receive scant attention in Vienna for more than a decade.

Conclusion

In July 1789 France -- and with it the rest of Europe -- was shocked by the storming of the Bastille prison which marked the beginning of revolution. The following year, Joseph, Emperor of Austria, died suddenly. Neither he nor his brother Leopold who succeeded him lived to see the war which erupted in 1793, breaking 40 years of peace and friendship between Austria and France.

Several writers have presented theses showing that the importance of France to the Austrian stage had, in any case, by this time passed. For example, Witzenez writes at the end of her study of French troupes in Vienna:

En 1772 l'acteur allemand Müller pouvait écrire avec conviction:

"Le théâtre National, qui avait ignoré et négligé une partie de ses moyens de se développer, s'éleva par une heureuse émulation au même niveau que le théâtre français". En 1772 donc la tâche des Français était déjà terminée, ils n'avaient plus qu'à disparaître de la scène viennoise."¹

And Karlhans Reuss, studying a slightly later period and the importance to the Nationaltheater of French works in translation concludes:

Man sieht also ..., dass mit dem Ende der Josefinischen Epoche, das innerlich gekennzeichnet wird durch das Ende des französischen Aufklärungszeitalters mit der Revolution und äusserlich mit dem Tod Josef II im Jahre 1790, die bis dahin beherrschende Vormachtstellung der französischen Dramatik am Nationaltheater endgültig gebrochen ist.²

These conclusions would appear to be nicely logical: by 1772 -- certainly by 1790--Vienna had its own exceptionally strong and distinctive stage tradition with, by the 1780s, three healthy suburban theatres as well as the two court stages. And at least four composers based in Vienna during the last quarter of the eighteenth century have enjoyed lasting international success, showing the vigour, too, of its musical tradition. Vienna, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first quarter of the nineteenth century, has been considered the third most

1. Witzenez, p. 75.

2. Karlhans Reuss, "Die französische Dramatik am Josefinischen Nationaltheater", Diss, Vienna 1964, p. 36.

important artistic centre in the whole history of the world, after only Periclean Athens and Elizabethan England.¹

Social change taking place in Austria -- the abandonment of Enlightenment idealism with the death of first Joseph and then Leopold -- and, more importantly, the changed relationship with France, with whom Austria was now at war, might also have been thought to exclude French stage works now tainted with revolution and socialism from the theatres of imperialist Austria.

And a new influence and stimulus was beginning to be felt on the Austrian stage -- that of England, one of Austria's allies. By the 1830s Frances Trollope reported that English literature was everywhere.² As early as 1807, when slightly milder censorship laws allowed more "classics" to be performed in Vienna, Die Theaterzeitung reported:

Das deutsche Theater bildete sich zuerst nach dem französischen, seit aber Shakespeare auf die deutsche Bühne gebracht wurde, ging man zur Nachahmung des englischen über, und da dies in einer Zeit geschah, wo das deutsche Theater zuerst eine feste Konsistenz erhielt, so hat diese Nachahmung den grössten Einfluss auf die deutsche Kunst gehabt. Die Riesengestalten Shakespeares, das Gewaltsame seiner Handlungen die genialische Verwechslung von Ort und Zeit rissen die Zuschauer hin, und machten den Schauspielern leichte Arbeit.³

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1. Otto Erich Deutsch, Schubert, a documentary biography, trans. Erich Blom, (London, 1946; rpt. New York, 1977), p. xxi.
 2. Frances Trollope, Vienna and the Austrians, 3 vols., (London 1837), II, p. 52.
 3. Die Wiener Theater Zeitung, 29 August 1807; first published in Vienna in July 1806, this paper was printed in Vienna until 1859 under several slightly different titles. It was founded by "A. Christian Bolthart", (probably Adolph Bäuerle) and from 1807 Bäuerle appears as the paper's editor. This publication will in the future be referred to in notes as TZ.

Another person, a few years earlier (1801), wrote in the influential pages of the AMZ¹ that although Vienna had for a short time paid much attention to the music of Monsigny and Grétry, it had now staunchly returned to Italian opera.

What actually happened does seem surprising. For more than twice as many -- over 100 -- opéras-comiques were performed in Vienna between 1790 and 1819 as in the 40 years before 1790. Indeed in comparison to subsequent decades the number of opéras-comiques seen in the Austrian capital before 1790 appears small. In addition to opéras-comiques themselves, there were countless French vaudevilles, translations of French plays and Austrian reworkings of French plots performed in Vienna between 1790 and 1850.

1. Die allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, 25 January, 1801, report from Vienna. Published in Leipzig from 1798 and edited by Rochlitz, this paper had a wide readership throughout Germany. This publication will in the future be referred to in notes as AMZ.

CHAPTER II

Social and political
environment, 1790 - 1819

Introduction

In - 1786, European politics were being discussed -- sometimes in French -- in the Viennese theatres. As Perinet recorded:

auf dem Parterre noble hört man mehr
von Kriegssachen als Theater raisonnieren,
und ein französisches Gerede übertäubt die
Sprache des deutschen Schauspielers.¹

Eight years later, Emperor Franz was alarmed to be told by the police that cobblers and other artisans were discussing the French revolution in lively fashion in the suburbs.²

The three emperors who ruled Austria between 1790 and 1819 had different strategies towards France, and the way in which Austria's foreign policy changed during these years was to have important indirect effects on the theatres, and on public taste.

I. The Austrian Government, 1790-1819

Joseph II had been sympathetic to the ideas of the Enlightenment. He believed, for example, that it was France's failure to carry out enlightened

1. Joachim Perinet, 29 Aergernisse (Vienna, 1786), p. 40, as quoted in Otto Schindler, "Das Publikum in der Josefinischen Ära", Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum, Vol. I, Ed. Margret Dietrich (Vienna: 1976), p.48. The Parterre Noble was the part of the ground floor of the theatre reserved for distinguished visitors and noblemen. But free tickets were also given to authors, composers, architects, painters, and actors, singers, and dancers. Schindler. p. 45.

2. E. Wangermann, From Joseph II to the Jacobin Trials (London, 1959), p. 149.

policies which led to the Revolution of 1789. He himself had been responsible for many policies of reform in Austria. In the reigns of first his mother, Maria Theresa, and then Joseph himself, Austria had within a few decades made considerable progress; once such a backward country, it had taken significant steps forward into the eighteenth century.

But for many people, the reforms had not gone far enough, and there was a sense of disappointment. For example, during Joseph's reign, the state had been particularly ungenerous in its support of the arts and sciences, money which might have been used for patronage remaining in the state coffers. As a result:

writers complained above all of Joseph's utter lack of respect for learning and letters... They contrasted their earlier vision of Josephinian Vienna as the Empire's cultural metropolis with the actual situation in which they were held in contempt by the government and deprived of access to court.¹

More seriously, perhaps, towards the end of Joseph's reign, the interest rate in Austria had been high and the war tax levied to pay for the wars against Turkey caused hardship and aroused people's indignation. On 31 July 1788 several of the heavily populated Viennese suburbs were without bread altogether because millers and bakers were holding back their supplies of rye - flour in expectation that the maximum price on black bread was to be lifted. The following year, flood disasters in Tyrol and the dissolution of the Brüderschaften, rather like Friendly Societies, in which

1. Wangermann, p. 25.

some very poor people had invested their money, brought about a potentially revolutionary situation.¹ Also in 1789 there were mass demonstrations against the war tax. Joseph's reforms had awakened the underprivileged to their rights:

enough, in fact, to envisage, however vaguely, complete social and political emancipation.²

An important aspect of Joseph's policy had been the relaxation of censorship, which enabled the Austrian public, almost for the first time, to express its views about the government, local conditions, and politics. Vienna was flooded with tracts and leaflets,³ and Joseph was alarmed to realise the extent to which his own opinions differed from those of a fourth estate not wanting to admit the right of the aristocracy to special privileges. His alarm was aggravated by the growing realisation of the seriousness of the situation in France. But another unexpected consequence of Joseph's policies was the weakening of the Catholic church, due to the emperor's religious reforms. These had had the unintended effect of encouraging a ferment of religious views and heresies. Although open to other eighteenth century ideas, the Austrian leaders had no sympathy with the

1. Wangermann, p. 29.

2. Wangermann, p. 2.

3. See Leslie Bodi, Tauwetter in Wien, (Frankfurt, 1977) for a detailed discussion of Viennese political writings during Joseph's reign.

religious scepticism of the Enlightenment and the questioning of these traditional beliefs was disturbing and distasteful to Joseph.¹

In 1786, the police were given instructions to listen to what people were saying about the emperor, and further repressive measures followed.²

There was an alarmingly strong black market in uncensored books and a vast haul of these was found in the warehouse of Georg Philipp Wucherer.³ Such signs that hitherto dormant sections of the population might respond to ideas filtering down from above in unexpected and unwelcome ways, and the agrarian revolt and urban atheism in some parts of the Habsburg territories, prompted Joseph II to begin using secret agents.⁴ It marked the beginning of the end of what Bodi has called the "Tauwetter in Wien",⁵ and when Joseph II died in 1790 he had retreated from some of his enlightened policies, afraid of the consequences, and alarmed by the unrest in France. In an attempt to restore stability to Austria, Joseph's brother, Leopold II, sought to regain the support of the aristocracy who had been alienated by the previous government's interest in the poorer classes.

1. Wangermann, pp. 2-16.

2. Bodi, p. 395.

3. Wangermann, pp. 40-41.

4. Wangermann, pp. 30-40.

5. Bodi, Tauwetter in Wien.

The flight of Louis XVI in 1791 caused all the leaders of Europe to fear for their own safety, and in Austria the unprecedented rise in the cost of living and attendant hardship, and the large number of French who had moved to Austria as a result of Joseph II's economic inducements, were all potential grounds for insecurity.¹ Leopold II took seriously allegations which reached him in June 1790 that French agents were being recruited in Paris to infiltrate foreign countries and engineer revolutions there. The provinces were urged to keep a watch on foreigners coming into Austria and aliens in Austria were to be supervised by the Minister of Police.² Lorenzo da Ponte was one of the French and Italian immigrants who incurred the suspicion of the authorities and was banished during this time.³ Leopold II proposed that the censors must be specifically instructed to cut out:

all references to the French principles, so fraught with danger at the present time, as well as all expositions of, or favourable comments on, the French system, which in the present state of public opinion might well create a most mischievous and pernicious impression on the people.⁴

1. Bodi, p. 425.

2. Wangermann, pp. 62-64.

3. Wangermann, p. 64.

4. Wangermann, p. 61.

It would clearly have been dangerous for Leopold to restore privileges to the aristocracy without also showing compassion to the fourth estate.¹ The peasants were partly compensated by political concessions; the introduction of a free health service and the reorganisation and control of the powers of the police, were other enlightened policies of Leopold II, still basically a man of the Enlightenment.²

He has often been seen as a peacemaker. He did not believe that war with France was justified after Louis XVI had signed the new constitution, despite the hopes of French emigrés in Vienna and the opponents of France. Up until 1792, when Leopold II died, the policy in Austria had been one of controlled alarm over but non-intervention in France. The common people in Austria, like their counterparts elsewhere, hailed the revolution in France as a triumph and were in sympathy with it. And there was a sense in which European governments, though frightened for their own skins, were at first secretly glad to observe the weakening of such a powerful neighbour.

But the accession of Emperor Franz after the death of his father in 1792 ushered in a different policy. A French work about Napoleon, who was soon to lift France from its present confusion, writes scornfully about the new Austrian emperor:

1. Bodi, p. 398.

2. Wangermann, p. 116.

François II, fils aîné de Leopold Ier .
[recte II] trop tôt disparu, neveu de
Joseph II, n'avait ni l'intelligence de
son père ni le prurit de réformes de son
oncle. Consciencieux et laborieux comme
un petit administrateur incapable de vices
d'avenir, il devait représenter pendant
près d'un demi-siècle l'esprit de conser-
vatisme et d'immobilité sur le trône.¹

The new emperor perceived Austria to be in
very great danger and allowed himself to be tempted
to abandon the cautious policy of non-intervention
in France. In the hope of gaining land for Austria
as a reward for fighting against France on behalf of
the French royal family, he was prepared for confron-
tation.² Being afraid, too, of the danger of revolution
within the Habsburg domains, he abandoned the new
ideals of the eighteenth century and rid his ministries
of men known to be sympathetic to the new thinking.
Austria's administration became repressive, suspicious
of change, afraid of outside contamination, and above
all, anxious to maintain the status quo. As Alxinger
wrote to his friend Wieland, the present ministers were
hostile to the Enlightenment:

Sie möchten gern so regieren wie vor
hundert Jahren Mode war, schelten alles
Jacobiner, was die alte Mode missbilliget
und sind entschlossen es auf ihre Art
durchzusetzen es koste, was es wolle.
Pressfreyheit und Publicität sind höchst
verhasst und wer ihnen je das Wort geredet
hat, der ist sicher nie befördert zu

1. André Latreille, L'ère Napoléonienne, (Paris, 1974),
pp. 32-33.

2. Wangermann, pp. 113-115.

werden. Die Censur ist strenger als je und Josephs grosser Geist ganz von uns gewichen.¹

After an initial purge in 1792, resulting in the deportation and detention without trial of supposed "Jacobins", there was a rounding up of "Jacobins" in 1794, and the poet Hebenstreit was executed,² Riedel was sentenced to 60 years imprisonment, and another offender, Gilowsky, committed suicide.³

The execution of Marie Antoinette in 1793 had been a major shock to the Austrian royal family and it was still thought that a similar revolt was possible in Vienna. Also, in 1794, the Habeas Corpus act was suspended and police activity intensified. In the August of that year, Beethoven wrote to Simrock that one dared not talk too loudly.⁴ Thugut wrote to Colloredo in July 1796 that he feared Vienna more than all the fury of the enemy, and that it was from Vienna that would come ruin.⁵

1. Gustav Wilhelm, Briefe des Dichters Johann Baptist von Alxinger, Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserl. Akad. d. Wiss. in Wien, CXL/2, (Vienna, 1898), p. 70.

2. He was hanged on 8 January 1795.

3. Bodi, p. 418; pp. 419-422.

4. "To Nikolaus Simrock, Bonn," 2 August 1794, Letter 12, Letters of Beethoven, ed. Emily Anderson (New York, 1961), I, p. 18.

5. Wangermann, p. 189.

Since the days of Joseph II, there had been a strong Viennese tradition of meetings in cafes to exchange views.¹ When the secret police started frequenting cafes, the free-thinkers would meet in private homes to express their advanced ideas and read prohibited newspapers; it was at these meetings that Hebenstreit spoke out against class divisions. The failure of the 1793 campaign against France, the financial burdens, war weariness and discontent had made the government extremely insecure and the police were on the alert for anything suspicious. Perhaps Franz felt more secure after the arrest of these scapegoats and therefore put increasing trust in the secret police. Later historians have seen his concern as needless. "According to all the evidence available, the various activities which have gone into history as the Jacobin conspiracy, were little more than such an attempt to organise and coordinate the active opposition to the policies of Francis II's government."² The spying and censorship used by Franz and his future foreign minister, Metternich,³ to control the country, have been seen as the genesis of the Vormärz -- that is, the period of tension leading up to the people's revolt in March 1848.

1. Wangermann, p. 137.

2. Wangermann, p. 137.

3. Metternich was appointed foreign minister on 8 October 1809.

After 1809 Metternich virtually ruled Austria, continuing the repressive measures even after the danger from France had passed. For decades, Austria was to stand still in respect of policies at home and abroad until the years of constraint and suppression erupted into the revolution which Franz and his ministers had feared during the 1790's. The prelude to the turbulent year of 1848 was a demonstration of students and professors from the University, who made their way, not to the Hofburg, for they had nothing against the emperor, but to near Metternich's residence, to present demands for a free press and trial by jury. Metternich resigned and made his way to London; there were celebrations in the streets of Vienna.¹

II. Austrian Reactions to the French Revolution

There was a large French community in Vienna before the revolutionary troubles; some had entered Austria as a result of economic inducements instituted by Joseph II to attract skilled artisans. And, swelling their numbers, French émigrés began to leave France in 1791; by 1792 they were leaving in large numbers. It has been estimated that in 1793 there were 22,800 foreigners in Vienna, as opposed to 10,000 before the French emigration began.²

1. Richard Rickett, A Brief Survey of Austrian History, (Vienna, 1966), p. 88.

2. J. G. Prod'homme, La jeunesse de Beethoven (1770-1800) (Paris, 1921), p. 145.

Karl Philipp Freiherr von Reitzenstein, visiting Vienna in 1795, exclaimed that there were so many foreigners who could not understand German in Vienna, that the German Schauspiel in the Austrian capital barely stood a chance.¹

It is difficult to tell how long it took for news from France to reach Vienna. The Viennese were, on the whole, well-read, and, as mentioned above, people with any sort of pretensions read French.

Wangermann has concluded that:

The Austrian newspaper reader had acquired a limited but genuine knowledge of the French Revolution.²

In addition to the Austrian papers, where the standard of journalism was low and censorship prevented the expression of opinions and only allowed "facts" to be reported,³ various forbidden and uncensored papers reached Vienna, and Jacobin circles had forbidden papers smuggled in from Salzburg during the 1790s.⁴ Austria, although more protected from foreign influences than other European countries, was not, as one

1. Karl Philipp Freiherr von Reitzenstein, Reise nach Wien, (Hof, 1795), p. 12ff. As quoted in Kindermann, "Das Publikum und die Schauspielerrepublik" in Dietrich, Das Burgtheater, p. 105.

2. Wangermann, p. 120.

3. An imperial decree dated 9 February 1793 had forbidden all books presenting the French Revolution in a favourable light and any favourable mention of the French Revolution in Austrian newspapers. Alfred Korner, Die Wiener Jakobiner, (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 11.

4. Baron Riesbeck, in 1789, noted that border checks were arbitrary and that forbidden books were smuggled into Vienna from Switzerland, Innsbruck and Salzburg, I, pp. 203-210.

writer has claimed, separated from the outside world by a host of censors and spies "comme entourée d'une Muraille de Chine."¹

Almost every visitor is alleged, in the words of the cynical Charles Sealsfield, author of Austria as it is, to have been "surprised" at the easy availability of foreign newspapers, of forbidden books, the effectiveness of bribes to customs officers (perhaps a good meal) and the easy passing of foreign letters at salon meetings.²

Another writer even reported knowing a Viennese censor who allowed a friend of his to receive the most inflammatory of Paris newspapers.³ The weakness of human nature and fallibility of government institutions leads one to suppose that even during the dangerous days of the nineties it was possible to obtain what one wanted to read -- in the words of one traveller the people of Austria were:

in one way or another...well enough informed of what passes in other countries, especially England and France; perhaps as perfectly as their own apathetic indifference would allow them to be.⁴

The reaction of the Austrian people to the revolution in France had been, from the first, enthusiastic, in common with people all over Europe.⁵

1. Prod'homme, p. 145.

2. Charles Sealsfield [Karl Postl] Austria as it is (London, 1828) pp. 30-31, p. 184 ff.

3. Peter Evan Turnbull, Austria, (London, 1840), II, p. 263 ff.

4. Turnbull, II, p. 271.

5. Wangermann, p. 73.

Beethoven, who had arrived in Vienna in November 1792, associated with the group of Austrian intelligentsia who, interested in the French revolution, met at the house of the French ambassador to Vienna, General Bernadotte. It was here that Beethoven learnt favourable reports about Napoleon in 1798. Beethoven anyway had been in favour of democracy and noted in his diary:

Allenthalben wiegeln sich die Unterthanen gegen ihre Herren auf. So ungerecht das auch sein mag, so ist doch auch viele Unterdrückung im Lande. Die Geistlichkeit und der Adel haben zum Theil ihre Güter frei von allen Abgaben; der arme Bauer muss im Schweisse seines Angesichts sein Brot gewinnen, für jene die Steuern bezahlen und die Lasten des Landes tragen.¹

But he was realistic about the possibility of revolution in Austria, writing to tell Simrock in 1794 that imminent revolution was at that time feared. Beethoven added, however, that he thought it unlikely that the Austrian would revolt as long as he had his brown beer and sausages.²

In his pro-revolutionary tendencies, Beethoven had been influenced by a teacher at Vienna University. Indeed, it seems to have been the intelligent middle and upper classes who talked most about the events in France; and this interest was more intellectual than practical -- perhaps it was political speculation rather than possible political action which really excited people. Beethoven angrily withdrew the

1. As quoted in Georg Knepler, Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, (Berlin, 1961), p. 529.

2. Beethoven, Letter to Simrock, 2 August, 1794, Anderson, I, p. 18.

dedication of his third symphony to Napoleon when he decided that Napoleon was merely another kind of tyrant. Mozart, on the other hand, who died two years after the storming of the Bastille, does not mention the French revolution in any of his surviving letters.

Although the Austrian public was reportedly in favour of the revolution, the hoisting of a French flag over the French ambassador's house in 1798 was greeted by an angry mob who tore the flag down. A mixture of half truth, rumour and speculation about France abounded in Vienna during these years, partly put to rest in 1802, during a break in the fighting with France when France was on the road to economic recovery and considered stable enough for foreign visitors. Curious visitors from all over Europe, including Austria, flocked to Paris to see the effects of the Revolution for themselves.¹ Austrian sympathy for France made fighting the French difficult for the Austrian military leaders. Despite the killing of the French king and the looting of Belgium, Austrian peasants were against war and the personal sacrifices it would entail:

For the French "enemy" the Austrian soldier tended to feel sympathy rather than hostility. Both shared a common hatred for the landed nobility. The longer the Austrian soldier remained on French soil, the more did he assimilate the language and outlook of the man he was supposed to fight, the ideas of '89. The growing number of deserters was but one expression of this mutual understanding. "I am dissatisfied with the ...

1. Latreille, p. 104

troups under Wurmser", Francis wrote to his brother the Palatin early in 1794, "there is a great deal of political discussion even among the officers, desertion is frequent, and they continually hold friendly conversation with the enemy's advanced guards".¹

Austrian soldiers would collect the buttons worn by the foreign army with their motto "liberté, égalité, fraternité" but the authorities required that these be surrendered:

The problem of growing sympathy for the French soldiers on the part of those who came into close contact with them was not confined to the front line. It emerged in all the Habsburg provinces through which French prisoners of war had been transported, and even more in those where they finally settled. Everywhere the population showed a keen desire to come into contact with the prisoners, and it was not long before the relations established were so friendly that an alarmed Ministry of Police urged decisive intervention.²

Even when, after a series of defeats, the French took Vienna for the first time in 1805, and at 11.30 am on Wednesday 13 November it was announced that the French were coming, everyone turned out to watch and a carnival spirit prevailed. Rosenbaum entered this in his diary the next day:

The French are behaving civilly, even gallantly. Wherever Frenchmen are seen, the streets are soon full of people; this must appear strange to them, for in every other city they have entered, the people have hidden from them, and here they are received in a friendly manner... May they soon leave Vienna in just as friendly a way!³

1. Wangermann, p. 147.

2. Wangermann, p. 147.

3. "The Diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum," ed. Else Radant. The Haydn Yearbook, V (1968). (Bryn Mawr, Pa, 1968), diary entry for the 14 November 1805, p. 127.

Rosenbaum continued by writing that there was a great shortage of food and that people were "almost fighting to death in the Mehlmarkt over a quarter of a pound of flour". Billetting placed a heavy burden on Austrian housewives, but, in spite of it, relationships with the French remained essentially friendly. Whereas morale in the experienced French army was very high --, it has been claimed that the soldiers in Napoleon's large army enjoyed better food and conditions than they did at home -- the Austrian army was old-fashioned, badly clothed, and, until 1806, when there were reforms, subjected to corporal punishment.

The second time Napoleon captured Vienna -- four years later -- he met with more resistance. For a brief period, from about 1808 to 1810, there was in Austria a keen sense of national purpose and of indignation towards the French. Austria assumed a warlike aspect for perhaps the first time. The patriotic movement was encouraged by Maria Ludovica, wife of the emperor Franz, whose family had lost its possessions during Napoleon's sweep through northern Italy; and by ~~Made~~ de Staël, an "anti-Napoleon one-man campaign", who descended upon Vienna in the winter of 1807-1808. This time, Vienna was to be more heavily defended, and there is an amusing note in Rosenbaum's diary telling how all the firearms, sabres and swords were collected from the theatres as news spread that the French were approaching. But the

resistance was in vain and by dawn the following morning Vienna was again in the hands of the enemy. The Viennese asked themselves whether the defence had been worth it in the light of damage to property and civilian injuries.

An interesting incident is recorded about one of the French dancers at the court theatres, Nalej-Neuville who, in April 1809, had apparently refused to dance until the French had reached Vienna. The general public was convinced that she was in collaboration with the French ambassador's secretary and demanded her arrest. But the Polizeihofstelle wanted the matter to be forgotten as quickly as possible and had her released.¹

Despite the initial resistance of the Viennese towards the enemy, Austrian citizens would flock out to Schönbrunn in hopes of catching sight of Napoleon himself.² But some lasting resentment towards the French did remain, and when Frances Trollope visited Vienna during the 1840s, she was given two conflicting reasons as to why the tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral was not perpendicular: some people told her that it had been hit by the Turks during their siege of the city in 1683 (which was the real reason); others said that its lean was a result of the French bombardment in 1809.³

The French remained in Vienna until November 1809. After this fresh defeat for the Austrians, the patriotic movement lost support with the government and expressions

1. Schlientz, "Das Wiener Theater während der Napoleonischen Besetzung im Jahre 1809", Diss. Vienna, 1964, p. 31.

2. Stella Musulin, Vienna in the Age of Metternich, (London, 1975), p. 46.

3. Trollope, I, p. 296.

of it were officially discouraged and feared to be dangerous. The following year, Austria amazed the rest of Europe by submitting itself to what appeared to be fresh humiliation, by marrying Marie-Louise, daughter of the Emperor Franz, to Napoleon. Shock and outrage were felt most keenly by the aristocracy because the murdered Marie-Antoinette of France had been her aunt. After the news had been much discussed in Viennese cafes and salons, the marriage was happily accepted by most Viennese and dutifully celebrated.¹ The emperor Franz who, in arranging the wedding, met and talked with Napoleon, is reported to have been favourably impressed with him.²

In 1813, Frederick William III called for a war of liberation, which united Austria, Prussia and Russia against France; and the entry of the allies into Paris in March 1814, followed by the Battle of Waterloo, brought about Napoleon's downfall. During the wars Austria had lost a million men.³

The Congress of Vienna (September 1814 to June 1815) restored all her possessions to Austria with the exception of Flanders and the so-called Rhine provinces. The Austrian empire, as the monarchy was named after 1804, comprised roughly the territory of the later Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with Venice, Milan and other

1. Musulin, p. 101-102.

2. Musulin, p. 117.

3. Deutsch, Schubert, p. xxii.

possessions in northern Italy. The Congress brought 100,000 strangers to the Austrian capital. The Austrians were proud to host such an international gathering (although it proved costly for the Viennese tax payer): Vienna then enjoyed a glamour and importance perhaps unprecedented in its history.

After the Congress, when Europe had been redivided and the wars with France were over, Vienna was more settled and stable. From 1815 to the 1830s was a time of flourishing theatrical life, the age of Raimund and Grillparzer; when Vienna was called the musical capital of the world. It is remarkable that, for all the police spying, censorship and bureaucracy, Vienna managed to retain its legendary self-indulgence during the Biedermeier period. W. E. Yates has pointed out that there is a certain aptness about the fact that from 1804, Vienna was presided over by a Mayor called Stefan von Wohlleben.¹

III. Spoken French as a fashionable Viennese affectation

Vienna has been called the most French of all the German cities.² One factor influencing the perhaps surprising choice of Vienna as host for the Vienna Congress in 1814, was the ability of most of its aristocracy to speak French. By 1790, this once purely upper class pastime had spread to the lower ranks of society.

1. W. E. Yates "Cultural life in early nineteenth-century Vienna", Forum for Modern Language Studies, April 1977, pp. 116-117.

2. Félix Kreissler, Le Français dans le théâtre Viennois du XIXe siècle, (Rouen, 1973), p. 171.

The imaginary peasant who had come to live in Vienna from the suburb of Eipeldau and whose supposed letters home were published during the 1790s, related to the family how his wife had left French visiting cards with her friends, as a matter of social necessity, even though none of them could understand them.¹ Schreyvogel in Das Sonntagsblatt calculated that in 1807 the reading matter of the Viennese was: 64% German, 28.5% French, 6% English, and 1.5% Italian.² French was not spoken very well (the main requirements of a French teacher were inexpensiveness and politeness) and as an exasperated journalist wrote:

Unter den vielen ärgerlichen Dingen auf der Welt ist auch ein gar ärgerliches, dass noch immer alle Welt in allen Städten Deutschlands, und zumahl in unserem lieben Wien französisch sprechen will und so selten jemand französisch sprechen kann.³

It was something of an affectation: *I have noticed* that in German translations of French operas, French words creep back into the German when one character becomes haughty or angry. In Heinrich Schmidt's translation of Isouard's opera Cendrillon (which became Aschenbrödl in German), for example, the two ugly sisters

1. "Mein Frau Gmahlinn kann's selbst nich lesen; aber weil sich halt unsere deutsch Noblessi noch immer französische Fisitzettel zuschickt, so hat mein Frau Gmahlinn halt auch ihren Namen auf Französisch stechen." Joseph Richter, Die Eipeldauer Briefe 1785-1813, ed. Gustav Gugitz (Munich, 1917) I, (book 7, letter 4), p. 122. See p. 136 for more information about Die Eipeldauer Briefe.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 21 June, 1807, p. 342.

3. Die Theaterzeitung, 3 February, 1818, p. 57.

lapse into French when angrily telling Aschenbrödl to go home: she is not welcome at the king's ball (III, 8):

Clorinde and Thisbe:

Marsch fort von hier, Mademoiselle!...

Ha seht die Insolente,
Seht die Impertinente.
Folgen ist dir Pflicht,
Man fragt dich nicht.¹

A letter published in the satirical paper Das Sonntagsblatt shows quite clearly this tendency to use French to demonstrate superiority. A Herr von der Muecke writes to Schreyvogel:

Im Ernst, einige Ihrer Blätter sind charmant.
Sie haben Esprit, mein Herr, für einen Deutschen,
sehr viel Esprit.²

The sometimes shallow understanding of French achievements and poor observation of them by the Viennese is embodied in another of Schreyvogel's creations, a Frau Schwach who, in 1807, took her holiday in Paris. There she met a charming French officer who could even say "ich liebe" in German (the Austrian lady was blissfully unaware of his intentions); and a German academic who had moved to the French capital and now counted milliners among his friends there. She went to the theatre where there was unfortunately only a play by Corneille "leider nicht mehr neu" with, worst of all, no live horses on the

1. Heinrich Schmidt, trans., Aschenbrödl, by C. J. Etienne, 3rd ed. (Vienna: Wallishauser, 1812) p. 57.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 20 September, 1807, p. 84.

stage. Frau Schwach announced that of course she loved her own country but was now really taken with Paris.¹

This fascination with France, thirty years earlier most prevalent among the court and aristocracy, and now filtered down to ordinary people, was only heightened by the mixture of excitement, fear and rumour which accompanied the Revolution and subsequent wars with France. French had become part of Vienna's heritage, and it is difficult to imagine it quickly going out of fashion, or remaining out of fashion.

IV. French Revolutionary Opera

A second and more important reason why the Viennese saw so many French stage works, especially opéras-comiques, on their stages during these troubled years, was the strength of the French opera school during the Revolution. French opera composers were, during the last decade of the eighteenth century and first decade of the nineteenth century, prolific, numerous, and highly successful. As well as being impressive in terms of sheer quantity, the works coming out of Paris were notable for their quality and freshness. These composers "laid down a stock of technical achievements which was not exhausted for another fifty years".²

¹. Das Sonntagsblatt, 20 December 1807, p. 327-328.

². Winton Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution", p. 77.

Signs of a new direction in taste had already been gathering in France before the upheaval of the revolution, which was to give romanticism a clear field. For example, Rousseau's Le devin du village had indicated a new attitude towards nature, and so had Grétry's choice of libretti, which included not only exotic subjects such as Zémire et Azor and Raoul Barbe-bleue; but also chivalric, mock-mediaeval stories like Richard Coeur-de-Lion which used local colour and choruses of peasants. And alongside Grétry stood Dalayrac who had written his share of rescue operas, a form which reached its culmination in Fidelio. This type of opera was also adopted by Cherubini and Gaveaux -- and all these composers were known to Viennese audiences. Indeed, by 1814, when the final version of Fidelio was performed, some of the audience were to react negatively to the plot because by then rescue operas were old-fashioned. As the AMZ wrote, after conceding that on the whole the opera had been quite successful:

Einige sagen, das Sujet (wieder eine Rettungsgeschichte) sey veraltet, und muss, nach so vielen ähnlichen seit dem Wasserträger Les deux journées, fast zum Ueberdruß aufgetischt, eher abstossen als anziehen.¹

Cherubini was the most distinguished member of the French school, and he was to excite Beethoven's warmest admiration;² Cherubini in turn had been influenced by Gluck's

¹ AMZ, 22 July 1814, column 420 ff.

² A. W. Thayer, Life of Beethoven, (New York, 1921), II, p. 48. In Beethoven's opinion in 1823, the texts of Les deux journées and Spontini's La vestale were the best ever written. Thayer, II, 36; III, 139.

blend of classicism and romanticism and he, like Spontini and Méhul, developed in his different way surprising and spectacular new effects. As well as these composers, dozens of now less familiar names became known to Viennese audiences, though none won as much affection as Grétry and Dalayrac, and perhaps Boieldieu, and none such respect as Cherubini. The Viennese recognised the influence of Gluck in the music of these men, and several times new French composers would be introduced in the German press as "a pupil of Gluck" as though that were all the introduction necessary. Notices of French operas would remind Viennese audiences of a composer's indebtedness to Gluck -- and one often wonders whether the Viennese did not sometimes think of the French school as an extension of their own opera tradition.

French revolutionary opera had deep roots. It is true that some operas from the 1790s such as Le congrès des rois or Les rigueurs du cloître have been seen as operatic monstrosities written for a particularly bloodthirsty period and such deservedly ephemeral works never reached Vienna. The former, dating from February 1794, is a collaboration between twelve composers including Berton, Cherubini, Dalayrac, Grétry and Méhul. It tells of a conspiracy against the reigning Kings of Europe by their mistresses and ends with the Kings dancing the Carmagnole in red bonnets. Les rigueurs du cloître by Berton (1790) is an early example of rescue opera "of which it is a primitive and

somewhat naive example". Its heroine is rescued from a convent and all the nuns are sent out into the world to rear families.¹ But a surprising number of revolutionary operas stood the test of time.

For over a century, writes a historian of the French theatre, Paris had "consistently enjoyed theatrical excellence unknown on the continent".² A Viennese historian might want to challenge that claim but could not deny for example the important developments in staging and production which were made in late eighteenth century France and which, for the first time, gave theatres the concept of an overall artistic director responsible for the whole production.³ Paris enjoyed an excellent publishing tradition which allowed full opera scores to be printed shortly after their première; as well as a school of journalism and fine criticism which surpassed anything the Austrian papers could offer. And the French tradition of orchestral playing enjoyed European fame during the eighteenth century. The 1780s and 1790s saw French experiments in the accurate notation of tempo indications, new methods of conducting and the use of different wind instruments.⁴

1. Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution" pp. 78 and 82.

2. Marvin A. Carlson, The theatre of the French Revolution, (Cornell, 1966), p. 7;

3. See Pierre Peyronnet, La mise en scène au XVIII^e siècle (Paris, 1974).

4. David Charlton, "Orchestration and orchestral practice in Paris , 1789-1810", Diss. Cambridge 1973, pp. 67-77; p. 120ff.

The revolution deeply influenced music and theatre in Paris, already a melting pot of new ideas. Music, for example, played an important part in the revolutionary festivities and celebrations. At first, it was still based on literary ideas, and so the flight of the King of France in 1791 was celebrated in hymns and chants often more like cantatas. After 1792, when France was at war, much more music was written and the words of choruses and opera libretti were now based on more contemporary ideas, strong and immediate in their impact with the inflamed passions one might expect of a time of great political upheaval. 1793 and 1794 saw the high point of the revolutionary feast, where huge massed choirs sang on open pieces of land such as the Tuileries Park, or the Champ de Mars where, on 8 June 1794, the "Feast to the Highest Being" was held. A choir of 2400 people sang, fifty from every quartier of Paris, each of the 48 quartiers being under the direction of a musician or composer. Méhul, for example, took the Tuileries. A hymn by Gossec and the Marseillaise were sung and Robespierre spoke at what was a "well prepared and well-disciplined meeting."¹ One hundred and five composers in Paris wrote for the revolution: opera composers such as Dalayrac, Catel, Méhul, Gossec and Cherubini and Berton were all involved in composing for these revolutionary celebrations,² which cast their

¹. Georg Knepler, Musikgeschichte des 19 Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1961), p. 111ff.

². Knepler, p. 142.

influence over all music even though not all composers were necessarily in sympathy with the sentiments being expressed. Grétry, for instance, has been cited as an eighteenth-century man who remained largely untouched by the ideological changes taking place around him, even though Raoul Barbe-bleue and Richard are celebrated examples of rescue opera.¹

As the revolution gave impetus to music, it also affected the theatrical life of the city. In 1790, the two conditions under which the Opéra-Comique was allowed to perform were lifted: it no longer had to pay the opéra 40,000 livres yearly for the privilege of giving musical works in the French capital and was now able also to give Pièces à ariettes on Thursday and Fridays, the big nights at the Opéra. And in January 1791, the revolutionary government declared that any citizen could erect a public theatre for the presentation of all genres as long as he notified the municipal authorities of his plans in advance.² By 1793 there were eighteen theatres in Paris. Their titles and ownership changed frequently.

After the first two stimulating years of Revolution, matters became harder for the theatres. In the autumn

1. Cooper, p. 44.

2. Max Aghion, Le Théâtre à Paris au 18e siècle, (Paris 1926), p. 360 ff.

of 1792, the theatres suffered badly as a result of the strife and bloodshed, and this situation continued during the troubled summer of 1793. Because of rapid political changes, many new works were of an ephemeral nature, for references to the old regime had to be altered (words such as "mademoiselle" were replaced by the more revolutionary "citoyenne"). The darkest time of all was the "Terreur" from September 1793 to July 1794. The milieu in which plays and operas were presented changed from week to week; each character, each word of every play being "subject to the rule of the changing governments and of the fickle and violent mob."¹ The actor Abraham-Joseph Fleury said that the actors became weathercocks.²

After the fall of Robespierre in July 1794, audiences began returning to the theatres and lavish sets now became a feature of productions. For example, the Cherubini opera Eliza ou le voyage aux glaciers du Mont Saint Bernard, first performed in Paris in December 1794, stressed a romantic appreciation for Switzerland and culminated in an avalanche. Weber was to have a great affection for this opera, but when it was given in Vienna in 1802, it fell flat, and inadequate staging was one of the reasons.³ A fantastic array of costumes was also a

¹. Carlson, The theatre of the French Revolution, p. V.

². Carlson, The theatre of the French Revolution, p. V.

³. see p. 186.

feature of opera productions in Paris after 1794. 1797 was the last full year of Revolution before Napoleon came to power, and Méhul's Adrien of that year was banned after its fourth performance because of its political implications (the difficulties entailed in portraying emperors and monarchs on stage). In 1798, the theatres became more settled again, and in that year the 1791 act allowing freedom to open theatres in Paris was repealed and the number of theatres in the French capital restricted to six. In 1807, this number was changed to eight.¹

During the 1790s, the twin cradles of opéra-comique in Paris were the Théâtre Monsieur and the Théâtre Feydeau.² Streams of new opéras-comiques received their premières at these theatres, which remained open during most of the troubles, despite financial worries. The quantity of new works written during this time, and the fact that they reached production, is remarkable.

Most of the opéras-comiques performed in Vienna had received their première at one of these theatres. Prior to 1790, the Salle Favart had been called the Comédie Italienne. In 1793 it became the Opéra-Comique National

1. Carlson, The theatre of the French Revolution, p. 285.

2. Charlton, "Orchestration", p. 63.

and, the following year, the Théâtre Favart. The Théâtre Feydeau had opened in 1789 as the Théâtre de Monsieur and changed its name two years later.¹ After years of intense rivalry, these two theatres united in 1801 as the Opéra-Comique. So, for example, two of the most successful French composers whose works were performed in Vienna, Isouard and Méhul, each had three of their operas performed at the Opéra, several at the Théâtre Feydeau and over twenty each at the Opéra-Comique. None of their works was premièreed at other Parisian theatres. Occasionally, some of the French operas produced in Vienna came from one of the minor Parisian stages, such as the Porte-Saint-Martin (a very prolific theatre which first opened in 1807 and underwent several periods of closure), or the Théâtre Montansier. The Paris Opéra continued to perform grand opera of the more traditional kind, though this art form was somewhat in decay between 1790 and 1819. The most celebrated and popular French composers of the day wrote opéras-comiques, and the Paris Opéra, which performed large-scale works with no spoken dialogue, no longer had composers of genius attached to it. Gluck had left Paris in 1776 and Salieri's last Parisian opera, Tarare, had been performed in 1787. Apart from the occasional grand opera composed by Cherubini, Méhul or one of their contemporaries, the Opéra now relied on a repertoire of older works.

¹. It had been organised by the king's brother -- hence its original name. It was the victim of some heavy vandalism during the 1790s because it was suspected of being a haven for royalists.

In the new opéra-comique, pastoral and make-believe plots with gentle elements of parody and comedy gave way to serious plots involving ordinary people in heroism and escape; the music included large choruses, more complex orchestration. Symphonic and dramatic unity became more important and local colour added interest to operas. The Revolution in Paris affected the theatres themselves. Prior to 1789, it had been the aristocrats and the rich bourgeois who had provided the largest part of the theatres' incomes in Paris. But by the mid-1790s, the Théâtre Favart received nine times the income from daily visitors who bought their tickets at the box offices that it received from subscribers to boxes.¹ After the French Revolution, the lower classes had more power in the theatres.

Another side-effect of the revolution was the foundation of the Paris Conservatoire, established on 3 January 1795. It strengthened musical education in Paris, centralised it, and provided regular teaching for students and composers. It appointed many composers of opéra-comique to its board and teaching staff: in March 1800 these included: Méhul, Gossec, Le Sueur, Cherubini, Monsigny, Adam, Berton, Blasius, Catel, Devienne, Gaviniès, Kreutzer, Persuis, Plantade and Boieldieu.²

¹. Knepler, p. 142.

². Charlton, p. 21 ff;

The rest of Europe was slow to assess the worth of the intense artistic activity of revolutionary Paris. As late as December 1798 and January 1799, there appeared in the Leipzig paper, the AMZ, an article in three parts entitled "Einige Ideen über den Geist der französischen Nationallieder" written by a Pfarrer Christman; it concluded somewhat helplessly:

Wenn mir das Glück noch zu Theil werden sollte, mit der gegenwärtigen Geschichte der Kunst in Frankreich durch nähere literarische Verbindungen bekannter zu werden: so werde ich bey der künftigen Beurtheilung französischer Produkte, welche die verdienstvollen Herren Verleger dieser Blätter mir zu übertragen die Güte hatten, auch noch in Zukunft auf diesen wichtigen Gegenstand besondere Rücksicht nehmen und nicht nur manches ergänzen, was itzt aus Mangel an mehreren Hülfsmitteln nicht geschehen konnte; sondern vielleicht auch noch in einer eigenen Abhandlung zeigen was die Kunst überhaupt durch die Revolution gewonnen oder verloren habe.¹

However, almost two years later, when it was evident that the situation in Paris was now stable and the rest of Europe was in a better position to assess it, the AMZ carried a much more positive report:

Im dramatischen Fach ... hat Paris nie eine solche Menge verbrüderter Künstler beysammen gesehen als jezt /sic/ ... Kaum jemals hat man eine schönere Musik und eine vollkommnere Ausführung derselben gehört. Alles trug bey zu dieser Vollkommenheit. Ein doppeltes Orchester, zahlreiche Singschöre, das prächtige Gebäude mit seinen sonoren Wölbungen, und das lebhafteste Feuer aller Musiker, das sie bey Aufführungen nicht eben immer beseelt aber heute von Einem dem Andern mitgetheilt, wurde --: dieses zusammen bildete Ein Ganzes, im strengsten Sinn des Worts.²

¹ AMZ, 16 January 1799, column 268-269.

² AMZ, 24 December 1800, column 216-217.

From 1800 the pages of the AMZ were rich in musical reports from Paris; notices, obituaries, articles and histories of the different Paris theatres. And the AMZ also devoted much space to opera news from towns in north Germany, including reports of German performances of the new opéra-comique, sometimes even suggesting the certain French works would be particularly suited for performance in Germany. This almost amounted to advertisement and the AMZ was important in the dissemination of opéra-comique. Performance material for most opéra-comiques performed in Vienna between 1790 and 1802 was to come from north Germany, and not from Paris.¹

V. The theatres in Vienna

Some effect of the wars on the people of Vienna -- and in particular on the theatres -- will be considered in the next section. But first must come a brief note about the theatres themselves, and mention, too, of the smaller stages.

All five major Viennese theatres gave Viennese premières of French operas at some time between 1790 and 1850: the two court theatres, mentioned in chapter I, the Burgtheater and Kärntnerthortheater; and the three suburban theatres: the Theater in der Josefstadt, Theater auf der Wieden, which was succeeded by the Theater an der Wien; and the Theater in der Leopoldstadt. Between 1790 and 1802, most opéras-comiques

¹. See pp. 355-356.

were performed in these last two theatres; after 1802, the court theatres and the Theater an der Wien became the most important stages in Vienna for French opera. The Theater in der Josefstadt did not become significant as an opera stage until the 1820s.

A, The court theatres

Before 1810, the Burgtheater and Kärntnerthortheater were jointly run, and most works given at one theatre were also performed at the other, with the same sets and cast. The stages of both theatres were nearly enough the same size to make this possible, and the scenery and artists were transported the short distance by carriage. It has been estimated that the Burgtheater held an audience of about 1350, and that the inside of the auditorium measured 25.5 metres in length, 15.2 metres in breadth, and 13 metres in height. The capacity of the Kärntnerthortheater was about the same, and, although the interior box arrangement of both theatres was altered from time to time, neither theatre underwent substantial alteration between 1790 and 1819.¹ After 1810, the administration of the two theatres was separated: the Burgtheater now specialised in spoken drama and the Kärntnerthortheater in opera and ballet.

For most of the period covered by this study, the court theatres employed four different companies: a ballet company; a company of German actors; an Italian opera troupe and a German opera troupe.

1. Otto G. Schindler, "Das Publikum des Burgtheaters in der Josephinischen Ära," in Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum, ed. Margret Dietrich, 2 vols (Vienna, 1976), I, p. 18.

However, from time to time, one opera troupe would be supported at the expense of the other, and so, for example, the main reason why few French or German operas were given at the court theatres during the 1790s was that the theatres did not at that time employ a company of German singers. Later, the German opera company was to be strengthened and the Italian troupe temporarily disbanded.

A higher proportion of aristocracy attended the court theatres than the other theatres in town. Some Viennese from the suburbs may not have felt at home among the courtly clientele, and others may have found the distance at night, and slightly greater expense, inhibiting; for others, the programme was not appealing. That is not to say that other members of the general public did not visit these two theatres.

B. The suburban theatres

The number of theatres in Vienna remained constant from 1790 to 1819, even though the population expanded. But there had been a brief burst of new theatrical activity during the late 1770s and 1780s as a result of the Spektakelfreiheit passed in 1776, which removed the court's monopoly over theatres in Vienna and allowed other theatres to be built. After this, the three theatres mentioned above opened in the suburbs. Each had its more modest predecessor, but the dates usually given for the beginning of these theatres are: 1781 the Theater in der Leopoldstadt;

1787 the Theater auf der Wieden; and 1788 the Theater in der Josefstadt.

Subsequent alterations and renovation took place in each of these theatres, and in 1801 the Theater auf der Wieden company moved into a completely new building, but between 1790 and 1819 -- indeed, until at least 1850 -- these theatres were remarkably stable, remaining essentially true to their own traditions and avoiding long periods of uncertainty or closure.

Unlike the court theatres, the suburban stages were not normally entitled to perform operas in Italian; but their repertoires included pantomime, Austrian folk comedy, German Singspiel, spoken drama, and some dancing. Music played an important part in these varied entertainments and so all three theatres had orchestras and German singers and were at least theoretically capable of mounting a production of the smaller French operas.

1. The Theater in der Leopoldstadt

Troupes of players and musicians had performed in the Leopoldstadt before 1781 when the theatre was actually built. The mediocre company was strengthened during the 1780s with the addition of the composer and conductor, Wenzel Müller, the singer, Anton Baumann, and the Bondra family and Sartory family.¹ After 1787; when the German opera troupe was released from

¹. Hadamowsky, Das Theater in der Leopoldstadt, p. 49ff.

the Kärntnertheater, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt was performing operas by Gassmann, Dittersdorf, Paisiello, Salieri and Martín. The theatre held 1400 people, it was 29 metres long and 15 metres broad. The interior of the auditorium was 17 metres long and the stage was ten metres deep.¹ In the early years of the theatre's existence the orchestra pit was only two metres wide.²

From 1785, the theatre employed a writer important in the performance of French operas there, Perinet, a talented young writer who had written a large number of brochures towards the end of Joseph's reign. He was a shrewd and sharp satirist³ and in 1789 he wrote Liliputianische Steuerfassionen, reactions of the people of "Liliput" to the war taxes imposed in November 1788. Castelli said that this:

strotze so sehr von Witz dass man versucht sei, zu glauben es habe dieses Büchlein nicht ein Mensch sondern mehre geschrieben.⁴

Perinet was politically aware and expressed his own opinions in this and other pamphlets. Born in Vienna in 1763, he was involved in translating operas for the Theater in der Leopoldstadt during the 1790s.

¹. Kindermann, V, p. 272.

². Hadamowsky, Das Theater in der Leopoldstadt, p. 44.

³. Castelli said "er galt mit Recht damals für einen der Witzigsten Köpfe", Castelli, I, p. 111.

⁴. Castelli, I, pp. 111-112.

He was also the librettist of the opera Kaspar der Fagottist, with music by Wenzel Müller, performed at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt in June 1791, three months before the performance at the Theater auf der Wieden of Die Zauberflöte and so similar in its basic plot to the Mozart opera that it used to be claimed that Mozart had had to change his opera at the last minute.¹ The Theater auf der Wieden was a fierce competitor of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt during the 1790s. But towards the end of this decade, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt lost some of its best men: Anton Baumann, the singer, moved to the Kärntnerthortheater in 1795, and in 1797 Perinet moved to the Theater auf der Wieden. In 1801, Marinelli, the theater's director, died, having been the first theatre impresario to be awarded an imperial and royal honour. Over the next few years, Hensler, Marinelli's successor, sought to strengthen the company. Its repertoire was very varied: various kinds of Singspiel, patriotic and military plays, comedies, and pantomimes; from 1808, historical plays were especially popular. Like the Theater in der Josefstadt and the Theater an der Wien, this theatre had the privilege, from 1804, of performing ballets, previously only the privilege of the court theatres.

¹ For example, see Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, eds. Ist die Zauberflöte ein Machwerk? (Munich, 1978).

² See Franz Hadamowsky, Das Theater in der Leopoldstadt.

The comedian, Ignaz Schuster, made famous because of his rivalry with Raimund, played the part of the jailer in Dalayrac's Raoul Sire de Créqui in 1813 here. When Raimund joined the company himself, in 1817, the theatre is reported to have smelt of garlic and sausages.¹ It enjoyed its greatest glory with pantomimes. The home of the traditional Viennese comedy, it was said that for foreign visitors to the Austrian capital, no visit was complete without an evening at this famous theatre.

As mentioned above, this theatre was most significant as a Viennese stage for opéra-comique during the 1790s. But it also gave occasional later performances as well as parodies of the operas. Around 1817, when fewer French operas were being given at the other theatres, it was the scene of some revivals of the most popular opéras-comiques of the past two decades.

2. The Theater auf der Wieden and Theater an der Wien

The Freihaustheater auf der Wieden was founded in 1787 by Christian Rossbach who had come to Vienna nine years earlier and been playing in the meantime at the Weisser Fasan, huts in the Neuer Markt and also the theatre at Spittelberg. The theatre was built in the courtyard of a large building consisting of rented apartments; it was largely made of wood, though

¹. Dorothy Prohaska, Raimund and Vienna, a critical study of Raimund's plays in their Viennese setting, (Cambridge, 1970), p.11.

had stone walls and tiles. It was 30 metres long, 15 metres wide, and had a stage 12 metres deep.¹ This made it narrower than the Theater in der Josefstadt, and the Theater in der Leopoldstadt had a slightly larger audience capacity, having three galleries instead of the Freihaus's two.

The director Rossbach was succeeded by Johann Friedel; and then, in July 1789, by Schikaneder. Schikaneder's era at the Theater auf der Wieden opened with -- characteristically -- a Singspiel, Der dumme Anton, by Benedikt Schack and Franz Xaver Gerl.

Musical works were to be an important part of the repertoire of this theatre. In 1791, Die Zauberflöte received its première here. But from then until 1801, Schikaneder's repeated attempts to create operas which might match the success of Mozart's opera, limited the musical repertoire of the theatre. However, the theatre was well equipped to produce French operas, and during this period of competition with the Leopoldstadt during the 1790s, it did successfully mount several new opéras-comiques.²

The Freihaustheater auf der Wieden had, eventually, to shut in 1801, because of an alleged fire risk. The new Theater an der Wien, which opened the day after the closure of its predecessor, was, according to Bäuerle

1. O. E. Deutsch, Das Freihaus Theater auf der Wieden, Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, XVI (Vienna, 1937), pp. 4-5.

2. Deutsch, Das Freihaus Theater, p. 15ff.

in his memoirs, the talk of the whole town for a month before and after its opening.¹ It was the most modern theatre in Vienna, and in the whole of Germany there was scarcely another theatre to compare with it. Its large stage allowed for grand tableaux, large choruses and crowd effects -- dozens of horses and even a camel or two -- and its seating capacity was 2,200, in addition to a large number of standing places. Because of its facilities which surpassed those of the court theatres, this theatre was able to engage in fruitful competition with them. After 1801, when the lavish and fantastic magic operas and pantomimes were ceasing to pay for themselves, this theatre became a pioneer in introducing the operas of Cherubini and other French composers into Vienna, which proved to be great box-office successes.

Under Schikaneder's previous regime, it had been difficult for new and young authors to have any of their work given at the Theater an der Wien, because Schikaneder wrote so much himself; the performance of foreign operas at least gave young writers opportunities to gain experience and have works performed, albeit only in the capacity of translators or adaptors, because Schikaneder did not know enough French to be able to engage in that work himself.² In 1803, the

¹ Adolph Bäuerle, Memoiren (Vienna, 1858), I, p. 112ff.

² Anton Bauer, 150 Jahre Theater an der Wien, (Vienna, 1951), p. 65.

number of pieces of French origin given amounted to 35%, and in 1803 to 50%. In these two years also, approximately a third of all the works given at the Theater an der Wien were operas or musical works of some kind.¹

The Theater an der Wien suffered financially during the two occupations of the city, but kept playing. There were several changes of directorship, and the theatre was run for some years by a consortium of noblemen in conjunction with the court theatres. It remained a major theatre in Vienna, employing a very good orchestra.²

3. The Theater in der Josefstadt

The Theater in der Josefstadt was the smallest of the three suburban theatres in Vienna; it is the only remaining eighteenth-century public theatre in Vienna today.³

Opened on 24 October 1788 by Karl Mayer, the theatre was situated in the courtyard of a public house belonging to Mayer's father-in-law. It held about 900 people, and its auditorium was about 12.5 metres broad by 10 metres long.⁴ The original décor was very bare, with

¹. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 60; p. 65.

². Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 30ff.

³. The theatre at Schönbrunn Palace is older, having opened in 1749.

⁴. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 56; p. 46.

almost no decoration; later the theatre was embellished and enlarged. Its greatest importance was after 1822 when it became a significant opera stage of the Vormärz under August Stöger and Franz Pokorny.¹ But before then, the theatre did occasionally mount French operas and other Singspiele, which were rather beyond the limitations of the company and treated scornfully by the press.

A dismal picture is drawn of the theatre during the 1790s. The cast would go down the street in costume, sporting umbrellas, if it were raining, to protect their garments, because the silks and brocades were often made of paper. Audiences were small, and people might be invited in off the street to swell the audience and enable the performance to begin. Schröder, who visited the theatre in 1792, reported that none of the troupe knew its part, but the standard cannot have been too lamentable otherwise the royal privilege allowing its existence would have been discontinued; and on 18 February 1791, Leopold II visited the theatre with Ferdinand IV of Sicily.²

Although there may have been occasional visits from royalty, this was probably the most isolated of the Viennese theatres; the suburb it served was difficult

¹. See Beatrix Renate Schimscha, "Das Josefstädtertheater als Opernbühne", Diss. Vienna, 1965.

². Anton Bauer, Das Theater in der Josefstadt zu Wien, (Vienna, 1957) pp. 22-28.

to reach from the centre of the city, particularly during inclement weather or at night, because the Glacis, a wide stretch of unbuilt ground used for military exercises and originally kept bare to enable the defenders of the innere Stadt to protect it by a wide, unbroken field of fire, had to be crossed, and after dusk, attacks were not uncommon.

The theatre's repertoire was varied, including operas, "Ritterstücke", Harlequinades, and pantomimes with titles such as a piece advertised in 1797:

Der Todesreiter oder Die Kalkgrube im Todesthure, ein heroisch-komisches Zauberspiel mit Gesang, Maschinen und Flugwerk, dazwischen verflochtenem Feuerwerke in drey Acten ... Die Musik ist ganz neu und geschmackvoll hierzu verfasst. Decoration und Kleidungen neu, das Orchester doppelt besetzt.¹

During the 1790s, the theatre had an unsettled time, perhaps because its lessees who included Eberl and Joseph Sonnleithner, tried to establish it on too grand a scale and had to abandon the attempt. In 1797, the company of the Theater in der Josefstadt was 39 strong, including a Kapellmeister; in comparison the thriving Theater in der Leopoldstadt, with its 23 male and 12 female singers and actors, was very respectable.²

From 1812, the Theater in der Josefstadt was leased by Joseph Huber, the brother of the lessee of the rival Theater in der Leopoldstadt. For the next five years, the theatre enjoyed a brief period of glory. Alterations made the theatre more comfortable,

1. Kindermann, V, pp. 299-300.

2. Kindermann, V, pp. 299-300.

and no expense was spared. Raimund joined the company during this time. In 1817, the year that Raimund left the Theater in der Josefstadt, disillusioned, to go to the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, a "Bericht der Polizeioberdirektion" reckoned that 700 Gulden was a good taking for the Theater in der Josefstadt; 1000 for the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, and 3170 for the Theater an der Wien. The Josefstadt had a smaller catchment area than the other main two suburban theatres.¹

In the spring of 1817, Huber gave up the theatre, having incurred huge debts. In 1822, Hensler took over the theatre again (Beethoven wrote Die Weihe des Hauses for the re-opening ceremony). In 1825, after Hensler's death, his daughter Josepha took over, and under her leadership, local premières in Vienna of operas by Rossini Kreutzer and Gyrowetz were given there. In 1827, the celebrated Karl Carl took over and ran the Theater in der Josefstadt with the Theater an der Wien. When he left in 1832, Johann Stöger, previously manager of the theatre at Graz, administered the theatre, which he renovated so that it could give large-scale operas to compete with the Theater an der Wien.

The gloomy report of this theatre which appeared in the Theaterzeitung in 1813 no longer held true:

1. Bauer, Das Theater in der Josefstadt, p. 40.

Der Weg zu uns in die Josephstadt ist weit, mein Herr.... Die Opfer in unserm Tempel sind häufig; fast alle Tage, ein neues Stück! Schade nur, dass wir so selten ein gutes Stück erhalten, oder unter den mittelmässigen eins, das ordentlich einstudiert würde. Die hiesige Bühne hat Leute, die nie etwas auswendig lernen; wenn man bedenkt, dass selbst Personen darunter sind, welche auf die ersten Rollen Anspruch machen, so ist diess sehr ärgerlich.¹

C. The smaller theatres

Four of the neighbourhoods around Schönbrunn: Mariahilf, Hietzing, Penzing and Meidling, quite a long way out of Vienna, had grown up and become fashionable because of the presence of the palace and court. But performances at Schönbrunn were exclusive, and so people living nearby had to look elsewhere for theatrical entertainment. Theatres grew up in all these suburbs, and between 1790 and 1819 they occasionally mounted French operas.

1. The Penzinger Theater

The most important one was the theatre at Penzing, where, in 1770, a wooden theatre was built. Several troupes and entrepreneurs worked there, without much continuity. They gave ballets, fancy dress comedies and German comedies but did not play every day. From the summer of 1790, the actor Josef Ketterer was the director of the theatre, and he mounted small Singspiele, comedies and pantomimes. The Emperor Leopold II visited the attractive little theatre. In 1791 or 1792, a

¹ TZ, 27 March 1813, p. 146.

new theatre was built, after a fire. Bauernschober directed a good troupe there. Over the next years, the theatre became popular.¹ Richter and Zinzendorf state that society people went to the theatre in Penzing during these years.² 1800 to 1805 were unsettled years for the theatre, with more changes of direction and location; but from 1803 to 1805 the theatre mounted some good productions, and Rosenbaum reported favourably on a performance there in June 1803.³ The following year it gave Renaud d'Ast (as Rainald) by Dalayrac, described for censorship purposes as: "schon alt und bekannt. Dieses Singspiel dürfte ebenfalls als unbedenklich die hohe Bewilligung erhalten".⁴ After 1805 the theatre closed.

2. The Theater in Meidling

Until 1814, when a professional troupe took over, groups of amateurs played here; they occasionally gave charity performances. According to Der Sammler, performances were of a high standard. One company called itself Die Gesellschaft der Theaterfreunde and performed on a completely voluntary basis in 1810. Opéras-comiques were often a part of the entertainment: for example, in August 1810, Dalayrac's opera Les deux mots (in German, as Die zwey Worte) was performed there.⁵

¹. Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren pp. 59-60.

². Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren p. 94.

³. Rosenbaum, diary entry 14 June 1803, quoted in Blümml & Gugitz, Thespiskarren p. 93.

⁴. Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren p. 100.

⁵. Der Sammler, 25 August 1810, "Notitzen".

In September 1810, this company was reported to give performances every Sunday, and to offer different pieces every week even though "kaum zu einer oder zwey Proben Zeit gewonnen werden kann". Nevertheless, one was never aware of a prompt:

Überhaupt wird jeder Kenner mit uns übereinstimmen, wenn wir versichern, dass man bey dieser Gesellschaftsbühne ganz darauf vergisst, Dilettanten vor sich zu haben, ja dass man den Mitgliedern dieser Gesellschaft mit Billigkeit sogar einen Vorzug vor Professoren der Kunst darin einräumen muss, dass jene, welche ihre täglichen Amts- und Privatgeschäfte zu besorgen haben, und die Schauspielkunst in ihren wenigen freyen Stunden nur als Zeitvertreib betrachten können, nicht so, wie diese, all ihr Studium, all ihre Kräfte, und all ihre Zeit darauf verwenden können.¹

However, some of the performers were not complete newcomers to the stage: Castelli, poet for the court theatres, and the member of the court theatre company Baumann, are listed among the participants.

On 23 September 1810, the company performed Méhul's opera Die beyden Fuchse, for the benefit of the poor in Meidling.²

Die Theaterzeitung commented that most of the numbers in the Méhul opera were given "mit vielem Takte und bewunderungswürdiger Präcision". It was performed with piano accompaniment and the composer Hummel was, on this occasion, the pianist; he greatly impressed the audience.³

¹ Der Sammler, 20 September 1810, p. 462.

² Der Sammler, 20 September 1810, p. 462.

³ TZ, 2 June 1813, p. 14.

3. The Theater auf der Landstrasse

This theatre followed the construction of the three main suburban theatres in Vienna, which gave impetus for the foundation of a fourth. The theatre grew up in a suburb of people "mehr als naive" whose main entertainment was animal baiting.¹ These people were "Küchengärtner, Gerber, Fleischer und Viehhändler".²

The theatre itself is reported to have looked like a hen or goose house, very simply decorated and unpretentious. Its opening was delayed by the death of Joseph II -- from 17 November 1790 to the spring of the following year. There were two directors: Rautenstrauch, responsible for music and opera -- he called himself "Unternehmer der deutschen Opern im Theater auf der Landstrasse", and Scherzer, who concentrated on plays. From April until June that year, the theatre mounted an ambitious and expensive series of Italian operas which caused financial troubles. In March 1791, the theatre very interestingly sought permission to play during Lent, giving French plays at the Landstrasse twice a week: perhaps an attempt to attract a new public from the city. Several changes of direction ensued, the theatre ceasing to exist after 1794. During the last two years of its life some French operas were performed there.³

¹ Dr. Henry Reeve, an English doctor, wrote with contempt about the Austrian passion for such "sights" as bear-baiting; Reeve, p. 27.

² Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 229.

³ Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 246.

The Wiener Theater Almanach of 1794 said that the company was bad, and the theatre poorly decorated.¹ After 1794, it was closed and turned into rented accommodation.²

4. Das Theater zum weissen Fasan

Writing in the 1770s, Baron Riesbeck had had the following to say about theatres in Vienna:

Ausser dem Nationaltheater treiben jetzt in den Vorstädten noch 6 bis 7 besondere Schauspielergesellschaften ihre eigne Wirtschaft. Sie sind von der Art, wie ich einige in Schwaben herumziehen sah, deren Glieder wechselweis bald bei der Trommel und meistens verlaufene Studenten, Schneider und Perückenmachergesellen sind. Sie spielen im Halbdunkel und scheuen eine starke Beleuchtung um den ehrlichen Leuten kein Argernis zu geben, die bei mehren Licht alle Schürzen der Mädchen über die Hände der neben ihnen sitzenden Mannsleute gebreitet sehen würden. Die, welche ihre Bühnen tief hinter den Hintergebäuden und in Gärten aufzuschlagen wissen, wo man nach Beendigung des Schauspiels in der Nacht mit einer Freundin leicht einen Abtritt von der offenen Strasse nehmen kann, haben den meisten Zuspruch. Sie wissen so wohl, dass man nicht wegen ihres Spieles zu ihnen kommt, dass oft die halbe Gesellschaft während der Komödie ins Wirtshaus läuft, und einer drei bis vier Rollen zugleich spielen muss.³

This has been identified as the Theater zum weissen Fasan in Neustift, a theatre in the courtyard of a house;⁴ at some times during its chequered history, it was also used as a dance hall. From May 1776 until 11 February 1777, a famous children's troupe led by Felix Berner played here:

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1794, p. 40.

² Der Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1795, p. V.

³ As quoted in Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, pp. 103-104.

⁴ Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 104.

bald Opera Pantomime, bald ein verdeutsches französisches Singspiel mit französischer Musik, bald eine deutsche Operette, bald ein Lustspiel. Da sehen Sie Ballette, da sind die zween Geizigen, Händchen und Lukas, Ninette à la Cour, der Edelknabe, Präsentiert das Gewehr! Nur das Trauerspiel und etwas anderes mangelt noch, das man nicht allein in den Schauspielen nicht, sondern auch in dem ganzen Geschäft der Welt nicht entbehren kann.¹

From 1777 to 1778 an unsuccessful company did operas and ballets there; from 1781 the theatre was apparently used by amateurs, and Joachim Perinet and the writer Gewey both had links there. The theatre performed works which had already been done at the National-theater, and these included some French operas as well as Italian and German musical works and comedies, though performances were allegedly poor. From 1790 the number of musical works dropped again, and the programme became more literary.²

5. Schönbrunn

The small theatre at Schönbrunn Palace, where the French troupes had entertained the court during its summer residence, lost its importance as a home for opera with, firstly, the decline of grand baroque operas as a courtly entertainment, and, after about 1765, the dissolution of the Théâtre français près de la cour. The later companies of French players, which visited Vienna in the winter of 1775-6 and the

¹ Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 106.

² Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, pp. 110-134.

autumn of 1780, performed mostly in the city at the Burgtheater or Kärntnerthortheater. When French players came to Vienna in 1809, in the wake of Napoleon's army, to entertain the occupying soldiers, they gave most of their performances at the Burgtheater.¹ Schönbrunn was used (as it still is today) for special performances: the occasion of the visit to Vienna of Cherubini in 1805, which coincided with the first occupation of Vienna by Napoleon, led to an invitation to Cherubini to direct performances there.² During Napoleon's second stay in Vienna, he was entertained at Schönbrunn by a series of splendid Italian operas and ballets with the stars of the time: he has gone on record as preferring Italian to French music. The little Schönbrunn theatre had another brief return to glory in 1815, when heads of state from all over Europe were taken out there by sledge for a special banquet, followed by a performance of Isouard's Cendrillon, on 22 January.³

6. Small troupes and huts

Up till 1776, the year of the Spektakelfreiheit, there were no wandering troupes within Vienna's city walls; after that date, a great variety of small troupes played in all corners of Vienna, often giving

¹. See p. 241 .

². Ernst Blümml and Gustav Gugitz, Von Leuten und Zeiten im Alten Wien, p. 309.

³. Ernst M. Kronfeld, Das Schönbrunner Schlosstheater, Archiv für Theatergeschichte , 1905 (Berlin, 1905), p. 178 .

traditional improvised Hanswurst comedy under the guise of "regular" drama to circumvent the ban on improvisation. They would come round and collect money after the first act, not allowing the audience to stay for the second part unless they paid. Castelli remembered the wooden huts in the Graben and Neuer Markt where the audience would be called together with a trumpet; the theatres played several times a day and frequently changed companies.¹ In 1787 Duni's Les deux chasseurs may have been given at a hut in Spittelberg; and a poster remains from 1792 from a hut on the Jubilätemarkt where a troupe led by Johann Morelli gave this same opera.²

7. Private theatres

Brief mention should also be made of the private theatres in Vienna, which have been seen as very important by one commentator on Beethoven.³ Performances in private homes would frequently take place under the protection of the name of some Viennese nobleman like Schwarzenberg; and Zinzendorf recalls in his diary the pleasure he derived from seeing amateur performances in French of French plays and operas during the 1790s. These had been taking place since the 1780s, but in 1798, in an attempt to control amateur dramatics in the Austrian capital, a law was passed

¹. Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 308 ff.

². Blümml and Gugitz, Thespiskarren, p. 320.

³. Prod'homme, p. 147.

forbidding public officials to act in such performances, and special permission had to be sought each time a work was presented. One can assume that such private performances were fairly frequent during the 1790s.

Zinzendorf, for example, refers to performances of both French plays and musical pieces. On 19 December 1790 he wrote in his diary how he had seen L'amant bourru by Monvel at the house of Prince Lichnowsky. It brought tears to his eyes to see the unity of the piece and the fine acting of two young ladies who played their parts "avec la plus grande perfection". Zinzendorf reports that this play was extremely well attended.¹ Two years later, -- and presumably on several occasions in between -- Count Zinzendorf again recorded in his diary visits to private performances of French works. In February 1792, for example, he attended a "jolie pièce" by la Noue (La coquette corrigée) at the Viennese home of the Esterhazys whose little theatre was "joli ... mais tellement rempli de monde que je fus longtemps debout".² On 26 February Zinzendorf attended an amateur performance of Les précieuses ridicules and Le Joueur very well done with beautiful costumes but marred by the fact that the Prince de Ligne had failed to learn his part properly.³ The following

1. Zinzendorf, diary entry 19 December 1790.

2. Zinzendorf, diary entry 12 February 1792.

3. Zinzendorf, diary entry, 26 February 1792.

day, Zinzendorf saw La gageure and Renaud d'Ast apparently at the home of M. de Thun. The opera eclipsed the first piece and especially touching were the couplets added at the end by M. Delvogne "Quand il s'agit de vous aimer, nous apprenons l'un à l'autre". Also, some words were sung to M. Pergen, one of the censors, who attended this spectacle.¹ It appears that at least some of the people who took part in these amateur performances were French. Such productions -- there were almost certainly many more of them -- show that the aristocracy were still fascinated by French drama and, in lieu of a French troupe, performed works themselves in French.

The following year (1793-1794), the private theatres were considered important enough to merit a full page report in the *theatre almanac*.²

The aristocracy's interest in amateur dramatics apparently continued: In 1810, a group of noblemen and women gathered at the house of Count Palffy to perform two French comedies (in French). The Prince de Ligne and Duc de Rohan were among the participants.³

¹. Zinzendorf, diary entry, 27 February 1792.

². Wiener Theateralmanach für das Jahr 1795, p. 1.

³. Der Sammler, 22 May 1810 "Notizen".

VI. Effects of the wars on Vienna and its theatres

Contemporary accounts of the manner of life of the Viennese sometimes seem to conflict with later memoirs as well as with the records: they seem to be living so well, when, by rights, they should be half-starved and miserable.¹

Prices in 1805 were three times what they had been in the 1780s, which was especially hard on people with fixed incomes. As well as the war levies inflicted by Napoleon, feeding the soldiers of his army -- in 1805 there were 34,000 of them -- was a heavy task for Viennese housewives. And after the French armies left, the Viennese suffered food shortages because crops had been damaged or stolen. Napoleon also flooded Austria with foreign-printed "Austrian" money, to aggravate the inflation. Industry in the Habsburg lands suffered because of the reluctance of the government to export to or import from Revolutionary France or Poland.²

Day to day survival was a never entirely solvable problem for many Viennese. The war raised the national debt to 680 million Gulden; the price of food rose steadily:

Every battle, every war that was lost -- and Napoleon's diplomatists were careful to see that even battles that were won brought no advantage to the enemies of France -- meant enormous reparations to be paid, meant a considerable loss of territory. Wherever

¹ Musulin, p. 131.

² Musulin, p. 96-98.

possible, Napoleon emptied museums, castles and strongboxes to make Paris more opulent and beautiful.¹

To ward off threatening collapse, the exportation of money was suspended in Vienna, and low-value copper and silver fractional currency was minted. Paper money bearing no interest was also issued, and was fiercely resisted until, in 1799, currency measures compelled people to accept these "Bancozettel" as legal tender. By 1807, the banknotes had increased the national debt to more than 700 million. Because all measures to redeem the bancozettel were unsuccessful, the Silver Patent was promulgated in 1809, by means of which all privately-owned silver considered dispensable was called in by the state in return for share certificates or banknotes, guaranteed by the properties of the church and state. The plan failed completely. Such silver plate could not save Austria from bankruptcy and a further negative result of the scheme was that many works of art which could not be redeemed by their owners were melted down and thus lost beyond hope of recovery, which partly explains the notable absence of Renaissance and Baroque silver in Austrian museums. Speculation was rife, and the only hope for the poor was to hoard precious metals. In 1811, finally, when inflation again rose to dizzy

¹ Else Radant, introd. "The diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum", p. 13

heights, the government had to declare bankruptcy.¹

The value of the paper gulden, officially the full equivalent of the silver coin, amounted in effect only to one-twelfth, but the decree reduced the banknotes merely to one-fifth of their nominal value. Chief sufferers from the devaluation and continued price rises during the war were employees on fixed incomes; the lower middle class and daily wage earners suffered most. A wide gap was created between the Austrian people and their government.

The recovery of Austria's economy came about slowly after 1811. The marriage of Marie-Louise to Napoleon ended the economic warfare with France; with the end of the war, the country's heavy military expenses ceased; the influx of the war indemnity imposed on France after 1815 helped Austria's financial situation; finally, the establishment of the Austrian National Bank in 1816, which coincided roughly with the end of the war, helped to stabilise the economy which had suffered heavily from mismanagement.²

The financial difficulties were, to some extent, felt by the theatres, but not as much as one might expect. In 1801, Vienna acquired the most modern theatre in Germany, and it began almost straight away

¹ Else Radant, introd. "The diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum," pp. 13-14.

² Robert A. Kann, A history of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918 (Berkeley, Ca, 1974), pp. 240-242. In 1816, bankruptcy was averted by 60% devaluation of the Austrian currency.

to perform French operas. The Theater an der Wien replaced the old Freihaustheater:

Welches Nebentheater in Deutschland wird und kann es wagen, eine Summe von zwey oder drey mal hundert tausend Gulden auf einen Theaterbau, mitten in der schrecklichsten Kriegszeit, zu wagen...¹

asked Perinet, wonderingly, in the theatre's almanac.:

Und doch geschah es. -- Eines der schönsten, ergiebigsten, und vielleicht das niedlichste und bequemste Theater in Europa, stieg in Jahresfrist aus dem Nichts hervor.²

Performances were sold out for weeks after the opening night.³

But in Vienna, there was nothing like the theatrical speculation that there was in Paris during the unstable and excited years of the 1790s -- or in other places in Austria during those years (an expansion in the theatres in Innsbruck has been described as being a "Theaterwut ... so unheilbar wie der tolle Hundsbiss".⁴ The number of major theatres in Vienna remained stable, at five. Musical life continued as usual. The Wiener Theateralmanach of 1796 wrote cheerfully:

Es wird wenig grosse Städte, selbst die grössten Städte Italiens nicht ausgenommen geben, in welchen die Musik so leidenschaftlich getrieben wird, als in Wien. Nirgends werden, im Verhältnisse zur Volksmenge so viele musikalische Akademien gegeben; denn es ist keine Stunde des Tages, zu welcher

1. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803 (von Joachim Perinet). pp. 66-67.

2. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803 pp. 66-67.

3. Bäumler, p. 49.

4. Kindermann, V, p. 143, quoting W. Senn, Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck (Innsbruck, 1954), p. 276ff.

hier nicht förmliche Musik gegeben wurde... Fast jeder Vater von mässigem Einkommen lässt seine Kinder Musik lehren[sic]. Wie viele Dilettanten es hier gebe zeige sich an der grossen Zahl der Instrumentenmacher aller Art, die ihr hinlängliches Auskommen finden.... Wie hier eine Oper, entweder auf den Hoftheatern oder auf dem Marinellischen und Schikaneder'schen Theater, welcher beyde ihr Aufkommen hauptsächlich den Opern zu danken haben, erscheint, so findet man schon in den Zeitungsblättern im Clavierauszuge angekündigt.¹

Seventeen years later, Spohr came to Vienna; he was still to hail Vienna as the capital of the musical world, even after the wars and occupations.²

The combination of high inflation, censorship, and the craving for entertainment on the part of the public, put strain on theatres to attract audiences. Special effects, novelties, new works were important to draw people to the box office. Das Sonntagsblatt commented sadly that new costumes, machines, dogs and horses, new sets, tableaux, dream scenes, descents into hell, ascents to heaven, visits to Neptune's kingdom, one succeeding the other, did not compensate for the lack of dramatic art, which seemed to play no part in these entertainments.³

There was a feeling among the more critical Viennese public that the theatre was not as good as it had been, or should be. An article in Der Sammler of 20 April 1811, reporting a comparison between the theatres of Paris, Vienna and London, and alleged to

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1794, pp. 172-174.

² Hanslick, *Op.* 63.

³ Das Sonntagsblatt, 18 October, 1807, p. 181.

have been written by an objective observer, reported:

Die Wiener klagen überhaupt, dass das goldene Zeitalter ihres Theaters vorüber sey.¹

A Viennese reporter, Mosel, refuted most of this poorly understood appraisal of artistic affairs in the city, by pointing out that no German city had a greater number of excellent artists and that the theatre directors were extremely generous in the works they mounted, seeking the entertainment of the public more than their own gain. But even Mosel felt compelled to look back, ruefully, to the golden years before 1790, when scarcely a work was badly set, and when actors were more highly motivated. Nowadays it was not true to say that the public were only interested in watching love-stories, intrigues and spectacle -- the people of Vienna, he alleged, had better taste than merely to be satisfied with cheap rubbish, but things had certainly been better before.²

Three years earlier, another Viennese paper, Das Sonntagsblatt, had commented on the current willingness of the Viennese to tolerate careless productions and poor standards:

Das Publicum, dessen Geduld beynahe noch grösser ist, als die Zuversicht mit der man sie missbraucht -- nimmt mit allem vorlieb, was man ihm gibt, und gewöhnt sich immer mehr selbst das Schlechteste zu ertragen. In solchen Umständen macht auch ein schwaches Product, wenn es neu und nur nicht ganz widersinnig ist, eine Art von Sensation.³

1. Der Sammler, 20 April 1811, p. 192.

2. Der Sammler, 23 April 1811, p. 196.

3. Das Sonntagsblatt, 26 June 1808, p. 189.

The government was generally too occupied with war to be very concerned about theatre policy, but in 1794 there was a big outcry when the state subsidy to the Burgtheater was considered to be too great and the theatre was leased again to an independent entrepreneur. To many Viennese, this was an outrageous throwing away of a fine national institution. But on the other hand, the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (not state-funded) was founded largely because of the interest and national feeling generated by the war.

Certain activities were inhibited by the troubles: in 1797 Wranitzky's Friedenssymphonie was forbidden by the authorities, and a concert in the Augarten did not happen for the same reasons.¹ One can speculate that events which might otherwise have happened were cramped by the wars and unusually harsh government restrictions.

But there were two general points of government policy which directly affected the theatres. One was censorship, to be dealt with in the next section, and the other was the decision to keep the theatres open. In August 1806, the financial situation had become so bad at the Theater an der Wien, with profits falling and the theatre on the verge of bankruptcy, that, when plans to lease the theatre to a consortium of noblemen failed, the director decided to shut the theatre from 1 September. However, three days before the theatre was due to be shut, the following note was sent to the emperor:

1. Hanslick I, p. 17.

Das Volk ist an die Schaubühne gewöhnt. Das Theater an der Wien ist die Lieblingsunterhaltung der höheren und mittleren Stände. Selbst die niederen Stände nehmen Anteil. In Zeiten, wie die gegenwärtigen, wo so mannigfaltige Leiden den Charakter der Menschen verstimmen, muss die Polizei mehr als jemals zur Zerstreung der Staatsbürger auf jedem sittlichen Wege mitwirken. Die gefährlichsten Stunden des Tages sind die Abendstunden. Unschädlicher werden sie nicht ausgefüllt als im Theater.¹

The theatre played on as it had been ordered.

Theatres were also used for concerts and academies. And as patriotism swept people up in 1809, for example, there was an academy on 25 March, 1809, which consisted of patriotic music written by Weigl, Haydn and Gyrowetz: Haydn's Military Symphony; Der Kriegs Eid, by Collin, music by Weigl; Das Gebet, by Collin set to music by Gyrowetz; Der Genius Oesterreichs, by Castelli, with music by Süßmayr; Oesterreich über alles.² The concert had unpleasant consequences for the patriotic poets, for Napoleon issued writs on Collin and Castelli, and intended to have them brought before a military tribunal. Castelli, who did not have enough money to flee as the French approached, turned to the emperor for help. Emperor Franz is recorded as having replied: "Who asked you to write a war song?"³

During both invasions, it was the court theatres which suffered the most. In November 1805, when it was rumoured that the French were coming, the imperial

1. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, pp. 75-76.

2. Langsam, pp. 100-101.

3. Musulin, p. 100.

family left Vienna, and the Habsburg crown jewels 120
were hurriedly removed for safe keeping. Many aristocrats
left, too, but Braun was ordered by the government to stay
in Vienna to keep the theatres going, even though, in the
opinion of the husband of one of the court opera singers,
Braun, as court banker and landowner, was likely to be
carried off as a hostage by the enemy.¹ And so the theatres
continued to play through the troubles, even though, as Rosenbaum
remarked cynically, . . . the management seemed to think it
must cheer up the public by playing only comedies, but it
would scarcely achieve its aim.² At the beginning of
November, Braun was given passes for the members of the
company, to assure their safe passage home in the event of
a bombardment.³

In 1809, the French army was followed to Vienna by a
troupe of French players. The Burgtheater had to be given
over three nights a week to this troupe, for which it was
paid a sum which hardly covered costs, and it consequently
suffered loss of funds. The French players also used the
theatre orchestra of the Burgtheater and did not adequately
pay for it.⁴ The Burgtheater also suffered because it lost,
in the evacuation of Vienna, most of its noble audience.
During the bombardment of Vienna, the Burgtheater's work-
room was damaged and some of the sets destroyed (there are
no reports of other theatres being damaged).⁵

1. E. Radant, ed., "The diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum 1770-1829." Trans.
Eugene Hartzell. In *The Haydn Yearbook*, v (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 1968),
diary entry, 8 November 1805, p. 126.
2. Rosenbaum diary entry, 7 November 1805, p. 126..
3. Rosenbaum diary entry, 8 November 1805, p. 126.
4. Schlientz, p. 25.
5. Schlientz, p. 15.

The Burgtheater was the only theatre to have to remain shut part of the time because of its location: on the advice of the court doctor it was closed because of the dangers of infection from the temporary military hospital set up in the Redoutensaal next door.¹

The administrators of the court theatres were noblemen and members of the aristocracy; the popular theatres were run by actors like Schikaneder, who loved the theatre. During the time covered by this study, none of these suburban theatre directors posed any threat to the government and their biggest fear was bankruptcy.

There was a surprising degree of amateurism in the leadership of the Burgtheater and Kärntnerthortheater. In 1794, amidst protest, Baron von Braun had taken over the lease of the Burgtheater, to the disgust of supporters of government help for the theatre and German art, who disliked seeing the German national theatre leased out again to a private director.²

In 1804, Braun bought the Theater an der Wien, and ran both theatres jointly; in 1806, he was joined by other noblemen who formed a consortium, the Gesellschaft der Kavaliers, and they ran the theatres until 1817, through various unhappy patches of financial difficulty. In 1810, Palffy asked the emperor to

¹. Schlienz, p. 10.

². Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1796, p. 70.

place him in sole control because he thought he would be more effective in his work if he did not have to share the leadership. In the August of the following year he stepped down, and Lobkowitz, who in 1811 had been in charge of the operas being produced there, took over as Hoftheaterdirektor. Lobkowitz was now administrator of the three theatres.¹ In 1814, Palffy took over again. Under him, the Theater an der Wien enjoyed one of its most glorious periods, with splendid performances of operas, classics, and popular folk comedies.²

From 1801 to 1817, *Sebastian Mayer* [*Meyer*] was the opera director for the Theater an der Wien. He, with the Kapellmeister, Ignaz, Ritter von Seyfried, and the musician Franz Clement, shared the responsibility for the opera performances there.³ Up until 1808, when he died, Anton Fischer helped with arranging material, composing and conducting. But it must be pointed out that the Viennese theatres *were not yet* used to the concept of one person having responsibility for the artistic effect of a whole production, and members of the theatre staff worked, theoretically, as a team.

At the court theatres, the cavaliers were not pure administrators: they also took an interest in the artistic leadership of the theatres. Also involved in artistic leadership was the translator and court poet,

¹. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 70ff.

². Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 93ff.

³. Castelli, I, p. 241.

Sonnleithner, whose work took him outside the realm of pure administration; he was able to influence the programme of the theatre, acting as an intermediary between the directorate and actors. He worked in close contact with artists in the theatre. Until Schreyvogel became secretary of the court theatres in 1814, there was no single person, like Iffland in Berlin, responsible for overall artistic policies. A whole team of actors, Kapellmeister and directors shared the work of deciding upon the programme, casting, rehearsals and policy, for ballet, opera and drama.

By 1808, most of the noblemen had already become tired of being directly responsible for the theatres, and Josef Härtl took over the direction for a short time. As economic consultant, he managed to bring order to the box office, but suffered personal loss in the attempt. In the December of that year, the noblemen had to take over again. Sonnleithner, as secretary, controlled the library and undertook the correspondence, but during the 1809 invasion the aristocracy fled to Hungary, leaving the court theatres without properly safeguarding their financial well-being.¹ The government granted the theatres a subsidy to see them through. Still, they were hard times for the players. In May 1809, Härtl had had to pay out 1000 Gulden from his own pocket for the actors, and

¹ Schlientz, pp. 34-35.

could only urge them to look for better times. Even though Napoleon was generous to actors and singers during his stay in Vienna,¹ giving them large presents for their services, this did not compensate for the fact that their regular earnings from the Austrian authorities had not kept up with inflation. In 1809, the salaries of some players were halved and some personnel were dismissed altogether.² More plays were mounted than ballets or operas because they were less expensive to produce.

When the French left Vienna, the Burgtheater applied for financial help to the emperor in compensation for the evenings lost through the playing in Vienna of the French troupe; but the reply came back that it would only be possible to give compensation for the damages done during the defence of Vienna. Prices were raised when the government refused this request, but the public was annoyed because it did not feel that the poor

1. "Se. Französisch-kaiserl. Majestät haben das zu diesen Vorstellungen verwendete, Theater-Personale nicht nur für jeden Abend reichlich belohnen, und einige Mahle mit einem herrlichen Mittagsmahle bewirthen, sondern den vorzüglicheren Künstlern aus demselben noch besonders sehr beträchtliche Geschenke in Goldmünzen zustellen lassen." Der Sammler, 14 October 1809, p. 402.

In the summer of 1809, singers and dancers from the court companies gave special performances for Napoleon at Schönbrunn: most were Italian operas (but a few German operas were also given because Napoleon liked Weigl's Italianate style). See Blümml and Gugitz, Von Leuten und Zeiten, pp. 305ff.

2. Schlientz, p. 26.

programme being offered justified it, and the government was alarmed because it kept people away from the theatre.¹

In March 1810, Palffy decided to shut the Kärntnerthortheater and to reduce the Italian opera and ballet company if he could not get the same subsidy which Braun had had during the 1790s. The request was a reasonable one, because it was conceded that the sum requested was only half of what the court would have to pay for its concessions and free tickets for soldiers if the theatre were a purely private affair; however, the government refused and prices were again raised.²

Despite its decrees about the importance of the theatre, the government was notoriously unwilling to give financial support. Price-rises discouraged the audiences for a little while, but invariably they returned.

In 1810, as already mentioned, the two court theatres were divided into different genres: the Kärntnerthortheater performing ballet and opera, which were more expensive to mount; and the Burgtheater, spoken drama. Economy measures after 1809 meant that actors and singers had to perform more often.

¹. Schlientz, pp. 17-18.

². Schlientz, p. 20.

The Austrians showed remarkably good humour -- and meekness -- in accepting what came their way during the war years. As Schreyvogel said of the Viennese in the middle of the war with France:

Jedermann ist überzeugt, dass an keinem Orte der Welt mehr Witz and natürlicher Humor zu finden ist, als in unserer guten Stadt Wien... und nie hat sich der eigenthümliche Humor dieser Stadt in einem glänzenderen Lichte gezeigt, als in Fällen einer öffentlichen Calamität, welche den Muth und die Laune jedes anderen Volkes niederschlagen würden... In der That glaube ich, dass wir eine starke Ader von Spartanischer Grossherzigkeit in unserem Geblüte haben.¹

The same trait can be observed among the Viennese in the rebuilding of the opera house in Vienna after World War II. The public of the first World War period was portrayed by Karl Kraus as still absorbed with actors and operetta stars "while the apocalyptic last days of mankind" remained uncomprehended.²

VII. Censorship

Censorship in Austria was not a new phenomenon introduced at the time of the French Revolution to protect the Habsburg government. There had long been the conviction among its Catholic rulers that it was the responsibility of the State to control reading matter and drama injurious to the people's good morals, religion, or respect for the state. On these grounds, the Empress Maria Theresia had passed a law forbidding improvised German farce and tried to limit the activi-

¹ Das Sonntagsblatt, 10 May 1807, p. 225 - 226.

² Yates "Cultural Life", p. 118.

ties of Hanswurst and his companions.¹ Even early opéras-comiques and vaudeville operas performed in Vienna by the first French troupe in 1752 had to be rearranged for Vienna because, as Count Durazzo explained to Favart, the Habsburgs disapproved of certain types of allusion, and not all that which amused Paris would be enjoyed in Vienna.

The greater freedom of speech allowed during the early part of Joseph II's reign had not been a carte blanche to the theatres, which were strictly controlled. Indeed, at a time when other forms of censorship were relaxed in Europe, theatre censorship actually became harsher because it was recognised that drama affected more people than books intended merely to be read, and because of Enlightened ideals that the theatre should be a "Schule der guten Sitten".²

The basic principles of censorship in Vienna were the same during the 1790s as they had been during the Schauspielerrepublik during the days of the Nationaltheater, except that at that time the players themselves had a large part to play in the decision of whether or not to put on a play, and what to alter, before it was submitted to the censor -- that privilege ended with the end of the Schauspielerrepublik.

¹ Kindermann, V, p. 60ff.

² Carl Glossy, "Zur Geschichte der Wiener Theaterzensur", Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft, VII (1896), pp. 23-28.

The greatest care had to be exercised over the depiction of monarchs, and also in the description of foreign countries, especially those which did not enjoy good relations with Austria. This extended to criticism as well as to praise. Names and identities of such countries were generally disguised. Any allusion to freemasonry was forbidden, as was mention of the Austrian court, even indirect praise of it. Pieces with soldiers were strictly checked. Anything which showed the aristocracy in a bad light was not allowed, and nothing could cast a slur on the institution of marriage, which was to be handled in a tasteful and discreet manner.¹

Political anxiety on the part of the government during Leopold's and Franz's reign might have heightened the sensitivity of the censors to the dangers of mentioning war and portraying soldiers on the stage. And potentially loaded words like "Gleichheit" and "Freiheit" were now treated with the greatest suspicion. The increased restriction of public freedom in Austria which resulted from the French Revolution was extended more to the areas of the secret police and seizure of forbidden books and newspapers than to harsher theatre censorship. The disappearance of fears of invasion and revolution had almost no effect on Austrian theatre censorship laws, which were an integral part of Franz's and Metternich's reign. They were repealed, (only for a short time), when Metternich finally resigned in 1848.

1. Glossy, Zur Geschichte der Wiener Theaterzensur, pp. 23-28.

It is worth noting that from 1802, Napoleon sought to control France by delicate control of the press, largely the minimisation of bad news and concentration on victories. He ordered that the following be communicated to journalists:

Dites-leur que je ne les juge point sur le mal qu'ils auront dit, mais sur le peu de bien qu'ils n'auront pas dit... La première règle de conduite est donc, non de laisser aux journalistes une liberté réelle et entière, mais d'accréditer sans affectation l'idée consolante pour les lecteurs que les journalistes sont libres. Pour cela, il ne faut que diriger habituellement, d'une manière secrète et invisible, la rédaction des journeaux.¹

This subtle approach was very different from the Austrian method, and when Napoleon came to Vienna and took charge of the censorship, more books were available, more plays could be staged, and the quality of journalism in Viennese papers, also taken over by the French, went up considerably.²

Who were the censors, and what guidelines were they given? Despite a general dislike of, and even contempt for, the censors in Vienna,³ one comes across occasional flashes of idealism. Hägelin, for example, who had become a censor in 1772, and whose signature appears at the bottom of a censored text book of a Dalayrac opera used in Vienna during the 1790s, was paid 500 Gulden a year (a small amount):⁴ his post was almost honorary. He was a cultured

¹. Latreille, p. 179.

². Blümml and Gugitz, *Von Leuten und Zeiten*, p. 310.

³. Julius Marx, *Die Österreichische Zensur im Vormärz* (Vienna, 1959), p. 10ff.

⁴. Glossy, p. 39.

man with some vision, who had done much to improve educational standards in Vienna. A document dated 1779 gave the following description of the qualities required of a censor:

Ein Censor muss viele Belesenheit, eine bescheidene Urtheilskraft, historische Kenntnisse alter und neuer Gelehrsamkeit, eine gute philosophische Kritik, Geschmack um den Ton eines Autors zu bestimmen und hauptsächlich keine insulierte Wissenschaft seines sonstigen Amtes, sondern eine hinlängliche Kenntnis von der Verwandtschaft zwischen den Wissenschaften besitzen, um zu wissen, was ein Satz für einen Einfluss auf die Wahrheiten einer anderen Disciplin haben kann.¹

In 1817, Schreyvogel volunteered out of unselfish motives to be a theatre censor. But for the most part, censors (who were civil servants) were shadowy figures, and most reports of them were second-hand. Castelli, the court poet from 1811 onwards, said he had never met Sedlnitzky, the man responsible for censoring his work.² Censors were not given very clear guidelines -- for example, Hägelin had been advised to delete doubtful jokes, anything harmful to the state, and had been told to be extremely suspicious of extemporisation.

The censors' fear of the authorities made them inflexible and it was difficult to bring about changes in censorship laws. For example,

¹. Protokoll der Bücherrevisions - Commission, 9 August 1779, as quoted in Glossy, p. 37.

². Marx, p. 20ff.

with the slight lightening of censorship in 1810, the censors still tended to go by the old rules, for they were less likely to be reprimanded if they erred on the harsh rather than the lenient side. It was an unenviable job, and unpopular.¹

Austria's fairly overt censorship made the country despised in other parts of Europe. Sealsfield, writing bitterly about how inhibiting it was to live in Austria, said:

never has there been exhibited an example of so complete and refined a despotism in any civilised country as in Austria.²

Tales and rumours abounded about the poverty of the censors' minds, their warped imaginations, lack of good sense, and capacity for suspicion.

The censors would sometimes retain a work for a ridiculously long time, and it would be up to the author to retrieve it or enquire what the delay was.³ Works which the world now recognises as masterpieces were mutilated, and others could not be performed in Vienna for many years after they had been written. As a result, artists felt cramped and inhibited; there was a lack of originality and Viennese writers were driven to adapt others' works, finding it safer to make arrangements of foreign works

1. Marx, p. 10ff.

2. Sealsfield, p. 209ff.

3. Yates, "Cultural Life", pp. 110-111.

than to try new material. Some writers, on the other hand, used this as an excuse for their own lack of talent, and staleness.

During the 1790s, censors had been given wider powers. In 1793, Emperor Franz put the Polizeihofstelle in charge of censorship. It was run by a zealous man named Pergen who felt that harsher censorship was required in view of the political danger, and who thought that the censors were not strict enough. So works already passed by the censors were submitted to a fresh examination. Pergen had already resigned once, in 1791, when he felt that censorship and the police were not given enough autonomy under Leopold II -- that the emperor was controlling them too closely. The Polizeihofstelle of 1793 was a devious institution which did not disappoint its instigators. On 2 January 1794, the ministry of police was given wider censorship powers, and was allowed to recheck the lists of allowed works once a fortnight. In 1795 alone, 2500 books were forbidden by this very unpopular police force. Pergen was particularly concerned about the expansion of Vienna, feeling that a large and growing town full of foreigners was injurious to national security. He also felt the need to revise the educational system, and professors with suspect views were dismissed (though a large-scale purge was prevented).¹ In 1797, Pergen resigned again.

1. Wangerman, p. 170ff.

In 1798 the censorship was given a ministry of its own, the Zensurkommission, which was on a par with other ministries in the Hofstelle.

In 1801 it was handed over to the police again.

The French occupation of 1809 brought about another brief relaxation of censorship laws under the French administration. Suddenly, for the first time, German classics were available in unexpurgated versions. With the return to Austrian rule, a new censor's edict of about 20 paragraphs appeared -- it was, however, slightly more lenient than previous edicts.¹

Sedlnitzky was appointed as chief censor in 1815. Rumours which circulated about him, such as alleged laziness, were typical of the contempt in which censors were held by the general public. However, Sedlnitzky was sufficiently sympathetic to art to suggest that Franz should give the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde 1000 florins towards building their Conservatoire and concert hall.

Many puzzles remain about the censorship of French operas. Glossy describes how a play, Le Marchand de Smyrne, was altered because it showed

1. Schlientz, p. 202ff.

a member of the aristocracy in too bad a light.¹ And yet Raoul: Barbe-bleue was allowed. Pieces about soldiers were generally harshly dealt with, and yet Le Déserteur enjoyed a popular career in the Austrian capital. It may have been thought that the effect on the general public of operas was less immediate than that of spoken drama and that they were consequently less dangerous. The censorship laws, if strictly applied, should have caused many French operas to be banned. One is reminded of the comment of the critic of the Wiener Realzeitung about the first performance of Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro: "Was in unseren Zeiten nicht erlaubt ist, gesagt zu werden, wird gesungen".²

Censors' alterations to Dalayrac's opera Renaud d'Ast are described on pp. 492-498, most of them amount to the excision of Zweydeutigkeiten about which the censor responsible had both an active conscience and imagination. An instance of costume being censored is mentioned on p. 626. Castelli in his memoirs comments that the files censors kept about works submitted to them would make highly amusing reading.³

1. Glossy, Zur Geschichte der Wiener Theaterzensur, p. 97.

2. Wiener Realzeitung, 1786, p. 447.

3. Castelli, I p. 277. - Reeve wrote cynically that every book in Vienna passed through a censor's hands but probably not through his head. Reeve p. 26.

VIII. Newspapers and almanacs

During the years covered by this dissertation, Viennese journalism was not as advanced as journalism in Paris. There were no distinguished, internationally known critics like the later Hanslick¹, living in Vienna at that time. Unfortunately, most Viennese publications between 1790 and 1810 fail to tell us what we most want to know: how French opera impressed Viennese musicians; what they admired or were critical of; which numbers made the most impact; what orchestration was used; to what extent the Viennese version differed from the original French.

The use of newspapers as sources is most useful about more nebulous matters such as changing tastes, or theatrical standards and the factual information they give, but occasionally a great deal can be gleaned from chance remarks.

Theatres in Vienna would often produce an almanac for sale, usually at the beginning of a new calendar year. It reported on the repertoire for the previous theatre season (which ran from 1 August to 31 July), and listed the theatre personnel. In addition, it contained articles about recently performed works, leading musicians or actors, and the theatre.

1. Eduard Hanslick, 1825-1904.

Almanacs, sometimes beautifully bound -- one produced in 1796 and preserved in the Theatersammlung of the National Library, is covered with green leather and stitched with sequins¹ -- were usually compiled by a member of the theatre staff -- often the poet or translator -- and were the size of a small diary: about five inches by three inches. Often, too, they contained engravings showing scenes from the most successful pieces of the previous year.²

Occasionally referred to are the Eipeldauer-briefe, a series of letters sent from an imaginary peasant who had come to live in Vienna, back to his cousin in the country. This satirical magazine -- dialect comedy -- was read in Viennese cafes and was a commentary on life in the capital as seen through the eyes of a newcomer. The idea was conceived by Josef Richter and the letters first appeared in 1785. From 1813 to 1819, Franz X. Gewey wrote them, and then, until 1821, Adolph Bäuerle -- these men were popular dramatists.

Other works which resemble almanacs were the Wiener Theater Kritik which appeared in 1799 and 1800, the first year bi-monthly, and the second year monthly; the Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde which appeared in 1805 and 1806, and Thalia, a paper in larger format which was edited first by Castelli and later by Seyfried and which ran from 1810 to 1812.

1. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1796.
VThSmIlg 72234-G.

2. These were imaginary rather than actual illustrations of Viennese sets.

A newspaper, Die Theaterzeitung, was alleged to have been the most widely read newspaper in Vienna and to have a readership which extended beyond Austria. . . Founded in 1806 by Adolf Bäuerle, who was only eighteen at the time and who used a pseudonym, it ran for over forty years, giving reviews of new pieces performed in Vienna and articles of general interest about the theatre. Music, however, was not given very close attention.

Der Sammler was a paper of a more general nature, containing, as the title suggests, miscellaneous articles on many different subjects, stories, anecdotes, obituaries, news of scientific curiosities. It first appeared in 1809 under the editorship of Leopold Braun. Theatre notices, in smaller print, took up half of the back page, though by 1818 this allocation was often increased. Seyfried and Ignaz von Mosel edited the notices.

Das Sonntagsblatt was founded in 1807 by Schreyvogel (born in 1768); it provided entertaining reading for Sundays. During its first year it consisted mostly of conversations and letters; the following year it extended to more serious theatre criticism. From 1802-1804 Schreyvogel was secretary of the Burgtheater but he left because of his frustrations with the censorship laws. In 1814 he became director of the Burgtheater.¹ The years prior

¹. Kindermann, V, p. 329ff.

to that he established a reputation as one of its main critics. He campaigned for the classics and was anti-Romantic. He was passionately fond of the theatre; although not a musician, Schreyvogel provided some of the most intelligent and useful information about theatres in Vienna in his day.¹

Die allgemeine musikalische Zeitung (AMZ), published in Leipzig, was read in Vienna and Viennese correspondents sent in theatre reports. Edited by Freidrich Röchlitz, its first issue which appeared in 1798 had opened with an essay, Gedanken über die Oper; subsequent issues contained many articles about the state of music in Germany and, particularly, discussion about the lack of native opera. The paper appeared weekly and contained special reports from German-speaking cities as well as from Paris. From time to time obituaries of composers, reports of newly published music and musical supplements were included. This paper is often more informative about musical matters in Vienna than the general Viennese newspapers.

In 1813, a Viennese edition of the AMZ appeared. It was edited by Ignaz von Schönholz, Mosel, Seyfried and other members of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. It contained reviews and articles about musical happenings in Vienna as well as articles about other places.

¹ Kindermann, Josef Schreyvogel und sein Publikum, pp. 185-195.

Conclusion

The revolution in France, the war being fought by Austria against that country and the harsh censorship in Austria itself, soured the feelings of the Austrians neither towards the French, nor towards their own country and the Habsburg emperor. Towards the French they felt fascination and admiration, perhaps something like that felt by modern Americans towards England, once its political enemy.

Whereas Austria was well-disposed towards France, the reverse could not be said. Shepherd in 1814 said that the French hated the Austrians,¹ and Reichardt, the German composer and Kapellmeister who visited Berlin in 1802 to 1803, tells of an evening at the Théâtre Feydeau when the celebrated Chenard was playing in one of the topical military plays. Chenard was playing the part of an Austrian general. At the end of the first act he is alleged to have had to yell wild invective against the French army, in his rich bass voice. This he did so effectively that he awoke the commander of the French National Guard who had had too much to drink that night and fallen asleep on the floor of his box. On hearing the inflammatory words, he arrested the whole troupe and flung them into jail for the night.

¹. William Shepherd, Paris in 1802 and 1804, (London, 1814), Part II, p. 277.

In prison, the following day, Chenard acted out the second act of the play showing the decisive defeat of the Austrian general and glorious triumph of the Republican armies. Whereupon the commander not only released them all, but invited them to lunch.¹ Bloodthirsty and highly-coloured scenes of this nature were common in Paris at the time. Reichardt found them at the same time hilarious and blood-chilling. In Vienna such scenes would have been forbidden.

The Parisians, as they are portrayed in the Viennese press during the Napoleonic wars, were fastidious, highly organised, highly motivated, full of spirit, but fickle, and more materialistic than the Austrians. In contrast, the Viennese prided themselves on being relaxed, imaginative, more thoughtful and abstract in their thinking, and with more natural flair than the French.² The French, wrote the critic in Der Sammler in a review of Johann von Paris in June 1815, had no poetry in their soul (and were incapable of expressing deep emotions or elevated thoughts) but they had wit and vitality.³ One current rumour about the French, which Schreyvogel made fun of, was that the French were all extremely intellectual in comparison with the Viennese. Frau von

1. J. F. Reichardt, Vertraute Briefe aus Paris in den Jahren 1802 und 1803, (Hamburg, 1804) III, p. 72ff.

2. TZ 20 December 1807, p. 269. "Der Deutsche ist in seinem Aeussern zurückhaltend, ruhig, ernsthaft, empfänglich für die innre geistige Freude des Gefühls. Sein Nachbar ist offen, unruhig, lebhaft, die Arbeit des abstrakten Denkens ist ihm zuwider, seine Aufmerksamkeit strebt nach dem Reellen, und er freut sich der Welt und der Objekte, die sie ihm darbietet." Article entitled "Die Liebe bey den deutschen und französischen Dichtern."

3. Der Sammler, 6 June 1815, under "Notizen".

Schwach, on her holiday in Paris, found a German intellectual whose friends were now French milliners.

Some Austrians looked to Paris as Dick Whittington looked to London though not with quite the cringing respect that Prague seems to have had for the French capital. On 16 April 1816, a review of Isouard's Joconde appeared in Der Sammler. The correspondent for Prague wrote apologetically:

Der Ruhm, den sich diese Oper in Wien und Paris erworben hat, ist so allgemein anerkannt, dass wir Provinzbewohner... es nicht wagen wollen, ein Urtheil, über die Composition auszusprechen, das mit jenem der ersten Hauptstädte des Continents nicht durchaus gleichstimmig seyn dürfte.¹

Partly, this apparent lack of animosity may have been due to the cosmopolitan nature of eighteenth-century Europe, with "its ties of kinship and patronage criss-crossing Europe like telephone wires" and "affording infinite possibilities for the communication of men and ideas". Laurence Sterne in his Sentimental Journey was able to write "I have left London for Paris with so much precipitation, that it never entered my mind that we were at war with France."²

By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, though, this ease had been superseded in most other places by a growing nationalism. A wave of patriotism swept Austria

¹ Der Sammler, 16 April, 1816, p. 188.

² As quoted in Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment, (Harmondsworth, England, 1968), p. 71.

around 1808 to 1809, though this has been dismissed by Prohaska as not true pride in country, but rather a complacency, a warm smugness in a sense of well-being.¹ The Austrians apparently felt so little bitterness towards the French that they were not prompted to remove the eagles which Napoleon, as a sign of his power, placed during his occupation on the gateposts of Schönbrunn Palace.

Opéra-comique of the French Revolution spread, as it made its way to courts all over Europe, a veiled message of egalitarianism and democracy.

To assess how widely this message was comprehended is outside the scope of this study. How interesting it would be to trace in the emergence of opéra-comique in the Viennese suburbs during the 1790s the rise of Jacobin sentiments -- or to be able to link operas performed later in Vienna with political and military events. Such links may well have existed, though several pieces of evidence serve as warnings against pursuing this line too seriously. Firstly, the Austrians loved their emperor Franz, despite his evident failings and even his cowardice. (He fled with the rest of the family when both Napoleonic invasions were imminent, taking the Habsburg treasure with him.) After both

¹ Prohaska, p. 24.

invasions, though, he received a tumultuous welcome when he returned to the capital. And in June 1814, after the signing of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, when Franz returned from Paris and the Kärntnertheater performed a special allegorical-dramatic poem, Die Weihe der Zukunft, Der Sammler wrote:

In der Weltgeschichte, ist wohl kein Ereigniss aufzufinden, das erfreulicher für die Gegenwart, segensreicher für die Zukunft wäre, als der Augenblick, der unsern hoch herzigen Monarchen wieder in die Mitte seiner Völker führte.

The emperor entered the lit theatre to the accompaniment of seven choirs of trumpets and drums, and Sonnleithner's poem, set to music by Weigl, was sung by the best singers in the company. One hymn often sung at the evening in the theatre, and incorporated into the end of the texts of some French operas, was Haydn's famous setting of the song by Haschka, "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser."¹

There was a complacency and basic contentment in Vienna which, in retrospect, made a French-style revolution unthinkable there between 1790 and 1819. But even if there had been a really revolutionary element among the lower classes, the court theatres and, from 1804, the Theater an der Wien, the main theatres to stage opéra-comique in Vienna, were in the hands of noblemen and not artisans. Lastly,

¹. Der Sammler, 28 June 1814, p. 412.

the time taken for Viennese theatres to acquire scores of French operas, translate them, submit them to censors, and rehearse them, meant that the performance at any particular time of a French opéra-comique could barely hope to be a reflection of present political thinking in Vienna or current sympathy for France, support for the monarchy, or the expression of warlike sentiments.

Comparing France during the 1790s with its enemy, Austria, a Frenchman observes:

En face de la France porteuse d'un véritable évangile politique, l'Autriche n'a à défendre qu'un mode de vie et une civilisation aimables aux privilégiés, où se marient heureusement les influences germaniques et méditerranéennes, sous l'égide du catholicisme romain, en part particulier, on y possède cet art tout italien de corriger les distances d'une aristocratie hautaine par une bonhomie condescendante au populaire.¹

But another writer has been more charitable about it:

at the very time when the traditional structure of society in Western Europe was beginning to disintegrate in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, what was being attempted in Vienna was a bridging of the cultural gap long found between the "two nations" in every major country, a meeting and a blend between the culture of the people, uneducated and underprivileged, and the international culture of the court and the educated classes.²

¹. Latreille, p. 34.

². Yates, "Cultural Life", p. 110, paraphrasing Friedrich Heer "Josef Weinheber in Wien", Frankfurter Hefte VIII, (1953), especially pp. 590f and 600.

This dialogue, this blending of cultural experience (which included that of aristocratic French emigrés and French soldiers) has, it has been claimed, made Austrian art what it is.¹

The difference in political climate between Paris and Vienna is shown by the following Austrian reactions to some opéras-comiques. Montano et Stéphanie by Berton had, when first performed in Paris in 1798, been the cause of the last theatre riot of the revolution because it contained a scene in a Catholic church. It had to be modified. When performed in Vienna in 1810 as Rosamunde, it had a mixed reception. Despite the very splendid production it had been given, the music was too complicated and too "grand"; the subject too simple, and the opera not sufficiently well cast. And, Der Sammler explained:

Überdiess gibt es auch einige Missgriffe in der Anlage des Stückes, die leicht abgeändert wären. Der Spanische Vice-König muss nämlich die Vermählung, ein Priester-geschäft vollführen, und sich einen Wolf im Schafspelze und Diener des Aberglaubens schelten lassen, vermutlich bloss darum, weil die Rolle säcularisirt wurde; eben so unschicklich ist es, dass sich das Volk in dem Thronsaale vor die Wachen und den Thron stellt, und den Chor, wie auf einem Marktplatze, absingt.²

The Viennese complained of anti-Catholicism and lack of respect for the monarchy.³

¹ Yates, "Cultural Life", p. 110.

² Der Sammler, 20 July 1807, p. 28.

³ Der Sammler, 20 July 1807, p. 28.

Another example is the production in 1807 of the Méhul opera, Gabrielle d'Estrées, about the popular French King Henry IV who had special compassion for commoners. This opera was a favourite in Paris during the Restoration. It told how the king, incognito, helped poor country people of his land. But in Vienna it aroused misgivings

weil es sich vermuthen lässt, dass ein so grosser Mann wie Heinrich sich wahr-scheinlicher mit Jemanden der sich seinem Geiste nähert abgeben und anvertrauen wird, als mit einem gemeinen Soldaten der hier eigentlich mehr die Stelle eines komischen Bedienten über den Mannlacht, als sonst etwas vertritt. Auch ist es unangenehm Heinrichen so lange in einem so schlichten Gewande vor Augen zu haben; der Zuseher vergisst am Ende, besonders bey Herrn Schmidtman, dass er einen König vor sich sieht.¹

Even this opera which, in France, was thought to honour the king, in 1807 ran counter to the Austrian conception of seemly behaviour of a subject towards his emperor.

By this time, then, as far as one can tell from the respected Viennese papers quoted above, the Austrians were -- at least in print -- staunch supporters of their paternalistic emperor; any idea of overthrowing the government was far from their thoughts. By 1807, the patriotic movement was gathering momentum. It is possible that, during the 1790s and the first few years of the new century, greater political significance was attached to the performance of recent opéras-comiques in Vienna.

¹. TZ, 20 July 1807, p. 28.

CHAPTER III

French opera in Vienna

1790-1848

Introduction

It is now being "widely accepted" that French opéra-comique was the "most important tradition to fertilize the emergent German Romantic opera". But the spread of French opera was erratic and spasmodic, and it found more favourable ground in which to root in some cities than in others. It did not excite universal approval from musicians or public.¹

This chapter is an attempt to chart the reactions to opéra-comique of one city -- Vienna -- from the time when theatres there first experimented with French revolutionary opera to the time when the public grew disillusioned with it. The chapter will give some indications about why some works failed in Vienna, and what kinds of opéra-comique were most successful there. As one Viennese newspaper said, in 1813:

ein anderes ist das Original, ein anderes die Übersetzung, ein anderes Paris, ein anderes Wien, der Geschmack ist verschieden, und nicht alle Opern sind in allen ihren Theilen so wichtig und vortrefflich...²

¹. John Warrack "German operatic ambitions", PRMA, (1977-78), p. 86.

². TZ, 12 January, 1813. In a long article summarising the Viennese theatres during the previous year, Adolf Bäuerle expresses admiration for the diversity of theatrical entertainment but points out the vast difference in quality between some modern French operas.

The first sections, dealing with the 1790s, cover the span of eleven years; later sections dealing with times of special significance, such as the first performances in Vienna of Cherubini, consider a single year at a time.

The Viennese vogue for opéra-comique became firmly established in 1802, with productions of Lodoiska and Les deux journées. The Viennese were "elektrifirt".¹ The following year, several Méhul operas received their Viennese première. As Der Sammler commented with hindsight, composers of the stature of Cherubini and Méhul were as rare in Paris as Mozarts were in Vienna. Behind them came many lesser men.² During the following fifteen years, many undistinguished opéras-comiques were performed in Vienna because of the fine reputation which French composers had earned abroad. After 1815 there was mounting frustration with, and criticism of, Viennese preoccupation with French opera; by the end of that decade Italian opera had once more become fashionable.

It would have been impossible -- and tedious -- to quote from all the press reports about Viennese productions of opéra-comique found by the writer. Many are in any case disappointingly uninformative.

¹. Der Sammler, 21 February, 1811, p. 92.

². Der Sammler, 21 February, 1811, p. 92.

I have sometimes given additional references to reports in the Leipzig AMZ knowing that paper to be more readily available to British readers than, for example, Der Sammler or Die Theaterzeitung.

I. Opéra-comique in Vienna, 1790-1819

A. Italian Opera at court, 1790-1801

Joseph II died on 20 February 1790 and the court theatres were shut for the period of official mourning. His successor, his brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, arrived in Vienna on 13 March; he became Emperor on 30 September 1790. Leopold was crowned King of Bohemia on

6 September 1791 in Prague (Mozart's opera La Clemenza di Tito received its première on this occasion).

Under the new regime there was fierce competition at the Viennese theatres for better positions. A number of Italian composers wished to assert themselves; Salieri was thought to be about to secure his position as first Kapellmeister, and there were people who wished to oust Da Ponte from his position and appoint Casti instead. It was known that Leopold, having had links with Italy, was more interested in Italian than German opera.¹

Leopold replaced Salieri with Cimarosa, who had been active in St. Petersburg from 1789 until 1791,² and barely two weeks after the first performance of Die Zauberflöte at the suburban Theater auf der

1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte Europas, V, p. 108.

2. "Cimarosa," New Grove.

Wieden, Vienna was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new Imperial Kapellmeister. He brought with him five female and six male singers, all Italians.

When Cimarosa's opera Il matrimonio segreto was first performed at the Burgtheater on 7 February 1792, the whole opera had to be repeated the same evening.¹

The court theatres had seriously reduced their ability to perform operas in German in 1787, when the German opera company was released. Sing-spiele were still occasionally given at court but probably by groups of singers brought together specially for the occasion, and not by an actual company. And so in 1790 the only two operas sung in German in the Imperial and Royal Theatres were: Der Bettelstudent with music by Peter Winter, and the melodrama Ariadne auf Naxos by Benda, making a total of only four evenings of German opera. In contrast to that, 140 evenings were given over to opera sung in Italian with Weigl, Martín y Soler, Salieri, Paisiello, Guglielmi, Storace and Cimarosa among the composers. Of the Italian operas in the repertoire for that year, the most performances were of Guglielmi's Pastorella Nobile and Paisiello's Il Rè Teodoro -- both given 21 times. There were 133 evenings of comedies at the court theatres that year, by writers such as Schröder, Schletter,

1. Deutsch, Mozart, p. 409.

Ziegler and Kotzebue. Most comedies received between only one and three performances, and so the 133 evenings were spread over nearly fifty works. 21 other plays including ten tragedies were also performed.

And so, as the Musikalisches Wochenblatt of Berlin reported in 1791, it looked as though an unadvantageous epoch was in sight for German composers.¹ After the death of Leopold II on 1 March 1792, Cimarosa was obliged to make way for Salieri again, and he returned home to Naples in 1793. But still the situation for German opera did not improve, and theatre almanacs for 1792-3 and 1793-4 both list no German opera company for the court theatres.² The almanac for 1794-5 reported that the German Singspiel company at court was in such a state of flux that it was not able to give an accurate list of its members.³ As the German singers also gave the French operas in translation, this almost excluded opéra-comique from the repertoire. From 1791 there was a French composer at court -- the husband of one of the

1. Musikalisches Wochenblatt (Berlin), 10 December 1791, no X, p. 79, as quoted in Deutsch, Mozart, p. 409.

2. Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1794, ed. Sonnleithner
Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1795.

3. Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1796, p. VII.

court opera singers, Dutillieu. However, instead of composing operas in French for the Austrian court, or being commissioned to write operas which could be translated and performed in German, he was employed to compose Italian ballets and operas. In 1792 he had been employed as a harpsichordist and acting Kapellmeister.¹

Three French operas were occasionally performed during these years, however: Der Fassbinder (Le tonnelier) by Philidor, first seen in Vienna in 1780, was given in 1792; and Monsigny's Röschen und Colas (Rose et Colas) which had already been performed in German in Vienna in 1778 was revived in 1794.

In 1794 Süssmayr was appointed as a Kapellmeister, and after that, operas in German fared slightly better at court, though most of those seen for the next seven years were to be old works. In 1796, Die doppelte Erkenntlichkeit with additional music by Süssmayr was performed; several operas by Süssmayr himself were produced; in 1795 Die edle Rache and Der Marktschreyer, and in 1797 Der Wildfang; Das schöne Milchmädchen with music by J. Wolf. A resetting by Süssmayr of the Roxelane story, Soliman der Zweite, was performed in 1799.² Its popularity is attested by Beethoven's piano variations (Wo076, 1799) on the terzetto

1. The New Grove calls him an "Italian composer of French descent"; although born in Lyons he was educated in Naples and had worked in Italy. His opera achieved little success in Vienna; his ballets were more favourably received.

2. 43 performances.

"Tandeln und Scherzen".¹ Most successful of all was Winter's Das unterbrochene Opferfest, first given in June 1796 and performed 65 times until 1807.

B. Opéra-comique in the Viennese suburbs 1790-1801

Now that little opera in German could be heard at the court theatres, it was the theatres of the suburbs which became more important as stages for French opera in German translation as well as for original German works.

The first opera by Dalayrac was seen in Vienna in June 1790: Nina ou la folle par amour was given at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt under the title Nina, oder was vermag die Liebe nicht. The production used a translation by the north German J. André, which suggests that the performance material was bought from elsewhere in German rather than from Paris. The plot of the opera would have been familiar to any members of the audience who had been to see the play Nina, oder Wahnwitz aus Liebe at the Burgtheater in 1788 or 1789: a one-act comedy, an arrangement of Marsollier's story by J.H.F. Müller the elder, it had received five performances. And two months before the French Nina opened in the Viennese suburbs, an Italian version of the story, with words after Marsollier by Da Ponte and music by Paisiello and Weigl, was given at the Burgtheater. It received

1. See p. 540.

only three performances, but was more successful in a different version (to which Hadamowsky gives "only the designation " play with music"), without the Weigl numbers, from 1794.¹ The Nina story was also seen as a ballet, at the court theatres, from 1797 to 1799.

The Dalayrac Nina was never seen at the court theatres, but it received only three performances at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt from 11 June 1790 and was never revived there. But sixteen years later, it was performed at the Theater an der Wien, and a notice published in Die Theaterzeitung described it as a callous little opera, which was emotionally unsatisfying: a story about a girl who went mad and was restored to sanity on seeing her lover again was hardly a story for an opera. This notice made no mention of the earlier Leopoldstadt performance.²

It is likely that in both 1790 and 1806 Viennese critics were unaware of the significance of Nina. It may well be the first opéra-comique to exclude comic elements entirely, and because of its forward-looking subject-matter the opera was first tested out in private before its public première in Paris.³ It subsequently enjoyed enormous success and Berlioz

1. Hadamowsky calls the first version a "Singspiel"; poor casting was blamed for its failure. After the opening night the opera's ballet numbers were cut out (there was no ballet company) and J. Weigl added eight arias to replace them. Michtner, p. 300. The 1794 version was probably Paisiello's opera.

2. TZ, 20 July, 1806. p. 56.

3. R.C.G. Pixérécourt, Vie de Dalayrac (Paris, 1810), p. 43.

in his memoirs was to recall the immense popularity of the romance "Quand le bien-aimé reviendra" which Nina sings on her first appearance in the opera.¹ This becomes her theme song, repeated each day as she commences her vigil for her lover. Separation from Germeuil has caused Nina to lose her mind, and each day, although believing him to be dead, the deranged girl, hair dishevelled and dressed in white, goes to the same place to await his return. In fact, their separation is a result of her father's disapproval of the match and the opera ends happily when the young man returns, greeted as a son by Nina's father. Nina is brought back to her senses. Another forward-looking aspect of the opera is the use of an oboe (playing a shepherd's tune) to represent Nina: in surprising anticipation of the opening of act III of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde.² Austrian audiences perceived that Nina was an unusual opéra-comique but failed to see its dramatic qualities.

But there is no reason to suppose that the 1790 production of Nina at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt was poor -- this theatre, after all, was a competitor of the Theater auf der Wieden where the première of Die Zauberflöte took place the following year. It is not known whether the cast was a weak or strong

1. Hector Berlioz, Memoirs of Hector Berlioz, trans. and ed. David Cairns (New York, 1969), p. 32.

2. David Charlton, "Motif and Recollection", p. 39.

one. It is unlikely that the performance was especially good.

An older French opera whose run had opened in January 1790 was to enjoy greater success. The old fairy tale opera based on a story by La Chaussée, Zémire et Azor, by Grétry, had already been seen at the court theatres in both French and German. It was first produced in the Leopoldstadt in 1776, and lasted for 54 performances until 1809. In 1793, the Theater auf der Wieden was to mount a production of this popular opera. And also running at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt during the 1790s was Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft, a translation of La rencontre imprévue by Gluck, which had opened in November 1789.

In 1791 we read of an unusual performance at the Theater auf der Landstrasse, where, on 4 January, Rousseau's Pygmalion is alleged to have been performed for the first time in Vienna. Unlikely though this may seem -- the work may have been confused with the melodrama by Benda -- it seems slightly more feasible in the light of this theatre's request to the authorities to be allowed to perform French plays during the Lent of 1791;¹ the playbill was written in French.²

¹. Blümml and Gugitz, Alt-Wiener Thespiskarren, p. 240.

². Blümml and Gugitz, Alt-Wiener Thespiskarren, p. 394.

In August 1791 the Theater auf der Wieden matched the achievement of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt in mounting a Viennese première of a recent Dalayrac opera. Like Nina, Renaud d'Ast was four years old. The number of performances at the Theater auf der Wieden is not known, but it must have been moderately successful because it was revived at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt in 1799; again there in 1801;¹ and was performed also at the theatre in Penzing in 1804. If Dalayrac had made a visit to Vienna during these years he would most certainly have been surprised and confused to see his operas performed cheek by jowl with, and by the same personnel who performed in traditional Viennese pantomimes and comedies; in Paris, the theatres tended to specialise in one genre.

1792 was a bleaker year than most for the court theatres. With the periods of official mourning following Leopold's death, the Kärntner-theater remained shut for two thirds of the year, and the Burgtheater for a fifth of the year. In the autumn, five performances were given of Philidor's opera Le tonnelier (Der Fassbinder), a one act opera which combined well in a double bill with a comedy or ballet. It had first been produced at the court theatres in 1780. Isolated performances of this work were also given in 1794 and 1796.

¹. See p. 492.

There was especial excitement in the Viennese suburbs in the December of that year over the rival productions of Dalayrac's Les deux petits Savoyards, which opened at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt on 13 December and at the Theater auf der Wieden the following evening. The Theater in der Leopoldstadt production had had its performance material especially prepared and translated by its poet J. Perinet; it was given 44 times until 1825. Schikaneder's theatre used a translation by the north German Schmieder.

Les deux petits Savoyards was the most modern French opera to be seen in Vienna up until this date. It was one of Dalayrac's major successes before the Revolution and Beethoven possessed a copy of it. It had first been seen at the Comédie Italienne on 14 January 1789, the year of revolution, and the Mercure de France had had the following to report:

Ce petit Ouvrage, dont il nous est impossible de faire connoître toutes les situations, a de l'interêt and de la gaîté. Ces deux sentimens s'y succèdent and s'y opposent tour à tour avec beaucoup d'adresse. Il y a peut-être un peu trop d'esprit dans quelques parties des rôles des enfans; mais ce défaut est racheté par beaucoup de grâce dans les idées, and de vérité dans le dialogue. La reconnoissance de la fin ne se forme pas dans la manière commune; elle est amenée par son mouvement de comique relatif au genre de l'Ouvrage, and qui n'en est pas moins naturel. La musique a le mérite de la Pièce, c'est tout dire.¹

i. La Mercure de France, 24 January 1789, p. 183.

In Vienna, the performance may have been good: between 1 September 1793 and 1 September 1794 the Theater in der Leopoldstadt had a good-sized orchestra of 24 musicians (the following year it increased to 30)¹; Müller was Kapellmeister and Kauer Musikdirektor. The company consisted of 43 adults and eighteen children (these numbers include both singers and actors).²

Les deux petits Savoyards became a lasting favourite with Austrian audiences.³

In August 1794 there were several performances of La Colonie by Sacchini at the theatre in the Landstrasse. In 1794, Austrian audiences had their first opportunity to see an opéra-comique which actually dated from the time of the Revolution in France. Dalayrac's opera Raoul, Sire de Créqui, had received its Paris première on 31 October 1789. It was given 52 times in the Leopoldstadt from September 1793.

In 1813, Ignaz Schuster was to play the part of the drunken jailer in this opera, for Vienna. This became the favourite part and rather overshadowed the rôles of the wrongfully imprisoned Raoul, and of his wife.

The subject matter of this opera as well as the date of its performance in Vienna make a closer look at the plot worthwhile. After serving his king in Palestine, Raoul, Sire de Créqui, has

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1795, p. LI-LIII.

² Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1796, p. XLIII-XLV.

³ See p. 482.

been imprisoned in a castle by an evil character, Le Sire de B'audouin, who hopes to acquire Créqui's wealth by marrying his wife, Adèle, now almost convinced that Raoul is dead. However, at the last minute, the jailer's children, who have taken pity on Raoul, help to intoxicate their father and free the prisoner who is reunited with his wife.

As the Mercure de France wrote:

Cet ouvrage est d'un grand effet: il offre beaucoup de mouvement, de situations, de tableaux variés, attachans; il a sur-tout une plénitude d'intérêt fort rare... La musique doit ajouter à la réputation de M. d'Alejrac; elle a de la grace, de l'esprit, de la force quand il en faut, & son premier mérite est d'être toujours dramatique.¹

But the most interesting part of the opera is the second act:

Le second Acte est principalement remarquable par une double scène qui forme un contraste très-piquant. D'un côté, on voit le cachot où est enfermé Créqui; on est témoin de ses maux, de ses soupirs, de ses gémissemens; de l'autre, on voit la chambre du Geolier, où le père boit et chante tandis que les enfants méditent la délivrance du Prisonnier.²

Raoul has been dreaming of his wife, Adèle; on awakening in his cell, he realises he has merely been sleeping and laments his fate. He is brought bread and wine by the children, who feel sorry for him. Raoul asks what prison he is in, and shudders

¹. La Mercure de France, 14 November 1789, p. 42.

². La Mercure de France, 14 November 1789, p. 42.

when the children tell him it is Baudouin's. .
 Meanwhile the jailer starts drinking heavily;
 having just been paid by Baudouin for disposing
 of the prisoner he is resorting to "Dutch Courage".
 Encouraged by the children, the jailer becomes so
 drunk that he falls asleep and the children, know-
 ing Raoul is to die, release him into the woods
 where he finds his wife and son. This all takes
 place at night, after a bad storm; the audience
 knows that Baudouin's troops are about to surround
 Adèle's home. It is a typical rescue opera such
 as Viennese audiences had already seen in Richard
Coeur-de-Lion and Le déserteur. But the contrast
 between domestic scenes from the jailer's home
 and the darkness of the prison, and the incident
 of a condemned prisoner dreaming about his wife
 and being brought food and drink as a last act
 of mercy, remind one irresistibly of Beethoven's
Fidelio.

Beethoven had settled in Vienna in the autumn
 of the previous year; it is possible he saw this
 opera. And ironically, the revival of this opera
 at the court theatres in 1805 came six months
 before the première of Fidelio at the Theater an
 der Wien. Gaveaux's Léonore, first produced at
 the Théâtre Feydeau in 1798, was never seen in
 Vienna although others of Gaveaux's operas were.

But in Dalayrac's opera the crucial scene in the prison consists mainly of spoken dialogue of which there are six consecutive pages in the full score; instead Beethoven here makes wonderful use of melodrama. In Fidelio the prisoner is released not by children but by his wife, to whom Beethoven can ascribe mature emotions.

Beethoven, if he saw the Dalayrac opera in 1793, might have been inspired by the subject matter; but in his treatment of a similar subject he was far to outdo Dalayrac twelve years later.

How did the Viennese react to Dalayrac's opera? The Wiener Theater Almanach of 1795 had the following to say:

Dallairac ist zuverlässig einer der grössten Componisten unserer Zeit; seine Manier ist originell und gross; seine Musik wirkt tief ins Herz; jedes seiner Musikstücke ist mit dem grössten Verstand angelegt, und dock gefielen seine zwey Opern, Die zwey kleinen Savojarden und Raoul von Crequi nicht so sehr als sie es verdienten. Beyde gefielen zwar, aber nicht wegen der vor-
trefflichen Musik, sondern wegen dem nied-
lichen Spiel der Schauspieler. Der Gang
der Musik, der nur eine leichte Tinctur
vom französischen Geschmacke hat war den
Ohren zu fremd. Das Ohr fand die Melodien
nicht schnell genug, dass sie hätten unge-
halten bis ins Herz dringen können.¹

The production of Raoul in the suburbs was remembered a decade later and mentioned in a notice of its re-
vival in 1805.

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1. Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1795, pp. 33-34.
It was unusual for productions at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt to be commented on in such detail, and to save its readers confusion, the almanac added a footnote to explain that these Dalayrac operas were seen not at the court theatres or the Theater auf der Wieden but were "auf dem Marinellischen Theater gegeben".

In the April of 1794, the Theater auf der Wieden produced the more than 30-year-old opera by Duni, Les deux chasseurs, in the German version by Faber already well familiar to Viennese audiences; and in May 1794, the Gluck opera L'arbre enchanté, first seen at court in Vienna in 1759, and now specially translated for the Theater auf der Wieden by Karl Ludwig Gieseke, who had played the part of first slave in the première of Die Zauberflöte and went on to become Professor of Mineralogy at Dublin, was seen there, being probably the first French opera to be specially translated for the performance at that theatre.

As though to make up for a year when it had produced no new French operas, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt mounted two new Dalayrac operas in 1795: in July, Azémia ou le nouveau Robinson, (Azemia oder die Wilden), translated by Schmieder, which ran for forty-four performances; and, a month later, La soirée orageuse (Die stürmische Nacht), translated by the future editor of the Leipzig AMZ, Rochlitz, and which received six performances. Both these operas were later revived at other Viennese theatres.

In the same year, the Theater auf der Wieden had the distinction of mounting the first Viennese production of an opera by Méhul. Again, it was translated by Gieseke, a member of the company,

and in 1806, when the opera was revived at the Theater an der Wien,¹ Gieseke's translation was praised for its deftness and poetry.²

Euphrosine, a rescue opera first performed in Paris in 1790, was known in Vienna as Die Milzsüchtige. No reviews seem to have survived. Deutsch in his study of the Theater auf der Wieden does not mention it. It would be of great interest to know how the Austrian public reacted to this work in 1795. Musically, this opera (set in the time of the crusades) is very uneven but it contains a duet "Gardez-vous de la jalousie" that was singled out as a stroke of genius by both Grétry and Berlioz.³ The most remarkable feature of Euphrosine is Méhul's use of a motive, first heard in the overture, to depict the evil effects of jealousy. The story is complicated, but offers a great many dramatic surprises. Méhul's interest in individual emotions, particularly the darker passions of his villains, is evident. Starting like a frivolous comic opera, it becomes more and more serious as it progresses, with the tyrant Coradin becoming increasingly nasty: a powerful and potentially tragic situation is built up only to be dissipated in a perfunctory happy end. Weber may

¹ With additional music by Seyfried.

² TZ, 10 August, 1806, p. 89.

³ Dent, pp. 83-4.

have been imitating Méhul (for whom he had the greatest admiration) when he wrote Euryanthe, also a tale of mediaeval chivalry. No more operas by Méhul were given in Vienna for eight years.

Between 1 April and 30 September 1795, seven Italian ballets were given at the Theater auf der Wieden by a company of twelve dancers and twelve Figuranten and Figurantinnen. The theatre almanac for 1796 also contains an interesting note to the effect "auch ward im Sommer auf diesem Theater eine Opera Seria in italienischer Sprache gegeben: Alciades und Telesia, wobey Hr. Bartolini und Mad. Lusini wie auch Hr Moltone sangen".¹ Herr Bertolini [*recte*] appeared with his company three times at the Theater auf der Wieden in August 1795 "mit hoher Bewilligung der hohen Obersten Theatral-Hof-Direktion". This appears to have been an extension of the special dispensation granted to the theatre that year which allowed Checchi's ballet company to perform there. Suburban theatres were not usually entitled to perform ballets, or operas in foreign languages: the Theater auf der Wieden had to pay a special tax for the privilege of doing so. Anxious to perform ballet, Schikaneder had since 1794 been trying to attract Vigano's company to the

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach für das Jahr 1796, p. XLIX.

Theater auf der Wieden. Plans failed when Braun took over the direction of the court theatres. In 1795, when the court theatres resumed their performance of German operas, Braun was willing to grant special permission to Schikaneder's theatre, perhaps because it did not now pose such a threat of competition. The ballets were performed by previous members of the court ballet company;¹ the operas were performed by singers not listed as members of the court opera company between 1792 and 1795. It is possible that they were free-lance singers or artists visiting Vienna.

In 1796, as mentioned above, came the only important French première of the decade at the court theatres: La double épreuve by Grétry. No new opera by this composer had been seen in Vienna for eight years. This one was enlarged by Süßmayr and received 24 performances until July 1798: a good success.

For the next two years no theatre in Vienna attempted any new works from the French repertoire. Italian taste still prevailed at court, and the suburban theatres already had in their repertoire a small number of tried and successful opéras-comiques. News reaching Vienna about the "Terreur" and the Guillotine, and the uncertain nature of communications in Europe and the wars, may briefly have

¹ Deutsch, Das Theater auf der Wieden, pp. 22-23.

discouraged theatres otherwise interested in acquiring recent French music to perform.

It may also be that some important changes in the company of the Theater in der Leopoldstadt affected the theatre's programme. In 1794, six of its company died, and on 17 February 1795 the popular actor Freidrich Baumann left the Theater in der Leopoldstadt to become a court opera singer at the Kärntnerthortheater which, as mentioned above, now reassembled its German opera company. Lastly, in 1797, Perinet, translator of Les deux petits Savoyards and Raoul, Sire de Créqui, left the theatre for the rival Theater auf der Wieden. Nevertheless the Theater in der Leopoldstadt was still to be the chief pioneer in bringing modern French opera to Vienna: it was not until about 1801 that Schikaneder of the Theater auf der Wieden really relinquished his hopes in the German fairy tale type of pantomime and put his faith in French opera.

In 1799 the Leopoldstadt staged a production of Renaud d'Ast, (as Der Liebhaber in der Klemme), first seen at the Theater auf der Wieden eight years earlier (as Georg von Asten), and retranslated for the Leopoldstadt by Perinet before he changed theatres. In September 1799 the first opera by Della Maria was produced in Vienna at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt. It had first been seen in Paris as recently as 1798.

Excerpts from Le prisonnier, the most successful of Della Maria's operas, had been included in an insert in the newly-founded Leipzig paper Die allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, in the edition dated 5 December 1798.¹ Viennese subscribers to the paper could have read as early as 24 October that the opera had already been given in French at the theatre in Berlin:

eine ganz allerliebste kleine Oper in einem Akte: ... mit dem allgemeinsten Beyfalle gegeben; die Musik ist von dem Citoyen Domenico della Maria und in der Manier der Cosa rara and des Arbore di Diana, aber in Hinsicht des Niedlichen seine Accompagnements diesen weit vorzuziehen.²

The AMZ seems to have made no mention of the performance of Le prisonnier at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, nor of the production in February 1801 of the revival of Renaud d'Ast, nor in the following month of Toberne ou le pêcheur suédois by Bruni.

These were the last French premières to be given by the Theater in der Leopoldstadt for many years.

Why the theatre stopped producing French operas then is a mystery. The AMZ of 26 August 1801 remarked disappointed:

¹. AMZ, Beylage, 5 December 1798.

². AMZ, 24 October 1798, column 64.

Leopoldstadt:

Hier treibt Herr Wenzel Müller sein Unwesen nach wie vor. Wie Pilze schiessen ihm die neuen Opern auf. Ist und bleibt irgend ein Komponist unerschöpflich, so bleibt er es; denn jeder neue Ländler bietet ihm ja ein Thema zu einer neuen Arie an. Er gebt der Sache nun das gehörige Wasser -- einige verbrauchte Figuren u. dgl. -- jetzt noch Trompeten und Pauken dazu, und der Satz ist fertig, mag ihn der Held oder der Trossbube vorzutragen bekommen.¹

French operas were such a small part of the theatre's repertoire that their presence there went almost unnoticed. Two years later, Marinelli died. Perhaps the opening of the new Theater an der Wien in the summer of 1801 and the string of new French operas which appeared on that stage during the summer and autumn of 1801 stopped the Leopoldstadt from wanting to compete.

C. Opera in Vienna around 1800; the new Theater an der Wien

The AMZ paints a gloomy picture of the theatres in Vienna around the beginning of the new century:

Mir scheint überhaupt, das Publikum ist es hier endlich müde, länger den Unfug aller dieser Geister-und Zauber-Harlekinaden auf dem Theater zu sehen, und verlangt nach einer kräftigern, dem gesunden Menschenverstande mehr angemessenen Nahrung.²

wrote the paper's Viennese correspondent at the end of July 1799 adding:

In den Vorstadttheatern fiel schon seit geraumer Zeit keine Oper sehr auf.³

1. AMZ, 26 August 1801, column 800.

2. AMZ, 28 August 1799, column 814.

3. AMZ, 28 August 1799, column 814.

Babilons Piramiden, an exotic and splendid opera with a libretto by Schikaneder, and with music to the first act by Gallus and to the second act by Peter von Winter, was performed at the Theater auf der Wieden in October 1797. It had a very mixed reception, largely on account of the uneven music:

Man kann sich nichts Gemeineres denken, als die Composition des ersten Akts, gegen den der zweyte; voll Würde und Schönheit, eben so stark und angenehm ...¹

Alexander, also by Schikaneder, this time with music by Teyber, first given in 1798 (and revived in 1801), drew the following reaction:

Bekommt der Komponist von einem bessern Dichter bessere Veranlassung; so wird sein Talent sich gewiss recht vortheilhaft hervorthun.²

The opera was condemned for being old, unoriginal and "monotonisch". The AMZ put the blame for a boring repertoire on the poor company of German singers:

Die Wahl der Opern ist bey einem solchen Personale allerdings schwer.³

In August 1801 the AMZ correspondent reported lamely from Vienna:

Meine Schuld ist es nicht, dass ich des wirklich Bedeutenden nur so wenig anführen kann.⁴

¹ AMZ, 31 October 1798, column 73.

² AMZ, 26 August 1801, column 799.

³ AMZ, 15 October 1800, column 45.

⁴ AMZ, 26 August 1801, column 797.

What with allegations that the performance of German language operas at the court theatres was severely handicapped by inadequate personnel, criticisms of Schikaneder's operatic efforts at the Theater auf der Wieden, and the short shrift given to the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, a reader of the AMZ who had never been to Vienna would have probably gathered that few operas were ever mounted there, whereas in fact large numbers were being given, as usual.

With hindsight one is able to see what contemporaries sensed only vaguely: the peevish discontent about opera expressed in reviews and articles around this time may have been because the Viennese found themselves in a lull between times of significant and hectic operatic activity: for the moment a staleness hung in the air and little exciting or new was happening. And despite the present interest in Italian opera at court, it *seemed unlikely that* Italian composers would create anything original. An article published in the autumn of 1798 had summed up the position of the Italians:

In den neuesten, in unsern Zeiten, blieben die Italiener im ganzen sich treu: aber der Genius der Nation schien sich selbst erschöpft zu haben -- sie wurden meistens fad, und verfielen, weil ihre längst ausgesungenen Melodien nicht mehr wirken wollten, auf Bizzarrieren, Seiltänzer -- und Luftspringerkünste für Sänger und Instrumentisten...¹

1. AMZ, 17 October 1798, column 37. The possibility of dismissing the Italian court opera company had been raised in March 1801, and the AMZ this month went as far as announcing its imminent dismissal. In the midst of the uncertainty, Herr Simoni, a tenor, moved from the court theatres to the Theater auf der Wieden. A week later, the AMZ announced that the Italian opera company was not to be dismissed after all; instead its singers were to have their income cut. AMZ, 4 March 1801, column 404; AMZ, 11 March 1801, report from Vienna.

This sentiment was to find many echoes in Viennese journals over the next decade. On the other hand, it was occasionally acknowledged that French opera had made strides forward during the last decades:

Die Franken, betroffen besonders über die gewaltig einschlagenden Blitze eines I. I. Rousseau gegen blos berechnete Musik eines Rameau, Lully u.s.w., die jedoch, wie Blitze pflegen, das Gute mit dem Bösen zu verzehren wünschten -- näherten sich mehr dem Guten ihrer Nachbarn (the Italians), ohne jedoch ihren eigenthümlichen Charakter ganz von sich zu werfen. So arbeiten z. B. Philidor, Gretry and Andere. Einige ächte Kunstgenie's thaten aus dem reichen Schatz ihres Geistes ihre Originalität hinzu.¹

The operas of Lully and Rameau had never found popularity in Vienna.

At the beginning of the new century there was no widely held conviction in Vienna that the French opéra-comique composers might be successors to the Italians in the development of modern opera.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the Theater an der Wien had the prospect of a splendid new theatre, a good German opera company, sound financing and an ambitious director whose old-fashioned works dominated the repertoire though they no longer achieved their hoped-for popularity; and the court theatres had a weak German opera company, conservative direction, and performed the traditional Italian operas.

¹. AMZ, 17 October 1798, column 37.

There were no particularly striking successes for opéra-comique in Vienna during the first part of 1801; the revival at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt of the Dalayrac opera Renaud received only two performances; Torbern ou le pêcheur suédois, by Bruni, first seen at the Théâtre Feydeau on 3 December 1795, was given first at the Freihaus Theater auf der Wieden on 14 March 1801 and later at the Theater an der Wien. After the opening of the new theatre, this Bruni opera was followed by an epilogue, entitled Thespis, on a subject of local political importance. It was a polemic against Braun, director of the court theatres, and his attempt to block the building of Schikaneder's new theatre. According to Rosenbaum "much of it was very coarsely served up".¹ The opera was dropped from the repertoire in 1802. In May, there was a new production at the Theater auf der Wieden of Le prisonnier, first seen at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt the previous year. The opening of the new Theater an der Wien had been announced in the AMZ:

Es ist ein schon von aussen schön in's Auge fallendes Gebäude, hat von innen eine einfache bequeme und doch vortrefflich sich ausnehmende Einrichtung und ist, was Dekorationen, Maschinerie u. dgl. betrifft, so reichlich ausgestattet, als kaum ein Operntheater in Deutschland. Es soll 200.000 Gulden kosten, und das ist gar nicht unwahrscheinlich.²

¹ Rosenbaum, diary entry 11 June 1801, p. 97.

² AMZ, 17 June 1801, column 643.

During the first six months of the new Theater an der Wien nearly sixty different pieces were given -- most of them new works. Thirty were pieces of spoken drama of which at least four included music; and there were fourteen operas: four French; seven German; one German setting of a French libretto; a serious German opera; and one serious Italian opera (sung in German). It was apparently Sebastian Meyer, Mozart's brother-in-law and a member of the Theater an der Wien company, with responsibilities for organising the production of operas, who suggested to Schikaneder that he give up trying to perform the fairy tale operas and concentrate on the modern French operas.¹ None of the opéras-comiques given at the Theater an der Wien in 1801 was particularly successful in what could be seen as an experimental year. Le petit matelot was given in June and performed seven times at the new theatre, being revived several times at others, though it did not enjoy the popularity in Vienna which it seems to have enjoyed in other places. And a second Bruni opera was seen an der Wien in September -- Les Sabotiers (Der Holzschumacher) was given only twice. Adolphe et Clara received its Viennese première in October 1801 and was given nine times. The real successes with opéra-comique were to begin the following year.

¹ Thayer, II, p. 4.



Podolsk.

D: 1802: The first Cherubini season

Rumours of peace had been spreading around Vienna in early spring 1801, and the Treaty of Lunéville was signed on 9 February. By summer 1802, France was back on the way to recovery with Napoleon established in Paris and behaving increasingly like a monarch. Now that things were returning to normal, Paris was the subject of considerable curiosity from the rest of Europe; foreigners flocked to Paris to see, first hand, what the Terreur and the Revolution had done to France. It has been estimated that 20,000 visitors spent time in Paris during the first few years of the new century. If they had expected to see the guillotine and hoards of sans culottes, they were disappointed; they found a city where people more or less carried on their normal occupations amid an air of gaiety:

A Paris surtout, règne un climat d'activité, de gaieté, voire de légèreté, dans les lieux élégants et parmi les riches, qui étonne et qui séduit. Mais il est clair que cette impression favorable provient du contraste avec l'image qu'on s'était faite au dehors pendant la Terreur.¹

Della Maria failed to continue in the original fluid and brilliant style which had made Le prisonnier so successful. His later works were less successful. Della Maria's Le vieux château, first performed in Paris in 1798, was performed at the Theater an

¹. Latreille, p. 104.

Illustration opposite " stellt die letzte Scene in der Oper Lodoiska dar, wo der edle Bojar seinen Freund aus den Händen des Tyrannen Turlinsky befreiet, und die Burg in Brand steckt. Floresky und Lodoiska stürzen mit der Brücke ein, werden aber durch Tizickans Leute gerettet". Wiener Theater Almanach, 1803.

der Wien in January 1802; it received only two performances but was revived at the Kärntnerthor-theater twenty years later for eight performances. Lodoiska on the other hand opened at the Theater an der Wien on 2 March and was seen there 70 times until 1828, being revived also at two other theatres. News of the Viennese production of this opera reached Cherubini in Paris, and he wrote to the Theater an der Wien to thank them for their reportedly good performance. The German version of Lodoiska used for the production was that prepared by C. A. Herklots of North Germany. In Vienna it was hailed as an opera:

über deren schöne und exacte Ausführung der grosse Cherubini aus Paris, seinen schriftlichen Dank, an das hiesige Personal und Orchester sendete.¹

Looking back on 1802 at the Theater an der Wien, the Theater Almanach singled out the Lodoiska production as one of the year's highlights:

Und nun endlich zu Cherubinis Lodoiska, die schon so lange existirt, und zu unserer Schande erst jetzt bekannt wurde. Alles, was nur der strengste Kenner fordert und der Kunstliebende wünscht: alle Reize des classischen Guten und Schönen liegen in diesem musikalischen Phönix. -- Es ist ein ganz neuer Weg, den Cherubini, hier einschlug, und vollendete. -- Es wäre nicht gewagt, Cherubinis Satz kantisch

1. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, p. 78.

zu nennen; wenn er sich nicht darin von ihm unterscheide, dass Kant nur denen, die ihn ganz fassen (und wie viele sind wohl deren!) verständlich wird, Cherubini aber, durch Wahrheit und Naturgefühl, der Kunst den Triumph, wie Mozart einst bereitet, auch auf das Herz der zarten, selbst unmusikalischen - musikalischen Hörerseelen zu wirken. -- Diese Oper flösst dem, der sie sah und hörte, Respect für Wiens Publikum ein, das ihr einen so entschiedenen Beyfall und Zuspruch schenkte. In diesem Augenblicke erscheint mir Wiens Publikum grösser.¹

The author of this article was Perinet and his comment about "ein ganz neuer Weg" was perceptive: a modern writer² has said that it was with Lodoiska that Cherubini launched the new style of opéra-comique: that it was with this opera that rescue opera "got its teeth" ... The simple structure of opéra-comique was in this work subjected to an enormous expansion:

the music is propelled by a pounding rhythmic energy, with constant sforzandi cross-accented and extreme dynamic contrasts, not only within the bar but within the beat: for pages on end almost every note may carry a fresh dynamic mark. The orchestration too is full of contrast, huge climaxes spread over several octaves alternating with sudden pianissimos in which solo instruments, especially the woodwind, come to the fore.³

Cherubini's opera became far more popular in Germany than it ever was in France, where audiences preferred Kreutzer's treatment of the same subject.

The AMZ, however, in a letter from Vienna published six months after the première of Lodoiska in Vienna, reported that the poor translation of

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, pp. 82-83.

² Winton Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution", p. 82.

³ Winton Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution", p. 83-84.

the opera ,compensated for by Cherubini's great music and the good performance:

Obgleich der Uebersetzer dieses Stücks weder für eine gut gewählte Prosodie, noch viel weniger für die Vereinigung des oratorischen und musikalischen Ausdrucks gesorgt hatte: so erhielt dasselbe doch durch die gewaltvolle Musik, welche die Fehler der Uebersetzung bedeckte, so wie durch die gute Aufführung und den vereinigten Eifer der singenden und spielenden Personen, gleich bey der ersten Vorstellung den ausgezeichnetsten Beyfall.¹

In May came a very successful revival at the Theater an der Wien of Richard Coeur-de-lion "mit Grétrys schmeichelnder, liebehauchender Musik";² for this production was added to the opera a new overture by Weigl and a ballet dream scene with new machinery which is described on pp. 412-413.

This opera enjoyed several subsequent revivals: Viennese audiences liked the story (nicely royalist) and the music. French opinions on its Paris première had been divided: "Le tout est chargé d'épisodes étrangers au sujet; ce qui produit un effet assez bizarre, & ne sert pas peu à embarrasser l'intrigue... On a entendu avec plaisir & applaudi avec transport une foule de per[?]s [two letters illegible] airs, de rondes, de vaudevilles et écrits d'un style gracieux & piquants".³

After the outstanding success of Lodoiska, there were evidently rumours circulating around Vienna about the reasons for the court theatres'

1. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 25.

2. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, p. 79.

3. La Mercure de France, 30 October 1784, p. 233.

slowness to perform operas of the modern French school -- in particular Weigl was accused of trying to keep them, and especially Cherubini, away from the court stages.¹ But in June 1802 one new French opera was given there, though it was not a recent one. Sacchini's Oedipe à Colonne received only four performances at the Kärntnerthortheater, which must have been a disappointment. Sacchini's La Colonie was already known, having been given at the court theatres in 1780, and again at the theatre in the Landstrasse during the 1790s. But Oedipe was, in Paris at least, considered to be his masterpiece, having been first performed at Versailles in 1786 and surviving in the repertoire for 95 performances until 1827. Sacchini had settled in Paris in 1781 and started off well there under the protection of Joseph II, who was visiting his sister, Marie Antoinette. Oedipe was an old opera, described as a tragédie lyrique, not an opéra-comique. It could be described as "classical" - descended from the French operas of Gluck but with a more Italian style of melody.² Generally speaking, the more serious operas on classical themes found less acceptance in Vienna than more frivolous stories:

¹ For example when, in October 1802, it was announced that Médée would be given, the AMZ had the following comment: "Geschieht dieses, so wird die Verläumdung: als hätte der Kapellmeister die Werke dieses Komponisten von der Bühne in der Stadt zu entfernen gesucht, am besten widerlegt". AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 26.

² Dent, p. 49.

partly because the Viennese found the music of Parisian grand operas too French and "angular" and also because stiff French dignity did not appeal to them. They preferred the lighter side of the French character.

If there was a party at the court theatres which resisted French opera, it was soon outvoted. The success of Lodoiska apparently prompted the court theatres to compete with the Theater an der Wien over the première of the next Cherubini opera to be seen in Vienna, Les deux journées, which opened in Vienna on 13 August at the Theater an der Wien, and 14 August at the court theatres.¹ According to a historian of the Munich theatre it was the performance there which prompted the production at the Theater an der Wien:

Der Erfolg der Münchner Aufführung muss ebenfalls gross gewesen sein, sonst hätte nicht der schlaue Schikaneder im Jahre darauf seinen Kapellmeister Seyfried behufs Gewinnung einer Abschrift der Partitur nach München geschickt.²

The Theater an der Wien used a translation by Schmieder; the court theatres on the other hand used a German version by their own Treitschke. Had they obtained a French score from Paris or had Treitschke adapted an existing German version?

¹ AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 27.

² Max Zenger, Geschichte der Münchner Oper, Munich, 1923, p. 81. Cherubini's Lodoiska was not performed in Munich until 1813 and after Les deux journées it was an intense disappointment. Zenger, p. 131.

At both the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnerthor-theater, tickets were sold out.

According to the AMZ: "Cherubini's Ruhm hatte sich bereits in die entferntesten Theile der Stadt verbreitet."¹ Great excitement surrounded both opening performances. At the Theater an der Wien:

es war schwer an diesem Tage Eintritt-billete in das Schauspielhaus zu erhalten, des ungeachtet führte mich ein glücklicher Zufall dahin. Die Overtüre begann. Sie wurde im gehörigen Zeitmass genommen; vollkommen genau nach der vorgeschriebenen Schattirung der Töne, und im gleichen Gehalt vom Anfang bis ans Ende, von allen Mitspielenden durchgeführt. Ein allgemeiner Beyfall belohnte den Eifer des Orchesters. Der Vorhang ging auf, und nun, von der ersten Scene, worin die Rolle des Antonio von Hrn. Cagé mit vieler Innigkeit gespielt wurde, bis zum Schluss des ersten Aufzuges, konnte sich das entzückte Publikum nur durch das immer steigende Interesse, und das Frappante und Neue in der Manier, wie Cherubini seinen Gegenstand behandelte; vom Ausbruche des lautesten Beyfalls zurückhalten. Herr Mayer mit seiner angenehmen Basstimme hatte die Rolle des Wasserträgers übernommen, und sang diesen Abend ganz vorzüglich. Durch das ganze Stuck griff alles rasch in einander. Die Chöre gingen präcis, das Kostüm war richtig, und die Dekorationen schön. Als am Ende der Vorhang fiel, war der Beyfall allgemein, und jeder-mann schien den Schauplatz mit Vergnügen zu verlassen.²

The plot of this opera, in which a gentleman is taken out of prison concealed in a water cart, was allegedly based on a real incident during the Revolution. Unlike other Rescue operas Les deux journées has no storms or melodramatic scenes of

¹ AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 27.

² AMZ, 7 October 1802, columns 27-28.

rescue from fire or water. Perhaps it appealed to the Viennese -- and to Beethoven - because of its concentration of interest on the simple human kindness and gratitude of the humble water carrier.¹

The opera allegedly received an excellent production at both theatres according to the AMZ (see Chapter VI pp.660), but it was hinted darkly that the Theater an der Wien had "mixed ordinary chicken with the pheasant"² and should have informed the public before adding new musical numbers by its own Kapellmeister Seyfried. More will be said about both productions below. (see p.515ff).

The new season, from August onwards, brought new efforts on the part of the directorates of both theatres. The AMZ announced with satisfaction that the Theater an der Wien had appointed a committee to look after opera productions -- it already had one to supervise the performance of comedies -- and it was thereby hoped that more good new operas would be performed there, and also, that better translations would be used. From the autumn of 1802 most French operas now given an der Wien were translated by Seyfried, the theatre's own poet, and second-hand north German versions appeared less frequently.³

¹. Dent, p. 83.

². AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 28.

³. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 28.

The period of peace with France which was enjoyed after the Peace of Amiens from 25 March 1802 to 20 May 1803 had encouraged foreign visitors to Paris, and among these was Baron von Braun from the Viennese court theatres. A letter from Vienna to the AMZ published in October 1802 announced that the capital was excitedly awaiting his return, for he was bringing:

die vorzüglichsten Ballette und Singspiele mit sich hierher, welche alle auf's genaueste nach dem Geschmacke des französischen Theaters hier aufgeführt werden sollen.¹

It is easier to imagine Baron von Braun, as a member of the Viennese aristocracy, visiting Paris, than to imagine Schikaneder leaving his theatre to journey to France. One may well ask where the Theater an der Wien obtained its French scores.

Braun's visit bore fruit in November 1802 with the Viennese production of Medea. It received nineteen performances, closing in the July of the following year; but it was revived ten years later. This opera which has been described as classical tragedy in the grandest manner² was never produced outside the Viennese court theatres. On its revival in 1812 Der Sammler commented on the "grösste Schwierigkeit" of the opera, especially the wide vocal range, awkward leaps and acting demands on the heroine which required a lot of rehearsal.

¹. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 32.

². Dent, p. 82.

One of the reasons why Médée is rarely revived today is because the vocal parts are so exhausting.¹ Contemporary reports accuse the court theatres in 1802 of trying to save money on the production and ruining some of the effects.²

In December 1802, the Theater an der Wien gave Cherubini's Eliza translated by Seyfried specially for Vienna. This work received only seven performances at the theatre which, though higher than average for new productions at the Theater an der Wien, was very low for a French opera (Lodoiska received 70; Les deux journées 31 at the Theater an der Wien and 64 at the court theatres, and Médée nineteen performances). The Austrian audience reportedly found the subject a depressing one for December because the opera was set on a snow-covered mountain. Vienna was very short of good tenors, especially high tenors, and Herr Simoni, who sang the part of Florindo, was Tyrolean and had such a broad Italian accent that his words could not be understood.³ And the sense of the opera may have been hindered by the censors. The report of the censor who received the translated score of this opera two months before its performance insisted that, owing to Austrian law, members of religious orders and priests were not allowed

1. Dent, p. 82.

2. See Chapter VI p. 631.

3. AMZ, 23 February 1803, columns 369-370.

to appear on stage in vestments or cassocks. So the monks in this opera about St. Bernard's mountain were recommended by the censor to appear disguised in Russian-type fur hats.¹ In the performance reported in the AMZ, the evening was falling so flat that Herr Simoni, who had been trying throughout the opera to draw inappropriate attention to himself, was allowed by the direction to insert some extra arias by another composer to win some applause. In spite of the splendid music, the AMZ called the opera a cold work which did not meet with success.² This was the only Cherubini opera to be given in Vienna which did not enjoy a long and distinguished run there.

The picturesque music -- the opening scene, for example, with the monks looking for lost travellers -- is admirably written ; the striking figures of rushing semiquavers in the woodwind might be intended to represent winds; but it seems not to have appealed to the Viennese. The most consciously romantic of all Cherubini's operas, it did, however appeal particularly to Weber. The Viennese critic who commented on the "cold" set (if indeed this comment is to be taken seriously) was accurate in identifying this as an unusual

¹ See p. 626.

² AMZ, 23 February 1803, columns 369-370.

feature. Apart from Grétry's Guillaume Tell (1791), which was never performed in Vienna, this is the first opera in which the new Romantic interest in Swiss mountain scenery was illustrated.¹ In both acts the scene is the same, a part of the St. Bernard pass, with the hospice and monastery of the monks and a precipitous snow-covered landscape.

In 1802, the Theater an der Wien had given 25 operas and Singspiele out of a total of 92 pieces. But the operas accounted for 60% of all the performances of this year, which shows that they were three times as successful as the plays. In 1802, over 35% of all texts used at the Theater an der Wien were of French origin. In 1803, this number was to rise to 50%.²

In its theatre almanac for 1802, the Theater an der Wien expressed pride in its opera company: an orchestra of 40 players, a theatre company of about 70; the celebrated designers Sacchetti and Gail, and its large number of Kapellmeister: Henneberg, Franz Teyber, Ignaz v. Seyfried, Beethoven, Vogler; and Cherubini, it was claimed, would be engaged in a few months.³

According to Thayer, Vogler and Beethoven were appointed as composers to the Theater an der Wien in order to maintain the successful operatic

1. Dent, p. 90.

2. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 65.

3. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, pp. 148-153.

competition with the court theatres. It is confusing, then, to read in this almanac, that Cherubini was to be appointed to the Theater an der Wien.¹

Thayer claims that "while the music of the new master was thus attracting and delighting crowded audiences at both theatres, the wealthy and enterprising Baron Braun went to Paris (on behalf of the court theatres) and entered into negotiations with Cherubini, which resulted in his engagement to compose one or more operas for the Vienna stage".² It is known that Braun visited Paris in the autumn of 1802 in order to buy scores of French operas; but the AMZ, which reports this, does not also mention the negotiations with Cherubini³, and Thayer does not cite his source.

From newspaper reports and the repertory lists, it seems that the court theatres were struggling to match the achievements of the Theater an der Wien at this stage rather than the other way round.

Zitterbarth had bought the theatre and taken possession of it in June 1802, but Schikaneder was still largely responsible for artistic decisions.

E. 1803: Méhul and other composers

In the new year of 1803, the musical public was still divided between Italian and French opera.

¹. Thayer, II, p. 3.

². Thayer II, p. 4.

³. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 32.

A report from Vienna written in February of that year said that half the public wanted Paer to return and the other half Cherubini.¹

But there was a growing recognition of the importance of modern French opera -- and a realisation that in Vienna, even at the court theatres it was an important new part of the repertoire. In the summer of 1803, the AMZ announced the establishment of a second important "epoch" for opéra-comique in the Austrian capital:

Seit zwanzig Jahren, wo Gretry, Monsigny, Philidor u. a. auf unsern Bühnen glänzten und endlich verloschen, beginnt für die französische Musik nun die zweyte Epoche durch Cherubini, Méhül, Dalayrac u. a. welche der Herr Kapellmeister und Intendant W. mit einem Eifer und einer Theilnahme unterstützt.²

Of Cherubini's eighteen operas, seven -- or eight including a collaboration with Boieldieu -- were given in Vienna; four of these had been first seen in 1802. Of Méhül's 40 or so operas, thirteen were given in the Austrian capital; five of them received their Viennese première in 1803; in addition two more Cherubini operas were seen for the first time in Vienna this year.

1. AMZ, 30 March 1803, column 456. Paer had come to Vienna in 1798 and written the most celebrated of his operas, Camilla, in 1801. In 1803 he left Vienna to go to Dresden but he returned to Vienna at the end of February.

2. AMZ, 31 August 1803, column 818. "Herr W." almost certainly refers to Joseph Weigl who was director of the German and Italian opera and Kapellmeister (under Salieri) during the 1803-1804 season at the court theatres.

The most successful French operas given in 1803 were three by Méhul: Une folie; Hélène and Le trésor supposé; and two by Cherubini: L'hôtellerie portugaise and La punition. Two operas in particular failed to live up to expectations: Le Sueur's La caverne in June, mounted by the Theater an der Wien and Kärntnerthortheater within two days of one another; and Della Maria's L'oncle valet, also produced by both theatres: by the Kärntnerthortheater on 2 November and the Theater an der Wien the following day. The reason for the failure of the Le Sueur opera was the poor translations used. Lippert, who did the German version for the Kärntnerthortheater, was especially blamed for incompetence; indeed when his death was announced in the AMZ in August of that year the paper was unpleasant enough to say that he had been neither a bass, nor tenor; that he was a hopeless translator; people were glad he had died, for his passing ushered in a new era for German opera at the court theatres. Seyfried, responsible for the translation for the Theater an der Wien, escaped personal criticism but his work was blamed. Secondly the set at the Theater an der Wien had been too commonplace and although the orchestra there had played well, the performance as a whole had been weak with too small a chorus which anyway was not secure, and two of the leading characters were unequal to their parts. But the music had been thought

impressive -- ("tumultuarisch ... brachte grosse Wirkung"). At the Kärntnerthortheater the last scene had been thought too gruesome and in poor taste: about 40 shots were fired on stage which was tasteless enough to shatter everybody's nerves.¹

The loud battery of gun shots at the end of the opera evidently made a big impression on the Viennese. Even the Eipeldauer peasant wrote home to his cousin:

Der Herr Vetter kann's nicht glaubn,
wie z'Wien der französische Gusto wieder
überhand genommen hat. Da habn s'an der
Wien und gleich in der Stadt ein Opera,
d'Räuberhöhl aufgeführt, und da hab ich gar
nichts rar's d'rinn g'funden, weil aber
d'Oper in Paris ist gebn worden, und weil
auf der Räuberhöhl oben in der Höh ein Wald
z'sehn ist, und weil drin brav geschossen
wird, so hat d'elegante Welt d'Ausländerwaar
wieder wunderschön g'funden.²

La caverne was inspired by Schiller's play Die Räuber and the picture on the title-page of the French score clearly indicates the Romantic nature of the plot.³ The set, which is the same for all three acts of the opera, is unusual: a spacious rocky cave inhabited by a group of robbers. A lamp hangs from the ceilings, and above the natural roof, the surface of the ground can be seen -- the floor of the forest -- on which actors can be observed walking. The ways in and out of the cave

¹ AMZ, 6 July 1803, column 683-684.

² Die Eipeldauer Briefe, II, Volume 19, (1803), p. 148, letter 4.

³ Dent, p. 66.

are mysterious, not leading directly to the ground above. A commonplace set -- like that criticised at the Theater an der Wien in 1803 -- could easily be seen to have spoilt the impact of the production (especially as the set remained the same for all three acts).

La caverne was possibly Le Sueur's greatest work: first performed in 1793 it had firmly placed him in the French public's eye, along with Cherubini and Méhul. A modern appraisal of Le Sueur's composition is that it is "rather dry and mechanical", but there are some strange effects of harmony; and the overture, with its long horn solo, followed by a very passionate allegro in C minor, is reminiscent of Berlioz, who was greatly influenced by Le Sueur.¹ La caverne is a rescue opera typical of that era: one which aristocratic audiences at the Kärntnerthortheater found too heavy and gruesome. Le Sueur's music was bold for 1803: to Viennese audiences, it seemed almost overwhelming. Le Sueur never received the acclaim accorded in Vienna to Cherubini and (to a lesser extent) Méhul.

The court theatres had more success with the only other French opera they mounted that year -- Le chapitre second by Solié -- given as Das zweite Kapitel and translated by Treitschke. The AMZ wrote:

1. Dent, pp. 65-67.

Die Uebersetzung von Hrn. Treitschke ist gut. Die Dekoration von Hrn. Platzner ebenfalls. So mittelmässig die Vorstellung war, gefiel sie doch durch den leichten Gang der Dichtung, und die sehr gefällige Musik, welche letztere das Orchester meisterhaft ausführte.¹

The Viennese were never to remember Méhul, Le Sueur, Della Maria or Solié with the same affection they had for Cherubini, Dalayrac or Grétry.

In 1803 the Theater an der Wien again succeeded in outmatching its rival in the number of successful new French operas it mounted. Dalayrac's Léheman appeared as Der Thurm von Gothenburg in March, was given 40 times and described as "lieblich" in the AMZ. The resumption of hostilities with France in May this year does not seem in any way to have tarnished public affection for opéra-comique.

At the end of May, the first Méhul opera for nearly ten years was seen in Vienna. La folie had been performed in Paris for the first time only in the April of the previous year (1802) and for about a fortnight it had been advertised at the court theatres under the title Wagen gewinnt, translated by Treitschke; but around mid-day a small printed notice would appear on the poster regretting that, owing to an illness of a female singer, the company had been compelled to postpone the performance. The Theater an der Wien took advantage of this delay

¹. AMZ, 30 March 1803, column 458.

to mount its own version of the opera in a translation by Seyfried, about which the AMZ wrote on the whole approvingly:

Die Schnelligkeit, womit die Direktion ihre eigene Uebersetzung und die Einführung des Stücks in die Scene, nebst zwey neu dazu verfertigten Dekorationen u. s. w. besorgen liess, ward mit allgemeinem Beyfall aufgenommen. In der That ist der Inhalt dieser Oper so interessant und Mehüls Musik so angenehm und reizend, dass sich das Publikum lange damit unterhalten wird. Sowohl die singenden Personen, als auch das Orchester verdienen alles Lob. Einer kleinen Sünde hat sich der Uebersetzer dadurch schuldig gemacht, dass er die Scene nach Wien verlegte, die Intrigue trägt zu sehr das Gepräge einer leichten, flüchtigen, französischen Phantasie. Wir Wiener grösstentheils sind hierin solider, und halten uns mehr am Boden.¹

Le trésor supposé (Der Schatzgräber)² and L'Importé (Die Temperamente)³ both succeeded nicely in Vienna; even though the former had only a qualified success in Paris it had the distinction of being performed at all five major Viennese theatres.

The beginning of the new season in 1803 -- from August -- was impressive, with two productions of Méhul's Héléna within three days of each other, the first at the Kärntnerthortheater and the second at the Theater an der Wien. The opera had been given in Paris only five months earlier, which made it the most recent French opera to be given in Vienna up to that date. The AMZ described the opera as "ein getreues Seitenstück zu den beyden gefahrvollen Tagen" and commented that Cherubini and Méhul stood

¹. AMZ, 15 June 1803, column 638.

². Le trésor supposé ou le danger découper aux portes, opéra-comique in 1 act by Méhul.

³. L'importé, opéra-comique in 1 act by Méhul;

next to one another as a pair of friends. This opera, Viennese audiences felt, was very French:

Von allen bisher aufgeführten französischen Singspielen blieb keines noch, vom Anfang bis zum Schluss, dem wahren unveränderlichen Charakter französischer Nationalmusik so getreu, wie dieses.¹

But the music was not sung as the composer intended, for the singer playing the Count von Arles:

verschnörkelte and verbrämte, mit einer sehr unreinen Stimme, so viel und so lange, dass man kaum mehr verstand, was denn eigentlich Méhül habe singen lassen wollen.

This practice infected other singers, including the Helena. The AMZ explained that this ran contrary to the traditions of French music, and gave three short paragraphs explaining that French music should be performed as written, with no extra embellishment; French singing was declamatory and simple and, unlike Italian vocal style, one of its chief characteristics was the narrow pitch range it encompassed.²

Like many other contemporary judgements, in the Viennese press, these comments about Méhul contained some half truths. A contemporary musicologist has written of Méhul's style: "He aims ... more at the truth of speech than at pure melody",³ but it is not true to say that the French confined themselves to a narrow vocal range: French tenor parts, for example, often went high, and one of the criticisms

1. AMZ, 31 August 1803, column 818.

2. AMZ, 31 August, 1803, columns 818-819; see Chapter VI for full quotation.

3. Dent, p. 78.

of Cherubini's Medea when it was performed in Vienna was that the wide vocal leaps made it difficult to sing. The AMZ was right, however, in observing that French music contained fewer melodic embellishments than Italian music.

At the Theater an der Wien the opera received only three performances -- less than the average for a new production; but at the court theatres the opera enjoyed a decent run of eighteen.

A month later another Cherubini opera was given at the Kärntnerthortheater, L'hôtellerie portugaise, which, like La folie, had had to be postponed because of illness. The AMZ suggested that the Theater an der Wien should take advantage of the delay by mounting the opera itself,¹ but for some reason the Theater an der Wien did not rise to this suggestion although the opera was performed there in 1812. This was surprising because when the opera, with a new overture by Cherubini, received its Viennese première, and played to a full house on 22 September, it was hissed and considered to be a very disappointing piece:

Die Handlung hat freylich wenig Interesse,
keine Verwicklung, überhaupt keinen Gehalt.²

Grove considers this one-act opera to be of minor significance.³

¹. AMZ, 15 June 1803, column 639....

². AMZ, 12 October 1803, column 31.

³. "Cherubini", The New Grove.

Seven days after L'hôtellerie portugaise, the Theater an der Wien rather surprisingly mounted a production of a very recent Dalayrac opera, Le boucle de cheveux (Wasser und Feuer). It had been a complete failure when first seen at the Théâtre Feydeau on 29 October 1802, and was dropped after three performances in Vienna, having failed there too. It was felt to be too much of a "französisches Kunstspiel" to succeed in the Austrian capital.¹

The only opera by Lebrun performed in Vienna was Marcelin (Pächter Robert). According to the AMZ, the Theater an der Wien was in its element with this opera, which could be "hogartisiert" there -- presumably meaning "caricatured".² Less successful operas were Della Maria's L'oncle valet (Der onkel in Livree) dropped after only one performance in November at the Theater an der Wien; and Méhul's Joanne in December.

The last Cherubini opera to receive a stage performance in Vienna apart from a collaboration with Boieldieu, was La punition (Der Gefangene) on New Year's Eve, 1803. Being a one-act opera, it was performed after a German play which was a translation of a French play on the same subject. This is supposed to have detracted from the success of both works. The reporter for the AMZ commented that had Cherubini's name not been on the poster, one would not have guessed

1. AMZ, 2 November 1803, column 74.

2. AMZ, 2 November 1803, column 74.

the composer or the origins of the opera, which had undergone several alterations for performance in Vienna.¹

In 1803 concerns were still being expressed about the standard of the German opera company at the court theatres: apparently the Italian company was at this stage still much stronger. This weakness had spoiled the production of Medea. The Theater an der Wien, on the other hand, prided itself on its strong singing company, good orchestra, and fine facilities.²

Until 1803 the Theater an der Wien had given more of the smaller opéras-comiques by lesser composers than had the court theatres. The performance of these slighter works may have caused some people in Vienna to underestimate the distinction of the modern French operas. For example, comparing the court theatres with the Theater an der Wien a Viennese correspondent for the AMZ wrote:

Das Theater an der Wien giebt Stücke dieser Art für nichts mehr, als was sie sind: nämlich schon nach einander folgen liess. In der Stadt erscheinen diese Bagatellen die eigentlich nur Zugabe neben einem andern guten Stücke seyn sollten, mit dem Schein von Wichtigkeit. Das kann dann keine gute Wirkung hervor bringen.³

When, in 1803, Lesueur's La caverne was first performed in Vienna, its composer was introduced to Viennese

¹. AMZ, 1 February 1804, column 292-293.

². AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 28.

³. AMZ, 7 July 1803, column 683-684.

audiences as being the third member of the important trio of modern French composers, the other two being Cherubini and Méhul;¹ Cherubini quickly seems to have emerged as the most respected of the three. He was recognised by Der Sammler as a genius² and his name was often coupled with that of Mozart as a standard to which other composers should aspire.³ The easy acceptance he found in Vienna can be attributed partly to the fine reputation which preceeded him, partly perhaps to his Italian name, but also to a recognition that his operas were superior, both in terms of music and drama, to those of most of his contemporaries. As Der Sammler said in 1811, works by lesser composers had found their way to Vienna only because of Cherubini's success, but Cherubini's were as rare in Paris as Mozarts were in Austria.⁴ No clear answer can be given to the question why Méhul, Cherubini's distinguished contemporary, received less respect. Both composers handled the orchestra in an impressive fashion, both expressed excitement in their music. In a letter sent in from Vienna in August 1803, the AMZ spoke very highly of Méhul, comparing his operas with those of modern Viennese composers, especially the Seyfried brothers. Whereas

1. AMZ, 7 July 1803, column 683-684.

2. Der Sammler, 4 January 1812.

3. For example, AMZ, 31 September 1803, column 815, in a report from Munich.

4. Der Sammler, 21 February 1811.

the latter needed enormous expenditure on costumes and "37" scene changes, Méhul's works achieved their success by simple, tasteful means. The general public was looking forward eagerly to the next Méhul opera.¹ Later, although more Méhul operas were given in Vienna than Cherubini operas, Cherubini was always referred to as the most important modern French composer. He endeared himself to the Viennese by his visit in 1805 but it is possible that the Viennese also preferred him for his melodic style..

Certainly, the current vogue for French composers cast a shadow over the activities of Viennese composers, who were compared unfavourably with their Parisian colleagues. Whereas whole pages of the AMZ were given over to reviews of French operas in Vienna, four lines were given in March 1803 to announce that:

Beethoven und Abt Vogler komponiern
jeder eine Oper für das Theater an der
Wien. Im Theater wird in der Charwoche
eine Kantate von Beethoven zu seinem
Benefiz gegeben.³

F. 1804

1804 saw probably the greatest number of French premières in Vienna of any year. More

1. AMZ, 24 August 1803, column 797.

2. Dent, p. 78.

3. AMZ, 30 March 1803, column 458.

smaller French operas reached Vienna this year by composers such as Tarchi, Berton, Boieldieu, Dumoncheau, Isouard, Quaisin and Devienne. Also, there were several new operas by Dalayrac and Grétry as well as a revival of the old opera Rose et Colas by Monsigny. Out of this large number of premières (twenty altogether, divided between the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnertheater) six received a total of four or fewer performances and so can be considered failures: Le grand deuil (Die tiefe Trauer) by Berton; Isouard's Le médecin Turc and Les confidences;² Une aventure (Das Hasardspiel) by Tarchi; and Dalayrac's La jeune prude (Die Spröde auf der Probe). Dumoncheau's L'officier Cosaque (Der Kosack-Offizier) and Boieldieu's Ma tante Aurore (Meine Tante Aurora) were operas which, though apparently unsuccessful on their first appearance, were later revived. Two of the most successful operas this year were: Raoul Barbe-bleue by Grétry, and Dalayrac's Léon ou le château de Monténéro (Das Schloss von Montenegro); the former was given 81 times.

In February 1804, the owner of the Theater an der Wien, Zitterbarth, frustrated at being so dependent on Schikaneder in matters of theatrical expertise, sold the theatre to the Bohemian nobleman, Baron Braun, industrialist and court banker, and already vice-director and lessee of the court theatres.¹ Rosenbaum was gloomy over this new

¹. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, pp. 66-67.

². These operas were performed in Vienna as Der türkische Arzt and Die Verwechslungen, respectively.

leadership of the three theatres and confided to his diary that Braun had achieved a monopoly and was sure to serve the public badly.¹

For the last two evenings of his regime, Zitterbarth chose two operas for charity benefit performances: Une folie (Die beyden Füchse) by Méhul, and Richard Coeur-de-lion (Richard Löwenherz) by Grétry. Zitterbarth had been spending his own personal wealth in maintaining the splendour of the gala-type performances characteristic of the Theater an der Wien. Summing up Zitterbarth's regime at that theatre, Anton Bauer writes:

Die Aufführungen waren gut, die Ausstattung überaus prächtig. Um dem Kärntnerthortheater Konkurrenz zu machen, wurden musikalische Stücke über Gebühr gepflegt und damit der Zweck des damals schönsten Theaters eigentlich verfehlt. Als Vorstadttheater wäre es doch berufen gewesen, ein wirkliches Volkstheater zu sein, und das war es eben nicht.²

During this important year for French opera in Vienna, ten new productions were given at the Kärntnerthortheater and eleven at the Theater an der Wien.

Braun's directorship of the Theater an der Wien began on 16 February with a performance of Salieri's Palmyra. Freiherr von Braun, the long-time competitor of the ageing Schikaneder, did not want to work with him, and Schikaneder was replaced by Josef Sonnleithner. Sonnleithner brought some pantomimes

¹. Rosenbaum, diary entry 12 February 1804, p. 118.

². Bauer, p. 68.

into the repertoire but was responsible during his period of leadership for only two real successes: a new version of Richard Coeur-de-Lion with additional music by Anton Fischer, and the opera Fidelio by Beethoven. Sonnleithner left the theatre at the end of August having had little impact, and Schikaneder returned. Like his predecessors, Braun cultivated opera and Singspiel, and still engaged in fierce competition with the court theatres. Opera and pieces which included singing amounted to two-thirds of the repertoire.¹ Music played an important part in many other productions : ballets, intermezzi, melodramas and spectacular pieces, which might include horses on the stage (soon to be limited by the police, however, because of accidents). In the autumn of 1804, seat prices were raised at the Theater an der Wien.

Some of the greatest successes of 1804 were old operas like Della Maria's L'Opéra-Comique, first performed in 1788, but from March of this year, there was a series of very new French operas at both theatres, some of them only four or five months old, which suggests that someone in Vienna had recently returned from Paris. Perhaps Baron Braun, who visited Paris in 1802 to purchase opera scores, had made a return journey (see p. 185).

An attempt at the Theater an der Wien to perform a grand opera by Méhul, Ariodant, failed: it was given three times and never revived, despite

¹ Bauer, p. 71.

musical additions for Vienna by Seyfried.

The failure in Vienna of Ariodant -- and the addition to Méhul's score of music by Seyfried -- are disappointing. Not having seen Seyfried's score, one is unable to make an informed judgement about the quality of his work, but one can suspect that some of the most unusual and daring aspects of Méhul's opera were altered. As Cherubini had dedicated Les deux journées to Méhul, so Méhul dedicated what is perhaps the best of all his operas to Cherubini. Ariodant has a very good romantic plot which deals with genuine human emotions and has consistency of style. The villain of the opera, Othon, is a tenor rather than the expected baritone. The opera had no long overture (in many ways the opera is curiously prophetic and experimental) and the prelude begins with a slow movement for four violoncellos, gradually building up to a climax on the chord of the dominant. The curtain then rises and Othon begins with spoken dialogue announcing that his fate is decided. A short and furious passage of diminished sevenths burst in from the orchestra and recurs throughout the opera as a sort of Leitmotif representing Othon's jealousy.¹ Both the overture and opening speech may have been altered for performance in Vienna. High tenor parts were often transposed. Seyfried often wrote new overtures to operas when the original was considered unsuitable, and there are instances --

1. Dent, p. 84.

for example in Dalayrac's Raoul, Sire de Créqui, performed in 1805 -- of opening spoken dialogue being transformed into recitative and chorus. The Viennese seem to have preferred operas to start with a chorus.

Whatever the nature of the alterations, audiences at the Theater an der Wien did not perceive the quality of Méhul's composition.

The first Berton opera produced in Vienna was Aline, in March 1804, which had been given in Paris only six months earlier; it received the gratifying number of twenty performances at the court theatres, and a revival in 1812. Berton's easy melodic grace which he adopted from Italian composers such as Sacchini and Paisiello, but which is today heard as a Mozartian feature,¹ appealed to the Austrians. But Boieldieu's first appearance in Vienna was a complete failure. Ma tante Aurore was dropped after two performances, having been found lacking in life and interest, and silly and sentimental despite its popularity in Paris. Perhaps most of the failure was due to the performance: two of the leading singers were very weak indeed with poor voices (Dem. Brohmann sang out of tune and lacked technique).²

L'officier Cosaque, by Dumoncheau and Gianella, performed in April at the court theatres as Der

1. "Henri-Montan Berton", The New Grove.

2. AMZ, 25 April 1804, column 504.

Kosacken Offizier, had first been seen in Paris at the comparatively minor Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin: few opéras-comiques given in Vienna had been produced anywhere other than the Opéra-Comique, or the Théâtre Feydeau. This opera had more success than the Boieldieu, being better performed and with a more attractive and simple plot (a historical episode from the life of Peter the First).¹ It was seen only four times though. Der türkische Arzt (Le médecin Turc), the first work by Isouard seen in Vienna, also received four performances, and was never revived. Isouard's Michel-Ange was seen for the first time in Vienna at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt this year and given three times.

Boieldieu's operas were slow to obtain recognition in Vienna. Béniowski ou les exilés de Kamtchatka was the first to enjoy moderate success - twelve performances from June 1804, but no revival. The story of this opera should already have been familiar to Viennese audiences, because it was based on a play by Kotzebue which had been seen in Vienna during the 1790s. At that time, the Beniowskys (Benjowskys) were still resident in Vienna, and the censor insisted that when the play was given, the family's name should not be used in the title.² Perhaps this also accounts for the opera's Viennese title of Die Verwiesenen in 1804. Audiences in the Austrian capital found the

¹. AMZ, 25 April 1804, column 504.

². Blümml and Gugitz, Alt-Wiener Thespiskarren, pp. 257-258.

music of this opera, especially the choruses, energetic and clever, and the characterisation, good, especially that of the Count.¹ Ironically enough, the stronger criticism was for the dénouement of the plot which the AMZ at least did not say had been taken from a German source, Kotzebue.² As well as many new French operas, other sources of excitement for Viennese music-lovers during the summer of 1804 were performances given by the famous castrato Crescentini in Italian operas. He was regularly showered with flowers and gifts on the stage,³ having not appeared in Vienna for seven years.⁴

Boieldieu's success in Vienna was more firmly established with Le calife de Bagdad (Der Kalif von Bagdad), which opened at the Theater an der Wien on 10 July. It was described as:

Eine allerliebste Operette, mit einer sehr angenehmen Musik.⁵

The oriental plot appealed to Viennese audiences who were used to Turkish music and Turkish libretti. And the opera was helped in its success by a new

¹. AMZ, 8 August 1804, columns 759-760.

². See AMZ, 8 August 1804, column 759-760.

³. For example, after a performance of Amarodo's Pygmalion in July 1804 - AMZ, 8 August 1804, column 760.

⁴. His first appearance was in Zingarelli's Giulietta e Romeo on 28 April, when he was very warmly received. AMZ, 9 May 1804, column 543-544.

⁵. AMZ, 8 August 1806, column 762.

tenor, Hr. Krebner, at the Theater an der Wien, who combined a nice pure voice with sufficient technique and expressive acting.¹ The opera received six performances and was revived at the court theatres a year later.

Later in July, another Isouard opera, Les confidences (Die Verwechslungen), failed at the court theatres, being criticised mainly for the poor translation, the metre of which did not fit the music; and for an over-complicated plot. But it was conceded that the ensembles were excellent, especially the final canon.² Rose et Colas which opened on 26 July managed only two performances. But two Grétry operas in August and October brought larger audiences to the Theater an der Wien: Le caravane du Caire and Raoul Barbe-bleue both received good notices, the success of the latter being especially striking as it followed two weeks after the failure of a new Italian opera at the court theatres: I Fuorusciti by Paer.³

Raoul Barbe-bleue was first given in Paris in February 1789, which made it quite old: this may have been why Anton Fischer wrote new wind parts.⁴ The music was not particularly appealing to Viennese

1. AMZ, 8 August 1804, column 762.

2. AMZ, 8 August 1804, column 761.

3. AMZ, 5 September 1804, columns 822-823.

4. See also pp. 412, 480 ff.

audiences: the AMZ wrote that "Die Musik eben keine besonderen Verdienste hat": in its opinion the overture, though good, did not fit the opera, but the finale of the second act was fine and there were several other pleasing moments. On the other hand, La Mercure de France had written after the Paris première in 1789:

La musique a fait un plaisir général. Des motifs heureux & pleins de mélodie y tranchent avec des morceaux de la plus vigoureuse expression... L'orchestre offre dans les accompagnemens, des intentions dramatiques très-savantes, & qui produisent un grand effet.¹

But the sets and costumes for the Viennese production of Raoul are reported to have been splendid, and the heroine, Marie, played by Dem. Eigensatz, aroused everyone's admiration. This opera was revived several times in Vienna, but Eigensatz was remembered as having been the best Marie even though, here, her singing was criticised for its poor intonation and insecurity, and she was told she needed more voice-instruction. But the overall impact of the opera was great "schanderhaft", "schrecklich", "erschütternd" and "furchtbar" were some of the words used to describe the story, which was received with a mixture of delight and horror.² The opera was to receive the compliment of a delightful Viennese parody, Die Braut in der Klemme.³

¹ La Mercure de France, 14 March 1789, pp. 93-99. Here, p. 99.

² AMZ, 5 September 1804, column 823.

³ See below, pp. 553 - 559.

But Blaubart had formed only the second half of the evening's programme, which began with an opera Die Scheidewand by Fischer, reported to contain many reminiscences of modern French composers.¹ The AMZ does not elaborate on the nature of these similarities.

Tarchi's Une aventure (Das Hasardspiel) at the Theater an der Wien in October was a complete failure, despite the success of his first opera, but Quaisin's Salomons Urtheil was given 76 times, plus several revivals from 27 October 1804. Apart from an opera by Devienne, the rest of the year was taken up with revivals or new productions of Dalayrac operas: Les deux petits Savoyards and Une heure de mariage were fairly popular, but Le château de Montenégro and La jeune prude failed, largely because of their plots: the former, a rescue opera, was considered improbable, and although the prison trio was held to be very fine, the rest was unmemorable and average and the overture aroused unfulfilled expectations.² The second opera, La jeune prude (Die Spröde auf der Probe) had bored the audience who said the opera lacked a proper denouement.³

In his diary, Rosenbaum noted complaints about rising prices⁴ as inflation tightened its grip on

¹. AMZ, 5 September 1804, column 823.

². AMZ, 13 February 1805, column 319.

³. AMZ, 13 February 1805, column 319.

⁴. Rosenbaum, diary entry, 7 July 1805 p. 123.

Vienna in 1804. In July there were bread riots in the streets of Vienna and soldiers had to intervene to restore the peace.¹

G. 1805: Cherubini in Vienna; French Occupation of the City

The situation in Vienna deteriorated as the year progressed and in November 1805 the imperial family left. On 13 November, the French arrived at the gates of Vienna.

The theatres continued to play as they had been instructed, and the premières of ten French operas were seen during the course of the year. For the first time, works by Konradin Kreutzer, Peter von Winter, Spontini and Plantade were seen on Viennese stages. But eight of the operas premièred this year were never revived and did not last long, and the only works which could be called successes were Devienne's Les comédiens ambulants (Die wandernden Komödianten), in January,² Dalayrac's Alexis in September, and the Spontini Milton, also in September. The revival of Les deux avares at the Theater an der Wien in January, with additional music by Anton Fischer, was generally enjoyed and had a good run, but a report from Vienna dated 28 January which appeared in the AMZ complained about the tedious music currently being given in the Austrian capital.³ After a string of French operas had

¹ Rosenbaum, diary entry, 8 July 1805, p. 24.

² AMZ, 26 February 1805, column 350.

³ AMZ, 13 February 1805, column 319.

failed at the Theater an der Wien in the first months of 1805, the court theatres decided to revive Raoul, Herr von Crequi, by Dalayrac, already performed in Vienna at the Leopoldstadt during the 1790s.

The AMZ wrote scathingly:

Selbst unser Hoftheater nimmt wieder zu alten französischen Opern eine Zuflucht. So wurde vor kurzem d'Alleyracs Raoul von Crequi mit einigen eingelegten Stücken des Kapellmeisters Weber aufgeführt... Die Oper erhielt wenig Beyfall.¹

The favourite number of the opera was the drinking song. Weinmüller, the gaoler (this became the main part in Vienna), sang superbly but acted badly.

Two operas by Gaveaux were performed in this year. 1805 also saw the première of Beethoven's Fidelio, but Gaveaux's Léonore were never seen in Vienna. Both Gaveaux operas failed at the Theater an der Wien. Avis aux femmes (So bessert man die Männer) was well played by the orchestra and contained some pleasing moments, but the singing was reported to have been hopeless, and "Auch die französische Musik Gaveaux's ist sehr mittelmässig."² This opera was first performed in Paris in October 1804 but the AMZ journalist evidently thought it was an old work which had been resurrected:

Wie Spiessens alter Ueberall und Nirgens erstehen bey uns die vergessenen alten Operetten wieder aus ihren Gräbern und

¹. AMZ, 26 June 1805, column 611.

². AMZ, 26 June 1805, column 629.

werden so aus einer gewissen Ehrfurcht
noch geschätzt.¹

Better performed at the Theater an der Wien was Dalayrac's Alexis in September 1805.² In the operas given there later in the year it was the works themselves which were blamed for failures, not the performance. Plantade's Palma, given in September, had very ordinary music,³ and Bruni's Le Major Palmer (Hauptmann Palmer) was criticised on three counts: firstly the gruesome plot which was not even interesting; secondly the "tiredness" and lack of vitality of the whole opera; but most of all the style of the music itself:

aber überall und besonders in den Arien
von echt altfranzösischem⁴ Schlage, fehlt
Erfindung und Kunstwerth.

More admired was the Spontini opera, Milton, especially its ensembles like the quintet and the scene where the blind Milton dictates his poem about the origin of love in Paradise.⁵

Another important musical event of 1805 was the visit to Vienna of Cherubini prompted by the Cherubini season of 1802-1803. There had been speculation in the Viennese press that he would arrive before 1805 (see pp.188-189). It was apparently the Theater an der Wien which took the initiative of

¹. AMZ, 24 July 1805, column 689.

². AMZ, 23 October 1805, column 60.

³. AMZ, 23 October 1805, column 60.

⁴. AMZ, 23 October 1805, column 60.

⁵. AMZ, 23 October 1805, column 59-60.

appointing him and he was listed as one of their Compositeurs in the theatre almanac of 1803.¹

During his stay in Vienna he was commissioned to write an opera for the court theatres, and Faniska, the result of this commission was performed there on 25 February 1806. He was enthusiastically received by the court and by leading musical figures, among them Haydn and Beethoven.²

One writer states that Cherubini, who had been ignored by the official government during the consulate (whereas Méhul, Gossec and Grétry were decorated with national orders), completed his plans for a trip to Vienna after Napoleon had assumed the throne in May 1804.³ Napoleon preferred music by Italian composers like Paisiello and is reported to have told Cherubini that his music had too much accompaniment and was too noisy.

Napoleon's campaign ironically took him to Austria at the same time as the composer. The Duke of Bassane, Napoleon's aide, and Crescentini, informed Napoleon of Cherubini's presence in Vienna and reproached him for not fostering such talent in France. Cherubini was assigned the direction of the small concerts at Vienna and Schönbrunn and asked to keep the dynamics very low.⁴

¹ Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, p. 153.

² Basil Deane, Cherubini (London, 1965), p. 16.

³ Margery Stomme Selden, "Napoleon and Cherubini", JAMS vii (1955), pp. 111-112.

⁴ Selden, p. 112.

When Napoleon left Vienna in December 1805, he casually mentioned that Cherubini should not stay in Austria long, but soon return to Paris with him. The emperor extended no definite offer and Cherubini made it plain that he intended to fulfil his engagement to Vienna. As a result, Paer was hastily appointed as head of the emperor's musical staff. The possibility that Cherubini found his visit to Vienna difficult in some respects, and the suggestions he made about the rearrangement of the orchestra of the Hoftheater and the new alterations he made to his opera Lodoiska for performance in Vienna, are discussed below (see pp. 507-515).

Faniska, the opera specially commissioned by Vienna, was written by Cherubini to Italian words on a plot taken from Les mines de Pologne, a melodrama by Guilbert de Pixérécourt. It was first performed at the Kärntnerthortheater on 25 February 1806. The full score of the opera was published in Paris around 1845 with only Italian words.¹

In Vienna, Faniska was performed as a Singspiel in German translation.² A modern writer comments:

Although the work was applauded at its first performance, and praised by Haydn and Beethoven, it was a succès d'estime.

Yet again, Cherubini had set to music an impossible hotch-potch, with all the faults and none of the merits of Lodoiska.

¹. Dent, p. 90.

². Cherubini could not set the German directly.

³. Deane, p. 16.



*Gott sey Dank, ich habe sie
gerettet !*

Scene from Cherubini's opera Faniska

" Die Scene ist aus dem 2ten Acte genommen. Das Theater stellt eine unterirdische Höhle vor. Vor einem Felsen ist ein Jüngling in Ketten angeschlossen, auf dem Erdboden sieht man ein Gitter, in welchem der Graf mit seinen Leuten eingeschlossen ist. In dem Aufzuge sitzt Faniska mit ihrem Sohne, und wird hinaufgezogen -- über den Steigbaum klettert ihr Gatte hinauf. Im hintergrunde seitwärts kniet Moska an einen Stock angebunden, faltet die Hände gegen Himmel, und ruft: 'Gott sey Dank, ich habe sie gerettet' ". Engraving 2 from WTA auf das Jahr 1807.

According to another writer, Cherubini in this opera was evidently determined to take advantage of the excellent Viennese orchestra. He also used many devices intended simply to show off a singer's voice in a dignified style.¹ Faniska, however, demands large voices and singers with a lot of stamina: like Médée, the opera is taxing to sing and many of the numbers strike one as being too long.

One contemporary report called Faniska a "Seitenstück" to Les deux journées and added that it nicely satisfied the public's demand for spectacle. The dialogue was held to be poor and the second and third acts were improbable. The music was not as warm as that of Les deux journées, though it was undeniably a great opera.²

The AMZ admired some dramatic parts of the plot, but commented that it "zwar keinen ausgezeichneten dichterischen Werth hat". The AMZ was more complimentary about the music:

Die Musik ist überall, wo sie gar nicht zu künstlich ist, vollkommen ihres grossen Meisters würdig; tief, kräftig, feurig und charakteristisch, mit allen harmonischen Hilfsmitteln, zuweilen auch wohl allzu-reichlich, unterstützt.³

The opera was performed by a very strong cast and excellent sets though the general effect was uneven. On the first night, Cherubini was received with enthusiastic applause.

¹. Dent, p. 92.

². Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde, ed. Friedrich Linde, ix, 1806, p. 109.

³. AMZ, 12 March 1806, columns, 376-377.

In 10 years' time the AMZ commented that the opera was old-fashioned, for the age of rescue operas was over and the libretto was weak.¹

H. 1806-1808: Successes and failures with French Opera

Five days before the new year of 1806 the Peace of Pressburg was signed and Austria lost its Italian provinces and Tyrol. 1806 opened with the French still in residence in Vienna. It was another troubled year, particularly for the Theater an der Wien, which experienced severe financial troubles from August onwards. The theatre was ordered to stay open because of the danger of leaving the difficult hours of the evening without wholesome entertainment for members of the public (see p.119). On 25 October the Gesellschaft der Cavaliere was formed to run the Theater an der Wien.

The Viennese correspondent for the AMZ apologised to his readers in January 1806 for the scarcity of his letters during the previous year, but announced that he at last had something to report, circumstances in Vienna had improved so that he would now be able to send in reports more regularly. November 1805, with the arrival of the French in Vienna, had scarcely been the most propitious time for the performance of new works, but the most notable musical event of

¹. AMZ, 28 August 1816, column 600.

that month had been the première of Fidelio which had come only a week after the beginning of the French occupation. According to this paper, the opera had been "sehr kalt aufgenommen", and a considerable disappointment to the audience of the Theater an der Wien, who had expected something new and noble; in the reviewer's opinion, the choruses were bad; the text repeated endlessly; and the music was too loud and hectic; the prisoners' chorus was not effective.¹ The opera was given only three times, fewer performances even than some of the failed Isouard operas given in Vienna that year.

Cherubini saw Fidelio during his stay in Vienna and is reported to have recommended that Beethoven undertake further study of writing for the voice; he ordered a copy of the textbook used at the Paris Conservatoire for the Austrian composer.²

In general, French opera came in for less criticism than Italian opera at this time, but a fierce and bitter article appeared in the Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde edited by Linde in 1806. Perhaps some sort of angry comment was to be expected in view of all the French operas which had failed (in admittedly adverse circumstances) the previous year, but which, nevertheless had been lavishly produced. The Monatschrift wrote:

¹. AMZ, 8 January 1806, column 236-238.

². Anton Felix Schindler, Beethoven as I knew him, ed. Donald W. Macardle, trans. Constance S. Jelly (London, 1966), p. 133.

Der grösste Theil neuer Produkte sind mittelmässige Uebersetzungen mit all den Fehlern, mit all den naturellen Eigenthümlichkeiten ausländischer Dichter. Wer sich zu schwach erkennt, etwas Neues, Originäles, zu schaffen, wer menschliche Leidenschaften, Charakterzeichnung, Theaterwirkung nicht hinlänglich studiert hat, der nimmt ein französisch Buch in die Hand und übersetzt. So wurde unser arme Vaterland mit fremden Kunstwerken überschwemmt, und Bequemlichkeit, Mangel an Talent, zum Theil auch ein zurückschreckendes, zweckwidriges Benehmen der Direktoren unterstützen diese Ueberschwemmungen.¹

All the plots in these French works, he continued, were the same, there was no character drawing, and the only concern was for development of the storyline. The characters of French comedy were all too painfully predictable -- even Le trésor supposé and La folie are cited as stereotypes of this kind. The writer felt that these simplistic works and the extravagant expense which they necessitated were having harmful effects on the taste of the general public:

„Ihre Sorgfalt ist nur auf die Verwicklung gerichtet. Wenn der Plan unabsehbar verworren ist, wenn er überraschende Situationen kunstvoll motivirt enthält; mehr fordert sie nicht ... alte Onkel, oder Vormund, der geprellt wird; ein Liebhaber, der sich dem Empfindungsgeiste des Bedienten überlässt; ein Gaenschen von Fräulein, die sich von Kammermädchen leiten lässt, voilà tous leurs caractères... Da ist keine ausführliche Charakterzeichnung, keine moralische Tendenz, kein einfacher, natürlicher, Raisonement und Mahlerey gestaltender Plan.“²

¹ Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde, vii, 1806, pp. 6-10.

² Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde, vii, 1806, pp. 6-10.

That might have been a minority view: the editor added a short comment to say that he disagreed with these sentiments. Most of the premières of French operas which took place in Vienna in 1806 came in the second part of the year, despite the financial troubles. Herr Ehlers, a tenor singer from Weimar, engaged in January, was a distinct asset to the court theatres. He was to become one of the most popular interpreters of French opera in Vienna because he was a lively and talented actor as well as a pleasing singer. His first appearance in a French opera in Vienna came on 17 January in Isouard's

Das Singspiel. The AMZ commented:

Die Musik ist durchaus lebhaft und angenehm, manchmal auch geistreich. Hr. Ehlers, vordem in Weimar, spielte die Rolle des Bedienten mit vieler Gewandheit. Er hat eine angenehme, wenn gleich nicht sehr ausgebildete, noch viel umfassende Stimme.¹

This one-act Isouard opera received 51 performances. Less successful was the grand opera by Grétry Les mariages samnites, which had first been given in Paris back in 1776. The tenor, Herr Rokel, was inexperienced and sang out of tune, but the choruses and a duet in the third act were especially successful, as was the staging:

das Uebrige is grösstentheils zu loben. Die Oper wurde im Theater an der Wien mit ganz ungemeiner Pracht gegeben. Die Dekorationen sind vortrefflich, besonders im zweyten Akte in Hain vor dem Tempel, und im

1. AMZ, 19 February 1806, column 328-329.

dritten ein Amphitheater zwey Stockwerke hoch, in welchem sich nach und nach alle Plätze mit Menschen füllten. Sowol in dieser Scene, also wo die Samniter zu Streit ausziehen, waren mehrere hundert Menschen auf dem Theater zu sehen.¹

With extravagance of this kind it was hardly surprising that the Theater an der Wien soon experienced financial difficulties.

Some resentment and criticism towards the French composers can be detected in newspapers which commented on theatre in the Austrian capital: not only the AMZ, published in Leipzig, but also the Wiener Theaterzeitung, founded in 1806 in Vienna.

Probably intentionally, revivals and premières of French operas alternated strictly between the Kärntnerthortheater and the Theater an der Wien for the rest of the year, though there was a long break between March and July when no new French works were given; a letter published in the AMZ in October, looking over the summer's theatrical events, reported gloomily:

Bis jetzt liegt Opernwesen in tiefer Lethargie. Seit zwey Monaten hatten wir auf dem Hoftheater eine einzige Neuigkeit die denn auch noch leicht entbehrt werden könnte.²

The work to which this refers, Berton's Le vaisseau amiral, had appeared on 4 July. The audience criticised its sloppy verse writing: "die Verse verdienen den meisten Tadel, denn ihnen fehlt

1. AMZ, April 1806, columns 426-427.

2. AMZ, 29 October 1806, columns 74-75.

Richtigkeit und Wohllaut"; the music was only average, but the clever way in which navy life was portrayed was admired, and the opera was redeemed by the singer Ehlers's ability to make the insignificant significant. It enjoyed a moderate success with eleven performances.¹

Dalayrac's Nina, which had first been seen sixteen years earlier at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, and an der Wieden in 1801, was found by the Theaterzeitung to be absurd and distasteful: the directorate who had chosen the opera for production could only be thanked in so far as they gave the public the opportunity to see the talents of the leading lady, Madame Røose, in their fullest light. An artist of international renown, Røose received the compliments of an Impromptu written about her by Perinet and quoted at the end of the notice. There may be dramatic interest in this opera, says the critic grimly, but it is the drama of a sickroom and hardly the stuff operas are made of:

Ein Mädchen, die aus Liebe verrückt ist,
und durch das Wiedersehen ihres Geliebten
zurecht gebracht wird, -- welch ein Interesse
kann diese Hauptperson eines Stückes hervor-
bringen?²

Nevertheless, it was performed eighteen times until 1812. Gulistan, also by Dalayrac reached 40

1. TZ, 20 July 1806, p. 52.

2. TZ, 20 July 1806, pp. 56-59, here p. 56.

performances, being first seen at the Kärntnerthor-theater on 2 August 1806. The only remarks we have about the singers are that Herr Möglich, who sang the part of the stranger in February, was not suited to the part, and the whole opera was improved by the acting of Ehlers. The favourite musical number with the public was a bass aria by Weigl which had been added, and was superbly sung by Weinmüller.

The Theaterzeitung, or perhaps the Theater an der Wien, were slightly dishonest in announcing the revival of Euphrosine in 1806 as a première; it will be remembered that this opera, under the title Die Milzsüchtige, had been seen at the Theater auf der Wieden in 1795.¹ Now, the greater familiarity of Méhul, and probably the hope of attracting a larger audience, led them to claim that it was a first performance. Die Theaterzeitung told the story at some length and then went on to praise the masterly and poetic translation by Gieseke and the splendid sets where, however, there was some historical inconsistency: "nur scheinen mir die Suffiten aus dem neuern Zeitalter mit dem Übrigen aus den frühern Zeiten unvereinbar zu seyn. Auch die alten schmützigten eckelhaften Stühle in einem Gemache voll Pracht und Schönheit verdienen Rüge."²

1. See p. 165. The translation used in 1806 was almost certainly the one made by Gieseke for the 1795 production.

2. TZ, 10 August 1806, p. 88-89.

As for the music, it was "äusserst schön und angenehm"; especially successful were the first finale, and the pretty aria with choir in the third act: "Auf unsers Lebens Wegen".¹

Yet again the performance was criticised as patchy: Euphrosine (Madame Müller) could not act, and played the title part as a coquette. Mademoiselle Marconi as the Countess of Arles neither acted nor sang nicely, and Herr Demmer as Count Coradin and Herr Mayer as Alibur were also blamed. Dlle Pfeiffer, continued the critic, could not declaim German properly.

Viennese audiences had seen other modern French operas based on tales of mediaeval chivalry -- particularly Grétry's two works Richard-Coeur-de Lion and Raoul Barbe-bleue. The critic for Die Theaterzeitung noticed that there were some historical errors about the set at the Theater an der Wien in 1806.

Spontini's one-act opéra-comique Julie was reviewed by the Theaterzeitung by Christiani (Bäuerle) who found both the music and plot to be dull, although it was performed thirteen times.²

1. TZ, 10 August 1806, column 88.

2. Curiously, Julie received a review in the Theaterzeitung a full month before the date of the première given by Hadamowsky. One concludes that the information given by Hadamowsky must be wrong.

Ein sehr gewöhnlicher, alltäglicher
höchst abgenützter Komödienstoff wie er in
tausend Lust-und-Schau-Trauer-und Singspielen
gemisshandelt und gebraucht worden ist. Nun
hat die Musik auch weder angenehme noch neue
Stellen und verliert sich in Unbedeutend-
heiten. Das Spiel und der Gesang des Herrn
Ehlers als Thaldorf, und Herrn Weinmüller
als Florback, hatte indessen doch sein längst
bewährtes Verdienst.¹

We also learn that the overture was almost unrecog-
nisable because of the out-of-tune and out-of-time
wind instruments and the general lack of precision.²
The opera was not revived after its first production.

Another opera which was blamed for its plot,
and which was a bad failure, was the last French
première of 1806, Méhul's Les deux aveugles (Die zwei Blinden), but
according to the Theaterzeitung the opera had also
failed in Paris, nine months earlier. In spite of
the good music by Méhul, the subject was tasteless
and the last scene made a very poor ending:³ "Traurige
Gebrechen können unmöglich ein glücklicher Stoff zu
einem belustigenden Kunstwerke werden, das Stück wurde
trotz Méhuls Musik ausgepocht."⁴

Several gala productions of modern French operas
in 1811 show the respect which opéra-comique was enjoy-
ing at this time. Also in 1806 was the first Catel

1. TZ, 28 August 1806, p. 117.

2. AMZ, 29 October 1806, column 75.

3. TZ, 1806, no. 16, p. 50.

4. TZ, no. 7, p. 112.

opera seen in Vienna. Sémiramis was based on Voltaire.. It was a grand opera and therefore received its Paris première--in 1802 -- at the Opéra (not at the Théâtre Feydeau, the home of opéra-comique where most of the French operas seen in Vienna had their première). It received an unusually long notice in the Theaterzeitung, which reviewed the opera in much greater detail than normal -- a sign that the opera was thought to be important. Dem. Müller was criticised for wearing too much jewelry, which, for the role of Azéma (a simpler girl than Sémiramis) was inappropriate. Some of the singers overplayed their parts, and the ballet was unimaginative. Herr Mayer, as Assar, seemed unable to adapt from his usual role as villain, and thereby rendered some tender parts unconvincing. The ballets were too noisy and were spoilt by poor stage behaviour, but Madame Milder gave the part of Sémiramis herself with majesty, and fine acting and singing. It was an unusually scholarly and serious review. Referring to Hamlet and to Lessing, the critic considered the appearance on stage of a ghost to be undramatic. It was rare that Viennese critics latched on to some specific convention; Castelli was criticised for bringing to the German stage a piece in which Lessing's dramatic principles went unheeded. The translation was found to be inadequate, and careless in some respects:

Die Uebersetzung des Herrn Castelli wäre bey etwas mehr Feile zu loben, sie enthält nicht gar so viele, ganz in Wasser zerfliessende Verse, wie wir sie leider beständig lesen. Mehrere Verse sind ihm gelungen, und haben Energie des Ausdrucks, sein unglücklichster ist wohl dieser:

die mir gebühren
 Als Babels Königin, d'rum merkt
 euch diess
 Und kennt dadurch in mir Semiramis
 diess ist um so unverzeihlicher, da mit
 einer halben Sekunde Nachdenken, er ihn
 verbessern, und dadurch die Gemeinheit,
 wodurch dieser Vers bis zur Travestie
 herabsinkt, -- hätte ersparen können.¹

The critic also commented that the score was sometimes too full, sometimes too sparse. But on the whole, the impression was favourable, for the production contained many talented people, and the music and decorations gave pleasure.

The critic went on to comment interestingly about the success of producing in Vienna operas in translation which had already been tested on the stage and were relatively certain of success. The Viennese theatres only had the expense of remunerating the translator, and the works had good and sometimes witty texts. Also, they perhaps served to instruct native artists.²

Of the new operas given in 1806, only two, Gulistan and Sémiramis, were ever revived. On 31 December 1806, Schikaneder finally broke with

1. TZ, 15 October 1806, p. 38.

2. TZ, 15 October 1806, pp. 37-40.

the theatre his imagination had created. And on the same day Braun also left. One authority has criticised Braun's directorship of the Theater an der Wien as unsatisfactory because it made no progress as a folk theatre;¹ in other regards, however, Braun's leadership was very important for bringing modern French operas before the public and expanding the Theatre's repertoire.

When Baron Braun left the Theater an der Wien, he chose Euphrosine for his final farewell performance, showing his personal admiration for works of the modern French school.²

On New Years Day 1807, the consortium of noblemen took over. Count Lobkowitz was in charge of opera. On New Year's Day the new direction opened with Alamar der Maure with music by Seyfried; it used personnel from the three theatres. Under the new regime, spoken drama received more emphasis at all three theatres, and Count Nikolaus Esterhazy petitioned the emperor to allow classical works to be censored more mildly, to allow the performance of some of the great German and foreign classics.³

In particular, strong requests were submitted for the performance of Macbeth, Fiesko and King Lear.

1. Bauer, p. 77.

2. Braun was responsible, on at least one occasion, for travelling to Paris to purchase French scores (see p.185) for the Theater an der Wien.

3. Bauer, p. 80.

Results were not seen for eighteen months, but in July 1808 King Lear was performed and in March 1809, Götz von Berlichingen. Shakespear's Julius Caesar opened in August 1811, Goethe's Mahomet in April 1812, Schiller's Macbeth in May 1812, Goethe's Romeo and Julia in July 1813 and finally, in December 1813, Schiller's Fiesko. All these were performed at the Theater an der Wien.¹

There was a considerable degree of alteration made to these works. Franz Grüner, the actor, adapted Götz von Berlichingen for performance in Vienna. Schreyvogel lamented his alterations and commented that the adaptation of classics for Vienna should be given to more responsible people.² For a short time during the French occupation of 1809, censorship laws were relaxed by the French administration and some classics were seen in their original form.³

Perhaps as part of this campaign, several articles were published in Viennese papers about the importance to the theatre of the until now forbidden classics: the Theaterzeitung in 1807 talked about the influence and impact of Shakespeare ; and Schreyvogel in Das Sonntagsblatt compared Austria, where the classics were barely known, with France, where great masterpieces of the past were a regular part of the repertoire:

1. Bauer, p. 80.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 3 April 1809, p. 305.

3. Schlientz, pp. 232-236.

Kein Volk kann eine gute Schaubühne haben, bey dem die grössten Meisterwerke von derselben verbannt werden, sobald sie über ein Jahrzehnt alt sind.¹

Schreyvogel attributed the large number of French works being performed in Vienna both to the lack of good German works, and the failure to perform the classics. The Viennese public seemed to prefer a steady supply of new works to the production of older pieces not recognised as masterpieces.

There had been a change of taste in Vienna -- as Die Theaterzeitung of 10 November 1807 announced:

Deswegen ist die Musik in der Oper nicht die Hauptsache -- sie darf aber auch nicht Nebensache seyn, Poesie und Musik sollen sich in ihr wechselseitig ergänzen und erheben.²

The greater importance given to the libretti of French operas was -- for the time being-- satisfying the needs of the Viennese audience for a more literary opera.

Italian operas were still produced at court at the rate of between three and nine a season (an average of five) between August 1802 and July 1808.³ It is curious therefore, that from at least August 1805, no troupe of Italian singers was actually employed by the court theatres.⁴ Even during the 1809-1810

1. Das Sonntagsblatt, 7 June 1807, p. 302.

2. TZ, 10 November 1807, p. 90.

3. Hoftheatertaschenbücher for the years 1804-1809.

4. Hoftheatertaschenbuch, 1807, pp. 9-13. Members of the German acting company, the German opera company and the ballet company are listed, but there is no mention of an Italian opera company. In her study of the Viennese theatres during the year 1809, Schlientz concludes that during that year, there was no Italian opera company at court. Schlientz, p. 91.

season, posters produced to advertise Italian operas performed in Vienna during the summer of that year give no indication that the operas were given by members of a court Italian opera company. It seems likely that for at least five years -- possibly longer -- the Italian opera company was dismissed and performances were given by Italian singers resident in Vienna and brought together for special performances. It seems that by 1812, the Italian opera company was once more established at court for Castelli describes how, in 1812, Gaetano Rossi was appointed by Lobkowitz as its director.¹

Repertoire lists in the Hoftheateraschenbücher covering the seasons 1 August 1802 to 30 July 1808, show that in all these years, considerably more German than Italian operas were performed at the court theatres and that in every season but one (August 1804 to July 1805) the number of new French operas exceeded the number of new Italian operas. (In the exceptional year -- August 1804 to July 1805 -- nine Italian and eight French operas were produced.) The number of French operas being performed in Vienna during these years was raised by those being produced also at the Theater an der Wien.

Italian opera was now considerably less important to the Viennese theatres and it is remarkable

1. Castelli, I, p. 202.

that for several years the Italian court opera company was released.¹

Perhaps as a part of the noblemen's concern with the classics, 1807 saw two revivals of Gluck operas on the Viennese stage, with more following in 1808. Apart from those, there were premières of operas by Berton, Méhul, Gluck and Dalayrac. The Berton opera, Délia et Verdikan, was given only seven times and criticised for the bad acting and improbable plot:

Wir haben Opern aus dem Französischen, die ein Schatz für die deutsche Bühne genannt werden können, wir haben auch Lustspiele übersetzt, die uns manche frohe und heitere Minute verschafften. Diese Oper gehört nicht unter jene, denn selbst die Musik, die gewöhnlich einem solchen Mischmasch zum Laufpass dienen muss, hat wenig vorzügliches.²

Very unusually the Méhul opera, Gabrielle d'Estrées, retained its French title. The portrayal of the King aroused misgivings in Vienna³ (see p. 146). The opera was given seven times.

Les deux nuits, by Dalayrac, was given 28 times at the Theater an der Wien, and subsequently at all main Viennese theatres, which was unusual. The music, according to the Theaterzeitung, was not particularly original but:

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1. During the French occupation of 1809, French and German opera were temporarily pushed aside again due to Napoleon's preference for Italian opera.
 2. TZ, 8 February 1807, pp. 89-90.
 3. TZ, 20 July 1807, p. 28.

durch die Originalität des Inhalts und durch die Niedlichkeit der Charaktere machte dieses Stück ein ausserordentliches Glück.¹

Between 1807 and 1808, gloom filled the Hofburg: state bankruptcies and the end of the monarchy were predicted. But the winter season 1807 to 1808 was one of the most brilliant remembered. Perhaps one of the reasons was that Germaine de Staël descended on Vienna with her enormous personality and strong feelings against Napoleon.²

By December 1808, Austria was led to believe that a campaign against Napoleon would now be successful.

In the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, where pleasure was usually the order of the day, patriotic songs by Perinet were sung and the audience joined in clapping.³ Castelli, Reichardt and Rosenbaum record the sense of excitement and national pride felt at this time.⁴ This phase of the war however, was to end in crushing defeat for Austria and a second invasion by the enemy in May 1809.

As part of the wedding celebrations of Franz and Maria Ludovica, Gluck's Armide was given on 8 January 1808. Rosenbaum attended the performance at the Theater an der Wien and describes it in the following way:

1. TZ, 9 July 1807, p. 73.

2. Musulin, p. 64-65.

3. Schlientz, p. X.

4. Castelli, I, p. 152; Reichardt, I, p. 299; Rosenbaum, diary entries 1808-1809.

Armida, opera in 4 acts by Gluck. Grand free spectacle at the Theater an der Wien... The lighted hall filled with beautifully dressed people (some of them lavishly attired) was a magnificent sight. -- The Court descended from the carriages at the Wien, the courtyard was decorated with orange and lemon trees and covered by an awning, green cloth was stretched over the floor and the stairs, the whole was sumptuously lighted. At about 6:30 the Emperor, Empress, the mother, Louise, Albert, etc., appeared in the box prepared for them. There was universal applause, cries of vivat rang out and two groups of trumpets and drums blared forth...¹

Rosenbaum concluded, however, that the opera, was not successful.

When revived at the court theatres in April, the opera received 8 performances. Dalayrac's Les deux mots was revived this year at the court theatres, and given sixteen times, described as a clever opera spoilt by poor direction.² Later in March Isouard's opera Alle fürchten sich, this time at the Theater an der Wien, was also criticised for a poor performance:

wahr, dass sie einige Fehler hat, doch ist es bey weitem nicht die Erbärmlichkeit, die sie daraus machen.³

On 5 May, an opera by Anton Fischer, Das Milchmädchen von Bercy, a Singspiel in two acts, opened at the Kärntnerthortheater. It was set to a text by Treitschke based on a French model: La laitrière de Bercy, by Charles-August de Bassompierre. It ran for eight performances until 1 June 1808.

1. Rosenbaum, diary entry 9 January 1808, Radant, p. 140.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 1808, no. 61, p. 205.

3. Das Sonntagsblatt, 10 April 1808, no. 78, p. 222.

On 11 May, J. C. Vogel's Démophon opened at the Theater an der Wien. Born in Nuremberg in 1756, Vogel, a horn player, was active in France. His first opera, La toison d'or, had excited the admiration of Gluck, and Vogel has been called the most promising composer of his generation, along with Cherubini. J. C. Vogel had begun work on Démophon before Cherubini began his opera of the same name, but indolence or possibly dissipation delayed its completion and Cherubini's work was performed first on 5 December 1788. By the time of the première of J. C. Vogel's Démophon at the Paris Opéra on 22 September 1789, Vogel had been dead for more than a year.¹ His musical style owed much to Gluck and Salieri: nevertheless, Démophon was a curious choice for performance in Vienna: it was a relatively old work, a French grand opera, usually unpopular in Vienna, and it was written by an almost unknown Frenchman. Musical additions to Vogel's score were added for the Viennese production by J. von Seyfried.

Dalayrac's Marschall Catinat at the Theater an der Wien in July had, according to the Sonntagsblatt, too many French anecdotes to be completely successful on the Austrian stage:

1. "J. C. Vogel", The New Grove.

Es ist möglich dass dieses kleine Stück in Frankreich durch Anspielungen auf bekannte Anekdoten, oder durch den Geist des Publicums gehoben, einigen Effect mache; wenn es aber nicht bey uns gänzlich missfiel, so hat man diess nur dem Herrn Mayer zu verdanken, dessen gute Laune und lebhaftes Spiel allein dem schläfrigen Gange des Stückes aufhelfen konnte. Es fehlt diesem sentimental Lustspiele an Handlung, deren Mangel nicht durch ein paar übel angebrachte Musikstücke ersetzt werden kann. Die französischen Charaktere wodurch es allenfalls interessiren könnte, werden schwerlich auf einem deutschen Theater so lebendig dargestellt werden, dass man das Ganze ohne Gähnen ansehen könnte. Um wie viel langweiliger wird aber trotz einen paar drolligen oder witzigen Einfällen, das Stück, wenn, wie bey uns, die Delicatesse und Liebenswürdigkeit der handelnden Personen sich hinter Plumpheit und Uebertreibung verbirgt. -- An der Musik ist, ausser der Romanze, wenig zu loben. Alles übrige ist gemeine französische Musik, wie man sie, seit Cherubini und Méhul, selbst in Paris nicht mehr hören mag.¹

Dalayrac's Koulouf was given eight times in Vienna from August 1808. The plot was tedious, but the music pleasing and effective. The Chinese ceremonial was laughable, but the Chinese costumes were effective even if the music was Turkish and French rather than Chinese.² Also in 1808 at smaller theatres, Paer's L'arbre creux and Bierey's Le chasseur de chamois were performed. Lastly came a production of Gluck's Iphigenia in Aulis, first seen in Paris in 1774 and given fourteen times in Vienna.

The most successful operas of this year were one-act "Kleinigkeiten" which could be combined with another work to form a full evening's entertainment.

1. Das Sonntagsblatt, nos. 82 & 83, 31 July 1808, p. 303.

2. AMZ, 4 October 1808, column 14.

The revivals of Gluck in 1808 could be seen as a side-effect of the rising tide of nationalism and desire for national art. It is true that, for example, Iphigenia in Aulis was a French opera re-written for Vienna, but Gluck as an Austrian Bohemian was claimed by the Viennese as a local composer. Theatres quickly catered to the popular demand for patriotic performances.¹ 1808 ended with war on the horizon.

I. 1809: War with France; the sixth French troupe

Excitement about another imminent conflict with France dominated the thoughts of Viennese citizens during the early months of 1809; there was an enthusiastic response to the call for mobilisation.

The only French opera premiered at the court theatres this year was a slight one-act work by Boieldieu, La jeune femme colère (Die heftige junge Frau), which achieved the respectable number of ten performances. Two weeks earlier, on 21 February, there had been a revival at the Theater an der Wien of the once-popular Dalayrac opera Der stürmische Abend; it was not well received because people thought it was a slight opera -- a poor work -- which did not give the singers much scope.²

1. Walter Consuelo Langsam, The Napoleonic wars and German nationalism in Austria (New York, 1930, repr. 1970), pp. 98-119.

2. Der Sammler, 2 March 1809, under "Notizen".

The following month, April, the Austrians suffered a very heavy defeat in a battle near Regensburg; a quarter of the whole Austrian army was killed or wounded. On 10 May French units were sighted on the outskirts of Vienna, where morale was low, food shortages having made themselves felt very quickly. In July bread and flour prices were to be three times what they had been in May.¹ On 11 May, the Viennese surrendered and the French again occupied Vienna. This time there were no lines of crowds in holiday mood to welcome the enemy; as soldiers entered Vienna they found streets empty, littered with broken glass, and shops and houses with their shutters closed. Napoleon imposed crushing demands on the Austrians and the Viennese struggled under the weight of having to provide accommodation for French soldiers.² At the theatre the French made themselves unpopular, sometimes keeping away members of the Austrian public by their unruly behaviour. Rosenbaum, after his visit to the theatre on 12 June wrote:

Es war an diesem Abend aussergewöhnlich voll. Die so gebildete Nation betrug sich äusserst tumultuarisch, sie schrien, pfffen durch die Finger und klatschten einen Marsch.³

Members of the public also complained that the programme being offered in Vienna was poor: only old works, poorly cast.⁴ It was a hot summer, and

1. Radant, introduction, "The dairies of Rosenbaum".

2. Musulin, p. 72.

3. Rosenbaum, diary entry 12 June 1809, quoted in Schlientz, p. XIII.

4. Der Sammler, 4 July 1809, p. 316.

people were allegedly uncomfortable in the theatre; also, seat prices were raised -- at the Burgtheater from 12 Gulden to 40 Kreutzer; at the Kärntnerthortheater from 15 Gulden to 40 Kreutzer. Reichardt records that the theatres were empty and the public annoyed by the price rise.¹

At the Theater in der Leopoldstadt Le petit matelot by Gaveaux and Le trésor supposé by Méhul were performed in August and September respectively. But apart from that, most of the large number of French operas seen in Vienna during the summer and autumn of this year were given in French by a troupe of actors and singers which accompanied the French soldiers and entertained Napoleon's army.

From 18 June until 7 November they gave performances three times a week at the Burgtheater and occasionally also at Schönbrunn. Fifteen of the operas they performed had never been seen before in Vienna; a large number of them was never revived. One of the operas introduced by these French players was given in Vienna later in German: La maison à vendre; some of them were only seen again in performances by a later French troupe to visit Vienna in 1826. But the most interesting aspect of this troupe is that it performed in French some works which Viennese audiences had already seen in German.

1. Reichardt, Vertraute Briefe aus Wien, II, p. 80.

Most of the works in the repertoire of this troupe were given four or five times; given the unusual circumstance of the performances it is difficult to tell which works were successful and which failed. The operas by Radet and Patrat, and the vaudevilles, received fewer performances.

Shortly after their first performance, a notice dated 24 June 1809: appeared in Der Sammler commenting that the French players would certainly be a good model for local artists:

Im Theater nächst der Burg gab eine Französische Schauspieler Gesellschaft seither drey Vorstellungen, unter denen die von Adolphe et Clara den meisten Beyfall fand. Wenn auch unser Publikum dadurch einen allzu verüngten Massstab des jetzigen Französischen Theaterwesens erhielt, so blieb das rasche Eingreifen des Spiels, und die Geläufigkeit und Sicherheit des Vortrags jeder einzelnen Rollen nicht unbemerkt, und sey hiermit vielen Deutschen Künstlern zur Beachtung und Nachahmung empfohlen.¹

D'Adolphe et Clara had already been seen in Vienna in German at the Theater an der Wien in 1801. It had run for 9 performances until June 1807. It was performed five times by the French troupe in 1809 and revived in German at the Kärntnerthortheater the following year.

The repertoire of the French troupe was large: while in Vienna they performed 34 different works - 20 operas, twelve comedies and two vaudevilles. The first performances were well visited. Yellow posters

1. Der Sammler, 27 June 1809, notice dated 24 June.

which appeared from 18 June onwards had announced that ticket prices for this special entertainment would remain the same as normal at the court theatres and that civil servants and court officials would be admitted free.¹ The Eipeldauer peasant wrote to his family: "Unsere elegante Welt hat d'erste Vorstellung kaum erwarten können, und da ist um fünf Uhr schon kein Platz mehr z'haben gwest".²

The troupe's successes waned however after 9 August, when its leading lady, Mme. Alexandre, left with her husband. Before coming to Vienna, she had been a member of the French theatre at Kassel.³ After her departure, the standard of performances declined badly.⁴ Rosenbaum did not regret her departure, having called her a "hübsch gewachsene, grosses aber schon passiertes Weib".⁵ Rosenbaum was scathing about Le triple mariage: "empörent dargestellt. Elenderes lässt sich nicht denken, sie heulten, sie sangen nicht."⁶

1. Theaterzettel 18 June 1809 onwards.

2. Eipeldauerbriefe, 1809, letter no. 4, volume 6, p. 29.

3. Theaterzettel 9 August 1809

4. Annalen der Literatur und Kunst, Intelligenzblatt December 1809, p. 272.

5. Rosenbaum, diary entry 18 June 1809, as quoted in Schlienz, p. 174.

6. Rosenbaum, dairy entries: 22 July, 12 and 17 August 1809, as quoted in Schlienz, pp. 174-175.

Looking back on the late summer and autumn of 1809, the AMZ simply commented that the musical performances at Schönbrunn had stopped (Napoleon had prominent Italian singers to entertain him there) but made no mention of the French troupe.¹ Der Sammler announced in August 1809 that the German acting company, the Italian and German opera and the ballet "hat die Ehre, drey Mahl die Woche zu Schönbrunn vor Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser Napoleon Vorstellungen zu geben. Der Anfang wurde den 1 August mit Collins Phädra gemacht, welche seine Majestät selbst gewählt haben sollten. Auch wohnten Sie der Vorstellung bis zu ihrem Ende bey!"²

Napoleon preferred Italian to German opera and so Italian opera was the largest part of the repertoire.³

Nine days after Napoleon left Vienna, the Theater an der Wien mounted a splendid production of Méhul's opera Joseph; probably it had been under rehearsal during the troubled months of the summer and was waiting for calmer times. One Viennese almanac, Thalia, published drawings of the original Paris costumes of this opera.⁴ About the production Der Sammler wrote:

1. AMZ, 7 February 1810, column 295.

2. Der Sammler, 12 August 1809.

3. Blümml & Gugitz, Von Leuten und Zeiten im alten Wien (Vienna, 1922), pp. 318-319.

4. Thalia, no. 69, 28 August 1811, p. 275.

Das Theater an der Wien hat uns vor einigen Tagen mit einer herrlichen Erscheinung erfreut; wir meinen die neue Oper: Joseph und seine Brüder, aus dem französischen des Alex. Duval, von F. J. Hassaureck, mit Musik von Méhül, einem der Inspectoren des Conservatoriums zu Paris. Seit Cherubini's unvergesslicher Medea (die wir, leider: nun nicht mehr hören, und doch durch Mlle. Milder so vortrefflich hören könnten.) erinnern wir uns keiner dramatischen Musik von pathetischem Genre, die sich mit der Musik der angezeigten Oper messen dürfte. Ein erhabener Genius waltet über sie, vom Anfang bis zu Ende; Originalität, und zwar Originalität ohne Bizarrerie, zeichnet jedes Musikstück, aus; Worte und Gefühle, vom Text angegeben, werden von der Melodie nicht nur auf das getreueste ausgedrückt, sondern noch um vieles erhöht; und die Instrumentirung ist durchaus mit eben so weiser Beurtheilung als vollendeter Effectskenntniss angebracht. Obschon kein Musikstück in diesem Singspiele ist, das nicht seinen eigenen und entschiedenen Werth hatte; so müssen wir doch vorzüglich der zweyten Arie Josephs im ersten Acte erwähnen, die wahrlich als Muster gelten kann, wie man Erzählungen -- bey denen Alles darauf ankommt, dass der Text deutlich verstanden werde -- musikalisch begleiten und instrumentiren soll; ferner, und zwar vor Allem, der Arie Simeons mit dem Chor seiner Brüder; ebenfalls im ersten Acte. Feuriger und hinreissender hat nie das Genie in Gesang und Orchester ausgeströmt. Mit grösserer Wirkung sind Leiden der Seele nie durch Töne geschildert worden. -- Besonders Lob erheischt auch der Doppel-Chor, mit welchem der erste Act schliesst. Der zweyte darf sich einer der schönsten Hymnen rühmen, die man je gehört hat; es ist unmöglich, sich etwas feyerlicheres und herzerhebenderes zu denken, als den Morgengesang der Isrealiten; ein wahrer Psalm, der einfach und hehr sich durch die Wolken zu Jehova aufschwingt. -- Da eine geschmackvolle Zusammensetzung der vorzüglichsten aus den Singstücken der Oper selbst genommenen Ideen die Ouvertüre bildet -- deren wir aus diesem Grunde zuletzt gedenken -- folgt von selbst, dass auch diese ein Meisterwerk say.¹

1. Der Sammler, 23 December 1809, p. 612.

The only thing the critic could fault was that there were not more musical numbers in the opera -- it was more a play with music than an opera. The management of the Theater an der Wien had not spared any costs to make the production a glittering one; but it was not as well supported as one might have expected, and perhaps would lose the theatre money;

Gleichwohl erweckt der Umstand, dass der Beyfall, den dieses Meisterwerk erhielt, seinem Verdienste nicht völlig angemessen war, die Besorgniss, dass es der Direction mehr Ehre als Gewinn bringen werde; ein Beweis, dass die Anhänger gediegener Musik doch nicht so zahlreich sind, als man es, der hier so allgemein verbreiteten Cultur der Tonkunst nach, zu glauben berechtigt wäre.¹

Joseph enjoyed a good run at the Theater an der Wien and, despite the outlay for costumes, sets and the chorus, almost certainly proved lucrative for the theatre in the end. It attained the greatest celebrity and popularity of all Méhul's operas; both Wagner and Weber had the deepest admiration for it.² The familiar Bible story is treated extremely simply; the antique costumes and scenery and the sentimentality of the tale, which was well suited to the genre of opéra-comique, contributed to the opera's success. Perhaps some musical numbers were omitted in Vienna because the original score does not strike one as musically sparse.

The morning prayer of the Israelites which the Viennese critic for Der Sammler so admired is

1. Der Sammler, 23 December 1809, p. 612.

2. Dent, p. 77.

strikingly romantic in spirit and may have been in the memory of Saint-Saens when he wrote the analogous scene in Samson et Dalila.¹

In Joseph, Méhul adopted a tuneful idiom without sounding definitely Italian.² This lyricism, as well as the orchestration and characterisation (Simeon, maddened by remorse for his crime, receives especially vivid treatment), won Viennese admiration, as did his clear presentation of the text.

Four years later, this opera was still being hailed as "unter die vorzüglichsten Erscheinungen nicht nur der französischen, sondern selbst der neuern Tonkunst im Allgemeinen."³ A revival of it at the Kärntnerthortheater in 1815, which had been feared as a possible anti-climax, was also dazzlingly successful.⁴

The AMZ, in a report from Vienna for the months September and October 1809 (not published until February 1810 because it had allegedly been lost in the post) explained to readers all over Germany what music in Vienna had suffered under the general pressure of the times; how few operas and concerts had been given, and how the performances of the French operas in French had ceased with the departure of Napoleon's army and the troupe of French actors. The reporter was confident that with the return to peace:

1. Dent, p. 77-78.

2. "Méhul", The New Grove.

3. Der Sammler, 16 October 1813, p. 165.

4. Der Sammler, 17 June 1815, P; 306.

der Drang nach Musik, welcher so vorzüglich in dem Gemüthe des Wienerers auch nur von einiger Erziehung vorherrschend ist, auf Kunst und Künstler wieder wohlthätigen Einfluss haben; wenn gleich unsere Kaiserstadt ihren vorigen Glanz auch in musikalischer Hinsicht nicht sobald wieder erlangen wird.¹

In October 1809, Schreyvogel was able to write that there was a better spirit now at the Theater an der Wien. More classics were being performed there.²

At the end of 1809, Viennese subscribers to the AMZ heard of the production in Paris of Spontini's opera Fernand Cortez. Summer 1809 had been a lean time for the theatres in Paris, too, with the Théâtre Feydeau shut and the Opéra mounting only repeats, but impoverished Austrian composers must have been sickened to read that both poet and composer had received 10,000 livres each for La Vestale and anticipated receiving 31,200 each for Fernand Cortez.³

J. 1810-1814: Decline of the Italian School of influence

Hopes that the musical life in Vienna would revive with the coming of peace were not fulfilled straight away. Theatres strained their resources to attract audiences with a varied repertoire. Apart from Paris, Vienna probably provided greater theatrical variety than any other city in Europe, but this was more a question of quantity than quality. Several commentators asked bitterly why so few of the new works being lavishly produced were German:

1. AMZ, 7 February 1810, Column 295.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 3 October 1809, under "Notices" for the Theater an der Wien.

3. AMZ, 25 October 1809, column 54.

Haben wir keine Opern -Dichter, oder mangelt es uns an Componisten?.... Ist unsere. von jeher an Componisten so berühmte Stadt seit einiger Zeit so gänzlich verärmt?

-- a diet of Weigl or, on good days, Gyrowetz at the court theatres, or Seyfried at the Theater an der Wien, was meagre fare.¹

Operas that were by composers living in Vienna were not even fully Austrian as most of them re-used French libretti.² Still, the comparisons with Paris continued -- live horses on the stage of the Paris Opéra for a production of Fernand Cortez were reported in Germany with a mixture of wonder and contempt: that "das erste Theater Frankreichs zu einer Reitbahn wird".³ Spontini, was already known in Vienna for his one-act opera Julie, but several of his more serious works had been reported in the Austrian press though were still unknown to Viennese audiences. So the high point of 1810, after what was alleged to have been a long and weary summer ("beyde National-theater scheinen in einer Lethargie versunken zu seyn"),⁴ was the long-awaited production of Die Vestalinn which had been repeatedly postponed "durch Unpässlichkeiten verschiedener Mitglieder".⁵ It had been announced in

1. AMZ, 21 February 1810, column 333 (report from Vienna on 5 February).

2. Thalia, 29 December 1810, p. 52.

3. AMZ, 3 January 1810, column 216.

4. AMZ, 21 November 1810, report dated Vienna 31 October.

5. AMZ, 26 December 1810, report from Vienna dated 5 December.

Thalia in mid September that the work "welche in Paris den Preis erhielt, und worin Mad. Milder und Herr Siboni singen werden", would soon be performed,¹ but it was not given until 12 November 1810.

The Viennese admired the music but a critic commented that it was complex and difficult. Expectations were not quite fulfilled. The piece lacked the stature of Cherubini's Medea, Catel's Semiramis, Gluck's Iphigenia auf Tauris, Salieri's Axur and Winter's works such as Tamerlan. The rich orchestration was sometimes too heavy and the recitative too stylised. The vocal range of the recitatives was held to be too wide for true declamation. The work was patchy, some pieces had fire; others fell flat. The choruses were fine, but none was as good as the chorus of priestesses in Iphigenia or of Argonauts in Medea. The most successful number of the opera was the finale of act II; the aria and chorus of Licinius and the warriors however was not in the same class as the rest of the music and in the opinion of the critic should be omitted. The leading role by Herr Siboni, whose first language was Italian, surpassed expectations in his clear speaking and excellent declamation.²

The opera's ballets are alleged to have been poor,³ and Thalia in November suggested that they

1. Thalia, 15 September 1810, p. 88.

2. Der Sammler, 17 November 1810, under "Notizen".

3. Der Sammler, 17 November 1810, p. 562.

be omitted;¹ Der Sammler on 27 November announced that the ballets were now being omitted. The opera used larger choruses than were usually employed at the Kärntnerthortheater.²

The delay in mounting the opera was again blamed on illness among the singers. Early performances may have been weak. Der Sammler, commenting on the fourth performance, reported that by now the ensemble, "welches in den drey ersteren Vorstellungen nicht so vollkommen war", was much better:

Es ist natürlich, dass eine Musik dieser Art bey jeder Wiederholung besser ausgeführt werde, und folglich auch mehr gefallen muss; denn man mag sagen was man will, eine musikalische Composition, deren Schwierigkeit von Seite der Sänger in schweren Intonationen in richtigen gefühl- und kraftvollem Vortrag, in treuer Verbindung der Singpartie bey mehrstimmigen Tonstücken, und von Seite des Orchesters in dem genauen Zusammenspielen der Nuancen von musikalischen [sic] Licht und Schatten (piano, forte, crescendo etc.) besteht, eine solche musikalische Composition in allen ihren Theilen vollkommen auszuführen, fordert weit mehr Kunst, Wissen und Mühe, als eine Musik, in der die Sänger eine Passage nach der anderen vorzutragen haben, und im Orchester jedes Instrument ein Concert spielt.³

The critic for Der Sammler perceived two distinct traits of Spontini's composition:⁴ firstly, his use of dynamics (the end of act II, singled out for special mention in the Viennese review, made a very great

1. Thalia, 24 November 1810, p. 168; Der Sammler 27 November 1810, p. 578.

2. Der Sammler, 17 November 1810, p. 562.

3. Der Sammler, 27 November 1810, p. 578.

4. Der Sammler, 27 November 1810, p. 578.

impression both in France and Italy, largely due to the so-called Rossini crescendo;¹ and also his concentration on the effect of the whole opera, rather than the success of small parts of it.² Der Sammler did not comment on Spontini's Italianate lyricism nor on his sometimes clumsy harmony, though did imply the music was "learned". Spontini, however, was not so well educated a musician as, for example, Cherubini.

Die Vestalinn was given ten times at the Kärntnerthortheater, now the opera house and ballet stage for the centre of Vienna; and again at the same theatre in a new production two months later. In the summer of 1811, the Theaterzeitung found the opera as fresh and delightful as ever; a masterpiece which would give pleasure even if performed a thousand times.³ The opera did not meet with quite that amount of success, but was given 61 times until 13 April 1814.

Uthal had been seen at the court theatres in January 1810; it was given four times in Vienna but never revived, the main cause for failure being supposedly the uninteresting story: "Ein Komponist wie Méhul könnte Wunder wirken, wenn ein Dichter wie Klopstock oder Denis ihm ein Barde lieferte". Three times in

1. "Spontini", The New Grove.

2. Dent, p. 95.

3. TZ, 10 August 1811, pp. 10-11.

the short review in Der Sammler, the orchestration is mentioned: the unusual omission of violins from the orchestra,¹ strange at first (higher tones were provided by oboes, clarinets and flute), spread a very effective darkness over the work, which for the educated listener was a unique musical experience; the arias were also unusual and moving. The overture and the first five or six numbers sounded very like Gluck. The choruses were "vortrefflich"(and the Viennese cast quite a strong one, including Mlle. Laucher, Herr Vogel, Herr Saal and Herr Demmer). The opera proceeded:

mit jener Simplizität und Energie vor,
die nach unserem Begriffen, die erste
Eigenschaft derselben seyn muss, wenn er
nicht bloss die Ohren kitzeln, sondern die
Herzen rühren soll.²

These opinions are corroborated by a notice in the AMZ which said that the music redeemed the poor story -- but not sufficiently to turn it into a success.³

For the court theatres, French opera did not form a large part of the repertoire during 1810. The paper Thalia summarised the new productions at the Burg- and Kärntnertheater for the season 16 October 1809 to 15 October 1810 as consisting of eleven comedies, five plays, three tragedies (sixteen of them original and three translated from the French), no fewer than ten of the sixteen being by Kotzebue, seven ballets, three grand Italian operas and six

1. Méhul requires the violinists to play violas in this opera.

2. Der Sammler, 20 January 1810, p. 36.

3. AMZ, 5 February 1810, column 334.

German operas, one (Uthal) translated from the French and almost all of the rest having been set to French libretti.¹

Among the "Italian" operas was a production of Gluck's Alceste in April, with Madame Milder in the title role: "ein glänzendes Fest" spoilt only by Salieri's conducting.² (See p. 653 .) Four performances of Iphigenia were given in 1810, the last one being in May.

From 1810 until about 1815 the rising German nationalism led to a vogue for patriotic music in Vienna.³

Hand in hand with this went a disaffection among some people for Italian music -- which merely tickled the ear and took refuge in virtuosity. Viennese now preferred greater simplicity. Madame Milder's singing provided some of the highlights of the year:

Einzig war die Wirkung, die ihr Gesang auf das an die geschmücktere italienische Schule gewohnte Publicum macht. Keine Koloraturen, keine Triller, keine Mordanten -- sondern der einfachste seelenvollste, man möchte wohl sagen, echtdeutsche Gesang.⁴

Der Sammler launched bitter attacks on the Italians this year: the bad texts of the operas, and the unbearable behaviour of the singers, earned the

1. Thalia, 29 December 1810, p. 52.

2. As Gluck's pupil, Salieri made a point of directing performances of his operas, but he is reported to have been a noisy conductor -- under his leadership both choir and orchestra left much to be desired. Der Sammler, 1 May 1810, p. 210.

3. Langsam, pp. 94 - 126; here, p. 101. Milder's pure clear singing as Alceste was also praised: Der Sammler, 1 May 1810, p. 210.

4. Der Sammler, 22 September 1810, p. 114.

Italians public contempt. Italian tragic operas were "bloss zu einem Tummelplatz für glänzende Virtuosen bestimmt".¹ Italian singers did not learn their parts so that the prompter had to shriek at them in the middle of performances, and the Italian did well not to own up to authorship of their poor libretti.²

Opinions of the French were, as usual, ambivalent. Der Sammler both for 1809 and 1810 contained large numbers of reports from Paris about many matters. The popular patriotic movement, hastily suppressed by the government after the defeats of 1809, for fear it would become dangerous, received a serious jolt in the spring of the following year, when, after considerable diplomatic uncertainty and wranglings, Marie Louise finally left Vienna on 13 March, amidst the waving of flags, cheering crowds, the ringing of the bells of Vienna, and the firing of guns, to marry the French emperor. Poems celebrating the marriage appeared in their almanacs (in French) and the actual marriage in May was celebrated by a festal performance of Gluck's Iphigenia in Tauris. Other countries of Europe viewed the marriage as a new humiliation for Austria, a disgusting lack of honour, and the outrage in Vienna was deepest and longest-lasting among the aristocracy; among other social classes, there was disagreement:

1. Der Sammler, 14 June 1810, p. 294.

2. Der Sammler, 15 September 1810, p. 454.

In the inns and coffee houses bewildered disapproval was at first almost universal, but soon, prompted by the newspapers and in particular by the ecstatic Eipeldauer, doubt and resentment melted away and rejoicing took over. People began to see the whole thing from its sentimental angle: the loving father making an almost intolerable sacrifice so that his country might have peace.¹

The aristocracy was dismayed:

that a daughter of the House of Austria should marry a parvenu, a man without principles, the enemy of our Fatherland and of humanity, that she should wish to ascend a throne from which the stench of her aunt's blood has scarcely departed.²

As for the theatres in Vienna, the economic cutbacks were felt in 1809 and 1810 particularly, and the actors of the three theatres found themselves having to work harder than ever before, and give more performances.³

There were big changes in this year in the direction of the court theatres. From 1 October 1810, the Kärntnerthortheater and Burgtheater ceased to share the same repertoire: in order, according to Palffy, to maintain the standards, the former was to specialise in opera and ballet, and the latter in spoken drama. Opera and ballet were more expensive to mount than plays, and the prices at the Kärntnerthortheater were proportionately higher.⁴ Along with

1. Musulin, p. 101.

2. Musulin, pp. 101-102.

3. Schlientz, p. 18-19; 27.

4. AMZ, 12 April 1809, column 441. Prices had already been raised in March that year, Der Sammler, 4 March 1809.

this change, the prices of theatre tickets were raised -- a move, which Hager, president of the Polizeihofstelle, considered to be very bad for national security, because people could not afford to go.¹ But the theatre had been in such bad state that the wages of the actors in 1809 had had to be suspended or halved and some of the personnel dismissed.²

The four new operas given at the Theater an der Wien in 1810 all received fairly poor reviews. La famille americaine (Die amerikanische Familie) was a reworking of Dalayrac's Arnil le prisonnier americain; the Viennese found it predictable and sentimental, and all the cast (except Herr Wilder as the miser) sent it up. The public listened with ill will.³

Dalayrac's death on 27 November 1809 in Paris had been announced in Der Sammler on 6 January 1810⁴ -- Der Sammler called him "der gute Dalayrac, der 30 Jahre lang einer von Europens Lieblings Tonsetzern war". The tone of the obituary was that Dalayrac was a composer of the past.

Two Catel operas failed this year: Die zwey Generale was reviewed in the paper Thalia under the sarcastic title "Todes-Anzeige", due apparently to

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1. Bauer, p. 86. This new increase doubled the cost of theatre tickets during 1809.
 2. Schlientz, pp. 18-19; 26.
 3. AMZ, 21 February 1810, column 334.
 4. Der Sammler, 6 January 1810, under "Notizen".

poor singing ("howling") and bad casting;¹ and the Viennese reporter for the AMZ described Dichter und Tonkünstler as a boring work and judged that the composer was better at tragic operas.²

Berton's Rosamunde fared a little better, reaching nine performances. It was given a grand production in Vienna with musical additions by Ignaz Seyfried, and with Madame Campi, the celebrated coloratura singer, playing the leading role. The music was considered to be in the grand style: too complex, perhaps, thought the critic of Der Sammler, whereas the plot was too simple. The opera was not well cast, which may have been why audiences decreased in subsequent performances. But most interesting in this review are two comments about the plot:

The incident between the Spanish vice-roy and the priests caused strong offence in Vienna. Mention of religion on the Austrian stage had been disapproved of back in the time of Maria Theresia, and references to foreign monarchs was often forbidden by the censors for the same reasons; and the Viennese, fiercely loyal to their emperor and almost feudal in their social structure, strongly objected to the part where the crowd appeared in the king's throne room and sang before the guards "wie auf einem

1. Thalia, 7 July 1810, p. 8. Also: AMZ, 3 October 1810, column 832.

2. AMZ, 21 February 1810, column 334.

Marktplatz". This showed undue familiarity towards a member of the ruling family and would, said the critic, have been easy to alter for Vienna.¹

In addition to the normal professional theatres, performances of French operas were given this year in the theatre at Meidling: Les deux mots (Zwey Worte) by Dalayrac, and Une folie by Méhul, both in German, were given by amateurs in aid of the poor in Meidling, badly hit by the war. The poet Ignaz Castelli participated in one at least of these ventures, which was reported in the Sammler:² he acted in Das abgebrannte Haus, a play by Schikaneder.

Another theatrical event in May 1810 was the performance at the house of Count Palffy of the French plays La Revanche and Monsieur Cracq, in which the Duke de Rohan, the Duke de Ligne, Counts Palffy, Wallenstein, Fürstenberg, Düben and others played.³ Der Sammler, which in some ways took a grim view of Austrian aristocrats entertaining themselves in this way, commented:

Wenn man auch wünschen möchte, dass in der Hauptstadt Deutschlands, Deutsche Stücke zu solchen Unterhaltungen gewählt werden möchten so muss man doch bedenken dass hierdurch die Mitwirkung anwesender Fremden die der Deutschen Sprache unkundig sind vereitelt würde.⁴

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1. Der Sammler, 12 May 1810, p. 234.
 2. Der Sammler, 25 August 1810, p. 102.
 3. Der Sammler, 22 May, 1810, p. 61.
 4. Der Sammler, 22 May 1810, p. 61.

This is interesting because it suggests that performances in French were now quite unusual (and worthy of special comment) and that excuses needed to be made for them, in some way.

The economic situation in Austria had been deteriorating steadily, aggravated by Napoleon's economic warfare; on 20 February 1811 redemption notes were introduced as the only legal tender.¹ From 1810, the noblemen running the theatres were suffering financially from their investment and were now more interested in their money than in art. In 1811, Prince Schwarzenberg dropped out of the leadership of the Theater an der Wien, which henceforth consisted only of Palffy and Lobkowitz; Lobkowitz took over the leadership of the Burgtheater.² Musical

1. Musulin, p. 114.

2. Bauer, pp. 90-91.

pieces still accounted for 50% of the repertoire of the Theater an der Wien and about half of all pieces given there were of French origin.¹ In 1811, the court theatres, whose repertoire of French operas was only enlarged by revivals of three older works, took second place in this respect to the Theater an der Wien, whose spectacular productions of Richard Coeur-de-lion (a revival); Isouard's Cendrillon and Un jour à Paris (both new operas) attracted large and enthusiastic audiences.

The Kärntnerthortheater was still capitalising on the enormous success of Die Vestalinn, first produced in 1810. On 10 March, for instance, the Emperor had invited King Albrecht of Prussia for dinner, and after their meal they visited the Kärntnerthortheater to see the Spontini opera. Fifteen or twenty years earlier the Emperor would have taken his visiting dignitaries to an Italian opera. However, we read:

Herr Siboni hatte dieses Mahl den einfachen Gesang auf die Seite gesetzt und eine Menge, oft₂ sehr langer Rouladen zum besten gegeben.

The departure of Madame Milder deprived the court theatres of one of their most successful female singers. But the Viennese tried to console themselves by thinking that her success at the Italian theatre in Paris was bringing reflected glory on Vienna, and

1. Bauer, p. 87.

2. Der Sammler, 14 March 1811, p. 128.

Spontini himself was alleged by Der Sammler to have written that:

jamais voix humaine ne produisait une plus grande sensation.¹

Speculation about a possible successor was apparently rife, but the decision, reported in June 1811, to appoint the illustrious Dlle. Anna Maria Sessi to the German opera company in Vienna, was seen as a triumph for German opera in the Austrian capital: the directors of the court theatres were at last willing to spend heavily on singers for German opera. There was a lot of optimism for German opera around this time which perhaps reflects the general feelings of patriotism:

Wenn eine Direction...mit diesem Eifer für Kunst und Künstler mit diesen Mitteln, jene zu beförden und diese zu unterstützen, so viel Sorgfalt und Aufwand auf die deutsche Oper zu wenden willens ist; als bisher auf die italienische ... so dürfte der Zeitpunkt nicht mehr fern seyn, in welchem für das deutsche Singspiel wird gethan werden, was Pericles für die Tragödien des Sophocles und Euripedes that -- Neue Glücke würden sich erheben, und Wien den Nahmen des zweyten Athens sich erwerben.²

With Austria on the brink of bankruptcy, a Viennese paper was writing:

Die deutsche Oper...hat niemahls eine glänzendere Periode gehabt, als eben jetzt.³

Ironically, one of the theatrical events which prompted

1. Quoted in Der Sammler, 13 April 1811, p. 180.

2. Der Sammler, 25 June 1811, p. 302.

3. Der Sammler, 20 April 1811, p. 192.

this comment was the revival in 1811 at the Kärntner-theater of Cherubini's opera Die Tage der Gefahr (Les deux journées)¹ which "schien gleichsam der hiesigen Musikwelt über das, was die deutsche Oper leisten könne, die Augen geöffnet zu haben". This year Italian opera was definitely out of fashion: "Die schönste Periode der italienischen komischen Oper ist allerdings bey uns vorüber", was the opinion of this journalist:

Mehrere französischen Opern und Operetten, freylich von sehr verschiedenem Werthe, wurden auf das deutsche Singspiel-Theater verpflanzt, und der, schon früher durch mehrere treffliche italienische Opern bekannte Kapellmeister Weigl schrieb das Waisenhaus und die Schweizerfamilie, welche den Geschmack des fühlenden Publicums von der italienischen Oper auf immer abgezogen, und für die gute deutsche Oper gewonnen zu haben schienen.²

Referring to Italian music during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the New Grove writes: "The rise of the German symphonists, and the establishment of conservatories north of the Alps more than equal to those of Bologna and Naples, were among a number of factors that led to Italy's loss of the musical hegemony that it had enjoyed for 200 years."³

During the 1790s, Joseph Weigl, who had moved to Vienna in 1769 (from Eisenstadt), had composed operas for Vienna both in German and Italian. His

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1. This particular article is the first example I have found of a Viennese newspaper giving the original French title of an opera alongside the German one.
 2. Der Sammler, 20 April 1811, p. 192.
 3. "Opera, II, 4: Italy - 19th century" (p. 561), The New Grove.

last Italian opera to be performed in Vienna seems to have been Il principe invisibile, performed in October 1806. He wrote four Italian operas for Milan after that, but they were translated into German for performance in Vienna and all subsequent operas written for Vienna by Weigl were German works.

According to reports in Die Theaterzeitung and Der Sammler between 1810 and 1813, the Italians had at this time made themselves unpopular in Vienna, both on account of their music and their allegedly arrogant behaviour. For the moment they could no longer assume to be the musical leaders of Vienna. For example Der Sammler reported with some satisfaction in April 1811 that Viennese instrumentalists were now better than Italian ones: a famous Italian virtuoso on hearing one of the best Austrian keyboard players in Vienna had cried: "Davon hat man in Italien keine Idee". Der Sammler added that it was no longer a compliment to Viennese music to say that it matched that of Italy: it now surpassed it.¹

That there was some truth in this statement is suggested by a later article which appeared in 1820 in the WAMZ and which drew attention to the previous excellence of singers from Italy, the cradle of opera. During the last ten or fifteen years, however, good Italian singers had disappeared and the lyrical Italian

1. Der Sammler, 20 April 1811, p. 192.

operas which required pure, simple singing — works by Cimarosa, Nicolini, Paer, Paisiello, Sacchini and Salieri had all but disappeared from the stage. Singers, now unable to sustain long notes, covered up for their lack of technique by inserting apparently difficult but tasteless runs and embellishments.¹ Hanslick, looking back on what he also perceived as a decline in Italian opera in Vienna at the beginning of the nineteenth century, attributed that, and the subsequent return to fashion of the Italians (the vogue for Rossini's operas), as being due to first a decadence and then a revival in the art of Italian singing.²

Some of the complaints expressed against Italian opera during the next few years were: Italian singers could not declaim properly;³ they made up for their technical deficiencies by adding tasteless decorations: trills and runs to impress the public;⁴ Italian composers used senseless word repetitions, making an aria set to a four-line text a quarter of an hour long;⁵ Italian opera would not improve until better text books were written and until Italian singers stopped tampering with the written music;⁶

1. WAMZ, 16 December 1820, columns 801-808.

2. Hanslick, I, p. 260.

3. Der Sammler, 22 January 1811.

4. Der Sammler, 11 April 1811, p. 176.

5. Der Sammler, 4 June 1811, pp. 265-266.

6. Der Sammler, 30 April 1812, p. 210.

the Italians were arrogant and called themselves on posters "celebri maestri" whereas they deserved no such title.¹ Their unbearable behaviour earned them public contempt:²

in der That, es ist auch nichts dabey verloren, wir haben ja Künstler, die uns grossen Ersatz für all diese Gurgeleyen biethen die uns in einer unserm Charakter weit analogern Musik ansprechen und entzücken; wir bedürfen keine Leyerey, wie diese in den Horatiern, wenn wir eine Vestalinn, Ferdinand Cortez und eine Medea auf unserm Repertoire erhalten.³

Opera, announced this critic in the Theaterzeitung proudly, was now to be the possession of all, not the whim of a few. It was to be understandable, and not boring. The spoken dialogue and shorter arias made French opera accessible to the general public.⁴

The Viennese production of Isouard's Cendrillon, which became Aschenbrödl to Austrian audiences, is discussed in greater detail below. Viennese newspaper readers learnt of the success of the opera in Paris and of the splendour of such Paris productions: costly decorations and costumes, scenery consisting of wide landscapes and how:

die sogenannten Comités, in welchen die Schauspieldichter ihre Werke zur vorläufigen Untersuchung vorlegen müssen, fragen vor allem andern, ob das neue Werk Spektakel enthalte.⁵

1. Der Sammler, 4 June 1811, p. 266.
2. Der Sammler, 14 June 1810, p. 294.
3. TZ, 24 April 1813, p. 11.
4. TZ, 24 April 1813, p. 11.
5. TZ, 2 November 1811, p. 105.

In Vienna, the opera became "eine der sehenswürdigsten",¹ and audiences there appreciated the musical satire, where the two ugly sisters, Clorinde and Thisbe, sing Italian-type roulades, and the good, ill-treated Aschenbrödl, simple melodies.²

Perhaps in an attempt to repeat the success of Aschenbrödl, Isouard's Un jour à Paris was also given a gala production at the Theater an der Wien.

Die Dekorationen, die Meubles und das Kostüme dieser Vorstellung war glänzend. Man kann sich schwerlich mehr Pracht und Aufwand in den Livrée-Röcken einer Dienerschaft, mehr Aufwand in den Maskenkleidern denken als man hier sah.³

In retrospect, these years have been seen as particularly hedonistic ones at the Viennese theatres.

As Der Sammler wrote:

Das hiesige Publicum sey nur gewohnt, Liebesgeschichten und Liebes-Intriguen zu sehen; nur Decorationen, Aufzüge, Gefechte gefallen ihm; es verkenne undankbar den humanen Geist der Direction, welche schon nicht mehr wisse, was zu thun sey, um das Publicum fest zu halten, so wie dieses selbst nicht wisse was es wolle.⁴

The years 1812 and 1813 were rich ones for opéra-comique in the Austrian capital; a higher percentage of the works being seen in Vienna for the first time were deemed worth reviving, and some lasting favourites were established.

1. Der Sammler, 9 April 1811, p. 172.

2. Der Sammler, 22 March 1810.

3. TZ, 7 December 1811, p. 147.

4. Der Sammler, 23 April 1811, p. 196.

In 1812 the direction of the court theatres launched a competition to encourage the composition of more operas by local composers, but a notice appeared in September saying that owing to the poor response, the management was holding the competition open until the end of December and was still willing to receive manuscripts.¹

This year the Theater an der Wien gave nine new operas; six of them were French but three of these failed: Boieldieu's L'amour et mystère was seen only once; Isouard's Le magicien sans magie and Blangini's Nephtali only four times each; this latter was found to be like a weak imitation of Méhul.² Blangini had moved to Kassel in 1809 and had had several works performed in Munich. The Theater an der Wien also gave two smaller operas, both French. At the Kärntnerthortheater, four large operas in German were given their première this year, two German originals by Weigl: Francisca von Foix and Der Bergsturz; and two operas from the French: Fernand Cortez by Spontini; Johann von Paris by Boieldieu. The theatre also gave six smaller operas and half of these were French. As well as these, the Kärntnerthortheater gave four operas in Italian.

1. Der Sammler, 10 September 1812, p. 438.

2. Der Sammler, no. 62, 1816, under "Notitzen".

The long-awaited revival of Medea on New Year's Day was warmly welcomed; despite raised entrance prices, the theatre was full.¹ Singers found the music difficult as they had done in 1804 and some cuts were made in the music, but Madame Milder had returned from Paris, now married as Madame Milder-Hauptmann², and sang the part of Medea superbly. Three Isouard operas were disappointing: Michel Angelo was well performed but boring: "höchst unwahrscheinlich and fade";³ Le billet de loterie (Das Lotterielos), though thought initially by Die Theaterzeitung to have a weak plot and not very attractive music,⁴ became more popular after its first performances and actually went on to achieve 114 performances; Le magicien sans magie (Die natürliche Zauberey) failed.⁵ Dalayrac's Ambros suffered from music which was "fade und langweilig" in spite of a good production;⁶ Boieldieu's Rien de trop (Nur mit Mass und Ziel) was held to have a stupid story and to be poorly translated: "diese Neuvermählten wurden gleich nach der Hochzeit zu Grabe getragen".⁷

1. Der Sammler, 4 January 1812, p. 8.

2. Der Sammler, 4 January 1812, p. 8.

3. TZ, 15 January 1812, p. 20.

4. TZ, 8 February 1812, p. 44.

5. TZ, 25 April 1812, p. 133.

6. TZ, 25 April 1812, p. 132.

7. TZ, 25 April 1812, p. 132.

In 1812, the refurbishment of the Theater in der Josefstadt was begun. The Viennese were impressed to watch how, under the management of Joseph Huber, this old theatre, carefully rearranged inside, yielded spacious, elegant accommodation.¹

On 13 August 1812 this theatre gave a revival of an opera by Méhul, Le trésor supposé, which had been given at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt in 1809, as well as the Theater an der Wien in 1803 and the court theatres in 1809. This performance seems to have been passed over in silence by Viennese papers which normally comment on theatrical events; but Die Theaterzeitung was very scathing about attempts by this theatre to mount operas the following year.

In 1812, Viennese readers of the AMZ heard of the success of the opera Silvana by Weber, performed in Berlin. For supporters of German opera, it was grounds for celebration:

In der jetztigen musikalischen Zeitperiode, wo auf der einen Seite in den Opern der neuern italienischen Schule, nur dem Sänger, als solchem, auf Kosten des musikal. Charakters gehuldigt wird, wo alltägliche Flachheit und leere Seichtigkeit den ächten, guten Geschmack zu verdrängen drohen; auf der

1. TZ, 13 June 1812, p. 190.

andern Seite, die herrschende Manier der neuern französischen Oper den Mangel des Innern, im Gesange sich eigentlich aussprechenden Gemütvollen der Kunst, durch gesuchte und bizarre Instrumentaleffecte zu ersetzen sucht.-- in dieser für die Vervollkommenung der Oper so wenig günstigen Periode, ist es eine wahrhaft erfreuliche Erscheinung für den Freund der Kunst.

The most outstanding success of 1812 was Boieldieu's Jean de Paris which opened at the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnertheater on subsequent nights in August. In years to come, this opera was looked back on with affection as one of the very best French operas ever seen in Vienna. It was given at all four major Viennese theatres, and it and its Viennese parody are described below (see p. 559ff; 606). In July 1812, Mozart's Die Zauberflöte had been revived in rival productions at the Theater an der Wien and Kärntnertheater. Bäuerle, summing up the year's achievement in Die Theaterzeitung, commented on the richness and variety of the repertoire, and the effectiveness of costumes and decorations:

Bald im pohlischen, bald im türkischen, bald in ungarischen, bald im altenglischen, bald im spanischen, bald im schwedischen Costüme, bald in der Tracht der alten Ritter, bald in den Wänsen der Hussiten und Zigeuner.²

-- this expense showed the richness and generosity of theatre directions and, added Die Theaterzeitung,

1. AMZ, 26 August 1812, column 572.

2. TZ, 12 January 1813, opening article.

their concern for art; (a modern reader might add, cynically, and box office success).

But one surprising disappointment for Viennese audiences in May 1812 had been Spontini's Fernand Cortez; Spontini was composer to Napoleon and therefore was respected at the Viennese court. The translation of the opera which claimed not to have altered a single rhythm, was criticised by Die Theaterzeitung in what may have been a smear campaign against the court poet, Castelli.¹

Der Sammler, on the other hand, praised the text especially "wenn man bedenkt, wie schwer es ist, einen Text aus einer Sprache; die eine so willkührliche Prosodie hat, auf eine schon bestehende Musik zu übersetzen".²

The opera was produced in Vienna five times before 1850 (and also in 1854) at both the Kärntnerthortheater and the Theater an der Wien; the 1812 production ran for 39 performances until 1814. In 1815 and 1818 the opera was revived, on the latter occasion in a new version by Spontini.

The plot of the opera is about the Spanish conquest of Mexico; it is known that Napoleon had a guiding hand in the planning of the opera and that the character of Cortez was meant to suggest a resemblance to him.³ The Spaniards in the opera behave with unrealistic

1. TZ, 30 May 1812, p. 174.

2. Der Sammler, 30 May 1812, p. 262.

3. Dent, pp. 99-100.

nobility and chivalry. The opera uses a smoother and more Italianate line of melody than most French composers, but has at the same time an almost German concentration on harmony: Spontini is said to have "created the international style of the next generation".¹ The drama is not very clear, and the construction of the opera rather clumsy owing to the alteration of solos and choruses. The effectiveness of the opera depends largely on the big choruses which often use long crescendos leading to a climax.

The performance of the opera, which was deficient on the first few nights (see pp. 599-601), subsequently improved. From the beginning, however, audiences appreciated the distinctive features of Spontini's style:

Die Chöre, deren Anzahl gross ist, dürften als das Vorzüglichste der Oper gelten, obschon auch die meisten der übrigen Gesangstücke bestimmten Werth haben.... Herrschende Kraft ist überall, wo der Text sie erheischt; die Neuheit der Composition aber liegt nicht sowohl in der Melodie, als in der Harmonie, ihrer Zusammenstellung und Führung.²

According to Der Sammler, the recitative was even further removed from "natural declamation" than in La Vestale. Dlle Sessi, who played the part of Amazyli, did not have the power and strength to give the required importance to her part. Although the work was admired in Vienna, it was never regarded with the same affection as La Vestale, whose music is generally regarded as having greater beauty.

1. Dent, p. 101.

2. Der Sammler, 30 May 1812, p. 262.

The Eipeldauer peasant related to his cousin the story of a farmer who was taken to see Fernand Cortez during one of his visits to the big city and who was surprised at Spontini's frequent repetition of the text, which he took as a result of the fact that the singers kept getting stuck, not having learnt their parts properly.¹

In 1818, Madame Grünbaum coped better with the striking, forceful and concentrated music allotted to Amazily² which has wide vocal leaps and modulates freely.³ When the new production opened on 3 October 1818 it is amusing to note that this opera, written to glorify Napoleon, was chosen for the Emperor Franz's namesday and was preceded by a round of "Gott erhalte Franz der Kaiser".⁴ The new arrangement performed this year, was especially made by Spontini for Vienna, in which (according to WAMZ), the introduction to Act II and much of Act III were omitted, and the order of the acts altered.⁵

The change of style in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century has been attributed particularly to Cherubini and Spontini.⁶ Schubert was directly influenced by Spontini and saw La Vestale

1. Die Eipeldauer Briefe, II, volume 8 (1812), p. 387.

2. TZ, 6 October 1818, p. 479.

3. Dent, p. 100.

4. TZ, 6 October 1818, p. 479.

5. WAMZ, 10 October 1818, columns 381-382. (see p. 527-530).

6. Dent, p. 108.

in 1812.¹ In this regard it is fascinating to read that negotiations took place to bring Spontini to Vienna. Der Sammler allegedly went as far as quoting the Journal de l'Empire dated 1 February 1813, as saying "Man sagt, Hr. Spontini habe einen Ruf nach Wien erhalten, um dort eine Oper zu componieren".² Spontini did not go to Vienna; in the light of his future activity in Berlin it is tantalising to think what might have happened if he had.

By the beginning of 1813, the financial strains of the last 15 or 20 years were beginning to ease. Mills and workshops were now working to capacity again and trade had improved, and there was a new sense of hope.³ But although the average person was now better paid, people such as civil servants still suffered considerable hardship, and in 1813 when Franz Grillparzer applied for a post in the Hofbibliothek he was warned that it would be seven or eight years before he could expect to be paid.

Another celebrated artist who accepted an appointment in Vienna in 1813 was Spohr, who came to the Austrian capital to be "erster Musikdirector" at the Theater an der Wien.

On 1 October 1813, Graf Palffy von Erdöd opened his period of sole directorship of the Theater an der Wien with a performance of Don Giovanni. When he took over, a large number of singers moved to the

1. Deutsch, Schubert, p. 28.

2. Der Sammler, 25 February 1813, p. 128.

3. Musulin, p. 130.

Kärntnertheater, and from 1813, the number of operas given at the Theater an der Wien declined.¹ Palffy, however, was interested in art and idealistic. He was to lose all his money in the enterprise.² Die Wiener Zeitung reported a lottery of his possessions on 6 May 1819.

Operas now sank to a quarter of the repertoire of the Theater an der Wien, and later to a sixth, whereas spoken drama rose to over half the total number of performances.³ Ballet, children's ballets and pantomime replaced opera in the repertoire. Palffy remained the theatre's director until 1825. Around 1813 Bäuerle became established as master of the Viennese Volksstück (he had been editing the Theaterzeitung since 1806); his plays about Staberl enjoyed a great vogue.

A vogue for patriotic music was sweeping Vienna and this had its influence on the repertoire of the theatres and on production itself. The renovated Theater in der Josefstadt which, in accordance with its new image, produced a theatre almanac this year, lists among works about Thaddädl, Rochus Pumpernickel and pantomimes, which made up the greatest part of its repertoire, pieces with titles like:

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1. Bauer, p. 93.
 2. Bauer, p. 92.
 3. Bauer, p. 92.

Die Recrutirung, Menschengene in 1 Akt (1 September)
Die zwey Grenadiere, Lustspiel in 3 Akt (14 September)
Der Kampf fürs Vaterland, Schauspiel in 3 Act, von
 Gleich, Musik von Roser, Kapellmeister (27 September)

The Theater in der Josefstadt this year had an orchestra of sixteen players as well as a Kapellmeister, Franz Roser and a Musikdirektor, Herr Streuble, and a company of twenty men and twelve women.¹ According to Johann Schindler in Die Theaterzeitung they gave

fast alle Tage ein neues Stück! Schade nur, dass wir so selten ein gutes Stück erhalten, oder unter den mittelmässigen eins, das ordentlich studiert würde. Die hiesige Bühne hat Leute, die nie etwas auswendig lernen....²

But Der Sammler commented favourably about the August production of Die Schweitzerfamilie:

So gewagt der Versuch immer seyn möchte, der Erfolg war nicht ungünstig. Das Orchester that seine Schuldigkeit redlich; auch das singende und recitirende Personale zeigte sichtbare Anstrengung.³

Both the Theater in der Josefstadt and the Theater in der Leopoldstadt gave parodies of Jean de Paris in 1813 - a sign of the opera's popularity in Vienna.

The most successful new opéra-comique of 1813 was Catel's Les aubergistes de qualité, at the Theater an der Wien in February, parodied in April at the Theater in der Josefstadt (Die vornehmen Wirtinnen).⁴

1. Almanach für das Theater in der Josefstadt, 1813, pp. 16-17.

2. TZ, 27 March 1813, pp. 146-147.

3. Der Sammler, 24 August 1813, p. 540.

4. Music by Roser, libretto by Gleich. TZ, 8 April 1813, found nothing funny about the parody.

Die vornehmen Wirte, as the Catel opera was known in Vienna, was amusing and interesting with good, witty dialogue and well-drawn characters. Die Theaterzeitung complained that the music was "kaum mittelmässig" the overture "gehaltlos", and that Catel, so masterly in the realm of tragic operas like Sémiramis, had demeaned himself in composing this slender opera.¹ Der Sammler found the music unpretentious but pleasing: complementary to the text without seeking effects of its own.² The production got off to a slow start with several performers not knowing their parts;³ with greater familiarity, the ensembles improved and the opera was given to full houses.⁴

But another Catel opera this year, Les Bayadères, although very popular in Paris, failed completely, being badly cast, with ballets omitted, and poor performance of the chorus of Bayadères. Some of the music, it was alleged, was strongly reminiscent of Die Zauberflöte. The Viennese did not like the music: "die Ouvertüre, obgleich lärmend und kriegerisch, machte keine Sensation."⁵ Strangely, Die Theaterzeitung⁶ had, at first, hailed

1. TZ, 6 February 1813, pp. 61-62.

2. Der Sammler, 7 February 1813, p. 88.

3. TZ, 13 February 1813, p. 5. Viennese had first read of the Parisian success of this opera in Der Sammler, 30 July 1812: it was claimed "sie ist ungemein lustig, und hat keine langweilige Stelle, obschon sie drey Aufzüge enthält."

4. TZ, 13 February 1813, p. 5.

5. AMZ, 17 November 1813, p. 759; also 24 November 1813.

6. TZ, 26 October 1813 (front page).

the opera as a masterpiece but it failed to hold the stage and was a disappointment to Austrian audiences who had first read about the pomp of the opera as performed at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1810.¹ Castelli made alterations in the third act of the opera "um das Interesse nicht sinken zu lassen". Summing up the fate of the work in Vienna Die Theaterzeitung wrote:

Schade, dass wir in dieser Epoche unsers Theaters ein solches Werk nicht in seiner ganzen Grösse geben können.

More successful was a ballet based on the story with some of Catel's music and additional material by Gyrowetz, given at the Kärntnerthortheater in 1815.²

Isouard's opera Alamon at the Theater an der Wien, however, was given a lively, entertaining performance and the finale of the first act and entracte were "Sterne erster Grösse". Herr Wild, Vienna's favourite tenor, played Alamon.³ Isouard's Lully et Quinault in September at the Theater an der Wien failed, being too stiff and full of allusions interesting only to the French.⁴

But most interesting this year were reactions to five revivals which took place. Cherubini's Der Gefangene had first been seen at the Theater an der Wien in 1803. In 1813, it was found old-fashioned, ordinary and thin:

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1. Thalia, 22 September 1810, p. 93.
 2. TZ, 26 October 1813, (front page).
 3. Der Sammler, 12 December 1813, p. 792.
 4. Der Sammler, 28 September 1813, p. 620.

wir sind von dem Gedanken zurückgekommen,
alles Französisch allerliebste zu finden.¹

On 11 March, Raoul der Blaubart was performed at the Theater in der Josefstadt as a benefit performance for Herr Santner. The opera was still being given at the Theater an der Wien, and in July 1813 was performed for the debut of Madame Grünbaum. On that occasion Die Theaterzeitung described the opera as "einförmig in der Handlung, nicht allzu anziehend in der Composition";² the Josefstadt production seems to have been given only once.

On 20 March, not to be outdone, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt gave Raoul von Crequi, but the revival was not a success. It was bearable only on account of "die lieblich romantische, durchaus charakteristische Musik", but the first and third acts were held to be a chaos of jumbled-together scenes ("von Haltung und Wahrscheinlichkeit ist keine Rede"). On the other hand, the second act was well organised, simple, and dramatically effective. This is the scene which is reminiscent of *Fidelio*. The jailer was played by Ignaz Schuster and highly acclaimed, but Die Theaterzeitung threw the mantle of Christian charity over the performances of the rest of the cast.³

In May, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt gave another revival: Gaveaux's Le petit matelot with

1. Der Sammler, 13 March 1813, p. 168.

2. TZ, 20 July 1813, p. 334.

3. TZ, 23 March 1813, p. 140.

Ignaz Schuster and Swoboda as the ship's captain and Thomas, and Dem. Hensler as Leopold who sang the old favourite tobacco-pipe song charmingly. All the performers acted better than they sang, but the whole performance was thoroughly enjoyable.¹

Lastly, there was a revival of Le déserteur by Monsigny at the Kärntnertheater in November. It consisted of a substantial reworking of the original opera, by one of the singers, Herr Ehlers, and included a patriotic song to the Austrian emperor, which was thought to be the most enjoyable part of the whole evening. This version is discussed in greater detail on p. 453.²

In the spring of 1814, a series of allied victories ended with the march on Paris, the abdication of Napoleon and his internment on the island of Elba. His wife, Marie-Louise, and their son arrived in Vienna accompanied by members of her Paris household. Happier than the return of Marie-Louise was the arrival in Vienna of kings, ambassadors and emperors from all over Europe to attend the Congress of Vienna. It gave rise to a final act of 121 articles restoring stability to Europe and establishing national boundaries. A real feeling of liberation came over the Austrians after the cessation of hostilities.

An opera by Boieldieu and one by Gaveaux were the only French operas new to Austrian audiences this

1. TZ, 20 May 1813, p. 236.

2. AMZ, 29 December 1813, letter dated Wien, den 4ten Dezember.

year, but the Kärntnerthortheater, with almost exclusive rights over opera performance now that the Theater an der Wien's direction had changed, also revived some "classics" by Cherubini, Méhul and Spontini.

In Lent 1814, the Theater in der Josefstadt underwent further alteration to improve the sightlines, enlarge the auditorium by two hundred, and make the theatre more comfortable. As part of this general policy of improvement, the theatre also engaged new members, among them a Herr Raimund, to undertake "das intrikante [sic] Fach und.... komische Rollen".¹ The new year 1814 saw a revival of Mozart's Così at the Theater an der Wien, in a new translation by Treitschke as Die Zauberprobe. Then on 24 January at the Kärntnerthortheater there was a revival of Lodoiska performed "nach der Original-Partitur", but no mention was made as to whether the score used was different from the earlier Theater an der Wien production. Madame Milder played Lodoiska. The overture and most of the vocal pieces were clapped but the final set was not as effective as it could have been.² Gaveaux's L'échelle de soie followed in February; it was given nineteen times, and in two revivals, as a useful one-act opera to combine with ballets or short plays -- and Der Sammler conceded it was a lively opera, though improbable, and with poetry "matt und zuweilen

1. Der Sammler, 19 April 1814, p. 252.

2. AMZ, 23 February 1814, column 131.

ganz prosaisch" -- but it was comic and "die Musik von Gaveaux ist leicht gefällig und dem Sūjet angemessen".¹ In May, Boieldieu's Le nouveau seigneur de village got off to a poor start but the translation was, unusually, singled out for being excellent, with no dull rhymes, and Johann was played by Herr Ehlers with great acclaim.² This opera also held the stage extremely well, being given 99 times until 1824. Perhaps the revival of Berton's Les maris garçons at the Kärntnerthortheater in June stemmed from the belief that the failure of the work at the Theater an der Wien the previous year could be avoided. However this work was evidently not to Viennese taste because it was given once and then abandoned.

In September, the third new production of La Vestale in four years opened at the Kärntnerthortheater. This was the longest-lasting production, with 73 performances. Der Sammler greeted the revival with approval:

Opern, wie die Vestalinn, ... sind ein wahrer Schatz für eine Bühne, welche den Kunstgeschmack bilden und feststellen will...³

Es ist sehr lobenswerth, wenn ältere Opern und Stücke, besonders wenn sie als classisch anerkannt sind, neu besetzt wieder in die Scene kommen.)⁴

But there was some criticism of the singers -- ironically because Italian-trained, or Italian-born

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1. Der Sammler, 26 January 1814, p. 131.
 2. Der Sammler, 28 May 1814, under "notices".
 3. Der Sammler, 29 November 1814, p. 764.
 4. Der Sammler, 18 September 1814, p. 600.

singers were now constrained, by the change of taste, to sing German opera and French works in translation. Herr Forti and Herr Deville had poor German accents; Deville sounds more like a French than an Italian name, but according to Der Sammler he was Italian --

Es ist schon ganz recht, dass die Italiener anfangen deutsch zu lernen; aber es bleibt Anmassung, mit den ersten Anfangsgründen der Sprache kaum nothdürftig ausgerüstet, in einer bedeutenden Rolle aufzutreten und Worte hinzuleyern.¹

A long and bitter complaint appeared in the AMZ in the autumn of this year, particularly in connection with the revival of La Vestale, complaining that at a time when the whole of Europe was gathered together in Vienna, so few German operas were being given -- and ones that were, such as Don Juan and Die Zauberflöte, were being given so badly; in addition there were few concerts, and too many foreign artists who were spoiling Vienna's reputation as a centre for musical activity; "Von unserm Haydn aber ist auch nicht eine einzige Note öffentlich aufgeführt worden."²

The Vienna Congress was, by the spring of 1815, beginning to lose its attraction. Foreign dignitaries began leaving around March, and by June, Vienna was returning to normal. The policies of Austria were to remain essentially the same for over thirty years.

1. Der Sammler, 29 September 1814, p. 764.

2. AMZ, 7 December 1814, column 829.

In January 1815, a festal performance of Isouard's Aschenbrödl was given at Schönbrunn palace; European monarchs were taken on sledges through the snow for first a banquet and then the opera. Herr Wild, described as "der erste jetzt lebende deutsche Tenorsänger", played Prince Charming.¹ Johann von Paris was also given a gala performance.

During the months of January, the companies of the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnerthortheater combined for opera performances, perhaps to form one strong opera company out of two weaker ones during the presence in Vienna of so many visitors. Pieces given by this joint troupe included Johann von Paris; Die beyden Füchse (Une folie by Méhul); Der Schatzgräber (Le trésor supposé, also by Méhul); and other works from the repertoire like Figaro, Camilla, König Theodor and Der lustige Schuster. Because of this, no new work was given at the Theater an der Wien during January; but on 12 January, a revival of Solié's Le secret (Das Geheimnis) was performed by the joint company at the Kärntnerthortheater, but it survived only three performances.

There was increasing demand for the shorter opéras-comiques which combined well with ballets or plays, in double or triple bills. The large-scale French operas which had become classics of the Viennese stage, such as the larger Cherubini and Spontini works, were

1. (see pp. 605-606).

still revived, but the chances of new works on that scale finding a foothold in Vienna now were slight. Having decided that what they enjoyed most in French opera were fast, witty plots and light entertainment -- characteristics of the one-act works which French composers wrote in large numbers -- the Viennese became impatient with the longer, more demanding French works even though real music connoisseurs recognised their worth.

Two larger-scale operas, one new to Vienna, and one a revival, were given in the early spring of 1815, perhaps to impress foreign guests. Both failed. One of these operas, La Jérusalem délivrée, by Persuis, had been first given in Paris in autumn 1812, and Castelli saw it there. However, the production at the Theater an der Wien, announced in the AMZ in January and timed to coincide with the emperor's birthday, came as a bitter disappointment. It had been awaited with excitement. Persuis, it was explained, was a pupil of Gluck, and he was already known to Viennese audiences through his charming ballet, Nina.¹

There was little of interest in the plot and the characters were flat, and lacking that "gewisse Liebenswürdigkeit" and energy which audiences had come to expect of French works. The music was cold, lacking both form and melody, but it had too much harmony and colour.² Voices were subordinate to the orchestra,

1. AMZ, 22 March 1815, columns 196-201.

2. AMZ, 22 March 1815, columns 196-201.

and a suggested reason was that Persuis was a violinist, and not a singer.¹

Der Sammler devoted most of its theatre page for three issues to reasons for the opera's failure in by far the most fierce attack ever made by a Viennese paper on a French opera performed there. Why, it asked, had so much money been spent on this poor foreign opera, when German composers were in need of encouragement? The performance, which is reported to have been good, had exploited to the full the capabilities of the Theater an der Wien staff, with costumes specially designed by Stubenrauch, sets by Pian, Gail and Arrigoni. The sense of indignation against the French is heightened by the fact that the usual words used in Vienna to mean "sets" and "costume" at this time, the French-German "Decorationen" and "Costüm" appear pointedly in brackets after German words "Verzierungen" and "Trachten".² A sour report also appeared in Der Sammler after the revival a month later of Catel's Sémiramis: "Was die blinden Verehrer der französischen Musik dagegen sagen mögen kümmert uns nicht", said the reporter, but went on defiantly to blame the subject for being too gruesome a plot for an opera. He criticised the whole opera for lacking, both in its libretto and music, those romantic twists which Viennese audiences now sought -- even if its composer was Professor of the French Conservatoire.³ This

1. Der Sammler, 23 February 1815, p. 100.

2. Der Sammler, 18, 21 and 23 February 1815; pp. 92-92; 95-96; 99-100.

3. Der Sammler, 1 April 1815, pp. 171-172.

revival actually ran for 22 performances, which shows that this opera must have found some supporters. But the Persuis opera and its failure helped to fuel what was a rising tide of resentment and disillusionment with operas from France. In Der Sammler and in the AMZ one comes across increasingly frequent bitter remarks about French music from 1815 onwards, though there were still some outstanding successes.

Isouard's Joconde was first given at the Kärntnerthortheater in April 1815 and ran for 40 performances; it was a return to the "safe", entertaining type of opéra-comique which caused no offence and was good for the box office. No report appeared immediately in Der Sammler but it seems that the paper received some criticism and pressure from the public for this lack, and in July there appeared a favourable review of Joconde, and a denial by the paper that Der Sammler had ever implied that French drama had no worth, was lacking in wit, frivolity, or lightness; or that French operas had bad libretti. The journalist added however that he, personally, found them superficial and ephemeral, and thought successful German art now needed encouragement. Joconde was a highly successful and delightful mixture of French and Italian styles with fine word-setting which ensured its success.¹

A revival of Isouard's Fürst von Catanca at the Kärntnerthortheater received a respectable run of

1. Der Sammler, 22 July 1815, p. 366; AMZ, 24 May 1815, column 353.

twelve performances; it had also been successful at the Theater an der Wien, since "in der Heimath doch am besten sey".¹

In June followed a very successful revival of Méhul's Joseph, an opera which was being performed in Vienna as late as 1833. A new work, Der General, by Bochsa, first seen in September, was boring and dull, with not enough plot to cover three acts:

Solche Werke sind es, welche den Feinden der französischen Muse Waffen in die Hand geben. Wenn sie behaupten, dass Wien fünfzig Compositeurs besitzt, die eine bessere Musik schreiben würden, als jene des Herrn Bochsa, so lässt sich nichts Verneinendes darauf antworten.²

Another paper said the subject was too like Méhul's Schatzgräber, had pleasant vocal lines and instrumentation, but was predictable and suffered from endless boring choruses.³ After the revival of Der Gefangene, by Della Maria, which was so badly given that people walked out of the Kärntnertheater,⁴ came Lottchen am Hofe performed in Vienna on the day of the Battle of Waterloo. It was a new setting by Berton of a Favart opera which dated back to the times of the Paris fairgrounds, and had been seen in Vienna in French in 1776 and 1780. There was also a German setting of the plot by Weisse and Hiller; the Berton opera as performed in Vienna claimed to have words by "Favart and Weisse" which suggests some of the earlier translation may have been included.

1. AMZ, 24 May 1815, columns 353-354.

2. Der Sammler, 23 September 1815, p. 476.

3. Der Sammler, 24 October 1815, p. 528.

4. AMZ, 20 December 1815, column 351.

Der Sammler and the AMZ stated that this attempt to revive an old opera from 1750 had been a failure -- to Viennese audiences at least. Originally this portrayal of life at the French court and the naive Lottchen had something touching about them: but now, manners and customs at court had changed and Lottchen had become something of a caricature:

Das Schwankende in den Charakteren vermehrte noch den Unmuth des Parterre's, umsonst belustigte Herrn Hasenhuts stummes Spiel bey dem Genuss einer Tasse Eis, umsonst sang und spielte Mad. Forti allerliebste. Das Stück war von den ersten Scenen an dem Abgrunde gewidmet und in den letzten schien sich, nach dem Ausdruck eines unserer Prager Correspondenten, das Parterre in ein Volk von Schlangen zu verwandeln.¹

The AMZ commented that the music was "in der neuern französischen Manier, leicht, tadelnd, aber ziemlich flach".² In addition, two of Hiller's original Lieder were incorporated into the opera, which must have heightened for Viennese audiences the feeling that the opera was an anachronism.

Jeannot und Collin, by Isouard had a cold reception and the music was held to be thin. Herr Forti was not successful in the title role of Jeannot although the music was increased by the addition of a coloratura aria for him (the opera was given as a benefit performance for Herr Forti). The favourite singers, Wild and Seidler, were thought to have been played too much into the shadows. The opera also included an extra duet by Hummel.³

1. Der Sammler, 24 October 1815, p. 528.

2. AMZ, 20 December 1815, column 852-853.

3. AMZ, 20 December 1815, column 352-352; Der Sammler, 23 November, 1815.

For the members of the Viennese public who were beginning to find that all French operas sounded prosaically the same, and that their staging wasted too much theatre money, and who wished to see those funds spent on worthy productions of recent German operas, there was a disappointment. For in the summer of 1815, Count Palffy from the Theater an der Wien made a journey to Paris -- not for the primary purpose of buying the latest French opera scores, but to engage new French ballet dancers for Vienna. The AMZ commented bitterly:

Keine günstige Vorbedeutung für die deutsche Kunst! Haben denn die Ereignisse der neuesten Zeit auch in dieser Hinsicht nicht die wohlthätigen Folgen herbeygeführt, die man sich von ihnen versprach? werden wir, trotz der patriotischen Floskeln, die jetzt so häufig unsern Lippen entströmen, immer und ewig für unser theures Geld nur vergöttern, was über den Rhein kommt? Fern sey jede gehässige Anwendung auf einzelne, wahrhaft grosse Künstler aber im Allgemeinen, im Allgemeinen....¹

L. Disillusionment with French opera

In January 1816 the opera company of the Theater an der Wien was much depleted when some of its singers moved to the Kärntnerthortheater. The theatre was reportedly going to have to limit its activities to smaller works.² However despite the smaller company, the Theater an der Wien this year gave revivals including

1. AMZ, 25 October 1815, columns 718-719.

2. Der Sammler, 25 January 1816, p. 44: "Bey dem Verluste einiger bedeutenden Sänger scheint das Theater an der Wien auf Spectakelstücke und locale Singspiele zu beschränken".

Titus, Lodoiska, Raoul der Blaubart, Johann von Paris and Richard Löwenherz, as well as an old opera by Seyfried, Zum goldenen Löwen. There was a resurgence of interest in ballet, both in der Wien and, especially, at the Kärntnerthortheater, where Herr Aumer's ballets were extremely popular and now considered the most exciting element of the theatre's activities.

The only première of an opéra-comique in Vienna in 1816 was Dalayrac's Dichter und Tonsetzer, described by Viennese papers as his swansong. This was not strictly true as Dalayrac's opera Le pavillon des fleurs received its première at the opéra-comique in May 1822. It was, however, the last of Dalayrac's operas to be staged in Vienna, and its fast pace, melodious music and good plot -- all the ingredients which traditionally pleased the Viennese in French music -- gave great satisfaction. Dalayrac and Grétry were considered, in Paris as well as Vienna, as belonging to the golden age of opéra-comique, which was looked back to with some nostalgia.¹

A very successful opera by Boieldieu, Le nouveau seigneur de village (Der neue Gutsherr), first performed at the Kärntnerthortheater in 1814, and to enjoy a long run of 99 performances there until 1824, was given two performances at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt this year. Very unusually for this theatre, a French opera was chosen for the début of one of its company, Emanuel Schikaneder's nephew, Carl. The opera was well received at this suburban theatre.²

1. Der Sammler, 17 October 1815, p. 516.

2. AMZ, 26 June 1816, column 442.

Blangini's Nephtali, which had been seen at the Theater an der Wien in 1812, and performed only twice, was revived at the Kärntnertheater this year, but despite apparent hopes that this opera would be more successful at the Kärntnertheater, it was given only four times. It was criticised for having a story too like Méhul's Joseph, but music lacking the stature of Méhul's. It was claimed of this new production that much that was superfluous in the work had been omitted, and Seyfried's complete second finale and new final scene were well received. But these musical additions and an interesting allegorical set failed to save the opera, which by its third performance was playing to a half-empty house on account of its "matte, inhaltsleere Sujet" and the "oberflächlich gehaltene Musik".¹

Another dreary revival which made little impact was Quasin's Salomon's Urtheil, which had been a great success on its first production, reaching 76 performances, but which was now found watery and unoriginal, despite new music written for the ballets by Kinsky, which only showed up the "patched together" French music.²

In the press, the tone of notices about French operas performed in Vienna was becoming peevish and critical. The real reason for the disaffection with French operas was detected as early as 1814 by one

1. AMZ, 26 June 1816, column 441.

2. AMZ, 23 October 1816, columns 780-781.

shrewd writer for Der Sammler who noted that Semiramis was not as popular as it had been and put it down to a change of taste:

"nur derjenige Compositor, welcher tragische Formen mit romantischen Gedanken und Ansichten zu vereinigen weiss, wird -- allgemeine Theilnahme erwecken",¹

Another sharper indication of changing times came in 1816, with the performance on 27 November of the first opera by Rossini ever seen in Vienna. An Italian troupe under the direction of Herr Cera, visiting Vienna, opened its season at the Kärntnertheater with a performance of L'inganno felice, preceded by an opera by Generali, L'Adeline. On this first evening of opera in Italian in Vienna for several years, excitement ran high and there were no vacant seats. How would the Viennese react to Italian opera after so many years of opéra-comique? The answer was disappointment, even slight musical culture shock: the performance "hat keineswegs den Hoffnungen des Publicums entsprochen"; the music and libretto allegedly existed too independently of one another, and the singers could not act.² Better received was the second half of the programme, a one-act opera L'inganno felice by Rossini.

The Italians began their season on 26 November and stayed in Vienna until the following spring, performing a total of nine operas of which two: L'inganno felice and Tancredi, were by Rossini. Der Sammler attributed some of the disappointment to the

1. Der Sammler, 13 February 1814, pp. 103-104.

2. Der Sammler, 30 November 1816, p. 592.

poor performance which was only too evidently the first in a new location. The operas had been hastily mounted in six days. The troupe consisted of ten singers and was accompanied by the court opera orchestra under the leadership of Herr Weigl. The critic for Der Sammler hoped that the Italian performances would improve, but expressed little enthusiasm.¹ The AMZ was even less encouraging: it was a long time since the patience of the Viennese had been tried by something so altogether poor. The singers' tasteless and out-of-time embellishments almost made one laugh. The performance allegedly lasted too long -- until almost 10.30 pm--and was so tedious that the audience talked.²

Viennese readers of the AMZ would have realised that Rossini was fast becoming a household name in other parts of Germany. In Munich, for example, "Rossini ist der Liebling des grössten Theils unsers Publicums geblieben. Seine schönen, gefälligen, wirklich genialischen Melodien bedürfen nur eines Ohres, um jeden zu unterhalten."³ In Paris, too, there was renewed interest in Italian music and the AMZ devoted much of two issues in December 1816 to describing the new Italian Opera there.⁴

1. Der Sammler, 30 November 1816, p. 592.

2. AMZ, 1 January 1817, column 14.

3. AMZ, December 1816, column 857.

4. AMZ, December 1816, numbers 51 and 52.

M. 1817

There were two new opéras-comiques seen in 1817 at the Kärntnerthortheater and the AMZ reported that the final curtain of the first one fell to the accompaniment of hisses, each act having been worse than the previous one in spite of the enjoyable music. This production of Boieldieu's La fête du village voisin had been announced excitedly in a report from Vienna in April¹ as a forthcoming attraction. It was given only four times, but was revived four years later at the Leopoldstadt.² On the other hand, La prisonnière by Boieldieu and Cherubini in December reached ten performances. The same feeling of flatness is to be sensed in reactions to revivals of once-popular French operas. There was a tinge of regret, a feeling that times, styles and priorities had changed. When Die vornehmen Wirte was given in Vienna in May, the singing is reported to have overshadowed the "einst so blühenden Conversationston".³

The theatres in Vienna were in a state of flux at the beginning of 1817. The Italian troupe continued to play in the early part of the year,⁴ but left around April to play in Munich. Madame Borgondio, one of the troupe's stars, fell ill and the troupe's activities were curtailed. But Austrians complained

1. AMZ, 28 May 1817, column 427.

2. AMZ, 18 June 1817, column 377.

3. AMZ, 18 June 1817, column 428.

4. Rossini's opera l'Italiana in Algeri was performed in Vienna on 15 March but met with limited success because it was recognised as being a reworking of the Roxelane (Les trois Sultanes) story. This was hardly a valid reason and the opéra subsequently enjoyed success in Vienna.

that since the rebirth of interest in Italian opera, the German troupe at the Kärntnertheater was being run down. In 1816, when Herr Wild had fallen ill, both the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnertheater had been in difficulties as to how to fill his place; and when Herr Siboni left Vienna, Fernand Cortez could no longer be given,¹ because Herr Forti, who remained behind, could not manage the high notes.²

In 1817, Méhul died in Paris and an obituary appeared in the AMZ;³ rather surprisingly this year, the French composer Persuis, future director of the Paris Opéra, visited Vienna. His opera La Jérusalem délivrée had disappointed the Viennese in 1815, and he was known in the Austrian capital largely for his ballet Nina. There were only passing references to this visit in the press -- as though it was barely thought important:

While the other theatres were disillusioned with French opera, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt out in the suburbs began a series of revivals of some of the most famous French operas: Johann von Paris, Salomon's Urtheil and Die Tage der Gefahr. "Ich war erstaunt" wrote the critic of the Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung:

1. AMZ, 28 May 1817, column 377.

2. AMZ, 25 November 1818, columns 820-821.

3. AMZ, 12 November 1817, column 785.

am 4. Juni auf dem Anschlagzettel des k.k.Privil. Leopoldstädtertheater die Aufführung des Johann von Paris mit Boyeldieu's Musik zu lesen. Was Wunder also, wenn mich die Neugierde, diese Bühne, auf welcher ich bisher nur locale Stücke, Travestien, Pantomimen, Geister in -- und ausserhalb Fläschen (Vitzliputzli) sah, zu besuchen, diese Oper anzuhören, reizte, welche als eine der beliebtesten sich stets auf den ersten Bühnen dieser Kaiserstadt schon mehrere Jahre ehrenvoll erhalten hat.... diese oft gehörte Oper wurde in allen Nuancen, in so ferne es nur physisch möglich war, gut gegeben. Jedes einzelne Gesangstück erhielt verdienten Beyfall.

It had clarity, pace, and skill.

Anton Schuster played the seneschal and the weakest part was Johann himself, played by Herr Blacho; the theatre lacked a strong tenor.

The paper concluded that "Diese Bühne bedeutende Sänger und Künstler besitzt".¹

The success of this undertaking encouraged the performance of two other French operas later in the year.

Ironically, the same page of the AMZ which in 1817 announced the performance at the Leopoldstadt of Cherubini's Die Tage der Gefahr, and the return to Vienna of the Italians, also carried a notice by Weber of Hoffmann's opera Undine.²

In January 1818 Les artistes par occasion was given at the Kärntnertheater. On 12 February, the emperor's birthday, there was another première: L'amour et mystère by Boieldieu and Hérold. The latter, previously unknown to Viennese audiences, was introduced as a pupil of Méhul and the

1. AMZ, 26 June 1817, column 216.

2. AMZ, 19 March 1817, column 207-210.

composer of La clochette, a new opera currently enjoying much success in the French capital. L'amour et mystère was quite freely translated for Vienna because, as Der Sammler acknowledged:

an einer Gelegenheitsoper so manches umzuändern ist, was auf fremden Boden und in andern Verhältnissen unpassend wäre.¹

Owing to Herr Wild's absence, the weaker Herr Forti had to take the leading part, and Der Sammler reports that the opera was not well attended at first, though attendances later improved.

Two months later, also at the Kärntnerthortheater, Méhul's Journée aux aventures was given its première. It was performed only twice, for although the third act was charming, the plot was held to be too complicated and there was "too much music".²

At the Theater an der Wien, no longer giving many French operas, Spohr's Faust received its first performance on 7 July.

There were three new French operas in the following year: 1819. La lettre de change was given at the Kärntnerthortheater in April -- an opera by Isouard and Bochsa -- but the AMZ announced only Bochsa as the author. It succeeded well, being given 35 times. It was lively and entertaining but the music was not thought to be particularly distinguished.³

1. Der Sammler, 19 February 1818, p. 87.

2. TZ, 16 April 1818, p. 183.

3. AMZ, 26 March 1819, column 359.

Catel's Das frühere Recht, in June at the Kärntnerthortheater was probably the work originally named Le premier en date. The opera is not clearly identified. It had a frosty reception, being regarded only as a time-filler before the ballet which followed.¹ Another new opera, Die beiden Ehen by Isouard, was hailed by the AMZ as the only interesting performance at the Kärntnerthortheater.²

Die Weiden Troubadours in September (Le prince troubadour, by Méhul) was given once and never repeated:

Das Singspiel missfiel so sehr,
dass keine Wiederholung desselben mehr Statt
fand. Die charakteristische, im Geist des
Zeitalters gehaltene, auf National-Melodien
gebaute Musik war für die, durch welsche
Süssigkeiten verwöhnte Gaumen der
Wiener rein ungeniessbar.³

The AMZ commented that the music was too French for German audiences.⁴

As well as these new operas, there were two important revivals of older operas this year: Die Tage der Gefahr by Cherubini, who stood the test of time in Vienna much better than Méhul, and Spontini's Die Vestalinn.

1. AMZ, 28 July 1819, column 510.

2. AMZ, 22 September 1819, column 629.

3. AMZ, 1 December 1819, column 822.

4. The provincial French troubadour song had, it was alleged, no interest for German audiences. WAMZ, 24 September 1818.

In the words of the AMZ, Cherubini had written: "ewig sich verjüngende Musik". The opera was very well performed, with a chorus 56 strong but some tempi were taken very fast, especially the romance, the close of the first finale, and the allegro of the overture:

wenigstens waren die Violinisten nothgedrungen, alle 16-theilige Noten auf Achtel zu reduzieren. Als der Meister selbst bey seiner Anwesenheit vor zehn Jahren seine Werke leitete, fixirte er dies Zeitmaas mehr als um die Hälfte langsamer; darauf sollte man doch nicht vergessen.

The revealing word "Chiusa" is used instead of "finale" and one can well imagine that this opera was falling under the influence of the Italians and (perhaps) their faster.. tempi.¹ From about 1818 onwards, one is struck by a new affectation which appears in the writings of Viennese critics: the use of Italian words and phrases of exclamation. During the previous twenty years this was not found in Viennese journalism.

In the summer of 1819, the Theater an der Wien was redecorated inside and Die Vestalinn was the first work of the new season. It was a grand production, well rehearsed, and well set,² but it was given only three times. The AMZ talks approvingly of the "reich besetzten, mit Delikatesse und Präcision ausgeführten Chöre, die treffliche Begleitung des Orchesters, das

1. AMZ, 28 July, 1819, column 511.

2. AMZ, 1 December 1819, column 824.

sehenswürdige Ensemble" but adds that the rôles of Pontifex (Herr Spitzeder), Licinius and the high priestess (Herr Schulz and Dem. Schwarz), and Cinna (Herr Seipelt) were poorly played. The latter's part lay quite outside his vocal range.¹

The most important performance of a French work in 1819 was that of the new Boieldieu opera, Rothkäppchen, (Le petit chaperon rouge), given in March.

Viennese audiences had already read of the outstanding success in Paris of this latest Boieldieu opera, and waited excitedly for the Austrian première. Boieldieu's operas had, on the whole, been successful in Vienna -- his Jean de Paris was still being given to full houses with fresh excitement over each new artist whose talents were tested by taking on one of the roles, and his works had not aroused the same frustration and disillusionment as, for example, the operas of Isouard.

After the Paris première, an unusually unfavourable review of Le petit chaperon rouge had appeared in the AMZ, written by Sievers whose regular reports of theatrical life in the French capital usually appeared on the front page of the paper.² This only heightened the excitement and curiosity of the Viennese.

1. AMZ, 28 July, 1819, column 511.

2. AMZ, 1 April 1818, column 244.

After the Austrian première on 27 March, opinions in Vienna were divided about the opera:¹ the instrumentation was "interessant"; the introductory chorus and chorus of woodcutters pleasing; the trio in act one, the two duets and the first finale had good parts. But the music was heard by Viennese ears to be striving for originality -- seeking to impress by a learned mastery of counterpoint. Parts of it, such as the trio in the overture for flute, bassoon and cello which represented the characters in the fairy story, sounded too baroque and thin; the funeral scene in act two was seemingly endless and only saved by the appearance of the genies. As the AMZ wrote:

Endlich und endlich und endlich sahen wir denn auch das vielbesprochene Rothkäppchen (Le petit chaperon rouge) von Boieldieu... Freund Sievers hat mit seiner Prophezeiung doch nicht so ganz in's Blaue geschossen. Zwar wurde die Oper glücklich und unangefochten bis zu Ende gespielt; manches gefiel sogar... aber gegen das Ende ermattete alles sichtbarlich, und das Resultat des Totalerfolges erhob sich nicht über die Mittelmässigkeit. Wenn auch die Tendenz der Fabel -- bekannt unsern Lesern aus dem Pariserbericht -- einigermaßen nach Moral schmeckt, und am Schlusse der Triumph der Tugend gefeyert wird, so sind doch mehr /sic/ Szenen ziemlich lasciv, und unverschleyert equivoque, dass man sich billig wundern muss, wie eine besonders bey den Hoftheatern auf Sittlichkeit so streng wachsame Censur gerade hier nachsichtsvoll durch die Finger sehen konnte.²

1. AMZ, 21 April 1819, columns 268-269.

2. AMZ, 21 April 1819, columns 268-269.

The music is criticised here; but also one of the old Austrian prejudices about the French is brought up: the idea that they were not as morally upright as the subjects of Austria. A certain streak of prudishness lay behind this, and Maria Theresia had been the first to suggest that not all French operas would be suitable in Vienna because of a difference in moral standards. In fact, Austrians too had a streak of grossness in them -- it was just a different kind. The less than complete success in Vienna of this very successful Paris opera came as a shock. (However, it was performed 22 times until November 1822.)

In 1819 the Italians sealed their success in Vienna with a performance on 3 October (the emperor's name-day, and only a week after the last Méhul opera to receive its première in Vienna failed there) of Rossini's Ricciardo e Zoraide. This honour had, for many years, been accorded to particularly successful French operas. It was a grand festal performance and in December 1819 the AMZ commented that the reports from Italian papers were true:

wie nähmlich, der divino maestro hier
einen neuen Weg eingeschlagen, und ausschliessent-
lich der Wahrheit, Natur und edlen Einfachheit
mit gänzlicher Verschmähung der bisher
angewandten Kraftmittel, gehuldigt habe....¹

The talk about the "new path" is reminiscent of Vienna's first reactions to Cherubini (cf. p. 178 above).

1. AMZ, 1 December 1819, column 823-824.

Not all the Rossini operas were immediate successes in Vienna: Richard und Zoraide (as the opera was called in Vienna)¹ for example, had a fairly cold reception on its early performances at the Kärntnerthortheater, although it was conceded that it contained many beautiful and successful passages. Singing actors such as Herr Forti, Madame Grünbaum and Madame Waldmüller adapted badly to Italian opera after singing French operas for so many years. There were various criticisms of these experienced singers including lack of expression, inadequate vocal range and breathing that was not effortless enough.²

The Theater an der Wien also performed Rossini in translation, and on 28 September, Der Barbier von Sevilla was given:

Hier lebt und webt Rossini recht eigentlich in seiner Sphäre; alles athmet Laune, Munterkeit, und Frohsinn, und von Ernst ist gar keine Rede.³

One piece of theatrical news from Vienna which was submitted to the AMZ deserves to be mentioned here. On 21 and 25 August 1819 a M. and Madame Price from St. Petersburg gave scenes from Adolf et Clara and Le nouveau seigneur de village, in French, joined by members of the Kärntnerthortheater company. The evening was arranged like a concert, with miscellaneous choruses. The Viennese were not very impressed by

1. Ricciardo e Zoraide, first performed in Naples 3 December 1818.

2. AMZ, 1 December 1819, columns 823-824.

3. AMZ, 1 December 1819, column 824.

the French artists: M. Price could sing and not act,
and his wife could act but not sing:

Indessen bewährte sich auch hier die leidige
Vorliebe für ausländische Schnurrpfeifereyen
besonders jen(?en)/illegible/ gegenwärtig beynahe unbegreif-
liche Vortreise transrhemanischer Etourderie.

The boxes clapped furiously and in an unruly manner.

One can imagine a hastily put-together evening, capitalising on the French visitors. Admirers of the French, the old-fashioned elite, applauded enthusiastically, while the rest of the audience was scornful.¹

In 1820, a new setting of the Jean de Paris libretto Gianni di Parigi, was performed in Vienna as Die Prinzessin von Navarra. The music was by Francesco Morlacchi, who was Kapellmeister of the Italian opera at Dresden. Gianni di Parigi had first been seen in Milan in 1818 and it was one of at least half a dozen operas in which Morlacchi used a text of French origin. Despite the current popularity of Italian music, the Viennese resented the reappearance of one of their favourite operas in this new form and judged that the French plot combined oddly with the "fremdartig geformte Zuschnitt" of the Italian music.²

In 1821, the following nostalgic article appeared in Die Theaterzeitung expressing the opinion that certain of the better French operas would always hold a place in the affections of the Viennese:

1. AMZ, 22 September 1819, columns 631-632.

2. WAMZ, 1 November 1820, column 704.

Rossini hätte sicher in jeder Zeit hohe Aufmerksamkeit verdient und zahlreiche Verehrer finden müssen ... Kein Tonsetzer vor oder neben ihm hat es je besser verstanden, die Phantasie der Sinne lebendiger und angenehmer zu wecken, zu reitzen und in blühendern Regionen süssträumend umher zu gängeln. Seltener gelingt es ihm die Phantasie der Seele anzusprechen... Daher hätte er aber auch in keiner andern Zeit eine unbestreitbare Oberherrschaft im Gebiete der Musik gewinnen können -- als in einer Zeit, wo man von der Oper gar nichts verlangt, als üppigen Zeitvertreib -- und wo der kunstwürgende allgemein verbreitete Dilettantismus nur nachtrillern und nachleyern will -- um die Poesie der Worte sich eben so wenig kümmern als der Maestro selbst.

Wie wohlthuend wirkt in einer solchen Zeit auf Herz und Verstand eine Musik, wie sie Boieldieu zu seinem Johann von Paris dichtete. Gleichweit entfernt von der herben Strenge und Härte der Schule -- wie von der vagen Melodientändelei, *schmeichelt sie den Sinnen* nur des Herzens in reger Aufmerksamkeit zu erhalten, damit diese alles rein und vollkommen empfangen und genießen können.

Wenn alle Opern von Boieldieu allmählig vom Repertoire der deutschen Bühnen verschwinden, so wird doch ohne Zweifel Johann von Paris neben Mozarts ewigen Werken, neben Weigls Schweitzerfamilie, Winters Operfest, Cherubinis Wasserträger, Mehuls Joseph stets ein lebendes Denkmahl der goldenen Zeit und eine Aegide gegen die völlige Oberherrschaft des Ungeschmacks bleiben.¹

By 1820, however, Viennese taste returned to Italian opera, though French opera still had many admirers there.² Rossini gave Italian opera a new identity, and the period of transition to Italian opera, during which French rescue opera had a strong and far-reaching effect on it and several of the most eminent Italian composers including Paer, Cherubini and Spontini wrote their most successful operas outside

1. TZ, 20 September 1821, p. 451.

2. In 1823, the English paper The Harmonicon published a report by Spohr about music in Vienna. By that time, Spohr obviously perceived what he considered to have been a "dangerous" vogue for French opera in Vienna to have passed. The Harmonicon, XI, November 1823, p. 116ff.

Italy, was brought to an end. In an article which appeared in December 1820, the WAMZ commented that music in Germany had made too much progress for Italian opera to make the same impression as it had thirty years earlier in Vienna.¹ In a sense this was true for, from now on, Italian operas were to appear as neighbours in the repertory to both French and German operas at the Kärntnertheater and on the suburban stages. An article in the WAMZ in November 1820 criticised the fickleness of Viennese audiences in courting first the French and then the Italians.²

The following month, another article tried to explain first the vogue for the French, and now the fashion for Italian opera in Vienna. Both, according to this critic, could be attributed to the lack of German opera. Gluck, finding the situation of Vienna difficult, with a lack of both good singers and good prospects, had moved to France where he helped to found a new school of French operas. Attempts by German opera composers had been isolated which made it easier for French operas to establish themselves in Vienna: "als sie bey ihrem Reichtum an Producten, schnell eines auf das andere folgen lassen, und so den Eindruck nähren konnte, den sie Anfangsbewirkte". The severe shortage of German operas led to a situation where "alle französischen Opern" (regardless of quality), could be performed in Vienna.³

1. WAMZ, 16 December 1820, columns 801-808.

2. WAMZ, 29 November 1820, column 764.

3. WAMZ, 16 December 1820, column 805.

The WAMZ went on to criticise the poor taste of theatre directors in allowing opéra-comique this degree of importance and added that French operas were not suitable for transplanting to the German stages. The lack of German poets, and strife and division among Viennese composers, had now allowed Italian composers to fill the gap. The charming and fresh melodies, lively accompaniments and brilliance had beguiled the public. The taste for difficult-sounding music was due to a change in taste away from simplicity. The music of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven was badly neglected.¹

II. 1820 - 1848

A. French opera in Vienna, 1820-1826

This concluding section does not deal with the Viennese performance of opéra-comique in the same detail as the preceding sections -- to do so would have extended the scope of this thesis beyond manageable proportions. The "golden years" of the Theater in der Josefstadt and its spectacular performances of the works of Meyerbeer, Hérold and Auber; the so-called "Opernkrieg" between the Italian and German opera factions in Vienna occasioned by the approximately simultaneous rise of Donizetti, Rossini and Weber (all of whom visited Vienna); and the participation of Nestroy in performances of French operettas -- are passed over swiftly.

1. WAMZ, 16 December 1820, columns 803-804. Gluck is quite often referred to as one of the fathers of modern French opera in the Viennese press in a way which suggests that the Viennese were proud to think that opéra-comique was related to Austrian opera.

The main purpose of this section is to dispel any impression that French opera vanished from Viennese stages at any such convenient date as 1820, and to give a brief survey of Viennese interest in French opera until 1848 when the socialist revolutions erupted in Vienna. By that time, opéra-comique as a genre had become merged with French grand opera.¹ In the early summer of 1821, performance of operas took place in Italian at the Theater an der Wien, for Palffy had obtained special permission in May of that year to perform ten Italian operas over six weeks.²

Between 1820 and 1826, Viennese audiences saw only three French operas they had never seen before: German versions of Hérold's Les troqueurs (Der Tausch) based on a much older story by Vadé; Auber's La neige (Der Schnee) and Boieldieu's La dame blanche (Die weisse Dame). Auber and Hérold were new composers to Viennese audiences, but destined to become household names. Several parodies were to be written on this last very successful opera.

Meanwhile, in 1821, Raimund was receiving good reviews in the Theaterzeitung:

ist ein ausgezeichnete Künstler und
mit Recht ein Liebling des Wiener Publikums,
der auf jedem Platze zu wirken versteht.³

The same year, Meisl's Das Gespenst auf der Bastey was given to packed houses with great success.⁴

1. Martin Cooper, Opéra-Comique, p. 64, (see pp. 318-319).

2. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 104.

3. TZ, 20 September 1821, p. 451.

4. TZ, 8 November 1821, pp. 535-536.

In 1821, too, Weber's Der Freischütz, "eine neue romantische Oper"¹, was performed at the Kärntnerthortheater. The TZ wrote "Es liegt nicht im Zwecke dieses Blattes, musikalische Gelehrsamkeit zu entwickeln; damit würden wir der Mehrzahl unserer Leser einer schlechten Dienst leisten"; Dlle Schröder played Agathe, and Herr Rosner, the new tenor, said to have improved his acting greatly, played Max. The whole was judged to be both a work of promise, and an exciting new development of existing ideas.² The strength of the pro-German party, which supported Weber and Spohr, led to a musical battle between the supporters of German and Italian opera.

Weber himself came to Vienna and was well pleased and impressed with his work there. He wrote to his wife:

Die Chöre waren vortrefflich, die Decorationen sehr schön, Schröder, herrliche Mime, zweckmässiges Spiel, reine Intonation... und der Enthusiasmus für die Oper ist wirklich grenzenlos... ich zitterte vor der Zukunft, da es kaum möglich ist, höher zu steigen. Gott allein die Ehre.³

On 3 March 1822, Weber himself conducted Der Freischütz in the Kärntnerthortheater, to much acclaim.⁴ He was presented with flowers, poems and shown many signs of appreciation.⁵

1. TZ, 8 November 1821.

2. TZ, 8 November 1821, pp. 535-536.

3. Kindermann V, p. 319.

4. John Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, (London, 1976) p. 274.

5. Kindermann, VI, p. 47.

German opera was just gaining recognition when an Italian, Barbaja, assumed charge of the Kärntnerthor-theater. Barbaja, an extremely clever impresario, brought Rossini to Vienna. He also commissioned Weber to write a new opera, Euryanthe, in the winter of 1823 when the supporters of Italian and German opera were sharply divided.

Barbaja held the lease of the Kärntnerthor-theater for twelve years, during which time he cunningly tried to soften the very Italianate appearance of the new régime by appointing Konradin Kreutzer as Kapellmeister, and commissioning the Weber opera.

One of the most striking changes in Viennese theatrical life after 1822 was the rise to much greater significance of the Theater in der Josefstadt. As the Theaterzeitung commented in 1823:

Das Josefstädter-Theater weiss nicht mehr, was ein leeres Haus heisst; denn das kunst-sinnige Wiener Publikum findet den Weg in dasselbe nicht mehr weit.¹

The change in standard was largely due to the change of director. Under the leadership of Karl Friedrich Hensler; the theatre company had been strengthened by the addition of several talented new comedians and actors; the writers for the theatre kept the audiences amused with their wit; there were skilful Kapellmeister as well as a good orchestra and ballet. As the Theaterzeitung continued:

1. TZ, 15 November 1823, p. 547.

Welche schnelle und unglaubliche Veränderung in einer Kunstanstalt durch Einsicht, regen und konsequenten Eifer hervorgebracht werden könne, beweiset das Theater in der Josefstadt ... Früher glaubte man, dieses Theater sey schon durch seine Lage, mitten in einer zwar volkreichen Vorstadt, aber ohne Vergnügungsorte, wohin die Menge wälet, und entfernter, der Meinung nach, von den Thoren der innern Stadt, als jedes andere, der Unvollkommenheit und artistischen Dürftigkeit Preis gegeben... An der Stelle des ärmlichen Lokales, erhob sich der geschmackvollste Kunsttempel, in dessen freundlichem Inneren Jedermann gerne mit Vergnügen verweilet.

... Nach dem bereits Geleisteten ist zu hoffen, dass diess Theater im Opernfache noch viel, für das Vergnügen des Publikums thun werde.¹

Aschenbrödl was revived at the Theater in der Josefstadt in November 1823, providing the director of the theatre with opportunities for spectacular staging effects. Die Tage der Gefahr (Les deux journées) was seen by audiences in the Josefstadt in March 1824. But the theatre had no important singer to play the part of the water-carrier in this opera, because it completely lacked a good bass. In 1823, Les deux mots (Die zwey Worte) had been produced at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, and in 1824 the Josefstadt also gave this work, but it was criticised in the Theaterzeitung for a less than adequate cast. In 1827, Les deux avarés was revived at the Theater in der Josefstadt, and performances at that theatre were now of a sufficiently high standard as to provide competition for the court theatres.² After Napoleon's death in 1821, a vogue for things from the Napoleonic era sprang up in France, and the renewed Viennese interest in Napoleonic operas around that time could be a reflection of the Paris fashion.

1. TZ, 15 November 1823, pp. 547-548.

2. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, pp. 300-306.

Apart from the comparatively tiny number of new productions of French operas being given in Vienna during the 1820s, there were many revivals of older French operas: works by Grétry, Dalayrac, Gaveaux, Cherubini and Isouard were still being performed at the Kärntnerthortheater as well as the Theater in der Leopoldstadt and Theater in der Josefstadt. Quite a large proportion of the works revived during the 1820s were operas which had first made their way to Vienna in the early nineteenth century, and which date from the revolutionary or post-revolutionary period: works which either echoed the violence of their time like Raoul Barbe-bleue, first performed at the Comédie Italienne in 1789 and revived in Vienna in 1821; or low-key works, which provided escape and amusement, like Le petit matelot (Der kleine Matrose), first performed in Paris in 1796 and revived, after several productions at the Kärntnerthortheater, in October 1821.

Despite the outstanding success of some works, there was a general trend during the 1820s and 1830s for pieces of all genres to disappear rapidly from the repertoire. In 1826, for example, Karl Carl, who had at that time responsibility for the direction of both the Theater in der Josefstadt and the Kärntnerthortheater, gave 62 pieces new to Vienna, but none lasted long, even though some of them were good. The public demanded constant novelty.

Under the leadership of Stöger, a composer and tenor singer, the large stage of the Theater in der Josefstadt was used to mount splendid opera productions. One particularly successful production was that of Zampa at the Theater in der Josefstadt on 3 May 1832 in a translation by Seyfried. This production became a model for other European productions of the work, and Nestroy wrote a parody of it. French opera did still generate excitement. The French vaudeville enjoyed increasing popularity, and large numbers of vaudevilles were seen in Vienna over the next decades.¹

B. The seventh French troupe; French opera in Vienna, 1826-1848

A wide variety of entertainment was available at the Kärntnertheater. The Theaterzettel for 15 April 1826 announced:

Die deutsche Oper und dass (sic) Ballet werden im Laufe des ganzen Jahres gegeben, die italienischen und allenfalls auch französischen Opern-Vorstellungen werden mit den ersten beyden Spectakeln abwechseln, dass im ganzen Jahre 300 Vorstellungen, worunter wenigstens 50 grosse italienische Opern mitbegriffen sind, statt finden.²

1. In the introduction, the term "vaudeville" was explained in its seventeenth and eighteenth century sense. At the end of the eighteenth century, as opéra-comique became musically more elaborate, comedy with sung vaudevilles became separated from opéra-comique and became known under the title "comédie à couplets" or "comédie vaudeville". This kind of entertainment resembles modern musical comedy, and in 1792 Piis and Barré opened the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris. Eventually these shows became known simply as vaudeville. They enjoyed considerable popularity in Vienna, too, and large numbers of them were performed there from the 1820s.

2. Theaterzettel, Theatersammlung of the Austrian Nationalbibliothek.

Performances of Italian operas in Italian began in mid May and on 15 June a special Theaterzettel announced that performances by a French troupe would begin in July and last for three months, alternating with German ballet and opera. The troupe played under the direction of M. Hyacinth and its opening performance, on 13 July, was Ma tante Aurore by Boieldieu and a vaudeville by Doche, Gastronomie sans argent. After September, the company played in the kleine Redoutensaal, giving late-night performances of French comedies. In the spring of the following year, its players moved on to Berlin and Warsaw.¹

Die Theaterzeitung praised this particular troupe: their polish and sense of ensemble were, to this critic, of an order never before seen in a German playhouse: their neatness and elegance and, above all, the wittiness of their repertoire had been a delight. Works given by this troupe are listed on p. 758: they included traditional opéras-comiques, some of which were familiar to Austrian audiences through their German translations, though there were one or two works completely new to Vienna.

The players were warmly welcomed by the Viennese. Indeed, Die Theaterzeitung gives the erroneous impression that this troupe had introduced French plays and operas to Vienna for the first time.² Not only were hundreds of

1. Theaterzettel, 12 July 1826.

2. TZ, 17 March 1827, front page.

French operas already known to Austrian audiences in German translation; but also French troupes had played in Vienna within living memory. Perhaps none of these earlier productions had done justice to the French stage; or perhaps the disillusionment with French theatre of around 1819 had already worn off.

In 1828, Barbaja leased the Kärntnerthortheater to his companion, the French dancer Louis Antoine Duport, and ballet and French theatre received fresh impetus. In 1829, only two new French operas were given at the Kärntnerthortheater. In the early '30s, though, the number rose, perhaps as Duport had had time to assess the ability of the company and taste of the public. Large numbers of operas by Auber were performed, in what was almost as important a vogue for French art as the earlier fashion during the Napoleonic era. Adam and Hérold spent several months in Vienna.¹

The Burgtheater continued to perform spoken drama, but opéra-comique was featured at the Kärntnerthortheater, at the Theater an der Wien and the Theater in der Josefstadt, with the occasional performances at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt. There were few revivals of older operas during the 1830s and 1840s.

In the years leading up to 1848, the chief composers of French opera to attract audiences in Vienna were: Auber, Meyerbeer, Donizetti and Hérold. Along with the classical German plays, ballet, pantomime, folk comedy and Italian opera, they formed part of a very rich repertoire.

1. Kindermann, Theatergeschichte, V, pp. 319-322.

In Paris, however, opéra-comique stagnated between 1825 and the Franco-Prussian War. Many composers who enjoyed success, notably Halévy and Adam, contributed nothing new to the genre; less distinguished composers descended to triviality. Hérold, perhaps the most enterprising opéra-comique composer of his generation, died young without reaching his full potential. Some foreigners, Donizetti, Balfe, Flotow and Meyerbeer, contributed to the repertory without affecting its course.

After the war, Camille Du Locle, who had become joint director of the Opéra-Comique in 1869, tried to revitalise the genre. He chose Bizet as his principal agent and was attracted to oriental and exotic subjects:

But the production of Carmen in 1875 carried opéra-comique to its highest artistic achievement and gave it its death wound. By taking a tragic story of low and almost contemporary life and refusing to soften its impact, Bizet introduced a quality of realism... that was implicit in the form but usually evaded... By annexing a serious subject for the Opéra-Comique Bizet upset the artificial distinction that held the two Parisian repertoires apart. His successors, unable or unwilling to attain a satisfactory equilibrium within the old confines, soon abandoned spoken dialogue.¹

Successors of opéra-comique, the operettas of Offenbach, and works by Massenet, Delibes, Chabrier and Gounod, were produced in Vienna.

1. "Opéra-Comique", New Grove.

These works were of a different order from the small and unpretentious pieces which had entertained audiences all over Europe during the eighteenth century. Audiences outside France had been fascinated by their combination of humanitarian feeling and intellectual radicalism which was the essential hallmark of the Encyclopedists. The prettiness and elegance of opéra-comique settings, as well as their sheer aptness, had for over a century delighted Viennese audiences. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, until the rise of Rossini, they had proved to be useful and lucrative additions to the Viennese opera repertory.

CHAPTER IV

The acquisition and adaptation of
opéras-comiques for Vienna

Introduction

After the enormous Viennese success of Catel's opera Sémiramis, in October 1806, Die Theaterzeitung commented shrewdly on the local theatres' readiness to produce French operas:

Es ist jetzt allgemein zur Mode geworden, zur Oper meist französische Poesie und Musik zu benützen, man zieht hieraus den Vortheil; erstlich ein Uebersetzer muss sich mit einer kleinern Belohnung befriedigen lassen als ein Dichter, weil seine Mühe auch geringer ist. Zweytens gewöhnlich findet sich zu dem meist witzigen Text eine schon brauchbare Musik, und hierdurch werden abermahls die Unkosten der Composition einer neuen erspart; und drittens hat man schon die Erfahrung voraus, man lässt die Misslungenen hinweg, und gibt blos jene, welche mit Beyfall gekrönt wurden.¹

French operas were less expensive and easier to obtain than original Austrian or German works and it was a reasonably straightforward task to prepare them for production. The second part of this chapter will examine some aspects of Viennese translation and adaptation of opéra-comique; the first part will consider ways in which French operas came to be known to Austrian theatre directors and were obtained for production in Vienna.

Not all the French operas chosen for performance in the Austrian capital were as successful as Die Theaterzeitung suggests, but on the whole, the fashion for French opera was financially advantageous

1. TZ, 15 October 1806, p. 37.

to the Viennese theatres. Castelli writes in his memoirs that during the height of the vogue for opéra-comique, Meyer, opera director for the Theater an der Wien, "wusste den Geschmack so zu fesseln, dass selbst kleine Operetten dieses grosse Schauspielhaus zehn-zwanzigmal füllten".¹ Not counting revivals, which would raise the figure much higher, the average number of performances achieved by French operas on their first production at the Theater an der Wien was 17. Other theatres achieved a more impressive average. At the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, the average number of performances achieved by new French operas between 1790 and 1819 was 21.6. At the Burgtheater and Kärntnerthortheater from 1790 to 1810, and from 1810 to 1819 at the Kärntnerthortheater alone, French operas in translation attained the high average of 26.7 performances on their first production. Performance numbers are deceptive when one recalls that the Theater an der Wien had the largest audience capacity (about 2800) of all the Viennese theatres. It was able to hold a thousand more people than the Burgtheater, four hundred more than the Kärntnerthortheater and twice as many as either the Theater in der Josefstadt or Theater in der Leopoldstadt.²

1. Castelli, I, p. 240.

2. Kindermann, 'Josef Schreyvogel und sein Publikum', M. Dietrich, ed., Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum, I (Vienna, 1976), 238.

Operas given simultaneously at the court theatres and the Theater an der Wien give the impression, therefore, of being more successful at the court theatres than in the suburbs: for example the very popular Johann von Paris received 131 performances at the Kärntnerthor-theater but surprisingly only 62 at the Theater an der Wien, which was more of a people's theatre.

Still, the average number of 17 performances for new French operas at the Theater an der Wien is considerable in the light of Anton Bauer's research which sets the average life of all tragedies, comedies, plays and burlesques given at that theatre between 1810 and 1814 at 4.3 performances, and the average for all musical dramas at only 5.4.¹ From 1 October 1813 until 31 May 1825, the average number of performances for new works at the Theater an der Wien was 3.4.²

It was clearly advantageous to Viennese theatres to mount French operas; but how did Viennese impresarios hear about them and obtain the music: how did opéra-comique achieve its fame and popularity abroad?

I. The spread of opéra-comique by the French troupes

It is difficult for a modern mind to apprehend the internationalism of eighteenth-century Europe, which was criss-crossed with ties of friendship and kinship.³ Almost a century before the rise of

1. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 89.

2. Bauer, Das Theater an der Wien, p. 107.

3. Hampson, p. 71.

opéra-comique as a genre, travelling Italian opera companies had accustomed European courts to the idea of foreign opera. Later, the spread of comic Italian intermezzi (which were first performed in Paris, for example, in 1729), was carried out almost entirely by small groups, often only couples, of itinerant singers.¹ The couple which played at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1729, Antonio Maria Ristorini and Rosa Ungarelli, had been invited to Paris from Brussels. Few of the Italian intermezzi were actually published and so Italian performers were almost entirely responsible for the dissemination of this genre which enjoyed "un extraordinaire épanouissement" in Europe. The large number of Italian intermezzi being written and performed within and outside Italy has, until recently, been largely unknown to researchers.²

If Italian opera and, later, Italian intermezzi could quickly become popular throughout Europe due to performances by small troupes of Italian singers, how much easier was it for the best opéras-comiques to be performed and win favour abroad. Unlike most of the intermezzi, which remained in manuscript, the most celebrated opéras-comiques quickly became available as good printed scores and textbooks. The dissemination of opéra-comique was further aided by the status of French as the language of European courts, and by the fact that opéra-comique

1. Irène Mamczarz, Les intermèdes comiques italiens au XVIII^e siècle en France et en Italie, (Paris, 1972), p. 310.
 2. Mamczarz, p. 232.

soon became a fashionable symbol of the changes in artistic ideals and new ideas which were sweeping over Europe.¹

The travelling French players were organised into rather larger troupes than the Italian singers who performed intermezzi -- eight to twelve members were not unusual -- and they toured Europe from at least the beginning of the eighteenth century. At first they seem to have relied heavily on classical French spoken drama, on works by Corneille, Racine and Molière, and only later, as opéra-comique developed as a genre during the 1740s and 1750s, to have extended their repertoire to include musical pieces. The Prussian court employed a French troupe from 1701, when French comic opera was scarcely established, and French players performed there on a regular basis throughout the eighteenth century up until at least 1802. They included opéras-comiques in their programmes as the demand arose.² The troupe appointed to the Viennese court in 1752³ at first performed mostly spoken drama; this however, proved to be less popular than comedy and opéra-comique, and Count Durazzo hastily dispatched requests to Paris for good French singers to be sent to enlarge the Viennese troupe and allow the performance of more comic operas.

1. See pp. 10-13.

2. Jean Jacques Olivier, Les comédiens français dans les cours d'Allemagne au XVIIIème siècle, (Paris, 1901-5) II, p. 3ff.

3. The influence of France began to affect Austria later than protestant countries in northern Europe, and those states whose frontiers bordered on France. Hans Wagner, "Der Höhepunkt des französischen Kultureinflusses in Österreich in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts, in Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur, x (1961), p. 507.

Many other German cities employed French players and among the most important were Dresden, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Cassel. The first three acquired French troupes close to the time that Hébert's actors first arrived in Vienna, but Cassel was later in establishing a French theatre. Its first French troupe does not seem to have been appointed until 1764: the players were dismissed 21 years later upon the accession of Wilhelm IX.¹ French and German players usually existed side by side in German speaking cities as they did in Vienna, and when French players left, German companies would usually take over some of their repertoire and perform opéra-comique in the vernacular. All of the opéras-comiques performed on the Viennese suburban stages before 1790 had been introduced to the city by French players. After the dismissal of the established French theatre in Vienna there were short periods of a few weeks or months when troupes visiting or passing through Vienna briefly gave opéras-comiques in French simultaneously with German troupes performing French opera in translation.

However, other German cities maintained their French theatres longer than Vienna. In 1800 it appears that Italian and French players were still to be found all over the continent, because the AMZ asked: "in welcher wirklich beträchtlichen Stadt von ganz Europa findet man nicht ein italienisches oder französisches

1. Olivier, IV, p. 28.

Theater?".¹ In Dresden, where French, German and Italian troupes had been employed simultaneously, the French theatre lasted until 1770.² After that date, opéras-comiques were given in German. In Hamburg, French and German actors played side by side into the nineteenth century and in 1801, Les deux journées was given there in the original language.³ Berlin, having a large French colony and French grammar school, had a French theatre until at least 1848.⁴ It was also one of the first German cities to produce the great operas of the French Revolution. Cherubini's Medea in Herklots' translation was performed there in early spring 1800.⁵

The French theatre in Hamburg was well established and a healthy rival to the German players, although a report in 1799 implied that neither theatre was outstanding: "mit der französischen Oper sieht es hier freylich nicht ganz so schlecht, doch aber auch nicht viel besser aus, als mit der deutschen".⁶ As a multi-lingual trading port where, during the early eighteenth century, mixed-language baroque operas had been given, Hamburg was perhaps unusual. But there were regular performances

1. AMZ, 30 April 1800, column 545.

2. AMZ, 20 February 1799, column 329ff.

3. AMZ, 6 May 1801, column 545. A musical supplement from this opera, to introduce it to other German audiences was included in AMZ 15 July 1801, 707ff.

4. Siegfried Söhngen. Französisches Theater in Berlin im 19. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1937).

5. AMZ, 16 April 1800, column 508.

6. AMZ, 24 July 1799, column 727.

of opéra-comique in French at Cologne, Gothenburg and Berne during the 1790s, and Berlin, Cassel, Hannover, Rheinsburg and Stockholm gave plays and operas in French during the first decade of the nineteenth century¹ (for longer periods than the 1809 spate of French operas in Vienna, occasioned by the French invasion).

Apart from some small works by Favart performed by courtiers in Vienna during the 1740s, the earliest opéras-comiques to be seen in the Austrian capital were brought there in the repertoire of the first French troupe. Blaise, Dauvergne, Dezède, Duni, Gibert, Gillier and Philidor, and, in 1762, Monsigny, were introduced to Austria by French players. In 1772, a troupe designated in chapter I "the third French troupe" brought to Vienna operas by Grétry. As mentioned already, not all these players came directly from Paris. Some, like the original members of the first French troupe, came from the Netherlands; other came on from other European courts. The players who visited Vienna in 1819 had been playing at St. Petersburg.

B. Viennese contacts abroad

For the thirteen years of the existence of the Théâtre français près de la cour, the French troupe was not confined to its original repertoire. As well as requesting the appointment of new singers from Paris, Count Durazzo also asked for new music to be sent. At

1. Loewenberg, Annals.

first, he enlisted the help of an Austrian diplomat, Count Starhemberg, serving in the French capital as emissary to Poland; later, he used the services of the playwright Favart whom he requested to send scores and news of the Paris theatres to Vienna.¹

As the capital of a large empire, Vienna sent and received a considerable number of foreign emissaries and there was a good deal of diplomatic activity between the two cities. Indeed, a visit to the French capital was considered to be an important part of the formation of an Austrian gentleman, and so the son of the personal physician to the Austrian royal family was sent to Brussels, in 1755, and then on to Paris to gain experience under the eye of Count Starhemberg. Gottfried, Baron van Swieten, as the young man was called, developed an enthusiasm for opéra-comique during his time abroad and reported the success of Soliman II ou les trois Sultanes, with music by Gibert, first performed in Paris on 9 April 1761, and Annette et Lubin, first performed there in January 1762. Both of these operas he conducted for himself two years later in Vienna. Edward Olleson considers it possible that van Swieten was known personally to Favart, but notes that whether he was or not, van Swieten composed a setting of a Favart libretto in 1763.² Although his interest in music and considerable collection of music by Handel and Bach was to prove

1. See p. 22.

2. Edward Olleson, "Gottfried Baron Van Swieten", Diss. Oxford, 1967, pp. 24-29.

important in the development of Mozart's and Haydn's musical styles, Van Swieten was not a gifted composer: his French opera is of no significance apart from showing how contacts abroad and interest in France by influential people helped to maintain the Viennese interest in French opera. His later eminence has allowed his interest in opéra-comique to be researched and recorded; one may assume that it was shared by other -- now obscure -- Viennese aristocrats.

C. Austrian links with theatres in the Netherlands

As well as the diplomatic links with Paris, Austria also fostered links with the French speaking world through the Netherlands, with which it had strong links until 1792. Austrian rule of part of the Netherlands gave the Habsburg government ultimate responsibility for the Brussels theatre.¹

During the 1770s, there was a high standard of music at the Brussels theatre; Vitzthumb, its director, and one of his singers, Compain, maintained correspondence with three Paris composers: Philidor, Gossec and Grétry. They requested suitable music and advice about its performance to be sent to Brussels. From the French composers Vitzthumb received the kind of help which Durazzo had sought from Favart. In 1774, for example:

Compain reçut ... la mission d'aller à Paris engager de bons chanteurs, d'y acheter les partitions des opéras d'élite et les meilleures comédies à la mode. Pendant son séjour en cette ville, il eût une correspondance très-suivie

1.H.Liebrecht, Histoire du Théâtre Français à Bruxelles (Paris, 1923), p. 345.

avec Franck, secrétaire attaché à la personne du Prince de Starhemberg, ministre plénipotentiaire de l'empereur-reine aux pays bas autrichiens, et spécialement chargé de surveiller le théâtre ... Aux mois de février 1774 Compain était à Paris furetant partout, liant connaissance avec les artistes les plus distingués et les compositeurs les plus en vogue.¹

Brussels then was in closer contact with Paris than Vienna at this time. But did the Brussels theatre have any special relationship with the Viennese court theatres? The answer seems to be no: at least nineteen of the major operas first given in Paris between 1750 and 1791, of which Loewenberg lists about 90, were given in Brussels but not in Vienna, and twenty-three were given in Vienna but not Brussels. This is a bigger discrepancy (about 50%) than that which seems to have existed between theatres elsewhere in Germany and Vienna (25%). In 1780, the Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie was in bad financial straits, forcing its director to relinquish his privilege; in order to do so he had to write to the same Count Starhemberg. Presumably, the theatres in Vienna could have used the Brussels theatre as a link with Paris if they had needed any such contact; one assumes that they did not find it necessary. A Belgian historian of the Brussels theatre is scathing about the unhelpful and incompetent involvement which Austria maintained with the Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie.²

After 1792, Austrian connections with the Netherlands decreased, though that did not necessarily mean that any

1. Charles Piot, ed., "Particularités inédites concernant les oeuvres musicales de Gossec et de Philidor" in Académie Royale de Belgique, Extraits des Bulletins, 2ème Série, XI, no. 11. Nov. 1875, pp. 2-3.

2. Liebrecht, p. 345.

artistic contact had to be severed. It has been claimed that the repertoire of the Brussels theatres during the 1790s was almost the same as that of the Paris stages.¹ If this optimistic claim were true, Brussels would have provided a useful link in the diffusion of contemporary French operas to the rest of Europe at a time when contact with the French capital itself was difficult and perhaps dangerous. However, there is more evidence to suggest that performance material -- and news -- came to Vienna via Germany than via the Netherlands during these important years.

D. Visits by Viennese to Paris

After the political situation in France had calmed down, after about 1800, Paris swarmed with curious foreign visitors. Anxious to observe for themselves the effects of the revolution, travellers from every country of Europe spent time in the French capital and took home news.² Nevertheless, travel to Paris did not remain consistently easy. Europe was at war for much of the next 15 years and travellers ran the risk of being turned away from the French border, as will be mentioned later. During wartime, Austria could still rely on its diplomats in Paris; until 1809, Metternich himself was Austrian ambassador to the French capital. After 1809 he was succeeded by Prince Karl Schwarzenberg who enjoyed with Napoleon "a considerable degree of mutual sympathy not far short of friendship".³

1. Liebrecht, pp. 320-327.

2. Latreille, p. 104.

3. Musulin, p. 104.

But during the height of the Viennese vogue for opéra-comique, theatres in the Austrian capital seem to have relied most heavily on visits made to Paris by the Austrian noblemen responsible for the theatres. Knowledge that such journeys took place comes only from brief sentences in reports about Vienna in the AMZ. In the autumn of 1802, for example, at the end of an article giving news about the latest musical happenings in Vienna, one reads that the general public were eagerly awaiting the return of Baron von Braun, shortly expected back from Paris and supposed to be bringing back with him the latest French opera scores.¹ It is known that Count Palffy visited Paris in 1815 and returned with much new French ballet music.² In 1816, a journey to Paris by Prince Esterhazy secured new Cherubini masses for the Esterhazy chapel.³

It seems safe to assume that other such trips which have gone unnoticed or unrecorded were made by leaders of the Viennese theatres. The spate of new opéras-comiques performed there in 1803 and 1804 may have been a direct result of Baron von Braun's visit in autumn 1802: later sudden increases in the number of new French operas performed at a certain theatre may indicate that some theatre member had recently returned from Paris. But whereas the director of the Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie could, in 1774, send one of his singers on an errand to

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1. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 32.
 2. AMZ, 25 October 1815, column 718.
 3. AMZ, 23 October 1816, column 734.

Paris, Viennese directors seem to have taken on the responsibility themselves. Although it was usual for Austrian noblemen to be fluent in French, most of the Viennese opera singers were not. Castelli relates how the singer with responsibility for opera at the Theater an der Wien, Sebastian Meyer, knew not one word of French and needed someone to explain to him the gist of each French opera plot.¹ Clearly, he would have been helpless in Paris if charged with the responsibilities of Vitzthumb's singer Compain. One can imagine too how members of the Austrian aristocracy would have more influence and savoir-faire in Paris than obscure Viennese opera personnel.

One member of staff of the court theatres who was neither a director nor a member of the aristocracy did visit Paris in 1815. He was appointed to accompany a civil servant on business connected with the book trade with which he had had experience. Ignaz Franz Castelli was apparently appointed to this task because of his knowledge of French;² court poet and, earlier, one of the most important translators for the Theater an der Wien, he had for over 12 years been involved in the translation of opéra-comique.³ Some of Castelli's impressions of the Parisian theatres will be mentioned in a later chapter (his stay was curtailed by political uncertainties and dangers). He recalls, however, having

1. Castelli, I, p. 241.

2. Castelli, II, pp. 1-5.

3. Castelli, I, p. 205, pp. 240-241.

found spoken French very difficult to understand because of the speed at which people talked (see p. 366).

It is very possible that he purchased some French opera scores for later performance in Vienna; or that he made suggestions about which of the latest successful opéras-comiques might attract large audiences in Vienna. Kotzebue, who visited Paris in 1804, saw La reine de Golconde, St. Foix ou le coup d'épée, Ma tante Aurore, La soirée orageuse and Le calife de Bagdad at the Théâtre Feydeau. He found them all entertaining and wrote: "was davon auf teutschen Bühnen noch nicht bekannt seyn möchte, darf ich zum Uebersetzen empfehlen".¹

E. French publishing

Visits to Paris would probably not have been worthwhile for Viennese impresarios if good printed scores and text books of French operas had not been readily available in the French capital. The standard of publishing in France was much higher than in Austria. Almost all of Monsigny's operas first performed in Paris during the 1760s and 1770s were published promptly;² on the other hand Charles Burney who visited Vienna in 1772 was amazed to discover that there were no music shops in Vienna where one could buy scores and that the best way to obtain music was to buy a manuscript copy from a copyist. The copyist, however, might have altered a composer's work out of all recognition.³ The Viennese composer Adalbert Gyrowetz (1763-1850) "zitterte vor Freude" on realising that

1. Kotzebue, Erinnerungen, pp. 501-2.

2. "Monsigny", New Grove.

3. Hanslick, I, pp. 98-99.

some of his symphonies and quartets had been printed in Paris even though they appeared there without his permission and were passed off as being by the famous Joseph Haydn.¹ Similarly, Mozart was surprised to find that his father's violin treatise was on sale in Paris, in a French translation, and wrote to tell Leopold Mozart.²

Thousands of pages were engraved every year in Paris, including huge works like Spontini's opera Fernand Cortez. Bernard Sarrette said in his speech to the Paris Conservatoire on 24 February 1802:

Si le commerce des instruments nous appartient exclusivement par L'excellence de notre facture, celui de la musique gravée nous appartient également. Nous ne tirons pas de musique de dehors, et nous en exportons beaucoup.³

David Charlton's research has shown that most opéras-comiques were issued within three years of their first performance and that they were sometimes brought out in a very much shorter space of time. This meant that German theatres could quickly acquire the most fashionable French operas. In 1800 the AMZ reported the impatience of the rest of Europe for the publication of Les deux journées which had been first performed at the Théâtre Feydeau on 16 January 1800.⁴ The opera

1. Hanslick, I, p. 98.

2. Letter from Wolfgang to Leopold dated 29 May 1778. Barry Brook has drawn attention to the success of Parisian publishing during the eighteenth century, and also to the extent of European piracy. Barry S. Brook "Piracy and Panacea", PRMA, cii (1975-6), pp. 13-36.

3. As quoted in Charlton, pp. 8-9.

4. AMZ, 16 July 1800, column 734.

was published later that year, performed 10 December 1800 in Brussels, in 1801 at Brunswick, the Hague, Berne, and Hamburg; and in German at Frankfurt, translated by H. G. Schmieder, as early as 5 July 1801. It was first seen in Vienna the following August.

Trading links with other European countries had improved under the government of Napoleon, and there was at that time no international copyright agreement, which made the sale of opera scores for performance abroad a simple matter. Composers like Dalayrac and Grétry sometimes published their own operas, for it paid them to keep a closer check on the dissemination of their works;¹ in 1802, Cherubini, Méhul, Kreutzer, Isouard and Boieldieu formed their own company to avoid the added expense of employing a middle-man.²

In 1804, Ossian ou les Bardes by Le Sueur was first performed at the Paris Opéra. It was probably published the same year.³ At least Le Courier des Spectacles reported later in 1804:

Toutes les cours et les capitales de l'Europe et même les grandes villes de l'Italie, demandent à connoître la belle musique des Bardes. Madrid, Vienne, St. Petersbourg veulent voir le bel opéra sur leurs théâtres. La Reine de Prusse vient d'en demander la partition à M. de Lucchesini; l'enthousiasme semble générale d'un bout du continent à l'autre.⁴

1. Charlton, "Orchestration", p. 6.

2. Charlton, p. 6.

3. The New Grove gives the opera's publication date as ?1804.

4. Le Courier des Spectacles, 25 November 1804.

Loewenberg does not list the cities outside France where this opera was given, though does mention that 'it was the subject of three Parisian parodies.'¹ Printed scores of the opera are owned by both the Nationalbibliothek and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, but although these may be the scores which Viennese theatres requested to be sent from Paris in 1804, Le Sueur's opera was never performed there. The opera is on a very grand scale, with important harp parts, huge ballets, immense ensembles and double choruses:

it must have been the model for Berlioz's Les Troyens, and most of it is much more like Berlioz than like Beethoven or Cherubini, except that Le Sueur is not always able to keep up his Romantic style, and at odd moments drops into the most antiquated Mozartian formulae.²

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that it was not given in the Austrian capital; the writer has been unable to discover whether it was ever performed at Madrid, St. Petersburg or Berlin. Loewenberg does not list performances in those places.

Despite the foreign export of opera scores, French composers did not usually make concessions for the performance of their works at theatres which lacked the resources of, for example, the Paris Opéra, where Ossian was first produced.

1. Loewenberg, Annals.

2. Dent, pp. 87-88.

Della Maria is an exceptional example of a composer who made allowance for performance of an opera with less than the prescribed forces.¹ The overture to L'Opéra-Comique could, wrote the composer in 1798, be played by a smaller orchestra. The large scale of some of the new French operas limited their proper performance even within France. Le Clerc wrote:

Aussi, a-t-on tellement multiplié les instruments, que le plus petit opéra-comique peut à peine être joué dans quatre ou cinq des plus grandes villes de la république.²

In France, printed scores were used for performance in preference to the manuscript score. During the time of the Nationalsingspiel it is very likely that French printed scores were used by conductors in Vienna; some of the printed French scores in the Nationalbibliothek contain performance indications and appear to be well used. Manuscript copies of many operas from the old court archives do remain as well, however, but the writer considers that prior to about 1792, copies of the music may have been made primarily for the purposes of fitting the music to the new German text. Austrian manuscript scores dating from this period are sketchy, with most of the inner parts omitted. Sometimes they resort merely to the copying of treble and bass lines.

1. Charlton, p. 14.

2. Le Clerc, Essai, p. 34, as quoted in Charlton, p. 14.

If French operas in Vienna were indeed directed from printed French scores during this early period, the occasional replacement of numbers or addition of new ones would, from time to time, have made reference to a manuscript score necessary. Later on, alterations to French operas became increasingly extensive, and it is evident from looking at remaining manuscript German scores that these heavily marked and more complete copies were now used to direct performances.

Printed orchestral parts were obtainable in Paris but it is unlikely that most German theatres purchased them. Heinrich Schmidt, director of the Eisenstadt theatre, describes for example how his employer, Prince Esterhazy, returned from Paris in 1810 with the music of Isouard's immensely popular opera Cendrillon. More will be said later about the success of this work in Germany, but it is interesting to point out here that Schmidt writes quite clearly what was brought back to Esterhazy: "das Buch und die Partitur". He makes no mention of printed orchestral parts.¹

In Vienna, theatre orchestras were smaller than their Paris equivalents and the balance of parts also slightly different. Changes were made in the music: some numbers were transposed for the sake of singers, some were omitted, some replaced by new numbers. One can easily imagine that manuscript orchestral parts, especially made for a particular production at a

1. Schmidt, pp. 124-125.

Viennese theatre, were more manageable than printed parts with many alterations. Travellers -- even noblemen -- probably avoided the addition of unnecessary bulk to their luggage; a neat printed score and small text book took up less space than a bundle of orchestral parts.

In Vienna, I was not allowed access to the stacks to be able to check whether any printed French orchestral parts remained there; for the reasons given above I consider it unlikely that such parts were widely used.

Scores and orchestral parts were rather costly. Grétry's opera Richard Coeur-de-lion published in 1786 contained a list of other available opéras-comiques, and their prices. Scores ranged from 15 to 24 livres and parts from nine to 12 livres. Richard cost 24 livres, and orchestral parts nine livres; Zémire et Azor also cost 24 livres, but its orchestral parts 12 livres. Later, as operas became larger, they were more expensive: in 1799, Méhul's opera Ariodant cost 40 francs,¹ ten times the daily wage of a workman at the Gobelins factory.²

1. Charlton, p. 14ff. On 7 April 1795 the word Franc was adopted instead of Livre. The two were almost equivalent from 14 April 1796. Livres were exchanged for French Francs on the basis of 1 French Franc to 1 Livre 3 Deniers. Franz Pick, René Sédillot, All the monies of the world: A chronicle of currency values, (New York, 1971), p. 164.

2. Charlton, p. 14.

Not every opéra-comique which was performed in Vienna was published, however, and some operas which were available as printed scores reached the Austrian capital as German manuscript scores prepared for other German theatres. Two unpublished operas by Boieldieu, La prisonnière [Emma] (a collaboration with Cherubini) produced in Vienna in 1817; and L'Amour et mystère, ou le quel et mon cousin, first performed at St. Petersburg in 1807 and in Vienna in 1818, now presumed lost,¹ must have reached the Austrian capital in manuscript. In 1805, Dalayrac's opera Raoul, Sire de Créqui was performed at the Viennese court theatres in a version made by B. A. Weber, which differed significantly from the original.² For this production a German copy was probably used rather than the French published score.

I know of no French score which was engraved in Vienna, either in French or German between 1790 and 1819, though Viennese arrangements of numbers from opéras-comiques, and favourite arias, were printed in the Austrian capital (in German translation), usually as piano reductions. But Viennese theatres did continue, with French opera, the long established custom of printing Italian libretti for the Italian opera in the Austrian capital. At the time of the

1. "Boieldieu" , New Grove.

2. See pp. 482-492.

Théâtre français and the French troupes, opera texts were published in the language used for performance;¹ later -- from at least 1778 -- opéras-comiques translated for performance in the Austrian capital had their texts published in German.

F. French journalism

Just as the French achieved excellence in their publication of opera scores, so they also earned international respect for the high standard of their journalism. One French paper which Count Durazzo is known to have received regularly from at least 23 August 1760 is the Journal Etranger, sent to him by Favart. A list of subscribers to this publication shows that as early as April 1754, Le Journal Etranger was being received by "Alberti, Conseiller à Vienne en Autriche"² but out of almost 1100 names, an impressive list including ambassadors and Kings in Strasbourg, Prussia, Berlin, Spain, Portugal and Denmark, only this one name is listed in Vienna. The following year the paper listed addresses in Leipzig, Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Dresden and Berlin where Le Journal Etranger could be purchased, but no Viennese address. This perhaps shows that other European cities were more in touch with modern French ideas than Vienna was during the 1750s.

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1. In the first year alone of the French theatre in Vienna (1752), 81 French theatre texts were published there. See Vera Oravetz, Les impressions françaises de Vienne 1567-1850. Etudes françaises de l'Institut Français de l'Université de Szeged, 3 (1930).
 2. Letter from Durazzo to Favart, 23 August 1760: "J'ai reçu par le même envoi les six premiers volumes du Journal étranger que je vous prie de me continuer". Favart, Mémoires I, p. 86.

As far as the French theatre in Vienna was concerned, however, this paper would not have helped Durazzo: as the preface to the April 1754 edition stated:

Il aura pour titre JOURNAL ETRANGER parce qu'il le sera en effet relativement au pays ou il paroitra. Les productions de la France n'entrent point dans l'objet que nous embrassons. Nous nous proposons de faire passer dans la langue Françoisse toutes les richesses littéraires de l'univers.¹

Durazzo could have read articles on natural history, philology, the lives of European poets; he could have seen there summaries of foreign (but rarely French) plays, and other "correspondance, aussi nécessaire entre les nations pensantes pour la perfection de la raison"² but have read almost nothing about France itself. Durazzo received at least one other paper regularly from Paris. He was anxious to receive every copy of L'Avant Coureur. In a letter to Favart written on 23 August 1760, he specifically requested certain back numbers of this publication.³

It seems safe to assume that other French papers were read in Vienna,⁴ and we know that by the beginning

1. Le journal étranger, May 1755, pp. 238-240.

2. Le journal étranger, April 1754, pp. iv-v.

3. Favart, Mémoires, I, p. 86. Durazzo wrote: "Il me manque plusieurs feuilles de l'avant-Coureur, outre celles que je ne vous ai déjà mandées: des feuilles doivent porter les numéros 23, 24, 25, 29 et suivantes, la dernière que j'ai reçue étant notée 28."

4. And in addition to papers published in France, some French language periodicals were actually printed in Vienna during the time of the French troupes. For example, the Gazette de Vienne appeared between 1757 and 1766; the Gazette française littéraire de Vienne from 1768 to 1769, and Le journal de Vienne dédié aux amateurs de la littérature, edited by Jean and Frédéric Gay of Strasburg, from 1784 to 1785. Wagner, p. 509.

of the nineteenth century such publications as La Mercure De France, Le Journal des Débats and Le Courier des Spectacles were known there for they were widely quoted in Viennese papers and reviews of the Paris productions of opéras-comiques. Translated into German and abridged, they were useful fillers for Austrian newspapers as well as good advance publicity for coming productions. I. F. Castelli, who edited Der Sammler from 1809, might either have subscribed himself to La Mercure de France or had friends in Paris who sent him extracts: it is often quoted in his paper. Castelli's connections with the book trade could have facilitated this kind of contact.

It is not always clear, however, whether Austrian journalists read French papers themselves or whether they merely quoted them indirectly. European newspapers frequently borrowed from one another without acknowledgement, which could lead to the spreading of untrue rumours. In 1823, for example, the English paper The Harmonicon announced that Salieri had died.¹ This had to be rectified the following January, for the old Italian was still living quietly in retirement in Vienna. Salieri died in May 1825. The Harmonicon regretted its mistake, explaining that the news had been taken from reports which appeared "in French and German newspapers".²

Misreading or misquoting of foreign newspaper reports might similarly account for the widespread rumours that Cherubini was coming to Vienna in 1803.

1. The Harmonicon, no. X, October 1823, p. 158.

2. The Harmonicon, no. XIII, January 1824, p. 3.

Rumours fuelled by apparently unreliable press reports seem to have surrounded Cherubini's visit to Vienna. Two weeks after the Paris première of Cherubini's Lodoiska, R. Kreutzer's opera Lodoiska had been performed in the French capital with more acclaim than Cherubini's.¹ Appreciation of the Cherubini opera in Vienna must have especially pleased its composer. The AMZ was so bold as to say:

Cherubini's Musik heisst jetzt in allen entscheidenden Zirkeln, auch schon in Journalen, deutsche Musik.²

The success of Lodoiska -- and the other Cherubini operas which had been seen in Vienna in 1802 -- apparently prompted Cherubini, as early as the new year of 1803, to consider going to Vienna. In the February of that year the AMZ reported:

Cherubini gedenkt künftigen Frühling wirklich dem Rufe nach Wien zu folgen und auf einige Zeit dort für die Oper zu arbeiten.³

A letter from Vienna dated "Ende Febr" published in the AMZ in March 1803 expressed the greatest wish of the public to see Herr Cherubini in the Austrian capital⁴, and the Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803 listed Cherubini's name under the list of "Compositeurs" at the Theater an der Wien and announced his expected arrival.⁵

1. "R. Kreutzer", New Grove.

2. AMZ, 9 November 1803, column 94.

3. AMZ, 16 February 1803, column 358.

4. AMZ, 30 March 1803, column 456.

5. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, (Stadtbibl. 620049-A), p. 153.

"Hr. Cherubini soll auf einige Monate hieher engagirt seyn."

However, this plan -- if there was a plan -- fell through, and Cherubini did not actually appear in Vienna until 1805 -- presumably after lengthy negotiations between the theatres and Cherubini himself. And in the end, his stay in Vienna coincided with the presence there of the French army in the early summer of 1805.

But the AMZ quoted reports from Paris:

Kömmt er nicht zurück so muss es ihm dort nicht nur überhaupt besser gefallen, er muss auch besonders für seinen Genius and seine Kunst, welchen er alles aufopfert, einen freyern und passendern Speilraum finden; kömmt er zurück so wird man sich hoffentlich unter dessen hier besinnen gelernt haben, und ihn auch in Paris in eine Thätigkeit setzen, wo er seines Bestes liefern und es mit gebührendem Werthschätzen aufgeführt sehen kann.¹

Cherubini was to make the three week coach journey back to Paris and he never returned.

G. The exchange of letters

The exchange of letters has already been mentioned as an important way in which individuals kept in fashionable contact with Paris: French writers, composers, or theatre impresarios wrote to important members of the European aristocracy; many volumes of such correspondence have been published. Favart, playwright and theatre manager, wrote to Count Durazzo. La Harpe, a celebrated French critic, wrote to the future Emperor of Russia and countless other people, including the Prince de la Ligne.²

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1. AMZ, 21 August 1805, report from Paris dated 3 August.
 2. Jean-Francois de la Harpe, Correspondence littéraire adressée à son altesse impériale M. gr. Le grand-Duc aujourd'hui Empereur de Russie et à M. le Comte Andre Schowalovv, Chambellan de l'Imperatrice Catherine II depuis 1774 jusqu'à 1791, 6 vols., (Paris, 1801-1807).

The latter, a member of the Austrian aristocracy, had come to Vienna in 1740 at the age of 15. During his colourful life as soldier and diplomat he was on terms of intimacy and friendship with many people including Frederick the Great, Voltaire, Rousseau and Madame de Staël (she was to publish an anthology of his letters and thoughts in 1810); he met Grimm. After much travelling, he retired in 1794 to Vienna, gathering around him French refugees who had fled from Paris. His international friendships and his writing are exceptional;¹ but lesser men enjoyed similar pursuits. Such correspondence helped to spread news across Europe.

Letters had their dangers if too much faith were put in them. La Harpe, for example, wrote 27 letters to the Russian court about recent theatrical successes and his views on Grétry's operas. The alleged success of a first performance in Paris was no guarantee of a work's quality or of its ability to succeed elsewhere, and such letters gave only one man's opinion. In an unpublished manuscript fragment recently available in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, Grétry expressed his impatience with these littérateurs who wrote about the Paris² theatre to foreign aristocrats:

Il est à Paris une espèce de journalistes charlatins, qui correspondent (sans attendre de réponse, si ce n'est quelque lettre de charge) qui correspondent, dis-je, avec les princes

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1. Prince Charles Joseph Emmanuel de Ligne, Letter and Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne, trans. Leigh Ashton, (London, 1927), pp. 3-4.
 2. He wrote many letters elsewhere.

étrangers, toujours curieux de savoir ce qui se passe dans la grande capitale. Cette espèce de correspondance ou d'espionnage par écrit, conduit à plus de mal dans ses effets que les journaux sur lesquels la censure publique exerçant son empire, impose une sorte de retenue au journaliste le plus affamé de pain et de réputation. L'autre, au contraire, ose tout confier à sa correspondance secrète: secrète pour un temps cependant, et quelque jours publiée par lui ou par ses mechancetés du défunt. Ces sortes d'écrits sont d'autant plus hazardés, que l'écrivain craignant d'être prévenu par les feuilles du jour, se hate d'arriver le premier chez l'étranger avant de connoître la sanction publique. Tout, ou à peu près tout, est de lui de son estoc, et de sa société privée, spécialement dans la partie des arts ou il est le plus inepte. Ajoutons une autre considération qui rend ces correspondances dangereuses: c'est qu'on ne s'adresse, dans ce cas, qu'un littérateur digne de ce nom, pour apprendre et connaître ce que les feuilles publiques n'osaient révéler, Combien de jugements précipités n'a pas fait Laharpe... dans sa correspondance; d'abord secrète, ensuite publiée? combien de fois n'a-t-il pas dû être honteux et répétant d'avoir précipité son dire et ses sarcasmes sur des ouvrages qu'il n'avoit qu'entrevus? et, quant aux ouvrages de théâtre, sur lesquels il n'avoit prononcé au'en sortant du tumulte d'une première représentation orageuse?... rien de plus dangereux que de porter les débuts des acteurs que de pièces de théâtre dont le temps a reformé le succès. ... Quant à la musique, Grimm en sentait le charme, autant que la Harpe y était insensible, ils m'ont traité tous deux en ami, et je les en remercie, s'ils peuvent m'entendre. J'ai été assez étonné que Grimm ait dit que la musique de Zémire et Azor était moins italienne que celle de mes précédens opéras; personne que lui n'a fait cette remarque ... Je le répète, les jugements précipités des gens de lettres chargés de telles correspondances, sont le plus souvent hazardés.¹

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1. Fragments du manuscrit autographe des Reflexions d'un Solitaire (1805 - 1813) Mus Ms. 245, VIII, chapter 14, "Théorie des réputations", pp. 288-293. I am grateful to Dr. Yves Lenoir of the Bibliothèque Royale Brussels for bringing this manuscript to my attention.

There was not only the danger that a French composer's work might be misrepresented to people abroad, but also the possibility that letters might give composers in Paris a false impression of the performance of their works in those foreign cities. Grétry was also to complain about that, and one wonders, on slender evidence, whether Cherubini was misled in this way. After the production of Lodoiska in Vienna in 1802, Cherubini wrote to thank the orchestra and chorus of the Theater an der Wien for the beautiful and "correct" performance of the opera, news of which had reached him in Paris. Did Cherubini approve of the Austrian versions of his operas? He was disappointed!

It is interesting to note that Cherubini, who visited London twice from 1784 to 1786 and in 1815 and found an equally impressive and flattering reception on both occasions, counted his second visit a failure and cut it short because of difficulties in translating a French libretto (presumably into Italian or English). As he wrote to his wife "There is no longer a question of Elisa; that is why I consider my trip as wasted, and had I foreseen such a result, should certainly not have undertaken it". During the earlier visit, most of Cherubini's works had been successfully performed in the original Italian. The plan in 1815 was to produce Elisa in English, but during this second visit to London most of the works conducted by Cherubini were to be by other composers.¹

1. Margery Stomme Selden, "Cherubini and England", MQ, 1x(1974), pp. 421-434.

The only example I have found of a French composer complaining about the foreign performance of his works was Grétry -- in 1776 -- when he did succeed in seeing a foreign performance of one of his own opéras-comiques: news of the opera's success had reached Grétry who said that he would accept an invitation to see the opera and would pay a short visit to Brussels on a journey to his birthplace, Liège. Grétry also promised to return at a later date to see both Les mariages Samnites and La fausse magie. La fausse magie had been sent to Vitzthumb in Brussels (for 25 Louis),¹ with some advice on how to perform it.

However, after seeing La fausse magie, Grétry was deeply offended and vowed never to return, because of the musical additions Vitzthumb had made to his score, and wrote the following letter:

Monsieur,

Nous vous prions d'agréer nos remerciements de toutes les honnêtetés dont nous avons été comblés par vous pendant notre séjour à Bruxelles. Que ne puis-je vous en dire à tant de la part de ma musique, Monsieur. Mais elle est bien loin d'être aussi satisfaite de vos prétendues corrections que nous le sommes, M. de Viltaneuse et moi, de toutes vos honnêtetés. Ne comptez plus sur mon retour à Bruxelles, Monsieur. Je viendrais vous gêner dans vos opérations. Vous m'avez banni à jamais du théâtre de Bruxelles.²

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1. According to the list published in 1786 at the beginning of the engraved score of Grétry's opera Richard Coeur-de-lion, mentioned above, the score of La fausse magie cost 18 livres to buy in Paris.
 2. Grétry wrote to Vitzthumb on 21 April 1775, impatient to know how his opera had been received. See "Quelques lettres de la correspondance de Grétry avec Vitzthumb"; Notice par Charles Piot. Extrait des Bulletins de l'Académie royale de Belgique, 2^{me} série, tome XL, nos. 9 et 10, 1875, p. 27-30.

Grétry evidently felt disappointed and that he had been misled by the correspondence with Brussels, but countries and customs differ in ways which are difficult to communicate by letter (as Durazzo and Favart discovered), and it is impossible to imagine a foreign theatre performance. Impressions of Paris gleaned only from letters were probably misleading.

H. Links with other German theatres

During the 1790s, German cities where productions of opéra-comique were enjoyed became increasingly dependent on news about recent French operas from other theatres in Germany. In 1798 the well-respected and widely-read AMZ had been founded in Leipzig. One of its main aims was the encouragement of German opera; ironically it played an important part in the dissemination of opéra-comique. Viennese theatres sent in regular reports about their theatrical activities for publication in the AMZ and the paper was sometimes quoted in theatre almanacs and other periodicals there, showing that it was known and read in the Austrian capital.

As well as publishing biographies, portraits and obituaries of French composers and printing regular reports from Paris, the AMZ also reviewed editions of opéras-comiques and contained reports about opera productions at other German theatres. This gave opéra-comique a sort of respectability and encouraged competition between the major theatres. In November 1800, for example, it carried an excerpt from Della Maria's

opera Le prisonnier and accompanied it with the following note, which almost amounts to an advertisement:

noch immer erhält sich auf den besten deutschen Operntheatern der Prisonnier des liebenswürdigen Della Maria, und wir dürfen vielleicht uns schmeicheln, dass unsre Blätter durch die erste Bekanntmachung und frühe Empfehlung dieses so sehr angenehmen Stücks, zur allgemeinen Aufnahme desselben etwas beygetragen haben. Aber nur dieses kleine Stück Della Maria's scheint man allgemein zu kennen, nicht seine übrigen -- unter welchen sich die Opéra comique am vortheilhaftesten auszeichnet. Nur an zwey Orten ist die, so viel uns bekannt, auf's Theater gebracht worden. Das Gedicht ist eben so artig als jenes... die Musik ähnelt der des Prisonnier... ist noch reicher an den kleinen witzigen, freundlichen, zarten, niedlichen Liedchen, durch die sich die französischen Operetten so sehr vor den unsrigen auszeichnen; ist übrigens recht leicht zu exekutieren, und konnte mithin in jeder Rücksicht ein kleines Lieblingsstück jeden Theaters seyn, das nur einige wirklich gebildete Personen hat.¹

In a similar way, in May 1802, L'hôtellerie portugaise was recommended for performance on German stages,² and, in 1806, Isouard's opera Le fils adoptif.³ In July 1801 the AMZ printed a supplement containing musical excerpts from Les deux journées in order to introduce the opera to German audiences.⁴

By 1802, when Cherubini's Lodoiska was first produced in Vienna, Viennese readers of the AMZ had read of the success of Cherubini operas in other parts of

1. AMZ, 19 November 1800, column 116.

2. AMZ, 12 May 1802, column 543.

3. AMZ, 15 January 1806, column 251.

4. AMZ, 15 July 1801, column 707ff.

Germany. Ritter Palmer by Bruni and Lodoiska by Cherubini were given in Dessau for example in the summer of 1800 and according to the AMZ:

Beyde wurden mit der grössten Anstrengung
und dem allgemeinsten vollsten Beyfall gegeben.

The same year a three-part article about the performance of Medea in Berlin appeared.¹ Le major Palmer was not seen in Vienna until 1805 and Lodoiska, first seen in Paris in July 1791, was an old work by the time of its Viennese première in 1802. The Wiener Theater Almanach of 1803 referred to it as the "Lodoïska, die zu unserer Schande erst jetzt bekannt wurde".²

The main theatres in Germany which vied with Vienna were Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Mannheim. The tendency of singers and actors to travel, give guest performances or move theatres facilitated the exchange of news and performing material; sometimes a member of a foreign theatre could be delegated to undertake a long journey to collect a French score or translation.

There is an instance in 1802, for example, when Schikaneder sent Seyfried to Munich to collect a copy of Les deux journées for performance at the Theater an der Wien.³ In the race to mount this opera, the

1. AMZ, 16 April 1800, column 508 ff.; 25 June 1800, column 683 ff.; 2 July 1800, column 700 ff.

2. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, p. 82.

3. Max Zenger, Geschichte der Münchner Oper (Munich, 1923), p. 81.

suburban theatre managed to beat its court rival by a day. A fast business transaction similarly brought the Theater an der Wien success in 1811. Prince Esterhazy after a trip to Paris had brought back to Eisenstadt a score of the Isouard opera, Cendrillon. It was promptly translated by Schmidt, the director of the court theatre at Eisenstadt, performed, and then sold by the opportunist Schmidt to the Theater an der Wien, where the opera was performed only thirteen and a half months after its première in Paris¹ and enjoyed an immense success. The opera was never attempted by the Kärntnertheater.

The practice in Vienna of publishing French -- and Italian -- opera texts for the audience has already been referred to. They were produced in small batches of 50 or so, and were frequently reprinted.² These translations made in Vienna were also used by other German theatres. During the 1811 to 1812 season at the Munich opera, the theatre was suffering severe financial difficulties and decided to counteract them by producing seven new operas including the first Boieldieu opera to be seen in Munich, Jean de Paris. This text was bought by the Munich theatre from Vienna.³

Until about 1802, when the Theater an der Wien established a new committee to oversee opera production and the hope was voiced in the AMZ that better translations would result,⁴ this theatre had been more

1. Heinrich Schmidt, Erinnerungen eines weimarischen Veteranen, (Leipzig, 1856), pp. 124-125.

2. Information from Ernst Hilmar, Stadtbibliothek, Vienna.

3. Zenger, p. 130.

4. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 28.

dependent than the court theatres on translations made by other theatres. After 1802, more of its texts were made in Vienna by poets at the Theater an der Wien. Perhaps because of the precedents set by the National-theater and Nationalsingspiel, the court theatres made more of their own translations from the beginning. For example, the 1802 production of Les deux journées at the Theater an der Wien used a text from Munich; the production of the same opera at the court theatres that year used a new translation by the court poet Treitschke.

I. Visits to Vienna by French composers and playwrights

At the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, Austria's reputation abroad was poor. The country was despised for its repressive government, old-fashioned outlook and for its lack of generosity. In the 1830s, Frances Trollope quoted a M. Girardin as saying: "il n'y a pas de pays qui soit jugé avec plus de défaveur que l'Autriche".¹

Reichardt visited Paris in 1803 during France's war with Austria and described an incident that had happened at the theatre, to show France's contempt of Austria. A leading French actor had been imprisoned for playing his too realistic portrayal of an Austrian general in a military play. His lines had included passages of wild invective against the French. Such plays were fashionable in Paris at that time; in Vienna, however the expression of such warlike

1. Trollope, II, p. 138.

sentiments, and reference to the politics of countries closely associated with Austria, were forbidden.¹

Nevertheless some French-speaking musicians did come to Vienna. One of the earliest was Pierre van Maldere, a violinist and composer from the South Netherlands who had attracted the attention of Maria Theresia's brother-in-law, Charles of Lorraine. The prince appointed him director of his concerts and the Empress Maria Theresia recognised his talents. His first opéra-comique, Le déguisement pastoral, was performed at Schönbrunn in July 1756. Shortly afterwards, the Seven Years War broke out and this kept Charles of Lorraine and his musician in Austria and Bohemia until 1758. On 5 November 1758, another opéra-comique by van Maldere, Les amours champêtres, was performed at Schönbrunn. The next day Charles of Lorraine returned to the Netherlands. In 1762, after more travelling, Maldere was appointed as director of the Brussels grand theatre where he directed performances and chose the repertoire; in 1768 at the age of 39, he died of overwork.² His compositions bridged the gap between the decadent Italian style and the Classicism which was to develop in Vienna. More important, perhaps as a concert master and violinist, he never became very eminent as a composer. He came to Vienna in the service of his prince, not on his own initiative. Interestingly,

1. Reichardt, Vertraute Briefe aus Paris, III, p. 72.

2. "Pierre van Maldere", New Grove.

he is the only composer apart from Gluck to have written opéra-comiques in Vienna, and he is the only non-Viennese composer known to have composed French operas for performance in the Austrian capital.

The playwright Favart never visited Vienna during his correspondence with Vienna. Durazzo had to write in detail about some differences between the two countries to help the Frenchman understand Austrian culture but Favart was not invited to Vienna. Durazzo tactfully wrote to explain that Favart would probably not derive much from such a visit -- that it was difficult to find entry into court circles. One can well imagine that an ex-pastry cook might not find easy acceptance with the Viennese aristocracy. Expense to the Viennese court was perhaps also a consideration.

Sadly, little is known about two Frenchmen who did stay in Vienna during the time of the French troupes. Dancourt came to the Austrian capital to help arrange operas and copy parts. It is not known when he left. We do know, however, that he helped Prince Esterhazy catalogue his library of French music. He does not appear to have had any significance as a librettist or teacher. In 1763, La Ribardiére came to Vienna and made five-act pieces into pieces in three acts, and added arias to them for performance at Laxenburg.¹

The next reference to a French composer in Vienna seems, at first, exciting. Pierre Dutillieu came to Vienna in Lent 1791. But although he had been born in Lyons, he had been educated and had worked mainly in

1. Haas, p. 91.

Italy. He came to the Austrian capital as an Italian, not French, composer. After his marriage in Naples to the Italian singer Irene Tomeoni, he and his wife were appointed to the Burgtheater. In the shadow of his wife's success he initially enjoyed acclaim, but the Italian operas and the ballets he wrote for Vienna were not particularly successful. He died in Vienna in 1798 having apparently had nothing to do with opéra-comique or its performance in Vienna.

After the appearance of the operas of the French Revolution by composers such as Cherubini and Méhul, considerable excitement was generated in Vienna about the possible visit to the Austrian capital of Cherubini. It was talked about several years before it actually happened, and, as mentioned earlier, it was something of a disappointment when it did take place, coming during wartime and foreign occupation of Vienna. He was, however, enthusiastically received by the court and by leading musical figures. He attended the first performance of Fidelio.¹ While he was in Vienna Cherubini made suggestions about the reorganisation of the Viennese opera orchestras.² Cherubini wrote one opera for performance in Vienna in 3 acts. Loewenberg calls it a German Singspiel. Cherubini (who knew no German) apparently composed the opera faniska to Italian words, which Sonnleithner then translated into German. It was first performed on 25 February 1806, and

1. Thayer, II, pp. 67-68.

2. See p. 656.

had a good run of 64 performances until 3 May the following year. However, it was never revived, and is scarcely ever referred to in Viennese press articles over the next twenty years which praise other operas by Cherubini.¹

While Cherubini was in Vienna, working on his new opera, Napoleon entered the city and asked Cherubini to direct a series of concerts at Schönbrunn. He was unusually cordial to the composer and expressed his desire that Cherubini return to Paris soon. Despite initial speculation that Cherubini might stay in Vienna, he did return.

Persuis was a violinist and composer who, in 1810, became director of the Opéra orchestra in Paris; the following year, he also became chef d'orchestre at Napoleon's chapel; he was appointed inspector-general of music at the Opéra in 1814, and on 1 April 1817, became director there. He visited Vienna in 1816. The AMZ noted briefly "Hr. Persuis ist gegenwärtig auf Besuch hier".²

His most important opera, the grand opera La Jérusalem délivrée, was performed in Vienna at the Theater an der Wien on 11 February 1815, three years after its Paris première.³ Persuis also wrote a small number of opéras-comiques but none of them appear to have been performed in Vienna. La Jérusalem délivrée had been given good publicity but received criticism because

1. See p. 307, for example.

2. AMZ, 23 October 1810, column 733.

3. Its performance was evidently delayed, taking place later than expected; AMZ 18 January 1815, column 46, complained that its première was still awaited; AMZ 15 February 1815, column 118, mentioned lavish preparations for the opera.

so much Viennese money had been spent on what was perceived to be an unpopular French grand opera. It ran for 14 performances until the following May. Persuis was evidently a well-respected musical figure in Paris, but the choice of a grand opera for performance in Vienna was not a wise one and brought forth resentment.¹ In 1818, he collaborated with A. Gyrowetz in the writing of a ballet, Der Zauberschlaf, performed in Vienna in January that year.

He seems to have enjoyed respect in Paris as an administrator and for his association with the Opéra (perhaps this is why he came to Vienna) rather than for his compositions.² Any recorded reactions of his stay in Vienna -- and of Cherubini's -- would be of the greatest interest.

It is perhaps more than coincidence that these composers all failed to establish themselves in Vienna. We may compare their stays and connection with Vienna with, for example, Favart's stay in Brussels from 1746 to 1749, and year-long stay in Strasbourg from 1749 to 1750; Cherubini's two visits to London; Boieldieu's eight years' service in Russia from 1803 to 1812, where he was offered a sumptuous, opulent life by the Russian Tsar;³ or Spontini's long stay in another important foreign centre of French culture, Berlin, where he served from May 1820 to June 1842 (when he was replaced by Meyerbeer).⁴

1. AMZ, 22 March 1815, columns 196-201.

2. "Persuis", New Grove.

3. "François Adrien Boieldieu", New Grove.

4. "Gasparo Spontini", New Grove.

Conclusion to Part I

Something may have discouraged French artists from travelling to Vienna. France, for example, was able to pay artists more: in May 1804, the famous castrato, Crescentini, made a great sensation in Vienna and was reported to have been paid an exorbitant amount for his services; but in 1806, he was lured to Paris by the promise of a large gift of 30,000 livres from Napoleon.¹

To be persuaded to move from Paris, financial inducements had to be high. Auber was quoted as saying that he did not want to move to Vienna because he was too comfortable in Paris to want to move anywhere.² The reputation of the Habsburgs' meanness to artists persisted. Even in 1823 an English paper, The Harmonicon, published an article about music in Germany which mentioned the typical Austrian lack of generosity towards the arts and told an anecdote about Emperor Leopold's meanness.³

Vienna was expensive for foreign visitors: Riesbeck commented in 1787 that lodging in Vienna was more costly than in Paris;⁴ Richard Bright, the Edinburgh doctor, reported in 1814 that the inns in Vienna were miserable

1. AMZ, 5 February 1806, column 301.

2. Hanslick, II, pp. 479-482.

3. "Leopold loved the arts, and was also fond of show but his revenues were too limited to admit of his being magnificent. He caressed talent but he did not enrich the possessor of it." The Harmonicon, no. IV, April 1823, p. 50.

4. Riesbeck, I, p. 219ff.

for the price;¹ Mrs. Trollope in 1836 found rooms dearer than in Paris, and not so well furnished.²

There were other discouragements to travel. Pleyel, travelling to Austria from Paris, was unable to enter Austria to meet Haydn and discuss a proposed performance of The Creation in Paris;³ and in 1815, Castelli had his visit to Paris cut short because of the war.⁴ Travelling was hazardous, and the right of entry to a country or city was by no means assured during this time.

The searching of incoming visitors by the Austrian authorities for subversive material was notorious and irksome: Cimarosa was even imprisoned in 1791 because, ignorant of the regulations, he had failed to declare the entire contents of his luggage on entering Austria.⁵ Trying to find suitable singers for Count Durazzo, Favart had found it necessary to enquire whether Vienna was a safe place for a well-brought up young lady.⁶ Worse perhaps than the red-tape, expense, discomfort and boredom which French composers were probably led to believe they would suffer in Vienna, was the long, wet and uncomfortable journey down the Danube by raft to the Austrian capital, which Dr. Burney thought he would never repeat, or the slow and dangerous coach ride.⁷

1. Bright, pp. 1-3.

2. Trollope, I, p. 298.

3. AMZ, 8 October 1800, column 40.

4. Castelli, Memoiren II, pp. 38-45.

5. Cimarosa was appointed as Salieri's successor as court Kapellmeister. He returned to Naples in 1793.

6. See p. 22.

7. P. Scholes, ed: Dr. Burney's Musical tours in Europe, (Oxford, 1959), II, p. 63.

There was less contact between Paris and Vienna during the opéra-comique vogue than one might have expected. Indeed, it is difficult to detect a genuine desire to have been closely informed about Paris, apart from an obvious interest in the latest fashionable and lucrative operas being given there. Even the visits which were made to the French capital and the occasional visits of Parisians to Vienna, were apparently of short duration -- snatched visits from which only superficial impressions were likely to remain. This cannot be compared to the impact of the Italians on Vienna, who lived, composed and taught there for many decades.

II. The translation and adaptation of opéras-comiques for Vienna

Introduction

In 1782, Grétry's opera Zémire et Azor was performed at Eszterhaza in Italian, but I have found no instance of opéra-comique being performed in Italian in Vienna. Paradoxically, some of Paer's Italian comic operas which had been translated for performance in Paris were performed in Vienna in French. Later, Paer's opera Sargines (libretto by Monvel originally set to music by Dalayrac in 1788) was apparently translated from the French into Italian by G. Foppa and from Italian into German by C. M. Heigel. The opera was first performed in German in Dresden in 1803. It was also performed in German in Vienna on 25 November 1807.

However, there do not seem to have been any performances of opéra-comique in a mixture of languages in the Austrian capital.

Possibly the earliest opéra-comique to be translated for the German stage was Philidor's Tom Jones by F. J. Sebastiani in 1768.¹ Within a few years, Germany was flooded with French opera translations, J. H. Faber in Frankfurt being one of the most prolific translators.

A. The Viennese and the French language, 1790-1819

The work of J. H. Faber and translators who followed him will be examined later after some general aspects of opera adaptation have been examined.

Before the vogue for French became established at the Austrian court, Italian had been widely spoken and understood among the aristocracy; to some extent this continued into the latter half of the eighteenth century but it was most widespread from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century:

When in 1711 Charles VI, King of Spain, was crowned Emperor of the Römische Reich and resided in Vienna, Italian had been the language of the Court and the educated circles for more than fifty years. Plays at the Court were given in Italian and the libretti of operas printed in Italian and German. Operas sung in Italian were not an affair of the sophisticated: in comic opera every pun in the libretto was understood as if it had been sung in German.²

It is impossible to say with certainty how many Viennese courtiers later had a knowledge of French as

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1. Loewenberg calls it "one of the earliest German translations of French opéra-comique", Loewenberg, p. 281.
 2. Egon Wellesz, "An ancestor of Papageno", in Festschrift Otto Erich Deutsch zum achtzigsten Geburtstag (Kassel, 1963), p. 183.

fluent as this, but several pieces of evidence suggest that, though they might have read French fluently, members of the Austrian aristocracy were not as comfortable with the French language as they liked to think themselves to be. As the Wiener Theaterzeitung complained:

Unter den vielen ärgerlichen Dingen auf der Welt ist auch ein gar ärgerliches, dass noch immer alle Welt in allen Städten Deutschlands, und zumahl in unserm lieben Wien französisch sprechen will, und so selten jemand französisch sprechen kann.

The paper went on to list common grammatical mistakes made by Viennese who pretentiously spoke French and added that it mattered little to most people what kind of French a teacher spoke as long as he was polite and inexpensive.¹

It was mentioned earlier that Castelli, an experienced translator of opéra-comique for the court theatres, visited Paris in 1815 in connection with his work as a civil servant and expressed surprise -- and dismay -- that the French spoke so fast.² He had been chosen for the assignment partly because of his knowledge of French: for years he had read through French operas for the opera director of the Theater an der Wien, Sebastian Meyer, who knew not one word of French. Fifty years earlier at the time of the French theatre in Vienna, opéra-comique quickly established itself as the most popular part of the French troupe's repertoire, perhaps

1. TZ, February 1818, pp. 57-58.

2. "Ich muss übrigens gestehen, dass ich bei dieser ersten französischen Vorstellung, welche ich sah, kaum die Hälfte verstand; denn die Schauspieler sprachen äusserst schnell". Castelli, II, p. 34.

because it was accessible to people whose ears were not sufficiently tuned in to French to be able to enjoy a play by Voltaire or Corneille. Austria had been at war with France for many years: the peace was not finally ratified until 1756. Knowledge of Italian in Vienna, on the other hand, was encouraged by the close diplomatic links the Habsburgs had enjoyed with Italy, by their geographical proximity and freedom of travel between the two countries.

Whether or not this suspicion that Austrian knowledge of French and modern French ideas was during the 1750s and 1760s less than the Viennese court would have desired, it is certain both that Viennese courtiers experienced something of a culture shock when they saw the first performance of a French tragedy by the Théâtre français in 1752¹ and that French works were not performed in Vienna as originally intended. Almost all works in the French troupe's repertoire received some degree of adaptation.

B. Viennese adaptation of opéra-comique at the time of the French troupes

Gluck's name often appears alongside the name of French composers in works performed in Vienna by the first French troupe. He was employed officially as an arranger for the French theatre from 1758² and his work (which unofficially began before then) has been documented in detail by Robert Haas.

1. See p. 27.

2. Favart, Mémoires, I, , p. 263.

One of Gluck's main tasks was to write new arias to replace the older, outdated vaudevilles. As was explained in the foreword, vaudevilles were old French melodies often associated with a particular idea or person and full of associations for Parisian audiences; they would frequently be omitted in Viennese productions because they were old fashioned and sometimes referred back to older works not known in the Austrian capital, so that the allusion was lost. An example of this connection between different opéra-comiques, which sometimes even extended beyond the use of similar melodies and might involve parody of a plot, concerns the three operas Le devin du village by J. J. Rousseau, first performed at Fontainebleau on 18 October 1752; Les amours de Bastien et Bastienne, a parody of Rousseau's work by Favart, first performed at the Comédie Italienne on 4 August 1753, and La vengeance inutile.

All three works were performed in Vienna, in the autumn of 1760, September 1755 and June 1755 respectively. Viennese audiences probably understood something of the connection between them although, ironically they were given in reverse order to their appearance in Paris.¹

Le devin du village had contained music composed by Rousseau. Some French operas, however contained strings of vaudevilles, to be sung one after the other: Favart's Le coq du village was such an opera. During the 1750s, however, newly composed "airs nouveaux" were

1. See appendix 2 p.746.

beginning to replace the older vaudeville music in Parisian opéras-comiques. Le peintre amoureux, Blaise le savetier, both performed in Paris in 1759; Le maître en droit (1760); and Le cadi dupé (1761) and Le roi et le fermier (1762), had none. Vaudevilles were often replaced by new (Austrian) music in Viennese productions.

Another type of musical number which was usually omitted when opéras-comiques were performed in Vienna during the 1750s and 1760s was the formal Italian opera aria which the French interspersed freely with simpler vocal numbers. These were either omitted or replaced by new numbers specially written in Vienna. Some French operas like Le peintre amoureux received new overtures: the original one-movement overture was replaced by a "French overture" in two movements. Ensembles which became increasingly common in later opéras-comiques, were frequently struck out in Viennese productions because the music was too complex for the French cast in Vienna to manage. This happened to Mazet in 1768. Operas were not necessarily performed the same way on revivals as on premières. La Cythère assiégée, first seen in Vienna in 1757, was given on that occasion with Favart's original vaudeville music, but Gluck wrote 26 new numbers for the 1759 revival of the opera.

Alterations were not confined to the music. French texts were censored and parts of the French dialogue which might be thought to offend the public were excised; even titles of the timbres (vaudeville melodies) which

appeared in text books were sometimes amended for Viennese publications: for example "Les capucins de Meudon" was simply called "Meudon" and "La jeune abbessse de ce lieu" renamed "La jeune fille de ce lieu" to avoid reference to the church.

More information about alterations of these early opéras-comiques is given by Robert Haas;¹ it will be seen that later Viennese adaptation of French operas was surprisingly similar in its intentions: to modernise French operas which sounded old to Austrian ears; reduce the risk of offending sensitive Viennese consciences; remove allusions understood only by Parisian audiences; and to make operas both performable and enjoyable to the foreign audiences.

C. Early German opera translations

When, during the 1770s, performance of opéra-comique in the vernacular became common throughout Germany, J. H. Faber and André were two of the most prolific translators and their German versions were often used in Vienna. Faber worked in Frankfurt as Marchand's chief translator. Marchand, who had visited Paris as a young man and been impressed by the works of Grétry, Duni and Monsigny, had succeeded in moulding the taste of his public away from cheap slapstick and his troupe's repertoire from 1771 to 1777 contained many French works.² Faber is listed by Goedeke as having

1. Haas, Gluck und Durazzo, pp. 137-175.

2. A. Iacuzzi, The European Vogue of Favart (New York, 1932), p. 174.

translated almost 40 modern French works, including seven by Favart.¹ He usually translated Favart's text literally, turning couplets into prose and vaudevilles and arias into verses.² In order to fit these to the original music, he was compelled to keep the original number of syllables and the result was a collection of poor verses. The difficulties of fitting new words to old music are obvious; but Faber also displayed a lack of imagination in his prose passages when he laboured under no such handicap. He usually adhered closely to the text without the slightest attempt to adapt place names, or other situations. The poet August Gottlieb Meissner, who himself gave up opera translation because of his mother's disapproval of the stage, commented in his preface to Arsène that Faber's translation was extraordinarily stiff; almost every contemporary who had occasion to mention Faber found it necessary in the same breath to condemn his translation.³

André's translations have also been criticised for being weak in inventive faculty.⁴ André first heard opéras-comiques during the French occupation of Frankfurt in 1760-61. He made his first translation of a French opera in 1765. In 1770 Theobald Marchand's theatrical troupe moved to Frankfurt and because Marchand was impressed by the literary finesse of André's work, a close collaboration with the troupe followed. Between 1771 and 1772 André translated more than a dozen French operas into German. André withdrew from the family silk concern to found his own publishing house. In 1776 he was appointed conductor of Theophil Doebbelin's theatre in Berlin, directing a troupe of over 50 musicians, among them 16 orchestral players. During these years André composed several Singspiele, though he was not a significant composer.⁵ Verses translated by

1. Goedeke, V, pp. 250-251.

2. Iacuzzi, pp. 177-190.

3. Iacuzzi, p. 194.

4. Iacuzzi, pp. 195-200.

5. "Johann André", The New Grove.

André tended to be longer, more verbose and clumsy than the French original. He often resorted to a forced play on words and his work was rather insipid.

Part of the criticism directed towards these men can be seen as an expression of the dismay felt by some German critics that writers of comic operas were so uncreative as to have to borrow works from foreigners; part of it was justified: a characteristic of these early translations is a slavish adherence to the original French text even to the point of clumsiness.

Translations of every kind were common in Germany from the middle of the eighteenth century: Germans were consumed by what has been nicely called by one authority an "Uebersetzerwut".¹ Of the 5000 to 6000 works estimated to have been presented at the Easter Fair at Leipzig in 1782, for example, more than half are reported to have been translations from French or English.²

The attitude to translation was ambivalent: Germany had few good native writers and the translation and "imitation" of foreign works was considered important by some because it was a means of making available to the German speaking people works of high literary value which would help in the formation of native taste and letters. At a time when Frederick the Great of Prussia felt that German was suitable only as a language

1. Walter Fränzel, "Geschichte des Übersetzens im 18 Jahrhundert", Beiträge zur Kultur und Universalgeschichte, 25 (1914), p. 60.

2. Helmut Knufmann, "Das deutsche Übersetzenswesen des 18 Jahrhunderts im Spiegel von Übersetzer und Herausgeber", Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel, no. 91 (1967), pp. 2676-7.

for servants and animals, Gottsched and his wife strove to convince people that German was a noble language, a suitable vehicle for their intimate thoughts. They translated many works into German for the benefit of the general public.¹ Other people saw the influx of foreign works as a kind of national betrayal.

Also, contradictions exist in the method of translation in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany : earlier translations were closer to the original -- to the point of being stiff -- than later ones. As German confidence grew, writers became bolder about digressing from the French original.

In 1784, Michael Kelly, the Irish tenor visiting Vienna, reported that Schroeder was careful to visit London to see The school for scandal on the English stage before translating it into German.²

Twenty years later, the idea of a Viennese translator visiting Paris to see the work in its original language before translating it would have been quite impractical because of the cost involved (any economic advantage of mounting opéras-comiques could thereby be lost), probably, too, it would have been considered unnecessary.

Some extraordinary liberties were taken by German writers with great works of art even at a fairly early stage. On 16 January 1773 Hamlet was first performed at

1. Knufmann, p. 2679.

2. Michael Kelly, Reminiscences of Michael Kelly (London, 1826) I, p. 212.

the Burgtheater in Vienna; its success "übertraf die Erwartung" and its translator was commended for his good taste. "Hätte er dazwischen geflicket und modernisiert: so wäre es nicht mehr Shakespeare gewesen", wrote a theatre almanac for the following year. The review of the production continued:

Der Herausgeber hat mit kritischem Scharfsinne das Unregelmessige und die episodischen Szenen des Originals, ... weggelassen, und die Handlung dadurch concentrirt.

As a result, the juxtaposition of scenes and the dénouement are quite different from Shakespeare's original. Laertes, Osric, Fortinbras and his soldiers, the Danish courtiers, grave diggers, and sailors never appear, and the story is altered so as to leave Hamlet alive at the end of the play.¹

But it is misleading to assert that eighteenth or nineteenth century critics and translators had no concept of authenticity. Gottsched's wife who translated The rape of the lock into German via a French translation in 1744 was horrified to discover at a later date how widely the French version differed from the original. When an English copy came into her hands she began her translation again, taking care to respect the authentic text.²

Newspaper articles between 1790 and 1819 show that many critics were eager to censure poor translation. In September 1799, for example, the Intelligenzblatt of the AMZ had contained an advertisement for a

1. Theatralmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1774, pp. 38-42.

2. Knufmann, p. 2679-2680.

German translation -- by Spazier -- of Grétry's Mémoires. The three volumes of Grétry's original had, its translator claimed, been reduced to a single volume of about thirty gatherings:

Ich werde aus den weitläuftigen Mémoires einen lesbaren und gedrunenen Auszug zu machen suchen, der den eigentlichen Geist derselben gehörig darstelle, wobey aber auch der Stoff für Ergänzungen, und, wenn man will, Berichtigungen und Verbesserungen nicht unbenutzt bleibe.¹

In February 1802, the AMZ contained a 14-column review of Spazier's translation -- an unusually long article for this paper -- which referred to the shallowness of Spazier's work as editor, his many needless tinkering with Grétry's text, his excision of parts he did not understand or agree with, and the printing errors. German readers were recommended by the AMZ to use the original French version assumed to be readily available to them.²

The Viennese were quick to become enraged when they discovered that Austrian works were significantly and apparently arbitrarily altered in Paris (without any consultation with the composer). The French alterations to Die Zauberflöte -- the excision of the sub-plot, the rearrangement of the chorus, and the rewriting of Sarastro's part -- were reported at length in the AMZ. Much to the annoyance of Germans the opera was drastically altered for Parisian audiences and renamed Les mystères d'Isis.³

1. AMZ, Intelligenzblatt XVIII, September 1799 (columns 89-91).

2. AMZ, 3 February 1802, columns 297-310. Rosenbaum, a year earlier had been given a copy of Spazier's translation by Count Lichtenstein. Diary entry 4 February 1801, p. 89.

3. AMZ, 28 October 1801, columns 69-74. Berlioz was contemptuous of Lachnith's alterations; Memoirs, pp; 89-90, 94.

The Viennese seem to have considered the French to be especially arrogant in their attitude towards the translation of foreign works, and although this was like a pot calling the kettle black, the French were particularly unwilling to accommodate themselves to foreign culture, tending, in their translations, to alter works so that they presented no challenge to French customs or contemporary thinking.¹ So the Viennese, who themselves allowed Così fan tutte to be rearranged, renamed and altered almost out of recognition,² and who in 1812 gave Die Zauberflöte with a woman playing the part of Tamino (the music, of course, transposed up an octave which affected the counterpoint and harmonies)³ were enraged to read of poor Parisian performances of Mozart and Haydn.⁴

In 1800, for example, Steibelt, visiting Germany, had taken back to Paris the first German copy of Haydn's Creation. Its performance was planned in the French capital and it was intended that Pleyel should travel to Vienna to discuss the performance with Haydn and bring the elderly composer to Paris to conduct the work himself.⁵ Because of the war, however, Pleyel was refused a pass to enter Vienna.⁶ Undeterred,

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1. Walter Fränzel, Geschichte des Übersetzens im 18 Jahrhundert, (Leipzig, 1914).
 2. Der Sammler, 25 January 1814, p. 60.
 3. Der Sammler, 11 July 1812, p. 333.
 4. For example, AMZ, 22 April 1801, columns 509-514 (of Haydn's Creation).
 5. AMZ, 16 October 1800, column 39.
 6. AMZ, 16 October 1800, column 40.

Steibelt went ahead with the performance but the AMZ regarded his intentions with mistrust and scorn:

Man hat zu diesem Unternehmen nicht eben das beste Zutrauen in Paris, besonders da, wie man versichert, der Uebersetzer seine eigene Poesie, ja auch Herr Steibelt seine eigenen Harmonien den Haydnschen beyzumischen wagen will.¹

After the first performance, French reactions to the performance were reported in the AMZ as having been favourable, however the German critic commented grimly:

...wir haben nicht begreifen können, aus was für einem Grunde sich Hr. Steibelt erlaubt hat, an Haydns geheiligtem Werk etwas zu ändern, zumal alles, was er demselben in der Anwendung der Instrumente anzuhängen oder unterzuschieben gewagt, weiter nichts, als ein Resultat von schlechtestem Geschmack und ein wahres Charivari bewürkt hat. Da wir die Original-Partitur, von Haydns Hand unterschrieben, vor Auge hatten; so haben wir uns des gerechten Unwillens über Hrn. Steibelts Vergreifung (Sacrilege) an einem solchen Heiligthume nicht enthalten können.²

A sense of outrage at the unjust alteration of another's work was not confined to the pages of the AMZ, or to German operas. In 1811 Der Sammler described the alterations made by Spontini to Sémiramis, an opera by Francesco Bianchi which had been adapted from the original Italian for performance at the Paris Opéra. Bianchi's original score, commented Der Sammler grimly, had not been "respectirt".³

1. AMZ, 8 October 1800, column 39.

2. AMZ, 22 April 1801, column 513.

3. Der Sammler, 14 September 1811, p. 444.

D. Translations of Gluck and Salieri operas

Gluck and Salieri, highly successful composers who were based for most of their lives in Vienna, both spent time in and wrote operas for Paris.

Gluck's Orfeo had been first performed in Vienna in 1762. When Gluck moved to Paris in 1773, he arranged for a French version of the opera to be made. The translation of the French Orphée¹ progressed slowly for the greatest care was taken with the preparation of the text.

The libretto which was used for the first performance even differed from that which appeared in the final printed score. French opera did not use castrato singers, so the part of Orphée was rewritten for tenor, which meant a complete alteration of the key scheme; the traditional four-part Italian chorus was rearranged for the more usual French chorus of five voice parts; the recitatives were rewritten to accommodate the new text; separate parts were written for cello and bass, cornets and chalumeaux replaced by oboes and clarinets; and a new ballet was inserted to make use of the very fine French ballet troupe. The French Orphée had become a new opera.

The translation of another Gluck opera, Iphigénie en Tauride, this time from French into German, after Gluck's return to Vienna, was also painstaking, with

1. Julian Rushton, "from Vienna to Paris: Gluck and the French opera", Chigiana, vol. XXIX - XXX (1972-1973), pp. 286-291.

Gluck able to supervise the subtle last minute alterations personally. Mozart wrote to his father about the translation:

der die Iphigenie in das teutsche übersezt hat, ist ein vortrefflicher Poet, und dem hätte ich recht gerne meine Oper von München zum übersetzen gegeben.¹

Another composer wished to have an opera he had written for France remade for production in Austria. Salieri's opera Tarare had been first produced in Paris in 1787. On his return to Vienna, Salieri commissioned Da Ponte to translate it into Italian for performance at the court opera house. However, Da Ponte soon found that merely to translate the Beaumarchais text would be impossible, and the opera reemerged as a substantially different opera now called Axur and more in accordance with the traditions of Austrian-Italian opera.²

Salieri and Gluck understood both the French and Austrian opera tradition and realised the substantial alterations needed when transferring a work from one place to another. They were successful and eminent enough to obtain conscientious translators and to be able to work in close collaboration with them. Also, they had the power to choose how their works appeared to foreign audiences and saw the task of adaptation as lengthy and painstaking.

1. Gerhard Croll, Introd., Iphigenie auf Tauris, deutsche Fassung, Wien 1781, Sämtliche Werke I,11 (Cassel, 1965), p. VII.

2. Dent, p. 41.

E. Viennese reactions to French opera texts

The Viennese, as far as one can tell from articles in the contemporary press, were in fairly general agreement about the qualities they admired in opéras-comiques between 1790 and 1819. Words which recur in praise of such operas are those used to describe Isouard's Une journée à Paris performed in the winter of 1811: "leicht, gefällig, rührend und elegant".¹ The Austrians enjoyed French works which were witty and entertaining:² they also liked a certain amount of sentimentality: "die süsslich empfindsame Manier der neuesten französischen Theaterschule";³ they sought works which had vitality (in one review the French mind was compared to quicksilver); and they approved of a moral ending. A typical review read:

Diesen Stoff hat der französische Dichter mit der seiner Nation eigenen Lebhaftigkeit behandelt, und mit Einsicht durchgeführt. Die Scenen folgen natürlich auf einander, eine bereitet die andere vor, nie wird die moralische Tendenz ausser Acht gelassen.⁴

The impression gained from such notices is that the Viennese placed the importance of the plot above that of the music, but this may be a false conclusion because the story line of an opera was, to a newspaper critic lacking musical training, the most obvious part of the work about which to comment. When reasons are given for

1. Der Sammler, 3 December 1811, p. 582.

2. AMZ, 17 February 1819, front page.

3. Das Sonntagsblatt, 27 November 1808, (review of Bouilly's Hass allen Weibern; Haine aux femmes), pfd BTh 9 November 1808.

4. Thalia, 30 November 1810, front page, review of Ein Tag in Paris.

an opera's failure, the libretto's inability to capture the interest and imagination of the audience is most frequently blamed. To a certain extent, however, poor music seems to have been tolerated because the opera texts were good. As Die Theaterzeitung commented in 1807, tastes had changed, the public now desired simplicity and naturalness, music was not now the only quality prized in opera.¹ And so, in 1815, Der Sammler wrote ruefully about a second rate French composer whose work Der General had been produced in Vienna:

Wenn sie behaupten, dass Wien fünfzig Compositeurs besitzt, die eine bessere Musik schreiben würden, als jene des Herrn Bochsá, so lässt sich in der That nichts Verneinendes darauf antworten.²

Sometimes, even the good plot was not enough to compensate for what the Viennese perceived to be second-rate music -- or, particularly in the case of French grand opera, which between 1790 and 1819 failed to appeal to Austrians, for music which was not to their taste. In 1813, for example, Catel's opera Les Bayadères, failed in Vienna to achieve an expected success:

Was Herrn Catel in seinen Compositionen schadet, ist, dass seine Melodien auch in den lieblichsten, gefühlvollsten Situationen, die von Dichtern vorgezeichnet wurden, einen gewissen ernsthaften Charakter annehmen, wodurch der Anschein von Trockenheit und Schwerfälligkeit auf sie zurückfällt.³

1. TZ, 16 April 1807, pp. 17-18.

2. Der Sammler, 23 September 1815, p. 476.

3. TZ, 19 October 1813, p. 487.

Two years later, Persuis's opera La Jérusalem délivrée failed, in spite of a lavish production, because "Die Musik hat zu wenig Form oder Melodie, obgleich sie einen Überfluss an Masse: d.h. an Harmonie oder Farbe hat". The production of this opera brought forth bitter comments about the absurd amount of money which had been spent on poor French music and which should have been put towards encouraging local opera.¹

Despite the changes in taste which had taken place in Vienna, it seems that the general public, accustomed to the lyricism of Italian opera, preferred melodic opéra-comique (which had been influenced of course by Italian comic opera) to what they considered to be the angular, awkward style of serious French opera. And so Isouard's opera Joconde was successful because: "Wie der Name des Tonsetzers, so ist auch seine Composition eine Vermischung des italienischen mit dem französischen Geschmacke",² but the same composer's Lully et Quinault, parts of which imitated the style of Lully, failed, because it contained "Bizarrerien" and music which "nur für französische Zuhörer Reitz hat". The attempt to present such a work to Viennese audiences was criticised as foolish and misguided.³

Because the texts of many of the Italian operas which had traditionally been prized in Vienna, were done by

1. Der Sammler, 18, 21, 23 February 1815, pp. 91-92; 95-96; 99-100.

2. Der Sammler, 22 July 1815, p. 366.

3. Der Sammler, 28 September 1813, p. 620.

writers who were poets rather than playwrights, authors of French operas with their passages of spoken dialogue were sometimes criticised "for having no poetry in their souls", for being unable to develop a poetic idea.¹ Jean de Paris was described in 1815 as being "seicht und flach in Beziehung auf die poetische Idee; aber lebendig in der Vorbereitung zum Hauptereigniss";² its character-drawing was admired but the words of the text were thought to be prosaic. Sometimes Viennese translators of opéras-comiques were criticised for trying to embellish the original French text. Treitschke, in the opinion of Das Sonntagsblatt, was too pretentious a translator: the Austrian stage needed such people but "ihre erste Pflicht ist, flink zu seyn, die zweyte, erträglich gut".³ Treitschke would be a good translator if he did not persistently try to be a poet at the same time. Parts of opera texts which, in the original, were simply expressed, delicate, subtle and above all natural-sounding, became in some of Treitschke's German texts crude, clumsy and over-complicated: "Es ist kaum möglich" wrote Das Sonntagsblatt of the translators's work "sich sinnloser und plumper und doch so geziert zugleich auszudrücken".⁴ The adapters of opéras-comiques were expected to walk a narrow tightrope -- between exact translation, and imaginative alteration of parts which needed to be changed for the foreign audience.

1. Der Sammler, 6 June 1815, p. 286.

2. Der Sammler, 6 June 1815, p. 286.

3. Das Sonntagsblatt, 9 August 1807, p. 437.

4. Das Sonntagsblatt, 9 August 1807, p. 449. A similar criticism was made of his translation of Gozzi, 2 August 1807.

Schreyvogel doubted that translations from the French would ever be satisfactory:

Die französischen Charaktere, wodurch es allenfalls interessieren könnte, werden schwerlich auf einem deutschen Theater so lebendig dargestellt werden, dass man das Ganze ohne Gähnen ansehen könnte. Um wie langweiliger wird aber, trotz einem paar drolligen oder witzigen Einfällen das Stück, wenn, wie bey uns, die Delicatesse und Liebenswürdigkeit der handelnden Personen sich hinter Plumpheit und Uebertreibung verbirgt.¹

The importance to Viennese audiences of the French opera texts put a heavy burden on their translators: clumsiness was particularly noticeable in the passages of spoken dialogue and often criticised. Praise was quite rare. In 1814 when Gaveaux's opera L'échelle de soie was performed in Vienna as Der Stickleiter, Castelli, its translator, was unusually congratulated by Der Sammler: "Der Dialog hat keine Härten, er passt für den Umgangston".² Ten years later -- Castelli was still translating opéras-comiques for the Viennese theatres -- he was commended, once more, for having admirably fulfilled the rôle of translator. Die Theaterzeitung wrote: "Herr Castelli hat die Bearbeitung mit Glück, Routine und Talent für unser hiesiges Bedürfniss eingerichtet. Die Sprache ist gewandt, fließend und edel".³

1. Das Sonntagsblatt, 31 July 1808, p. 303.

2. Der Sammler, 26 January 1814, p. 132.

3. TZ, 30 March 1824.

Viennese admiration for modern French writing was not confined to the librettists of opéras-comiques.¹ Viennese playwrights often, during these years, based their works on French originals; French plays as well as French operas were translated for production in the Austrian capital. This has some amusing side-effects as Austrian artists were, quite unjustly, criticised for their lack of originality. Così fan tutte, with its text by Da Ponte, had first been performed in Vienna in 1790. In 1814, the work re-emerged in an "improved" version by Treitschke which aimed to soften the nature of the women's inconstancy. The opera was not particularly successful in this form being accused of too great a resemblance to the plots of modern French operas.² Mistaken identity and female unfaithfulness are, of course, stock operatic situations not only characteristic of opéra-comique.

Similarly, and equally without reason, a play by Caroline Weissenthurn, one of the Burgtheater actresses, Welche ist die Braut?, first performed in Vienna in January 1813, was criticised for having used the plot of Isouard's opera Cendrillon -- of having relied too heavily on a French model. The story centres on

1. Sometimes too, operas were performed in Vienna without music. Plantade's opera Le mari de circonstance was given without music at BTh on 10 May 1814. The opera, with a libretto by Planard, had first been seen in Paris on 18 March 1813. Der Sammler said the attempt was ill-advised: "eine Oper wird nie ein vollkommenes Lustspiel, oder man müsste die ganze organisation derselben verändern" but the spirit of the piece was well captured by the cast. Der Sammler 21 May 1814, p. 324.

Isouard's opera Lulli et Quinault was also performed in Vienna as a play at the Burgtheater on 29 June 1813. It failed.

2. Der Sammler, 25 January 1814, p. 60.

the household of a baron who has fallen on hard times. One of the daughters must be married to a rich duke in order to save the fortunes of the family. The marriage broker chooses the youngest step-daughter, who has finer manners and a more charming personality than her older sisters. The play seems to have been padded out by amusing well-wrought episodes, and Weissenthurn's character-drawing is praised. The play gave opportunities for pleasing visual effects and was well organised. But Bäuerle, having given credit to Weissenthurn for a good piece of work, implies that she cribbed the story from the French story of Cinderella which had been given in Vienna earlier as the opera Aschenbrödl set to music by Isouard, and enjoyed a huge vogue. Bäuerle goes on to say that this was not necessarily a criticism. It was taken as such, however, and the work allegedly was nicknamed Die neue Aschenbrödl.¹ In the Theaterzeitung of 22 February 1813, Madam Weissenthurn's reply was printed:

Man behauptete nämlich in einem vielgelesenen Blatt, ich hatte den Stoff dieses Stückes aus dem Französischen genommen, man beschuldigt mich daher öffentlich eine Unwahrheit gesagt zu haben, in dem ich es für ein Original, das heisst: für eins, mit keinem deutschen ähnlich, und aus keiner andern Sprache übersetztes Stück ausgab. Ich halte es für nöthig auf diese öffentlich Beschuldigung zu antworten, dass mir kein solches französisches Stück bekannt ist, dass ich bisher gewissenhaft alle Quellen angegeben, aus denen ich schöpfte, und es daher bey diesem Stück, wo ich auf so manchen bösen Willen rechnen könnte, gewiss nicht verschwiegen haben würde.²

1. TZ, 28 January 1813, pp. 45-46.

2. TZ, 22 February 1813, p. 53.

Ironically, when Isouard's opera had first been referred to in the Viennese press -- on 22 March 1810 -- it was described as being based on a tale well-known throughout Germany: "ein bekanntes Ammemärchen".¹

Opera texts were also not infrequently accused of being copied from French sources: as for example with the text of Castelli's opera, Salem, set by Mosel and first performed at the Kärntnertheater in March 1813. Castelli did not deny his source, but refuted the accusation of plagiarism put forward by the paper Thalia.²

French writing -- and hence French opera texts -- were, during these years, admired in Vienna.³ It seems to have been generally thought that Germans could not do as well. Beethoven, whose only opera used a French text, is reported to have said that the Germans could not write good opera texts.⁴ But not all Austrian attempts to use French texts were successful, and Schubert was, on at least one occasion, criticised for failing to understand the character of the text he set.

When his opera Die Zwillingsbrüder was first performed in Vienna, one of the criticisms was that it was too serious: "Die Musik der Zwillingsbrüder hat viel Originalität, manche interessante Parthien, und ist declamatorisch richtig; darin liegt aber ein Flecken des Werkes, dass die Empfindungen einfacher Landleute in einem komischen Sujet viel zu ernsthaft, wir möchten

1. Der Sammler, 22 March 1810, under Notizen (report from Paris).

2. Der Sammler, 6 April 1813, p. 220; The accusations in Thalia appeared in numbers 31, 32 and 33 for the year 1813.

3. This vogue did not last: 20 years later, Mrs. Trollope wrote that the Viennese now despised French literature. Trollope, II, pp. 54-5.

4. As recorded in a conversation with Sir Julius Benedict, Thayer, III, p. 139.

sagen schwerfällig aufgefasst, sind." The WAMZ compared Schubert's treatment of a comic plot to Méhul's or Cherubini's. The latter, it was alleged, did not try to treat comedy as tragedy.¹

G. The cost of translation

Opéra-comiques usually held the stage well; but it is worth considering some of the expenses involved in producing them in Vienna. Firstly, the French score had to be purchased and they were by no means inexpensive. As mentioned above, in 1799 Méhul's Ariodant cost 40 francs, which was ten times the daily wage of a worker at the Gobelins factory. Austrians who made the journey to purchase music also incurred travelling expenses for their theatre unless involved in a diplomatic mission.

When the score reached Vienna, a translator had to be found and paid unless a German translation of the opera was purchased from another theatre, which was unusual in the years between 1801 and 1819. The translator was usually a man attached to the theatre as a poet or sometimes as an actor.

When the German version of the opera had been prepared, copyists produced parts for the orchestra and cast -- these expenses had to be met in almost every opera production. Beyond the purchase of the score, there was no payment to a composer, whereas a Viennese composer might be paid several hundred Gulden for the music of an opera.

1. WAMZ, 17 June 1820, columns 386-388.

Financial records from the court theatres at the turn of the century show that payment for composers and librettists varied.

In 1799 Schenk had received 225 fl. for the music to Die Jagd, first performed 7 May 1799 at the Kärntnerthortheater; (the libretto was taken from a French tale by Collé, translated by Weisse, and presumably only the text book was purchased); it was performed 5 times but never revived. Aloys Weissenbach in the same year was paid 150 fl. for his play Die Barmeciden oder Die Egyptier in Bagdad, first performed at the Burgtheater on 4 October 1799, which ran for 3 performances. Franz Karl Lippert was paid 112.30 for his four-act comedy Das Komplot, which opened on 20 August 1800 and ran for 11 performances; Weigl, in addition to his salary of 1050 fl. per annum, received 150 fl. for the ballet music he wrote for Vigano's ballet Chlotilde Prinzessin von Salerno which ran for 21 performances from 15 October 1799 to 17 April 1801. Thomas Polliani was given 225 fl. for his music to the Singspiel Il Naufrago, first performed 19 May 1800 and running for 4 performances.¹

The following year, Ignaz Franz Castelli, a young man who was to become an important translator of opéras-comiques for Vienna, was delighted to receive 30 fl

(Gulden) for his first translation of a French play.

Castelli had been interested in the theatre all his life -- among other achievements he could claim at

1. Haus -, Hof -, und Staatsarchiv, Theatral Hof - Directions Rechnung 1 August 1799 - Ende July 1800, S. R. 33.

a young age to have played the part of a monkey in Die Zauberflöte.¹ He was a close friend of Joseph, Ritter von Seyfried, theatre poet at the Theater auf der Wieden (later the Theater an der Wien), with whom he had been at Vienna university. Castelli records that he often helped Seyfried with a translation when translations needed to be quickly finished, writing a scene or an aria to help speed the work, but in 1801 he finally undertook himself the translation of a work by Pixérécourt of which the original had been received by Seyfried.² The work is probably Coeline ou l'enfant du mystère which was performed at the Ambigu Comique in 1801, a play "avec grand spectacle"³ which, Castelli refers to as a melodrama called Coline. It was performed in Vienna in 1801 as Die Mühle am Arpennefelsen. Castelli recalls with pleasure that it was "sehr beifällig aufgenommen" listing the ingredients which made it so popular at this time: "Eine verfolgte Unschuld, ein graulicher Tyrann, Donner und Blitz, eine Brücke, welche sich einbricht, ein Stummer u.s.w." In order to celebrate the success of his work, with which he was delighted, Castelli invited the cast out to what he describes as a "glänzendes Fest". However, his honorarium, which had seemed generous, failed to pay for the meal, and he had to add another 10 fl. from his own pocket to cover the cost. Translators had to depend on a salaried position for their livelihood.

1. Castelli, Memoiren, I, pp. 50.

2. Castelli, Memoiren, I, pp. 54-55.

3. Library of Congress Catalogue "Pixérécourt".

H. The translators

Between 1790 and 1819, 114 French operas were seen in Vienna for the first time. Three quarters of them were translated by local Viennese men (though the fact that the name of a Viennese author was attached to a translation did not prevent him from "borrowing" from the work of his colleagues in Hamburg, Frankfurt or other German cities); eleven translations remain anonymous and 23 were by translators in other German theatres.

Before 1802, Viennese suburban theatres were heavily dependent on other German stages for French performance material: between 1790 and 1801, only four of the fourteen operas translated were the work of men known to have been in Vienna (Perinet and Gieseke).

Translations of opéras-comiques used in Vienna

name of translator	number of translations by him used in Viennese productions of opéra- comique			
	1750-1850			1790-1819
Alxinger	1	.	.	. 1
J. André	5 or 6	.	.	. 1
J. D. Anton	1			
G. Ball	1			
W. G. Becker	1			
F. Blum	1			
K. Blum	1			
Börnstein	1			
Braun	1			
K. J. Braun von Braunthal	1			
Margarethe Carl	1			
I. F. Castelli	26	.	.	. 11
Cornet	1			
W. Ehlers	1			
F. Ellmenreich	2			

name of translator	number of translations by him used in Viennese productions of opéra- comique				
	1750-1850		1790-1819		
J. H. Faber	8				
Franke	1				
Francke	1				
Friedrich	1				
F. Genée	1				
Gieseke	3				
Gollmick	2				
J. C. Grünbaum	3				
Hassaurek	1	.	.	.	1
Haupt	1				
Hell	3	.	.	.	2
C. A. Herklots	14	.	.	.	11
L. Herz	1				
F. K. Hiemer	1	.	.	.	1
J. Hoffmann	1				
G. E. von Hofmann	1				
Huber	4	.	.	.	4
Ihlée	2	.	.	.	2
Kotzebue	1				
J. Kupelwieser	9				
M. G. Lambrecht	2	.	.	.	2
von Lichtenstein	11	.	.	.	2
K. F. Lippert	1	.	.	.	1
A. G. Meissner	1				
A. Meyer	1				
F. L. W. Meyer	1				
C. G. Neefe	1				
Ott	2				
Perinet	2	.	.	.	1
Dr. Petit	1				
A. Prix	1				
Reinold	1				
Rellstab	1				
C. L. Reuling	1				
Ribics	1				
F. A. Ritter	1				
K. A. Ritter	1				
Rochlitz	1				
J. D. Sander	1				
Schmieder	4	.	.	.	3
Heinrich Schmidt	1				
Sedtler	1				
J. G. Seidl	1				
J. Seyfried	32	.	.	.	25
G. L. P. Sievers	1	.	.	.	1
Sonnleithner	4	.	.	.	4
M. Stegmayer	1	.	.	.	1
G. Stephanie	6				
W. A. Swoboda	2				
Treitschke	21	.	.	.	18
Weiskern	1				
Weisse	2				
K. Vio	1	.	.	.	1
Voll	2	.	.	.	1
Voss	1				
unknown	23				

A study of the biographies of the Viennese translators of opéra-comique shows that a high percentage of them had studied law; many of them had connections in the book or publishing trade and a few were civil servants or members of the diplomatic service. Three were singers at the court theatres: Lippert translated Die Räuberhöhle in 1803; and Wilhelm Ehlers translated Le déserteur in 1813. But neither of these translations was very successful. Gieseke, whose German version of Euphrosine for the Theater auf der Wieden in 1795 was highly praised, was a singer and actor at that theatre, later to have an appointment as mineralogist at the Royal Society of Dublin. Before 1790-- especially in the days of the Nationalsingspiel -- opéras-comiques had been translated by court theatre actors like Stephanie the Younger and Weiskern.

1) Castelli (born 1781) had, from a young age, shown talent for verse-writing and as a student of law at Vienna university he played in private and amateur theatre productions. When he left university he entered the Buchamt and his work as a civil servant took him in 1809 to Hungary, in 1815 to France, and in 1839 to Germany. From 1802, Castelli was connected with the Theater an der Wien, and from 1811 to 1814 he was Theaterdichter at the Kärntnerthortheater. His writing activities involved him in editing parts of Der Sammler, Thalia, and several theatre almanacs ; as well as this he wrote articles, plays, and dialect poems. He died in retirement in 1843 and his collection of about 12,000

plays and 1600 theatre posters was bought by the court library. As a young man, Castelli had had some musical training for he had played the violin in the theatre orchestra.¹

2) Joseph Ritter von Seyfried was a year older than Castelli and also studied law in Vienna, wanting, on leaving university, to enter the Civil Service. Instead, he became, in 1801, secretary and poet to the Theater an der Wien where he stayed until the end of Baron von Braun's direction in 1806. However, his connection with the Theatre continued and his opera translations and texts for new operas (some of them set by his composer brother, Ignaz) include texts to Halévy, Auber, Hérold, Rossini, and, in 1849, the year of his death, Hernani, by Verdi. In 1811 he took over the editorship of Thalia from Castelli and also embarked on editing Der Sammler from 1814. He did less creative writing and more of the hack translation work than his colleague Castelli. In 1804 he refused the offer of a post as theatre secretary and poet to St. Petersburg, opting to stay in Vienna.² The role of Herr Joseph von Seyfried was described in 1805 in the following words:

Herr von Seyfried ist zwar kein theatralisches Genie, aber doch verdient er die beleidigenden Ausdrücke im Freymüthigen nicht; wir verdanken seinem Fleisse wirklich viele französische Opern, welche das Publikum unterhalten haben.³

1. Goedeke, IX, pp. 51-52.

2. Goedeke, 11/II pp. 390-391.

3. Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde, II Heft, Wien 1805, p. 167.

3) Georg Friedrich Treitschke, who was Joseph von Seyfried's rival at the court theatres from 1802 onwards, was slightly older than Castelli and Seyfried, having been born in 1776. He had come to Vienna from Leipzig in 1802 and entered employment under Baron von Braun as a producer ("Regisseur") and poet at the Hofoper. Although encouraged by his father in the field of business, he devoted himself after 1799 to literature. In 1809 and 1811 he was delegated to run the Theater an der Wien when leadership was needed, and after 1822 was responsible for the finances of the court theatres. In 1842 he collaborated with Ochsenheimer on an important book about butterflies, and also wrote some poems, plays and occasional articles for Castelli's paper Thalia. Most of his work was opera translation.¹ He altered the texts to Mozart's Idomeneo and Così fan tutte and also did the final version of the libretto of Fidelio. Così fan tutte was first performed under its new title Die Zauberprobe, oder: So sind sie Alle at the Theater an der Wien on 20 January 1814, and was criticised in its story line for being a mixture of modern French operas recently seen in Vienna: Die natürliche Zauberey, Aschenbrödl and Raoul der Blaubart.²

In Das Sonntagsblatt, Schreyvogel in 1807, was scathing about Treitschke's work -- and in particular about his version of Méhul's opera Gabrielle des Estrées

1. Goedeke, VI, pp. 572-576.

2. Der Sammler, 25 January 1814, p. 60.

of which he had completely altered the tone. Parts which, in the original, had been subtle and delicate, became crude and stilted in the translation. But Schreyvogel also quoted in this article a more favourable appraisal of Treitschke's work from Das Morgenblatt:

In seinen Arbeiten, bemerkt man eine besondere Reinheit des Verses. . . Wie weit er es hierin gebracht, zeigen seine Uebersetzungen der Medea der deux journées, des Milton . . . Noch auffallender wird die durchgängige Politur seiner Sprache, wenn man andere Uebersetzungen dagegen hält. -- Es ist nämlich, Treitschke'n ausgenommen, der sich auch hierin als ein Mann von Talent bewahrte, noch keinem eingefallen, der Leerheit jener Originalien in der Uebersetzung einen glücklichen Gedanken unterzulegen.¹

Schreyvogel held up Seyfried's text to Gyrowetz's opera Agnes Sorel as a model translation. However this text was set to music after translation into German and one feels that Schreyvogel is unsympathetic to the difficulties of translating opera texts already set to music.

4) Joseph Sonnleithner (1766-1833) had directed a publishing firm after leaving Vienna University. A member of Joseph II's secret cabinet and of the exchequer, he was secretary of the court theatres from 1804 until 1815 and founded the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. He was more of an administrator than an artist, but did translate some plays and operas.²

5) Joachim Perinet was born into a wealthy family, but squandered his fortune at an early age. In 1790, he was engaged as Theaterdichter at the Theater in der

1. Das Morgenblatt, as quoted in Das Sonntagsblatt, 9 August 1807, p. 442.

2. Goedeke, 11/II, pp. 397-400.

Leopoldstadt. He moved to the Theater auf der Wieden for five years from 1798 to 1803 after which he returned to the Leopoldstadt.¹ His importance as a writer of pamphlets and essays during the Josefinian period has been pointed out by Lesli Bodi.² Perinet, with his strong political views, may have been instrumental in encouraging the production of opéra-comique in the Viennese suburbs during the 1790s. A closer study of Perinet and the suburban theatres during this time was unfortunately outside the scope of this dissertation.

6) Matthäus Stegmayer joined the Theater in der Josefstadt in 1792 having been a choir-boy in a Dominican monastery, later a member of a troupe of wandering players. In 1796, he left the Theater in der Josefstadt for the Theater auf der Wieden; and in 1801 he joined the court theatres where, from 1814, he directed the chorus.³

7) The only other translator who deserves special mention is T. Hell, who translated operas which were performed at the Kärntnerthortheater from 1818. He was actually called Karl Gottfried Theodor Winckler, studied law at Wittenberg and Dresden, and was employed in important government posts in Dresden which involved

1. Goedeke, V, pp. 332-335; 11/II, p. 302.

2. Bodi, pp. 375-394.

3. Goedeke 11/II, pp. 402-407.

him in much travel. For a few years around 1815, he was Intendant of the theatres in Dresden and Leipzig. He edited government publications, papers on artistic matters, and was an influential figure in artistic circles for nearly twenty years. Goedeke is scathing about his contribution to German dramatic literature.¹ Hell completed translations with great facility and application, though often with the help of hacks.

A notice which appeared in Der Sammler about Hell's translation of Boieldieu's Liebe und Ruhm in 1818 was complimentary:

Was die deutsche Uebersetzung des Hrn. Hell betrifft, so scheint uns diese sehr rein und fliessend, mit Witz, besonders in den Scenen des Freyherrn von Montalfiero, der die Einsamkeit über alles liebt, und mit zahlreichen Besuchen doch so sehr überhäuft wird, reichlich ausgeschmückt und ziemlich frey zu seyn. Dieses ist um so mehr zu glauben da an einer Gelegenheitsoper so manches umzuändern ist, was auf fremdem Boden und in andern Verhältnissen unpassend wäre.²

H. A translator at work

Castelli worked first as poet to the Theater an der Wien, after 1802, and later to the court theatres. In his memoirs he describes how a team of people worked together at the adaptation of French operas; the following long account from Castelli's memoirs describes the process of adaptation at the Theater an der Wien:

1. Goedeke, IX, p. 278.

2. Der Sammler, 19 February 1818, p. 87.

Dieser Mann /Sebastian Meyer/ war als Sänger (Bass) nicht sehr bedeutend, aber ein wackerer Schauspieler, und als Opernregisseur ein ganz ausgezeichneter Schützer und Verbreiter des wahrhaft Guten und Schönen. Niemand hat in Wien für die Verbesserung der Opernmusik, und daher auch für die Verbesserung des Geschmacks in musikalischer Hinsicht so Bedeutendes gewirkt als er. Mit tiefen musikalischen Kenntnissen ausgestattet, war es weniger die Pflicht, die ihm als Regisseur oblag, sondern mehr seine Liebe für die Kunst dass er im Theater an der Wien eine Oper zu Stande brachte, die nicht nur mit der Hofoper wetteifern könnte, sondern dieser bei weitem übertraf. Er war es, welcher die bessern französischen Opern verschrieb, sie übersetzen liess und dann mit grosser Sorgfalt in die Scene setzte. Cherubini, Catel, Dallayrac, Mehul, Boieulldieu /sic/, Isouard wurden durch ihn zuerst den Wienern bekannt und bei ihnen beliebt. Wer "Lodoiska", "Semiramis", "den Bernhardsberg", den "Thurn von Gothenburg", "Johann von Paris", "Aschenbrödl", "die beiden Füchse", "Johanna", die "vornehmen Wirthe" u.s.w. auf dieser Bühne gesehen hat, wo sie unter Meyer's Leitung eben so gut gesungen als gespielt wurden, der wird das Vergnügen welches sie ihm gewährten, nie vergessen; ja Meyer wusste den Geschmack so zu fesseln, dass selbst kleine Operetten, wie der "Schatzgräber", "Pächter Robert" u.s.w. dieses grosse Schauspielhaus zehn-zwanzigmal füllten. Dabei unterstützten ihn die beiden Brüder Seyfried ganz ausserordentlich. Joseph v. Seyfried war ein schneller und glücklicher Uebersetzer, und Ignaz v. Seyfried einer der tüchtigsten Capellmeister, nach Sechter wohl der grösste Contrapunctist, was seine gediegenen Kirchencompositionen beweisen, und wovon seine vielen Schüler, welche er in der Composition hat, Zeugniß geben. In der Composition von Opern war er nicht so glücklich, doch geschah es oft, dass er auf Anordnung Meyers ältere französische Opern, wie z.B. "Richard Löwenherz", vortrefflich neu instrumentirte und zu ändern ein neues Musikstück componirte, welches als das beste der Oper anerkannt wurde.

Ich war mehre Jahre täglich Abends nach dem Theater bei Meyer, und lernte diesen Mann ganz kennen. Da sah er gewöhnlich neuere französische Opernpartituren durch, und ich musste ihm -- da er nicht französisch verstand -- den Inhalt erklären; gab er entweder Seyfried oder mir die Oper zu übersetzen, und deutete uns zugleich die Abänderungen an, welche wir damit zu treffen haben, bezeichnete uns die Stellen, wo neue Musikstücke einzuschalten seien, und liess diese, von uns gedichtet, von den Capellmeistern Seyfried oder Fischer componiren. Aeltere Opern, wie "Richard Löwenherz" und "Raoul der Blaubart", liess er ganz neu instrumentiren; so kam es, dass das Theater an der Wien

stets Neuigkeiten, gut dargestellt, brachte, und zu jener Zeit das beliebteste Theater in Wien war.¹

Many interesting points emerge from this account.

We know that some operas were bought from other German theatres, but the norm described here is the use of the actual French score. In so far as there was any one person in charge of opera production at the Theater an der Wien (as mentioned above, the concept of overall "artistic director" or "producer" did not emerge in Vienna until later), it was Sebastian Meyer. Yet he could not understand French, and was dependent on Castelli for explanation. Castelli evidently thought that the alteration of operas -- and addition to them -- was desirable if this filled the theatre. The qualities he commends in a fellow translator, Joseph v. Seyfried, were his speed and success. New Operas were discussed after the evening performance, by candlelight, and the translation and parts to be altered were delegated to the Seyfried brothers, Anton Fischer or Castelli. An important consideration which affected the translation of opéra-comiques and other French works which were performed in Vienna, is the speed with which translators had to work. Castelli writes that, when under pressure, theatre poets might divide works between several people in order to obtain a translation quickly:

Manchmal wenn er [Joseph Ritter von Seyfried] schnell die Bearbeitung eines französischen Originals leisten musste, bat er mich ihm einzelne Scenen und Arien hinzu zu machen.²

1. Castelli, Memoiren, I, pp. 239-241.

2. Castelli, Memoiren, I, pp. 54-55.

Castelli says less about his work for the court theatres. One may imagine that the process of adaptation there followed a similar pattern. He remembers working very hard as translator and that the singers sometimes were difficult ("hatten mir wohl manchmal gerne Galle gemacht"). Prince Lobkowitz protected Castelli and gave him a rise from 1500 to 2000 fl. Castelli was pleased with the performance of the works he translated:

Ich hatte dazu gute Darsteller; denn damals verstanden die deutschen Operisten auch noch zu reden und zu spielen, und so gefielen alle diese Opern.¹

I. Problems with translation

In 1803, a review of Méhul's Le trésor supposé appeared in the AMZ. Here was an opera, recommended the paper which "auf deutschen Theatern einheimisch zu werden verdient".² It would be inexpensive and easily performed for German companies. The extent to which it was considered appropriate to alter French operas to make them "at home" in Vienna - and other German cities -- varied enormously. In 1806 the same AMZ suggested that Léonce ou le fils adoptif by Isouard be performed on German stages, but that the dialogue be shortened for German audiences: this could be done without damaging the whole.³ A year later a Viennese paper, Die Theaterzeitung, ascribed the failure in Vienna of Méhul's opera Gabrielle d'Estrées, to the fact that Henri IV behaved too like

1. Castelli, Memoiren, I, p. 205.

2. AMZ, 5 October 1803, column 25-26.

3. AMZ, 15 January 1806, column 251.

an ordinary man and not sufficiently like a monarch.. Alteration of the plot was suggested as a way in which the opera could have been brought closer to Austrian ideals;¹ the Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde complained in 1805 that Seyfried's translation of Grétry's opera Les deux avares had spoilt the character of the two misers (but Seyfried was still thanked for making these entertaining operas available for Austrian audiences).² Cherubini's opera Médée was revived in Vienna in 1812 with cuts both in the story and the music.³ Der Sammler refused to comment about the music, but expressed some doubts about the success of the enterprise: "es ist ein schweres Unternehmen, ein Genie wie Cherubini beschränken zu wollen". On the other hand, Boieldieu's opera L'Amour et Mystère, first performed at St. Petersburg in 1807 and in Vienna relatively late, in 1818, its première being on the emperor's birthday, was praised for its free translation -- such liberties needed to be taken with a "Gelegenheitsoper".⁴ Presumably there were no hard and fast rules about translation; but there was a manual for translators, published in Leipzig, to which translators of opéra-comique were referred in the AMZ in July 1803, entitled Grundsätze der Kunst zu übersetzen.⁵

Names of characters were usually, but not always, "translated" from French to German. Sometimes, as in the case of Les deux petits Savoyards, a Provençal

1. TZ, 20 July 1807, p. 28.

2. Monatschrift für Theaterfreunde, 1805, III, p. 107.

3. Der Sammler, 4 January 1812, p. 8.

4. Der Sammler, 19-February 1818, p. 87.

5. AMZ, 27 July 1803. column 733: Grundsätze der Kunst zu übersetzen, published by Weygand in Leipzig. I have been unable to identify this work.

accent was turned, in translation into a provincial German accent.¹ The location of operas was occasionally altered from France to Germany: the productions of Les deux journées in 1802 at the Kärntnerthortheater and Theater an der Wien set their opera in Paris and Vienna respectively; both were approved of: the first for being "richtiger", the second for showing more imagination. Similarly with La Caverne, performed at both theatres in 1803: the Theater an der Wien set the opera in Algeria (in a translation by Seyfried entitled die Höhle bey Kosire), and the Kärntnerthortheater's production was set in Spain (as Die Rauberhöhle in a German version by Lippert).² Occasionally, French words were left in operas to give them an intentionally French flavour. This was the case with Castelli's translation of Lully et Quinault in 1813 (as a play): words left for local colour such as "Eugenie", "les auteurs", "Demoiselle", and so forth, were mispronounced by the actors and the author chided for not correcting his performers.³

It is likely that Viennese translators, sheltered as most of them were from the rest of Europe, would have been unable to translate some of the expressions used in revolutionary France. In 1815, for example, Der Sammler reported the production in Vienna of a play set in France entitled Ludwig und Louise, which failed to capture the French character, and its author was recommended to consult Kotzebue's

1. See p. 490.

2. AMZ, 6 July 1803, column 684.

3. Der Sammler, 3 July 1813, p. 420.

play Der weibliche Jakobinerklubb.¹ Kotzebue had visited Paris several times, and was vehemently anti-revolutionary and anti-Napoleon, but he was conversant with colloquial French. When referred to in the press, numbers of French operas were, both in the AMZ and the various Viennese newspapers and almanacs, referred to by their German names. An early example of a review of an opéra-comique which quoted the original French titles for songs was a review by Mosel in the WAMZ of Catel's opera Sémiramis revived in Vienna in 1818.² An amusing -- and potentially confusing -- attempt to do the same with a title occurred in 1810 with a Catel opera reviewed in Thalia under the name Les deux generales, a direct translation from the German of the title by which the opera had become known in Vienna. Catel wrote no opera of this name. The work anyway failed in Vienna: this review is given the title "Todesanzeige".³

Cultural differences between Paris and Vienna confronted Austrian translators with difficult decisions: Count Durazzo had written to Favart 40 years earlier to explain that not everything which the French found amusing would be appreciated or understood in the Austrian capital, and certain allusions to French

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1. Der Sammler, 7 November 1815, p. 548. Ludwig und Louise was set in France at the time of the revolution and the reviews for Der Sammler complained of a lack of understanding of the revolution and: "der Mangel französischer Charaktere". In the Kotzebue play the author would find "ein Schatz von Französischem Freyheits und Gleichheits-Jargon, der nebst dem Verdienst der Wahrheit auch das eines komischen Effectes hat".
 2. WAMZ, 28 November 1818, columns 439-440.
 3. Thalia, 7 July 1810, p. 8. This is probably referring to the opera by Catel, L'auberge des baignères.

customs or French history would be lost on the Viennese.¹ As the AMZ commented in 1799: "Opern sind Musik für den oder jenen Schauplatz. Selten schreibt nemlich ein Komponist Opern anders, als für ein bestimmtes Theater, und auch für ein besonderes Publikum",² and fourteen years later Die Theaterzeitung wrote firmly: "ein anderes ist das Original, ein Anderes die Uebersetzung, ein anderes Paris, ein anderes Wien, der Geschmack ist verschieden".³ Isouard's opera Lully et Quinault, performed in Vienna first as a play in a translation by Castelli and later as an opera, failed on both occasions because its story was "too French". The following year, in August 1814, reservations were expressed about Méhul's opera Die beyden Füchse, currently running in Vienna:

Jackerle (war) füglich nicht zu vermeiden, und die Beschaffenheit der französischen Componisten die in der Regel kein Metrum kennt und bey jeder Repetition abzuspringen pflegt, entschuldigt die hin und wieder vorkommenden Verstösse gegen den Rhythmus der teutschen Poesie. In dieser Hinsicht ist das Übersetzen der französischen Opern eine überaus undankbare Arbeit.⁴

Differences in German and French speech rhythms left the translator with the dilemma of whether to respect the text and alter the music, or translate the text freely to fit the existing music. An attempt by Castelli to leave the music of Spontini's opera exactly as written brought him some biting criticism.

1. See pp. 22-24.

2. AMZ, 1 May 1799, column 485.

3. TZ, 12 January 1813.

4. Der Sammler, 23 August 1814, p. 540.

In 1812, the Hofoper made a special attempt to perform Fernand Cortez in accordance with the composer's wishes, and the Viennese performance material was carefully prepared with this in mind. Castelli made an unusual announcement at the end of his translation of the opera:

Eine kleine Nachrede des Uebersetzers um jeder üblen Nachrede vorzubeugen. Jeder, der es versucht, einer ursprünglich französischen Opera einen deutschen Text zu unterlegen, wird die Schwierigkeiten gefühlt haben, mit denen man bey einer so maschinenmässigen, beschränkten und undankbaren Arbeit zu kämpfen hat. Der Französische Operndichter schreibt gewöhnlich nur Reime, nicht Verse. Der Französische Componist braucht die Worte, wie es ihm beliebt, ersetzt z.B. auf ein zweysilbiges Wort bald eine, bald zwey Noten, und betont die Silben bald kurz bald lang, wie es zu seinem musickalischen Rhythmus passt. Mit einem Worte: so oft der Componist einen französischen Vers in seiner Oper wiederholt, ist der deutsche Uebersetzer gezwungen, einen ganz neuen Vers zu machen, und zu unterlegen. Daher kömmt es, dass die deutschen Uebersetzer, um sich die Mühe zu ersparen, nach ihrem Belieben Noten theilen oder zusammenziehen, wodurch der beabsichtigte Effect einer Stelle nicht selten geschwächt wird. Ich habe bey vorliegender Uebersetzung keine Mühe gescheut, und jede willkürliche Veränderung aus Achtung für ein Werk Spontini's ganz vermieden. In der ganzen Oper, selbst Recitative nicht ausgenommen, ist nicht eine Note verändert. Jedermann wird sich davon bey Durchsicht des Clavierauszugs, welcher von Herr Spontini selbst verfasst, und mit unterlegtem französischen und deutschen Texte im k.k. Hoftheater-Musikverlage zu haben ist, überzeugen können. Ich habe ganz allein dahin gearbeitet, meine Worte der Musik so anzupassen, dass der Effect dieser letzten nicht geschwächt werde.

Diess sage ich denjenigen welche an ihrem Pulte das gegenwärtige Opernbuch mit kritischen Augen durchsehen, und ohne auch nur einen Begriff von den unzähligen Schwierigkeiten zu haben, welche sich bey einer solchem Uebersetzung der Freyheit des Geistes entgegenstemmen, den Stab darüber brechen.¹

----- J.-F. Castelli

1. Esménard and de Jouy, Ferdinand Cortez, trans. I. F. Castelli (Vienna: Wallishauser, 1812), last page.

Die Theaterzeitung was scathing about the claim, and devoted two thirds of one edition to the Kärntnerthortheater's production of the opera:

Dieses heisst auf Deutsch: Ihr hämischen Rezensenten wisst, dass ich in dieser Oper keine Blossen gab, dass ihr keinen Begriff von meiner Riesen-Arbeit habt, und dass ich keine Mühe scheute -- euch zum Trotz -- etwas Vollkommenes zu liefern.¹

But a notice in Der Sammler which appeared on the same day said almost the opposite:

Die Übersetzung des Buches verdient alles Lob; wenn man bedenkt, wie schwer es ist, einen Text aus einer Sprache, die eine so willkürliche Prosodie hat, auf eine schon bestehende Musik zu übersetzen, ohne an dieser etwas zu verändern; welche unermessliche Schwierigkeit Herr Castelli noch eigenwillig dadurch vergrösserte, dass er nicht nur die Gesangstücke, sondern auch alle Recitative in Reime brachte.²

Castelli edited notices for Der Sammler but it seems unduly cynical to suppose that he wrote this notice himself.

Two years later, commenting on Seyfried's translation of La folie made for the Theater an der Wien in 1803 and re-used for the Kärntnerthortheater revival in 1814, Der Sammler remained gloomy about "die Beschaffenheit der französischen Composition, die in der Regel kein Metrum kennt, und bey jeder Repetition abzuspringen pflegt". This excused the translator "die hin und wieder vorkommenden Verstösse gegen den Rhythmus der teutschen Poesie."³

1. TZ, 30 May 1812, p. 174ff.

2. Der Sammler, 30 May 1812, p. 262.

3. Der Sammler, 23 August 1814, p. 540.

I have not found any instances of fundamental alteration of the plot in opéras-comiques performed in Vienna. The press sometimes suggested that aspects of an opera should have been altered for Vienna, for example parts of Berton's Montano et Stéphanie mentioned on p. 145. But an addition to Cherubini's opera La punition was disapproved of: "Nach der Musik des Singspiels zu urtheilen, würd ich ohne den Anschlagzettel Cherubini als den Komponisten nie erkannt haben" exclaimed the critic. A part was added for Taddädl, an Austrian character created by the Theater an der Wien actor Hasenhut, which the AMZ said made nonsense of the whole miserable production. A real Taddädl, the paper explained for the benefit of its north German readers, was a dimwitted Austrian of the lowliest class, whose singing voice sounded like the high tones of a trumpet, was unsteady like a donkey's bray, and punctuated like the cry of a jackdaw. He spoke like an adolescent boy and was a character usually found only in very funny situations. The critic found him quite out of place in a Cherubini opera.

One of the reasons, the AMZ suggested, why Seyfried had been tempted to make this addition, was the unpretentiousness of the opera, which required only five characters and simple sets. These, suggested the paper, would make it easily performable at other theatres. Seyfried had tried to expand the work, not having confidence in its simplicity.¹

1. AMZ, 1 February 1802, columns 292-294.

The Viennese were, perhaps, dishonest with themselves about the extent to which they altered French operas: for when Baron von Braun had visited Paris in 1802 and brought back scores of French operas and ballets the AMZ had announced that ^{they} would all be "auf's genaueste nach dem Geschmacke des französischen Theaters hier aufgeführt".¹

The public was not entirely unaware of the extent to which French operas were altered for performance in Vienna. Rival productions such as the production at both the Kärntnerthortheater and the Theater an der Wien of Les deux journées in 1802, highlighted the question of adaptation. The AMZ commented briefly on the differences between the productions: "Im neuen Theater wird die schöne Romanze des ersten Aktes ausgelassen, in der Stadt sind einige Chöre abgekürzt".²

J. Adaptation of the music

Just as the texts of opéra-comiques and titles of songs were, even during the years of their performance in Vienna in French, slightly amended for Austrian audiences, so was the music. One of the chief reasons for omission or alteration of numbers at that time, was their difficulty. Later, when French operas were performed in the vernacular, certain numbers, particularly high tenor parts and complex ensembles, presented a great challenge to Viennese opera-singers. More will

1. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 32.

2. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 31.

be said about this in a later chapter about performance. Medea, revived in Vienna in 1812 for example, was, even then, described as being of "grösste Schwierigkeit" and early performances were decidedly rough. The production of such operas in Vienna was seen by more enlightened critics as presenting a worthwhile challenge to Austrian artists and being good for theatrical standards.

Musical alterations to French operas were sometimes welcomed and sometimes condemned. After the first production of Les deux journées at the Theater an der Wien in 1802, the AMZ only hinted that there were some musical additions. Seyfried is known to have written an extra march to Les deux journées, but it is not clear that that is among the additions referred to here:

Es ist zu erwarten, dass der erstere für minder holperige Uebersetzungen, so wie für gute Originalspiele sorgen; und das Publikum jedesmal von eingeschalteten Tonstücken zwischen die Arbeit grosser Meister benachrichtigen wird. Wer auf Fasanen einladet, und mit unter gemeine Hühner giebt, muss wenigstens seine Gäste davon unterrichten.¹

A year later, in February 1803, Elisa ou le voyage aux glaciers du Mont de Saint-Bernard was given at the Theater an der Wien and was not successful. Herr Simoni was the tenor who sang the part of the painter Florindo. The main reason given for the failure was that two of the acts took place on a snow-covered mountain in freezing conditions which a Viennese audience did not consider suitable entertainment for February.² Because the

1. AMZ, 6 October 1802, column 28.

2. The opening stage directions are as follows:

"Le Théâtre représente une partie du Mont Saint Bernard. A droite et à gauche sont des glaciers, dans le fond un precipice bordé de glaçons et des tas de neige. Dans le lointain on aperçoit sur une hauteur l'hospice et les aiguilles des glaciers voisins, à gauche la colline des monts, et sur le devant une grotte sous un des praticables à gauche." Full score p. 32.

audience was thin and unreceptive, Simoni (who had been trying throughout the opera to draw inappropriate attention to himself) and the direction decided at the last minute to insert extra arias (not by Cherubini), to win applause. The public did not agree with the theatre management about what was appropriate; a critic claimed that:

die eingelegten Arien nicht zweckwidriger seyn könnten (die selbst das in der Sache unkundige Publikum mit der grössten Gleichgültigkeit aufnahm).¹

On the other hand, an aria by Nasolini, inserted for Madame Campi in the 1802 production of Lodoiska at the Theater an der Wien, was hailed by Perinet as the final pearl in Cherubini's crown of triumph. A letter from Vienna sent in to the AMZ in January 1803 disagreed, saying:

Der Lorbeerkrantz dieses Komponisten bedarf keiner fremden Zierde; er kann durch eingeflochtene Blümchen fremder Art nur verlieren, nicht aber, wie Hr. Perinet fälschlich glaubt, gewinnen.²

The alterations made for the 1812 production of Cherubini's Medea excited both praise and blame on the one hand, an aria added for Herr Siboni (and by Cherubini), was highly praised, but on the other hand, cuts in the score were criticised:

Übrigens haben wir in einigen Musikstücken Abkürzungen wahrgenommen, von denen wir eben nicht alle wünschenswerth finden können; es ist ein schweres Unternehmen, ein Genie wie Cherubini, beschränken zu wollen.³

1. AMZ, 23 February 1803, columns 369-370.

2. AMZ, 23 February 1803, column 371.

3. Der Sammler, 4 January 1812, p. 8.

The operas of Dalayrac and Grétry gave rise to different problems for the theatre Kapellmeister, because they remained popular in Vienna for a long time (some of them for forty or fifty years). After the operas of Cherubini and Méhul had been heard in the Austrian capital, the orchestration of French operas from the 1780s sounded thin and old-fashioned. So Seyfried, Fischer, or other composers, reorchestrated them, adding new wind parts, and sometimes added whole new scenes to catch the public's interest. Richard Löwenherz is an example of an opera which, on its first performance in Vienna, followed the French original fairly closely but became more Viennese on each revival. First seen at the Kärntnerthortheater in 1788, the opera was revived at the Theater an der Wien in 1802, and Perinet's Theatralmanach which appeared in the new year of 1803 gave a vivid description of the new alterations:

Die Aufführung des Richard Löwenherz, mit Grétrys schmeichelnder liebehauchender Musik, wozu man aus dem Ballette des Herrn Joseph Weigels k.k.Kapellmeister Ouverture [sic] nahm, und des Hrn. Hof-Ballettmeisters Salvatore Viganos Traumscene benützte, übertraf die Erwartung. Auch hier zeichnete sich Hr. Stöger durch eine der überraschendsten Maschinerien zu seinem höchsten Vortheile aus. Der breite, offene von Herrn Theatermahler Sacchetti aufgestellte Saal, worin Margarithe in Mitte der Bühne auf einem einfachen Ruhebette schläft, lässt hier das weit umfassende Auge keine Spur einer Maschinerie entdecken; obschon die schauerlich leise athmende Musik von Haydns würdigen Taufpathen, uns unwillkührlich etwas Ausserordentliches ahnden lässt. Plötzlich entsteigt die Furie dem Abgrunde, tritt auf den Rand des Bettes, und ergreift Margaritha (sic) an der Hand, die ob dem Traumgesichte ihr schweres Gefühl pantomimisch ausdrückt. In diesem Augenblicke hebt sich das Ruhebette, und von allen Coulissen rückt ein erhabenes -- vom

Hrn. Theatermahler Gail dem jüngeren, trefflich entworfenen Wolkentheater in Pfeilesschnelle ... heraus, und formirt ein zweytes höheres theatralisches Traumgesicht. Alle in diesem Balletchen figurirenden Personen schweben fast mit diesem Gebilde gruppiert schon heraus, und stellen oben, auf einem gleichsam hergezauberten festen Bodium [sic] die Allegorie des Traumes vor. Am Ende derselben entswinden die Wolken mit samt ihren Bewohnern an ihre vorigen Plätze.

Das Theater ist wieder Saal, das Ruhebett sinkt an seine Stelle herab. Margaritha [sic] schläft fort, und die Cortine rollt sehr langsam herunter. Die Wirkung dieser theatralischen Täuschung ist über aller Beschreibung.¹

The ballet must have come at the end of Act I where Blondel sings "Que le sultan Saladin" to Margarithe, of whom he asked permission to spend the night in the castle. In the original, the orchestral finale to the act came after three verses of his song, when the singer came in to tell Margarithe someone needed to see her. The Viennese ballet probably replaced this.

Audiences were also very impressed by the final scene in which Richard was finally freed: the rows of adversaries for the final battle made an unusual and splendid sight. Even Das Sonntagsblatt, often critical of popular taste, called Grétry's opera one of the most enjoyable French operas.²

The dream-scene machinery did not always work as smoothly as in the performance described above. In March 1813, there was a bad hitch during one of the performances of the dream scene, and the decision was made to enlarge the opera to four acts, devoting a whole act to the dream scene to give the machinists more time.³

1. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, von Joachim Perinet, pp. 79-82.

2. Das Sonntagsblatt, 4 August 1808.

3. TZ, 13 April 1813, p. 10.

It is often difficult to tell whether operas were altered because they were too difficult in their original form, or because they did not suit Viennese taste. Here again, attitudes towards alteration were ambivalent. Weigl's new overture and "dream scene" added to Richard Coeur-de-lion in 1803 "übertraf die Erwartung", and Der Sammler disapproved of the lack of attention paid to local talent shown by the omission from the poster for Grétry's Raoul der Blaubart, revived in Vienna in 1813, of the name of a local composer,¹ Fischer (who had added considerably to the opera, particularly to the end of act II). However Der Sammler criticised the addition in 1810 of Seyfried's new music to Richard Coeur-de-lion which was "ganz und gar nicht in Grétry's Geist und Manier", making the opera appear like "ein Kleid aus zweyerley Stoff gemacht".² Thalia, in the same year, called Seyfried's reorchestration of Grétry's opera pompous;³ Der Sammler in 1816 commented that French operas seemed to have more success when performed in their original form, less pretentiously and expensively.⁴ All the decorations, machines, dances, seemed to have done little to improve the work's popularity: the libretto had become clearer and more elegant, and many corrections had been made to clumsy parts of Grétry's music: "manche Fehler des Satzes" had been removed. But the opera had lost what Der Sammler called the "edle Simplizität"

1. Der Sammler, 13 July 1813, p. 111.

2. Der Sammler, 13 December 1810, p. 606.

3. Thalia, no. 45, 1811.

4. Der Sammler, 13 January 1816, p. 24.

of Grétry's original opera. This critic at least would rather have had Blondel's original aria and chorus to conclude the opera than the big aria by Paer (inserted for Madame Campi) and chorus which concluded this new version of the opera. Seyfried's new version of this work all but made nonsense of one of the most distinctive features of the opera: the use, as a kind of early "leit-motif", of Blondel's theme throughout the opera.¹ This melody recurs in the final chorus, which was entirely missing from this Seyfried arrangement.

In 1810, Der Sammler had said of Seyfried's arrangement that even then only half of Grétry's original composition had been retained. It recommended that the original music of older operas should be retained, newly orchestrated to use modern instruments, and that obsolete cadences should be altered, but that it should never be forgotten that the simple melodies despite their sometimes empty and tasteless accompaniments had their own distinctive beauty.² On the other hand Die Theaterzeitung in 1818 praised an attempt by the Theater an der Wien to perform Zémire und Azor more in the style of the time. Seyfried was congratulated for having embellished Grétry's music with effective and rich orchestration, he had included lively additions to Grétry's score and made sensible cuts.³ The WAMZ, speaking of the same production, praised

1. Der Sammler, 13 January 1816, p. 24.

2. Der Sammler, 13 December 1810, p. 606.

3. TZ, 13 January 1818, p. 23.

the new adaptation and the increased number of wind instruments and improved bass line: alterations which had been made "mit Verstand und klarer Erkenntniss". These improvements were, the AMZ added, now "höchst notwendig" for the modern German stage.¹ In 1833, however, Raoul Barbe-bleue was performed at the Kärntnerthortheater in the version made for the Theater an der Wien thirty years earlier. It was given to an empty house, Grétry's "alte charakterische Musik" sounded odd next to Weigl's alterations with their traces of The magic flute, and orchestration reminiscent of Mozart combined oddly with Grétry's angular French melodies.² Grétry, perhaps this is saying, stood the test of time better than the second-rate Viennese composers who, during the vogue for opéra-comique, had tried to accommodate French operas to the taste of the day.

In 1818, Mosel looking back on the vogue for opéra-comique which was nearing its end, said that the Viennese during the early years of the century had lacked opera composers who even deserved to be compared with Cherubini and his contemporaries.³

K. Composers who adapted opéra-comique for Vienna

The composer of musical alterations to French operas performed in Vienna is sometimes hard to determine; often they were carried out by one of the theatre Kapellmeister;

1. WAMZ, 31 January 1818, column 39.

2. TZ, 5 October 1833, p. 802.

3. WAMZ, 5 December 1818, column 451.

sometimes numbers by a completely different composer would be inserted, and his name unacknowledged on the poster. In 1813, with a revival of Raoul Barbe-bleue which used the musical additions composed by Anton Fischer for the 1804 Theater an der Wien production, Der Sammler chided theatres for omitting such details from their posters:

Warum man auf den Anschlagzettel unterliess, dem Nahmen des Tonsetzers Grétry jenen des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Fischer beyzusetzen, der die Musik neu instrumentirt und bearbeitete, ist um so weniger abzusehen, als die Oper dadurch und durch die Bereicherung mit dem schönen zweyten Finale, welches Fischers Originalarbeit ist, offenbar gewonnen hat. Diese Weglassung scheint eine Zurücksetzung des einheimischen Verdienstes, deshalb glaubten wir, sie rügen zu müssen.¹

1) Anton Fischer is known to have composed substantial musical additions for three French operas: Raoul Barbe-bleue mentioned above, Richard Coeur-de-lion (for which he wrote a new overture which "ubertraf die Erwartung" according to the Wiener Theater Almanach of 1803),² and Les deux petits Savoyards. He had come to Vienna in 1798 at the age of 20 and joined the Theater in der Josefstadt as a singer. From 1800 he was a conductor for the Theater auf der Wieden, later the Theater an der Wien. He wrote several operas of his own including Das Singspiel auf dem Dache and Das Milchmädchen von Bercy, but died early.

The overture to Raoul Barbe-bleue is interesting: on examining a manuscript Viennese score containing Fischer's alterations (described in chapter V), I

1. Der Sammler, 13 July 1813, p. 111.

2. Wiener Theater Almanach auf das Jahr 1803, pp. 78-82.

noticed the striking similiarity of the overture to that of Die Zauberflöte. However, the AMZ shortly after the first production including Fischer's alterations published a notice of the publication of Fischer's overture in a collection with other numbers from the opera: the duet by Grétry "Ja, ja ich gebe deine Schwüre",¹ a scene with choir "O Gott, du wirst sie stärken" by Fischer (described as "ein feyerlicher und schöner Gesang der Hrn. Fischer Ehre macht"), and Grétry's trio "Schwester, Schwester, siehst du nichts",² The AMZ reviewer commented:

Man scheint in Wien an der Verherrlichung Grétry's in Paris vor einiger Zeit Theil genommen zu haben, indem man seinen Blaubart mit grossem Aufwand wieder auf die Bühne gebracht und ihn dadurch dem Publikum geniessbarer machen wollen, dass man Herrn Fischer mehrere und modernere Musikstücke hat einlegen lassen....
Ouvertüre von Fischer (Pr. 36 Xr) mit Lebendigkeit und Energie ohngefähr in der Manier der neuesten französischen ausgeführt.³

This review makes no mention of similarities to Mozart and indeed announces that the overture is in the most modern French taste.

Another comment about the opera's alterations was published in the same paper in October 1811 under the title "Paris, Anfang October". This article commented that the French were now finding Raoul Barbe Bleue revived at the Théâtre Feydeau in October 1811 to be old-fashioned, simply an old moral fairy tale, which made

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1. D-major duet I(ii), "Vergi, Vergi jamais Isaure".
 2. B-minor trio III (ii), "Vergy ma soeur ne vois tu rien venir".
 3. AMZ, 30 January 1805, column 291: ("Kurze Anzeige": Ausgewählte Stücke aus dem Singspiel: Raul der Blaubart, von Grétry und Fischer, für das Pianoforte. Wien, b. Thade Weigl).

the mother blush to retell and the children bored. The Viennese solution to the problem of mounting old works like Raoul, commented this correspondent from Paris, was ridiculous. The Viennese version had weighed the opera down with long new numbers which had none of the worth of Grétry's originals when the opera should have been made to move along faster. He added that the Germans should avoid French opera altogether because they could not act and sing at the same time.¹

Twenty years later, when the opera was over forty years old, it was again revived in Vienna, at the Kärntnerthortheater, still using Fischer's music. Only then is there any reference to the similarity to Mozart:

Der talentvolle nun verstorbene Capellmeister Fischer hatte die Gewohnheit immer eine Partitur vor seinen Augen liegen zu lassen, um sich durch Imitiren den Style des vorliegenden Meisters zu eigen zu machen. Bei dieser Ouvertüre lag die Zauberflöten-Ouverture als Musterbild vor, und so schimmern denn bisweilen die eckigten charakteristischen Formen des trefflichen Grétry durch die Instrumentalfarben Mozarts.²

F. A. Kanne, the author of this article, condemned the anachronism.

2) The most prolific composer of additions to French operas, and Kapellmeister responsible also for many alterations, was Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried. He is known to have added music to Euphrosine (in 1795 and 1806), Ariodant (1804); reorchestrated and added a new overture to Grétry's Les mariages samnites (1806);

1. AMZ, 23 October 1811, report from Paris dated "Anfang Oktober".

2. TZ, 5 October 1833, p. 802. This is quoted on p. 479.

added new music to Gabrielle d'Estrées (1807); reorchestrated Richard Coeur-de-lion (1810), added music to L'Auberge des Bagnères and to Montano et Stéphanie (1810); he wrote new pieces for Winter's Tamerlan and Nephtali ou les Amonites in 1812; and added music to both Le Prince de Catane in 1813 and to Zémire et Azor in 1814. In addition to these the music collection of the Vienna Nationalbibliothek contains new marches he wrote for Grétry's Raoul Barbe-bleue and Les deux journées, and many other unidentified Seyfried songs probably including extra numbers for French operas (it is certain that Seyfried and Fischer wrote more additional music to such operas than has been preserved).

Seyfried's work, like Fischer's, was sometimes unrecognised. For example in 1806, the AMZ attributed the musical additions to Grétry's Les mariages Samnites in Vienna to Reichardt, the Berlin Kapellmeister, who was visiting Vienna. The alterations were described as "eine effktvolle, nur zuweilen mit Blasinstrumenten überladene Orchesterbegleitung" but quite free so that "Grétry ist allerdings in dieser Behandlungsart schwer zu erkennen".¹ In a following number of the paper, Seyfried had to make it clear that he, not Reichardt, had made these musical alterations.²

1. AMZ, 2 April 1806, column 426. The alterations included reorchestration (with the addition of more wind parts) and changes to the end of act I and to many of the choruses. A new soprano aria was inserted and a new duet added to act III.

2. AMZ, 14 May 1806, column 528.

In 1818, as French opera was going out of fashion, Die Theaterzeitung paid tribute to Ignaz von Seyfried and his work as an adapter of French operas. The production which aroused this praise was a revival at the Theater an der Wien of Grétry's old opera Zémire et Azor which had first been produced at Fontainebleau in 1771:

Hr. Kapellmeister v. Seyfried, der ihren edlen Geist am würdigsten aufzufassen und die Ideen des grossen Grétry schon mehrseitig durch glückliche Instrumentirungen auszuschnücken verstand, hat das Amt des Bearbeiters wieder zweckmässig verwaltet, und uns besonders durch verständige Abkürzungen, reiches Accompagnement und geistvolle Zusätze einen heitern Genuss bereitet.¹

Two weeks later, praise of Seyfried also was expressed in the WAMZ: Seyfried had increased the number of wind instruments and improved the bassline without smothering the voices.

Herr v. Seyfried hat die neue Bearbeitung mit Verstand und klarer Erkenntniss des eben Berührten durchgeführt.

Er hat nirgends die Singstimmen verdeckt, sondern sich auf die Vermehrung der Blasinstrumente und die Verbesserung des Grundbasses beschränkt, welches beydes für die jetzige deutsche Bühne höchst nothwendig war.²

Some other composers who engaged in this work of adding or altering musical numbers were Süssmayr and Weigl. Their adaptations were used by the court theatres. Weigl is known to have added a new aria for the favourite singer, Weinmüller, in Dalayrac's opera Gulistan, in 1806 (it became a favourite with the audience); and to have inserted new numbers into Italian operas; possibly he wrote more new numbers for opéra-comique, unnoticed. Süssmayr enlarged the Grétry opera

1. TZ, 13 January 1818, p. 23.

2. WAMZ, 31 January 1818, column 39.

La double épreuve in 1796 and also completely reset Gulnare ou L'esclave persane and Soliman second.

In 1805 the Dalayrac opera Raoul, Sire de Créqui was performed at the court theatres with extra music by B. A. Weber from Berlin,¹ who had visited Vienna in 1793. It is almost certain that Weber's score was sent from northern Germany. Weber added numbers to other French operas which may have been used in Vienna but not admitted to.

More will be said about the actual performance of opéra-comique in a later chapter. However careful adapters were, it was evident that performance in German by Viennese singers would immediately give opéra-comique a new flavour. Even for example the performance before a French opera of Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser, which was sung before Spontini's Fernand Cortez in 1818 when the opera was performed to celebrate the birthday of the Austrian emperor, must have subtly affected the impact of the opera which followed.²

Composers in Vienna were not involved in the French theatre merely in the task of adapting operas; many of them based their own operas on French texts. There were at least 250 operas written between 1750 and 1850 whose libretti claimed to be "aus dem Französischen". They include settings by: Aigner, Beethoven, Bierey, Binder, Blum, Blumenthal, Cantal, Dittersdorf, Eulenstein, Fischer,

1. AMZ, 26 June 1805, column 611.

2. TZ, 6 October 1818, p. 479.

Flotow, Bierey, Fränzel, Graf Gallenberg, Gläser, Gyrowetz, H. Granfeld, J. Haibel, Hebenstreit, Heller, Hummel, Kanne, Kauer, Kinsky, C. Kreutzer, Krones, Lannoy, Lortzing, Lindpaintner, Adolf Müller, Wenzel Müller, Mauerer, Mica, Netzer, Platzer, Pleyel, Proch, Reissiger, Reuling, Riotte, L. Schneider, Schoberlechner, Josef Schuster, Josef Stadler, Storch, Josef Strauss, Süßmayr, F. W. Telle, Teyber, Titl, L. Torelli, Tucek, I. Umlauf Weigl, and Wimmer.

An assessment of how the minor Viennese composers were affected by their contact with French operas must be made in some later study. It is certain that contemporaries heard the influence of revolutionary opéra-comique in Austrian operas at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Teyber's opera Die Zerstreuten, a setting of a text by Huber, first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 29 January 1805, was thought to be "nach, französischer Art zugeschnitten, aber ohne sich durch die Leichtigkeit und Beweglichkeit auszuzeichnen, die selbst in bessern französischen Komponisten eine fließende Melodie und reiche Instrumentierung oft ersetzen müssen."¹ Das Singspiel auf dem Dache was described in the following terms: "Die Fischerische Musik gleicht allen seinen vorigen: sie ist leicht, lebhaft und von französischem Schnitte."² Again in June 1808, Fischer's opera Das Milchmädchen von Bercy was described as pure Mozart and Cherubini, and based on

1. AMZ, 26 February 1805, column 320.

2. AMZ, 18 March 1807, column 399. Fischer's opera was first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 5 February 1805.

Les deux journées.¹ Bierey's music was thought to be, in every respect, an imitation of Cherubini's.² Some of these criticisms were absurd: for example Mozart's Così fan tutte which had reemerged in 1814 in a version by Treitschke as Die Zauberprobe was thought to rely too heavily on modern French models. A close study of French musical influence in Vienna, outside the scope of this dissertation, would be enlightening.

Conclusion

Most of the opéra-comiques performed in Vienna between 1801-1819 were purchased from Paris as printed scores: without excellent French publishing the Viennese vogue for opéra-comique might quickly have died out.

If Austrian theatres had desired to make their performances of opéra-comique authentic, there were several ways in which they could have done so, chief among which would have been invitations to French musicians and actors to come to Vienna.

They seem to have been content with their own compromised productions of French operas, which were rather haphazard and not very idealistic. It is not true to say that there was no concept of authenticity at this time, for the careful translations of their own works which Gluck and Salieri were able to supervise show a keen awareness of the delicate balance between preserving the integrity of a work of art while making it acceptable in a foreign language.

1. AMZ, 23 June 1808, column 621. Das Milchmädchen von Bercy was performed at the court theatres in May 1808.

2. AMZ, 16 December 1807, report from Vienna about Bierey's opera, Wladimir, Fürst von Nowogrod.

The translators and producers of opéra-comique in Vienna were not experts on the French theatre, being free-lance writers or theatre employees (some of whom had never been outside Germany) who were paid little for the task. The two chief constraints of translators were time and the necessity of making each work acceptable to the foreign audience. It is probable that the strictly enforced censorship laws in Vienna had accustomed the public to the idea that alteration of works of art was inevitable. One of the chief attractions of opéra-comique in Vienna was the financial advantage of having an abundant supply of successful operas for which only a translator need be paid. Spending a long time on translations would have been unbusinesslike.

Certain things which pleased French audiences fell flat -- or were even disapproved of -- in Vienna. The translator had to present each opera to its new audience in an attractive way and became a scapegoat in the case of a work's failure, being naively blamed for all the elements of the opera which were foreign and unappealing.

Audiences and critics were inconsistent: sometimes the translator was blamed for not altering parts of a work, sometimes on the other hand he was accused of tampering with a foreign masterpiece which should have been left alone.

The following chapter will examine specific examples of Viennese alteration and reactions to them.