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Introduction

Melodrama as it existed around 1800 was a genre of music theater that alternated and occasionally overlapped declamation and pantomime with instrumental music, all characterized by an aesthetic of emotional excess.¹ In its modern form as music for film and television, melodrama has become such a ubiquitous part of our everyday lives that we hardly take notice of it. But when the genre first appeared during the European Enlightenment, it was so exotic that contemporaries believed it might cause a revolution in music theater.² In *Pygmalion* (composed 1762, premiered 1770)—credited as the first melodrama—Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) sought to present text, music, and emotion equally by separating spoken declamation, gesture, and music. Five years later, in 1775, Georg Anton Benda (Jiří Antonín Benda; 1722–95) composed his first two melodramas—*Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Medea*—and both of these popular works helped initiate the spread of this new genre across Europe.

Eighteenth-century melodramas usually unfold in one act. Most frequently taken from classical mythology or the annals of history, their subjects commonly involve transformations from the tangible to the intangible, articulating physical stress that gives way to the emotional turmoil of the psyche.³ Indeed, melodramas of the period communicated through rhetorical and musical parataxis the extreme emotions of a principal character, usually a woman, who, throughout the spectacle, descended into madness before meeting a tragic end (often suicide). Key to this transformative process was sublime horror, invoked not only through declamation but also via instrumental interjections that themselves assumed a narrative function expressing natural and psychological

turmoil.⁴ As a theatrical genre that embodied both fashionable *Sturm und Drang* literature and its musical equivalent, *Tempesta*, melodrama swept throughout the theaters of the Holy Roman Empire during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.⁵ This was not only because of its popularity and novelty as a potential model for how text could be set to music in a comprehensible manner, but also because it constituted a practical genre that could be performed easily by the empire's many traveling theaters for a fraction of the cost of Italian opera and singspiel. In fact, early melodramas, like Benda's *Ariadne* and *Medea*, required only a handful of performers who did not need to be singers. Thus, with only a few actors and limited scenery, they were inexpensive to produce. Due in part to these considerations, melodrama quickly became a popular entertainment and an imperial cultural export that spread across the continent.⁶ Indeed, Benda's *Ariadne* and *Medea* were among the few German-language works translated into multiple languages for performance on European stages.⁷

Yet, despite its popularity during the waning decades of the eighteenth century, melodrama as an autonomous musical genre hardly earns mention in studies of the period. Most scholarly examination of melodrama identifies Rousseau as its founder and acknowledges Benda's contributions before focusing on either the "elite" German melodramatic tradition as it relates to the works of canonical composers including Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, or on the "popular" French tradition associated with the spectacles for Paris's boulevard theaters by René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773–1844).⁸

4. On melodramatic aesthetics, and especially their sublime quality, see Ulrike Küster, *Das Melodrama: Zum ästhetisch-geschichtlichen Zusammenhang von Dichtung und Musik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994).

5. On the *Tempesta* topic, see Clive McClelland, *Tempesta: Stormy Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2017).

6. Jörg Krämer, *Deutschsprachiges Musiktheater im späten 18. Jahrhundert: Typologie, Dramaturgie und Anthropologie einer populären Gattung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 296.

7. Arthur S. Winsor, "The Melodramas and Singspiels of Georg Benda" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1967), 22–23.

8. On the French melodrama tradition, see, for example, Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); and Katherine Astbury, "Music in Pixérécourt's Early Melodramas," in *Melodramatic Voices: Understanding Music Drama*, ed. Sarah Hibberd (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594804>.

1. Jacqueline Waeber, *En musique dans le texte: Le mélodrame, de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren, 2006), 9.

2. "Merkwürdige Zeitpunkte," in *Theater-Kalender auf das Jahr 1776*, ed. Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard (Gotha: Carl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1776), 103–4. This correspondent, like other contemporaries, reasoned that those who were tired of opera's boring recitatives and incomprehensible arias would appreciate that melodrama texts could be understood and that actors were free to act without having to worry about the music. On early reactions to melodrama, see Austin Glatthorn, "The Legacy of 'Ariadne' and the Melodramatic Sublime," *Music & Letters* 100, no. 2 (2019): 233–70, esp. 243–54, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcy116>.

3. See especially Waeber, *En musique dans le texte*, 9–16 and 51–104.

Text and Translation

The text of this edition is based on that of Benda's autograph score (see "Sources" in the critical report). Original spellings and capitalization have been retained even when inconsistent; the exception is in versified or poetic texts, where capitalization has been added to the beginning of lines for consistency. Shorthand dashes indicating repeated letters have been realized without further comment. Benda often does not include punctuation between textual interjections; punctuation has been tacitly added to avoid ambiguity, and dashes have been inserted to represent musical interjections between the text, as was common practice at the time.

Philon und Theone

No. 1. Chorus

CHOR

Seÿ ruhig Theone, trotz allen Gefahren!
Es werden sie himmlische Mächte bewahren.
Sie schützen der Liebe
Erhabene Triebe!

CHORUS

Be calm, Theone, defy all the dangers!
Heavenly powers will protect her.
They protect love's
sublime urges!

No. 2. Melodrama

PHILON

Find ich hier Rettung?—Bin ich entflohen?—Noch brauset der¹ Sturm um mich her.—Noch wancket mein Schritt über die bebende Erde.—Etwas blickt die Sonne schon wieder. Etwas legt sich der Sturm.—Danck Euch himmlischen Rettern!—Doch, was hilft Ruhe um mich her?—so lang du noch stürmest,—so lang du verwundetes geängstigtes Herz mich umher treibst!—Furchtbarer ist dein ängstliches Pochen,—der Drang deiner Empfindungen schrecklicher als alles Toben des Meeres!—Schicksal! Was that ich dir?—Was that ich, daß du so mich verfolgst?—Mit allen Schrecken der Natur (*führt ununterbrochen fort*),—mich ohnmächtiges verlaßnes Geschöpf verfolgest.—War es den nicht genug, mir Theonen zu rauben? Das Liebste mir zu rauben, was du mir geben konntest. Das Mädchen, deßen meine ganze Seele sich freute.—Wars nicht genug, daß sie heimlich mir entrißen ward, so heimlich, daß ich auch die mindeste Spuhr nicht entdeckte, daß Niemand mir sagen konnte, welcher Unfall dem Mädchen begegnet, das mehr als ihr Leben mich liebte!—Muste ich alles verlieren?—Auch die süße Hoffnung des Wiedersehens sogar, das einzige, was mir zuweilen noch Trost gegeben hätte.—Ach, muste ich alles, alles verlieren?—Von einer Insel wär ich zur andern geflohen,—von der volkreichsten Stadt zu den einsamsten Wohnungen,—in die verborgensten Gegenden herumgeirrt.—Überall hätte mein

PHILON

Will I find salvation here?—Have I escaped? Still the storm rages around me.—Still my stride falters across the quaking earth.—The sun is coming out again somewhat. The storm abates somewhat.—Thanks to you, heavenly saviors!—But what good is the quietness around me?—As long as you continue storming,—as long as you drive me around, my wounded, frightened heart!—Your fearful pulsing is more terrifying,—the impulse of your emotions [is] more dreadful than all the raging of the sea!—Fate! What did I do to you?—What did I do that you pursue me so?—With all the horrors of nature (*continuing uninterrupted*),—pursuing me, a powerless, abandoned being.—Was it not enough to rob Theone from me? To rob me of the most beloved one that you could have given me? The girl in whom my whole soul rejoices?—Was it not enough that she was covertly snatched away from me, so covertly that I didn't find the smallest trace, so that no one could tell me what disaster the maiden, who loved me more than her own life, faced!—Did I have to lose everything?—Even the sweet hope of reunion, in fact the only thing that would occasionally have given me solace.—Oh, did I have to lose everything, everything?—I would have fled from one island to another,—from the most populous city to the loneliest dwellings,—straying in the most concealed regions.—My hopeful heart, my caring eyes would have gone on

No. 2. Melodrama

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn 1, 2
in F

Glass Harmonica

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

The score is for a piece titled "No. 2. Melodrama". It features a woodwind section with Flute 1, 2; Oboe 1, 2; and Bassoon 1, 2. The woodwinds play a melodic line with dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The strings consist of Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings of *f* and *p*. The Horns 1 and 2 in F are present but do not play in this section. The Glass Harmonica is also present but does not play. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C).

4 *f* *p* *f* *f* *f* *f*

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

Bn. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *a 2* *f* *f*

PHILON
Find ich hier
Rettung? Bin ich
entflohen?

Vn. 1 *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

Vn. 2 *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

Va. *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

Vc. *f* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

D.B. *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

10

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

Bn. 1, 2

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

D.B.

Noch braust der
Sturm um mich her.

Noch wancket mein Schritt
über die bebende Erde.

109

Fl. 1, 2 *p*

Hn. 1, 2
in F *p*

Vn. 1 *p* *pp*

Vn. 2 *p* *pp*

Va. *p* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

D.B. *p* *pp*

Gern wollte ich leiden,
gerne dulden, was ihr
mir auflegt!

(Hierauf eine kurze Musik hinter dem Theater. Nach Endigung derselben fängt das Chor an.)

111

G.Har. *p*

115

G.Har.

[attacca]

32 **Allegro**

Fl. 1, 2
Ob. 1, 2

f

Bn. 1, 2

a 2

f

Hn. 1, 2
in G

f

S

tutti

f

Dan- cket den Göt- tern, den mäch- ti- gen Ret- tern, von

A

tutti

f

Dan- cket den Göt- tern, den mäch- ti- gen Ret- tern, von

CHOR

T

f

Dan- cket den Göt- tern, den mäch- ti- gen Ret- tern, von

B

f

Dan- cket den Göt- tern, den mäch- ti- gen Ret- tern, von

Vn. 1

f

Vn. 2

f

Va.

f

Vc.

f

D.B.

f

36

Fl. 1, 2
Ob. 1, 2

Bn. 1, 2

Hn. 1, 2
in G

S

A

T

B

CHOR

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

D.B.

ih- nen kam Hül- fe, kam Hül- fe und Glück. Sie

ih- nen kam Hül- fe, kam Hül- fe und Glück. Sie

ih- nen kam Hül- fe, kam Hül- fe und Glück. Sie

ih- nen kam Hül- fe, kam Hül- fe und Glück. Sie

Critical Report

Sources

This edition is based on Georg Anton Benda's autograph manuscript of *Philon und Theone*, housed in A-Wn, Mus.Hs.18521. No performance parts, other copies of the score, or separate publications of the text are known to exist. Because of Johann Ludwig Röllig's many later emendations to the music and text of the autograph, his revised version (*Almansor und Nadine*, A-Wn, Mus.Hs.18522) was also consulted in order to determine which markings in Benda's original were made by Röllig on the rare occasion when this was not immediately discernible. Röllig's revisions within Mus.Hs.18521 are disregarded in the score of *Philon und Theone* presented here. Music from Mus.Hs.18522 for *Almansor und Nadine* that is not present in Benda's autograph, along with details on Röllig's revisions, may be found in appendix 2.

Editorial Methods

Title

Scholars have on occasion called the work simply *Theone* because a later hand wrote "Theone" on the cover of the bound score; others have labeled it *Philon und Theone*. The edition gives what I consider the work's proper title, *Philon und Theone*, with *Philon*—whose search and precarious mental instability are the focus of the piece—used as a short title.

Movement Divisions and Labels

With the exception of the introduction (labeled "Introduzione"), Benda does not label separate numbers in the autograph score. He does, however, inconsistently employ final and double barlines, and he relabels staves to indicate the division and subdivision of musical sections. Based on Benda's markings, the edition numbers the movements of *Philon und Theone* according to type of setting (in English) for convenience and clarity. Benda's application of barlines has been standardized in the edition: double barlines precede all changes of key, time, and tempo, follow all musical passages interrupted by text within melodrama movements, and are placed at the end of all attacca movements.

Score Order, Part Names, and Cleffing

Benda uses twelve-stave paper throughout *Philon und Theone*. With the exception of the trumpets and horns, he typically presents pairs of instruments on separate staves

unless there are space restrictions, in which case he may also combine bassoons onto a single staff. Cello and double bass parts are consistently written on the same staff. Philon's declaimed text is written in a blank space between musical passages on the first violin line, while sung vocal parts are written on staves between the winds and strings. In the edition, the presentation of the score has been standardized by placing the cellos and basses on their own staves and pairs of wind instruments on shared staves. Minor adjustments have been made to score order and layout where necessary to conform to modern practice, including placing the glass harmonica part—given on a single staff in the source—on a grand staff. Horns and trumpets are notated without key signatures as in the source. The timpani part also appears without key signatures, as in the source, though the edition adopts the modern practice of using sounding pitches throughout (the source notates the timpani sometimes at sounding pitch and sometimes according to the eighteenth-century convention of using c and G regardless of sounding pitch). Timpani pitch indications have been added editorially at the beginning of the relevant movements. Names of instruments have been translated into English, and paired instruments are numbered with arabic numerals.

Cleffing has been modernized in the edition. Vocal parts notated in moveable C clefs in the source have been transcribed into modern clefs (treble for soprano and alto parts, transposing treble for tenor parts) without further comment. Tenor clef is occasionally used or extended in the bassoon part to avoid ledger lines.

Scoring and Shorthands

Benda frequently uses shorthand such as "c. B." (coi bassi) or "c. Fl. 1." (col flauto primo) to indicate doublings; all such shorthand has been realized in the edition, and dynamics and expressive markings in such passages are tacitly duplicated in the realized parts. As pairs of wind instruments are now presented on single staves, indications such as *1* and *2* have been added tacitly to clarify voicings. The appearance and placement of all scoring indications (*solo*, *unis.*, etc.) have been standardized. The oboes' doubling of the flute in no. 5 is editorial and indicated with bracketed part labels; it may be omitted at the performers' discretion.

Rhythmic Values and Beaming

Source rhythmic values are retained, though the notation of rests has been adjusted to accord with modern conventions.