## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road. Ann Arbor. MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9510626

# A study of compositional procedures in selected opera overtures (1791–1821)

Ardito, Linda, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994



U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

# A STUDY OF COMPOSITIONAL PROCEDURES IN SELECTED OPERA OVERTURES (1791-1821)

by

LINDA ARDITO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1994

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 20, 1994
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

20 May 1994
Date

Executive Officer

Professor Henry Burnett

Professor Noel DaCosta

Professor David Ernst

Professor Leo Kraft

Professor Henry Weinberg
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## Abstract

A STUDY OF COMPOSITIONAL PROCEDURES IN SELECTED OPERA OVERTURES (1791-1821)

by

Linda Ardito

Adviser: Professor Henry Burnett

The thirty year period between 1791 and 1821 represents a crucial transitional phase in music history and composition from Classicism to Romanticism. The opera overture, in particular, introduced many compositional innovations and therefore represented one of the most significant and influential symphonic genres of the time. Cherubini and Spontini in Paris and Weber in Germany were primary composers in this genre and each were highly regarded by their contemporaries. Despite this fact, their operas are, for the most part, currently ignored or underrated both in scholarship and in performance. This remains true even for their most popular operatic overtures, *Lodoïska*, *La Vestale*, and *Der Freischütz*, respectively, for which no critical musical analyses exist.

This dissertation focuses specifically upon the overtures mentioned above. Each of these three overtures, *Lodoïska*, *Ves*

*tale*, and *Freischütz*,is analyzed and discussed in terms of innovations in compositional procedure with respect to the treatment of sonata form and the role of melody. From this, two important observations can be made. First, traditional interpretations of the "sonata principle" require a re-assessment, and, secondly, related to this, there arises the need to re-evaluate what constitutes dynamic and static elements in music.

An historical background on the general impact of operatic overtures in Post-Revolutionary times and a comparison of classical and romantic compositional approaches with respect to sonata form is also given.

In addition, an entire chapter is given over to Christoph Willibald Gluck's development of the overture through his reforms. Many of these innovations contributed vitally to the transitional phase that ushered in musical romanticism. There is also a musical analysis of Gluck's *Alceste* overture since it is the first of his overtures to truly reflect his reform ideals.

Gluck's influence appears in the works of Cherubini, Spontini, and Weber. All three composers knew each other and each other's musical works. Their compositions occupy an important place in operatic history and in music history in general. Indeed, Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, Spontini's *La Vestale*, and Weber's *Der Freischütz* become innovative and important models of composition.

To

Vincenza Finazzo

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to thank Henry Burnett for his friendship and support over the years and for his many invaluable suggestions which were incorporated into this dissertation. His work in early musical romanticism greatly influenced my own studies in that area. I also wish to thank Henry Weinberg for the many years of musical inspiration, friendship and support, and for his immeasurable contributions concerning this dissertation. I am grateful to Leo Kraft for his many valuable insights and suggestions and for being on my dissertation committee. I wish to thank Noel Da Costa, David Ernst, and Rufus Hallmark for also serving on my dissertation committee and I wish to thank Edward Smaldone who kindly offered his time and assistance. Finally, I wish to thank Halina Goldberg, Roy Nitzberg, and Matthew Simon for their support and valuable assistance.

## PREFACE

The opera overture, from the years 1791 to 1821, represents one of the most innovative, significant, and influential symphonic genres in music history. Considering this, one might ask why three of the primary and representative composers in this genre, Cherubini, Spontini, and Weber, have been referred to in recent scholarship as "half-forgotten."[1] While it is true that even for their most popular operatic overtures, *Lodoïska, La Vestale,* and *Der Freischütz*, respectively, there exist no critical musical analyses, I believe that we can nevertheless add to our understanding of these works by considering the following criteria: primary source material of the compositional ideals set forth by the composer himself (when possible) as well as contemporaneous accounts, current musicological and theoretical sources both primary and secondary (where applicable) and, finally, findings from the musical analyses of these overtures in the present study.

*Chapter 1* provides an historical background, including

---

[1]Winton Dean, *Essays on Opera* (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 91. Dean refers specifically to Cherubini and Spontini though questions about Weber's merit as a composer still surface. See Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall, *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 24.

the general impact of operatic overtures in Post-Revolutionary times. Also, an account of the various meanings of the term *overture* and its contribution to other instrumental genres is discussed. A comparison of classical and romantic compositional approaches with respect to *sonata form* is also given. The question is then raised as to how to reinterpret *sonata form* based on its application to the works analyzed in this study that have been affected by a newly emerging romantic aesthetic.

*Chapter 2* addresses various concepts of *sonata form* from a theoretical standpoint in both classical and romantic periods. Varying views are presented from primary and more current sources. Factors creating the need for a reinterpretation of *sonata form* in romantic symphonic movements are elucidated.

*Chapter 3* provides background on Gluck and the reform opera overture. An analysis of his *Alceste* overture follows. A comparison of this work as it relates to his other reform overtures shows it to be an important precursor of musical romanticism as represented in the overtures analyzed later in this study.

*Chapters 4, 5,* and *6* deal with the overtures to Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, Spontini's *La Vestale*, and Weber's *Der Freischütz*, respectively. Each of these works is analyzed and discussed in terms of innovative compositional procedures.

It is hoped that the reader will find here a clearer

understanding of this crucial era of transition into the Romantic Age as it pertains to music composition. It is also hoped that the music analyses of the overtures in this study will confirm their significance in the development of new compositional ideals and procedures, particularly with respect to the treatment of *sonata form* and *melody*, and the evaluation of what constitutes *dynamic* and *static* elements in music.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Opera has historically represented the most important musical genre in France. In the aftermath of the Revolution, the popularity of French rescue operas by Cherubini and Spontini, among others, was so great that its influence soon reached beyond Paris to Vienna, Berlin, Prague, Dresden, and Warsaw.[1] As a result, the French operatic style soon became evident in the works of German composers. Louis Spohr (1784-1859) and E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), for example, were affected by this influence and Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber drew significant inspiration from the French style. Ultimately, Weber's mature operas, particularly his first in

---

[1]The popularity of French opera in Poland is generally not discussed in current scholarship. Nonetheless, only four years after the Paris premiere of Cherubini's *Lodoïska* (1791) it was performed at the *National Theatre* in Warsaw with great success and many subsequent performances. In this same theatre, as late as 30 January 1828, the *Lodoïska* overture opened a concert program featuring the famous violinist Karol Lipinsky. Among a list of thirty of the most popular performances given at the *National Theatre*, between the years 1815-1830 (according to the number of times various forms of musical and non-musical theatre was given), Spontini's *La Vestale* ranked at number 15 with thirty-two performances (the first of these was given on 21 February 1821). Works by Grétry, Méhul, Boieldieu, and Isouard, among others, were also regularly performed there. (This information was kindly submitted by Halina Goldberg whose current area of research is on the musical life of Warsaw during the early nineteenth century.)

this category, *Der Freischütz*, laid the foundations of German romantic opera.[2]

The operas of Cherubini, Spontini and Weber were to have a major impact not only upon future opera but also upon instrumental musical genres.[3] One such genre was the symphony. This association was due to the increasing popularity of opera overtures of the period, many of which were performed as independent symphonic pieces.[4] In fact, the words *overture* and *symphony* were used interchangeably in the eighteenth-century. Indeed, at no time has the concert

---

[2]See Donald Jay Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 375; John Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 242-43. In addition to *Der Freischütz* (1821), Weber's most significant operas include *Euryanthe* (1823) and *Oberon* (1826).

[3]Cherubini's *Lodoïska* is considered "the first important Revolution opera...and indeed of the Revolution school in general" (Winton Dean, *The New Oxford History of Music*, vol. 8, 35). Also see Max Dietz, *Geschichte des Musikalischen Dramas in Frankreich (1787-1795)* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), 205-229, for an appraisal of *Lodoïska's* importance during the period of the Revolution. Dietz states outright that *Lodoïska* represented "the peak of all French operas given up to that time -- a monumental work" and surveys all the contemporary French newspaper accounts of the opera, all of which give glowing reports of the premiere and attest to its novelty, brilliant effects, orchestration, etc. Spontini, too, was cited as a "bold innovator" (Winton Dean, "Gluck and the Reform of Opera," *Essays on Opera* [London: Oxford University Press, 1990], 91). Weber produced Spontini's most popular opera, *La Vestale*, during his directorship in Prague in 1813.

[4]Cherubini's overtures to *Lodoïska, Élisa, Médée,* and *Les Deux Journées* were frequently performed in Vienna and elsewhere as independent works. See Winton Dean, "The Age of Beethoven (1790-1830)," *The New Oxford History of Music*, 11 vols., ed. Gerald Abraham 8 (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), 44.

overture and the dramatic overture been entirely distinct from one another.[5] Often, the term *overture* was applied to symphonic works regardless of whether or not they served as preludes to dramatic works. Symphonic works were frequently listed as overtures simply because they initiated the first or second half of a concert event. Haydn's *London symphonies* (Hob.I:93-104), composed between 1791 and 1795, for example, were often billed as *overtures*[6] while many of his earlier symphonies, as well as symphonies by Mozart, served as introductions to stage works. Conversely, the later operatic overtures of Haydn and Mozart were sometimes performed independently as concert pieces.[7]

It is not surprising, therefore, that operatic overtures served as models of composition for the genre of the symphony and for symphonic and instrumental music of the early romantic period.[8] Indeed, the characteristic lyricism of themes

---

[5]Nicholas Temperley, "Overture," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie 14 (London: Macmillan, 1980), 34.

[6]In London, on 11 March 1791, shortly after Haydn's arrival there, one of his newly composed symphonies (speculated to be *No. 92 in G* of 1789) initiated the second half of a concert program under the title *New Grand Overture*. Many subsequent symphonies by Haydn were to carry this designation. For more information see H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: A Documentary Study* (New York: Rizzoli, 1981), 117-46.

[7]The concert ending composed by Mozart for his overture to *Don Giovanni* is indicative of this practice.

[8]Winton Dean cites Cherubini's overtures to *Lodoïska*, *Élisa*, *Médée*, and *Les Deux Journées* as works which were "taken as symphonic models by the whole German school." See Winton

within the overture largely inspired *thematic transformation* as a compositional procedure and introduces the plausibility of creating a large form derived primarily from the dictates of *melody*. This transition from harmonically conceived form, as found in the classical sonata, to melodically conceived form in the romantic symphony, also becomes an important underlying determinant of the newer romantic aesthetic.

The general impact of operatic overtures is evident in compositions by Beethoven, Schubert, and others of the period.[9] It is generally accepted by music historians that the first great representative of the romantic symphonic tradition is Franz Schubert.[10] What is not typically acknowledged is the extent to which opera, and, particularly operatic overtures, played an important role in ultimately

---

Dean, *The New Oxford History of Music*, vol. 8, 44. For more information on the nature of French overtures in terms of their experimental harmonic and thematic treatment, see Basil Deane, "The French Operatic Overture from Grétry to Berlioz," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* (1974), 75-76.

[9]Music to over fourteen dramatic works by Schubert survive. These compositions for the theatre include operas, singspiels, and incidental music. Some of the surviving music originates in Schubert's six uncompleted operatic attempts. In other cases, only sketches survive for some of these. Dramatic aspects are also apparent in his songs, many of which are constructed in scena form with a combination of recitative and arioso-like passages. One example is *Der Neugierige*, Schubert's sixth song in his cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin, D.795* (1823).

[10]Schubert's *Unfinished*, for example, has been referred to as "the first example of a lyrical *romantic* symphony," (in *The Music of Schubert*, ed. Gerald Abraham, [New York: W.W. Norton, 1947], 22).

shaping many aspects of Schubert's own symphonic writing.[11] This fact appears to have been mostly overlooked, ignored (even in texts dedicated specifically to Schubert studies), or rejected in scholarship.[12] Nonetheless, among other contributions of the opera overture upon Schubert's symphonies (and chamber music) is the so-called "three-key exposition" as

---

[11]Schubert was influenced by the Viennese fascination for Italian and French opera which reached a high point in about 1815. His own first attempt at opera composition was just before his fifteenth birthday. He planned to compose a three-act Singspiel *Der Spiegelritter*, to a text by German playwright August von Kotzebue. In 1813, however, before completing the first act, Schubert abandoned the project, realizing the difficulty of the task; see Elizabeth Norman Mckay, "Schubert," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie 4 (London: Macmillan, 1992), 243.

[12]Brian Newbould rejects any real connection between the opera overture and the symphonies of Schubert. He states that "... although the origins of the symphony lay in the old opera overture (sinfonia), it had long since shed all traces of them ... The historical connection between opera and symphony had become a remote genealogical link by Schubert's time ..." (*Schubert and the Symphony* [London: Toccata Press, 1992], 14). None of the eleven articles in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, edited by Walter Frisch, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), is devoted to Schubert's symphonic works. Peter Branscombe in "Schubert and the melodrama," *Schubert Studies: Problems of style and chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) does not relate traits found in Schubert's melodramas to his instrumental music. Elizabeth Norman McKay's article "Schubert as a composer of operas", from the same source, is generally informative but also does not consider this connection. The remaining twelve articles in this source address various interesting topics regarding Schubert's lieder, questions of chronology, etc. While it would be inappropriate to fault any individual study of Schubert's music for lacking this information, his instrumental music and particularly his symphonies are curiously missing from the above mentioned sources, to say nothing of the connection of his symphonies to opera. This seems remarkable as this connection does indeed exist and has gone virtually unnoticed.

represented in some of his sonata form movements. Some current scholars consider this compositional procedure to be a relatively "novel" approach in Schubert's time, with Schubert being the first composer to establish its usage.[13] James Webster suggests Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture, Op. 62 (1807) to be a possible origin of the three-key exposition.[14] More likely, *Coriolan* was influenced by Cherubini whose overture to *Les Deux Journées* (1800) is an even earlier example of this harmonic scheme.[15]

Unquestionably, the French operatic aesthetic, particularly as represented by the works of Cherubini and Spontini, contributed to a newly emerging romantic aesthetic. Schubert's own uniquely romantic compositional voice was in large measure the result of his direct exposure to operas from Paris. Cherubini's *Médée* and Spontini's *La Vestale* (in German versions) were attended by Schubert in Vienna circa 1812.[16] Even earlier, in 1808, when Schubert was eleven years old, not only had he heard overtures by Cherubini and others, he

---

[13]Brian Newbould refers to the "three-key exposition" during Schubert's time as "a valuable innovation in sonata-form practice" and "a scheme particularly congenial to Schubert" (*Schubert and the Symphony*, 62).

[14]James Webster, "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity," *19th Century Music* 2 (1978), 26-27.

[15]In *Les deux journées*, the exposition unfolds the following fundamental key scheme within the tonality of *E major*: I - III♮ (*G Major*) - V.

[16]See Elizabeth Norman McKay, "Schubert," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 4, 243. See also Max Dietz, *op. cit.*, 205-229.

performed these works as violinist in the students' orchestra at the *Kaiserlich-königliches Stadtkonvikt*. Georg Thaa, a student at the university at the same time as Schubert, gave an account to Eduard Hanslick of the orchestra and its repertoire:

> The daily practice-pieces consisted of an Overture (usually by Cherubini, Weigl, or Mozart), a symphony (by Haydn, Mozart, and others) and then finally another overture.[17]

Operatic overtures exhibiting innovative aspects of romanticism were fast becoming important compositional models that paved the way for further harmonic and formal experimentation.[18] Interestingly, while it is true that Beethoven's symphonies are essentially rooted in the classical tradition, his overtures, including those to his rescue opera *Fidelio*, show the strong influence of contemporary operatic overtures.[19] One such example is Beethoven's *Egmont* overture

---

[17]Cited in Alfred Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 11. An account of Schubert's increasingly significant role as a member of the students' orchestra is given by Josef von Spaun, a university student who founded this orchestra and became Schubert's oldest and most loyal friend (see his *Oesterreichisches Bürgerblatt für Verstand, Herz und gute Laune*, Linz, 1829).

[18]For a general discussion of musical innovations in French post-revolutionary overtures see Basil Deane, "The French Operatic Overture from Grétry to Berlioz," *Proceedings of the Royal Association*, 1974, 67-80.

[19]In May 1814, Schubert attended a performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio*. It is said that this influenced Schubert's own theater music, especially *Fierrabras* (1823). See Elizabeth Norman McKay, "Schubert," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 4, 243.

which closely resembles Cherubini's *Médée*.[20] Both works are in *F* minor, and, in the first groups, have descending themes in the lower strings followed by dominant pedal crescendo passages with repeated rhythmic figures culminating in fortissimo thematic statements in the tonic. In the second key areas, both works have rising eighth-note scale passages. In the brief development sections, both progress sequentially from *Ab* major to *Bb* minor and then to *C*. The more fluid design of Beethoven's overtures is largely owing to the French operatic style and to Cherubini's influence in particular.[21] In fact, Beethoven did not show interest in writing opera until after the Vienna performances of Cherubini's operas (staged by Emanuel Schikaneder) in 1802.[22] The genres of the overture and the symphony, therefore, must have been viewed by Beethoven as having separate traditions, the first being that of the Italo-French opera and the second, the Austro-German

---

[20]Discussed in Basil Deane, "The Symphonies and Overtures," *The Beethoven Reader*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 315-16.

[21]*Ibid.*, 314.

[22]In about December of 1803 Beethoven began composing music to Sonnleithner's German translation of Bouilly's *Léonore* (already set in French by Pierre Gaveaux in 1798). Cherubini's visit to Vienna in 1805 further inspired Beethoven to continue his operatic endeavor (*Fidelio*, the final form of *Léonore*, appeared in 1814). For more information on Cherubini's influence upon Beethoven, see William Pencak, "Cherubini Stages a Revolution," *The Opera Quarterly* 8 (1991), 21. Pencak mentions the specific influence of Cherubini's *Lodoïska* (the overture of which is discussed in *Chapter 4* of the present study) upon the plot and music of Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

classical tradition. Dahlhaus refers to these differing traditions as the "twin cultures of music."[23]

Nonetheless, the apparent influence of Cherubini and other composers of rescue opera upon Beethoven's symphonies must also be acknowledged. Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, for example, bears significant style traits of the period of French post-revolutionary music. Indeed, many works by Beethoven at the time of the *Eroica* were similarly influenced.[24]

With the romantic operatic aesthetic brought about by the gradual but steady flow of premiere opera performances throughout Europe, opera overtures, in particular, began to inform upon the genre of the symphony. In 1802, four of Cherubini's operas, *Lodoïska, Les deux Journées, Médée* and *Élisa* were produced in Vienna with great success. Vienna also premiered numerous contemporaneous French rescue operas. Beethoven and Schubert were among those who attended these Viennese performances.[25] Schubert was undoubtedly influenced

---

[23]Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 13.

[24]See Joseph Kerman, "The Symphonic Ideal," *The New Grove Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), 109. Kerman mentions Beethoven's "driving orchestral tutti style, his partiality for marches and march-like material, the free form of his overtures ... and ... points of harmony and orchestration" as some of the traits influenced by the operas of Cherubini and Méhul.

[25]Walther Vetter specifically mentions operas attended by Schubert as related by Joseph v. Spaun. These include *Fidelio*, Joseph Weigl's Singspiele *Das Waisenhaus* and

by this exposure as demonstrated by his own numerous operatic endeavors along these same lines (e.g., *Fierrabras*). At the same time, Beethoven's interest in this genre became evident with his own opera *Fidelio* (based on an original French libretto by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly). *Fidelio* has been cited not solely as a product of the French Revolution but also as a product of "the school of Cherubini"[26] and, more specifically, as a work bearing many traits of Cherubini's *Lodoïska*.[27]

Cherubini's influence on the subsequent development of opera can not be overstated. Beethoven, Weber, and Wagner as well as many French composers including Auber came under his influence. Gaspare Spontini (1774-1851), another Italian expatriate, was also influenced by Cherubini and, in turn, became a major influence. In fact, during the first years of the nineteenth century, under Napoleon, despite the moderate successes in Paris of other Italians such as Paisiello (1740-

---

*Schweizerfamilie*, Cherubini's *Médée*, Boieldieus' *Jean de Paris* and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. In addition, Vetter states that Schubert was also very familiar with the modern French revolutionary operas of Méhul, Isouard, and Paër (*Der Klassiker Schubert*, 2 vols., [Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1953], vol. 1, 122).

[26]For further commentary see Winton Dean, "Beethoven and Opera," *The Beethoven Reader*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 373. Also see Dean's commentary under "The Revolutionary Period," *History of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 196.

[27]Pencak, "Cherubini Stages a Revolution." See also Ralph P. Locke, *The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions, 1789 and 1848*, ed. Alexander Ringer (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 49.

1816) and Paër (1771-1839), Spontini practically single-handedly restored the Opéra to its prominence in Europe.[28]

As with Cherubini, Spontini's operas also had a major impact outside of Paris. Spontini's *Fernand Cortez* (1809) was the first of sixty-two operas produced by Weber during his directorship at the *Opera* (1813-1816) in Prague. This was followed by *La Vestale* (1807) shortly thereafter.[29] In Naples too, Rossini was enthusiastically producing operas by Spontini. In January of 1820, for example, the Neapolitan *Giornale* reported Rossini's commitment to the production of Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*:

> Rossini has been among us since the 12th of the current January. Since that day he has dedicated himself entirely to the rehearsals of [Spontini's] *Fernando Cortez*. The loving care with which he is trying to assure good results for a product of the composer of *La Vestale* is worthy of the composer of *Elisabetta*.[30]

In the music criticisms of E.T.A. Hoffman, Spontini is acknowledged as a composer in the "progressive" phase of art:

> ... [I]n Spontini, a true genius who bears the divine spark within him, the essence of opera has been revivified, fully in the spirit of the great composers of the past, yet in the form evolved by great composers in the progressive period of art.[31]

---

[28]Locke, *op. cit.*, 51.

[29]Warrack, *op. cit.*, 152.

[30]Cited in Herbert Weinstock, *Rossini: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 99.

[31]E.T.A. Hoffman, "Further Observations on Spontini's Opera *Olimpia*," *E.T.A. Hoffman's Musical Writings: "Kreisleriana," "The Poet and the Composer," Music Criticism*, trans. Martyn Clarke, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 445.

## CHAPTER 2

## SONATA FORM IN THE EARLY ROMANTIC PERIOD

Many of the operatic overtures of both Cherubini and Spontini reinterpret, for the first time, the classical procedures of Haydn and Mozart to create a different conception of sonata form. Cherubini's overtures, in particular, can be regarded as miniature symphonic tone poems which loosely exemplify a sonata procedure. The term *sonata form*, if applied to Cherubini's overtures, therefore, would necessitate a qualification, drawing attention to the great flexibility with which the form is generally treated.[1] To better understand some of the contributions of Cherubini and Spontini to the overture as represented in the works to be discussed later, some general style distinctions between classical and romantic compositional approaches will now be addressed.

The compositional motivator determining form in a typically romantic work results from the "poetic idea," as represented by its thematic construction.[2] This is despite

---

[1]For information about the treatment of sonata form in Cherubini's overtures, see Basil Deane, *The Beethoven Reader*, 314.

[2]Generally, the view of sonata form as a thematic construct was prevalent throughout most of the nineteenth century and has reached well into the twentieth century. For

the fact that nineteenth century sonata procedure was generally understood to be a prescribed form. While characteristics of sonata form were indeed discussed by classical theorists, composers of the same period had a more fluid notion of the form as compared to those in the nineteenth century.[3]

In the newer aesthetic, and under the influence of opera, themes replace motives and become a fundamental aspect of the composition. Also, the emphasis on tonic-dominant polarity is weakened, and themes and theme groups become stable and closed harmonic entities. At the same time, a romantic theme, in the context of a large symphonic movement, can be interpreted as a primary dynamic event, taking on a similar role as that of the aria within its larger operatic context. In early

---

a nineteenth century perspective on sonata form, see Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, trans. John Bishop, 3 vols. (London: Robert Cocks, c.1848), vol. 1, 33. For a survey of sonata form in the classical period and for a comparison of interpretations of sonata form in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see Marc Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 13-52; See also Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988).

[3]For an historical survey of classical sonata form see Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, 30-52; Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 30-42; William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 110-20; Eugene K. Wolf, "Sonata Form," *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 764-67. For a more extensive and detailed study of sonata form see William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983); William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*.

nineteenth century opera, the aria exists on two structural levels: first, it represents the primary *event* in that it is a stable harmonic period within the larger context of a harmonically unstable recitative surrounding it. Secondly, the aria is of sufficient length to contain within its form both dynamic and static material thereby creating musical momentum within itself.[4]

For the classicists, the dynamic aspects of the form placed the emphasis upon *harmonic* and *motivic* aspects. Since classical form is largely influenced by the much shorter time interval and dynamic pacing of the *opera buffa* style,[5] a typically closed romantic *theme* would not successfully function as a dynamic event. In classical works influenced by this style, musical events succeed one another within a relatively shorter prescribed time interval as compared to later works in the newer aesthetic.

There are two important aspects of the classical style which have been attributed to the influence of *opera buffa*. The first is the combining of dramatic traits within

---

[4]An early example of the kinetic role of the aria is already apparent in Gluck's *Orfeo* (1762) with the famous aria *Che farò* from Act III which is an outpouring of emotion. The surrounding recitatives are so harmonically volatile that the aria becomes a point of stasis while simultaneously becoming a dynamic event due to the anticipation engendered by the dramatic events leading up to it.

[5]The symphonies of both Haydn and Mozart are largely influenced by the *buffa* style. See Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 154-55.

symmetrically closed forms that could be expanded without a change in their basic nature. The second is the emergence of a broad, vital and clearly articulated rhythmic scheme which could provide unity to the shorter phrase articulations and give a dynamic impulse to the overall form. This classical technique has been described as one which achieves an essentially "systematized intensity."[6]

Works in the romantic style deviated significantly from the classical style and, thus, demonstrated the following features: a weakened polarity of the tonic and dominant, increased chromaticism and a primary emphasis upon melody. At the same time, these works maintained the fundamental concerns of classical *sonata form*.

Actually, two important factors impinge upon and create the necessity to reinterpret sonata form in the early romantic period. First, the tonal language becomes increasingly chromatic, making it difficult to support a large structure based solely upon the diatonic key system of the eighteenth century. Secondly, a new emphasis upon melody provides a stabilizing effect in areas that were previously dynamic and transitory. *Melody* becomes an important and essential feature in the design of sonata form and provides temporary tonal stabilization, a feature which becomes necessary as

---

[6]As mentioned by Rosen, "with the sense of the event or individual action and the new technique of an almost systematized intensity, the classical style became at last capable of drama even in non-theatrical contexts." See Rosen, *ibid.*, 155.

chromaticism becomes more prevalent and intense. This new melodic emphasis, providing stability and closure, threatens the very essential harmonically dynamic aspect of sonata form. Beethoven, even in his most "romantic" compositions (e.g., his overture to *Egmont*), keeps his themes harmonically open-ended, making the form dynamic, not static. The themes found in overtures by Cherubini and Spontini, however, are typically closed and are closer to the later practice of Schubert.

Obviously, romantic composers clinging to a prescribed notion of classical sonata form would inevitably encounter difficulties in attempting any practical application of it in their own works. The current reaction against nineteenth century interpretations of sonata form stems from what has been referred to as "the old cookbook approach" to form in composition and analysis.[7] Indeed, preconceived notions of classical sonata form often resulted in "textbook" models of the form, having no practical application.

The question remains whether or not the changes in harmonic and melodic emphasis in early romantic sonata form movements warrant a reinterpretation of the form. More current views on this subject perhaps further complicate this question. Rosen himself, inspired by Tovey, rejects the notion of a true "sonata form" model. Instead, he suggests multiple "sonata forms" or simply a "sonata style" as perhaps

---

[7]See Rothstein, *op. cit.*, 110-11.

more appropriate descriptions.[8] James Webster, too, believes that sonata form is "not a mould into which the composer has poured the contents."[9] He suggests, rather, that the movement is created by each measure and phrase. The degree of confusion over interpretations of sonata form is obvious, particularly in Webster's suggestion above.

Rothstein agrees that the multiplicity of forms and the existence of a "sonata style" are realistic accounts of what is often found in music and he "highly" recommends the writings of Tovey and Rosen on the subject. He also believes, however, that

> ... it is not only possible, but ... imperative to rescue some notion of the sonata as a definite *form* from all of the mostly necessary revisionism to which that notion has been subject.[10]

I agree with Rothstein and will cite one other, namely, Mark Evan Bonds, who also shares this viewpoint:

> ...the *a priori* categorization of specific forms remains essential in the analysis of individual works. No matter how deprecated the idea of a stereotypical pattern may be, it must still be integrated into a broader theoretical concept of form if we are to understand any number of important works of music.[11]

The sonata principle will be considered here, therefore, as a broad theoretical concept of form. The focus will be upon

---

[8]Both Tovey and Rosen use these terms.

[9]James Webster, "Sonata Form," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie 8 (London: Macmillan, 1980), 497-508.

[10]Rothstein, *op. cit.*, 111.

[11]Bonds, *op. cit.*, 16.

compositional differences between basic and underlying principles of classical and romantic symphonic movements in sonata form as generally understood.

Classical symphonic introductions, for instance, are dynamic in that a harmonic and rhythmic "dissonance" is established. Harmonic dissonance is established through the presence of the dominant and rhythmic dissonance is asserted, at the phrase level, as a large-scale upbeat. A deviation from this is first evident in the introductions to romantic operatic overtures. Full melodic periods are now found in the introduction rather than in the exposition as is the case in the classical period. This change is exemplified in many of the overtures of Cherubini and his contemporaries. In these works, the large-scale harmonic scheme found in the introductory sections is no longer dynamic but, rather, supports a phrase rhythm that has the effect of a downbeat, providing further stability.

The primacy of *melody* now replaces the former dynamic aspects of rhythmic and harmonic impulse in large-scale formal organization. One typically important feature in the romantic treatment of sonata form is the primary role assigned to the lyrical second theme. The second theme often functions harmonically as pre-dominant material (mediant, subdominant, or minor dominant) in three-key expositions. While expanding the area of the dominant, however, the powerful effectiveness of its arrival as a primary harmonic goal in the closing

"theme" is potentially weakened. Often, a more background harmonic scheme unfolds a cycle of thirds, whereby the second theme is understood as a contrapuntal passing motion to the dominant and an elaboration of the tonic triad (see Fig. 4-5). This shows a linear, contrapuntal and melodic emphasis over the harmonic polarity of the tonic and dominant.

These changes were first set in motion between the years 1790 and 1815 primarily by Cherubini and Spontini in Paris and Weber in Germany, all three of whom knew each other and each other's works. Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, Spontini's *La Vestale*, and Weber's *Der Freischütz* were acknowledged at the time of their respective premieres as being tremendously successful and, as a result, they became especially popular and influential soon thereafter. Chapters 4, 5, and 6, analyze and discuss these overtures with particular emphasis upon the way in which the underlying principles of sonata procedure are utilized within the context of the new romantic aesthetic.

## CHAPTER 3

## GLUCK AND THE REFORM OPERA OVERTURE

It might well be said that Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-87) represents the fountainhead of the entire romantic movement in music. Berlioz, in his *Memoirs*, says of the operas of Gluck (and Spontini), "I could conceive of nothing more grand, sublime, or true than the works of those great composers."[1] In fact, it is well known in opera history that Gluck's influence can be felt even as late as in the works of Wagner.[2] Gluck has been credited with having influenced Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the leitmotif.[3] Wagner, himself, in *Oper und Drama* (1850-51), places the utmost importance on Gluck as a crucial innovator in the genre of opera. He acknowledges, for example, the importance of

---

[1]Ernest Newman, ed., *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz from 1803 to 1865 comprising his travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England*, trans. Rachel Holmes and Eleanor Holmes (New York: Dover, 1966), 50. Originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.

[2]Wagner re-orchestrated Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* and produced it in Dresden in 1846 and Hans von Bülow wrote a piano-forte arrangement of it that was published in 1859. This "Wagnerized" version of Gluck's music became the primary text for performances in the nineteenth century. Also, Liszt's production of *Orfeo* (1853) prompted his own score, the third symphonic poem *Orpheus*.

[3]See Winton Dean, "Gluck and the Reform Opera," *Essays on Opera* (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 91.

Gluck's aim of matching the dramatic contents of a given text to an appropriate musical expression.[4]

Gluck's development of the overture commences with his overture to *Alceste* (1767)[5] whose formal inspiration changes from that of the baroque binary dance to the programmatic aspects relating to the opera.[6] In fact, as we shall see, Gluck dramatizes the older binary form in which the second half is a repetition of the first half starting in the dominant and working its way back to the tonic. The *Alceste* overture actually follows a one movement slow/fast scheme and is more mood-oriented compared to his previous overtures.

---

[4]Richard Wagner, "Opera and Drama." In *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 8 vols., 2 (New York: Broude Brothers, 1966), 27-28. Repr. from London ed., Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1895-1899.

[5]Gluck's first *reform* work, in collaboration with Calzabigi and choreographer Angiolini, is the ballet-pantomime *Don Juan ou Le festin de pierre* (1761). It represents a deliberate attempt at greater *artistic unity*. Gluck's first "reform opera", *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762; French version, 1774) focused particular attention on the development of dramatic force within the passages for chorus. *Paride ed Elena* (1770) was Gluck's next reform opera. A further collaboration with Calzabigi, now choreographed by Noverre, resulted in *Alceste* (1767; French version 1776). His operas for Paris include *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774), which initiated the controversy between Gluck and Piccinni (representing Italian music), *Armide* (1777), *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779), and *Echo et Narcisse* (1779). For more information on the beginnings of the Reform movement see Patricia Howard, *Gluck and the birth of modern Opera* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), 89-99.

[6]Originally, the term *overture* was derived from the French *ouverture* which denoted a work in two or more sections that served as a solemn introduction to a ballet, opera or oratorio in the seventeenth century. An alternate definition included a suite of dances in addition to the overture proper as found in works by J.S. Bach and G.P. Telemann.

Gluck's famous preface to the first version of *Alceste*, outlines his reform ideals. The following excerpt from this preface makes clear his position on the importance of relating the overture to the drama it precedes.

> I have felt that the overture ought to apprise the spectators of the nature of the action that is to be represented and to form, so to speak, its argument.[7]

*Alceste*, a *dramma per musica* in three acts, premiered on 26 December 1767 and represented the first true musical fulfillment of Gluck's collaborative attempts at reform with Calzabigi. The overture to *Alceste*, the opera of which is often referred to as a "sacrifice opera", is highly programmatic, possessing ceremonial qualities which are already apparent in the four introductory measures. The primary motivic material of these measures is the outlining of a *d* minor tonic triad in the bass register by the lower strings, bassoon, and bass trombone. This opening arpeggio is the only figure that might be said to recur in the opera. Of course, with so common a musical figure it is difficult to ascertain at first whether or not this was intended to be a source motive for the entire work. Nonetheless, the recurrence of this figure in the temple scene of *Act 1* is undoubtedly deliberate and becomes the chief unifying musical element of the whole scene.[8] In addition to the use of the

---

[7]Alfred Einstein, *Gluck*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 113. First publication by J.M. Dent & Sons, London, 1936.

[8]See Howard, *op. cit.*, 91.

minor mode and low register, aspects of the drama are also musically represented by sharp contrasts in dynamics from fortissimo to piano, and the coloristic use of the trombone; all are employed for dramatic effect and programmatic purpose. The use of the trombone, for example, adheres to its historically long-held association with sacred worship and the supernatural.[9]

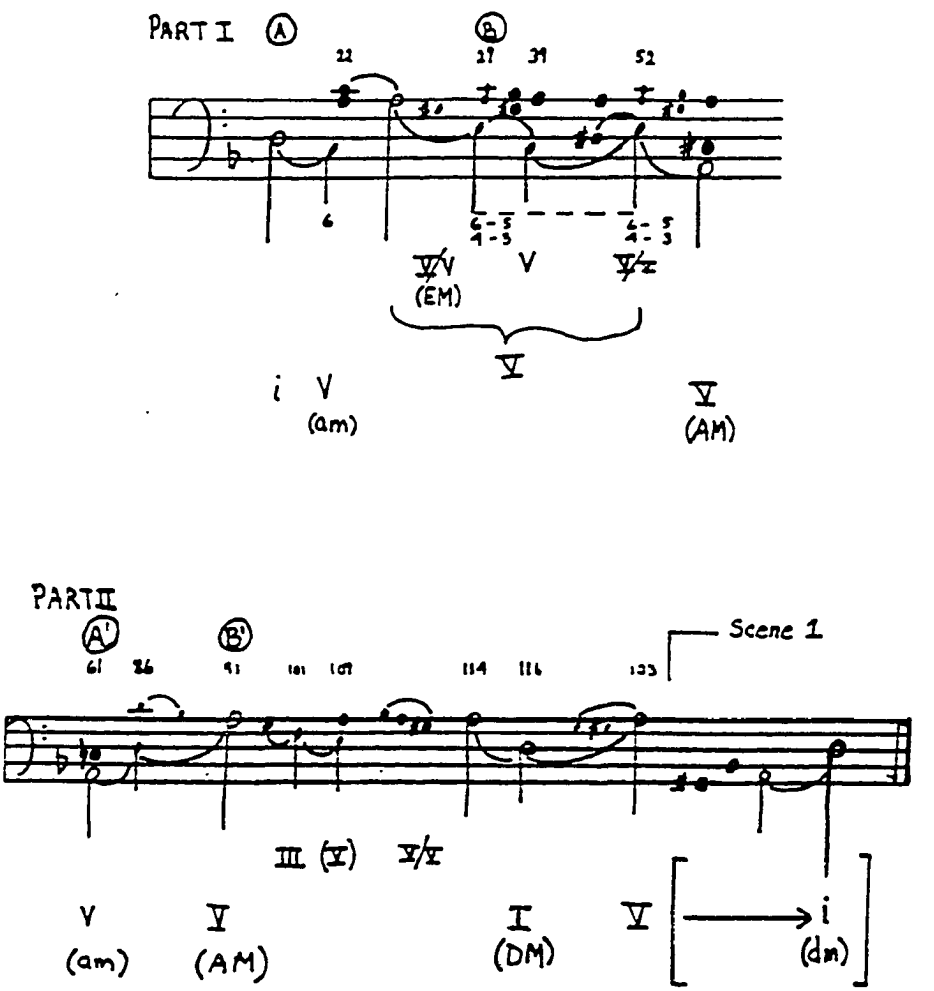
Unlike the overture to Gluck's earlier reform opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), his *Alceste* overture does not rely on harmonic conventions of the sonata principle. Instead, its irregularity becomes a model for continued exploration in future overtures. A background harmonic scheme of this overture is given in Figure 3-1 below.[10]

---

[9]While the earlier part of the eighteenth century saw a general decline in the use of the trombone, this trend was reversed when the opera orchestras of Gluck and Mozart called upon the instrument for its religious and mystical connotations. Mozart's *Idomeneo* (1781), is one such example, influenced by both Italian opera seria and the sacrifice operas of Gluck. Mozart greatly admired Gluck's *Alceste* which served as an inspiration for many scenes in *Idomeneo*. The use of the trombone in Mozart's *Magic Flute* is also programmatic but as in his earlier works and Gluck's *Alceste*, its treatment is classical, being scored with thirds in the top register and fifths and octaves in the middle and lower registers. Also, the unfolding of musical material in these works is purely motivic, not melodic as in the early romantic aesthetic.

[10]Upper-case Roman numerals and capital letters indicate major mode sonorities. Minor is represented by lower-case letters and numerals. Letters in parentheses indicate key areas within the primary tonality of the piece (chord numerals refer to the original key).

**Figure 3-1.** The Overture to Alceste: A Background Harmonic Scheme.



As can be observed in Figure 3-1, the *Alceste* overture is in simple binary form, the second half being merely a repetition of the first half in the dominant. The dominant then provides a smooth transition into the action of the first scene which opens with the herald's trumpet call and is supported by *d minor* (tonic harmony).

The second key area of *Part I* (mm. 29-53) is in the dominant minor (*a* minor) instead of the more common (and expected) motion to the relative major. Within this key area, there is an extended dissonant cadential motion on V/V which eventually resolves to the dominant *major* that concludes *Part I*. This unstable harmonic feature occupies a relatively substantial portion of the *B* section. In essence, despite no real development section in this overture, the large dissonant harmonic area, expanding this second key, becomes a dynamic event and justifies the return of the opening melody in the *minor* dominant. Gluck is, in effect, moving beyond the classical norms of what constitutes a dissonant second key, thus opening the door to further harmonic/chromatic compositional innovations that will ultimately change the entire approach to sonata form. Each of the overtures that follow in this discussion relate directly to the novel harmonic relationships appearing in Gluck's *Alceste* overture. In particular, the relationship between parallel modes is evident.

In terms of the placement of the minor dominant within

the form, this otherwise unusual middleground dissonance in Gluck's overture takes on the effect of being a natural, commonplace event because of his emphasis upon dramatic atmosphere. One is not listening to the harmonic bass motion but rather to an exotic melody of undulating parallel thirds orchestrated with flutes, oboes, and clarinets.

Despite the anticipated and eventual arrival of the dominant *major* (mm. 54-60) which serves to close *Part I*, this harmony does not resolve to the tonic (*d* minor) in *Part II*. At the point where one would normally expect a formal recapitulation of minor tonic harmony (m. 116) Gluck substitutes the major mode for the minor mode. There is also no return to the opening melodic material. *Part II* begins with the introductory four measures now in the dominant *minor*, followed by the dominant *major* in the *B' section*. This is later followed by a repeat of the *major* dominant thematic material that closed *Part I*; now, however, it appears in the tonic *major* at m. 116 (*D major*) instead of the more expected tonic *minor*. The overture is unresolved on the dominant *major* (mm. 123-128) at its close.

While non-functional in a background harmonic sense, the *minor* dominant that opens *Part II* receives great emphasis. The process of resolving the *minor* dominant into the structural *major* dominant necessitates a motion into the relative major, an event that would normally have taken place in the second key of the exposition. This change and

expansion of the dominant through its parallel minor, shows the experimental nature given over to it and anticipates a later practice as found in the overtures of Cherubini, Spontini, and Weber and even anticipates the three-key expositions in Schubert and other nineteenth-century composers.

Gluck is one of the first composers to specialize in composing one movement overtures.[11] The later overtures written for Paris are usually characterized by a weighty, slow introduction followed by a dynamic and often free-form *Allegro*. One of the features that makes the *Alceste* overture unique, and an important precursor of romantic compositional procedure, is its elimination of the repeats found in the older Baroque dance form. This enables an expansion and elaboration of the dominant harmonic region which now takes on greater significance. The dominant *major* which closes *Part I*, for example, is preceded (within the *B section)* and followed (in the *A section* of *Part II*) by the *parallel minor* mode. As mentioned earlier, this contrast of parallel major and minor modes on a middleground structural level becomes a characteristic of early romantic operatic overtures such as those to be analyzed later in this study.

As previously noted, Gluck, therefore, dramatizes the

---

[11]Grétry, Méhul, Jommelli and Traetta are equally important composers of opera reform. See Giorgio Pestelli's *The Age of Mozart and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

older baroque binary form. In the *Alceste* overture, the opening material returns in *Part II*, now in the dominant *minor*; this in itself is not particularly unusual considering that the tonic is also in *minor*. However, the use of the dominant *minor* at this point in the *form* is a dramatic reinterpretation of the old binary dance scheme.

In classical operatic overtures, as, for example, in the overture to Mozart's *Magic Flute*, the opening chords and themes are transposed to a structural dominant at the beginning of the development section, serving to announce the arrival of the development after which follows an articulated recapitulation. In Gluck's *Alceste*, however, there is no development proper and, in fact, there is no articulated recapitulation (see previous discussion). Mozart, unlike Gluck, remains within a much more classically conceived harmonic context that emphasizes the structural dominant and a full development section.[12] In his overtures, there is essentially no delay of structural harmonies and no harmonic experimentation.

In Gluck's reform opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774), the innovative aspects of *Alceste* become an even more integral part of the dramatic scheme as a whole. In fact, the linking

---

[12]The one exception is Mozart's *Idomeneo* which has been cited as a work modeled after Gluck's *Alceste*. The *Idomeneo* overture has extensive use of minor harmonies and a second subject in the *minor* dominant (rather than in the expected *major* dominant). For more information on *Idomeneo*, see Edward J. Dent, *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33-66.

of the overture more continuously with the first scene is carried further in each reform overture.[13] In the first *Iphigénie* (1774) the music of the overture leads more directly into the first scene. The second *Iphigénie* (1779) begins with a raised curtain and the first scene is given a dramatic prelude (we might consider this as an opera without an overture, at least in traditional terms). With the audience giving their serious attention to these opening notes, Gluck is obviously attaching a new level of importance and dramatic relevance to the music preceding the dramatic action. As a result of Gluck's careful attention to the union of drama and music, *Iphigénie en Tauride* is closer to being a tone poem rather than a formal movement. The orchestra in this work, the largest Gluck had ever used, consists of piccolo and flutes, clarinets, oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, drums, and strings. Gluck achieves an unprecedented fullness of sound with more independent passages for the woodwinds and a more consistent use of brass, wind, and strings as separate orchestral choirs.

In general, Gluck's orchestration and his emphasis on the lyrico-dramatic reached unprecedented proportions. In terms of orchestration, as mentioned by E.T.A. Hoffman, Gluck had

---

[13]For Hector Berlioz's general criticism of the joining of the overture to the first number of the opera, with particular reference to Gluck's *Alceste* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, see Hector Berlioz, *Gluck and His Operas With an Account of Their Relation to Musical Art*, trans. Edwin Evans (London: William Reeves, 1915, repr. 1972), 74.

even more unconventional departures in mind that were never realized:

> It is well known that when he died, Gluck had a whole opera worked out in his head without having written down a single note. This opera was to be called *Die Hermannsschlacht*, and he was intending to include some totally new brass instruments, to be modelled on the pattern of the Roman tuba, in order to introduce their plangent tones during the wildest battle-choruses and thus intensify the effect to an unprecedented degree.[14]

After Gluck, the unifying of the overture to the opera in tone and theme was further developed in France, largely by Cherubini (see Chapter 4).

---

[14]E.T.A Hoffman, *op. cit.*, 436-7.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE OVERTURE TO CHERUBINI'S *LODOÏSKA*

The most prominent composer to follow Gluck in the development of the opera overture was Cherubini.[1] His overtures, too, became independently popular. Introductory sections became more substantial in scope and musical interest as the overture itself gained greater significance and autonomy. For example, as compared to Gluck's *Alceste* overture (1774), with only five measures of introductory material, the introduction in Cherubini's *Lodoïska* overture (1797) comprises forty-four measures. It thereby contributes to the importance and independence of the overture by its lengthened duration and by its preparatory and anticipatory nature.[2]

Cherubini, Spontini and Méhul, in particular, further

---

[1]Gluck has been cited as the primary musical inspiration for Cherubini's works. See Boris Schwarz, "French Instrumental Music Between the Revolutions (1789-1830)." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1950, 142. Cherubini did not become familiar with the music of Gluck until he visited Paris in 1786. The works composed by Cherubini *before* his arrival are noteably undistinguished and attest to Gluck's undoubtedly strong influence upon Cherubini's musical development.

[2]With the exception of *Médée*, all of Cherubini's operatic overtures have a slow introduction, often spannning over forty measures. This characteristic of an expanded slow introduction in Cherubini's overtures may have been influenced by Haydn's late symphonies which were extremely popular in Paris at the time.

developed the integration of mood and theme from the opera into their overtures. This practice also attracted early nineteenth-century German composers. Beethoven's first two *Leonore* overtures (now numbered *2* and *3*) are permeated by *dramatic* motifs signifying his attempt at embodying the elements of the entire drama.[3] Weber's *Freischütz* (to be discussed in *Chapter 6*), in addition to subsequent works by him, expands further upon this practice.

Despite the fact that Cherubini's overtures have been given limited style analyses by most scholars,[4] they must nonetheless be counted as innovative works which contributed to important aspects of the romantic style. Winton Dean is one of the few recent scholars to acknowledge this:

> ...the boldest innovators among the early Romantics were not Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, or even Berlioz, but the half-forgotten composers of the previous generation, Cherubini, Méhul, Le Sueur, and Spontini.[5]

While the operas of Cherubini were performed throughout

---

[3]Unlike Beethoven's first two *Leonore* overtures (nos. 2 and 3), his third *Leonore*, listed as no. 1 and composed in 1807, merely hints at the subsequent dramatic action. For more information about motivic connections between the overture and subsequent drama in Beethoven's first two *Leonore* overtures see Michael Broyles, *Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven's Heroic Style* (New York: Excelsior Music, 1987), 134-35.

[4]An exception is Weber's analysis of *Lodoïska*, a work he conducted in Dresden, see Carl Maria von Weber, *Saemtliche Schriften*, ed. Georg Kaiser (Berlin, [n.p.], 1908). This analysis also appears in Richard Hohenemser, *Cherubini, sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913, repr. 1969).

[5]Winton Dean, *Essays on Opera*, 91.

Europe, they were especially popular and influential in Germany. His operatic overtures were frequently performed independently and became, in and of themselves, models of symphonic composition.[6] Their treatment of melody as a focal point within the overall form is one example of the newer romantic aesthetic. A melody in this newer context often maintains the same tonality (often the tonic) for whole themes and theme groups. Rhythmic effects and orchestration also come under the newer programmatic and romantic conception. The fundamental question for the German romantics who attempted to confront these newer compositional procedures was how to integrate them into the traditional Viennese approach whereby the empasis was on the development of motives within a dynamic harmonic framework. Ultimately, integration of these procedures and a reinterpretation of their function resulted in works exhibiting a new musical aesthetic.

*Lodoïska*, a *comédie héroique* in three acts, is Cherubini's second major opera for Paris.[7] This work literally set new standards in French operatic writing in terms of scope and complexity and established rescue opera as a significant operatic subspecies.[8] Despite its successful

---

[6]See *Chapter 1* of the present study.

[7]Cherubini's first opera for Paris was the tragédie lyrique *Démophon* of 1788 which was not met with success.

[8]Grétry's *Richard Coeur de Lion* of 1784, with its dramatic rescue of King Richard from the Linz fortress in Austria, is the work typically cited for introducing rescue opera which received an important stimulus with the storming

premiere at the Feydeau in 1791, however, *Lodoïska* eventually came to be virtually ignored until its more recent revival at La Scala in March of 1991 under Riccardo Muti. It has also been unjustly "overshadowed" due to the preference of the opera-going public for Cherubini's opera *Médée* (1797).[9]

While *Lodoïska* came to be all but forgotten, its *overture* remained a most popular orchestral work. Nonetheless, according to Boris Schwarz, writing in the year 1950, even this overture appeared to have "strangely faded."[10] This observation remained true until the 1991 revival for the 200th anniversary of its premiere. Its reception was very favorable and perhaps better enables us to comprehend the enormous impact of *Lodoïska* in its own day.[11]

*Lodoïska* exhibits many innovative musical features which indeed set it apart from previous operas. Some of these changes have been acknowledged in scholarship:

---

of the Bastille in 1789.

[9]See Pencak, *op. cit.*, 9.

[10]Schwarz, *op. cit.*, 150.

[11]In a recent article reviewing the recording produced from this event, James H. North makes the following comments: "The new La Scala performance of *Lodoïska* conducted by Riccardo Muti ... presents the twentieth century with its first opportunity to fathom the popularity, esteem, and influence that this revolutionary masterpiece commanded for so many years ... For both its inherent greatness and its historical interest, *Lodoïska* is the most fitting choice to initiate a revival of Cherubini's stage works." See James H. North, "Cherubini: *Lodoïska*," *Fanfare Magazine* 15 (1992), 176. North's comments refer to the 1991 performance by Orchestra e Coro del Teatro alla Scala, conducted by Riccardo Muti, recorded on compact disc (Sony RSCD 2450, S2K-47290).

> ... *Lodoïska* represented an entirely new departure in opera. Despite its external similarities to some of its predecessors, notably [Grétry's] *Richard Coeur de Lion*, it is entirely original in its depth of psychological insight, dramatic tension, and musical technique ... *Lodoïska* opened a new path for opera composers, by demonstrating that areas of human experience outside the restricted fields of historical or mythological grand opera and comic opera could be treated seriously. In it Cherubini moves as far from the classical legends of Gluck as he does from the world of eighteenth-century comedy. Despite its geographically remote setting, the work was relevant to the turbulent world of the Revolution, and it set an example eagerly followed by such French composers as Méhul and Lesueur.[12]

It is also noteworthy that the work of Salieri, a pupil of Gluck's, was another source of influence for Cherubini. Salieri's *Les Danaïdes* (Paris, 1784), in fact, has been cited as a significant model for *Lodoïska*.[13] When comparing *Lodoïska* to *Les Danaïdes* we find that both works exhibit a primary focus on symphonic texture, with more extensive ensembles and lengthened finales (as in those of comic opera generally) than is typically found. Also, the tone of both overtures reflects the seriousness of the drama.

In turn, the music of Cherubini influenced many others including Schubert, who was directly exposed to it in a variety of ways and on numerous occasions. As mentioned earlier, Schubert participated as violinist in the orchestra at the *Kaiserlich-königliches Stadtkonvikt*, performing many of

---

[12]Basil Deane, *Cherubini* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 5.

[13]See Lorenzo Tozzi, compact disc notes, trans. Nigel Jamieson, for Luigi Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, performed by Orchestra e Coro del Teatro alla Scala, conducted by Riccardo Muti (Sony RSCD 2450, S2K 47290), 1991.

Cherubini's overtures. As an audience member he formed early impressions of Cherubini's work during his youth.[14] In addition, as a student under the tutelage of Salieri, Schubert studied many of the same scores that Cherubini himself had studied. Few scholars make this connection though it has not gone completely ignored.[15]

Within his operas, Cherubini's treatment of the *orchestra* had the greatest impact on his contemporaries.[16] The overtures to Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Fingal's Cave* came under this influence.[17] Gradually, this newer aesthetic, governed by poetic, and dramatic principles, began to infiltrate the early romantic symphony as well.

---

[14]Cherubini's *Médée* was one of the first operas heard by Schubert around 1811. About this same time, Schubert also heard Spontini's *La Vestale* at the Kärntnertor Theatre (the exact date is uncertain). See Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 28.

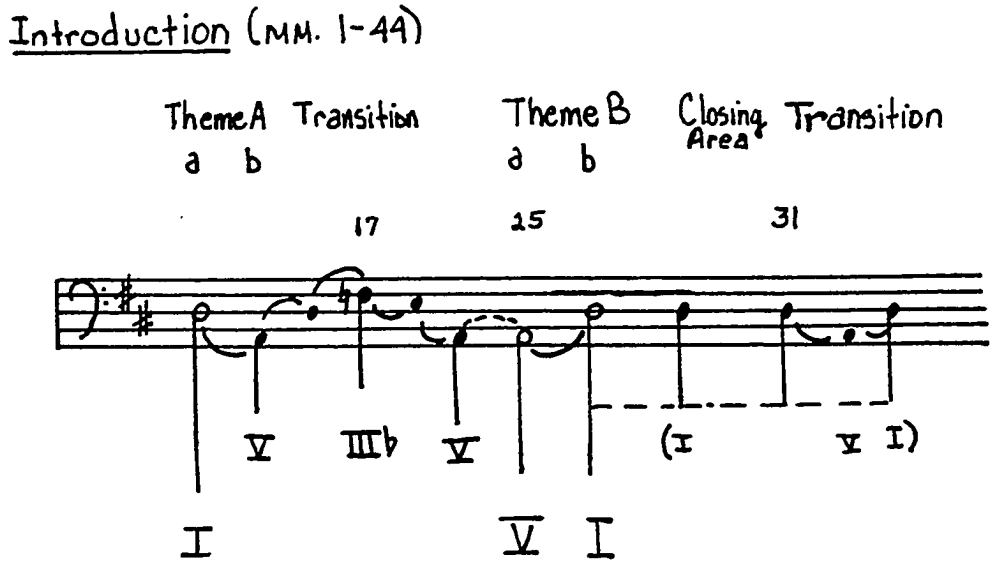
[15]Boris Schwarz, for example, credits Cherubini with being one of the primary "inspirers" of musical romanticism and says that "Beethoven and Schubert, Weber and Mendelssohn are deeply in [Cherubini's] debt." See Schwarz, *op. cit.*, 144.

[16]Cherubini wrote only two symphonies. The first is not extant and is given no entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* though we know it was performed at the *Concert spirituel* on 8 September 1785 (see Constant Pierre, *Histoire du Concert Spirituel 1725-1790* [Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, 1975]). His second symphony (*Symphony in D*) was written in 1814 for London. Among his other non-operatic works, are six string quartets (1814-37) and other chamber and pianoforte pieces, nine masses, two requiems, and a number of smaller sacred works.

[17]See Schwarz, *op. cit.*, 145. Weber's *Oberon* was also a major influence on Mendelssohn's overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

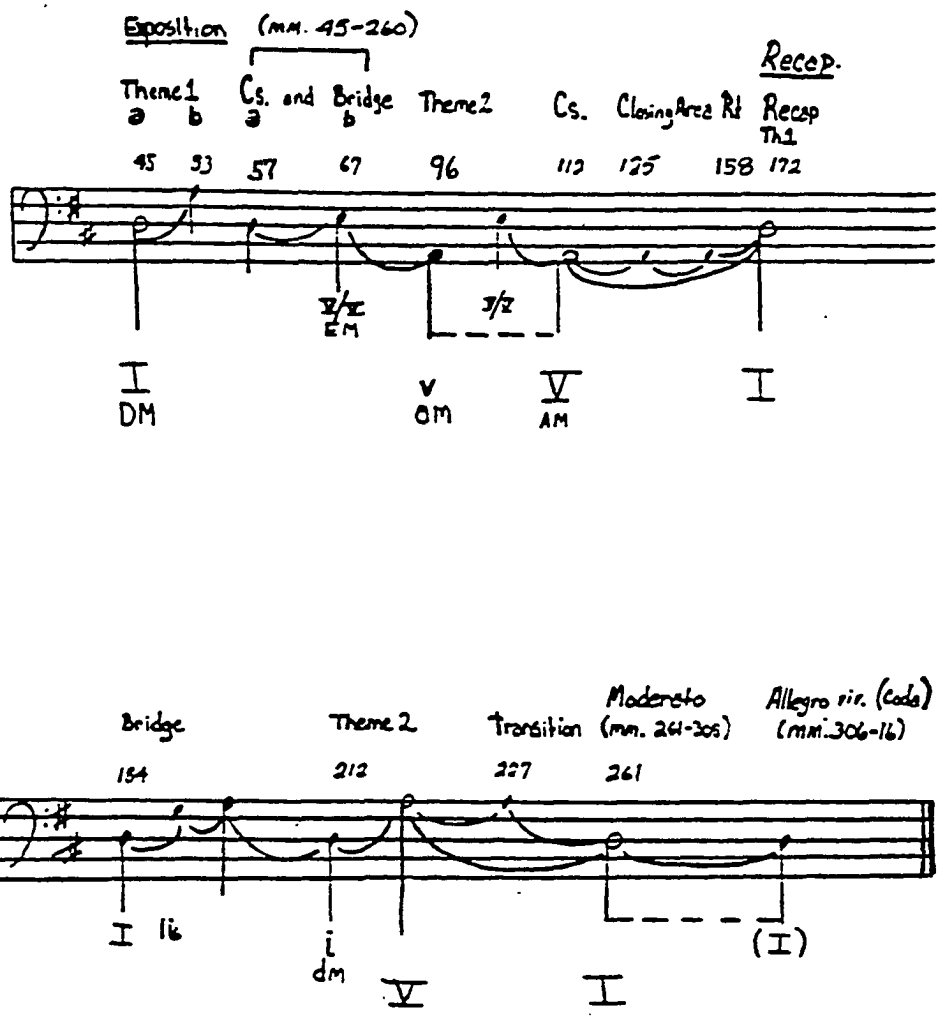
The overture to *Lodoïska* has a clearly discernible harmonic and formal scheme. A background harmonic plan of the overture is given in Figure 4-1 below.[18]

**Figure 4-1. Cherubini's *Lodoïska* Overture: A Background Harmonic Plan.**



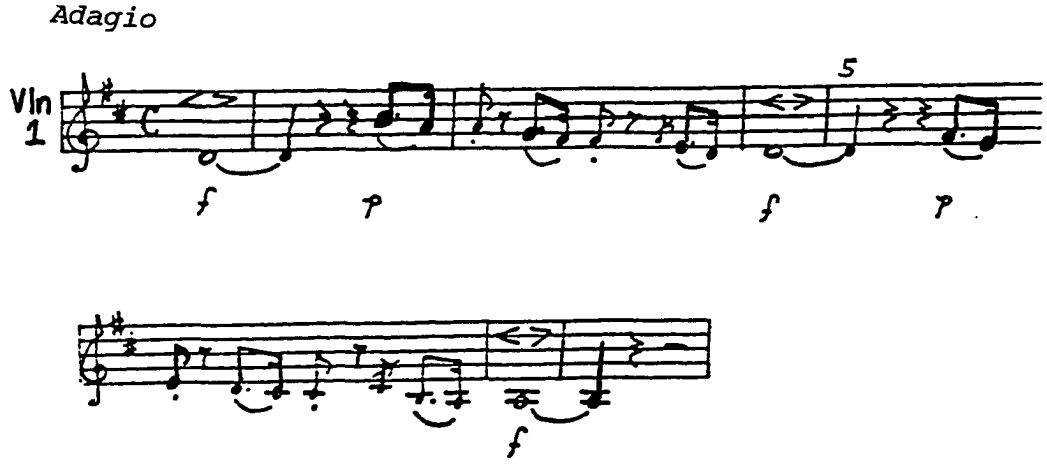

[18]The letters "a" and "b" which sometimes appear above the harmonic indications refer to "antecedent" and "consequent" phrases, respectively. Themes of the introductory *Adagio* are labeled "Theme A" and "Theme B" to distinguish them from the themes of the Exposition which are labeled "Theme 1" and "Theme 2" ("Theme 1" and "Theme 2" can more broadly refer to a "theme area"). While in classical sonata procedure the background harmonic areas of the Exposition are often referred to as "1st Key" and "2nd Key" (see Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music*, pp. 217-18, for a description of "key-area form"), a thematically oriented concept of form did exist in the classical period (see Marc Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, pp. 110-15) and seems more appropriate in formal considerations of the examples cited here which emphasize themes within the overall harmonic structure. The abbreviations "Cs." and "Rt" refer to "counterstatement" and "retransition", respectively.

(Figure 4-1, cont'd)



There are a number of compositional traits in this overture which deviate from the classical symphonic "sonata form" approach. One new and important feature is its primary focus upon *melody* (including those found in the *Introduction*) with particular emphasis upon second themes. Generally, the nature and treatment of thematic material in this work is antithetical to classical procedure. The introductory *Adagio*, for example, opens with the following kinetic theme (see Example 4-1):

**Example 4-1.** *Adagio*: Theme A



The kinetic nature of *Theme A*, however, merely serves to enable a return to the tonic in *Theme B*. Therefore, contrary to the rhythmic and harmonic dissonance typically raised in classical introductions in order to bring about a large-scale dynamic effect, the first and second themes within the *Lodoïska* overture create tonal closure within the tonic; *Theme A* leads to the dominant only to arrive at a tonic resolution in *Theme B*. Comparing this harmonic scheme to a typically classical symphonic introduction, we would observe a harmonic reversal in the phrase structure. This aspect of Cherubini's work indicates a significant compositional deviation from the classical approach.

Despite only one presentation of *Theme A*, its motivic aspects do become important large-scale unifying devices.[19] For example, the sustained tonic note of the opening reappears at the beginning of *Theme 1* in the *Allegro vivace* as does its stepwise downward motion. Also, the somewhat ambiguous meter of this theme prepares for the syncopated second phrase of *Theme 1* in the *Allegro*, making its initial appearance at

---

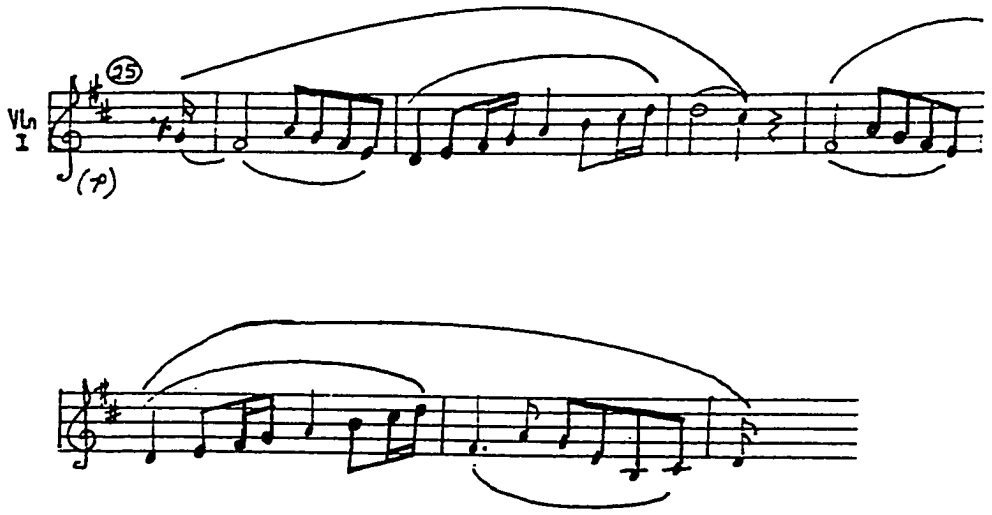
[19]Even with Cherubini's many romantic compositional innovations, the process of expanding upon and unifying thematic and motivic musical material remains within the Viennese classical tradition. Indeed, Cherubini studied numerous musical scores by Haydn. Haydn is quoted as having said to Cherubini, "Let me call myself your musical father, and you my son," to which Cherubini was overcome by tearful emotion! See Vernon Gotwals, *Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius*, a translation of the *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn* by G.A. Griesinger (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 56.

m. 53.

*Theme 2* of the *Allegro* is also affected by motivic characteristics of the opening theme of the *Adagio*. The dotted rhythmic pattern of the opening, for example, now appears in augmentation and is heard throughout in various manifestations and note values. The transition to *Theme B* of the *Adagio* (mm. 9-24), for example, is permeated with this rhythmic pattern. One particular example within this transition is found in mm. 10-15 where the flutes, bassoons, violins, and violas sound the opening dotted rhythm in augmentation. Measures 17 through 24 present transitional material that employs both the dotted and syncopated rhythms. During this transitional passage, the earlier metric ambiguity of the opening theme is further emphasized by a most obvious and singular appearance of syncopation in all sounding parts occurring in m. 19 during the harmonic appearance of an augmented sixth chord.

*Theme B* of the *Adagio* also receives only one statement. Unlike *Theme A*, however, it is static and harmonically closed in a typically antecedant and consequent phrase structure as shown in Example 4-2 below. Therefore, the antecedent phrase cadences on the dominant and is followed by a consequent phrase resolving to *D* major, *the tonality of the piece*. *Theme B* also contrasts with the first theme in that it is lyrical in nature and metrically regular (see Example 4-2 below).

**Example 4-2.** *Adagio* - Theme B



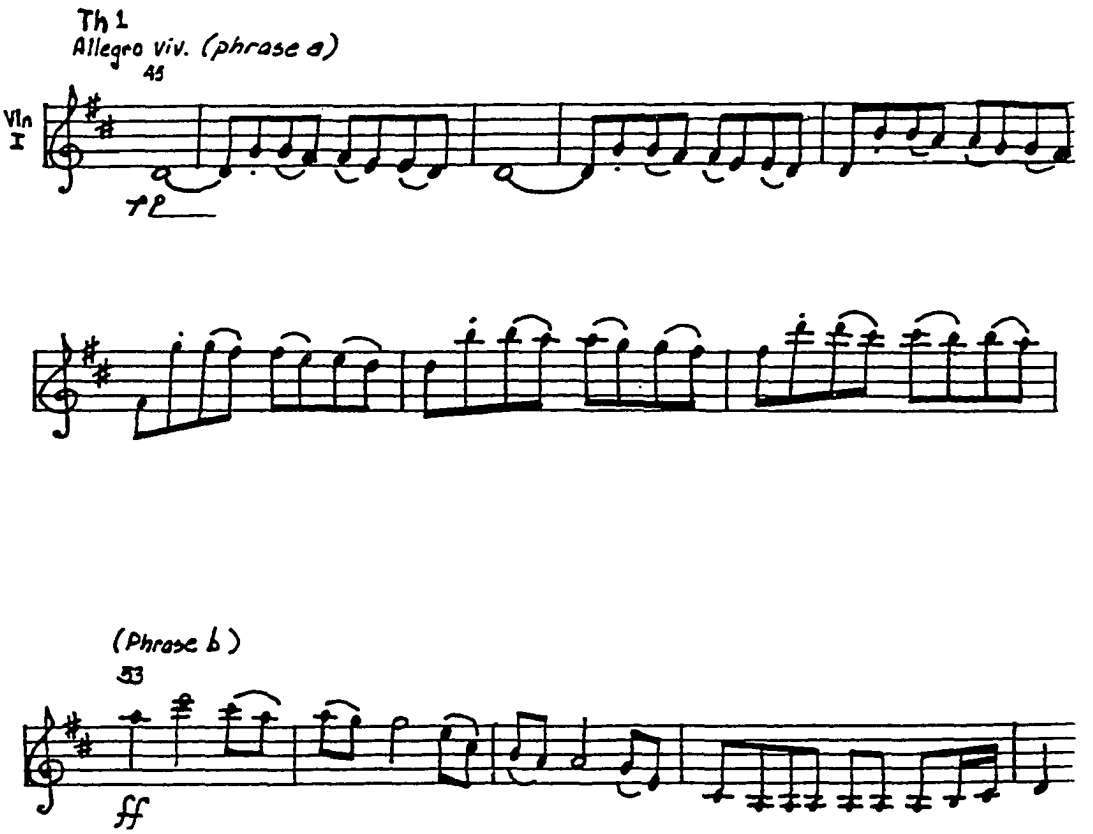

The *Introduction*, therefore, remains within the tonic of *D* major. As previously mentioned, *Theme A* merely provides for the return of the tonic in *Theme B* negating the dynamic function of the opening theme. The *Concluding Area* and *Transition* between *Theme B* of the *Introduction* and the opening theme of the *Allegro vivace* (mm. 31-44) unfolds a basic harmonic progression within *D* major, moving from the tonic through subdominant and dominant harmonies, closing again on the tonic, *D* major. The harmonically static nature of this

*transition* (mm. 40-44) demonstrates a uniquely romantic characteristic.

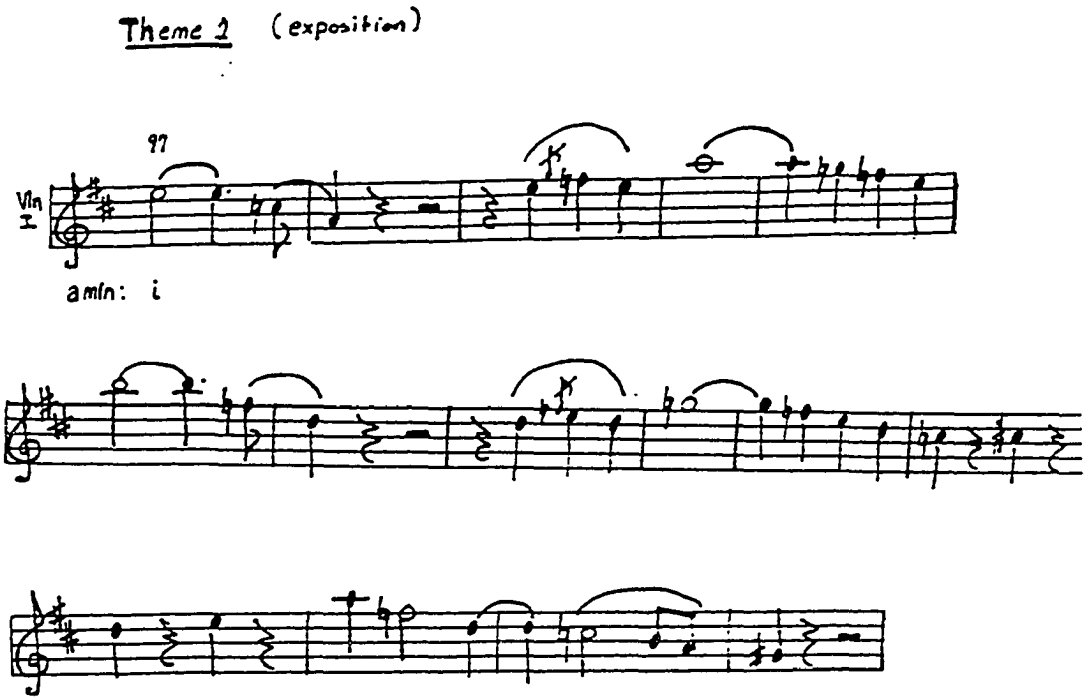
The primary nature of the lyrical second theme which governs the introductory section is also antithetical to classical procedure. In classicism, the presence of closed themes in an introduction would disrupt the dynamic flow and therefore the very purpose of the introduction as a large-scale harmonic and rhythmic upbeat. Classical introductions tend to prolong dominant harmony or harmonies dissonant to the tonic and find only temporary resolution at the *Allegro* of the *exposition*. This aesthetic as found in the classical symphony differs greatly from that of the opera overture which determines its musical content not by a prescribed harmonic scheme but rather by the necessity to create foreground dramatic atmosphere.

Both the first and second themes of the *exposition* in the *Lodoïska* overture are given in Example 4-3 below.

**Example 4-3.** Exposition: *Themes 1 and 2*



*(Example 4-3 cont'd)*




Unlike the previous *Adagio*, the *Allegro vivace* (see Figure 4-3) has a dynamic function that is enhanced by a passage through distant key areas such as the prominent *E* major tonality in the bridge (mm. 67 - 95). When *E* major

first appears (mm. 67 - 82), it is not a primary key area in its own right. It is, rather, an applied dominant (that is, a V/V in *D* major) as well as a preparation for its greater harmonic role as a tonal center from mm. 87 through 95. This is asserted through the presence of its own dominant (*B-D#-F#-A*) in mm. 83 through 86. In classical procedure, the arrival at this rather distant fifth relation of *E* major as a new key area (marked by a new triplet rhythmic figure in the violins) would normally be reserved for the development proper. Instead, this new key area is reinterpreted as a dominant pedal point (sounded by the lower strings and bassoon), preparing the arrival of the second theme in m. 97 in the dominant *minor* (*a* minor). Within the bridge section between *Themes 1* and *2* of the *exposition*, the strong arrival and presence of the *major* dominant (mm. 71-6) anticipates *Theme 2*, making its arrival (in the *minor* dominant) all the more effective by emphasizing the modal parallelism.[20] Already within the bridge section the *major* dominant is announced and is followed by its parallel *minor*. This rather atypical

---

[20]The presence of the dominant minor within the context of the major mode is a compositional method typically found in bridge or transition passages in classical music, particularly in the works of Haydn. In the bridge between the first and second themes of the first movement of Haydn's *Symphony No. 92* in *G* major (1789), for example, there is a *d* minor/*D* major conflict within the context of *G* major. With the works of Cherubini and his contemporaries, however, the purpose of this compositional method must be reinterpreted within its operatic context which calls for the exploitation of the juxtaposing of the major and minor mode with more regularity and with more structural relevance.

harmonic succession adds to the overall dynamic function of the *Allegro* (cf. Gluck's overture to *Alceste* discussed previously). Modal mixture in this context is projected onto a deeper, more middleground level of structure and therefore necessitates a re-evaluation of constituent dynamic forces within a composition of this kind.

Modal mixture is already suggested in the *Introduction* and gradually becomes a more apparent compositional and motivic device throughout the overture. In mm. 16 and 17, for example, we find a local harmonic progression to *F major*, the flat mediant, implying a motion to the tonic *minor*. This brief suggestion of the parallel minor mode becomes an important motivic element to be expanded upon in the *Allegro*. The dominant minor of the second theme of the exposition becomes the tonic minor (i.e., *d* minor) in the recapitulation (mm. 212-27). The expected resolution of the tonic minor to *major* (the resolution of *f*♮ to *f*♯) is delayed as is the harmonic resolution of the dominant which remains at the end of the bridge passage and closes this section. Cherubini, in ultimately fulfilling the expectation that the tonic minor be resolved by its parallel major within a movement in the major mode, in fact, reverts to a standard classical procedure.

Later, as found for example in the works of Schubert, the major and minor modes are often treated more equally, creating no inherent need to resolve to the parallel mode. Webster writes:

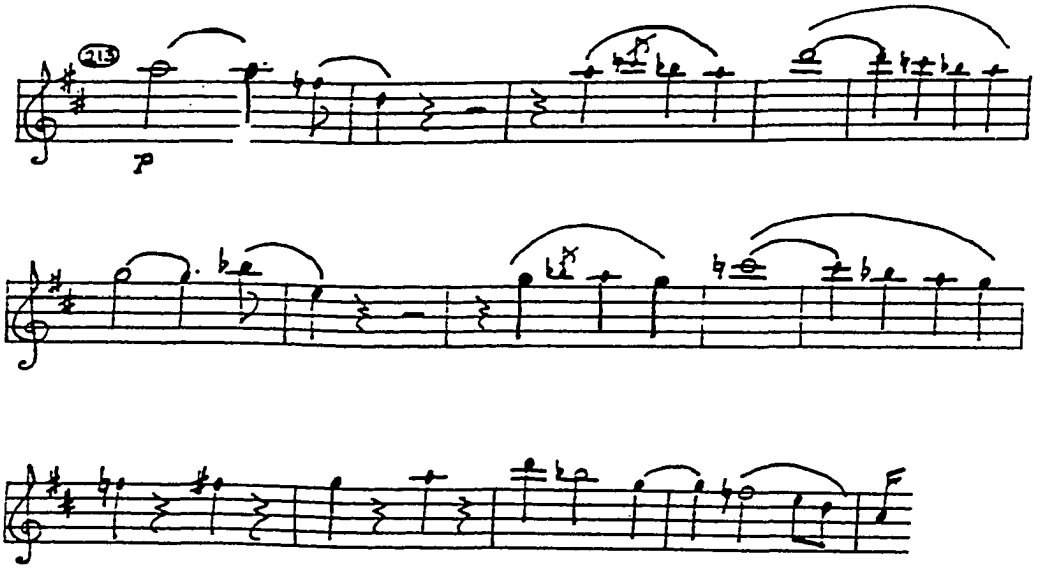
> ...Schubert fully accepts the major and minor modes as equally valid representations of the tonic, and constantly juxtaposes the resulting remote (non-diatonic) chords and keys.[21]

In *Lodoïska,* the second theme of the *recapitulation* is in the *parallel minor* mode, demonstrating one important aspect of motivic expansion. The local harmonic event of the introductory section found in m. 17 with the arrival on the flat mediant (*f*♮-*a*-*c*) is now expanded to encompass an entire harmonic and thematic area. The change in mode in the restatement at m. 213 now creates a *middleground* dissonant relationship between *f*♯ (the third scale degree in *D* major, the basic tonality of the overture) and *f*♮ (the third scale degree of the parallel minor mode). The lengthened duration of this area of dissonance gives the passage a dynamic function that is further supported by the harmonically open-ended close of the theme on the dominant. The second theme of the recapitulation is given in Example 4-4.

---

[21]Webster, *op. cit.*, 19.

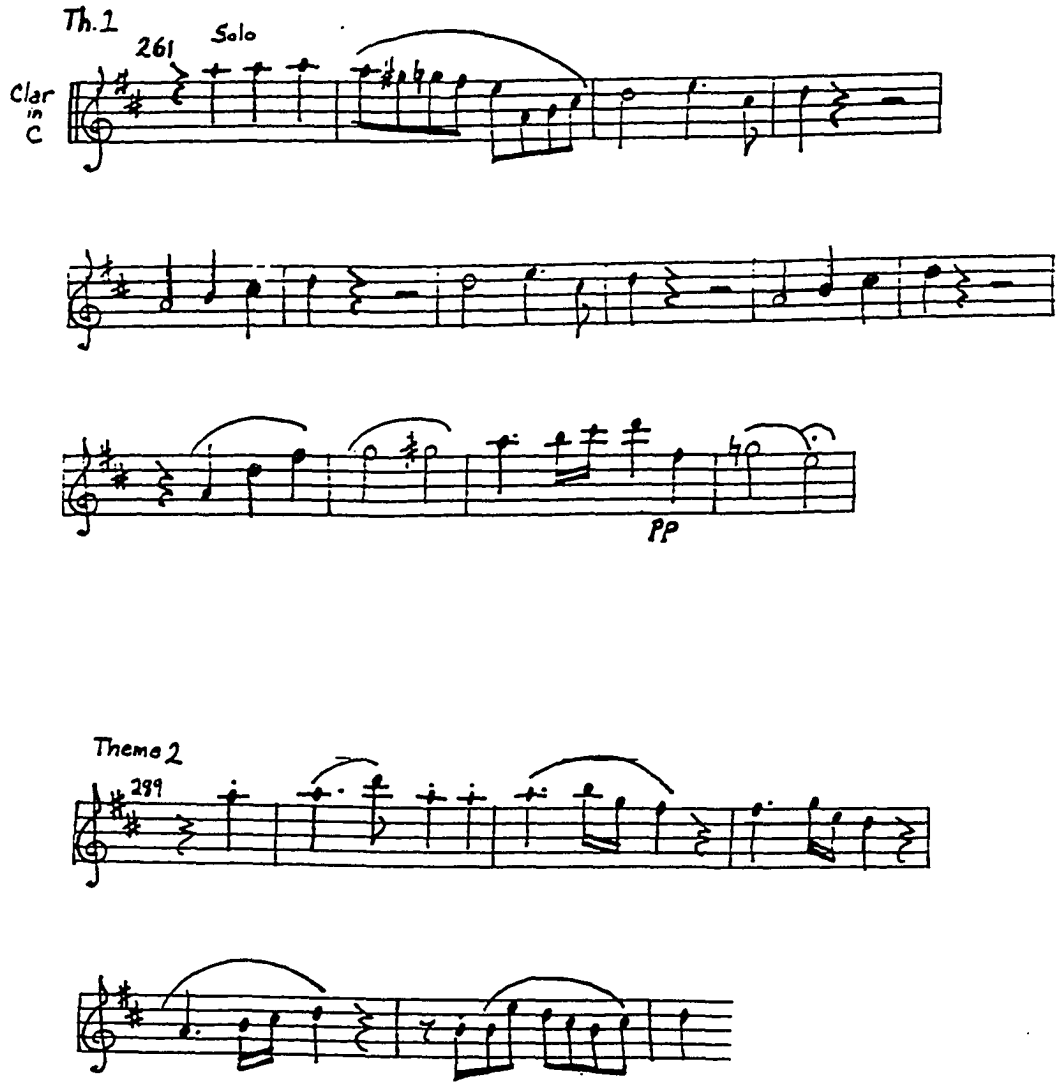
**Example 4-4.** *Recapitulation*: Second Theme



As the *recapitulation* draws to a close, the *A* major dominant harmony is maintained from mm. 253 through 260, avoiding tonic closure. The *recapitulation*, therefore, is harmonically dynamic and seeks its resolution in the subsequent *Moderato*.

Motivic associations from the slow introduction are also found in the *Moderato* which extends from mm. 261 through 305. The dotted-rhythm of the *Adagio*, that appears in the second theme of the *Allegro vivace* (m. 97), is again present in the *Moderato* section, now as a characteristic of both themes as shown in Example 4-5.

**Example 4-5.** Themes 1 and 2 of the *Moderato* Section




The significance of the *Moderato*, however, is not so much the foreground motivic connections with previous sections of

the overture. Rather, its purpose lies in the resolution of the previous tonic *minor* as well as the dominant (of the *Allegro*) that was raised at the end of the *recapitulation*. The raising of dominant harmony at the end of a *recapitulation* is not a compositional procedure found in classicism. In the *Lodoïska* overture, on a background harmonic level, the dominant which closes the *Allegro vivace* resolves to the *D* major tonic in the *Moderato*. Also, the middleground dissonance of *f*♮, presented in the *d* minor restatement of the second theme of the *Allegro*, resolves to *f#* in the *D* major tonality of the opening clarinet solo of the *Moderato*.

Within the *Allegro*, the second theme in the dominant *minor* at m. 97 is partially restated at m. 114 in the dominant *major*, resolving the large-scale *c*♮/*c*♯ dissonance (the *c*♮/*c*♯ conflict is another feature contributing to the dynamic effect of the *Allegro*). A motion to the tonic *minor* (*d* minor) occurs at m. 213, creating a middleground dissonance between *f*♮/*f#*. This theme, now in the tonic minor, requires a harmonic resolution through a thematic restatement in the parallel *D* major mode, just as the second theme of the *Allegro*, first in the dominant *minor* (m. 97), later reappears in the dominant *major* (m. 114). Interestingly, the expected *D* major restatement never occurs within the *Allegro*. In fact, the tonic minor theme concludes that section. Therefore, the *f*♮/*f*♯ conflict remains, only finding its resolution in the new opening theme of the *Moderato*. This new theme substitutes for

the classical harmonic resolution that would have typically occurred within the *recapitulation*.

Generally, in classical sonata procedure, rhythmic and harmonic events remain dissonant until the recapitulation or even until the coda. Very often, a transposition of a motive or theme will provide a resolution. This is found in the *Lodoïska* overture where the dominant minor resolves to the dominant major in the second theme of the *Allegro* within the *exposition*. Already in the *Introduction*, the *f*♮ at m. 17 hints at *d* minor just as the *c*♮ of the previous measure suggests *a* minor. Both these areas are further exploited and expanded upon in the *Allegro* so that the tonic and dominant harmonic areas, with *f*♯/*f*♮ and *c*♯/*c*♮, respectively, are elevated to a higher level of dissonance through the use of the major versus minor mode.

As mentioned, the resolution of the dominant minor to the anticipated dominant major occurs within the *exposition* of the *Allegro*. It is not until the *Moderato*, however, that the necessary resolution to the tonic major occurs, finally resolving the *f*♮/*f*♯ dissonance. It is noteworthy that this resolution occurs within the context of a new theme (in *D* major) rather than by the more standard classical procedure of transposing the original theme that carries the dissonance.

Six different themes are presented in the *Lodoïska* overture; most are not repeated and, therefore, not developed. Clearly, the deliberate emphasis upon melody is foremost.

Exceptions include the two themes of the *Allegro* which are *repeated* within that section at different pitch levels according to their respective harmonic contexts as previously discussed. Neither theme, however, is developed or projected onto any deeper levels of structure. Of course Cherubini does develop *motivic* ideas in this overture; one such example has already been cited: within the *Introduction* there appears a local harmonic event (the *F*♮ at m. 17) that is later expanded into an entire thematic area in the *Allegro*. Nonetheless, the melodies themselves are foremost, rather than their development on a deeper level of structure.

Despite Cherubini's thorough awareness of classical procedure, he transforms much of the classical aesthetic into a romantic one (before Schubert, who generally receives the credit for this). Among other romantics, Schubert, like Cherubini, contended with the same forces of classical developmental procedure within the newer romantic aesthetic and its emphasis upon melody. The first movement of his *C Major String Quintet*, op. 163 (1828), to name just one example, exploits classical motivic developmental procedures including that of modal mixture. The foreground harmonic scheme of the *exposition* outlines a *c* minor triad within the background harmonic context of *C* major. This entire harmonic scheme is anticipated in the opening theme in which the first violin moves from *C* up to *E*♭. The harmonic background of the first movement of Schubert's quintet is given in Figure 4-2.

**Figure 4-2.** *C Major String Quintet*, op. 163 - Exposition

**EXPOSITION**

| | *1st Key Area* | *2nd Key Area* |
|---|---|---|
| | **C----------G** | **[E♭]----------G** |
| **CM:** | **I V** | **(♭III) V** |

The second key area of *E♭* represents a mere contrapuntal passing motion through a 5-6 exchange and is dissonant within *C* major. The resulting *E♮/E♭* conflict (within *C* major) is, therefore, a projection onto a deeper level of harmonic structure. This is a classically oriented developmental process in that the *C* and *E♭* of the opening violin melody becomes a significant part of the overall harmonic scheme in the *exposition*. Unlike traditional procedure, however, the *E♭ melody* within the *exposition* is more important than the *key* itself which has no preparatory dominant of its own. The harmonic motion from *E♭* to *G*, therefore, remains a more middleground event. The *E♭* melody fulfills a dynamic role in a new way by raising the *E♮/E♭* conflict through a primary melodic, instead of harmonic, emphasis. This compositional procedure forces us to rethink the very question of what constitutes kinetic versus static events in music.

We should recall that in the *Lodoïska* overture, *d* minor

is first suggested through the arrival of the flat mediant (*f*♮-*a*-*c* ) at m. 17; the *c*♮ also appears as the root of the dominant triad to *F* major. This strong reference to *c*♮, since it also serves as the third scale degree in *a* minor, prepares the arrival of the second theme of the *Allegro* which is in the dominant *minor* (*a*-*c*♮-*e*); this, in turn, enables its repetition in *d* minor, the tonic minor at m. 213. Evident here is the romantic exploitation on a deeper level of structure of the tonic-dominant polarity using parallel modes. While the more traditional application of this polarity is now weakened, new approaches to the tonic-dominant relationship are substituted and further enhance compositional possibilities for sonata procedure.

## CHAPTER 5

## THE OVERTURE TO SPONTINI'S *LA VESTALE*

In his early career (1796-1802), Gaspare Spontini (1774-1851) produced a dozen operas — mostly comedies — for Rome, Venice, Florence, Naples, and Palermo. However, only when he arrived in Paris in 1803, under the patronage of Empress Joséphine, did he achieve his first major success with his "Gluckian" *tragédie lyrique La Vestale* (1807).[1]

Spontini, like Cherubini, made important contributions to the opera overture after Gluck. His overtures became popular in their own right, having substantial introductory sections and melodic interest. He further developed the "poetic idea" in his overtures and ultimately played a major role in the formation of the early romantic compositional style. Many features in Spontini's operas are credited with directly influencing Weber's *Euryanthe*, Spohr's *Jessonda* and *Der Berggeist* as well as musical traits in Wagner's music dramas.[2]

Despite the originality and impact of his overtures,

---

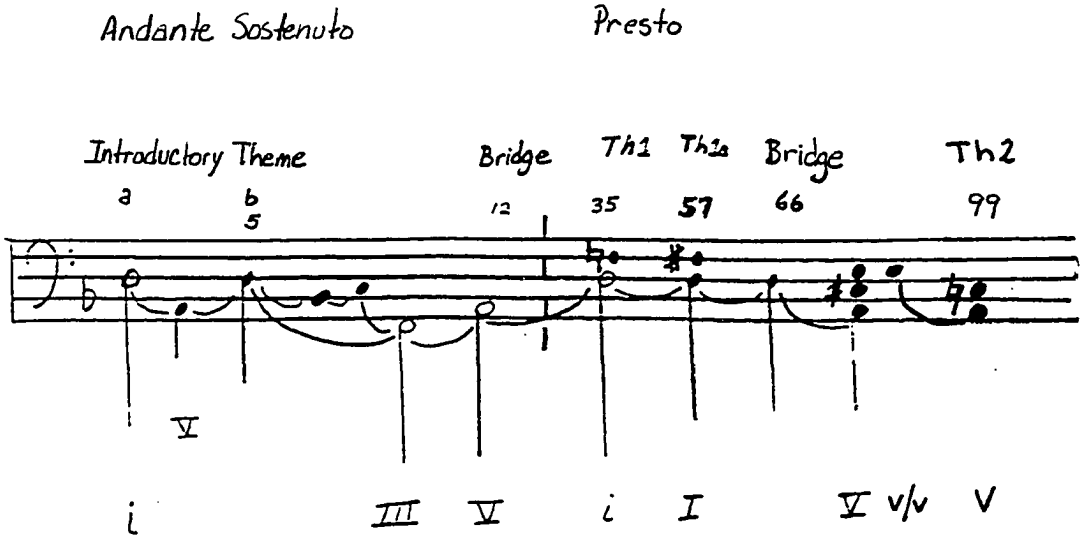
[1]Before his overnight triumph with *Vestale*, Spontini had written three *opéras comiques* for Paris: *La Petite Maison* (1804), *Milton* (1804), and *Julie, ou Le Pot de fleurs* (1805). See Nicolas Slonimsky, ed., *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (New York: Schirmer, 1988), 1187.

[2]See Gerald Abraham, "The Best of Spontini," *Music and Letters* 23 (1942), 166.

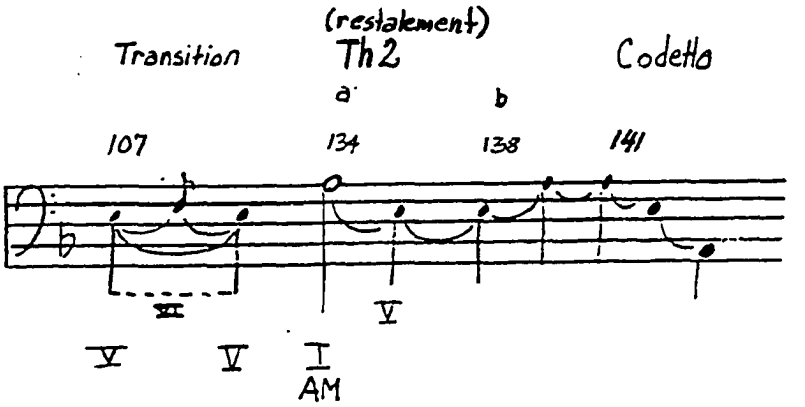
there exist no critical analyses of them. Nonetheless, particularly in Spontini's operatic overtures to *La Vestale, Cortez,* and *Olympie*, a true unity of musical texture was to be among the primary features that influenced the German romantics. As with Cherubini, Spontini's operas, though performed throughout Europe, were especially popular and influential in Germany. His overtures, too, were frequently performed independently and became models of symphonic composition.

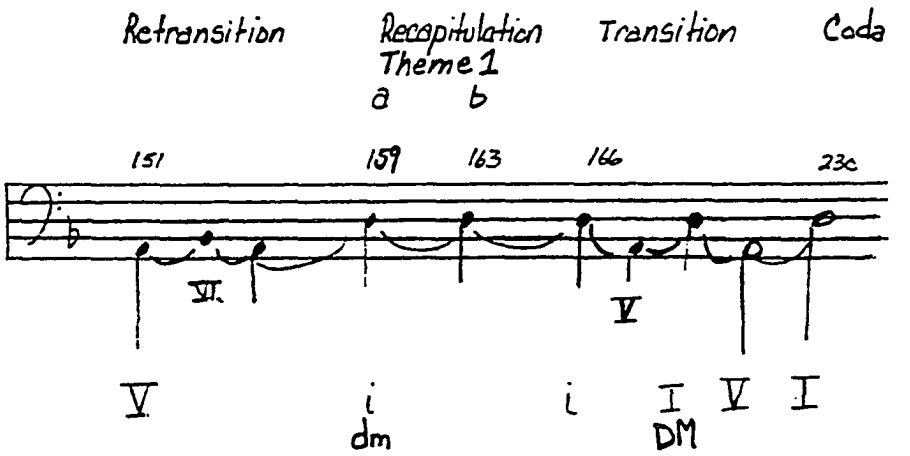
The overture to Spontini's *La Vestale*, as in Cherubini's *Lodoïska* overture, applies a free approach to sonata form. The background harmonic plan of this overture is shown in Figure 5-1 below.

**Figure 5-1.** Spontini's *La Vestale* Overture: A Background Harmonic Plan.



*(Fig. 5-1, cont'd)*

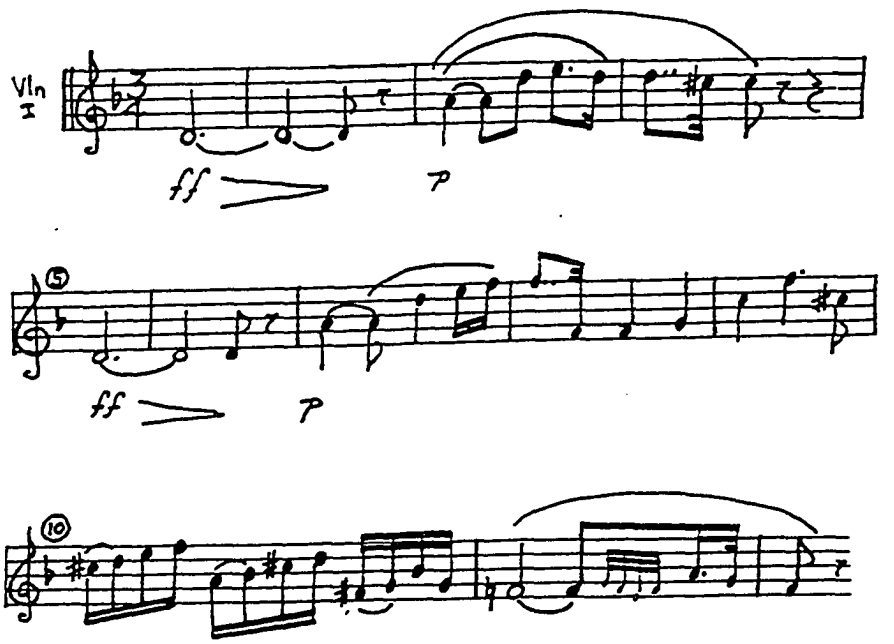



When comparing the *Lodoïska* and *La Vestale* overtures, their similarities are of much greater relevance to this study

than their differences. As in the introductory *Adagio* of the *Lodoïska* overture, the opening theme in *Vestale* has a dynamic harmonic structure. This theme is given below in Example 5-1.

**Example 5-1.** *Andante Sostenuto*: Opening Theme




The harmonic motion of the antecedent phrase of the above theme is from the tonic of *d* minor to its dominant. In the

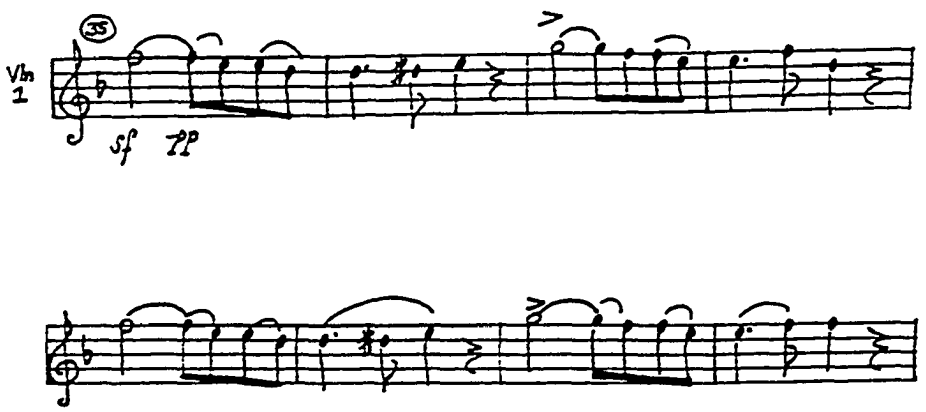
consequent phrase, the harmonic motion leads from *d* minor to its relative major (*F* major). A characteristic of the opening themes from both overtures is the sustained tonic note on *D* which begins each theme. A rest then precedes the continuation of both themes and lends to their disjunct nature. In both instances these opening themes contrast the more lyrical second themes. Also, both initial themes have sharp contrasts in dynamic levels, dotted rhythms, and somewhat ambiguous meters. These characteristics combined with considerations of their respective harmonic structures all lend to a dynamic effect.

As in the *Lodoïska* overture, the opening theme of *Vestale* is stated only once but its motivic aspects become important large-scale unifying compositional devices. In *Vestale*, the sustained *D* which initiates the opening theme of the *Andante* is found at the opening of *Themes 1, 1a*, and *2* of the *Presto*. The dotted rhythm of the opening theme is another characteristic of all themes of the *Presto*. Common to both overtures is the horn calls which close both introductions and signal the arrival of the main sections of both movements. The horns, in this context, are indicative of the increasing importance given over to this instrument which gradually became more melodic in the early romantic period (see the opening *C* major horn theme in Weber's *Freischütz* overture, discussed below in *Chapter 6*). In *Lodoïska*, the horn in *D* appears five measures before the *Allegro vivace* (mm. 40-4).

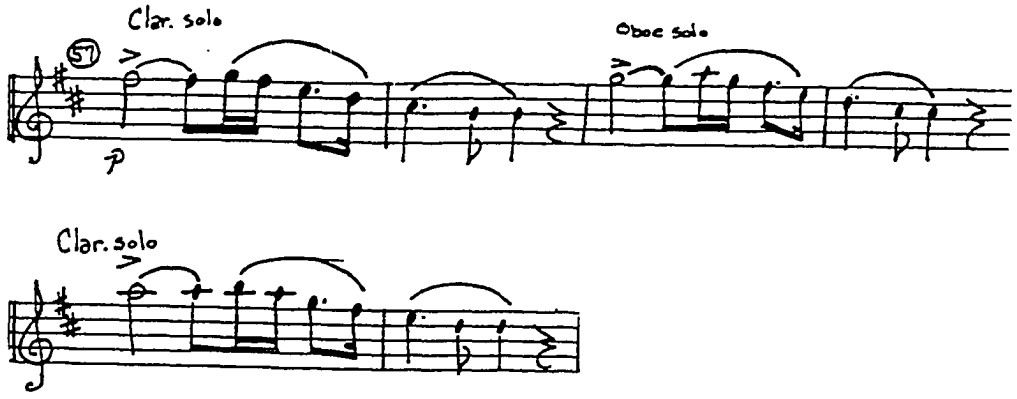
In *Vestale*, the horns (in *D* and *F*) appear at a comparatively similar point (mm. 32-3), followed by only the horn in *D* which resolves in the first measure of the *Presto*. The themes of the *Presto* are given below in Example 5-2.

**Example 5-2.** *Presto Assai Agitato: Themes 1, 1a, and 2*

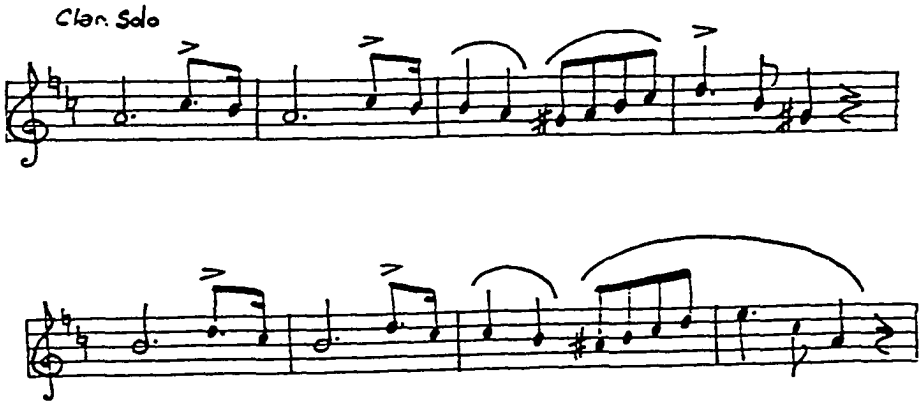
***Theme 1:***



*Subsidiary Theme 1a:*




*Theme 2:*



As shown in Example 5-2, there are two primary themes and one subsidiary theme in the *Presto*. The first theme (m. 35) is harmonically closed, having both phrases of the period ending on the tonic (*d* minor). This theme later appears literally in the recapitulation at m. 159. The second theme appears in the dominant *minor* (*a* minor) at m. 99. The arrival of this second theme is prepared by a typically classical compositional device whereby $\hat{6}$ (*f*♮) alternates with the dominant of *a* minor (*E-G*♯*-B*) from mm. 91 through 95.

Interestingly, after a bridge section (mm. 43-56), a subsidiary theme which will be referred to as *Theme 1a* is stated in the parallel major mode (*D* major).[3] Expressing the opening tonic minor in its parallel major form within the first theme group is a typical romantic procedure. *Themes 1* and *1a* are compositionally related and further emphasize the minor mode versus major. For example, *Theme 1*, presented by the first violins, opens and closes with *f*♮ within the context of *d* minor. *Theme 1a* also begins with $\hat{3}$ (*f*♯), though within the context of *D* major this time. The resulting conflict between the notes *f*♮ and *f*♯ brought about by this modal contrast symbolizes the programmatic idea of duty versus love, a main theme within the opera.

---

[3]I have determined this theme to be subsidiary owing to its sequentially derived bridge-like quality, being divided among the clarinets, oboes, and flutes. Also, this theme does not return as do both ***themes 1*** and ***2***. ***Theme 1a*** is clearly to be understood in relation to ***theme 1*** as providing a heightened contrast by appearing in the parallel major mode.

The second theme appears in the dominant minor (*a* minor) in m. 99. Interestingly, both primary themes are later restated in the reverse order. *Theme 2* occurs in m. 134 now in the dominant major (*A* major) instead of the dominant minor. The return of this theme provides temporary stability. It also prepares the return of *Theme 1* in the *Recapitulation* (m. 159) that remains in *d* minor. A lengthy transition (mm. 166-230), based upon the themes of the *exposition* (*D major*), leads to a triumphant *D major Coda* based upon *Theme A*.

As with the *Lodoïska* overture, *La Vestale* exploits the *minor* dominant. In both, *D major* is a goal of victory and both exploit the relationship of parallel modes. The main difference is one of pacing: in *Vestale* the juxtaposing of the parallel mode occurs much more quickly. In the *exposition* of *Lodoïska*, for example, the first theme in *D major* does not receive a restatement in the parallel minor. Instead, the restatement appears as the second theme group within the *recapitulation*. In the *exposition* of *Vestale*, however, *Theme 1* in *d minor* is followed immediately by a restatement (*Theme 1a*) in *D major* and quickly changes the darkness into its counterpart, light. This process anticipates the romantic conception of *thematic transformation*. Clearly, the works of both Cherubini and Spontini contributed in innovative ways to the romantic symphonic aesthetic.

## CHAPTER 6

## THE OVERTURE TO WEBER'S *DER FREISCHÜTZ*

The operatic style of Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) was profoundly influenced by the operas of Cherubini and Spontini. Two of Cherubini's operas, *Lodoïska* (1791) and *Élisa* (1794), had a direct influence upon Weber.[1] Weber arrived in Prague on 12 January 1813, to take over the directorship of the Opera. He was in full charge of disbanding and reorganizing the company, with plans for a new opening season in September of the same year. The first of sixty-two operas produced by Weber during his directorship was Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*. This success was followed (on October 3rd) by Weber's production of Spontini's *La Vestale* (1807). In fact, almost all the initial operas produced by Weber were from the French repertory; after *Cortez* there followed twelve works by Spontini, Cherubini, Isouard, Boïeldieu and Dalayrac.[2] Interestingly, Weber did not produce any of his own operas and it was not until a full year later that he began producing a number of German operas. The

---

[1]Warrack, *op. cit.*, 150.

[2]*Ibid.*, 148. There were only three exceptions to this series of works in the initial six months: Fränzl's *Carlo Fioras*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and Fioravanti's *Le Cantatrici Villane (Die Dorfsängerinnen)*.

works of Cherubini, Spontini, and French opera generally, therefore, played a major role in affecting the works of Weber, and, in turn, the whole aesthetic of German Romantic opera.

As in Cherubini's *Lodoïska* and Spontini's *La Vestale* overtures, Weber's *Freischütz* overture exploits the polarity of the major and minor modes as dictated by the drama. Indeed, the musical representation of opposing dramatic elements through the use of the parallel mode is the primary governing principle behind all three overtures. In *Vestale*, the conflict is between *love* and *duty*. In *Freischütz* and *Lodoïska*, the dramatic conflict is between the forces of *good* and *evil*. Weber himself discusses this aspect of the drama, adding further insights about the underlying principles of *Freischütz*:

> There are in *Der Freischütz* two principal elements that can be recognized at first sight -- hunting life and the rule of demonic powers as personified by Samiel. So when composing the opera I had to look for suitable tone colours to characterize these two elements; these colours I tried to retain and use not only where the poet had indicated one or the other element but also where they could be made effective use of. The tone colour of the scoring for forest and hunting life was easy to find: the horns provided it. The difficulty lay only in finding for the horns new melodies that would be both simple and popular. For this purpose I searched among folk melodies ... I did not even shrink from using parts of these tunes -- shall I say, as far as the actual notes are concerned? It will not have escaped you, for instance, that the last huntsmen's chorus conceals the second part of the tune of Marlborough ... The most important part..is in Max's words, 'mich umgarnen finstre Mächte,' for they showed me what chief characteristic to give the opera. I had to remind the hearer of these 'dark powers' by means of tone-colour and melody as often as possible ... I gave a great deal of thought to ... the

> principal colouring for this sinister element. Naturally it had to be a dark, gloomy colour -- the lowest register of the clarinet, which seemed especially suitable for depicting the sinister, then the mournful sound of the bassoon, the lowest notes of the horns, the hollow roll of drums or single hollow strokes on them. When you go through the score of the opera, you will be able to satisfy that the picture of the sinister element predominates by far and it will be plain to you that *this* gives the opera its principal character.[3]

Under the direction of Weber, *Der Freischütz* premiered in Berlin on 18 June 1821 and was an immediate success. The overture to this opera had a triumphant premiere earlier in Copenhagen (8 October 1820), also under Weber's direction. It remains one of the most popular operatic overtures in the musical literature, along with the opera itself which represents what is generally considered to be the first true German Romantic opera. The following is a representation of this popular viewpoint:

> Before 1820 German opera was known outside its own country only through *The Magic Flute* and a few Singspiels. A truly national opera came into existence with the performance of Weber's *Freischütz*...[4]

---

[3]Cited in Warrack, *op. cit.*, 212. The above quote originally appears in the essay "Gespräche mit Weber" by J.C. Lobe which has been frequently reprinted and is most accessible in *Consonanzen und Dissonanzen* (1869). Warrack's quotation makes "a few unimportant omissions" from the original.

[4]Donald Jay Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 375. Spohr's *Faust* (1813) is often considered the first true German Romantic opera although its comparatively "*undigested* mixture" of French influences have perhaps prevented a more widespread agreement on this point (Warrack, *op. cit.*, 214). More significant is E.T.A Hoffmannn's *Undine* (1816), set to his own libretto. *Undine* is the first opera with a text of true literary merit, anticipating many aspects of later German Romantic opera.

According to Warrack, however, despite its Germanic outward appearance, the primary influences represented in *Der Freischütz* are *French* not German.[5] When Weber moved to Vienna from Augsburg in 1803, although he planned to study with Joseph Haydn, he instead took composition lessons with Abbé Vogler who had come under the French influence, particularly through the theories of Rameau. Weber's own merit as a composer has sometimes been called into question because of his association with Vogler. The following passage by Oswald Jonas is indicative of this position:

> Rameau's theory came to Germany through Kirnberger's antipode Marpurg, who translated d'Alembert's work on Rameau into German. The theory was later transmitted also by Vogler, whose charlatanism is adequately documented in Mozart's letters. Anyone not convinced by this need only glance at Vogler's "Improvements of the Bach Chorales." Unfortunately that childishly impudent piece of busy-work elicited admiration even from Vogler's pupil [Carl Maria von] Weber. Perhaps one can understand from this why Weber was not equal to the synthesis of the great masters.[6]

Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall make reference to this same passage by Jonas. Heinrich Schenker's own opinion, according to Dunsby and Whittall, was that the apparent lowering of German musical standards was due to the

---

[5]Warrack, *op. cit.*, 215-16.

[6]Oswald Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker: The Nature of the Musical Work of Art*, trans. and ed. John Rothgeb (New York: Longman, 1982), 124-25. First published as *Das Wesen des musikalischen Kunstwerks Eine Einführung in die Lehre Heinrich Schenkers*. Vienna: Saturn-Verlag, 1934. The present translation is based on the second edition, revised by the author and published by Universal Edition in 1972 under the title *Eine Einfühhhrung in die lehre Heinrich Schenkers: Das Wesen des musikalischen Kunstwerks*.

infiltration of Rameau's theories and the French influence generally; this "decline in standards" supposedly began with Weber, the first noted German composer to come under the French influence, and culminated in the works of Wagner and Bruckner.[7] Despite this, Dunsby and Whittall make an important distinction between *compositional* and *conceptual* models of theory and analysis which elevates the significance of Rameau's contributions. They refer to *compositional* models as "indigenous" (Viennese) and *conceptual* models as "imported", crediting Rameau with enabling the early romantics to consider an alternative to the already extinct thoroughbass practice.[8]

While Vogler had the greatest admiration for Rameau, he did not espouse all of Rameau's theories. In fact, Vogler made many original contributions to the field of music theory in addition to expanding upon, modifying or negating aspects of Rameau's theories.[9] With Vogler, there is a freer acceptance of dissonance. From this standpoint, Vogler's direct musical influence upon Weber may have contributed to aspects of Weber's *Der Freischütz* with, for example, its

---

[7]See Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall, *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 24.

[8]*Ibid.*, 28.

[9]For more information see Floyd K. Grave and Margaret G. Grave, *In Praise of Harmony: The Teachings of Abbé Georg Joseph Vogler*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

overriding use of diminished sevenths.[10]

But Cherubini and Spontini had an even greater impact upon Weber than Vogler. As we know, many of their operas had been staged at Prague along with other leading operas of the time including Grétry's *Richard*, Mozart's *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Titus*, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. Spohr's *Faust* and E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Undine*, both from the year 1816, were also major operatic influences upon Weber.

The previous two chapters discussed how the overtures to Cherubini's *Lodoïska* and Spontini's *La Vestale* elevate the importance of melody within a harmonic framework. In the *Freischütz* overture, themes and motifs are developed further still and essentially permeate the form. By programmatic design, with the exception of the opening horn theme, all the themes of the overture reappear in the opera. This thematic material is not merely a succession of melodies but is to be understood within the context of sonata procedure and the dictates of the drama.

Aspects of romanticism abound in this overture. Orchestral "color", for example, is a primary consideration: the overture is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings. In the *Introduction*, the

---

[10]Grout states that "the influence of Weber's principal teacher, Abbé Vogler, as well as the whole intellectual milieu of his life, inclined him strongly toward romanticism..." See Grout, *op. cit.*, 383-4.

prominent treatment of the *C* major horn theme as stabilized harmonic and rhythmic material shows how the instrument has evolved from its traditional supporting role.

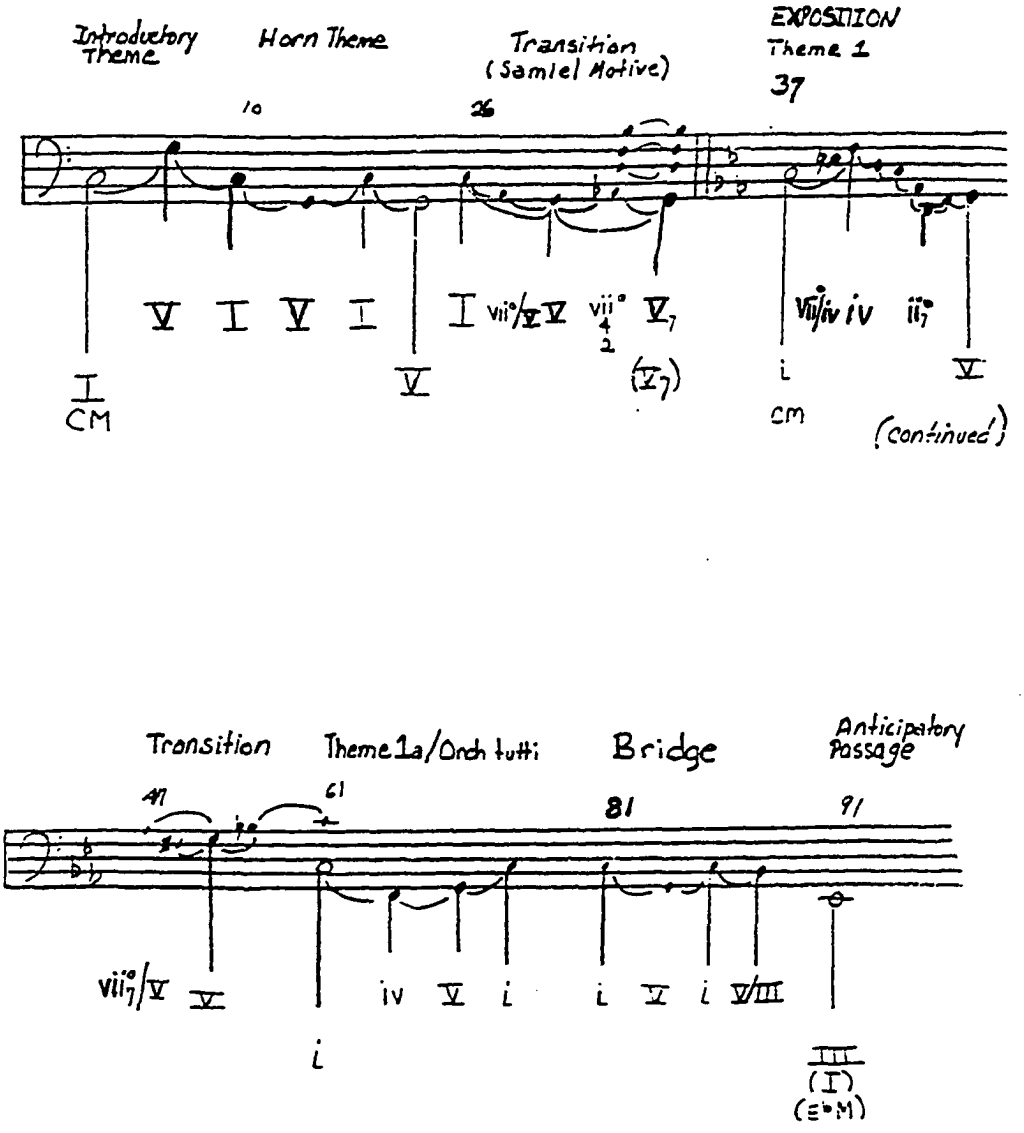
Another romantic characteristic in the *Freischütz* overture is found in the programmatically influenced transitional material (mm. 25-36) between the *Introduction* and the *exposition*. The presence of the "mysterious" diminished sevenths and tremolos effectively portray Samiel's motif of evil. Also, the opening *c* minor theme of the *exposition*, and all motivic and thematic material represented by *c* minor in the overture, is programmatically associated with the demonic or the power of evil.

Yet another programmatic association is found in the so-called "triumph" motifs. These victory motifs are represented by the harmonic areas of *E♭* major, as in the clarinet solo (mm. 96-123) or Agathe's theme which follows (mm. 123-45), and *C* major, as in the *Introduction* and the second theme area of the *recapitulation* and *Coda* (mm. 279-342). The motifs of evil and good found in the overture recur throughout the opera and serve to unify the work.

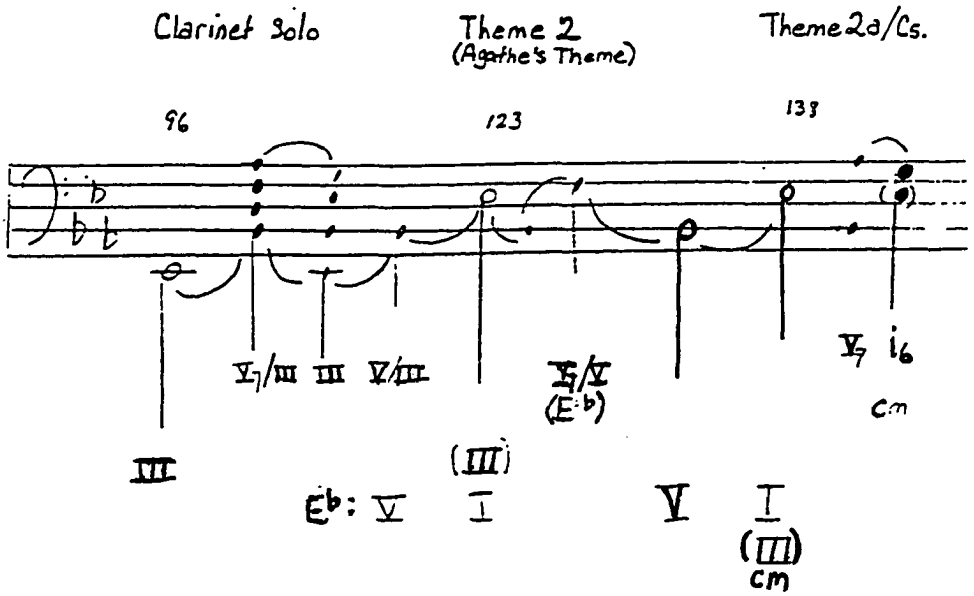
The *Freischütz* overture, therefore, refers to characters and themes of the opera. This is carried out by the use of representative and characteristic themes and motifs and by the exploitation of the relationship between the parallel modes (*C* major/minor) and the relative of *c* minor (*E♭* major). Figure 6-1 places the thematic and motivic material of the overture

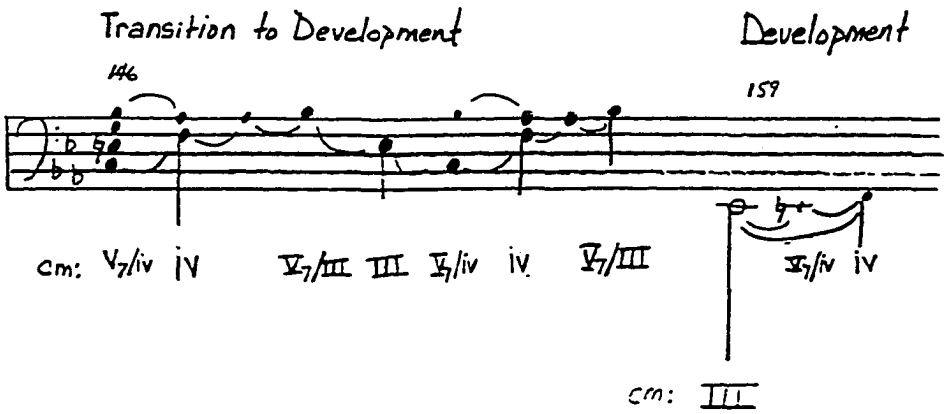
within its harmonic context.

**Figure 6-1.** Weber's *Freischütz* Overture: A Background Harmonic Plan.

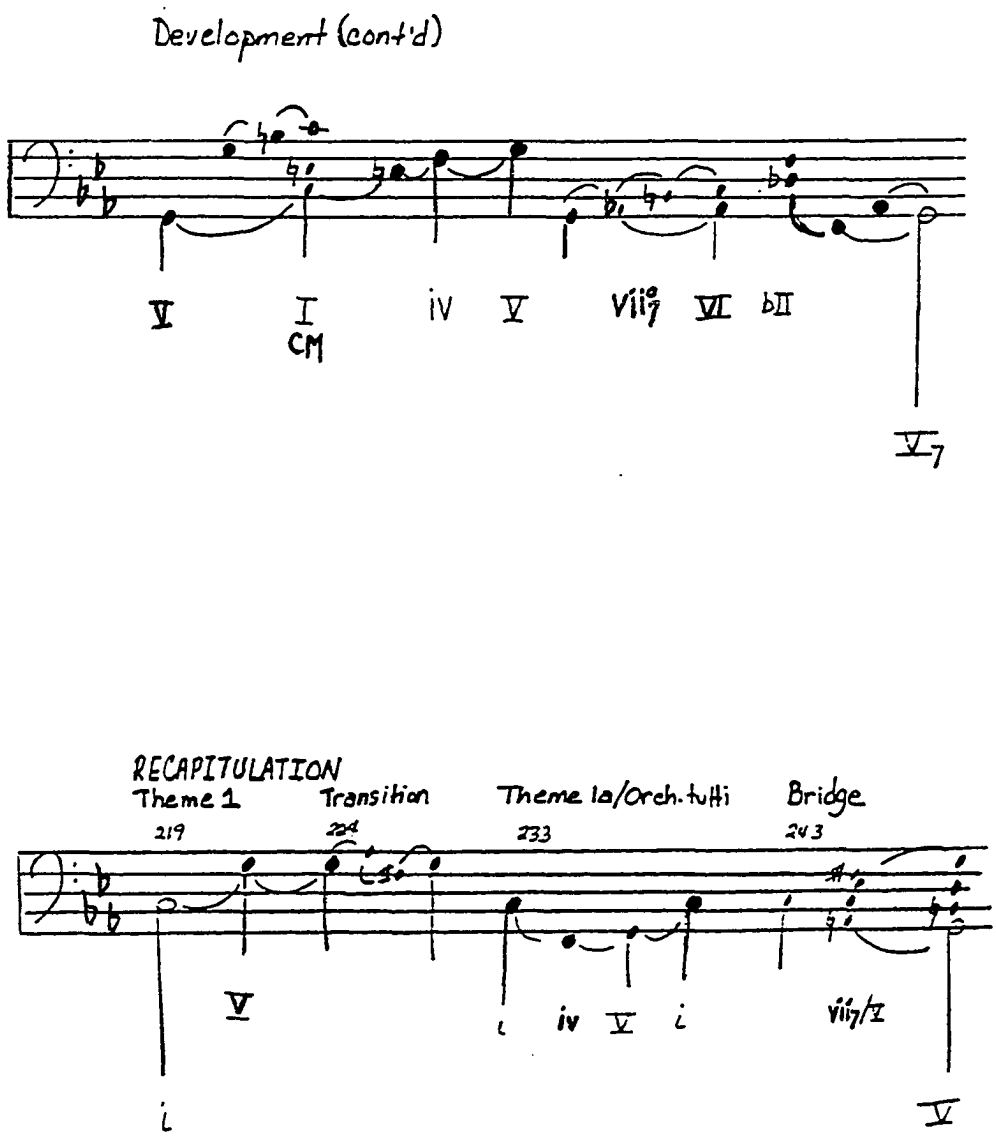


*(Fig. 6-1, cont'd)*

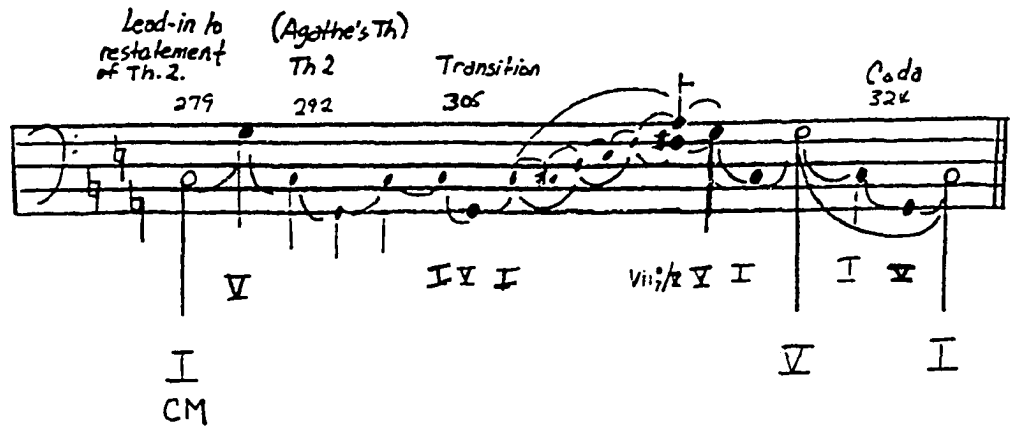


*(Fig. 6-1, cont'd)*



*(Fig. 6-1, cont'd)*




As in the *Lodoïska* and *Vestale* overtures, the *Freischütz* overture has a clearly discernable formal scheme as shown above in Figure 6-1. Also common to all three overtures is modal mixture, introduced at their very openings. In all cases, the slow introductions begin with a single sustained tonic note.[11] In *Lodoïska*, the held tonic note *D* is in all

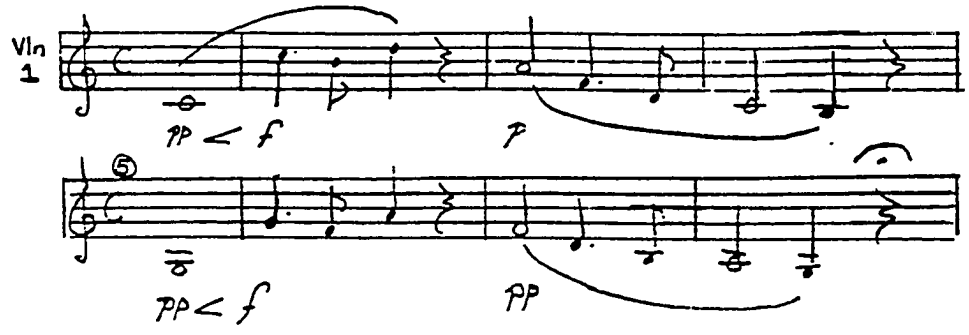
[11]Symphonic introductions with sustained *chords* occur frequently in the symphonies of Haydn (for example, *Symphony nos. 99, and 100*). His *Symphony no. 102* temporarily delays

sounding parts (strings and bassoons). Within the first phrase of this introductory theme, the presence of *f*♯ as a melodic tone in the first violins (m. 3) clarifies the question of mode. *Vestale* also opens with a sustained tonic note (*D*) in all sounding parts. As in *Lodoïska*, the question of mode is also clarified within the first phrase of this introductory theme but now it is done with the appearance of *f*♮ in the violas, rather than as a melodic tone (*f*♮ does appear in the consequent phrase as a melodic tone). *Freischütz* opens with a sustained tonic note on *C* in all sounding parts (strings, *B*♭ clarinets, and bassoons). Unlike the *Lodoïska* and *Vestale* overtures, an avoidance of $\hat{3}$ in the melodic line of the antecedent and the consequent phrases of this opening theme provides a more subtle implication of mode through the use of $\hat{6}$ (see Example 6-1 below).

---

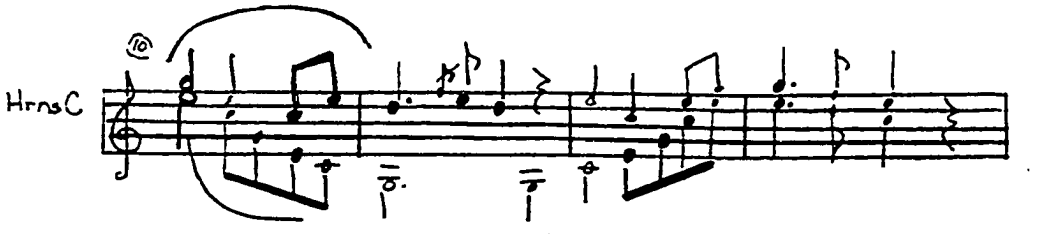
defining the mode by opening with a sustained *tonic note* (B♭) rather than a full chord (the second violins provide $\hat{3}$ in the very next measure). A sustained *tonic note* (B♭) also opens Beethoven's *fourth* symphony (Beethoven saw the sketches for Haydn's *Symphony no. 102*) but here the question of mode remains throughout the introduction and is not clarified until the fifth measure of the *Allegro vivace* (m. 43) where the first violins provide $\hat{3}$.

**Example 6-1.** Weber's *Freischütz* Overture: Introductory Theme




The horn theme which immediately follows provides $\hat{3}$ so that the theme itself now outlines *C major* through arpeggiation (see below).

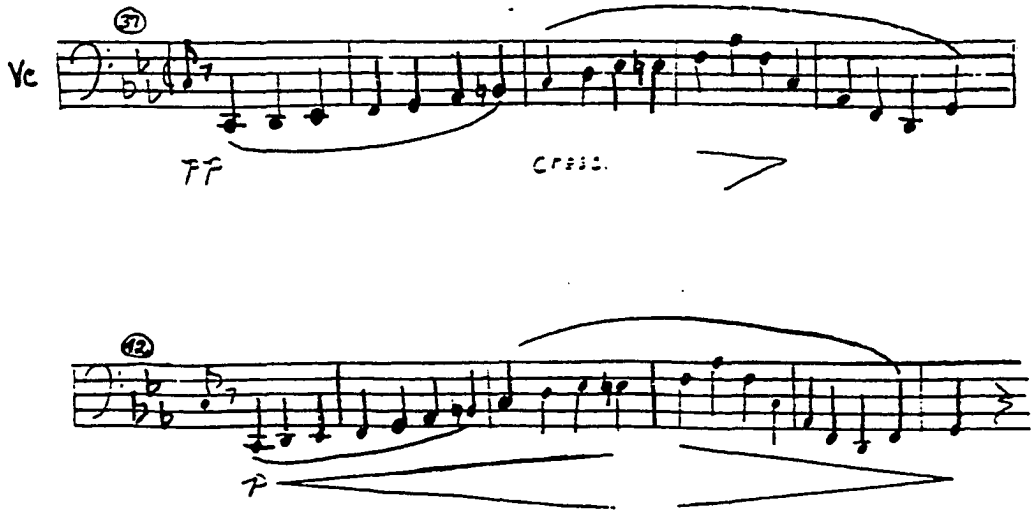
**Example 6-2** Introduction: *C Major* Horn Theme



Unlike the two former overtures which establish the tonality and mode within the *Introduction*, the *Freischütz* overture presents an interesting ambiguity. There is a question as to whether the background tonality is *c minor* which appears initially in the first theme of the *exposition* (mm. 37-47) or *C major* which opens and closes the overture. A third, more preferable interpretation is this: the background tonality is, in fact, *C* (with the major and minor modes equally considered in representing the tonic) so that the compositional technique of juxtaposing *major* and *minor* is, here, superimposed onto this broadest level of formal structure.

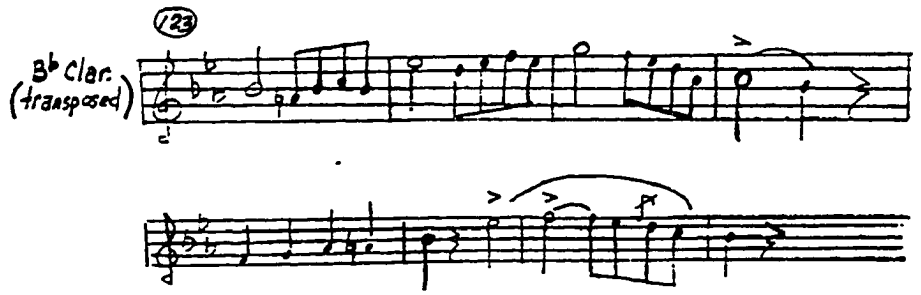
The first theme of the *exposition* is given in Example 6-3 below.

**Example 6-3.** Exposition: Theme 1 in *C Minor*



In this context, the slow *Introduction* in *C major* is atypical and causes the first theme of the exposition in *c minor* to be perceived as an unstable harmonic area.[12] We should recall that in the *Lodoïska* and *Vestale* overtures, the second theme of the *exposition* becomes a point of arrival and stability. In *Freischütz*, the second theme in the relative major (*E♭*) is further emphasized as a primary, stable, and melodic goal within the context of the unstable *c minor* first theme. This second theme is given in Example 6-4 below.

**Example 6-4.** Exposition: Theme 2/Agathe's Theme in *E♭ Major*

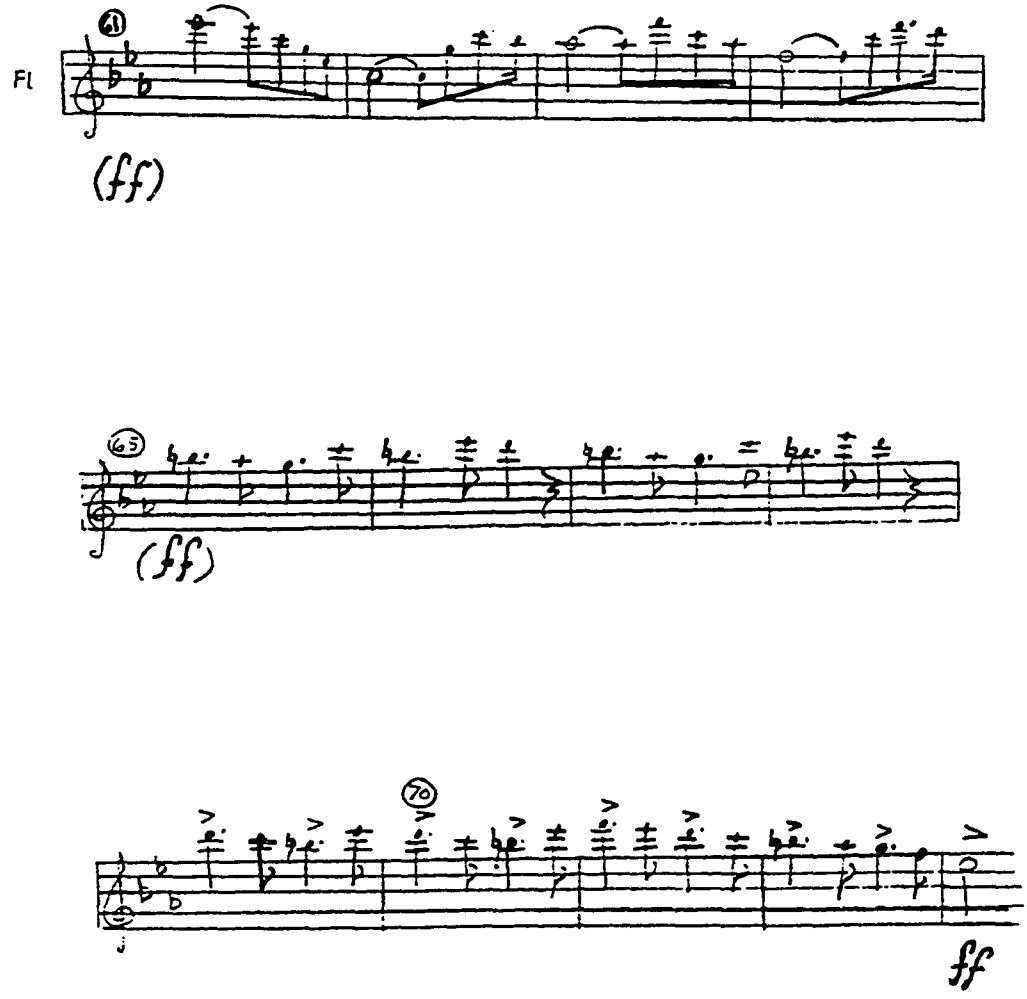



[12]Weber was familiar with and admired E.T.A. Hoffman's *Undine* (1816) and was no doubt influenced by this work. In the *Freischütz* overture, the same key areas as those in the *Undine* overture are exploited. The *Undine* overture also begins in *C major*. However, already *within* the *Introduction*, the additional key areas of *c minor* and *Eb major* (given within the exposition of *Freischütz*) are presented, respectively. The *exposition*, too, is represented by these keys, with *C major* as the primary key. Unlike *Freischütz*, the overture to *Undine* is *harmonically* dynamic, ending on the dominant which resolves in *scene 1* to *c minor*.

In classical procedure, harmonic and melodic motion is usually from passive to active so that the *exposition* begins as a stable entity and moves to an unstable area in the second key. Clearly, in the *exposition* to *Freischütz*, with its unstable first theme in *c minor* followed by a contrasting second theme (Agathe's theme) in *E♭ major*, the opposite goal is intended. The *E♭* key area is devoid of chromaticism, further adding to its relative harmonic stability in relation to the *c minor* key area where chromaticism is prevalent.

The subsidiary themes in the *Freischütz* overture also serve to emphasize and augment the passive or active role of the main themes (*Themes 1* and *2*) of the exposition. For example, within the transition (mm. 53-60) between *Theme 1* and *Theme 1a* (orchestral tutti) of the exposition, the harmonies are highly chromatic and dissonant, expanding the dominant. This dynamic area demands a resolution and therefore goes into a bridge which begins a new theme (*Theme 1a*) in the tonic, replacing what would normally have been the counterstatement. *Theme 1a* is given below in Example 6-5.

**Example 6-5.** Exposition: *Theme 1a*




The dissonant transition within the exposition enables a return to the opening key. In classicism, however, a melody

would more typically be followed by its counterstatement which then leads to a transitional passage of a dynamic nature. As a work reflecting the romantic aesthetic, *melody* is given priority over traditional harmonic considerations and itself becomes a dynamic event within the work. For this reason, *Freischütz* was preferred by Schubert over Weber's *Euryanthe* (1823). In fact, Schubert criticized *Euryanthe* for its "lack of melody", stating that "whenever a scrap of tune appears, it is crushed like a mouse in a trap by the weighty orchestration."[13]

The development section of the *Freischütz* overture further expands upon the programmatic *good/evil* conflict introduced in the exposition. To convey this, the dark instrumental color provided by the lower strings, bassoons, and trombones sharply contrasts with the brighter upper registers of the flutes, oboes, clarinets and horns. The forces of evil are also portrayed in the frequent occurrence of descending semi-tone motion (for example, in the lower registers between mm. 179 and 187 and within the oboe solo beginning in m. 191). Harmonic areas such as the *E♭ major* which opens the development section or *C major* which is arrived at shortly thereafter (m. 167) represent the forces of *good*; conversely, *evil* is represented by diminished sonorities (for example, mm. 201, 215, 229-230).

Unlike the *Lodoïska* and *Vestale* overtures, Weber's

---

[13]Warrack, *op. cit.*, 297.

*Freischütz* overture has a true *development* section (mm. 159-218). In fact, in terms of form, this overture follows classical "first-movement" sonata design more so than either *Lodoïska* or *Vestale*. Within the development of the *Freischütz* overture, for example, the dominant is raised harmonically at the point of retransition as is expected in a typical classical development. One crucial difference, however, is the non-developmental nature of its succession and repetition of thematic and motivic material within this harmonic context.[14]

The recapitulation provides for the dramatic return of Agathe's *E♭ major* theme, now in *C major* (m. 292). This is prefaced by a return of the theme of the dark forces in *c minor* (m. 219) and the return of Samiel's motive (string tremolos with diminished sevenths) from mm. 253 through 264. This is the final modal confrontation and the most dramatic part of the overture (accentuated by the grand pause at m. 278); it represents the final conquering of *major* over *minor* and the triumph of *good* over *evil*.[15] The recapitulation, therefore, provides a resolution of the harmony and of the drama as well.

---

[14]A similar compositional approach to development sections is found in Schumann's symphonic developments in which large areas of thematic material are simply restated in contrasting keys.

[15]Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* overture (the first version for Dresden) replicates the same dramatic effect. After a pause there is a sweep up the scale and a triumphant return of the heroine's theme.

Clearly, Weber must be credited with having established fundamental aspects of the romantic symphonic and operatic aesthetic. It is Weber who transforms the opera overture of Cherubini and Spontini into a true symphonic statement, showing that themes are capable of being developed within a larger melodic context. Indeed, Weber's *Freischütz* overture is much more compositionally effective in manipulating thematic and motivic material as it relates to the whole opera.

## CONCLUSION

The operatic overtures of Cherubini, Spontini, and Weber occupy an important place in music history; their works represent a transitional phase in music composition which ushers in musical romanticism. By selecting the most popular and innovative overture from each of their repertoires, and analyzing their contents with respect to the treatment of sonata form and the role of melody, two particularly interesting compositional issues have been raised. First, the "*sonata principle*" may perhaps be given an even broader definition by traditional standards. Secondly, the criteria for what constitutes dynamic and static elements in music is called into question. From this standpoint it is interesting to realize how much of the fundamental criteria from our traditional notions of *sonata form* remains while the focus upon primary musical elements of the form has changed from a fundamentally harmonic perspective to one which integrates *melodic* events with a newer treatment of supporting harmonies. While, for example, the overtures of Cherubini and Spontini, analyzed in this study, have no formal development sections within their loosely-defined sonata-form schemes, they nonetheless achieve dynamic effects. This is due to a new emphasis upon melody within a different approach to the exploitation of tonic-dominant polarity. The primacy of *melody* is achieved through a change in pacing and the

juxtaposing and interrelating of themes, counterstatements, and subsidiary themes, within the harmonic interplay of parallel modes and relative and secondary keys.

Gradually composers were better able to reconcile the classical approach to sonata form with the newer romantic aesthetic. In Gluck's *Alceste* (1767) overture, for example, there is no real attempt to adhere to *sonata form* principles. The overture is fundamentally dictated by the drama and the music reflects this. Gluck, therefore, romanticized the earlier baroque binary dance form used in the overtures of Rameau and Lully before him. With Cherubini and Spontini, sonata form, even without formal development sections, is a primary underlying compositional factor. In their overtures, while it can be said that the tonic-dominant polarity is weakened on a middleground level (due to lyrical, stable, themes that emphasize the tonic or dominant in parallel modes), on a background level this polarity actually further expands the tonic and dominant regions giving them greater relevance. Both overtures also have formal recapitulations and codas.

By the time Weber is composing the *Freischütz* overture (1821) we see an even greater adherence to *sonata form* principles. Indeed, this work, unlike the previous overtures discussed, has a full development section with a structural dominant. One crucial difference from classical procedure, however, is the non-developmental nature of its succession of

thematic and motivic material within this harmonic context.

Clearly, many of the musical innovations of the early romantics were introduced between the years 1791 and 1821 primarily by Cherubini and Spontini in Paris and Weber in Germany. All three composers knew each other and each other's works. While their compositions occupy an important place in operatic history and in music history in general, currently, their works often go unnoticed or are underrated. Nevertheless, the musical innovations in the overtures studied here set them apart from previous opera overtures. Indeed, they become important compositional models for all composers who wish to appreciate them.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books, articles, treatises and translations.

Abraham, Gerald. "The Best of Spontini," *Music & Letters* 23 (1942), 163-71.

_____, ed., *The Music of Schubert*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1947.

Bartlet, Elizabeth M. "The new repertory at the Opera during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary rhetoric and operatic consequences," *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Bellasis, Edward. *Cherubini: Memorials Illustrative of his Life and Work*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1971.

Berlioz, Hector. *Gluck and His Operas With an Account of Their Relation to Musical Art*, trans. Edwin Evans. London: William Reeves, 1915, repr. 1972.

Bonds, Mark Evan. *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Braunbehrens, Volkmar. *Maligned Master: The Real Story of Antonio Salieri*, trans. Eveline L. Kanes. New York: Fromm International Publishing, 1992. Originally published as *Salieri: Ein Musiker im Schatten Mozarts*, München: R. Piper GmbH & Co. KG, 1989.

Brown, Bruce Alan. *Gluck and the French theatre in Vienna*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Brown, Maurice J.E. *Schubert: A Critical Biography*. London: Macmillan, 1958.

_____. *The New Grove Schubert*, ed. Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton, 1980.

Brown, Clive. "Weber," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1992, 4: 1113-19.

Broyles, Michael. *Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven's Heroic Style*. New York: Excelsior Music, 1987.

Bruce, Robert. "The lyrical Element in Schubert's instrumental Forms," *The Music Review* 30 (1969): 131-37.

Bukofzer, Manfred F. *Music in the Baroque Era: from Monteverdi to Bach*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1947.

Buschmeier, Gabriele. *Die Entwicklung von Arie und Szene in der französischen Oper von Gluck bis Spontini*. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1991.

Charlton, David. "Orchestra and Image in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 1979.

_____. "On redefinitions of 'rescue opera'," *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Chusid, Martin. "Schubert's Overture for String Quintet and Cherubini's Overture to *Faniska* (1806)," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 78 (1962): 78-84.

Dahlhaus, Carl. *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. Mary Whittall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

_____. *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

_____. *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Dean, Winton. "Beethoven and Opera," *The Beethoven Reader*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune. New York: W.W. Norton, 1971.

_____. "The Age of Beethoven (1790-1830)," *The New Oxford History of Music*, 11 vols., ed. Gerald Abraham. London: Oxford University Press, 1982, vol. 8.

_____. *Essays on Opera*. London: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Deane, Basil. *Cherubini*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

_____. "The Symphonies and Overtures," *The Beethoven Reader*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune. New York: W.W. Norton, 1971, 281-317.

_____. "The French Operatic Overture from Grétry to Berlioz," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 1974.

Demuth, Norman. *French Opera: Its Development to the Revolution*. Sussex: The Artemis Press Ltd., 1963.

Dent, Edward J. *The Rise of Romantic Opera*, ed. Winton Dean. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

_____. "The Style of Schubert," *Edward J. Dent: Selected Essays*, ed. Hugh Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 133-41.

_____. *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. (first published 1913 by Chatto and Windus)

Deutsch, Otto Erich. *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom. New York: Da Capo Press, 1977. (first English translation published in London by J.M. Dent, 1946)

Dietz, Max. *Geschichte des Musikalischen Dramas in Frankreich (1787-1795)*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970.

Dunsby, Jonathan and Arnold Whittall. *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 23-28.

Einstein, Alfred. *Music in the Romantic Era: A History of Musical Thought in the 19th Century*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1947.

_____. *Schubert: A Musical Portrait*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.

_____. *Gluck*, trans. Eric Blom. New York: Collier Books, 1962. First published by J.M. Dent & Sons, 1936.

Gerhard, Anselm. "Spontini," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1992, 4: 482- 86.

Grave, Floyd K. and Margaret G. Grave. *In Praise of Harmony: The Teachings of Abbé Georg Joseph Vogler*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Gray, Walter. "Schubert The Instrumental Composer," *The Musical Quarterly* 64 (1978), 483-94.

Graybill, Roger Carper. "Brahms's Three-Key Expositions: Their Place Within the Classical Tradition." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, unpublished, 1983.

Grey, Thomas S. "Wagner, the Overture, and the Aesthetics of

Musical Form," *19th Century Music* 12 (1988), 3-22.

Grout, Donald Jay. *A Short History of Opera*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

Hilmar, Ernst. "Neue Funde, Daten und Dokumente zum symphonischen Werk Franz Schuberts," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 33 (1978), 266-76.

Hoffman, E.T.A. "Further Observations on Spontini's Opera *Olimpia*," *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: "Kreisleriana," "The Poet and the Composer," Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 431-46.

Hohenemser, R. *Luigi Cherubini: Sein Leben und Seine Werke*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913, repr. 1969.

Howard, Patricia. *Gluck and the birth of modern Opera*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963.

Hur, Mi-Sook Han. "Irregular Recapitulation in Schubert's Instrumental Works." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, unpublished, 1992.

Johnson, James H. "Beethoven and the Birth of Romantic Musical Experience in France," *19th Century Music* 15 (1991), 23-35.

Jonas, Oswald. *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker: The Nature of the Musical Work*, trans. and ed. John Rothgeb. New York: Longman, 1982. First published as *Das Wesen des musikalischen Kunstwerks: Eine Einführung in die Lehre Heinrich Schenkers*. Vienna: Saturn-Verlag, 1934. The present translation is based on the second edition, revised by the author and published by Universal Edition in 1972 under the title *Eine Einführung in die Lehre Heinrich Schenkers: Das Wesen des musikalischen Kunstwerks*.

Kaplan, Richard. "Sonata Form in the Orchestral Works of Liszt: The Revolutionary Reconsidered," *19th Century Music* 8 (1984), 142-52.

Kerman, Joseph. "The Symphonic Ideal," *The New Grove Beethoven*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1983, 105-110. Originally published in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 1980.

Koch, Heinrich Christoph. *Introductory Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody*, sections 3 and 4, trans. Nancy Kovaleff Baker. New Haven: Yale University Press,

1983.

Kollmann, Augustus Frederic Christopher. "Modulation of a Piece," *An Essay on Practical Musical Composition*. [n.p.], 1799. In *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, selected and annotated by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin. New York: Schirmer, 1984.

Kraus, Beate Angelika. "Beethoven and the Revolution: the view of the French musical press," *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Landon, H.C. Robbins. *Haydn: A Documentary Study*. New York: Rizzoli, 1981.

Locke, Arthur Ware. *Music and the Romantic Movement in France*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1920.

Locke, Ralph P. "Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment," *The Early Romantic Era: Between Revolutions, 1789 and 1848*, ed. Alexander Ringer. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Longyear, R. Morgan. "Notes on the Rescue Opera," *The Musical Quarterly* 45 (1959), 49-66.

Longyear, Rey M. and Kate R. Covington. "Sources of the Three-Key Exposition," *The Journal of Musicology* 6 (1988), 448-470.

McKay, Elizabeth Norman. "Schubert as a composer of operas," *Schubert Studies: Problems of style and chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

_____. "Schubert," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1992, 4: 243-48.

Newbould, Brian. *Schubert and the Symphony: A New Perspective*. London: Toccata Press, 1992.

Newman, Ernest, ed. *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz: From 1803 to 1865 comprising his travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England*, trans. Rachel Holmes and Eleanor Holmes. New York: Dover, 1932. An unabridged republication in 1966 of the work originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.

_____. *Gluck and the Opera: A Study in Musical History*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976. (repr. of 1967 ed. published by V. Gollancz, London)

Newman, William S. *The Sonata Since Beethoven*, vol. 3 of *A History of the Sonata Idea*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1969.

_____. *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1983.

North, James H. "Cherubini: *Lodoïska*," *Fanfare Magazine* 15 (1992), 173-77.

Pencak, William. "Cherubini Stages a Revolution," *The Opera Quarterly* 8 (1991), 8-27.

Pierre, Constant. *Histoire du Concert Spirituel 1725-1790*. Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, 1975.

Plantinga, Leon. *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

Ratner, Leonard G. *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*. New York: Schirmer, 1980.

Ringer, Alexander L. "A French Symphonist at the time of Beethoven: Etienne Nicolas Méhul," *The Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951), 543-65.

Rolland, Romain. "Gluck and *Alceste*," *Essays on Music*. New York: Allen, Towne & Heath, 1948.

Rosen, Charles. *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1972.

_____. *Sonata Forms*, rev. edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1988.

Rothstein, William. *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*. New York: Schirmer, 1989.

Saak, Siegfried. *Studien zur Instrumentalmusik Luigi Cherubinis*. In Göttinger Musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten, Band 8. Göttingen: Bärenreiter-Antiquariat Kassel, 1979.

Schemann, Ludwig. *Cherubini*. Berlin: Deutsche Verlags, 1925.

Schenker, Heinrich. *Free Composition*, tr. and ed. by Ernst Oster. New York: Longman, 1979. First published by Universal Edition in 1935 as *Der freie Satz*.

Schwarz, Boris. "French Instrumental Music Between the

Revolutions (1789-1830)." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1950.

Selden, Margery S. "Napoleon and Cherubini," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 8 (1955), 110-15.

Sisman, Elaine R. "Haydn's Theater Symphonies," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43 (1990), 292-352.

Slonimsky, Nicolas, ed. *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*. New York: Schirmer, 1988.

Solomon, Maynard. *Beethoven*. New York: Schirmer, 1977.

_____. "Schubert and Beethoven," *19th Century Music* 3 (1979), 114-25.

Temperley, Nicholas. "Overture," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1980, 14: 33-5.

Tovey, Donald Francis. *The Forms of Music*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1969. Reprint from Oxford University Press, as Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1944.

_____. "Gluck," *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 6. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

Tozzi, Lorenzo. compact disc notes, trans. Nigel Jamieson, for Luigi Cherubini's *Lodoïska*, performed by Orchestra e Coro del Teatro alla Scala, conducted by Riccardo Muti (Sony RSCD 2450, S2K 47290).

Tusa, Michael C. *"Euryanthe" and Carl Maria von Weber's Dramaturgy of German Opera*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Vetter, Walther. *Der Klassiker Schubert*, 2 vols. Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1953.

Vogler, Abbé Georg Joseph. *Betrachtungen der Mannheimer Tonschule*, 3 vols. with musical supplements, *Gegenstände der Betrachtungen*. Mannheim, 1778-81. Reprinted in 4 vols., Vol 4: *Gegenstände*. Hildesheim: George Olms, 1974.

Wagner, Richard. "Opera and Drama." In *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 8 vols. New York: Broude Brothers, 1966, 2: 27-28. Repr. from London ed., Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1895-1899.

_____. "Mementoes of Spontini." In *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 8 vols. New York: Broude Brothers, 1966, 3: 125-43. Repr. from London ed., Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1895-1899.

_____. "On the Overture." In *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 8 vols. New York: Broude Brothers, 1966, 6: 153-65. Repr. from London ed., Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1895-1899.

Warrack, John. *Carl Maria von Weber*. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Weber, Carl Maria von. *Saemtliche Schriften*, ed. Georg Kaiser. Berlin: [n.p.], 1908.

Webster, James. "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity," *19th Century Music* 2 (1978): 18-35.

_____. "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity (II)," *19th Century Music* 3 (1979): 52-71.

_____. "Sonata Form," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1980, 17: 497-508.

Weingartner, Felix. *The Symphony Writers Since Beethoven*, trans. Arthur Bles. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971. Repr. from London ed., Willliam Reeves Bookseller Ltd., 1925.

Weinstock, Herbert. *Rossini: A Biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.

Whaples, Miriam K. "On structural integration in Schubert's instrumental works," *Acta Musicologica* 40 (1968), 186-95.

Whittall, Arnold. "The Sonata Crisis: Schubert in 1828," *The Music Review* 30 (1969), 124-30.

Willis, Stephen C. "Cherubini," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1992, 1: 833-837.

Wolf, Eugene K. "Overture," "Sonata Form," *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Randel. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

2. Musical sources, editions, and facsimiles.

Cherubini, Luigi. *Ouverturen für Orchester von L. Cherubini*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald. *Alceste: Overture to the Opera*. Mainz: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd., n.d.

Schubert, Franz. *Four Symphonies*. New York: Dover, 1978. [unabridged republication of selected sections (Symphonies 4,5,8 and 9) from *Serie 1. Symphonien für Orchester of Franz Schubert's Werke. Kritisch durchgesehene Gesammtausgabe*, originally published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, in 2 vols., 1884 and 1885]

Spontini, Gasparo. *La Vestale*, librettist Étienne de Jouy. New York: Garland Publishing, 1979. (a facsimile edition of the printed orchestral score)

Weber, Carl Maria. *Great Overtures*. New York: Dover, 1986. (as published in *Ouvertüren für Orchester von C.M. von Weber* by C.F. Peters, Leipzig, n.d.)