

"A cette époque [1794-1797]...Il n'était pas de grand concert sans qu'il y figurât un ou plusieurs virtuoses sur la flûte, la clarinette, le cor ou le basson, jouant ensemble ou séparément." 1)

It is of interest too that Sarrette correctly foresaw one direction that orchestral developments were to take. Although regarding wind instruments as having attained 'un certain degré de perfection,'<sup>2)</sup> he stated the necessity for extending the power of the lower notes on existing wind instruments, or else to evolve new, more manoeuvrable bass-wind instruments themselves:

"la physique....cherchera, dans ses immenses découvertes, les moyens d'étendre ou rectifier la partie instrumentale, et procura aux instrumens à vent le volume de sons graves qui leur manque pour le service mobile..."<sup>3)</sup>

The present study will attempt to show some of the wider ramifications of the "nouvelle carrière" of the winds in orchestral music and, by implication, the effect on this music of Sarrette's innovations within the Conservatoire.

### (3) The Teaching of Instrumental Composition

The judgement of Carse is broadly true:

"It is likely that budding composers of that time acquired their knowledge of orchestration by means of verbal instruction, by example and by practical experience."<sup>4)</sup>

By examining written text-books on the subject and the syllabuses of the Conservatoire, I hope to be able to demonstrate a more complete idea of what such instructions and examples consisted.

There were five books published in France between 1772 and 1816 dealing with instruments on a technical level, either wholly or in part.

1) Pierre/MAGASIN p.91

2) CONSERVATOIRE/I p.13

3) CONSERVATOIRE/I p.17

4) Carse/TEXT

- a) L. J. Francoeur: Diapason général de tous les instrumens à vent.....(1772)
- b) J. B. de Laborde: Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne...(1780)
- c) O. J. Vandebroeck: Traité général de tous les instrumens à vent à l'usage des compositeurs (ca.1795) 1)
- d) A. E. Choron: Traité général des voix et des instruments d'orchestre, principalement des instruments à vent, à l'usage des compositeurs; Par L. J. Francoeur.....revuë et augmentée des instruments modernes par Mr. A. Choron (1813)
- e) A. Reicha: Cours de Composition Musicale ou Traité Complet et Raisonné de l'Harmonie Pratique (1816)

Laborde's concern with currently-used instruments forms only a small part of his comprehensive treatment of musical history. Choron's volume did not alter the information contained in Francoeur's book, which he incorporated in toto, except to extend the instrumental ranges. Reicha's book, which owing to its slightly later date and exceptional interest will be considered separately, introduces the skills of managing instruments as part of the compositional disciplines generally described.

The function of the text-books preceding Reicha is roughly defined by the form of their titles. Whereas Reicha's book is concerned with all aspects of composition, his forerunners treat instruments in some isolation from harmony and counterpoint. There is here an analogy with the conception of the orchestra as a medium of melody and accompaniment rather than a fully expressive instrument in itself. (See sections 4 and 5 below). Laborde, Francoeur and Choron, in fact, treated their subject rather in the manner of the Encyclopaedists, taking for granted the notion that their work was essentially a compendium of reference. The gradual increase in the number of different instruments treated by successive writers, nevertheless, reflects the growing complexities of the classical orchestra.

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1) Details of the dating of this treatise are given in chapter 4, page 159.

As has been pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1)</sup> this increase and that in the number of treatises and tutors produced corresponds with the decline of the element of improvisation in orchestral music, and the concomitant need for more precision in the preparation of the scores.

The precise coverage of each book is as follows.

FRANCOEUR: Recorder, flûte de tambourin, piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, serpent.

LABORDE: All the above instruments, with the addition of strings, harp, cor anglais, trombone, timpani, drums, cymbals, tambourine, triangle.

VANDENBROECK: Fife, piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, serpent, horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani

CHORON: As for Francoeur, together with strings, harp, piano, cor anglais, basset horn, trombone, bass-horn or 'Russian bassoon', tuba curva, buccin, timpani, drums, tam-tam, tambour chinois, triangle, hand-bells (sonnettes), cymbals, the human voice. 2)

REICHA: Strings, flute, piccolo, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon, serpent, horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, the human voice.

In general, Francoeur and Laborde are only concerned with the timbre of individual instruments, not with the results of their combination.

Occasionally a specific type of orchestral writing is referred to, and the prospective composer instructed that a certain instrument might well be adopted for such a context; that is, the combination is assumed, not postulated, and the reader guided towards this fixed goal. For example:

"Clarinet in B flat or natural: suitable for 'grands effets,' 'comme symphonies, ouvertures,' etc.

Clarinet in C : suitable for 'bruits de guerre.'"<sup>3)</sup>

One of the few exceptions to this rule is Francoeur's remark that the clarinet's <sup>a</sup>ch<sub>l</sub>umeau register, "très douce et très agréable," mixes

1) Becker/INSTRUMENTATION p.26

2) Choron's wide coverage had been anticipated three years previously in F. J. Froelich's Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Musikschule...., Bonn 1810-1811, which included "alle beym Orchester gebräuchlichen wichtigen Instrumente." lich

3) Francoeur/DIAPASON p.27

well with the tone of the bassoon. Francoeur's work is naturally valuable since he was a director of the Académie orchestra, and states himself in the treatise that he drew on the knowledge of his instrumentalists as well as his own experience. How highly the work was valued may be seen from the fact that Laborde took his details of instrumental ranges directly from Francoeur (on his own avowal), and that Choron altered so little of the work for the 1813 revision, even though, as will be seen, instruments and their use had changed considerably in the intervening forty years.

The outstanding part of Francoeur's work, historically speaking, that which marks him as a forerunner of modern authors, concerns the serpent. Observing that orchestral scoring (primarily, it must be supposed, at the Académie) had tended to over-stress the upper register of the ensemble, he took an imaginative stand in advocating a hitherto little used and unexpected instrument to give the orchestra a more balanced sound by stiffening the bass:

"C'est pourquoi sans rien changer à la manière actuelle de composer, je suis sûr que le serpent peut être d'une très grande utilité pour l'effet ... Les sons nourris et volumineux que produit cet instrument dans les Sons bas, feront nécessairement sortir de la confusion tous ces grands effets qui jusqu'à présent n'ont point satisfait l'attente des connaisseurs et du Compositeur."

That Francoeur's analysis was correct is suggested partly by the appearance of three trombones the following year in Gossec's Sabinus and the actual adoption of the serpent at the Académie at the beginning of the Revolution.

Writers were still far from applying such imaginative principles to all instruments. Due recognition must therefore be given to Vandenbroeck's treatise, which, if the work of only a mediocre composer,<sup>1)</sup> is still the

<sup>1)</sup> He was a prolific writer of opéras-comiques, melodramas and concertos.



first French book on instruments in which may be discerned the mark of a single hand seeking to impose an order on the aural elements discussed. It will be noted that the treatise is explicitly 'à l'usage des compositeurs'. Vandebroek's horn tutor, ca.1789, devotes almost as much information to composers of horn music as to executants. The short music-type examples at the end of the work, vignettes of different post-Gluckian Affekt-styles, are really modest illustrations of how to orchestrate as well as to write for the horn. In contrast to Francoeur's work, Vandebroek's Traité is written in more technical language, and in a more detailed fashion altogether. There is still a good measure of the assumption of certain 'standard' orchestral effects; but a greater concern for explaining how these are achieved.

"Trombonne .... aucune de ces trois parties ne fait du chant, c'est tous accords préparés des morceaux déchirants, ou des morceaux lugubres." (p.54)

"Les violons dans les Orchestres sont fait\_s pour jouer des traits et passages difficiles. Les instrumens à vent sont faits pour avoir des chants agréables et doivent toujours planer au dessus de l'Orchestre..." (p.59)

In addition, there is a limited amount of detailed information on the mixing of wind timbres. This marks a definite step forward in the history of composition teaching, and may well indicate that composition pupils were receiving definite instruction in the art of writing for larger ensembles:

"Les Cors avec les Bassons ou avec les Clarinettes, bon; les Cors avec les Hautbois, comme cela; avec les Flûtes, ils ne seront jamais d'accord." (p.9)

It is impossible to say with certainty that this treatise was adopted by a large number of teachers, or even by the Conservatoire at its foundation. It remains, however, proof that even a composer of the second degree was concerned to impart information of a technical kind, and that he found it

worthwhile to have his work published. How much more perspicacious the teaching of a Cherubini or a Gossec may have been is not difficult to imagine.

Naturally the kind of advice published by Vandenbroeck could only begin to be practised when a certain state of uniformity had been achieved among the individual players within orchestras, and when the identity of 'the orchestra' as an artistic unit was able to be considered, rather than the qualities of individual ensembles each with their own peculiarities of tone and style. The responsibility for good instrumental writing is now put squarely on the shoulders of the composer, who is enjoined to study the instruments themselves, and not simply imitate the style of models:

"C'est le défaut de bien des Compositeurs de ne point connaître le Cor, faute de ne pas vouloir se donner la peine d'étudier les instrumens à vent." (p.8)

The same attitude is promulgated in certain instrumental tutors of the time, notably Lefèvre's for the clarinet.<sup>1)</sup> Vandenbroeck's concluding paragraphs appear under the headings, "Distribution des instrumens à vent," in which the author outlines the instruments appropriate to the tessitura of the different kinds of human voice, and "Dernière réflexion sur les instrumens à vent," in which he urges composers to write with understanding for the instruments and their players.

All this points to the growing acceptance of the idea that the composer himself, not the commentator, was the custodian of orchestral expression. Instead of certain, relatively fixed orchestral sounds being recognised as within the proper vocabulary of the musician, there was a greater accepted freedom now as to what might be written. Professional musicians, not amateurs, were needed to write books on instruments, and they saw that it was the composer who was now to imagine the finished work of art, existing in the medium of sound.

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<sup>1)</sup> Lefèvre/METHODE p.17

Orchestral pieces and operas were now less frequently written for a single occasion and one set of performers; the implication in Vandembroeck's treatise is that the effectiveness of the composition should conform to conditions and standards applicable in more than one place, and possibly in the future as well. This was a prerequisite condition for the development of the conception and teaching of 'orchestration'.

Choron was not greatly concerned in his published writing with the problems of combining instruments; his interests lay in church music and the study of ancient music.<sup>1)</sup> It is not surprising to find that his few remarks on instrumental combination in the Traité général are founded only on theory, and had no relevance to the contemporary situation. His advice to the effect that each group of voices, strings and winds should form complete harmony and counterpoint, an impossible ideal at the time, was the whole extent of his contribution to the present subject.<sup>2)</sup>

It is noted below (page 54) how "melody, harmony and counterpoint" formed in 1813 the essential part of Choron's compositional discipline. A few years later, advertising the syllabus for his own school of music, he included one further item:

"La composition traitera de la mélodie, de l'harmonie, de l'accompagnement, du contrepoint et des divers genres de musique.."<sup>3)</sup>

The word "accompagnement" is frequently found in reference to the orchestral part of a vocal or operatic composition. A discipline in its own right, it could not be separated from the teaching of composition (See section 5 below, p. 50)

The importance of Choron in the development of the teaching of orchestration lies not at all in his theories, which were negligible, but the multiplicity of instruments covered in the Traité, whose true

1) He published music by Palestrina, Josquin and Porpora from 1805. See article in Honneger/DICT

2) Choron/TRAITE p.57

3) Choron/ECOLE

comprehensiveness fulfilled the need for an up-to-date work of reference.

None of the four books I have discussed concerns itself with the consideration of music as a medium of communication, either in terms of painting or of language. There are virtually no references to existing pieces of music that might form illustrations of technical difficulties, or, indeed, of outstanding musical beauty. Examples in full score form no part of them. The discussion is carried out mostly apropos individual instruments, and no sections are devoted to the systematic exploitation of possible combinations.

It was, finally, Reicha's Cours de Composition that set the pattern of written orchestration manuals for the nineteenth century. This fact has escaped the attention of orchestral historians, and possibly of writers on Berlioz.<sup>1)</sup> While it is true that Reicha did not include examples of composition already established, he was in fact the first to tackle the problems of orchestration systematically, freely using the assistance of examples in full score. Most notably, Reicha concerned himself with orchestral combinations at far greater length than with the properties of single instruments. The section on instruments is comprehensive, yet not nearly as burdened with detail as the work of his predecessors. The essential points are succinctly made, yet there is room for a more sensitive exposition of both the cor anglais and the timpani, for example, than anyone before him had made. There are details of performance practice of a kind not previously noted:

"Les Clarinettes, Cors, Trompettes et Timbales peuvent changer dans le courant d'un morceau..." (p.258)

The description of the notation of percussion instruments was likewise an innovation.

1) Who have probably been misguided by his opinions of Reicha in chapter 13 of the Mémoires: "Reicha connaissait bien les ressources particulières de la plupart des instruments à vent, mais je doute qu'il ait eu des idées très-avancées au sujet de leur groupement par grandes et petites masses."

The section of the Cours devoted entirely to the treatment of the orchestra as a whole is no less than thirty pages long (pp.222-251). The arrangement of the teaching is as follows: introductory remarks on the nature of orchestration, and on the different sizes of orchestra that the composer might encounter; writing for wind instruments as solos; scoring for woodwind instruments and horn alone; scoring for the strings alone; scoring for the woodwind and horns in combination with strings; addition of the trumpets, trombones and timpani; and the problems of balance when writing for a choir with an orchestra.

At the heart of Reicha's exposition were two premises which show that his conception of orchestral writing was a modern one: first his acknowledgement of the absolute power of the composer over his resources; and second, his realisation that the orchestra was to be regarded as an instrument in itself.

"Le travail de l'orchestre dépend en même temps de l'imagination, du goût de l'habitude, de l'expérience, de la connaissance particulière de tous les instrumens, du génie et même du caprice du compositeur. Il est donc impossible de prescrire des règles précises sur la manière de mettre un morceau en partition ... mais cette grande variété n'empêche pas de donner des principes généraux sur l'art de manier l'orchestre..." (p.222)

"Dans les grandes conceptions il faut quelquefois envisager toute une masse comme un seul instrument..." (p.241)

The most limited part of Reicha's work was that concerning the piccolo, trumpets, trombones and timpani, which "ne s'employent que pour augmenter l'effet dans le forte". Yet Reicha was formulating broad principles for the student, and inasmuch this opinion was quite justified.

The three examples (Ex.1, a-c) from the Cours, dealing with the combinations of strings and wind instruments, show that Reicha's general approach was a harmonic one, necessarily so since he was not using the method of orchestral transcription from a keyboard piece. The contrast with

the chiefly contrapuntal definition of Koch (see page 52 below) reveals that the colouristic aspect of orchestration was not far ahead. Reicha proceeds from three to four-part harmony, using the kind of textures appropriate to a tutti. Distribution of the harmony varies between the extremes of unison strings and unison winds. Within the scope of a few bars for each example of the tutti he manages to incorporate several different techniques of string writing and a slightly more limited range of wind writing. The application of each kind of distribution is multiplied since one has the option of omitting wind instruments if necessary and redistributing the remainder according to the number of notes required to be sounded in harmony. In addition, a table gives five options for the distribution of single chords for the orchestra, varying from "position serrée" (one octave) to "position large et pleine" (as broad and filled out as possible).

It is clear from his autobiography<sup>1)</sup> that Reicha was as devoted to the development of teaching methods as he was to composition. Orchestration obviously formed part of his teaching, and we know that it was in Paris that the full effects of his methods were felt. He settled permanently in the capital in 1808, and hardly had any pupils in composition before 1809.<sup>2)</sup> When he did take pupils, they included, according to his own account, Rode, Vogt, Baillot, Dauprat and Habeneck. The Cours de Composition itself was extremely popular:

"The publisher reaped a fortune with it. Its popularity was due to the simple explanation of the rules, the new details and number of important features which had never been dealt with in any treatise before." 3)

Of these "important features" the section on instrumental writing was

1) Prod'homme/REICHA p.339

2) Prod'homme/REICHA p.348

3) Prod'homme/REICHA p.349



surely one. When appointed to the staff of the Conservatoire at the beginning of 1818 it was, as Berlioz points out, to teach counterpoint, not composition. But even so there is little doubt that Reicha's rôle was considerable in the dissemination of knowledge about orchestration. A scientific approach was needed, and his eminently mathematical mind supplied the first attempt. There was no longer any room for the use of such blurred terms as "grands effets"; these were now explained and illustrated, without any reference to the established precedents. It is not accidental that Reicha, the first to break with previously written theories of orchestration, was also the first internationally known and published composer to attempt to deal with the subject. The word "instrumentation" was not employed by him, since writing for instruments was thought of as integral to the composition process, and linked to the aspect of performance with its limitations for the student; but his attitude itself guaranteed the independence of the orchestral medium.

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As far as the written syllabus at the Paris Conservatoire informs us, the teaching of instrumentation is easy to trace; it made no official appearances until 1878:

"Il y a trois classes de composition. Cet enseignement comprend le contrepoint et la fugue, la composition et l'instrumentation."<sup>1)</sup>

Anterior to this date any such teaching would have been included in composition classes, which were established from the beginning. At first the only rubric was "composition théorique et pratique" (July 1796), but in March-April 1800 this was modified to "harmonie et composition". This separation set the pattern for all succeeding syllabuses up to the present day. Catel, Berton and Rey taught harmony,<sup>2)</sup> and Gossec, Méhul, Le Sueur

1) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.261, section II, Art.7

2) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE pp.223, 231

Cherubini and Martini taught composition.<sup>1)</sup> Catel and Berton, moreover, were well established composers in their own right.

In October 1808 further modifications to the written syllabus indicated possible further distinctions made between the two disciplines:

"Harmonie:....il faut être lecteur sur toutes les clefs et connaître le clavier.

Composition...il faut savoir l'harmonie..."<sup>2)</sup>

Berton, however, was still supervisor of the harmony class.

It would be rash to assume that the teaching of instrumental writing did not figure to a considerable degree in the composition classes of Méhul and Catel, if not of Cherubini. Both men remained as professors beyond 1810. Méhul, recognised at the time as a pioneer in French instrumental art, demonstrated his utmost disinterest in factions both in art and the old mystique of composition in the preface "Quelques Réflexions" to Ariodant (1799). This document, which shows Méhul striving to establish new bases for musical thinking appropriate to the post-Revolutionary world, urges composers to write accompanying notes to their works in order that a repository of wisdom might be built up for the future, without "l'influence des écoles, des préjuges nationaux et des hommes à la mode." Noting the prevailing climate of critical writing ("les hommes aiment mieux disputer que s'instruire") he firmly places the burden for the safeguarding of high musical standards with composers themselves:

"En le méditant, le musicien philosophe souleveroit le voile qui cache les causes qui ont concouru aux progrès de son art, et pourroit prétendre à l'honneur d'en reculer les bornes."

Above all, it must be remembered that Cherubini did not take over the direction of the Conservatoire until the late spring of 1822. The rather stiff reforms of 5 June for which he is well known were made to composition

1) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE pp.223, 231

2) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.237

teaching as follows. The change in emphasis, so well publicised by Berlioz, was considerable:

"Composition: 3<sup>o</sup> degré: Harmonie  
 2<sup>o</sup> degré: Contrepoint et fugue  
 1<sup>er</sup> degré: Composition et style de tous genres ...

Nul aspirant ne peut être admis aux classes de composition s'il n'a passé auparavant par les classes d'harmonie, de contrepoint et fugue..." 1)

When considering the earlier period, therefore, we should not think in terms of authoritarian counterpoint but of composition treated from all aspects, including orchestration. The practical experience, it must be stressed, was never lost sight of. Musical performances, the means by which Berlioz educated himself, were, from 1800 to 1815, specifically contained in the form of the Exercises within the curriculum of the students. At this stage in its history, moreover, works by current pupils were occasionally given by the orchestra. Dourlen and Dugazon were two such pupils.<sup>2)</sup>

It seems certain, moreover, from the words of Baillot at the Conservatoire prizegiving in December 1812, that full scores were used at the time in conjunction with keyboard and other practical skills. If pupils were being made familiar with full scores, even if only to read them as exercises in vocal accompaniment, some elements of orchestral technique must have been known to them, and a certain standard of expertise in reading this kind of music.

"Une des parties d' instruction qui doit le plus contribuer à étendre, par-tout l'Empire, les connaissances dans l'art musical, et dont l'influence se fait déjà sentir, est celle du forté-piano, puisque cet instrument est destiné par sa nature, non seulement à l'exécution des pièces composées par tous les plus grands maitres, mais encore à celle de la partition et à l'accompagnement de la voix ...." 3)

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- 1) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.247  
 2) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.462  
 3) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE pp.908-9

The use of full scores in teaching can scarcely be doubted; that this part of the musical industry actively spread knowledge of the effects of orchestration is likewise certain. The best evidence for their general use is contained in two reports written by foreigners:

"Educated amateurs own full scores much more frequently than in Germany; scores of symphonies and operas by Gluck, Cherubini, Haydn and Mozart find many more buyers in Paris ... anyone who wishes to become acquainted with the music buys a full score."<sup>1)</sup>

"Foreigners are before the English, I am sorry to acknowledge, in two points, viz. They certainly do not print much musical trash; and what they do print is, generally, in full score. Perhaps I may safely say that nine English works out of ten, do not exceed a song, or duet, with a piano-forte accompaniment... This is neither to the credit of able composers, nor is it for the advantage but rather the disadvantage of our science; inasmuch as it is not calculated to promote but rather check its progress..."<sup>2)</sup>

Kemp, prior to the publication of this book, "resided abroad for some time, and has had the happiness of comparing notes with eminent Foreign Professors."<sup>3)</sup>

#### (4) Music as a Language

Even though, as I have noted above, the French in 1789 were acutely conscious of the 'progress' of instrumental music, the legacy of the ideas of the Encyclopaedists lived on long after the mid-century. "They believed that all music was one and that its principal object was to 'paint'."<sup>4)</sup> Although in the painting of nature music could either represent physical phenomena or the subjective mood of a person, the latter rôle was considered a lesser class, one for which music had less power. As a result, vocal music and particularly tragédie lyrique formed the centre of critical

1) Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, Nov. 1811 p.761, reproduced and translated in Schwarz/FRENCH p.40

2) Kemp/EDUCATION p.9

3) Kemp/EDUCATION, Preface

4) Oliver/CRITICS p.61 et seq.

attention. "Instruments were invented merely to imitate the voice of man."<sup>1)</sup> This lingering view may be linked with the maintenance of a political status quo that ensured the continued cultural grip of the Académie Royale and the Théâtre Français. Needless to say, civilised assaults were more and more frequently being made on these and the other permitted theatres, especially in the 1780's, and on the monopoly of the Concert Spirituel. Gossec, in particular, was able to break through official irresolution and hostility in creating the Concert des Amateurs (1770) and the Ecole Royale de Chant (1784). These were not enough in themselves, however, to change French musical aesthetics, and Gossec's own symphonic and operatic output could not match the imagination of Gluck's music. Emphasis on the Académie remained.

The state of music theory in 1789 was therefore a necessarily backward one. The tradition of musical criticism by cultured amateurs was maintained and even increased up to 1789 with the general enthusiasm for musical entertainment (see introduction to Appendix 4). To what a degree the tragédie lyrique was still regarded by many in France as constituting the greater part of musical art may be seen from the extremely small consideration given to instrumental music and the opéra-comique in the two volumes of Lacépède's La Poétique de la Musique (1785).

Nevertheless, not even the supremacy of Gluck and the decadence that followed could prevent the steady intrusion of German instrumental music, and more especially that of Haydn. The popularity of Haydn's music in Paris dates, indeed, from well before the year in which the works of Gluck were first seen in the same city. Haydn's symphonies were first played there in 1779.<sup>2)</sup> The "Paris" symphonies (1785-6) are but one landmark

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1) ENCYCLOPÉDIE article, "Chant" by Cahusac, quoted in Oliver/CRITICS

2) Carse/BB p.88

in a history of increasing French familiarity with a fundamentally different kind of musical composition from opera, one which used instruments in just as different a way.

Two conflicts in ideas were therefore posed and partially resolved in France after the fall of the ancien régime: first, the question whether the critical values current before 1790 were applicable to French music written after this time, or indeed any music; and second, how the increasingly different use of instruments, especially wind instruments, fitted into the traditional Encyclopaedist view of musical expression. In general terms, we find that both these conflicts tended to seek resolution by thinking of music no longer as closer to painting, as had formerly been the case, but instead to language.

That there <sup>were</sup> / profound changes in music and that this was immediately realised at the outset of the Revolutionary period is very apparent from the confusion expressed by many writers at the time. Those who had been looking to Sacchini, Salieri and the rest to continue the line begun by Gluck at the Académie simply could not accept that Gluck's most potent successor was the composer of a new style of opéra-comique, namely Méhul. The way indicated by Méhul's Euphrosine et Coradin (1790) was, for some, completely unacceptable:

"Il n'est peut-être pas inutile de rappeler l'histoire des derniers excès de la musique. L'explosion qui se trouve dans le célèbre duo d'Euphrosine donna l'éveil aux jeunes compositeurs; ils renchérèrent à l'envi sur ce qu'ils nommèrent les grands effets, et la musique donna, comme le disent plaisamment les auteurs de la Décade Philosophique, dans le terrorisme ... laissons le drame lyrique se détruire par ses propres efforts.." <sup>1)</sup>

Grétry's opinion of the new music hinged on the danger to comprehensibility caused by the greater part that music itself was now playing, at the

1) Leclerc/ESSAI p.30



supposed expense of the words. His view, a very typically traditional one, was that words were a necessary complement to music in the opera:

"Je n'aime pas davantage les récits de combats, de tempêtes mis en musique; c'est, je crois, la faute de nos poètes, qui rassemblent tant d'images dans un même morceau, que le musicien devient confus pour vouloir tout rendre." 1)

Yet other critics sought refuge in an interpretation of the external circumstances of Revolutionary performances,<sup>2)</sup> seeing in the Gluck-like solemnity of idiom of many Revolution hymns an idealised enactment of the gestures of tragédie lyrique:

"La musique est donc enfin rendue à son institution première, celle de célébrer les actions éclatantes ... Les Grecs, nos modèles dans presque tous les arts, avaient bien senti les avantages de cette destination..." 3)

Within a decade, however, the revolution in French music was seen by one critic in perspective. De Momigny wrote in 1805:

"Il y a dans ce morceau [i.e. the duo in Euphrosine] un nouveau développement des grands moyens qui existent dans l'orchestre.

Je conviens que ce Duo a fait faire beaucoup de mauvais bruit à ceux qui ont voulu imiter M. Méhul sans avoir ni sa science ni son génie, mais si le singe copie l'homme d'une façon ridicule et maussade, est-ce la faute de l'homme ou du singe...." 4)

Manifestations of an aesthetic temper essentially rooted in the past were condemned to become more infrequent as the performances and teaching of music became more professional and the decadence of the Académie became more evident. By the Restoration, in spite of the continued performance of Gluck's works and the success of Spontini, the conditions of the traditional home of French opera had become deplorable.<sup>5)</sup> There was less of a place in print for the dilettante and more for the makers

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- 1) Grétry/MEMOIRES, Vol. I, p.36
  - 2) Leclerc/ESSAI p.10: "Les amis de la liberté se servirent à leur tour de la musique; elle employa les accens mâles auxquels le compositeur allemand l'avoit accoutumée..."
  - 3) Framery/AVIS p.1
  - 4) Momigny/COURS, Vol.II p.636
  - 5) Leo/PARIS p.304

of music who were, in the first eleven years of the nineteenth century, to be made familiar with the first three symphonies of Beethoven.<sup>1)</sup>

Such was the external reaction to the new dramatic music. Against this we may now explore the deeper levels of thought that were characteristic of this period of transition.

I have already mentioned the simile of painting that was so commonly used in France in the second half of the eighteenth century in connection with musical expression. This simile corresponded well with a view of music as objective representation. Within this context of thought it was possible to see the orchestra as divided up in a set and linear fashion:

"On peut dire que dans la peinture offerte par le musicien, le chant principal représente les personnages les plus intéressants d'un tableau; que les accompagnements figurés sont à la place des personnages secondaires, et que les autres accompagnements, ceux que je viens de nommer fonds d'orchestre, tiennent lieu du paysage, des bois, des montagnes..."<sup>2)</sup>

Of the two kinds of accompaniment, that which follows the vocal line and that which exists more autonomously, the latter forms

"pour ainsi dire, un morceau de musique à part, qui composent une peinture séparée..."<sup>3)</sup>

Such ideas were founded on particularly Gluckian currency, and influenced too by a style of musical execution no doubt as mannered and ponderous as Rousseau suggests when writing of the orchestra in the *Encyclopaedia*.<sup>4)</sup>

This line of thought was developed by Le Sueur two years later. In addition to using the simile of music and painting he introduced the notion that an instrumental accompaniment could contain pictorial and allusive meaning in itself which would throw contrasting light on to the text. Effectively, he was concerned with using methods of the theatre

1) Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE pp.466-467. Cf. Méhul's "Réflexions" before Ariodant.

2) Lacépède/POETIQUE, Vol.I p.348

3) Lacépède/POETIQUE, Vol.I pp.330-331

4) See chapter 3, section (1)c), page 89.

in church music; but an important part of his theory in general was that instruments could be given independent 'meaning'. He actually uses the word "language" at one point:

"Pourquoi voudriez-vous séparer le Chant des accompagnemens, pour votre plus grande intelligence? Les instrumens, par leurs langages mélodieux et distincts, ne servent qu'à donner plus de relief au Chant principal, à le mettre dans une plus grande évidence, comme les personnages du second ordre dans un tableau ne servent qu'à faire ressortir le personnage principal... Les accompagnemens sont donc nécessaires et peuvent être distingués<sup>tout</sup>/à-la-fois. Cela posé, il faut donc convenir que les plain-chants connus peuvent servir d'accompagnement à une Musique nouvelle, et former avec elle un parfait ensemble." 1)

Even Lacépède, however, realised the innate eloquence of individual instruments, rather than their simply representational or allusive capabilities. Of the viola, he writes:

"Ne peut-il pas aussi faire entendre ces instrumens en seuls... surtout pour peindre les affections mélancoliques? Rien ne peut donner aussi aisément à un morceau de musique une teinte de tristesse ... que deux alto ..." 2)

Le Sueur went so far as to elaborate on the dramatic qualities of individual keys. This had been done before by Rousseau;<sup>3)</sup> the important difference was that Le Sueur recognised that it was the tone-quality of the instruments playing that was a necessary determining factor in making such statements. His evidence is of great significance and could be used in different historical interpretations. It establishes that in writing instrumental ensemble music Le Sueur and others like him recognised that the choice of instruments was inseparable from considerations of mood, expression, and key. The timbre of the instruments vitally affected the power that any music might possess. It was no longer possible to rely on the older associations of instruments for 'the pastoral', 'the hunt' or 'the supernatural', so long continued in France. The scoring and the

1) Le Sueur/EXPOSE pp.66-67

2) Lacépède/POETIQUE, Vol.I p.360

3) Oliver/CRITICS p.61

composition were becoming already increasingly unified.

"Il faut cependant convenir que quelques-uns des tons de notre Musique semblent avoir une espèce de caractère particulier. Le ton de mi-bémol (joint cependant à un mouvement adagio, se tenant toujours sur des cordes graves et accompagnées de sombres trombons, ainsi que ceux <sup>des</sup> instrumens à vent, dont le son est pathétique) a un caractère plus religieux que les autres tons, quoiqu'on y joigne les mêmes instrumens.

Le ton de re majeur, joint aux sons gais du haut-bois, aux sons éclatans des trompettes et aux timballes retentissantes, est plus brillant que les autres tons, quoiqu'on y emploie les mêmes instrumens; mais ceci vient encore plus des instrumens, dont certains tons leur sont plus favorables, que du ton en lui-même." 1)

The notion that instrumentation might play a greater part in composition than before and the lessening of influence exerted by the tragédie-lyrique went with an increasing dissatisfaction with the concept of music as an analogue of painting. Already we have noted the use of the term 'langage' by Le Sueur; in a passage from a scientific paper of 1804 we not only see the writer unable to choose between either simile, but also how he associates an element of irrationality with the notion of "language". In this and other such passages there is no desire to admit the concept of the language of music as an objective one, or to seek structural parallels.

"...la Musique agit comme un beau tableau dont souvent on ne connaît pas le sujet, mais dont on peut néanmoins admirer les détails, le coloris, la délicatesse des nuances, la vérité de chaque expression; c'est un langage magique qui, <sup>2)</sup> par une imitation fidelle, dira tout, en gardant le secret."

If such a 'language' had to be regarded in terms of individual interpretation it necessarily bypassed all reason, and might appeal directly to the emotional sensibilities; Grétry noted in 1797:

"Tout le monde, cependant, veut avoir l'air d'aimer la musique, chacun sait qu'elle est un élan de l'ame, le langage du cœur..."<sup>3)</sup>

1) Le Sueur/EXPOSE pp.19-20

2) Delagrance/ESSAI p.14

3) Grétry/MEMOIRES, Vol.II p.154

This implies popular use of the word in this sense. Indeed, we find only five years later that Mme. de Staël's heroine, Delphine, speaks of love and connects these feelings with those aroused by music in precisely the same manner; she even uses the phrase, "langage mystérieux":

"Ah! crois-tu que mon amour n'ait pas aussi sa volupté, son délire? .... je m'attendrissois en faisant de la musique, car je t'adessois toujours ce langage mystérieux, ces émotions indéfinissables que l'harmonie nous fait éprouver..." 1)

In 1794 a musical lover wrote to Désirée Clary:

"La musique est l'âme de l'amour." 2)

More than simply the accompaniment or the description of an objective emotional situation, music could be seen as an actuality of emotion; this was a far more immediate feeling than could justifiably be likened to the static quality of a painting. If the idea of "le langage du coeur" was in common use - and its place in Grétry's context could hardly be fortuitous - it is to be regarded as reflected in the superscription to a later score:

"Von Herzen möge es wieder - zu Herzen gehen."

Even so apparently prosaic a figure as the French Minister of the Interior could speak of the same power of music in connection with the expressive resources of stringed instruments:

"On dirait qu'ils renferment une âme que nous pouvons évoquer, à volonté, pour répondre à toutes les émotions de la nôtre." 3)

The 'newness' of much French music written from 1790 was a direct result of its greater immediacy and concern for communication: in fact, it was felt to be more 'expressive':

"La musique qui prétend à l'expression est, surtout parmi nous, d'invention assez moderne..." 4)

Framery, in this lecture, was attempting to analyse the links between

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- 1) Mme. G. de Staël, Delphine (1802), Part 3, Letter 21. Taken from Oeuvres Complètes de Mme. La Baronne de Staël, 1820, Vol.6 p.124. A phrase from this passage is treated with others by the same authoress in John/REFLECTIONS, p.165 et seq.
  - 2) Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Fleischman/NAPOLEON p.84
  - 3) Speech at the Conservatoire prizegiving, 31 December 1801. Quoted in Pierre/CONSERVATOIRE p.905
  - 4) Framery/DISCOURS p.2

poetry and music. This prevented him from seeing music itself as a language, but he may have been criticising ideas already current when he wrote:

"La musique n'est point une langue, mais elle fixe, en les renforçant, les accents de chaque langue..."

It was left to the notable theorist J-J. de Momigny, in the three years after Framery's work, to postulate finally the view of music as an expressive language. As one of the primary hypotheses of his Cours complet d'harmonie (1803-5) it was emphasised at the beginning of this book:

"Après avoir fait connaître que la Musique est une langue, non de convention, non locale comme le grec, le latin, le français et autres, mais une langue naturelle et de tous les pays, je me demande si les sons qui composent son système ont pu être, arbitrairement, choisis par l'homme." 1)

Music was presented as the analogue of all aural experience, as painting was of the visual world:

"On ne peut pas dire que la Musique offre une image aussi exacte des objets que la peinture, qui est une espèce de glace qui les réfléchit; cependant elle est à peu près, pour ce qui s'entend, ce que l'autre est à l'égard de ce qui se voit."

Objections were raised at once to Momigny's far-seeing analysis by a commission of the Institut whose members included Grétry.

Musical criticism founded on operatic standards alone, however, was no longer to be tolerated, and Momigny showed the way forward. He concentrated on the analysis of instrumental music in the Cours - a Mozart quartet, a Haydn symphony - and did not dwell on theories of melody and accompaniment. He was concerned with the pure expression of music. Far from denying the suggestiveness of instrumental music, the analysis of the Haydn symphony is followed up by a subjective pictorial and metaphysical commentary.<sup>2)</sup> Music could still 'paint' for him, but the painting was bound

1) Momigny/COURS, Vol.I p.29

2) It must be said that Lacépède, before the Revolution, likened the movements of a symphony to the acts of a drama; Momigny even quotes a little of this passage (Lacépède/POÉTIQUE, Vol.II p.331). But it was only as far as opera that Lacépède's imagination extended: "Le musicien ... remplacera ces voix par le 1<sup>er</sup> violon, ou par d'autres instruments..."



to be peculiar to each listener, and not dependent upon words. Music could exist as an independent expressive medium.

(5) Conceptual Developments - Accompagnement and Effet

The words "orchestration" and "instrumentation", or their equivalents in translation, were not current in France until after 1810. The verb "instrumenter" was used by Momigny in 1818 in the passage quoted in Appendix 1.<sup>1)</sup> The notion that we entertain of either of these processes therefore did not exist in quite the same way before 1810. Different words, and so concepts, were used.

In France, where music for the orchestra was never far from the influence of the stage, a legacy of descriptive criticism defined the conceptual position towards the end of the eighteenth century. At the time of the last French operas of Gluck descriptive remarks on the powers of the orchestra were common. The language used was not technical, and the composer's command over his resources was not so much the point of interest as the relationship of the compositional process generally to a set of the critic's own poetic standards.

"Imitateur attentif et fidèle de la nature, le Musicien donne à la tempête quelques momens de relâche....Mais loin de s'apaiser, l'orchestre plus courroucé, plus perçant et plus aigu, présente à-la-fois mille images effrayantes: il peint et le mugissement des flots, et le sifflement des vents...."<sup>2)</sup>

The same attitude to the musician informs the two-dimensional conception of orchestral accompaniment (foreground and background) that we have noted above as common to Lacépède and Le Sueur. The common factor in all writing on the subject was the desire for a comprehensible melodic line, which automatically presupposed an accompaniment. The comparison with

1) Becker/INSTRUMENTATION p.26 credits its importation to Castil-Blaze in 1821 and Bartenstein/KUNST p.3 to Fétis in 1827.

2) Lettre sur Iphigénie en Tauride de M. le Chevalier Gluck, Mercur, 15 June 1779. Reproduced in Leblond/GLUCK p.433

vocal music was the one which frequently made its terminology available for the discussion of orchestral music:

"Le musicien choisira dans ses accompagnements la partie la plus saillante, celle qui pourra rendre les sons les plus analogues au sentiment qu'il voudra peindre ... il y placera un chant, de même qu'il auroit placé dans les voix, et il l'accompagnera avec les autres instrumens, comme si les voix le faisoient entendre." 1)

Melody, whether instrumental or vocal, had a certain accepted range of affekt; the association of particular instruments with a kind of pictorial suggestiveness was certainly not inoperative by 1789. In opera, at least, the general sensibility was attuned to the pace at which the verbal meaning of the libretto could be aurally associated with the progress of the harmonic rhythm. Le Sueur defends Gluck from the charge of complexity in his orchestral accompaniment, but there is no suggestion that the music was fundamentally incomprehensible through harmonic complexity.<sup>2)</sup> Nevertheless, Gluck's orchestral writing was found more difficult than, say, Rameau's, and as the trend towards a more Germanic style of orchestral writing increased, particularly with Salieri, problems of association and terminology also became more difficult for critics. But in 1789 it was still true to say that music could not be 'orchestrated' in our sense of the word, because the orchestra was not answerable to itself, but to a melodic line. Any obvious exceptions were accountable to 'painting' outward events; the "mille images effrayantes" above was the commentator's reaction to a piece of orchestral writing with no primarily melodic object.

Just as the question of a musical "language" gradually entered the critical consciousness, so the simple relationship of orchestral melody

1) Lapécède/POETIQUE, Vol.I p.363

2) Le Sueur/EXPOSE p.65

to accompaniment was gradually found inadequate. One symptom of this was the adoption of the word 'effet' in an initially general and afterwards specific way.

At this point we may turn to the first example of the use of the word 'instrumentation', which was entered in the concise dictionary of music by H. C. Koch in 1807:

"Instrumentierung. Die Art, wie der Tonsetzer die zur Begleitung einer Hauptstimme gewählten Instrumente, in Ansehung ihrer Wirkung, oder ihrer mehr oder weniger hervorstechenden Ausarbeitung, behandelt hat." 1)

What is most noteworthy is the similarity of conception with the French view; the basis of the definition is still essentially a contrapuntal, not a colouristic one. Moreover, Koch uses the word 'Wirkung' in precisely the way a Frenchman would have used 'effet' in the same circumstances.

In France the word "effet" was, in the artistic context, used in the commonly accepted sense of reference to a manifestation of the artist's power at a given point in time or space. The meaning of the word when applied either to melody or to the drama was sometimes, therefore, equivalent. This is shown in the following passages, the second of which is a paraphrase of the first, by different writers:

"...vous aurez vu ce Musicien fécond, propriétaire de toutes les richesses de Mélodie qu'il rassemble, en régler l'usage, convenablement à chaque effet dramatique." 2)

"M. Gluck, 'propriétaire de toutes les richesses de la mélodie, en varie les effets, en règle l'usage, en distribue l'emploi à telle voix ou à telle instrument, toujours convenablement à chaque situation.'" 3)

An orchestra, however, as well as a melody, was capable of being seen as a specific artistic manifestation of the artist's power:

1) "The method by which the composer has managed to choose the instruments to accompany a top voice through considering their effect, or their ability to be more or less prominent in the working-out."

2) Lettre d'un amateur de musique à un homme qui ne la sait pas, Journal de Paris, 1 June 1779. Reproduced in Leblond/GLUCK p.452

3) Réponse à la lettre d'un amateur en musique, Journal de Paris, 11 June 1779. Reproduced in Leblond/GLUCK p.457

"...le génie et la touche de l'Artiste qui...dans le second acte d'Armide, transporte tout-à-coup l'effet principal à l'orchestre." 1)

Here the "effet" is still considered as closely associated with the particular work of art in question. Gradually, the closeness of this bond was to be loosened. Gluck's successors continued to develop the orchestra as a means of increasing the 'effectiveness' of opera. Thus, by extension, "effet" acquired a new shade of meaning containing the idea of contrivance. This process itself reflected a shift towards a position where the composer's absolute rôle in the creative process was recognised. Grétry's use of the word in this way below also points the attention towards the opéra-comique:

"L'orchestre immense de l'Opéra avait déjà étonné les spectateurs par ses déploiements magnifiques, mais on était loin de s'attendre<sup>2)</sup> à des effets terribles sortant de l'orchestre de l'Opéra-Comique."

Here, "effets" is not associated with any particular dramatic piece, but simply describes a certain qualitative property which, it must be assumed, was familiar to Grétry's readers. Linked with the idea of contrivance and of an 'effective sound' the word appears then to have become applicable particularly to the orchestral accompaniment: that is, to the art of what we call "orchestration" itself.

"...le pathétique de toutes les expressions musicales, la sublimité des effets d'accompagnement, qui sont d'autant plus étonnans qu'ils sont plus ménagés..." 3) (From a notice of a reviva

of Méhul's Stratonice in 1800)

As orchestral art expanded and new sound combinations were experimented with, the word "effet" came more regularly to apply to the orchestral constituent of the composition; further, it came to refer to the concept of writing effectively for the orchestra.

1) Lettre sur Iphigénie en Tauride, Mercur, 15 June 1779. Reproduced in Leblond/GLUCK p.435

2) Reproduced in Pougin/MEHUL p.51

3) Courrier des Spectacles 17 April 1800. Reproduced in Pougin/MEHUL p.68

Since this period in orchestral history was rich in the novel employment of wind instruments, their use was sometimes especially associated with 'effectiveness' of sound. The theorist and educationist A. E. Choron, discussing the accompaniment of vocal melody in the elementary style of the Italians, made some observations in which the concepts of accompaniment (strings) and "effet" (winds) are clearly distinguished. These remarks date from shortly before 1808:

"Le plus souvent même, afin d'avoir plus de clarté, on se contente d'écrire à trois parties, soit en unissant les Violons, soit en mettant la Viole avec la Basse, et en se contenant d'ajouter quelques instruments à vent, pour l'effet."<sup>1)</sup>

Choron wrote no further (at this time) on orchestral writing. He may have felt that his own want of experience in writing for the orchestra rendered him an inadequate exponent of the art. At any rate, in his introduction to the revision of Francoeur's Diapason général (1813), the necessity for the prospective composer to know his instruments is asserted; but the essential constituents of writing music are still reckoned as "de la mélodie, de l'harmonie et du contrepoint" (page v), even in a book dealing primarily with instruments. In the better composer, merely using the winds for the purpose of relieving the ear was not acceptable. Choron is not saying that "orchestration" was to overlay what was already conceived in other musical terms; rather, the individual capabilities of instruments are to be absorbed in the same way as the rules of musical grammar. Composition for the orchestra meant thinking of instruments in terms of their contrapuntal function, not their colouristic one.

Wind instruments were easily misused as soon as their full inclusion in the orchestra became consolidated, especially under foreign influences; but at a slightly earlier period - the last decade of the eighteenth century -

<sup>1)</sup> Choron/PRINCIPES, Vol.III p.18

their use had not become completely overplayed. There are no more revealing remarks in Vandenbroeck's Traité général than the following:

"Les instruments à vent sont l'âme de l'orchestre. Si on les entend continuellement ils finissent par ne plus faire d'effet."

As styles of orchestral composition changed after 1810, the word "effet" became synonymous with the bad taste of composers "seeking effect".

Castil-Blaze devotes an entry to "effet" in his Dictionary, from which we can see that "orchestration", already overloaded, had become a stock-in-trade of the writers that Castil-Blaze is berating:

"C'est le défaut des mauvais compositeurs ... d'entasser parties sur parties, instruments sur instruments, pour trouver l'effet qui les fuit .. vous diriez, à voir leurs partitions si chargées, si hérissées, qu'ils vont vous surprendre ... et si vous êtes surpris en écoutant tout cela, c'est d'entendre une petite musique maigre, chétive..."

L'oeil est quelquefois obligé de chercher sur les partitions des grands maîtres ces effets sublimes ... que produit leur musique exécutée."

Revised note of October 1974: The foregoing seems misconceived for several reasons. (i) The final quotation was in fact taken by Castil-Blaze from Rousseau's musical dictionary (1768). It reappeared in METH, also under the title 'effet'. (ii) It was surely not new for the accompaniment to take over the 'effet'. (iii) No satisfactory definition of 'effet' is offered. Art-historical definitions should have been included, and likewise Rousseau's own view in METH that the 'effective' takes place when the apparent means producing the effect are exceeded by the aural result. (iv) Ginguené in METH adds actual 'effets d'orchestre' such as sudden loud full chords or tremolo bass. (v) Rather than tracing a supposed change in the meaning of the word, the section might better have defined new areas of 'effet' within the orchestral palette.