

## CHAPTER 9

MELODY AND ACCOMPANIMENTIntroduction

The preceding chapter has shown something of how an ensemble could be regarded as a single instrument. In discussing melody and accompaniment the object will be to demonstrate the most interesting ways in which orchestration used smaller groups of instruments for thematic expression in all pitch registers. These sometimes new conceptions of treatment often went with new technical demands on the players. The main areas of novelty were the wind ensemble (including open-air music) and the tenor melody.

In the symphony up to Beethoven tenor and bass melody was generally reserved either for contrapuntal working in the development section or strictly patterned treatment in movements like variations. In Haydn's case the best example is the lead back to the recapitulation in the first movement of "La Poule" where the separate cello part comes to the fore; this was probably executed in Paris by the "petit choeur" of the first two desks of the Concert Spirituel.

*Allo spiritoso*

Haydn,  
Symphony 83,  
I/120-3

f. *f*

The flexible forms in opera and ballet were ideal nurturing-grounds for unconventional melodic ideas; yet whatever the circumstances it seems true that the lower the melodic tessitura, the less frequently was melodic statement attempted in that area. Nevertheless, at least one instance may

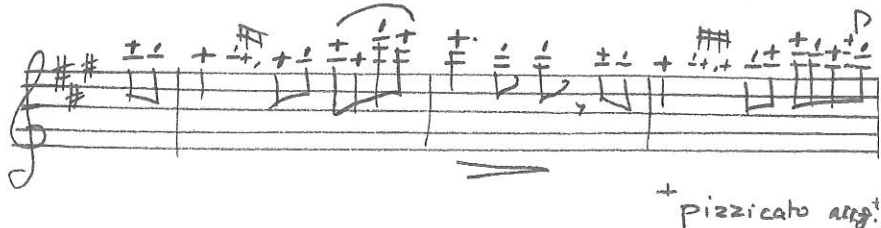
be claimed of a true bass orchestral melody with accompaniment in Paris, written in 1803. Lacépède's view of melody was given new meaning less than twenty years after publication: "Le musicien choisira dans ses accompagnements la partie la plus saillante ... il y placera un chant".<sup>1)</sup> The slow but distinct beginnings made in the melodic subdivision of orchestral forces heralded the demise of this vocally-orientated system of thought.

(1) Treble

(a) Violin solo. In parallel with the explosion of enthusiasm for solo wind instruments some attention was given to the violin as a special occasional colour in the orchestra. Grétry had used the violin with admirable dramatic point in the hands of Blondel in Richard Coeur de Lion, but his successors (and Grétry himself in Lisbeth, 1797) saw the violin solo as most appropriate in dances or the ritornello to an air. In these cases the idiom was graceful, even salon-like, rather than virtuosic,

Nicolo,

Les confidences (1803)  
p.159



Eight such examples have been found, all in opéra-comique, but in all likelihood others exist in unpublished Académie material.

The exceptional example is the overture to Dalayrac's Renaud d'Ast (1787) which must be one of the first in France to use concerto-like techniques. In the introduction (Ex.210) the soloist is heard alone and, as a variation, an octave above the other violins. The texture here is quite rich, easily of the complexity of a concerto. The ensuing Allegro contains extensive solo work, complete with semiquaver passages. Although many overtures followed this framework, none has been found using the solo violin.

<sup>1)</sup> Lacépède/POETIQUE Vol.I p.363. See chapter 1, p. 51

(b) Orchestral violin writing. As was outlined at the end of chapter 2, a marked increase can be seen in the diversity and quantity of instructions to violins towards 1800, when Italian playing styles were taking root and Italians came to write opéras-comiques in Paris. Several areas of special technical interest are evident, some of which must be assumed to <sup>be</sup> newer styles for Paris. In expressive melody the formerly used "louré" gave way completely to versions of "con espressione" and more especially "sur la touche". A passage containing the latter appears in Ex.96. Also superseded was "à demi jeu" which although described by Rousseau in his Dictionnaire de Musique as equivalent to "sotto voce" or "mezzo forte" was fraught with associations of eighteenth-century subdivision practice.<sup>1)</sup>

An even more direct demand for expressiveness appeared in the specification of certain left-hand positions. Occasionally, reflecting sheer technical difficulty, these were a guide to convenience, as in Le Sueur's Paul et Virginie, p.101 et seq. Mostly they aimed at securing the peculiar warmth of the violin's lower strings: the G and perhaps D strings of the time would have been gut, wound with silver or other metal.<sup>2)</sup> Not surprisingly, as Ex.81 demonstrates, "sur la 4<sup>e</sup> corde" or "sur la même corde" appears often in flat keys. Another example is taken from Isouard's Léonce (1805), pp.10-11.

Handwritten musical notation for a violin passage. The notation is on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The music consists of several measures of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. Above the staff, "3<sup>e</sup> corde" is written above the first measure and "4<sup>e</sup> corde" above the last measure. Below the staff, "dolce, cantando" is written at the beginning. There are also some handwritten markings like "-3" and "+ #" below the notes.

- 1) For example, Armide p.227 has violins "à demi jeu" and fortissimo at the same time.
- 2) Boyden/VIOLIN pp.321-2.

Méhul even exploited the attenuated sound of the viola C string in Bion (1800), p.2.

"Sur la 4<sup>e</sup> corde"

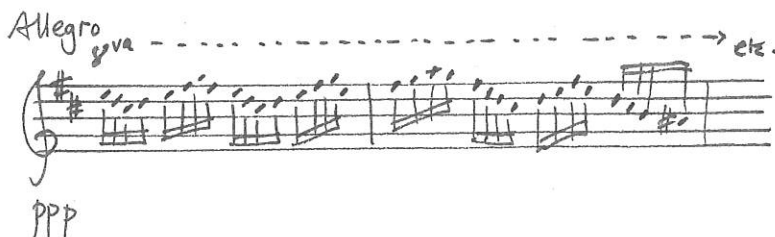


Altogether, eight examples of this type of string indication were noted, the first in Langlé's Soliman et Eronime (1792); this is the prelude

to act 3 which as well as being in E flat asks the cellos to play on the D strings in the second position.

Mention has already been made of *tuttis* characterised by difficult and agile violin writing. One of the earliest and most difficult forms part of the final "course" of Méhul's Henri-Quatre. This style, which had already appeared in lighter

French stage music such as the overture to Floquet's Le seigneur bienfaisant



(Ex.211), shows that a

nervous, Italianate texture was early appreciated in Paris. Floquet's episode was taken up by Dalayrac in his overture, L'amant statue (1785) where there are ten bars for first and second violins alone in similar scurrying idiom. Later French works extended the length of these extrovert passages to 43 bars (Gaveaux's Lise et Colin, 1795; second subject of the overture) and 56 bars (Berton's overture, Le concert interrompu, 1802).

These and other examples, often marked "staccato", were probably not played off the middle of the string, (i.e. "spiccato") as would be done today, but lightly at the point of the bow. This is suggested by numerous instructions to this effect in similar contexts. Even Spontini has "Très

légèrement, avec la pointe de l'archet" in Julie. Typical passages may be quoted from the works of a German and a Frenchman.

Winter,  
Tamerlan,  
p. 396

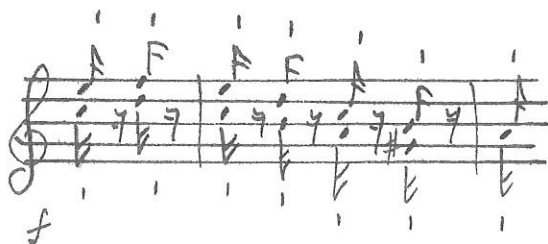


Dalayrac,  
Picaros et  
Diego, p. 100



The effect was probably less aggressive and more delicate than might be imagined, using strokes light enough to be stopped at the point.<sup>1)</sup> Doubtless the earlier tendencies of the French bowing style to stress down-bows and thus the heel lay behind these instructions.

"Sul ponticello" and "sur le chevalet" are a little more problematical. In 1793 Le Sueur was clearly asking for detached staccato in the following, from La caverne, p. 173.



However, later examples in Spontini's Milton (Ex. 34, p. 167), Isouard's Léonce (Ex. 212) and elsewhere much more nearly approach the repeated note staccato style associated above

with playing at the point of the bow. As it is easier and more effective to play the latter style of music near the bridge at the heel than at the point it seems possible that such passages indicate a semi-spiccato, short bounced stroke. Experiment shows that The tempo suited to this method of bowing would ideally be slower than that for playing either at the point or in a true spiccato; we find that the writing in both the above instances conforms to this impression. In Ex. 212 Isouard indicates a return to normal bowing ("loco") which again implies the exceptional nature of the preceding passage.

[Yet other instances of "chevalet" do not fall into categories but exist as separately designed effects.]

<sup>1)</sup> GROVE/V (article, "Spiccato") cites a semiquaver passage from Haydn, which is perhaps a solecism.

Parallel chromatic writing for strings occurred as early as 1792 (Berton's *Eugène*, storm, no.6) but this did not approach the difficulty of Grétry's *Anacréon* (Ex.171) where the violins commence in the 4th position. Less conventional difficulties were imposed by the device of "col legno". This first appeared in Boieldieu's *La calife de Bagdad* (1800) where it imitates guitar music (Ex.213). Isouard borrowed the idea for the same imitation in *Le médecin turc*. The following year (1804) Dalayrac gave the cellos and basses alternating "col legno" and "du crin" (i.e. horsehair), shown in Ex.214. Here the purpose must also have been pictorial, perhaps illustrating the "sauter, dancer" of the text. All three composers relied on some of the true notes emerging from the music to form the harmony.

(c) Subdivided upper strings. Before the composition of Spontini's *Milton* and Cherubini's ode for Haydn (1804) Méhul had experimented twice with subdivision of violins. Both instances took place in works with a classical subject. In *Bion* a quartet of solo strings was separated out to form sustaining tone. Against this the rest played pizzicato except for two solo cellos, which had decorative arpeggio figures. The context was a set of couplets with increasingly complex orchestration, so that in the second page of Ex.215 the decorative work is transferred to the violins' main body and to the flutes. Although the strings are strictly in a secondary position of interest there is little doubt of the effective poignancy of the music. Two expressive levels operate simultaneously within the strings, one confined by and the other liberated from the metre. Méhul stands from this point of view between Mozart's ~~string~~ quintet, "Di scrivermi" (*Così fan tutte* no.9) and the Adagio from Schubert's string quintet, where the temporal pizzicatos and melody have become less important entities than the ecstasy of the sustained tone itself.

The second example comes from act 1 of the ballet *Daphnis et Pandrose*

(1803)<sup>1)</sup> In Ex.216 all the violins are divided into four parts. Again there is a separate "Violon-celli solo" part with bassoons, which must have been taken by the "petite chœur" of four players. This time the aim was to provide the flute melody with a nebulous accompaniment; and the technical inventiveness was hardly outdone elsewhere by Méhul himself. In effect, this example approaches a post-classical position in that, as in the Schubert, the accompanying texture commands as much attention as the melody, and more than the form.

Spontini's subdivision of violins (Ex.34) remained firmly on the level of melody and accompaniment, but, as was suggested in chapter 7, Cherubini achieved more important originality of substance in the Chant sur la mort de Joseph Haydn (Ex.91, pp.7, 8). This is because no single element of texture, melody or form overbalances the other two, even though there is a more radical concentration on treble tessitura than in any of the three examples already mentioned. It is a pure re-examination of the relationship of melody and accompaniment.

Later Académie works made more routine use of subdivision. Catel's Les Bayadères (1810) used two solo violins in otherwise ordinary accompanied recitative, p.262 et seq. Le Sueur<sup>2)</sup> used two solo "violini recitanti" in a divertissement in Adam, p.21. These carry the principal melody, doubled on flutes and clarinets while the other violins support with pizzicato.

(d) Upper woodwind solo writing. Much of what has been said in previous chapters has concerned the way the nature and status of the orchestra performed a transition from the "private" world of the ancien régime to the "public" one of opéra-comique and Conservatoire education. The development of and value placed on precision and the exploitation of, say,

1) B. de l'Op. A.384, f.59

2) He might, according to Jean Mongrédien, have written the music prior to 1800.

motivic continuum, are inseparable aspects of the same transition. Paris, as Professor Brook has shown, enjoyed a period of intensive bourgeois musical activity in the two or three pre-Revolutionary decades. Two features of this eminently fashionable and competitive milieu were the rise of the *sinfonia concertante* and the continued popularity of the concerto, in other words, forms that placed themselves at the disposition of virtuosity. In a real way these works, analogous to the career of Clementi, prefigure the problems of virtuosity in the rather more familiar and industrial world of the July monarchy and second Empire.

In the free and shorter forms of stage music lay the way of experiment and here orchestral music proper first wrestled with the taste for individual virtuosity. In this sense the Revolutionary orchestra was the ancestor of the virtuoso orchestra that was the nineteenth-century instrument par excellence. As the orchestra underwent the pressures of public and competitive life so too it began to show symptoms of the need for brilliance. In fact, it was through upper woodwind and horn writing that composers introduced an orchestration that had to come to terms with form: the expressive and brilliant styles of violin writing described above, though certainly symptomatic of the new attitude to orchestration, were accommodated within existing structures.

Consideration will first be given the dance and entr'acte forms, and second the overture.

Dances were traditionally linked with instrumental solos; the Académie works of the Consulate and Empire continued the tradition and used it as an outlet for virtuoso performance. Examples 18 and 19 from Méhul's Adrien show the typically relaxed style and the tendency to variation-forms reminiscent both of the salon and of cumulative technical difficulty.



Example 217 is from Duvernoy's well-publicised solo in La Vestale, no less than 21 pages long; it precedes the last dance. The style is modelled on the soloist's capabilities, and an A minor section (not illustrated) shows off his cantabile, pathetic manner. Its length and position make this solo more than an appendage, and commitment to print confirms its importance: divertissements were not usually printed, and were often borrowings from other works. Catel's dance with horn and harp solos printed at the end of Les Bayadères contains much sensitive writing. Its two solo violins allow the harp to emerge more firmly.

The way in which most ballet scores were compiled made it impossible to deal with them systematically in this study. Even Catel's Alexandre chez Apelles (1808), long recognised as a landmark in the control of one composer over a ballet score, contains music by Haydn, Mozart, Paer and perhaps others. (Examples 41 and 46 have already shown solo writing in this score.) Instead, attention may be brought to bear on the orchestration of one particular ballet, Miller's Psyché; the work survived from 1790 to 1829, which is why a second copy score was constructed.<sup>1)</sup> This I conjecture was made for the restaging in 1817. The second score betrays clear alterations to the original orchestration in the form of encrustations and 'trombonisation'; a selection of passages is grouped under Ex.218. The positions of the added parts' systems has been retained from the original. As the second score consists of re-grouping of some old pages as well as new copies of others there exist the advantages of seeing some additions clearly and the disadvantages of not being able to date them without detailed scientific techniques.

<sup>1)</sup> B. de l'Op. A.337. a bis

Folio 15 shows straightforward virtuosic additions on upper woodwind over a typical eighteenth-century texture containing little sustaining technique and no confusion of melody and accompaniment. This gives way immediately to a passage in which a piccolo part has been added to double the violins at two octaves above. Folio 26 demonstrates three simultaneous methods of brightening the original: increasing the sustaining notes, doubling the melody on the piccolo, and purely decorative flourishes on the flute. This emphasis on the treble winds in a tutti may be compared with Ex.219 from Dalayrac's Koulouf (1806) which also has the melody much doubled and is encrusted with percussion. This passage is the counterpart to f.33 et seq of Psyché. The first bars of the latter show the virtuosity of 1790, again recalling the concerto style, and representing the first statement of what are in effect two orchestral variations of a melody. (This concept is already evidence of the interaction of orchestration with form.) The tutti statement is given depth and brilliance by the added brass and percussion. In yet further passages, trombones assist sustaining and lend their power to crescendos.

The decline of the Académie in the 1790's was perhaps a reason for the growth of entr'actes in opéra-comique. There were a significant number of such pieces, and they satisfied a desire to hear music prior to the second or third acts as well as the first; dramatic propriety was sometimes respected through the use of mime or simply the mood of the music. There was thus a reversal of the traditional attitude in opera towards preludial music.<sup>1)</sup> The favourite form was the variation, except when action was depicted or suggested, sometimes with a series of instrumental solos. Grétry's Lisbeth has solos for flute, oboe, clarinet, violin and bassoon,

<sup>1)</sup> And postludial: in 1810 Isouard could put the curtain down on act 1 of Cendrillon and continue with 3 pages of quiet music. As early as 1783, though, Dalayrac wrote a 200-odd bar ronde, dominated by flute and oboe solos, as the entr'acte in Matthieu. The whole topic requires investigation.

without any attempt at combination. Gaveaux's "séguidille" in Sophie et Moncars is much more ambitious (it is 141 bars long), and representative of the important part played by this composer in using virtuosity in the orchestra. (See too Ex.220 from the introduction to a duet in Le petit matelot, 1796.)

The seguidilla is in fact a showpiece that precedes act 2, and could be described as an ancestor of the concerto for orchestra. Its form is as follows, with variously composed links between statements.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| i) Principal melody                         | Clarinet and bassoon: pizzicato strings   |
| ii) ditto                                   | Violins doubled by flutes; counter-melody on bassoons and cellos "sul ponticello" |
| iii) ditto, major mode                      | Cellos  |
| iv) Lead-back over dominant pedal (26 bars) | Features upper woodwind   |
| v) Principal melody                         | Cellos  |
| vi) ditto, harmony a variant                | Cellos and basses; forces gather to tutti   |

The piece has extraordinarily plasticity of form and orchestration and the concentration on less familiar melodic instruments confirms its status as a deliberately brilliant piece of writing. The management of links and continuity of rhythm give it unity but the result resembles no tradition. Example 132, the final statement, has already been cited, and Ex.253 shows the fifth section. The flute writing in both and tenor and bass melody extended the available bounds of orchestral language.

Catel in particular seems to have been conscious of Gaveaux's composition in writing the second divertissement to act 1 of Sémiramis, a rondo-like dance with increasing ornamentation in the non-melodic parts at each development and repetition. Example 221 shows part of it, the general

vein being similar to f.33 of Psyché, but the technique more sophisticated; the earlier work separated the virtuoso clarinet solos from the tutti whereas Catel's music welds both elements.

In the opera overture distortions of traditional form were occasionally acute. The French were digesting both the classical symphony and the demands of the soloist. Before about 1789 scope for wind solos in sonata movements was comparable to Ex.222 from Piccinni's Didon, 1783, and in episodic ones, to the pastoral imagery in Grétry's Le jugement de Midas, Ex.223. Meanwhile during the 1780's clarinets were in the ascendant as soloists. Out of 30 sinfonia concertantes with wind solos, 8 used the clarinet and a further 3 the oboe or clarinet. Almost the same ratio obtained for 1790-1801.<sup>1)</sup> So when overtures adopted elements of display it was inevitable that the clarinet and the hardly less popular French horn should gradually displace the soloists of the old order.

La soirée orageuse (by Dalayrac, 1790), banishing oboes from the ensemble, began with a miniature slow movement for solo horns and clarinet. The accompaniment is purely functional. This pattern was imitated or continued by Le Sueur and others; La caverne (1793) has introductory solos for horn, clarinet and oboe. The piccolo also encroached upon the main allegro movement in Gaveaux's L'amour filial and Lise et Colin, with 13 and 32-bar solos respectively. Such displays were not much favoured by the "serious" composers, and it was characteristic of Méhul that in turning to orchestral variations as an overture form he endowed the music with both humour and extra-musical meaning. Le jeune sage et le vieux fou (1793) begins with apparently inexplicable passages for two solo flutes (Grave) and then cellos and basses (Allegro) - but these are surely musical portraits of the eponymous characters (Ex.226). The form overall anticipates

<sup>1)</sup> Figures compiled from Brook/SYMPHONIE, Vol.I p.585 (General Inventory)

that of the seguidilla, comprising alternations of a principal theme in varied orchestral guises with linking extensions and modulations, ending with a dominant pedal before the last statement and tutti. Instruments chiefly used for solos were the clarinet (Ex.226, p.7), cello and bassoon: the choice of flutes for the opening might read as a satirical paradigm of attitudes towards this instrument during the whole period 1789 to 1810.

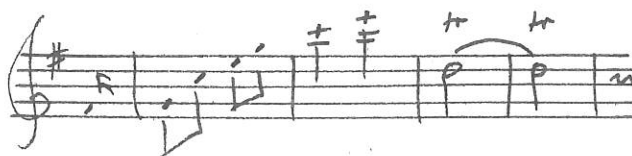
The first experimental distortion of sonato-allegro I have found is the overture to Solié's Le jockey (1795), which is a mixture of sonata and pot-pourri incorporating virtuoso wind writing for oboe, clarinet and bassoon.

Bassoon:



The second subject is given on the bassoon, leading to a concerto-like clarinet solo that extends into the development tutti. Following the restatement of the first subject the music again dissolves into semiquavers; the second subject follows on oboe and clarinet, complete with cadenza phrases:

Oboe:



The episodic feel of these solos is echoed by the freedom of the key design, in that the recapitulated second subject is not in E, the tonic major, but in C.

By the time of Sophie et Moncars and Boieldieu's Zoraime et Zulnar, instrumental virtuosity in the first of these and colour in the second outweigh the formal importance of the sonata convention that lies behind

both overtures. Two singular characteristics of both, for example, are that secondary themes are altered both in melodic shape and orchestration on their restatement, and that the first subject is discarded in the recapitulation. With passagework such as the following (by Gaveaux), accompaniment was necessarily minimal. Conversely the tuttis, as in many overtures of similar cast, became inflexibly scored: violin melody, <sup>wind</sup> chordal support, trombones doubling or simplifying the bass-line.

Clarinet:  
p. 12

Zoraine is by comparison a firmly unconventional dramatic composition, anticipating problems of organisation that concerned many later composers. Whereas Gaveaux merely polarised the virtuoso solo and the tutti, Boieldieu attempted to combine several distinct melodies with the old sonata shape by giving each melody a distinctive orchestration, and opposing these melody-sections with the tutti. Thus as in the traditional symphony Boieldieu's tuttis become synonymous with change, modulation and linking sections, while the melodies are in every case presented over a pedal point of greater or lesser length, audibly stable. Gaveaux's tutti, as in a concerto, was on the other hand synonymous with harmonic and structural stability: his linking sections were soloistic.

Such originality as Boieldieu's could only have emerged from a thinker in timbre; in Ex. 227, pp. 10 and 12, is seen the first subsidiary theme on exposition, and p. 32 on restatement. The outline and rhythm remain constant, but, as if to emphasize the importance of colour in itself, a change in actual melody goes with the rescoring of the horn theme on the oboe. The notes themselves matter less than an orchestration-pattern which recurs, in the form of a melody and accompaniment of equal status. The

first subject, heard on the tutti (Ex. 161), and its extension and later development, are correspondingly scored with less artifice and almost undivided attention paid to the first violins. Technically, Boieldieu's solo subjects are accompanied by the simplest sustaining music. It is the association of a particular theme with a carefully differentiated layout of accompaniment, together with simple harmony, that makes them memorable.

After 1800 similar adaptations were made to sonata form. In 1798 Devienne had allotted separate staves to solo and "ripieno" horn, oboe, flute, clarinet and bassoon in the overture, Les comédiens ambulants. In Dalayrac's La jeune prude overture (1804) the solo clarinet dominates almost 50 bars of exposition and a further 40 at the end of the development. Isouard's Cendrillon overture (1810) was confessed by the composer to be a sinfonia concertante for horn and harp in his "Avis particulier pour MM<sup>rs</sup> les Directeurs". All three works and others used virtuosity, sometimes employing the theoretical upper limits of instruments (see chapter 4), like the g<sup>'''</sup> natural for clarinet in Dalayrac's 1802 Picaros et Diego overture. The clarinet continued to be the most common agent of display.

As far as I have been able to see, the lower limit of the clarinet range was hardly used for melodic writing in concertos and sinfonia concertantes. It was sometimes used at the beginning or end of phrases, perhaps as a spring-board for an arpeggio. In opera a little interest was taken in the chalumeau as expressive in its own right. The context usually contained a pedal note so that the clarinet was either sustaining or moved slowly. Gresnick and Berton both used low g natural in 1796:

Gresnick,  
Le baiser donné  
et rendu, p.2

CLS

BASSI

en.

Berton,  
Le souper  
de famille,  
f.2<sup>v</sup>

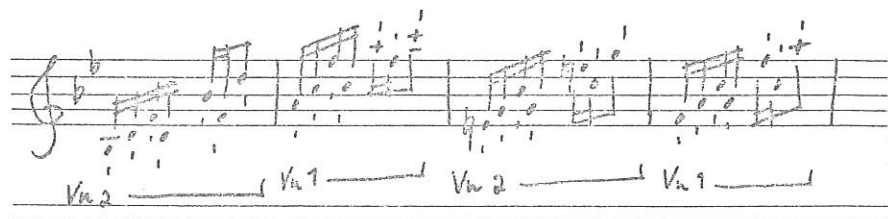
(8 bars)

1) B.N., MS. 3644

Similarly, the Chanson Picarde in Méhul's Une Folie (1802) uses the low clarinet (e natural) for rustic imagery (Ex.228).

More rarely the chalumeau was used in rapid broken chord accompaniment figures; military pieces contain a few examples, but nowhere is the quantity significant. The transposing term "chalumeau" was very sparingly used.

(e) Melody-sharing. A predictable outcome of flexibility in the treble range was the phenomenon of scoring a single melody-line between different instruments, confounding to some degree Lacépède's "la partie la plus saillante". Apart from antiphonal writing between winds and strings the closest that French music came to this concept before 1800 seems to have been answering between first and second violins, as in Ex.229 from Armide and Ex.277 from Méridore. The result produces a single line, but both impressions are intended to be jagged. A direct heir to this is the first movement (couplets) in Lise et Colin (1795).



This was succeeded in the equivalent place in Isouard's Les confidences (1803) by the genuine sharing of a simple melody by three instruments:

Andante con moto

to which OB may be compared the following from Boieldieu's Matante Armande of the same year, beginning act 2.



Wind instruments, susceptible to closely-worked imitation, were easier to score in melody-sharing. The locus classicus in the "Paris" symphonies is the coda to the Andante of no.84. A natural evolution from this contrapuntal passage is Ex.230 from La Vestale, where flute, clarinet and oboe succeed one another in quite short phrases or even parts of phrases of a single melody, sometimes as short as one bar's length. Fernand Cortez has similar passages, and introduces the technique of reinforcing the orchestration of shorter motifs. This naturally anticipates the methods of later and less melodic composers.

Spontini,  
Fernand Cortez,  
 p.466

Lower strings

Vns

sf

(4) Fgs + 1st Tb

Finally, Méhul at his most astringent, almost obscure, gives an ideal example of how in the last analysis the resourceful composer is he whose orchestral melody cannot be separated from its aural agency; in the Joseph overture (Ex.231, p.6) the requirements of expression force the separation of violins and upper wind as if forcing the melody in two. Once divided the lines fall away weakly. The sharing and the separation are a dramatisation of musical content.

(f) The wind ensemble. There is particular interest in the part played by the wind ensemble in the orchestra since, without approaching questions of symbolism and association, statistics have charted the rise in employment of the winds in opera and C. Pierre and others the rise of the

autonomous wind ensemble in the Revolution. The accelerated production of Republican music and its outdoor performance brought some new techniques in melody and accompaniment; in analysing these, possible influences on other genres may be traced.

Constant Pierre stated that military music before 1790 was scored only for clarinets, horns and bassoons.<sup>1)</sup> By examining certain operatic examples of the same era the probable style of composition for these bands can be seen. Example 232 shows that in 1773-4 this was simple homophony. All three passages use the bassoon for the bass and thirds or sixths in the upper woodwind parts. The latter are doubled at will with no regard for distinguishing timbre. Horns, where available, either double the melody where possible, or fill in the central register with repeated rather than held notes. The bassoons are divided in small ensembles but unison in larger ones. Martini's example is particularly important because he was aiming to reproduce as many aspects of a military display as possible. The tunes in Ex.232, as Laborde reveals, are actual "airs sur les batteries des tambours français".<sup>2)</sup> Examples from 1789 such as Vogel's Démophon p.45 and Rigel's Les Amazones no.3 show that up to this time the expected layout for either a religious or a secular march with predominating winds was exactly the same as fifteen years previously. Vogel doubles oboes and clarinets at the top, accompanying with horns and bassoons, the latter in unison. Rigel uses a string bass.

Production of Republican ensemble music, with and without vocal parts, began in 1790, yet according to Pierre's Hymnes et chansons de la révolution it only gathered momentum during 1793-5. 1789 to 1792 only saw sixteen identified pieces, the majority by Gossec. Some care is therefore needed

---

1) Pierre/FETES, p.LXIII

2) Laborde/ESSAI, Vol.I, examples to p.286

in assessing the progress of internal techniques. Ensemble music always possessed the following characteristics: it was written for forces that fell into no category and indeed which fluctuated; and it was not (with a few exceptions) printed in score. The principal organ of publication existed from April 1794 to March 1795 and, while releasing vocal parts in score, only presented instrumental accompaniments in parts.<sup>1)</sup> Scoring techniques were thus only readily available, especially before 1794, to those with access to the particular circle of composers around Gossec, and we find that others who wrote hymns - Punto, Cambini and Giroust, for example - did not employ the new style of writing.

The new style was distinctive in several ways. It gave as much movement as possible to vocal lines while keeping these basically homophonic it coupled the clarinets and piccolos (sometimes flutes) in an actively versatile treble rôle; and it united the brass section of horns, trumpets and trombones. After their introduction in July 1791 the tuba curva and buccin were regularly used when appropriate. It is tempting to see Gossec's four marches for Corpus Christi<sup>2)</sup> as a trial run for wind ensemble music, but their date and origin remain obscure. The Chant du 14 juillet of either 1790 or 1791 suffices both as an early example of the new genre and a good indication of its major and continuing traits. In Ex.234 the flutes and clarinets unite for strength as the treble of the ritornello. When accompanying the voices they become split and diversified in function. While flutes more often remain as doubling agents the clarinets are given different forms of "extension" scoring: offbeats at bar 15, semiquaver gloss a few bars after, repeated quavers after the double-bar. A more

---

1) Pierre/MAGASIN p.122 et seq. The two full scores were Mòhul's Hymne Patriotique (P.32) which was exceptional in using strings, and Cherubini's Hymne du Panthéon (P.79)

2) B.N., MS.1472. The date on the MS ("1789") is untypical in its presence and is unverifiable. Two were later printed as Republican marches.

developed example of clarinet technique may be quoted from Gossec's

The image shows a musical score for two parts: CLS (Clarinet) and VOICES. The CLS part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a highly technical and continuous melodic line with numerous slurs, ties, and accidentals. The VOICES part is written in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a more straightforward melodic line with some slurs and a final fermata.

Chant de triomphe (P.16),

1792; the continuity of tone can be associated in it method with the violin orchestral glosses in Académie opera.

The oboes were frequently omitted altogether. When included, they simply doubled the clarinets or at least were given the same type of writing

The brass scoring in Ex.234 is orchestral in design with horns as the most versatile of the three instruments. Their part in sustaining harmony is in severe contrast with their pre-1790 technique. The outstanding quality of the brass writing is however less the individual styles than the homogeneity of brass tone: the Académie could not normally supply trumpets and trombones together, much less the Concert Spirituel or other groups. Most wind ensemble music with trumpets was in E flat or F, so that true brilliance of tone was attainable. As is seen in the example, no hesitation was felt in scoring fully for the brass.

The bassoons were almost always given the bass-line, either in unison or the lower of two parts. They were reinforced, where possible straightforwardly, by serpents. The serpent appears so frequently in ensemble music that it must have made an effective contribution. When it occasionally held the bass alone, releasing the bassoons for tenor work, a held note was typically provided.<sup>1)</sup> No allowance was generally made for the lesser agility of the serpent beside the bassoon when the bass-line, as at the double-bar of Ex.234, was expanded into figuration.

<sup>1)</sup> It appears to have entered ensemble music via Gossec's Te Deum (1790; P.3), written for the Champ de Mars.

Such figuration was a distinctive part of the new style and seems to stem, in its "extension" conception, from operatic technique.

The instrumental rôles just described remained comparatively unchanged even after the advent of the ensemble "symphony" and "overture" in about 1793. Tenor and bass melody, for example, was excluded. No real advance could be made in associating horns with bassoons since the style of the music was too active. Clarinets were far more usually coupled with the bassoons when chords or accompaniments were designed in the alto or tenor range. In most pieces a rather inflexible polarity existed between the woodwind and horns, and the tutti. Curiously, there is no evidence for much subdivision; numbers of performers and indoor performances (see chapter 3) would have allowed this but it must be supposed that the variation in performance circumstances discouraged it. There was therefore a limit to the subtlety of combination that might be achieved. The average of eight clarinets, eight bassoons and six horns remained normally as units of sound, distinctive but difficult to blend.

The direct influences emanating from ensemble music in its new forms can thus be limited to the major part given to clarinets and piccolos, the timbre of the united brass group, and the concept of wind instrumental autonomy on a larger scale than hitherto.

Les visitandines by Devienne (July 1792) and Dalayrac's Ambroise (January 1793) were first given at the period of the early ensemble music. Both overtures open with passages 15 and 12 bars long respectively, for unaccompanied wind groups (Ex. 235). These are both slow, and, so far from being outwardly advanced, recall the leisurely *sinfonia concertante*. Devienne's, in fact, is a paraphrase of the introduction to Gluck's Iphigénie en Tauride, and precedes a storm movement leading into a nuns' chorus.

Steibelt's Roméo et Juliette (September 1793) is exceptionally richly scored for a Parisian opéra-comique and would have been notable for its orchestration had it been given at the Académie. With a fashionable sense of colour Steibelt used wind instruments in something <sup>like</sup> the degree we might have expected a Jadin or Devienne to do in opera. The set pieces (Ex.111) were one obvious place for display, but smaller sections too were scored with great beauty and care. One example is the passage in the first act love-duet after Roméo has imagined the approach of dawn (Ex.236). Even in concerted music Steibelt's wind writing could be of a polyphonic sophistication quite unusual in French scores.

Steibelt,  
Roméo et Juliette,  
p.65

(strings etc. omitted)

(sounding pitel)

So far from praising this approach to orchestration or recognising in it either a path to the future or the virtues of wind ensemble techniques, the press damned it jingoistically, in spite of some "choses délicieuses". It hoped that Steibelt would "se laissera moins maîtriser par le goût qu'ont tous les Allemands, d'employer trop souvent les instrumens à vent; enfin qu'il se piquera de peindre avec une teinte moins uniforme, [!] et conséquemment d'employer des oppositions ... " 1)

1) JOURNAL/S no.74, 13 September 1793

But music gradually shifted towards Steibelt's standpoint, if not encompassing the artistic success of his remarkable example. Grétry (or his collaborator), in rewriting the overture of the 1792 Cécile et Ermance for the 1794 performance as La rosière républicaine,<sup>1)</sup> re-composed the central section for wind instruments without strings (Ex.237). The catalogue of Gaveaux Frères, in a score of Pierre Gaveaux's Le petit matelot,<sup>2)</sup> is bereft of symphonies yet contains arrangements of operatic excerpts for "Harmonie": 4 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and serpent or double-bass. This surely points to some amateur activity. Jadin's Le défi (1796) shows the strongest affinities with the style of the wind ensemble "symphony" in the overture, and this may be described as a transference rather than an influence of styles since Jadin was the distinguished author of two such ensemble pieces. The transference is on the whole impressive (see Ex.238) because the winds in both the Andante and the Allegro participate in the inner development of the music. The strong antiphonal cadence, p.3, briefly indicates the essential parity of the groups in a stronger fashion than that of *sinfonia concertante*. With Jadin's fondness for Italian mannerisms the music sometimes recalls the mature Mozartian orchestra, at the time virtually unknown in Paris.

The explosion of patriotic and republican music traced by Pierre to 1794 - at least 49 hymns and instrumental works, not comprising chansons - was provided by a large group of minor composers as well as Gossec, Catel and Méhul. However, a study of the sources suggests that orchestration was not a major concern in most cases. Although by now the government ~~was~~ assisting the publication of this music and private publishers also issued it, the emphasis was inevitably on directness of idiom and accessibility of accompaniment. A great deal was issued only with figured bass

1) Lajarte/CATALOGUE wrongly gives 1793, though placing the work in the 1794 section.

2) B.M., G.272.b. Publisher's address: A la Nouveauté, Passage du Théâtre Feydeau.

or the old military combination of clarinets, horns and bassoons. Whatever the ambitions of Paris, the provinces could not perform works with elaborate orchestration. When an official series was planned for them (the "Recueil des Époques") it cut down all accompaniments to the above force and altered the music in the interests of simplicity; but delay in any case aborted the project.<sup>1)</sup> The official publishing house melted into the Conservatoire press under the Directory; the events of 1794 spelled the decline of the festivals and the demand for their music in anything but song format.<sup>2)</sup> The most famous popular piece written during 1794, Méhul's Chant du départ (P.68), was originally scored for clarinet, trumpets, bassoons, serpent and timpani: it can hardly ever have been heard in this form or indeed with the original introduction or even harmony, since publication for domestic resources was swiftly carried out with little respect for much except the melody and the words.<sup>3)</sup>

In general, therefore, the composition of Republican music helped the orchestration only of those who themselves wrote it; if there they made discoveries and placed them in operas under far more controlled conditions, the potential benefit to others was naturally greater. As events turned out, there was a delay in opéra-comique before the average employment of wind instruments rose to new heights (see graph no.2). The drop in their use under the Directory can perhaps even be explained as a reaction against wind music and its associations, as well as against "learnedness" and complication. No opera, for example, made better or more extended use of the offstage wind group than Médée; the music on p.279 closely imitates the Republican idiom. Yet the work was almost predictably unsuccessful. Della-Maria on the other hand stormed Paris

---

1) Pierre/HYMNES p.149

2) Ibid.p.139ff; Pierre/MAGASIN pp.70, 129ff

3) Pierre/HYMNES pp.336-351



the next year with four new opéras-comiques and unashamed levity of style. When he used wind scoring, light, fast-repeated chords predominated (Ex.239) and helped banish the memory of sedate march-rhythms. His buoyant layout of melody and accompaniment, foreign to Paris, must have been found attractive. It may have stimulated the French to take more care over designing their own accompaniments, particularly perhaps in the case of Boieldieu.

So without reaching a uniformity of Steibelt-like richness, the French during the Consulate learned to treat the winds with freedom and especially wit, making the occasions for their prominence less formal. Example 240 is a routine finale-opening by Gaveaux, and Ex.241 shows the new repeated-chord technique used both as subordinate and then principal accompaniment. Even though the solidly-scored Médée, Montano, Ariodant and Léhéman, the works that come closest to Steibelt in this respect, represent a slightly unfashionable watershed in French output, public taste had caught up sufficiently by 1804 to express caution, not condemnation, towards the novelties of Milton. In spite of the obviously studied care of Ex.66, "La musique du signor Spontini prouve une grande richesse musicale ..."; a scene was "mieux pensée qu'exprimée ..."<sup>1)</sup> If the occasion for a march presented itself (Ex.116, p.15) the chances were that it would possess the same basic layout as always but would be placed within the course of a larger design and be subject to imaginative detail such as unusualness of key or percussion writing.

It remains to isolate two passages that typify imaginative freedom in wind scoring under the Empire, both examples being important for their dissociation from convention. The second entr'acte in Méhul's Joseph combines upper woodwind solos so as to show off the section rather than the

---

<sup>1)</sup> COURRIER, 29 November 1804

individual in a virtuosic light (Ex.242). La Vestale has an episode of similar purpose in a first act dance (Ex.243). Each passage uses the kind of figuration more closely corresponding to previous music of its own nationality. What is most notable is the unselfconscious language in which both displays are presented.

## (2) Alto

Violas. Gluck's Alceste and Armide both contain some prominent viola writing, of which the most striking is the air, "Vis, pour garder" from act 3 scene IV of the former. Divided violas have the following, while the remainder of the strings accompany, *pizzicato*.



*Pizzicato* was a basic accompaniment device for any orchestral solo of weaker tone than normal, and it appears with the extraordinary viola solo in the overture of Grétry's L'amant jaloux (1778), Ex.244. In both Gluck and Grétry, where the viola is of primary melodic interest, the tessitura was kept high as though a second soprano rather than an alto voice. In Tarare (1788), with a string accompaniment *arco*, some use is made of the violas' lower strings. The music, describing "jeunes gens fatigués, appuyés sur leurs houlettes", never goes above e'' natural (Ex.245), though it can hardly be called idiomatic viola writing.

Possibly more influential in the development of idiomatic orchestral viola music were certain unusual passages in Piccini's Atys (1780, revived in 1790). Divided violas in three and four part chords appeared alone with the cellos and double-basses on p.39 to the words, "Le soleil peint nos

champs de plus vives couleurs". Page 136 contained even more elaborate music for the entry of Atys and Celoenus, when no voice was sounding.

The technical difficulty of this as well as its context may well mean that it was intended for solo players; there are no instructions.

Vle 1

Vle 2 *Andante*

B

As in many other instances, opéra-comique was the setting for technical advance in this area after 1789. In 1792 Berton wrote the most memorable of several pieces to treat the viola sympathetically. This was no.11 of Eugène, two stanzas accompanied only by four violas, preceded by an eight-bar introduction (Ex.246). The dramatic context is not known owing to the disappearance of the libretto, but something of the atmosphere is conveyed by the instruction that the first stanza is to be sung in the wings and the whole performed by a turnkey.<sup>1)</sup> In the same year Méhul brought the viola to prominence in the central section of Antiochus's air, "Oui, c'en est fait" from Stratonice. Example 250, p.35 illustrates the radical pruning of the orchestra to violas, bassoons and bass in order to create a texture in which full value is given to the G and D strings of the viola. Martini's 1794 example from Sapho (Ex.76) is technically similar.

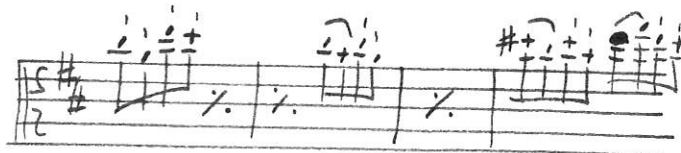
During the same period of experiment strenuous tutti writing helped bring ordinary viola technique above the first position, as in the following from Le. Sueur's Télémaque (1796), p.354.

(Allegro)

<sup>1)</sup> B.N., M.S. 3634. The MS bears a note by Berton dated 1816 rejecting the opera as "pitoyable" and the orchestra as "mal combiné". Rochefort's Toulon soumis (1794) borrowed the original idea, using violas, bassoons and cellos only for a stanza sung in shadows by a criminal.

Allegro

By 1808 Berton was able to give the violas the main upper part (extending to the third position)



for 18 bars of the overture to Ninon chez Mme de Sévigné.

Italian influence took attention away from much employment of the lower viola register, but a greater number of works now gave the violas more to play in prominent association with other instruments. Isouard accompanied just the first two bars of a soprano's opening phrase with two solo violas (Michel-Ange, p.23). Spontini, disliking the older Italian trait of placing the violas "col basso", often gave them the melody line an octave below the top part.

Uthal continues to fascinate the critic for its total rejection of violins. The opening pages (Ex.247) set an imaginative standard that I believe was impossible to maintain. Whereas these and the overture as a whole are composed around the timbre of the viola (as are isolated succeeding moments) neither the mood nor the technique of the majority of the remainder justify the absence of violins. In effect, those passages using the soprano solo or the upper woodwind or which are of an animated character cancel out the tone of the violas. The latter are often scored merely like low violins and sound no different to them. The overture deploys the lower strings of the instrument alongside bassoons and horns with inimitable results, and remains a memorable piece of proto-Romantic music.

### (3) Tenor

(a) Cellos. The development (not discovery) of tenor melody and techniques associated with the tenor region is the hallmark of the orchestra at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The "Romantic" cello and French

horn speak with tenor voices; both were given much interesting solo and accompanimental work even in the time between Mozart's death and Beethoven's early symphonies. Operatic heroes of the Revolution were tenors: Coradin, Antiochus, Floreski, Roméo, Paul. As the cello's rôle varied freely between melody, counter-melody and accompaniment, all three aspects will be considered under the present heading.

Composers in the earlier period were tentative in giving the cellos a principal melody, more often preferring to lend a general quality of richness to string-based writing by placing the cellos unusually high or lessening the interest of the upper parts. Grétry's setting of "Vive Henri IV" at the start of Le magnifique was thoroughly unusual; like Eroica/IV the countermelody enters first (flute, violins, pizzicato bass) to be joined by the familiar theme on bassoon, violas and cellos; the instruction provides that the latter group should "un peu dominer les autres parties". Where a later composer would have retained the pizzicato bass throughout, Grétry withdraws it as the tenor melody enters, making this the bass of a three-part texture. Similar in layout and in the omission of a true bass is the cello and bassoon melody in Grétry's Aucassin et Nicolette (1779; Ex.5). The nearest successor to these examples is the passage in Dalayrac's Sargines where the hymn-like theme on the chorus is doubled by oboes and "violoncelli chantant" (Ex.136, p.207). The pizzicato bass derives from earlier orchestration practice but the cello doubling was a novelty in such an animated and comparatively full passage. In its fervour it may be related to Nicolette's "laisse-moi mourir".<sup>1)</sup>

Gluck's use of the cello as an individual tenor instrument centred on the serene image it could convey by sustaining a high note between a melody and its accompaniment. The prime example is "Quel nouveau ciel"

<sup>1)</sup> There is no evidence that Gluck wanted anything but bassoons in the expressive inner melody of "O malheureuse Iphigénie". See Critical Report in the Gluck C.E. of the Vienna version of Tauride. Abert's Eulenburg Edition cellos are a perversion.

(Orphée) where *g'* natural is held at the outset for five bars above movement in first violins and violas (Ex.248). The act 5 dance in Armide, p.247, has a "basso solo" line sustained amid moving string parts and occasionally above the violas. Méreaux modified this layout in Alexandre aux Indes (dance, p.201, marked "grazioso" as that in Armide). Like the Orphée example, there is a pizzicato bass; but tenor emphasis is more strongly created by placing the violas and cellos in unison with the following chordal figure. Second violins supply the held note.

Musical notation showing a string ensemble part. The top staff is labeled "VN 2" and shows a sustained note on G4 with a fermata. The bottom staff is labeled "VLE + V/C" and shows a rhythmic chordal pattern with pizzicato markings. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4.

1789-94: Characteristic of the above examples is their lightening of the bass through its omission or pizzicato; progress towards the association of the violas with the cellos rather than against them; tentative combining of the cello in its tenor rôle with the voice; and predominantly string scoring. The first and last of these were often to give way to heavier forces and the second and third to be developed further.

The cello as a solo obbligato in the orchestra arrived with imported opera, for example Sarti's Les noces de Dorine, given in Paris in 1789. On p.210 two cellos set the mood: "cher amant, songe à ma peine". In 1816 Spohr wrote from Italy that "as in most Italian operas with from 6 to 8 double-basses there is only one cello, and usually not even a good one, they as yet know nothing here of the frequent use (since Mozart's day) of the cello for middle voices".<sup>1)</sup> While useful as an indication of orchestration-consciousness this does not reflect the whole truth about Italian music.

In his Démophon Vogel used the cello section in broken chord formations as a counter-melody in Timante's air, p.297, and this was the patterning

<sup>1)</sup> Spohr/AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Vol.I p.288

also adopted by Rigel in Les Amazones (Ex.182, first extract). All these are lightly supported by the orchestra; the Vogel contains no wind instruments at all.

Cherubini's use of the cello as a middle voice is best seen in a jovial excerpt from Lodoiska (Ex.249): again the context is dominated by strings, but the working is much heavier than those already described, to an extent that Cherubini's critics, at least, found it difficult to justify. Not only the position of the cello above the voice, but also the longer phrases given to this instrument mark an advance in the cause of the orchestra. In the first of two notable passages from Stratonice (Ex.250, p.29) Méhul chose the cello to echo Antiochus's self-revelatory pathos. (Vogel's Timante expresses pathos in the air mentioned, but here the victim is an innocent child.) Méhul's treatment breaks new ground by doubling the voice and by giving the violas and bassoons the all-important sustaining parts. The second passage (Ex.251) occurs at the start of the diagnosis of Antiochus's amatory complaint. In a kind of naked obbligato the cellos (afterwards in unison with the violas, as in Méreaux) take the principal melody, the voice the second part. This effect was immediately noticed, and written about when Méhul's greatest successes had come and gone. "On y remarque le solo de violoncelle [sic] qui, aux premières représentations, dut frapper agréablement les auditeurs par sa nouveauté."<sup>1)</sup>

In Le jeune sage of 1793 even more audacious writing in the overture has been described, Ex.226, which further exposed the melodic potential of the cello and gave it more structural importance.

At about the same time Viotti, in the 22nd concerto, gave the cellos answering phrases in the tutti against the combined strength of held

<sup>1)</sup> Martine /DRAMATIQUE p.303

oboes, bassoons, horns, violas and double-basses (Ex.252). The heavy scoring of this piece is rare for Viotti and for concertos in general, so without suspecting an interesting corpus of antecedents one could place the passage in question by the side of the more advanced operas of the day. In particular the pizzicato cellos in the tuttis of Steibelt's funerary scene in Roméo (Ex.111) may be cited. These minor mode pieces stand in contrast to the major mode painting of a seascape in Méhul's Mélide et Phrosine (Ex.262, p.27). The music, seen here in the overture, is drawn from the end of act 2 and the chorus's prayer, "Aplanis-toi, vague mutine". With this invention, perhaps, the modern conception of orchestral cello writing was convincingly established in French music. The violas add to the tenor sonority; there is a separate bass part; and the cello part could not be taken successfully by any other instrument.

By now smaller passages came to include cellos as tenor instruments as part of the accepted orchestral canvas. Example 72 uses cellos alone with solo clarinet, and the second subject of the overture to Martini's Sapho doubles the flute with a solo cello.

Martini,  
Sapho, pp.36-7

*Allegro*

1795-99: The cello was drawn inevitably into solo work of an Italian obbligato nature. Steibelt's Roméo had contained an impressive obbligato duet for E flat horn and cello at the suggestive moment when Roméo arrives at the Capulets' vault, and senses "un religieux effroi".

Steibelt,  
Roméo et Juliette,  
p.284

[no tempo given]

Cor(Eb)

V/c solo

Bass (pizz)



Gaveaux was also an important contributor, and wrote a 31-bar solo of considerable difficulty in the Andante of the overture, Lise et Colin, 1795. His cello obbligato in Sophie et Moncars (Ex.58) is another Italianate manifestation. These and other obbligatos used only light string accompaniments.

Some composers were giving the cellos parts of their own over larger time-scales in the tutti than before. Bruni's Toberne, p.59, and Fay's Clémentine, p.21, both of 1795, contain extended broken-chord figuration for cellos. Other pieces followed the lead of Sargines and Sapho in doubling melodies in the tenor range, instead of upwards on the flutes. This was ultimately a most fruitful direction to follow, adding sonority without necessarily requiring a special layout of the other instruments. An interesting case occurs in Ex.98 from Gaveaux's Léonore, where the cellos double the violins in unison, thus not only transforming the timbre of the melody, but robbing the bass of all but violas and bassoons. Here the entire texture is within the tenor range, *save for the flute*.

The motivic continuum sometimes depended on an independent tenor line, as in Ex.201, p.47. Even bass statements required the expressive articulating power of cellos; but if tenor and bass motifs were the delight of the intellectuals<sup>1)</sup> tenor melody itself obviously held the popular attention. Gaveaux's seguidilla depended on it.

1799 saw the premières of Méhul's Adrien and Ariodant, performance of the first having been banned in 1792. The presence of certain passages in the autograph and in extra material at the Opéra library<sup>2)</sup> show that Adrien preceded Stratonice in its use of solo cellos; the examples are less

1) "Entendez-vous le motif! disent les jeunes savants"; 1810 critique of Méhul's music quoted in Pougin/MEHUL p.270

2) B.N., MS. 2276 (bundle no.6) and B. de l'Op.A.367.b (Duo adagio)

terse and striking, but the general layouts more elaborate.<sup>1)</sup> Ariodant continued its author's exploration of the cello, notably in divisi writing (see Ex.183 and sub-section below). The tenor countermelody to Ariodant's "nos désirs, nos transports extrêmes", though cello-like, is now designed less richly for violas and bassoons (Ex.254). It is as though it had been reorchestrated, having been first conceived in terms of the cello.

1800-10: By the first decade of the new century, the period which saw a renewal of interest in cello concertos, the principal types of orchestration incorporating cello music effective to 1810 were established; but with the spread of tenor melody and tenor doubling there went a thinness of texture even though the violas were regularly placed below the cellos. Presence or absence of voices was of no account.

Counter-melodies involving the cello themselves divide into the more properly contrapuntal instances found in overtures (Cherubini's Anacréon is the best) and those forming part of involved textures in vocal accompaniment. Example 34 from Milton and Ex.153 from Julie are of the latter kind. Both use the violas as sonorous adjuncts to the cellos, whereas in Anacréon (quartet p.217), where a very similar layout to that in Milton is pursued over 41 bars, the violas are merely in unison with the cellos. Example 43 from Catel's Les Bayadères shows a typically "established" counter-melodic pattern with the maximum sustaining power normally found in surrounding instruments.

---

1) Méhul's sensitivity towards the cellos appears in a letter to the director of the Académie; it concerns Adrien and is quoted in Pougin/MEHUL p.178. Pougin dates it between 1800 and 1804. "La partie grave de votre orchestre est beaucoup trop affoiblie par les trois violoncelles qui y manquent ... Plusieurs morceaux de cet ouvrage tirent leurs effets des basses, et ils resteront sans caractère ... " etc.

Doubling of melodies has been seen in two Dalayrac operas, Léhéman (Ex.60) and Lina (Ex.116, p.2). These help to illustrate the great variety of contexts in which this technique was found and the relative smallness of forces involved. Spontini is the exception to the latter generality. La Vestale and Fernand Cortez make surprisingly little concession to cello melody but use doubling freely, as in Ex.114.

Two novel soloistic uses of the cello may be mentioned. Méhul's Une Folie (1802, p.43) contains a rondeau whose accompaniment opens with 32 bars for pizzicato cellos and basses alone. Boieldieu's Andante to the overture, Ma tante Aurore (1803; Ex.255) is in the style of a recitative and air for cellos. Although the inspiration may have been the Ariodant overture (see below) the conception anticipates many later operatic preludes, for example, Verdi's I masnadieri.

(b) Subdivided lower strings. Earlier composers seem to have made little <sup>more</sup> use of divided cellos than of divided violas. Some examples however may rest concealed; act 4 scene III of Gluck's Tauride opens as follows.

Allegro VNS 1/2

Vle

vlc

Bas p

Voice omitted:  
"Tremblez!"

Here and in similar layouts it would have been sensible to place the four "petit choeur" cellists with the violas and the "grand choeur" with the double-basses, to achieve a good foundation. Grétry attempted a hectic quality like Gluck's in Andromaque, p.64, perhaps borrowing from

Armide, e.g. Ex.229.<sup>1)</sup>

Grétry,  
Andromaque; air,  
"Ils me menacent de  
leurs armes"

Allegretto risoluto

v/c

C.B. & fg

While Académie composers of the early Republic paid little attention to subdivided cellos, opéra-comique took over separate cello lines and double-stopping into the tutti.

Allegro Violas

Cellos

C.B.

Martini's Sapho remained in isolation until Méhul's Ariodant brought subdivided cellos to the fore in the overture (Ex.256) and introduction to act 3 (Ex.183). The overture (so labelled) is in fact a continuous Adagio, a meditative prelude. Three solo cellos are supported by the remainder with the double-basses.<sup>2)</sup> This layout persists for 28 bars, excluding a dramatic interruption of four bars by the tutti. The similar passage preceding act 3 is itself the interruption of a tutti, and of only seven bars' duration.

We know from Martini's own account that Sapho received scant justice in performance and that his work was ignored by the "Conservatoire circle". This explains why Méhul's invention and not Martini's was imitated by others. Cherubini's ode to Haydn's memory was discussed in chapter 7. It was

<sup>1)</sup> But not from Tauride, since Andromaque was rehearsed in 1778. (J. G. Rushton, "Music and drama at the Académie Royale de Musique", unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford 1969, p.243.)

<sup>2)</sup> The "trombone" solo often mentioned probably originated in the misreading published in Chouquet/HISTOIRE p.188. The latest repetition is in Robert/Française p.20.

actually preceded by another derivative of Ariodant by Catel: the first entry of the high priest in Sémiramis (Ex.257, p.62). Méhul's original layout is added to sympathetically by imitative entries - bassoon, violas, flutes and trombones - but the divided cellos remain the essence of the musical image. In fact, Catel's real contribution may rather have been the association of divided lower strings with religious imagery; the music is marked, "Lent et religieux". Cherubini clearly followed this notion, as did Blangini in Nephtali (Ex.258; 1806). There is no subdivision, but the disposition of the lower strings is enough to relate the passage to the new tradition. Méhul returned to divided cellos in Joseph's overture (Ex.231, p.8), in which religious imagery is evoked in the beautiful suggestion of a chant on bassoons and horns against the harmony of the cellos. Cherubini too continued the association in Il Pimmalione (1809), where the Preghiera is accompanied by divided cellos and double-basses only.<sup>1)</sup>

At the same time others, not only Spontini in Julie, divided the cellos in routine accompaniments. This was done to strengthen the tenor area and in particular to reinforce the violas. Two or four cellos would be separated from the main body and placed in unison with the violas. This technique was evolved for smaller ensembles and suggests the definite need felt in them for an even power of tone through the orchestra. The cellos, in other words, could be used with complete freedom.

(c) Lower wind solo writing. The way in which French composers took advantage of the new discoveries in horn tone and technique (see chapter 4) enables a division to be made between those who tended to write melodically and those who made more use of the chromatic potential of the instrument.

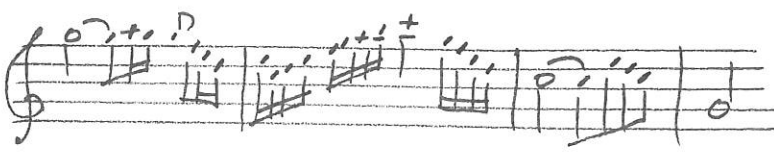
---

<sup>1)</sup> B.M., R.M.23.c.2 (2), f.75

Horn solos in opéra-comique had long been freed of hunting associations and were making use of characteristic arpeggio and scale figures since at least 1766:

Gossec,  
Les Pêcheurs, p.55

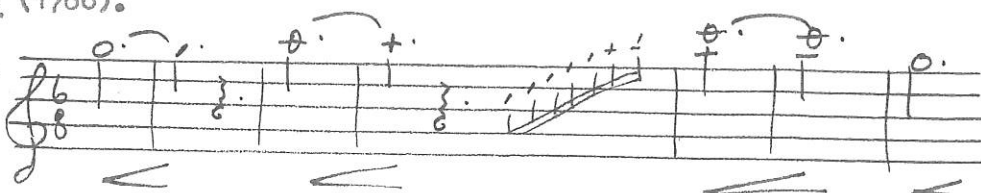
Cor-solo  
(Eb)



Greater control of high notes, still within a diatonic framework, was required in the solo in act 3 of Grétry's popular Les méprises par ressemblance (1786).

Page 191

Cor-Solo  
(C)



To these and to Italian obligato examples by Cimarosa and Sarti the Académie answered in 1790 with a notable trio for three solo horns (Ex.259)<sup>1</sup> in Miller's Psyché, act 1, f.29. Although it is possible that a similarly scored piece had been thought of before as an operatic dance the possibility could not have arisen before 1788, when the Académie acquired a third and fourth horn. Miller uses a wide range of stopped notes and includes typical batteries for the third horn. As the ballet was exceptionally long-running, this trio stands as an important archetype of a much used Romantic sonority.

The horn solo is found in the French overture at the Académie, without great distinction, in Lemoyne's Louis IX of 1790 and Langlé's Corisandre of the next year. Such structural emphasis was short-lived before the new pace and excitement of the historical and contemporary dramas of 1793-4, and the next important examples are in opéras-comiques already discussed using wind solo introductions. Here the horn adopted the style

1) Key-signatures as in the original.

of the *sinfonia concertante*, nearly always in *Andante tempo* and given the lightest of orchestral accompaniments. At this period the horn in E flat was commoner than any other for solo work, and the best music was in this key also. Following Steibelt's vault scene in *Roméo Boieldieu* produced an inspired solo in 1797 as the introduction to a scena in which the heroine remembers lost love not merely in monologue, but while sketching in the hills that were the background to it (*La famille suisse*, Ex.260). The whole sequence is a surprisingly early assertion of Romantic sentiment, nostalgia and orchestral colour at once.

The change to the F horn for some solo work, even that in the key of E flat, came a few years later.<sup>1)</sup> Not far removed from the Boieldieu example is the introduction to the "Hymne", no.4 in *Milton*. The use of the F horn in this E flat piece must have been prompted by the desire for the resulting slightly stopped tone on the tonic and subdominant, and heavily stopped tone on the leading-note. This degree of sophistication was rather exceptional before 1810.

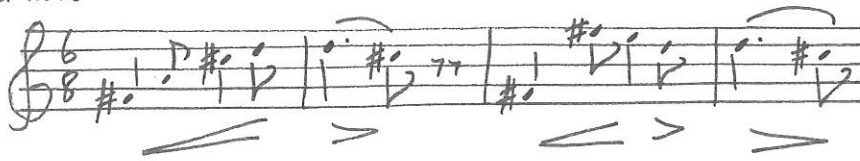
The diatonicism of solos was paralleled elsewhere by exploration of stopped notes, usually in subordinate phrases. Berton, for example, was employing sustained a' natural and its lower octave by 1790. In 1794 (*Agricol Viala*, f.22) the more heavily-stopped a flat was used (Ex.261). It was obviously for its muffled quality that Berton here used the note in question on the Neapolitan chord, to the word "nuit". The same year also saw Méhul's most radical experiments in the same direction in *Mélidore*. The ordinary horn solo obbligato was often used to portray sentimental love. In *Phrosine's* romance p.51 she recovers from her brother's vehement attack on her lover's worthiness that starts the opera. The horn solo

---

1) I feel that Morley-Pegge/HORN p.98 is wrong in suggesting there was automatic preference for the F solo crook in E flat solos as early as 1793.

opening the romance, sounding in A minor, is stopped on every note except the 6th and 7th of the melodic minor scale.

Cor in Eb



(accompanied by strings and a flute)

The more celebrated music at the death of the same brother presents a simple plagal cadence in which all the horn notes are stopped.<sup>1)</sup> The passage (Ex.262, p.118) remained unique for the time in its complexity, and must have been reckoned by the composer as either a failure or ahead of its time.

Boieldieu and the younger composers preferred to avoid stopped notes for any reason, whether connected with special effect or harmonic support. Berton and Méhul continued to use them for both, the latter composer in particular writing sometimes almost as if the horn had no chromatic limitations at all. He was doubtless sure of his players at the Opéra-Comique (Tourtourelle and Schwend) and theoretical publications already examined in chapter 4 show the progress towards the completely chromatic scale. But this aspect of orchestration was one case in which Méhul's advances did not become common property at once, remaining instead to be discovered from printed scores. The unison scale for four horns in Gabrielle d'Estrées doubled only by second violin, was still exceptional in 1806 (Ex.113).

Of the solo bassoon there is regrettably little to say; the horn was consistently preferred. In 1786 Philidor gave the bassoon a modest solo in Themistocle. Its appearance in the overture is taken from the scene in act 2 of "reconciliation of old enemies".<sup>2)</sup> The bassoon speaks

1) Chouquet's "smothered rattle" description in GROVE/V (article, "Méhul") again implies misunderstanding of the notes themselves. "Muted amen" might be more appropriate.

2) J. G. Rushton, op.cit. p.239.



in a baritone voice and ascends only to e' natural. The string accompaniment is surprisingly full, with separate cellos and basses. In Neris's air in Cherubini's Médée, act 2, the bassoon is chiefly in the tenor clef and ascends to a sustained high c'' natural. This beautiful obbligato was not imitated by other composers. Its string accompaniment is apt, not elaborate, using a pizzicato bass and low strings to render the solo more audible.

Neris's woes found one echo in the bassoon solo in Beniowsky, p.243, where Boieldieu begins the scene in which the hero is found exhausted on a mountain side.

*Con  
espressione*

Bassoon

Cherubini's use of the bassoon as a tenor voice in the ensemble is seen in the elaborate design of Ex.42.

(d) The tenor wind ensemble. The bassoon's rôle in the orchestra was in fact highly varied, being shared between tenor support, accompaniments and bass doubling. In the tenor it formed the basis of a group with horns and sometimes trombones. The standard pre-Revolution tenor grouping was for the violas to sustain parallel to the horns, with the bassoons col basso. Gluck anticipated the future by a rare joining of horns and bassoons in Alceste (act 1, air, "Grands Dieux"), giving the first bassoon the notes otherwise necessarily stopped on the horn. This, however, was a special design, not a tutti; Exx. 1 and 143 are comparable. The tutti began to give independent parts to the bassoons more regularly in the 1780's when bassoons and horns coincided in the tenor register, as in Ex.210. When the single trombone became part of the ensemble it often sounded close to the tenor instruments when it doubled the cellos rather than the double-basses.

Méhul,  
Henri-Quatre,  
no.5

Gaveaux,  
Sophie et  
Moncars,  
p.241ff

Example 103, p.1 (Stratonice) illustrates how the trombone could also act in triads with the bassoons, independently from the bass.

Wind ensemble music and Republican hymns added nothing new to tenor wind groupings except perhaps an awareness of the chalumeau register of the clarinet in chordal use. Second clarinets were often placed in accompanying chords with bassoons and sometimes, as here, with horns also.

Kreutzer,

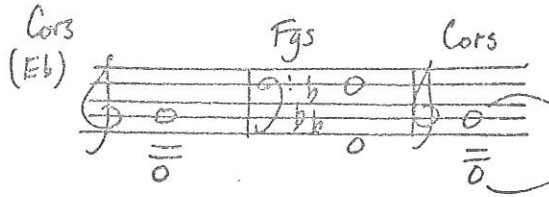
Overture, "La journée  
de marathon", bar 65  
(1794)

Accompaniment patterns in later opera often forced violas, horns and bassoons together, moving and overlapping in the same area with freedom; the clarinet was too useful to be kept in the chalumeau register for long. These tenor groups were necessary to balance the brighter woodwind doubling and counterpoint fast becoming de rigueur, especially in opéra-comique and the Académie works of Spontini.

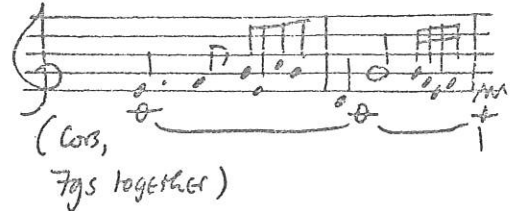
As mentioned above, the equation of horn and bassoon colour was unexpectedly rare in extended contexts. The outstanding exceptions to this are the stanzas addressed to Night in Berton's Les deux sentinelles (1790), accompanied by two bassoons, two horns and pizzicato bass,<sup>1)</sup> and the opening of Uthal (Ex.247). Subsidiary fragments can often be found which used both instruments to secure either continuity or strength of tone.

<sup>1)</sup> See chapter 10, pp. 482-3

Spontini,  
Milton, p.166



Candeille,  
La patrie reconnaissante, f.62



(4) Bass

The only example of a fully-fledged bass melody (rather than a short motif) with its own specially designed accompaniment appears to be the "Marche religieuse" in Méhul's ballet Daphnis et Pandrose (1803; Ex.263). Example 107 from Le délire may perhaps be counted as a melodic bass, heard against a pedal.

Composers of opera had been fascinated by the evocative possibilities of the unaccompanied bass since around 1790, when Berton's Les rigueurs du cloître (Ex.106) and Méhul's "Gardez-vous" duet (Ex.196) branded the bass anew with the imagery of darkness and danger. The descent into "La nuit" in 1791 was given by Langlé to unaccompanied cellos.

Langlé,  
Corisandre, p.7



Candeille's La patrie reconnaissante begins with a single line for cellos and basses alone, "A demi jeu en liant tous les sons".



These unison bass solos bore fruit in a great deal of later operatic music, where such a technique could be used for linking sections, introductory passages or sudden changes of mood. Simply examining the beginning

of various movements from one later opera, Médée, shows the existence of three orchestral bass and two tenor solos.

The image contains five handwritten musical staves for bass, arranged in two columns. The left column contains three staves: p.177 (Allegro, ff), p.217 (Andantino, pp), and p.330 (Andante, pp). The right column contains two staves: p.227 (Moderato, p) and p.297 (Moderato). Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Special mention should be made of Boieldieu's "horror" orchestration in Ex.81, p.3. In no opera though, however sensational the effect, was the trombone used to double a solo bass theme. The emotional sense of many bass motifs tended later to become reflective or jocose rather than frightening, or simply degenerate into boisterous introductions to new melodies, anticipating Rossini.