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THE OPERAS OF RAMEAU

by

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INTRODUCTION

During the latter part of the seventeenth century the opera house in France was at once the home of the arts and a state institution. Its influence was so great that the church music of the period tended to borrow from the dramatic and the ceremonial. In the last years of Louis XIV the taste of the people began to change; the majestic glamour of the opera as a state ritual in the time of military reverses did not seem appropriate especially when eminent theorists and divines were denouncing this form of art as offensive to both reason and morality.

Consequently, we find the works of Couperin expressing intimate and human qualities. Painters adopted the same ideals; architecture, though still preserving some of the previous external magnificence, was planned for a more intimate society; the life of Paris superseded the autocracy of Versailles. Values which were once important became less clearly defined and, in many ways, less impressive.

In 1733, the year in which Couperin died, Rameau produced his first opera. Couperin had been essentially aristocratic in taste and style; Rameau succeeds in fusing an

inherited aristocracy of style with the new, more middle-class spirit of the Enlightenment. He was a friend of Voltaire and his patron was the financier, Le Riche de la Poupelinière, one of the best known members of the new bourgeoisie, who later was a patron of Stamitz and the Mannheim symphonists.

Jean Philippe Rameau was born in Dijon in 1683. His father, a church organist, instructed him in organ, harpsichord and theory. At the age of sixteen he was allowed to leave the Jesuit college where he was studying law so that he might travel in Italy and become familiar with the more fashionable musical techniques of the day. He did not stay long in Italy. In 1702 he was organist in a church in Avignon and shortly after took a similar post in Clermont-Ferrand where he composed several church cantatas.

In 1705 he moved to Paris where he published his "Premier Livre de pièces à clavecin." He served as an organist but, failing to make a name for himself, returned to Dijon in 1708 to take the post vacated by his father. He worked at Lyons in 1714 and then returned to Clermont Cathedral. There for seven years he lived quietly and worked on the "Traité de l'harmonie." In 1722 he returned to Paris where the "Traité" was published and bitterly attacked by the academic musicians of the day. However, the publication of the second book of harpsichord pieces in 1724 brought recognition and Rameau became a fashionable teacher of harpsichord playing and music

theory.

He began to realize a life-long ambition when he composed incidental music to a number of plays of Piron. Although this venture was not successful, he began seeking libretti from well known poets, but not until he met Le Riche de la Poupelinière did he succeed. Through Le Riche he met Voltaire, who at that time refused to produce a libretto, but another poet, the Abbé Pellegrin, did write a work called Hippolyte et Aricie based on Racine's play "Phèdre." The music was rehearsed with the private orchestra of Le Riche, but despite the great enthusiasm of those who heard the score before its first performance, the opera met with hostile reception from the critics and the professional musicians who accused Rameau of imitating the Italian practices to excess.

The public, however, liked Rameau's theatrical music and demanded more. Les Indes galantes was produced in 1735 and was highly successful. Castor et Pollux was heard in 1737 and Les Fêtes d'Hébé and Dardanus in 1739. All were very successful.

For five years Rameau produced no new operatic works. He published some music for harpsichord, part of which was dances arranged from his operas. He worked at his newly founded school of composition and conducted at the Opéra-Comique.

In Paris with his music becoming familiar to the pub-

In 1754 he staged La Princesse de Navarre based on a libretto by Voltaire, a work commissioned to celebrate the marriage of the Dauphin to the Infanta. New stage works followed in rapid succession and books dealing with the theory of music were published.

In 1752 an Italian company presented Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona in Paris and touched off the now famous "guerre des bouffons" waged by the supporters of the new Italian style of operatic writing and those who clung to the old fashioned French style of Rameau. Paris was split into two rival camps and Rameau, admitting the merit of the new style and still not forgetting that his detractors had accused him of being too Italianate in his first ventures in operatic writing, continued to insist that harmony was the basis of all music. He was attacked for his theoretical position as well as his music. He replied in a series of pamphlets based on scientific arguments - not on rhetoric - and still found time to create new works for the stage. His popularity increased, he was ennobled by the king and honored by the City of Dijon and by the Academy.

Today there are few full-fledged performances of the dramatic works of Rameau. The vocal demands are excessive and the staging requires mechanical aids not easily available. In the spring of 1952, more than two hundred years after its first performance, Les Indes galantes was revived in Paris with all the original features familiar to the pub-

lic in Rameau's day, and, at this time (1955) is still a favorite of the patrons of opera.

As a part of the transition from the aristocratic style of music to that of the new bourgeoisie, Rameau's works for harpsichord and the "Pièces de clavecin en concert" must be mentioned. Rameau's music for harpsichord is more harmonic, less linear in style, more virtuoso and theatrical in treatment than that of Couperin. It is more brilliant and, at times, emotional, but not necessarily more profound. The "Pièces de clavecin en concert", published in 1741 though written earlier, use the clavecin not as a continuo instrument, but as a solo instrument exploited in a manner which suggests the way in which Haydn and Mozart treated the combination of piano and strings. The form of the Italian concerto is used with its pattern of fast, slow and fast movements. These movements are based on the usual binary principles, but they are not exclusively monothematic, since secondary themes are often introduced and developed to some extent in the second sections of the movements.

It is significant, too, that Rameau, a man of the Enlightenment, could bring his creative genius to full fruition only after he had achieved a convincing scientific explanation of the principles governing his art. In his theoretical work he does not seek to evolve a set of rules which are to be obeyed without question; he merely tries to rationalize and to systematize the practices of composers over the last

hundred years.

There are two main aspects of Rameau's theory, the first of which deals with the mechanics of music in an attempt to establish the dominance of harmonic thought and diatonic tonality. Rameau established the pre-eminence of the major and minor triads by deriving them from the harmonic series and from combination tones; he was first to recognize the fact that each chord had a fundamental root, no matter how the tones of the chord might be arranged; he rationalized the technique of building up dissonances by the superposition of thirds; and he demonstrated to his own satisfaction the logic of the cycle of tempered fifths. The fact that his explanation of tonality and harmony was not as scientific as he thought it was is unimportant. It was true while it lasted, and that was for more than a hundred years.

The second aspect of Rameau's theoretical work deals with the relation of this new technique and the expressive purpose for which it was intended. He believed that the purpose of art was communication, that music aimed to express human emotion, nature, and to reveal Truth through Reason. He charted the precise and particular expressive functions of both harmony and tonality, dissonance, intervals and chromatic passing notes. He believed each key had its peculiar expressive aptitude. He practiced his system of harmony and tonality with remarkable consistency.

Although Rameau's tonal language is more systematically

planned than that of any other late Baroque composers, his use of keys and harmonic and melodic formulae is not radically different from that of his contemporaries. His emphasis on tonal order, however, did preclude the audacious type of voice leading so often characteristic of Bach's polyphony.

Rameau insisted he was the successor of Lully; he was actually looking to the future. Precedents can be found in the works of Lully for almost all the aspects of his operatic style, but the interpretation Rameau gives to traditional techniques stems from a new conception of the role of music as an art and a means of communication.

CHAPTER I

INSTRUMENTATION AND ORCHESTRATION

Instrumentation

Rameau's orchestra included at most about fifty musicians. In 1756 at the revival of Zoroastre the orchestra had one clavecin, four basses du petite choeur which could substitute for the musette and tambourin, sixteen violinists, one of whom played the timbales, eight basses du grand choeur, seven quints, of which one of the instrumentalists played the musette, four oboes, two flutes, five bassoons, one trumpet and the "beater of the measure." This list does not mention the horns which were probably played by supernumeraries.

The use of the clavecin gives the orchestra a rather archaic appearance, since that instrument not only dominates the recitative but is prominent in the ensemble. Although its metallic quality tended to cut through the tones of the ensemble and did not blend well with voices, it could indicate full harmony and act as a stabilizer for the orchestra. In many instances, though, Rameau directs that the clavecin shall be silent even though the score still

contains the figured bass line from which the clavecin part is realized.

The strings are the basis of the orchestra. They include the violins, the basses and that group of instruments designated by the general term "parties." In his use of the strings Rameau introduced new techniques for the sake of color and pictorial effects. He did much to spread the popularity of the use of pizzicato, a manner of playing practically unknown in France at that time (Ex. 1).¹

Ex. 1

The musical score for Ex. 1 is written in 3/4 time and consists of five staves. The top two staves are for Flutes (Flutes), the next two for Violins (Vlins), and the bottom staff is for Bassoon/Double Bass (Bsn. - Doux - db.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes several measures of music, with pizzicato (pizz.) markings for the strings. The Flute parts have some dynamics like *mf* and *ff*. The Viola part has a *pizz.* marking. The Bassoon/Double Bass part has a *pizz.* marking. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

¹ Hippolyte, Act IV, scene 4.

He made extensive use of double stopping (Ex. 2)¹ and his figurations exploited the high registers of the instruments.

Ex, 2

The musical score is handwritten and consists of five staves. The top staff is labeled 'Vlns' and shows a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It contains four measures of music, each with a single note on the G string (G4) and a double note on the E string (E4). The second staff is labeled 'à deux cordes' and shows a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains four measures of music, each with a single note on the G string (G4) and a double note on the E string (E4). The third staff is labeled 'Vla' and shows a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains four measures of music, each with a single note on the G string (G4) and a double note on the E string (E4). The fourth staff is labeled 'Théâtre' and shows a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains four measures of music, each with a single note on the G string (G4) and a double note on the E string (E4). The fifth staff is labeled 'B.C.' and shows a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains four measures of music, each with a single note on the G string (G4) and a double note on the E string (E4). The lyrics 'Deux cru-els ven-geurs im-pla-ca-bles' are written below the Théâtre staff.

Vlns

à deux cordes

Vla

Théâtre

B.C.

Deux cru-els ven-geurs im-pla-ca-bles

He, too, realized the value of the color of the lower strings of the violin and refused to limit himself to the use of the "chanterelle" (the string with the highest pitch). He multiplied the use of repeated notes and rapid arpeggios, practices designed to produce more harmonic fullness or to provide dramatic effects. Unfortunately, this excessive emphasis on the use of the orchestral strings

¹Hippolyte, Act IV, scene 4.

and the resultant neglect of the other instruments robbed the ensemble of some of its potential color.

The bass of the orchestra is the bass viol, abetted by the violoncello and the contrebasse. In the 1736 edition of Les Indes galantes Rameau mentions the violoncello as the normal bass of the orchestra, but he stills continues to use it for the continuo and, occasionally, in octaves to support the harmony. The contrebasse, an import from Italy, was used to double the continuo in loud passages and for its pictorial qualities in scenes representing supernatural or awful events. On occasion, it was given special notes to mark the bass of the harmonic structure.

The "parties," which correspond to the present-day violas, have a fill-in role. At the beginning of the century three instruments were used to perform these parts: the haute-contre, the taille and the quint, all of which had approximately the same range. Masson states that after 1750, the music of the "parties" was written only in the alto clef and performed by the quint which was sometimes called the alto after the Italian custom.¹ Rameau usually writes only two inner parts for the strings which are called haute-contre and taille. There were two instruments in Rameau's time whose names corresponded to these

¹Masson: L'Opéra de Rameau, p. 517.

orchestral parts. The haute-contre was a bowed string instrument of the violin family; its lowest tone was A below middle C. The taille was either a tenor viol or the viola. The term "taille" was originally a name for the tenor voice; instrumentally, it is most often used to distinguish the tenor viol from the smaller haute-contre, but the name may be applied to both instruments. Rameau neglects the color of this register of the strings, but, at times, he does assign the instruments florid figurations.

The wind instruments had less variety and flexibility than the strings and were not able to be used so constantly because of mechanical imperfections. Because of their clearly defined colors, they are often reserved for some traditional usage. Rameau observes these customs, but he expands the practices, and, in addition, introduces certain wind instruments new to France.

The transverse flute is ordinarily used in Rameau's operas. The "flûte à bec" and the "basse de flûte" found in Lully's works had been abandoned. Rameau uses the flute brilliantly whether for expressive or pictorial purposes. It is often used in the "airs tendres"; it creates the Elysian atmosphere in which the happy Shadows of Castor move; it spreads its melancholy charm in the "delicious gardens"; in Les Indes galantes the male lovers are represented by the violins and the females by the flutes. The

virtuosity of one Blavet who appeared at the Concerts Spirituels is said to be responsible for the increased popularity of this instrument.

The piccolo is used almost entirely for descriptive effects such as the twittering of the birds or the supernatural mobility of the wind (Ex. 3).¹ It is used to supplement the piercing sounds of popular instruments in such dances as the tambourin; it may be used to supply the effect

Ex. 3

The musical score for Ex. 3 consists of five staves. The top staff is for Piccolo (Pic.), the second for Musettes, the third for Viola (Vla.), and the bottom for Voice. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The Piccolo part features trills and triplets. The Musettes part has a melodic line with some grace notes. The Viola part provides a simple accompaniment. The Voice part has the lyrics "Ac-compa-gnes le doux ra-ma-".

¹ Les Indes galantes, prologue.

Ex. 3 (Continued)

A handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Ex. 3 (Continued)". The score is written on six staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third and fourth staves are treble clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fifth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The sixth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of four measures. The first measure contains a treble clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet, and a bass clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet. The second measure contains a treble clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet, and a bass clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet. The third measure contains a treble clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet, and a bass clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet. The fourth measure contains a treble clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet, and a bass clef staff with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note triplet. The score ends with a double bar line and the word "Des" written below the sixth staff.

Ex. 3 concluded

ten - dre oi - seurs

of noisy rejoicing. Rameau even uses the flageolet, the small member of the "flûte à bec" family, to picture the commotion of the birds on seeing the owl in the second act of Platée.

The biting color of the oboe is used to reinforce the sonority of the orchestra in joyous or energetic passages, to double the strings or to alternate with the violins in the form of an oboe trio (two oboes and one bassoon). The oboe is used for brilliance and, also, for its pastoral qualities, being considered a rustic instrument along with

the musette. In exploiting its pastoral character, the oboe is sometimes used alone or with instruments of the same type; a trio of oboes may be contrasted with the trumpets. Rameau first sensed the use of the oboe for pathos in opera.

The musette is a rustic instrument often used in contrast to the trumpets of war to mark the return of peace. In the time of Rameau there were two kinds of musettes. One was a sort of rustic oboe with very limited musical possibilities; the other was an instrument constructed along the lines of the present-day bagpipe. The chanter was an oboe-like instrument with a soft tone quality; the bore of the instrument was a narrow cylindrical one and the drone was in the form of a rackett about six and one half inches in height, in which the bore ran up and down twelve times or more. The length and pitch of the rackett could be changed. At the middle of the seventeenth century a second chanter was added for the highest notes. The range was about two octaves ($f^1 - d^3$). The supply of wind was supplemented by a bellows held under the left arm. This form of the musette was used by Lully, and it seems reasonable to assume that Rameau did the same, since the parts written for the musette in the Rameau operas could not have been executed by the simple form of the instrument. The musette is ordinarily used in combination with oboes and in two parts. Rameau does not always make a clear distinction between the

oboe and the musette except through the inclusion of the drone bass which is provided by another instrument of the orchestra.

Rameau treats the bassoon in a particularly original manner. He may use it to play the bass of a trio of oboes or to increase the volume of the continuo, but he also assigns it independent melodies which exploit the high register of the instrument. In the final chaconne of Dardanus (Ex. 48) there is a couplet whose melody is assigned to the bassoon alone. Most frequently, the bassoon is a part of the mass of the orchestra, but in accompanying voices, Rameau may use the bassoon alone because of its blending qualities. Before Rameau the bassoon was an instrument valued for its volume alone; he treats it as an instrument capable of pleasing the ear both in solo passages and in ensembles.

The orchestra of la Pouplinière from 1748 on contained two clarinetists, and Rameau, who was nearly seventy years of age at that time, was so captivated by the new instrumental color that he made a place for it in some of his works. Clarinets were first used in Zoroastre in 1749, although they only doubled the oboes in certain places, no new parts having been written for them. In Acante et Céphise two clarinet parts have an important place in the score: clarinets in C in the overture, and in D and A in acts two

and three. There are twelve instances of their use in this work, either doubling the oboes or the violins, or forming a quartet with two horns (Ex. 4).¹ Rameau seems to have used the instrument for its pure tone and its vibrant energy, but he valued it most for its possibilities of expressing sweetness and tenderness.

After Acante et Céphise Rameau used the clarinets on one other occasion and this without special notation for the instruments. In Boréades there is this note on the score: "If there are clarinets, they will play the violin parts." His disuse of the instrument may be attributed to his break with la Pouplinière, a break that deprived him of an orchestra with which he had been able to experiment in achieving new effects.

The only brass instruments used by Rameau are the trumpet and the horn. The trumpet is the instrument of war and of heroism. It is suitable for battles, triumphant occasions and solemn ceremonies. It is used in the dances of the martial scenes as well as in the sung airs of the same type. Rameau used only the instruments in D and C, the latter less often. They are assigned parts which demand agility and often double the violin and oboe parts.

¹Acante et Céphise, Act II, Entr'acte.

At the time of Rameau the natural horn was in use. It was improved in construction and the use of additional parts allowed the performer to change the key of the instrument to suit the music being played. Performers were developing skill in the use of the horn and composers were able to write more complicated parts for it. At this time the horn is no longer a picturesque instrument associated primarily with hunting scenes, but is used to accompany certain airs, and with the clarinets, at times, to form a quartet capable of sentimental or brilliant effects.

In the minuet which forms the central part of the overture to Boréades, the horns are given the principal melody (Ex. 5). A more typical use is illustrated in Example 6.¹ In Hippolyte, Act IV, scene 3, in addition to

Ex. 5

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a melodic line consisting of quarter and eighth notes, followed by a trill on a note, a grace note, and then a series of eighth notes. There are two boxed-in sections of music, one in the middle and one towards the end. The bottom staff is also in treble clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

¹Hippolyte: Act IV, scene 3.

Ex. 6

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 6, featuring Horns in D and Orchestra parts. The score is written on three systems of staves. The first system includes a Horns part in D major and an Orchestra part. The second system shows the continuation of the Horns and Orchestra parts. The third system features a trill in the Horns part and rests in the Orchestra part. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/8 time signature. The score is enclosed in a rectangular box.

using the horn with the chorus and the orchestral sections, Rameau adds its color to the air and dances which make up the divertissement. The horn in F is used in Les Fetes d'Hebe, and the four dances added later contain parts for two horns in D. The overture to La Temple de la Gloire uses horns in E in a majestic manner (Ex. 7). After 1750 Rameau used the horn with increasing frequency, often writing parts for the instrument which, because of range, demanded real virtuosity on the part of the performer.

The "timbales" or timpani, which were used in the Middle Ages for military fanfares and were introduced to French opera by Lully, are the most used among the percussion instruments. Rameau uses them for their power of rhythmic articulation in vigorous passages and he also appreciates the harmonic significance of the two tones which they produce, the essential sounds of the fundamental bass. In spite of his knowledge of their harmonic resources, Rameau failed to use the timbales elsewhere except in scenes of martial character (see example 7).

The other percussion instruments used by Rameau are the "tambour," the "tambourin" and the "tambour de basque."

The tambourin used by Rameau is the "tambourin de Provence," a very long drum but with a small diameter. It was used for dance accompaniment in the Middle Ages and was extremely popular during the time when Rameau was producing

his operatic works. Because of its simplicity -- it usually was played in a sustained manner only on the accented beats of the measure -- parts were not always in the score for this instrument, but its use was assumed. Rameau sometimes indicated its omission with such notes as these on the score:

"Without tambourin, gentle", or "With tambourin, hard."

The tambour de Basque is the equivalent of the modern tambourine. It was used on the stage rather than in the orchestra and was a favorite instrument for accompanying certain dances.

There is a curious use of the cannon in the fireworks scene which forms the first part of the overture to Acante et Céphise. The gunshots, simulated by fire-crackers or a handgun, are indicated on the score by the word "cannon" or the abbreviation C. placed on the desired point above the bass part. Written on the score is this notation: "The gunshots must go off exactly on the bass notes marked with a C, always on the first or second beat of the measure." In Acante there is also a part for a "tocsin" (a bell sound which reverberates) in repeated eighth notes to the unison of the bass continuo.

Orchestration

One of the most characteristic traits of Rameau is the variation of instrumentation for expressive purposes; he not only varies his combinations of instruments, but he plans instrumental coloring independent of the customs of his time.

The number of parts in French orchestration at this time is not determined in such a fixed manner as in the Italian writing. Extended passages in two parts are sometimes found such as the duet of the flutes and the violins in the "Air au rondeau for the Cupids" in the prologue of Hippolyte (Ex. 8). In this passage the duet is punctuated with passages for full orchestra. A minuet from Castor (Ex. 9)¹ is written almost entirely in two parts with varied instrumental groupings featuring contrasts in color and pitch.

Trio writing may or may not include the use of the clavecin. Performance with the clavecin, which permits an easy conception of the harmonic structure of the music, had been known since the beginning of the century and is used by Rameau for pieces of light character and for accompaniments. In writing without the clavecin, Rameau is particularly

¹Castor, prologue, p. 59.

Ex. 8

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves. The first staff is labeled "flutes" and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is labeled "violins" and contains a similar melodic line. The third staff features a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff includes a trill ("tr") and a dynamic marking of "Full". The fifth and sixth staves are labeled "orchestra" and contain a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two measures by a bar line.

Ex. 9

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 9, featuring four staves: Piccolo, Bassoon, Violins, and C.B. (Cello/Bass). The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The Piccolo and Bassoon parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the Violins and C.B. parts play a melodic line. The Piccolo and Bassoon parts are mostly rests, with some notes in the final measure. The Bassoon part has a sharp sign on the final note. The Violins and C.B. parts have a melodic line that starts in the second measure and continues through the fourth measure. The C.B. part has a sharp sign on the final note.

Ex. 9 (Continued)

A handwritten musical score for six staves, arranged in three pairs. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff is also in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The fourth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The fifth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The sixth staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The score is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. The first measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The second measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The third measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The fourth measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The fifth measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The sixth measure contains a melodic line in the top staff, followed by a repeat sign. The second and fourth staves contain melodic lines in the first two measures, followed by repeat signs. The third, fifth, and sixth staves contain melodic lines in the third, fourth, and fifth measures, followed by repeat signs. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and repeat signs.

Ex. 9 (continued)

A handwritten musical score for a six-part setting of a short exercise. The score is written on six staves. The top two staves are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom four staves are in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is organized into five measures. The first measure contains a whole rest on all staves. The second measure features a melodic line in the top two staves, consisting of eighth notes with slurs and accents, moving in a stepwise fashion. The bottom four staves have whole rests. The third measure continues the melodic line in the top two staves. The fourth measure continues the melodic line in the top two staves. The fifth measure concludes with a whole note in the top two staves and whole rests in the bottom four staves.

Ex. 9. (continued)

A handwritten musical score for five instruments: Piccolo, Bassoon, Violins, Viola, and B.C. The score is written on five staves. The Piccolo and Bassoon parts are in treble clef, while the Violins, Viola, and B.C. parts are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The Piccolo and Bassoon parts play a simple melody of quarter notes. The Violins part features a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Viola and B.C. parts play a simple bass line of quarter notes. The score is divided into five measures by vertical bar lines.

Ex. 9 (continued)

A handwritten musical score for a six-part ensemble, consisting of two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and two alto clefs. The score is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written in a clear, legible hand.

The score is organized as follows:

- Measure 1:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (G4, A4, B4, C5); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (C5, B4, A4, G4); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.
- Measure 2:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (D5, E5, F5, G5); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (G5, F5, E5, D5); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.
- Measure 3:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (A5, B5, C6, D6); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (D6, C6, B5, A5); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.
- Measure 4:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (E6, F6, G6, A6); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (A6, G6, F6, E6); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.
- Measure 5:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (B6, C7, D7, E7); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (E7, D7, C7, B6); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.
- Measure 6:** Treble clef 1: eighth-note ascending scale (F7, G7, A7, B7); Treble clef 2: eighth-note descending scale (B7, A7, G7, F7); Bass clef 1: whole rest; Bass clef 2: whole rest; Alto clef 1: whole rest; Alto clef 2: whole rest.

Ex. 9 (concluded)

A handwritten musical score for 'Ex. 9 (concluded)'. The score is written on eight staves, organized into four systems of two staves each. The top two staves of each system are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music consists of a complex melodic line in the upper staves and a simpler bass line in the lower staves. The piece concludes with a final whole note chord in the first staff of the fourth system.

fond of a trio of violins whose upper parts can be doubled by the flutes (Ex. 10).¹ The bass part may be played by the basses of the petite choeur or the haute-contre.

Ex. 10

Moderé
1st Vln. - Fluo.

1st Vln. - Fluo.

2nd Vln. with clar.

Writing in four parts is the most ordinary division of voices in the orchestration of Rameau. The strings may be divided in this fashion: violins, two parts of haute-contre

¹Hippolyte, prologue. Prelude to air and chorus "Quel doux concerts."

and tailles, and bass, with or without clavecin. Rameau also wrote two violin parts, one part of haute-contre and tailles, and the basses. The last arrangement became the rule in the later works of Rameau -- probably because of the Italian influence -- and thus forms the modern quartet. Other quartet formations are used. Three oboes may be combined with violins, or two clarinets and two horns may play four-part harmony. In Dardanus we find the use of a quartet of oboes and bassoons and a quartet of strings used as an accompaniment (Ex. 11).¹ Rameau uses the current forms but he reserves the right to vary the instrumentation according to his inspiration or fancy.

This is also true in the writing for five parts, a rather wornout heritage from Lully. In his Traité, Rameau discusses the tradition of Lully and enumerates the five string parts which were almost sacred from long use, but, from Hippolyte on, he adopts the new order popular since the Regency: first violins, second violins, haute-contre and tailles, and bass. This division, with the uniting of the haute-contre and tailles, permits the formation of the quartet which is the basis of present-day orchestration. Writing in five parts, however, did appear in the later works, but in other forms. Scoring for violins (doubled

¹Dardanus, Act IV, scene 2, p. 364.

Lentement
Oboc I

Ex. II

Oboc II

Bsns

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Voice

Ob.

Monstre af-freux!

The image shows a handwritten musical score for an orchestral and vocal piece. The score is organized into nine staves. The top staff is for Oboe I, followed by Oboe II, Bassoons, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Voice, and Contrabass. The tempo is marked 'Lentement'. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The music is divided into four measures. The vocal line enters in the third measure with the text 'Monstre af-freux!'. The woodwinds and strings provide accompaniment throughout the piece.

by the piccolos), oboes, "parties," bassoons and basses may be found.

Orchestration in more than five independent parts is found only in rare cases, since the multiplication of parts was not necessary for the projection of the musical expression. In the second act of Hippolyte there is an ensemble of eight parts, seven of which are strings. This example is a descriptive symphony of the "shuddering of the waves" and the adding of instrumental voices is, no doubt, an attempt to picture the confused murmur and disordered agitation of the water (Ex. 12).¹

There is freedom in the combination of orchestral colors, although Rameau does not discard the old custom of grouping instruments of the same family in trios and quartets. The string group, in four or five parts, often alternates its color with that of the oboe trio, or with the full orchestra. Actually, there is less alternation of instrumental families in the music of Rameau than in that of Lully. Flutes or trumpets in four or five parts are no longer found in the orchestra as they were in the seventeenth century. A new taste in orchestration has developed, a taste for the less massive and more varied.

The most simple form of this new technique is doubling,

¹Hippolyte, Act II, p. 255. "Frémissement des Flots."

Ex. 12

The musical score for Ex. 12 consists of six staves, each representing a different instrument. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The instruments are: Bsn. (Bassoon), Vln. I (Violin I), Vln. II (Violin II), Vln. III (Violin III), Vlas. (Viola), and B.C. (Bassoon/Contrabass). The music is written in a unison style, with all instruments playing the same melodic line. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and there are repeat signs at the end of each staff.

which consists of having the same part played in unison or at the octave by two or more instruments. This practice is not new; there are many instances in the works of earlier composers of the doubling of violins and oboes, violins and flutes, violins and trumpets, basses and bassoons. The overture to La Temple de la Gloire has parts for flute and piccolo, oboes, bassoon, trumpets, horns, percussion and strings, but, in most cases, the harmony is four-part with

doubling at the octave or unison. Instances of this practice found in Rameau that are not so usual are the combinations of violins and piccolos, oboes and trumpets, horns and trumpets, horns and oboes, clarinets and oboes, and clarinets and violins. This doubling was, no doubt, used only for the reinforcement of parts, and not for color or expressive possibilities. We do find this note on the score of the first act of Boreades: "Everywhere there is 'Doux' or D, it is always necessary to exclude the oboes, bassoons and piccolos unless that is written for these instruments."

The custom of dividing several of the principal instruments into parts was already widespread at the time of Rameau. This is especially true in the case of the violins, the oboes, the flutes and the trumpets. The division into three parts, which is rather frequent in the last operas of Handel, is often found in the works of Rameau beginning with Hippolyte, where the air of Phèdre is accompanied by the violins divided in such a manner (Ex. 13). There is also an instance of a division into four parts in the final scene of Le temple de la Gloire. In this scene, "Ramage de oiseaux," Rameau seems to be actually looking for instrumental color. The same is true in the scene of the "Annonce du géolier" from Paladins in which Rameau directs that half the violins use the bow and the other half play pizzicato.

Ex. 13

The image shows a musical score for three violin parts, labeled Vln I, Vln I, and Vln II. The score is written in 6/8 time and consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system shows the initial entries of the three parts. The second system shows the parts continuing with various rhythmic and melodic patterns. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f'.

Sometimes instruments ordinarily used in single parts are divided. In the "Frémissement" of Hippolyte (Ex. 9), the basses are divided. This is found again in Zoroastre and in Boréades, but in rather brief passages. The bassoons are so treated more often and in longer passages, but writing for them in a single part is much more frequent.

There is often found a counterpoint of colors, in which

instruments of the different families are assigned to the various levels of the harmonic structure, or one family may play sustained chords while the melody is given to a contrasting instrument. At times the instruments interweave freely in a kind of delicate counterpoint, taking the form of instrumental dialogue, flutes with violins, violins with oboes or trumpets, or even the bassoons with the basses.

All the instruments in Rameau's orchestra have more independence in their relation to the full ensemble than that commonly found before his time. This independence is due in part to Rameau's subtle use of polyphony. He was not a great contrapuntist, but through the use of this form of composition, he was able to attain more variety in color and melodic development.

CHAPTER II

RAMEAU'S USE OF HARMONY AND COUNTERPOINT

Rameau's interest in the theoretical aspects of the harmonic practices of his day is reflected in his operative works. Although he clarified the principles of harmony, he actually added little that was new to the materials of music and to the harmonic procedures current in his day. But we do find exceptional originality in his use of modulations and his acceptance of certain chords not generally in use at this time. Rameau's construction of music is based on the principles set forth in his writings. Most of his practices are not new -- almost all of them had been used by composers prior to his time -- but he was the first to coordinate them into an idea which depends on a system of harmony based on the physical phenomenon of resonance.

His system of tonality and modulation is deliberately planned with reference to the expressive function of keys; it might be said that modulations control the whole musical and dramatic structure of his works for the stage. Although he was a firm supporter of the system of equal temperament,

Rameau believed that each diatonic key had its own expressive aptitude, peculiar to itself. In the major, the keys of C, D and A are suitable for picturing happiness and rejoicing. The keys of F and B flat should be used for expressing fury and stormy emotions; G and E may be used for the "chants tendres et gais"; D, A and E contain elements of the magnificent. In the minor, the keys of D, G, B or E are suitable for the "douceur et la tendresse"; C and F may be used for "la tendresse" and "les plaintes" while F and B flat are appropriate to "les chants lugubres."

The basis of Rameau's tonal pattern is the relationship between tonic, dominant and subdominant, or, in the minor, between tonic and the relative major. Modulation toward the dominant indicates an increase in animation, joy or serenity. A modulation to the subdominant usually implies an increase in gloom, solemnity or intensity. Most of the dramatic effects are accompanied by a modulation downward such as found in the musical setting of the appearance of the monster in Hippolyte.

Moments of great dramatic stress are often accompanied by a modulation to the key of the major submediant. An instance of this sort is found in the music accompanying the metamorphosis of the statue in Pygmalion where the tonality changes from G to a radiant E major (Ex. 14).¹ In

¹Pygmalion, p. 25.

the eighth measure of the overture to Zaïs (Ex. 30) there is an abrupt modulation from the tonality of F sharp minor to F minor, an apt bit of pictorial representation of the chaotic state of the elements which have been separated.

In the "Trio des Parques" of the second act of Hippolyte, there is a modulatory passage which was so extreme in its day that the members of the orchestra had difficulty in performing it. In the beginning of this passage (Ex. 15),¹ the pattern of chords is D major (the dominant of the key), F sharp minor, C sharp major and F minor. To our ears this is not too radical since there is an enharmonic relation between the chords that is quite logically exploited. In Rameau's time, the use of such a sequence was startling, indeed.

Chromatic passages are often found. When in ascent, they convey a sense of mounting excitement; in the descending form, they suggest moods of sadness (Ex. 16).²

¹Hippolyte: Act II, scene 5, p. 184.

²Castor: Prelude to Act I (the funeral of Castor).

Ex. 14

The musical score is written in three systems. The first system is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Lui seul pouvait rassem- bler tant de". The piano accompaniment consists of a bass line and a treble line. The second system continues the vocal line with "char - - - mes" and features a key signature change to C major (no sharps or flats). The piano accompaniment includes a treble line with a melodic line and a bass line with chords. The third system continues the piano accompaniment, with the key signature changing to D major (two sharps). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, bar lines, and dynamic markings like 'm'.

Ex. 15

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 15, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes various chords and melodic lines with accidentals and dynamics.

Ex. 16

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 16, consisting of two systems of two staves each. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes various chords and melodic lines with accidentals and dynamics.

In Rameau's system of harmony, the greatest interval found in the chord is the factor that determines its use and its place in his harmonic scheme for expressive purposes. Chords with diminished intervals serve one purpose; chords which contain enharmonic tones serve another. The basic major and minor triads link these in the framework of modulations and cadences.

Writing in unison or octaves is used at times for expressive purposes. The "prelude of the basses" (bass instruments and continuo) announces a statement or a dramatic situation of importance. A unison passage in a chorus may emphasize important phrases of the text or underline exceptionally dramatic moments. Orchestral unisons appear in such situations, an example being found in the frenetic postlude of the "Act of the Incas" in Les Indes galantes.

Rameau considers the fifth as the smallest interval which can contain a real chord. This interval is used for expressive purposes only when it is altered. The diminished fifth denotes trouble and anxiety. But it is in his use of the augmented fifth that Rameau shows the most originality (Ex. 17).¹ It may be used in the minor mode without suggesting a modulation, and the leading tone is often in the

¹Castor: Act III, scene 2, p. 171.

Ex. 17

Phébé

Partageant le des-tin ou la sureur te

livre In-grat, j'ai su fai mer et je saurai te

sui-vre

upper voice. At times, a seventh may be added to this chord, a tone that is a part of the dominant chord of the key to which the accidental of the augmented fifth seems to suggest a modulation (Ex. 18).¹ The diminished fifth is explained by Rameau as a chord made up of two minor thirds

¹Dardanus: Act III, scene 3.

Anténoir Ex. 18

A son sort elle a don-ne des lar- - - mes

7 #5 6 4 5/5 4 7 7

hence its tendency to create a mood of sadness.¹

The chord of the added sixth is the greatest innovation to the harmonic system devised by Rameau. The term "added sixth" is applied to all major sixths added to major chords. The added interval is most often used with a subdominant chord to bring about a conclusive cadence since it has in its musical content an expression of waiting or preparation which comes from its tonal function and its characteristic interval. (This particular chord is most commonly identified as the supertonic seventh chord at the present time.) Rameau considers this chord a basic one (as Rameau says, "primitive"), even though the added sixth forms a dissonance within the chord. Although the chord may be

¹Traité, page 55.

inverted to form a seventh chord, he does not consider it related to the chord of the seventh. In the minor mode the chord has a striking appearance because of the augmented fourth which appears between the third of the chord and the added sixth when the chord is built on the subdominant (Ex. 19).¹ Rameau also used the augmented sixth in which the two leading tones of the chord resolve to the octave, but he used it rarely (Ex. 20).²

Ex. 19

The image shows two systems of handwritten musical notation. Each system consists of two staves, likely representing a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various chord symbols and intervals, with a specific focus on the augmented sixth interval mentioned in the text. The first system shows a sequence of chords, and the second system continues the sequence with similar structures.

¹Dardanus: Act I, p. 192. Chord Sequence.

²Castor: Act I, scene 4, p. 84. Chorus of warriors.

Ex. 20

The musical score for Ex. 20 is written on two staves. The top staff is for the voice and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'lent' for the first six measures and 'Vive' for the last two. The lyrics are: 'Qu'une om-bre plain-tive en jou-isse'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The first six measures are in 4/4 time, and the last two are in 2/4 time.

The chord of the seventh is used by Rameau with greater frequency than by his predecessors. It is the principal source of prepared and unprepared dissonances which Rameau recommends for either tender or vehement expressions. The major seventh appears without preparation in the dominant chords; in other chords, it is usually prepared (Ex. 21).¹ Progressions of sevenths may be found in his music. Seventh chords may be used for expressive purposes or the seventh may be added to increase the sonority of the chord.

The major seventh has its own individuality and the chord that contains it is "hard and noisy" according to Rameau. The use of the chord is rather exceptional, since it requires careful preparation. The seventh most often

¹Dardanus: Act I, "air vif," after chorus of the warriors.

Ex. 2

The musical score is handwritten and consists of six staves. The first two staves are a piano introduction in 3/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The next two staves show a vocal line with triplets and a piano accompaniment. The final two staves feature a melodic line with triplets and a piano accompaniment, ending with a fermata.

appears in the form of a suspension marking a particular accent of the dialogue -- a cry of terror, a plea, or a violent moment in a descriptive passage (Ex. 22).¹

¹Les Indes galantes: Act I, scene 2, p. 86.

Emilie Ex. 22

Vaste em-pi-re de mers ou tri-

Flute, bassoon
and strings

om-... ple l'hor-reur

The diminished seventh chord is often used, without preparation, and usually for the purpose of modulation. Like other chords which contain the interval of the minor third, its principal expressive purpose is to suggest

sadness (Ex. 23).¹

Ex. 23

Sans Lenteur Venus

Trou - bles cru - els soup - çons

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

Rameau made the chord of the ninth a part of the harmonic vocabulary of his time. He used the ninth and the eleventh chords without preparation according to his own rule that "ninth and eleventh chords always need to be prepared, except when they accompany the leading tone."² In Example 24,³ there are two successive ninths, each prepared. The first is on the subdominant and resolves

¹Dardanus: prologue, p. 49.

²Nouveau système de musique théorique (1726), p. 74.

³Les Fêtes d'Hébé: Act II, scene 4.

itself to the chord of the seventh; the second ninth is actually a suspension.

Violins Ex. 24

Iphise
Pro- te- quez dieux puis- sants un he-

B.C.
6 9 7 9

ros que ja do- re

6 5

Because of the intervals formed by the outer tones of the eleventh chord, Rameau liked to relate it to the interval of the fourth. This chord usually appears as a seventh chord of the dominant placed above the fundamental tone of the tonic of the key and is frequently analysed as

a dominant seventh chord over a tonic pedal. It is used in moments of agitation in scenes of the operas. An example may be found in Hippolyte in the music which describes the appearance of the monster (Ex. 25).¹ In chords of the eleventh, the ninth may or may not be omitted.

Ex. 25

assez animé

Flute, oboe and bassoon in octaves

Strings

There is one instance of the use of the chord of the thirteenth at the beginning of the earthquake scene in Les Indes galantes.

¹Hippolyte: Act IV, scene 3, p. 306.

Despite the fact that these chords, unusual in the time of Rameau, are used in his works, the harmonic patterns which are most typical of the composer are rather simple, since, in the rules that he made for himself, the greatest power of expression does not lie in harmonic complexity, but is found in the observance of the tonal functions of harmony and the manner in which its materials are used.

Rameau's use of counterpoint will be discussed to some extent in the chapters dealing with the orchestral music and the music for choral ensembles.

His major interest was harmony and the contrapuntal devices which he used were for the sole purpose of adding interest to his harmonic structures, or for the observance of traditional uses of polyphonic writing in certain musical forms such as the overture.

Traditionally, the second part of the French overture is fugal. Rameau used this style of composition to introduce that section of the overture, but not according to the rules of strict counterpoint. The entrances of the voices may be regular, or they may be altered in whatever ways suit Rameau's fancy. In the first answer to the subject of the fugal beginning of the second part of the overture to Hippolyte the subject appears in inversion.

(Ex. 26).¹

Vile Ex. 26

In the "Prelude for the Adoration of the Sun" from Les Indes galantes, what seems to be a fugal passage becomes only an instance of imitation which is strict in no sense of the word (Ex. 27).² The fugal sections of the choruses are only brief statements, in fugal style, of subjects which are never developed contrapuntally.

¹Hippolyte: Overture to the opera.

²Les Indes galantes: Act of the Incas.

Ex. 27

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 27, consisting of two systems of five staves each. The instruments are Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The score is written in treble clef with a 2/2 time signature. The first system shows the initial measures, with the Flute part starting with a whole rest and the Violin and Viola parts beginning with a half note. The second system continues the piece, featuring more complex rhythmic patterns and accidentals (sharps) in the upper staves.

Ex. 27 (concluded)

A handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Ex. 27 (concluded)". The score is written on ten staves, organized into two systems of five staves each. The first system includes a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs. The second system continues the piece with similar notation, ending with a double bar line and a fermata. The handwriting is clear and legible.

The use of contrapuntal techniques enriches the music of Rameau, but his medium of expression is found in his system of harmony and he never allows himself to stray too far from it.

CHAPTER III

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

At the time of Rameau orchestral music was much more important in French opera than in Italian, which placed the emphasis on the aria. There are two kinds of music for the orchestra alone found in the operas of Rameau: that which is related to the action of the opera, and the music for dancing. The dramatic music for orchestra may be divided into three classifications: overtures, descriptive music, and preludes and interludes.

The Overtures

In the beginning of the history of opera there was no relation between the overture and the opera itself, but, more and more, the overture was inspired by the drama. The French overture was composed of two sections: the first slow and majestic and with a dotted rhythm; the second, fugal and in faster tempo. A slow section was sometimes added to conclude the movement.

In the overtures to the operas of Rameau there is

usually found a relationship to the opera whether the thematic material appears later in the opera or not. In the overture to Castor, the theme of the first section is the same as that of the "Entrée des Astres" which opens the final scene of the opera (Ex. 28).¹ In Platée the first part of the overture is similar to the scene of the second act which announces the arrival of the "Folie" thus indicating the buffoon nature of the opera (Ex. 29).² The overture to Zaïs paints the development of chaos and the shock of the elements after they have been separated, thus anticipating the first two scenes of the prologue (Ex. 30).³ In this scene Rameau uses the kettledrums and brusque juxtapositions of dissonant tonalities in a Beethoven-like manner. The second part of the overture is polyphonic and polyrhythmic.

The overture to Nais is linked to the dramatic action of the opera without pause. It paints the noise of war and the tumultuous movement of Titans and giants climbing up to the sky in a most effective manner. The second part of the overture, which is characterized by abrupt rhythms and harmonic hardness, is used to accompany the Titan chorus which opens the prologue with the cry "Let us attack the

¹Overture to Castor.

²Platée: Overture.

³Zaïs: Overture.

Ex. 28

Handwritten musical notation for the first system of Ex. 28. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 2/4. The music includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure of the second staff.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system of Ex. 28. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 2/4. The music includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and a fermata in the final measure of both staves.

Vite

Handwritten musical notation for the third system of Ex. 28. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 3/4. The music includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and a fermata. Labels "Vln I" and "Vln II" are present above the staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system of Ex. 28. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 3/4. The music includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and trills (tr.) in the final measure of both staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system of Ex. 28. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 3/4. The music includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and trills (tr.) in the final measure of both staves. A label "Vla." is present above the bass staff.

Ex. 29

Lent

1st Vln - Fl.
+ ob + Bass

Vif

Lent

Vif

Ex. 30

lent

Str.

Tambour (voilé)

Str. & Reeds

en peu vite

The musical score is written on six systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning in D major, 2/4 time, with a tempo marking of 'lent'. The second system introduces a 'Tambour (voilé)' and 'Str. & Reeds'. The third system continues the piece. The fourth system features a key signature change to D minor and a tempo change to 'en peu vite'. The fifth system continues in D minor. The sixth system concludes the piece in D minor.

heavens," thus linking the overture and the dramatic presentation.

The omission of the prologue to Zoroastre (1749) gives the overture more importance and allows it to replace the prologue. Instead of using it as a prelude, Rameau conceives it as a resumé of the whole opera, a kind of programmatic symphony which suggests the scenes of the plot. Rameau, himself, suggests the program. The first part is a strong and moving demonstration of the barbaric power of Abramans and the moaning of the people whom he oppresses. A sweet silence follows; hope is born again. The second part is a lively and laughing image of Zoroastre and the happiness of the people whom he has delivered from oppression. The development of these ideas is not extensive, but the details are rendered clearly and in a musical manner.

Acante et Céphise, produced two years after Zoroastre, also has a programmatic overture. It makes reference to the event which was the occasion for this heroic work, the birth of the Duke of Burgundy. This overture has three parts: The Vows of the Nation, a kind of prelude, in a slow tempo and seventeen measures long; Fireworks, a section in binary form for large orchestra and preceded by five measures of tocsin and punctuated by cannon shots; and a Fanfare, joyous and martial with a rhythmic repetition on the same note of the cry "long live the King."

The last two works of Rameau also connect the overture to the main body of the works. The overture to the Paladins contains a gay air which is found later in the Chinese divertissement of the third act. The overture to Boréades ties up directly with the beginning of the action. The final allegro of the overture is a characteristic hunting air and the first scene begins with the words of Alphise, "Follow the hunt." One also hears the call of the horns in the middle of the recitative which follows. In scene two, when Borilee returns from the hunt, the orchestra recalls the allegro theme of the overture.

The one act operas are so short they do not always have real overtures; instead, they may have a ritornelle which precedes the beginning of the opera ballet. However, three of these works do have overtures: Pygmalion, Daphnis et Églé and La Naissance d'Osiris. The overture to Pygmalion (Ex. 31)¹ is a brilliant one and is, to some extent, pictorial since it imitates the noise of the sculptor's workshop. La Naissance d'Osiris uses the rondeau of the overture for the final contredanse.

In the ballet-opera, the overture would not be linked with the action since there are as many subjects as there are acts. At most, it might be linked with the prologue,

¹Pygmalion: overture. Oboes, bassoons and strings.

Ex. 31

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 31, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is in G major and 2/4 time. The first system includes a 'piano' marking. The second system includes a 'piano' marking. The third system includes a 'piano' marking. The fourth system includes a 'piano' marking. The fifth system includes a 'piano' marking.

Ex. 31 (concluded)

which may include ideas common to all the acts; however, the subject of the prologue is generally insignificant and without dramatic interest. The overture to the ballet-opera may be brilliant, but it is usually purely decorative.

Form in the Overture

The form of the overture varies according to Rameau's fancy and its suitability for use. He did not imitate Lully in the use of a standardized form. In his first operas Rameau often used the form of Lully, but he introduced new ideas foreshadowing future developments.

The overtures to Hippolyte and Les Indes galantes

(Ex. 32)¹ use the Lully model -- the first part slow and in recitative style, the second part rapid and in polyphonic style. Hippolyte and Castor have allusions to the action of the opera. The second part of the overture to Castor contains three themes combined in a happy fashion and is one hundred measures long.

Rameau has made some use of the Italian overture in modified form. Daphnis et Eglé has an overture constructed in this fashion -- a "lent" of fifteen measures and a pair of minuets. La Naissance d'Osiris has an overture made up of a rondeau, an andante and a brilliant allegro for a finale. Paladins begins with a lively movement followed by an adagio of twenty measures ending on the dominant and, finally, a minuet en rondeau which is rhythmically interesting. The overture to Boréades is trite in nature, but includes a minuet and a hunting air which leads directly into the action. The Italian influence is found in these overtures, but the three-part form is used with great liberty.²

Rameau did the most important orchestral writing in France before the time of the French symphonists and the influence of his innovations may be seen in their works. Before this time overtures had been somewhat indifferent

¹Les Indes galantes: overture. Flute, oboe and strings.

²Masson, Paul-Marie: L'Opéra de Rameau, pp. 317-326.

Lento

Ex. 32

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of eight systems of two staves each. The first system is marked 'Lento' and 'Ex. 32'. The second system continues the piece. The third system has a 'Vite' (Allegro) marking. The fourth system has a 'Fl. Ob. Vla I' marking. The fifth system has a 'Vln II, Vla.' marking. The sixth system has a 'Bsn & Vlc.' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

compositions. Now they begin to challenge the imagination of the composer.

Descriptive Music

Descriptive music is written to accompany the action of the drama. It complements with sound that which is seen on the stage. The characteristics of descriptive music stem from the Court Ballet music which underlined the action of mute dramatization on the stage. Such music may represent a subtle imitation of nature, natural phenomena, or simple acts of movement on the stage.

Music describing storms has always fascinated the French composer and Rameau is no exception. He has a fine description of a marine tempest in the first act of Les Indes galantes which, although it covers only sixteen measures, is filled with foaming tones, tremolos in triple quavers, and some exciting modulations near the end (Ex. 33).¹ In Hippolyte there is a section of eighteen measures which is entitled the "Trembling of the Tides" where eight different types of instruments are joined to produce a confusion of sounds. The fourth act of Hippolyte contains another "Noise of the Sea and the Winds" which announces the

¹Les Indes galantes, 1st Entrée, scene 2, p. 82.

Ex. 33

Flote

Vns.

Vla.

Cb.

Fl.

Vns.

Vla.

Cb.

EX. 33 (concluded)

Flute

va - ge

appearance of the monster and uses melodic figurations more or less like those described above. In Les Fêtes d'Hebé the agitation of the river is pictured by a design of the same type played by all the orchestra and accompanied with a chorus of mariners singing "Heaven, O Heaven! The river is agitating its wave." In Les Fêtes de l'Hymen it is a flood of the Nile which is pictured first by the growling of the cataracts (a noise similar to thunder), then by a cascade of notes which accompany the air of Canope and the double chorus "Impetuous currents."

Finally, among the natural phenomena which inspire terror, Rameau has pictured an earthquake. This scene from Les Indes galantes (Ex. 34)¹ is an interlude of about seventy measures containing two bits of choral work sung by the terrified people. The melody is mostly made of tremolos and repeated patterns of chords which are combined with the threatening rhythms of the bassoons and basses. The harmonic patterns used give this passage unusual depth, since they contain, especially in the passage between the two choruses, modulations of extraordinary audacity for that period coupled with much chromaticism and dissonance.

¹Les Indes galantes, Act of the Incas, p. 206.

Ex. 34

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 34, featuring five staves: Bassoon (Bsn), Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), Viola (Vla), and Cello (Cb). The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The Bassoon part is mostly silent. Violin I and II play simple melodic lines. The Viola and Cello parts feature more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs and chords. The score is divided into two systems of four measures each.

Ex. 34 (continued)

The musical score is arranged in six staves. The top two staves are for Flute and Oboe, both of which are silent (indicated by a horizontal line) in the first two measures and play a whole note in the third measure. The Bassoon staff shows a melodic line starting in the first measure, continuing through the second, and ending in the third. The Violins and Viola staves play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes in the first two measures, followed by a change to a different rhythmic pattern in the third measure. The C.B. (Cello/Bass) staff follows a similar pattern to the Violins. The dynamic markings 'doux', 'plus fort', and 'très fort' are placed below the Bassoon staff to indicate the intended volume for each measure.

Ex. 34 (concluded).

A handwritten musical score for a six-part exercise, titled "Ex. 34 (concluded)". The score is written on six staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music is organized into three measures. The first measure contains simple rhythmic patterns: the top two staves have half notes, and the bottom four staves have quarter notes. The second measure continues these patterns with some variations in rhythm and pitch. The third measure is more complex, featuring sixteenth-note runs in the top two staves and sixteenth-note chords in the bottom four staves. The notation is clear and legible, with some handwritten corrections and markings.

Rameau also likes to picture the less terrifying aspects of nature such as the "Clearing up of Chaos" in the overture to Zais (Ex. 30). The movement of peaceful waters is suggested according to the traditional procedure by subtle diatonic designs which form the prelude and the accompaniment of the chorus of divinities of the sea in the last act of Nais. The rising of the sun has been the inspiration for several pictures of unusual instrumental and harmonic coloring. In the prologue to Zais there is a section of seven measures entitled "L'Aurore" (Ex. 35)¹ where the dawning light is suggested through the successive entrances of several instruments. The picture is continued in the following scene by the "Lever du soleil" (Ex. 36)² which is accompanied by scintillating arpeggios of detached notes played by the violins against a sustained background of instrumental color.

The concerts of the birds are included in the pictures of the awakening of Nature. "Amorous nightingale, respond to our voices" from Hippolyte et Aricie is a dialogue between the voice of the shepherdess and the warbling of the flutes. In the Temple de la Gloire there is a similar section of twenty measures for orchestra alone and it con-

¹Zais: prologue, L'Aurore, p. 28.

²Zais: prologue, Lever du soleil, p. 30.

Ex. 35

assez lent

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The top staff is for Oboe (Oboe), the second for Bassoon (Bsn), the third and fourth are for Violins (Vlms), the fifth for Alto Horn (AH), and the bottom for Trombone (Cb). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo marking is *assez lent*. The score consists of five measures. In the first measure, the Oboe and Bassoon have whole rests, while the Violins play a triplet of eighth notes. In the second measure, the Oboe has a whole rest, the Bassoon has a quarter rest, and the Violins play a quarter note. In the third measure, all instruments play quarter notes. In the fourth measure, the Oboe has a whole rest, the Bassoon has a quarter rest, and the Violins play a quarter note. In the fifth measure, all instruments play quarter notes, with the Oboe and Bassoon playing a sixteenth-note triplet.

Ex. 36

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 36, featuring staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), Viola (Vla), and Cello (Cb.). The score is in 2/2 time and D major. The Flute part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4. The Oboe part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4. The Bassoon part begins with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G3. The Violin I part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then a quarter note B4, then a quarter note C5, then a quarter note B4, then a quarter note A4, then a quarter note G4. The Violin II part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4. The Viola part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4. The Cello part begins with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G3. The score concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

tinues as the accompaniment of the air of Trajan "These birds by their singing." The "agreeable locations" and the "delicious gardens" imagined by the poets are also musically described by Rameau in his operas.

Pauses in the action of the drama or the movement of groups of people involved in the action are responsible for other purely orchestral music. These sections are usually brief, but, at times, there may be a long development of the musical material. In scenes depicting events of marvelous character, they may distract the attention of the audience from the stage. In the fourth act of Dardanus there are two bits of orchestral music to accompany the apparition of the monster. The first one (the monster coming up from the waves) is fourteen measures long. It ends on the dominant and proceeds without interruption to the second (the ravage of the monster), thirty-one quick measures (Ex. 37).¹ The threatening rhythms, the rapid figurations of the strings and the inevitable drums underline this tense situation in a very plausible manner.

Sudden changes of scene, dictated by supernatural powers, are also accompanied by appropriate music, the length of which is determined by the needs of the situation.

¹ Dardanus: act IV, The ravage of the monster.

Ex. 37

The musical score for Ex. 37 is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It consists of six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system continues the melodic and bass lines. The third system features a double bar line and repeat signs, indicating a section that is repeated. The fourth system continues the melodic and bass lines. The fifth system shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The sixth system concludes the piece with a final melodic and bass line.

Music is also used during certain violent actions on the part of persons on the stage to reinforce the animation and the noise. Fights, be they individual or collective, are the most natural inspiration for music of this sort. When Dardanus fights the monster, kills it and brings Antenor on the scene, seven measures of "tunes and batteries" accompany the exploit. The collective fights, difficult to represent on the stage, usually take place behind it and the music evoked by such situations is designated by the title "Noise of War."

The noise of war (Ex. 38)¹ is a part of the tradition of battles in music and has been used in French opera from its beginning. In the fourth act of Dardanus, a work of great dramatic power, the noise of war which is heard toward the middle of scene four plays an important part in the entire finale of the act. These echoes of the fight which come to the doors of the prison are combined with the moving dialogue of Dardanus. After the end of this scene when Dardanus again joins the fighters, the noise of war is heard and developed in a purely symphonic manner for more than fifty measures. The first act of Castor ends with a double noise of war. First there is a section of

¹Dardanus: "Noise of War" for entr'acte.

Ex. 38

Musical score for Ex. 38, featuring five staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), and Bassoon (Bsn). The score is in 2/4 time and consists of two measures. The Flute and Clarinet parts are mostly rests. The Violins, Viola, and Bassoon parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Fl.

Cl.

Vlns.

Vla.

Bsn

twenty measures entitled "War," after which the voices of the invisible warriors announce the death of Castor; then for an entr'acte, there is a noise of war of thirty measures suggesting the battle fought by Pollux to avenge his brother.

The use of music during the entr'acte posed several problems in the time of Rameau. At this time it was customary for the orchestra to continue playing during the intermissions, most often repeating a dance borrowed from the preceding scene until the beginning of the next act. During the first entr'acte, the overture was often played again. Under such conditions, the spectators had to consider this interlude as a continuation of the drama, and the music performed did not always agree with the dramatic situation. A joyous dance might follow a sad scene and destroy the desired effect of the action. In most of his operas Rameau follows the customs of the period, but in Dardanus, as we have mentioned before, he actually composed music for the entr'acte which was original and which formed a continuation of the spirit of the drama.

Rameau does not achieve the fusion of orchestral music with the drama found in the works of the composers of the nineteenth century, but he did anticipate the use of form and thematic development which found a place in the works of subsequent composers.

CHAPTER IV

THE DANCES

Most of the dance forms used by Rameau were those which were popular in his time. The choice of a dance for a particular scene was determined by the expressive need of the moment. Each of the traditional dances had a general character; its use was determined by the dramatic situation and the nature of the characters involved in the action. The individuality of the dance depended on its meter, tempo, and certain details of construction.

The dances of two beats employed by Rameau are, in increasing order of speed, the gavotte, the bourrée, the rigaudon, the tambourin and the contredanse. To these may be added those dances in which each of the two beats has a ternary division, the loure, the forlane and the gigue.

The gavotte is the slowest dance in two beats (modéré). It is usually written in 2/2 meter and, in its normal form, begins on the second beat of the measure. Its normal expression is one of vivacious and sweet gaiety. The speed of the dance may vary to some extent according to the notations on the score such as "gavotte un peu lent,"

"gavotte légère et gracieuse," "gavotte gai" and "gavotte vive." These variations of speed correspond to certain secondary nuances, but they are never strong enough to alter the character of the expression to a great extent. In the prologue to Zaïs, Rameau links three gavottes which alternate between minor and major tonalities and have subtle variations in mood (Ex. 39a and 39b).

The bourrée, a faster dance than the gavotte, is used less frequently because it can express little else than popular joy. For such purposes, Rameau prefers the rigaudon which is quite similar to the bourrée. Both have the same meter, they start on the last quarter of the measure and often use syncopation on the second half of the first beat of the measure (Ex. 40).¹

In the Rameau operas the rigaudon is the most frequently used dance in two beats and in quick tempo. It appears in French opera toward the end of the seventeenth century, but Lully did not use it. It is written in 2/2 meter or 2/4 and starts on the last beat of the measure. It is suitable for animated expressions of joy which may vary in character as do the first "rigaudon au tambourin" in the third act of Hippolyte, which has the robust vigor of

¹Les Fêtes d'Hébé, prologue, p. 39.

Ex. 39 a

Moderé

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of six systems of two staves each. The first system is marked 'Moderé' and includes dynamic markings 'p' and 'f'. The second system includes an 'm' marking above the first staff. The third system includes a 'p' marking above the second staff. The fourth system includes a 'tr' marking above the second staff. The fifth system is marked 'Fin' above the first staff. The sixth system concludes the piece. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs.

Ex. 40

The musical score for Ex. 40 is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a treble staff containing a melodic line and a bass staff with a supporting bass line. The second system features accents (marked 'm') over notes in the treble staff. The third system includes a repeat sign in the treble staff. The fourth system has a slur over a melodic phrase in the treble staff. The fifth system continues the melodic and bass lines.

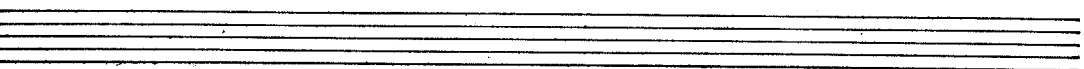
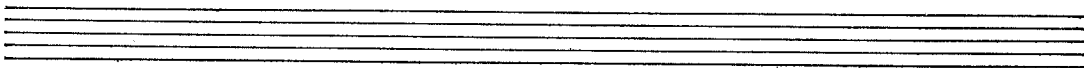
Ex. 40 (concluded)

Handel, and the two "rigaudons en rondeau" from the first entrée of Les Indes galantes (Ex. 41)¹ which are filled with graceful joy, or the rigaudons in the last act of Dardanus which express pure and celestial joy.

¹Les Indes galantes, first entrée, "The Generous Turk."



Ex. 41



The tambourin (Ex. 42),¹ which originated in Provence, is more animated than the rigaudon. It is especially adaptable to the expression of wild joy, the accompanying dance being filled with leaps. It is written in 2/4 meter, and may begin on either beat of the measure (more often on the second). The bass uses a repetition of the same note as much as possible to simulate the striking of the tambourin. This dance form is peculiar to the eighteenth century. It is not used by Lully and makes its appearance in opera at the time of the Regency. The tambourin appears in the greater part of Rameau's operas and always with the same character of frantic jubilation, but the melodic variations suggest varied interpretations to the dancers.

The contredanse is similar to the tambourin except that the repeated bass notes are omitted; however, it does have a more popular character. In the ballroom it was danced by four, six, or eight people, usually following the dancing of minuets which involve more participants. In his operas Rameau uses it to express popular rejoicing, often after the singing of a chorus. Its melody is always simple, intriguing and easy to remember. Because of its less serious nature, Rameau uses the contredanse only in

¹From Castor, prologue, p. 53.

Ex. 42

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 42, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is in G major and 2/4 time. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 2/4. The score features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble and a bass line in the bass. The second system continues the melodic development. The third system features a more complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes. The fourth system shows a melodic line with some rests. The fifth system concludes the exercise with a final cadence.

Gai

Ex. 43

The first system of musical notation for 'Gai' consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The music begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The melody in the upper staff features eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes.

1st. Couplet

The first couplet of the piece is shown in two staves. It begins with a first ending bracket and a '2' indicating a second ending. The notation continues with eighth and sixteenth notes in the upper staff and quarter notes in the lower staff.

The second couplet of the piece is shown in two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and the lower staff provides a bass line with quarter notes.

au rondeau 2nd Couplet

The second couplet of the 'rondeau' section is shown in two staves. The notation features a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff, both using eighth and sixteenth notes.

The final section of the piece is shown in two staves. It continues the melodic and bass lines from the previous section, ending with a final cadence.

his lighter works (Ex. 43), except for one instance in the second act of Zoroastre. The chorus often sings the same melody as the dance is performed.

These dances discussed so far are apparently related. There are certain nuances of tempo and melodic distinctions which are characteristic, and it is possible to find the same air designated by a different title. The final contredanse of the first version of Les Fêtes d'Hébé becomes the "gavotte en rondeau" which ends the series of dances added by Rameau to the second entrée for the "Act of the Barbarians." There are a few isolated instances in which Rameau divides the beats of the contredanse into triplets; however, this division occurs more often in the loure, forlane and the gigue.

Of the dances written with two compound beats in each measure, the loure is the slowest in tempo. It is usually in 6/4 meter, though the signature may vary. It ordinarily begins with a pickup note before the beginning of the measure and may use some syncopation. The character of the dance is not always the same. One fine example is found in the scene of the Rising Sun in the "Act of the Incas" in Les Indes galantes (Ex. 44);¹ another is the "loure un peu

¹ Les Indes galantes, Act of the Incas, p. 197.

Ex. 44

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 44, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The first system includes a circled 'X' above the first measure. The second system includes a circled 'p' above the first measure. The third system includes the word 'Fin' above the first measure. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Ex. 44 (cont.)

2nd Reprise

D.S.

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system begins with a treble staff containing a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4, followed by a long rest. The bass staff contains a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble staff and provides a bass accompaniment. The third system features a treble staff with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4, with a long rest. The bass staff contains a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. The fourth system continues the melodic line in the treble staff and provides a bass accompaniment. The fifth system concludes with a treble staff containing a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4, with a long rest. The bass staff contains a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. The piece ends with the marking 'D.S.'.

Gai Ex. 45

This is a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Gai" (Example 45). The score is written on a grand staff with two systems of two staves each. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are several dynamic markings, including *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *tr* (trills). The piece concludes with a double bar line. The handwriting is clear and legible.

Ex. 45 (continued)

Ex. 46 (concluded)

The musical score is a handwritten exercise titled "Ex. 46 (concluded)". It is arranged in four staves. The first and third staves use a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second and fourth staves use a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines, concluding with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Ex. 46

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Exercise 46, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'. The score is neatly written and occupies most of the page.

gai" from the "Ombres Heureuses" (Castor). There is a loure of religious character in Zoroastre. The "Loure grave" of Les Fêtes d'Hébé has three beats to the measure.

Rameau uses the forlane in three of his operas: Les Indes galantes, Le Temple de la Gloire (Ex. 45)¹ and Les Sybarites. The dance was imported from Italy at the end of the seventeenth century. It is more rapid than the loure but somewhat similar in its rhythmic character. It is "beat out" gaily and the dance itself is very lively.

The gigue (Ex. 46),² of English origin, is the most rapid of the dances, but Rameau tends to make it more languorous than gay. The meter is generally 6/8, although the use of 6/4 may be found. Its characteristic rhythm may make it monotonous if it is used too often. A very effective use of this dance is found in the setting of the subtle antics of the wedding feast of Zoroastre.

The dances in triple meter used by Rameau, in increasing order of speed, are the sarabande, the chaconne, the minuet and the passepied.

The sarabande is of meditative character, somewhat like a slow minuet, and in some ways is related to the largos and adagios of the classical symphony. Its execution is marked

¹La Temple de la Gloire, p. 227.

²Les Fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour, first entrée, p. 125.

with nobility and grace. Along with the gavotte, it is one of the most ancient dances used in opera. It probably originated in Spain and appears in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. By nature it is adaptable to a small number of situations for operatic purposes. There is a fine sarabande in the second act of Castor. Zoroastre has two sarabandes which are little masterpieces, one in the nuptial ceremony of the second act, and the other at the beginning of the figured ballet of the third act. Two sarabandes are in the short score of the Princesse de Navarre (Ex. 47),¹ two are in Zéphire, and Les Fêtes d'Hébé contains a sarabande of dramatic character.

The tempo of the chaconne is midway between that of the sarabande and the minuet, and its uniqueness stems from its form which included an indeterminate number of couplets placed end to end, which are, at least in principle, based on the same harmonic pattern. The measure has three beats and the dance starts on the second beat of the measure. According to Rameau's Traité, its speed is between that of the "grave" and the "vite" and its nature is light. It is used in opera for prolonged and important dances and to accompany scenic evolutions and collective pantomimes which

¹La Princesse de Navarre, Act II, p. 37.

Ex. 47

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 47, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The first system includes a 3/4 time signature and a 3/4 measure. The second system includes a 3/4 time signature and a 3/4 measure. The third system includes a 3/4 time signature and a 3/4 measure. The fourth system includes a 3/4 time signature and a 3/4 measure. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals.

Ex. 48

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 48, consisting of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The music is in 3/4 time and the key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings such as *tr* (trill) and *p* (piano). The score is written in a clear, legible hand.

Ex. 48 (continued)

A handwritten musical score for a string quartet, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system includes a 'strings' label. The notation features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second system contains a triplet of eighth notes. The third system contains a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth system contains a triplet of eighth notes. The fifth system contains a triplet of eighth notes. The score is enclosed in a rectangular border.

Ex. 48 (concluded)

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 48 (concluded), consisting of five systems of two staves each. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fifth system.

require a long interval of time. To avoid dullness Rameau uses changes from the major to the minor in the couplets so that variations in mood may be suggested without altering the tempo of the dance.

Most of the important works of Rameau contain chaconnes. In Hippolyte the chaconne appears in the final divertissement, the graceful character of the dance being enhanced by a most appropriate instrumentation. The astronomical apotheosis culminates in a vast chaconne of two hundred measures, flexible in construction and with a brilliant and expressive melody. The first version of Dardanus ends with a still longer chaconne of two hundred and twenty measures (Ex. 48), whose rather simple theme is enhanced by a sensitive orchestration. The most celebrated chaconne, though, is found at the end of the "Act of the Savages" in Les Indes Galantes; its change of mood, now vigorous, now soft, then warlike or pastoral in turn, is reminiscent of the style of Handel.

In Rameau's time the minuet was a rather rapid dance, expressing alert grace rather than the noble simplicity so often associated with it. In his Traité, Rameau designates the dance as one of six beats to the measure, but in his

¹Dardanus, p. 438.

operas he writes it in $3/4$ or $3/8$ meter, and the nature of the dance requires that the melody be divided into phrases of four measures, beginning on the first beat.

The minuet became popular in France as a ballroom dance about 1670 and was at the height of its popularity when Rameau's operas began to appear. None of his dramatic works lack minuets. The latter usually appear in pairs in major and minor with the first minuet repeated. The use of the dance is made to correlate with the action. In the two minuets at the end of Les Fêtes de Polymnie, the first depicts the rude eagerness of the hunters who wish to please the nymphs, while the second expresses the tender abandon of the nymphs, who, after hesitation, give themselves over to love. The mood of the minuet may be tender or graceful; there is even one minuet in Acante et Céphise marked "un peu lent." Ordinarily the minuet is rapid and animated in the operas of Rameau. The minuet in the second divertissement of La Princesse de Navarre (Ex. 49)¹ contrasts the strings of the first minuet with the oboe trio of the second minuet. The interesting use of contrasting tone color of the minuet from the prologue to Castor (Ex. 9) has already been mentioned.

¹La Princesse de la Navarre, 2nd divertissement, p. 33.

Ex. 49

Strings

The musical score for Ex. 49 is written for strings and consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'tr' and 'f'. The first system begins with a treble staff containing a melodic line with slurs and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic development in the treble staff. The third system features a more complex melodic line with slurs and a bass staff with a steady accompaniment. The fourth system shows a melodic line with a 'tr' marking and a bass staff with a consistent accompaniment. The fifth system concludes the exercise with a melodic line that includes a 'f' dynamic marking and a bass staff with a final accompaniment.

The *passepied* is a kind of minuet in very quick tempo. It is in $3/8$ meter beginning on the third beat of the measure, is embellished with sixteenth notes, and usually contains some use of syncopation which makes for more rhythmic interest. Most often, this dance is used in pairs. In Platée there is an interesting example of Rameau's ability to fit the dance into the dramatic scheme of the opera. The air accompanies the dance of the nymphs of Platée who rejoice at the approach of the storm which Juno is planning to release over the marshes. The nymphs, says a note on the score, form different dances in their character, the burlesque character being reflected in the unevenness of the rhythm and the ungraceful melody. The *passepied* cited from Castor (Ex. 50)¹ shows an interesting use of syncopation.

The air, as used in the operas of Rameau, has no set form and serves to enhance the dramatic expression according to the needs of the composition. The march and the *musette* are also used in a similar manner. An interesting use of the air is found in Castor (Ex. 51).² In this "Air for the athletes," Rameau has suggested their activities through the use of melodic runs and leaps.

¹Castor, p. 218.

²Castor, Act I, p. 98.

Ex. 50

The musical score for Ex. 50 is written in a three-sharp key signature (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system features a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system continues the melody and includes a section with repeated chords in the bass staff. The third system is primarily chordal, with the treble staff playing chords and the bass staff providing harmonic support. The fourth system shows a more active treble staff with some melodic movement and a bass line. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final chord in the treble staff and a bass line.

Ex. 51

Moderé

The musette (Ex. 52)¹ is a pastoral dance which either uses the instrument of the same name or suggests it through the drone bass. It may have a two or three beat measure; it is naïve and sweet in character and slow in movement. As a musical form it is not necessarily a dance, but in the

¹Zaïs, Act I, p. 126. Musette lente.

Musette lente

Ex. 52

Handwritten musical score for "Musette lente" (Example 52). The score is written on five systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The music is in a slow tempo. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

opera it is always danced and, sometimes, sung by the chorus. The use of the musette in opera marks the return of pastoral taste in all the arts and its flexible character is noted in the use of its distinguishing features in other dances such as "minuet à musette" in Le Temple de la Gloire, and "gavotte à musette" in Hippolyte; its name is even applied to the march.

The march accompanies scenic movement. It may be heard as a group of characters change positions; it may include the participation of dancers. Its pattern is similar to that of the dance airs. It is not always in two beats, although that is usual. Marches in Hippolyte and Les Indes galantes (Ex. 53)¹ are found containing three beats suggesting a rhythm for dancing. Rameau uses the

Ex. 53

¹Les Indes galantes, "La fête des fleurs," p. 267.

march for triumphant entries and solemn processions. There is a solemn march in the second act of Zoroastre, a martial march in Castor for the entrance of the victorious Pollux (Ex. 54)¹ and a joyous march for the people of Provence in Les Indes galantes. The term "entrée" may also denote a march, usually of a processional character. An "entrée" may be the first of a suite of dances, too.

The Form

Despite the fact that the dances must fit the dramatic needs of the opera, Rameau uses exact patterns in their construction. All the dances, including the airs, are in binary form or in the pattern of the rondeau with one exception, the chaconne. In the binary pattern the first part is terminated by a cadence on the dominant (without modulation) or by a real modulation, generally to the dominant of a closely related key. The second part, after "diversions" which may contain secondary modulations, leads back to the tonic conclusion. The length of the first part is not specified, but the second part is generally more developed than the first. In most cases, each of the two parts is repeated, though at times a part of B is used for a coda when Rameau does not want to repeat the

¹Castor et Pollux, Act I, p. 79.

Ex. 54

The musical score for Ex. 54 is written in 2/2 time and consists of six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and trills. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

System 1: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Includes a trill in the first measure of the treble staff.

System 2: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Includes a trill in the first measure of the treble staff.

System 3: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Includes a trill in the first measure of the treble staff.

System 4: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Includes a trill in the first measure of the treble staff.

System 5: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Includes a trill in the first measure of the treble staff.

System 6: Treble clef, 2/2 time. Bass clef. Ends with a double bar line.

whole section.

The second part of the binary form as used by Rameau, sometimes has its own independent melody, but, toward the end of the section, may recall the melody of A. Usually this involves only a fragment of A, but, at times, all of A is repeated, but with a modulation to the tonic.

A mono-thematic binary form is most often used in the instrumental dances of Rameau. Part B has no especial theme and does little except to utilize melodic and rhythmic elements borrowed from the first part. The relationship of the two parts is maintained only through the use of characteristic rhythms, or, in some cases, a secondary melodic fragment from A may be more fully developed in B. Most frequently, though, B begins with the theme of A in a different key, generally that of the modulation, and this theme is stated in several keys, finally ending on the tonic of the initial key of A.

The entire melody of A may develop from a single idea. On the other hand, A may contain two equally important ideas which will be utilized later, thus making a bi-thematic homogeneous form.

When B is made up of a very simple development, it may use the two themes of A. In the second minuet of Act II, Les Fêtes d'Hebé, the second theme of A forms almost all

the material of B (Ex. 55).¹ When B ends with a tonic repetition of entire phrases of A, the following usage is the one most often found: at the beginning of B, the first idea is used for a modulating development and the second idea of A is repeated in the principal key as the second half of B. The two ideas of A are seldom repeated on the tonic at the end of B in addition to the modulating development. This form is found in the clavecin pieces of Rameau, and may be related to the allegro of the classical sonata.

The rondo form lends itself less to thematic development. In the grouping ABA, the couplet B differs from the couplet A and contrasts with it. A, ending in the principal key, is usually repeated without change, its return being effected through the modulation or harmonic rest which marks the end of B. This return is indicated on the score by the notation "en rondeau," by a simple repeat sign, or, after 1750, by the Italian words "da capo." The instrumental rondeau may be found in more complex forms. It involves three couplets, ABACA, and may be expanded into ABACABA as found in the "Tambourin en rondeau" of Les Fêtes d'Hébé. Rameau does not sacrifice thematic unity in the rondeau. The theme of the refrain is suggested in the succeeding couplets, making a kind of homogeneous rondeau.

¹Les Fêtes d'Hébé, Act II.

Ex. 55

The musical score for Ex. 55 is written in 3/4 time and consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first system is marked with a large 'A' and includes a trill in the bass line. The second system is marked with a large 'B' and features numerous triplet markings in both staves. The third system continues with complex rhythmic patterns and triplets. The fourth system shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with triplet accents. The fifth system is dominated by triplet patterns in both staves. The sixth system concludes the piece with a final cadence, including a double bar line and repeat dots. Dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte) are used throughout the score.

The rondeau form may apply to all dances, evidence being found in the titles "minuet en rondeau," "gavotte en rondeau" and "tambourin en rondeau."

The chaconne is employed in the operas of Rameau in preference to the passacaglia. According to the primitive rules, the chaconne form is characterized by a bass pattern of four measures, constantly repeated with elaborations on the melody with each repetition. Interest is maintained through melodic and rhythmic invention and the only modulation permitted is from major to minor. Rameau disregards the classic rules and avoids monotony by modulating to neighboring keys, changing the bass line and writing in periods of eight measures. The chaconne of Les Indes galantes is divided into ten sections, some major, some minor, the bass line changed in figuration, and the number of measures in each section varying, but always divisible by four. The chaconne of Castor is even more freely constructed, the melody no longer being divisible into groups of four measures, but containing groups of four, eight, six and even two. The final chaconne of Dardanus (Ex. 48) changes the bass, modulates to distant keys and uses uneven periods with the greatest of freedom. Toward the end there is a literal repetition of the first thirty-four measures followed by a brilliant ending built on the initial harmonic scheme, but introducing an entirely new melody.

CHAPTER V

THE RECITATIVE

The recitative of the Rameau operas is the part which the public found hardest to accept and which the critics judged most severely. At the time of Les Indes galantes the opposition was such that Rameau published the scores in the form of "concerts," omitting the recitatives. Eulogies published after Rameau's death, while praising his work, avoided discussing the recitative, or, still mindful of the practices of Lully, suggested that he had failed to carry this aspect of operatic composition to the point of perfection achieved in the arias.

Rameau used three forms of the recitative: the simple recitative, the accompanied recitative, and the rather ambiguous form which is known in French opera as "measured recitative."

The expression "simple recitative" is employed by the critics of this period to designate the recitative which is not accompanied by the orchestra, nor is it measured in a regular manner. It is the most common form of the recitative in French opera from the time of Lully to that of Gluck.

The recitative in operas of the Rameau period is clearly distinct from the air, but not so much as in the Italian opera. The airs have definite dimensions and are of more or less regular construction, while the recitative is modeled freely on the inflection of the dialogue, or on the details of the action, without being limited in any way in its form and extent. In most instances the simple recitative is supported by continuo alone, while the airs are accompanied by a relatively full orchestra. However, small airs with only the accompaniment of the continuo are to be found in the works of Rameau. There is a more clearly marked difference of air and recitative to be found in Italian opera than in the dramatic music of the French. The French recitative is relatively melodic, and the airs retain some of the characteristics of the recitative.

The simple recitative has two principal functions in the opera. It serves to clarify and to unify the plot, to fill in the undramatic yet necessary moments which provide understanding of the drama, and to assure continuity between the lyric and the more dramatic portions of the opera. It may be employed in explanatory dialogue or narrative discourse to relate events which could not have been presented on the stage. It may be used to translate musically the sentimental or passionate dialogue, the confession full of trouble, tender farewells, and the expres-

sions of rage, jealousy and desperation. Through the use of subtle melody it can follow the elusive shades of sentiment and the smallest degrees of emotion. Such scenes were considered the finest parts of operas, since they most nearly approached the ideals of the French classical tragedy.

The contemporaries of Rameau sometimes accused him of being less successful in the writing of recitatives than in other phases of his composing. "He has shown contempt for his words, and he has neglected his recitatives."¹ "He wanted to make music, and with that idea he has put everything in ballets, in dances, in violin airs, and did not want scenes."¹ It is possible that Rameau did not choose his librettos carefully, which would be reflected in the recitatives, and that he was not always at ease in the purely orchestral movements where his musical genius could have been given full rein, but there is evidence that he thought with Lully "that the recitative should be considered the principal and fundamental part of the opera and the rest merely ornaments."²

The recitative is a particular type of melody which is modeled on the rhythms and inflections of the spoken

¹Quoted from Masson's L'Opéra de Rameau, p. 135. Masson is referring to works of Pidansat de Mairobert (Les prophéties du grand prophète Monét, 1753) and Colle (Journal, Sept. 1764, ed. Bonhomme, II, 375).

²L'ami des arts (1776), p. 178. (Quoted by Masson in L'Opéra de Rameau, p. 135.)

language. In this regard the aesthetic conception of Rameau is the same as that of Lully: "The song must imitate the speaking in such a way that it should seem one is speaking instead of singing."¹ The musical recitation, foundation of the recitative, is basically rhythmic. To this rhythm is added a special melody, more or less tied to the accents of the speech, and, finally, a harmonization appropriate to the movement of the phrase and the succession of thoughts or sentiments.

As far as rhythm is concerned, Rameau looks first for an exact prosody, a rhythm. The musician must devote himself, he says, especially to expressing "the long syllables of the text by notes of comparable value, so that one can understand their number as easily as by the pronunciation of a text, although one might use notes of equal value on long and short syllables, provided one can make his long ones heard at the first moment of each period, and, above all, in the first period."¹ For Rameau the essential condition for an appropriate rhythm is to underline the syllables accentuated by the text whether it be by long notes or a special place in the measure. In order that he may accomplish this, he does not allow the meter in which he places the irregular recitative of speech to remain too

¹Rameau: Traité de l'harmonie, p. 162.

long the same, a practice that can be observed in classical French opera from the time of Lully. It brought about the necessity of placing the ends of verses and the important pauses in the first part of a measure, without altering the rhythm and adding rests which would rob the recitative of its momentum. This may be illustrated by a phrase from Zaïs, of which the eleven measures all have a change of meter (Ex. 56).¹

The French recitative used a more complicated form of notation than that currently in use in Italy. Most Italian recitative was written in 4/4 meter and the singer was allowed a great deal of freedom in its performance. The French recitative was not tied to the same metrical pattern, and, although the singer was allowed some liberty within the measure, he was strictly guarded by the precision of the notation.

All the practices of Lully are utilized in the recitative of Rameau. Actually, he used the Alexandrian metrical patterns, but there is always evidence of an eagerness to determine as exactly as possible the value of every syllable of the text according to the natural rhythm of the recitative, or according to certain expressive intentions. The

¹Zaïs: Act I, scene 2, p. 92. Recitative of Zélide.

zélide

Ex. 56

Za- is je ne cherchais que vous Pour moi votre ten-
 dresse est l'ora- desu- pré- me et le spectacle le plus
 doux est de voir l'ob- jet que l'on ai...

effects thus obtained are not too different from those of Lully, but, certainly, Rameau is more meticulous in the precision of his notation (Ex. 57).¹

Rameau was accused by his contemporaries of "strangling" French prosody. Certain disconcerting passages that may be found are not the result of negligence, but must be explained as processes of expression employed consciously. One example is found in the stopping on "de" on a high note (Ex. 58);² another is his treatment of final mute syllables. When words with feminine terminations are placed at the end of a period or a recitative, the last syllable is underlined and lengthened by the carrying of the voice. Rameau sometimes used terminations of this sort, but he often used for the final mute syllable the classic process of repeating with a lesser value the note before the last. Rameau, in most cases, solved such problems in the simplest manner possible; he asked his librettists to terminate their songs with masculine endings.

Rameau's change of meter to assure the placing of principal accents of the text on metrical accents which are considered strong musically serves to point up the effectiveness of his ability for securing expressive effects through the intentional placing of accents on weak

¹Les Indes galantes: Act I, scene 1, p. 76.

²Dardanus: Act IV, scene 5, p. 385.

Antenor

Ex. 57

Dieux cruel, vous deviez être moins rigoureux et m'accorder la mort en môtant la vie.

toir-... re.

Emilie

Ex. 58

Et je me vois cap- ti -- ve sur les eaux près de

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It contains three measures of music with lyrics. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring chords and some melodic lines. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic foundation.

ce que j'ab-hor - re et loin de ce que

The second system of music continues the piece. It features a vocal line with lyrics, piano accompaniment in treble clef, and piano accompaniment in bass clef. The music includes various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

j'ai - - - me

The third system of music shows the vocal line with a long note and a slur, followed by the word 'me'. The piano accompaniment in both treble and bass clefs continues with chords and melodic lines.

syllables. Syncopations and unusual meters underlined by the use of accents emphasize certain words, generally of one syllable, which mark a caesura or a sharp change in thought. Syncopations and odd measure divisions are used to give impetus to the dialogue and the action. The interval which separates the words of two speakers may be minimized to give the conversation more naturalness and liveliness. In rare instances, the words of two characters may even overlap (Ex. 59).¹

If it serves his purpose best, Rameau may treat verse as prose. Instead of making a pause at the end of a rhyme, he pauses only if it corresponds to the actual ending of a phrase, independent of the verse; in this manner, he neglects the Alexandrian metrical pattern.

French operatic recitative has two principal aspects; basic is the use of the classic rhythm with accents appropriate to the spoken word, but to this rhythmic pattern are added melodic elements derived from sources other than the accents of the chosen words, the melody being used for heightening the elements of expression. In writing recitative, the interval used in approaching an accented beat from an unaccented beat is of great importance. The Italian recitative, in following the natural inflection of its

¹Hippolyte: Act V, scene 2, p. 335.

EX. 59

These'e

Ciel ! ne puis-je attendre un pè-re Que je venge mon

Neptune

Va ! ton fils n'est pas mort

Sils

language, used smaller intervals than those of the French recitative, which modeled its inflections after those of the Comédie-Française. The interval groupings found in Rameau's recitatives are similar to those of Lully, but the use of the large interval is more frequent, since it is used to heighten expression and to give a deeper and more varied picture of the musical thought.

Repeated notes, so frequent in Italian recitative, are used by Rameau for passing quickly a small number of syllables to an accented syllable. Minor seconds and chromatic ascending intervals, underlined with repeated notes, are employed with more frequency in moments of dramatic intensity, and with resultant modulations (Ex. 60).¹ Rising fourths are often used to provide a melodic design productive of mounting intensity (Ex. 61).² A pattern of falling fourths is much rarer. The interval of the fifth is usually used in descending form (tonic to dominant), but, on occasion, the rising form is used in energetic passages giving the effect of a ninth (Ex. 62).³ The diminished fourths and fifths are used in passages expressing tenderness and for the purpose of initiating

¹Les Indes galantes: Act II, scene 3, p. 164.

²Les Indes galantes: Act II, scene 3, p. 164.

³Castor et Pollux: Act IV, scene 4, p. 260.

Ex. 60

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system features a vocal line for 'Huscar' and a Continuo accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "C'est l'amour ! Dans votre âme, il est seul é-cou-". The Continuo part consists of two staves, with the upper staff in a treble clef and the lower staff in a bass clef, both with a common time signature. The second system features a vocal line for 'Phani' and a Continuo accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "L'amour que croyez vous ! te". The Continuo part consists of two staves, with the upper staff in a treble clef and the lower staff in a bass clef, both with a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics for the second system are: "Oui, vous aimez, per-".

Bellone Ex. 61

Quit-tez ces paissi-bles re-trai-tes Com-bat.

Vins + cont.

tez combat-tez il est temps de cueil-

lir des lau-riers

Pollux

Ex. 62

Cas- tor, nous la per- drons tous deux Hâ- te- toi, va!

The first system of musical notation for 'Pollux' consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line in G-clef, 3/4 time, with lyrics 'Cas- tor, nous la per- drons tous deux Hâ- te- toi, va!'. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in C-clef, 3/4 time, featuring chords and single notes. The bottom staff is the bass line in F-clef, 3/4 time, with single notes. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

le ciel for- dan- ne d'être deu reux Et d'est ton- ri-

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line in G-clef, 3/4 time, with lyrics 'le ciel for- dan- ne d'être deu reux Et d'est ton- ri-'. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in C-clef, 3/4 time, with chords and single notes. The bottom staff is the bass line in F-clef, 3/4 time, with single notes. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

val qui t'en pri- e

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line in G-clef, 3/4 time, with lyrics 'val qui t'en pri- e'. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment in C-clef, 3/4 time, with chords and single notes. The bottom staff is the bass line in F-clef, 3/4 time, with single notes. The system is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

harmonic development. The diminished intervals are rare in the ascending form.

The descending major sixth (considered in the time of Rameau as difficult to sing) is used only for great dramatic emphasis (Ex. 63).¹ The ascending sixth is used for expressing violent emotion (Ex. 64).²

The major seventh was not used to any extent before the time of Rameau in French recitative. Rameau uses it for violent and descriptive effects. In some instances, a major and a minor seventh may appear in the same phrase of an air. Sevenths are used only in descending form, as is the octave which is rare in Rameau. The expressive power of the diminished seventh is familiar to Rameau and he often uses it (Ex. 65).³ The octave is sometimes used in the final cadence for bass voice, or between two unaccented syllables, to underline an accent of particular intensity. This interval is found more in the airs.

Intervals greater than the octave seldom appear in the recitative of Rameau, but the melodic range may be that of a ninth, a tenth, an eleventh or, occasionally, even greater. The use of large intervals is one of the most radical introductions made to French recitative by Rameau.

¹Hippolyte: Act I, scene 7, p. 108.

²Hippolyte: Act III, scene 3.

³Dardanus: Act II, p. 160.

Ex. 63

Oenone

Arcaas

O mal-heur O funeste sort

Arcaas, que viens tu nous ap.

prende

prende

Ah j'en frissonne en-cor. le Roi vient de des

Phèdre

Ex. 64

Tu me hais autant que je

t'aime Mais pour trancher mes tristes

jours Te n'ai besoin que de moi-me me Donne

Ismenor

Ex. 65

Tout l'a-ve-nir es present a mes yeux

Strings, oboe
Bassoon, continuo

U-ne suprême in-tel-li-

gen-ce Me sou-met les en-fers

The basis of Rameau's recitative is that of Lully modified by the rules of classic rendition of poetry. Phrases are often based on one chord. The combination of the intervals of the chord, used in different order and sequences, the repetition of certain notes and the addition of passing tones can provide, in such a case, many varied melodic patterns.

The use of the dominant seventh chord is related to Rameau's theory of modulations, since it tends to suggest a change in tonality and in mood.

Rameau makes a much greater use of the accompanied recitative than did the men who came before him, usually introducing it at the more solemn moments of the drama. His use of the accompanied recitative may be compared with that found in the Passions of Bach.

There are three principal types of the accompanied recitative. First, there are the prayers and invocations such as the Invocation to the Sun in Les Indes galantes, Ismenor's Lament in Dardanus (Ex. 65), and the recitative of Phèdre in the fourth act of Hippolyte. In Ismenor's Lament one finds an interesting use of bold leaps and dissonant suspensions which serve to intensify the dramatic import of the scene (Ex. 65a). Each of the three examples cited attains a dramatic power and a grandeur more suggestive of Gluck than of Lully.

The second type of accompanied recitative is what Rameau calls the "récitatif accompagné pathétique" which is related to the Italian "recitativo obbligato." Such passages ordinarily portray doubt, trouble or fury and introduce various "sensational" instrumental techniques such as tremolos, trills, syncopations and extreme modulations. The arrival of the monster in Dardanus provides an opportunity for a recitative of this sort. In Tirtée's "récitatif pathétique" in the second entrée of Les Fêtes d'Hébé we find an almost complete repertory of the Mannheim formulae: rapid scales, arpeggios, repeated notes often on a diminished seventh chord, and sudden pauses and many effects of rubato (Ex. 66).¹

The third type of recitative is the "récitatif mesuré" and there is little distinction between it and the "air de dialogue" except that the melodic lines are not quite so lyrical and the dissonances have more of an element of harshness than sadness. Such recitatives are indicated in the score with the word "mesuré." They bear some relation to the monody of early Italian opera with its tendency to adopt for a few measures a lyric form neither as lyric as the airs nor as declamatory as the recitatives. Perhaps

¹Les Fêtes d'Hébé: 2nd Entrée.

Vivement

Ex. 66

Que te re-tient la cé-de-

mo-nie l'en-ne-mi trop long-

temps est au pied de tes murs Qui te re-

the nearest equivalent in Italian opera is the arietta.

The Italians who heard French opera in Rameau's time often failed to distinguish the airs from the recitatives, so closely were they related in style and spirit. This achievement was the ideal and goal of the operatic composer of that time, and in the best operatic works of that age we find what is probably the closest realization of the ideals of the Camerata which the latter had formulated as basic in the combination of music and drama. Except in the prologue, the function of music is to serve as a means for developing the dramatic ideas of the plot and never as a vehicle for individual or unnecessary showmanship.

CHAPTER VI

THE AIRS

The distinction between the air and the recitative of French opera is not so clearly defined as it is in the Italian operas. The French recitative is relatively melodic and it is sometimes difficult to tell when the recitative ends and the air begins, since the air is conceived in the spirit of the recitative. There is, too, much more contrast in the accompaniments of the Italian recitative and the aria than there is in the French counterparts. The air, in the French form, is employed much more frequently than is the Italian, which is reserved for climaxes of scenes.

There are two kinds of airs found in the operas of Rameau: the airs which occur when several persons are on the stage, and the monologues which are ordinarily heard when a character is on the stage alone.

The first type, the dialogue air, emerges quite naturally from the recitative and may be little different from it in style. This combination of air and recitative serves to heighten the effectiveness of the scene through the contrast of style and the use of regular and irregular measure patterns.

Airs of this sort may be designated only as "mesuré" or they may be called "airs tendres" or "airs gracieux," the latter being a bit more serious in nature than the first. The character of the air may differ according to whether it is a part of the drama (announcements of general ideas) or a part of the immediate action; in either case, it is generally preceded by a recitative which serves as an introduction.

At times, two airs may be placed together, either sung by one person or by two of the characters in the form of dialogue. There is one example of three airs in succession found in the second act of Castor in which Pollux sings an "air tendre" and Tellaire responds with an "air gracieux" and an "air tendre" (Ex. 67).¹ These airs -- the "air tendre" and the "air gracieux" -- are all linked to the recitative in such a way that one is indispensable to the other.

Occasionally, we find an air of the type known in French opera as the maxim air (air-maxim), one which is not indispensable to the action, and even intended to be so complete in itself that it would be appropriate for inclusion in a concert performance. They are most often

¹Castor: Act II, scene 1, p. 122.

Air tendre Ex. 67
Pollux

lors qu'un Dieu s'est laissé char-mer, Est-ce un vain

cul-te qui l'ho-no-re

Tellair Air gracieux
si de ses feux on Dieu n'est pas le maître

Ex. 67 (concluded)

s'il ne peut vainere un penchant a-mou-reux Sur

Air tendre Tailleire

Gou-tes les flot-teu-ses pro-

mes-ses que vous font vos des-tins Gou-

Ex. 68

No-tre tran-qui-li-té se fon-de sur le bon-heur pré-
 sent et sur l'art d'en jou-ir ir hais-
 sons dans une nuit pro-fon-de les plaisirs et les

found in the divertissements, but a few may be found in the main bodies of the operas themselves (Ex. 68).¹ They tend to retard the action and are most often assigned to minor characters. There is some evidence of public reaction against this type of aria in the time of Rameau, but the taste for the Italianate in opera was slowly gaining ground in France. When such airs use texts necessary to the drama, they can be justified on the grounds that they introduce variety and give increased intensity to an evident emotion. They often include repetition of words, but this practice can be explained as a means of emphasizing the sentiments of the dramatic situation.

The airs which are a part of the dialogue emerge from the recitative in an effortless fashion without interrupting the continuity of the thought or the action. The melodies are nearly always syllabic and are patterned after the accents of the text to which they are set. The use of the air in the dialogue is determined by the dramatic situation. In intense situations they may be omitted; in less tense situations, they may be used liberally. The character of an air may vary according to its place in the opera. The prologue, most always in the character of a divertisse-

¹Zais: Act II, scene 2, p. 165.

ment, allows a freer use of any of the usual forms. The simple "air gracieux" of the scene from Castor cited in example 74 is in violent contrast to the air of the same title found in the prologue to Dardanus which has a theme based on scale-like passages and leaping octaves, a slow middle section and a final section which includes a rococo cadenza and a ritournelle (Ex. 69).¹

The length of the air varies, although the average is not more than twenty measures. Some are accompanied by continuo alone; others use the full orchestra.

To the airs which appear in situations involving more than one person may be added another classification, the air of appeal or exhortation. It is addressed to an absent person or to the audience and is not really a part of the dialogue. A person may call on a divinity, as in the scene in Castor in which Phoebe calls demons who try to stop Pollux at the gate of Hell. Usually such airs are addressed to the chorus which replies in ensembles independent of the air. These airs are closely linked to the action of the drama, and though not the same as the other airs of the dialogue, they do not lack musical interest. They are often based on short musical motifs and sometimes contain rather long flights of vocalization.

¹Dardanus: Prologue, p. 51. Oboe, bassoon, strings.

vivement

Ex. 69

Quand l'a-gui-lon fou-queux s'é-chap-pe de ma

chai-ne sur les mers qu'il va

va

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The time signature is 2/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system contains the first two lines of the lyrics. The second system contains the third and fourth lines. The third system contains the fifth line. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together.

Ex. 69 (continued)

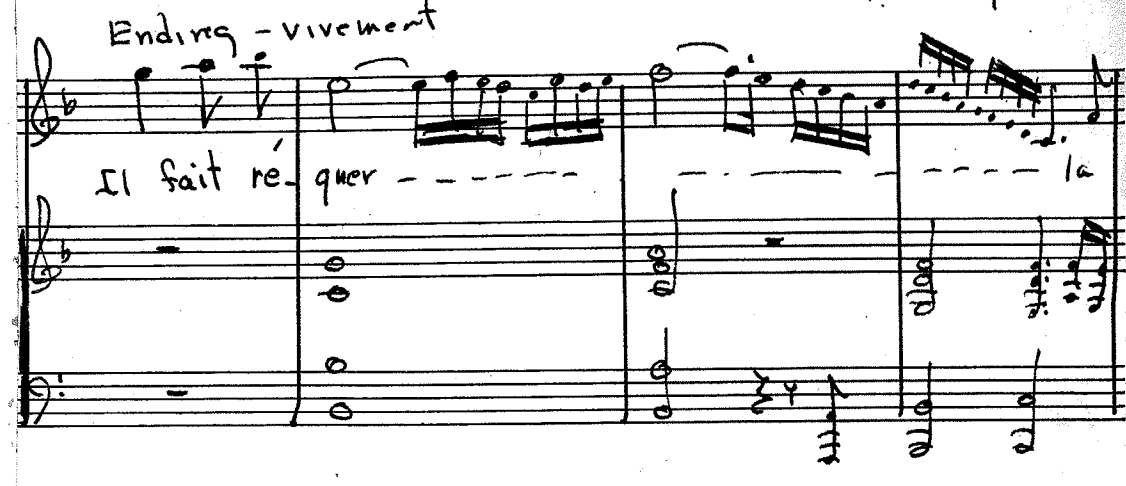
1st Part - *mezzo-forte* *no*
--- *me* il fait régner la mort



2nd Part - sans lenteur
Mais quand le Dieu des vents cap-ti-vant son es-sort



Ending - vivement
Il fait ré-quer --- la



Ex. 69 (concluded)

In Rameau's time the monologue was the song of the actor who occupied the stage by himself. It might be an air or a recitative, or a combination of the two. The monologue of Thésée in the third act of Hippolyte includes a simple recitative, a recitative and air preceded by a prelude, another passage of simple recitative, a descriptive orchestral interlude with recitative, and, at last, an air which marks the end of the act.

The monologue is the heart of French opera. It is always lyric in character and is most deeply sentimental. It is the French equivalent of the great arias of the Italian opera. The brief airs which appear in the more involved monologues are often closely related to the

"*récitatif mesuré*," but the depth of feeling evident in both text and musical setting give them a lyrical quality which is not a part of the style of the true recitative (Ex. 70).¹

The form of the monologue may be binary, but it is most often that of the rondo with couplets. The melody is not strictly measured, but is closely related to the intonations and accents of the spoken word. It is conceived in the spirit of the recitative. This lack of strict adherence to a fixed meter is, from the French point of view, what makes it such fine music.

The monologue is most frequently found in the lyrical tragedies, Hippolyte alone containing five. It is also found in the lighter works with the exception of the heroic pastorales. Opera-ballets which had dramatic subjects were able to use them. The monologue of Emilie in the first act of Les Indes galantes, "Great empire of the seas" is a dramatic declaration of superb effect. The monologues of Les Fêtes d'Hébé and Pygmalion are equally effective.

The airs of the divertissements are the ariettes, the sung dance airs and the airs which are for the purpose of vocal display and entertainment. The divertissement is naturally less serious than the drama itself, but it is

¹Dardanus: Act III, scene 1, p. 232. Air of Iphèse.

Ex. 70

O jour af-freux le ciel met le comble à mes

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment features a bass line with a half note G2 and quarter notes A2, B2, and C3. The right hand has a half note G4 and quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. A fermata is placed over the final C5 in both parts.

maux Dar-da-nus est cap-tif. Dieux!

Detailed description: This system contains measures 3 and 4. The vocal line continues with a half note D5, followed by quarter notes E5, F5, and G5. The piano accompaniment continues with a bass line of half note G2 and quarter notes A2, B2, and C3. The right hand has a half note D5 and quarter notes E5, F5, and G5. A fermata is placed over the final G5 in both parts.

Dieux sa-par-te est cer-taine Dieux!-

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 and 6. The vocal line continues with a half note A5, followed by quarter notes B5, C6, and D6. The piano accompaniment continues with a bass line of half note G2 and quarter notes A2, B2, and C3. The right hand has a half note A5 and quarter notes B5, C6, and D6. A fermata is placed over the final D6 in both parts.

still intended to be a part of the entire dramatic work. It does allow the action to be interrupted so that it may become a spectacle of pantomime, vocal ensembles, airs and symphonic interludes.

The tradition of sung dances is an old one, but their use in operas is more refined in character. The dance air is usually announced by the instruments alone, and then the words are added. The vocal melody may differ from the instrumental melody to such an extent that it amounts to a paraphrase. This is necessarily true since the librettist must fit words to an already devised tune, and the accents of the melody must be fitted to the accents of the text. Sometimes the dance is not sung entirely by the voice; the orchestra fills in the missing phrases (Ex. 71).¹ However, the rhythm of the dance is preserved.

These sung dances are among the most pleasant features of the divertissements. Forms found in both vocal and instrumental versions are the sarabande, the gavotte, the rigaudon, the loure en rondeau and the tambourin.

Some of the airs used by Rameau are original and independent of the action. One of these is the ariette which has a new style. Some are small airs with a bass

¹Castor: Act II, scene 5, p. 155. Air for Héb e.

Ex. 71

Sarabande

Flute, Strings,
Continuo.

Voi - ci des Dieux
l'asile
ai - ma - ble

Ex. 71 (continued)

Goû-tons des cieux la paix du-ra-ble

Plus de plai-sirs Que de dé-sirs Des

chai-nes Sans pein-nes Et des beaux

Ex. 71 (concluded)

jours Comptés tou-jours Par les a-mours.

continuo; others are airs inserted into a chorus. The accompaniment, whatever it may be, is light and restful, and the melody is generally charming. The melody may be derived from a neighboring dance, without copying the original tune in an exact fashion. A dance which follows may reemphasize the relation of the air to the preceding material. In such cases the air may be considered a type of sung dance.

Sometimes these airs furnish the thematic material for that which follows them; this is often true of the airs which are followed by choruses. In Platée the air of the Folie "Chantez Platée" becomes the melody which the chorus repeats as a round, thus providing an instance of

a dance originating in a vocal chorus instead of an instrumental composition.

The airs almost always form a complete unit in themselves, ending on the tonic; however, they may be of varying degrees of complexity. Modulations and variations of the melody are not uncommon. These airs are related to the airs of the dialogue but the melodies and the instrumental accompaniments are more appealing from the standpoint of pure entertainment.

The ariette is a form of the vocal solo which became popular in France about 1700 when the Italian cantata was introduced. The name itself is a contradiction, since it would normally indicate a "little air"; it is actually the longest and musically the most elaborate of the French forms of the aria. When it was first used in French opera, it was sung with Italian words and known as the "Air Italien." For Rameau, it is the great air in Italian style and is generally constructed in the Italian da capo form.

The usage of this large form of the aria differs in France and Italy. In Italy, it is reserved for the end of a scene where its purpose is to sum up the emotions and state of mind of a principal character of the drama. The French use it only in the divertissements where a long break in the action does not matter. The words themselves are not ordinarily too important. Florid melodic lines and repetition of phrases are allowed since the purpose of this

form of solo performance is for entertainment alone. Rameau follows the fashion of his day and caters to the new taste of his audience by including the ariette in his dramatic works. This marks one aspect of operatic composition not found in the operas of Lully.

The melody of the ariette is quite different from that of the air. The words are allowed to be obscured and the style of vocalization used permits the creation of melodies which are more instrumental than vocal (Ex. 72).¹

In the use of the ariette, Masson states that the model used by Rameau was derived from the operatic styles of Pergolesi and Alessandro Scarlatti.² From the former he received his ideas of flowing and simple melody surrounded by harmonic figurations of great variety. From the latter he obtained ideas of musical elegance, refined expression and polyphonic accompaniments. The Pergolesi influence is seen in his later works.

The ariette "Règne amour" from Pygmalion is one of the best examples of Rameau's use of this vocal form. Here we find what had started as a Baroque technique is being translated into rococo terms; the florid melody is accompanied by percussively repeated rhythms and arpeggio

¹Dardanus: Act I, p. 138. With oboe, bassoon & strings.

²Masson: L'Opéra de Rameau, p. 234.

Ex. 72

Al-lez jeu-ne guer-rier cou-

The first system of the musical score consists of three measures. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a half note 'Al-lez' followed by eighth notes for 'jeu-ne guer-rier' and a quarter note for 'cou-'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a bass line with eighth notes and a treble line with chords and eighth notes.

rez à la vic-toi-re

The second system continues the vocal line with 'rez à la vic-toi-re'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes and chords.

Cou- rez - - -

The third system shows the vocal line with 'Cou- rez - - -' and a fermata. The piano accompaniment features a series of triplets in the treble clef and continues in the bass clef.

figures (Ex. 73).¹ It should be noted that the term "ariette" may be used at times to designate any air which contains a florid vocal line.

In discussing the forms of the vocal airs, it should be mentioned again that Rameau's melodies may stem from the accents of the text and its inflections, or they may be copied or derived from the melodies of instrumental dances. Rameau used the forms current in his time, but he varied his treatment of them to create variety and interest.

Rameau uses three principal patterns of construction in his airs: the binary, the rondo and, less frequently, a division into three parts. The pattern of the binary form is the usual AB division with A ending on the dominant or a modulation to a closely related key. Each or either of the two parts of the binary form may be repeated, but B is repeated most often, ending first with a dominant cadence or a modulation to a neighboring key, and having the final ending on the tonic. The repetition of B is most logical because it is usually longer than A and is more interesting musically. Sometimes the repetition is only the second half of B, making it a small binary form within itself.

¹Pygmalion: p. 91. With bassoon and strings.

Ex. 73

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Exercise 73, consisting of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system begins with a vocal line starting on a whole note 'Rè-' followed by a dashed line. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with a dashed line and the piano accompaniment. The third system features a vocal line with the lyrics 'que A-mour' and includes a trill (tr) and a fermata (f) over a note. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

The rondo form is as old in usage as the binary. It might be termed ternary since in its simple form it has three parts, the third being a repetition of the first. Most often this form is designated as an "air en rondeau." The first part ends on the dominant; the B part ends on the dominant or the relative minor, then A is repeated textually and melodically as it first appeared. Rameau varies his ending of the B section quite often by modulating to the mediant. This three-part form is a favorite of Rameau for the simplest air or the most fully expanded monologue. Even if there should be several sub-divisions in the air, they still appear in the framework of A and B.

In contrast to the binary form, the A section of the rondo is the most fully developed. Rameau may repeat the words with two different melodies of which only the second ends on the tonic, or he may make a little rondo of A by repeating at the end the melody of the beginning. The B part is often reduced to a very simple form; only in the ariette does it retain its equality with A. It is often much shorter and may be only a resting place between the repetitions of A. If A has full orchestra for accompaniment, B may have only the support of the continuo. After 1750, the Italian sign "da capo" replaces the French notation "en rondeau."

The monologue of Pollux which opens the second act of Castor may be cited as a splendid example of Rameau's use of the ternary form of the air (Ex. 74).¹ Here a declaimed but lyrical melody is combined with an orchestral accompaniment that has a beauty which might be compared to the creations of such a modern composer as Ravel. The A part is the more fully developed with its rather long introduction which serves as a ritournelle and also as the accompaniment of the air. The B section uses only the continuo for accompaniment, but the vocal line is still in keeping with the style of A. The repetition of A is exact, being indicated with the sign "da capo."

In rare cases, the rondo has more than one couplet; usually there are no more than two. In the latter case, the refrain is repeated after each couplet giving the scheme ABACA. This form is most used in the small dances and airs, but it can be found in the monologue "Ah, faut-il en un jour" in Act IV of Hippolyte. In the rondo with several couplets, the refrain is often sung by the chorus alone. In a few cases, the rondo is irregular with the A sections altered to provide variety. In other instances, the second A may be expanded in length.

¹Castor: Act II, Scene 1, p. 117. With flute, oboe, bassoon and strings.

Un peu lent

Ex. 74

Na- ture, A-

The first system of music features a vocal line in the upper staff and piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/2. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics "Na- ture, A-". The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand.

mour qui par- tagez mon

The second system continues the musical piece. The vocal line has the lyrics "mour qui par- tagez mon". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns.

coeur qui de vous se- ra - - - le vain-

The third system concludes the piece. The vocal line has the lyrics "coeur qui de vous se- ra - - - le vain-". The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord in the left hand and a melodic phrase in the right hand.

Ex. 74 (concluded)

De Ju-pi-ter i-ci mon des-tin va dé-
pen - der l'ami - tié brû - le d'ob-te - nir

There is a three-part form, ABC, but it is seldom used. The melodies of each section are different, and each section maintains its own independence. The unifying factor is found in the use of modulations. Rameau ends A and B with modulations which lead logically to the final tonic conclusion of C. Sometimes the words of A are used with the new melody of C.

The accompaniment to the air may be only the continuo, but the air is expected to be more melodic than the recitative and its accompaniments to have more elaborate figurations. The continuo was always subordinated to the vocal line and ornamentations were used only when their

expressive values seemed to justify them.

The most frequently used ensemble for accompanying the air is the four-part string orchestra, of which the violins are the most important. The bass line is often doubled by the bassoons, and the flutes and oboes double the violins. At times, Rameau directs that the clavecin be omitted from the ensemble. Solo instruments may play obbligatos to the voice part (Ex. 75).¹ In these instances, their parts may be derived from the melody assigned to the voice, they may be based on figures taken from the accompaniment or they may be given figurations of a pictorial nature.

The accompaniment may be harmonic, supporting the melody, it may be syllabic or independent of the vocal part, or it may be contrapuntal. If it is contrapuntal, the device used most often is imitation. In quick tempi the accompaniment is sometimes in unison with the vocal melody; this occurs most often in dance airs. Repeated chords and arpeggios are occasionally used, but never through the whole air. Later, the use of the arpeggio in accompaniments became very popular.

¹Les Indes galantes: 1st Entrée, p. 144.

Ex. 75

Oboe

Emilie

Fuy-ez, fuy-ez, vents o-ra-geux Cal-mez les

Bassoon with clarinet

Flots a-mou-teux. Ris et jeux ! Char-mant Plai-

sir fais notre sort Dans la rou-te es-que au pont

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is handwritten and consists of three systems. Each system has three staves. The top staff is for Oboe, the middle for Emilie (vocal), and the bottom for Bassoon with clarinet. The music is in 2/4 time and has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are in French and describe a storm and a journey. The first system has lyrics: 'Fuy-ez, fuy-ez, vents o-ra-geux Cal-mez les'. The second system has lyrics: 'Flots a-mou-teux. Ris et jeux ! Char-mant Plai-'. The third system has lyrics: 'sir fais notre sort Dans la rou-te es-que au pont'. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

CHAPTER VII

THE VOCAL ENSEMBLES AND THE CHORUSES

Generally speaking, Rameau followed the traditions of French opera in his use of the various types of vocal ensembles. The use of these groupings is almost always dependent on the dramatic needs of the moment, and, with few exceptions, seldom are they used for decorative purposes alone. Ensembles not only point up the dramatic elements of an opera, but they provide variety and relief from the constant use of the solo voice.

The use of the duo is varied in the works of Rameau, but there are no important innovations in his usage, since he followed practices current in his time. The duet is most often used in fragmentary fashion in the middle of other dramatic songs, taking the form of exclamations of surprise and gestures of supplication or exhortation. It is dependent on that which surrounds it and generally lacks a tonal conclusion. In the divertissements, it may have the form of an air, unified through the development of its thematic material and through its having definite formal

construction. In the first act of Les Indes galantes, the duo "Volez Zéphirs" (Ex. 76)¹ is in three-part da capo form and is followed by a chorus based on the same text.

In the duets, most often the characters express the same idea or sentiment. Love, oaths and conjurations are often the occasion for the use of this form. There are rare instances in which two characters must express sentiments which are divergent. In such cases, Rameau was rather original and, perhaps, made his only contribution to this form of operatic expression. In Hippolyte there is a duet which involves Thésée and Tisiphone, a Fury; one is singing "content yourself with a victim" and the other "a victim is not enough." Rameau treats the two speeches in counterpoint so that each has a different character (Ex. 77).²

Many of the duets are not sung from beginning to end by both voices; there are passages of varying lengths in which one voice is heard alone. The most interesting form of the duet is that which approximates dialogue. In form, the duet is most often binary, with the dialogue and the actual duet making the A and B sections, or in rondo form with the duet as a refrain.

¹Les Indes galantes: Act I, p. 119.

²Hippolyte: Act II, scene 1, p. 120.

Ex. 76

Emilie

Un peu animé

Valère Vo-

Continuo Vo- lez

lez

-- Vo- lez Ze- phirs Vo- lez

ten- dres amantes de Flo- re Vo-

ten- dres amantes de Flo- re Vo- lez

Ex. 77

Tisiphone

Thésée

C'est peu pour moi d'être vic-

Contente-toi d'être vic-ti-me! Quoi!

B.C. and Bsnr.

ti-me Non - - - - rien n'a-pai-se ma su-

rien n'a-pai-se ta su-reur Quoi! - - - -

Trios are found less frequently than duets, but Rameau treats them in a striking manner. They are in about the same classification as the duets in their form and usage. In some instances, the harmonic structure was so unusual that the singers found them difficult to execute. Masson thinks that the "Trio des Parques" in Hippolyte (Ex. 15)¹ was beyond the ability of the chorus of the Opéra because of its enharmonic passages.² The trio, when independent of the action of the drama, had for its purpose the presentation of a résumé of the dramatic situation. There are few of such nature to be found in the Rameau operas, but, on occasion, he did use them. This form of the trio was new in France at that time, and was included in the opera, no doubt, as a concession to the growing popularity of the Italianate in dramatic music.

The writing for three voices may be harmonic or contrapuntal, but in most cases, it is a mixture of the two styles of composition. The accompaniment may be confined to the continuo or, again, it may involve a fairly large orchestra. At times the combination of trio and orchestra may be joined by the chorus and the result is a sort of symphonic ensemble, with the words of the singers

¹Hippolyte: Act II, scene 4, p. 126. (Continuo only).

²Masson: L'Opéra de Rameau, p. 279.

Ex. 78

Du des-tin le vou-loir su-pré-me A-mis

en-tre nos mains la tra-me de tes jours

Mais le fa-tal ci-seau n'en peut trancher le

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle staff is the piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is the bass line. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff. The first system contains the first two lines of lyrics, the second system contains the next two lines, and the third system contains the final line. The music is written in a clear, legible hand.

so obscure that they are unimportant in the mass of tone.

The quartet has the same number of voice parts as the chorus, but in the quartet each of the four voices has an equal melodic interest. It is essentially polyphonic in its nature and, as Rameau pointed out in his Traité, it lends itself to imitation and fugues. There is only one real example of a quartet in the dramatic works of Rameau (Ex. 79),¹ although a short quartet of a comic nature and only nine measures in length is found in the first act of Platée.

The quintet, called the "quinque" at the time of Rameau, does not appear as a complete number for five individual voices; it is found only in the choruses. However, there is a combination of five solo voices and the chorus in Le Temple de la Gloire in the scene in which the five chained kings thank Trajan for his mercy (Ex. 80).²

At the time of Rameau, the operatic chorus was still considered the glory of French opera, even though the Italians had not used it to any great extent since the end of the seventeenth century. Rameau especially liked the chorus because it gave him an opportunity to unleash

¹Les Indes galantes: Entrée des fleurs, scene 8, p. 263.

²La Temple de la Gloire: Act III, scene 4, p. 279.

Ex. 79

Fatime

Zaire

Taemus

Ali

Tendre a-mour que pour nous ta: chai

Tendre a-mour que pour nous ta

ne

the force of his harmonic principles and his techniques of expression. These resources, plus his ingenuity in melodic invention, give his choruses their own distinctive character.

The use of the chorus, derived from Greek drama, involves both music and drama. The chorus may take part in the action as a real character; it may enter the dialogue with an exclamation or a reply to a short speech; it may explain the answer to a question; it may be divided so there is dialogue in the chorus itself. It may contribute movement other than that of the dancers as in the second act of Castor when the Heavenly Pleasures try to hold back Pollux with a chain of flowers. The chorus never fills the role of a moralizing spectator; most often it is used for exhortations, injunctions and prayers.

Choruses of exhortation often follow an air of the same sort, and may address themselves to a person, but the command is usually general. The prayers may be spontaneous expressions of collective sentiments or they may be prepared prayers sung during a religious celebration. Certain aspects of the drama may be explained to the audience by the chorus; the outcome of some bit of action may be announced by this group. In a few instances, there is a combination of statement of fact and exhortation.

The "decorative chorus" is rare in the main body of Rameau's operas, but may be found in the divertissements. The text of such numbers is limited to a statement of the character of the people who form the chorus.

The music for the chorus may be original or it may be borrowed from adjacent airs and instrumental dances, but the place of the chorus in the opera is always reasonable and dramatic in the way in which it is used. When the melody of an adjacent air or dance is used in a chorus, the new setting is always varied by slight changes in the melodic line or in some new sort of polyphonic treatment.

Used in a fragmentary fashion, the chorus may assume a role more important from the standpoint of drama than of music. In the storm scene of Les Indes galantes,¹ the chorus of invisible sailors sings two short verses which indicate the direction the dramatic action will take. The chorus may repeat the melodies of brief dances, or it may sing the refrain in a vocal rondeau.

The chorus in Rameau's time normally had four voice divisions, one for women and three for men. The men are the haute-contre (the male alto), the taille (tenor) and

¹Les Indes galantes: Act I, scene 2.

the bass. The women are the sopranos, or, to use the French term of the day, "dessus." In 1760 at the Paris Opera, there were twelve women in the chorus and only nineteen men, with the upper voices evidently predominating. The use of the male alto gave the chorus an element of color impossible to duplicate today with the quartet of two women's and two men's voices.

The musical structure of the operatic chorus depended on the number of voices used, and the manner in which they were grouped in relation to each other. There were two general divisions of choruses in Rameau's time, the little chorus (*petite chœur*) which used less than four parts and the big choruses which had four or more voices.

The unison chorus is used in an episodic manner, most often within another chorus. It involves the use of only one type of voice (Ex. 81).¹

The little chorus in two parts ("*en duo*") is found more frequently. It is usually scored for the sopranos divided into two parts, although there are instances of the combination of soprano and *haute-contre*. This form of the chorus is appropriate to graceful expression of sentiments and its natural place is in the *divertisse-*

¹Castor: Act IV, scene 2 (with flute, oboe, bassoon and strings).

Vivement

Ex. 81

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of two staves with rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Fuy-ez, fuyez Om-bres lé-gè-res! Vos

jeux sont pro-fa-nés par des

ments (Ex. 82).¹

The chorus in three parts allows more varied combinations and variety of expression. In this form it may be made up of the divided sopranos and the haute-contre (Ex. 83),² soprano, haute-contre and taille, the three men's voices, or even soprano, haute-contre and bass. It may be used in the body of a big chorus as a "petite choeur" for a short period (usually four or five measures) for the purpose of contrast in choral texture and color (Ex. 84).³

The chorus with four voice divisions is the one found most often in the Rameau operas. It may take the form of a refrain which punctuates an air, it may be the repetition of a dance melody, or it may be a fully developed number full of all the harmonic and polyphonic resources at Rameau's command. In most cases the texture of the chorus is a mixture of polyphony and harmony, much in the style of the choruses found in the works of Handel (Ex. 85).⁴

¹Castor: Act II, scene 2 (With flute, oboe, bassoon and strings).

²Hippolyte: Act I, scene 3, p. 66.

³Dardanus: Act I, p. 149.

⁴Hippolyte: Act III, scene 8, p. 217. (With strings, oboe and bassoon.)

Ex. 82

Sop. I

Sop. II

Cour. & Strips

qu'Hé-bé de fleurs tou-jours nou-vel-les Forme vos

chai-nes im-mor-tel-les Forme vos chai-

Ex. 83

Dans ce pai- si- ble sé- jour Rè- que l'ai- mable in- no-
 Dans ce pai- si- ble sé- jour Rè-
 Dans ce pai- si- ble se-
 cen- ce Rè- que l'ai-
 que l'ai-
 jour Rè- que l'ai-
 mable in- no- cen- ce les traits que
 mable in- no- cen- ce les
 mable in- no- cen- ce les

Ex. 84

Guer-riers sui-vez l'A-mour, C'est dans sa cour, Que

Guer-riers sui-vez l'A-mour, C'est dans sa cour, Que

Guer-riers sui-vez l'A-mour C'est dans sa cour, Que

les plai-sirs font leur sé-jour. Cé-dez ---

les plai-sirs font leur sé-jour Cé-dez ---

les plai-sirs font leur sé-jour Qu'il vous en-trai-

Qu'il vous en-trai-

Qu'il vous en-trai-

Ex. 85

Handwritten musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 2/4 time. The score is divided into two systems of four staves each.

System 1:

- Sop.**: Rests in all measures.
- Alto**: *Que ce ri-va-ge re-ten-tis-se De la gloi- - - -*
- Tenor**: Rests in the first two measures, then *Que ce ri-* in the third measure.
- Bass**: Rests in all measures.

System 2:

- Sop.**: Rests in all measures.
- Alto**: *- - - - re du Dieu des flots De la*
- Tenor**: *va-ge re-ten-tis-se De la gloir- - - -*
- Bass**: Rests in all measures.

Lyrics:

Que ce ri-va-ge re-ten-tis-se De la gloi- - - -
 Que ce ri-
 - - - - re du Dieu des flots De la
 va-ge re-ten-tis-se De la gloir- - - -

The five-part chorus is reserved for religious music. Rameau in his Code de musique partique published in 1760 says "It is always useless to compose in five parts, since harmonically one never finds five voices except in suspensions which reduce themselves to four parts eventually." Five parts are found most often in choruses which have a temporary division of voices that creates the effect of a chorus with soloists or that of a double chorus (Ex. 86).¹ Such a chorus is often used to hide the lack of action on the stage, a situation which is created normally when the chorus sings for any length of time.

The choruses may be either harmonic or polyphonic in texture. In Rameau's time the harmonic choruses were called "syllabic," since all the voices sang the same syllable of the text at the same time. In this form the melody is the important part and the inner voices are only filler. Rameau liked the harmonic form of choral writing because of its simplicity and the fact that the clarity of the text made it valuable in any scene of great dramatic intensity. It also gave him a chance to demonstrate the power of his harmonic principles of expression in which modulations produced effects independent of the melodic designs.

¹Dardanus: Act III, p. 243. Chorus with dance.

Ex. 86

Vif

Quel tri-om phe Quel tri-
Quel tri-
Quel tri-

om phe Quel jour heu- reux Quel tri-
phe Quel jour heu- reux Quel tri-
om-phe Quel jour heu- reux Quel tri-
Quel tri- om phe Quel tri-

The more elaborate choruses are often more polyphonic than harmonic in their conception, the independence of voices involving the use of every contrapuntal device from the simplest of figurations to the most complex forms of polyphony. The large choruses make use of imitation and the fugue. Rameau uses the fugal style freely and without any of the scholastic bonds, but there is no chorus in his operas which is completely contrapuntal. In writing in this style, he limits himself to simple expositions which eventually dissolve into chordal passages. In the use of strict canon, the longest example is only nine measures.¹ In the chorus of the *Trezeniens* found in the third act of *Hippolyte*, we find Rameau's most involved use of the exposition of a fugue (Ex. 85). The first part of the chorus is the exposition and the second part, written in imitation, is superimposed on the theme of the first part.

Counterpoint is a resource of expression to Rameau, not a point of procedure. In his most important choruses, he combines, at will, vertical harmony with any type of polyphony.

The orchestra most often doubles the voices of the

¹Hippolyte: Act IV, scene 3. The chorus of the hunters.

chorus. Added parts are treated as a part of the choral texture, being either counter-melodies or figurations. When an independent accompaniment is found, the chorus part is often reduced to a syllabic intonation of the text superimposed on the orchestral part. In form, the choruses are either binary, ternary, or in the style of a rondo.

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¹Microfilms are of the scores published by A. Durand et Fils, Paris. Quotations from the operas of Rameau other than those listed above are taken from L'Opéra de Rameau, by Paul-Marie Masson.

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