

IGNAZ HOLZBAUER AND THE ORIGINS OF GERMAN OPERA IN VIENNA

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ABSTRACT

Ignaz Holzbauer (1711–1783) is best known for his singspiel Günther von Schwarzburg (1777), a work that deeply impressed Mozart during his sojourn in Mannheim. A much earlier German opera by Holzbauer, however, has gone virtually unnoticed. In the summer or autumn of 1741 the composer's full-length, three-act teutsche Opera entitled Hypermnestra was performed at the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna. Following the death of Emperor Charles VI and the accession of Maria Theresia, the Kärntnertortheater Intendant Joseph Selliers commissioned a German-language opera, selecting Holzbauer, who had recently returned to Vienna from Moravia, to compose the music and the court printer Johann Leopold van Ghelen to write the libretto.

Although it is widely known that Holzbauer composed several operas in Italian before 1741, Hypermnestra appears to be the earliest opera by the composer for which a score survives. The music provides ample evidence of a mature composer in full command of opera seria style. Although Holzbauer had not yet found a satisfactory solution to the problem of narrative recitative, the opera nevertheless illustrates many of the virtues found in Günther von Schwarzburg: outstanding accompanied recitatives, a great variety in the treatment of da capo aria form and a rich array of orchestral colours.

Apart from the music, Hypermnestra is remarkable for historical reasons. It reveals that the composer had received a commission to compose an opera in the German language long before Günther von Schwarzburg. On the basis of current research it appears to hold the distinction of being one of the earliest, if not the first, full-length German opera produced in Vienna. Maria Theresia soon re-established the dominance of French and Italian styles. Nevertheless, Hypermnestra is an early example of an idea that would gradually gain acceptance and blossom during the reign of Joseph II.

Ignaz Holzbauer is perhaps best known for *Günther von Schwarzburg*, a singspiel first performed at Mannheim on 5 January 1777 and composed at a time when German princes were beginning to encourage the creation of secular dramatic works in the vernacular.¹ *Günther von Schwarzburg* has been described as 'the

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1 Concerning the increasing support for German opera and singspiel in the north German courts, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Munich and Vienna during the second half of the eighteenth century see Thomas Bauman, *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and John Warrack, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 5 ('From the Seven Years War to the French Revolution') and chapter 6 ('The Viennese Singspiel'). Joseph II's promotion of the German language and the founding of the German National Theatre at the Burgtheater in 1776 and the concomitant German National Singspiel, however



culmination of his career'.² At this stage in the development of German opera, the term *deutsch* often carried a purely linguistic meaning, but it could also embrace patriotic or even nationalistic notions, as it did in *Günther von Schwarzburg*. The impulse to write secular dramatic music in the German language sprang up in the eighteenth century and blossomed fully in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Mozart himself attended a performance of Holzbauer's work in Mannheim and expressed his enthusiasm for the music to his father in an often quoted letter of 14 November 1777:

Nun auf die opera. ganz kurz. die Musick von Holzbauer ist sehr schön. die Poesie ist nicht werth einer solchen Musick. an meisten wundert mich, dass ein so alter Mann, wie holzbauer, noch so viell geist hat; denn das ist nicht zu glauben was in der Musick für feüer ist.³

Now for the opera, but quite briefly. Holzbauer's music is very beautiful. The poetry doesn't deserve such music. What surprises me most of all is that a man as old as Holzbauer should still possess so much spirit; for you can't imagine what fire there is in that music.

Scholars have often drawn attention to the influence of *Günther von Schwarzburg* on *Idomeneo*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Die Zauberflöte*.⁴ However, the recent rediscovery of the manuscript and printed libretto of *Hypermnestra*, a full-length *teutsche Opera* performed at the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna in 1741, demonstrates that Holzbauer had composed a German opera thirty-six years before *Günther von Schwarzburg*.

The 1741 production of *Hypermnestra* is surprising because it was mounted in a city where the ruling family had long maintained a hostile attitude towards the notion of German opera. The Habsburgs had always insisted upon Italian as the language for secular dramatic music and frowned upon most forms of stage entertainment in the German language; negative attitudes towards German as a language for singing were widespread. The problem stemmed largely from the lack of a tradition of German musical declamation and was reinforced by the dearth of trained German singers.⁵ The view that German was unsingable persisted well into the eighteenth century and was in fact expressed in a review of *Günther von Schwarzburg*.⁶ The Francophile Frederick the Great described the German language as *à demi-barbare* and declared that he would rather listen to his horse than to a German soprano.⁷

At Vienna, only members of the court circle and their guests were permitted to attend the performances of Italian dramatic works commissioned by the Habsburgs. After the founding of the Kärntnertortheater in the first decade of the eighteenth century, the Viennese public began to enjoy a variety of theatrical performances with music, some in German, others in Italian. Even after the death of Charles VI on 20 October 1740, however, the lingering Habsburg bias for Italian opera precluded performances of German works at the court theatre in Vienna. And yet, shortly after the accession of Maria Theresia, Holzbauer and

politically motivated, laid the groundwork not only for Mozart's masterpieces, but also for important works by Umlauf and Dittersdorf; see Warrack, 128–143.

2 Paul Corneilson, 'Holzbauer', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), volume 2, 744.

3 *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch and Joseph Heinz Eibl (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962–1975), No. 383, volume 2, 125; English translation in Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, third edition, ed. Alec Hyatt King and Monica Carolan (London: Macmillan, 1966), volume 1, 374.

4 See, for example, Warrack, *German Opera*, 112–115; Roland Würtz, 'Ignaz Holzbauer and *Das teutsche*', *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario* 7/1 (1982), 92–93; and Floyd Grave, 'Holzbauer', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2002), volume 11, 664.

5 Concerning widespread negative attitudes towards German as a language for singing, the lack of a tradition of German musical declamation and the problem of training German singers see Warrack, *German Opera*, 23, 61–62 and 137; Beverly Jerold, 'Fasch and the Beginning of Modern Artistic Choral Singing', *Bach* 35 (2004), 61–86; and Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 28.

6 See Würtz, 'Ignaz Holzbauer and *Das teutsche*', 91 and 97, note 11.

7 Warrack, *German Opera*, 91.



the court printer and librettist Johann Leopold van Ghelen were commissioned by the Intendant Joseph Selliers to write a three-act German opera for the Kärntnertheater.

Van Ghelen evidently enjoyed a special relationship with the Intendant of the Kärntnertheater, for Selliers contracted him to assist with many foreign-language productions.⁸ Moreover, between 1735 and 1747 he published translations of librettos for at least thirteen Italian operas. Unlike the texts for operas sung in German at the Kärntnertheater in the 1730s, van Ghelen's libretto for Holzbauer's *Hypermnestra* is not a translation of a pre-existing Italian text, but a newly created drama based upon a classical Greek myth and written entirely in German. The only known extant copy of the printed libretto is preserved in the city library at the Rathaus in Vienna, where I located it in 2001.⁹

For his subject van Ghelen turned to the story of Hypermnestra, which served as the basis for numerous dramas and opera librettos in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁰ Baroque dramas and opera librettos prior to Pietro Metastasio's text for the marriage of Archduchess Maria Anna on 7 January 1744 are mainly derived from Aeschylus's telling of the story in *The Suppliant Women*. Although the story is embellished and varied in myriad guises, the basic outline remains essentially the same. Having overthrown the legitimate King Stenelo of Argos, the tyrant Danaus is visited by an oracle, who predicts that he will be murdered by his son-in-law. Danaus therefore commands his fifty daughters to slay their bridegrooms, the fifty sons of Aegyptus, on their wedding night. Deeply in love with her betrothed, Lyncaeus, Hypermnestra proves to be the only daughter who refuses to kill her bridegroom. Vengeance is carried out by Lyncaeus, and the throne of Argos is returned to its lawful heir, Argia, the daughter of Stenelo.

Even though the tale of Hypermnestra includes some gruesome details, including mass murder, it was especially favoured for occasions such as royal birthdays, name days and weddings, no doubt because most versions end with the happy union of Hypermnestra and Lyncaeus. The basic outline of the story is found, for example, in Giovanni Moniglia's libretto for Francesco Cavalli's opera *Hipermestra* (Florence, 1658), a work performed for Cardinal Giovanni Carlo of Tuscany to celebrate the birth of the prince of Spain. The text by the renowned librettist Antonio Salvi for Giovanni Ferrandini's *Ipermestra* (Munich, 1736) emphasizes the aspect of vengeance: Lyncaeus carries out the oracle's ominous prophecy by killing Danaus and seizing the kingdom of Argos. The Munich opera was performed in honour of the name day of Maria Amalia, Electress of Bavaria and daughter of the deceased Emperor Joseph I. The proximity of the Munich court, the close blood relationship of Maria Amalia to the Habsburg dynasty, Ferrandini's visit to Vienna in 1739 and his dedication of a manuscript volume of cantatas to Charles VI in that year are circumstances that suggest a possible influence on van Ghelen.¹¹ However, a comparison of van Ghelen's text with Salvi's reveals no direct indebtedness.¹² On the contrary, van Ghelen's is a work of striking originality, incorporating stirring dramatic episodes and surprising twists of fate. A rescue scene, a staged battle, the switching of potions, a parody of a mad scene and an extensive ballet at the end of each act no doubt supplied essential ingredients of entertainment.

The drama penned by Pietro Metastasio for Johann Adolphe Hasse's *Ipermestra* marked a kind of watershed in the history of opera librettos based upon this classical myth. According to Don Neville,

8 Eleonore Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertheaters (1710–1748)' (PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1969), 164.

9 Vienna, Stadtbibliothek, shelfmark A 9862.

10 For a list of Italian librettos based on the Hypermnestra myth see Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800*, volume 3 (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli Musica, 1991), items 13542–13609.

11 The archival copy of the cantatas presented to Charles VI by Ferrandini is in Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, shelfmark 19028. According to Karl Böhmer, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, second edition, *Personenteil*, volume 6 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), column 1024. Ferrandini visited Vienna in 1739.

12 Van Ghelen's text appears to be even less indebted to the libretto for *Ipermestra*, an anonymous *dramma per musica* produced at Hamburg in 1740. The cast, which starred Francesco Cuzzoni in the title role, included only four characters: *Ipermestra*, Linceo, Danao and Mirtena. See Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, item 13556.



'Metastasio's plot has its closest parallels with Joseph de Lafont's *livret* for Charles-Hubert Gervais' *Hypermnestre* (1716, Paris).¹³ In several respects the court poet stands the story on its head. In the first place, the Metastasian version is far less violent than the ancient story as related by Aeschylus in *The Suppliant Women*. There is, for example, no battle scene. The cast of characters is also revised: Nicander, Argia and Delmirus are replaced by Danaus's confidant, Adrastus, and by Danaus's niece and her betrothed, Elpinice and Pleisthenes. In this version, after Hypermnestra refuses to kill Lyncaeus, Danaus promises Elpinice that she will inherit the throne if she persuades Hypermnestra to obey his command. Elpinice eventually reveals the king's plan to Hypermnestra, and Pleisthenes persuades Lyncaeus to rebel rather than flee Argos. Lyncaeus and Pleisthenes burst into Danaus's chambers to kill him, but Hypermnestra rescues her father. As the rebellion is put down by the king's men, Hypermnestra begs her father to spare the lives of Lyncaeus and Pleisthenes. In a complete reversal of the van Ghelen drama, the king thus emerges victorious, pardons the traitors, and grants permission for the wedding of Hypermnestra and Lyncaeus.

Metastasio's revision of the classical myth of Hypermnestra was a reasonable choice for a lavish Habsburg entertainment in the 'Age of Enlightenment', for it concludes with the union of lovers made possible by a pardon that could only have been granted by an enlightened despot. While the defeat of the king might have seemed completely satisfactory for an opera performed at the Kärntnertortheater, it would have been offensive to the ruling family in a court production at the Hoftheater. Hypermnestra, the true heroine of the opera, could easily be identified with Maria Theresia herself, or perhaps Maria Anna on the occasion of her wedding. The Metastasio text soon became the standard version of the Hypermnestra myth and inspired nearly thirty settings during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁴

Hypermnestra represents the first important composition written by Holzbauer for Vienna, the city of his birth and early education. Details of the composer's formative years are still sketchy, but recently uncovered documents have filled in a few gaps.¹⁵ Bärbel Pelker divides Holzbauer's life into two phases. The first includes the composer's apprentice years in Vienna, his journey to Venice to become acquainted with current Italian styles, his service as Kapellmeister to Count Franz Anton von Rottal in Moravia, a decade of employment in Vienna and his two-year appointment as Oberkapellmeister at the court of Duke Carl Eugen at Stuttgart. The second phase, beginning in 1753, is dominated by his thirty-year service at the Mannheim court of Elector Carl Theodor.

Although it is widely known that Holzbauer had composed Italian operas before 1741, the German-language *Hypermnestra* appears to be the earliest opera by the composer for which a score survives. Nothing is known about the circumstances surrounding its commission, the length of time that it took the composer to prepare the score or even the precise date of the performance. There is no mention of the opera in the 1741 issues of the official court newspaper, the *Wienerisches Diarium*, which are dominated by reports of the impending war with Bavaria and contain very few references to musical performances in general. It has usually been assumed that the theatres in Vienna did not reopen until 1742, after a full year of mourning following the death of Charles VI.¹⁶ However, in a study of theatrical history written in 1969, Eleonore Schenk

13 'Ipermestra', *New Grove Opera*, volume 2, 815.

14 'Ipermestra', *New Grove Opera*, volume 2, 815; see also Neville, 'Metastasio', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, volume 3, 356, and, for a slightly compressed but updated list, Neville, 'Metastasio', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, volume 16, 516.

15 For details see Bärbel Pelker, 'Holzbauer', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, second edition, *Personenteil*, volume 9 (2003), columns 265–266. For additional biographical information see Grave, 'Holzbauer', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, volume 11, 663–664. An autobiographical sketch, 'Kurzer Lebensbegriff des Herrn Ignaz Holzbauer, Kurpfälzischen Kapellmeister', appeared in the *Pfälzische Museum*, volume 2, Heft 5 (Mannheim, 1783), but it provides few details about Holzbauer's early life and career.

16 The assumption appears to be based upon a passage in the *Lettere di Gasparo Angiolini a Monsieur Noverre sopra l'uso dei programmi nei balli pantomimi* (Milan: G. B. Bianchi, 1773), 11–14; an English translation of the pertinent passage is given in Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 153–154.



demonstrated that the theatres actually reopened in 1741. Faced with financial exigency and the departure of performers for other courts, the court-appointed Intendant, Selliers, seized the occasion of the birth of the future Emperor Joseph II on 13 March 1741 and appealed to Maria Theresia for the right to reopen the theatres in recognition of this historic event. The petition was granted, the period of mourning reduced and the theatres reopened on 21 April 1741, just six months after the death of Charles VI.¹⁷ The printed libretto and only manuscript score of *Hypermnestra* – both dated 1741 – corroborate Schenk's research. Holzbauer's *Hypermnestra* appears to be one of the first operas to be mounted after the reopening of the Kärntner-theater that year.¹⁸

Holzbauer had married the soprano Rosalie Andriedes in 1737 while still in the service of Count Rottal. Pelker indicates that the couple can be traced at Holleschau (Holesov) in Moravia as late as the end of March 1741.¹⁹ The reopening of the Viennese theatres may have inspired the young couple to try their luck in the Habsburg capital. Unless the composer was already at work on *Hypermnestra* before leaving Holleschau, it seems unlikely that the production could have been mounted before summer. Traditionally the theatres were also closed during Advent, so it seems logical to conclude that the performance must have taken place between June and December of 1741. At any rate, Holzbauer did not begin work on the opera as a wholly inexperienced composer of dramatic music, having written three Italian operas for the Count's theatre at Holleschau between 1737 and 1739.²⁰

Only a single copy of the full score of *Hypermnestra* survives, and we owe its existence to a little known but important collector, Duke Anton Ulrich von Sachsen-Meiningen (1687–1763).²¹ From 1725 to 1745 Anton Ulrich was a frequent visitor to Vienna; extensive lists of music manuscripts purchased during his initial sojourn of 1725–1728 are recorded in his diaries and in two early handwritten inventories found in the Thuringian State Archive.²² In addition, the Meiningen duke purchased at least seventeen manuscripts copied by professional Viennese scribes after 1728.²³ On the whole, the scribal work in these manuscripts resembles the handwriting found in the volumes purchased by Anton Ulrich in the

17 Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertheaters', 145.

18 Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertheaters', 185, lists two dramatic works performed at the Kärntnertheater in 1741: *Antigona*, an opera by Giuseppe Maria Orlandini with a libretto by Benedetto Pasqualigo, first performed in Venice in 1718, and *Das lustige Elendt*, a burlesque. However, she gives no information about the production of *Hypermnestra*. Nor does Robert Haas, who cites only the libretto for *Antigona* in his article 'Die Musik in der Wiener deutschen Stegreifkomödie', *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 12 (1925), 17. There was also a practical reason for reopening the theatre: taxes imposed on the Kärntnertheater were desperately needed to support the Viennese penitentiary.

19 Pelker, 'Holzbauer', column 265.

20 The three operas listed by Pelker in 'Holzbauer', column 267, are *Lucio Papirio* (12 October 1737), *Sesostri, re d'Egitto* (12 October 1738) and *Vologeso* (Autumn 1739); librettos survive for these works, but the scores appear to be lost.

21 Concerning the life of Duke Anton Ulrich see L. Hertel, 'Meiningische Geschichte von 1680 bis zur Gegenwart: Erste Hälfte: Bis zum Regierungsantritt Herzog Bernhards II (1821)', *Schriften des Vereins für Sachsen-Meiningische Geschichte und Landeskunde* 47 (1904), 216–226; Helmut Müller, 'Anton Ulrich, Herzog von Sachsen-Coburg-Meiningen, 1746–1763', in *Herrscher und Mäzene: Thüringer Fürsten von Hermenegred bis Georg II*, ed. Detlef Ignasiak (Rudolstadt: Hain, 1994), 271–280; Rudolf Schnitzler, 'Fux or Badia? The Attribution of Santa Geltrude and Ismaele', *Fontes artis musicae* 42/3 (1995), 217–218; and my 'A Little-Known Collection of Early-Eighteenth-Century Vocal Music at Schloss Elisabethenburg, Meiningen', *Fontes artis musicae* 48/3 (2001), 251–254.

22 The diaries are found in Meiningen, Staatsarchiv, GA, SV.T.54, and the inventories are preserved in GA.XV.T.47 and 49. Today the extant portion of Anton Ulrich's music manuscript collection is preserved in the Max-Reger-Archiv of the Staatliche Museen in Meiningen. It consists of 107 manuscripts containing 279 sacred and secular vocal compositions, of which approximately ninety are unique to the Meiningen library. GA.XV.T.49 also includes a long list of instrumental compositions that are no longer preserved at Meiningen and have not yet been traced to other collections. For further details see Bennett, 'A Little-Known Collection'.

23 For the complete list see my 'A Little-Known Collection', 280.



1720s.²⁴ Dated 1741, the copy of *Hypermnestra* (Meiningen, Max-Reger-Archiv, Ed 130d) is the most recent manuscript in the Meiningen collection and the only one in the German language.²⁵

Preserved in the Hofkapelle library during the late eighteenth century, the manuscripts were transferred in 1831 to the court theatre, where the collection was all but forgotten. Designated as 'Alte Kirchenmusik', the manuscripts were understandably judged to be of no significance to those in charge of secular theatrical productions. While searching for historical sacred music in 1910, the choral director and chronicler Christian Mühlfeld gained access to the collection and rescued the manuscripts from obscurity. Today they can be found in the Max-Reger-Archiv at Schloss Elisabethenburg in Meiningen.

Not surprisingly, no manuscript of Holzbauer's *Hypermnestra* comes down to us in a copy preserved in Vienna, and in 1741 Holzbauer had not yet received an official appointment at the Habsburg court. Since *Hypermnestra* was composed for the Kärntnertheater, it was not commissioned by a member of the Habsburg family, who would therefore have had no reason to order the preparation of a copy by one of the professional court scribes.

In 1912 Mühlfeld included *Hypermnestra* in his inventory of baroque manuscripts at Meiningen in an article published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*,²⁶ but since then *Hypermnestra* has gone largely unnoticed.²⁷ The opera does not appear in the work lists found in recent encyclopedia articles, which usually credit Holzbauer only with composing the ballet music for Johann Adolph Hasse's *Ipermestra*, the Italian opera commissioned for the marriage of Maria Theresia's younger sister, Archduchess Maria Anna, to Charles Alexander, Duke of Lorraine (the younger brother of the future Holy Roman Emperor Francis II).²⁸ Both the printed copy of Metastasio's libretto in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna (A-Wgm, Textbuch 9017) and the supplement to the 1 February 1744 edition of the *Wienerisches Diarium* identify Holzbauer as the composer of the *Arie* for the dances that conclude each act. Two scores preserved in Viennese libraries contain the music for Hasse's *Ipermestra*; neither score contains the ballet music composed by Holzbauer.²⁹

24 The court copyists Andreas Abendt and Killian Reinhardt both died in 1729; the leading copyist after this time was Andreas Amiller, and he is perhaps one of several scribes who prepared manuscripts for Anton Ulrich after 1730. However, the handwritings of the scribes of this period are extremely difficult to differentiate.

25 A professional Viennese scribe prepared Ed 130d on uncropped paper with the usual ten staves per page. Wrapped in modern white paper, the early cover is severely damaged, but its gray-green heavy paper is reminiscent of at least one other Meiningen manuscript, Ed 1191 (Staatsarchiv), which was put up for auction and purchased by the Austrian National Library in 2001; the new call number is Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Mus. Hs. 43.001. Sporadic foliation in Ed 130d has been written in modern pencil by a recent hand. The numerous loose fascicles are not threaded to the spine. The title-page provides information about the place, date, librettist, and composer: 'Hypermnestra / In einer Teutschen Opera / Auf dem Königl: Privilegirten Teatro / in Wienn [sic] Vorgeestet. / 1741 / Verfasset von Johann Leopold Van ghenen. / Die Music ist Von Herrn Ignatio Holtzbauer'.

26 Christian Mühlfeld, 'Die Meininger Hofbibliothek: Notenschätze der Herzogl. Öffentlichen Bibliothek und der Bibliothek der Hofkapelle in Meiningen aus dem 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 79/16 (1912), 219. Although Robert Eitner includes much of the information from Mühlfeld's article in volume 11 (*Nachträge und Miscellanea*) of the *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1900–1904), he fails to list *Hypermnestra* under any of the Holzbauer entries.

27 The work is not mentioned by recent biographers, including Pelker, Corneilson and Grave.

28 A full account of the wedding ceremony and celebration is given in the fifteen-page supplement to the 1 February 1744 issue (No. 10) of the *Wienerisches Diarium*: 'Ausführliche / Beschreibung / der höchsten / Vermählung / der durchleuchtigsten / Ertz-Hertzogin zu Oesterreich / MARIAE ANNAE / Ihrer Majestät der Königin zu Hun- / garn und Böhheim / MARIAE THERESIAE / Frauen Schwester / mit / Ihre durchleucht Herr / CAROLO ALEXANDRO / Printzen / von Lothringen und Baar / etc.. / So geschehen in der Königl. Residentz-Stadt Wien / den 7. Januarii 1744.'

29 The manuscript in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (A-Wgm, Q1463 (IV 1974)) represents the only complete score of Hasse's music. The manuscript in the Musiksammlung of the Austrian National Library (A-Wn, 17286) contains a short score of the recitatives and arias (solo vocal and continuo parts only) for the role of *Ipermestra*, complete with appropriate cues. This source has no title-page and provides no information about the place, date, occasion or anyone involved in the production except Hasse.



The question of whether some or all of the twenty-five dances written for *Hypermnestra* were retained for Hasse's *Ipermestra* is perplexing. The libretto for *Ipermestra* provides a summary of the actions represented by the ballets with music by Holzbauer at the ends of the three acts.

BALLI

Nel fine dell'Atto primo.
 Ballo rappresentante gl'inganni d'un
 Idolatra Impostore, finalmente co-
 nosciuto, e deriso.
 Nel fine dell'Atto secondo.
 Di Nobili Cacciatori, e Giardinieri.
 Nel fine dell'Atto terzo.
 Di Dame, e Cavalieri Argivi.

DANCES

At the end of the first Act.
 Dance representing the deceits of an
 Idolatrous Impostor, finally un-
 masked and derided.
 At the end of the second Act.
 Noble Hunters and Gardeners.
 At the end of the third Act.
 Ladies and Gentlemen of Argos.

These descriptions seem consistent with the standard pattern of serious, comic and celebratory ballets. They also seem apt enough for the dances found in the Meiningen manuscript of *Hypermnestra*. In particular, the rustic quality of the *Ballo Secondo*, which features horn duets and drones, matches the description of the corresponding ballet of *Ipermestra*. However, without clear evidence that some or all of the dances were used again in 1744, the question remains open.

By 1730 ballet had become a standard part of Kärntnertortheater entertainments. In its thirty-year history, the theatre's repertory had varied greatly. The government's decision to permit the construction of a public theatre came only after decades of imperial resistance and repeated petitions; even after the opening of the theatre about 1710, opera performances, restricted to the court, were forbidden. Under the leadership of the gifted comic actor Joseph Stranitzky and his colleague, the choreographer Johann Hilverding, however, the theatre gained the whole-hearted support of the Viennese public. A permanent imperial privilege was finally granted to Stranitzky and Hilverding in 1720. Fragmentary details about performances during these early years of the Kärntnertortheater indicate that three genres dominated the repertory: *Komödie*, *Hauptburleske* and *Hauptaktion*.³⁰

After Stranitzky's death on 16 May 1726 the company fell on hard financial times. Seizing the opportunity to revitalize the theatre, two court performers, the Italian tenor Francesco Borosini and the ballet dancer Joseph Carl Selliers, petitioned the court commission, which had been established to make recommendations concerning the future of the theatre to Charles VI. The Emperor endorsed the recommendations of the commission, which granted Borosini and Selliers a privilege for twenty years, beginning in 1728. The theatre was to remain a 'bürgerliches Privathaus', but Borosini and Selliers were given the title 'Direktoren des von kaiserlicher Majestät privilegierten Komödienhauses'.³¹ Thus the Kärntnertortheater passed from being a civic institution to being an impresarial undertaking with close ties to the court. The increased influence of

30 For a list of repertory performed in the early years of the Kärntnertortheater see Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertortheaters', 172.

31 Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertortheaters', 135.



the court was reflected in a significant change in the repertory, which soon boasted plays, ballets and arias sung in German as well as Italian. During the first three years of the Borosini–Selliers collaboration comedies and plays with music continued to dominate the repertory. From 1730 the repertory included popular Italian operas; the performances sometimes mixed German with the original Italian, but occasionally an opera seems to have been sung entirely in German translation. These works were designated as *Intermezzo musicale*, *Musikalisches Zwischenspiel* or *Musikalisch-italienisches Zwischenspiel* to distinguish them from the official productions heard at court. For such performances Borosini and Selliers selected music by leading composers of the day, including court musicians such as Francesco Conti and Antonio Caldara, as well as international stars such as Handel, Gasparini, Porpora, Hasse, Albinoni and Giovanni Bononcini. By the middle of the 1730s, therefore, visitors to the Kärntnertheater could enjoy a remarkable variety of entertainment.³² Following the reopening of the Kärntnertheater in 1741, then, the production of a complete opera with an original German libretto may not have seemed such a novelty, but simply the logical next step in the expansion of the theatre's repertory. The audience itself consisted of those who could afford to purchase tickets.

Evidence suggests that Anton Ulrich had taken an interest in the Kärntnertheater as early as 1730. The Meiningen collection includes unique copies of three dramatic works performed there between 1730 and 1732.³³ Moreover, a clearly documented friendship between Anton Ulrich and Borosini may also have contributed to the Duke's interest in the theatre. Numerous entries in Anton Ulrich's diaries of 1725–1728 provide a picture of a friendship that developed shortly before the tenor assumed his responsibilities with Selliers as impresario. Their friendship included the exchange of gifts. Thus on 9 May 1727 the Duke paid the large sum of 120 ducats for a lavish gift to be presented to Borosini, perhaps in return for services rendered by the tenor; and from Borosini he received a copy in the hand of a professional Viennese scribe of the opera *Bajazet* (Reggio nell'Emilia, 1719) by Francesco Gasparini with a dedication on the inside front binding: 'Von Mr. Borosini verehrt bekommen in Wien'.³⁴ The final reference to Borosini in Anton Ulrich's diaries is dated 3 January 1728. By the summer Borosini and Selliers had gained complete artistic and administrative control of the Kärntnertheater.

Taking charge of both the administrative and artistic direction, Borosini and Selliers oversaw every aspect of the theatre – the solo singers, dancers, chorus, orchestra and scenery. Although one observer, Johann Basilius Kuchelbecker, considered the dancing to be inferior to its French counterpart, he praised the orchestra, scenery, acting and costumes.³⁵ With the permission of the court and the commission, Borosini and Selliers established an academy for apprentice singers that was to serve both the Kärntnertheater and the court theatre. On the reverse side of the title-page of Meiningen, Staatsarchiv, Ed 130d, the copyist recorded a list of roles and singers in *Hypermnestra*:

Hypermnestra (soprano)	Frau Holtzbauerin
Danaus (tenor)	Herr Hager
Lyncaeus (soprano)	Jungfer Eckhartin

32 Further concerning the Borosini–Selliers collaboration see Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertheaters', 132–142; for a chronological list of 154 performances between 1728 and 1740 see Schenk, 172–185.

33 Francesco Rinaldi's *Eumene* (1730; D-MEIr, Ed 147p), the Viennese production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1731; D-MEIr, Ed 129n) and Rinaldi's *Il contrasto delle due regine in Persia* (1732; D-MEIr, Ed 147r).

34 The manuscript of *Bajazet* (D-MEIr, 126w) is one of fifty-two volumes copied for Anton Ulrich in 1726–1727 and inscribed on the inside front binding with the initials A. U. D. S. [Anton Ulrich Dux Saxoniae]. Borosini sang the title role in the 1719 production of *Bajazet*; in the Meiningen manuscript it is stated that the final scene was written by 'Zanella' after an idea suggested by Borosini himself. The tenor also debuted as Bajazet in Handel's *Tamerlano* (1724) at London's Haymarket Theatre. See my 'A Little-Known Collection', 259, and Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas, 1704–1726* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 534. *Bajazet* was produced in Italian twice at the Kärntnertheater, once in 1730 and again on 17 July 1739. *Bajazet*'s dramatic suicide scene at the end of the third act may have been the inspiration for the tyrant Danaus's mad scene in the third act of *Hypermnestra*.

35 Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertheaters', 137.



Argia (soprano)	Jungfer Catherl
Nicander (bass)	Herr Lehner
Delmirus (bass)	Herr Hammer

The composer's wife sang the title role. None of the singers held appointments in the Hofmusikkapelle, but from the lists of cast members provided in the unique Meiningen manuscripts of earlier works produced at the Kärntnertortheater it appears that the Intendant turned repeatedly to a small group of accomplished German-speaking singers, some of whom may have been trained in the early years of the singing academy.³⁶ In 1730 Herr Hager sang the title role in Francesco Rinaldi's *Eumene*. In the following year he sang the lead in the Viennese production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, and in 1732 he sang Segeste in Rinaldi's *Arminio*. The soprano Jungfer Catherl can be traced to Kärntnertortheater performances as far back as 1731. In that year she sang the roles of Sesto in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* and Ramife in *Arminio*; in the following year she portrayed Idreno in Rinaldi's *Il contrasto delle due Regine in Persia*. Schenk has identified Jungfer Catherl as Katharina Mayerin, the soprano who sang the role of Tivame in the 1739 Kärntnertortheater production of Antonio Caldara's *L'inganno tradito dall'amore*, originally performed at court in 1721; in the 1739 production, the role of Trasone was sung by one 'H. Löhner', perhaps the same person as the Herr Lehner who sang Nicander two years later in *Hypermnestra*.³⁷ Nothing is yet known of Jungfer Eckhartin or Herr Hammer.

The names of the singers who performed in Hasse's *Ipermestra* do not appear in the libretto or in the two manuscripts that contain the music (Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Q1463 and Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, 17286). At the outset of rehearsals for the opera, some consideration was given to assigning the title role to Maria Theresia, who had often performed at court as an archduchess, but eventually it was deemed inappropriate for a reigning monarch to participate on stage.³⁸ Folios 19r–20r of Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, 17286 provide elaborate written-out ornaments in the composer's hand for five arias sung by *Ipermestra*. The virtuosic demands of these ornaments indicate that the role must have been sung by a star soprano, probably the composer's wife, Faustina Bordoni.³⁹ In general, the virtuosity of written-out vocal lines supplemented by frequent fermatas suggesting improvised cadenzas is greater in Hasse's opera than in Holzbauer's, with the exception of the demanding part written for *Hypermnestra*.

The three arias composed for *Hypermnestra* require a soprano with exceptional range and agility. Each of the arias is unusually long, with copious coloratura. *Hypermnestra*'s first-act tour de force 'Ich bin bereit' parallels 'Der glänzende Himmel', Anna's aria from the first act of *Günther von Schwarzburg*. Each heroine's aria begins with a lengthy instrumental introduction that features an obbligato instrument – oboe for Anna's aria and cello for *Hypermnestra*'s. The brilliant *fioriture* in the second half of the A section of 'Ich bin bereit' ascend to a rare peak of c^{#3}, though not the stratospheric f³ required of Franziska Danzi, who sang the role of Anna in *Günther von Schwarzburg*. The second- and third-act arias are scarcely less challenging, each featuring long florid lines rising to c³. The vocal virtuosity demanded by these arias suggests that at least in part Holzbauer used the commission to write his first opera for Vienna as a vehicle for his wife, Rosalie Andriedes.

The music of *Hypermnestra* provides ample evidence of a mature composer in full command of Italian opera seria style. The score consists of extensive passages of *recitativo semplice*, sixteen da capo arias, four ensembles (one trio, one duet and two choruses), three orchestral recitatives and instrumental music: an

36 The lists of cast members in the Meiningen manuscripts containing secular dramatic works performed at the Kärntnertortheater from 1730 to 1732 are found on the reverse sides of the title-pages in D-MEIr, Ed 129n, Ed 147p and Ed 147r.

37 Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertortheaters', 184, gives a complete list of cast members for the Kärntnertortheater performance of *L'inganno tradito dall'amore*.

38 See *Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisters 1742–1776*, ed. Rudolf Graf Khevenhüller-Metsch and Hans Schlitter (Vienna: Adolf Holzhausen, 1907), volume 1, 202.

39 I am grateful to Dr Sven Hansell for identifying the handwriting of these ornaments as that of Hasse himself.



Italianate *sinfonia*, a march to announce the first-act entrance of Delmirus (the commander of Lyncaeus's army) and ballet music at the end of each act. The score of Hasse's *Ipermestra* features nineteen *da capo* arias, two ensembles (one duet and one chorus) and two orchestral recitatives. Apart from the opening *sinfonia* and the lost ballet music by Holzbauer, there are no independent instrumental numbers. Seven brief scenes are devoted entirely to *recitativo semplice*. Like Holzbauer's ballet music, the *licenza* and concluding chorus by Luca Predieri are missing.

The complete score of *Hypermnestra* requires flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, a variety of strings and basso continuo. And it is not surprising that a composer who later achieved acclaim as an important Mannheim symphonist had already exploited an impressive variety of orchestral colours, articulations and dynamics at a much earlier stage in his career. For the most part the singers are accompanied by full orchestra throughout their arias. French horns are assigned prominent parts not only in the *sinfonia* and first-act march, but also in two arias and several dances. For Danaus's aria at the end of Act 1, Holzbauer added separate parts for violone and bassoon to the usual four-part strings and indicated that the aria is to be played *senza cembalo*. In the echo duet the violins are divided into three parts. Individual parts for oboes, flutes, bassoons and violoni can also be found in the scoring for the ballets. On the other hand, many dances require only unison or paired violins and cello, the standard instrumentation for ballet rehearsal in Austria and Italy.⁴⁰ Oboes and flutes are not specified in the orchestral accompaniments for arias, but the addition of wind instruments to the strings, especially in *forte* passages, was common in Viennese scores of this period.

Hasse draws upon a similar instrumental palette. The first and third movements of the *sinfonia* include parts for paired French horns, unison violins, violas and basso continuo. The horns are omitted in the central movement of the *sinfonia* and do not reappear until Act 2 Scene 5, where they join divided oboes and the usual strings. They return once again at the end of Act 3 for the final quintet (marked *Coro* in the score). As in *Hypermnestra*, the full orchestra accompanies singers throughout their arias, although Hasse, like his Viennese contemporary, often indicates a *piano* dynamic for the instruments during vocal sections. Most arias are accompanied only by strings: violins (sometimes divided, sometimes unison), violas and *bassi*. Occasionally Hasse exploits idiomatic string writing. During *Ipermestra*'s agitated orchestral recitative in Act 2 Scene 2, for example, strings punctuate vocal phrases with double and triple stops, rushing ascending and descending scales in demisemiquavers and passages marked *tremulo*. In *Ipermestra*'s aria 'Se il mio duol' (Act 2 Scene 3) Hasse requires the strings to play *con sordine* and specifies *Bassi pizzicati* at the point where the soprano first sings.

Holzbauer's previous training and experience as an Italian opera composer are reflected in *Hypermnestra* by the numerous narrative passages that draw upon the clichés of Italian recitative distributed in short halting phrases over static bass lines with limited harmonic interest. Many years later the composer substantially reduced the amount of simple recitative when he composed *Günther von Schwarzburg*. In other respects, though, *Hypermnestra* illustrates many of the virtues found in the singspiel: a flexible approach to the treatment of *da capo* form, several dramatic accompanied recitatives and a rich array of orchestral colours found both in the aria accompaniments and in the purely instrumental numbers.

Seven aria texts by van Ghelen consist of paired stanzas of equal length, each comprising three to six lines of verse. More often than not, however, the distribution of text between the *prima parte* and *seconda parte* is not balanced. Arias that exhibit unusual proportions include Delmirus's 'Es falle, es stürzte' (two lines versus eight), Nicander's 'Der schon einmal' (eight lines versus three) and *Hypermnestra*'s 'Gleich wie das Schiffllein' (nine lines versus three). Metastasio's aria texts usually consist of two stanzas of four lines each, a plan that can be seen in no fewer than eighteen arias of *Ipermestra*. For the duet between *Ipermestra* and Linceo at the end of Act 2 he doubles the number of lines for the *prima parte*. In two third-act arias with seven lines of text he assigns four lines to the first section, saving three for the second. Both composers often

40 See Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 167, and Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, 'Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera. Chapter 4: 1740–1765, The Rise of Italian Pantomime Ballet', in *Opera on Stage*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 214.



highlight important words through text repetition, wide leaps and coloratura passages, and both prefer the major mode: Hasse selects minor tonalities for two arias, while Holzbauer uses minor only once.

The five arias outlined in Table 1 illustrate the wide variety of text treatment, interaction of voice and orchestra and da capo designs found in *Hypermnestra*. The standard mid-eighteenth-century five-part da capo (form number 1 on Table 1) is represented by Nicander's second-act aria, 'Der müde Wanders-Mann'. A prince and commander of Danaus's army, Nicander has until now been in love with Hypermnestra, but he declares in a recitative that the love he formerly felt for Hypermnestra has been replaced and doubled by his love for Argia. In the G major aria that concludes the scene Nicander likens his situation to that of a man forced to choose paths in a dark forest.

Der müde Wanders-Mann
 Kommt in dem finstren Wald
 Gar Bald
 Auf einen Irr-Weeg an.
 So geht es auch im Liebes Schertz
 Wann sich auf einmal in dem Hertz
 Wie bey getheilten Weegen
 Zwei gleiche Triebe regen.

 The weary wayfarer
 in the dark forest
 arrives very soon
 at the wrong path.
 So it is also in the game of love
 when at the same time in the heart,
 as at a fork in the road,
 two equal desires stir.

Holzbauer divides the eight lines of poetry equally between the A and B sections. This aria opens in typical fashion, with a tutti ritornello, and concludes with an abbreviated variant of the initial tutti. The opening seventeen-bar ritornello is fugal, demonstrating Holzbauer's command of three-part counterpoint and his ability to combine several distinct rhythmic motives. The voice enters with the head motive of the opening ritornello, but the composer reserves rapid semiquaver motives for the orchestra, weaving them together with the more sustained vocal line throughout the aria. The vocal portion of the long first section is divided into two parts, A and A¹, separated by a brief internal ritornello; the first part of this binary scheme cadences in the dominant key, D major, and, after another cadence in the dominant at the end of the mid-point ritornello, the tonality soon returns to the original key. The second part of the A section repeats the four-line text of the first portion, now with wide melodic leaps – descending octaves and ascending sevenths and tenths – which aptly illustrate the poetic image of wandering in the forest; the vocal writing is ideal for a competent bass-baritone, never rising above d¹ or below F#. The shorter B section begins in the relative minor, lacks a ritornello and dispenses the second quatrain much more efficiently. Following a cadence in the mediant, both A and A¹ are restated with the customary ritornellos.⁴¹

Although the basic da capo plan prevails in virtually all the arias of *Hypermnestra*, Holzbauer treats it with considerable freedom. Thus, for example, Danaus's B flat major aria at the end of the very first scene, 'Gedenke nur das ich das Leben', begins without an introductory ritornello, a choice perhaps motivated by the composer's desire to propel the drama forward after the opening dialogue in *semplice* style. It also serves to establish immediately the menacing nature of Danaus's character. Hypermnestra has just learned about the oracle's prophecy from Danaus, who has extracted a promise from her to emulate her sisters by killing

41 This basic formal plan essentially agrees with the aria form 1.a (five-part da capo) outlined in Jack Westrup, 'Aria', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 1, 891.



Table 1 Aria forms in Ignaz Holzbauer's *Hypermnestra* (1741)

1. Standard mid-eighteenth-century five-part da capo: <i>Der müde Wanders-Mann</i> (Nicander: Act 2 Scene 7)									
section	A	A'	tutti	tutti		B			da capo (A, A')
thematic	solo	solo			tutti	solo			
poetic lines	a	a'			x	x			
tonal plan	G	G-D	D		G	related keys: e-b			
2. Altered five-part da capo: <i>Gedenke nur das ich das Leben</i> (Danaus: Act 1 Scene 1)									
section	A	A'	tutti	tutti		B			da capo (A, A')
thematic	solo	solo			tutti	solo			tutti
poetic lines	a	a'			x	x			
tonal plan	B \flat -F	F-B \flat	F		B \flat	related keys: g			g-B \flat
3. Altered five-part da capo with contrasting metres and tempos: <i>Ich gehe aber ach!</i> (Hypermnestra: Act 2 Scene 9)									
section	A (4/4, Andante)	A'	tutti	tutti		B (2/4, Allegro)			da capo (A, A')
thematic	solo	solo			tutti	solo			tutti (4/4, Andante)
poetic lines	a	a'			b	b			
tonal plan	E \flat -B \flat	B \flat -E \flat	B \flat -E \flat		E \flat	4-5, 6-8			E \flat
4. Da capo al segno: <i>Gleich wie das Schifflein</i> (Hypermnestra: Act 3 Scene 2)									
section	A (dal segno)	A'	tutti	tutti		B			d.c. al segno (A, A')
thematic	solo	solo			tutti	solo			abbreviated
poetic lines	a	a'			x	x			tutti
tonal plan	A	A-E	E		A	D			A
5. Da capo aria with contrasting metres and tempos within the A section: <i>Was fürchtet ihr</i> (Danaus: Act 1 Scene 9)									
section	A	B	A'	B'		C			da capo (AB, A'B')
metres/tempos	4/4, Andante	solo	solo	solo	tutti	solo			
poetic lines	1-2	3-4	1-2	3-4	2/4 Allegro	2/4, Allegro			
tonal plan	E \flat	B \flat	B \flat	B \flat -E \flat	B \flat	5-6, 7-8			related key: c



her bridegroom. Danaus leaves little doubt that he will inflict dreadful punishment on his daughter if she disobeys him.

Gedenke nur das ich das Leben
 Durch solchen Tod von dir begehrt.
 Und wirst du mir nicht widerstreben
 So werd' ich aller Sorgen leer
 Und fanget meine Freiheit an.
 Allein brichst du dein Versprechen
 So werd' ich mich so grausam rächen
 Als noch kein Vatter sonst gethan.

Just remember that I desire life
 from you through such death.
 And if you do not oppose me
 I will be free of all worries
 and my freedom will begin.
 But if you break your promise
 then I will avenge myself more cruelly
 than any father has ever done.

Following the clear design of the aria text, Holzbauer assigns five lines to the A section and three to the B section. Although the aria opens with a bit of imitation between voice and violins, the active string parts remain mostly independent of the vocal line throughout the aria, and vigorous semiquaver figuration in the ritornello at the end of the A section brings the aria to an emphatic conclusion. The bass line participates in the figuration, but to a lesser degree than in Nicander's second-act aria. The figuration is echoed in a compensatory ritornello at the end of the B section, which leads tonally from the final vocal cadence in G minor back to B flat major in preparation for the da capo (form number 2 on Table 1). String tremolos heard throughout B underscore Danaus's threat. Holzbauer stresses the key word *Freiheit* with a melodic peak of g^1 , but the modest vocal range for tenor does not exceed a major ninth.

Holzbauer exploits the technique of omitting the initial ritornello again for Hypermnestra's aria 'Ich gehe aber ach!' (Act 2 Scene 9) and for the trio that concludes the second act. The aria is noteworthy also for a contrast of tempo and metre used to express conflicting affects. Hypermnestra, still struggling with the inner conflict between loyalty to her father and love for her betrothed, has agreed to hide in the tent of Lyncaeus's encampment.

Ich gehe aber ach!
 Ich weiss nicht, was für Peine
 In meiner Brust erscheinen.
 Die Forcht, die Pflicht, die Wut, die Rach,
 Und dein gerechtes zörnen
 Will immerzu
 Von aller Ruh
 Mein Hertz entfernen.

But I am going, alas!
 I do not know what kind of torments
 are appearing in my breast.
 Fear, duty, fury, revenge.
 And your righteous anger



wants constantly
to keep any peace
from my heart.

The composer follows the poetic structure by assigning the first three lines to the A section and the final five lines to B. Throughout the andante A section in common time Holzbauer stresses Hypermnestra's anguish by writing languid vocal lines and by placing fermatas on the word 'Ach', perhaps providing opportunities for improvisation, but in the agitated allegro B section in 3/8 he dramatically and musically portrays the psychological distress caused by the realization that her father's rage cannot be appeased (form number 3 on Table 1). The high tessitura and rhythmic complexity of the extended coloratura passages of the A section attest to Frau Holzbauer's skill and far exceed the demands made upon any of the other singers. A non-motivic, walking bass line provides steady harmonic support for the voice. On the other hand, the upper strings participate fully in the interplay of motivic material with the soprano line, which generally lies higher than the violin parts. As in Danaus's first-act aria, the B section is followed by a ritornello that prepares the listener for the da capo.

Yet another modification of standard da capo form can be seen in Hypermnestra's 'Gleich wie das Schifflein' (Act 3 Scene 2). As the opposing armies prepare for battle, Hypermnestra compares her situation to a ship that plays on the water: once the rage of the storm of her life is over, surely she too will overcome pain, attain sweet peace and be released from anxiety.

Gleich wie das Schifflein mit der Fluth
Da deren scheuen Stürmen Wut
Gestillt
Nur spielt
So wirst auch du
Die süsse Ruh
Mein kummervolles Hertz
Nach überstandnen Schmertz
Nun bald erreichen.
Dahero hemme deine Qual
Und lasse endlichen einmal
Die Angst entweichen.

As the little ship plays simply on the water,
once the rage of its storms is quiet, so
will you, my sorrowful heart,
after having overcome pain, reach sweet peace.
Therefore, restrain your agony
And finally let the anxiety flee.

The simile of a battered ship that reaches port safely is clearly indebted to Italian models such as Cleopatra's virtuosic aria 'Da tempeste il legno infranto' from Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (London, 1724) or Arbace's elaborately ornamental aria 'Son qual nave ch'agitata' from Hasse's *Artaserse* (Venice, 1730). These operas were performed in modified versions at the Kärntnertheater in 1731 and 1732, respectively.⁴² Like Handel and Hasse, Holzbauer exploits the images suggested by the text. In the lengthy twenty-six-bar initial ritornello, rippling quaver triplets, agitated semiquavers, Lombard rhythms over diminished seventh chords, rushing scales and marcato articulations aptly portray both the ship tossed at sea and Hypermnestra's inner conflict. For the vocal line the composer focuses on the triplet figure, offering the

42 For further information concerning the simile aria see Jack Westrup, 'Simile aria', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 23, 398.



soprano rich opportunities for vocal display throughout the aria. The unusual distribution of the text – nine lines for the A section, but only three for B – is reflected in the proportions of the music. The considerably shorter B section also mirrors the calmer affect suggested by the poetry: although the vocal line continues with triplets, the instrumental parts are reduced to simple supporting harmonies in steady crotchets. An abbreviated ritornello at the end of the B section that modulates from the subdominant (D major) back to the tonic (A major) replaces the initial ritornello, and the rubric *da capo al Segno* instructs the singer to return immediately to the vocal entrance of the A section (form number 4 on Table 1).⁴³

By far the most fascinating departure from conventional da capo design occurs in Danaus's 'Was fürchtet ihr', an impressive E flat major aria that concludes the first act (form number 5 on Table 1). The tyrant is tortured by the martyrdom of his daughter and by frightening visions of his own impending downfall.

Was fürchtet ihr meine beängstigte Sinnen?
 Was schreckt dich mein unerschrockenes Hertz?
 O Himmel! ich eile, ich fliehe von hinnen,
 Es tödtet mich sonsten ein rasender Schmerz.
 Ich sehe den Geist meiner Tochter alhier. . .
 Da stehet Lyncaeus mein Hencker vor mir.
 Ich wancke, ich falle, ich zitt're, ich bebe,
 Und bin schon des Todes, obschon ich noch lebe.

What do you fear, my unsettled senses?
 What terrifies you, my fearless heart?
 O heaven, I hasten, I flee from here,
 Otherwise excruciating pain will destroy me.
 I see the ghost of my daughter right here . . .
 There stands the ghost of Lyncaeus my executioner
 before me.
 I reel, I fall, I tremble, I quake,
 And am already possessed by death, though I still live.

The *prima parte* is actually divided into four parts, ABA¹B¹, with tempos alternating between andante and allegro and metres shifting between 4/4 and 2/4 (see Example 1). The middle portion of the aria, C, retains the tempo and metre of B¹. The da capo marking at the end of C leads to a complete return of ABA¹B¹. Holzbauer distributes the text in couplets, a plan similar to one found in rondeau arias by Rameau,⁴⁴ and he enriches the instrumental writing with the dark timbres of obbligato violone and bassoon and coordinates the contrasting tempos and metres with alternating instructions of *con sordini* and *senza sordini* for the strings. The fluctuating tempos, metres and string timbres serve a clear dramatic purpose. In the sections designated A and A¹ (lines 1–2), Danaus queries himself about a strangely unfamiliar feeling of fear. In the B and B¹ sections (lines 3–4), he impetuously decides to flee from the impending crisis, and in the C section (lines 4–8) he experiences fully the terror of his situation. Holzbauer eschews vocal virtuosity in favour of short declamatory phrases with dramatic leaps. The agitated string parts, syncopated rhythms for bassoon and violone and sudden dynamic shifts in the C section reinforce Danaus's terror.

The widespread preference for the da capo aria *al segno* in the middle of the eighteenth century is evident in *Ipermestra*. Hasse chooses this plan for fourteen arias and for the final quintet. Only one aria conforms to the standard five-part da capo plan (Table 1, no. 1). The altered five-part da capo (Table 1, no. 2) appears in

43 This formal design conforms to the aria form 1.b (da capo al segno) in Westrup, 'Aria', 891.

44 See Malcolm S. Cole, 'Rondo: 2. The Rondeau in the 17th and Early 18th Centuries', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 21, 650. According to Cole, this type of rondeau had spread throughout Europe by the middle of the eighteenth century.



[Andante] [con sordini]

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violone
Bassoon
DANAUS
Bass

senza cembalo

Example 1 *Hypermnestra*, Act 1 Scene 9, Danaus: 'Was förchet ihr?', bars 1–62 (Meiningen, Staatsarchiv, D-MEIr, Ed 130d)

two arias; like Holzbauer, Hasse adds a ritornello at the end of the *seconda parte* to prepare for the return of the opening section. At times he combines the *al segno* principle with contrasting tempos and metres. For example, Ipermestra's Act 2 aria *al segno*, 'Se il mio duol', opens with a section in cut time marked 'Lento assai, ma non troppo', which contrasts with a middle section in 3/8 having the tempo designation 'Andantino, ma non troppo'. Two arias also exhibit unusual features. Elpinice's 'Abbiam penato' (Act 1 Scene 1) begins with an allegro tempo in common time; it proceeds like a typical five-part da capo through three bars of the B section, but the rhythmic flow is suddenly interrupted by a dramatic pause, followed by an expressive passage in 3/8 marked 'Un poco lento' for the text 'O amabile dolor! Dolci sospiri!'. Most



The musical score consists of two systems. The first system begins at measure 7 and features a vocal line with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The second system begins at measure 10 and shows a more complex texture with multiple piano parts. Dynamics such as *pp* and *f* are used to indicate volume changes. The key signature has two flats and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 1 *continued*

unusual is Ipermestra's 'Ah non mi dir così' in Act 3 Scene 8, following her climactic confrontation with Danao. This F major aria in 3/4, marked 'Un poco lento', begins without a ritornello and continues as if it were a typically altered five-part da capo. The tempo changes to allegro at the beginning of the *seconda parte*, but Ipermestra is soon interrupted by a crowd of citizens crying 'Mora il Tiranno'. The music of the aria breaks off entirely, and dialogue between Ipermestra and Danao resumes.

Each act of *Hypermnestra* includes an extensive orchestral recitative. Danaus's aria 'Was fürchtet ihr' follows the most dramatic moment in the entire first act, the point at which Hypermnestra obediently drinks the intended poison as punishment for refusing to kill Lyncaeus. Argia has substituted a sleeping potion, but



13

16

Was förch-tet ihr mei - ne —
 — be - äng - - stig - te Sin-nen? be - äng - stig - te Sin - nen? Was —

Example 1 *continued*

neither Danaus nor Hypermnestra is aware of the switch. Realizing the dramatic potential offered by the text, Holzbauer emphasizes Hypermnestra's dying words by composing an emotionally charged orchestral recitative (see Example 2). Turbulent string figures at first punctuate Hypermnestra's thoughts, then a tempo change from presto to larghetto mirrors her mood change. To underpin the poignant situation, the composer draws upon a rich harmonic palette, including fully diminished sevenths, a Neapolitan sixth, a German augmented sixth and frequent chromatic modulations. Hypermnestra's last words are set in short-breathed, drooping melodic fragments.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The entire opera has been accepted for publication in the series *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*.



19

schre - ket dich mein un - er - schro - ke - nes Hertz?

22

mein un - er - schro - ke - nes Hertz? O

Example 1 *continued*

The second act opens with two brief scenes composed entirely of simple recitative, but the third scene once again provided Holzbauer with a special dramatic opportunity. Believing that Hypermnestra is dead, Lyncaeus comes to mourn at her grave, not knowing that she is hiding behind her tombstone. The two sing a cleverly conceived, through-composed duet, 'Wo ist mein Abgott', in which the heroine echoes the longer phrases of her beloved with shorter ones that rhyme poetically and musically with his. Following the duet, the distraught Lyncaeus launches into another dramatic accompanied recitative. Just as he draws a dagger to kill himself, however, Hypermnestra reveals herself and rescues him.



Allegro
 25 *senza sordini*

Him - mel! ich ei - - le, ich

29

flie - he, ich flie - he von hin - nen.

Example 1 *continued*

Holzbauer saves the most elaborate accompanied recitative for the climactic ‘mad scene’ (Act 3 Scene 5). Overwhelmed by the realization that his army has been crushed by Delmirus’s forces, Danaus begins to hallucinate, and in a remarkable sixty-eight-bar passage he attempts to persuade Nicander to ascend an imaginary stairway to paradise with him. Intermingling monologue with dialogue and *semplice* style with *accompagnato*, Holzbauer portrays the tyrant’s aimless wanderings with meandering chromatic harmonies, a cycle-of-fifths progression, diminished seventh and augmented sixth chords and tremolo string figures.



33

f *p*

(*f*) *p*

Es tö - - - - dtet mich son - sten ein

37

f *ff*

(*f*) *p*

ro - sen - der Schmerz, ein ro - - - - sen - der

Example 1 continued

Such a scene no doubt provided entertainment for a Kärntnertheater audience familiar with opera parody and burlesque.

Holzbauer's tendencies to loosen the structure of the da capo aria, to change metre and tempo within a single section and to underscore dramatic moments with orchestral recitatives anticipate reforms soon carried out more methodically by Christoph Willibald Gluck, evident already in several arias of *La Semiramide riconosciuto* (1748). Unlike Holzbauer, however, Gluck found a way to break from the rigidity of *semplice* style in the dénouement of *La Semiramide* by composing arioso passages for lines clearly intended as



41

f *p* *f*

f (*p*) (*f*)

(*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

Schmerz.

(*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

45

p *f* *p* *f*

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

(*p*) (*f*) (*p*) (*f*)

Example 1 *continued*

recitative in Metastasio's libretto.⁴⁶ By the time Holzbauer composed *Günther von Schwarzburg*, he too had worked out some of the problems of *Hypermnestra* by sharply reducing the amount of formulaic recitative and by relying much more upon the power of orchestral recitatives for extended dramatic scenarios.

46 See Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 20.



Example 1 *continued*

Holzbauer's setting of the ancient myth may not have received the contemporary acclaim accorded Hasse's *Ipermestra*, written for the festive wedding of a Habsburg princess, but it is significant for historical as well as musical reasons. *Hypermnestra* is an early attempt to compose a serious opera in the German language for the Viennese stage: it reveals no trace of nationalistic or patriotic sentiment in either the music or the libretto, nor is there any evidence of what the noted Gluck scholar Bruce Alan Brown has described as the 'all too frequent verbal and gestural offences against decency in the Kärntnertheater'.⁴⁷ *Hypermnestra* contains enough entertainment to have satisfied the public theatre audience in Vienna, but that it remains essentially a serious work is evident in the genre designation, *teutsche Opera*.

47 Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 64.



57

61

Example 1 *continued*

As a composer of German-language opera Holzbauer seems to have had few, if any, immediate successors in Vienna. Margaret Dietrich notes the existence of *Die glückliche Vorbedeutung*, a German opera intended for the Kärntnertortheater season of 1742–1743, with music composed by Ignazio Conti to a libretto by van Ghelen. However, there is no evidence that the opera was ever performed.⁴⁸ And Holzbauer himself wrote

⁴⁸ Margaret Dietrich, 'Theater am Hofe – Zwischen Tradition und Wandel', in *Maria Theresia und ihre Zeit*, second edition (Salzburg: Residenz, 1980), 397. Hermine Williams, 'Ignazio Conti', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 6, 343, lists no new works by Ignazio after 1739.



Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

HYPERMNESTRA

Wol - an so sey - e es.

Bass

Presto

3

(Trinckt.)

Ich trin - cke se - he hier Ist auch hie -

5

mit dein Mord-Durst nun ge - lö - schet? Lyn -

Example 2 *Hypermnestra*, Act 1 Scene 9, Hypermnestra: 'Wolan so seye es', bars 1–30 (Meiningen, Staatsarchiv, D-MEIR, Ed 130d)



Larghetto **a tempo**

7

cae-us. Lies-stes Hertz.... Mein Ab-gott Mei-ne See-le Dir nur al-lein zu _ lieb Er-

10

- gib ich mich dem Tod. Ty - rann... Doch nein. Ver-zeih Wann

13

in der Ra-se-rey DerTo-des Schmerz aufmeine Pflicht Mich macht ver-ges-sen.

Example 2 continued



16

p
(*p*)

Ach denck-test du dass nur al - lein Die Lie-be mei-ne

19

piano sostenuto
(*piano sostenuto*)
(*piano sostenuto*)

Schuld So wä-re mir Ster-ben noch so süß... Ver - gön - ne Ver - gön - ne mir

(*piano sostenuto*)

22

f *p*
(*f*) (*p*)
(*f*) (*p*)
(*f*) (*p*)

doch ei - nen Bli - cke... Auch die-ses nicht?... Wie kannst du... A - ber ach O

Example 2 continued



25

♭

pp

(*pp*)

(*pp*)

Weh! Ach Er - zeu - ger. Wann ich dich doch noch al - so... nen-nen soll... Er - zeu - ger...

(*pp*)

28

Freun - din... Ach!... Lyn - cae - us... Fah-ret wol.

Example 2 *continued*

music for a German farce by Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern that was performed at the Kärntnertortheater in 1746,⁴⁹ but the music appears not to have survived. Maria Theresa soon suppressed the ribald behaviour of the German troupe and for moral, artistic, and political reasons gave her approval to the founding of the French theatre, which opened at the Burgtheater in 1752. In the context of these shifting political winds, *Hypermnestra* is a fascinating and significant historical anomaly, even if it had little immediate impact on the development of German national opera.

⁴⁹ See Peter Branscombe and Thomas Bauman, 'Singspiel', *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 23, 437–442. Schenk, 'Die Anfänge des Wiener Kärntnertortheaters', 188, identifies Weiskern and the title, *Arlequin, ein Nebenbuhler seines Herrn*, but not the composer.