

**TSIPPI FLEISCHER**

**LUIGI CHERUBINI'S MÉDÉE (1797):  
A STUDY OF ITS MUSICAL  
AND DRAMATIC STYLE**



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A STUDY OF ITS MUSICAL  
AND DRAMATIC STYLE**

**Ph.D. Thesis**

**By**

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**Department of Musicology**

**Submitted to the Senate of Bar-Ilan University**

**Ramat-Gan, Israel**

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**This work was carried out under the supervision of  
PROF. BATHIA CHURGIN**

**Department of Musicology  
Bar-Ilan University**

## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my husband, an expert in Comparative Linguistics, Prof. Aharon Dolgopolsky, who, because of his incredible ability to distinguish between things spiritual and material in this world of ours, has always believed this doctoral thesis to be an eminently praiseworthy intellectual contribution.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I presented my Ph.D. proposal to the Department of Musicology of Bar-Ilan University, Israel, in 1980, I had already been deeply involved for over ten years in the teaching of the theory of music to aspiring professional musicians and was just at the outset of my career as a composer. When I look back on the protracted process I underwent during the preparation of this dissertation, which has come to mean far more to me than merely another line in my curriculum vitae, I see it rather as plumbing the depths of a research which, through the profusion of experiences brought in its wake, would consistently colour my views and way of life during many years of intensive creative and educational work.

My thanks are extended to many individuals who have helped me attain many of the achievements of this thesis. They are mentioned according to the order in which they appeared in my life:

Prof. Yizhak Sadai (1968), my mentor in the theory of harmony; his teaching illustrates the indelible importance of a detailed, sensitive understanding of traditional harmony and its progressions through a fundamental and thorough approach

Prof. Noam Sherif (1969), from whom I learned the ins and outs of the art of orchestration - to differentiate carefully between the timbres of individual instruments and to hear their combinations in various groupings

Prof. Bathia Churgin (1977), from whom I gained the understanding of historical order, and principally, of the spirit of the Classical era. As an authentic 18th century person,<sup>1</sup> she has been most enthusiastic about the discoveries of this dissertation (belonging as they do to the turn of that century)

Prof. Roger Kamien (1980), who, as a true representative of its creator, introduced me to Schenker's method

Dr. Beth Shamgar (1981), who, in her classes, sharpened my insight into the exact period with which this dissertation deals, in her own very special way - with both knowledge and idealism

Prof. Jan LaRue (1982), who personally familiarized me with his method of analysis of musical style; his exceptional ability as a teacher unquestionably helps to disseminate his method. On this occasion I would like to mention that his apparatus for the study of Sound stimulated me to make further discoveries in my own compositional language

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During the years 1989-1993 I undertook research projects in three libraries out of Israel - in Stanford (1989, 1993), in Brussels (1989) and in Vienna (1993). As a result, the first

---

<sup>1</sup> At least, this is how I, personally, have always regarded her

chapter of this dissertation came to be written in its present form. My thanks go to the following librarians who helped me during my research: Mr. Mark Dimunation and Mr. David Sullivan of the Stanford University Memorial Library (Department of Special Collections); Mr. Paul Raspe of the Bibliotheque du Conservatoire Royal, Brussels; Ms. Inge Pechotsch-Feichtinger of the Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek (Musiksammlung), Vienna. My warmest thanks are extended to my friend Rachel Weil for her help with Cherubini's materials in the Bibliotheque de l'Opera, Paris.

At this point I should like to express my special thanks to Ms. Lydia Ashri, the librarian of the Department of Musicology of Bar-Ilan University, who has always been more than willing to extend to me her professional assistance.

In the course of the years 1993-1994, I began to spend increasingly more time on the concluding stages of the preparation of this dissertation, and I should like to mention especially the devotion of two persons: of my thesis advisor, Prof. Bathia Churgin, who, with her intrinsic respect for every note in Cherubini's score, may serve as a model of excellence for each and every musician (performer, composer, researcher, teacher and educator); and of my colleague, Ms. Gila Abrahamson, the English editor of this dissertation (who also typed it), who has spared no effort in order to enter into the finest nuances tucked away in its many lines and pages.

Tsippi Fleischer  
August 1994

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## Introductory Plates

Call # MLM 208

Date 10/5/93

Photocopy is for reference use only.  
Further reproduction requires the  
permission of the Department of  
Special Collections, Stanford  
University Libraries.

*Medée*

*Opera en 3 Actes*

*D' Hoffman*

*Musique*

*de Cherubini*

*Représenté sur le Théâtre de La Haye*  
*Le Lundi 15 Mars 1797 V.S.*  
*23 Ventose L'an 5<sup>me</sup>*

*Overture*

*Allegro*

Flutes

Hardbass

Clarinets

Cor Anglais

Cor Anglais

Bassons

Timbales

Violon 1

Violon 2

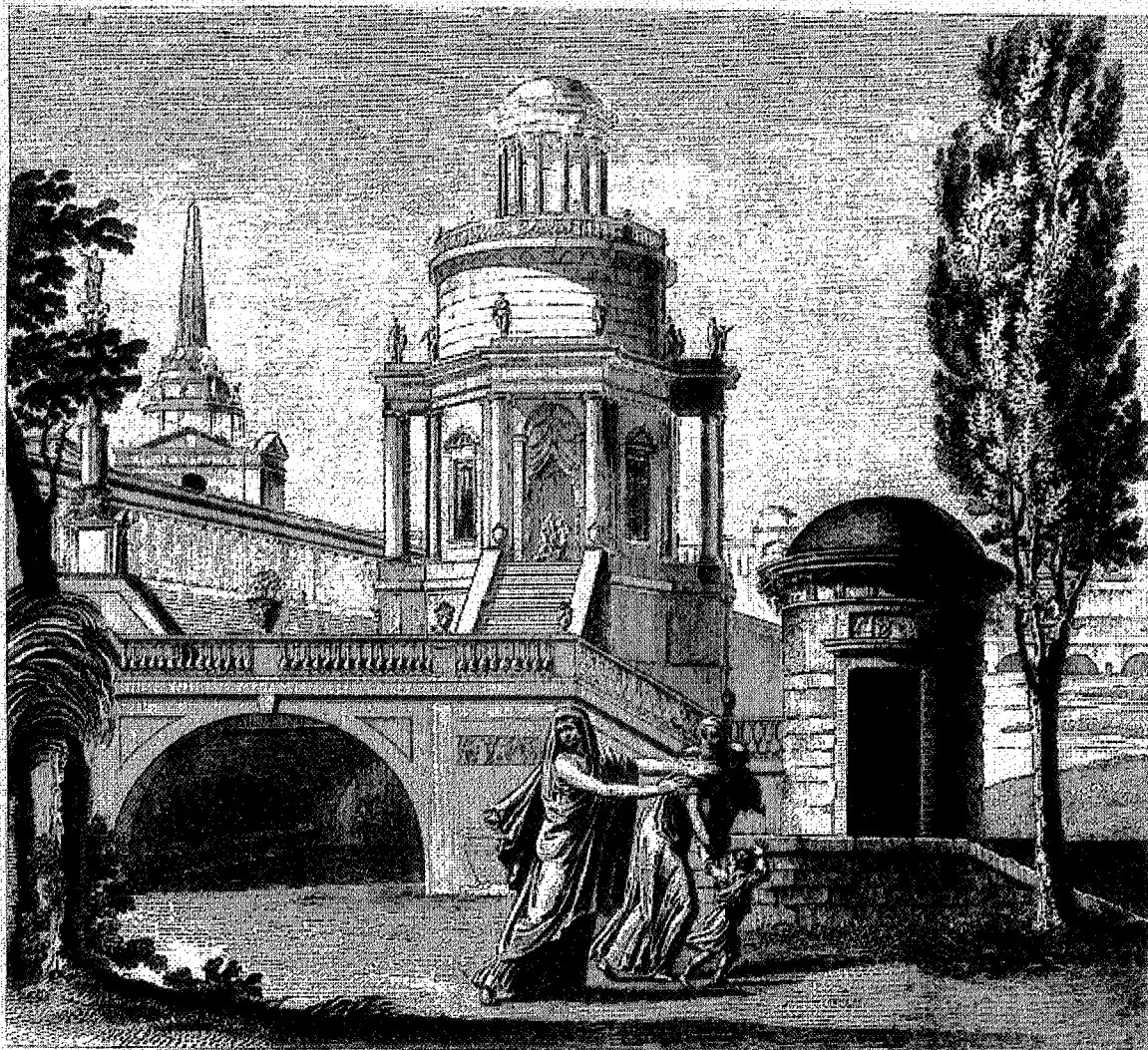
Alto

Violoncelle

Contrebasses

*Allure*

II. Medée: First Page of the Overture in the Autograph Score



*Un buste enroulé.*

*CACHES-LES! 3<sup>e</sup> Acte de Médée*

*A. L. J. Goussier del.*

**MÉDÉE**  
OPERA EN III ACTES  
Paroles d'Hoffmann Musique de Cherubini  
Représentée sur le Théâtre de la rue Feytaud le 23. Ventose.  
Le 5. 13 Mars 1797. vieux style.  
Propriété de l'Editeur.  
Gravé par Huguet  
**PRIX 40!**

A PARIS Chez Imbault M<sup>r</sup> de Musique, Rue Honoré N<sup>o</sup> 200. entre la Rue des Poulies et la Maison d'Aligre  
Et Péristyle du Théâtre de l'Opéra Comique Rue Favart N<sup>o</sup> 461.

*Imbault*

1844  
MÉDÉE,

TRAGÉDIE

EN TROIS ACTES, EN VERS,

PAROLES de HOFFMANN,

MUSIQUE de CHÉRUBINI.

Représentée sur le théâtre Feydeau, le 23  
Ventôse.



A PARIS,

Chez HUET, Éditeur de Pièces de Théâtre  
et de Musique, rue Vivienne, N.º 8.

AN V.º 1797.

PERSONNAGES.

ACTEURS.

MÉDÉE,

M.<sup>me</sup> Scio.

JASON,

M. Gaveaux.

CRÉON, roi de  
Corinthe.

M. Dessaulles.

DIRCÉ, fille de  
Créon.

M.<sup>le</sup> Rosine.

NERIS, esclave  
Scythe.

M.<sup>me</sup> Verteuil.

Chef des Gardes.

M. le Grand.

Confidentes de Dircé. M.<sup>les</sup> Gavaudan et Beck.

Les deux fils de Jason  
et Médée.

Femmes de Dircé.

Argonautes.

Gardes de Créon.

Peuple de Corinthe.

Prêtres.

La scène est à Corinthe, dans le palais de  
Créon.

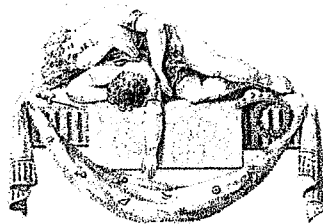
k 253

*Medea*  
*eine tragische Oper in drey Aufzügen*  
*Frei nach dem Französischen von*

(J.F. TREITSCHKE)

*Musik von*  
[CHERUBINI

*Clavier*



*Auszug.*



MS. 27022<sup>22</sup>

— Wien —

*In der Kunst und Musik Handlung des Thadé Weigl.*  
*Graben N<sup>o</sup> 1212.*

- V. Medea: Title Page of the Viennese Piano-Vocal Score of the 1802 Production, with German Translation by J.F. Treitschke (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek)



- VI. Medea: Inner Title Page of the Peters Piano-Vocal Score, 1856, with German Text, Franz Lachner's Added Recitatives, and the Cuts Made in 1802 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek)



## ABSTRACT

Cherubini's Médée, his most famous work, came to be an opera appreciated by such composers as Beethoven and Brahms, and was particularly popular in Germany in the 19th century. It has been revived in the 20th century for especially great singers like Maria Callas in an unfortunate presentation in Italian with recitatives composed by Franz Lachner (in 1854) in a very severely cut version which the present author has found goes back to the composer himself in Vienna in 1802.

This first detailed study of the opera is organized into four main chapters. These are preceded by remarks concerning "Methodological and Technical Aspects", and an Introduction, giving reasons for studying this opera and a survey of research on Cherubini and his opera Médée.

The first chapter deals with the historical background of the opera and the story of Medea. It also discusses the autograph located in the Stanford Memorial Library; some investigation is made of Cherubini's compositional process as reflected in this manuscript. A further discussion considers some changes in orchestration and the addition of metronome markings attached to the printed score found in the library of the Conservatoire Royal in Brussels. These additions were made for the French production of the opera in Brussels in 1814. An important discovery is revealed of the prompter's part ("Souffleurpart") for the performance (the German version) in Vienna in 1802 which contains Cherubini's cuts, later incorporated in the edition published by

Peters in 1856. This is the source of the cut performances used today.

The next three chapters investigate the style of each act in great detail. There is an overview of the action and musical organization, and a summary of the basic overall moods, sections, forms and proportions. Analytical outlines are then provided for each number, including the overall form, inner formal divisions, the main keys, and the harmonic functions.

For each act the author offers a detailed analysis of two or three numbers. These analyses include a summary of the dramatic context and content. The text is given in French and in English translation, and the versification is specified. A more detailed analytical outline is provided, showing the coordination between the text and the musical material, the inner details of the structure coordinating the text with the dynamics, phrases, thematic functions and local harmony. Separate discussions include tonality, sound and orchestration, text-music relationship with a list of musical phrases, a consideration of the influence of the text on mood and the vocal style: melodic contours and highest peaks (with graphs and musical examples); text and harmony; ensemble, mood and texture; dynamics (sometimes with graphs); rhythm; and growth options with graphs.

The thesis ends with a brief section of conclusions regarding the historical and musical significance of the opera.

## METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS

In this thesis, which is essentially a detailed study of Cherubini's Médée, four methods of musical analysis are employed. According to their importance in this survey, these are the methods developed by Jan LaRue, Heinrich Schenker, Yizhak Sadai, and Leonard Ratner.

While following these approaches, the author has made certain modifications, according to her own analytical preferences. These methods are considered and treated as complementary to each other, a fact which led the author to draw melodic graphs and special Timelines.

This means that the essence of the analytical process utilizes the idea of LaRue's Timeline and develops considerations of the elements of Sound-Harmony-Melody-Rhythm into very detailed graphs. In order to aid the reader's insight into growth options, much effort and thought have been invested in the many analyses, maps, graphs and in musical illustrations.

It is important to note that, by using Schenker's and LaRue's methods, the panorama of basic tones for a section were always the same. Reflecting LaRue's interest in maps of stresses, the author has included such maps showing the relation between text accents, melodic contour and harmonic rhythm. The total picture of contrasting stresses is related to Ratner's approach to Expression and Rhetoric, and when needed, reference is made to his repertoire of Topics.

Several technical details should be explained at this point.

Some of the harmonic symbols are those derived from Sadai: tonic and dominant indicate the functional symbols related to the basic/first key of a number; III or VI degrees are considered as a special tonic. Indication of a lowered note as II<sub>b1</sub><sup>2</sup>, for example, is based on Sadai's book on harmony.

The Hebrew terms 'minorization' and 'majorization' have been used because of their usefulness. They refer to the change of harmony from major into minor and the reverse. In the figures and tables, lower-case letters indicate minor keys, and capital letters, major. Other symbols include (T) for tonic, (SD) for sub-dominant, (D) for dominant.

The orchestral motives are indicated by the author's specific sign  $\Phi$ ;  $\Phi^1$  refers to the first orchestral motive of a section;  $\Phi^2$  to the second in the same number, and so on.

The key of symbols used:

Capitals - A B C	- formal sections
Small letters - a b c	- phrases, segments, motives
Small letters underlined - <u>a</u> <u>b</u> <u>c</u>	- musical notes
Capitals underlined - <u>P</u> <u>I</u> <u>S</u> <u>K</u>	- formal functions according to LaRue

The measure numbers run through a single scene.

In order to simplify the musical example, in most cases the

author has not included slurs.

The reader should note that discussion of the orchestral introductions to Acts I, II, III (Chapters II, III, IV), appear at the end of each chapter. This was convenient as regards the order of presentation of material, since most of the analyses deal with dramatic-musical development, where the presence of a text immediately dictates the musical content. The presentation of a purely orchestral section is a completely different matter; it is also reasonably compatible with the process of composition, that is, orchestral introductions to an operatic act, and, in particular, the overture which initiates the opera as a whole, are usually among the sections written relatively late in the compositional process.

The English translations from Hoffman's French text are not literary; they are as close as possible to the original text, an effort having been made to preserve a suitable English syntax and style.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) has been almost entirely forgotten in the course of the last 150 years. Nevertheless, his music most certainly merits a thorough examination, seeing that 19th-century composers such as Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner, Brahms, Bizet and others, admired him greatly,<sup>1</sup> as did his greatest contemporary, Beethoven.<sup>2</sup> Hugo Riemann characterizes Cherubini as the leading composer of the "Pariser Klassiker".<sup>3</sup> Grout places him with his Médée (1797) at the top of the list of opera composers at the turn of the 19th century. And yet, Cherubini's music is hardly ever studied and rarely performed: his only works included in the contemporary repertoire<sup>4</sup> are his Requiems.

Many reasons may be given for this situation.<sup>5</sup> Basil Deane claims that Cherubini's Cours de contrapoint et de fugue (1835)

---

1 For Beethoven's admiration of Cherubini, see Thayer's Life of Beethoven, ed. Elliot Forbes (rev. ed., Princeton, 1967), pp.326, 327, 828.

2 Hugo Riemann, "Epochen und Heroen der Musikgeschichte", Spemanns goldenes Buch der Musik (Berlin-Stuttgart, 1909), Par. 127.

3 Donald Jay Grout (with Hermine Weigel Williams), A Short History of Opera (3rd ed.; New York and London, 1988), pp.347-8.

4 Cherubini's Requiems are probably still included in concert series because of their religious subject which appeals to the emotions of the audience, as well as their most impressive combined choral-symphonic ensembles (the D minor Requiem with men's chorus is especially popular). It is easier to gain an audience's sympathy with a religious work than with the difficult story of Medea.

5 Basil Deane, Cherubini (London, 1965), p.47.

caused damage to his reputation, since it was much used in 19th-century studies of composition, and young musicians seemed to dislike its "strict and dull" exercises.<sup>6</sup> Others might say that the omission of Médée from the opera house is a direct result of the great artistic and technical difficulties inherent in the heroine's part, so that performers avoid singing it. Below are listed eight additional reasons which may have been instrumental in keeping Cherubini's Médée off the operatic stage:

- 1) The complicated subject as a whole;
- 2) The supernatural character of Medea, with her supernatural heroism which is alien to today's audiences, who have greater affinity for more natural, human characters with whom they can identify or against whom they can express antipathy;
- 3) The plot, which creates an extremely negative psychological reaction according to present-day morality;
- 4) The harrowing ending to the opera (F.B. Hoffman having followed Euripides' version of the myth), which causes the audience to leave the opera house in a depressed mood;
- 5) The French language, which adds to the difficulties for singers (in comparison to Italian, which has far more open vowels) and especially for Medea. There has also been some criticism of Cherubini's use of the French language. Whatever the reasons, the French version has rarely been produced since 1814 (for 170 years!);
- 6) The mixture of genres - formally it is opéra comique, with a lyric-dramatic serious plot and musical expression - resulting in

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<sup>6</sup> It is well-known that the composer who denigrated Cherubini and damaged his reputation the most was Berlioz.



some sort of ambiguity that has a negative effect on perception;

7) The chaotic overall view of Cherubini's work caused by the mixture of his original musical sections and Lachner's recitatives, which since 1856 have misled performers (especially conductors in whose hands the decision-making lies) and audiences, as to what the master's authentic composition was! The picture becomes even more blurred if we take into account that these recitatives of Lachner's were almost always combined with Cherubini's cuts of the year 1802!;

8) The strong dramatic drive is a result of Cherubini's very intimate contact with Hoffman's libretto while he was engrossed in the composition of Médée; it shows that the composer would not allow any 'external' factor (e.g. principal singer, conductor or stage manager) to interfere with the process of composition. This focused process of composition resulted in an operatic masterwork which the environment in question often finds difficulty in confronting, comprehending or performing.

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Alexander Ringer goes so far as to evaluate the role of Cherubini's orchestra in Médée as similar to that of the chorus in ancient tragedy. There is something to be said for this innovative approach which seems to clarify why this cathartic opera has not been fully understood until the present day. In his

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7 Alexander Ringer, "Cherubini's Médée and the Spirit of French Revolutionary Opera", in Essays in Musicology in honour of Dragan Plamenac on his 70th birthday, ed. Gustave Reese and R.J. Snow (Pittsburgh, 1969), pp.281-99. Ringer also states that, in spite of the great differences between Cherubini and Mozart, the two composers share an attribute which reflects the greatness of both: "making musical distinctions between different characters and situations" through "idiomatic variety" (pp.289-90).

opinion, it is strongly related to Richard Strauss, Arnold Schonberg and Alban Berg. On the other hand, it is interesting to note what Grout's attitude is: he feels that, objectively speaking, there is not sufficient focus in Cherubini's style as opposed to that of Mozart and Beethoven - which is why Cherubini has been set aside in the past and will probably be neglected in the future.<sup>8</sup>

No matter how one evaluates the above reasons or the degree of authenticity conveyed by them, they no doubt help describe the reality which calls for a greater insight into Médée, the master's greatest work. This opera reflects his dramatic style at its best, and exists as one of the peaks of dramatic musical expression in the 18th century, at the vanguard of the stream of operatic works marking the turn to the 19th century. Its atmosphere is strongly reminiscent of the "Rescue" opera genre, but the myth of Medea, with its enormous dramatic potential, dwarfs all the other elements. When praising Cherubini, musicians and critics mainly referred to him in connection with this work (see Brahms' comment: "Diese Medea, das ist was wir Musiker unter uns als das Hochste in dramatischer Musik anerkennen").<sup>10</sup>

After all that has been said till now, and taking a broad historical perspective, it cannot be denied that Cherubini's originality, reflected specifically in his Médée, enables him to

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<sup>8</sup> Grout, A Short History of Opera, p.359.

<sup>9</sup> The author cannot accept Grout's statement. In her opinion, all the repetitions that Cherubini decided upon were made for the purpose of shaping and strengthening the musical drama.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Heinrich Hohenemser, Luigi Cherubini: Sein Leben und seine Werke (Leipzig, 1913; reprint Wiesbaden, 1969), p.207.

assume an uncontested position as a great pioneer in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century. As Bellasis explains in the preface to his book,<sup>11</sup> perhaps it was Cherubini's very special personality that enabled him to create a character as original as Medea, full of extraordinary force in spite of the difficult reality of her complex psychological existence. Basil Deane also acclaims the originality of Cherubini's approach, concentrated in his Médée. He mentions the huge power and originality of Cherubini's overtures which "opened a new path for<sup>12</sup> opera composers, areas of human experience...". Bathia Churgin considers this work of 1797 as much more advanced in musical style than Beethoven or Mozart: "an amazing work, the most advanced piece of music of its time which should be thoroughly analyzed in order to broaden our knowledge of the Classical epoch; Haydn's "Creation" of the same period is of an entirely different style! We cannot continue analyzing Beethoven and Mozart without knowing Cherubini's Médée."<sup>13</sup>

The libretto for Médée was written by François Benoit Hoffman (1760-1828), a French writer of comedies, lyric tragedies, and librettos of operas comiques by Lemoyne (Phèdre, 1786), Méhul (Euphrosine et Coradin, 1790); Stratonice, 1792), Grétry, Solié, and others. His fame rests on his critical articles in the Journal de l'Empire and on his most successful

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11 Edward Bellasis, Cherubini: Memorials Illustrative of His Life and Work (London, 1874; new ed., Birmingham, 1912), p.10. He says about Cherubini's Médée: "This reputedly cold man can subdue us to tears or shake us with fear".

12 Deane, Cherubini, p.9.

13 Prof. Bathia Churgin, the advisor of this thesis, made these remarks to the author during a working session.

comedy Roman d'une heure ou la Folle gageure (1803).

Médée is listed among other settings of the Euripidian plot since the 17th century,<sup>15</sup> such as that of Francesco Cavalli (1649), Antonio Gianettini (1675), Georg Benda (1775), and later settings such as Simone Mayr's (1813) and Darius Milhaud's (1939). Cherubini's opera with Hoffman's libretto stands as an example of the use of the classical Greek heritage in French culture in the revolutionary period.

In its original form, Médée was an opéra comique with largely spoken dialogue. In 1854 Franz Lachner (1803-1890), a German conductor and composer, active in Munich, set the spoken dialogue to music. Lachner's new recitatives fall far below Cherubini's style as regards dramatic value. After Lachner's revisions, the opera has invariably been performed in the purely lyric version.

The autograph of Médée is located in Memorial Library, Stanford University, California. A fragment is located in the Paris Opera library.<sup>16</sup>

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14 For further information about Francois Benoit Hoffman see M. Michaud, Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne, XIX, (Graz, rep. 1967), 499-502.

15 See The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera, ed. Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack (London, rep. with corrections 1977), 254.

16 Just before submitting this study, the author has discovered that the Opera library contains one leaf written on both sides. One side has two added trombone parts (alto and tenor) for the duet closing Act I. The handwriting resembles the added material found in Brussels for the 1814 performance (see below). The other side of this leaf seems unconnected. See the illustration on the next page.

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The first edition was published in Paris by Imbault in 1797-99, and dedicated to Cherubini's good friend and great admirer, the other leading opera composer in Paris, Etienne Méhul. A facsimile of the original edition was published in London by Gregg International Publishers Ltd. in 1971. Among the piano-vocal scores are those by Gustav Schmidt (Leipzig: Peters, 1856), Carlo Zangarini (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel, 1873), Horst George, and Wilhelm Reinking (Milan: Romualdo Fantuzzi, 1910).

There are a few helpful biographical studies and surveys of Cherubini's music: Bellasis 1874, Hohenemser 1913, Schemann 1925, Confalonieri 1948, Deane 1965, Croce 1983/86 (for full titles see the Bibliography). Besides these, several articles have been published on Cherubini, suggesting his qualities as a dramatic composer, as well as a few articles about his Les deux Journées, Médée, Requiems and string quartets. Two useful doctoral dissertations by Margery Stomne Selden and Stephen Willis,<sup>17</sup> contain much historical data as background for further research. An article by Anna Amalie Abert,<sup>18</sup> has thrown light on Cherubini's importance from the wider historical view. A collection of articles and a catalogue are contained in a volume marking the bicentennial of Cherubini's birth, ed. Damarini, 1962.

The main sources of this study are the autograph and the published edition of Médée of which a detailed study was made from the point of view of style analysis. The author sincerely

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17 See Margery Stomne Selden, "The French Operas of Luigi Cherubini" (Yale University, 1951); and Stephen Charles Willis, "Luigi Cherubini: A Study of his Life and Dramatic Music, 1795-1815" (Columbia University, 1975).

18 Anna Amalie Abert, "Die Oper zwischen Barock und Romantik", Acta Musicologica, XLIX (1977), 137-93.

hopes that her research into Médée provides the opportunity for evaluating the work as one of the climaxes in operatic history. The present dissertation has allowed the author to delve deeply into this opera, which, until the present day, has never been given its just due. It was in Médée that Cherubini, in his prime, unquestionably found the path leading to his innermost soul.

During work on the autograph and its corrections, the author had the opportunity of making exciting discoveries while visiting the Stanford library in March 1989 and October 1993, Brussels in February 1989, and Vienna in February 1993. The two visits to Stanford for research on the autograph of Médée allowed for a progressive follow-up of Cherubini's corrections in the autograph which reflect a final stage of composition, and a continuation of research into the style of the opera - a labour of love in which she had been involved for a number of years.

It was interesting to observe how, in the preparation of the autograph, Cherubini was beset by second thoughts, resulting in the deletion of a number of repetitions to his complete satisfaction. The important discovery of the cuts made in Vienna in 1802,<sup>19</sup> which had been mistakenly quoted in very many places as having been made by Cherubini in Vienna in 1809, has been authenticated by the author after the discovery of the prompter's copy

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19 Klaus Hortschansky, "Médée", in Pipers' Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters (München-Zürich, 1986), p.560. The fact of the 1802 (and not 1809) authorized cuts was mentioned without any details or proof. The author made this discovery before reading the article, however.

("Souffleurpart"), stowed away in the National Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) in Vienna. In the thorough examination made of all Cherubini's cuts, the author came to the conclusion that these are only superficially "authorized cuts" as they do nothing to improve the score or the music but rather detract from its dramatic-expressive power.

Of great importance was the investigation of corrections and additions probably made by Cherubini in 1814 in the Library of the Royal Conservatory (Bibliothèque du Conservatoire Royal de Musique) in Brussels.<sup>20</sup> The alterations in the orchestration throughout the Overture and at the end of the Finale of Act II, the first hints of the composition of recitatives (for Medea and Neris) towards the end of the Finale of Act II, and above all, two pages of metronome markings which were found in the corrected edition in the Royal Conservatory in Brussels - throw an important light on the many rapid musical changes which had taken place in the world of music during approximately fifteen years. It is most advisable that the metronome markings of 1814 be inserted into a revised edition of Médée which will hopefully be initiated in the near future. It would also be most rewarding to see a revival of this opera in the near future, performed in Cherubini's complete original French version, according to its first printed edition which is analyzed in this dissertation.

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20 The existence of the corrections is cited in the work-list of Cherubini's music for the article on Cherubini by Basil Deane, NGD, 4, 210.



C H A P T E R    I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR MÉDÉE;  
THE MANUSCRIPT AND PRINTED SOURCES

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842): A Brief Biography

Luigi Cherubini was born in Florence in 1760 to the family of Bartolomeo Cherubini, a harpsichord player at the Teatro di Pergola in Florence. He received his first musical instruction from his father at the age of six, and studied composition with prominent Florentine musicians: Bartolomeo Felici, his son Alessandro, Pietro Bizzarri, and Giuseppe Castrucci. At the age of thirteen he wrote his first compositions, a Mass and Credo in D minor (for four voices and orchestra) and an intermezzo Amore artigiano. By the age of sixteen he was already the author of 36 works, mainly church music. His career as an opera composer began in 1778-81 in Bologna and Milan, where he studied opera composition with Guiseppe Sarti. His own first opera, Il Quinto Fabio, was staged in 1779 at Alessandria (Piemonte). In 1781 and 1782, back in Florence, he composed three other operas, Armida abbandonata and Mezenzio re d'Etruria (both for the La Pergola opera theatre in Florence) and Adriano in Siria (for the Armeni opera in Livorno). The subject of all his operas of that time, as usual in opera seria, was Roman antiquity. In 1783-84 a reworked version of Il Quinto Fabio was staged in Rome, Venice, Mantua and Florence. He thus became famous throughout Italy.

In 1784 he moved to London where he wrote two operas for the King's Theatre (Theatre Royal): the comic opera La finta principessa and Il Giulio Sabino, which won great favour with the English audience. In 1785 he visited Paris, and in 1786 settled

there. In 1788 he composed his first French opera, Démophon, which was well received. The stormy years after the siege of the Bastille (on July 14, 1789) did not interfere with his active musical life. That same year he was appointed musical director of a company for the performance of Italian operas, which were staged first at the Théâtre de Monsieur (at the Tuileries) and later at a new theatre in Rue Feydeau. It was at this theatre that his first famous opera, Lodoïska (1791), was staged and widely acclaimed.

In 1792, during the Revolution, the Italian opera company (which had been connected with and supported by the royal court and the royal family) could not function any more. Its director, the composer Viotti, fled to England, and Cherubini retired to a country home in Normandy. In the summer of 1793 he returned to Paris, and was soon appointed inspector of instruction in the newly-founded Institut National de Musique. His new opera Eliza was staged at the Théâtre de Feydeau in December of 1794. In 1795 the Institut National de Musique was transformed into an official national conservatory (the Conservatoire) and Cherubini was appointed one of its five directors, together with Méhul, Gossec, Grétry, and Le Sueur. Together they wrote some republican hymns in 1793-98.<sup>1</sup> On 13 March 1797 Cherubini's new opera, Médée, was staged at the Théâtre de Feydeau. Though in this work his musical language had attained the height of mature expression, the opera was not received in Paris with great enthusiasm. It was followed

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1 For details concerning these hymns, marches and funeral pieces, see Selden's dissertation, pp.121-2.

in 1800 by the opera Les deux Journées, his greatest success, and to this day considered his best-known opera.

The year 1802 saw Cherubini's most successful season in Vienna. In 1805 Cherubini moved to Vienna where he was welcomed by the public and by the leading musicians, among them Beethoven and Haydn. He attended the premiere of Leonore that year.

After Napoleon's invasion of Austria, and after having been invited by Napoleon to return to Paris, Cherubini moved back to France. From then on he applied himself to church music which was well received, unlike his unsuccessful operas of that period. Under the restored Bourbon monarchy he was appointed "superintendent of the King's music" (surintendant de la musique de roi). Between 1808 and 1836 he composed ten Masses (including two coronation Masses and two Requiems). In 1822 he was appointed director of the reconstituted Conservatoire, his activity being of primary importance for the future character of that institution. In 1841 he became Commander of the Légion d'Honneur. He died in 1842 in Paris.

Cherubini's sacred works include seven Masses, two Requiems and several short pieces. These two Requiems (in D minor, for men's chorus, and in C minor for mixed chorus), are considered his greatest achievement; they are included in the repertoire of many concert series throughout the world today.

His instrumental music includes a separate Overture in G (in addition to the overtures to his operas), the Symphony in D and a

set of six string quartets composed in the course of the years 1814-34.

Cherubini's didactic works include a collection of solfège exercises and figured-basses (1798-1840) and his important book Cours de contrepoint et de fugue (1835), for the teaching of strict polyphonic writing based on the theories of Fux, Martini and Marpurg.

### Performances of Cherubini's Médée

Cherubini's Médée was first performed at the Théâtre de Feydeau in Paris on 13 March 1797, and was given a lukewarm reception by the audience, in spite of the appearance as Medea of the famous singer Mme Julie Angélique Legrand, known as Madame Scio, and the first Jason, Pierre Gaveaux, also a renowned composer; this production was not repeated. The reviews in Paris mentioned the expressiveness and the majesty of the music, the richness of the costumes, the excellent performance of the chorus and of the main female heroine; at the same time they found that the musical style showed signs of imitation of Méhul.<sup>2</sup>

This opera, together with Les deux Journées in 1800, was the basis of Cherubini's artistic fame. One of the contributory factors to Medee's fame was the extremely successful reception of

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<sup>2</sup> See the reviews which appeared immediately after the premiere in the Parisian press in Courrier des Spectacles (14 March 1797) and Journal d'Indications (15 March 1797), as described in Willis' dissertation, pp.52-3. Pougin presents evidence of Mehul's great anger about this criticism of his esteemed friend. See Arthur Pougin, "Cherubini: sa vie, ses œuvres, son rôle artistique", Le Ménestrel, XLVII, (4 September 1881), 40.

the opera on German and Austrian stages beginning on 17 February 1800 with its appearances in Berlin (translation by Karl Alexander Herclot, Medea's role sung by Margaret Schick). Cherubini, who was already well-known for Eliza and Lodoïska, was acclaimed after the Berlin premiere. Below is a translation of a quotation from the AMZ II, 29, 16 April 1800, appearing in Willis' dissertation, p.59. Herclot's German translation was also highly praised:

"...the composer is always faithful to the main character, achieves great success in the expression of vengeance, cruelty, anger...there is unity and perfection in all and a great variety of detail, much exactitude in accompaniments and faithful expression of suffering...sometimes too much richness of harmony which distracts the attention from the singer...this is the fault of many French composers..."

The opera was performed in Vienna from 6 November 1802 and from 5 December 1802. The translation was by Georg Friedrich Treitschke, and Medea was sung by Anna Milder-Hauptmann, both figures associated with Beethoven's opera Leonore-Fidelio.<sup>3</sup> In Vienna it was produced in a new shortened version with cuts by Cherubini (see below). Later productions came in Budapest - on 23 December 1803, and in 1812 again in Berlin and in Vienna. The Brussels French production of 1814 introduced new corrections, probably by Cherubini (see below).

Commencing with the Frankfurt staging in 1854, it became normal practice to perform the opera with recitatives composed by Franz Lachner which seemed to be more in keeping with the tragic

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<sup>3</sup> Treitschke's German translation, first presented in Vienna in 1802 and repeated in Berlin in 1812, was very well received. See letters in this connection in Willis' dissertation, pp.306-7.

events and their distance from everyday life than the original spoken dialogues.

In this form Médée was performed in German opera houses in the ensuing decades. In spite of some excellent achievements, these performances were paid a minimum of attention, and they did not result in Médée asserting its position in the regular operatic repertoire.

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The following is a list of later performances of the opera:

Germany: Mainz 1865; Leipzig, several appearances until 1893; 1925 in Erfurt with Médée arranged by Hans Schüller and Heinrich Strobel.

England: It was first performed in London in 1865 in Italian, with recitatives by Luigi Arditi, who also conducted. The main role was sung by the Dutch singer, Therese Tietjens. It was repeated with her in 1870 at Covent Garden.

Italy: It first appeared in 1909 at La Scala, translated by Carlo Zangarini with recitatives by Lachner. Medea's role was sung by Ester Mazzoleni. In 1953 it was performed at the "Maggio Musicale" Festival in Florence, again in Italian, based on Zangarini, and elaborated by Vito Frazzi and Tullio Serafin. Medea's role was sung by Maria Callas, with the conductor Vittorio Gui, the opera produced by André Barsacq and staged by Lucien Coutaud.

Maria Callas' interpretation, her expressive, psychological

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4 See Klaus Hortschansky, "Medee", Pipers Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters (München-Zürich, 1986), p.560.

insight into the heroine's very being which gave the original archetype a contemporary aesthetic response, laid down the musical and dramatic model for the interpretation of Medea in the 20th century. Again in 1953, this time with Maria Luisa Nache as Medea, it was presented at La Scala, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, with staging by Margareth Wallmann.

More recently at the Buxton Festival, on 28 July 1984, the original French version with reduced spoken dialogue was finally presented. Another performance occurred at Covent Garden on 6 November 1989.

These historic performances saw the renaissance of the opera. After Maria Callas had performed Medea in 1953, the following singers followed in her footsteps: Eileen Farrell, Inge Borkh, Elizabeth Carron, Gerda Lammers, Rita Gorr, Antigone Sgourda, Gwyneth Jones, Anja Silja, Leonie Rysanek, Cristina Deutekom, Sylvia Sass, Grace Bumbry, Katia Ricciarelli, Shirley Verrett and others. The New York stage revival with Eileen Farrell (1958) was a remarkable event in the modern world of opera performance. None of these singers, however, succeeded in reaching the heights of Callas.

Since the middle of the 20th century, after a neglect of almost the whole first half of the century, a few recordings of the opera have been made: in 1953 and 1957 with Maria Callas as Medea, in 1958 with Eileen Farrell and with Callas - in separate recordings, in 1959 and 1961, in 1967 with Gwyneth Jones, and in



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1978 with Sylvia Sass.

This all would seem to indicate that it is quite possible the 20th century will see a renewed interest in this opera. However, since Callas stopped performing the role of Medea, interest in Cherubini's opera has again faded away.

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Klaus Hortschansky writes: "It seems to me that Eduard Hanslick's opinion after the production in Vienna was prophetic: 'hoch gepriesen und lässig besucht, von allen bewundert, von wenigen geliebt, das ist jederzeit das Schicksal der Cherubini-schen Medea gewesen' ('highly appreciated and poorly attended, admired by all, loved by few - this was always the fate of Cherubini's Médée')."

Whatever the case, one cannot but agree that Cherubini's Médée has always been and will remain an opera greatly admired by composers and musicians if not by audiences and critics.

#### Sources of the Libretto and Hoffman's Text

##### The Myth

The legend of Medea originates in Greek mythology. She was the daughter of Aeetes, King of Colchis and protector of the Golden Fleece, and sister of Chalciope. Having fallen in love with Jason, one of the Argonauts, she helped him steal the fleece from Aeetes using her magic powers, on the condition that he

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5 For information about performances and recordings, see Klaus Hortschansky, "Medee", p.560.

6 Ibid., p.561.

would marry her. When pursued by the Colchians, Medea killed her half-brother, Apsyrtus, whom she had taken captive, and strewed the pieces of his body in the path of the boat. This slowed down the Colchians, so that the Argonauts were able to arrive home safely after numerous more adventures.

Jason arrived back in Thessaly to find that his close family had all been put to death and that his uncle, Pelias, was in power. Medea, again with the aid of her magic, arranged for Pelias to be carved up by his own daughters; Jason and Medea, fearing revenge, left Iolchus and took up residence in Corinth where Jason was accepted as king, Medea being the only surviving child of Aetes, previously King of Corinth.

After ten prosperous years and fourteen children, Jason began to suspect Medea of having procured him the throne through poisoning and decided to divorce her in favour of Glauce (Dircea), daughter of Creon, King of Thebes. Medea did not deny her crimes but insisted that Jason live up to the oath which he had taken when she helped him to procure the Golden Fleece, to love her forever. Jason refused; Medea feigned submission and sent a wedding gift to Glauce in the hands of her children - a golden crown and a long white robe. However, when Glauce put them on, they burst into flames, killing all assembled, except for Jason. By this time Zeus had fallen in love with Medea's indomitable spirit but was repulsed by her: Hera promised Medea's children immortality if she would lay them on the sacrificial altar in Hera's temple. Having done this, Medea fled. Her

children were seized and stoned to death by the Corinthians, enraged by the murder of Glauce and Creon. Medea escaped to Thebes, then to Athens, where she married King Aegeus, and finally returned to Colchis before becoming immortal and reigning in the Elysian Fields. Jason, cursed by the gods for having broken his oath to Medea, wandered homeless from city to city and was finally killed, just as he was on the point of committing suicide, when his boat, the "Argo", toppled forward on top of him.<sup>7</sup>

### Euripides' Play: The Concept and Plan of the Drama

#### The Concept

The first important drama to be written on this subject was by Euripides (c.485-407 B.C.E.). His Medea created even further confusion in the story; the Corinthians bribed Euripides to say that Medea had killed two of her children and that the rest perished in the palace fire. The plot revolves around only the last part of the original myth: the vengeance of Medea. The principal characters are Medea, Jason, Creon and Aegeus (King of Athens): a group of Corinthian women make up the chorus. The drama is set in Corinth in front of the royal palace. With all the art of a great master, Euripides portrayed Medea's jealousy and the anguished conflict of her emotions when she is on the point of killing her children.

Euripides' innovation is the combination of various sub-

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7 After Robert Graves, The Greek Myths (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1960), II, 236-59. Graves made a conflation of several sources of the myths.

plots: the murder of Creon and his daughter; the murder of the two boys; the story of Aegeus.

His tragedy, written according to traditional rules, was first performed in 431 B.C.E.; it was awarded third place in the competition held during the Dionysiac festivities.

The play begins with a dialogue between the nurse and the boys' tutor on hearing that Jason, Medea's former husband, has married Glauce (Dircea), daughter of the King, Creon. Medea, distraught and in a fury because of Jason's deed, is prepared to put an end to her life. Creon, fearful that she may murder his daughter, banishes Medea and her sons. In the first episode (far earlier than in Hoffman's version), Medea speaks of the wretchedness of women in the institution of marriage and her own condition as an abandoned and alien woman. By her cunning she receives a stay in her banishment from Creon in order to decide upon her next move. Immediately she begins to plan the details of the murders; Jason offers to aid his exiled wife. She repulses him in scorn while he justifies his treachery as an acceptable step in a world of expediency.

The story of Aegeus is inserted here - Medea manages to extract refuge in Corinth from him (in exchange for her magic draughts to aid his potency). She presents her completed plan to send Glauce a poisoned robe and crown in the hands of her sons (as if pleading with Glauce not to exile them) and in the end, as the culmination of her revenge against Jason - she intends to murder their children. The desperate cries of the children are

heard in the chorus, after she has managed to mislead Jason and Glaucea. She murders the children. Victorious, with god-like attributes, she appears in the chariot of her grandfather, Helios (the Sun). She has murdered Jason's bride, the King and the children, and it is left to the chorus to convey this to Jason. He wishes to punish her. She does not allow him to bury his sons and prophesies a bitter end for him: that the poop of his ship, the "Argo" (hanging in the temple to Hera) will fall on him and will split his skull. She disappears in the chariot and the mourning, sorrowing Jason departs.

Synopsis of Medea by Euripides. Edited in 11 Scenes by Nigel Watson. 8

#### SCENE 1

Medea's children's nurse sets scene. We learn that M. suffers greatly because Jason has bedded Glauce, daughter of Creon (King of Corinth) and intends to marry her. Tutor reports gossip that C. may drive M. and children into exile. Nurse warns children to stay away from M. because of her emotional state. After tutor and children exit, M. appears, curses children and entire lineage. Nurse remonstrates, says children aren't to blame, preaches moderation. M. goes indoors.

#### SCENE 2

Enter Chorus of Corinthian women. Claim crying over J. isn't worth it. Nurse is saddened that music cannot cure such grief. Indoors, M. prays to gods to destroy J. and G. Nurse fetches her out.

#### SCENE 3

M. confronts Chorus. She bemoans women's lack of social maneuverability and her fall from princess to refugee without protector. Ch. acknowledges her feelings are just. Enter C. who banishes M. and children for fear M. will harm G. M. begs for one day's respite. C. reluctantly agrees, exits. M. tells Ch. her plan to kill H., G. and C.

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8 Nigel Watson is a scholar of the theatre and artistic director of the "Theatr 'Taliesin' in Cardiff, South Wales, Great Britain. This synopsis was edited at the author's request in May 1994.

SCENE 4

Enter J. who offers provision for children. M. refuses to believe him. J. says she has been 'civilized' by Greek values and that he is marrying G. to ensure children's financial security. Exile is her own fault for calling down curses on C.'s family. M. spurns his offer of financial assistance. (Exit J.). Ch. sides with her, again pleading for moderation.

SCENE 5

Enter Aegeus, King of Athens, old friend of M. She explains the situation from her point of view. He swears before the gods that she may find a home in Athens in perpetuity and will never be given up to enemies under any circumstances. However, he will not actively assist her to escape Corinth: this she must do unaided. In return, she agrees to help him cease being childless.

SCENE 6

M. exults, tells Ch. her plan. She will summon J., apologize, pretend to accept his plan, send the children with golden dress and diadem to G. as a wedding gift. The latter is smeared with a magic poison: the wearer and all who touch, will die in agony. Then M. will kill the children before fleeing, as they will be without protection. Ch. begs her to desist, asks how can she kill her own flesh and blood. M - it is best way to be revenged on J. Ch. predicts she won't actually be able to do it.

SCENE 7

Enter J. M. acts contrite, pretends to agree to everything, brings out the children to witness harmony restored. J. asks why she is so pale and weeping. M. blames it on female weakness. M. begs J. to beg C. to let children stay in Corinth, or let G. beg her father for this favour. M. persuades J. to let the children take (poisoned) gown and diadem to G. Ch. now sees disaster as inevitable.

SCENE 8

Tutor appears with children, back from royal palace, tells M. that children may stay in Corinth after all. M. aghast. (Exit T.) Pity for her children and willingness to abandon plans battle with wounded pride and hatred of J. inside her. Desire for revenge wins. Embraces children and sends them into the house. "I know indeed what evil I intend to do". Exits. Ch. reflects that the childless are sometimes blessed.

SCENE 9

Re-enter M. and Messenger from the palace. Mess. tells her to flee, G. and C. are dead. She, delighted, wants to gloat over the details. He gives lengthy, gory description of events. Ch. - J. has deserved these evils, pities M.

SCENE 10

M. rushes into house, intent on slaying children lest they "be slain by another hand less kindly to them". Ch. appeals to Earth and Sun to stop this. The children's cries are heard from inside.

Ch. wonders whether to intervene. (But doesn't). Claims only to know of one woman (implied - in the history of the world) who has committed the same terrible deed.

SCENE 11

Enter J. asking for M.'s whereabouts and children's. Has come to protect the children from Corinthian vengeance. Ch. tells him the bitter truth. M. appears above the house in a dragon-drawn chariot, the children's corpses with her. (Chariot kindly donated by her grandfather Helios). He screams his regret, hatred, racism at her: "There is no Greek woman who would have dared such deeds". They blame each other at fever pitch. He begs for the bodies to bury and mourn them. She refuses, intending to bury them in Hera's temple and to establish in Corinth "a holy feast and sacrifice/ Each year for ever to atone for the blood guilt". She prophesies the circumstances of J.'s death. Further expression of mutual undying hatred and recriminations. He begs her to let him touch the bodies. She refuses.

Chorus: "Zeus in Olympus is the overseer of many doings. Many things the gods achieve beyond our judgement. What we thought is not confirmed and what we thought not god contrives. And so it happens in this story".

F.B. Hoffman's Libretto: The Concept and a Short Synopsis

Among the settings which followed that of Euripides, was the important one by the Roman, Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c.43 B.C.E. - 65 A.C.E.). The first significant French drama on this theme was Corneille's first tragedy, Médée, in 1635 (one year before Le Cid), based mostly on Seneca's play. A later French writer who was attracted to this myth was Jean Maria Bernard Clément (1742-1812), but his attempt was a failure.

The majority of tragedies devoted to the Medea-theme have dealt with the last episode of the story, and Hoffman's libretto was no exception.

Hoffman's setting begins with Dircea and her handmaidens - her fears of Medea are masked by her lack of faith in Jason;

Dircea is not convinced by their attempts at calming her or those made by her father, King Creon, either. In Scene 6 of Act I Creon frightens Medea. Scene 7, Act I, is mainly a dialogue between Medea and Jason (with Medea begging Jason to return to her); they curse the fatal influence of the Golden Fleece on their fate.

In Act II Medea is already ordered to leave; her thoughts are reflected through her handmaiden Neris. Medea remains an additional day in Corinth and plans the murder of her sons; she sends them to Dircea with the poisoned gifts.

In Act III Medea is in the midst of her tremendous conflict: she asks for the gods' assistance so that she may succeed in executing her vile deed, curses her motherhood, and welcomes the children in the temple (Neris has brought them there at her request); when Jason comes to rescue them from the temple, she emerges with a sword in her hand. She rises up to heaven (after having murdered the boys) and the temple goes up in flames.

Hoffman, then, starts out with Dircea and expands her figure (at the same time exposing the blandness of her character as compared with Medea). It takes longer than with Euripides for him to have Medea enter.

With Hoffman there is a considerable modification of the Greek myth, greatly expanding two of Medea's emotions: those of vengeance and of the intent to murder. Hoffman also provided Cherubini with interesting characters to work with. Medea, even more central a figure now, more human than before in her fears and her scheming mind, can inspire a stronger psychodrama. But as



with Euripides, she also curses her motherhood. Dircea (Glaucé) is given more prominence than in Euripides. Jason is also more visible and appears more often with Medea. Neris, also a handmaiden to Medea, is a new character on whom Hoffman concentrates in particular; she is an especially sensitive character whom Cherubini developed, thus making for more interest within the plot.

It is usually accepted that Hoffman prepared the libretto for Médée in the 1780's. Winton Dean<sup>9</sup> writes as follows:

"Médée (1797), perhaps Cherubini's most potent opera, is in one sense the culmination of pre-Revolution classical tragedy; the libretto had in fact been written for the Opéra in the 1780s, but not accepted because of Framery's (unperformed) setting of the same subject. Its violence is all the more impressive for being largely psychological and expressed in a basically classical style. Yet it derives much of its urgency from the new heaven."<sup>10</sup>

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9. Winton Dean, "Cherubini", in New Oxford History of Music (Oxford, 1988), VIII: The Age of Beethoven, 1790-1830, 37-46.

10. In correspondence which the author of this thesis conducted with Winton Dean and Elizabeth Bartlet in July 1993, no further clarification in this connection was forthcoming.

### Cherubini's *Médée* in the Context of the History of Opera and French Theatre

Since the year of its first appearance, 1797, at the turn of the 19th century, *Médée* has retained its position as a major work in the world of opera. It must be acknowledged as the main contribution to the history of the opera as regards Cherubini's oeuvre. It was he, together with Grétry and Méhul, who succeeded in developing the *opéra comique* from a limited genre to a most powerful instrument dealing both with bold, dramatic character portraits as well as with themes from everyday life. Cherubini's *Médée* easily surpassed the other French operas of its time, when Paris reigned as the recognized center of opera at the end of the 18th century.

The reality of the French Revolution encouraged the use of music in daily life: patriotic songs were sung in official patriotic festivals and in civic fetes and funeral processions. Music was also of great significance in its relation to the opera and the theatre. When the Revolution was at its height, enthusiasm for scenes of mass spectacle ran high, both in the popular and artistic fields.

Cherubini enjoyed a most esteemed status in Paris. Beethoven was a great admirer of Cherubini's operatic style, and owned a copy of the published score of Cherubini's *Médée*.<sup>11</sup> Beethoven was inspired to compose his famous rescue opera, *Leonore*, after

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<sup>11</sup> The score is listed as item No.229 in the inventory of Beethoven's estate sold on 5 November 1827. See *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, p.1069.

seeing Cherubini's Lodoïska and especially Les deux Journées in Vienna in 1802.

The qualities of Classicism and Romanticism co-exist in Médée as a reflection of the new epoch. The boldness of conception inherent in Médée, both from the psychological and musical aspects, will always be regarded as one of the most unequivocally pioneering advances towards the essence of the 19th century, in the shadow of the events of the time. It provides clear evidence of the spirit of its time - "inordinate desire of stimulus, of increased excitement",<sup>12</sup> which is expressed in its musical values.

Carl Maria von Weber's vivid description offers a clear picture of the strong interrelationship between political events and musical expression which pervaded the specific atmosphere existing then:<sup>13</sup>

"The epoch in which we live, fruitful in excitement, has subjected us to the two extremes, the two rigid taskmasters, death or pleasure. Overwhelmed by the horrors of war, and rendered familiar with every species of misery, men have betaken themselves to the more coarse and exciting pleasures of art, as a means of relief against the pressures of evil. The theatre has been changed into a rareeshow, in which...the restless mind seeks relief and excitement in splendid scenery, in broad humour, in melodies calculated to tickle the ear, or harmonies of the most stormy kind...Accustomed in daily life to the strong and stimulating, nothing but pieces of that character was relished by the frequenters of the theatre...They have

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12 Beth Shamgar, "Perceptions of Stylistic Change: A Study of the Reviews of New Music in the Harmonicon (1823-1833)", Current Musicology, 42 (1986), 26. Shamgar quotes this from the Harmonicon of 1829.

13 Shamgar quotes the translation in the Harmonicon of 1829, from Weber's "Tonkünstlers Leben". See fn 20, p.30.

butchered clearness and simplicity, as heretofore they butchered the freedom of the people; they have trampled on the laws of harmony, as they once did on the laws of nations; they have broken down the protecting barriers of the pure and the beautiful, and with savage joy."

Médée is Cherubini's most monumental opera, the one most representative of his musical style. In its gloomy greatness it even brings to mind the architecture of the Revolutionary period. From the typological aspect it is a mature opéra comique with spoken dialogue; yet respecting its dramatic structure, it is nearer to Gluck and Metastasio and the later serious opera. It is completely devoid of comic scenes, satires and vaudeville dialogues - all of which are standard features of opéra comique. The chorus participates fully in the plot and the many dialogues transfer the main emphasis from external events to the psychological process in which love is transformed into destructive hatred. Cherubini's musical language allows the listener to become involved in the internal conflict of the main heroine, especially as long as she remains onstage. Medea embraces a large area of emotion because of her psychological condition (pain, sadness, tranquility, anger, supplication, revenge, lamentation) and all the conflicting moods are moulded musically: dramatic, lyrical and declamatory. The instrumentation must also be cited in relation to its use for the creation of drama - like the bright flute in Dircea's aria in Act I ("Hymen, viens dissiper") and the sombre bassoon in Neris' aria in Act II ("Ah! nos peines").

The dominance of Paris in the world of opera during the Revolutionary days goes back to the time of Gluck. In his Orfeo

(Vienna 1762, Paris 1777), Alceste (Vienna 1769, Paris 1774) and Iphigénie en Aulide (Vienna 1772, Paris 1774). Gluck's studies with Sammartini led him to introduce the sound of the modern symphony of his time into the operatic field, and by this innovative addition to the genre, dramatic strength was heightened and the standard for modern opera came to be defined. Constant suffering finds its new culmination in Cherubini's Médée at the turning-point of the century, thus drawing a gradual line of connection to Wagner and late Verdi. The topic of opera seria rules with Gluck, Cherubini and Wagner, as a supremely important continuity in the world of opera. Cherubini stands in the middle of the two extremes regarding text-music relationship. In the operas of J.A. Hasse (1699-1783), the text is subordinated to the music, whereas in Wagner, poetry supplies the frame for the music; and in Cherubini, music is complementary to the text. The monumental spirit of Cherubini's Médée is nurtured both by the brilliance of the spectacle-opera and the deep gloom of the expressive psychodrama. The tension in the plot of Médée results in this opera being related to, but not identified with, the archetypal rescue-type opera. The intense nature of the heroine, Medea, with her incredible emotional range, can be considered as paving the way for the operas of Richard Strauss, Arnold Schönberg and Alban Berg in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, the third act of Médée with its atmosphere of inexorable doom inevitably brings to mind the last act of Verdi's Otello.<sup>14</sup>

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14 Deane, Cherubini, p.9.

When considering Mozart's enormous contribution to the world of opera, it is obvious that his idiom in his last so-called comic operas, is totally different. Mozart's search for the most human of characters involves both a comic and serious atmosphere. Idomeneo (1781) is his greatest opera seria. Still, despite the moving conflicts between father and son and the two feminine protagonists, and the dramatic storm scenes, the intensity is less imposing than that found in Cherubini's Médée.

It is interesting to note that Gluck's Orfeo and Alceste, Beethoven's Fidelio and Grétry's Richard, share a similar atmosphere of a basic transition from darkness to a source of light, but the deus-ex-machina which allows the dungeon scenes to develop by some process into an enlightened, optimistic resolution, does not exist in Cherubini's Médée: here all remains dark and still darker at the very end; a total feeling of black despair shrouds the stage after the unmitigated suffering of all the participants in the drama. An excellent illustration of the profound depression caused by the tragedy of Medea is expressed by Neris' word "mort", repeated several times in her aria in Act II (Scene 4); this aria (see its detailed analysis in Chapter III, pp.209-27) is a reflection of her mistress' (Medea's) own inner struggle.

Cherubini's musical traits establish his position at the inception of early Romanticism or at the juncture-point of the contradictory stylistic tendencies of Classicism and Romanticism; in this connection, the significance of the typical key areas

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should be mentioned, such as the tragic-heroic key of D minor,  
<sup>16</sup>  
the dramatic F/F-sharp minor, the declamatory-frightening B  
<sup>17</sup>  
minor. Cherubini's position is very interesting from this  
aspect: the key-symbolism in his Médée is related to the general  
harmonic plan. In Gluck's Alceste, the concept is one of tonal  
centralization which is mainly to be found in the first act and  
is then gradually lessened during the course of the opera. In  
Beethoven's Fidelio, the symbolism attached to the heroes by  
means of certain keys, is the strongest among these three operas.  
One of the earliest examples of the three-key exposition in major  
can be found in the overture to Cherubini's Les deux Journées  
(1800). The dramatic exposure of heroes onstage in a gradual  
manner (Dircea, Jason, Creon, Medea, Neris) and the grand crowd  
scenes (all the "tout" subsections, and especially the March of  
the Argonauts near the beginning of the opera, in Act I, Scene 3)  
should be mentioned here. The powerful overture to Médée,  
governed by a daring storm and stress atmosphere, is already very  
dramatic, but in comparison to Alceste, for example, the tension  
of drama increases here from one act to another. It is inter-

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15 Resembling the importance of D minor in Mozart's Don Giovanni, in Gluck's Alceste (the key of the Overture), and Pizzaro's declamatory aria in Beethoven's Fidelio (No.4). It appears in Cherubini's Médée in the agitated orchestral introduction and in Medea's tremendously tense recitative, both in Act III, and in the duet of Medea and Jason in Act II (when she is commanded to leave).

16 F minor is the key of the Overture to Médée, Florestan's aria in Fidelio, Act II, Joseph's important aria in Méhul's Joseph (Act I). F-sharp minor is the typical dark key in the piano sonatas of Hummel (piano sonata op.81 in F-sharp minor, 1812-14) and Dussek (piano sonata in F-sharp minor, 1819).

17 B minor serves for the oracle's appearance in Alceste in Act I, and for the declamatory aria of Creon in Act I, Scene 6, of Médée.

esting how, at the end of the 18th century and in the 19th century, the tenor timbre always serves the masculine profiles as characters of a certain rich psychological strain (Jason, Florestan, Don Jose, Otello, etc.).

A brief mention of the similarities between Beethoven's and Cherubini's musical traits includes: sensitive orchestration with many solo wind passages, motivic orchestral and contrapuntal textures, frequent use of third-related keys and more intensive dissonances, careful placement of melodic climaxes and use of an extreme melodic range, and a broad rhythmic spectrum. In terms of structure, there is a similar emphasis on motivic development and many effects of concinnity. While the main technique for the creation of dramatic peaks with Cherubini is by means of melodic climaxes, in Beethoven this occurs by means of a wide dynamic range.

### Médée and the French Theatre

Médée by F.B. Hoffman belongs to the realm of classical theatrical literature, namely to the genre called in France "high tragedy".

Tragedy, born in Ancient Greece, reached its culminating point in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E. in the tragic plays by Aeschylus (born ? 525 B.C.E.), Sophocles (born 497 or 495 B.C.E.) and Euripides (born ca. 485 B.C.E.). The greatness of tragedy, after Classical Greece, reappeared with the Renaissance in Western Europe in the late 16th century in England, especially



with Shakespeare.

In France the tragedy was reborn in the 16th century, first in Latin and French translations of the Greek classics (Hecuba and Iphigenia translated by Erasmus, 1506, Electra translated by Lazare de Baif, 1527, Plutus by Ronsard, 1549) and later in the work of French authors. In the 17th century neoclassical tragedy reached its peak in the work of Corneille (Le Cid, Horace, Seneca, Pompey, Nicomede) and Racine (Andromache), and continued in the 18th century (Voltaire, Guimond de la Touche, etc.). The themes of the tragedies belong largely to Greek and Roman history and mythology, but partially to medieval history (e.g. Le Cid). The tragedy mostly represents famous persons or mythological figures, their tragic and heroic life and death, the conflict between human will and the fatality of passions.

In Paris of the late 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century (before, during and after the Revolution), the theatre was one of the most important cultural phenomena for the cultivated classes. Louis Bertrand puts it as follows: "A cette époque, la fourniture des théâtres devient une sorte de service public: l'opéra, la tragédie, la comédie et le vaudeville sont des denrées de première nécessité, des objets de consommation journalière".<sup>18</sup> Many theatres were opened in Paris at that time, as the "theatres of the Boulevards", the "theatres of the Fair".

In the French tragic plays of that epoch, the themes of

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<sup>18</sup> Louis Bertrand, La fin du classicisme et le retour à l'antiquité dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle et les premières années du XIXe (Paris, 1896; reprint Geneve, 1968), p.115.

classical antiquity went on being favoured by the authors, no less than modern subjects. The Greek classic tragedy was at the centre of interest. According to Bertrand (p.117), "on n'a a la bouche que les grands noms de Sophocles et d'Euripide, même les plus avances d'entre les 'modernes', comme Diderot". This intense interest was caused, on one hand, by the content of higher education of that epoch and by the theatrical and cultural traditions, and on the other hand, by the heroic spirit of the epoch in which ideological struggle, sense of citizenship, loyalty and selflessness played an extraordinary role. Bertrand observes, "si l'on tient compte de l'éducation de college, des habitudes antérieures de la scene, on comprendra que l'imagination du public s'accoutumat difficilement a rencontrer au théâtre, même sous les noms nouveaux, autre chose que les types dramatiques consacrés" (ibid.). It is therefore no surprise that Hoffman and Cherubini directed their attention to a Euripidian tragedy - even though the theme they chose was a particularly violent one.

Although the revolutionary epoch brought about new interests, new themes and genres, 'high tragedy' and the imitation of classical antiquity were still enthusiastically applauded by the public. A century earlier Hilaire de Roqueleyne Longepierre, 1659-1721, had also written (in 1694) his own tragedy, Médée. This tragedy was performed 24 times in the years of the Revolution (1789-92) in the theatres of Paris, including 15 times at the Théâtre-Français (renamed "Théâtre de la Nation" on 3 December 1789) and nine times at the "Théâtre de Mlle

Montansier" in the Palais-Royal.

In a recent article that appeared after the completion of this dissertation, Paolo Russo discusses the influence of earlier French sources on Hoffman's libretto, especially the plays by Longepierre and Clément. He also shows that Hoffman even borrowed  
19a  
entire lines from Clément.

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19 Cf. A. Tissier, "Les spectacles a Paris pendant la Revolution" (Paris, 1992), pp.70, 218, 455 and 512. See also K. Derzhavin, Teatr Francuzskoj revoljucii (1932), E. Vinaver, Racine and Poetic Tragedy (1953), Jules Bertaut, La vie littéraire en France au XVIIIe siècle (1954), G. Steiner, The Death of Tragedy (1961).

19a See Paolo Russo, "Visions of Medea" Musicodramatic Transformation of a Myth", Cambridge Opera Journal, 6 (1994), 113-24.

## THE MANUSCRIPT AND PRINTED SOURCES

### The Autograph and Its Revisions

#### Description of the Autograph

The autograph of Médée, catalogue no. 208 in the Music Division of Memorial Library in Stanford University, is bound in a typical early 19th-century French hard, red morroco-leather binding with gold-leaf decoration. In addition to the title "MANUSCRIT ORIGINAL DE LA PARTITION DE MÉDÉE CHERUBINI", the cover bears the name of the wealthy French collector who first owned it, J. Zimmerman. This autograph undoubtedly passed through several hands until it was bought by Stanford University, probably in 1950, when the printed edition was also acquired from a Dutch antiquarian, while establishing the collection of the Memorial Library.<sup>20</sup> There is one leaf plus 528 pages. The leaf is 22.15 cm. in width and 28.9 cm. in length; the total span of the page is 18.8 cm. in width and 24.3 cm. in length. There are various kinds of paper, ranging from 12-14 staves, which were collected and cut in order to create this upright format. The title page in Cherubini's hand, reads as follows: Médée/ Opéra en 3 Actes/ d'Hofman [sic]/ Musique/ de Cherubini.

This autograph without doubt reflects the final form of the score in the last version as prepared by Cherubini, with only a

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20 This was how the collection was established by George T. Keating, founder and patron of the Music Division in Memorial Library, who was also a collector. This information was given to the author by Mr. David Sullivan, technical services librarian in the Cecil H. Green Library (Memorial Library of Music), Stanford, on 5 October 1993.

few alterations. The printer made some modifications for the published edition mainly by means of the indication of page numbers (to correspond exactly with the numbers of the pages in the printed edition) in thick brown pencil markings. The title page of the autograph also bears the date of the premiere, 13 March 1797, in another hand. In the autograph there are no indications of measures and scenes. Cherubini identified the musical sections by a consecutive numbering throughout the autograph.

Cherubini's handwriting in the autograph is clearly legible. He must have worked intensively on the copying of the score and it is always noticeable where he begins to work on a new day: when he starts to work, his pen strokes are more delicate and his writing is finer. For example, in Plate I-1, there is a notable disparity between the writing at the end of Neris' aria in Act II (in the autograph, the end of No.10, or, according to the formal divisions, Act II, Scene 4, G minor), and the beginning of the duet between Medea and Jason (in the autograph, the beginning of No.11 = Act II, Scene 5, D minor), which naturally appear next to one another in the autograph. It is obvious that the beginning of the duet was copied at the start of a new day or at least after a rest or intermission, the copying of Neris' aria having been completed earlier. One can also clearly discern the printer's brown pencil marking below the tempo, indicating the page number 227 where the duet begins in the edition.

Plate I-1. The end of Neris' aria and beginning of the duet for Medea and Jason "Chers enfans", Act II, Scene 5, in Cherubini's handwriting in the autograph.

Handwritten musical score for the song "Die Schöne" by Franz Schubert. The score is written on ten staves. The first five staves are for the vocal part, and the last five are for the piano accompaniment. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The score is handwritten in ink on aged paper.

*Die Schöne*  
 Franz Schubert  
 aus dem "Liederkreis" von Franz Schubert  
 1. Die Schöne  
 2. Die Schöne  
 3. Die Schöne  
 4. Die Schöne  
 5. Die Schöne  
 6. Die Schöne  
 7. Die Schöne  
 8. Die Schöne  
 9. Die Schöne  
 10. Die Schöne

Handwritten musical score for "L'Espresso" by Charles C. Danforth. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is labeled "bassoon" and the second "Clarinet". The third staff is labeled "Clarinet" and the fourth "Bassoon". The fifth staff is labeled "Bassoon" and the sixth "Clarinet". The seventh staff is labeled "Clarinet" and the eighth "Bassoon". The ninth staff is labeled "Clarinet" and the tenth "Bassoon". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "p" and "f". The title "L'Espresso" is written in the center of the score.

Note. The work of the printer for the publisher Imbault in Paris is highly commendable. He made the correct compromises between the autograph, in which there are only musical numbers, and Hoffman's libretto, so that the edition most successfully includes all the spoken text and the sung scenes, as befits the opéra comique genre. An unfortunate revelation was that whoever had bound the autograph, sliced off almost all of Cherubini's headings on the upper margin of the pages!

#### Revisions in the Autograph

At this stage we are not concerned with sketches, but rather with the final version just before the score was handed over to the printer. The autograph is in fine condition; the changes and deletions that Cherubini inserted here, at the twelfth hour, may be estimated as not more than three per cent of all the music, all in all at ten places. In most of the places deleted, the original measures are still visible. In a few places, the new version of the music has been pasted over the original measures which are now illegible; in one place only is there a big deletion of notes and in another, a deletion of text. It would appear that Cherubini was aware of redundancies while working on the autograph, and this even without the pressure of an ongoing production! There are two very successful corrections - one as to text setting (in Act II, Scene 7, Correction 6, pp.54-5 here) and one with regard to the melodic drive (in Act II, Scene 4, Correction 5, pp.53-4 here). The huge deletion (the only one of its

kind) within Act III, Scene 2, (Correction 9, pp.58-9 here) arouses a number of speculations (see below).

At any rate, these last-minute corrections throw an interesting and relevant light on Cherubini's compositional work processes. Below are enumerated, with consecutive numbers, all the corrections and deletions in the autograph in consecutive order, according to the original edition and the analysis given in this study. Analytical comments are added, in the author's endeavour as musician and composer, to identify as far as possible with the needs, self-questionings and dilemmas of Cherubini, the composer.

Correction 1. Between mm.319-20 in the Overture.

[= p.26 in the original edition, marked No.1 in the autograph]

In the edition, the harmonic progression is

m.318 <u>VI</u>	m.319 <u>II</u> <sup>6</sup> → <u>V</u> <sup>7</sup>
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in the key of F minor (see there, p.26). Before the final measure there were two additional measures containing

<u>IV</u> <sup>7</sup> higher dim.	<u>V</u> <sup>7</sup> <u>4</u>
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

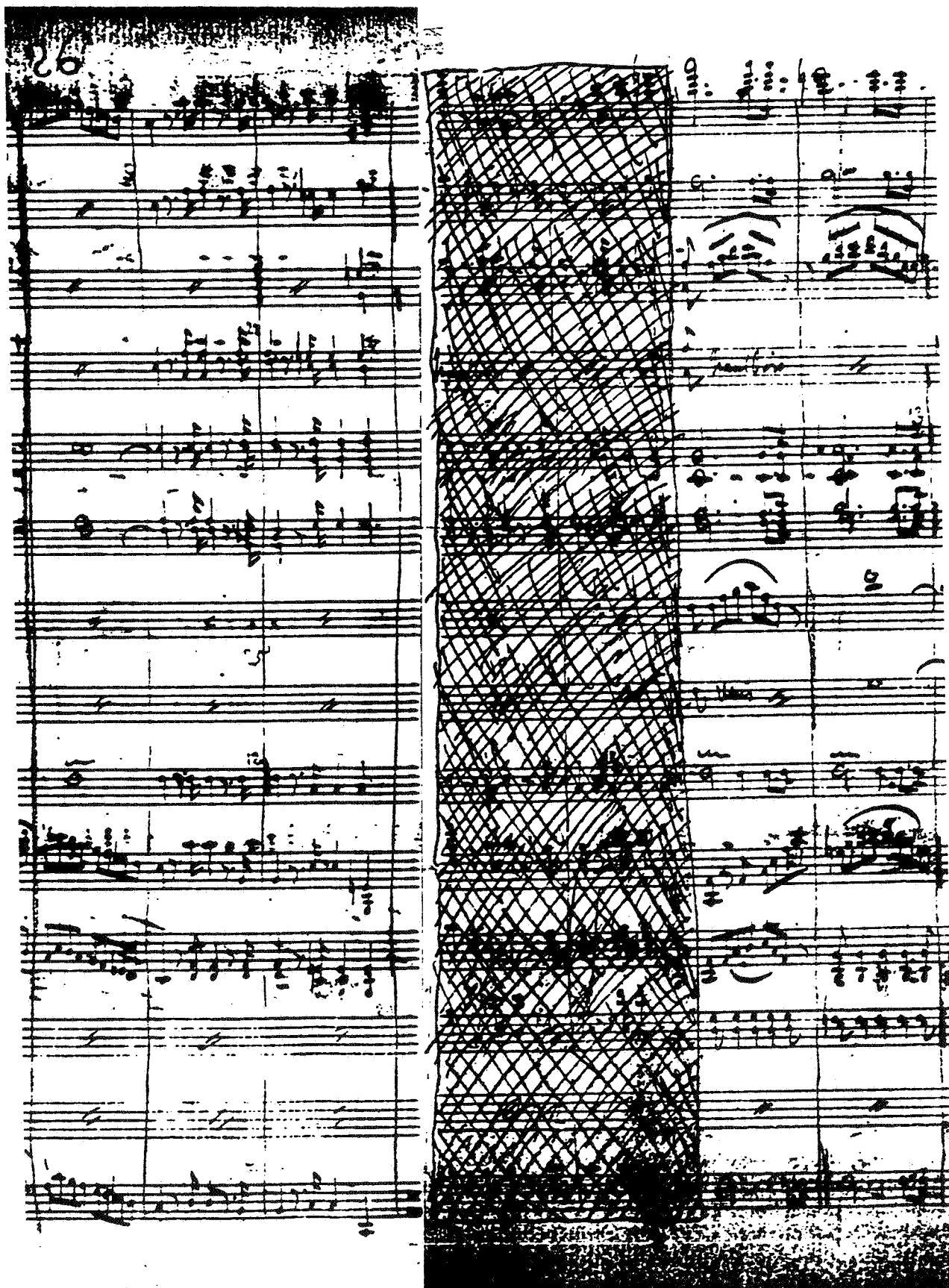
See Plate I-2.

Comment. The author is not convinced that Cherubini acted correctly here. This is the final cadence in the Overture before the last 15 measures of a strong tonic at its very end. While preparing the autograph, Cherubini must have felt a further extension of the cadential process was unnecessary and caused some sort of redundancy. However, what he deleted was a shocking



intensification, replacing  $\overline{\text{VI}}$  and  $\overline{\text{II}}^6_5$  by the diminished seventh chord of the dominant, with huge leaps in the first violin and bass parts. But would not such an intensification before the final tonic have helped to strengthen the last instant, the ultimate impact of the final cadence of this strong, energetic Overture?

Plate I-2. The Correction in the Overture including the deletion of two measures between mm.319-20 in the autograph.



Correction 2. Act I, Scene 3, Section 1, before m.40 in the March of the Argonauts (D major, March + Ensemble "Belle Dirce").

[= p.69 in the original edition, marked No.3 in the autograph]

Cherubini deleted two measures, an instrumental codetta exactly at the end of the purely orchestral section of the March of the Argonauts before the entrance of the chorus with "Belle Dirce". Before the deletion these measures are still incomplete, at the stage between partial and full score.

Comment. The instrumental codetta is indeed valueless because of the five-measure dominant pedal with repetitions. Cherubini planned these two measures, was perhaps undecided about them for some time - they were not noted down in completed form - but when the final stage of the scoring was reached, just before handing over the autograph to the publisher, he decided to omit them. In other words, he felt that these two measures had no significance and so did not complete them. This is interesting from the point of view of Cherubini's method of work: he first prepared the draft with the bass line and a number of lines - mainly significant vocal lines. At this stage he was fully aware of what could be omitted because he was able to grasp the continuity of the music without getting bogged down by minutiae; then he filled in the rest of the details, writing everything out fully.

Correction 3. Act I, Scene 3, Section 2, between mm.187-8, and in mm.201-2, Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais".

[= pp.83 and 84 in the original edition, marked No. 4 in the autograph]

Between mm.187-8 there were 17 measures which Cherubini had written in full and then decided to delete. Measures 200-2 are a short instrumental transition between the end of this section and the next section (which begins with a short recitative by Creon, p.84 in the original edition). Cherubini deleted two measures between mm.201-2.

Comment. Note the size of the huge deletion between mm.187-8. Here Cherubini obviously decided to tighten up the score and avoid overemphasizing Jason's aria at this dramatic point. With regard to the small deletion between mm.200-2, Cherubini realized that they were nothing more than a valueless incident in this short instrumental transition.

Correction 4. Act II, Scene 4, between mm.50-1, Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines".

[= p.219 in the original edition, marked No.10 in the autograph]

Cherubini himself deleted six measures which he had written here. In these discarded measures there is an almost exact repetition of what has already been heard in mm.46-9, including the text. See Plate I-3 for the exact place of the cut; also clearly visible is the printer's mark in m.46 as to where p.219 in the published version will begin.

Comment. This is an excellent example of how aware Cherubini was of places where he repeated himself and how he did away with them when necessary, still without the pressure of an ongoing production. In the deleted portion these repetitions included another presentation of the phrase and its opening, and two recurrences of the bassoon phrase.

Plate I-3. The Correction in Act II, Scene 4, between mm.50-1 in the original edition, Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines", where Cherubini deleted six measures.

279 m

Violon 1

Violon 2

Alto

Basson

Noris

Sopra

*Campa-que de vos infor-tunes* *je vous sui-*

*Campa-que de vos infor-tunes* *je vous sui-*

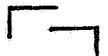
*moi jusqu'à la mort et je vous suivrai je vous suivrai*

52

Correction 5. Act II, Scene 4, between mm.124-5.

[= p.223 in the original edition, marked No.11 in the autograph]

Here Cherubini merely decided to cancel 12 measures he had written for Neris' aria (in the autograph it takes up one whole page, one measure on the previous page and three measures on the following page). The cut was made by means of pasting an empty sheet of white paper over the measures excluded; the pasting was not very efficient so that the measures omitted by Cherubini can still be deciphered.

Comment. The tightening up Cherubini aimed for here was achieved most successfully. The following (Ex. I-1) is a copy of the vocal line which Cherubini deleted (marked ) from the autograph.<sup>21</sup> When he reviewed the complete melodic context, he decided quite rightly that it was an uninteresting place in which he repeated the high e-flat three times, and recalled the secondary phrase which started the Reprise and had been already presented twice.

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<sup>21</sup> It was obviously impossible to xerox what had been pasted over with a sheet of paper, but enough of Cherubini's original text could be discerned and copied by hand.

Example I-1.

The Correction, mm.122-7 (the complete melodic context) in the original edition.



The full vocal line between mm.124-5 in Neris' aria which was deleted, including the existing mm.124-5 in the original edition.



Correction 6. Act II, Scene 7, mm.17-20, ensemble "Fils de Bacchus".

[= pp.258-9 in the original edition, marked No.12 in the autograph]

Cherubini altered the melodic line (chorus in unison) as well as the arrangement of the text, thus resolving the problem he had encountered with the text in m.20.

Comment. The following excerpt (Ex. I-2) is what Cherubini wrote originally (and later decided to alter):



Example I-2. Act II, Scene 7, ensemble "Fils de Bacchus" (chorus), the melodic line in mm.17-20 before the alteration (copied from the autograph).



Example I-3. Act II, Scene 7, ensemble "Fils de Bacchus" (chorus), the melodic line in mm.17-20 after the alteration (copied from the published version).



This is an excellent example of Cherubini's sensitivity in his treatment of the melodic line. In the version which he first wrote (Ex. I-2) in m.20, two syllables appear on the first long tone a (whole-note in 4/4). When he altered the melodic line, mainly in m.20 (Ex. I-3) and added more tones to this measure, he was able to set the word "guirlandes" perfectly. He thus increased the melodic activity, making a more attractive melodic line; and he also avoided repeating the same rhythmic pattern in mm.17 and 18, producing more variety. In the version before the alteration, both at its beginning and at its end, the text has been omitted. The reason for this differs in the two cases: in mm.17-18 the libretto cannot be verified because of the pasted sheet; and in mm.21-2 there is no text at all because of the problem of text setting.

Correction 7. Act II, Scene 7, in m.162 (choral finale "Des plus tendres époux").

[= p.274 in the original edition, marked No. 13 in the autograph]

Cherubini deleted five measures from m.162, beat 2 - m.162, beat 3. In other words, instead of these five measures, only m.162 remained.

Comment. The deletion was made so that the first half of the first measure and the second half of the last measure originally composed, become the two halves of the one measure which appears in the edited score - namely m.162. Plate I-4 illustrates the above-mentioned section. This is another example of small contractions which Cherubini correctly made when he felt that an unnecessary recurrence was interfering with the flow of the music. The deletion consisted of the music found earlier in mm.131-5. These were probably omitted to vary the second part of the choral section.

Plate I-4. Act II, Scene 7, ensemble "Fils de Bacchus" (chorus). The relevant section between pp.273-4 inside which the contraction of five measures in the autograph was made.

Handwritten musical score on page 56. The page features a large, dense, diagonal cross-hatched scribble covering the right half of the page. The left half contains musical notation and lyrics. The lyrics are written in a cursive script and include the words "Heimliche Jaurnee".

Heimliche Jaurnee

Handwritten musical score on page 57. The page features a large, dense, diagonal cross-hatched scribble covering the right half of the page. The left half contains musical notation and lyrics. The lyrics are written in a cursive script and include the words "Heimliche Jaurnee".

Heimliche Jaurnee

Correction 8. Act II, Scene 7, ensemble "Fils de Bacchus" (chorus), between mm.311-12.

[= p.292 in the original edition, marked No.14 in the autograph]

Cherubini deleted three measures between mm.311-12.

Comment. This example resembles the previous one. Even when only three measures were deleted, Cherubini did not hesitate to make the decision and effort if it improved the flow of the music (even though the deletion is shorter - only three measures long and thus less significant as compared with the previous one of five measures). Unfortunately, the notes were illegible.

Correction 9. Act III, Scene 2, Medea's aria "Du trouble affreux" [E-flat major], between mm.91-2.

[= p.327 in the original edition, marked No.15 in the autograph]

This is a huge deletion in black crayon and then in dark ink, so that it is impossible to decipher anything written beneath the crossout.

Comment. Here, where we may estimate a deletion of about 20 measures to have been made, we find that there are deletions such as this one which are completely undecipherable. What was the reason for this huge deletion? A composer's hysterical reaction?

Embarrassment? Was he possibly ashamed of these repeats? or did Cherubini want to make absolutely sure that these measures would not be performed? This is a basically psychological question which is unanswerable for the moment, and it will no doubt remain unanswered until the score at this spot is subjected to some modern technique for reestablishing what originally appeared here.

Correction 10. Act III, Finale, between mm.151-2 (from Medea's aria "Ô Tisiphone").

[= p.344 in the original edition, marked No.16 in the autograph]

Comment. Once again a typical tightening up of three measures. It works out perfectly for Cherubini: the first measure he deleted resembles the measure from which the undeleted continuation begins (= m.152 in the published score). He also made some rearrangement of the text as a result of the deletion, so that the correction works out most successfully.

## The Cuts in the Opera: Vienna 1802

### Historical Background

When it was decided to produce Cherubini's Medée in Vienna in the season of 1802, the composer, under pressure of this production, was apparently forced to make as many cuts as possible in the score. The reviews of the premiere in Paris in 1797 (see above) had criticised the length of the opera and the many musical repetitions in Cherubini's music: these were said to lessen the effectiveness of the drama.

The dates of the Viennese premiere in the Kärnthnertheater (at the time one of the important Viennese theatres) were from 6 November (12 performances) and from 5 December (3 performances),<sup>22</sup> five years and eight months after the premiere in Paris. Cherubini arrived in Vienna where he himself apparently made the many cuts - in almost every place where he found repetitions of any kind in his score. The cuts were made in such a manner that it would seem that only the composer himself could have made them. Gustav Schmidt who made the piano-vocal score published by Peters in 1856 with the Vienna cuts, states that the cuts were made by Cherubini. See this statement in the next plate.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Anton Bauer, Opern und Operetten in Wien (Graz-Köln, 1955), p.67.

<sup>23</sup> The year of this score's publication is not given in the score itself but is known from the Peters catalogue where the archive includes 'Platten No.12188' of 1856: the plates prepared for the printing of this edition two years after the editing of the cuts by Franz Lachner.

It is this score that, for the first time, contains the 1854 recitatives of Franz Lachner, as well as Cherubini's cuts, and the German version of the text in J.F. Treitschke's translation (see Plate I-5). However, the comments of Gustav Schmidt, the editor of this edition, include a serious error. He writes there that the cuts were made for the Viennese production of Cherubini's Medée in 1809, rather than 1802.

Plate I-5. The Table of Contents for the Peters edition of Medea (1856) with the "Vorbemerkung" of the editor, Gustav Schmidt, regarding the cuts in the score and Lachner's recitatives.

# MEDEA

Oper in drei Akten  
von

L. CHERUBINI.

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## Vorbemerkung.

Die von Cherubini 1797 komponirte Oper Medea wurde vom Komponisten selbst, bei seinem Aufenthalt in Wien im Jahre 1809, zum Zweck einer dortigen Aufführung umgearbeitet; den meisten Musikstücken ward eine abgekürzte Form verliehen, das Final-Duett des ersten Akts aber auch in seinem instrumentalen Theile überarbeitet. Durch Kraft des Ausdrucks, einschneidende Wirkung und die Möglichkeit einer exacten Ausführung dürfte die zweite Bearbeitung den Vorrang vor der Original-Partitur verdienen.

Gegenwärtiger Klavier-Auszug ist zunächst nach letzterer bearbeitet, enthält aber zugleich durch \* ..... + Zeichen angedeutet, die von Cherubini selbst gemachten Aenderungen, ferner die zweite Bearbeitung des ersten Final-Duett als Anhang zum ersten Akt sowie endlich die von Franz Lachner hinzukomponirten Recitative.

When the author of this thesis visited the music department of the Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek in Vienna - she set out to search for the proof of Cherubini's cuts.<sup>24</sup> On the bibliographical card of the Peters edition (Cat. No. 1362, manuscript No.7598), to the left, in small handwritten letters, is noted that it was edited according to the archival manuscript in the same library, No.281. In addition the author examined the date of the Viennese production and was suddenly shocked, and a moment later, extremely excited. Both in the chronological catalogue of Anton Bauer,<sup>25</sup> 150 Jahre-Theater an der Wien, as well as in the alphabetical encyclopaedia of the same author from the year 1955, Opern und Operetten in Wien, there is no indication that a production of Medée by Cherubini was staged in 1809. In the early source (1952), under the year 1809, this production does not appear at all and in the later source (1955), the dates of 1802 are given!

The author asked to see the 'Zettlbücher' in the library; the assistants brought them all out, starting with the beginning of the 19th century, but the book of 1802 had been lost or was not available. A 'Zettlbuch' such as this contains all the first pages of opera programmes produced in Vienna, a book for each year, in chronological order. In other words, it is a documentation of the operas produced in the form of the first page of the programme or a poster - what one might call an announcement of the performance of an opera - its authors, date of production in

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24 The author's research in this library obliged her to remain in Vienna for a week, 11-18 February 1993.

25 (Zürich, 1952), pp.286-7.



Vienna, characters and performers. To our amazement, in the Zettlbuch of the year 1809, on the page bearing the date 9 January 1809, there is an announcement of a production of Medea, not by Cherubini but by Georg Benda! The name of Benda appears in small letters, which is why Gustav Schmidt erred, and his error was accepted for many years by those dealing with Cherubini's Médée, because this Peters edition was considered to be the authoritative one. The incorrect information, appearing as it did on the first page (see again Plate I-5) was never questioned; the 1775 opera Medea by the Bohemian composer Georg [Antonin Jiří] Benda (who lived in Germany) was quite well-known in Germany. However, Cherubini's Médée was much more famous in the 19th century, and Gustav Schmidt, while preparing his edition in 1856, did not bother to read these small letters spelling out the composer's name. Thus we know today that it was Georg Benda's Medea that was produced in Vienna in January 1809 and not Cherubini's Médée (see below Plate I-6 - from the Zettlbuch).

Plate I-6. A page from the Zettlbuch of the year 1809 in which Georg Benda's Medea is mentioned as having been produced on 9 January 1809 (a Monday) in Vienna.

Heute Montag den 9. Jänner 1809, wird in beyden k. k. Hoftheatern  
aufgeführt werden:

(Im Theater nächst der k. f. Burg)  
Von den k. k. Hof-Schauspielern:

## Die Ehelichen.

Ein Original-Lustspiel in einem Aufzuge.  
Von Dramme Wehntsch.

### Personen:

Der Graf, } Hr. Brodmann.  
August, } Hr. Koberwein.  
Frank, } Hr. Kern.  
Elisbetine, seine Tochter, Witwe. Mad. Geiser.  
Anna von Eiden, seine Schwester. Mad. Korn.  
Der Inspektor auf des Grafen Gütern Hr. Weidmann.  
Bedienter. Jendel.

### Darsteller:

## M e t e d e.

Ein mit Misset vermischtes Drama.  
Die Misset ist von Herrn Georg Weida.

### Personen.

Medea . . . . . Mad. Jendel.  
Ihre Ehne . . . . . Johanna Demmer.  
Deren Hofmeisterin . . . . . Ad. Demmer.  
Jasón . . . . . Ad. Goldmann.  
Kreusa . . . . . Hr. Klingmann.  
Erfolge . . . . . Ad. Menner.

Mad. Jendel, vom Kersner Nationaltheater, wird die Ehre  
haben, in angelegter Gastrolle aufzutreten.

Der Anfang ist um 7 Uhr.

(Im Theater nächst dem Ständtheater)  
Von den k. k. Hof-Spielern:

## S a n i t a.

Eine große Oper in drey Aufzügen.

Nach dem Französischen von Sonnlechner.

Die Musik ist von Cherubini.

### Personen:

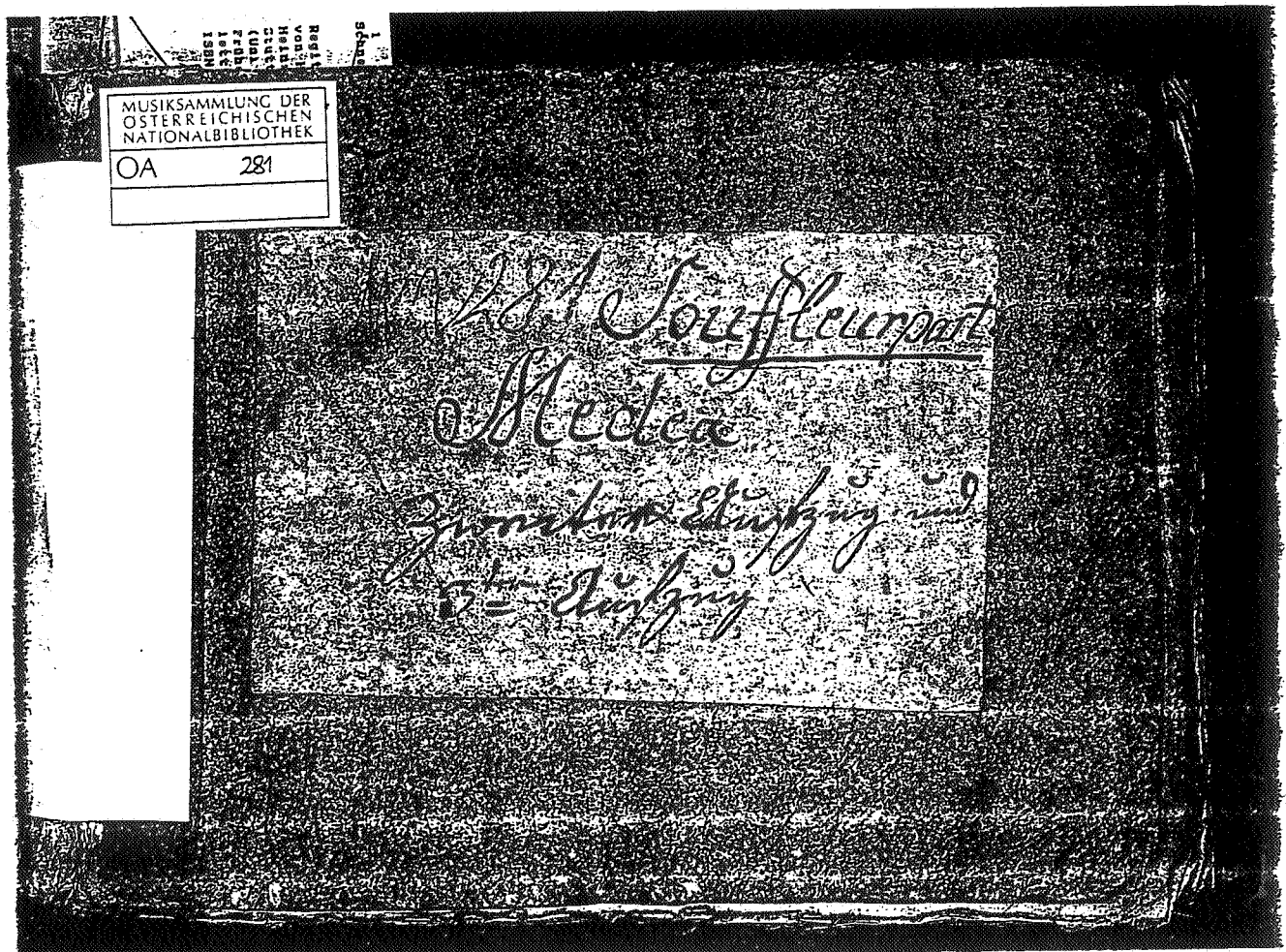
Manfred, Statist von Max. . . . . Hr. Neumann.  
Zamozzi, Statist von Zamboni . . . . . Hr. Weimüller.  
Kantata, Statist's Gemahlin . . . . . Ad. Geiser.  
Bedwig, ihre Tochter, 6 Jahre alt. . . . . Emilie Neumann.  
Drauf, Kaffeehändler, der Kofaken unter  
Zamozzi . . . . . Hr. Demmer.  
Moska, in Zamozzi's Dienste, . . . . . Ad. Jaccot.  
Mosno, ihre Stiefmutter, ein Verführer . . . . . Hr. Juchwalb.  
Manozzi, Kaffeehändler's Freund . . . . . Hr. Köhner.  
Drey Kofaken . . . . . Hr. Stöcker.  
Kofaken, Kofaken, Maren und Mareninnen.  
Kofaken, Kofaken, Maren und Mareninnen.  
Kofaken, Kofaken, Maren und Mareninnen.

Die Bühnen sind mit der Masse, und in der Abtheilung für 4 kr. zu haben.  
handlung für 4 kr. zu haben.

Nachricht:  
Hr. Graecen de Cavo ist krank.

In the above-mentioned catalogues, there is no mention whatsoever of a production of Cherubini's Médée as Gustav Schmidt had mistakenly stated. The latter could not have learned of this from the musical source with which he worked while preparing his edition. This source is the same manuscript from the archives in Vienna bearing the number 281. Nor is there much likelihood that the year of preparation of a manuscript such as this would have been noted since this is the prompter's part ("Souffleurpart") from the 1802 production in Vienna (see Plate I-7).

Plate I-7. The Front Cover of the prompter's part ("Souffleurpart") for the performance of Cherubini's Medea in Vienna, 1802.



The prompter's part was prepared exactly for that purpose, all of it handwritten, with the melodic line and Treitschke's German translation. The prompter apparently made the final adjustments in the translation to fit Cherubini's vocal lines, together with the bass line as well as all the important instrumental cues. Sometimes long instrumental lines are given when they are of importance, or other notable markings (for example, on p.351 in Medea's second aria in Act III, Scene 3, there is the indication 'dim.6'). In the bass line there are also cuts. This was a completely practical rehearsal score for this particular production. The above-mentioned prompter's score is in oblong format, with different types of paper, most of them with eight staves. It is bound in thick grey carton covers in two volumes. The length is 31 cm. but the staves take up 26 cm. only; the width is 23 cm. All the sung parts are noted in traditional clefs and the musical editing is by musical numbers, exactly as in the autograph.

Technically, Cherubini made the cuts either by crossing out in ink, or by sewing with thread or pinning, or by sewing on a new sheet of the required size at the place of the cut. When the cut was a matter of pages, he folded over the pages in question in a bunch and then sewed the lot together. In these cases it is more difficult to understand the nature of the cut he made. In addition to everything that is to be found in the prompter's part of 1802, Franz Lachner's recitatives are also added, but obviously in a different handwriting.

As a result of these discoveries made by the author and the overall picture now gained, it has become clear what primary importance this prompter's part has regarding the cuts. Even though this manuscript receives the same fine care as do all the rest of the manuscripts in the National Library, there still seems to be no awareness of the tremendous importance of this find and its authenticity. In the author's view, it should be afforded a far more honoured place and more careful preservation. This was extremely careful work done by Cherubini himself, a continuation of the compositional process, as it were, the proof being in the efforts of the composer-in-action, as preserved in the prompter's score. In addition, even though it is not our concern at the moment, here is the proof concerning the work of Franz Lachner on the recitatives. According to the information found in the National Library, Gustav Schmidt, when preparing his edition for Peters, also worked with this source and added Lachner's recitatives from it.

It is noteworthy that Cherubini never made cuts in his orchestral introductions - neither in the long Overture at the beginning of the opera nor in the shorter ones before Act II and Act III. Nor did he shorten Medea's recitative in Act III, which is of major importance from the point of view of dramatic power and Medea's most difficult moment of soul-searching in the whole opera. What he preferred to do was to cut scenes containing less psychological and dramatic development such as the crowded spectacle scenes, especially since they were mostly situated at the beginning of the opera, in Act I.

### Evaluation of Cherubini's Cuts.

There is no doubt that Cherubini did his utmost to come to terms with the pressure made by the Viennese production in 1802, introducing cuts in almost every place where there were shorter or longer repetitions in his original version of 1797. The Peters edition of 1856 as source material is unsuitable for anyone who is only just beginning to study this opera and is as yet unfamiliar with Cherubini's complete original version.

On examining the opera with all of Cherubini's cuts, the author still finds it necessary to reject them. Today, as is well-known, authenticity is encouraged as a principle for the examination of works written in the past. What is more - without any connection to this general tendency - the author is of the opinion that the cuts do not improve the opera. They interfere with the deeper perception of the dramatic process. These cuts together with Lachner's added recitatives present us with a very different opera from the one composed by Cherubini. When Médée was given its premiere in Paris in March 1797, Cherubini, the great master in the field of opera, had come to terms with every tone. As far as he was concerned, this was the greatest work of his life. Those places that he still found necessary to change at the last moment before the printer began to work on the Imbault publication were included in the autograph. The insensitivity and commerciality of producers should not be taken into consideration; they have a destructive effect. Several pages of the manuscript are sewn together in a number of places, and some

other pages are folded over, but the original can still be read. The information below demonstrates how Cherubini trimmed more and more from Act I and how these cuts add nothing to the musical impact.

At the beginning of the opera, in Act I, Scene 1, Cherubini made a huge cut from m.110 to m.285, that is to say, besides the 110 measures from the beginning of the scene, he did away completely with almost all of the first two musical sections of Dircea and her women, until the beginning of Dircea's aria in Section 3 in C major. Before this huge cut Cherubini had made some other shorter cuts: mm.142-3, mm.151-4, mm.222-36, mm.242-85; after this came the stage of a big cut from mm.159-285; and in the third stage, the huge cut from mm.110-285, made by folding over many pages together. The following excerpt (Ex. I-4) shows the cuts in mm.142-3 and mm.151-4.

Example I-4. Original score, p.38 with markings of two short cuts.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is measures 142-149, and the second system is measures 150-157. Both systems have a box around measures 142-149 and 150-157 respectively, indicating the cuts. The score includes staves for Violins 1 and 2 (Vl1, Vl2), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc). The lyrics are in French: 'trouble sans effroi... trouble sans effroi li-mes pour a l'amour tous ces presents must ne' and 'sont qu'un vain bruit... ne peut obscurcir l'éclat d'un si beau jour que ne peut obscurcir'.

It is obvious why Cherubini saw fit to take out these measures in two places sung by one of Dircea's women (see the entrance of "1ere femme" in m.137); this is a seemingly secondary role of a most unimportant character, and the measures occur in places where their absence is not felt, the melodic line having been unharmed. However: with the disappearance of these measures, the correct background for Dircea's first entrance in m.159 has been impaired. If the role of the woman who precedes her is shortened, Dircea's entrance is less well prepared and not as striking. Here, then, is an illustration of how to take the wind out of a composer's sails: cut more and more from the body of his work until the said composer is left helpless and lacking the



ability to make correct decisions in his own score. Cherubini later also cut out the whole section from this early entrance of Dircea until the beginning of her aria in m.285. Well and good! Dircea's entrances are joined up and a huge section can be thrown out, mm.159-285, and Dircea's aria has still survived! But she begins to sing when the musical-dramatic background laid down by her women has been drastically cut: they had been encouraging her not to despair, but she bursts out again with the same familiar fears of Jason when she starts her aria.

After this, in the third stage of the cuts in Act I, poor Cherubini becomes even more desperate, less sensitive to his own music and cuts another section of 49 measures more from earlier in the women's section; we are now left with the huge cut from mm.110-285!! Thus the lovely entrance of Dircea's women early on in Médée, establishing the pseudo-calm atmosphere of the beginning of the opera, remains as nothing more than a short, insignificant statement, because Dircea enters immediately with her aria, "Hymen! viens dissiper",<sup>26</sup> and we have no perception at all of the nature of her character nor of her distress.

Furthermore: we have noted that there were other cuts before m.110: mm.29-36, mm.50-65, mm.93-100. Cherubini, the well-disciplined student for the moment, discovered every spot where

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26 See the detailed analysis in Chapter II. Here Cherubini creates a new norm of drama and dramatic force with a high threshold in this opera. This is an unexpectedly dramatic Dircea who astonishes us by her dramatic power from the very beginning of the opera, anticipating Medea who will be far more forceful still when she enters the stage.

it was possible to manipulate the melodic line (where entrances and exits are made on the same tone) and may be said to have savaged it, so that his tremendous power of expression was lost to him - and to us. One is left with the feeling that what has survived after the cuts is an excerpt from Act I! Much of the power of expression has been destroyed and nothing added to the musical perception; it is also a crime against the composer's innermost feelings.

After what has been discussed above, the author recommends that students of Cherubini's Medée familiarize themselves with the original version. In this way it would at least be possible to encounter Cherubini at his best as opposed to an emasculated Cherubini, forced to make the cuts against his will in Vienna in 1802.

27

# Full Listing of the Cuts

## Act I

Act I, Scene 1, Section 1  
(Dircea's women)

mm.56-65 (bound)  
mm.93-100 (bound)

Act I, Scene 1, Section 1-2  
(Dircea + her women)

mm.110-285  
  
In this huge, folded-over cut, shorter earlier cuts are included (as described above: mm.142-3, mm.151-4, mm.159-285, mm.222-36, mm.242-85

Act I, Scene 1, Section 3  
Dircea's aria (C major)  
"Hymen!"

Very many short cuts:  
mm.310-1, mm.317-8, mm.321-2,  
mm.326-35, mm.358-62, mm.370-3,  
mm.375-6, mm.380-1, mm.388-9,  
mm.392

Act I, Scene 3  
Creon's small aria (F major)  
"Dieux et Déesses"

mm.266-9, mm.274-8

Act I, Scene 6  
Creon's aria (B minor)  
"C'est a vous a trembler"

1  
mm.16-57 - a big cut  
3 3  
mm.62 -3

Act I, Scene 7, Section 1  
Medea's aria (F major)  
"Vous voyez de vos fils"

mm.33-6, mm.42-8, mm.59-68, mm.  
3 3 1  
72 -90, mm.111 -14

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27 The measure numbers are according to the indications made by the author in the original score while analyzing it.

Act I, Scene 7, Section 2.

Duet Med.-Jas. (E minor)  
"Perfides ennemis"

mm.142-4, mm.233-6, mm.280-91,  
mm.304-55 - a big cut

Act II

Act II, Scene 3 (one section)  
March + Ensemble (E-flat major)  
"A du moins a Médée"

mm.40-6, mm.53-147 - a huge cut

Act II, Scene 4  
Neris' aria (G minor)  
"Ah! nos peines"

mm.11-18, mm.55-8, mm.65-100,  
mm.119-29, mm.144-7

Act II, Scene 5  
Duet Med.-Jas. (D minor)  
"Chers enfans"

mm.116-27, mm.132-3, mm.165-82,  
mm.214-19, mm.232-3

Act II, Scene 7  
Ensemble (F major-F minor)  
"Fils de Bacchus"

mm.74-83 (pinned)  
3  
mm.124-50 (pinned, folded over)  
mm.234-43

Act III

Act III, Scene 2  
Medea's aria (E-flat major)  
"Du trouble affreux"

mm.34-53, mm.107-8

Act III, Scene 3  
Medea's aria (D major)  
"O Tisiphone"

mm.82-5, mm.131-3, mm.135-6,  
mm.139-40

mm.143-89 (bound - a big cut)

Finale

mm.216-26, mm.303-11, mm.329-  
38, mm.382-9

Examples from the Prompter's Part, Including Cuts Made by Cherubini

Plates I-8 and I-9a, I-9b below show us the type of score prepared for the prompter, with the main instrumental obbligato lines or bass lines. Plate I-9 presents a cut made by Cherubini: after becoming familiar with this type of score it is easier to identify the cuts.

In Plate I-8 (Act I, Scene 1, mm.269-74), we see the measures which first introduce the brilliant flute solo which will later serve as a prominent obbligato in the course of Dircea's aria itself (see its reappearance with variations, from m.301 on). This plate is xeroxed from the prompter's part.

Plate I-8. Measures 269-74 from Act I, Scene 1, end of Dircea's short recitative and the beginning of her aria.

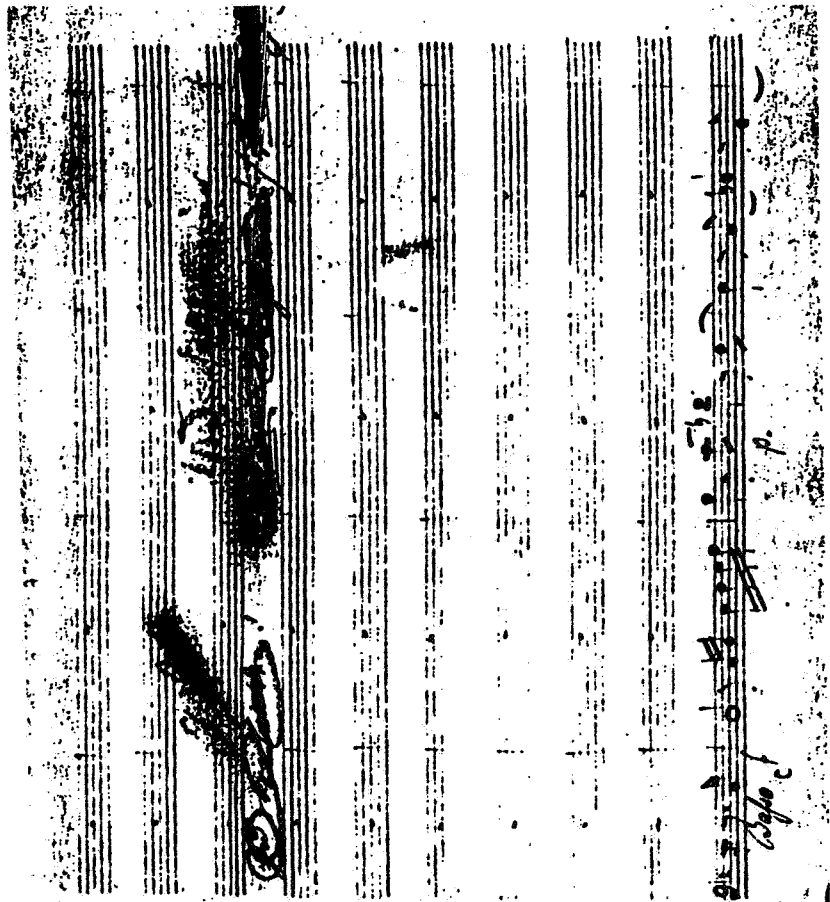
Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A handwritten note "in die Brust gestrich!" is visible on the second staff. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

==

Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

[illegible]

Plate I-9b.





mm.23-31) in order to indicate the opening march. In m.28, he moves to the bass line, which suddenly appears very prominently. See first the full score; the arrow indicates the starting-point of the prompter's part (Plate I-9b). (In m.32, the women's chorus enters with "Fils de Bacchus"). The prompter's part indicates first the clarinet part (at the bottom of the left side page) and then the bass part (right side). The transfer from clarinet to bass takes place at the end of m.27, exactly in the changeover from one page to the other (from left page to right here). The scribblings higher up in these pages cover up some unneeded text.

Plates I-10, I-11 refer to Neris' aria in Act II, Scene 4, with the bassoon still playing its long opening solo. This one section includes five cuts. The first cut, in mm.11-18, is represented in Plate I-10: it is xeroxed from the full score, p.217, the cut indicated in brackets. The prompter's score in this place in the aria (Plate I-11) consists of the bassoon part only, and mm.13-18, are scribbled over (mm.11-12 are not shown).<sup>28</sup> As can be seen, the bassoon obbligato continues in the prompter's part as the only line until the entrance of Neris' vocal part.

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28 Measures 11-12 of the bassoon part which are also scribbled over in the prompter's score, belong to the previous page of the prompter's score which is not given here. It results in a poor connection between measures 10 and 19.

Plate I-10. Neris' aria, Act II, Scene 4, first cut, mm.11-18  
(full score).

Violins

Violes

Solo Basson

arco

11 15 16 20 23

Pizzicato 6RT

cres

Plate I-11. Neris' aria, Act II, Scene 4, first cut, mm.13-18  
(prompter's part).

Handwritten musical notation for the prompter's part, including lyrics: "Lust mir nicht zu sein"

Dejso

p/22:

## Alterations in the Original Edition (Brussels, 1814)

### Background

A copy of the published score of Médée with revisions is found in Brussels. Alterations were made on handwritten sheets, both pasted in and attached to the volume, which is identified as Catalogue Item No.1447, located in the "Bibliothèque du Conservatoire Royal de Musique" (the library of the Royal Academy of Music). It seems logical that these corrections and additions were made for a performance of the opera in French in Brussels on 31 March 1814. Wotquenne, the compiler of the catalogue of the library's collection, stated that these "corrections and<sup>29</sup> modifications" in the edition were made by Cherubini. These corrections and additions are also described as autograph in the catalogue of Cherubini's works by François Lesure and Claudio Sartori.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, none of the biographical references consulted by this writer contain any information about a visit to Brussels by Cherubini for this 1814 performance.

In addition, the musical handwriting of the added trumpet and trombone parts differs from the handwriting in the autograph of Médée in such details as the clefs, and form of the flat and natural signs. According to the flat and natural signs pasted on the score, this handwriting is also different from the opera autograph. The added material includes two handwritten pages with

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29 See Alfred Wotquenne, Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Conservatoire de Musique de Bruxelles (Brussels, 1898), I, 206.

30 See Adelmo Damerini, ed., Luigi Cherubini nel il centenario della nascita (Florence, 1962), p.156.

remarks about the tempo of the various numbers with metronome marks. The handwriting of the names of the main characters is different from the opera autograph, but the remarks resemble the handwriting found in some of Cherubini's correspondence available  
31  
in facsimile.

This remarkable volume is very carefully preserved in the library, under sun- and light-resistant conditions. It has obviously been restored and is glued into a new, brownish-red leather binding, gilded and decorated with gold.

The Conservatoire Royal was established in Brussels in 1832, that is to say, after the production of Cherubini's Médée in 1814. There was fortunately a new production between the years 1870 and 1880 in the excellent new concert hall of the Conservatoire Royal (800 seats) in the framework of several performances of Italian and French operas promoted by François Auguste Gevaert, second director of the Conservatoire during the years 1871-1908. Fétis, the first director, initiated this idea of historical concerts in the Conservatoire. Alfred Wotquenne, the librarian at the time of the new production, an expert on opera of the 18th and early 19th century, probably discovered these  
32  
revisions, etc., at that time. Of course, it is possible that the materials date from the later production of the opera. From  
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31 See Vittorio della Croce, Cherubini e i musicisti Italiani del suo tempo (Turin, 1968), II, 48, 107, 270, 322.

32 Item No.1446, a clean copy of the original edition without the corrections, was presented to the library by Jules de Glimes, a voice teacher at the Conservatoire, who had previously included it in his own private collection, according to the correspondence in the library's archives.

this point of view the paper-type must be analyzed. However, the relatively poor French of the pages about the tempo also seem to point to Cherubini (see below).

No correspondence from before 1919 exists in the archives of the library today, so that it is impossible to trace the history of certain early manuscripts and volumes,<sup>33</sup> including the engraved edition of Médée with these additions and commentary.

These materials are found as follows:

- a) the revised orchestration of the Overture;
- b) the many new tempi indications plus only very few recommendations as to optional cuts;
- c) a new recitative, with a number of verses composed for Medea and Neris (which had been spoken in the 1797 edited score), and revised orchestration for the Finale of Act II, Scene 7.

All these corrections are of great interest. Perhaps most significant is the fact that very few cuts were made in the score, perhaps showing that Cherubini returned to the original version as the best version.

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33 The Bibliothèque du Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels contains 700,000 volumes, including 8,000 iconographies and 20,000 autographs.

### The Revised Orchestration of the Overture

Two trumpets ("trompettes") in F and three trombones (alto, tenor and bass) were added to the scoring of the Overture, and the four horns that comprised the brass section. These five parts were written separately on four pages in the score. The additions are in tune with the developing concepts of sound in the early 19th century, with more emphasis on a richer sound and on brass instruments. Here the renewed orchestration emphasizes certain beats at the beginnings and ends of phrases and measures, etc.

Plate I-12. The first page of four (all from the Overture) containing a score of the added parts for two trumpets and three trombones.

Cherubini.

Ouverture de Médée      Trompettes et Trombones

*Allegro.*

Trompettes en Fa

Trombones.

*f*

*f*

28

*p*    *cresc. poco a poco fino al*    *Ap.*

This new scoring immediately resulted in the need for doubling in the strings in order to balance the orchestral sound. The alterations in the strings led to the doubling of the first violin by the second violin, while the violas were provided with a part basically resembling the second violin part in the original edition. Thus, in addition to the four separate pages of brass parts, strips of paper were pasted on the score throughout the second violin and viola parts in the tuttis and places of rhythmic stress which were emphasized. In the very beginning of the Overture (see Plate I-12, mm.1-8 there), the new stresses are to be seen in three places in the course of the repeated unit of four bars:

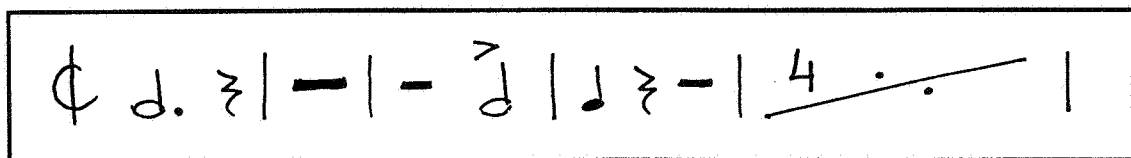


Plate I-13. A comparison of mm.1-8 of the Overture as found in the original edition and altered Brussels score.



OUVERTURE

*Allegro*

Flauto 1<sup>a</sup>  
Flauto 2<sup>a</sup>  
Flauto 3<sup>a</sup>  
Clarinetto in C  
Coro in Fa  
Coro in Mi b  
Trombe  
Tromboni  
Timballe  
Violoncelli  
Violini

1

5

10

687

Flauto  
Clarinetto  
Coro in Fa  
Coro in Mi b  
Trombe  
Tromboni  
Timballe  
Violoncelli  
Violini

Another illustration of the same kind appears below in Plate I-14. This is taken from the starting point of I in the Overture, mm. 57-63.

Plate I-14. The Overture, mm. 57-63 of the beginning of I. The altered score with the strip of paper pasted over the second violin and viola parts.

6

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello/Double Bass

col b

luthi.

687

Two Handwritten Pages with Metronome Indications and Remarks on Optional Cuts.

Only two options for shortening the score are mentioned:  
mm.<sup>1</sup>85-200, which is the longest cut from the year 1802 in Vienna, in the section of Dircea's women; and the cut of 20 mm. in Medea's first aria "Vous voyez de vos fils" (mm.72-92), both in Act I. No mention is made of any cuts in Acts II and III. If these pages were actually written by Cherubini or stem from him, they show that twelve years after the Viennese production of 1802, it would appear that Cherubini ignored the need for cuts. This fact corresponds with this writer's negative opinion of these many cuts, apparently "authorized" by Cherubini in 1802.

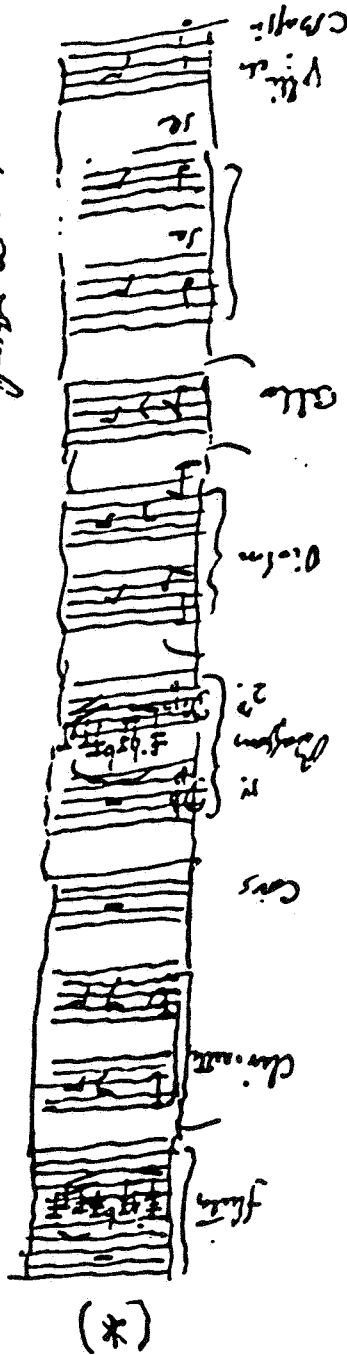
Of great importance are the extremely detailed metronome indications for each number and tempo in the opera. Once more two loose sheets of paper were inserted into the score separately. The photocopy of these remarkable, original handwritten pages (Plate I-15), reveals a very poor handwriting, a number of mistakes in the French and total lack of syntactic marks. It is hard to believe that these remarks do not stem from Cherubini. Certainly these metronome marks and comments should be known by every conductor of this opera. The very last paragraph contains significant remarks about the fact that the metronome mark indicates the starting tempo only. Thereafter the tempo can be modified "according to the convenience of the singer or the nature of the accompaniment".

Plate I-15. Photocopy of the original two pages attached to the score, showing the many metronome indications and two places of optional cuts for Act I. The photocopy is presented here as a single continuity.

Ach 1°

Ouestura  $\equiv (p = n^{\circ} 112)$ 

1er chœur  $\equiv (p = n^{\circ} 88)$  Ce chœur peut se raccorder en l'absence de la poutre de la  
 la manière suivante. De la mesure 85 on peut passer à la mesure  
 221<sup>me</sup> en avançant cette poutre jusqu'à la mesure 221. Cette mesure aide. par la suite (H) et  
 de cette entrée on continuera jusqu'à la fin du chœur, tel qu'il est.



Reil de l'ice qui suit le chœur immédiat  $(p = n^{\circ} 160)$  Se 2<sup>e</sup> flèche du même

Air de l'ice (même monument, sur la 2<sup>e</sup> flèche ci-dessus)

Chœur Belle-dieu  $(p = n^{\circ} 144)$  vers l'ice qui suit le chœur. air de l'ice  $(p = n^{\circ} 96)$

Air de l'ice  $(p = n^{\circ} 80)$

Morceau d'Escalier de chœur en fa (dieu et d'ice)  $(p = n^{\circ} 96)$

Air de l'ice (cathédrale de l'ice)  $(p = n^{\circ} 88)$

Air de l'ice (vous voyez 2-vo 15)  $(p = n^{\circ} 50)$  on peut, si l'on veut, raccorder en  
 air en passant de la 72<sup>me</sup> mesure, à la mesure 92 :

Deo (sur l'ice en l'ice)  $(p = 88)$

## Acte 2<sup>me</sup>

Introduction. ( $\rho = 160$ ) - un peu plus vite que ce numéro.

Thème d'ensemble ( $\rho = 160$ ) aux mots que dit créon (quand que d'a ma bonté) plus lent ( $\rho = 112$ ) ensuite on reprend le 1<sup>er</sup> motif, et à l'entrée on se dirige vers 1050 pour allegro, le mouvement double éton plus vite que le 112. 160.

air de nevis ( $\rho = 104$ )

Deux entrées de jason (chans enfans) ( $\rho = 120$ ) l'allegro aux mots (oh veis, nevis) ( $\rho = 152$ ) le premier mouvement reprend après aux mots (ne sera pas pour vous, revois-vois) l'allegro qui vient ensuite ( $\rho = 152$ ); on revient ensuite au 1<sup>er</sup> mouvement ( $\rho = 120$ ) aux mots (l'en doit s'attendre); l'allegro qui reprend vient après, allegro est du même mouvement que l'air, savoir ( $\rho = 152$ ).

Finale. ( $\rho = 112$ ) le mouvement un peu plus vite, les deux motifs parle, est le même ( $\rho = 112$ ) le 1<sup>er</sup> motif est à 3 temps qui suit. ( $\rho = 72$ ); l'allegro, quand on parle, ( $\rho = 112$ ) la suite de chaque 3 est du même motif que ci-dessus ( $\rho = 72$ ); l'allegro qui suit, le 1<sup>er</sup> motif reprend de ce motif ( $\rho = 50$ ); l'allegro qui suit dire être comme le motif quand on parle; le 1<sup>er</sup> motif qui suit après, est du même mouvement. que l'air ci-dessus ( $\rho = 50$ ); l'allegro qui suit du même motif: quand on parle; l'allegro qui suit est du même motif: quand on parle. ( $\rho = 96$ ) et qui termine l'air.

Acte 3:

Introduction ( $p = 88$ ) dans ce mouvement il y a une fausse digression dans la Basse à la 51<sup>me</sup> mesure, car on lève en 8<sup>me</sup> BE il dit y avoir BD. ainsi 51-61

Crie de Médée Largo ( $p = 63$ ) Allegro moderato ( $p = 144$ )

Reintroduction - Médée And.<sup>te</sup> moderato ( $p = 80$ ) adagio ( $p = 50$ ) allegro qui suit ( $p = 160$ )

l'Andante d'après ( $p = 66$ ) l'allegro moderato d'en suite ( $p = 120$ ) l'Andante et l'allegro moderato

dit être exécuté ainsi ( $p = 96$ ) ce mouvement dit entièrement pendant la mesure qui suit jusqu'à l'endroit où introduction j'en dit quel bon plaisir fait, supplément au le mouvement ralentit ainsi ( $p = 60$ ) l'allegro d'après: qui suit ( $p = 96$ ) l'Andantino, aux 100 mesures qui dit Médée raisonnable ( $p = 60$ ) le mod.<sup>te</sup> vite et l'allegro vif avec d'après d'après d'après puis comme les allegro précédents ( $p = 96$ ) et ce mouvement dit être continu jusqu'à la fin.

113. Tous les mouvements de ce opéra ont pour j'ai indiqués, sont nécessaires pour le point de départ de chaque mouvement; toutefois il y a des mesures, il y a de modification dans le cours de ce mouvement, selon la condition de chaque l'acteur, et la nature de ses engagements, et pour l'intelligence de sa part pour l'acteur, <sup>l'acteur</sup> l'acteur, et l'acteur, et l'acteur.

The Exact French Text of Plate I-15.

Acte 1

Ouverture = (  $\text{P} = n^{\text{O}} 112$  )

Premier chœur = (  $\text{P} = n^{\text{O}} 88$  ). Ce chœur peut se raccourcir de la manière suivante. De la mesure 85<sup>me</sup> on peut sauter à la mesure 22<sup>me</sup> en arrangeant les accompagnements et le chœur [?] de cette mesure ainsi qu'il suit (\*) et des cetttes endroits on continuera jusqu'à la fin du chœur, tel qu'il est.

(\*) 34  etc.

Recit. de Dircé qui suit la chœur immédiatement (  $\text{P} = n^{\text{O}} 160$  )  
solo de flute du meme récitatif. (  $\text{P} = n^{\text{O}} 120$  )

Air de Dircé (même mouvement, que la solo de flute ci dessus)

Chœur Belle Dircé (  $\text{J} = n^{\text{O}} 144$  ) récitatif oblige qui suit le  
chœur alla vivace (  $\text{J} = n^{\text{O}} 96$  )

Air de Jason (  $\text{J} = n^{\text{O}} 180$  )

Morceau d'Ensemble et chœur en fa (Dieux et Déesses)  
(  $\text{P} = n^{\text{O}} 96$  )

Air de Creon (c'est à vous à trembler) (  $\text{J} = n^{\text{O}} 88$  )

Air de Médée (Vous voyez de vos fils) (  $\text{J} = n^{\text{O}} 50$  ) on peut, si  
l'on veut, raccourcir un air en passant de la 72<sup>me</sup> mesure, à  
la mesure 92<sup>me</sup>

Duo (perfides ennemis) (  $\text{P} = 88$  )

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34 The score of m.221 is given in the manuscript

## Acte 2me:

Introduction ( $\text{♩} = 160$ ) un peu plus vite que son [orig.:sa] numéro  
Morceau d'ensembles ( $\text{♩} = 160$ ) aux mots que dit Creon (quoique de  
ma honte) plus lento ( $\text{♩} = \overset{\text{O}}{\text{n}} 112$ ) ensuite on reprend le 1e  
mouv't, et à l'endroit ou est indique un poco più allegro, le  
mouvement doit être plus vite que le  $\overset{\text{O}}{\text{n}} 160$ .

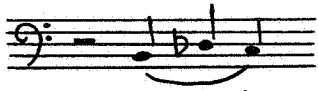
Air de Neris ( $\text{♩} = 104$ )

Duo entre Médée et Jason (chers enfans) ( $\text{♩} = 120$ ) l'allegro aux  
mots (oh seigneur) ( $\text{♩} = 152$ ) le premier mouvement reprend  
apres aux mots (ne sera pas sans recompense) L'allegro qui  
vient ensuite ( $\text{♩} = 152$ ); on revient ensuite au 1e mouvement  
( $\text{♩} = 120$ ) aux mots (Creon doit a l'autel); L'allegro qui  
vient apres...du meme mouvement que l'autre a savoir  
( $\text{♩} = 152$ ).

Finale ( $\text{♩} = \overset{\text{O}}{\text{n}} 60$ ) le mouvement...plus vite, lorsque Médée  
parle, est le suivant ( $\text{♩} = 112$ ) Le petit chœur a 3/4 qui  
suit. ( $\text{♩} = 72$ ); L'allegro, quand Medee parle, ( $\text{♩} = 112$ ) La  
suite du chœur a 3/4 est du meme mouve<sup>n</sup> que ci-dessus<sup>n</sup>  
( $\text{♩} = 72$ ); La lento qui succède doit etre de ce mouv<sup>n</sup>  
( $\text{♩} = 50$ ); L'allegro qui vient doit etre comme les autres  
lorsque Medee parle; Le Lent qui vient apres, est du même<sup>n</sup>  
mouvem<sup>n</sup> que l'autre ci-dessus ( $\text{♩} = 50$ ); L'allegro d'ensuite  
du même<sup>n</sup> mouv<sup>n</sup> que les autres, La marche qui lui succède et  
qui termine la final doit être executée du...mouvement  
( $\text{♩} = 96$ ).



### Acte 3<sup>me</sup>

Introduction (♩ = 88) dans ce morceau il y a une faute de gravure dans la basse a la 5<sup>me</sup> mesure, car au lieu de l'E il doit y avoir D. ainsi 

Air de Médée Largo (♩ = 63) Allegro moderato (♩ = 144)

Recitativ de Medee andante molto sostenuto (♩ = 80) adagio (♩ = 50) allegro qui suit (♩ = 160) l'Andante d'apres (♩ = 66) l'allegro moderato d'en suite (♩ = 120) l'andante et l'allegro moderato doit etre execute ainsi (♩ = 96) ce mouvement doit continuer pendant le chœur qui vient jusqu'a l'endroit où Jason dit quel horrible forfait et où le mouvement rallentit ainsi (♩ = 60) l'allegro du récit. qui suit (♩ = 96) l'andantino, aux paroles qui dit Médée reserve leurs (♩ = 60) le mouv<sup>n</sup> vif et l'allegro vivace d'ensuit doivent être pris comme les allegro précédants (♩ = 96) et ce mouvement doit être continué jusqu'à la fin.


NB. Tous les mouvements de cet opera que j'ai indiqués, sont nécessaires pour le [Cher.: la] point de depart de chaque morceau; toutefois il sont susceptibles de modification dans le cours de ces morceaux, selon la commodité de l'acteur, ou la nature des accompagnements, ce que l'intelligence de M<sup>r</sup> [ ? ] pouvait facilement apprecier [= apprécier], diriger, et determiner.

English Translation of the Handwritten Remarks in French.

Act I

Overture = (  $\text{P}$  = No.112)

First Chorus = (  $\text{P}$  = No.88). This chorus may be shortened in the following way. From measure 85 one may skip to measure 221 while arranging the accompaniment and the chorus of this measure...this way it follows (\*) and from those places we should continue up to the end of the chorus, as it is.

(\*)  etc.

Recit. of Dircea which immediately follows the Chorus (  $\text{P}$  = No.160), flute solo of the same recitative (  $\text{P}$  = No.120)

Aria of Dircea (the same tempo as the above flute solo)

Chorus "Belle Dirce" (  $\text{J}$  = No.144) obligatory recitative which follows the chorus alla vivace (  $\text{J}$  = No.96)

Aria of Jason (  $\text{J}$  = No.180)

Passage from the Ensemble and Chorus in E (Dieux et Déesses) (  $\text{J}$  = No.96)

Aria of Creon (c'est a vous a trembler) (  $\text{J}$  = No.88)

Aria of Medea (Vous voyez de vos fils) (  $\text{J}$  = No.50); if necessary, the aria may be shortened by passing from m.72 to m.92

Duet (perfides ennemis) (  $\text{J}$  = 88)

Act 2:

Introduction (  $\text{J}$  = 160) a little quicker than its number

Part of Ensemble (♩ = 160), in the words said by Creon (quoique de ma honte) more lento (♩ = 112) then return to 1st tempo, and in the place where it is indicated un poco piu allegro, the tempo must be quicker than No.160.

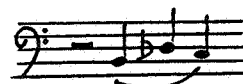
Aria of Neris (♩ = 104)

Duet between Medea and Jason (chers enfans) (♩ = 120) the allegro with the words "oh seigneur" (♩ = 152) the first tempo returns after the words "ne sera pas sans recompense" the allegro which comes thereafter (♩ = 152); after this one returns to the 1st tempo (♩ = 120) with the words "Creon doit l'autel"; the allegro which comes after....of the same tempo as the other one namely (♩ = 152).

Finale (♩ = No.60) the tempo...quicker, when Medea is speaking and the following (♩ = 112). The small chorus in 3/4 which follows (♩ = 72); the allegro when Medea is speaking. (♩ = 112). The continuation of the chorus in 3/4 is of the same tempo as the above one (♩ = 72); the Lento which follows must be of this tempo (♩ = 50); the allegro which follows must be as all others when Medea is speaking; the Lento which follows is of the same tempo as the other one above (♩ = 50); the next allegro is of the same tempo as the others, the march which follows it and which ends the Finale must be performed with the...tempo (♩ = 96)

### Act 3

Introduction (♩ = 88) in this passage there is a mistake in the engraving in the bass of measure No.51 because instead of E it must be D, like this



Aria of Medea Largo (♩ = 63) Allegro moderato (♩ = 144)

Recitative of Medea Andante molto sostenuto (♩ = 80) adagio (♩ = 50) the following allegro (♩ = 160) the andante after it (♩ = 66) the allegro moderato which follows (♩ = 120) the andante and the allegro moderato must be performed like this (♩ = 96) this tempo must continue during the chorus which follows up to the place where Jason says quel horrible forfait and where the tempo slows down like this (♩ = 60) the allegro of the recit. which follows (♩ = 96) the andantino in Medea's words reserve leurs (♩ = 60) the vivace tempo and allegro vivace which follow must be taken as the preceding allegros (♩ = 96) and this tempo must be continued up to the end.

NB. All the tempi of this opera which I have indicated are necessary for the starting-point of each passage; nevertheless they are open to modification in the course of these passages, according to the convenience of the singer or the nature of the accompaniment, which the intelligence of Mr.....can easily evaluate, direct and determine.

Finale of Act II (Scene 7, Ensemble): A Number of Verses Composed for Medea and Neris which had been Spoken in the 1797 Original Score, and the Orchestral Revision of Its End.

The specific places where recitatives of Medea and Neris were added - are located on pages 258, 259, 260, 267, 271, 272, 276, 277, 278, 279, 295-6. Since the handwriting is hardly legible, it may well be thought that these new verses of recitative were composed and added very quickly, perhaps in the course of the rehearsals for the Brussels production in 1814. This may have been done at this point in the drama - on approaching the last act - in order to inject more dramatic power into some of the verses sung by Medea and Neris so as to strengthen the musical expression.

The small added recitative-entrance of Medea at the very beginning of this scene, "mais quels sons", m.11, before the chorus "Fils de Bacchus", strengthens the drama and also makes for a most organic connection between the orchestral opening and the entrance of the chorus. This coherence and richness of vocal sound then continues with Medea's second entrance immediately after in m.15, "quels chants" (Plate I-16).

Plate I-16. Full score, p.258, with the two pasted strips of paper for Medea's part in m.11 and mm.15-17, compared to the same place in the original edition.

Original Edition

258

*Trombone*  
*d'après le théâtre*

*Modée*  
*mais quels sont...* *quel plaisir se font entendre...*

*Chœur*  
*cert à cet endroit que le cortège parait il commence par une troupe de Musiciens*  
*Fils de Bachas descend des Cieux le front pa'*

687

Altered Score

25-8

*derrière l'unique*  
*derrière la machine*

*Musée*

*quelques choses à dire...*

*certains ont dit qu'il y avait une*  
*il commence par une troupe de musiciens*

*Philobachus descend des Cieux le front p*

*Chœur*

At the end of Act II, Scene 7, (Finale of Act II), there is a revision of the orchestration in pages 295-6. These are again separate sheets inserted in the score, adding brass and wind instruments plus timpani in order to intensify the tutti at the end of the act (Plate I-17).

Plate I-17. Replacement in manuscript for mm.326-32 (p.295 of the original edition) showing the added instrumentation.



Handwritten musical score for percussion instruments. The score is written on ten staves, each labeled with an instrument name in brackets: [Fl], [Trp], [Bsn], [Trb], [Timp], [Vl1], [Vl2], [Vla], and two unlabeled staves at the bottom. The notation includes various rhythmic symbols, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The score is organized into measures by vertical bar lines. The handwriting is in black ink on a white background.

### Final Observations

It is worth mentioning that there is not even one section in which any successive change or elaboration of the score may be traced from the material of 1797, 1802 and 1814. Yet, it is interesting to note that two sections underwent some changes in two out of the three versions. The Overture was shortened to its final version by the small deletion in the autograph stage, between mm.318-19; and later, in 1814, a big revision was made in the orchestration. Neris' aria (Act II, Scene 4) was subjected to two significant cuts in two places during the preparation of the autograph (see Correction 4 and Correction 5) and in 1802 again, to smaller cuts in five places.

CHAPTER II

ACT I

## DRAMATIC ACTION AND MUSICAL STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

### F.B. Hoffman and the Myth of Medea

The well-known Greek myth of Medea reflected in Euripides' tragedy goes through several transformations in F.B. Hoffman's libretto. In the original story, during the journey of the Argonauts, Jason (messenger and nephew of Pelias, King of Iolcus), meets Medea who saves his life many times over and helps him to obtain the Golden Fleece. Later Medea causes the death of Pelias and thus enables Jason to govern Iolcus. But then they both have to flee from Iolcus and find refuge in Corinth.

According to Hoffman's version, Jason abandons Medea somewhere in the East, so that she cannot return to Corinth to join her husband. He himself, wishing to continue his political career, wants to marry Dircea (Glauce), daughter of Creon, King of Corinth. The plot of Cherubini's opera starts at this point. The whole of Corinth knows of Medea and her magic powers. At the beginning of the opera, Dircea's handmaidens strongly feel the need to calm down their frightened mistress; they try to paint an optimistic picture of her future marriage to Jason.

### Overview: Action and Musical Organization

List of characters in the order of appearance:

Dircé's handmaidens  
Dircé  
Jason

Women's chorus, soloists  
Soprano  
Tenor

Créon (King of Corinth, Dirce's father)	Bass
Les Argonautes	Chorus
Le Coryphaeus	Baritone
Medée	Soprano
People 1	Chorus

Act I is divided into 7 scenes.

Scene 1 opens in a gallery of Creon's palace, where Dircea's women try to cheer her up on the eve of her marriage to Jason: "Tomorrow, when the splendid dawn will announce the day with its happy weather" ("Demain, la brillante aurore, à ces heureux climats annoncera le jour"). But Dircea can only brood: "If he could leave her (i.e. Medea) for me, will he not leave me as well some day?" ("S'il a pu la quitter pour moi, ne peut-il pas un jour m'abandonner comme elle?"). Finally she is convinced of a happier future and expresses her joy in an aria which concludes Scene 1: "And you, oh Love, who promise me a charming fate, do not deceive my trusting soul!" ("Et toi, qui me promets un destin enchanteur, Amour, ne trompe pas mon âme confiante").

In Scene 2 (spoken) Creon promises Jason to protect his sons, and Jason asks Dircea to accept the gifts of the Argonauts.

Scene 3 opens with the March of the Argonauts carrying the Golden Fleece. This sight stirs up foreboding in Dircea's heart and Jason addresses her: "What do I see? What sombre cloud darkens the lustre of your eyes?" ("Que vois-je? Quel sombre nuage obscurcit l'éclat de vos yeux?"). He tries to calm her and deplores his former marriage to the cruel Medea. However, the

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1 Henceforth, the English version of the French names will be used; Coryphaeus = Captain of the Guards.

stanza of Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais de l'épouse cruelle", does not exist in Hoffman's original libretto. Creon then enters and advises his daughter to have faith in the generosity of the gods, and all invoke "Hymen" to bless the forthcoming marriage.

In Scene 4 the Captain of the Guards announces a stranger and Medea makes her entrance.

In Scene 5 she claims Jason and drives out the people of Corinth by her menacing words.

In Scene 6 Creon demands that Medea leave immediately, and he calms his daughter Dircea. A long discussion follows between Medea and Jason, Medea declaring that she loves him passionately. At the end of the scene Creon threatens Medea: "It is you who must tremble, oh impious and barbarous woman" ("C'est à vous de trembler, femme impie et barbare").

The last scene of Act I is a long dialogue between Medea and Jason. In her aria "You see the unfortunate mother of your sons" ("Vous voyez de vos fils la mère infortunée") Medea begs Jason to return to her, to flee with her. Jason refuses, claiming her vengeful personality as a justifiable reason for leaving her. The act ends in a duet where both Medea and Jason deplore the fatal influence of the Golden Fleece on their lives: "Ô fatale toison!".

Scene 1 is the only scene fully set to music. Scenes 2, 4 and 5 are spoken only. Scenes 3, 6 and 7 consist of both musical settings and spoken sections. With his or her first appearance,

each new character has a solo aria: Dircea in Scene 1, Jason in Scene 3, followed by Creon in the same scene, and Medea in Scene 7 (although she first appears in Scene 5, which is spoken). Other musical numbers consist of a women's chorus (with solo voices) in Scene 1, a mixed chorus for the March of the Argonauts (starting with a long orchestral introduction) in Scene 3, and the concluding duet of Medea and Jason in Scene 7.

### Basic Overall Moods, Sections, Forms and Proportions

Scene 1 presents a variety of musical forms which immediately serve to convey a dramatic richness to the listener. The 445 mm. of Scene 1 include three sections, the central section being the longest, and the atmosphere changes drastically from section to section.

Cherubini evokes a vivid musical scene for the three stanzas in which Dircea's handmaidens try to cheer her up (Scene 1, 109 mm., "Andantino con moto"), ending with a women's chorus set in a well-conceived vocal style and in ternary form.

After this relative optimism, the mood changes when Dircea sees nothing but gloom, in spite of her women's exhortations. This section (indicated as Section 2 in Table II-4, p. 113), the longest in the scene, presents a through-composed form with five sections. It still introduces the same basic opening key of B-flat major, but with clear modulation to D-flat major (a third relationship - a minor third higher). With Dircea's recitative, leading to her big aria which ends the scene (Section 3, 177 mm.)

there is a modulation to C major. Dircea sings an aria in binary sonata form. It is her character, and not that of Medea, which radiates a surprising dramatic power early in the opera. (See the detailed analysis of this aria, pp. 116-37 ).

Scenes 1 and 3 are similar in length regarding the number of measures: 438 mm. altogether. The gradual progression from simple to more complex forms characterizes Scene 3. On the other hand, where the fullness of texture is concerned, there is a balance resembling Scene 1: the festive clamour of the the march and the involvement of all the participants (except for Medea) in the drama, make for a high degree of complexity, as opposed to Jason's aria which represents a "falling-off" (solo with a small instrumental accompaniment) right in the center of the scene.

The atmosphere of a popular march in Section 1 of Scene 3 is further emphasized by a popular song-form  $\overset{1}{A}-A-\overset{1}{B}-A$  in the standard C meter of the march. The marking is "Sostenuto" and the march's texture intensifies as it progresses; the key is D major with a simple modulation to the dominant A major.

Jason's aria follows, filled with tension in spite of the "Larghetto" indication. It is 84 mm. in length and in A-B-A-C form. In the key of A major, it modulates in section B to C major (again the third relationship - a minor third higher). The aria is noteworthy regarding the compositional treatment of the text (the setting of repetitions, etc.). See the detailed analysis of this aria, pp. 137-54.



Then follows a modulatory recitative from A major to F major, 14 mm. in length, in which Creon tries to calm Dircea: "Ah! it is too much to be troubled by a dreadful prediction" ("Ah! c'est trop s'occuper d'un présage funeste"). It serves as a transition to the third section of Scene 3, which is the longest and most impressive single musical entity since the beginning of the opera, altogether 225 mm. Here, we find the first presentation of an ensemble in the opera (Table II-1):

Table II-1. Scene 3, trio (Creon, Jason, Dircea): "Dieux et déesses tutélaires": formal outline.

Overall Form	A	B	C	D
Subsections	A B C	A B C	A B A	A B C
mm.	75	42	34	65
Text Beginnings	Dieux et déesses	Tendre, Hymen	Doux, Hymen	Pénètre
Characters	Creon (aria)	Ensemble	Jason+Dircea (duet)	Ensemble
Main Key	F major	C major	D minor	F major
Form according to harmonic scheme	A	B		A

In Scene 6 Cherubini turns Creon's frightening words to Medea into an aria of 115 mm., expressing horror and storm and stress according to the affects or topics of the text. The aria in "Allegro" tempo and C metre, is in exposition-recap form, the development being an integral part of the recap:

Expo	Recap	Coda
PTS	TTS <sub>1</sub>	K

The key is B minor with a number of deviations.

Scene 7 is divided musically into two sections: the first - Medea's aria, and the second - Medea and Jason's imposing duet, which serves as the finale to Act I.

After a spoken dialogue of five stanzas between Medea and Jason, and with Medea's last call to Jason: "Listen to me, Jason, for the last time" ("Écoutez-moi, Jason, pour la dernière fois"), she begins her aria. This aria, considered as Section 1 of Scene 7, is 114 mm. long and in F major. Its mood is shaped in 3/4 "Larghetto", with the sincere love of Medea for Jason much in evidence. In spite of this, after the calm love-song, Jason, in his spoken dialogue, encourages Medea to flee. This dialogue leads to the duet which concludes the entire act, with the musical components stressing the psychological elements of the stormy conflict between the two. This complex duet of 290 mm., the longest number in the whole act, is an extended rondo, as it were (Table II-2):

Table II-2. Scene 7, duet (Medea and Jason): "Perfides ennemis qui conspirez ma peine": formal outline.

Overall Form	A		B	C	B	D	B <sup>1</sup>
Subsections	A	B	C	D	C	E	C <sup>1</sup> D <sup>1</sup> C <sup>2</sup> =Coda
mm.	37	19	33	41	33	47	80
Text Beginnings	Perfides!	Reprimez	Ô fatale toison	Ô Colchos	Ô fatale toison	Dun roi	Ô fatale

The central key is E minor, with modulations of a third up to G major and down to C major located in section B. Section B (i.e. subsection C) serves as a kind of "refrain" sung by both protagonists together: "Ô fatale toison".

## ACT I: MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Table II-3. Number of measures in the scenes set to music.

Scene 1: 444 mm.
Scene 3: 438 mm.
Scene 6: 115 mm.
Scene 7: 399 mm.

Scene 1

Table II-4. Detailed structure of Scene 1 (total: 444 mm.).

Section 1: Women of Dircea $\frac{2}{4}$  Andantino con moto, 109 mm. Form: A B A'

Summary of Content: Dircea's women try to cheer her up

Mood: calm and optimistic

Form	A	B	A'
mm.	1-44	45-75	76-109
Key	Bb	F	Bb
Harmonic Functions	(T)	(D)	(T)

Section 2: Women of Dircea with entrance of Dircea $\frac{3}{4}$  (finishes  $\frac{2}{4}$ ), 176 mm. Form: A B C D E (through-composed)

Summary of Content: Dircea can see only gloom in spite of her women's encouragement

Mood: less optimistic

Form	A	B	C	D	E	recit. transition
mm.	110-36	137-59	160-89	190-203	204-65	266-85
Key	F-g	c-Bb	Bb-Db-d	d-F	F-Bb	→ C (allegro)
Harmonic Functions	(D)		(T) <sup>3rd</sup> <sub>rec.</sub>		(D)(T)	(SD)

Section 3: Dircea's aria

C Allegro, 159 mm. Form: binary sonata form

Summary of Content: Dircea sings to Jason and her women about her happy future

Mood: flame of love, joy

Form	Expo.				Dev.	Recap.				orchestral transition
	P	T	S	K	N	S	K'	1NK	2NK	3NK
mm.	286-301	301-14	315-26	327-43	344-85	386-97	398	406	422	429-44
Key	C	C→G	G	G	Db-d-C	C	→ Ab	C	C	C
Harmonic Functions	(T)	→ (D) <sub>mod.</sub>			(SD) (T) <sub>heapol.</sub>		(T) <sub>vi low.</sub>	(T)		

Scene 3

Table II-5. Detailed structure of Scene 3 (total: 438 mm.).

Section 1: Parade of the Argonauts (incl. chorus, Dircea and one of her women, Jason)

C March, 115 mm. Form: A A' B A'

Summary of Content: while the Argonauts march, carrying the Fleece, Dircea is frightened; Jason again tries to calm her

Mood: festive (many participants, large ensemble)

Form	A	A'	B	A'	recit.
mm	1-40	41-64	65-92	93-108	108-15
Key	D	$\bar{\text{I}}^{\text{ped.}}$ D	D-A-D	D	
Harmonic Functions	(T)		(D)	(T)	

Section 2: Jason's aria $\frac{2}{4}$  Larghetto, 98 mm. Form: A B A C=coda (ternary form+coda)

Summary of Content: Jason's long declaration to Dircea about his cruel former wife. Creon enters.

Mood: nervous

Form	A	B	A	C=coda + recitative transition (Creon)
mm	116-35	136-58	159-72	173-202 203-13
Key	A	A-C → B	A	→ F
Harmonic Functions	(T)	(T) $\frac{3}{4}$ rel.	(T)	(T) $\frac{5}{6}$ low.

Section 3: Trio (Creon, Dircea, Jason and chorus)

C Sostenuto, 225 mm. Form: A B C D (big through-composed)

Summary of Content: Creon tells Dircea to believe in the gods' generosity and all invoke Hymen to bless them

Mood: dramatic, forceful

Overall Form	A	B	C	D
(Participants)	Creon (aria): total 75 mm	Ensemble: total 42 mm	Jason+Dircea: total 34 mm (duet)	Ensemble ("tout"): total 65 mm
Subsections	A B C	A B C	A B A trans.	A B C
mm	214-255- 262-89	289- 297- 319-27	328-41 341-60 360- 365-73	374-91 392- 415-38
Key	F	F-C	→ d d-Bb-g-d	→ F
Harmonic Functions	(T)	(D)	(T) (SD) (T)	(T)

Remarks: transition at the end of Section C includes an ad lib, orchestra and chorus

Scene 6

Table II-6. Detailed structure of Scene 6 (total: 115 mm.).

A single musical section: Creon's aria

C Allegro, 115 mm. Form: exposition-recap + coda

Summary of Content: Creon sings a frightening aria to Medea about her last day

Mood: storm and stress, threatening

Form	Expo.		Recap.		Coda
mm	P 1-15	T 16-29	P' 43-56	T' 57-69	S' 77-83
Key	b	→ D mod. $\bar{\text{I}}$	b → e	e → D-G mod. $\frac{5}{6}$	e-b
Harmonic Functions	(T)	relative major	(SD)	(T)	(T)

## Scene 7

Table II-7. Detailed structure of Scene 7 (total: 399 mm.).

## Section 1: Medea's aria

$\frac{3}{4}$  Larghetto, 114 mm. Form: A B A'

Summary of Content: Medea begs Jason to return to her, describes her love for him, recalls the past

Mood: true, sensitive love, relatively calm

Form	A	B	A'
mm	1-41	42-72	73-114 (Coda 95-114)
Key	F-C	Ab-f	F
Harmonic Functions	(T) (D)	(T) modulatory lowered VI of C	(T)

## Section 2: Duet of Medea and Jason

C, ♩ Allegro, 285 mm.

Form: ABCBDB<sup>1</sup> (big rondo)

Summary of Content: Medea and Jason deplore the fatal influence of the Golden Fleece on their lives

Mood: stormy, agitated

Overall Form	A	B	C	B	D	B <sup>1</sup>		
Subsections	A	B	C	D	C	E	C <sup>1</sup>	C <sup>2</sup> Coda
mm	115-51	152-70	171-203	203-244	245-327	327-321	321	344 367-99
Key	e	e-G-C	C	C-a-b-D- -a-e-G	G-a-G	G-e	e	
Harmonic Function	(T)		V I	(T) VI very modulatory	(T)	(T) 301/312 V-I # dom. pedal		

Formal Types: Typical Key Relationships

Ternary form (A-B-A) in several versions occurs most often in Act I. In addition, there are two appearances of each of these types: modified sonata form (binary, exposition-recap) and through-composed form. The last section is the only rondo in this act.

Key relationships that recur most often are tonic-dominant and third relationships (submediant or mediant, sometimes lowered) indicated basically as a tonic. Longer and more extreme modulatory processes occur only in the middle of the last section (see above). There is one notable appearance of the Neapolitan key, D-flat major - in Dircea's aria (Scene 1, Section 3).

## DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THREE NUMBERS

### Scene 1, Section 3: Dircea's Aria, "Hymen! viens dissiper une vaine frayeur"

#### Dramatic Context and Content

Finally, after the gloomy mood that dominated the previous section, when Dircea confided to her women her fears about Jason (the man who broke the bonds of an unhappy union in the past), she is finally convinced about the happy future promised her, and gives vent to her joy. She remains alone on stage, and, after a short recitative, starts her big aria, dominated by her expression of love for Jason, with an unusual interpolation of the flute solo.

#### Text and Versification

##### English Translation

##### Original

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Oh, Hymen! dispel a vain fear                          | Hymen! viens dissiper une<br>vaine frayeur:           |
| 2. Tender Dircea is abandoning<br>her soul to you         | La sensible Dircé t'abandonne<br>son âme:             |
| 3. Come, penetrate her feelings<br>with your divine flame | Viens, pénètre ses sens de ta<br>divine flamme        |
| 4. It is from you alone that I<br>expect happiness        | C'est de toi, de toi seul que<br>j'attends le bonheur |
| 5. Take far away from me that<br>barbarous foreign woman  | Écarte loin de moi la barbare<br>étrangère            |
| 6. Whose charms have seduced a<br>hero                    | Dont les enchantements ont<br>séduit un héros         |
| 7. May her appearance and her anger                       | Que son aspect, que sa colère                         |
| 8. Not trouble our rest                                   | Ne trouble point notre repos                          |

\* Hymen = God of Marriage

### Versification:

This heterometric stanza of eight lines includes six hexametric iambic lines (with a caesura after the third foot) followed by two tetrametric iambic lines (with a caesura after the second foot). The rhyme scheme is abbacddc (enclosing rhyme abba + alternate rhyme cdcd). The rhymes b and c are masculine, a and d are feminine.

### Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Aria, Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

Dircea's optimistic hope for her future life is reflected in a truly moving song of love that she sings to Jason. The expression of her emotions is treated as the central idea, repeated in various ways (mainly, Jason's flame of love for her and his rejection of Medea). This somewhat static aspect of drama influenced Cherubini to use the strategy of musical repetitions of words or parts of sentences (as, for example, "que j'attends le bonheur", which is much repeated).

Cherubini divides the fluent stanza of eight lines into two basic parts: lines 1-4 for the exposition and lines 5-8 for the beginning of the development. Then the first lines 1-4 with their repetitions are used for the rest of the development and for the recapitulation.

Table II-8 is a schematic representation of the lines of text and form. Smaller numbers in brackets indicate repetitions.

$\frac{1}{2} \times \dots$  indicates repetitions of half-lines; these repetitions

may occur in any part of the line - beginning, middle or end).

Table II-8. Text and form - schematic representation (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper une vaine frayeur").

<b>Expo.</b>	P	T	S	K
Line No.	1 2(x2)	3( $\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ )	4(x2)	3 4
<b>Dev.</b>	N		P	
Line No.	5 6 7 8( $+\frac{1}{2} \times 2$ )	1 2(x2)	3( $+\frac{1}{2} \times 2$ )	
<b>Recap.</b>	S	K'	1NK	2NK 3NK
Line No.	4	3	4 ( $+\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ )	

Figure II-1. Timeline: binary sonata form (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

Text	Hymen		Viens		C'est de		Viens penetrer	
Music	EXPO. P	P	To T	I	S	K		
	286 289		301 303 (overlap)	309	315	327		343
	C			$\underline{V}$ ped. G				GI
Text	Écarte		Hymen		Viens			
Music	Dev. (P)	(S)	IP)		P+T, T			
	N	N	Ph, r					
	344 353/354		362		375 380 385			
	$\underline{DbV}$	$\underline{Vd} : \underline{V}$	$\underline{V}$ d C		$\underline{V}$ ped. C $\underline{V}$			
Text	C'est de toi		Viens	C'est de toi		que j'attends		
Music	Recap.			(S+T)				
	S	K'	1NK (with cadenza)	2NK	3NK (orchestral transition)			
	386	398	406	422	429			444
	C	$\rightarrow Ab$	$\rightarrow C$					



# Scoring:

Solo Flute  
2 Oboes  
2 Horns (in C)  
Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Vcl, Cb  
Voice: Soprano (Dircea)

## Tonality:

The aria is in C major - the second degree or  $\frac{\bar{V}}{V}$  in relation to B flat major, the basic key of the entire scene. According to Yizhak Sadai,<sup>2</sup> this is considered as a subdominant harmonic function, and in the overview of the whole act, this subdominant compensates for its absence during the previous two numbers, which emphasize tonic and dominant.

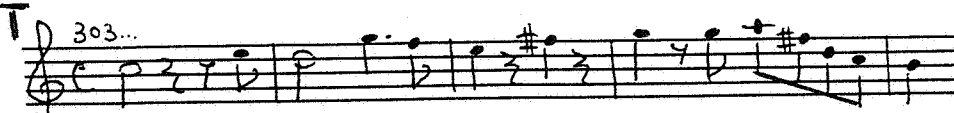
## Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

### A. Thematic Elements

Example II-1. List of phrases (Dircea's aria: "Hymen! viens dissiper").

indications according  
to Ratner's topics:

P 289...  singing style

T 303...  singing style

S 316... 386...  singing style

K 327... 398...  storm and stress

2 Yizhak Sadai, Harmony (Jerusalem: Yanetz Ltd., 1980), pp. 27-9.

## B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

Dircea's delicacy and sensitivity are evident in the elegant phrases in P, I, S. These start out with longer rhythmic values, becoming shorter and gradually less "interrupted" by rests, an indication of intensified dramatic expression. The sharper melodic contours upwards in K reappear later in the recapitulation, approaching the final vocal cadenza. The singing style<sup>3</sup> which was typical of P I S, changes in K and then in K<sup>1</sup> and through the vocal cadenza, into obvious storm and stress, and reaches its climax of intensity in Dircea's virtuosic coloratura cadenza (especially in mm.411-29) with its typically brilliant style<sup>4</sup> (Ex. II-2).

Example II-2. Soprano and bass lines, mm.409-32, (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

9 ex-pect ---

409

415

416

424

425

432

happiness that I expect happiness

le bonheur que j'attends le bon-

that I expect happiness that I expect happiness

le bonheur que j'attends le bonheur

strings

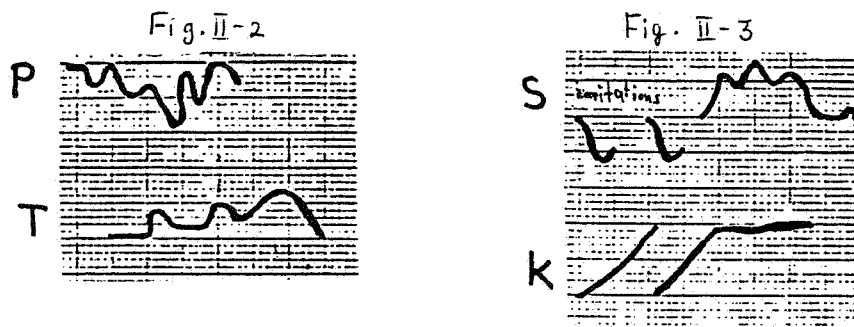
<sup>3</sup> L.G. Ratner, Classic Music (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1980), pp.9-26, and especially p.19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

### C. Melodic Contours, Highest Peaks and Underpoints

The whole process of the melodic contour changing from the wavy, happy type into one made tense by love, is shown graphically in Figs. II-2, II-3. Note how the contours move rapidly between the extremes of low and high in the motives in S and K.

Figures II-2 and II-3. Melodic contours of the thematic units shown graphically (Dircea's aria "Hymen, ! viens dissiper").



Highest melodic peaks are in definite correlation with the highest emotional moments in Dircea's words. In the second repetition of line 4 at the end of the exposition (m.338), the melody reaches b on the word "bonheur" (Ex. II-3).

Example II-3. Soprano and bass lines, mm.332-46 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

332 it is from you that I expect happiness that I expect happiness →

seul c'est de toi seul que j'at-tends le bon-heur que j'at-tends le bon-

338 that I expect happiness take far a-way from me

-heur que j'at-tends le bon-heur e-car-te! loin de moi

IG 121 IIW=V Db

Another high melodic peak that stands out clearly in its melodic environment appears in m.371 (approaching the end of the development). Dircea describes herself in the third person: "t'abandonne son âme, la sensible Dircé" (line 2, in *P* of the development) and, on reaching the word "sensible", sings a big leap of a major sixth upwards (Ex. II-4).

Example II-4. Soprano and bass lines, mm.360-72 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

360 our rest Oh, Hymen! dispel a vain fear! Tender →

re-pos no-bre re-pos Hy-men viens dis-si-per une vai-ne frayeur la sen-

367 — Dircea is abandoning her soul Tender Dircea

-si-ble Dir-cé t'a-bandon-ne son â-me la sensi-ble Dir-cé

IV<sup>4</sup>/<sub>2</sub> = V<sub>2</sub>C I6

#### D. Text and Harmony

The following passages are three locations at which harmonic progressions serve the intention of verbal expression and create musically the specific atmosphere required:

(a) Towards the end of the exposition, when Dircea reaches the word "flamme", the tension is growing. The melodic contour of *K* has already been mentioned, and now its important moment on the words "flamme, c'est de toi" will be emphasized (Exs. II-5, 5a).

Example II-5. Soprano and bass lines, mm.327-36 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

327 come, penetrate her feelings with your divine flame | it is from you alone, it is from you alone that I expect happiness 336

viens! pe net-re-ssens de ta divi-ne flamme | c'est de toi seul c'est de | toi seul que j'at-tends le bon-heur

*p* *cresc.* *f* *f*

Example II-5a. Harmonic reduction of mm.330-4.

330 331 332 - 3 334

mod. → G

increasing harmonic (and melodic tension starting on the word "flamme"

On reaching "flamme", the high *f* at m.330 which was just attained by the quick, surprising melodic movement upwards, approaches a relatively stable position. But immediately the tension grows with the half step higher and the chromatic shift to *f*-sharp when Dircea clarifies her emotional need "it is from you alone that I expect" ("c'est de toi seul"). This sudden chromatic shift makes the modulation from C major to G major, while the harmonic progression on *f*-sharp leads to  $\text{III } \frac{6}{4}$  of G major (or  $\text{VI } \frac{6}{4}$  of D major, the dominant of G major).

(b) The mood of horror is felt directly from the beginning of the development when mention is made of Medea (m.345): "Take far away from me that barbarous foreign woman" ("Écarte loin de moi la fatale étrangère"). Ex. II-6 quotes mm.345-58 with most of Dircea's frightened words and also shows the harmonic progression.

Example II-6. Soprano and bass lines, mm.341-57 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

341 take far away from me that barbarous foreign woman whose charms —  
 é-car-te! l'on-dé-moi la fa-ta-le! é-t-ran-gè-re! dont les enchan-te-  
 P

350 have seduced a hero may her appearance and her anger not trouble our rest ||  
 -ments ont sé-duit un hé-ros que son aspect que sa co-lè-re! ne trouble point notre repos ||  
 f  
 (b-b-a)

After a dominant pedal point on g (mm. 340-43, the very end of the exposition), the astonishing  $\flat$  in m.344 immediately creates a tense atmosphere. Medea is not yet with us, but her spirit has made its appearance. Dircea begs for mercy, for some relief from the barbarous foreign woman, and this tremendous tension is achieved by the steady throb of  $\flat$  as dominant of D-flat major, but without "revealing" its tonic. The chromatic progression carries on to D major in m.354 by once more emphasizing its dominant -  $\flat$ -natural. This consistent dominant, never reaching the tonic, is a very successful strategy for continuing tension while constantly searching for relaxation. This is expressed in Dircea's further words (line 7): "May her (i.e. Medea's) appearance and her anger not trouble our rest" ("Que son aspect, que sa colère ne trouble point notre repos"), exactly after the chromatic shift to  $\flat$ -natural, in m.354. See the reduction in Ex. II-7. The chromatic progression may be considered to be a chain of Neapolitan connections serving as a means of modulation without revealing the tonic.

Example II-7. Bass line with harmonic progression of mm.342-54 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

342 343 344 345 — 353 354

IG IIb1 = V Db dom. pedal

↑ Neapolitan as a means of modulation

(c) The recapitulation introduces an intensification of the dramatic expression. The intensive harmonic progression in mm.401-7 reflects the extremely emotional words: "It is from you, from you alone that I expect happiness: ("C'est de toi, de toi seul que j'attends le bonheur") (Note the repetition of text).

Here is a description of the musical drama: Suddenly, in the key of C major, the Neapolitan sixth chord appears (m.402) on the word "you" ("toi") and leads with the entire textual-musical sentence to the key of A-flat major, at the end of which the word "happiness" ("le bonheur") bursts out (m.405). But more is to come: at m.406, after a leap of a minor seventh in the bass, returning to the leading note and so achieving a very quick return to the original key of C major, Cherubini continues to repeat the musical phrases on the words "it is from you" ("de toi"), starting from m.405. At this point Dircea sings these words many times, an indication of her love for Jason, each time in a different harmonization, so anticipating the final rest on C major, which will allow for the virtuosic vocal cadenza later (Exs. II-8, II-8a).

Example II-8. Soprano and bass lines, mm.400-7 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

400 your divine flame|| it is from you alone that I expect happiness|| it is from you, it is from you, from you  
de ta di-vi-ne flamme|| c'est de toi de toi seul que j'at-tends le bon-heur|| c'est de toi c'est de toi de toi  
407  
cresc.

Example II-8a. Harmonic reduction of mm.400-7.

400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407  
C 8 - b7 b5 b3 b6 b3 I = VI b C 6 4  
II b heap. = VII 6 I V 6 I

### Ensemble and Mood, Texture

After the relative richness and variety of texture and ensemble provided by Dircea and her women in the first two sections of Scene 1, the basic impression here in the concluding section is one of a more homophonic texture created by a small ensemble accompanying the solo voice of Dircea. The strings provide a variety of rhythmic and contrapuntal interest, with the first and second violins conversing in imitation almost exclusively in sixteenth-notes. As opposed to these syncopated imitations between the violins themselves, the viola part supplies a different type of syncopation of eighth-notes and quarter-notes: | 7 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 7 |. This varied use of dialogue in the strings makes for contrapuntal-rhythmic tension in the accompaniment as a whole, pitted against the two dominant melodic



lines: that of the singer herself in which there are many rhythmic values of half-notes and of dotted quarter-notes and which generally emphasizes the first beat of every measure, and that of the flute's striking counter melody. The basic continuity is interrupted only by this very prominent part given to the flute. Its tender sonority underlines extremely well Dircea's delicate femininity. It gradually integrates as a character on stage. Its first entrance comes with its short solo full of virtuosic power at the beginning of I (m.301), which presages the vocal motive (m.303) and has running sixteenths contrasting with the long notes of the vocal motive (Ex. II-9).

Example II-9. Soprano line and flute part, mm.301-10 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

The musical score for Example II-9 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 301 to 305, and the second system covers measures 306 to 310. Each system features a Flute (Fl.) part and a Soprano (Sopr.) part. The Flute part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Soprano part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are in French and English.

**System 1 (Measures 301-305):**

- Measure 301:** Flute has a short solo with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 302:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 303:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 304:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 305:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.

**System 2 (Measures 306-310):**

- Measure 306:** Flute has a short solo with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 307:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 308:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 309:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.
- Measure 310:** Flute continues with running sixteenth notes. Soprano has a whole rest.

**Lyrics:**

viens | pé-nè-tre | ses | sens | viens |  
 come, penetrate her feelings, come,  
 viens | pé-nè-tre | ses | sens |  
 come penetrate her feelings  
 de | ta | di-vi-ne | flamme || de | ta | di-vi-ne |  
 with your divine flame || with your divine

The flexible writing for the flute continues as a counterpoint to the singing nature of the vocal line all through the contrapuntal I, until it first introduces the motive of S in m.315 accompanied by the violins (Ex. II-10). Imitation between the soprano and flute is significant and reappears at the start of S in the recapitulation, m.386, but in C major instead of G major.

Example II-10. Soprano line with reduction of string and flute parts, mm.314-20 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

314 320

Fl. Vl. Vl.

→ flame ||

Sopr. --- me||

It is from you, from you, it is from you alone, you that I expect my

c'est de | toi | de | toi | seul de | toi | seul que j'attends mon |

The flute again plays a remarkable role at an important moment of the recapitulation, when the transition is made for the start of the virtuosic vocal cadenza in the course of INK (m.409). Here again it is the flute that introduces the theme and the singer is forced to imitate it, which is her way of introducing her brilliant style of singing until the end of the aria.

Example II-11. Cherubini's full score, mm.404-14 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

404 409

Flauti  
Hautb.  
Clarin.  
Vl.1.  
Vl.2.  
Violes  
Dircé  
Vlc

Hymen! viens dissiper

410 414

The relative steadiness of the accompaniment is felt throughout this aria. The orchestral bass sinks to its lowest note  $\underline{c}$  while the flute provides the irregularities against this stable movement and accompanies the solo voice in its brilliant high passages, reaching its highest note  $\underline{a}$  in m.400. The vocal line moves between  $\underline{f}$ -sharp and  $\underline{c}$  with high notes below  $\underline{c}$  and  $\underline{c}$  itself appearing in Dircea's part several times from m.414 on. The following are the pitches most often used: in the vocal line  $\underline{g}$ ,  $\underline{c}$ ,  $\underline{g}$ ,  $\underline{a}$  and in the bass line  $\underline{g}$ ,  $\underline{c}$ ,  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{g}$ ,  $\underline{c}$ .

## Dynamics

Although both motives for P and S reflect the singing style, they differ from each other in character, a result mainly of the quality of their dynamics. After the short piano recitative transition, P introduces at the beginning of the exposition (m.286) a remarkable forte, symbolizing the self-assured Dircea's flame of love. When she begins her sentence (line 4) "it is from you alone that I expect happiness" ("c'est de toi, de toi seul que j'attends le bonheur"), her expression is more refined, as if begging for mercy, and the S motive then introduces a subtle piano presented first by the flute (m.315). This is also well served by the minorization of key in mm.320-22. The main tendency of the dynamics later is one of forte and a crescendo towards the end of the exposition.

The dynamics - one of the most natural means of textual expression, achieve a remarkable piano at the beginning of the development, together with the sudden modulation to D-flat major where the frightened Dircea (line 5) sings "take far away from me that barbarous foreign woman" ("ecarte loin de moi") (m.345). The spectrum of changes moves between piano and forte and again reaches a structural crescendo towards the end of the development. The alternations between piano and forte in the recapitulation are quicker, as if the tempo of these is faster; the expected crescendo appears, integrated in the frame of faster tempo although it lasts only two measures (mm.402-3) and the forte rules the aria until its very end, with its coloratura and final orchestral ending.


To summarize the curve of dynamics of this aria: no specific dynamic level dominates; there is a constant piano - forte dialogue, with the emphasis on a basic forte for P and a basic piano for S. The curve may achieve a crescendo at the end of a wave and the speed of change finally accelerates, everything seeming to point to the aim of a relatively long forte for the end of the aria.

### Delving into Rhythm

The rhythmic lines used for the P and S motives introduce the same rhythmic curve, moving from longer rhythmic values to shorter ones (Ex. II-12).

Example II-12. Melodic lines with their rhythms for P and S (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").



An inner progression of accelerando may be noted with regard to the rhythmic process arising from these two singing lines quoted in succession: from its beginning, the second line already has quicker values than the first, and this second line (S) contains a chain of eighth-notes which has not appeared previously. Yet the modulatory I already introduces the shorter values intensively,  with more rests than in the E materials, but the rhythmic values play a less important role in the musical-dramatic process. The motive for K pushes the chain of eighth-notes even further with its rhythmical-structural force (Ex. II-13); it is an integral, prominent element from which this motive is constructed from its beginning, integrating all with the dotted rhythm element (one of the main rhythmic features of the whole of Act I, although not typical of this aria).

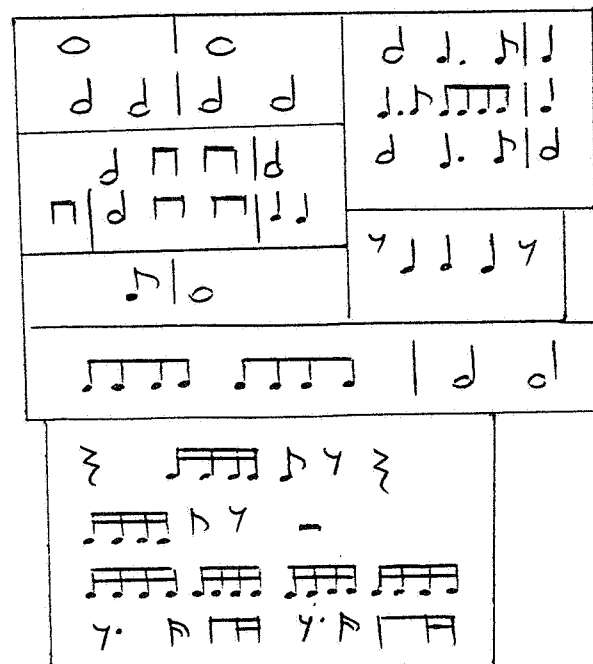
Example II-13. Melodic line with its rhythms for K (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").



This relatively stormy rhythmic area in K, especially in its reappearance in the recapitulation (m.398) towards the end of the aria, is very important in the creation of the storm and stress mood which dominates the brilliant vocal cadenza.

In comparison to the vocal lines, the instrumental rhythmic patterns always run faster, filling the same number of measures, and in this way achieve their effect as the accompaniment in the homophonic texture. The next illustration (Fig. II-4) which introduces the lexicon of vocal and instrumental rhythms and rhythmic patterns in a concise form, allows for a visual overview of the role of rhythm discussed above.

Figure II-4. Compilation of instrumental rhythms (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").



### Growth Options (Including Maps and Graphs)

Example II-14 draws a melodic outline of the vocal line only, following a quasi-Schenkerian system of graphs, in order to observe the broad melodic curve which appears to be rather wild:

Example II-14. Melodic graph, mm.284-429 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

Expo. P T S K Dev.

284 303 307 345

Aria

Key C

Recap. coloratura

360 364 370 375 380 385 395 399 410 424

The fourth and fifth relationships are melodically prominent, a fact which also fits the harmonic scheme according to Schenker.

The summary of the main levels of pitch (g, e, g, a, already drawn on p.129) illustrates the majority of pitches, yet the function of peaks and underpoints (in this case the peaks - because it is a soprano aria in which the tense, dramatic situation results in a high register) can be better observed through a detailed graph such as this. The unruly organization of the melodic line cannot be appreciated unless one realizes how rapid are the changes of register in the singing. It is worthwhile repeating here what was said earlier on p. 110: this is Dircea (and not Medea) whose character radiates a surprising dramatic power early in the opera.



Examples II-15 and II-16 are maps of stresses (following La Rue) which illustrate the dramatic-musical complexity of P and S and at the same time clarify the whole process stemming from these two important themes. Both maps are first introduced here and will be followed by their analytical discussion.

Example II-15. Map of stresses for P, mm.289-301 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

	m.	289		291		293		295
Melodic stress								
Surface rhythm		1 0	d	□ □	d	z z	□	□ □ □
Text		Hy-men	viens	dis-si-per	une	vaine	frayeur	la sensi ble Dir-cé
Harm. rhythm		↓			↓		↓ ↓ z	↓
Key and degrees		I C			V	I	I V	I
Effect								^

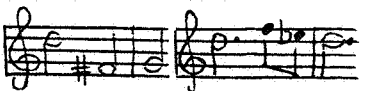
	m.	295		297		299		301
Melodic stress		cond.						
Surface rhythm		□	d	□ □	z	□	1. □. □	□ □ □
Text		fa-ban-donne	son	â-me	la sensi-ble	Dir-cé	ta--ban-donne	son
Harm. rhythm		↓ z ↓ z	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓ z ↓ z	↓
Key and degrees		I V		I	IV		IV V	I
Effect				^				^

Example II-16. Map of stresses for S, mm.315-26 (Dircea's aria "Hymen! viens dissiper").

	m.	315		317		319		321
Melodic stress		d d						
Surface rhythm		1 1	d	z -	d	z z	□ □ □ □	d.
Text		c'est de	toi	de	toi	seul	de	toi
Harm. rhythm		↓					↓	↓
Key and degrees		V G					I b	V
Effect								^

	m.	323		325		327	
Melodic stress							
Surface rhythm		□	d.	□	d	□ □ □	
Text		c'est de	toi	de	toi	seul	
Harm. rhythm		z	↓	z	↓	z	
Key and degrees		I		V 6	I	II 6 cad. →	
Effect							^

The expressive opening of Dircea's aria (line 1) "Oh, Hymen! dispel a vain fear" ("Hymen! viens dissiper une vaine frayeur") (m.289) results in a non-consistent chord and surface rhythm for P which leads to a non-symmetrical musical sentence. This symbolizes the emotional nature of this aria in comparison with all that has happened before in the course of Scene 1 (see Ex. II-15). The key of C major is still consistently maintained. Continuing all this, S (Ex. II-16) develops the general dramatic effect into an even more emotional one. Already after the modulatory I, Dircea begs Jason (line 4) "It is from you, it is from you, you alone that I expect happiness" ("C'est de toi, de toi, seul de toi") (m.316) and there are a few compositional strategies in S for gaining the needed expressive force (see Ex. II-16). The melodic stress (which reflects the extremes of the falling or rising melodic contours) is wilder (it was still symmetrical in P - Ex. II-15, but becomes wholly non-symmetrical in S - Ex. II-16), and the repetitions of "c'est de toi" by similar and different melodic units  very clearly emphasize Dircea's expression of love for Jason. The G minor occurring unexpectedly in m.320 is an important dramatic nuance: it helps Dircea to carry on expressing her love verbally "de toi seul que j'attends mon bonheur". Her dreams of happiness could have no better harmonic treatment than the surprising minorization of the tonic, a sure way of achieving a Romantic effect. This chord is very prominent after the static dominant at the beginning of S (mm.315-19). The rich melodic curve adds a great deal to the drama.

To summarize: S intensifies the musical-dramatic role of the

aria in comparison to P from four aspects: wilder melodic stress, imitation and variation of short motives for the repetition of words (serving for textual emphasis), richer melodic contours, surprising harmonic minorization which symbolizes more harmonic mobility. The difference of dynamics should be mentioned here as well (already mentioned on pp.130-1): P introduces a "simple" forte opening, and S brings a sudden piano with its appearance, appropriate to Dircea's different emotions: in line 1 "Oh, Hymen! dispel a vain fear" (P, m.289) she commands herself, as a heroine, not to fear; in line 4 "It is from you, it is from you alone", she speaks as a loving woman.

Scene 3 Section 2: Jason's Aria, "Éloigne pour  
jamais de l'épouse cruelle"

Dramatic Context and Content

Scene 3 opens with Creon and Dircea seated on their thrones, watching the March of the Argonauts carrying the Golden Fleece. Dircea reverts to her previous forebodings, but in the spoken dialogue between Jason and Dircea which follows, Jason points out to her that Medea could well be dead by now. He tries to calm her fears by the declaration of his love. But Dircea is still fearful; this is the reason for Jason's aria (following the spoken dialogue) in which he describes his cruel first wife and his unfortunate marriage, and stresses his strong love for Dircea. It is worth mentioning again (see p.108) that the one stanza, nine lines of Jason's aria, is not found in Hoffman's original printed version. Perhaps this was added at Cherubini's request, while he was preparing the music.

## Text and Versification

### English translation

### Original

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Being moved forever far away<br>from my cruel wife               | Eloigne pour jamais de<br>l'épouse cruelle           |
| 2. Who was my shame and my<br>misfortune                            | Qui fit ma honte et mon<br>malheur                   |
| 3. I lose the memory of the<br>very long failure                    | Je perds le souvenir d'une<br>trop longue erreur     |
| 4. And my destiny is being<br>renewed                               | Et mon destin se renouvelle                          |
| 5. Marriage was my torment,<br>it will be my happiness              | L'hymen fit mon tourment,<br>il sera mon bonheur     |
| 6. Your charms, your virtues have<br>succeeded in touching my heart | Vos attraits, vos vertus ont<br>su toucher mon coeur |
| 7. They will make my ties eternal                                   | Ils rendront ma chain<br>éternelle                   |
| 8. The fortunate Jason swears at<br>your knees                      | Le fortune Jason le jure a<br>vos genoux             |
| 9. Nothing will ever be able to<br>separate us                      | Rien ne peut désormais le<br>séparer de vous         |

### Versification:

This iambic stanza of nine lines includes lines of different lengths: 6 feet - 4 feet - 6 feet - 4 feet - 6 feet - 6 feet - 4 feet - 6 feet - 6 feet. The hexametric lines have caesuras after the third foot. The rhyme scheme is abbabbadd. The a rhymes are feminine, all others are masculine.

### Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Aria, Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

This aria of Jason's reflects his efforts to persuade Dircea and, at the same time, convince himself regarding their unknown, happy future. The lines repeated most often are 1-2 which emphasize the memory of his cruel first wife who was his shame and misfortune. These two lines form Section A, and in addition to

the inner repetitions on the first appearance of Section A (m.120), the importance of line 1 is again felt strongly at the beginning of the reappearance of A (m.159): "Being moved forever far away from my cruel wife" ("Éloigné pour jamais de l'épouse cruelle"). The first six lines of the stanza are devoted to this marriage of torment (line 5) and they, together with their inner repetitions, make up the whole body of the A-B-A form. Jason tries determinedly to forget these memories and to picture a new destiny in lines 3-4, and the reappearance of these lines in the second A (m.165, "Je perds") provides evidence of these efforts.

From line 7 Jason praises Dircea for her virtues and tries to believe with all his heart in their common fate. This relative optimism is relegated to the coda; this coda is relatively long (30 mm. of the aria's total of 89 mm.) but it is mainly an external, formal ending to a subsection.

The accurate make-up of text and form results in the following schematic representation (Table II-9):

Table II-9. Text and form - schematic representation (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais de l'épouse cruelle").

Subsection	A			
Line No.	1	2	$(+\frac{1}{2} \times 2)$	
Subsection	B			
Line No.	3	4	$(+\frac{1}{2})$	$\overbrace{5}^{\times 2} (\text{first half} \times 2)$
Subsection	A			
Line No.	1	3	4	
Subsection	C = Coda			
Line No.	6	7	8	9

Figure II-5. Timeline: ternary form + coda (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").

Text	Éloigne Je perds L'hymen											
Music	0	A	(A)	B								orchestral link
	116	120 <sup>2</sup>	I	136	137	139	145-6	147	150	152-3	157-8	
	A	IV		I	IV	I	I = $\overline{V}$ → aug m.	e	F	$\frac{\overline{VI}b7}{a}$	$\frac{\overline{V}}{A}$	

Text	Éloigne Vos attraites Rien de vos											
Music	A		C=Coda								orch. link	recitative transition
	159	160	171	172 <sup>2</sup>	175	188			200	201-2	203	
	I	V IV	I	$\frac{V}{V}$	VI	Cadence						

#### Scoring:

Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Vlc, Cb  
Voice: Tenor (Jason)

#### Tonality:

The whole aria is in A major - the dominant key in relation to the opening D major of Scene 3 which dominates the previous section - the March of the Argonauts. Over a background of a steady insistence on the tonic throughout the aria, including the lower third relationship on C major (subsection B, m.139) - considered a special tonic - there is a prominent usage of the dominant at the very beginning of Section A. The fifth degree is emphasized as well at the beginning of the coda  $\overline{V}/\overline{V}$ , m.172, and the special tonic of the lowered submediant (F major) at which the final recitative transition aims. These third relationships above and below (m.139  $\overline{III}b7 = C$  major, m.213  $\overline{VI}b7 = F$  major) are a part of the dramatic-expressive force.

## Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

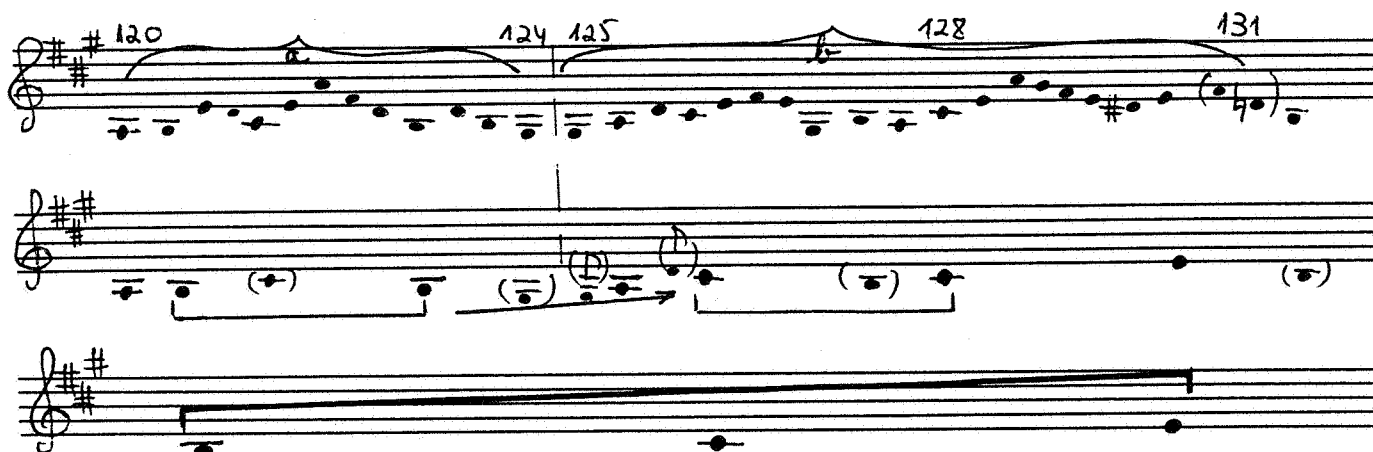
### A. Thematic Elements

Example II-17. List of phrases of Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais".

A study of these musical themes reveals a clear chain of motives. Everything derives from phrase a, the first important element of A. Phrases a and b are both questions, ending on notes which may be considered various tones of the in A major: g-sharp in mm.124, d in m.131. b, the longer one, is derived from a and also tries in the beginning to respond partially to a by its emphasis on e-sharp in mm.126-27 - see the illustration following (Ex. II-18).

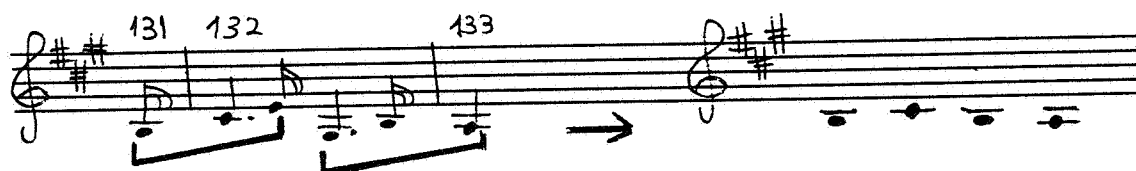
This melody arrives naturally at a at the beginning of m.129, and only after this is the main emphasis made on e, serving as the final question-mark for the whole of Section A. The linear summary of the whole of a b is clearly shaped by the three notes b-e-sharp-e.

Example II-18. Melodic reduction of mm.120-28 (Jason's aria "Eloigne pour jamais").



The interesting fact about c is that it derives organically from a+b: first it repeats these three notes b-c-sharp-e and then gives the organic answer concluding safely and surely on a (Ex. II-19).

Example II-19. Vocal line with melodic reduction of mm.131-33 (Jason's aria "Eloigne pour jamais").

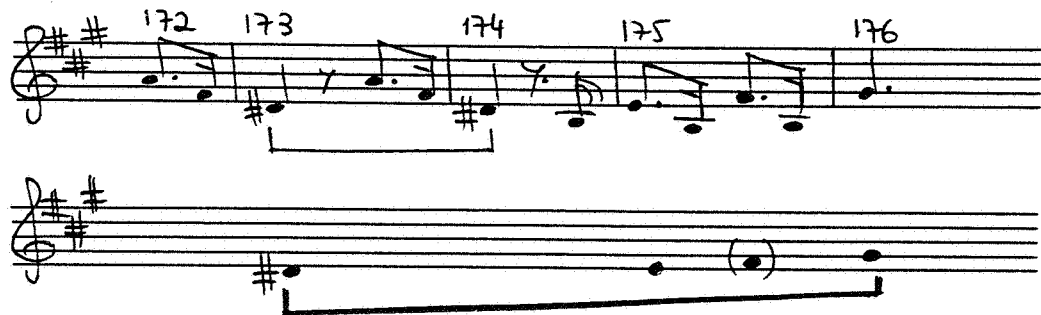


Section B is a clear variant of A with small melodic changes according to the harmonic modulatory plan: f-sharp becomes f-natural (m.136) for the minorization of the subdominant and c-sharp becomes c-natural (m.139) because of the modulation to C major.

Section C again employs the same basic melodic pattern of three notes going up, but transposed a major third higher with an important melodic transition between the second and third notes (Ex. II-20):



Example II-20. Vocal line with melodic reduction, mm.172-76 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").



### B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

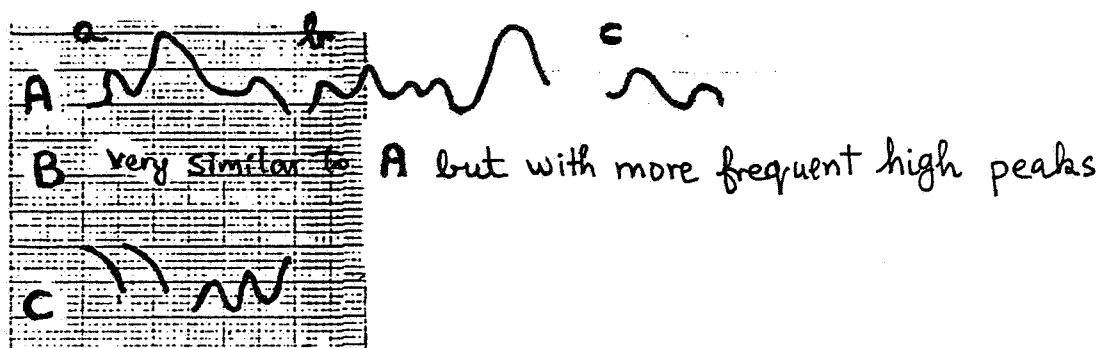
The music indicates that future happiness is problematic, and throughout, the mood is one of nervousness. All the musical components reflect this tendency. As to harmony, the submediant augmented chord in m.146 on the word "tourment" (torment) is a very good example. The texture of intensified accompaniment in that measure (from m.145 already) which carries on with the repetitions of Jason's evident torment in his past life, does much to evoke this atmosphere of nervousness. Then Jason continues in a verbally reasonable way, comparing his past to his future (lines 5-6): "Marriage was my torment - it will be my happiness" ("L'hymen fit mon tourment - il sera mon bonheur"). However, in contradiction to their meaning, the words "mon bonheur" are repeated nervously by a strong forte (m.155) and by touching the high <sup>1</sup> a a few times as a melodic peak (mm.153, 156). In spite of the basic piano dynamics and the "Larghetto" indication chosen by Cherubini for the whole aria, as well as the mixture of singing and sensibility styles, this is not a tranquil or truly warm love-song, but a very tense one. Jason

aspires to happiness - "mon bonheur" - but the music is infused with pessimistic emotions evoked by the underlying psychological fear which survives because of Medea.

### C. Melodic Contours and Highest Peaks

The list of motives (Ex. II-17, p. 141) illustrated here (Fig. II-6) show sections A and B to be of a mildly wavy nature, while the c element of section A seems to be a reduction of a and b (this coherence of motivic elaboration was explained above in Exs. II-18-20). Both sections A and B begin on a,

Figure II-6. Melodic contours of the thematic units shown graphically (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").



and also finish on the same a. Surprisingly, F major introduces <sup>1</sup>a at its very beginning (m.173), as if true relief will only come in the aria once it is done with. When Jason has lived through that moment he is able to sing his words of praise to Dircea.

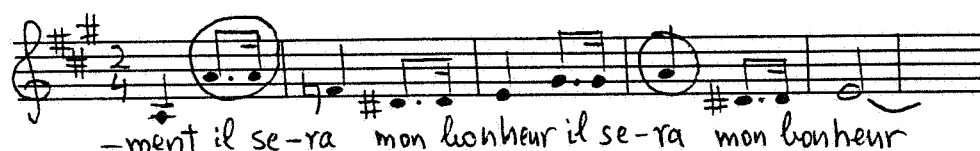
The phenomenon of the high <sup>1</sup>a in this aria is worthy of a specific discussion. The typology of <sup>1</sup>a is of different context in various cases. This <sup>1</sup>a in the frame of section A in mm.122, 129 - and in the frame of section B in mm.137, 142 (also in mm.160, 161 in the reappearance of Section A before Section C) - is basically the upper note of a broken chord moving up and down (Ex. II-21).

Example II-21. Two melodic excerpts, mm.129-30, mm.137-38 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").



The function of the upwards-moving  $\underline{a}$  towards the end of section B is entirely different: this high note creates the nervous tension in the repetitions of "il sera mon bonheur" and this time it appears in longer rhythmic values (Ex. II-22).

Example II-22. Melodic excerpt, mm.153-57 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").



Since Jason, during sections A and B, has already attained a standard usage of  $\underline{a}$ , it serves well the basic tense mood which Cherubini meant to achieve; thus he chose  $\underline{a}$  quite naturally for the starting point of section C. It is used a great deal throughout C, as if the starting point is a "fanfare-declaration" of  $\underline{a}$ , forcing the continuation of this high level of pitch. The high  $\underline{a}$  becomes a stylistic symbol - dominating first of all as a successful means of indicating emotional pressure (memories of Medea), and later turning into outbursts of emotion (remaining with Dircea) towards the end of the aria.

The high tessitura of the tenor is evident throughout the aria. The vocal part has the range from  $\underline{d}$ -sharp to  $\underline{a}$  and it is worth mentioning the many appearances of  $\underline{a}$  once more. In addition to these extremes, the pitches used most often in the

vocal line are  $\underline{a}_1$   $\underline{b}_1$   $\underline{c}$ -sharp,  $\underline{e}$  and  $\underline{a}$ . The cello line uses the following pitches most often:  $\underline{E}_1$   $\underline{A}_1$   $\underline{c}$ -sharp,  $\underline{e}$  and  $\underline{a}$ .

#### D. Text and Harmony

There is an essential difference between the harmonic picture of sections A and B – the text enables the whole process to move from a static expression into a more dynamic one. Cherubini uses a stubborn dominant, with the effect of a long dominant pedal point for lines 1-2 in A (Ex. II-23).

Example II-23. Tenor and bass lines, mm.120-31 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").

Jason 120.

127

130

131

The prolonged use of the dominant is aided by the inserted  $\frac{6}{4}$  chords (resembling transitional or regular cadential chords) and there is no real harmonic resolution to this dominant except for a weak cadence in mm.130-31. Nervousness, compulsion,

agression and restlessness - all these are reflected as basic features of Jason's temperament, and the harmonic treatment plays a most important role in creating this mood. In B Cherubini furnishes a sort of mobility to Hoffman's sentences (lines 3-4), as if there is suddenly a hope, a fresh psychological insight. This effect is gained by the modulation in mm.137-41 which accompanies the sentences speaking hopefully about losing the memory of failure and the expectation of a new destiny: "Je perds le souvenir d'une trop longue erreur, et mon destin se renouvelle" (Ex. II-24).

Example II-24. Tenor and bass lines with reduction of string parts, mm.135-43 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").

135 I lose the memory of the very long failure || And

140 my destiny, and my destiny, is being renewed

mon - des - tin | et mon - des - tin | se - re - nou - vel - le ||

I ped.

chromatic transition

The minorization of the subdominant in m.137 is the harmonic strategy on the way to the third relationship key of C major.

Jason's suffering increases in line 5 where he mentions the marriage that was his torment, and through the repetitions of this unfortunate fact, Cherubini does not hesitate to make use of some bolder harmonic progressions (Ex. II-25):

Example II-25. Tenor and bass lines with reduction of string parts, mm.145-57 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais").

145

--|| Marriage was my torment || Marriage was my tor-

le || l'hymen fit mon tourment || l'hymen fit mon tour-

150

-ment it will be my happiness || Marriage was my tor-

-ment || il se ra mon bonheur l'hymen fit mon tour-

*cresc. a poco*

155

-ment it will be my happiness it will be my happiness

-ment il se ra mon bonheur il se ra mon bonheur

*f* →

He dares to use the augmented sixth chord here, plus a chromatic modulation: a-sharp (m.147), still belonging to C major, turns into b-flat (m.151) which already functions as IIIb7 in A minor. Only the d-sharp in m.154, repeated a few times, brings back the augmented sixth, but now as the subdominant of A minor, which leads to the dominant in A major (m.157).

### Ensemble and Mood, Texture

The nature of this section, an aria of the tenor Jason, appears to be a complete contradiction of the previous one - the March of the Argonauts, especially in terms of ensemble and texture. The large tutti of the previous section is followed by a small chamber ensemble of strings accompanying Jason's singing, and this change of itself has dramatic-musical importance. This extreme change has a twofold significance: (a) the pure string ensemble focuses interest on what the solo part is about to say, and the atmosphere is very different from the noisy festive parade; (b) the intimacy evoked, in comparison with the boisterous, outgoing mood of the parade, allows Cherubini to delve into the psychological nuances he is interested in emphasizing in an aria such as this. The physical movement of the parade changes into the static stance of the hero, alone on stage, emotionally at war with himself. The texture is homophonic, in accordance with Jason's obvious need to dominate. In the course of his sentence "il sera mon bonheur" (m.150), in addition to the typical figured-bass part played by the basses, the violins and violas introduce a rhythmic-textural element for the purpose of harmonic filling out.

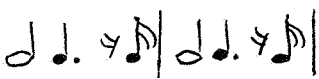
### Dynamics

The basic piano which dominates in this aria is a relevant component for the creation of the very special atmosphere of tension. This is a piano of nervousness and inner conflict, not one of tranquility and relaxation. The permanent piano is interrupted only once by a conspicuous forte, in the familiar repetition of line 5 "il sera mon bonheur", towards the end of B (m.155). This joins all the other musical components in creating <sup>1</sup> concinnity (LaRue) at this moment in the aria. The high a undoubtedly requires a forte for such an expression of tension at this point: Jason is struggling very hard to achieve this "bonheur", he has still to reach utopian happiness. There is a short, gradual crescendo prior to this forte, from m.151. Another crescendo in m.168 (after the beginning of the second appearance of A) does not develop into a forte but returns to piano in m.170. At this point Cherubini seeks some new means of expressing revival - "and my destiny is being renewed" ("et mon destin se renouvelle"). He prefers to surprise the listener by a sudden piano instead of a more natural forte culminating from a crescendo (which would have caused an uninteresting repetition of the same wave of dynamics, crescendo-forte), at the beginning of a subsection resembling a recapitulation.

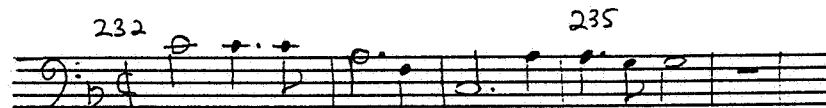
### Delving into Rhythm


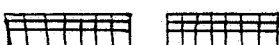
The dotted rhythm, a typical rhythmic feature of this scene, plays an important role in the vocal line of this aria. The varied versions are chains of dotted eighth-notes plus sixteenth-



notes (many of these in A and B) or dotted sixteenth-notes plus thirty-second notes (very typical of C). Because of the "Larghetto" tempo, there is a strong resemblance between these dotted rhythms and the  typical of the March of the Argonauts (Scene 3, Section 1), or this rhythm in longer values in Creon's aria at the beginning of the next section (Scene 3, Section 3) (Ex. II-26):

Example II-26. Beginning of vocal line, mm.232-36 (Creon's aria "Dieux et déesses tutélaires").



The accompanimental figures of Jason's aria played by the violins and violas - which serve mainly for the purpose of harmonic filling - give life to the texture by the vitality of their frequent motion. Their basic pattern is , but Cherubini also intensifies it into  as an integral factor in the preparation for concinnity on the words "il sera mon bonheur" (m.150) towards the end of B.

### Growth Options

Example II-27 provides further insight into Jason's vocal line.

Example II-27. Melodic graph, mm.116-213 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais" and following recitative by Creon).

Example 11-27. Melodic graph, mm. 116-213 (Jason's aria "Éloigne pour jamais" and following recitative by Creon).

The melodic graph is presented on a single staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. It is divided into three main sections: A, B, and K. Section A (mm. 116-120) is marked 'A-major' and shows a melodic line starting on a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. Section B (mm. 132-135) is marked 'B' and shows a melodic line starting on a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. Section K (mm. 155-8, 172, 176-9, 189-193-200-3-5-7, 213) is marked 'K' and shows a melodic line starting on a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The graph also includes a 'F-major' box and a 'V. F-major = 6' label.

Examining the preceding graph, we may note an interesting chromatic linear pentachord up and down which highlights the sensibility style nourished by psychological fears and hesitation.

The concinnity towards the end of B in line 5 (m.150) of the libretto will be summarized below.

The whole of A - "Éloigne pour jamais" - is a stubborn dominant-tonic expression of Jason's anger about his past life. The highest peak <sup>1</sup> a is touched only at the top of a broken triad and it already evokes the atmosphere of nervousness supplied by a steady piano; the dotted rhythms of the solo melody are accompanied by the supporting bass line and the sixteenth-note running patterns in the violins and violas, for the purpose of harmonic filling.

On reaching B, there is more activity in terms of harmonic progression, symbolizing Jason's search for a new destiny and his desire to forget his terrible past (lines 3-4). A modulation to C major is made (m.139). The piano dynamics still rules, the level of pitch for the tenor is regular, and the mild contours reflect a mysterious calm prior to the big climax. Concinnity is evinced thanks to activity in all the musical components since m.145 until the climax which begins at m.150 (towards the end of B) and lasts until the end of B (m.158). Line 5, "L'hymen fit mon tourment, il sera mon bonheur", supports this great activity. It provides musical evidence of a man strained to the utmost

psychologically; his voice climbs here without pause to <sup>1</sup>a and remains at the high level tessitura. The harmonic scheme shows the development of the modulatory process to the area of the lowered third, the key of A minor, using the extraordinary augmented sixth chord and enharmonic modulation; the level of dynamics rises surprisingly to a forte - the only such point in the whole aria.

Scene 7 Section 2: Duet of Medea and Jason, "Perfides  
ennemis qui conspirez ma peine"

Dramatic Context and Content

The last scene of Act I is a long dialogue between Medea and Jason. They start out with spoken dialogue, then Medea sings her aria begging Jason to return to her. In spite of her strong claim of love for him in this aria (Scene 7, Section 1), Jason rejects her in the following spoken dialogue. Medea again implores him to flee with her, but since he refuses, her hatred for him increases.

The stormy atmosphere has been well prepared for the duet of Medea and Jason. Section 2 of Scene 7, which ends Act I, includes an agitated duet between the two who curse each other and deplore the fatal influence of the Golden Fleece on their lives. It may be considered as the finale of Act I.

## Text and Versification

### English translation

#### Medea

1. Oh perfidious enemies who  
conspire to my suffering
2. I call to witness gods of  
heaven and hell
3. You will not conclude this  
hateful marriage

#### Jason

4. Restrain, oh just gods, her  
inhuman fury
5. And do not allow terrible  
crimes
6. To trouble my benefactors and  
to soil their palace

#### Together

7. Oh fatal Fleece! Oh disastrous  
trophy!
8. How much blood and how many  
tears you cost (will cost) us!

#### Medea

9. Oh Colchos! In order to punish  
the ungrateful one whom I  
detest
10. Oh Colchos, inspire me with  
your blackest horrors!

#### Jason

11. Oh depth of evil! Oh criminal  
audacity!
12. Flee, escape the blow that  
threatens you

#### Medea

13. I - to flee? I - to be afraid?!  
Ungrateful one, if her (my)  
misfortune is like that
14. Your wife, while fleeing, will  
pierce your heart

#### Together

- 15+16. Oh fatal fleece! etc.  
(=7+8)

#### Jason

17. Take care of the fury of a  
powerful king, of a king

#### Medea

18. My father was a king, too, and  
I betrayed my father

#### Jason

19. You are running towards death

#### Medea

- But before dying
20. I shall succeed in leaving you  
a bitter memory

#### Together

#### Jason

21. Restrain, oh just gods, her  
(=4) inhuman fury
22. Ward off the evil deeds that  
threaten these places!

#### Medea

23. Oh perfidious enemies who  
(=1) conspire to my suffering
24. You will not conclude this  
(=3) hateful marriage
- 25+26. O fatal Fleece! etc.  
(=15=7+8)

### Original

#### Médée

Perfides ennemis qui  
conspirez ma peine  
Du ciel et des enfers, j'en  
atteste les dieux  
Vous ne formerez point cet  
hymen odieux

#### Jason

Réprimez, justes dieux, sa  
fureur inhumaine  
Et ne permettez pas que  
d'horribles forfaits  
Troublent mes bienfaiteurs,  
et souillent leur palais

#### Ensemble

Ô fatale toison! Ô conquête  
funeste!  
Combien vous nous coûtez  
(coûterez) et de sang et de  
pleurs!

#### Médée

Ô Colchos! pour punir  
l'ingrat que je deteste

Colchos, inspire-moi les  
plus noires horreurs

#### Jason

O comble de forfaits! O  
criminelle audace!  
Fuyez, dérobez-vous au coup  
qui vous menace

#### Médée

Moi fuir! moi craindre!  
Ingrat, si tel est son  
malheur  
Ton épouse, en fuyant te  
percera le cœur

#### Ensemble

O fatale toison! etc.

#### Jason

D'un roi puissant, d'un roi  
redoutez la colère

#### Médée

Mon père aussi regnait, et  
j'ai trahi mon père

#### Jason

Vous courez à la mort

#### Médée

Mais avant de mourir  
Je saurai te laisser un amer  
souvenir

#### Ensemble

#### Jason

Réprimez, justes dieux, sa  
fureur inhumaine  
Écartez les forfaits qui  
menacent ces lieux!

#### Médée

Perfides ennemis qui  
conspirez ma peine  
Vous ne formerez point cet  
hymen odieux  
Ô fatale toison! etc.

### Versification:

The text is built up of several stanzas: a) a sextet (lines 1-6); b) a quatrain (lines 7-10); c) a quatrain (lines 11-14); d) a repetition of the first half of the quatrain b) (lines 15-16 = 7-8); e) a quatrain (lines 17-20); f) a quatrain (lines 21-24); g) another repetition of the first half of the quatrain b) (lines 25-26 = 7-8).

All stanzas are iambic and hexametric, with caesura after the third foot. The first sextet has the rhyme scheme abbacc, rhyme a being feminine, and all others being masculine.

The quatrains b) and f) have alternate rhymes abab, a being feminine and b masculine. The quatrains c) and e) are plain-rhymed (aabb), a being feminine and b masculine.

The poetic form of the text (short stanzas, plain-rhymed quatrains, easily divisible into successive distichs, hexametric lines with a caesura) corresponds to the performance of the text by the two characters, each one delivering his or her short text: several lines, sometimes half a line.

### Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Duet, Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

In comparison to the previous numbers analyzed in detail, and to Medea's aria before this duet (in this same scene) - all solo love-songs - this section is a long expression of hatred by both Medea and Jason. This basic emotion is strengthened by the ensemble (indicated as "tout" by Cherubini in his score), repeating the symbolic words of the refrain (lines 7-8 in their

earliest appearance "*Ô fatale toison!*"). The love-songs (i.e. arias) mentioned above (Dircea to Jason in Scene 1, Jason to Dircea in Scene 3, Medea to Jason in Scene 7) are never too calm or relaxed; none of these reflects a happy love but rather a desire for love diluted by emotional and rational difficulties. These difficulties are the outcome of complex situations out of which Hoffman evolved the libretto, though the unhappy mood which dominates many of these earlier arias prepares for the extremely agitated atmosphere of this duet. The refrain sung by both together in a number of places creates a meaningful strengthening of the sound, so that this relatively long section becomes the finale of Act I.

Hoffman could not avoid some structural repetitions of lines for the purpose of emphasis: his line 21 equals line 4, line 23 equals 1, 24 equals 3, and lines 7-8 contain more repetitions, functioning as a refrain always sung by both. These are in addition to Cherubini's repetitions for his musical scheme and are all indicated below (Table II-10).

Table II-10. Text and form - schematic representation (duet of Medea and Jason "*Perfides ennemis qui conspirez ma peine*").

Table II-10. Text and form - schematic representation (duet of Medea and Jason "Perfides ennemis qui conspirez ma peine").

<u>Big A</u>	A Medea 1	2	3	B Jason 4	5	6
<u>Big B</u>	C Together 7(x2)	8(x3 + 1/2)				
<u>Big C</u>	D Medea 9	10(+1/2x2)	Jason 11(x2)	12	Medea 13 (1st + 1/2x2) they converse 1/2x4 alone)	14(x2) (13 "ingrat") only at the end)
<u>Big B</u>	C Together 7(x2)	8(x3 + 1/2) = 15-16				
<u>Big D</u>	E Jason 17	Medea 18	Jason 19(x2) 1st half	Med. one sentence 20(x2) 2nd half	Jason 21	Medea inserted 22 23 24(x3) 2(1/2) (=1) (=3)
<u>Big B'</u> (enlarged again)	C' Together 7	D' Together 8	Med.: 13(1/2x2) Jas.: 12(1/2x2)	14	Together 15(+1/2x2)	C' = Coda Together 16(+1/2) 8(x5)



The big rondo in which this duet is constructed, makes use of Hoffman's 26 lines, according to his 14 "entrances" on stage (Fig. II-7).

Figure II-7. Timeline: big rondo (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

for "Phrases" see "List of Phrases",  
page Example II-28.

Page	Exemple II-28.	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Medea	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Jason	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Phrases	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Sections	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Sub-Sections	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Medea	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Jason	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Phrases	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Sections	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem
Sub-Sections	let de pleurs	let de pleurs	si tel-à Ton maitre épouse car	te ptem	te ptem

Scoring: 2 oboes

2 oboes  
2 clarinets

2 horns (in E)

2 bassoons

vin 1, vin 2, v1a, vcl, cb

Voices: duet - Soprano (Medea)  
Tenor (Jason)

**Tonality:** The busy orchestral opening of this duet introduces the key

of E minor, in the chromatic relationship of a half-step lower than the previous section - Medea's aria - in F major. Scene 7 is broken up into two completely independent musical sections between which there is only a spoken dialogue, and yet the bold harmonic relationship is perceived when the motive at the very beginning is heard.

There is a clear difference in the harmonic shaping of the two heroes; Medea with her self-confidence and arrogance asserts her decisiveness by her steady key of E minor in subsection A while Jason's nervousness is reflected in subsection B by a prominent modulatory area, using both lower (E minor → C major) and higher (E minor → G major) third relationships. The aim of G major is attained at the end of the most modulatory area - Section C - which is located in the middle of the number as the point of highest harmonic tension, the most concentrated process of modulations in the whole duet.

The third-relationship between the opening key of E minor and the relative major G major is the harmonic framework for this whole number; in spite of the lack of tonic-dominant in the large compositional concept, it contains within itself the fifth relationships by means of the C major - G major connection (see Table II-11, p. 173). C major is an important key on the way to G major (lasting throughout the whole of the B section) and it also functions at one and the same time as the third relationship downwards to E minor. All this leads obviously to a constant feeling of the tonic; therefore, something of the tonic-dominant


opposition is missing in this scene, and it might be that the broad chromatic relationship (F major - E minor) compensates for it in Cherubini's harmonic structural scheme. If this type of harmonic balance rules, the dilemma exists: did the composer plan it consciously or not?

### Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

#### A. Thematic Elements

Example II-28. List of phrases (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is labeled '(orchestral)' and begins at measure 115. The second staff is labeled 'Med.' and begins at measure 118. The third staff is labeled 'Med.' and begins at measure 125. The fourth staff is labeled 'Med.' and begins at measure 135. The fifth staff is labeled 'Med.' and begins at measure 236. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'. There are also measure numbers and some annotations like 'Ton e-pos' and '241'.

Because of the relatively large and complex form here, the system of indication of phrases needs to differ from the one used in the previous detailed analyses: the resemblance between formal inner sectionality and the phrases themselves is not complete (for example, such a resemblance is typical of **P I S K** forms) but each formal section or subsection consists of a few motives listed in the Timeline (p.159) on a separate line. Subsection A, for example, includes phrases a b c d, all sung by Medea. Phrase e is introduced only in subsection B when Jason enters. Yet the whole of subsections A and B make up the A (big) section, and the orchestral motive  functions as a unifying motive by its appearance both at the beginning and at the end of this section (A).

A remarkable thematic coherence is attained by both rhythmic and melodic unifying elements. As to rhythmic strategies, there

are many reappearances of the dotted rhythm: mainly in its dotted quarter-note plus eighth-note version - see motives a, b, f (i.e. refrain), g, h (its second part sung by Medea). It also appears in its slower version - dotted half-note plus quarter-note - see again motives a, b, h (its first part sung by Jason) and very prominently, d and e. Its quicker version, dotted eighth-note plus sixteenth-note, relates clearly to the long motive c.

Melodically there are two unifying elements: minor and major triads rising and descending (Ex. II-29) and a few big leaps of sixths and sevenths up and down (Ex. II-30).

Example II-29. Phrases from Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis", illustrating the element of triads.

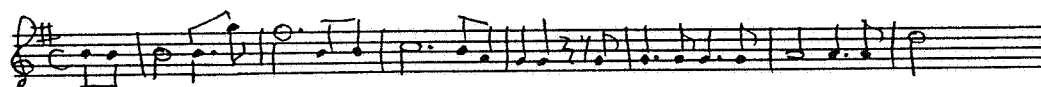
This structural minor third on  $\underline{e} - \underline{g}$  (which also appears on  $\underline{d} - \underline{f}$ ,  $\underline{a} - \underline{c}$ ,  $\underline{f\text{-sharp}} - \underline{a}$ ) is balanced by attractive leaps of sixths and sevenths. These do not occur often, but whenever they do, they have a strong impact and are perceived to a certain degree as effective word-painting at a particular moment (Ex. II-30).

Example II-30. Several phrases from list of phrases of Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis", illustrating sixth leaps up.

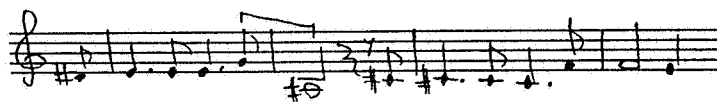
Phrase c (Medea): a few appearances of a minor sixth up: mm.135-141, 317-23



Phrase e (Jason): only one prominent appearance of a minor sixth throughout this phrase, in m.152



Phrase g continued (Jason) brings a very special diminished seventh down which emphasizes the word "forfaits" (crimes), perceived as the strongest in this sentence:



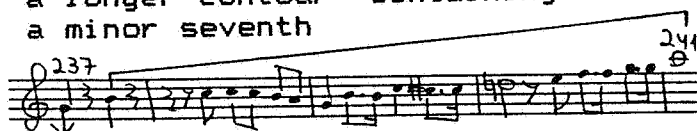
Example II-31 illustrates a hidden interval inter-relationship: the minor seventh is felt as the essence of these two rising melodic contours (for better orientation, see also the whole list of phrases - Ex. II-28 on p. ).

Example II-31. Phrases a and c from list of phrases (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Phrase a continued (Medea): a shorter contour containing a minor seventh



Phrase c continued (Medea): a longer contour containing a minor seventh



The essence of the minor seventh is strongly perceived in contradiction to the gradual inner secondary process of rising melody.

The embellishment of the major third  $\flat - g$  (as part of the E minor chord) down, takes place in phrases c and c<sup>1</sup> in a specific way (c<sup>1</sup> actually derives from c and develops its contours). There is a consistent dropping down onto the note g from  $\flat$  or  $\underline{c}$ , and this specific melodic movement also assists in achieving thematic coherence through the reappearances of phrases c and c<sup>1</sup> throughout this duet (Ex. II-32).

Example II-32. Phrases c, c<sup>1</sup> sung by Medea, mm.135-41, mm.317-23, and mm.227-41 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



## B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

The most agitated part of the libretto in the whole act is used by Cherubini for the duet between Medea and Jason at the end of Scene 7. It would appear that Cherubini constructed the whole act with a view to this atmosphere of rage and anger at the end of the act, gradually intensifying the mood. The storm and stress character of this long conversation between Medea and Jason falls on the ears of listeners well-prepared by the arias

of Creon in Scene 6 and of Medea in Scene 7 (Section 1), strongly characterized by their declamatory style. It concludes the dramatic process of the whole of Act I and presages the coming intensification of drama in the rest of the opera. The storm and stress in this duet deals with the manifestation of hatred and suspicion, albeit intense personal feelings, but feelings that result from the strong love that prevailed between these two personages in the past. The dotted rhythm has made many earlier appearances. See here only one example from Scene 1, Section 1 (an orchestral motive before the first entrance of Dircea) (Ex. II-33).

Example II-33. Orchestral motive at the beginning of Act I, Scene 1, Section 1.



Another prominent appearance of the dotted rhythm element, from Scene 3 - the March of the Argonauts (listed as Section 1 of this scene) (Ex. II-34):

Example II-34. Excerpts from the March of the Argonauts, mm. 1-6, 17-22, 41-46 (Scene 3, Section 1).



Example 11-34. Excerpts from the March of the Argonauts, mm. 1-6, 17-22, 41-46 (Scene 3, Section 1).

1... (beginning)

Ob.

# 6 #6 6 6#

Version 17...

Version 41...

Orch.

Sop. Aut. Ten. Bass

Choir

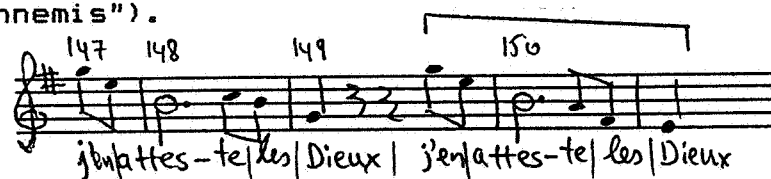
Orch.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'March of the Argonauts'. It is divided into three main sections. The first section, labeled '1... (beginning)', features a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a dynamic marking 'p' and a tempo marking 'Ob.'. The second section, labeled 'Version 17...', consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff, both with a key signature of two sharps. The third section, labeled 'Version 41...', is a multi-staff score. It includes a full orchestra (Orch.) with a treble staff and a bass staff, both with a key signature of two sharps. Below the orchestra staves are four vocal staves for Soprano (Sop.), Alto (Aut.), Tenor (Ten.), and Bass (Bass), grouped under the label 'Choir'. The vocal staves have a key signature of two sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The orchestra staves have a key signature of two sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Here are a few examples illustrating the stormy utterances of Medea and Jason.

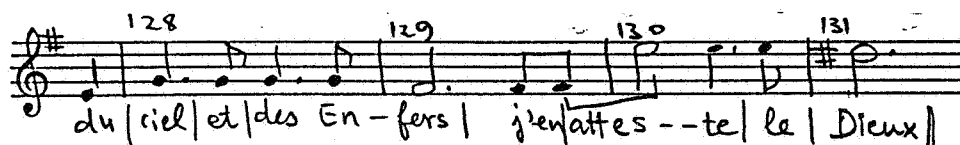
A very firm declamation is made by Medea in phrase d, calling on the gods of heaven and hell (Ex. II-35).

Example II-35. Phrase d sung by Medea, mm.147-51 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



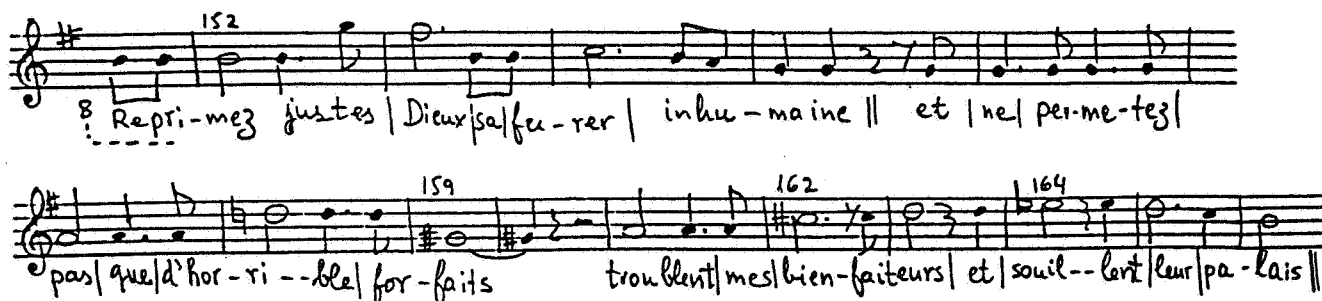
The musical sentence resembles a commanding manner of speech with short and long rhythms alternately juxtaposed and very soon falling a tenth. All this helps to emphasize Medea's decisiveness at this moment. This sentence (line 2 of the libretto in full) is used even earlier by Cherubini as an important highlight in Medea's decisive manner of self-expression (Ex. II-36).

Example II-36. Phrase b continued, sung by Medea, mm.128-31 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



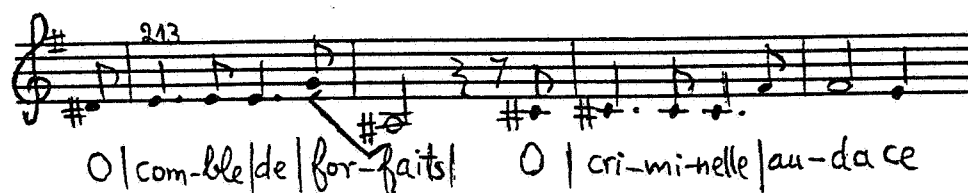
The decisiveness is again achieved by the remarkable differences between long and short rhythmic values (for example, a dotted half-note followed by two eighth-notes) and the sudden leap of a seventh up. Jason's immediate answer is menacing (Ex. II-37):

Example II-37. Segment e sung by Jason, mm.152-66 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



Jason's dreadful words present a dramatic answer to Medea's previous sentence, again introducing strong leaps. These are followed by a chromatic phrase which continues the threatening atmosphere in a different way. Jason's response to Medea in phrase g contains an important leap once more - a diminished seventh down (mm.213-14) (Ex. II-38).

Example II-38. Phrase g continued, sung by Jason, mm.213-16 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



### C. Melodic Contours and Highest Peaks

The melodic contours of this duet may be defined as extremely wild on the whole. Almost every phrase has a very large range, taking into account the technical vocal potential. These melodies also abound in leaps, including rapid contradictory changes in the direction of contours (Ex. II-39).

Example II-39. Beginning of phrase c, sung by Medea, mm.229-33 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



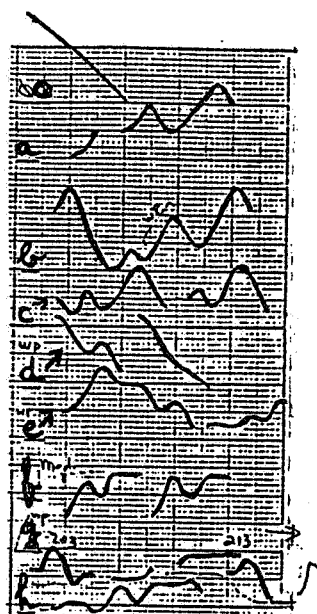
For the same reason, see also the extreme downwards contour of the opening orchestral motive (Ex. II-40):

Example II-40. Reduction of orchestral motive  $\phi$ , mm.115-16 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



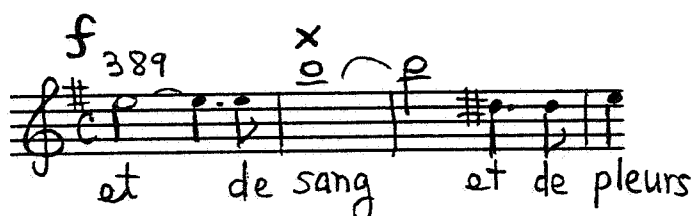
It would appear that the nature of the melodic contours as described above is the strongest factor in the creation of the storm and stress mood. A look at the graphic outline of the phrases provides an insight into the general effect of the complete melodic contours, especially when compared with the graphic outline of the phrases of the first section of this act (Fig. II-8).

Figure II-8. Melodic contours of the thematic units shown graphically (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



The highest peaks in Medea's and Jason's vocal lines reflect the high tessitura of both as an integral part of their furious expression. We find ourselves listening here to a battle of words. Medea is already in an angry mood; her high <sup>2</sup>b appears around the beginning of her first entrance in mm.125, 132, in the sentence "j'en atteste les dieux" at the beginning and at the end of motive b (see the complete quotation in the list of phrases, p.161) and also at the end of the coda in a long rhythmic value (mm.390-91) (Ex. II-41).

Example II-41. Melodic excerpt sung by Medea, mm.389-92 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



This extended last <sup>2</sup>b shapes the very last cadence and has the formal importance of a resounding final note, aesthetically <sup>2</sup>acceptable because of the many preceding appearances of <sup>2</sup>a throughout Medea's part (see, for example, m.297 on the repeated word "mourir" (dying), line 19).

Jason's highest peak has its relatively long high <sup>1</sup>a in the coda as well, in mm.357, 359, also using the same line B from the refrain ("combien") (Ex. II-42).

Example II-42. Melodic excerpt sung by Jason, mm.352-5 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



The levels of pitch for the vocal parts of Medea and Jason show a relatively high tessitura throughout the duet:

Medea: <sup>1</sup> e , <sup>1</sup> b , <sup>2</sup> f-sharp , <sup>2</sup> g , <sup>2</sup> a

and Jason: <sup>1</sup> a , <sup>1</sup> b , <sup>1</sup> f-sharp , <sup>1</sup> d

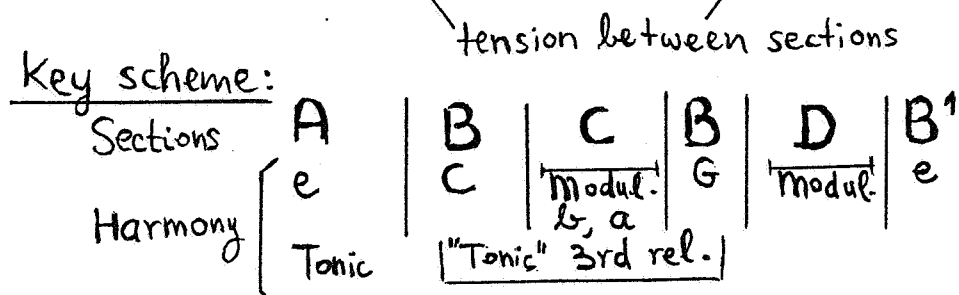
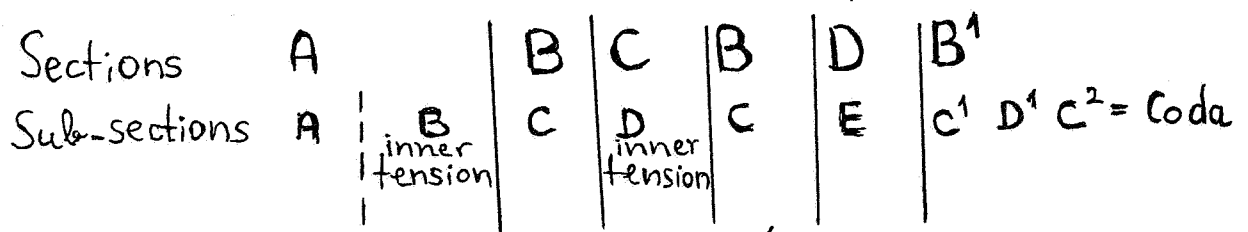
This prepares a suitable background for their highest peaks: <sup>2</sup> b for Medea and <sup>1</sup> a for Jason.

The level of pitch for the orchestral bass and cello, demonstrates a broad diapason, <sup>1</sup> E , <sup>1</sup> G , B , e , g , b , c , e , employed a great deal for its walking-bass function; this fact no doubt assists in establishing a stormy, agitated mood for the duet, since the bass line is always heard clearly above the ensemble. It reaches its underpoint, D-sharp, easily (see m.134) as well as its peak, <sup>1</sup> g (see m.271). This is also a reason for its agitated nature.

#### D. Text and Harmony

The vocabulary of chords includes a relatively large number of diminished chords besides the regular triads, and in addition to the usual authentic cadences and half-cadences, there are varied deceptive cadences (see Ex. II-45, p. 175, for details). This vocabulary which, in comparison with the rest of the act, reflects a relatively high level of dissonance, immediately proves that harmony plays an important role in the creation of the tense mood pervading this duet. Yet the build-up of tension and stability in harmonic densities (tense and less tense) and the inner key scheme should be noticed; both diagrams of Table II-11 allow for an overview of the complex, well-constructed section. Taking into account its dimensions, there is no doubt that it should be considered the finale of Act I.

Table II-11. Tension and stability in harmonic relationships for the entire number (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").



The chords often move in one-measure units. This relatively fast rhythm is kept up steadily and highlights Cherubini's ability to obtain all the harmonic richnesses he needs for his dramatic-musical purposes. Following is an insight into the most interesting harmonic progressions of this duet, identified with subsections B, D and C (Exs. II-43, 44), the musical sentence containing four deceptive cadences towards the end of the coda (Ex. II-45).

In subsection B, Jason first responds to Medea's first entrance; he bursts out as if unconsciously calling on the gods not to permit her crimes (Ex. II-43):

Example II-43. Harmonic outline in the form of figured-bass, mm. 152-70 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

mm. 152-6 157-8-9 160-1 -2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 170

forbids

Key e

(X) 173

G → C

Jason appears after the relatively steady harmonic progression in Medea's self-assured first entrance, and drives himself into an ever-fiercer rage; this energy is increased within the harmonic progression itself by the two deceptive cadences on  $\frac{5}{6}$  chords (both dissonant and not regular diatonic ones). There is no resolution (which would indicate some relaxation) but an option for the continuation of the progression with greater tension. The harmonic peaks come first on the word "forfaits" (i.e. crimes - of Medea, line 5) in m.159, then on "bienfaiteurs" (i.e. benefactors, line 6) in a sentence of the libretto which is more complicated than its predecessor and makes a point of saying things in an unclear manner so that the impetus of interesting harmonic language is kept up until the end. This is the first modulatory area.

The second modulatory area provides the opportunity for a bolder harmonic progression; it appears in subsection D where the duet's first conversational type of vocal texture takes place. The C (refrain) subsection introduces the combined singing of the two heroes; subsection D develops a more tense attitude to their singing together: they compete with one another and begin to converse, and this vital musical conversation (from line 9 on) is combined with a rich progression of deviation to the inner keys (leaving C major and arriving back at E minor): A minor, B minor, D major, again B minor, and A minor (Ex. II-44):

Example II-44. Full harmonic outline in the form of figured-bass, mm.203-28 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Handwritten musical notation for Example II-44, showing a figured-bass progression for a duet. The notation includes two staves with notes and figured bass symbols below. The progression starts in C major (I) and moves through various keys: A minor (a), B minor (b), D major (D), A minor (a), and E minor (e). The progression is marked with measure numbers 203-28 and includes annotations for 'German' and 'Italian' styles.

Figured-bass symbols: I, I<sup>6</sup>, I, 6 I, V<sup>6</sup>, IV<sup>6</sup>, V<sup>6</sup>, I. Key signatures: C, a, b, D, a, e. Measure numbers: 203, 7, 210, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 220, 1, 2, 3, 4, 225, 6, 7, 8. Annotations: German, Italian.



The most exceptional harmonic points are identified with Medea's extremely furious line (13) when the conversation reaches its climax: "Moi fuir? moi craindre? Ingrat" (i.e. "I - to flee? I - to be afraid? Ungrateful one"). There are two astonishing harmonic shifts in m.225 (on "moi") - a total chromatic shift of all the voices of the chord a half-step down, and in m.228 (on "Ingrat") a sudden minorization of the dominant grade of A minor which immediately turns the whole harmonic field back to the original opening key of the duet - E minor. Measure 225 is very concentrated in its harmonic content; the F major chord (the total chromatization of the F-sharp major chord) changes into the German  $\frac{6}{5}$  which transfers the whole tonality into the key of A minor by its  $\frac{6\sharp}{5}$ , and all this is effected by means of a full chordal cut of the texture. This also shows a remarkable correlation between texture and harmony.

The last harmonic exception introduced here belongs to the very end of the act. Cherubini elaborates the last authentic cadence in E minor by means of four deceptive cadences, marked x (Ex. II-45).

Example II-45. Harmonic outline in the form of figured-bass, mm.366-88 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

366 367 374-5 376 377 378 385 386 387 388

Key Cad. e

6 4 # #6 4 3 #1 3 -I 7 4 VI=IV II 6 I 6 # 7 # #1 I 6 4 # 7 # I

(x) (x) (x) (x)

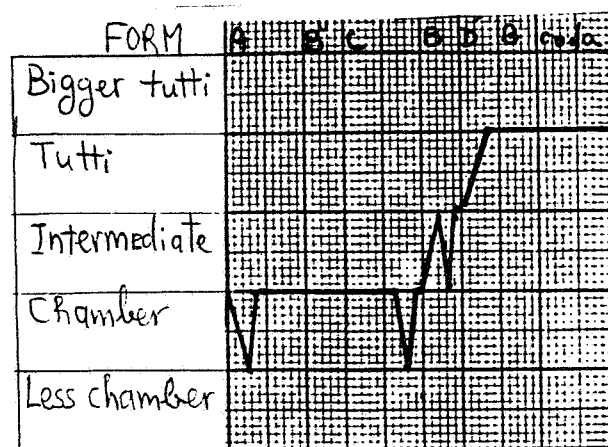
In mm.374, 376, 377, 385, Cherubini delays the harmonic resolution to the obvious final dominant four times before the last tonic, thus adding a tremendous harmonic complement to the storm

and stress expression. The arrival on the submediant of the key of C major in m.386 is completely unexpected as well as the chromatic shift from a to a-sharp in the bass line, plus their filled-in harmonies in mm.383-84. All this happens in line 8 ("combien") of the refrain. The refrain takes on a symbolic power here - both heroes sing in a seemingly regular homophonic texture with an overall power only evident in the ending tutti; but with an insight into these four deceptive cadences, the whole harmonic effect becomes much stronger. These make for a remarkable coherence of harmonic tension for the ending of the act.

### Ensemble and Mood, Texture

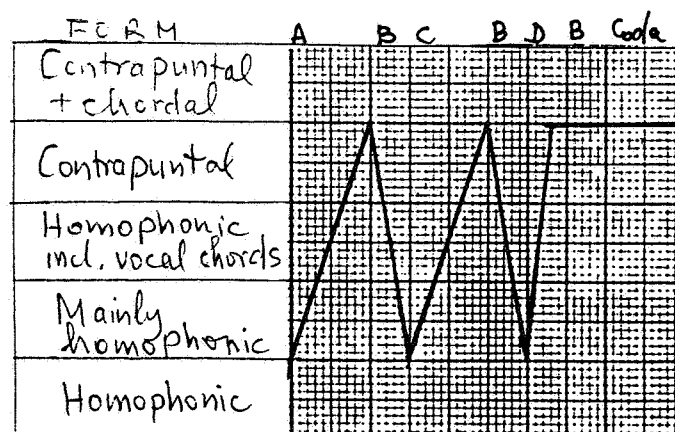
The details of the ensemble are given on p.159. It is of interest that the biggest tutti which has already appeared in a few places of the act, is sustained here longer than ever before. It grows out of a chamber ensemble, a tendency which indicates quite clearly the desire to create high dramatic tension and power towards the end of the act. (See the graph in Fig. II-9 which deals with changes in the fullness of orchestration).

Figure II-9. Graph indicating changes in the fullness-of-texture-element for Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis".



The complexity of vocal texture develops in a certain way combined with harmony, and both serve the dramatic role of the libretto. The great drama of lines 12-13 inspired Cherubini to compose a stormy musical conversation in Big Section C, which is also the most modulatory section in this duet. He employs solo homophonic textures for Medea and afterwards for Jason in Big Section A, and then introduces the refrain in Big Section B, sung by Medea and Jason together. Since both heroes have started to converse with one another musically, this type of vocal texture is repeated again broadly in Big Section D, between the refrain sections (second Big B and B<sup>1</sup>). This consistent movement between mainly homophonic and contrapuntal, contrapuntal + chordal textures - is illustrated here in Fig. II-10. At last it remains with the contrapuntal + chordal as a norm for achieving the tension needed for the end of Act I.

Figure II-10. Graph indicating types of textures throughout Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis".



The storm and stress mood evolves out of the nature of the motives themselves and their interrelationships as described in pp. 161-5 (Exs. II-28-32) and also in their melodic contours delineated on the right side of Fig. II-7 (the last section). The

sharpest oblique line is the unifying orchestral element  $\mathcal{Q}$  : see its five appearances as indicated in the Timeline (p.159) and also its piano-vocal outline in Ex. II-40 (p.170). This sharp movement down, right at the very beginning of the number, orchestrated in an almost full tutti unison, immediately creates the storm and stress affect. By its reappearances, this orchestral motive becomes symbolic of the whole musical section (see it in its first appearances, in the first measures of the full score (Ex. II-46).

Example II-46. Full score, mm.115-20, opening of Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis".

(115) *Medée* *Duo* (120)

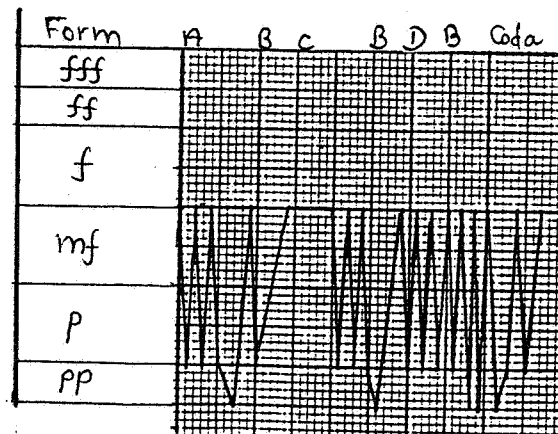
The musical score is for the opening of the Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis" (mm. 115-20). It is a full score for orchestra and two vocal parts (Medée and Jas). The tempo is marked "Allegro" and the time signature is 2/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes staves for Flutes, Clarinet, Cor Anglais, Bassoon, Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The vocal parts are for Medée and Jas. The score shows a rapid alternation between forte (f) and piano (p) dynamics, with some measures reaching pianissimo (pp). The lyrics "Perfides ennemis" are written under the vocal staves.

### Dynamics

The dynamics curve of this duet illustrates an intensive, rapid alternation between the forte and piano levels of dynamics, in some places also sinking to a pianissimo (m.151); at this stage of the drama, this is the strongest differentiation that

Cherubini allows himself, with an eye to producing higher and lower levels of dynamics in the next acts (fortissimo, pianissimo).

Figure II-11. Graph indicating levels of dynamics for Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis".



The rapid alternations of dynamics throughout the duet help to establish its stormy mood from its very first moments. In terms of dynamics, Cherubini does not wait for any process to be developed, but starts immediately with a forte and with intensive activity. This concentration of movement can be noted by making a comparison between the graph of Fig. II-11 and the rest of the dynamics curve for the whole act.

The best insight into Cherubini's use of this strategy can be achieved by looking at the dynamics in correlation with the text, form, phrases and orchestration (Fig. II-12).



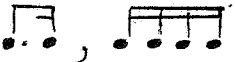
Figure II-12. Timeline of mm.115-400 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis") including text, form, phrases and orchestration.

[illegible][illegible]

\* changing parts  
in comparison to  
Section B m. 171

Refrain		Ô fatale	Maitre	Ô fatale	funeste	Combien	casual	et de ' pleurs Combien	Pleurs Combien	et de pleurs
ext	Medea	Ô fatale	Maitre	Ô fatale	funeste	Combien	casual	et de ' pleurs Combien	Pleurs Combien	et de pleurs
	Jason	Ô fatale	Fugz	Ô fatale	funeste	Combien	casual	et de ' pleurs Combien	Pleurs Combien	et de pleurs
	Orchestration	Str. in 4/4	continues	continues	continues	continues	continues	continues	continues	Orch Solo
	Dynamics	f	p	f	pp cresc.	f	pp	p	f	p
	Phrases	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
	Sections	B <sup>1</sup>								
	Sub-Sections	C <sup>1</sup>								
	Form	324	335	341	342	344	346	348	367	374
		385	388	392	399					

## Delving into Rhythm

The dotted rhythms once more become an essential element which helps to build up the rhythmic profile of the vocal lines in this duet. They appear in various lengths - dotted quarter-note plus eighth-note in phrases a and f; dotted half-note plus quarter-note or two eighth-notes in phrases b, d, e and h; dotted eighth-note plus sixteenth-note prominently in phrase c<sup>1</sup>. These various dotted rhythms are constantly combined with symmetrical values such as  in a most integrated manner. The unifying orchestral motive  is of a completely different nature - relatively quite short and characterized by the forceful forte tutti unison chain of running sixteenth-notes coming immediately after the first half-note, also in forceful forte tutti unison. Its reappearances come in opposition to the longer contours described above. As usual in this act, the orchestral accompaniment introduces filling-in running rhythms , which draw their mechanical force from the walking-bass line, allowing the rich vocal lines to flourish above a strong and steady rhythmic background.

## Growth Options (including Maps and Graphs)

This detailed analytical discussion draws to its end with a final description of the various sections (or subsections) of the duet. The succession of these sections is demonstrated by maps, graphs and examples which clarify Cherubini's techniques. According to Cherubini's plan, each section aims at assaulting the listener's ear from a different direction.

Subsection A immediately makes a strong impression with its wide melodic curves, which move between the highest and lowest extremes very rapidly (including, of course, the orchestral opening theme *Q* which later becomes a unifying motive between the main vocal entrances). The melodic graph of this subsection (until Jason's first entrance) needs to be drawn in three levels (Ex. II-47), while the second and third are considered as two components of the same melodic level; these wild melodic contours reflect equally important broken triads.

Example II-47. Melodic graph, mm.116-47 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

these two staves serve simultaneously for the same level of graph

Medea is very firm, calling on the gods to annul Jason's and Dircea's marriage (Ex. II-48, phrase d); the rhythmic attack is typical of the dramatic style with short rhythmic values preceding the longer ones.

Example II-48. Phrase d, sung by Medea, mm.148-51 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

147 150

jèn|at-tes - te| les|Dieux | jèn|at-tes - te| les| Dieux




Phrase b, 20 measures earlier, already reflects Medea's forceful manner of expression. On the words "j'en atteste", it introduces a musical phrase with considerable differences between long and short rhythmic values (Ex. II-49); this remarkable dramatic phrase, including a minor seventh leap up, appears quite early in the duet:

Example II-49. From phrase b, sung by Medea, mm.128-31 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

127-8 129 130 131

du | ciel | et | des | en-fers | j'en | at-tes-te | le | Dieux

The orchestral accompaniment assists in developing this strident mood by a rapid, decisive instrumental fragment repeating the rhythm  in the violins and violas, to fill in when the voice is silent (Ex. II-50):

Example II-50. Full score, mm.145-51 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

[illegible]

Jason's response (beginning of subsection B, m.152, Ex. II-51) immediately reflects his tense mood; he also sings in broad melodic contours, but supported by a modulatory progression with a higher level of dissonance.

Example II-51. Jason's segment e, mm.152-66 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Handwritten musical notation for Example II-51, showing two staves of music in G major. The first staff starts at measure 152 and the second at measure 159. The lyrics are: "Répri-mez jus-tes Dieux sa fu-rer in-hu-mai-ne et he/per-me-tez pas qu'il d'hor-ri-ble for-faits trou-ble lent mes bien-fai-teurs et souil--lent leur po--lais".

Jason's only solo throughout the duet begins at this point, a significantly soloistic line with rich harmonic content, immediate modulation of the minor third relationship higher, and typical of diminished chords. Example II-52 with its Map of Stresses illustrates clearly a few "coordinating rhythms": the surface-rhythm featuring the text, the chord-rhythm, the melodic-stress-rhythm and total rhythmic effect. Rhythm is present in every active component; the whole "network of rhythms" is pictured as follows:

Example II-52. Map of Stresses for Jason's segment e, mm.152-67 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis") (each diminished chord is marked (x)).


Example 11-52. Map of Stresses for Jason's segment e, mm.152-67  
(Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis") (each diminished chord is marked ⊗).

melodic stress	m. no.	Surface rhythm	Text	Réprimés	justes	Dieux	sal-fu-ver	in-hu	maine	et	ne	per-me-tez	pas	que	d'hori-ble	for-faits
>	152	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	153	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	154	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	155	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	156	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	157	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	158	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	159	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩

effect

melodic stress	m. no.	Surface rhythm	Text	troub	lent	mes	bien	-fai	-teurs	et	souil	-lent	leur	pa	-lais	et	souil	-lent
>	160	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	161	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	162	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	163	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	164	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	165	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	166	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
>	167	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩

effect

This mosaic demonstrates an interesting "counterpoint" between the surface rhythm and the chord rhythm in m.155: the key of E minor is maintained for two measures and the rhythmic-melodic cut occurs right in the middle of the first measure of this couple of bars. Later the disproportion becomes more evident: the harmonic rhythm becomes faster and changes once per measure; it is steady, as are the melodic stresses which also become faster ( > > > ) but not symmetrically so. The appearance of diminished chords becomes more intensive. The general effect (  ) created, provides an interesting picture: each successive wave of tension-and-relaxation is longer than the previous one, gathers more energy as it progresses until its breaking point, and the general effect is one of a constant build-up of power.

Big Section B introduces the first refrain sung by both heroes together. Ex. II-53 illustrates the vocal lines by means of a melodic graph using three levels. Medea and Jason sing in contrapuntal progression until the point, m.194, at which their singing becomes purely chordal.

Example II-53. Melodic graph, mm.173-203 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Example II-53. Melodic graph, mm. 173-203 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Handwritten musical score for Example II-53, showing a melodic graph for measures 173-203. The score is written on three staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a common time signature 'C' in a box. It contains a melodic line with notes and rests, with measure numbers 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 190, 191, 193, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, and 203 written above. A bracket labeled 'transpos.' spans from measure 183 to 191. Below the first staff, there are two more staves. The second staff has a treble clef and contains notes with 'harm.' and 'J. m.' markings. The third staff has a treble clef and contains notes with 'harm.' and 'J. m.' markings. The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols like notes, rests, and accidentals.

Both voices are described melodically in the graph from m.173 onwards; in m.193 the two voices are united in a vertical octave in the graph, and from m.195 they now sing the same line. The three quasi-Schenkerian levels of the graph help us to arrive at the essence of the musical-dramatic expression of the refrain: in spite of the clear tonic, C major, the note d (the fifth of the dominant) is very central because of its many repetitions, at the same time being an adjacent tone to c. In m.195 the strong d stands out in particular, a very clear common fifth of the dominant here. The tonal instability lasts throughout almost all of B, and only at the last moment is the resolution of the C major tonic heard with its preceding cadence (mm.202-3). The permanent tone d makes for restlessness, and in addition to its being the fifth of the dominant of C major, it also brings about the arrival of its own fifth - a - in m.199. The two protagonists burst out simultaneously in anger and dissatisfaction; it would appear that both of them wish to punish the gods and the whole world, and their hysterical mood is underlined by the continuous long piano until m.195. Musically and psychologically, this is a good way of preparing for the other types of nervous expression to come.

Bold melodic curves as well as intensive modulations feature strongly in section C. The harmonic progressions have already been described in detail in Ex. II-44, p. 174. Let us now look in detail at the melody of this first musical conversation between the two heroes (Ex. II-54); the peaks and underpoints of huge melodic leaps are noted:


Example II-54. Vocal line sung by Medea, then Jason, mm.204-20 (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

Med. 204 diminished  
O Col-chos pour pu-nir l'in-grat que je de-tes-te Col-chos inspi-re moi tes plus  
210 Jas.-con'd  
noires horreurs in-spi-re moi tes plus noires horreurs  
Jas. O comble de for-faits  
215  
crim-nelle au-da-cell fu-yez de-ro-bez vous au coup qui vous me-na-ce

Medea's mood is very well served by the broken diminished chord, together with the leaps up and down in mm.209-10. The leaps of triads and octaves are followed first by the minor seventh  $\underline{e}$  to  $\underline{d}$  in m.210 and secondly, and much more strongly, in mm.213-14 by the diminished seventh  $\underline{g}$  to  $\underline{a}$ -sharp on his word "forfait" ("crime") comes out forcefully. On "fuyez, dérobez", the movement downwards - the "blow" - may be considered merely as word-painting.

The last important expression of both heroes' emotions occurs in the coda. The following Map of Stresses (Ex. II-55) illustrates a remarkable contrapuntal network created by the basic difference between surface rhythms, rich strettos of the two vocal lines and the steady walking-bass.

Example II-55. Map of Stresses for coda, mm.356-68, with Medea and Jason singing together (Med.-Jas. duet "Perfides ennemis").

In comparison with the stable harmonic changes of one per measure and the steady walking-bass in quarter-notes, the conversational-vocal texture shatters this symmetry by means of rapid, strettolike vocal entries. In this way continuity is achieved. The melodic stress ( > ) does not show any clear breaks and it joins up into the final effect (  ) of progressive tension. The musical expression keeps going in long, compact lines, as may be seen in the lowest line of Ex. II-55: there are only two waves of continuity, the second (mm.360-67) being longer than the first; in the course of mm.356-63, there is no psychological break, and the contrapuntal complex changes into a chordal, homophonic, "relaxed" texture only in m.360. This alleviation of tension brings with it a most dramatic expression of the heroes: by the use of the same material (music and text), they demonstrate simultaneously their common love in the past and their mutual hatred in the present.

Ex. II-55

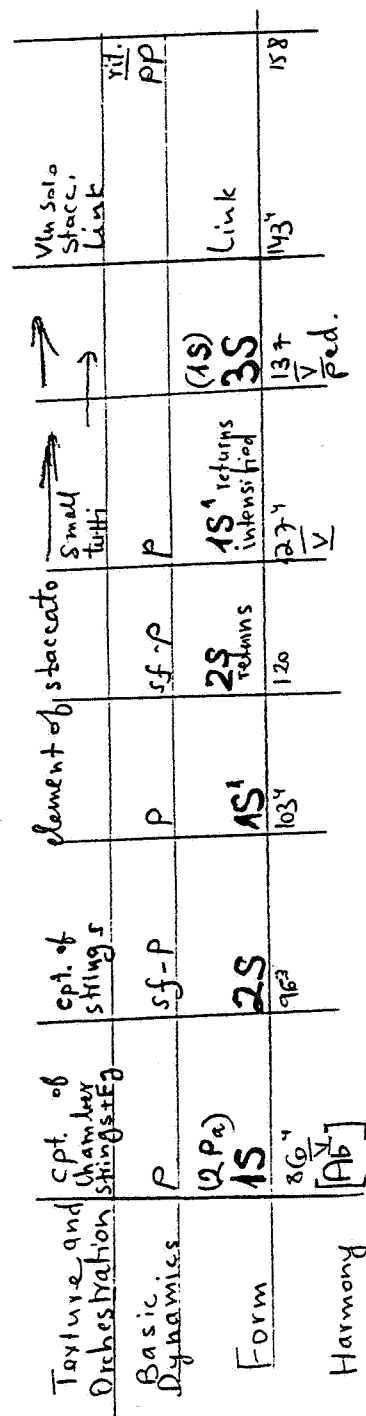
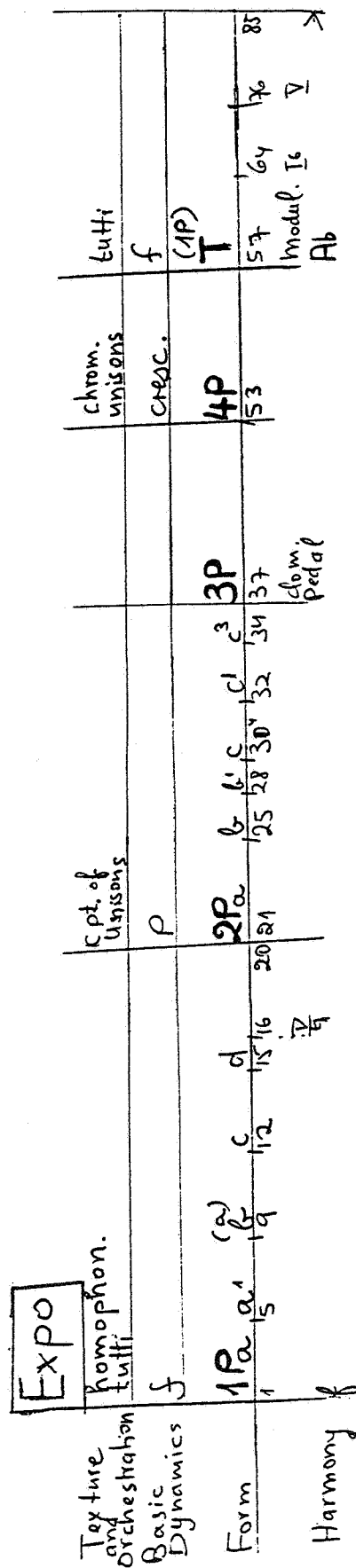
[illegible]



# OVERTURE

## Timeline

Figure II-13. Timeline: sonata form and reversed recap



Texture and Rehebr.	Dev.									
	Homophon.									
	tutti									
Dynamics	ff									
Form	(1P) → (4P)									
	159	163	167	171	175	181	187	191	198	
	[Ab]	$\frac{V}{h}$ bb	I	$\frac{V}{h}$ c	$\frac{V}{h}$ f	$\frac{V}{h}$ f	$\frac{V}{h}$ dom. pedal			

# "Bow Recap."

## Reversed Recap.

"Bow Recap."												
Reversed												
Recap.												
Orchestra, Dynamics	P	sf-p		element of staccato								
	1S	2S	1S <sup>1</sup>	2S	1S <sup>2</sup>	3S	Sol. vln. stacc. Link		K			
Form	199	209	216	233	240	249	258	260				
Harmony	$\frac{V}{h}$					$\frac{V}{h}$	equal for F		→			
	F											
			</									

# List of Phrases

Example II-56. List of phrases for the overture.

Expo 1

1Pa

2Pa 21

2Pb

2Pc 30

C1

3P (beginning) 32

Flauti

Hautb.

Clar

Vl. 1

Vl. 2

Viols

Vlc

Handwritten musical score for strings, featuring multiple staves and various annotations.

**Staff 1 (Violins 1 & 2):** Starts with a **4p** marking. The Violin 2 part includes a **53** measure mark and a **cresc** (crescendo) instruction.

**Staff 2 (Violas & Cellos):** Includes a **57** measure mark and a **(1p)** marking.

**Staff 3 (Violins 1 & 2):** Includes a **15** measure mark and a **86** measure mark.

**Staff 4 (Violas & Cellos):** Includes a **25** measure mark and a **96** measure mark. A **fp** (fortissimo) marking is present.

**Staff 5 (Violins 1 & 2):** Includes a **151** measure mark and a **103** measure mark.

**Staff 6 (Violas & Cellos):** Includes a **103** measure mark.

**Staff 7 (Violins 1 & 2):** Includes a **143** measure mark and a **solu-link** marking.

**Annotations and Notes:**

- harm. Accp. m. m. 36...** (harmonic accompaniment, measure 36...)
- in 127 returns + intensification by doubling of upper line (with 1st octave) and bass line (with Fg)** (in 127 returns + intensification by doubling of upper line (with 1st octave) and bass line (with Fg))
- etc.**

Reversed Recap.

249

35

new material in the S of the Reversed Recap

(4P) NT 272

strings

cresc

277

(3P)

293

Fl<sub>1</sub>

Fl<sub>2</sub>

Hautlois

Clarinets

Cors en f

Cors en m<sub>b</sub>

Bassons

(Timp) Timbales

Ve<sub>1</sub>

Ve<sub>2</sub>

(Violas) V<sub>la</sub>

V<sub>c</sub>

Wood

3P

319

Full + chordal accompaniment

327

330

### Basic Remarks

The atmosphere of storm and stress dominating this overture makes for a symbolic introduction to the whole opera in which Cherubini delineates Medea's character. Phrase P in all its derivatives can be considered as reflecting Medea's nature extremely well: the main phrase 1P illustrates her strength which will help her to overcome any obstacle in her way, scattering fear and horror about her; 2P, on the other hand, reflects her sense of true love, the nuances of her inner feelings; 3P and 4P, in this context, leave no room for doubt: here we have Medea struggling to gain victory every time. The S theme in all its parts can be considered as the antithesis, matching the opposing characters according to their psychological nature: the delicate Dircea, the relatively uninteresting male character of Jason. Phrase 2S can be said to fit exactly the idle, feminine Dircea and Neris, while 1S can be identified with Jason's thoughts about his career: this is always in evidence with him - his desire for power overrules his need for love. This progression of thoughts may be understood from the simple, balanced surface rhythms of 1S and 1S<sup>1</sup>, while the femininity of Dircea is clearly felt in 2S. Yet the main emotional experience awaits us in the opera itself: with every appearance of Medea on stage, vis-à-vis the opposing male characters (Jason and Creon), the psychological preparation for the murder of her sons increases. Her cruelty and her flame of love at one and the same time - these have already begun to be generated in the P themes of the overture.

Yet the formal structure should be noted: sonata form with a

reversed recapitulation is used here, "an ingenious solution to the problem of ending a minor movement with a major second group in the original mode" as Basil Deane writes.<sup>5</sup> The strong thematic interrelationships are clearly shown in the Timeline and list of phrases, by illustrating the derivation of 1S and 1S from 2Pa; the descending line of quarter-notes and the unit of dotted eighth-note plus sixteenth-note are common; the dotted eighth-note plus sixteenth-note already appear in 1P.

The short development section is still the most concentrated in terms of harmonic content. It modulates to the neighbouring keys of B minor and C minor in relation to A-flat major.

In this overture the role of orchestration is much more complex than the role of harmony. Cherubini's orchestral concepts are highly regarded by Deane. "Cherubini deploys his forces with imaginative insight into the characteristics of the individual instruments, and a fine sense of balance and clarity in the tuttis. In some respects his conceptions were well ahead of his time" (ibid., p. 41). From the Timeline we are able to comprehend Cherubini's attention to balance between tuttis and chamber sections, as well as between types of texture (homophonic, contrapuntal, polyphonic, unisons and short soli). This variety is connected with the necessity of tension to counteract relaxation. The huge variety stretches from full tutti (pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets in C, bassoons, 4 horns, tympani and strings) down to the use of obbligato parts.

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<sup>5</sup> Basil Deane, Cherubini (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.40.

CHAPTER III

ACT II



## DRAMATIC ACTION AND MUSICAL STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

### Overview: Action and Musical Organization

List of characters in the order of appearance:

Medea	Soprano
Neris	Mezzo-soprano
Creon	Bass
People (crowd)	Chorus
Jason	Tenor

Act II is also divided into 7 scenes. After a gloomy orchestral introduction, the act commences with Medea, enraged, descending from the palace, cursing Jason for preventing her from seeing her children: "Oh abominable marriage! Oh fury! Oh revenge! Oh unworthy retribution for all my crimes! You prohibit me, oh cruel man, from seeing my children!" ("Ô detestable hymen! Ô fureur! Ô vengeance! Ô de tous me forfaits indigne recompense! Tu me défends, cruel, de revoir mes enfans!"). She summons the gods of Hades to aid her in her vengeance.

In Scene 2 Neris, Medea's handmaiden, advises her mistress to hide from the wrath of Creon and his people: "Alas! Everything betrays you...The king himself approves of the people's demand. He searches for you, he threatens you, he wants a sacrifice; flee, escape" ("Hélas! tout vous trahit...Le Roi même, du peuple approuve le transport. Il vous cherche, il menace, il veut un sacrifice; fuyez, dérobez-vous"). In spite of this warning, Medea decides to remain where she is.

At the beginning of Scene 3, Creon instructs Medea to leave because everyone is afraid of her magic powers: "Oh you! Whose wild sight and impious mouth presage black crimes, flee, I outlaw

you; leave my state" ("Ô vous! dont l'oeil farouche et dont la bouche impie présage de noirs attentats, fuyez, je vous proscriis; sortez de mes états"). Medea begs for asylum in Corinth: "However, by which right dare you exile me?" ("Mais pourtant, de quel droit m'osez-vous exiler?"); she promises that she will not bother Jason or Dircea - and at this point the music begins. But Creon refuses: "Leave my possessions, nothing can bend me" ("Sortez de mes états, rien ne peut me fléchir"). Then Medea begs for just one day: "Well then, I submit because everyone abandons me; I shall submit to the exile which my husband orders me. But for only one day deign to postpone my exile" ("Eh bien! je m'y sou mets, puisque tout m'abandonne; Je subirai l'exil que mon époux m'ordonne. Mais d'un jour seulement daignez le différer"). After much hesitation, Medea is granted her request by Creon who is persuaded that her sole aim is to take leave of her children. Scene 3 concludes with Medea's prayer: "Oh Jupiter! Let the perpetrator of my misfortune not escape your penetrating sight!" ("Ô Jupiter! que l'auteur de ma peine ne se dérobe pas a ton oeil pénétrant").

Scene 4 consists almost completely of Neris lamenting the fate of her beloved mistress. This lament is partly spoken and partly sung; Neris' aria begins with the sentence: "Ah! Our suffering will be common; the most tender sympathy unites me to your destiny" (Ah! nos peines seront communes; le plus tendre intérêt m'unit a votre sort"). The rest of Scene 4 is devoted to Medea's preparations for revenge, again in spoken verse, after Neris has completed her aria.

In Scene 5 Medea, during her very tense spoken dialogue with Jason, discovers that he loves his two sons dearly. When he says: "No, nothing can separate me from them, do not ask it any more, stop hoping for it, I would rather give up my blood and my life" ("Non, rien ne peut m'en séparer, ne le demandez plus, assez de l'espérer; je donnerais plutôt et mon sang, et ma vie"), she responds forcefully, to herself: "He loves them" ("Il les aime"). After her tearful entreaties, expressing the great need to see her children before leaving them forever: "Dear children, I have to leave you! My sons, I have lost you forever" ("Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne! Mes fils, c'est par jamais que je vous ai perdus"), Jason allows her to see them, though he himself refuses to part with them. Both characters here again embark upon a dialogue of hatred and mutual recriminations, which lasts till the end of this scene.

Scene 6 consists of a spoken dialogue between Medea and Neris in which Medea plans the murder of Dircea. She is assisted by her faithful handmaiden to whom she gives a robe, a crown, as well as jewels, instructing her to have her children present these poisoned gifts to Dircea. Jason, at that moment, is in the temple, taking part in the prenuptial ceremonies.

Scene 7 - the last in Act II - which serves as a finale to the whole act, is the off-stage ceremony to Hymen in the temple. Everyone participates: Medea, Neris (in the foreground), Creon, Jason, Dircea, priests, soldiers, and a crowd of people; the atmosphere is extremely festive. The scene ends with an oath of

vengeance sworn by Medea: "Smile on my revenge, oh Hymen!" ("Souris a ma vengeance, Hymen, ô hyménée"). While everybody else returns to the palace, Medea rushes to the altar, pulls a sacred fire-brand from it, and leaves the palace with Neris repeating her last verse in rage.

Cherubini chose to leave Scenes 1 and 2 fully spoken. After the orchestral introduction, the next musical section in Act II appears only in the middle of Scene 3. This is a large through-composed section which includes Medea, Neris, Creon and the chorus, but consists mainly of the dialogue between Creon and Medea. Subsequently, there are more musical sections than spoken ones. Neris begins her warning to Medea in Scene 4 with eleven spoken lines, immediately followed by her aria. After her spoken dialogue with Medea which concludes this scene, Scene 5 is a sung duet between Medea and Jason. Scene 7, with its subsections, forms the finale. There is only Scene 6 left - once more a dialogue between Medea and Neris, planning the murder.

#### Basic Overall Moods, Sections, Forms and Proportions

Act II is more concise in terms of musical structure as compared to Act I. It is approximately 550 mm. shorter; each of its scenes is made up of only one musical section. Excluding the orchestral introduction, it starts and finishes with relatively long, impressive ensembles, and within this framework there are shorter sections of an aria (such as Neris' aria in Scene 4) and one duet (Medea and Jason's duet in Scene 5). The ensembles at

both extremes are larger in terms of orchestration while the biggest tutti is kept for the last scene which functions as the finale section of this act. Neris' aria in Scene 4 has a much thinner texture - a delicate chamber timbre - while the duet of Medea and Jason in Scene 7 contains an interesting variety of orchestration, moving from the chamber ensemble to the semi-tutti.

The big through-composed section in Scene 3 introduces a varied vocal texture: Medea and Creon respond to one another in mainly solo phrases; there are chordal phrases for Creon, Medea and the chorus together, around the middle of the section (mm.112-44) and in the concluding subsection (mm.296-378), and at one stage Medea and Neris sing together for a few measures (mm.254-7). The basic key of E-flat major makes numerous shifts into other key areas throughout the B section (mm.93-253): D-flat major, B-flat minor, F minor, D minor, until A-flat major where the C section starts. The B section is the longest - a quasi-energetic development. Medea's "Oh Jupiter" at its starting point, as well as at the beginning of B<sup>1</sup>, highlights the dramatic nature of these sections. This through-composed form can also be seen as a quasi-sonata form, because of the strong harmonic and motivic interrelationships between B and B<sup>1</sup> (see more details on p. 206). The table of dynamics is surprising: Cherubini's attitude in this ensemble section veers towards a more vital expression, in comparison to all that has happened previously in Act I. Here, for the first time in the opera, he assails the listener's ear with fortissimo dynamics. Pianissimo dynamics also makes its debut at this point.

Neris' relatively short aria (154 mm.) in Scene 4 is an obvious anticlimax. The delicate image of Neris, Medea's faithful handmaiden, is enhanced by transparent chamber texture in the accompaniment and mainly piano dynamics with several forte interpolations. It is related by harmonic relationships of the third to the previous section, which fits in with its general traditional nature (E-flat major - G minor). The binary sonata form used here is a relatively simple form in comparison to the through-composed type of form regularly used in Act II. Yet the spectrum of rhythms is rich and attractive and underlines a most expressive aspect of Neris' dramatic figure. Again the motivic unity is preserved here as a basic feature, very characteristic of Act II. (See detailed analysis of this aria, pp. 209-30).

The last two musical sections of Act II are again quite long, through-composed numbers. Medea and Jason compete with one another in their duet in Scene 5 (242 mm.) which is accompanied by various strengths of orchestral sound throughout; another aspect of irregularity is achieved by the numerous vocal motives serving the through-composed form. The varied usages of local tonicization adds to the freely Romantic emotional expression. Yet the unifying entities and emerging from the orchestral part, result in this duet retaining a somewhat Classical nature because of the clearly-heard repetitions of these two motivic units during the duet (Table III-1):

Table III-1. Scene 5, form of duet of Medea and Jason "Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne!"

Form	A	B	C	D	E
m.	1	54	86 <sup>4</sup>	140	194 <sup>4</sup>
Unifying orchestral units	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^2$	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^2$

Cherubini's "Mouvement de Marche sans presser" indication at the top of the quasi-finale of Act II (Scene 7), announces a relatively festive mood for Scene 7. The very first moments already acquaint the listener with the prominent march-orchestral motive C D. E.F | G A (G.A) | which will be repeated consistently as an accompanying element during the first section of the number (Section A, mm.1-112): see its first appearance at the very beginning of the scene - "woodwinds and brass at the back of the theatre" (in Cherubini's original: "Harmonie derriere le Theatre") (Ex. III-1).

Example III-1. Full score, mm.1-9, beginning of Scene 7, Act II.

Mouvement de Marche sans presser

(1)

*Flûtes*

*Hautbois*

*Clarinettes*

*Cors en Fa*

*Bassons*

Normand derrière le Théâtre

Except for four short solo entrances by Medea and a single one by Dircea, the general impression here is one of a large choral section, to begin with, either men's or women's chorus, leading to the singing of the full chorus. All this is 345 mm. long, rising several times to a fortissimo, as if Cherubini wishes to extract the maximum from this noisy setting, to be followed by the extremely tense calm at the beginning of Act III. Medea is the last to join in with a line floating above the whole ensemble, and she remains alone with the orchestra until the fortissimo ending of the act with a purely orchestral phrase, resembling its point of departure.

## ACT II: MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Table III-2. Number of measures in the scene set to music

Scene 3:	378 mm.
Scene 4:	154 mm.
Scene 5:	242 mm.
Scene 7:	345 mm.

### Scene 3

Table III-3. Detailed structure of Scene 3 (378 mm.)

<p><u>Only one musical section: Ensemble (starts: "Morceau d'ensemble")</u>  C (4) Allegro, 378 mm. Form: A B C B' (big through-composed, incl. repetitions)  Summary of Content: After a long discussion between Creon and Medea, the latter is allowed to stay one day in Corinth, in order to take leave of her two sons.  Mood: agitated</p>							
Overall form	A		B		C		B'
Participants	Medea + Creon		Medea + Creon + Chorus		Medea + Neris + Creon		Medea + Neris + Creon + Chorus
Subsections	A	B	C	D	E	B'	D' E'
mm.	1-46	47-62	63-92	93-111	112-155	156-253	296-313 314-78
Key	Eb-g		→ Eb-b	D-b-b	Bb→f	f-Bb-d-f-Ab	Ab-Eb Gb Eb Eb
Harmonic Functions	(T)			(b) D		(SD) (SD) (T)	(T) (T) lowered III



## Scene 4

Table III-4. Detailed structure of Scene 4 (154 mm.)

## Only one musical section: Neris' aria

$\frac{3}{4}$  Andantino, 154 mm. Form: binary sonata form

Summary of Content: Neris laments the fate of her beloved mistress, sharing in her suffering

Mood: tender and quiet

Form	Expo.		Dev.		Recap.	Codetta
mm.	Q 1-27	P 28-41	S 45 <sup>2</sup> -65	N 66-107	S <sup>1</sup> -NK 108-37	K <sup>K</sup> 137-54
Key	g		Bb		g	(SD) compensation in the frame of g)
Harmonic Functions	(T) + relative major		(T)		(T)	

### List of phrases in frame of form:

Motives	Q	a	b	c	d	e	b	f	f <sup>1</sup>	b <sup>1</sup>
Form	P	S					S <sup>1</sup>			(S)
	Expo.			Dev.			Recap.			K <sup>K</sup> Codetta

## Scene 5

Table III-5. Detailed structure of Scene 5 (242 mm.)

<u>Only one musical section: duet of Medea and Jason</u>	
C Moderato, 242 mm. Form: through-composed Summary of Content: In spite of her intense expression of love for Jason, Medea is commanded to leave her two sons; the two heroes can no more converse with one another Mood: psychologically complex, nervous, outburst	

Form	A	B	C	(A) D	(C) E
mm.	1-53	54-85	86 <sup>4</sup> -138	140-93	194 <sup>4</sup> -242
Key	d	F- C- a	a	F- d	d
Harmonic Functions	(T) I	(T) relative major VII	(D)	(T) (T)	(T)

List of phrases in frame of form:

Motives	a + Q <sup>1</sup> accomp.	dev. a	b + Q <sup>1</sup> accomp.	c d + Q <sup>2</sup> accomp.	e + Q <sup>1</sup> accomp.	f	g + Q <sup>2</sup> accomp.	h (b inverted)
Form	A	B	C	D	E			

## Scene 7

Table III-6. Detailed structure of Scene 7 (345 mm.)

### Only one musical section: Ensemble

♩ March, Larghetto, Lento, Allegro, March. 345 mm.

Form: A B C D D<sup>1</sup> (= Coda); big through-composed

Summary of Content : a pause in the development of plot

Mood: festive

Form	A	B	C	D	D <sup>1</sup> = Coda
mm	1-112	113-73	174 <sup>2</sup> -209	210-70	271 <sup>2</sup> -345
Key	F-A-a	A	C-d-C-f	F-f	F-f
Harmonic Functions	(T)	→ 3rd relation.	(D)	(T) I b	(T)

### Formal Types: Typical Key Relationships

The form most often used in Act II is the through-composed - simple or more complex and in larger or smaller dimensions. Neris' aria is in binary sonata form and brings to mind the similar form of Dircea's aria in Act I (Scene 1, Section 3). It is worth noting that Cherubini seems to treat the arias of these two secondary feminine characters similarly, as if he considers the relatively small or medium-sized forms (Dircea: 159 mm., Neris: 154 mm.) as suitable for the less important dramatic personalities.

Most of the key relationships are those of the third and of the tonic-dominant. Some third relationships are connected to the major-minor relative keys (e.g. G minor - B-flat major in Neris' aria in Scene 4; D minor - F major in the Medea-Jason duet in Scene 5) and are even more extensively used than the tonic-dominant. For an obvious example of the latter relationship, see the finale in Scene 7 where C major is opposed to F major (the principle key) in the middle section, C.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS OF TWO NUMBERS

#### Scene 4: Neris' aria, "Ah! nos peines seront communes"

#### Dramatic Context and Content

After the loud, agitated, unresolved confrontation between Creon and Medea in Scene 3, Medea is left to her fate: she will have to leave Corinth. Although she is granted her request to be

allowed to remain one day longer, she is desperate. At this moment Neris, her faithful handmaiden, appears. The scene begins with Neris speaking to her beloved mistress: "Malheureuse princesse!", after which she continues with her aria. She acknowledges the terrible fate which may be Medea's; while expressing her devotion to her mistress, Neris moves from using the first person to the third person and back again.

### Text and Versification

#### English Translation

1. Ah! Our suffering will be  
common;
2. The most tender sympathy  
unites me to your destiny.  
Yes!
3. A companion of your  
misfortunes,
4. I shall follow you till death.
5. But what do I see? What black  
madness
6. Is bringing confusion to her  
mind?
7. She is agitated, she sighs;
8. Her eye roves, her spirit  
is uncertain:
9. Without any doubt she is  
contemplating an evil plan.
10. Dear and unhappy princess,
11. Who could refuse to weep about  
your fate?
12. Yes, I shall bemoan you  
ceaselessly,
13. I shall follow you till death.

#### Original

Ah! nos peines seront  
communes;  
Le plus tendre intérêt m'unit  
à votre sort. Oui!

Compagne de vos infortunes,  
Je vous suivrai jusqu'à la  
mort.  
Mais que vois-je? Quel noir  
délire  
Porte le trouble dans son  
sein?  
Elle s'agite, elle soupire;  
Son oeil est égaré, son esprit  
incertain:  
Sans doute elle médite un  
funeste dessein.  
Chère et malheureuse  
princesse,  
Qui pourrait refuser des  
larmes à ton sort?  
Oui, je te pleurerai sans  
cesse,  
Je te suivrai jusqu'à la mort.

Versification:

This is a heterometric iambic stanza of 13 lines. The number of feet in the lines is as follows: 4 - 6 - 4 - 4 - 4 - 4 - 4 - 6 - 6 - 4 - 6 - 4 - 4. The rhyme scheme is ababcbcddebeb. Rhymes a, c and e are feminine, b and d are masculine.

Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Aria. Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

Neris begins her aria by expressing her warm feelings for her mistress, using the first person. This continues until line 7, where she moves over to the third person. This grammatical shifting marks the transition between being in attendance to Medea and actually describing her beloved mistress, while at the same time approaching the most important part of the development which has already begun. The last two lines (12 - 13) are repeated many times in the recapitulation and the codetta; they may be considered to be "overused", serving for 46 mm. (recap, plus codetta) which make up around a third of the total measures. It seems as if Cherubini decided to emphasize the essence of Neris' devotion to Medea in this way. Neris already changes back to addressing Medea in the first person in line 10 (the middle of the development), but she delves deeper into her own heart in the last two lines.

Here is the schematic representation of text and form:

Table III-7. Text and form - schematic representation (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines seront communes").

Expo.	P	S
Line No.	1	2 3 4 (*4, + 1/2 * 3)
Dev.	N	
Line No.	5	6 7 8 9 10 11
Recap.	+ Codetta	
	S	NK K <sub>K</sub>
Line No.	12 (*7)	13 (*7)
+ consistent repetitions of half-lines included; both lines serve for both S1 and K <sub>K</sub>		

Figure III-1. Timeline: binary sonata form (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

Text	Ah! nos peines		Compagne de vos	
Orchestration	Orch. Solo (Bsn). Chamber.			
Dynamics	P		a	
Phrases	Q		b	
Music	Expo. P		S	
	1	10 11 15 23 26 28	46	56 60 61 63 64
	g	VII VIV6 V# Cad. I	Bb	Cad. II Cad. Mod.

Text	Mais que Elle s'agite	
Dynamics	P	f f P f P f etc. PP
Phrases	c	d   e   (b')
Music	Dev.	
	66 69 72 73 76 77 86 102 103	
	g → c	V# enharm. mod. → cV E# g V# VII7#

Text	Oui, je te pleurerai	
Dynamics	P	sf P sf etc. sf ↔ P etc. f
Phrases	b	f   f'   b'
Music	Recap. S'	(S) = Codetta K <sub>K</sub>
	108 114 119 130 136 138 → 143 144 145 146 148 → 154	
	212 SD compens. VI IIb1 VII#	

Scoring:

VI 1, VI 2, Vla, Vcl, Cb  
Bassoon - contrapuntal obbligato  
Voice: Mezzo-soprano (Neris)

Tonality:

The aria is in G minor, remaining firmly and traditionally in this key area, moving in S to the relative major B-flat major - which is also traditional. G minor is located a major third above E-flat major, the key of the previous number, so that the overall scheme of third relationships is complete. The infrequent use of dominant and subdominant is strongly felt, since all these third relationships reflect the basic tonic function. This allows for the strong justification of the subdominant compensation in the frame of G minor (codetta, mm.137-8).

Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

A. Thematic Elements

Example III-2. List of phrases (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system is a piano introduction marked 'ANDANTINO' in 3/4 time, featuring a treble and bass staff with a melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. The second system, labeled 'a', shows a vocal line in G minor (one flat) in 3/4 time, starting at measure 28. The third system, labeled 'b', continues the vocal line, showing a modulation to B-flat major (two flats) at measure 46, labeled 'In S' (Expo.)', and then back to G minor at measure 108, labeled 'In S' (Recap.)'. The system concludes with a section labeled 'S (Expo.) Con'd' starting at measure 149, with measures 51 and 54 marked. The page number 213 is centered at the bottom.

Handwritten musical score for five staves (b1, c, d, e, f) in G major, 2/4 time. The score includes measures 136, 138, 66, 73-79, 75, 114, and 119. The notation features various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

## B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

Neris' delicate, emotional nature is reflected in this - her only aria throughout the opera. On the backdrop of a relaxed mood, Cherubini succeeds in painting her as a pale mirror-image of Medea with her strong, psychologically complex emotions. Neris sings in a restrained manner, with the bassoon obligato contributing to the creation of an idyllic atmosphere; at the same time the irregular rhythms suggest an agitated mood belying the quiet expression. As Medea's alter-ego, Neris finds it difficult to remain indifferent on realizing that her mistress is making new and terrible plans. This occurs at the very beginning of the development section (lines 5 - 6): "But what do I see? What black madness is bringing confusion to her mind?". Neris' agitation is



is reflected in the unexpected recitative style of the development (Ex. III-3).

Example III-3. Soprano and bass lines, mm.66-73 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

⑥⑥

mais que vois-je que vois-je quel noir dé-li-re por-te le

ibid. (Vln's billing pattern)

trouble dans son sein? el-le s'a-gi-te

⑦③

### C. Melodic Contours and Highest Peaks

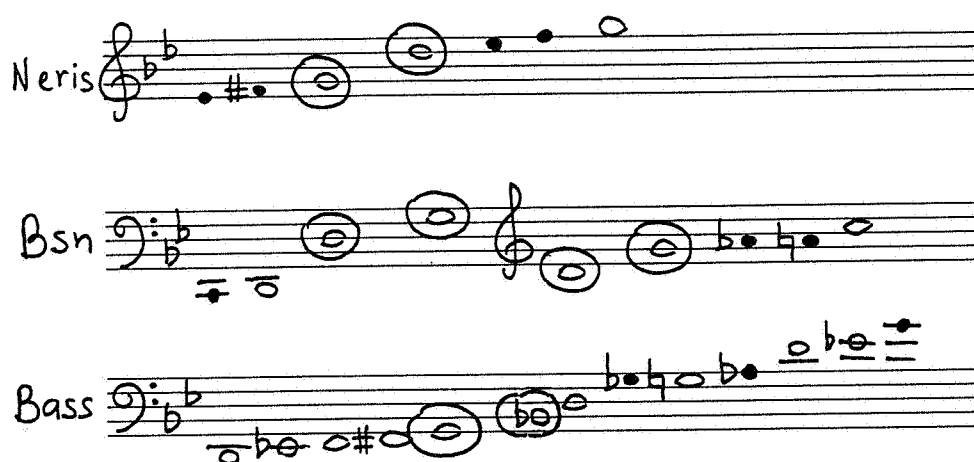
The connection of basic melodic contours (Fig. III-2) shows an organic process leading from P(a) to S(b):

Figure III-2. Melodic contours of the thematic units shown graphically (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").



The norm of levels of pitch in the three prominent lines (Neris, bassoon and bass) reflects traditional usage of the main diatonic tones of  $g$  and  $b$ -flat in their usual ranges. Yet the peaks and underpoints, especially in the two instrumental lines, illustrate a tendency towards a colourful, strong emphasis above the background of Neris' typical mezzo-soprano line (Ex. III-4):

Example III-4. Levels of pitch, including peaks and underpoints (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").



Neris' melodic line in  $\underline{S}$  (b) motive becomes more fluent, as if she has made her decision to follow her mistress. Then, when there is a break in her lines in the development (motive c), this is seen as a natural hesitation and fear concerning her mistress' future deeds.

As to highest peaks, the area of  $g1$  for the bassoon's upper range is remarkable, helping to create a warm atmosphere, especially as an accompaniment to Neris' words at the very beginning; the highest peak  $g$  in the vocal line appears at the end of the aria, and complements the expression of Neris' loyalty to her mistress. Many repetitions of lines 12 - 13 finally lead to a climax with the highest peak forte and on a long note, after

having twice leapt up an octave to a short g (mm.136, 140, motive b). The last long g is most prominent as it is reached by a leap of a ninth up! (Ex. III-5).

Example III-5. Soprano and bass lines, mm.128-54 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

Vlns parallel basically to vocal line

## D. Text and Harmony

Cherubini uses a basic harmonic strategy for creating the ambivalence of Neris' nature: she is concealing most dreadful secrets yet keeps calm; the lack of the dominant tonal function throughout all the keys of this aria is a coherent part of Neris' tenderness. Yet this mood is shattered on the long dominant of the retransition (mm.85-106, Ex. III-6). Here Cherubini is revealed as a composer who considers the long dominant pedal point to be an important dramatic force in the medium of opera; lines 10 - 11 "Dear and unhappy princess, who could refuse to weep about your fate?" ("Chère et malheureuse princesse, qui pourrait refuser des larmes a ton sort?") are treated at the retransition with many little manipulatory melodic variants in the vocal line, a significant syncopated contrapuntal fragment repeated in the strings and a steady dominant pedal point in the bass for the intensification of the drama. In the last four measures the chord changes to  $\overline{\text{VII}}7$  (on  $\text{f-sharp}$  instead of  $\overline{\text{V}}$ ), causing the end of the retransition to sound even more tense.

Example III-6. Soprano and bass lines, mm.84-8 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

Handwritten musical score for Example III-6, showing the soprano and bass lines for measures 84-88. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Measure 84 is marked with a circled '84' and a forte 'f' dynamic. Measure 85 is marked with a piano 'pp' dynamic. The lyrics are: "-sein un fu-nes-te des-sein" (measures 84-85) and "chère et mal -- heu-" (measures 86-88). The soprano line features a syncopated melodic fragment that is repeated in the bass line. The bass line has a steady dominant pedal point in the right hand and a syncopated contrapuntal fragment in the left hand. The score ends with a circled '88'.

There is one unexpected enharmonic shift in the modulation from G minor to B-flat major towards the beginning of § in the exposition. The keys of the major and their relative minors are traditional relationships, but Cherubini employs them here in a very unusual and dramatic manner, as if preparing the ground for the misfortunes ("infortunes") announced in § (line 3). He moves to the relative major through an augmented sixth chord with an enharmonic change of f-sharp to g-flat (Ex. III-7).

Example III-7. Soprano and bass lines with reduction of string parts, mm.41-8 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example III-7, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 41 to 47, and the second system covers measures 48 to 54. The music is written for Soprano (Soprano) and Bass (Bass) voices, with a reduction of the string parts (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses) indicated by the notation. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are in French: "sort", "oui", "compagne de vos in-for-tunes". There are annotations in the score, including "sf Vlns" (sforzando Violins), "enharmonic" with an arrow pointing to a note change, and "b" (bass) for the bass line. The measure numbers 41, 48, and 54 are circled at the beginning of their respective measures.

## Ensemble and Mood, Texture

The small ensemble of strings with one solo - the lyrical obbligato of the bassoon - is in keeping with the basically poignant mood of this aria, highlighting Neris' voice and emotion. Example III-B presents the first introduction of the bassoon melody which fixes the stylistic norm for the whole aria since it is so prominent throughout the long instrumental introduction, before Neris' first entrance.

Example III-B. Full score, mm.1-15 (beginning of Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

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The musical score is for measures 1-15 of the beginning of Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines". It is a full score for a small ensemble of strings and one solo bassoon. The tempo is marked "Andantino" and the key signature has two flats. The score is written for Violins (Vols.), Bassoons (Bassons), and Pizzicato strings. The bassoon part is circled in measure 5, indicating the first introduction of the bassoon melody. The string parts are marked "Pizzicato" and "arco".

Other entrances of the bassoon are remarkable in the short transition to  $\text{S}$  (mm.44-6) (Ex. III-9),

Example III-9. Reduction of mm.44-7 with bassoon obbligato (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

and again in the short transition to the start of the recapitulation. There the bassoon reverts from filling in (end of development) to a solo role (Ex. III-10).

Example III-10. Reduction of mm.106-8 with bassoon obbligato (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

The bassoon lines throughout are reminiscent of the Baroque harmonic-polyphonic style, where the line complements the harmonic scheme and does not disturb the basic homophonic texture. Cherubini also uses a typical syncopated repeated fragment in the violins which is part of the same textural concept. One important place where this pattern is introduced vigorously is the retransition (mm.86-106); this consistent rhythmic-contrapuntal fragment  appears after a short, excitable tutti (in mm.82-5) which makes for a chordal effect (Ex. III-11).

Example III-11. Full score, mm.79-92 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

79 221

Viol. 1

Viol. 2

Viola

Neris

83

92

687

### Dynamics

The scheme of dynamics shows a ruling piano which corresponds with the basically calm image of Neris in relation to all the other characters in the plot. The overview of dynamics is shown in the Timeline (p.212). There are a few places which



demonstrate an unusual effect - one leading to a pianissimo (m.85) and another to a forte (mm.24, 68, 72 on). It is interesting that the piano dominates but not to the exclusion of all other dynamics: throughout the exposition for P and S together (including most of the instrumental introduction) it establishes the expectation of a calm aria. The beginning of the development still preserves this piano, but after three measures, presents the sentence (line 7) "She is agitated, she sighs" ("Elle s'agite, elle soupire") where Neris bursts out in another forte (m.72). The surprising anticlimax is the pianissimo throughout the whole retransition, already discussed broadly in "Text and Harmony" on pages 218-9; see the music in Ex. III-6 (p. 218). This pianissimo intensifies the sense of drama at this point; we might have expected a crescendo here leading to a forte which would have continued to combine volume with the static dominant pedal point and repeated contrapuntal formula in the violins; but Cherubini prefers the unusual long and surprising pianissimo. A remarkable forte occurs on Neris' last high note in m.148. As a highest peak for Neris (with the preparation of the same g twice in short rhythmic values in mm.136 and 140) and because it is technically a high note for the mezzo-soprano voice in any case, this forte is a natural one. Yet it seems as if Cherubini consciously aimed at having Neris' final declaration of loyalty to her mistress, assume an heroic expression. This shows that the forte in mm.146 and 148 is meaningful as a dramatic device in addition to its being technically correct for the vocal line (see the music in Ex. III-5, p.217).

### Delving into Rhythm

The element of rhythm has already been mentioned earlier in this analytical discussion - indeed, it plays a unique role in this aria.

The essence of the use of rhythm as a dramatic-musical device is concentrated in the development section. This section is extraordinarily complex in its vocabulary of rhythms used in the motives and their reappearances. A mere glance at the first eighteen measures of the development (see Ex. III-12) will suffice in order to appreciate their tremendous rhythmic richness. These eighteen measures are shown below as a continuation of the previous section, in order to illustrate the special nature of the rhythms in comparison to the relative regularity in this sphere which dominates the previous section.

Example III-12. Soprano and bass lines, mm.66-88 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

Handwritten musical notation for Example III-12, showing Soprano and Bass lines for measures 66-88. The notation includes lyrics and rhythmic markings.

Soprano line (treble clef):  
mais que vois-je que vois-je quel noir dé li-re  
(66) *ibid. (vén's filling patterns)*

Bass line (bass clef):  
[Handwritten notes and rests]

70 por-te le trouble dans son sein? et-le s'a-gi-te  
thematic rhythms

74 el-le sou-pi-re son oeil est é-ga-re son es-

78 prit in cer-tain sans doute el-le mé-di-te un fu-

83 nes--te des sein un fu- nes-te des sein  
pp Vén's

87 chère et mal--heu-

This variety of unusual rhythms compensates for the continued "Andantino" mood which basically creates relaxed homogeneity (beginning of the development, line 5). It should be

considered in terms of word-painting, as a thrilling moment for Neris: she reveals Medea's "black madness", contemplating her evil crime.

The motivic interrelationships depend greatly on the similarity of rhythms in this aria. The syncopated accompanying figure in the bassoon in  $\emptyset$ ,  $\underline{\gamma F}$ , which recurs extensively in the instrumental introduction, continues to appear consistently in the accompaniment to Neris' singing in phrase a; it is elaborated again in an interesting way in the course of  $\underline{S}$  (m.54) as part of the accompaniment (Ex. III-13).

Example III-13. Full score, mm.53-65 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

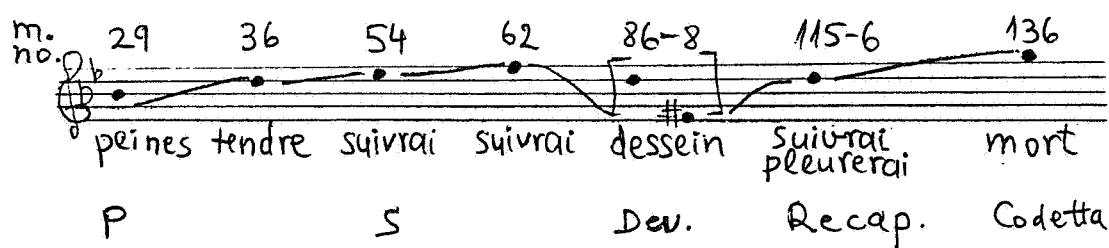
The musical score for Example III-13, measures 53-65, features a vocal soloist (Neris) and a full orchestra. The instruments shown are Violins 1 and 2, Violas, Bassoon, and Cello/Double Bass. The vocal line is for Neris. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'cres', 'sf', 'p', 'f', and 'diminuendo'. The lyrics are in French: 'Ah! je vous su-rrai jus-qua la mort je vous su-rrai je vous su-rrai jus-qua la mort'. The score is numbered 687 at the bottom.

### Growth Options (including Maps and Graphs)

The general flow of this aria fluctuates between Neris, the ideally innocent handmaiden and Neris, the woman who keeps to herself her mistress' most important secrets and cannot always hide her deeper feelings. In both cases she remains the faithful servant.

Her loyalty to Medea rules all, though Cherubini has one organic attitude towards the subject of pitch - basically it rises gradually, as if to illustrate this increasing loyalty until Neris' last expression of faithfulness (see the following graph, Ex. III-14); she repeats her last word "mort" three times on the same highest peak at the end, <sup>2</sup>g, twice on a sixteenth-note and at last on a half-note. This highest peak is reached quite unexpectedly and does not indicate a protracted stay on that level. The aim of the dramatic leap is clear.

Example III-14. Important places in melody and text (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").



The following three graphs (Figs. III-3, 4, 5) illustrate the basically smooth nature of the exposition, including its two subjects, in comparison to the development which is much more energetic.

Figure III-3. A special Timeline for P, mm.28-41 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

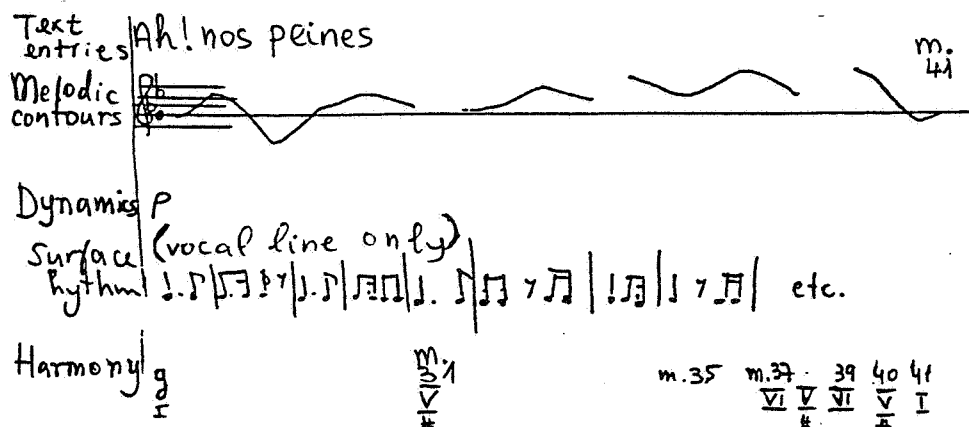


Figure III-4. A special Timeline for S, mm.46-64 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

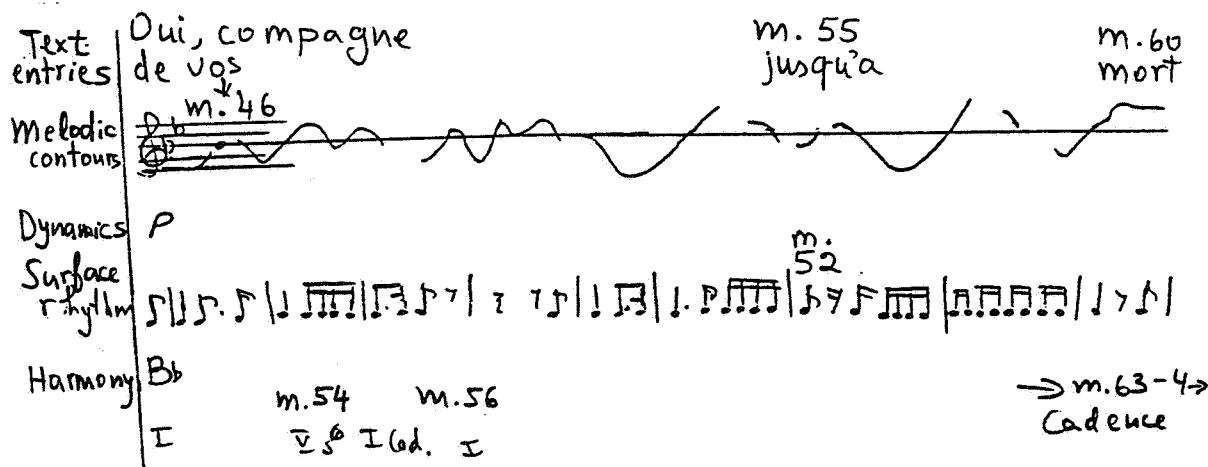
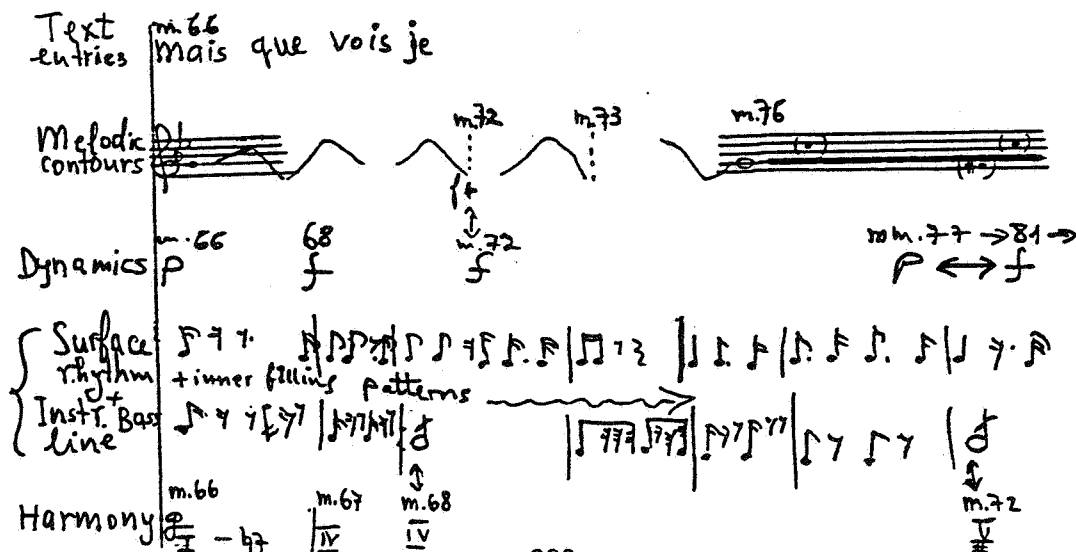


Figure III-5. A special Timeline for the development, mm.66-81 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").



The graph of dynamics related directly to the text (Fig. III-6) presents the following picture (in evidence of what was said in "Dynamics", p. ).

Figure III-6. A special Timeline for mm.28-154 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

English translation	Ah! our suffering	Ah! companion of your misfortunes	But what do I see?	She is agitated	she sighs	Her eye roves
French original	Ah! nos peines	Compagne de vos	Mais que	Elle s'agite	elle soupire	son oeil est égaré
Dynamics	P cresc. f Pf	P		f	f	P
Form	Expo - P	Expo - S	Dev.			
Motive	a	b	c d	e		
Bar No.	28	46	→ 66 69	72	75-6	77

~40 bars basic P

12 bars: occurrences of f but always returning to P

English translation	her spirit is uncertain, without doubt				she is contemplating an evil plan		→ unhappy
French original	égare, son esprit incertain sans doute elle				médite un funeste dessein		→ malheureuse
Dynamics	f	P	f	P	f	P	PP
Form							Dev-Cond
Motive							(b1) (rhythm)
Bar No.	78	79	80	81	82-4		85 → 105-7
	20 bars PP						

English translation	Yes, I shall bemoan	I bemoan you till death	I shall follow you	till death, I shall follow you	mort, je te suivrai...
French original	Oui, je te pleurerai	mort, je te pleurerai	je te suivrai	je te suivrai	→ mort
Dynamics	P	sf P f	P	f	f P f P f
Form	Recap-51		NK		Codetta
Motive	b	f f1			K k b1
Bar No.	108	114 119		130	136 144-5-6-7-8 → 154

~20 bars P

f

The next two short illustrations (Exs. III-15, 16) introduce two locations of interesting melodic contours; these are presented by means of graphs following the Schenkerian system. The melodic tritones and semitones appear in the development. This is also the area with the most extensive forte-piano changes in dynamics.

At this upper melodic level,  $\overset{2}{g}$  dominates, with its neighbours  $\overset{2}{f}$ -sharp and  $\overset{2}{f}$ -natural. At the lower melodic level,  $\overset{1}{f}$ -sharp,  $\overset{1}{a}$ -flat and  $\overset{1}{a}$ , decorate the central  $\overset{1}{g}$ . In the bass line there are many parallel octaves on the basic notes  $\underset{1}{g}$  and  $\underset{1}{d}$ .



Example III-15. Melodic reduction for mm. 75-86 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

nos peines").

elle sou-pire est éga-re son in-cer-tain sans doute de la mé-di-te un fu-nes-te des-sein un fu-nes-te des-sein solution

Example III-16. Melodic graph for mm. 136-48 (Neris' aria "Ah! nos peines").

Handwritten musical score for "Mort et te suivrai jusqu'à la mort" by Schubert. The score is written on five staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The fourth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The fifth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the staves: "mort et te suivrai jusqu'à la mort et te suivrai jusqu'à la mort". There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "p" and "f".

Scene 5: Duet of Medea and Jason, "Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne!"

### Dramatic Context and Content

Medea is left with a strong desire to see her two sons, and decides to battle once again for permission to remain in Corinth. This time she makes her appeal through her love for Jason. Scene 5 begins with a long spoken dialogue which follows the conversation between Medea and Neris at the end of Scene 4. Medea musters her forces towards her next tactical step in Scene 5. She does not hesitate to demand the children, but Jason rejects this idea. She comes to the conclusion that he really loves them. In the duet she begins to sing through her tears; she points to her children: "Dear children, I have to leave you! My sons, I have lost you forever" ("Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne! Mes fils, c'est pour jamais oui que je vous ai perdus"). Both Jason and Medea sing of their painful memories and of their injuries, the one bitterly, the other with feelings of revenge, yet Jason agrees, somewhat fearfully, to let Medea see their two sons once more before she leaves. She makes a decision as to her future deed.

## Text and Versification

### English Translation

### Original

#### Medea

1. Dear children, I have to leave you!
2. My sons, I have lost you forever.
3. I shall live far from you, your father orders it,
4. I shall die far from you, I shall not see you any more!

#### Jason

5. You will still enjoy their sweet presence,
6. Before you leave I shall let them be with you.

#### Medea

7. Ah! Sir, so sweet a kindness
8. Will not be without recompense.
9. What! I shall see them again, the fruit of our love!
10. They will remind me of those days, those happy days...

#### Jason (aside)

11. Painful memory!

#### Medea (aside)

- 11a. Oh eternal justice!

#### Jason (aside)

12. Heart-rending memory!

#### Medea (aside)

- 12a. Oh cruel constraint!

#### Jason (aside)

13. In vain I try to erase it from my memory!

#### Medea (aside)

14. You will pay a high price for the tears I am affecting.

(At this moment priests leave the temple and approach the palace; Jason sees them)

#### Jason

15. The king must offer a sacrifice on the altar;
16. He wants to interest the gods in my children.
17. I shall pray to heaven to favour you.

#### Medea

18. Are you leaving me, Jason? O sorrowful farewell!

#### Jason

19. Be happy.

#### Médée

Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne!  
Mes fils, c'est pour jamais que je vous ai perdus.  
Je vivrai loin de vous, votre pere l'ordonne,  
Je mourrai loin de vous, je ne vous verrai plus!

#### Jason

Vous jouirez encore de leur douce presence,  
Jusqu'a votre depart je les laisse avec vous.

#### Médée

Ah! seigneur, un bienfait si doux  
Ne sera pas sans récompense.  
Quoi! je les reverrai ces fruits de nos amours!  
Ils me rappelleront ces jours, ces heureux jours...

#### Jason (a part)

Douloureux souvenir!

#### Médée (a part)

Ô justice éternelle!

#### Jason (a part)

Souvenir déchirant!

#### Médée (a part)

Ô contrainte cruelle!

#### Jason (a part)

Vainement de mon coeur je cherche à l'affacer!

#### Médée (a part)

Tu paieras cher les pleurs que je feins de verser.

#### Jason

Le roi doit à l'autel offrir un sacrifice;  
Il veut à mes enfans intéresser les dieux.  
J'y vais prier le ciel de vous être propice.

#### Médée

Vous me quittez, Jason? O funeste adieux!

#### Jason

Vivez heureuse.

Medea

19a. Is it possible,  
20. Oh cruel one, that I shall be  
happy without you?

Jason

21. Forget, forget an unfortunate  
husband;  
22. Enjoy a peaceful destiny.

Medea

23. It is done, oh gods! His heart  
is inflexible!

Jason

24. Be happy.

Medea (to Jason)

24a. Is it possible,  
25. Oh cruel one, that I shall be  
happy without you?

Jason (touched, aside)

26. Oh tears of a mother!

Medea (aside)

26a. Oh eternal justice!

Jason (aside)

27. Oh touching memory!

Medea

27a. Oh cruel constraint!

(=12a)

Jason (aside, leaving)

28. In vain would I erase it from  
(=13) my heart.

Medea (aside)

29. You will pay a high price for  
(=14) the tears I am affecting.

Médée

Est-il possible,  
Cruel, que je le sois sans  
vous?

Jason

Oubliez, oubliez un  
malheureux époux;  
Jouissez d'un destin  
paisible.

Médée

C'en est donc fait, o dieux!  
son coeur est inflexible!

Jason

Vivez heureuse.

Médée (à Jason)

Est-il possible,  
Cruel, que je le sois sans  
vous?

Jason (avec

attendrissement à part)  
O larmes d'une mère!

Médée (à part)

O justice éternelle!

Jason (à part)

O touchant souvenir!

Médée

O contrainte cruelle!

Jason (à part, en  
sortant)

Vainement de mon coeur je  
veux vous effacer.

Médée (à part)

Tu paieras cher les pleurs  
que je feins de verser.

Versification:

The text may be analyzed as being made up of the following stanzas:

a) A hexametric iambic quatrain (lines 1-4) with alternate rhymes abab. Rhyme a is feminine, b is masculine.

b) Another iambic quatrain (lines 5-8). Its first two lines are hexametric, the last two tetrametric. The rhyme is embracing (abba), rhyme a being feminine, b masculine.

c) A hexametric iambic distich (lines 9-10). The rhyme is feminine.

- d) A hexametric iambic quatrain (= two distichs) (lines 11-14). In its first half (distich) each line contains two entrances, the border between them coinciding with the caesura. It is plain-rhymed (aabb), a being masculine, b feminine.
- e) A hexametric iambic quatrain (lines 15-18) with alternate rhymes abab (a feminine, b masculine).
- f) A iambic septet (lines 19-25) with hexametric and tetrametric lines (4 feet - 4 feet - 6 feet - 4 feet - 6 feet - 4 feet - 4 feet). The rhyme scheme is ababbba (a feminine, b masculine).
- g) A quatrain (lines 26-29) which is an exact metric replica and an almost exact textual repetition of the quatrain (d).

#### Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Duet, Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

Cherubini succeeds in building a gradually growing musical tension in spite of the relatively static regularity which is a basic characteristic of this duet. While the sections resemble each other in terms of the number of measures, there are clear changes of mood throughout: the music begins with a "Moderato" indication, moves into "Allegro" in the middle of the B section, changes to "Adagio" towards the end of D, and immediately, at the beginning of Section E, returns to "Allegro". The short "Adagio" serves as a calm introduction to the final, extremely tense "Allegro" section.

The strong tonicization of D minor right at the beginning, forming the background to apparently innocent, calm words such as "Dear children, I have to leave you" ("Chers enfans"), immediate-

ly creates a dichotomy which leads to the perception of drama. Until the end of Section B we hear mainly a quasi-aria sung by Medea, and the atmosphere is one of leave-taking and conciliation, Medea even thanking Jason sweetly for allowing her to see their sons once more. Jason's sentence (line 11) "Douloureux souvenir!" marks the change in mood into a more dramatic one when the C section starts, the orchestra already having grown from chamber ensemble to tutti. The musical stretto also makes for the intensification of the musical drama. When the conversation becomes heated, Medea is thinking about her future crime "Oh cruel constraint" (line 12) and her words come in response to Jason's bitter words in line 11 "Painful memory" ("Douloureux souvenir!"). Section D begins with a lessening of tension, when Jason also sings a short quasi-aria resembling Medea's solo part earlier, which makes for some balance in the construction of the duet as a whole. He speaks here about the gods and sacrifices on the altar (lines 15 - 17, "Le roi doit") and the previous rough dynamics of ever-present forte-piano is modified here to piano-pianissimo. Section D continues with the renewed conversation between the two protagonists. First come more relaxed utterances (Medea: "Are you leaving me, Jason?" ("Vous me quittez, Jason?"); Jason: "Be happy" ("Vivez heureuse") in lines 18 - 19, but they develop into the most passionate exclamations since the beginning of Section E. Word-painting is strong and this section is, for the most part, intense in texture and expression, resulting in a highly dramatic duet. The opening sentences already set the tone in two close musical entrances - "Jason: "Ô larmes"; Medea: "Ô justice éternelle" (line 26).

# Scoring:

Vl 1, Vl 2, Vla, Vcl, Cb  
 2 bassoons - join at m.45  
 2 horns (in D) - " " m.49  
 2 oboes - " " m.59  
 2 clarinets - " " m.65  
 Voices: Soprano (Medea)  
 Tenor (Jason)

Table III-8 illustrates the gradual scheme of text and form:

Table III-8. Text and form - schematic representation (Medea-Jason duet "Chers enfans, il faut donc que je vous abandonne!").

mm.	Section	Lines
		Medea
1-53	A	1 2 3 4
		Jason Medea
54-84	B	5 6 7 8 9 10
86-138	C	Jason Medea Jason Medea 11 11a 12 12a they converse in stretto → x4
		Jason Medea 13 (inner (x2 + 1/2)) 14 inner (x3) they converse in stretto x4
140-193	D	Jason Medea Jason 15 16 17(x2) 18(1/2 I x2) 19
		Medea Jason Medea 19a 20 21 22 23 (x2) 24 inner (x2) 24a 25 repetitions of single words (in two parts)
194-242	E	Jas. Med. Jas. Med. Jas. Med. 26 26a 27 27a 28 29(1/2 II x4) repetitions of single words x3 they converse in stretto x2 converse in stretto contains lines 26, 27

Figure III-7. Timeline: through-composed (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans").

		Moderato C						Allegro	Moderato						
Text	Medea	Chers enfans						Ah Seigneur	Je le reverrai						
	Jason							Vous jouirez		Med. continues and ends					
Orchestration		chamber			normal			big	recit. style						
Dynamics		p			p										
Phrases		a + q' accomp.		a (dev'd)		b + (Ah) q' accomp.			c						
Sections		A						B							
Harmony		1	4	13	18	25	49	54	56	60	66	71	74	79	86
Unifying orchestral units		I d (T)		VI		IV		I	VII = V		chrom. modul. → C		VI = I		V #
		Q1 a+b						Q1	F (T)				a		a

		Allegro									
Text	Medea	Tu parais						Vous me quittez			
	Jason	Douloureux souvenir		s'efface		Vainement		Le roi doit l'autel			
Orchestration		big		becomes dramatic mode real duet many text repetitions				normal			
Dynamics		p		sf sf sf etc.		etc.		P-pp		f sf sf etc.	
Phrases		d + q2		→ dev'd				e + q1		f	
Sections		C						D			
Harmony		86	99	111	119	127	140	161	162	172	
Unifying orchestral units		I	IV	chrom. modul. →		running, chrom. bass		V + cad. → I		V #	
		a	(SD) Compensation					F (T)		d (T)	
		Q2						Q1			

		Adagio	Allegro							
Text	Medea		O justice					de verser		
	Jason		larmes					effacer		
Orchestration			big							
Dynamics		p	p		f		sf sf etc.		pp	
Phrases			g + q2		(b)				ff	
Sections			E							
Harmony		194	195	196	202	203	210	215	227	
Unifying orchestral units		V #	I					running bass		
		Q2								



## Tonality:

The harmonic scheme firmly maintains the traditional relationships between the original key of D minor and its relative major, F major. Yet F major provides the framework for almost three formal sections - proportionally a long presence. It can be heard as early as m.56 of Section B and through a few secondary key areas (G minor, C major, A minor) during the rest of Sections B and C, and again from the beginning of D for 20 measures more. The half-cadence in D minor at m.171 later in Section D, signifies the return to D minor. The fact that there is rich local tonicization in D minor already in Section A (including B-flat major and G minor) and the developmental harmonic instability in B as well as the typical use of chromatic modulations (towards C major in Section B and towards F major in Section C) reflects Cherubini's relatively Romantic concept of harmony.

## Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

### A. Thematic Elements

Example III-17. List of phrases of Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans".

1 MODERATO  
MEDEA  
Chers En-fans  
87  
p

54 **GIASONE** 55 56 57

vous jou - l-rez en-cor vous jou - l-rez en-

(4) 75

(1) 87

TEMPO 1 (1) 141

Cré-on doit à l'au-tel of-frir un sac-re-

(M) 160

195 **ALL<sup>o</sup>** 199

O justice é-ter-nel-le

kar-mes d'u-ne mè-re O toi

The strategy of the orchestra as a unifying element is reinforced in this duet. Cherubini uses two rhythmical units noted in the list of phrases as  $\Phi^1$  and  $\Phi^2$ . Motive  $\Phi^2$  reflects the stepwise melodic movement, typical of slide motives. Both these motives, in their accentuation of the beat, bring to mind rhythmic features of Classic music. The overall picture of form and accompanying orchestral units illustrates a coherency:  $\Phi^1$  and  $\Phi^2$  are inserted alternately:

Form: A B C D E

Unifying orchestral units:  $\Phi^1 \rightarrow \Phi^2 \Phi^1 \Phi^2$

itself consists of two elements (Ex. III-18):

Example III-18. Cello and violin motives, mm.1-3 (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans").



## B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

The two characters, Medea and Jason, differ from each other psychologically. Medea is emotionally extremely complex: her desire for revenge always clashes with her strong love for Jason; she herself is about to kill her beloved children; she loves and hates Jason at one and the same time, she fluctuates between emotions of mercy and cruelty. In comparison to Medea's complicated nature, Jason is much simpler: he is a career man who

intends to broaden his scope and the territories over which he governs; all he has to do is to make Medea leave him and their two children because he is also a loving father. This basic situation of conflict between the two characters generates the musical expression throughout the duet.


Phrases e for Jason and f for Medea, introduced in Section D and appearing relatively close to one another, illustrate clearly these basic human characteristics: Jason's melodic line is one of decisive ascending triads (m.139) followed by Medea's line of hesitating ascending seconds (m.158).

The atmosphere of angry discussion grows consistently with these two extremely different means of expression. In Section E, when the vocal texture turns into a real duet, the conversation seems to be between two people, oblivious of one another, who continue to express their feelings in their own individual manner (Ex. III-19).

Example III-19. Reduction of mm.214-19 (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans").

Med.   
Jas.   
cer ô larme d'une mère ô larme d'une mère ô touchant souve-

Jason's words reflect his somewhat cynical attitude towards Medea: "Oh tears of a mother!" ("Ô larmes d'une mère!") and the rhythm in which he sings these words is decisive, with regular accents on strong beats

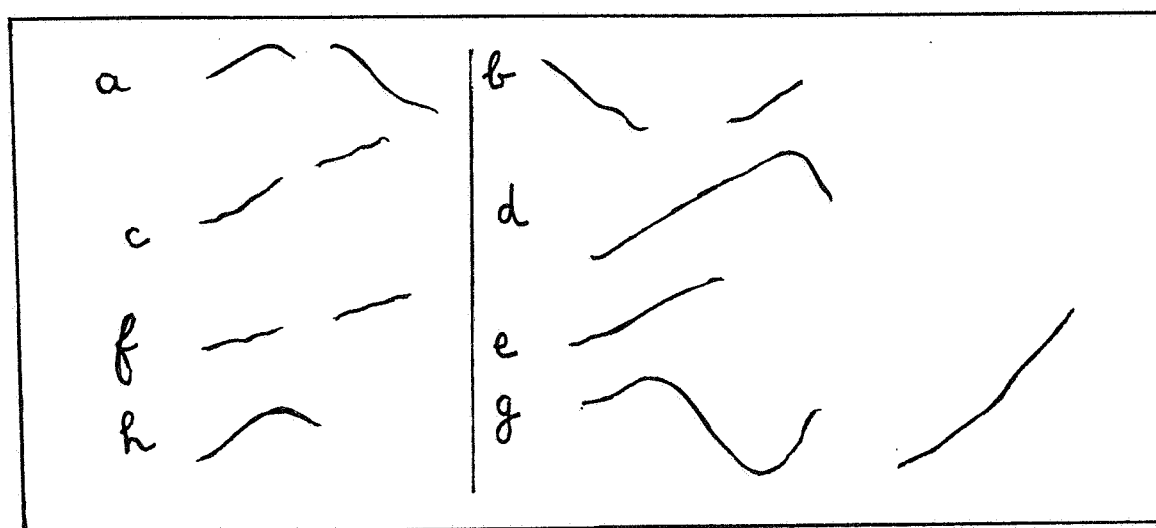


At the same time

Medea is already suffering, aware of the cruel deed she will perform in the future, and expresses her words "Oh cruel constraint!" ("Ô contrainte cruelle!") by means of a nervous syncopation which suddenly drops down a major sixth.

### C. Melodic Contours and Highest Peaks

Figure III-8. Melodic contours of thematic units shown graphically (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfants").



The scheme of contours for Medea illustrates the different basic moods which rule the emotions of both heroes in this duet as explained above (Influence of the Text, pp.241-2). Medea's lines are milder than Jason's more assertive ones which descend, but especially ascend, in sudden leaps.

Medea reaches her highest note <sup>2</sup>a in a few places (mm.20, 48, 83-4, 229); none of these occurrences relate to a specific textual message. Jason repeats the note <sup>1</sup>g a few times (mm.55-8, 114, 149-50). These repetitions tend to neutralize the specific importance of this high pitch; but towards the end of the duet Jason reaches <sup>1</sup>b-flat in m.211, a remarkable peak. Here

he turns it into a most dramatic expression by singing the words "mon coeur" (line 28). He repeats this word, reaching it on the high  $\flat$  after a minor sixth leap, while Medea has relatively low notes which serve as a musical background (Ex. III-20).

Example III-20. Piano-vocal score, mm.208-10 (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfants").

The image shows a musical score for a piano-vocal duet. The top staff is for Medea (Med.) and the middle staff is for Jason (Jas.). The piano accompaniment is in the bottom staff. The score covers measures 208 to 210. Medea's part starts with a '1' above the first measure. Jason's part has lyrics: 'coeur vainement de mon coeur veux' and 'tu parais cher les'. The piano accompaniment is marked 'dim.' and 'pp'.

An investigation of Medea's and Jason's most common levels of pitch in this aria shows them to be very similar:

The levels of pitch for Medea are:  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{f}$ ,  $\underline{a}$ ,  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{f}$ ,  $\underline{g}$ ,  $\underline{a}$

The levels of pitch for Jason are:  $\underline{a}$ ,  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{f}$ ,  $\underline{a}$ ,  $\underline{b}$

The levels of pitch for the orchestral bass are:  $\underline{C}$ -sharp,  $\underline{D}$ ,  $\underline{E}$ ,  $\underline{A}$ ,  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{e}$ ,  $\underline{a}$ ,  $\underline{d}$ ,  $\underline{f}$ .

Medea and Jason both sing in a relatively high tessitura which reflects their emotional tension and their psychological background (as explained under sub-heading B, p. 241). Yet the bass line provides flexible movement in terms of registers, including fragments of running-bass (see, for example, mm.119-24, 203-8, 215-20). These gain strength towards the end of the duet as an integral part of the increased musical activity which marks the antagonism between the protagonists.

#### D. Text and Harmony

Medea's sensitivity and hesitation are reflected as an important aspect of the rich tonicizations in D minor and F major, already in Sections A and B. When she reaches the words (lines 7-8) "Ah! Sir, so sweet a kindness will not be without recompense" (Ah! seigneur, un bienfait si doux ne sera pas sans récompense") she is extremely emotional, and the harmonic intensity plays an important role in emphasizing her condition (see Timeline, Fig. III-7, mm.1-86)

The appearances of the running-bass in this duet are always combined with the dramatic activity. These are not simply casual, rapid melodic progressions, but an integral part of the nervousness and the increased tension, especially around the end of the duet in Section E. The bass is doubled in the second violins; this steady rhythmic movement serves as a frame for the terse, stretto-like, contradictory statements by both heroes (Ex. III-21).

[illegible]



### Ensemble and Mood, Texture

There is an organic development in terms of texture throughout the duet, in accordance with the increasing dramatic tension. As Medea starts her opening quasi-arioso at the very beginning ("Chers enfans"), the atmosphere resembles that of any aria and the accompaniment is that of a chamber ensemble. Her singing is accompanied by the strings, with a pleasing obbligato in the cellos, a well-conceived counterpoint in the first violins, the second violins and violas filling in with tremoli. The ensemble grows towards the beginning of the B section where the solo part is given over to Jason. His tenor timbre calls for fuller support which the horns provide in sustained notes from m.49. When Medea re-enters ("Ah! seigneur, un bienfait") (line 7, m.65), her declamation continues, but since this "Allegro" clearly anticipates the real duet between the two, the ensemble is enlarged even further and now includes oboes and clarinets.

From now on, this enlarged texture serves the dramatic atmosphere created by text repetitions and stretti vocal entrances in Section C (m.111), starting with Medea's first singing of line 12a "O contrainte cruelle" with Jason's simultaneous line "vainement de mon coeur". This fullness is retained until the end of the duet except for a single, prominent, short anticlimax in Section D where Medea and Jason again sing short, separate sentences. Here the solo impression is immediately underlined by the strings mainly, with the mere addition of clarinets and bassoons. This is not an intimate chamber texture but rather a collapse of the enlarged sound which returns force-

fully to its norm in the E section and carries on consistently till the very end of the final "Allegro" of this duet.

### Dynamics

The overall dynamic curve for the whole duet indicates a correlation with the vocal scheme. All through Section A piano is steadily maintained, but Section B contains many contrasts. Section C, with its many stretti entrances of both singers who repeat a number of their words, exploits forte-piano dynamics. This helps to construct a remarkable concinnity around the middle of the duet, with the use of extended orchestration (in relation to the frame of the duet and the opera as a whole). When Medea and Jason return to solo passages again in Section D, the piano reappears, much more intensively now. Final Section E again contains many forte-piano occurrences since it once more reflects great dramatic intensity (as in Section C), and concludes the number in a strident conversational duet. Lines 12a - 14 of Section C return here, as an indication of the dramatic contradiction between Medea and Jason (Medea: "O contrainte cruelle!" Jason: "Vainment de mon coeur" Medea: "Tu pairas..") Cherubini uses the sudden pianissimo strategy in m.211 at the starting-point of Medea's sentence (line 14) "You will pay a high price for the tears I am affecting" ("Tu pairas cher les pleurs que je feins de verser") which appears together with Jason's "mon coeur" (line 13). This is the highest peak for Jason (<sup>1</sup>bb), while Medea sings in her lower register (Ex. III-22).

Example III-22. Vocal lines, m.211 (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans").



This remarkable pianissimo signifies an extremely high dramatic point, yet it serves as an anticlimax in the field of dynamics, an anticlimax conceived so as to achieve its final resolution in the closing fortissimo in m.227, which lasts till the end of the duet in m.242.

### Delving into Rhythm

The phrases pertaining to Medea are rhythmically characterized by relatively slow dotted rhythms such as a dotted half-note plus quarter-note (phrase a, see List of Phrases, p.239) and a dotted half-note plus two eighth-notes (phrase h, *ibid.*); Jason's dotted rhythms are sometimes shorter (phrases b and e, List of Phrases, p.240). This typology of dotted rhythms suits the main psychological difference between the two characters, as described under sub-heading B, pp.24+2. Medea's inner conflicts before the terrible murder of her sons make for her hesitation and hidden fears, while Jason is full of self-confidence and of anger at Medea, so that the shorter rhythmic values of his phrases reflect his feelings faithfully.

### Growth Options (including Maps and Graphs)

The large melodic variety of the thematic elements results in a through-composed form; on this background the unifying orchestral units  $\Phi^1$  and  $\Phi^2$  cause the whole growth process to generate coherency (Table III-9).

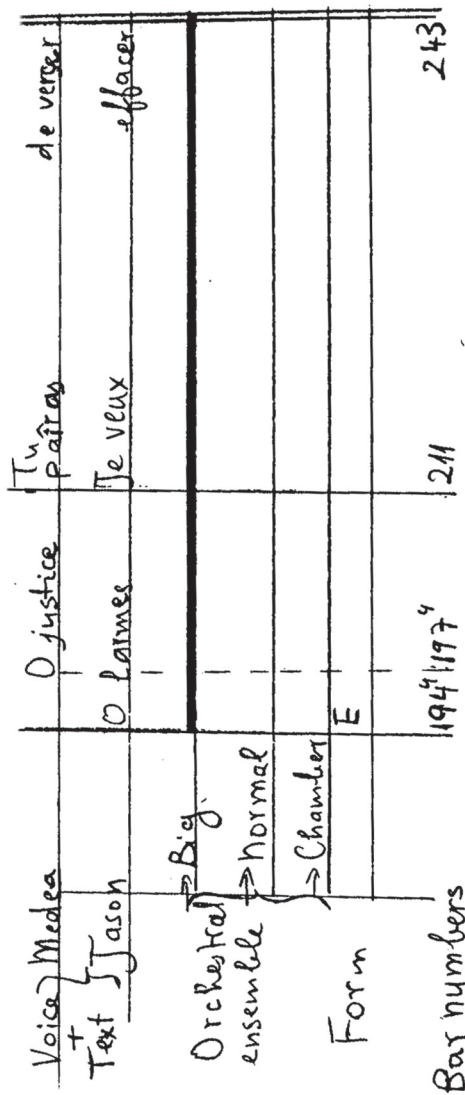
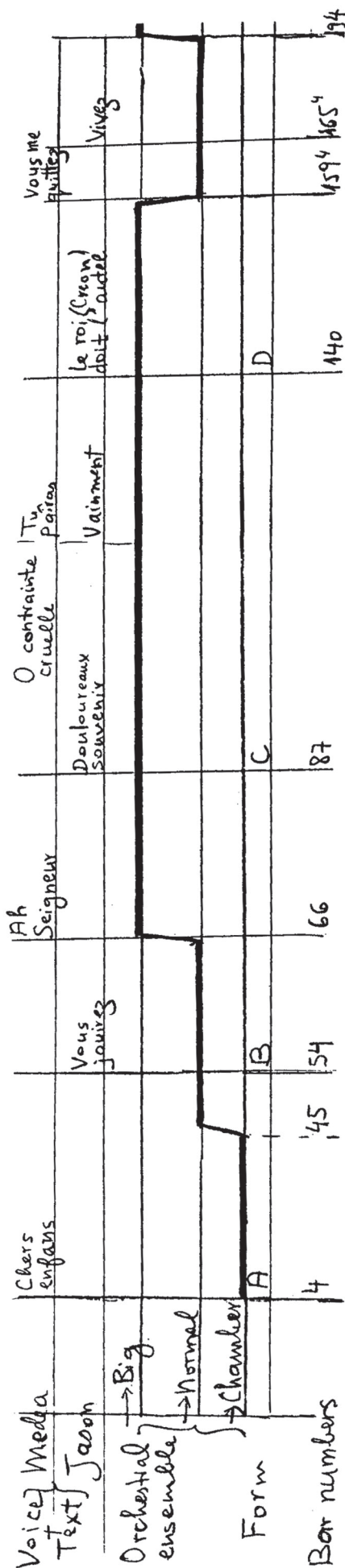
Table III-9. Form (including thematic elements) of Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans".

Form	A	B	C	D	E
Phrases	a	b c	d	e f	g h
Orchestral unifying motives (accompanying)	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^2$	$\Phi^1$	$\Phi^2$
	1 3	54 74	87	140 159	195 197 <sup>4</sup> 243

The above-mentioned coherency does not detract from the sharp difference between the opening and closing sections in terms of sound. Section A is involved with the solo singing of Medea accompanied by a *piano* chamber texture (which continues in the B section as well); E presents real duet singing together with a variety of extreme changes in dynamics until the last *fortissimo*. All this activity demands the large instrumental force behind it.

It is interesting to illustrate the integration of sound in relation to form and text for the whole duet (graph in Fig. III-9). The orchestral ensemble is organically enlarged when the vocal texture develops out of solo singing into a conversation between the heroes:

Figure III-9. A special Timeline for the entire number (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans"), indicating especially the size of the ensemble.



The last illustration for growth options in this duet concentrates on a certain moment of dramatic climax (Ex. III-23). A particular moment, already mentioned in the frame of dynamics, tessitura and related text, is summarized in the following graph, which also shows the interrelationship between the melodic contours (containing leaps and successive seconds) of both heroes.

Example III-23. Melodic graph, mm.209-12 (Med.-Jas. duet "Chers enfans").

Bar no 209 210 211 212 213

Medea

tu passas cher des pleurs que je feins de ver-ser

Jason

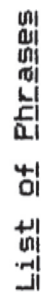
8 coeur vainment coeur je veux je veux

f PP P

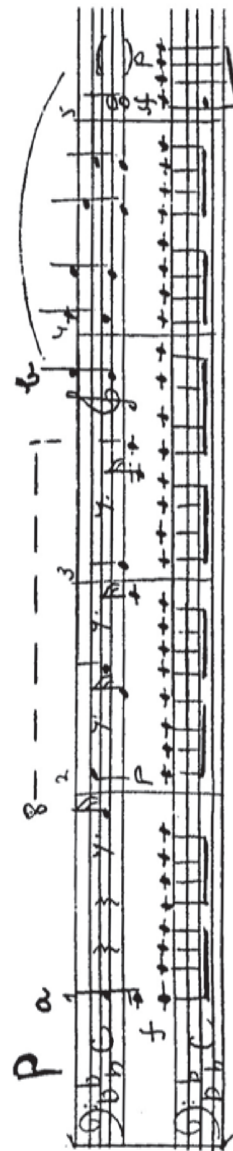
VI  
deceptive  
cadence

II<sup>6</sup>  
(IV)  
regular half  
cadence

Figure III-10. Timeline of orchestral introduction to Act II: binary form (no recapitulation).



Example III-24. List of phrases of orchestral introduction to Act II.



All the realizations of motives a and b in E (mm.1-21, piano-vocal score):

The musical score is handwritten and consists of several systems of staves. The first system (measures 6-10) shows motive  $a^1$  in the voice part and accompaniment in the piano. The second system (measures 11-15) shows motive  $a^2$  and  $b^1$ . The third system (measures 16-20) shows motive  $a^3$  and  $b^3$ . The fourth system (measures 21-25) shows motive  $a^4$  and  $b^4$ . The fifth system (measures 29-34) shows motive  $c$  and  $d$ . The sixth system (measures 35-40) shows motive  $e$  and  $d$ . The score includes dynamics such as *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *sf* (sforzando). A legend indicates that (a) represents the melody and (d) represents the accompaniment.



### Basic Remarks

In this orchestral introduction, the musical drama is created by the motivic interrelationships together with the very active surface-rhythm of the motives themselves. Nevertheless, the chromatic drive in K assists the musical drama to reach its final strong impact, underlined by the unusually massive tutti; both these cause the effect of intensification in K, a closing section which resembles closing sections in Beethoven's works in terms of proportions and meaningful musical events. Of interest is the third relationship in the wider view: C minor, the home key for this section, is interpolated between E minor as the closing key of Act I and E-flat major as the opening key of the following section - the ensemble with which Act II opens. The overview of orchestration illustrates a medium-sized tutti (pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, four horns and a string ensemble) with a static chordal-homophonic texture. This texture is further intensified once more in K.

In order to conceive this climax in K, one needs to have an insight into its contents. For the harmonic scheme for mm.57-72 (= K), see the following example (Ex. III-25):

Example III-25. Harmonic outline, mm.57-72, for K of orchestral introduction to Act II.

Handwritten harmonic outline for mm. 57-72. The notation shows a melodic line on a staff with notes and a corresponding chordal structure below. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

m.	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
m.	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
Notes	G <sub>4</sub>	A <sub>4</sub>	B <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>5</sub>	D <sub>5</sub>	E <sub>5</sub>	F <sub>5</sub>	G <sub>5</sub>
Chords	b7	b6	7	6	b6	6	6	5

Following (Ex. III-26) is the full score of mm.57-63, illustrating the extended tutti at the starting-point of K:

Example III-26. Full score, mm.57-63, of orchestral introduction to Act II.

57

Fl<sub>1,2</sub>

Ob<sub>1,2</sub>

Cl<sub>1,2</sub>

Cors en do

Cors en mi b

Timbales

Vel<sub>1</sub>

Vel<sub>2</sub>

Viola

Vcl

Cb

63 f=f

687

Every act begins with an introduction in a minor key, dramatic and agitated in character as we find here.

CHAPTER IV

ACT III

## DRAMATIC ACTION AND MUSICAL STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

### Overview: Action and Musical Organization

List of characters in the order of appearance:

Medea	Soprano
Neris	Mezzo-soprano
People of Corinth	Chorus
Jason	Tenor

Act III is the shortest and most dramatic act in this opera. It consists of six scenes, of which Scenes 3-6 form a single continuity.

After an instrumental introduction to Scene 1, evoking a dark atmosphere of thunder and storm with the temple in the background, Medea appears, dressed in a black gown studded with silver stars. Holding a dagger, she invokes the gods of Styx to aid her in her ghastly venture: "Oh gods who have given me your destructive help, Oh gods of Styx (= the underworld, hell), make haste to fulfil your favours" ("Dieux qui m'avez pr<sup>^</sup>été vos secours destructeurs, Dieux du Styx, hâtez-vous d'accomplir vos faveurs"). She continues speaking to her children with the assistance of Neris: "Unfortunate children, you are running towards your death. Oh! do not touch me with your innocent hands" ("Malheureux! vous courez au trépas. Ah! ne me touchez pas de vos mains innocentes").

In Scene 2, the conflict in Medea's heart reaches its highest peak. Medea and Neris, in their spoken dialogue, emphasize this conflict: both women express their pity for the innocent children about to be killed. An aria sung by Medea

separates the two extended blocks of spoken conversation. In this aria Medea expresses the devastated feelings of a mother committed to her horrible crime: "Nothing can be compared to the horror of the terrible anxiety which devours me: Oh, dear children! I adore you, and I am going to pierce your heart: ("Du trouble affreux qui me dévore, rien ne peut égaler l'horreur: Ô chers enfans! je vous adore, et j'allais vous percer le coeur"). This scene ends before Medea has killed her sons. The murder was prevented by Neris' strong physical and psychological presence.

From Scene 3 onwards, Cherubini, for the most part, uses musical settings for the strong dramatic climax of the plot. Medea's recitative and aria, at the beginning of Scene 3, presage the big Finale which lasts until the end of the opera.

Neris brings the children in. Their innocent joy at seeing their mother disarms Medea and she is unable to go through with her plan to kill them. After Neris has left with them, Medea curses her maternal weakness. Aided by the cries of horror from the palace, where Dircea has burst into flames on adorning herself with Medea's gifts, she rushes off to complete the vile deed that she has begun. Jason enters with the people of Corinth demanding the death of Medea, but Neris arrives and informs him that, at the very same moment, Medea is pursuing her children in the temple, brandishing a knife. Just as Jason prepares to enter the temple, Medea appears in the doorway, waving the knife, surrounded by the three Eumenides. All back off in terror, aware of Dircea's murder at the hands of Medea. Medea now acknowledges

that she has also murdered the two boys. She prophesies that Jason will spend the rest of his life wandering homeless over the face of the earth, filled with remorse, and that they will meet again in Hades: "Adieu! Go, drag your misery with you in Iolcos; from shore to shore, wandering, despairing, a fugitive everywhere, abhorred everywhere! Go, hide the remorse of your distraught soul, and let all seas tremble at seeing you!" ("Adieu! Dans Iolcos va traîner ta misère; de rivage en rivage, errant, désespéré, en tous lieux fugitif, en tous lieux abhorré! Va cacher les remords de ton âme éperdue, et que les mers partout frémissent à ta vue!"). As she finishes cursing, Medea rises up into the air, the temple bursts into flames and the crowd flees at last, as the curtain falls.

#### Basic Overall Moods, Sections, Forms and Proportions

The stormy mood in this act reaches its climax through the course of the dramatic events. It is most interesting to note the musical variety and richness of means employed as related to the characters and their interaction: from the discrete appearance of Medea and Neris on stage, through the deed of murder and its reflection in the bitter imprecations between Medea and Jason, and until Medea's curses at the very end.

Medea's first aria in this act is introduced in Scene 2. It is relatively calm and tender, full of maternal love which has overcome her desire for revenge and her fury. Medea cannot hide her thoughts when she speaks to her handmaiden later. While singing to her sons, the key of E-flat major dominates in a

Largo mood, moving consistently between forte and piano. The aria is 119 measures long - about one fifth of the total length of the music in Act III. Cherubini uses the regular binary sonata form, with the usual modulation to B-flat major.

The drama gets underway from Scene 3 on. Scene 3 until the end of Scene 6, considered as the big Finale for the whole opera, may be considered as a single musical continuity.

Medea's recitative at the beginning of Scene 3 is highly complex: it abounds in vocal phrases (from a to g) as well as five variants developed out of the accompanying orchestral  $\text{Q}$  motive, which itself consists of two different elements. In addition there is a great variety of moods which Cherubini underlines by means of eight tempo changes (!) during only 64 measures. Harmonically speaking, the recitative is most interesting: it moves rapidly through the following keys: D minor, F major, C minor, E-flat major, A-flat major, E-flat major, E major, A major, D major, F-sharp minor. This intense harmonic activity presages the real drama of the big Finale to come.

The above-mentioned recitative is immediately followed by Medea's second aria in this act, calling on the goddess Tysophone to grant her the courage to murder her sons. The Allegro vivace mood is sustained after the recitative as is the key of D major. It only represents a subsection of the exposition and, together with the previous recitative, forms a single unit of 189 mm. - the relative size of a whole musical section of a remarkable aria

in this opera. After the concentrated musical contents of the recitative, making for an extremely tense atmosphere, this exposition is relatively relaxed, employing the keys of D major, A major and D minor. There is a full representation of P I S K, and a return to D major/D minor which goes directly into the next musical section in which the chorus enters.

The appearance of the chorus (the crowd) signifies the formal starting-point of the Finale, also marked in Hoffman's libretto, although the musical continuity is already sensed from the beginning of Scene 3.

The Big Finale is analyzed in detail (pp. 279-330). It is a long through-composed section of 343 measures which stems organically from the beginning of Scene 3 (Medea's recitative and aria, altogether 189 mm). Subsections A, B, C, D and E, lead to the last one - F - which serves as a coda. The full impact of the opera can only be perceived after the end of this last Finale.

Musical sectionality runs according to the main division into scenes in Hoffman's libretto. Section 2 is devoted to that part of Scene 3 in which Medea, Jason and the crowd are onstage. They have witnessed Dircea's murder. Medea continues with her recitative, threatening Jason with her impending cruelty. This great emotional storm is reflected in the tremendous harmonic mobility (B minor, F-sharp minor, E minor, D major, B minor, C minor, E-flat major, C minor, B minor and D major) all through subsections A and B, phrases a  $\xrightarrow{2}$  d and many interchanges of forte-piano-pianissimo dynamics. This indicates the moment of the



children's murder, and may be considered the highest dramatic peak of the entire opera. The harmonic richness continues through subsections C, D and E, but is spread out through longer time durations. Also, from Section C on until the end of the Finale, there is a conflict between the keys of D minor and B minor. The third relationship is prominent in subsection C with the key of B-flat major and the final key of D major occurring surprisingly towards the end of subsection E and lasting throughout subsection F - the coda. The fact of a non-definite key for the big Finale (starting and ending clearly in B minor and D minor respectively) still reflects the basic reality of third relationships, but here it is stretched out extensively for the space of 343 mm. and does not only exist in harmonic inner relationships. It symbolizes the forceful drive and mobility of this Finale, described in detail on pages 291-5.

### ACT III: MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Table IV-1. Number of measures in the scenes set to music.

Scene 2: 119 mm.
Scene 3 (Medea's recitative and aria): 189 mm.
Scene 3 (cont'd), 4, 5, 6 (Finale): 343 mm.

## Scene 2

Table IV-2: Detailed structure of Scene 2 (total: 119 mm.).

### Only one musical section: Medea's aria

♩ Largo, 119 mm. Form: binary sonata form  
 Summary of Content: Medea admits that she was going to stab her sons, and shows how her heart is torn between their lives and her furious rage  
 Mood: relatively calm, full of passionate love of a mother for her children

Form	Expo.				Dev.				Recap.	Coda
	Largo				Allegro moderato					
	Q	1P	2P	T	S	K	Recit. style		N→S'	K'
mm.	1-2	3-14	14 <sup>2</sup>	22-5-33	53	4-61-2	-88		102-19	
Key	Eb			Eb-Bb	Bb	Bb-c-f-eb	Eb			
Harmonic Functions	(T)			(D)		(D) (SD) (T) II	(T)			

Pre-section: Medea's recitative

C Andante + Allegro, 64 mm. Form: through-composed

varies  
Summary of Content : Medea persuades herself, being alone, to kill her sons

Mood: very tense, because of the psychological conflict in Medea's heart.

	Andante molto sostenuto			accomp. Andante			Adagio			Allegretto			accomp. Allegretto	
Form (by motives and phrases)	10a	b	10a'	b' + qa	a	10a	b'	b	20	c	30a	d+		
mm	1	3	4	6	8 <sup>4</sup>	12	4	8	20	21	4	5		
Key	d						F			c				
Harmonic Functions	(T)						(T) upper third			(D) 				

Andante All. moderate	Andante All. moderate	Allegro moderate	Allegro moderate	Allegro moderate
4a	e <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>1</sup>	f <sup>1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>
29 <sup>4</sup> 32	3 <sup>4</sup> 6-7	8 <sup>4</sup> 46-8	56-8 <sup>2</sup> 61-3-4	
30 <sup>1</sup> E <sub>b</sub> A <sub>b</sub> SD → "D" lowered		38 E <sub>b</sub>	39 E A	52 D V <sub>7</sub> "T" major
		(SD) (D)		"T"

# Section 1: Medea's aria

C, 125 mm (measured continuously after the previous recitative)  
Form: Expo.-recap. with tonal return

Summary of Content: Medea encourages herself towards her crime  
Mood: less tense than in the previous recitative, since the decision psychologically has been made; in an heroic style

Form	Expo.		(P)	(T)	Total Recap.	
	Q	P	T	S	K	RT
mm.	65	6-78	9-107	8 <sup>4</sup>	25-141	141 <sup>2</sup>
Key	D		modulat. A	a - A	d	
Harmonic Functions	(T)			(D)		
						Pm+N
						149-89
						D/d

## Scenes 3 (cont'd), 4, 5 and 6

Table IV-4: Detailed structure of scenes 3 (cont'd), 4, 5 and 6 (Finale).

## Sections 2,3,4,5

C Allegro, 34 mm (measured continuously after the previous aria)  
Form: big through-composed

Summary of Content: All sing together, the plot is completed after the death of Dircea and the two boys and after Medea's final curse of Jason

Mood: horror and action, rage and hatred

	Choir, Med, Jas.	Recit. Med.	Jas. + choir	Neris + Jas.	Duet Jas. + Med, choir	(chords) choir
Scene	3		4	5	6	
Section	2	3	4	4	5	
Sub-Section	A	B	C	D	E	F = Coda
mm	190-282	282-343	343-394	393 <sup>4</sup> -412	412-70 <sup>3</sup>	470 <sup>4</sup> -533
Key	b (f#-c-D-b-c-Eb-c) b	b-d-D	d-Bb	Bb-b	b-d-b-d	d
Harmonic Functions	↓ D# third rel.	+ third rel				↓ V → I # third rel.
	(T) (+D) (SD)	(T)	(T)	(T)	(T) enlarged	(T)

### Formal Types: Typical Key Relationships

This short, concentrated act again employs typical sonata form and through-composed forms. The keys of D major and minor are mainly used, while A, E-flat and B-flat majors, and B minor, function in the dominant, third and Neapolitan relationships. The appearance of other keys, always relatively intensively, indicates an important aspect of the growing intensity of the drama.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS OF TWO NUMBERS

Scene 3: Medea's Recitative. "Eh quoi! je suis Médée et je les  
laisse vivre!"

#### Dramatic Context and Content

Scenes 1 and 2 are devoted to an intimate conversation between Medea and her handmaiden, Neris. In Medea's opening monologue, she tells her sons that they are to be the victims, but she begs them to understand her. This is not told them directly, but Neris overhears and responds in Scene 2 by trying to prevent her mistress from murdering the boys. It would appear that she has succeeded. Medea says: "My sons! so this is a fact: you have won me over. Nature is stronger" ("Mes fils! c'en est donc fait: vous l'emportez sur moi. La nature est plus forte"). She continues to describe her sufferings, her conflicts. Until the end of Scene 2, Neris succeeds in hiding the children. Scene

3 opens with Medea's recitative which reflects the extreme conflict warring in Medea's heart and mind: "Well then! I am Medea and I let them live!...They are yours, you say: but is he not their father?...should you want to be a mother?" ("Eh quoi! je suis Médée et je les laisse vivre!...Ce sont les tiens, dis-tu: mais n'est-il pas leur père?...est-ce à toi de vouloir être mère?").

### Text and Versification

#### English Translation

#### Original

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Well then! I am Medea and I<br>let them live!                 | Eh quoi! je suis Médée et je<br>les laisse vivre!          |
| 2. What have I done? Where are<br>they? I see them no longer.    | Qu'ai-je fait? ou sont-ils?<br>mon oeil ne les voit plus.  |
| 3. Because of Jason's sons my<br>conscience has been moved!      | Pour les fils de Jason me<br>sens se sont émus!            |
| 4. They are yours, you say: but<br>is he not their father?       | Ce sont les tiens, dis-tu:<br>mais n'est-il pas leur père? |
| 5. Unhappy woman! should you<br>want to be a mother?             | Malheureuse! est-ce à toi de<br>vouloir être mère?         |
| 6. Should you be feeling this<br>sweet trembling?                | Est-ce à toi de sentir ces<br>doux frémissemens?           |
| 7. Should you be listening to<br>nature's voice?                 | Est-ce à toi d'écouter la<br>voix de la nature?            |
| 8. What is it then? I am going<br>to flee! I leave my children,  | Eh quoi donc! je vais fuir,<br>je quitte mes enfans,       |
| 9. And I leave them in the<br>betrayers' hands.                  | Et je les abandonne au<br>pouvoir du parjure.              |
| 10. He can forestall me, he can be<br>the first to strike them!  | Il peut me prévenir, les<br>frapper le premier!            |
| 11. No. Let us commit the crime,<br>and let it be done entirely. | Non. Consommons le crime, et<br>qu'il soit tout entier.    |

#### Versification:

A hexametric iambic stanza of 11 lines. The rhyme scheme is abbcddedeff. This means that the first line is unrhymed with any other. The rhymes a, c and e are feminine, b, d, and f are masculine.

# The Art of Shaping the Recitative: Timeline, Scoring, Thematic Elements and Harmony

Figure IV-1. Timeline: through-composed form (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi! je suis Médée et je les laisse vivre").

Text	Phrases + Motives	Dynamics	Harmony
Eh quoi? Je suis Médée	Adante molto sostenuto 1Qa 1b 1Qa <sup>1</sup> 1b <sup>1</sup> + a →	sf pp sf p pp sf	1 3 4 6 7 8 9 12 14 15 16 17 18 I d V9 VI7 I V#11 III 17 IV 6 <sub>4</sub> V V7 F
Pour les fils de Jason	2Q	p	20 22 I6 V27G V2
Ces sont les tiens dis-tu	Animato C		
Malheureuse	Allegro 3Qa d + 3Qb	pp	23 24 25 I6 - I6 <sub>b1</sub> = IV#6 <sub>b1</sub> c V#4
est-ce à toi de travailler	Andante e	Unison modulatory	28 29 30 31 32 I6 <sub>b1</sub> = V#6 <sub>b1</sub> Eb V#6 I I → V7 Ab
est-ce à toi de raconter	Allegro Moderato 4Qa b	mf p	33 34 35 36 V#6 IV6 V#6 <sub>5</sub> I
Et je les abandonne	Andante e <sup>1</sup>		
Est-ce à toi de sentir	Allegro Moderato 4Qa b developed	sf p	37 38 39 V#11/V V → I Eb chrom. modul.
Eh quoi donc	(d <sup>1</sup> + c <sup>1</sup> ) g	cresc. f	42 44 46 47 I I = V-2 V#4 - f
de cette mes enfants	(c <sup>1</sup> ) 5Q	p	48 49 51 52 I tonic pedal point I = V V7 D
Et je les abandonne	(a <sup>1</sup> ) +	cresc.	53 55
Il peut me prévenir	Allegro Vivace 6Q	f p unisons	56 58 (d <sup>1</sup> + c <sup>1</sup> ) V#11 c <sup>1</sup>
les frapper	(c <sup>1</sup> ) h	f p unisons	59 61 62 63 64 "E" "C#" → I b = 7th degree of D

# Scoring:

2 Flutes  
2 Clarinets  
2 Horns (in D)  
2 Bassoons  
Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Vcl, Cb  
Voice: Soprano (Medea)

Example IV-1. Piano-vocal score including indications of motives, phrases and keys (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi!").

AND. MOLTO SOST.

immediate harm. develop.  
pp of Qa

MEDBA

Rus. Qa

Qa

quai! Je suis Mé-dée Je suis Médée et je laisse viv-re

ascending fourth

descending fourth

Qu'ai-je fait? ou/sort

Qa



15 ils? ou sont-ils? mon oeil ne les voit plus

a very dramatic move to F

18 Pour les fils de ja son me sens se sont é mus Ce sont les tiens

ADAGIO

22 Ces sont les tiens dis-tu mais n'est-il pas leur pé-re

Animato

30a

a long dominant for the whole motive

25 malheureuse malheureuse

30b

28 Est-ce à toi de vouloir être mè--re

e

e is a modulatory motive including imitation of the motive 10b

$E_b A_b$   
I  $\rightarrow$   $V_7$

(32) ALL. MOD.<sup>to</sup> e<sup>1</sup> AND.<sup>to</sup>

Est-ce à toi d'écouter la voix de la na-

(36) ALL. MOD.<sup>to</sup>

-tu --- re 4/8 developed E<sup>b</sup> tremolo Est-ce à

*sola voce*

(39)  $\rightarrow$  E chromatic modulation  $\rightarrow$

toi de sen-tir ces doux fre-misse-mens ces doux fre-mis-se-

(44) ALL.<sup>to</sup> =V A (d<sup>1</sup>4c) see b. 25

-mens Eh! qu'il donc!...

(47) A e<sup>1</sup>

qu'oi j'e vais fuir! 5 On a pedal posuit j'elquittel mes en-

m. 38... a modulatory subject starts and develops into thirds above the bass which stands on the tonic

m. 46... the broken ascending third turns into a descending broken third (vocal line)

(a<sup>1</sup>)

50 Et je les abandon - - - ne

53 5<sup>th</sup> cond et je les abandonne au pou-voir du par

56 ALL: VIVACE ju--re chrom. shift + unisons Il peut me pre-ve

59 - nir "E" chrom. nature les frapper le pre-

62 -mier Non Con-sommons le crime et qu'il soit tout en-tier

descending third

ascending fourth

In order to blur tonality

b = f# IV V#

= 7<sup>th</sup> degree of D

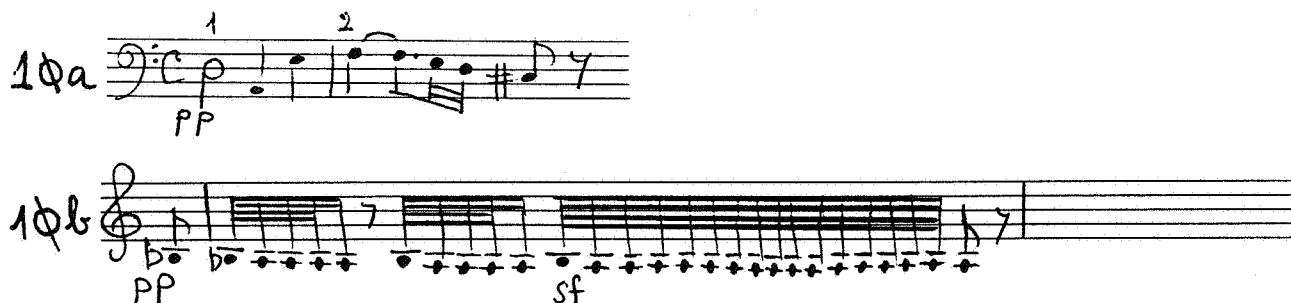
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Medea's rapid changes of mood result in a complementary richness and variety of events in the harmonic field. If LaRue points at the element of harmony as the basis for creating musical expression and drama, this recitative might well be chosen to exemplify the tremendous capacity of harmony for creating a remarkable short and concise musical movement. It is quite exceptional for Cherubini to compose a recitative. Yet he decided on this interesting musical setting for Medea's difficult moment of truth. The strength of his harmonic language and the richness of melodic ideas, make for great mobility; the many bold chromatic progressions and types of melodic intervals help Cherubini to illustrate once and for all Medea's sorely-felt dilemma before committing the murder of her sons. The orchestral motives are no less thematic than the vocal ones: they make six (!) appearances including inner variants:  $1 \text{ } \textcircled{a} \text{ } b \rightarrow 6 \text{ } \textcircled{a}$ . The modulatory nature of some phrases (e, f, g, h) join up with their typically defined melodic intervals, at which point harmony and melody together serve and characterize the most delicate and complex psychological nuances in Medea's soul. In my opinion, this recitative marks the highest dramatic and psychological moment of the whole opera. It appears before Medea's final decision as regards her terrible murder and its physical realization.

Here is a detailed discussion of several moments in the recitative, illustrating the role of harmony in the creation of deep and complex psychological drama. The full piano-vocal score introduced in this chapter (pp. 270-3 ) should be referred to while reading the following analysis. Example IV-2 illustrates the Romantic message in Cherubini's harmonic language.

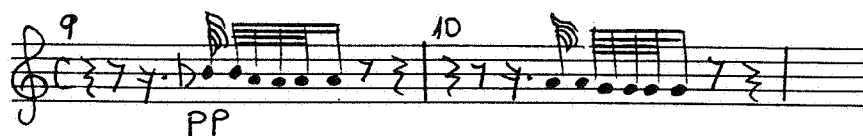
Motive 1 $\phi$  consists of two extremely different orchestral elements:

Example IV-2. Motives 1 $\phi$  a and 1 $\phi$  b (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi!").



Motive 1 $\phi$  a, the first part, is more lyrical, contains long notes - half-notes and quarter-notes, moves somewhat like an obbligato, and includes the large intervals of the fourth, and fifth right at its outset. Motive 1 $\phi$  b is much more rhyth-mical and has the nature of a tremolo and sigh motive with rapid sixty-fourth notes - somehow mechanical in comparison to the meaningful melody of 1 $\phi$  a. These two submotives of  $\phi$  will recur as an accompanimental element through-out the recitative. They recur in their full length in mm.12-14 and also in several partial versions (Ex. IV-3).

Example IV-3. Vocal line, mm.9-10 (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi!").



These two examples may be seen as partial versions of motive 1  $\phi$  b. A new, conspicuous appearance of an important instrumental motive will be given a new number: 2  $\phi$  in m.20, 3  $\phi$  a-b in mm.24-25, 4  $\phi$  a-b in m.32, etc.

There is no indication of key for this recitative as might have been expected, but it clearly opens in D minor and resolves to D major, moving through many inner keys as may be seen in the Timeline.

Each vocal motive from a to h is specified by interval jumps e.g. motive a is characterized by ascending thirds and fourths, b by gradual descending seconds, c by a prominent upwards leap of a fourth, d by a descending third, e by alternating neighbour notes.

The first harmonic exception is already noticed in the first modulation: mm.14-7 contain a most dramatic modulation from D minor to F major, in spite of the close relationship between the two parallel keys (Ex. IV-4).

Example IV-4. Harmonic progression mm.14-18 (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi!").

Handwritten annotations for the harmonic progression:

Measure 14:  $d \bar{v} II$

Measure 15: chromatic shift to  $\sharp$ :  $\bar{v} 6 / \bar{v}$  of  $\rightarrow C$

Measure 16:  $\bar{v} 6$  of

Measure 17:  $I$  of  $C =$

Measure 18:  $\bar{v}$  of  $F \rightarrow \bar{v} 7$

Cherubini preferred to proceed one scale further into the field of majorization and arrived at C major by another majorization: he uses f-sharp which is a tritone from the tonic c, yet only by using this key as a dominant of F major. This surprising chromatic shift occurs at the very beginning of the text, as if to emphasize the dramatic nature of the whole recitative to come.

Phrase e is of a modulatory nature. Moving organically to phrase f after its own interesting variant e<sup>1</sup>, the harmonic progressions continue to surprise the listener's ear in phrase g as well (see Ex. IV-5, on the following page). See also the piano-vocal score for this example, p.272 above. Cherubini employs a remarkable harmonic tool, viz. that of unisons in the strings. These can be heard clearly in mm.25-9, 37-9, for example. When an orchestral unison such as this appears, it makes for some harmonic blurring which brings with it astonishing modulations. To the perceptive ear, this chromatic shift included in mm.30-45 - from E-flat major to E major - is easier to absorb as written by Cherubini, rather than if it had been laden with full chords. He employs this bold procedure here, around the middle of Medea's recitative, in order to highlight her most shocking words; these two sentences are situated in the very heart of the recitative, as if to indicate that she herself is piercing her own heart (lines 5-6 of the text): "Malheureuse! est-ce à toi de vouloir être mère? Est-ce à toi de sentir ces doux frémissements?" ("Unhappy woman! should you want to be a mother? Should you be feeling this sweet trembling?").

Example IV-5. Harmonic progression, mm. 29-48 (Medea's recitative "Eh quoi!").

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "The Song of the Sea" (The Song of the Sea). The score is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The music is in a major key, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 29 through 48 indicated. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The score is a single system, with the music written on a grand staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is titled "The Song of the Sea" (The Song of the Sea). The score is written in a major key, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 29 through 48 indicated. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The score is a single system, with the music written on a grand staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is titled "The Song of the Sea" (The Song of the Sea).



SCENES 3 → 6: BIG FINALE

Dramatic Context and Content

Medea's aria following her recitative at the beginning of Act III, reflects her final decision to murder her sons, after having come to terms with herself. The Finale, according to Hoffman, begins when the chorus shouts at her "Oh crime! Oh treachery! wretched princess!" ("Ô crime! Ô trahison! déplorable princesse!") but in Cherubini's version, the opening sentence differs: "Oh Gods, help us!" ("Ô Dieux, secourez nous!"). The chorus, Medea and Jason, all in their own way, give vent to the feeling of horror surrounding the inevitable crime. Medea jeers at the grieving crowd "Oh cries, sweeter to me than songs of joy!" ("Ô cris plus doux pour moi que des chants d'allegresse!"). Her brazen-faced mockery is forceful and revengeful in spite of the tears surrounding her. Scene 3 closes with Medea running to the temple, holding the knife she has picked up. The crime is committed immediately after.

Scene 4, relatively short, enables the people of Corinth and Jason to express their horror at the murder. Jason searches hopelessly for his children and for Dircea; together with the people of Corinth, he curses Medea: "Let us pursue the guilty woman. Take her life!" ("Poursuivons la coupable. Arrachez-lui la vie!").

In Scene 5, once more relatively short, Neris tells Jason of the murder being committed just then in the temple by Medea; but no-one is able to stop her.

Scene 6, which closes the opera, has the main protagonists, Medea and Jason, expressing their despair. They blame each other for the fate which has overtaken them till the end of their days.

### Text and Versification

#### English Translation

#### Original

### Scene 3, Section 2

(The text in square brackets [ ] indicates Cherubini's additions to or shortenings of Hoffman's libretto)

#### Chorus

0. [Oh Gods, help us! Oh vengeful  
thunderbolt! fall on the  
guilty one]

1. Oh crime! Oh treachery!  
wretched princess!

#### Medea

2. Cries of despair are reaching  
me.

#### Chorus

3. People, shed your tears;  
you no longer have a king.

#### Medea

4. Oh cries, sweeter to me than  
songs of joy!

#### Chorus

5. Oh crime! oh treachery!  
unhappy princess!

5a. [Oh dreadful sight]

#### Jason

6. Wretched Dircea, what then is  
your fate?

#### Medea and chorus

7. Fall on the guilty woman, oh  
vengeful thunderbolt!

#### Chorus

8. Ill-fated Creon, unhappy  
princess!

#### Choeur

[Ô Dieux, secourez nous!  
Ô foudre vengeresse!  
tombe sur la coupable]

Ô crime! ô trahison!  
déplorable princesse!

#### Médée

Les cris du desespoir péné-  
trent jusqu'à moi.

#### Choeur

Peuple, versez des pleurs;  
vous n'avez plus de roi.

#### Médée

Ô cris plus doux pour moi  
que des chants d'allégresse!

#### Choeur

Ô crime! ô trahison!  
malheureuse princesse!

[Ô spectacle d'effroi]

#### Jason

Déplorable Dircé, quel est  
donc votre sort?

#### Médée et choeur

Tombe sur la coupable, ô  
foudre vengeresse!

#### Choeur

Infortuné Créon, malheureuse  
princesse!

### Section 3

#### Jason

9. What horrible crime has  
condemned you to death,

10. And has stolen you from my  
tenderness?

#### Jason

Quel horrible forfait vous  
condamne à la mort,

Et vous ravit à ma tendresse?

Medea (recit.)

11. Are you mourning your Dircea,  
oh perfidious one! and your  
children?
12. Do you not remember that they  
are in my power?
13. Spare your long moanings for  
them:
14. You do not know yet how far my  
vengeance goes.
15. No more weakness! No more  
fear!
16. Let us surpass, let us  
complete my crimes.
17. Eumenides, precede me.
18. Run, deliver my victims to me.

Médée (recit.)

- Tu pleures ta Dircé, perfide!  
et tes enfans?
- Ne te souvient-il plus qu'ils  
sont en ma puissance?  
Réserve-leur ces longs  
gémissemens:  
Tu ne sais point encor  
jusqu'où va ma vengeance.  
Plus de faiblesse! plus  
d'effroi!  
Surpassons, couronnons mes  
crimes.  
Eumenides, précédez-moi;  
Courez, livrez-moi les  
victimes.

#### Scene 4 Section 4

Jason (+ Chorus)

19. Oh heaven! will you leave her  
crimes unpunished?

Chorus

20. Revenging gods, punish this  
monstrous sacrilege.

Jason

21. Gods! where are my children?  
Gods! return my sons to me;
22. Let your goodness protect them.

Chorus

23. Oh father, wretched king!

Jason

24. Oh, my dear Dircea!

Chorus

25. Let us pursue the guilty woman.

Jason

26. Take her life!

All

27. Let her hateful blood pay
28. For the blood which her rage  
has shed!

Jason (+ Choeur)

- O ciel! laisseras-tu ses  
forfaits impunis?

Choeur

- Punissez, dieux vengeurs, ce  
monstre sacrilège.

Jason

- Dieux! où sont mes enfans?  
Dieux, rendez-moi mes fils;  
Que votre bonté les protège.

Choeur

- Ô pere, déplorable monarque!

Jason

- Ô ma chere Dircé!

Choeur

- Poursuivons la coupable.

Jason

- Arrachez-lui la vie!

Tous

- Que son sang odieux expie  
Le sang que sa rage a versé!

#### Scene 5

Neris

29. Ah! sir, your wife...

Jason

Continue speaking?

Neris

The cruel woman!

30. In this temple...right now...

Jason

Nérís

- Ah! seigneur, votre épouse...

Jason

Achevez?

Nérís

La cruelle!

- Dans ce temple...à

l'instant...

Jason

Neris

31. She is pursuing your sons in  
order to pierce their heart.

Jason + Chorus

32. Oh heaven! Oh criminal mother!

Jason

33. If there is still time, let us  
extinguish her fury.

Néris

Elle poursuit vos fils pour  
leur percer le coeur.

Jason + chœur

Ô ciel! Ô mère criminelle!

Jason

S'il en est temps encore,  
étouffons sa fureur.

Scene 6. Section 5

Medea

34. Stop and recognize your  
outraged wife.

Jason

35. What do I see, just gods!

Chorus

Oh dreadful sight!

Jason

36. Barbarous woman, where are  
my sons?

Medea

Their blood has avenged me.

Jason

37. What have my children done  
to you?

Medea

They were born from you.

Jason

38. Gods!

Medea

Go, loyal husband, fond and  
tender father,

39. Look for a young wife, abandon  
a mother.

Jason

40. Unhappy woman! ah! at least  
at this dreadful time,

41. Afford me the sweetness of  
seeing my children,

42. That I may embrace their  
bleeding corpses

43. That I may console their  
moaning shades;

44. That the last respects be  
paid to them

45. And that, in the grave...

Medea

You will not see them again.

Jason

46. My sons! return my sons to me!

Medea

They have followed my brother.

47. Adieu! Go, drag your misery

Médée

Arrête, et reconnais ton  
épouse outragée.

Jason

Qu'ai-je vu, justes dieux?

Chœur

O spectacle d'effroi!

Jason

Barbare, où sont mes fils?

Médée

Tout leur sang m'a vengée.

Jason

Que t'ont fait mes enfans?

Médée

Ils étaient nés de toi.

Jason

Dieux!

Médée

Va, fidèle époux, tendre et  
sensible père,

Cherche une jeune épouse,  
abandonne une mère.

Jason

Malheureuse! ah! du moins  
dans ces affreux moments,

Laisse-moi la douceur de  
revoir mes enfans,

Que je puisse embrasser  
leurs dépouilles sanglantes

Que je puisse apaiser leurs  
ombres gémissantes;

Que les derniers devoirs  
enfin leur soient rendus

Et que dans le tombeau...

Médée

Tu ne les verras plus.

Jason

Mes fils! rends-moi mes  
fils!

Médée

Ils ont suivi mon frère.

Adieux! Dans Iolcos va

	with you in Iolcos;	traîner ta misère;
48.	From shore to shore, wandering, despairing,	De rivage en rivage, errant, désespéré,
49.	A fugitive everywhere, abhorred everywhere,	En tous lieux fugitif, en tous lieux abhorré,
50.	Go, hide the remorse of your distraught soul,	Va cacher les remords de ton âme éperdue,
51.	And let all seas tremble at seeing you!	Et que les mers partout frémissent à ta vue!
52.	Luckier than you, I go to the Underworld	Plus heureuse que toi, je vais dans les enfers
52a.	[Luckier than you, I rise up to the sky]	[Plus heureuse que toi, je m'en vais dans les Aïrs]
53.	By known ways, always open to me:	Par des chemins connus, pour moi toujours ouverts:
54.	After a thousand torments I shall see you descending there,	Après mille tourmens je t'y verrai descendre,
54a.	[I shall soon see you descending to the Underworld]	[Dans les enfers bientôt je te verrai descendre]
55.	And on the banks of the Styx my shade will wait for you.	Et sur les bords du Styx mon ombre va t'attendre.
	<u>Chorus</u> ± <u>Neris</u> ± <u>Jason</u>	<u>Chœur</u> ± <u>Néris</u> ± <u>Jason</u>
56.	Just heaven! The whole of Hell is revealed before our eyes!	Juste ciel! tout l'enfer se decouvre à nos yeux!
57.	Let us flee, let us flee from this ill-fated place.	Fuyons, fuyons de ces funestes lieux.

Versification:

### Scene 3, Sections 2 and 3

The text may be subdivided into three stanzas:

1. In Hoffman's original text, the first stanza is of 10 lines. The text is an iambic hexameter, except for the shortened final line, which is tetrametric. The rhyme scheme is abbaacaaca. Rhyme a is feminine, all others are masculine. In Cherubini's text, two lines have been added: an initial hexametric iambic line (rhyme a, feminine) and a trimetric iambic line "o spectacle d'effroi" (rhyme b, masculine) following the original line 5, so that the rhyme scheme has become aabbaabcaaca.
2. A heterometric iambic quatrain (6 feet - 6 feet - 5 feet - 6

feet) with alternate rhymes dede (d masculine, e feminine).

3. A tetrametric iambic quatrain with alternate rhymes bfbf (b masculine, f feminine).

#### Scene 4, Section 4

The text consists of two stanzas:

1. A heterometric iambic quatrain (the first three lines of 6 feet each, the last one of 4 feet) with alternate rhymes abab (a masculine, b feminine). Rhyme a exists only if the word "fils" (sons) is pronounced as "fi" rather than "fis", otherwise line 1 and line 3 are unrhymed. The archaic pronunciation "fi" existed and is still preserved today (as a variant) in the biblical expression "le fils de l'homme" (cf. P. Fouché, "Traité de prononciation française, Paris, Klincksieck, 1959, p. 479).

2. A heterometric iambic stanza (4 feet - 3 feet - 3 feet - 4 feet - 4 feet) with the rhyme scheme abcd db (lines 1 and 3 are unrhymed). The rhyme b is masculine, all others are feminine.

#### Scene 5

The text is a heterometric iambic stanza of five lines. The lines are hexametric, except for the penultimate one which is tetrametric. The rhyme scheme is aabab (a feminine, b masculine).

#### Scene 6, Section 5

The text begins with a hexametric iambic quatrain. It has alternate rhymes abab. Rhyme a is feminine (with bisyllabic final -ee), b is masculine. The lines have caesuras after the third

feet. In the three last lines the caesuras serve as borders between different performers, each one singing half a line. Therefore there is room for an alternative analysis of the stanza: eight-lined trimetric iambic stanza with odd lines left unrhymed (all of them masculine) with the rhyme scheme abcdebfd.

The final part of the text may be considered one long iambic stanza (20 lines) with hexametric lines, except for the last one, which is pentametric. The rhyme scheme is aabbccddaaeeffgghhii (plain rhymes with repetition of rhyme a). The feminine and masculine rhymes alternate regularly: fmmffmmffmmffmmffmm.

Text and Form: The Art of Shaping the Arias, Timeline, Scoring and Tonality

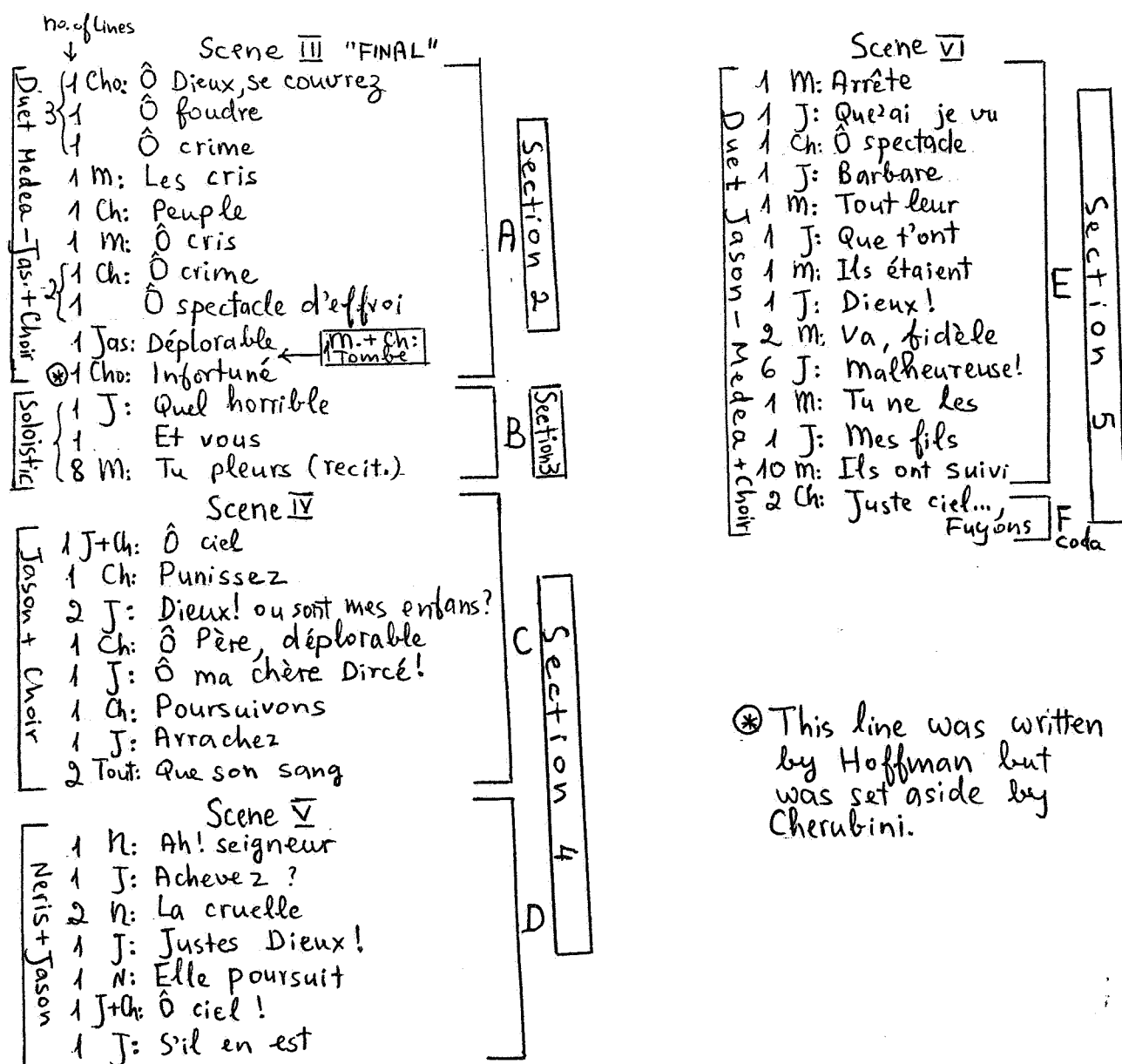
The big through-composed form is well-suited to the long chain of dramatic events occurring towards the close of the opera. The 'chain' begins with the people of Corinth, Medea and Jason, followed by solo appearances of Jason and Medea. At this point, Scene 3 ends and is followed by two instrumental sections. Scene 4 is devoted to Jason, echoed by the chorus, Scene 5 returns Neris to the stage and consists basically of Neris informing Jason of Medea's crime. These two scenes, 4 and 5, are followed by another instrumental section. In the final section - Scene 6 - the list of participants is identical to that in the opening section of the Finale: Medea, Jason and the people of Corinth. The frame of melodic motives is firmly attached to the musical sectionality.

To summarize: the dramatic necessities, reflected in the

appearances of the characters, dictate the big musical dimensions of the Finale. The listing of musical sections and numbers of measures starts from Section 2, m.190 i.e. Section 1, and mm.1-189 cover the early part of Scene 3, including the recitative (analyzed in detail earlier) and aria of Medea.

There are relatively few text repetitions in the scenes under discussion (Table IV-5).

Table IV-5. Text and form - diagrammatic representation of the Big Finale, Act III.



\* This line was written by Hoffman but was set aside by Cherubini.



Following is an accurate representation of the structure of text and form, with line numbers of text (Table IV-6):

Table IV-6. Text and form - schematic representation of the Big Finale, Act III.

mm.

190 **Big A** Scene 3 con'd  
↓  
282 Line No. 0 →  $\frac{1}{2}$  1 2 3 4 5 5a 6 7 8 9 10  
Choir M. Ch. M. Ch. J. M. + Ch. (\*) Ch. 8 J.  
Section 2 ————— Section 3 →

282 **Big B** Scene 3 con'd → ending  
↓  
343 Medea  
Line No. 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18  
 $\times 3$   $\times 2$   $\times 4$  (1/2 I)  
Section 3 con'd —————

343 **Big C** Scene 4  
↓  
394 Line No. 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28  
J. (+Ch.) Ch. J. Ch. J. Ch. J. Everybody  
text repetitions text repetitions  
Section 4 —————→

393 **Big D** Scene 5  
↓  
412 Line No. 29 30 31 32 33  
Neris J. Neris J. N. J. + Choir J.  
Section 4 con'd —————→

412 **Big E** Scene 6  
↓  
470 Line No. 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45  
M. J. Ch. J. M. J. M. J. M. J.  
Section 5 —————→

Scene 6 con'd  
Line No. 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55  
M. J. M.  
Section 5 con'd —————→

474 **Big F** = Scene 6 ending  
↓  
533 Coda  
Line No. 56 57  
Choir + Neris + Jason  
Section 5 —————

(\*) This line was written by Hoffman but was aside by Cherubini.

Figure IV-2. Timeline: through-composed form (Big Finale, Act III).

	Section 2						
Text	Choir O Dieu → O crime	Med. Les Cris	Med. + Choir O spectacle	Med. O cris	Jason Déplorable Dircé	Med. Choir → vengeance	
Phrases	[chords only]	a		a <sup>1</sup>	b	c	
Form	A						
Music							
	190	207	222	230	242	256	264
	b	f#	V # chrom. modul. →	V # e	b	→ V # c → modul.	f#
							f#

	Section 3				Scene 4									
	Jason		Medea		Section 4.		Jason + Choir							
Text	Quelle horrible (a+b)		Tuplures				O ciel							
Phrases	<u>d</u>	<u>d</u> <sup>1</sup>		<u>d</u> <sup>2</sup>		<u>d</u> <sup>3</sup>		<u>e</u>						
Form			B				C							
Music														
	265	274	282	282 <sup>4</sup>	289	290	297	320	333	343	345	→ 360	1	364
	c	chrom. modul.	<u>v</u> <sup>b</sup>	d	D			dom. pedal		d	tonic	ped. point	<u>III</u> <sup>b</sup>	Bb

	Scene 5			Scene 6		
				Section 5		
Text	(choir) Poursuivons la coupable	Neris + Jason Ah! Seigneur... Achevez?	Jason S'il en est	Duet Jas.-Med. with Choir (Med.) Arrête		(Choir) Ospectade
Phrases	(a) $\frac{f}{f}$					$a^2$
Form		D		E		I
Music	369	393-4	407	411-2	413	418'9
	[Bb]		chrom. modulation → b	V# I	V I	Vd IV#

Text	(Medea) Va, fidèle que je punisse	(Med)(Jas) Tu ne Mes les pils				Tout [choir, Neris, Jason] Juste ciel	Fuyons	Orch. only		
Phrases	variants of <u>a</u>					<u>g</u>				
Form					F = coda					
Music	425 [d]	431 VI	441-2 VIIb1	-6 IV b	452-4 b I	464 d	470 <sup>4</sup> v #	477-9	486 I ↔ V	503-33 → I

chromatic harmonies →

Table IV-7. Scoring indicates both form and size of orchestra.

Big sections	A	B	C	D	E	F = Coda
Size of orchest. ensemble	large	large →	large	small	large and small	large
List of instruments and vocal parts	1 Picc, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, 2 Hrn, 2 Fg, Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc, Cb, Chor, Sop, Ten. (Med.) (Jas.)	1 Picc, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 4 Hrn, 2 Fg, Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc	1 Picc, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 4 Hrn, 2 Fg, Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc, Cb, Timp.	Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc, Cb	2 Fl, 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 4 Hrn, 2 Fg, Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc, Cb, Timp.	1 Picc, 2 Cl, 2 Fg, 2 Hrn, Timp., Vl <sub>1</sub> , Vl <sub>2</sub> , Vla, Vc, Cb, Chor, Mez Sop, Ten. (Med.) (Jas.)

### Tonality:

The complexity of the tonal scheme in this Finale is an immediate reflection of the dramatic action onstage. Since the whole Finale may be considered as a single, long continuity with undefined form, its big sectionality is made possible by the differences between given sections according to the exigencies of plot, and the appearances of characters onstage. At the same time, harmonic progressions assist the action. Big Section A with its many participants, abounds in inner keys (B minor, F-sharp minor, E minor, D major, B minor, C minor, E-flat major, C minor, B minor); Big Section B, consisting of Medea's recitative only, is much more relaxed harmonically; it contains nothing more than a modulation to D minor and D major and then remains in D major for 43 measures. Big Sections C and D contain bold chromatic progressions within the keys of D minor, B-flat major and B minor. The density of chromatic progression is most obvious in closing Sections E and F, where all the characters participate once more. The fluctuation between D minor and B minor - which of these should be considered the main key - becomes more pronounced when D minor opens and closes this area (Sections E and F) and there are simultaneously many chromatic inner modulations.

## Text-Music Relationships: Musical Expression

### A. Thematic Elements

#### Basic Remarks:

1. The addition of a superscript to a phrase, for example, <sup>1</sup>b, indicates a variant of the phrase, in this case phrase b.
2. Phrase a is the source of almost all of the motivic material (the descending broken triad) and b serves as its antithesis.
3. Recitative or choral subsections or partial subsections do not include most of this motivic material.

Example IV-6. List of phrases (Big Finale, Act III).

The musical score for Example IV-6 consists of several staves with handwritten annotations and musical notation. The phrases are labeled as follows:

- Phrase a:** M, 207, starts away from tonic. The notation shows a descending broken triad.
- Phrase a' (variant of a):** M, 230, broken triad towards. The notation shows a descending broken triad.
- Phrase a<sup>2</sup>:** M, 420 (end of opera), 426. The notation shows a descending broken triad.
- Phrase b:** J, 242, ascending seconds. The notation shows an ascending second.
- Phrase c:** M, 256, descending seconds. The notation shows a descending second.
- Phrase d:** J, 265, combination of a and b. The notation shows a combination of the descending broken triad and the ascending second.

Handwritten annotations include:

- "starts away from tonic" for phrase a.
- "broken triad towards" for phrase a'.
- "ascending seconds" for phrase b.
- "descending seconds" for phrase c.
- "combination of a and b" for phrase d.
- "the 'antithesis' to a" for phrase b.
- "orchestra" for phrase d.

Handwritten musical score for five staves. The staves are labeled M, M, J, J Choir, and Tutti. The first staff (M) has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), with a handwritten 'd<sup>2</sup>' above the first measure. The second staff (M) has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), with a handwritten 'd<sup>3</sup>' above the first measure and 'd<sup>1</sup> (end)' above the last measure. The third staff (J) has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), with a handwritten 'e' above the first measure. The fourth staff (J Choir) has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), with a handwritten 'f(a)' above the first measure. The fifth staff (Tutti) has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C), with a handwritten 'g' above the first measure. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Handwritten annotations include '289', '333', '345', '369', '479', 'choir responses', and '(start of chords in b. 477)'. A bracket at the bottom left of the fifth staff indicates '[all incl. orch., except Medea and Creon]'.

## B. Influence of the Text on Mood and on Vocal Style

It is difficult to generalize about the subject of mood or the style of singing when dealing with so extended a Finale with long subsections, each of which features its heroes and its particular atmosphere. The four phrases for Section A, with their reappearances (a appears twice and d recurs in its first variant, <sup>1</sup> d - see the Timeline, p. 288), serve the various moods reflected by the particular participants; the chorus is of secondary importance only, complaining to the gods about the crime, and singing in simple chords. Medea's forceful appearance brings with it the first idea which appears twice for similar expressions of hers, using the same verbal motive "Les cris" (line 2) and "Ô cris" (line 4). Phrase a is developed verbally and musically - this can be seen by comparing measures 207 and 230: Medea starts out with "Cries of despair are reaching me" (line 2), and continues with "Oh cries, sweeter to me than songs of joy!" (line 4) (Ex. IV-7).

Example IV-7. Medea's vocal line, mm.230-8 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).

(M) Phrase a in its full length

ô cris plus doux pour moi ô cris plus doux pour moi que les chants d'al-lé-gres- - - - - se

Her mood is more arrogant here in mm.230-8, and her brilliancy of timbre, including a high tessitura, involves sharp melodic contours. In comparison to this mood of Medea's, expressed by stormy melodic contours downwards, Jason's motive b in response, is made up of milder ascending contours, starting with very gradual successive seconds (Ex. IV-8).

Example IV-8. Jason's vocal line, mm.242-6 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).

(J) Phrase b in its full length

Dé-plo-ra-ble Dir-cé Dé-plo-ra-ble Dir-cé quel est donc vot-re sort quel est donc vot-re sort

Jason does not as yet comprehend what is transpiring in Medea's heart, where passionate love and terrible revenge are present at one and the same time, and he radiates a calmer mood. His musical sentence in motive b (Ex. IV-8), although containing a gradual extension of the principal intervals of the contour, is effective

first and foremost because of its successive seconds. Here Jason sounds as if he is sincerely attempting to understand the far more nervous mood of his wife; this is the main impression he evokes at this moment, even though he may be merely playing the game of being unsuspecting of the impending tragedy.

However, Jason eventually bursts out, still at the end of Big Section A (phrase d), and this is the beginning of a dramatic, much rougher and more irritable mode of expression (motive d, m.265 onwards) (Ex. IV-9).

Example IV-9. Jason's vocal line, mm.265-71 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).



Jason uses the words "horrible" and "death" in order to penetrate to the depths of Medea's intentions. He cannot remain apathetic any longer. The bold, ascending octave leap, at the very beginning of this melody (Ex. IV-9), is the best evidence of a sudden change in Jason's mood, as he begins to realize the approaching danger.

The ruling atmosphere in Medea's recitative in Big Section B is again stormy, influenced by the inner conflict which she is trying to resolve. The recitative is full of melodic jumps which are not a typical feature (usually, there is a progression moving in seconds). Following is one of the musical phrases in this recitative of Medea's (Ex. IV-10).

Example IV-10. Medea's vocal line, mm.305-12 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).



Both line 9 "Eumenides, precede me" and line 10, "Run, deliver my victims to me" are repeated and give Medea the opportunity of expressing her determination to commit the crime.

Jason is now featured in Big Sections C and D. Assisted by the chorus, he uses a rhetoric which is musically more symmetrical than Medea's extremely tense manner of expression, brought out by her strong emotional inner conflicts. His relatively balanced manner of singing is marked by many repeated notes. Ex. IV-11 illustrates the typically steady repetitions of notes in phrases e and f. The words that accompany phrase e (line 19) are: "Oh heaven! will you leave her crimes unpunished?" (*Ô ciel! laisseras-tu ses forfaits impunis?*) and the beginning words of phrase f are: "Let us pursue the guilty woman" (*"Poursuivons la coupable"*) (line 25).

Example IV-11. Vocal lines of Jason and chorus, mm.345-9, mm.369-72 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).

Phrase e (start) 345 346 349

J. *ô ciel! ô ciel! lai-ssé-ras tu ses for-faits im-pu-nis*

Phrase f (start) 369 372

J. *ar-ra-chez lui la vi-e*

Choir *poursui-vons la cou-pa-ble*  
*poursui-vons la cou-pa-ble*  
*poursui-vons la cou-pa-ble*





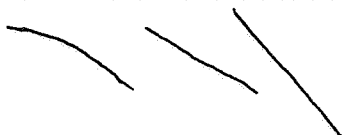
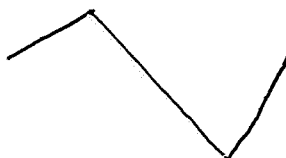
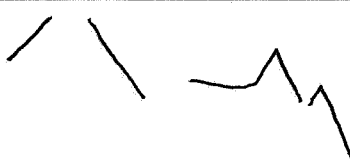


The vocal textural strength of the full chorus together with Jason in Big Sections C and D balances the moderate melodic movement reflected in motives e and f.

Harmony is the main element for the creation of atmosphere reflecting the intensification of the plot in Big Section E. There are no basic innovations in terms of melodic motives until the coda in F. But the differences between the various appearances of the characters are marked both by the richness of harmonic progressions and the variety of dynamic values. The mutual villifications between Medea and Jason, including longer solo subsections of both (lines 40-5 for Jason, 46-55 for Medea), abound in horrified reactions to the murder, and Medea's warnings of the terrible fate still in store for Jason. They both use recitative style; the complex harmonic content of these recitatives is analyzed in detail further on (Text and Harmony, pp.300-5).

#### C. Melodic Contours, Highest Peaks and Underpoints

The full picture of the list of phrases set graphically as a list of melodic contours, again proves the richness of types of linear movement. The melodic contours are drawn in Fig. IV-3, and relate to the big formal sections.

Figure IV-3. Melodic contours of the thematic movement shown graphically (Big Finale, Act III).

<u>PHRASE</u>	<u>CONTOUR</u>	<u>BIG SECTION</u>	<u>TEXT + LINE NO.</u>
a (Medea)		A, E	Les cris (4), Ô cris (4), Tout leur sang (36)
b (Jason)		A	Déplorable Dircé (6)
c (Medea + choir)		A	Tombe sur la coupable (7)
d (Jason, Medea)		A, B	J: Quel horrible (9) M: Reserve-leur ces longs (13) J: Courez (15)
e (Jason + choir)		C	Ô ciel (19)
continues into ↓			
f (choir)		C, D	Poursuivons la coupable (25)
g (tutti)		F=coda	Juste ciel (56-7)

The highest peaks are on the high  $\underline{a}$ -flat<sup>2</sup>,  $\underline{a}$ <sup>2</sup>,  $\underline{b}$ -flat<sup>2</sup>, and  $\underline{b}$ <sup>2</sup> for both Medea and Jason. Medea's peaks appear earlier, in Sections A and B, and Jason's, as if in reply, only in Sections C and D.

Medea's highest peak  $\underline{b}$ <sup>2</sup>, appears in m.311, approximately in the middle of her recitative and on a relatively long note (Ex. IV-12), in a *fortissimo* call to the Eumenides to help her reach her victims (line 17).

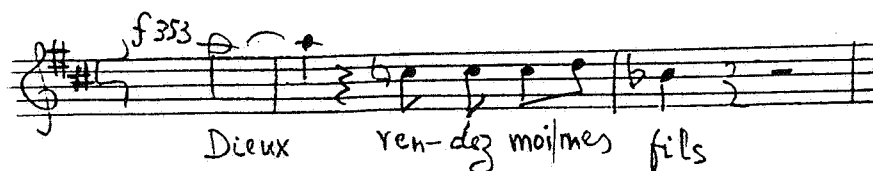
Example IV-12. Medea's vocal line, mm.309-14 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).



"Eumenides, precede me. Run, deliver my victims to me", Medea sings; the hysterical nuance of this sentence is that of the word "précédez" and the highest peak appears on the  $\underline{b}$ <sup>2</sup>. The echoes of this desperate scream still reverberate in the many repetitions of lines 17 and 18, until m.343, the starting point of Section C.

Quite soon after, Jason reaches his long  $\underline{a}$ <sup>2</sup> in mm.353-4 (Ex. IV-13). Once more, a crucial word, "Dieux", is sung by the hero in great turmoil (line 21); Jason is searching frantically for his children, and only the gods can help him.

Example IV-13. Jason's vocal line, mm.353-5 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).



Jason's shout stands out in the context of the the general singing in the course of Section C. It has a long rhythmic value: a half-note tied to a quarter-note above a background of many quarter- and eighth-notes, followed by a big descending leap above a steady dominant pedal point of the inner key G minor, the subdominant of D minor (Ex. IV-14).

Example IV-14. Peaks and underpoints for Medea, Jason and orchestra (the whole Finale).

The image displays a handwritten musical score for Example IV-14, consisting of four staves. The first staff is labeled 'Vocal Peaks and underpoints' and contains two systems of music. The first system is marked 'A mm. 190 → 282' and includes a key signature change from G minor to D minor (indicated by a double sharp on F). The second system is marked 'B mm. 283 → 342' and includes a key signature change from D minor to G minor (indicated by a double flat on F). The second staff is labeled 'Orchestral Peaks and underpoints, levels' and contains two systems of music. The first system is marked 'Picc. (♭) Bass level' and the second system is marked 'Picc. Bass level'. The third staff is labeled 'Vocal (Med.)' and the fourth staff is labeled 'Vocal (Jas.)'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and key signatures.

Handwritten musical score for "The Song of the Shrike" by Charles Ives. The score is written on five staves. The first staff is for the Vocal part, with lyrics "Peaks and Underpines" and a tempo marking "C 343 → 393(394)". The second staff is for the Orchestral part, with lyrics "Peaks and Underpines, Levels" and a tempo marking "C 343 → 393(394)". The third staff is for the Piccolo part, with lyrics "Peaks and Underpines, Levels" and a tempo marking "C 343 → 393(394)". The fourth staff is for the Med. part, with lyrics "Peaks and Underpines, Levels" and a tempo marking "C 343 → 393(394)". The fifth staff is for the Vocal part, with lyrics "Peaks and Underpines, Levels" and a tempo marking "C 343 → 393(394)". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Handwritten musical score for "Everybody" by The Beatles. The score is written on ten staves, divided into two systems of five staves each. The top system includes staves for "Vocal" (Peaks and Underpoints), "Orchestral" (Peaks and Underpoints), "Picc." (Piccolo), "Med." (Medium), and "Jas." (Jazz). The bottom system includes staves for "Vocal" (Peaks and Underpoints), "Orchestral" (Peaks and Underpoints), "Picc." (Piccolo), "Med." (Medium), and "Jas." (Jazz). The score is annotated with various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The title "Everybody" is written at the top, and the composer "The Beatles" is written at the bottom right.

The high vocal tessitura of both Medea and Jason is most evident in contrast to the general range; the orchestral peaks and underpoints also help to emphasize the dramatic expression (see Ex. IV-21, p. 308). The piccolo reaches over and over again to the highest levels of pitch -  $\overset{3}{e}$  and  $\overset{3}{f}$ . This summary shows that the use of levels of pitch is related to harmony, rhythm and dynamics as far as playing a role in the development of musical drama goes. Medea's highest peaks repeat  $\overset{2}{b}$  over and over again, in this way giving evidence of how demanding her vocal part is.

#### D. Text and Harmony

The harmonic lexicon of typical chords and progressions in the Big Finale illustrates clearly Cherubini's talent and his obvious leaning towards the Romantic era in the field of harmony. The following analytical discussion will first deal with four different examples of the variety of chords and progressions to be found (Exs. IV-15-21); next, long progressions out of Sections A and E will illustrate most interesting harmonic strategies through which the musical drama is served.

Example IV-15. Piano-vocal score, mm.199-207 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).

199 171

M. *fou - dre ven - ge - re - - - - se*

SAT Ch. *Ô fou - dre ven - ge - res - - - -*

B *Ô fou - dre ven - ge -*

202

equals M. *Ô fou - dre ven - ge - res - - - -*

P. 349 Ch. *- se*

in Cherub's full score *Ô fou - dre ven - ge -*

*- res - - - - se*

205

M. *- se*

SAT Ch. *- res - - - - se*

B *fou - dre ven - ge - res - - - - se*

MEDEA

les

The sentence (line 0) sung by the chorus in which the diminished chord stands out so clearly, paints a picture of the vengeful thunderbolt evoked against Medea. It is a strong, literary image, assisted by the prominent diminished seventh repeated several times.

Chromatic progressions are another basic ploy in the rich harmonic array reflected in this Finale. The chorus plays an important role in the opening section of the Finale. It continues to converse with Medea, expressing the crowd's horrified impressions of the ongoing tragedy. When they realize what has actually happened, and intending also to express their sympathy at the fate of Dircea, there is a surprising chromatic progression, transferring the whole tonal area from C-sharp minor to E minor, allowing simultaneously a chromatic step down in the bass line (Ex. IV-16). The piano dynamics serves the dramatic atmosphere well.

Example IV-16. Harmonic outline, mm.222-30 (Big Finale, Act III).

222-5      226-9      230

#5      #6      #

I      II      V

C#      (French)     

e

The chromatic shift is one further step into the Romantic usage of harmonic progressions of which Cherubini is a pioneer. In the following example (Ex. IV-17), Cherubini again chooses a surprising textual utterance in the course of the harmonic event. This musical illustration is taken from the end of Medea's recitative in Big Section B. Medea tries her best to take courage for the committing of her crime. After mocking Jason "Are you mourning Dircea?...Spare your long moanings...You do not know yet how far my vengeance goes", she attends to herself (line 9) "Eumenides, precede me" ("Eumenides, précédez-



moi"). Suddenly then, in the frame of D major, Cherubini introduces a second chord in mm.306-7, with a melodic outburst of a broken triad going up to  $\overset{2}{b\flat}$ .

Example IV-17. Piano-vocal score and harmonic outline, mm.305-7 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).

The image shows a musical score for Example IV-17. The top part is a piano-vocal score for measures 305-307. The vocal line is in D major, with the lyrics "Eu-me-ni - - des pré-cé - - - dez". The piano accompaniment features a broken triad in the right hand and a more complex harmonic structure in the left hand. Below the vocal score is a harmonic outline for measures 306 and 307, showing the progression of chords. The outline for measure 306 shows a D major triad (D, F#, A) and a D minor triad (D, F, A). The outline for measure 307 shows a D major triad (D, F#, A) and a D minor triad (D, F, A).

It is amazing how Cherubini requires a piano in this technically difficult spot for the soprano (Medea). He then immediately moves to fortissimo in m.308, when the tonal picture is again clarified, on the tonic of D major.

The last detail in the harmonic inventory introduced here is one special chord: the lowered  $\overline{II}^{\flat}$  "irritating" the tonic (Ex. IV-18).

Example IV-18. Piano-vocal score, mm.369-79 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).

choir *poursuivons la cou-pa-ble*

269

373

*ar-ra-chez lui la vi-e*

*poursuivons la cou-pa-ble*

3

*que son sang lo-di-ux ex-pi-e que son sang lo-di-*

5

equals Cherubini's full score p. 181 (bottom)

At this point in Big Section C, all cry out against Medea (lines 25, 27): "Let us pursue the guilty woman...Let her hateful blood pay" ("Poursuivons la coupable...Que son sang odieux expie"). The crowd is angry, full of feelings of revenge, and prays for the punishment of Medea. To emphasize the crowd's anger, these verses are repeated a few times. The seventh chord on the supertonic is repeated simultaneously with the text, and in this way harmonic recurrence of this exceptional chord disturbs the clear tonic impression of B-flat major, in order to move away psychologically from calmness or apathy: this woman must be pursued! At

line 27 the B-flat chord becomes a dominant seventh and leads to the subdominant (mm.378-9) in order to give more vitality to the same dramatic-musical expression for the word "blood".

Big Sections A and E are the strongest in terms of harmonic activity, related first of all to the dramatic action of the characters onstage. In these two sections there is a great deal of movement of all the participants onstage, announcing the imminent crime in Section A, and, in Section C, expressing in their own way what is actually happening. The frightful, as yet unknown, future, is tonicized by very complex inner tonal progressions in Section A: B minor contains all these inner keys within itself - F-sharp minor, C-sharp minor, E minor, D major, B minor, E-flat major, C minor (see mm.190-282). After the plot moves forward and the terrible events become known, Section E with all its activity onstage, again introduces a rich tonal picture, though somewhat less intense; the frame of B minor here includes D minor and D major, with many interesting chromatic progressions, finishing on D minor! (mm.413-470). Ex. IV-19 illustrates the interesting harmonic plan of Jason's and Medea's recitatives in Section E.

Example IV-19. Harmonic progressions and melodic graph, mm.429-70 (Big Finale, Act III).

Heroes J. 49

Line Text 50 Malheureuse, laisse-moi sanglantes 51 dans l'olchos 52 gémissements 53 devoirs 54 431 434 437 439 440 444 450

Vocal #

Melody

Harmony

D <=> d

Heroes → M.

Line Text 60 a-horé 61 que par prémi-line 62 les mers toutissent 63 dans les centre 64 du Styx ombre 65 451 452 454 455 456 457 460 461 462 464 466 467 469 470

Vocal #

Melody

Harmony

d  $\frac{viii}{II} \frac{6}{5} = d \frac{viii}{II} \frac{6}{5} \#$

b  $\frac{viii}{II} \frac{6}{5} = b \frac{viii}{II} \frac{6}{5}$

(D)

I

→  $\frac{v}{II} \frac{6}{5} \#$

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

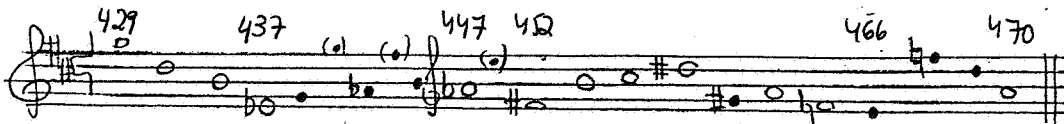
X

XI

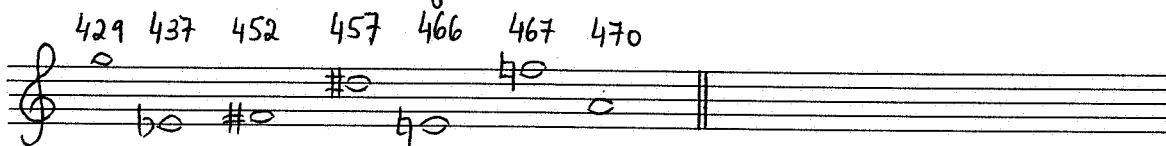
XII

The melodic skeleton of the vocal lines shows a very wild, long, restless contour, in terms of tonal focus or consistency (Ex. IV-20).

Example IV-20. Melodic graph (mm.429-70).



more concise version of basic contours:



### Ensemble and Mood, Texture

The division into Big Sections A, B, C, D, E and F is closely related to the unusual vocal complex, shown in the Timeline, Fig. IV-2, p. 288. Yet this complex basically creates the impression of the Big Finale as a single continuity. The short orchestral opening passages for Section C (mm.343-5), for E (mm.412-3) and for F (mm.471-6), contribute greatly towards establishing this impression of a single long continuity, even though there is no shared motivic connection, but only the scoring for "light" string ensemble for a few bars.

It is well worth taking note of a few examples of remarkable orchestral complexity. The following discussion of three points in the full score of this Finale demonstrates clearly that ensemble and texture have a great influence on the creation of specific atmosphere.

Example IV-21 reflects the complexity of orchestration in the first big tutti as early as Big Section A. These measures show the contrasting movement between the rapid rhythmic values in the strings as against the steady values of the vocal lines.

Example IV-21. Full score, mm.256-9 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 3).

256 259 355

Petite flûte

Oboe

Clari

Cors en Ut

Fagotti

VL<sub>1</sub>

VL<sub>2</sub>

Violes

Jason

sort

Chorus (people)

VL<sub>c</sub>

Cb

P. 355 in Cherub's full score

After Jason sings his sympathetic sentence about Dircea (line 6) "Wretched Dircea, what then is your fate?" ("Déplorable Dirce, quel est donc votre sort?") in pianississimo accompanied by a small ensemble of strings, Medea and the chorus burst out strongly in m.256. This is an extremely stormy, assertive entrance, with Medea's spontaneous shout at Jason, calling on the powers of Nature (line 7) "Fall on the guilty woman, oh vengeful thunderbolt!" ("Tombe sur la coupable, ô foudre vengeresse!"). The nuance of her impulsive reaction is achieved by the immediate forte-piano changes, and the coherence of sound, by the combination of long whole- and half-notes in the wind instruments and the low strings, with rapid passages simultaneously in the high strings. The chorus imitates Medea's entrance, their lines creating a balance between both strings and winds. Different rhythmic patterns interplay, reflecting various moods.

In Section B, for Medea's recitative included in the Finale, see especially mm.283-96. Medea begins with a recitative-like question in line 11 "Are you mourning your Dircea, oh perfidious one!" ("Tu pleures ta Dirce, perfide!"), and this relatively cool type of expression is provided with a reasonably stable orchestral accompanying texture, with down-beat chords in the big ensemble. Then, when moving over to line 14, "You do not know yet how far my vengeance goes" ("Tu ne sais point encor jusqu'ou va ma vengeance"), the full texture in steady quarter-notes makes a forte statement in m.295. Line 15 brings a sudden psychological shift: Medea's inner self is trembling. The dramatic impact is

intensified by her crucial sentence: "No more weakness! No more fear!" ("Plus de faiblesse! plus d'effroi!"). Suddenly she is left with a pianissimo accompaniment of three staccato eighth-notes plus an eighth-note rest in the violins and violas; she sings her trembling sentence much quicker (Allegro Vivace in m.297) and her innermost nature, at war with itself, is immediately revealed. The surprising starkness of texture allows Medea to focus the audience's concentration onto her, in her intimate moments with herself. Then, in the next line (16), her dreadful decision is evident: in line 15 she had encouraged herself by means of her inner strength, and in line 17 she already calls on the Eumenides to help her - in a strong forte orchestrated in a tremendous tutti. The energetic impact of the delicate but highly mobile texture for a few measures (297-302) serves to illustrate Medea's immense psychological drive. The following tutti from m.303 creates another effect in reaction to the previous one, much simpler and weaker from the psychological aspect. Measure 303 affords a strong reaction to the intimate, intense drama in mm.297-302.

Cherubini's ability to create wonderful orchestral coherence of sound is well-illustrated in Ex. IV-22, showing a full orchestral texture accompanying the singing of Jason and the chorus in Section C.

Example IV-22. Full score, mm.364-70 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).



311

Table IV-8. Basic rhythms of the various instruments, mm.364-70.

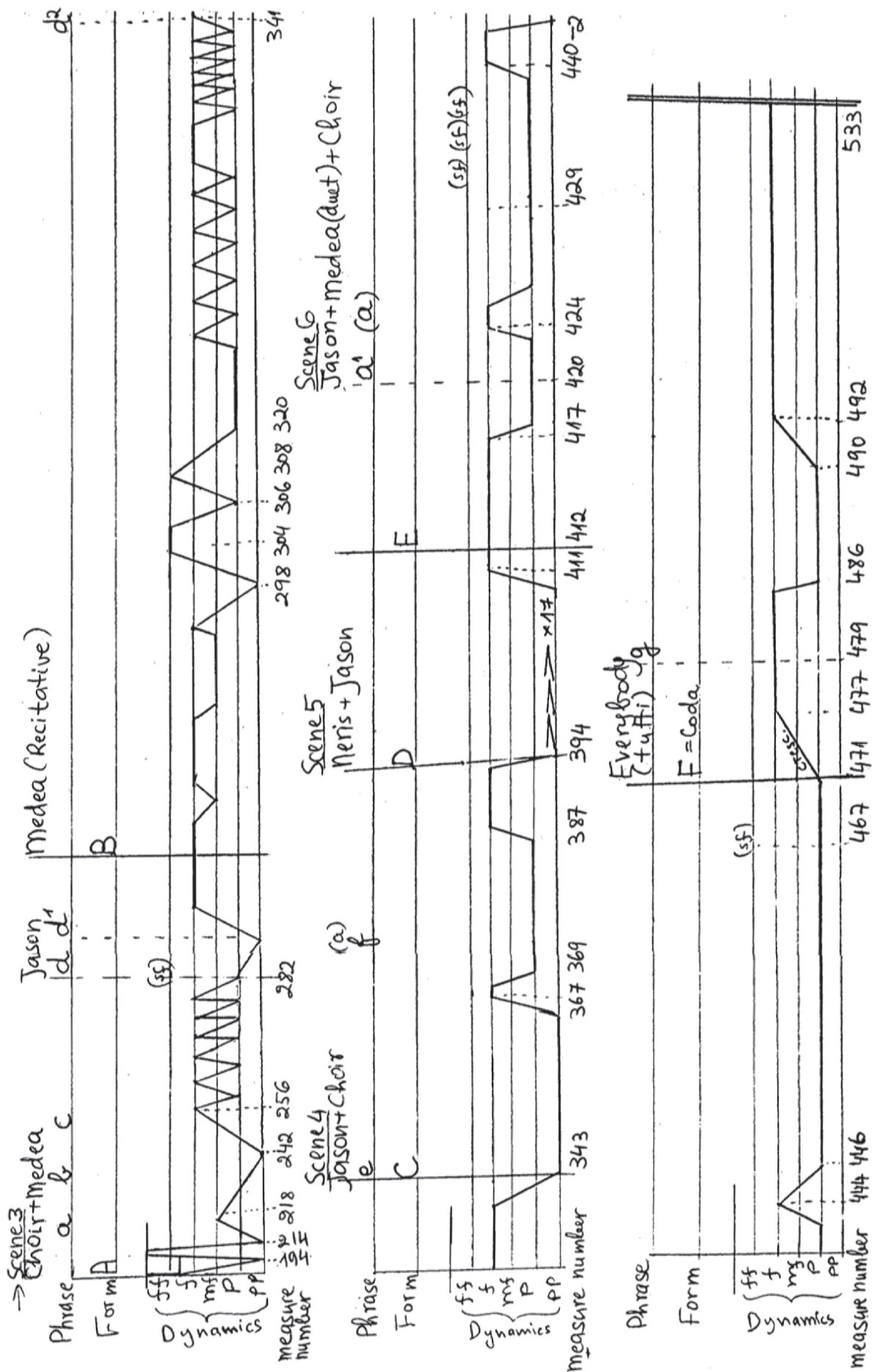
Picc.	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
2ob+2cl	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
4 Horns	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
2 Fg	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
Timp.	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
VL <sub>1</sub> +VL <sub>2</sub>	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
Vla	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
Vc	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
Cbs	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

### Dynamics

The table of dynamics for this Finale is the most uneven in the whole opera. Although pianissimo and fortissimo markings are an exception in Cherubini's musical language, they appear here and reflect the high drama which Cherubini aimed to set to music. There are also several repeated forte-piano areas which intensify the rhetoric of music and drama. In the field of dynamic changes, there is a crescendo and a diminuendo, most concentrated in Medea's recitative in Section B and less so already in Section C. This table of dynamics, presented in Figure IV-4, may well illustrate another Romantic element, in addition to the harmonic one. The Storm and Stress atmosphere here is created partly by the force of intense drama and partly by Cherubini's potential as a Romantic composer. The fortissimo-pianissimo occurrences (mm.298-305) are not as typical of him as they are of Beethoven, and their presence here assists greatly in creating the impact of a remarkable Finale. Medea's recitative, mentioned before as marking her most difficult conflict psychologically speaking, is definitely reflected in the table of dynamics. Pianissimo still rules, as seen in the table, and the fortissimo never returns

after the crucial moment in Section B - mm.304-5, when Medea exhorts herself to be strong: "No more weakness! No more fear! (mm.297-303 pianissimo), Let us surpass, let us complete my crimes" (mm.304-5 fortissimo).

Figure IV-4. Dynamic curve for the whole Finale.



### Delving into Rhythm

The lexicon of rhythms and rhythmical patterns used in the Big Finale reflects the variety and richness of musical events which highlight the intensity of the drama. Section A abounds in long values such as a whole-note tied to a quarter-note or to another whole note, especially in the woodwinds, side by side with running eighth-, sixteenth- and thirty-second-notes in the violins which accompany the vocal lines. Section B (Medea's recitative) starts with the same balance of a relatively steady vocal line accompanied by half- and quarter-notes in the woodwinds and strings. Throughout this section there is an intensification of the quarter-notes in the wind instruments, and eighteenth- and sixteenth-notes appear in the violin and cello when Medea reaches her last line (18) "Run, deliver my victims to me" ("Courez, livrez-moi les victimes"). She is already supported by a very vital, dense texture (Ex. IV-23). The ornamental thirty-second-notes which precede the quarter-notes, add force to the great tension which is increased by the intensive alternations between piano and forte in the horns. The various repetitive rhythms and the rapid, consistent changes of dynamics (forte-piano) make for great drama.

Example IV-23. Full score, mm.333-8 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).

333 338

Petite Flute + Fl.

Ob.

Ob.

Clar.

Clar.

Cor Anglais

Bassoon

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

rez l'incantation les ongles courrez courrez courrez l'oreille ma les ongles

F P F P F P F P F P F P F P F P

F P

The rhythmical subclimax is realized at the beginning of Section C. Jason and the chorus converse simultaneously in simple patterns of ♩ and ♪ = 

♩	♪	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩	♩

 with the background of the filler textures in ♩♩♩♩ (winds) and ♩. ♩. ♩ ♩ (low strings). But when Jason reaches his sentence (line 22) "Let your goodness protect them" ("Que votre honte les protège"), the same rhythmical patterns assert themselves by their instrumental duplications (see Ex. IV-22). This strong coherence of contrapuntal rhythmical patterns is maintained in the course of Scene 5 as well (Section D) although here the texture is lighter. The syncopated pattern 

♩	♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩	♩

 is prominent in the strings at this point, accompanying Jason's and Neris' singing.

Section E, containing the duet of Medea and Jason, is remarkable for the short instrumental responses to the singers in typical recitative style (Ex. IV-24).

Example IV-24. Full score, mm. 421-6 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 6).

421 Recit 426 p. 377

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Cor en fa

Fag.

Timb.

VL1

VL2

Violas

Med.

Jas.

VLc + Cb.

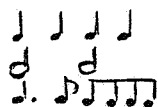
que tous ces âmes enfants

ils étaient nés de toi

ou plutôt Epouse tendre et sensible

Dieux

But as the end of the opera approaches - at the close of Section E and all through the coda = Section F, Cherubini emphasizes the simple down-beat



for the massive body of

the tutti, decorating it with some unusual patterns in the flute  $P \cdot \underline{\text{|||||}}$  (Ex. IV-25). The precision of the flute rhythm and its high register, causes it to stand out in the tutti.

Example IV-25. Full score, mm.506-20 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 6).

Handwritten musical score for Example IV-25, mm. 506-20. The score is for a full orchestra and includes the following parts:

- Petite flute 506
- + Fl.
- Ob.
- Cl.
- Cor.
- Fag.
- Vl<sub>1</sub>
- Vl<sub>2</sub>
- Violas
- Vcl.
- Fl.
- Ob.
- Cl.
- Cor.
- Fag.
- W.
- Violas
- Vcl.
- Cb.

The score is written in 4/4 time and features a complex arrangement of woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The flute part is highlighted with a handwritten 'P' and a series of vertical lines, indicating a specific rhythmic pattern. The score is marked with '510' and 'p.387'.





tionships between the musical elements, and there is a need for a variety of illustrations (which are a result or summary of the methods of analysis and illustration throughout the detailed discussions in this thesis so far). We could claim that 'everything is involved with everything else' here, in terms of analytical description and perception. For example, when speaking about rhythms, we immediately recognize how these create the density of texture (see pp.307-12 earlier), and the discussion on mood and texture could not avoid some details concerning rhythm. Then there is the boldness of harmony, immediately influencing our perception of Medea's most difficult psychological inner conflicts, or the location of melodic peaks within a phrase or in the framework of a whole musical section, or even the Finale as a whole - as an important indicator of concinnity (LaRue's remarkable term), in service of the plot's climax/climaxes.

The one basic continuity is separated into sections, and this sectionality, mainly constructed according to the appearance of the characters, gives the analyst, reader or listener, a clear orientation in this long Finale. For further insight, moving from the element of form into Cherubini's art of composition, a few maps, schemes and graphs are provided, dealing with smaller sections within the big continuity.

Example IV-26 facilitates the comparison between Big Sections A and B, taking into account various musical components. Phrases and harmonies in correlation with dynamics for both sections immediately highlight the differences in musical density, without touching on the component of texture. Cherubini

introduces here a different degree of focus for each of the sections in terms of harmony, phrases and dynamics and, in so doing, exploits very special tactics in the creation of a balance between intensity and relative weakness of musical elements. This may be considered as one of his methods for bringing about a balance between various musical components. Since at this point we are still not involved with differences of texture, we might already consider changes in musical densities and their inter-relationships.

Example IV-26. A special Timeline (phrases with melodic graph, harmony and dynamics).

(Choir, Medea, Jason)

Big Form A

Phrase

melodic graph of vocal melody (solo)

Dynamics fppp

Harmony

Med. a

Seconds

broken triads

pp

213 216 222-4 226-8 230 232 234-5 236 238 239-242 248

# Big Form

Phrase { Melodic graph vocal melodies (solo) Dynamics Harmony

br cond melodic peaks

seconds

Med. "relaxing"

intensive changes

f p f p f p f p f p

modulation Eb c

251 253 256 264 265

sf p

trads

Jay.

# Big Form

Phrase { Melodic graph vocal melodies (solo) Dynamics Harmony

d cond seconds

trads

Med.

f p f p f p f p f p

chromatic modulation

269 274 282 285 289 290

sf p pp

f p f p

p

modulation

282 285 289 290

sf p

p

trads

Jay.



The picture reflected here is one of simultaneous progress of the peaks and the rhythm of changes in dynamics. Phrase c (and d in its further realization in Section B) reaches its highest peak  $\flat^2$  and at the same time, moves rapidly in the circle of forte-piano changes. This process reaches its utmost level of dramatization in phrase d (realized, as mentioned above, in Section B) when the melody goes up even higher, to  $\flat^2$ , the forte-piano changes become fortissimo-pianissimo, and there are also concentrated forte-piano repetitions. At the same time, phrases in Sections A and B introduce rich harmonic progressions, as if to announce the musical drama about to unfold in the Finale as a whole; then, later, this harmonic 'shock' is balanced by vital melodic contours and dynamic curves, instead of by an increase in the harmonic tension. Still, so as preserve the relationship between harmony and dynamics, important chromatic and enharmonic deviations occur in moments of low dynamics: see the chromatic modulation in d<sup>1</sup> played pianissimo, and the harmonic shift in mm.306-7, creating the Neapolitan sixth in a sudden piano (between two fortes!) and on the high pitch  $\flat^2$  !! This is a very exciting moment involving Medea's sentence "Eumenides, précédez moi!" (line 17) which was discussed earlier in this chapter (Ex. IV-12, p.297) because of its importance. The  $\flat$  is held on a relatively long note (dotted half-note) and as a result, Medea's distress is communicated very strongly.

Highest peaks should be examined, taking into account their appearance in the framework of the whole Finale. Example IV-27

is a concise sketch of the highest peaks of the vocal solo lines throughout the Finale. The related text is of great importance in an illustration such as this.

Example IV-27. Average pitches, highest peaks, related to text for the whole Finale.

Bar no.	Line in which the highest peak is included	Average pitch	Highest peak	Text
(4)	235	M	○	Ô cris plus doux pour moi que des chants d'allégresse!
(10)	278	J	○	Et vous ravit à ma tendresse ?
(17)	311, 317	M	○	Euménides, précédez moi !

Bar no.	Line in which the highest peak is included	Average pitch	Highest peak	Text
(21)	353-4	J	○	Dieux, rendez-moi mes fils
(31)	401	N	○	Elle poursuit vos fils
(33)	409	J	○	Si, en est temps encore...

N stands for Neris  
(as M for Medea  
and J for Jason)

E (convers.)		F=Coda	
M average highest pitch   peak	J average highest pitch   peak	Everybody → average pitch	N highest peak   J highest peak
Bar no. 468-9 Line in which the highest peak is included (55) ... mon ombre va t'attendre	429, 431 438-9, 442-3 (40) Malheureuse! ah! du moins dans ces affreux moments (+other lines)	477, 493, 492 (56) Juste ciel!...	491-2, 500, 502, (56-7) Fuyons de ces funestes lieux

The repeated pitches  $\underline{d}$  and  $\underline{a}$  are very average for Medea and Jason throughout the Finale; these repetitions exert pressure on the listener who hears the most thrilling sentences set in high tessitura, over and over again. Still, when the high  $\underline{b}$  appears, it increases the dramatic tension; near the beginning, when Medea sings line 4 "Oh cries, sweeter to me than songs of joy!" ( $\hat{O}$  cris plus doux pour moi que des chants d'allegresse!), her cruelty is emphasized by a contour introducing the high  $\underline{b}$ , and she again sings a prominent  $\underline{b}$  on reaching her hysterical sentence calling

on the help of Eumenides (mm.311, 317, in her recitative in Section B). This is the most exceptional moment in terms of our discussion here, since only within this musical section is the standard of pitch (marked in Ex. IV-27 as 'average pitch') a whole octave lower (!) than the highest peak. This explains even better what a tremendous impact this highest peak makes on the listener.

Example IV-28 (see the following page) provides an insight into a specific harmonic phenomenon appearing in an unexpected place - the subdominant compensation which is a regular strategy of J.S. Bach's, as towards the end of a fugue, or in the development section in the sonata form. Here we find the subdominant emphasis in Section C quite unexpectedly, in the big through-composed form of the Finale. The minorizations of the tonic and subdominant create a strong emphasis on the subdominant area. Throughout Sections A and B, Cherubini treats the enlarged tonic with its inner keys. D major and B minor are the most typical tonalities, "ornamented" by keys taken from the dominant area (for example, F-sharp minor). On reaching Section C, he decides to emphasize the subdominant area and remains for some time in D minor, including its subdominant degree. By this method Cherubini balances his whole tonal scheme (with its many tonic areas throughout the Finale), complementing the dramatic role where Jason forms the balance or antithesis to the strong, central character of Medea.



Example IV-28. Outline of voice and harmony, mm.338-61 (Big Finale, Act III, Scenes 3 and 4).

end of B

Vocal outline

Harmonic progression (related to the musical text)

Minorization

a remark:

the  $\underline{d}$  pedal of the timpany is given plus basic harmonies

Dominant of  $\underline{IV}$ : emphasis on SD

pedal point-tonic + minorized  $\underline{IV}$

Tonic Neapolitan minorized

338 340 341-2 345 348 349 350-1

353 355 - 357 360 361

II I7 IV6 I II6

Phrases e and f, representing Jason in Section C, will be focused on in the coming two examples (IV-29, IV-30) for the discussion of the Finale's growth. The enlarged Maps of Stresses for these phrases show delicate differences in the musical expression of the same character - the secondary one in this opera - appearing successively in the same musical section.

Example IV-29. Melodic graph, melodic stresses, surface rhythm, text, harmonic rhythm and functional bass, mm. 343-59 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).

Phrase e

Bar No. 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351

Melody

Accomp. rhythms

Melodic graph

Melodic Stresses

Surface Rhythm

Text { Jason  
Choir

Harm. Rhythm

Functional Bass

(played by Vla, Vc, Cb)

Effect

Choir: *Dieux! ce monstre sacré!*

Jason: *Punissez Dieux... vengeurs*

Annotations: *II6 on tonic pedal point*, *Vc + Cb only*

Bar No. 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359

Melody

Accomp. rhythms

Melodic graph

Melodic Stresses

Surface Rhythm

Text { Jason  
Choir

Harm. Rhythm

Functional Bass

(played by Vla, Vc, Cb)

Effect

Choir: *ren-dez moi mes fils!*

Jason: *où sont mes enfants? Dieux, punissez vengeurs*

Annotations: *orch.*, *II6 on tonic pedal point I*, *VII6 on tonic pedal point I*

Phrase e, at the beginning of Section C, introduces a rhythmic ostinato on the tonic pedal point d. Phrases e and f move from D minor to B-flat major. The part of phrase e illustrated in Ex. IV-29 reflects a stubborn insistence on the tonic with an obvious deviation to the subdominant in mm.356-7. These together create a strong echo to Jason's desperate call: "Oh heaven! will you leave her crimes unpunished?" ("O ciel! laisseras-tu ses forfaits impunis?"). The answering sentence of the chorus (line 19) reflects the same echo as well - Jason and the crowd are looking for a way in which to punish Medea for her crimes. The melodic outline shows two linear levels, and the surface rhythm consists of various repetitive rhythmic patterns. On Jason's important word "Dieux", there is a third-beat entrance against the background of two elements, repeated consistently: the tied whole-note harmonic rhythm and the tonic-ostinato in the violas and timpani.

Example IV-30. Melodic graph, melodic stresses, surface rhythms, text, harmonic rhythm and functional bass, mm.369-76 (Big Finale, Act III, Scene 4).

Phrase f  
Bar no. Jason 369  
Melody Chorus

Melodic graph

Melodic Stresses

Surface Rhythm

Text

Harm. Rhythm

Functional Bass

Played by Vc, Vi, Cb

Effect

370 371 372 373 374 375 376

Poursuivons la coupable

Arta-chez lui

Arta-chez lui la vi-e

Example IV-30 involves a dilemma concerning the surface rhythm which was solved by treating the three elements - Jason, the chorus and the orchestra - equally. Phrase f concentrates all three of these components equally and creates a remarkable coherency of musical expression. This strength is felt in the combined outcry of Jason and the chorus (lines 25, 26) "Let us pursue the guilty woman. Take her life!" ("Poursuivons la coupable, arrachez-lui la vie"). This call accumulates power by the repetitions of text and the re-appearances of the altered supertonic in the syncopated rhythm. The harmonic constancy is established by the repeated broken triads on the chord of B-flat - the combination of a broken triad and its prominent root - making for a very stable impression of the tonic. The powerful syncopation constitutes a clear, consistent antithesis to the obvious, stable thesis.

#### THE ORCHESTRAL INTRODUCTION

##### Timeline

Figure IV-5. Timeline: through-composed form. (Orchestral introduction, Act III). Total 157 mm.



Orchest. Texture	unisons, tiny-chamber					"tutti-solo" effect strings, homophonic	cpt. chamber
	Vla's+Vci+Horns conv.	Vlns	Vln, Vc, Cb Woodwinds	Vlns+Vlns Horns + Fg's conv.	Woodwinds		
Dynamics	PP	P	sf	pp		$P < ff, p < f$	P
Form	A					B	A'
Motives	a	b	c	a'	b'	e	c'
Harmony	1	7	9	12	18	23	42 45
	d			$\frac{V}{V} \#$		heapol. Modulat. $Bb$	modulat. $\rightarrow$

Orchest. Texture	tutti	dev. of im. Vlns	big syncopation partial "tutti-solo" effect Vlns 12+Vlns accomp and tutti answering	again quasi "tutti-solo" effect	full tutti	pp
Dynamics	$ff \leftrightarrow P$		$f-p \infty$	quick changes	f	$f \infty p$
Form	C		D		E	
Motives	f		g		(f+g)	
Harmony	S3	62	65	67 69 75	85	91-2 93 94-5
	F			chrom. $\rightarrow$ $Db \rightarrow Ab$	$\frac{85}{V} \#$ dom. pedal	

Orchestra, Texture	members a lot the beginning Vlns Vci Horns tiny chamber		rhythmic diminution of $\underline{a}$ and acceleration Chamber →		intensified because of Vln-Fl dialogue Beethoven tutti		could accomp from f 1		Ob + Cl convers. Vlns, Vci	
	PP	P	PP	cresc. f	f		PP		PP	
Dynamics										
Form	A <sup>2</sup>		(A) F		(C) G				A <sup>3</sup>	
Motives	d <sup>1</sup>	a <sup>2</sup> b <sup>3</sup> c <sup>3</sup>	a <sup>3</sup>		f <sup>1</sup> (+g)		(a <sup>2</sup> ) a <sup>4</sup>		a <sup>5</sup>	accomp. melody a + e
Harmony	96	100	109	117	125	130	133	134	137	149
		102	I Tonic			I 5 Neapol	III-62	I # cad.	dom. pedal	I
										152
										157

[d]

Moderato.

A

10 15 18 20 29 32 49 50 54 65

pp p f cresc. dim. p

Vln I II

333

musical scene is made up of bare instrumental entrances, *pianissimo* dominates, and the tragic atmosphere is fully established.

Example IV-32. Full score, mm.1-11 (beginning of orchestral introduction to Act III).

## ACTE III<sup>eme</sup>.

297

(D'un côté, et dans une partie du fond, le théâtre représente une montagne garnie de rochers et d'arbres touffus. Une grotte parait au pied; il en sort une source qui tombe avec rapidité. Sur la croupe de la montagne, dans le fond, s'élève un temple dont la porte est ouverte, et où l'on voit brûler une lampe. Un escalier conduit à ce temple, et à la droite un chemin tortueux et escarpé, conduit du temple au sommet de la montagne. De l'autre côté, s'élève une aile du palais de Créon, des jardins et des édifices.)

*Moderato*

The musical score is written for a full orchestra. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Petite Flute**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *sf* and *pp*.
- Hautbois**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *pp* and *sf*.
- Clarinettes**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *pp* and *sf*.
- Cors en Ré**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *p* and *sf*.
- Bassons**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *pp* and *sf*.
- WPP**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *p* and *sf*.
- Cornes II**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *p* and *sf*.
- Viols**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *pp* and *sf*.
- Violoncelles et Contre Basses**: Measures 1-11, dynamics include *pp* and *sf*.

The score is marked *Moderato* and includes various dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *sf* (sforzando), and *solo*.




## Discussion

Let us point out certain important theatrical aspects of this introduction. The curtain rises only in m.85 (!) at one of the climaxes occurring at the beginning of Section E; shortly thereafter, Neris and the children appear in m.91, at the diminuendo-pianissimo. Then Medea appears at the beginning of Section F (pianissimo).

Thunder ("tonnèrre") is indicated five times on the score: mm.53-7 (beginning of Section C), mm.61-9 (which goes into Section D), mm.85-90 (from the beginning of Section E), mm.121-9 (in Section F and overlapping with Section G), mm.133-8 (in Section G). The thunder is mainly strong ("fort") and coordinated with loud tuttis.

This through-composed form includes three recurrences and additional derivations from the A Section that unify the movement, as shown by the Timeline in Fig. IV-5 (pp.331-2).

There are also repetitions of motives: motive c is heard from the first appearance of the upper neighbour tone (m.9 ) , in spite of the meaningful change of timbre into the lower register and into an harmonic function, immediately in the following measure. The same thing happens in all the recurrences of motive c.

This relatively long introduction falls between an instrumental prelude and a full overture, and needs to be analyzed thoroughly. Right at the outset, the first surprising moments of the opening are already before us (Ex. IV-32). The

In the field of melody, the broken-chord element dominates. The last moments of the introduction again emulate the same tragic, silent atmosphere of its very beginning, but Cherubini prefers here the inverted form of the same D minor chord to start with. This is a purely melodic strategy. See mm.147-57 (the closing moments of the introduction).

Example IV-33. Full score, mm.147-57 (end of orchestral introduction to Act III).

Handwritten note: equals to p.317 in Ch.'s full score

Handwritten note: equals to p.317 in Ch.'s full score

Handwritten annotations: 147, 157 (circled), PP, 687

The exhaustive use of motive a is another good example of Cherubini's ability, which resembles that of Beethoven, in the field of thematic elaboration. The many occurrences of motive a give evidence of considerable skill in this area: in mm.1, 12, 100, 109, 145, 149. For one more illustration of variants of motive a in this introduction, and in addition to the last example and the Timeline, see a <sup>3</sup> (m.109), included in A <sup>2</sup> (Ex. IV-

34). The development of the thematic material shows systematic rhythmical diminutions, with many repetitions towards the final climax.

Example IV-34. Piano-vocal score, mm.105-21 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

Out of

The original a becomes more and more rapid

Each motive from a to g has its own typical character: motive a has its slow broken triads, b responds by two quicker units of a rising chromatic line, and c emphasizes a melody which features neighbour notes, by the use of the upper alternating note. Each of these has already returned by m.23, where d appears. Motive d is derived from motive a and serves as a quasi I section, with an obvious modulatory function, moving from D minor to B-flat major. When e appears for the first time, a need has already been felt for some more action - and this need is realized by the hurrying broken chords with much fuller texture and far louder dynamics (see mm.29 on, in the Timeline above). The element which relates the two basic ideas of triads and melodic progression in seconds is the one of consistent inner note repetitions. Motive f brings onto the scene the brilliant tiratas in thirty-second notes in the first violin, with the tutti introducing dramatic shifts from fortissimo to piano. This

makes for a total enlargement of the activity. Then motive g with its recurring forte-piano syncopated arpeggios, as the last idea to appear, creates the most intensive effect (Ex. IV-35). It is important to note that the description of each motive and its particular nature refers to the elements of sound (including texture), harmony and rhythm. These will be discussed further on in detail.

Example IV-35. Full score, mm.65-9 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

p. 304 in Cherubini's full score

(65)

Petite Flute

Hautbois

Clarinet

Cors en fa

Bassons

VL<sub>1</sub>

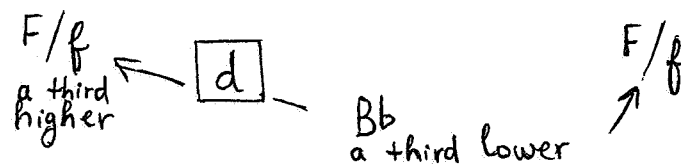
VL<sub>2</sub>

Violoncelle

Contrebasse

687

When studying Cherubini's treatment of melody and the through-composed form which basically evolves from the thematic data, the harmonic plan becomes clarified immediately. In the overall harmonic tonal scheme, we have before us once more the third relationships area: Act II ended with a basic F major-F minor ensemble section, and the introduction to Act III is in D minor with its most prominent modulations to the keys of B-flat major and F major and minor:



On a small scale, there are secondary keys related by half-notes to the tonic and to the dominant: see the most dramatic motive g area (Section D, mm.65-81) which represents a deviation to D-flat major, E-flat major and A-flat major; thus it is that the harmonic plan plays an essential role in the creation of drama at this point. The use of the Neapolitan key is of great significance. This is a well-known Beethovenian phenomenon which also exists in the language of Cherubini.

The most interesting progression maintained throughout Sections A -C-D will be illustrated below (Ex. IV-36). The first occurrence of the Neapolitan tone (E-flat) takes place already in motive d (mm.23-8), serving for the important modulation from D minor to B-flat major; then the Neapolitan key (E-flat major emerging out of D minor) is worked out extensively further on.

Example IV-36. Harmonic progression indicated by figured bass, mm.45-85 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

45 53 67 70 73 75 76 77 78 79 80 85

"V"  
d

I ↔ V

b f Db Ab d

Chromatizations of the Tonic and the Dominant

Tritonic relationships with the original Tonic

chromatic chords all through mm. 70-75

The Neapolitan key does not leave the stage yet but recurs in Section G and opens the way for the refreshing, last long tonic of D minor. Measures 129-37 contain remarkable harmonies including the Neapolitan  $\frac{6}{5}$ . From m.133 there is a strong progression to the subdominant (Ex. IV-37):

Example IV-37. Harmonic progression indicated by figured bass, mm.133-5 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

key: d 133 134 135

III-2 7# 6 4# 3b IV6

Through the surprising chord  $\text{III} \frac{2}{b7}$  - the first grade is majorized and only after a combining diminished-seventh chord on  $\text{c}$  in the bass, mm.134, the innocent-seeming cadence is

completed by an irregular elaboration of the subdominant  $\text{IV } 6$ , m.135, leading to the dominant pedal point in m.137 (see the whole progression in the piano-vocal score below (Ex. IV-38).

Example IV-38. Piano-vocal score, mm.128-37 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

128

130

132

134

136

dom. pedal  
of d

When touching on the element of sound, we reach the heart of Cherubini's success in heralding the Romantic era. A study of his art of orchestration clarifies his desire to, and his success in, creating solo instrumental and dramatic images by a transparent

world of sound-images for the various instruments. This artistic ability results in an extremely Romantic introductory section for the whole of Act III, holding the listener's attention and evoking an overall impression of a most tragic mood, painted by the dark colours of the low-placed strings conversing with the clarinets and bassoons. The dialogue is extended towards the lower and higher ranges - by involving the celli, basses, clarinets, oboes and flutes. This occurs during the first moments of the section, mainly by the unison texture of doubling, which makes for a mingling of colours and evokes a very special airiness with an extremely small body of sound all in all. Cherubini dares to require all these fragments to be played pianissimo in order to underline the dramatic atmosphere (see Ex. IV-32 above).

Since this dramatic, tragic mood has been achieved so successfully right at the beginning of the introduction, Cherubini is always able to return to it and to add other textural approaches gradually. By means of the long silences of the opening phrases which serve the drama so well, and through the slow, discreet character of these events at the very beginning, he succeeds in making his statement, from which he will develop the growth of musical expression throughout the introduction. Fantasia and Storm and Stress (see Ratner, Classic Music, pp.21, 24) are excellent terms for summarizing Cherubini's language throughout this introduction, reflected so well and in so concentrated a form right at its very beginning.

Then he moves to an effect which tends to recall a short musical event in the tutti-solo style, in order to evolve gradually into a broader texture (see Section B, m.29 on). He



also starts to use louder dynamics with quite rapid changes, yet does not abandon the homophonic texture. In Section A we again hear the well-known <sup>2</sup> b and <sup>2</sup> c motives, played by a small chamber ensemble which is, however, heavier than the extremely airy sound of the very beginning. Sections C and D (motives f and g) already have the orchestral texture reaching its full tutti, involving quicker and bigger interchanges of dynamics, from forte or fortissimo to piano, so that the transparent sound becomes dense.

The tendency towards fuller orchestral sound, developing gradually through the introduction, can be illustrated by both appearances of f. These are the thirty-second-notes of a rising scale in the first violin (mm.53-64) with the relatively modest accompaniment which consists of half-note chords and rapid descending scales in the bass, seen in Section C. Example IV-39. Full score, mm.53-7 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

Example IV-39. Full score, mm.53-7 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

57

*Pete Flute.*

*Viol. 1*

2 Hautb. *ff*

2 Clari. *ff*

4 Corni *ff*

2 Bassons *ff*

Vl<sub>1</sub> *ff*


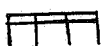
Vl<sub>2</sub> *ff*

Violes *ff*

Vcl *ff*

Cbs *ff*

*ff. fortissimo fort. 343 687 diminuendo*

Compare with this the same material when it reappears <sup>1</sup> (f) in Section G (from m.129 on) (see Ex. IV-40 below), with the violins rushing upwards in sixty-fourth-notes in two voices, doubled by the flutes, while the half-notes filling in - in the winds and in the lower strings - also use units of  and of  for creating a stronger intensity. This is a very good example of texture serving the development of musical drama.

Example IV-40. Full score, mm.133-6 (orchestral introduction to Act III).

314 (133)

Petite Fl.

2 Hautb.

2 Clarin.

4 Corni

2 Bassons

VL<sub>1</sub>

VL<sub>2</sub>

Violes


Timball.

Vcl.

Cb.

*Tonnerre fort.*



Cherubini does not neglect the textural balance, after reaching his first tutti in Section C. He returns to the tutti effect in Section D and again achieves the full tutti in Section E (m.85). The full texture becomes more condensed because of the inner rhythmical patterns conversing with each other rapidly (see the  units contradicting the basic melodic element, consisting of f and g motives, plus the tremendous variety of rhythms acting in combination). Sections A and F (stemming from A) again return to the familiar small chamber-type of texture, but the big climax from all aspects is achieved only in m.129, on reaching Section G. This is the forte section of the introduction, using the richest f<sup>1</sup> motive as well as some reminiscences of motive g in the first violin, and involving the bold harmonic progression with its Neapolitan connection (see Ex. IV-38).

The introduction ends with the last appearance of motive a<sup>5</sup> (a in the Timeline), starting at m.149, with an inversion of the triad, and again using discrete orchestration of conversing pairs of instrumental unisons (see Ex. IV-33). Cherubini wanted to have this specially tragic mood at the end, and his return to this same manner of Romantic rhetoric at the moments of departure - right before the entrance of the Scene 1 of Act III - signifies the importance of the symbolism for which these strategies exist. The big through-composed form with its dark, mysterious atmosphere, leaves the listener with a strong impression of Fantasy and Storm effects, and emotionally prepared for the terrifying dramatic events which are to follow.

The world of rhythm in this introduction is an integral part of what is happening as a whole. It always plays an important role in defining the nature of the themes as well as assisting in the achievement of a stylistic coherence. There is a consistent, gradual quickening of the rhythmic values in the motives themselves: motive a consists mainly of half-notes, b and c mainly of quarter-notes, d returns to the half-notes since it is based on melodic material from motive a (but its development is a result of harmonic modulation), e steadily introduces the groupings of repeated eighth- and sixteenth-notes, f brings the rhythmic thirty-second-note units with sixteenth-note accompaniment, and the last motive, g, contains within itself thematic syncopation and also a variety of eighth-, sixteenth- and thirty-second-notes. The prominent forte arrives with e and reaches the fortissimo level in f; yet the forte-piano fluctuations occur most rapidly in motive g. The simultaneous progression of rhythmic and dynamic values towards increased mobility, reveals much about the concinnity which is extremely relevant for this section. In addition to this organic process described above, the contrasting voices always intensify the dramatic effect by counter-rhythms and slight syncopations (see Ex. IV-40). The extreme case of quickening of rhythmic values is reflected in the construction of motive a<sup>3</sup> (m.109, Ex. IV-34): the original half-note triads are decreased into units of quarter-, eighth- and sixteenth-notes (see Ex. IV-40).

If, in the overture to Act I, Cherubini exhibited great psychological and musical skill in introducing his characters in new dimensions, (resembling Mozart in a way), and if, in the introduction to Act II there was evidence of motivic inter-relationships (resembling Beethoven in a way) and a development of texture with intensity - here, in the relatively long introduction to Act III, Cherubini's language achieves another of its climaxes: the creation of Romantic mood by all the means at his disposal.

When the plot has already approached its most advanced moments and the audience awaits the most crucial dramatic peaks with corresponding intensity of emotion, the art of theatrical expression penetrates with full dramatic power into the purely orchestral genre. Cherubini succeeds in combining instrumental timbre and harmonic resources in order to achieve one of his most Romantic movements, without abandoning his art of motivic elaboration and well-planned textural formation. He also exploits the rhythmic and dynamic devices in very meaningful ways. As a result, we find ourselves, while listening to this introduction, deeply within the area of Romanticism. This then is Cherubini's important contribution to the genesis of the Romantic epoch. He reaches his goal by means of instrumental music which serves the drama; the opera as a whole abounds in the traces of burgeoning Romanticism, presented in this introduction in a most compressed manner.

## CONCLUSIONS

This opera is important both musically and historically. Musically, it displays high quality in every number. There is an accumulation of tension through each act. Dramatically, we find the closest possible relationship between music and text, moods and the inner psychology of the main characters.

Historically, Medée is more connected to the operatic and stylistic developments of the 19th century than of the 18th century. Among its most prominent 19th-century features are the following:

- a) The predominance of storm and stress values: the high tension maintained through most of the opera, and the tragic struggle between Good and Evil in the heart of its leading character, Medea.
- b) The sustained tension which is created by several special stylistic traits, such as: the high tessitura of the vocal lines of Medea, Jason and Dircea; the more declamatory text-setting; the intensive continuity within the large ensembles and between some of the numbers; and the expansion of tonal relationships, featuring many third and remote key-relationships and tonicizations.

Underlying and expressing the drama is the orchestra with its complex textures, motives and rhythms; its masterly orchestration and refined treatment of dynamics. Not only is there a brilliant and dramatic Overture that sets the mood for the entire opera, but orchestral introductions also occur before Acts II and

III that establish and anticipate the dark moods to follow. Perhaps most remarkable of these three symphonic movements is the introduction to Act III with its basic through-composed form, its powerful build-up to very complex textures, and its exploitation of extreme orchestral sonorities.

Even though Cherubini's Medée is set in the late Classic epoch, chronologically speaking between Gluck's Alceste and Beethoven's Fidelio, in its musical language it takes flight stylistically towards the middle of the 19th century. Undoubtedly, Cherubini's ability to express the cathartic drama taking place in Medea's heart, led to his impressive pioneering achievement within the development of the operatic style at the mid-point between Monteverdi and Wagner and the late Verdi.

We cannot but agree with Johannes Brahms who stated that "this opera is regarded among ourselves as the summit of dramatic music".

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