CHAPTER 5

THE MAJOR OPERATIC WORKS

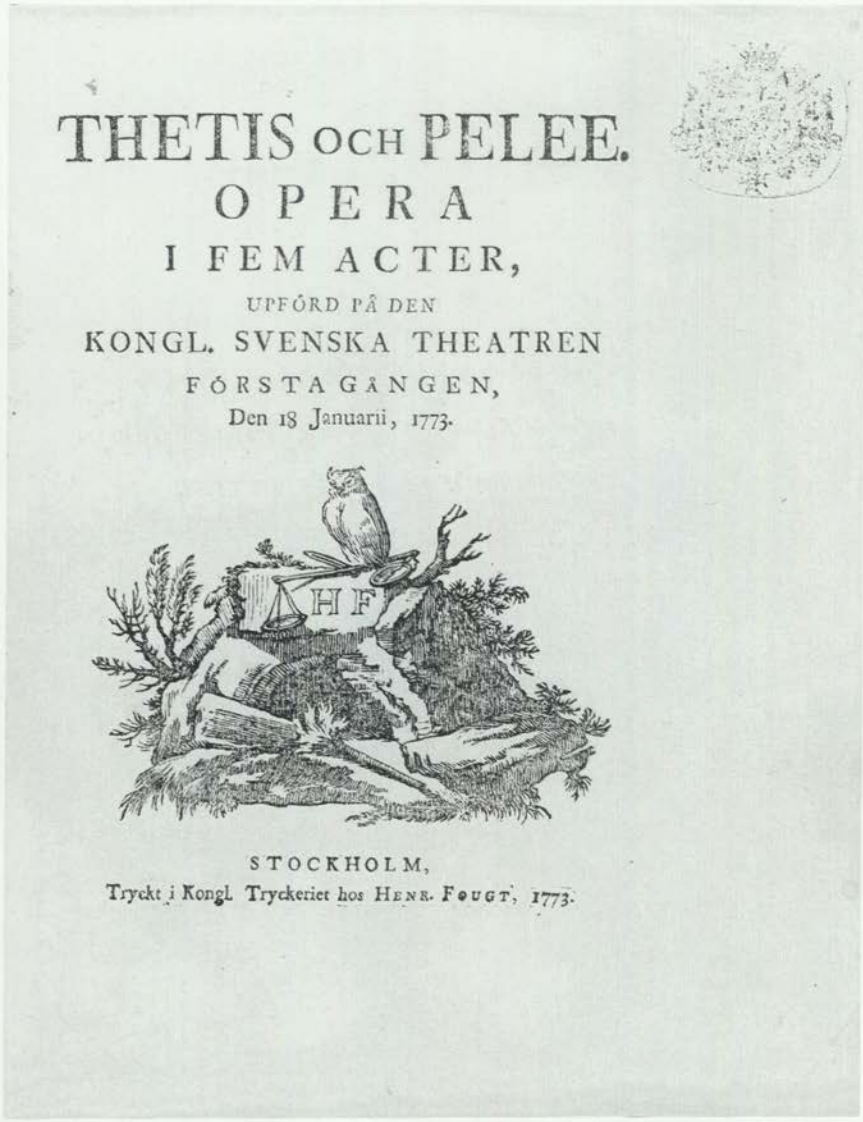

THETIS OCH PELEE.
OPERA
I FEM ACTER,
UPFÖRD PÅ DEN
KONGL. SVENSKA THEATREN
FÖRSTA GÅNGEN,
Den 18 Januarii, 1773.
STOCKHOLM,
Tryckt i Kongl. Tryckeriet hos HENR. FOUGT, 1773.

Fig. 1. Flyleaf to the libretto for the original production of Thetis och Pelée *("Thetis and Pelée"), opera in five acts by F. A. Uttini, libretto by J. Wellander after a draft by Gustaf III. It was this opera which inaugurated the Royal Opera on Jan. 18, 1773. Stockholm 1773.*

"THETIS OCH PELEE"

An opera's successive transformations

Martin Tegen

I

JANUARY 18, 1773 IS an important date in the history of Swedish theatre. It was then *Thetis och Pelée* ("Thetis and Pelée") had its première (Fig. 1). It was the very first Swedish-language opera. The king himself had been responsible for its creation (Figs. 2a–c). It was he who, choosing its theme, had entrusted Johan Wellander, author and alderman, with the task of writing a libretto. Based on Bernard de Fontenelle's *Thétis et Pelée* of 1689, it was also to incorporate the king's instructions for changes in certain scenes and sequences (Fig. 3).

Gustaf III had inherited his immense interest in the stage from his mother, Queen Lovisa Ulrika. Though many operas and *opéras-comiques* had been staged while he had been crown prince, all had been sung in Italian or French; partly and largely because the queen, from her youth at the Berlin court onwards, was used to hearing them sung in those languages, but also because most of the singers, instrumentalists and composers had been imported from the continent, to supply the lack of any indigenous operatic tradition.

But Gustaf, unlike his parents, had been born and brought up in Sweden, and after his accession to the throne in 1771 he intended to strain every nerve to create a Swedish-language theatre. Nor were audiences hereafter to be drawn exclusively from court circles, but comprise the general public. But to create a theatre of such magnificence as he had in mind he needed greater powers than those possessed by Swedish kings during earlier decades. His ministers, too, were utilitarians, decidedly more interested in trade, agriculture and

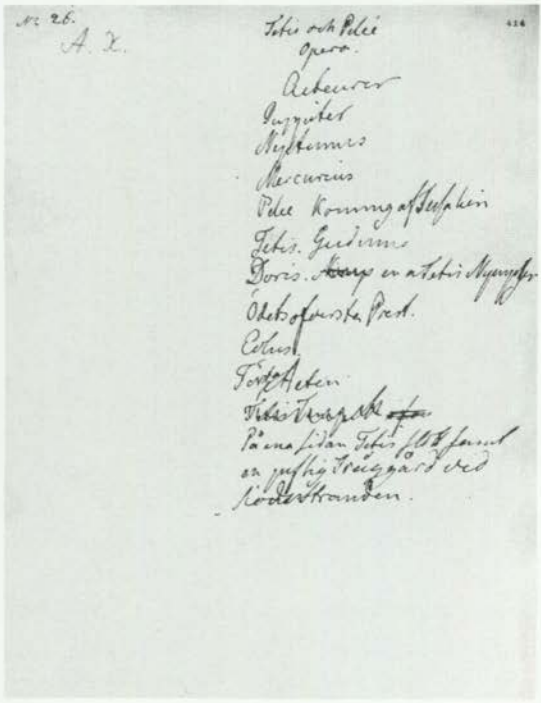


Fig. 2a. Thetis och Pelée. *Dramatis personæ and draft of Act I, by Gustaf III. UUB.*

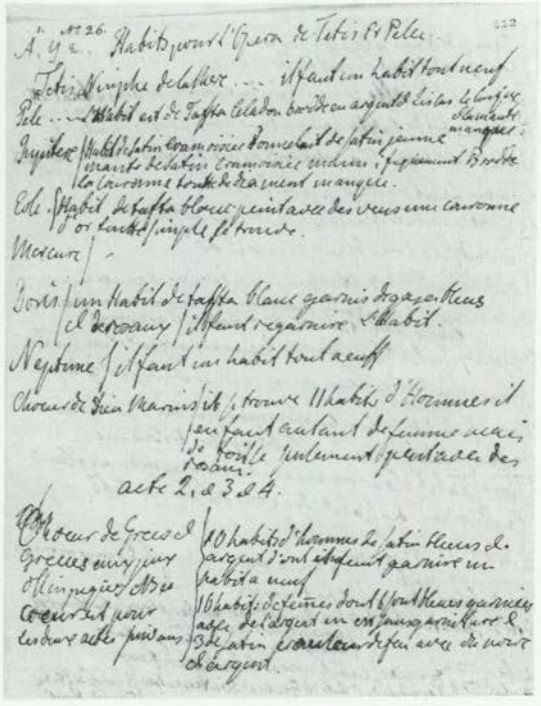


Fig. 2b. Thetis och Pelée. *Draft of a costume list by Gustaf III for Acts I–IV. Taking French models, the king, to judge from his drawings, had himself created a great many of the costumes. The style was Baroque-rococo-antique. UUB.*

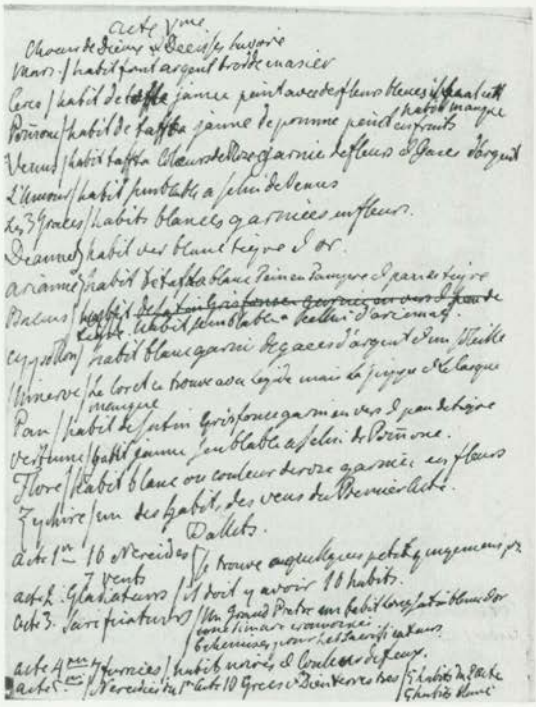


Fig. 2c. Thetis och Pelée. *Draft for a costume list for Act V and for the opera's ballet section by Gustaf III. UUB.*

industry than in expanding culture at the State's expense. To some extent this explains the king's bloodless *coup d'état* of August 19, 1772, which greatly augmented his power.

Already, in the previous year, he had founded a Swedish Academy of Music. One of its first tasks was to be to help him realize a Swedish-language opera, the first of its kind. Without its cooperation the project would certainly never had attracted the two star singers, Elisabeth Olin and Carl Stenborg (see the colour supplement) to the lead roles. But now the creation of a Royal Academy of Music had enhanced their status. Gustaf modelled his efforts on those of Louis XIV when he had stimulated the birth of high-quality opera in French. What Gustaf, like his august forerunner, desired was a theatrical work that would blend several arts. Poetry and dance, supported by painting and architecture. were to unite with music and acting. In this way his opera would be a theatrical symbol for his own splendour as a monarch.

He was also concerned that the general public should learn to enjoy theatre and absorb its ethic-aesthetic message. This was why he situated his operatic project right in the centre of Stockholm, in the Bollhus Theatre, which he rebuilt for the purpose (Fig. 4). Before long,

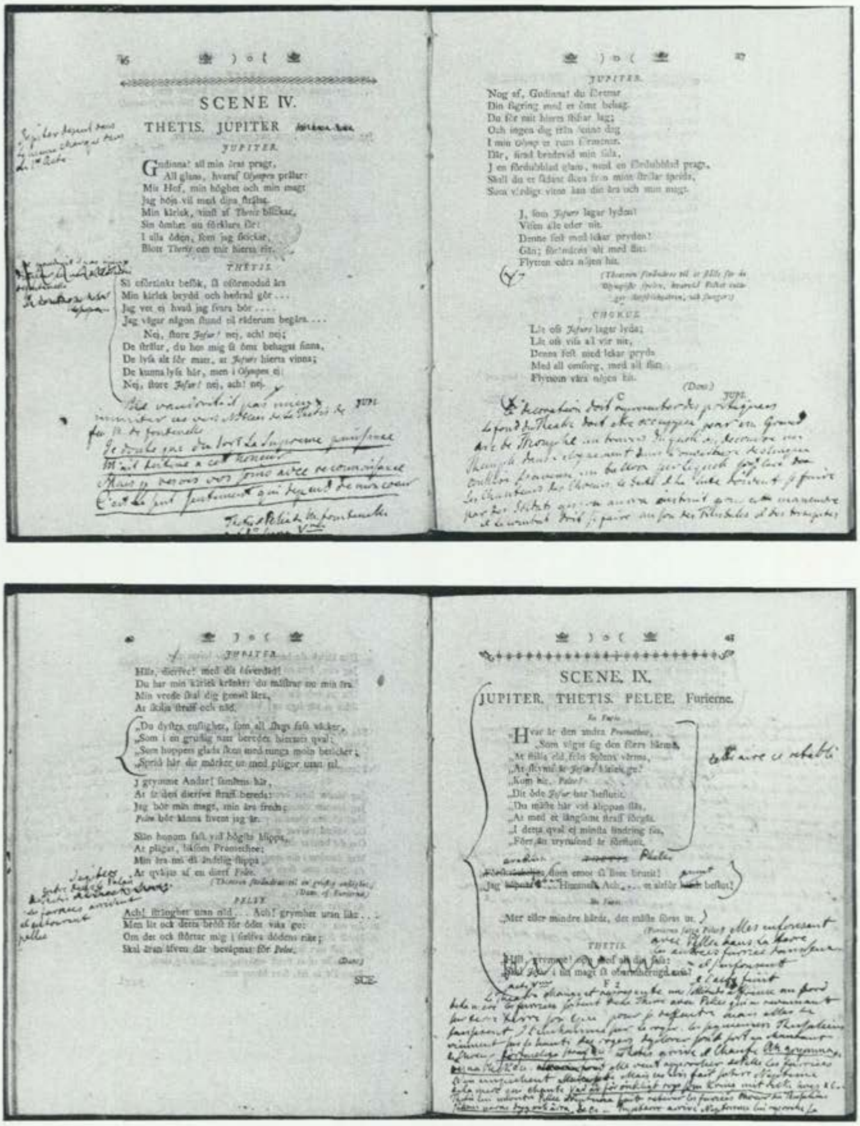


Fig. 3. Thetis och Pelée, the printed libretto (see Fig. 1) with Gustaf III's notes about cuts and stage directions. Stockholm 1773. See also the colour supplement. KB.

however, he was planning a proper continental-style opera house. It would not be ready until 1782. All this indicates that it was opera which was his first concern—the foundation of a Royal Dramatic Theatre for spoken drama would have to wait, until 1788.

The choice of Thetis and Pelée as the theme of the first opera in

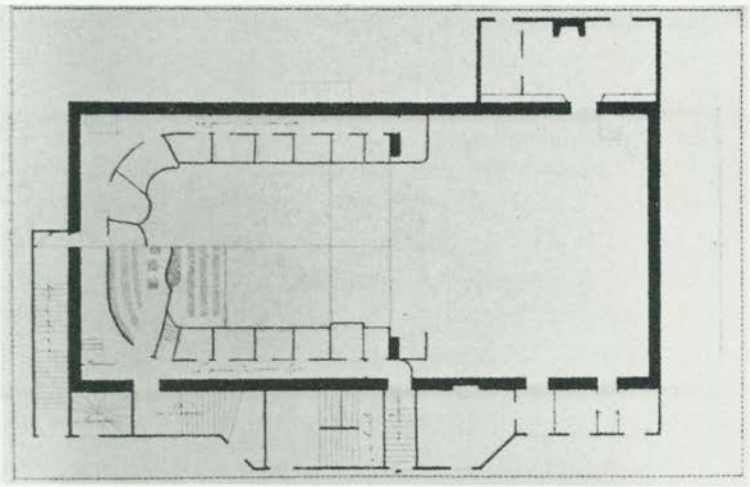


Fig. 4. Plan of the Bollhus Theatre. KB.

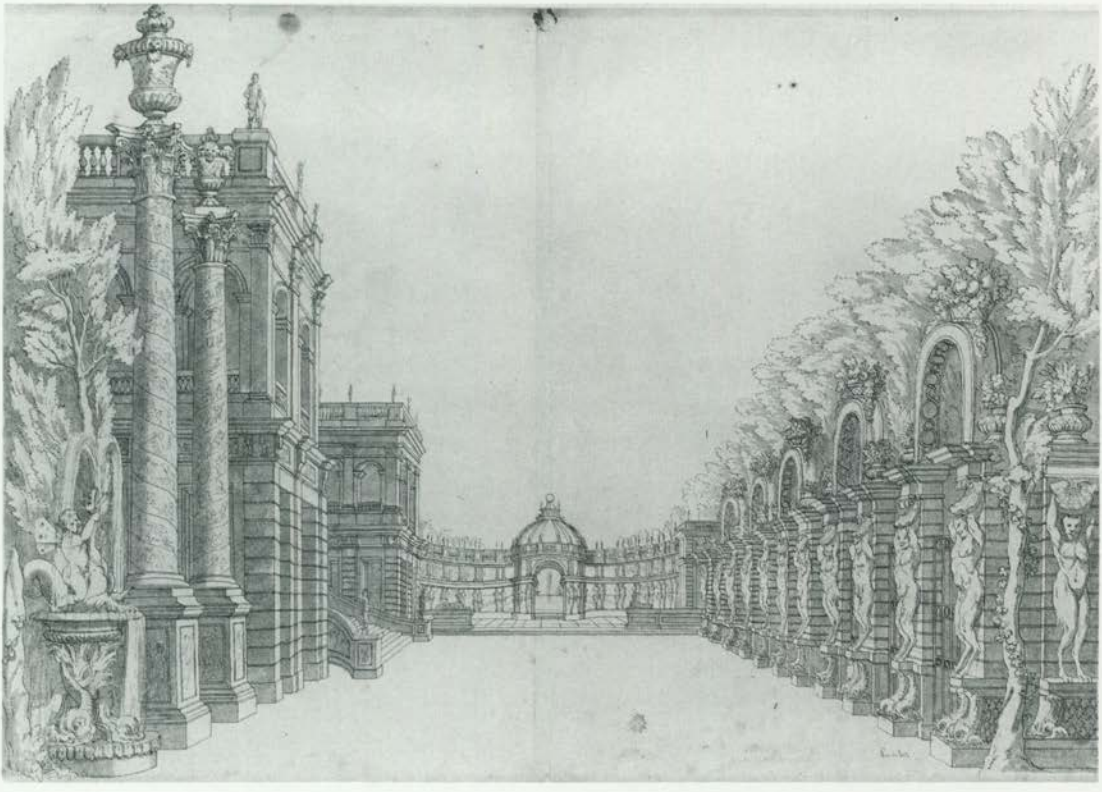


Fig. 5. Thetis och Pelée, *Act I. "The stage shows Thetis' garden by the seashore, which constitutes the stage's backdrop, whereto, to the left, can be seen the Goddess' palace." That is to say, one must imagine a seascape backdrop instead of the architectonic construction. The original, indeed, is inscribed in pencil (in Gustaf III's handwriting?):* Premier acte la mer dans le fond. *("First act the sea in the background"). Sketch, presumably by C. Vigarani, about 1675. NM.*

Swedish was partly due to the opportunity it afforded for many scene changes and for ballets of varying character. An important aspect of Wellander's task was to motivate ballets in four of its five acts. Probably every effort was also made to create impressive stage sets and beautiful costumes. Of all this little remains except a few sketches by Vigarani and Bérain, believed to have served as starting points (Fig. 5).

The next step was to find a composer. At that time Sweden had few experienced composers, and several of these had hardly ever worked for the theatre. The most experienced among them, both in theatre and opera, was Francesco Antonio Uttini (Fig. 6). But though he had been composing for the Stockholm court for the last seventeen years, all his libretti had been in French or Italian. Obviously Uttini, though by now he was fifty years old and still only spoke broken Swedish, found this grandiose project stimulating, and accepted the royal commission.

II

Unfortunately, it is by no means easy to gain a clear and correct idea of *Thetis och Pelée*. Its music has only survived incompletely, and only few of its costumes are preserved (Fig. 7), Bérain's sketches apart. The libretti, however, are extant, in no fewer than seven printed versions—something which, in itself, speaks volumes about the exceptionally many modifications its text would undergo.

The oldest version can be seen in the libretto for the 1773 première. It was in five acts. Under the heading "To the Reader" a preface explains how this first Swedish-language opera had come into being. There is also a poem acclaiming Gustaf III; a resumé of the action; and a complete list of the performers, including chorus and ballet. All this to underline the work's great importance.

In 1775, however, another libretto was printed. Now there are only three acts and the text has undergone major changes. Least modified is Act I; but Acts II and III, if we compare them with Acts II–V of the 1773 libretto, will be found to consist of rearrangements of the order of scenes, changes and cuts. Both versions (1773 and 1775) are found in a reprint of 1778.

The next revival, of 1791, reverted to five acts. Yet the text is not the same. Some unknown person (Wellander had died in 1783) has "improved" the text and made a number of minor changes in the

Fig. 6. Francesco Antonio Uttini (1723–1795). Engraving by unknown artist.

Fig. 7. Greek warriors, in the operas Thetis och Pelée *and* Iphigénie uti Auliden ("Iphigénie en Aulide"). *Watercolour pencil drawings in the costume books of the Royal Opera, about 1800. KTA.*

1773 libretto. The original text's 35 scenes have been reduced to 28, of which only 12 remain unchanged. The others have all been changed, sometimes rather radically. Some lines from the 1775 version have also been incorporated. But most amazing of all, we have *two* libretti, both dating from 1791, which differ considerably in point of detail. One of them was printed for a performance on February 13, the other for March 24. If we check up on actual performances, we find that *Thetis* was not played on the first occasion, only on the second, i.e., March 24. For some reason the earlier performance must have been cancelled at the last moment. Remarkably, between the performance planned for February and the one which really took place in March, the text (and therefore also the music) was revised.

This gives us, in effect, four different textual versions of *Thetis och Pelée*. Actually there is also a fifth, inasmuch as the very first libretto (1773) contains several sections, particularly marked, which were excluded from the première. The motive given is that the opera "in its five acts would have been too extensive".

In this five-act version, Act I is placed in the garden of Thetis, the sea-goddess, on the sea shore. To begin with, the five main personæ dramatis and their mutual relationships are presented, First, there is a triangle relationship between Thetis, Pelée and her lady-in-waiting Doris. Both ladies are in love with Pelée, who, unlike Thetis, is a mortal man, albeit king of Thessalonia. Pelée, for his part, loves Thetis, but has two dangerous rivals: Jupiter (Jofur/Jove) and Neptune. Neptune appears in the first of the opera's ballet-divertissements, courting Thetis with dances and chorus. The prevailing mood, to judge from the music, is gentle, pastoral. Suddenly it is interrupted by Jupiter, who attacks Neptune with "lightning, thunder and storms", forcing him to return to his own watery domain. At length Jupiter's wrath subsides, and Act I is rounded off with a "*ballet des vents*".

Act II, opens in a leafy bower in Thetis' garden. The obligatory misunderstanding occurs. Doris happens to be lingering there just when Pelée comes to visit Thetis. He is just telling Doris how greatly he fears his two puissant rivals, and has fallen on his knees before her when, suddenly, Thetis turns up and naturally regards this as evidence of his infidelity. Fruitless explanations are interrupted by Jupiter's arrival, accompanied by his entourage. They have come in order to arrange a grandiose entertainment—the second ballet-divertissement. Now the scene changes to "a place for the Olympic Games". Each sport, above all those of a warlike nature, is illustrated by a dance, to

lively martial music. In the 1773 libretto the act ends with a scene, cut in 1791, in which Thetis decides to consult the oracle as to "to whom I should devote my love".

Act III, in the Temple of Fate, begins with an embarrassing confrontation between the rivals, Thetis and Doris. But soon Pelée and his courtiers enter. In an emotional climax, he laments his troublesome situation. This is followed by priestly ceremonies, culminating in the oracle's famous answer:

The man, whom Fate declares shall Thetis' husband be
A son he shall beget, who'll greater be than he.

Although this act has no actual ballet, the sacerdotal processions and ceremonies before, during and after the sacrifice are to some extent pantomimic—like the corresponding scenes in *Die Zauberflöte*. Two marches and some sacrificial music accompany them.

Act IV brings the crisis. In two highly charged scenes, further complicated in the 1773 version by Doris' presence, Thetis and Pelée both express strong feelings of resentment, despair and passion. When Jupiter enters, Pelée does not hesitate to declare his love for Thetis. For this he is punished by being chained to a rock, and the scene changes to "a horrible solitude" where Pelée is tormented by the Furies, while the Thessalonians lament his tragic fate. Their dance, Act IV's ballet divertissement, is of considerable length. The music, of course, is passionate and indignant. And the Act ends with Neptune arising out of the sea and liberating Pelée.

In Act V we find ourselves on Olympus. Little by little Jupiter's moral position, his insistance on his own "honour", of which he has sung so much, are undermined. For the first, Neptune, supported by a few words sung by Love, maintains that Thetis has the right to choose her own husband. After which Neptune exposes Jupiter's machinations by lifting the veil which hides the flagellated Pelée. Thetis understands that Pelée has in fact been faithful to her. Love brings Pelée back to life, and the two lovers sing of their happiness, Pelée relates what the Oracle had said, and Jupiter, who by no means desires "a son who'll greater be than he", has the wit to withdraw. The act closes with a ballet-divertissement which, following an old French model, goes to a chaconne.

According to legend, Pelée's son did in fact become greater than his father. His name was Achilles, one of the heroes of the Trojan War.

III

If the libretti thus give us a clear idea of the opera's action and its successive transformations, it is correspondingly difficult to form one of the music. Though each of the 1773, 1775 or 1791 versions must presumably have had a score, none has survived. What we do have is a number of other musical documents, none of which, however, yields an overall picture.

The most important from the 1773 version is a handwritten vocal score, containing the arias and recitatives, but neither choruses nor ballet music; nor, of course, any orchestral parts either, except in summary. This keyboard version was purchased from a private person as recently as 1910 by the Royal Opera Library. There also exists a printed vocal score, publisher and place of publication unstated, entitled "*Thetis och Pelée, så som den uppfördes i början av år 1773*" ("Thetis and Pelée, as performed in the beginning of 1773"). Out of some one hundred numbers which must have made up this version, only twelve are printed (eleven arias and the sacrificial march). The music of both vocal scores is largely identical. Its typography seems to indicate that the printed one was the work of Breitkopf at Leipzig, and probably only a proof. Presumably, as the date is vague—only "at the beginning of 1773"—it was printed off prior to the première. No ordinary commercial edition ever seems to have seen the light.

For the music of the 1775 version, on the other hand, we have no documentation at all. Yet to judge by the major rearrangements, both of words and action, it must have been freshly composed, at least in part.

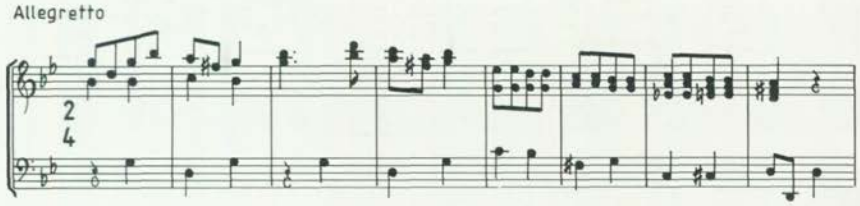
The 1791 music is extant in the shape of orchestral parts. Here the problem is that the arias' solo song parts are lacking. The recitatives, on the other hand, have been written into the string parts. And both ballet music and choruses are included. The parts show that certain changes were made: at certain points the innovations have been stuck on, or stuck together, bars stricken out or added. Comparison with the libretti shows that these changes more or less coincide with both 1791 texts.

During the 1960s I tried, on the basis of these 1791 orchestral parts, to reconstruct the opera's score. For the orchestra this presented no great difficulties. More problematic was the reconstruction of the arias' voice line. Soon it transpired that, compared with the 1773 vocal scores, the music had been shortened and changed. Thus the voice line could only partly be taken from that source. Elsewhere it was a matter of inventing a likely one.

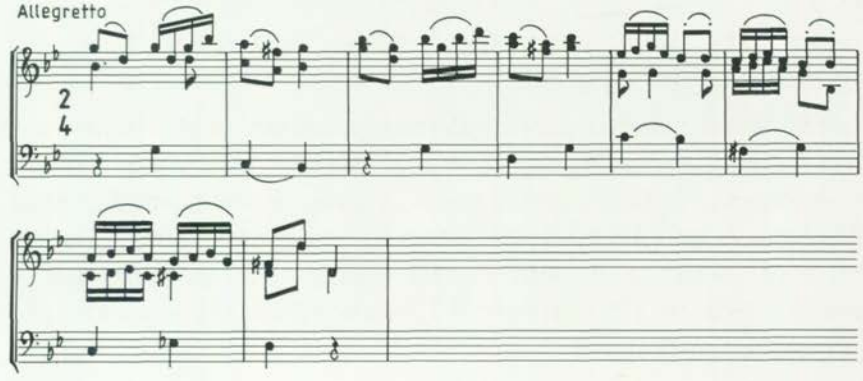
Most interesting, by these comparisons between the 1773 and 1791 music, it was evident how thoroughly the music was in fact changed. In one way or another, virtually every number had been modified. Most had been shortened, sometimes only by a few bars, but elsewhere had been cut by as much as a third or even half. Many numbers, it seems likely, were given a new instrumentation. At all events, there were no clarinets in the royal orchestra in 1773, and in 1776 they are still lacking from Uttini's *Aline*, whose score is extant. But in 1791 there they are.

Whole large sections of the music have been freshly composed. All degrees of revision are found, from numbers which remain virtually identical from 1773–1791, to others wholly new. Abbreviations, though frequent in the more baroque-like passages, can vary greatly. In the rest of the music, details can be changed and certain sections revised or even freshly composed.

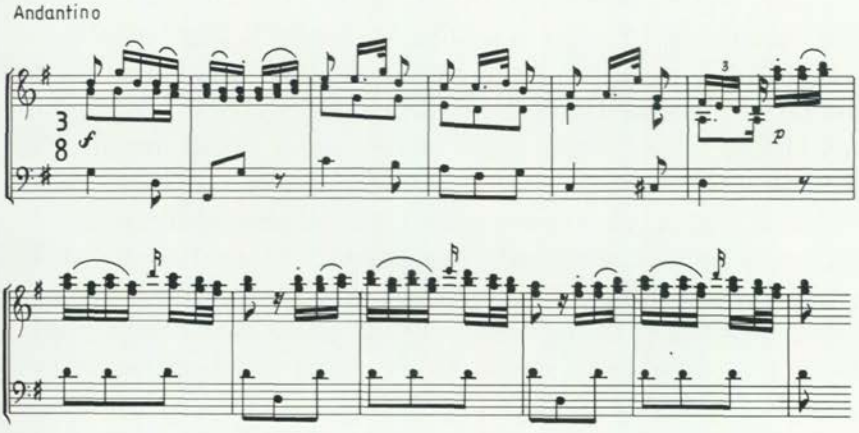
Obviously, all these changes have been made by an expert hand; and not merely in order to shorten the music, but also to modernize it and change its style, from what had been modern around 1770 to gratify the taste prevailing in 1790. One could even speak of the music having been "Mozartized". Two examples: In the 1773 vocal score the aria "*Sällan paras makt och ära*" ("Power and honour seldom mate", Act IV) begins like this:



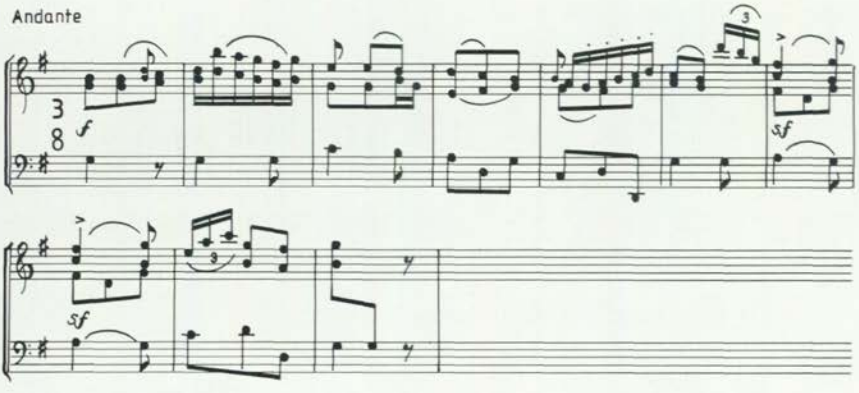
In 1791 the music has been deftly modernized:



The second example is in the aria "*Nej, Gudars Far*" ("Nay, Father of the Gods", Act V). The older version reads:



The new version, while conserving the older version's tempo, key, time signature and even certain traits of the melody, appears to be a fresh composition. Compare bars 3–4 in either version!



This is no place to make a thorough analysis of the music as a whole. In its general type what we have here is a mythological heroic opera, partly Italian, partly French in style, and not wholly unlike Mozart's *Idomeneo*. Both are instances of baroque opera in its last stage of development, with a great variety of forms and types of number. For the 1791 version of *Thetis och Pelée* these types can be summarized as follows:

	Number of items
Recitatives: to strings: simple	10
partly illustrative	10
strongly illustrative	4
to strings and wind: strongly illustrative	7
Arias: solo	20
duet	3
trio	1
solo + chorus	5
Choruses: (solo + chorus, as above)	(5)
3-part male chorus	4
4-part mixed chorus	3
chorus + ballet	1
Ballets: (chorus + ballet, as above)	(1)
dance numbers	24
Entr'acte	3
Total	95

Probably the recitatives in the 1773 version, except in a few *accompagnato* numbers, were sung *secco* (i.e. only to a harpsichord accompaniment), more or less as in *Aline* of 1776. In the 1791 version, by contrast, all recitatives go to orchestral accompaniments, and also vary in form. This variety I hope transpires from my table, where I have distinguished between simple recitatives corresponding to the older secco ones, and the various degrees of accompaniment that illustrate feeling.

The arias, too, vary widely in form. All the so-called *da-capo* arias (8 out of the 24) have a modified *da-capo* section (form A1 B A2). The forms of the others vary, e.g. fall into two sections (A1 A2 or A B) or three (e.g. A1 A2 A3 or A B C) or into some other form.

The ballets, as we see, make up rather more than a quarter of the total numbers, of actual playing time perhaps even more, as some recitatives are brief. The ballet-divertissements were a major feature even of the 1773 version—the balletmaster was none other than Louis Gallodier. The Stockholm *corps de ballet,* being one of the best in Europe, was fully occupied. In 1791, the ballets may have taken up even more space, though we have no information to prove it. Now the balletmaster was Jean Marcadet.

The symphony (or overture) too was reworked between 1773 and 1791. In either case what we have is a three-movement sinfonia, the first and last movements being identical, albeit abbreviated and reworked in the later version. But the 1791 middle movement is new.

Fig. 8. Foreign diplomats at the Royal Opera. Inscription in pencil: "G. Stackelberg en Engelsman Moreno Unga Stackelberg LegaSekret". Vidare: "grefv Sainprest(?)". ("G. Stackelberg and Englishman Moreno Young Stackelberg Secretary of Legation". Further: "count Sainprest(?)). Washed pencil drawing by J. T. Sergel. NM.

IV

Who made these thorough-going changes in the 1791 music? Can it have been Uttini, then 67? Three years earlier, in February 1788, he had retired from his post as Kapellmeister, nor does he thereafter appear to have conducted any concerts. Yet he lived on until 1795, and, in 1788, had married a second time. Though we have earlier instances of Uttini re-working his own compositions, they are of much earlier date. In the 1780s he had composed very little. This does not mean he may not have revised his own opera.

Other circumstances, however, speak against it. The music's "Mozartization", so able and thorough-going, suggests a younger hand. Furthermore it was common practise during this period for the serving Kapellmeister to make such revisions to a score as were deemed needful. In 1791 the Stockholm Kapellmeister was Uttini's successor, Joseph Martin Kraus. From time to time, it is true, Abbé Vogler also conducted the royal orchestra, though he tended to be in Stockholm for only 4–6 months at a stretch, meanwhile devoting a lot of time to his own compositions and to giving organ recitals in various Swedish

towns. So the burden and heat of the day fell upon Kraus, as can be seen from his letter of November 21, 1790 to his parents:

After the conclusion of peace [= the peace signed with Russia at Värälä] I've become the wandering Jew's stand-in. From the first of September until today I've only had one really good night's sleep, i.e., in my own bed.

No documents or verbal statements have survived to show who made this final revision of *Thetis och Pelée*. Cases can be made out both for Uttini and Kraus. Personally I believe it was Kraus, above all on grounds of what I have called the music's Mozartization. With so productive and capable a 35-year-old composer and conductor as Kraus then was, this would seem only natural; less so for the 67-year-old Uttini, who for several years had composed little or nothing, and furthermore was no longer in the Opera's employ.

Thetis och Pelée was played 26 times in its first five-act version, in 1773–74; 12 times in the three-act version between 1775 and 1781; and 6 times in the second five-act version 1791–92. This makes it one of those decades' most frequently performed operas (Fig. 8). How deeply Stockholmers appreciated Uttini can be seen from an *impromptu* poem by Bellman, *à propos* a performance of *Aline* in 1776:

Beauty captivates the heart,
Damon's sighs bring all together;
Yet Uttini has the start
Of us in major and in minor.
God knows where he got his art;
Pergolesi was his father.

SOURCES

Uttini, F. A., from *Thetis och Pelée* in the Royal Opera Library: *Sångpartitur* (vocal score), apparently from 1772–73. Orchestral parts, choral parts, balletmaster's part, apparently from 1791. Score, reconstruction of the 1791 version, by M. Tegen 1961. (Another copy in MAB.)

Uttini, F. A., *Thetis och Pelée, så som den upförd̈es i början af år 1773.* No date, no publisher. Very rare, probably printed in 1773 by Breitkopf, Leipzig, as proof. Contains 12 music numbers.

Uttini, F. A., *Ack olycksaligt ögnablick,* Pelée's aria in Act IV, in *Arier utur de på Kongl. Theatern upförde operor,* Vol. 1. Stockholm 1788.

Uttini, F. A., *Marche*, the sacrificial march in Act III, in *Baletter och Marcher samt Entreacter*, Vol I. Stockholm 1788.

Wellander, J., *Thetis och Pelée. Opera i fem acter, upförd /. . ./ den 18 Januarii 1773.* Stockholm 1773. (Reprinted in *Svenska Theatern* 1778, Vol. 1.)

Wellander, J., *Thetis och Pelée. Opera förkortad till tre acter, å nyo upförd*

/.../ den 30 October 1775. Stockholm 1775. (Reprinted in *Svenska Theatern* 1778, Vol. 2.)

Wellander, J., *Thetis och Pelée. opera i fem acter /.../ Öfversedd och förbättrad, samt å nyo upförd /.../ den 13 Februarii 1791.* Stockholm 1791.

Wellander, J., *Thetis och Pelée. Opera i fem acter /.../ Öfversedd och förbättrad, samt å nyo upförd /.../ den 24 Martii 1791.* Stockholm 1791.

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GLUCK'S "ORPHEUS OCH EURIDICE" IN STOCKHOLM

Performance practices on the way from "Orfeo" to "Orphée" 1773–1786

Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell

ALMOST FROM THE TIME of its première in Vienna in October 1762 Christoph Willibald Gluck's setting of Ranieri de' Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice* has stood as a milestone in the history of European musical theater. As early as 1763 the noted French dramatist and theater director Charles Simon Favart called it: "*un ouvrage qui fait époque, qui passera à la posterité*".[1] And yet, in its highly concentrated original form, *Orfeo* was little appreciated or even known in most of Europe. True, *Orfeo* was printed in full score at Paris in 1764, in itself uncommon for an Italian theatrical work of the day, but the publication sold very poorly. As for its performance record, neither the initial representations in Vienna—of which there were only eight in all[2]—nor later revivals in most other cities met with success until the work had been subjected to more or less extreme modifications. Indeed, few European theaters were even willing to put on *Orfeo* in anything approaching its daring original conception.[3] Of those that did, at only one did the piece manage to hold its own and exert a real and continuing impact. This single exception was the Royal Opera in Gustavian Stockholm.

Historians have of course long been aware of this "Swedish" phenomenon: it is mentioned in practically every 20th-century study of Gluck in general and of *Orfeo* in particular. But not even the more knowledgeable presentations, such as those of the German-Swedish musicologist Richard Engländer, go into much detail.[4] This circumstance has produced several unfortunate results. In the first place, it

Fig. 1 a. Act III, scene 1 of Orpheus och Euridice, *opera in three acts by Ch. W. Gluck, libretto by R. de' Calzabigi. First performed at the Bollhus Theatre on Nov. 25, 1773, in F. A. Uttini's version. Orpheus bringing his wife back with him from Hades, having overcome the powers of the Underworld. Crowned with a laurel wreath, holding his lyre in the right hand, Orpheus is seen emerging out of a cave where dragons are seen illuminated by flames, also the river Acheron with Charon's boat on it. With his left hand Orpheus is leading Euridice—as yet he has not defied the gods by turning round to look at her. His costume is "of gold sateen with red Paillon and crossed silver lacework, enhanced with Pailettes. Cape of fiery red sateen with blue Paillon and identically enhanced." Euridice is wearing "woman's clothes with white sateen. Chemise of Italian gauze. Bodice and shirt of silver cloth." The illustration is of the 1773 production. Oil on canvas by P. Hilleström. Royal Opera.*

Fig. 1 b. The same scene as in Fig. 1 a in another version (previously unpublished). Desolate rocky landscape with a cave; the entrance to Hades. The actors' positions and postures are not quite identical. Here Euridice is wearing plumes. Oil on canvas by P. Hilleström. Private ownership. Photo: E. Carlsson (Gothenburg Museum of Art).

has allowed the perpetuation of a number of misconceptions regarding the 18th-century Swedish productions of *Orfeo*. Secondly, it has meant that neither the changing character nor the stable aspects of these productions—and hence what they may reveal about contemporary tastes and influences—have been recognized. Happily, the survival of a large body of musical source material in Stockholm, in many

respects unique for a work of this date, permits us to begin to cut through this tangled web of details. But it also does much more. It sheds light on performance practices of the period to a degree generally impossible to match elsewhere. Finally, it contributes to our general knowledge of the establishment of Swedish opera and its relationship to foreign predecessors and contemporaries.

Before turning to the Swedish *Orpheus*, I would like to recall some of the important points regarding the history of Gluck's *Orfeo*, since these are crucial for understanding what happened in Stockholm. Intentionally, I have refrained from calling *Orfeo* an opera, because in its original version *Orfeo ed Euridice* was neither designated as nor intended to take the form of the usual mid-18th century Italian serious opera. Instead, *Orfeo ed Euridice* was called an *azione teatrale,* a term which accounts for some of those features that historians have often pointed to as unique or even revolutionary for this work, but which in reality were typical of the whole genre. Unlike a full-fledged Italian *opera seria,* an *azione teatrale* was an occasional work, performed to celebrate a special event—in this case Emperor Joseph II's nameday on 5 October 1762. As such, it was considerably shorter than the usual four-hour opera and contained the choruses and ballets absent from Italian serious opera since the 1720's. Its subject was mythological/allegorical rather than historical, and the action was concentrated on fewer characters than the six or seven common in *opera seria.*[5] All of these aspects may be noted in other *azioni teatrali* or *serenate* of the time, including those by the dominating 18th-century librettist, Metastasio.

What makes *Orfeo ed Euridice* different? It is extremely concentrated—its three acts last just under two hours. It has only three main roles (Orfeo, Euridice and Amor), and the action is highly simplified, centering in fact entirely on Orfeo—Euridice enters only in the last act and Amor has a minor role. Lastly, its choruses and ballets, rather than being mere decorative elements, as in most serenades, form an integral part of the plot. All of these aspects are attributable to the librettist Calzabigi, whose reformist ideals we shall consider by and by. In a letter to the *Mercure de France* a decade later Gluck himself admitted his debt to Calzabigi: "It is he who made it possible for me to develop the resources of my art".[6]

Gluck's resources, as we know, more than met Calzabigi's demands. They imparted to *Orfeo* those musical qualities which distinguish it from other contemporary works and in the end have given it its enduring place in the repertory. Here space does not permit elabora-

tion of these aspects, but certain important features should at least be named. All the recitative sections are accompanied by the orchestra, as in French opera, rather than by the *continuo* normal in Italian works. This factor alone gives the work a more seamless character. Further, the solo numbers, choruses and ballets are musically integrated through various formal, thematic and tonal means to an extent not found even in the French operas which served as models for some of these procedures.[7] All this makes *Orfeo ed Euridice* a concise and beautifully balanced work. It could not easily submit to the tampering in the form of additions and alterations all too common in the staging of contemporary operas.

Orfeo was designed around the acting and vocal abilities of its first protagonist, the alto castrato Gaetano Guadagni. Not only was Guadagni an accomplished and tasteful singer, known for unusual restraint in executing solo parts with what was then considered a bare minimum of ornamentation; but having studied with the celebrated actor David Garrick in London, he also displayed histrionic talents far above the norm.[8] *Orfeo* thus became a showpiece for Guadagni, who performed it some years later in London, Munich and elsewhere, as well as for other castrato singers who were also gifted as actors. Only such performers could guarantee the work any kind of success. One of these was the soprano castrato Giuseppe Millico, for whom Gluck revised the part—originally for alto—for its first production outside Vienna, the one staged at Parma in 1769. This, Gluck's only personal revision of the work in Italian, was confined to transposing the sections involving Orpheus.

Because *Orfeo* was short, at its original performances in Vienna it was preceded by a French comedy and followed by social dancing. At Parma, similarly, it formed part of a trilogy, for which Gluck supplied all the music. But its brevity meant that elsewhere, when it was to be the sole vocal work on the program, it was generally found unsuitable for production in its original form. Thus, in London in 1770 and 1771, in Munich in 1773 and in Naples in 1774—to name some of the revivals—whether in the alto or soprano version, other roles were added, and Gluck's original score was much amplified, reordered and altered quite beyond recognition by other composers to make it into something nearer an *opera seria*.[9] Furthermore, it was frequently performed according to the usual fashion of the times with entirely independent *entr'acte* ballets interrupting its three acts.[10] When Gasparo Angiolini had created its original choreography in Vienna in 1762, he supported the theatrical ideals of Calzabigi and Gluck and

had restricted his contributions to effective interpretations of the five internal dance sequences. The only other performances in Vienna of the Italian version until our own century occurred there in 1781/82 during the 15-year ban on ballets, when the evenings were filled out with spoken plays.[11]

I say "the Italian version". As is generally known, Gluck had the text revised and translated into French and then reworked the music substantially for performance in Paris in 1774. The Parisian production is the last I shall mention before concentrating on the Swedish version, precisely because the work's fate in Stockholm was so different from what happened almost everywhere else from this point on. For *Orphée et Euridice* Gluck rewrote the principal role for the *haute-contre* (high tenor) voice of Joseph Le Gros. The recitatives in particular were much changed and all the arias of course transposed. Further, he added two elaborate arias for Orphée, another for Euridice with chorus, and, near the close, a trio for the three principals. For some of the less usual wind instruments in the Vienna score—*cornetti, chalumeaux* and *cors anglais*—he substituted clarinets and oboes, and he cut and simplified the orchestration of the most complex section of *Orfeo*, the long recitative in Elysium, "*Che puro ciel*". But two other kinds of instruments uncommon in opera orchestras of the time were retained: the trombones accompanying the furies and Orfeo's harp. To make the work still more palatable for the French audience, Gluck inserted extra ballet music. The first was the noted dance of the furies at the end of Scene 1 of Act II, the music for which he lifted whole from his *Don Juan* ballet of 1761. The second was the equally celebrated middle section of the dance of the Blessed Spirits at the beginning of the following scene, with its flute solo. Most extensive of all were the dances he fitted into the final scene to provide the divertissement required of every French opera. For *Orphée* was indeed an opera, and during the first fifty years of its performance history—restricted mainly to France and Germany—it did not undergo anything approaching the modifications to the original *Orfeo*.[12]

It was the theater historian Agne Beijer who, in 1920, first pointed out the importance of the Italian writer and historian Domenico Michelessi for the establishment of a new aesthetic of opera in Sweden, and for the introduction of Gluck's *Orfeo*.[13] Born in 1735, Michelessi not only knew and supported Calzabigi's and Gluck's ideas, but as early as the 1750's had been a close friend of Francesco Algarotti and propagated his aesthetic theories. Algarotti's writings, especially his famous *Saggio sull'opera in musica* of 1755, were a principal source of

the aesthetic theories put into practice in Parma in the 1750's and then in Vienna in the 60's. Publishing his memoirs of the life and writings of Algarotti in Venice in 1770, Michelessi dedicated them to Frederick the Great, whom Algarotti had once served.[14] Probably intending to present them personally to the king, Michelessi travelled to Germany in 1771, and it was in Braunschweig, in April of that year, he met Gustaf III, who was on his way back from Paris to ascend the Swedish throne. So impressed was Gustaf III by Michelessi that he invited him to Sweden, and that summer he arrived in Stockholm. A genius for languages, Michelessi learned Swedish in a matter of months, astounding everyone at his installation in the Royal Academy of Sciences in May 1772 by holding his inaugural speech in the vernacular.

What he said on that occasion is fundamental to our history. In his learned discussion of how the Swedish language could be promoted, Michelessi presented an aesthetic program, one of the cornerstones of which was opera in Swedish. Here are a few key sentences; note the emphasis on simplification of the language and on representing the emotions:

> Tragedy will teach Swedes the pronunciation which most moves the heart [...]. Your masculine and penetrating discernment will come to tear away those superficial myrtle-wreaths with which our effeminate age has garishly ornamented [the language] and restore to her her rightful formation [...]. The harmony of music, to which your native tongue so well lends itself, will unite its delights with the art of poetry. In the new academies, which are now being founded in this lovely capital city, music will actively encourage Swedish men of genius to represent, by means of strong, expressive and well-suited tones, the encouraging voice of joy, the deep sighs of sorrow, the rudely interrupted screams of threats, wrath and despair [...].[15]

And so forth. If these ideas are not entirely Michelessi's own, they certainly corresponded precisely with Gustaf's intentions.

That Michelessi's influence on the future course of Swedish opera was even more pervasive than transpires from his inaugural address can be seen from a letter of his to the king, criticizing Metastasian opera texts and offering a striking parallel to a similar criticism by Calzabigi.[16] During the previous reign, under the leadership of Francesco Uttini, Metastasian opera had been firmly ensconced in Stockholm, both in the few staged performances and in vocal concerts.[17] But now, from 1773 on, the newly established Royal Opera promoted a very different ideal. In April of that year the Gothenburg newspaper *Hwad nytt? Hwad nytt?,* reporting from Stockholm

printed several intriguing notices. The first is of Michelessi's untimely death at age 38, on April 1st; the next mentions a three-act tragedy called *Gustaf Wasa* by a learned Austrian attached to the Imperial court; and the third reads as follows:

> Our Abbé Michelessi was also occupied with an opera, called *Orphée*; two acts were already completed [at the time of his death].[18]

Three months later *Hwad Nytt?* again wrote of *Orphée* as "translated from the Italian by Doctor Rothman",[19] a statement qualified on 17 November:

> One hopes soon to see the Theater reopened. Among the first operas which will be performed are *Orphee och Euridice*, a translation of which has been successfully accomplished by Doctor Rothman [...]. He knew the Italian language thoroughly and undertook this task on the advice of the knowledgeable Abbé Michelessi. This learned man checked over Rothman's work [...].[20]

As a final piece of information the reporter also notes:

> I have recently seen a dress-rehearsal, and I can confidently assert that the music is adequate to the poetry.[21]

During the summer of 1773 Göran Rothman, a doctor of medicine, had completed Michelessi's translation of Calzabigi's libretto. The result follows the original very closely and, despite what has afterwards been said of its alleged clumsiness, was eminently suited to its purpose, to present Gluck's setting convincingly. The work, the third produced at the Royal Opera,[22] was intended for its first performance on the occasion of the engagement of the king's brother, Prince Karl, duke of Södermanland, with Princess Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta of Holstein-Gottorp, on 25 November. In the printed libretto Rothman admits the difficulties posed by "clothing the work in Swedish dress".[23] Besides retaining the original meaning, meter and punctuation, these included the need to rhyme the lines of recitative (more characteristic of Swedish than Italian dramatic verse), to cope with elisions common in Italian but not in Swedish and, lastly, to find suitable Swedish equivalents for expressions of love and tenderness in which Italian, as Rothman laments, was so much richer.[24] Acknowledging Michelessi as having instigated the project, Rothman also supplies further significant details regarding the music, noting first that "we already had Gluck's music to hand".[25] No doubt, he is referring to a copy of the printed score of 1764, as other sources also confirm. The task of suiting the music to the exigencies of the Swedish text was entrusted to Uttini. And as Rothman explained:

This gave the Royal Chapel master UTTINI more trouble than if he himself would have composed new music for the recitatives. But through his tireless efforts these difficulties are now overcome and Herr GLUCK's music has been retained unaltered inasmuch as could possibly be managed.[26]

Just how Uttini accomplished his work is revealed in the above-mentioned musical manuscripts.[27] These also provide many clues regarding the first and later performances of *Orpheus och Euridice*. (Figs. 1, 3 and the colour supplement). The impressive stack of manuscripts falls into two main groups, of which I will chiefly consider the first, which is also the older and, to judge from its condition, was clearly the more well used. The first group comprises: an orchestral score, parts for the three solo singers, orchestral parts, two choral scores and parts for the four-part chorus. Here I should point out that the preservation of performance material—that is, the individual parts—is by no means something one commonly encounters among the world's major collections of 18th-century music. From this point of view the Royal Opera's older music collection may be regarded as unusually valuable.[28]

The handwriting, musical content and watermarks[29] indicate that the orchestral score was the one prepared for the première of November 1773. The main hand is that of one of the opera orchestra's principal copyists, identified by Ingmar Bengtsson in his manuscript studies as "H/N 62"—the copyist's name is as yet unknown.[30] While this hand wrote out all the instrumental lines and those for the choruses' bass and tenor voices, all the solo vocal lines, those for the chorus sopranos and altos and the text are by another (Fig. 2).

The presence of this second and most important hand, that of Francesco Uttini, has hitherto never been noted in any of the literature on Gluck, even in the extensive commentary prepared by Abert and Finscher for their volume in the new scholarly edition of Gluck's works, which goes into considerable detail about the Swedish sources.[31] The Stockholm copyist prepared as much of the score as possible, working from the published version of 1764. But obviously he could not do the same for the Swedish text or soloists' vocal lines, both of which had to be somewhat modified to accord with the translation and, in the case of Orpheus' part, suited to the vocal range of the performer.

The first Orpheus in Stockholm was neither an alto nor a soprano but the tenor Carl Stenborg.[32] Thus, a whole year before Gluck made his own revision of the principal role for tenor in 1774, Uttini had made one in Stockholm. But since it had obviously been decided, also

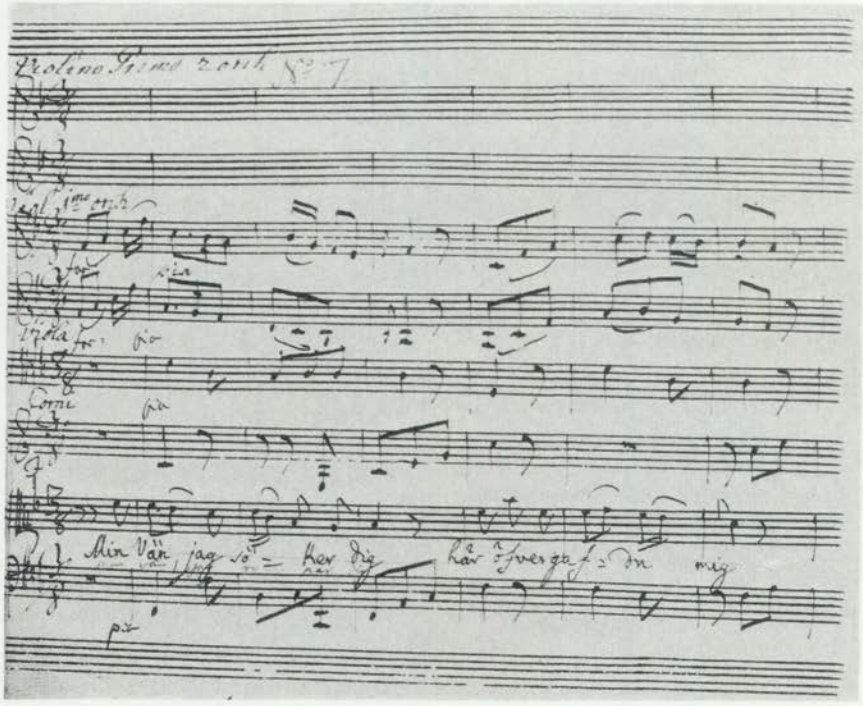
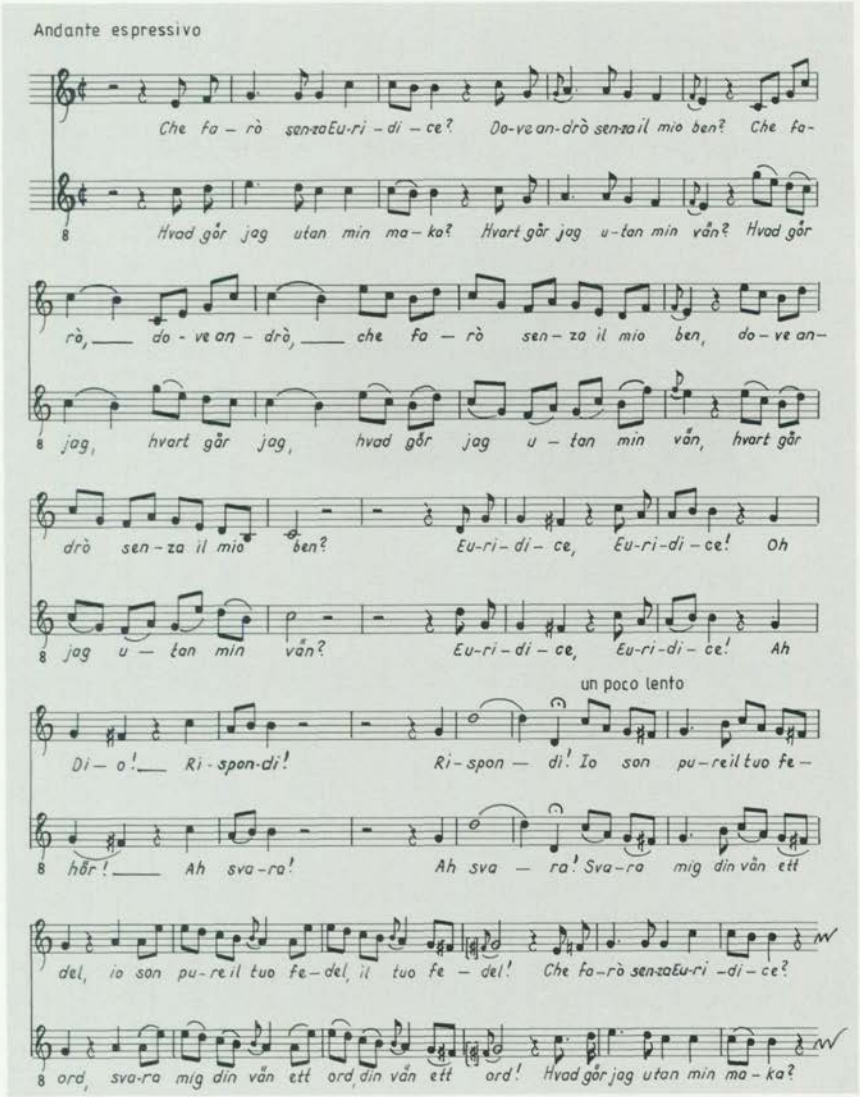


Fig. 2. A page from the score of the first Swedish adaption of Orfeo *(1773). The music and the text for the soloists (Act I, Scene 1) are in F. Uttini's hand, while the remainder is in that of a copyist. MAB.*

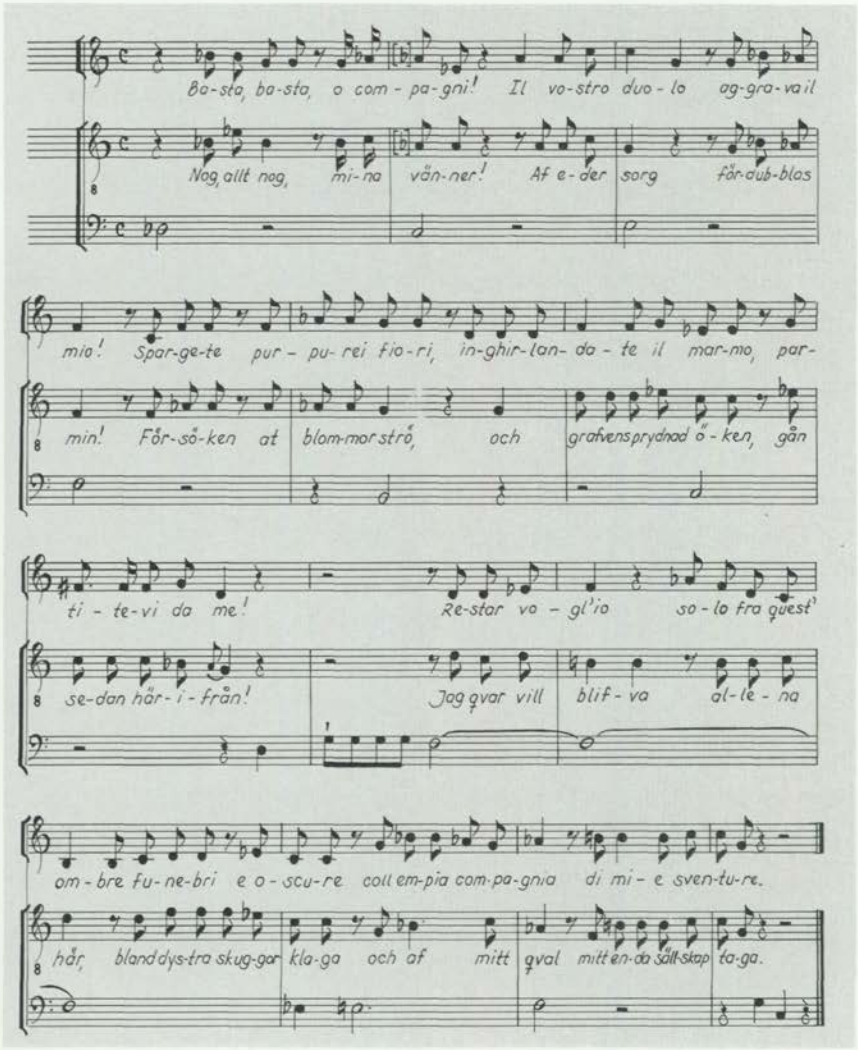
for practical reasons, to adhere as far as possible to the original Viennese version, Uttini's methods differed substantially from Gluck's. In order to avoid revising the orchestral parts, no aria or recitative was transposed, as was the case in Gluck's French version. Instead, Stenborg simply sang much of the original alto part an octave lower, Uttini only making such changes as were needed to eliminate the very lowest notes, out of Stenborg's range.[33] The musical example (p. 263), showing the beginning of the famous *rondeau* in the original version and the adaptation for Stenborg, gives a notion of Uttini's methods. (Musical Ex. 1) He did the same in the recitatives, where, however, the Swedish text necessitated more rhythmic alterations. For an illustration we may compare the opening recitative in the original version as against the adaptation to Swedish (Musical Ex. 2). The two other solo parts, Euridice and Amor, both for soprano, needed far less reworking, merely some rhythmic adjustments.

As Orpheus, Stenborg, who was 21 years old at the time of the première, achieved immediate success. A Stockholm newspaper later



Musical Ex. 1.

praised him for his acting ability and especially for his "purity in the pronunciation of our language". As for his singing, the same report calls his voice "beautiful, or at least the only one of such high quality we have yet possessed among our native singers".[34] Stenborg himself found the part, in which he was on stage during the entire performance, extremely taxing. In a letter to Rothman in May 1774, after having sung Orpheus at least 16 times, he remarked:



Musical Ex. 2.

I must say, though, that however lovely this opera truly is, the Italian author has nevertheless committed one great error, since without the least relief he leaves the actor constantly on stage for nearly three hours, on which account I, poor devil, have often complained, for the fatigue is unbearable.[35]

While he may have been exaggerating to make his point, we note that Stenborg says three hours and not two, the length of the original version. I will come back to this point later.

In the choruses the translator succeeded in emulating most of the original Italian metrical patterns. Why then did Uttini here take the trouble not only to accommodate the few changes occasioned by the

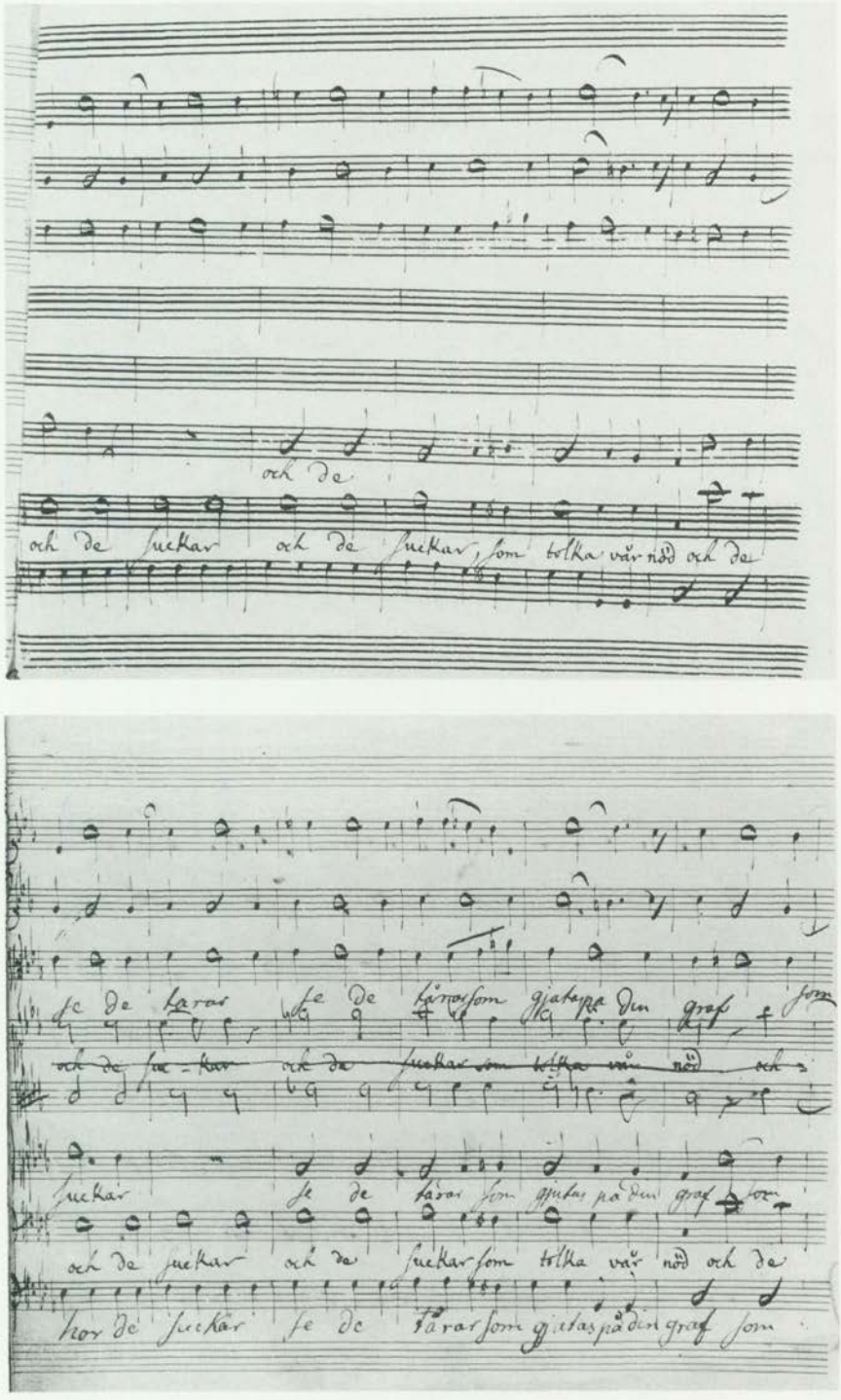
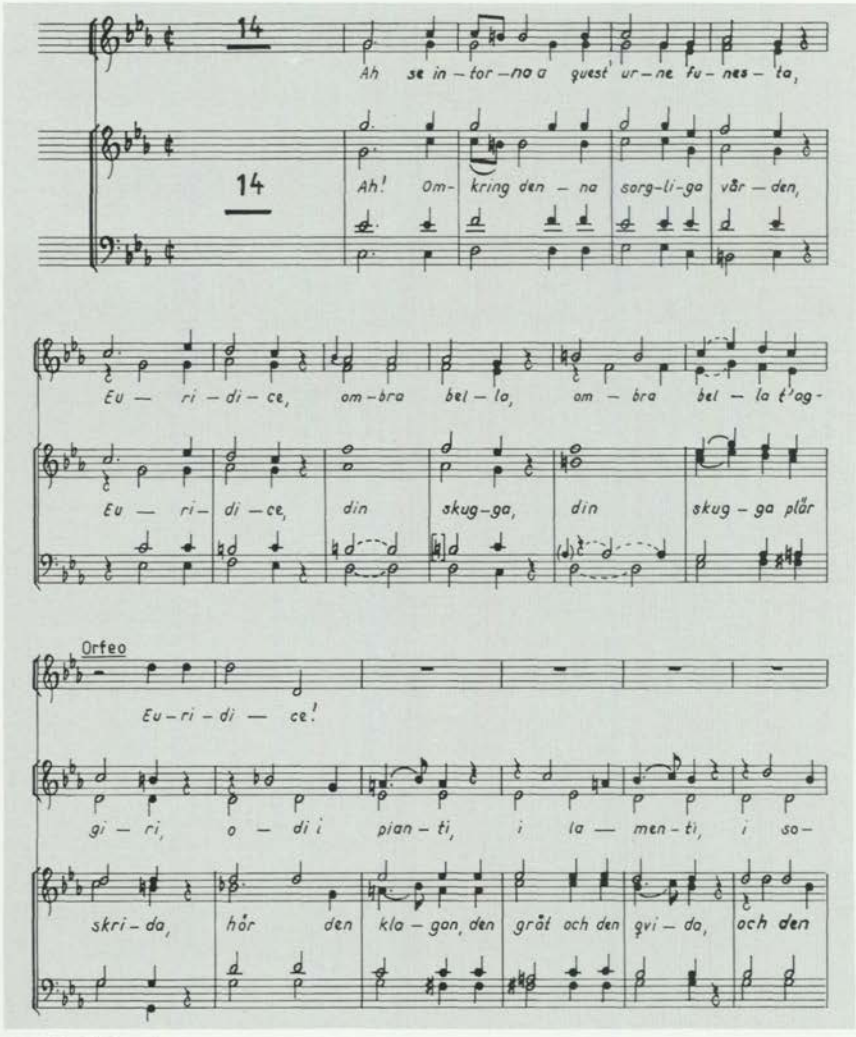
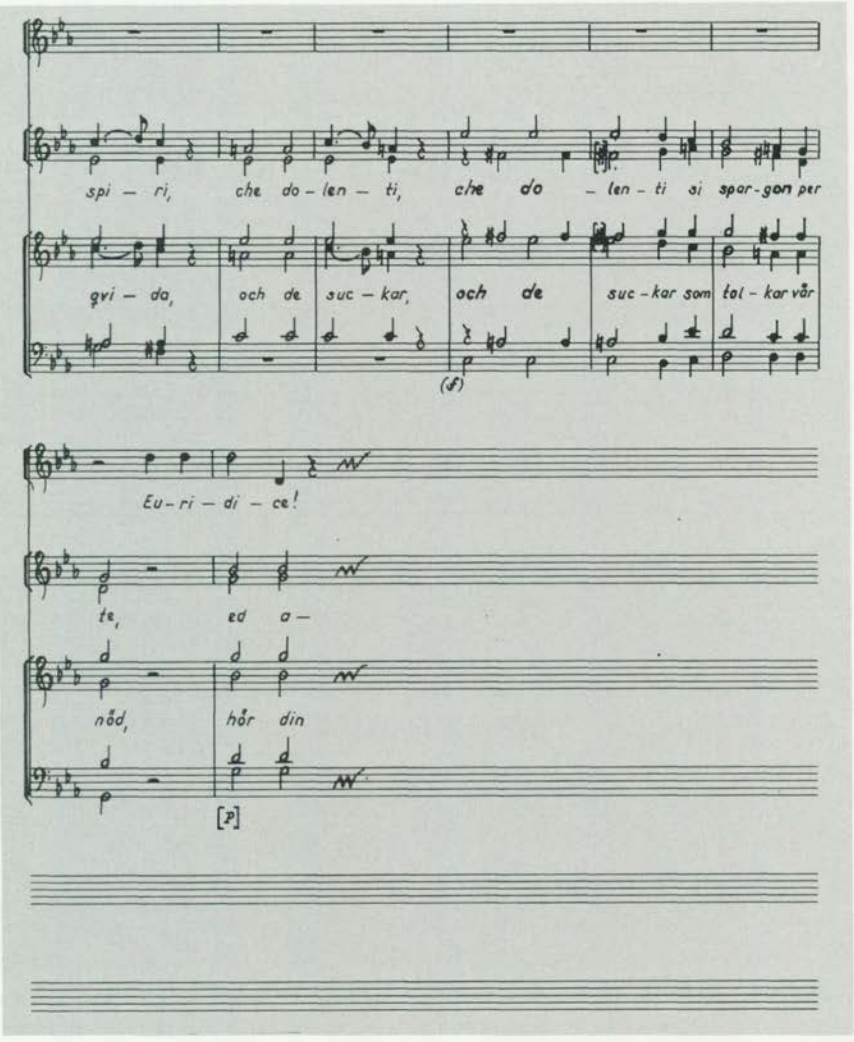


Fig. 3a–b. In the Stockholm score of 1773, a paste-over in the second choral section of Act I (Fig. 3b.) when lifted, reveals the page as prepared by the copyist, i.e., without the soprano and alto lines (Fig. 3a.). The text in both examples is in Uttini's hand, as are the notes of the soprano and alto parts in Fig. 3b. MAB.



Musical Ex. 3.

Swedish text, but also to write out the soprano and alto lines himself instead of leaving them to the copyist, as he did with the tenor and bass lines? (Consult Figs. 3a–b.) No doubt because Uttini, in rather substantial areas of the choral numbers—areas in which the soprano part originally lay rather low and the spacing of the three upper voices was therefore close—had altered Gluck's texture. In these phrases he had the altos sing the original soprano line and transposed the alto line up one octave for the sopranos. The result was to reduce or try to brighten what, according to accounts from performances of *Orfeo* in Vienna and elsewhere, was considered the choruses' excessively som-



Musical Ex. 3 continued.

ber effect. Compare, for instance, the following measures from the opening chorus (Musical Ex. 3).

Now, the changes just described are the only notable ones made for the first Stockholm performances. Otherwise the score corresponds entirely to Gluck's published version of the first setting. More importantly, no additions or deletions of any kind were undertaken. Thus Swedish audiences, unlike most of those in Germany, England, Italy and elsewhere, were quite exceptional in experiencing the work in a form close to what Gluck had intended. And they more than approved! From the time of the première in November 1773 until April

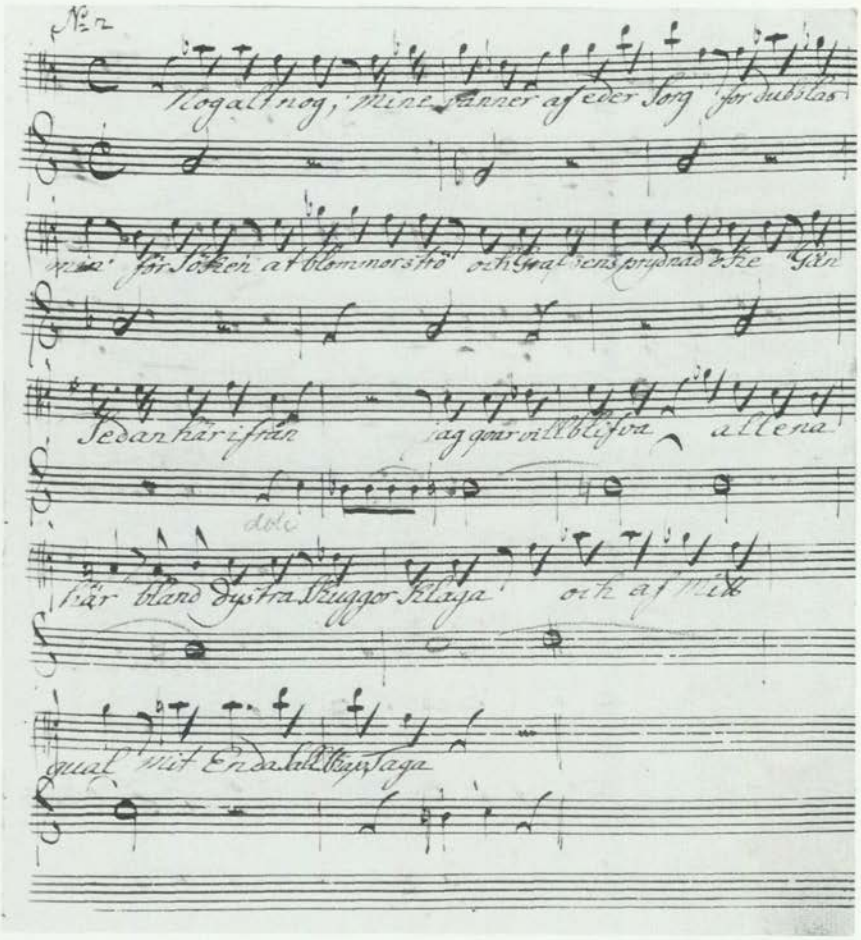


Fig. 4. The opening recitative as it appears in one of the first copied Violin II parts. The vocal line is Gluck's original, not Uttini's revision, and hence does not correspond with the Swedish text. MAB.

1780, available newspaper announcements indicate that *Orpheus och Euridice* was staged at least 49 times, making it—even by this reckoning—the most played work of its time in Stockholm.[36] But the manuscript parts for soloists and orchestral players not only tell of even greater longevity but also reveal how this was achieved. To some extent, that is to say, they help fill in the loopholes in the performance record due to a lacuna in newspaper announcements for the period 1782 to 1785. The also show how some elements of Gluck's French reworking began to be incorporated into Swedish performances of what basically continued to be the Viennese version. And, finally, they point to a hitherto unrecognized subsequent history of the work

Fig. 5. Christofer Karsten (1756–1827), 1st Actor and Singer at the Royal Opera 1776–1817, as Orpheus. Lithography in Svenskt Porträttgalleri *("A Swedish Portrait Gallery") by L. H. Roos, 1824.*

during the reign of the last Gustavian monarch, Gustaf III's successor, Gustaf IV Adolf.

The orchestral parts were originally prepared for an ensemble of 33 players, comprising 12 violins, 4 violas, 4 cellos, 3 double basses, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets and one timpanist.[37] Probably, as then was usual, *kapellmästare* Uttini directed from the harpsichord;[38] yet there is no evidence either in the score or anywhere else of the harpsichord's participation. Only one of the soloists' parts, Euridice's, includes for instance some added bass figures written in in pencil; but these were most likely for purposes of rehearsal with keyboard only. The original parts for the principal wind instruments, for the basses, cellos, both violas, and for most of the violins are all in the hand of "H/N 62"—the same copyist who prepared the orchestral score.[39] In addition there are three violin parts in somewhat later hands, no doubt copied for the five extra players who joined the orchestra by 1780.[40] One of these is for concertmaster, about which more later. The string parts copied by "H/N 62" reveal that he prepared them using the printed score and the new text, but not Uttini's revised score, as one might have presumed. How do we know this? As was necessary for rhythmically accurate performance of the recitatives, these string parts include the solo singers' vocal lines and texts. But while the text is Rothman's Swedish translation, the singers'

music has been taken straight out of Gluck's printed score and does not correspond to Uttini's modified vocal lines (Fig. 4). The implication is that, probably to save time, the orchestral parts were being copied out either before or while Uttini was working on the score, which was possible as no changes were made in the string parts. Such discrepancies between the parts and the score as may exist in the recitative sections do not seem to have affected performances, for the same string parts continued to be used for many years. The newer violin parts, on the other hand, do follow Uttini's version in the recitatives.

What about the winds? The Stockholm orchestra did not have the *cornetti, chalumeaux, cors anglais* or trombones called for by Gluck. Nor did it employ a harpist. The trombones, present only to add gravity to certain choruses, were therefore simply omitted, as they apparently also were in most other cities. The *cornetto* parts were played by the oboists, who switched to *oboe d'amour* for the *chalumeau* sections. Furthermore, their parts show that in Stockholm the oboists and flutists doubled the violins in certain movements, something neither called for by Gluck nor apparent in Uttini's score.[41] Both flutes and horns followed the original indications, but the horns also took over the sections for *cors anglais.* As for Orpheus' harp, although we know from the newspaper *Hwad Nytt?* that there happened to be a visiting German harpist in Stockholm at the beginning of November 1773,[42] the opera orchestra did not have one until the 19th century.[43] And from the first-chair violin part it is clear that this player rendered the passages for harp, playing pizzicato.

The original orchestral parts as a whole contain fuller dynamic indications and marks of articulation than are found in Gluck's score or in Uttini's. The majority of these, but not all, lend some authentic support to the kinds of editorial additions made in the new critical edition of *Orfeo,* although they were not used for this purpose. Since in 1773 the Stockholm ensemble did not have a sufficent number of string players to realize Gluck's intention of having a second, smaller group backstage to accompany Orpheus in Hades, the same violinists and violists performed both the Orchestra I and II parts from their regular positions in front of the stage apron; and it seems that all the string players played throughout: they were not divided.

Of the solo singers' parts, the original ones of 1773 are preserved for the roles of Euridice and Kärleken (Amor). They correspond entirely to Uttini's score and, unfortunately, contain no added ornamentation or other indications such as might have offered invaluable

clues in the matter of the period's vocal performance practice, an area about which we still have a great deal to learn. The surviving part for Orpheus was copied out in late 1779 and is labelled on the front cover: "Karsten". The performer in question was the younger tenor Christofer Karsten (Fig. 5), who we know took over for Stenborg in January 1780.[44] As a 16-year old, Karsten had sung in the chorus during the première of *Orpheus* in 1773.[45] Six years later he had risen to the rank of principal singer. His first appearances as Orpheus sparked a controversy reflected in a series of satirical poems published anonymously in the Stockholm newspapers. Those criticizing his interpretation, attributed by Leux-Henschen to the poet and librettist Johan Henrik Kellgren, found it too bland by comparison with Stenborg's.[46] But the opposition countered that such a reaction showed poor artistic judgment in giving the preference to Stenborg's old-fashioned, rococo, hypersensitive, lachrymose renditions.[47] Though no comparison is offered of their actual singing styles, we do have one item of evidence about Stenborg's way of singing Gluck. In 1783, when Joseph Martin Kraus was in Vienna, he visited Gluck and reported that the older composer became furious when he tried to demonstrate to him Stenborg's manner of performing an aria from *Alceste*. Kraus writes:

> But may God then have mercy on our lovable Stenborg, who goes to such trouble to sew wide gold braid onto the simple clothing of Gluck's children.[48]

In other words, Stenborg must have overloaded Gluck's arias with ornamentation. Gluck desired executions of the sort for which the original Orpheus, Guadagni, was celebrated. Happily, three arias from *Orfeo* as sung by Guadagni were published in London in 1779, including ornamentation, breathing marks and the occasional cadenza. The rondò "*Che faró senz' Euridice*" indicates the degree of embellishment which Gluck considered tasteful.[49] Karsten's part contains one page, an added leaf, not in the copyist's hand but in that of Karsten himself. The music is the virtuoso aria "*L'esprit renaît dans mon coeur*" from the end of Act I of *Orphée*, that is, Gluck's French version of 1774, composed for Le Gros. And sure enough, at this point in Uttini's score a later hand has written in pencil: Aria: Karsten.[50] This brings us to the matter of added numbers in later Stockholm performances of *Orpheus*.

The published score of *Orphée et Euridice* had appeared not long after the Paris première in 1774, and a copy was probably soon available in Stockholm. By 1779, perhaps even earlier, and until

1786, and probably later, elements of *Orphée* and ballet movements from other operas by Gluck and others were now and again introduced into the Swedish productions, although in the main these held to the Vienna version. I say "now and again" because, once introduced, they did not necessarily become fixtures. Most of the evidence concerning these additions and/or modifications is to be seen in the orchestral parts; little record of them appears in the score, or in any case none of the actual music. The parts, however, do contain added pages on several types of paper and in various later hands, as well as indications to omit these and certain parts of the original version, some of which are countermanded by such remarks as "play this movement". Besides the tenor aria just mentioned, the most enduring of the changes were the insertion of the much-liked furies' ballet in Act II and the middle section of the dance of the Blessed Spirits, as well as the abbreviation according to the Paris version of Orpheus' long recitative "*Che puro ciel*" ("*Quel nouveau ciel*"). Once incorporated, they do not appear ever to have been removed and were copied directly into the new concertmaster's part prepared in the 1780's (see below). By contrast, dance movements from other operas of Gluck and sources as yet unidentified, added early on at the ends of both Acts I and III, were subsequently deleted; in the first case in preference for the aria "*L'espoir renaît*", and, in the second, for ballet movements from the French *Orphée*. The latest of the insertions was the aria with chorus for Euridice ("*Cet asile aimable*") in Act II. The sum effect of these modifications was to lengthen the work. Stenborg's statement that by mid-1774 the performance took nearly three hours may mean that some of the ballet movements first added were already in use at that time.

Nevertheless, it is perfectly clear from the orchestral and solo parts that in the initial Stockholm performances—at very least for the first season—the ensemble played exactly according to Uttini's score, that is, followed the Viennese version. The differences in paper type and handwriting between the main body of the original parts (written on the same paper as Uttini's score and by the same copyist) and the insertions (on several later paper types and by other copyists) are obvious and consistent. Misrepresentative therefore are the blanket characterizations of the Swedish performance material as *Stockholmer Bearbeitung*, and especially Abert's and Finscher's description of them as a *Mischfassung italienischer und französischer Version*.[51] The performance history revealed is more shifting and complicated than such generalizations imply.

Of the two choral scores the earliest, from 1773, includes the celebratory prologue "*Vi njuta skydd i Svea Land*", given in its entirety only during the initial performances of *Orpheus*. Newly composed by Uttini, the prologue is wholly in his hand, while the choruses of the main work are in one of the early copyist's, the same one who wrote out the original part for Euridice. Dating from a somewhat later time, the second choral score contains only the movements from *Orpheus*. Both of these scores, nonetheless, as well as the individual parts for the chorus, represent Uttini's version with the inverted parts for alto and soprano. From the libretto of 1773, which names all the chorus members, we know that their forces numbered 65: 43 men and 22 women. Not all sang at once, however; the most usual combination, again following the specifications in the libretto, was 10 men and 8 women.

According to the theater regulations of 1786, *Kongl. Maj:ts nådiga Reglemente för Kongl. Svenska Musicaliska Academien och Opera-Theatern*,[52] the chorus singers were to know their parts by heart before rehearsals on stage began and were to keep them fresh in memory so that works could be taken up whenever demanded.[53] On performance days the chorus masters, again according to the regulations, were to stand on stage behind the first set of wings with the choral score in hand "to lead and correct any errors".[54] In so doing, though, they were to follow the *kapellmästare*, whose job it was

> to beat time and moderate the orchestral accompaniment; but in order that the actor may combine song with dramatic presentation without either aspect suffering too much, the kapellmästare ought to suit himself to the actor's convenience, to his skill, the greater or lesser strength of his voice and anything else he may fairly request in this respect.[55]

The directions to the orchestra's concertmaster go in the same vein, and the principal clause stipulating his duties includes several interesting points:

> Since the harpsichord is not always used, the concertmaster ought to pay attention to the actor so that, in the event of his going astray, he [the concertmaster] can immediately help him out and, so that the scene in progress not be interrupted by this kind of mistake, quickly bring the orchestra back together with the actor; remembering always that, on this and all other occasions, the vocal part is the primary one in an opera and ought to be served by all others.[56]

One wishes that modern orchestra leaders demonstrated the same consideration! For one thing it would probably result in more suitable tempos.

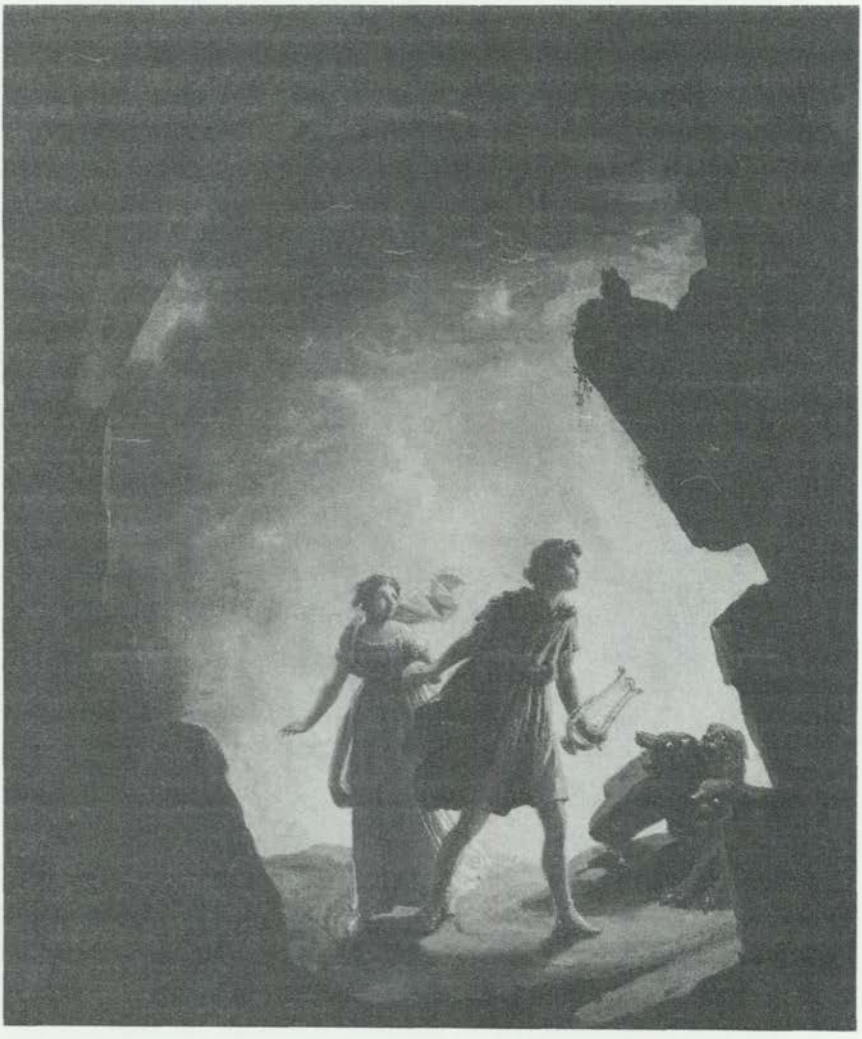


Fig. 6. Act III, scene 1 from Orpheus och Euridice, *presumably in the 1786 production. Now the costumes are neoclassical. Oil on canvas by P. Hilleström. DTM.*

The year 1786, the date of these regulations, is also a significant one in the history of *Orpheus* in Stockholm. It was then, namely, that a new Swedish translation was made, this time from the French text, and a new score and complete set of parts were copied out in order to stage Gluck's Paris version of 1774.[57] Hitherto it has been assumed that all of the 32 performances of the work known to have occurred after that date during the Gustavian era—the last being on 8 May 1806, or just one month before the Royal Opera was closed down[58]

—represented the newer version.[59] Yet the two groups of manuscript parts imply otherwise. Not only have those for the French version remained in pristine condition, as though little used; but the much worn older set of instrumental parts, corresponding to the Viennese version, bears the names of orchestral players who only became members of the ensemble between 1786 and 1806. The newer concertmaster's part, mentioned several times earlier, has on its cover "Violino principale / Sieur Müller"; and Christian Friedrich Müller, who joined the orchestra in June 1780, did not advance to that position until 1787.[60] The same kinds of observations hold true for the soloists' parts. A new copy of the role for Eurydice, still following the Italian version, is labelled "Mlle Åberg"—a singer engaged in 1787; Karsten's part of 1779 also bears the name "Hr Lindström": he began singing at the opera in 1800. More surprising, no solo vocal parts for the French version have come down in the collection. And most curious of all, as noted by a number of observers, Uttini's orchestral score and some of the solo vocal parts, while containing the music of the Italian version, also have a second text—the translation of the French version—written above or below the older translation, despite the fact that the new words in no way match the notes.

Even from the beginning, references to the work and its performances in Stockholm tended to call it *Orphée*, not *Orpheus,* as in the first Swedish libretto and earliest score and parts. Thus we cannot be certain that after 1786 any single mention of *Orphée*, even though this was the new version's official title, automatically signifies this version and not the earlier one. Furthermore, there were clearly more performances than have as yet been determined, definitely so in the first half of the 1780's, and perhaps later too. It may never be possible to work out these questions to complete satisfaction (see the colour supplement).

But the significance of *Orpheus/Orphée* for Gustavian opera is undeniable. Five works by Gluck dominated the period,[61] but both the first to be heard, in November 1773, and the last, in May 1806, were *Orpheus*. Between those dates it was certainly staged no fewer than 80 times, probably many more, a record only matched by *Gustaf Wasa*.[62] *Orpheus'* share in furthering the aims of those who took the initiative for bringing it to Stockholm was greater than even they anticipated. Orpheus' despairing cry for Euridice, "*Vad gör jag utan min maka*" ("What shall I do without my bride") might thus well stand as a motto for Swedish opera. What would it have done, what would it have become, without *Orpheus*?

NOTES

1. Cited in Alfred Loewenberg, "Gluck's *Orfeo* on the stage, with some notes on other Orpheus operas", *The Musical Quarterly,* XXVI (1940), p. 326.
2. Following the première at the Burgtheater on 5 Oct. 1762, *Orfeo* was repeated four times that autumn (10 and 12 Oct. and 9 and 12 Dec.) and three the following year (13 Feb. and 24 and 25 July). See Anna Amalia Abert's preface to her and Ludwig Finscher's edition of *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Sämtliche Werke*, Abt. 1, Bd. 1. Kassel 1963, p. ix.
3. Loewenberg's article (see fn. 1) surveys the known 18th and 19th-century revivals with succinct comments on some of the modifications these entailed. A somewhat fuller recounting of the 18th-century productions may be found in Abert's preface, *op. cit.*, pp. vii–xiii. For a bibliography of detailed studies on various individual productions, see the article "Gluck" by Gerhard Croll and Winton Dean in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London 1980, Vol. VII, pp. 455–75.
4. Among Engländer's studies on opera in Gustavian Stockholm, the article "Gluck und der Norden", *Acta Musicologica,* XXIV (1952), pp. 62–83, is the most important as regards *Orfeo*. Yet even here the discussion of the work is necessarily limited and concerns mainly the libretto.
5. Daniel Heartz points out the relevance of the work's function to its form in "*Orfeo ed Euridice*: some criticisms, revisions and stage realizations during Gluck's lifetime", *Chigiana*, XXIX–XXX (1975), pp. 384–85.
6. Cited in Abert's preface (see fn. 2), p. vii: "C'est à M. de Calzabigi qu'en appartient le principal mérite; et si ma musique a eu quelque éclat je crois devoir reconnoître que c'est à lui que j'en suis redevable, puisque c'est lui qui m'a mis à portée de développer les ressources de mon art."
7. The structure of *Orfeo* is considered in several of the contributions in the anthology *C. W. von Gluck*: ORFEO compiled by Patricia Howard. Cambridge 1981.
8. Concerning Guadagni's career and influence on the character of *Orfeo,* see Daniel Heartz' article "From Garrick to Gluck, the reform of the theatre and opera in the mid-eighteenth-century", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association,* XCIV (1967–68), pp. 111–127.
9. Michael F. Robinson presents a thoroughgoing comparison of the versions staged in London (1770 and 1771), Florence (1771) and Naples (1774), all of which included additional music by Johann Christian Bach and other composers, in the article "The 1774 S. Carlo version of Gluck's *Orfeo*", *Chigiana,* XXIX–XXX (1975), pp. 395–413. On the Munich productions, see Richard Engländer, "Zu den Münchner Orfeo-Aufführungen von 1773 und 1775", *Gluck Jahrbuch,* II (1915), pp. 26–55.
10. From the later 17th century through the early 19th, nearly all Italian theaters and the majority of those in other cities holding to Italian traditions (such as those in London, Vienna, Lisbon and St. Petersburg) staged increasingly lengthy autonomous ballets between the acts of all operas, both serious and comic, and often with plays as well. See my chapter "Il ballo teatrale e l'opera italiana" in *Storia dell'opera italiana,* Vol. V. Turin 1988, pp. 175–306. In Gustavian Stockholm, where French tendencies prevailed, accompanying ballets were not used as *entr'actes* but rather as contrasting items preceding and following operas, *sångspel* and plays. For details, see my article "Ballet in Stockholm during the later 18th century and its relationship to contemporary trends on the Continent", *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning,* LXVI (1984), pp. 9–42.
11. According to Franz Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater) 1776–1966: Verzeichnis der aufgeführten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweis und täglichem Spielplan*, Teil I: 1776–1810. Vienna 1966, the Burgtheater presented *Orfeo ed Euridice* five times during the 1781–82 winter season (31 Dec. 1781 and 3, 22 and 29 Jan. and 12 Feb. 1782). Emperor Joseph II's decree prohibiting ballets was in effect from the autumn of 1776 until just after his death in 1790.
12. See the preface by Ludwig Finscher to his edition of *Orphée et Euridice* in Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Sämtliche Werke,* Abt. 1, Bd. 6. Kassel 1967, pp. xvii–xx. *Orphée* later served as the basis for the composite version made by Berlioz in 1859, in which he reverted to elements of Gluck's Italian score whenever he felt there was a musical or dramatic advantage to be gained. Published in 1866, this hybrid, translated into many languages (including Italian!), captured the stages of Europe and America and is still the version most widely performed today.

13. Agne Beijer, "Abbé Domenico Michelessi: några anteckningar om honom själv och hans verksamhet i Sverige" [: some notes about him and his activity in Sweden], *Samlaren: tidskrift för svensk litteraturhistorisk forskning*, ny följd, I (1920), pp. 92–140.
14. *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti, ciambellano di S. M. il Re di Prussia* [...]. Venice: Giambatista Pasquali, 1770.
15. Cited in Beijer (see fn. 13), p. 123: "Tragedien skall lära de Swenske de uttal, som mäst röra hiertat [...]. Edert manliga och genomträngande omdöme tilkommer at rycka ifrån Tragedien de öfwerflödiga mirten-kransar, hvarmed wårt tidehwarf utprålat henne, och återgifwa henne sit rätta utspråk [...] Den Musicaliske harmonien, till hwilken Eder tungomål så wäl låter binda sig, skall förena sina behageligheter med skalde-konsten. I de nya Academierne, som nu anlägges i denna wackra hufwudstaden, binder Musiken de Swenska snillen, at med starka, uttryckande, och wäl afpassade liud föreställa glädiens upmuntrande röst, sorgens diupa suckar, hotelsers, wredens och förtwiflans afbrutna skrän [...]".
16. Michelessi's letter, discussed *ibid.*, p. 125, is preserved in the Gustavian collection at Uppsala University Library ("Bref till Gustaf III från främmande personer"). Its criticism of Metastasio's *Le cinesi* anticipates by nearly two decades a similar one that Calzabigi made of Metastasio's *L'eroe cinese* in his published response of 1790 to Arteaga's negative appraisal of the reform drama: "Risposta [...] alla critica ragionatissima delle poesie drammatiche del C. de' Calsabigi fatta dal baccelliere D. Stefano Arteaga suo illustro compatriotto."
17. See Einar Sundström, "F. A. Uttini och Adolf Fredriks italienska operatrupp", *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning*, XXII (1931), pp. 5–44, and Patrik Vretblad, *Konsertlivet i Stockholm under 1700-talet*. Stockholm 1918.
18. *Hwad Nytt? Hwad Nytt?*, Årg. 2. Götheborg 1773, no. 75 and 76 (*den 8 april*), contains the touching obituary, which begins: "Den för sin kärlek til Swenska Nationen, sin wördnad mot dess Makalöse Konung, och sin ej mindre lärdom, än munterhet, och uplysde smak, bekante, samt almänt älskad, Italienske Abbeen, Herr Michelessi, dog i natt, efter 3 dagars utstånden sjukdom, i des 38 ålders år." ["For his devotion to the Swedish nation, his veneration of its peerless King, and his learning no less than his cheerfulness and enlightened taste, universally known and loved, the Italian Abbé Michelessi died tonight after enduring 3 days' illness, in his 38th year."] The issue of 28 April (no. 90 and 91) reports the publication of the Austrian play and then provides this first reference to the Swedish libretto of Orfeo: "Wår Abbe Michelessi syslosatte sig äfven med en Opera, kallad Orphée. Twänne Acter woro redan färdige."
19. Issue of 27 July (no. 148 and 149): "Följande Operor äro i antågande [...]. Orphée, öfwersatt ifrån Italienska af Herr Doctor Rothman [...]; han är ostridigt en af wåre lyckligaste öfwersättare".
20. No. 230 and 231: "Man har hopp, at snart få se Theatren åter öpnad. Ibland de första Operor, som nu komma at spelas, är Orphee och Euridice, en öfwersätning, som är lyckeligen träffad af Herr Doctor Rothman [...]. Han kände Italienska Språket i grund, och företog sig detta arbete på den witre Abbe Michelessis inrådan. Denne lärde Mannen granskade Herr Rothmans försök [...]"
21. Ibid.: "Af den förra [ORPHEE OCH EURIDICE] har jag nyss sedt en General-Repetition och försäkrar jag trygt, det Musiquen swarar emot Poesien."
22. The production had been preceded by the inaugural presentation, Uttini's five-act opera *Thetis och Pelée* (18 Jan. 1773), and the opera-ballet *Acis och Galathea* (10 May 1773), a pasticcio based on Handel's masque.
23. See *Orpheus och Euridice, opera uti tre acter* (Stockholm, 1773), p. 2: *Til Läsaren* [To the Reader]: "[...] *de svårigheter, som förekommit vid des klädande i Svensk drägt*". Several copies of the libretto are preserved, the one cited here at Musikaliska akademiens bibliotek, Stockholm.
24. Ibid.: "Härtil kommer, at man trodt det Recitativerne i Svenskan icke tola at vara så orimade, som i Italienskan, hvarföre jag måst påtaga mig den, i detta fall, besvärliga skyldigheten at rima dem, så ofta det låtit sig göra [...]"; and p. [iv]: "Svenska Språkets fattigdom på sådana ordalag, som uttrycka kärleks och ömhets betygelser, och hvaruti det Italienska så mycket öfverflöder, har varit orsak, at jag måst oftare nyttia dem, som varit at tilgå; om äfven dessa låta platta och osmakeliga, är det väl et stort fel, men jag vet icke antingen det skall skrifvas på min räkning, som icke valt bättre, eller på språkets, som icke har några vackrare i förråd."
25. Ibid., p. 2: "Framledne Abboten MICHELESSI, som för smak och vitterhet giordt sig bland oss så allmänt högaktad, hade den goda tankan om

Svenska Språkets böjelighet och lämpelighet til öfversättningar, at han trodde en Italiensk Opera skulle kunna gifvas på Svenska [...]. Sedan Nådig tilstädielse blifvit gifven, at et sådant försök måtte göras, behagade Herr Abboten anförtro mig at verkställa detsamma med Operan Orpheo & Euridice, til hvilken man hade Herr Glucks Musique för handen."

26. Ibid., p. [iv]: "Denna omständighet [...] har gifvit Kongl. Hof-Capell-Mästaren UTTINI, som åtagit sig at sätta orden under Musiquen, mera besvär, än om han sielf skolat göra ny Musique för Recitativerne. Genom hans oförtrutna åtgärd härvid, äro nu dessa olägenheter afhulpne, och Herr GLUCKS Musique i det nogaste, som ske kunnat, behållen orubbad."
27. The MSS under discussion, part of Kungliga Teaterns musikaliesamling [The Music Collection of the Royal Opera], are now deposited at Musikaliska akademiens bibliotek (MAB), Stockholm.
28. For a description and listing of the collection's earlier operas, see Martin Tegen, *Kungliga teaterns äldre notsamling (operor före 1810)*. Stockholm University 1965 [typescript].
29. The sheet watermark, the same throughout the entire score, is the so-called Strasbourg bend-on-shield & fleur-de-lis with the name of the Dutch paper manufacturer C & I HONIG (i.e., Cornelis & Jacob Honig, Zaandyk). Paper with this watermark is dated no later than 1774 according to Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries*. Hilversum 1950, illus. no. 3346.
30. Ingmar Bengtsson & Ruben Danielson, *Handstilar och notpikturer i Kungl. Musikaliska akademiens Roman-samling* [Handwriting and Musical Calligraphy in the J. H. Roman Collection of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music]. Uppsala 1955. The original research material collected for this study and greatly amplified since then by Cari Johansson and Anna Lena Holm of the MS division of Musikaliska akademiens bibliotek, Stockholm, is available to scholars at the library. Containing hundreds of illustrations subdivided into categories such as clefs, note formations, text-writings, etc., it permits comparison even of copyists as yet unidentified.
31. See Abert and Finscher, *Orfeo ed Euridice, op. cit.*, Kritischer Bericht, pp. 196, 198–99, which describes the Swedish score as follows: *"Hs. Partitur, spätes 18. Jh. Ein Band, nicht paginiert,* EIN SCHREIBER" [emphasis added].
32. For biographical details on Stenborg as well as on the first Euridice in Stockholm, Elisabeth Olin, see Johan Flodmark, *Elisabeth Olin och Carl Stenborg: två gustavianska sångargestalter: bilder från svenska operans första tider*. Stockholm 1903.
33. Rather than using tenor clef, however, Uttini notated the part of Orpheus in soprano clef, to be read one octave lower.
34. From a review in *Dagligt Allehanda* of 27–28 Feb. 1776, commenting on a later performance; cited in Flodmark, *Elisabeth Olin och Carl Stenborg*, op. cit., p. 113: "Isynnerhet förtjänar att anmärkas hans renhet i uttalet af vårt språk, hvilket han ger dess rätta behaglighet. Hans röst är vacker, åtminstone den enda vi af infödingar ännu ägt i lika grad med honom [...]."
35. Stenborg's letter, preserved at Vetenskapsakademien [The Swedish Academy of Sciences], Stockholm, is cited ibid., p. 98: "Jag måste dock säga, att ehuru vacker denna opera verkligen är, har dock italienska auktoren begått ett stort fel, då han utan minsta relâche lämnar aktören beständigt uti tre timmars tid på teatern, hvarför jag stackare ofta klagat mig, ty fatiguen är odräglig."
36. These performance statistics are derived from Magnus Blomkvist's useful chronology giving day-by-day coverage of all the Stockholm theaters: *Nöjeslivet i Stockholm 1773–1806: en förteckning via dags- och veckopressen* [Public entertainments in Stockholm, 1773–1806: an index based on daily and weekly newspapers]. Unpublished thesis Stockholm University, Department of Theatre and Film Studies.
37. Figures derived from Tobias Norlind and Emil Trobäck, *Kungl. Hovkapellets historia 1526–1929*. Stockholm 1926, pp. 275–285.
38. Flodmark, *Elisabeth Olin och Carl Stenborg, op. cit.*, p. 51, quotes a couplet from a poem of the early 1780's which reads: "Uttini slår på sin klavessin / och straxt kapellet tutti gnider" ["Uttini strikes his harpsichord / and at once the orchestra scrapes the tutti"]. By 1786, however, Georg Vogler reported: "In the Stockholm orchestra there is no longer a cembalo [...]. It is too weak for a large orchestra and in choruses [it] is laughable"; cited in Bertil van Boer Jr., *The Sacred Music and Symphonies of Joseph Martin Kraus* (Ph.D. diss.) Uppsala 1983, p. 226, fn. 64. See also the pertinent clause in the regulations of 1786 for the Royal Opera, cited in fn. 56 below.
39. The parts in this hand include: 3 of the 4 for Violin I, 3 of the 5 for Violin II, both Viola parts, 3 of the 5 for *Basso* (one labelled "Violoncello/-

Basso"), those for Oboe I & II, Horn I & II and Flute I. Of the remaining orchestral parts those for Flute II, Bassoon II, Trumpet I & II and Timpani are in the hand proposed by Bertil van Boer to be that of Gottlieb Fredrik Ficker (1752–1840), contrabass player and opera librarian; see Van Boer's article "The Works of Joseph Martin Kraus: a Preliminary View of the Sources", *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning*, LXII (1980): nr 2, pp. 12–13 (with facsimile).

40. These include one part for Violin I and two for Violin II. According to Norlind & Trobäck (see fn. 37), pp. 276–79, new violinists were engaged in 1775 (1), 1778 (4) and 1780 (2) while two earlier members retired.
41. The oboes, for instance, in the third vocal section of Act II, scene 1 ("Deh placatevi", bars 111–152) and the flutes in the aria "Chiamo il mio ben così".
42. The interestingly worded notice of a concert in Riddarhuset [Hall of the Nobility], Stockholm, in the issue of 6 Nov. 1773 (no. 217 and 219) reads: "En Harponist på Davids Harpa, så rörande, at om mögeligt wore, skulle Orphei stumma åhörare äfwen qwikna. Det är Herr Kneusler, som så rörer Harpan."
43. The first harpist with a regular appointment was engaged in 1811, according to Norlind & Trobäck, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
44. Regarding Karsten's appearances as Orpheus see Irmgard Leux-Henschen, "Fyra gustavianska dikter kring en Orpheus-föreställning år 1780: en versifierad polemik om musikestetiska problem", *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning*, XLIV (1967), pp. 135–165.
45. Karsten is named in the libretto of 1773 (see fn. 23), p. [xiv], as one of the shepherds in the choruses of Act I.
46. Leux-Henschen, "Fyra gustavianska dikter", op. cit.
47. The final lines of the first poem criticizing Karsten—"Ty ingen tår ur något öga runnit, / och inget hjerta del uti hans klagan tar" ["For no tear ran from any eye, / and no heart takes part in his lamentation"]—were precisely those ridiculed by his defenders; see *ibid.*, pp. 141, 160–61.
48. "Aber gnade Gott dann unserem lieblichen Stenborg, der soviel Mühe anwendet, um handbreite Tressen an deren einfache Kleider zu nähen. Ein einziger Versuch, den ich zum Scherz nach des Herrn Hofsekretärs [Stenborgs] Weise mit der Arie Grausamer Freund aus Alceste machte, schreckte mich ab, ihn ein zweitesmal zu versuchen, denn er [Gluck] wurde halb rasend [...]"; letter of 15 April 1783 to C. B. Zibet, Assistant Director of the Royal Opera, Stockholm; see Irmgard Leux-Henschen, *Joseph Martin Kraus in seinen Briefen*. Stockholm 1978, p. 253.
49. The example is also reproduced in *C. W. von Gluck:* ORFEO (see fn. 7), p. 58.
50. The insertion is indicated for the end of the final recitative of Act I, in place of the instrumental postlude, as is also the case in *Orphée et Euridice.*
51. Abert and Finscher, *Orfeo ed Euridice, op. cit.*, Kritischer Bericht, p. 198.
52. The regulations are preserved at Kungliga biblioteket (KB), Stockholm, Hs. T. 7.
53. Ibid. See clause 18: "De [chormästarne] använde den flit, at Chor Sångarne altid, innan Repetitioner af et Spectacle på Theatren börjas, kunna sina stämmor utom paperet, hvilket dem aldrig tillåts at der nyttja"; and clause 19: "Likaledes repeteras Chorerne af de på någon tid borttagde Operor, så at de icke aldeles uti glömska falla."
54. Ibid., clause 21: "Då Choren är på Theatren böra Chormästarne finna sig i närmaste Coulisse, för at med Partitionen i handen den föra och rätta."
55. Ibid., clause 4: "Capellmästaren tillhörer väl ensamen, at slå Tacten och moderera Orchestrens accompagnement, men, på det Acteuren må med Sången kunna förena den theatrala actionen, utan at någondera för mycket lider, bör Capellmästaren i berörde delar lämpa Sig efter Acteurens bequämlighet, dess Skicklighet, dess mer eller mindre Starka röst, och hvad denne i Sådane afseenden med billighet kan begära."
56. Ibid., clause 10: "Som Clavessin icke altid nyttjas, bör Concertmästaren hafva agt på Acteuren, så at, i fall denne felar, han honom genast hjelpa kan, eller ock på det Scenen af et sådant fel icke må afbrytas, hastigt föra Orchestren hop med Acteuren. Påminnandes sig vid detta och andre tillfällen, at sång stämman är uti en Opera den första och som af de andre tjenas bör."
57. With some lacunae, the orchestral parts for the 1786 version still preserved in the music collection of the Royal Opera (see fn. 27) include the following: Violin I (4 parts), Violin II (5), Viola (2), Violoncello (2), Contrabasso (3), Flute II (1), Oboe I (1), Oboe II (2), Clarinet I (1), Clarinet II (1), Bassoon I & II (1), Horn I (1), Horn II (1), Trumpet I (1), Trumpet II (1), Timpani (1) and (*nota bene*) Harp (1). In addition a choral score and parts for the chorus survive: Soprano (3), Alto (3), Tenor (4) and Bass (3).
58. According to Blomkvist's chronology (see fn. 36),

after the première of the new version on 11 May 1786 performances took place in 1788 (3 performances), 1789 (3), 1791 (3), 1792 (3), 1793 (3), 1794 (4), 1795 (6), 1798 (2), 1803 (2) and 1806 (3).

59. Engländer's article "Gluck in der Norden" (see fn. 4) has since its publication been the principal source for subsequent references to the Swedish performances. His assertion, "Seit 1786 wurde die stark veränderte französische Fassung des 'Orpheus' in Stockholm bei den Aufführungen im neuen Opernhause zu Grunde gelegt [...]" (p. 75), has simply been accepted without further comment.
60. See Norlind & Trobäck, *Kungl. Hovkapellets historia, op. cit.*, pp. 276–77.
61. In addition to *Orpheus*, audiences in Gustavian Stockholm enjoyed *Iphigenie uti Auliden* (from 29 Dec. 1778: 57 performances), *Alceste* (from 26 Feb. 1781: 24 performances), *Iphigenie uti Tauriden* (from 5 May 1783: 33 performances), and *Armide* (from 24 Jan. 1787: 52 performances).
62. Johann Gottlieb Naumann's setting of *Gustaf Wasa*, long considered the Swedish national opera, had its première on 19 Jan. 1786. According to Blomkvist's chronology (see fn. 36), it was thereafter performed 78 times during the Gustavian era: 1786 (15 performances), 1790 (8), 1791 (9), 1792 (5), 1797 (12), 1799 (6), 1801 (8), 1802 (5), and 1805 (11). The later production histories of *Orpheus* and *Gustaf Wasa* at Stockholm present striking contrasts indicative of the mutability of tastes. Whereas *Orpheus* was laid down after 6 further performances in 1814–16, *Gustaf Wasa* played altogether 91 times between 1810 and 1886. Thereafter, however, the fortunes of the two works were reversed. Following the 100th anniversary performances in 1886, *Gustaf Wasa* has never again been produced in full. *Orpheus*, on the other hand, experienced a renaissance which began with the first revivals in 1893 and by the time of the bicentennial in 1973 accounted for altogether 206 performances. (Statistics on 19th and 20th-century productions are taken from K. G. Strömbäck and Sune Hofsten, *Kungliga teatern: repertoar 1773–1973*, Stockholm, 1974.) Nevertheless, until the past decade there was little interest in playing the work either according to Gluck's Viennese or Parisian versions or in following one of the two 18th-century Swedish adaptations. In Stockholm too, notwithstanding the survival of unique source material, the hybrid forms dominating the international scene long remained in use for productions of *Orfeo*.

"GUSTAF WASA" AS MUSIC DRAMA

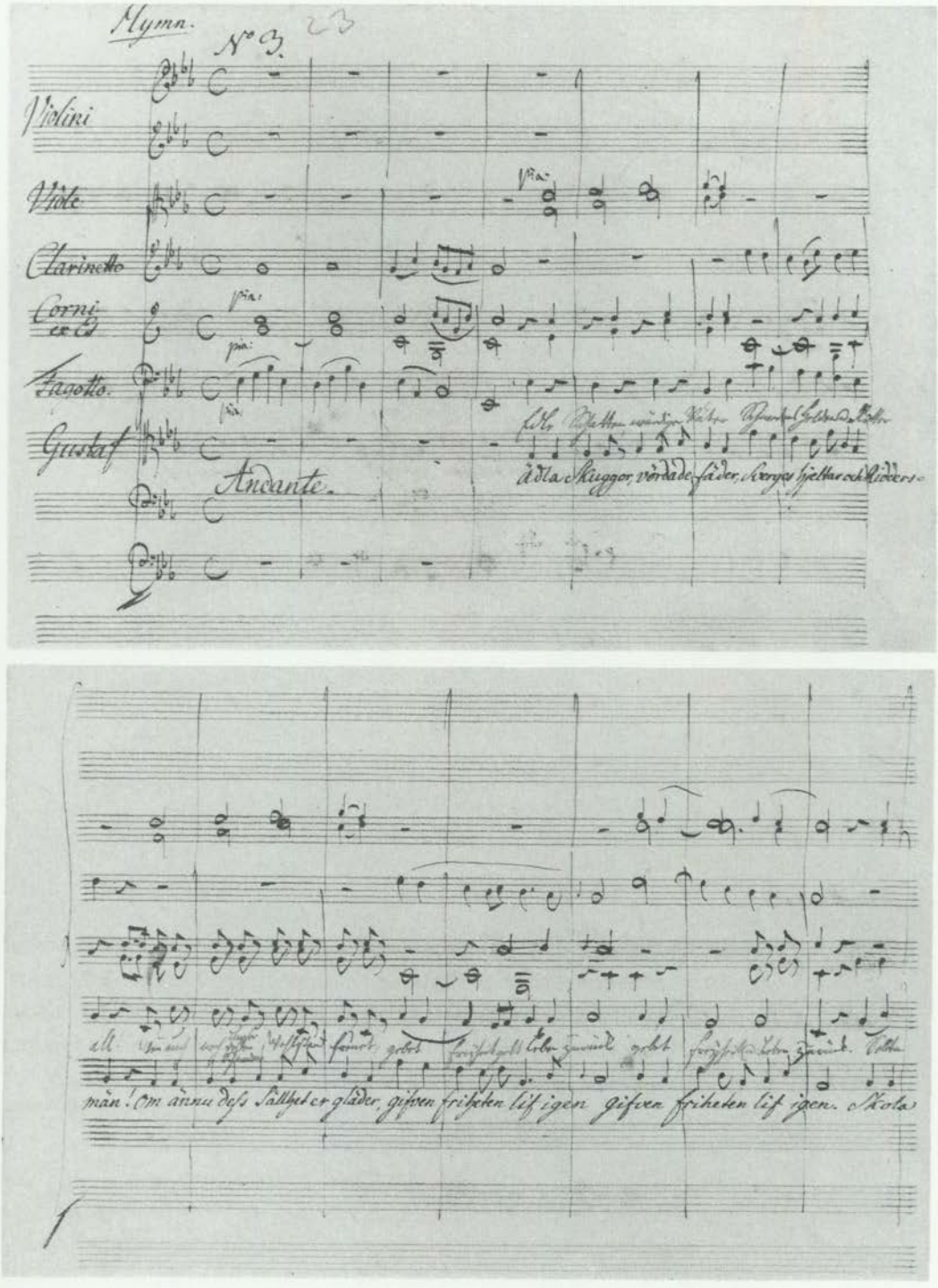
Hans Åstrand

A CENTURY AND A HALF ago Swedes, hearing the noble hymn *Ädla skuggor, vördade fäder* ("Noble shades, revered fathers"), would have felt an impulse to rise to their feet and even join in, as in a national anthem; in fact, it almost *was* the national anthem (Musical Ex. 1).

Actually, it is Gustaf Wasa's invocation, in Act II of Naumann's (Fig. 1) opera of that name, of the noblemen executed by his rival, the Danish king Christian, whom we Swedes call The Tyrant on account of his Stockholm Bloodbath of 1520. From this simple air it would be hard to infer that *Gustaf Wasa* really is a representative of the operatic genre known—surely quite anachronistically—as "music drama". Yet even this misnomer may have its points. Here are a few arguments:

Gustaf III's "theatricality" is well-known. It is the attribute we always associate with him. Both Erik Lönnroth and Birgitta Schyberg discuss Gustaf's opera *qua* propaganda medium, and there are several aspects to his themes and plots which contribute to the development of the age's trend toward more "action" on stage; thus toward more "drama", in the sense that Voltaire, among others, had infused into the sclerotic French tragedy. Gustaf knew Voltaire's theatrical œuvre well, admired it, and certainly learnt much from him.

The praise of Voltaire's *drame* implied by his invocation of national history or suppression of the love theme—as in *Mérope*—applies perfectly to *Gustaf Wasa*; as does the of inspiration Naumann's second masterpiece, *Cora och Alonzo*, staged for the inauguration of Gustaf's new opera house in 1782, drew from exotic countries, with Peruvian Incas, just as Kraus' gigantic *Æneas i Carthago* turned, in Shakespearean vein, to ancient Rome.



Musical Ex. 1. Gustaf Wasa, *Act II, Scene 5;* "Ädla skuggor, vördade fäder" *("Noble shades, revered fathers"). Autograph by J. G. Naumann. Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin.*

Fig. 1. Johann Gottlieb Naumann (1741–1801). Engraving by F. Rosmäsler. MM.

A basic question is whether there is such a thing at all as "Gustavian drama", or "Gustavian opera" and "music drama". Where Naumann as an operatic composer is concerned, his confrontation with Gustaf's Stockholm can perhaps be said to have speeded up the general trend away from the standard notion of Metastasian serious opera toward a new operatic model, a development in which Naumann could be claimed to have formed an important link.

Interestingly enough, neither of his two Swedish librettists were very good dramatists. Neither Adlerbeth nor Kellgren, though belonging to the "stable" of literary or otherwise artistic personalities Gustaf had set up, were essentially dramatic authors. Yet it was they who were asked to transform Gustaf's French themes or own inventions into libretti. And Engländer considered *Cora och Alonzo* "an unusually good book"[1] which also set a pattern for future exotic Incaoperas all over Europe (Fig. 2). As for Kellgren's stage adaptation of Gustaf's carefully elaborated drama about his great ancestor, it is an outstanding combination of historical drama and poetical charm. In his book about theatre and drama in the reign of Gustaf III, Oscar Levertin calls it "a remarkable and unique phenomenon".[2]

But Engländer goes further. He calls the libretto "one of the most original in the operatic literature",[3] and points out the importance of

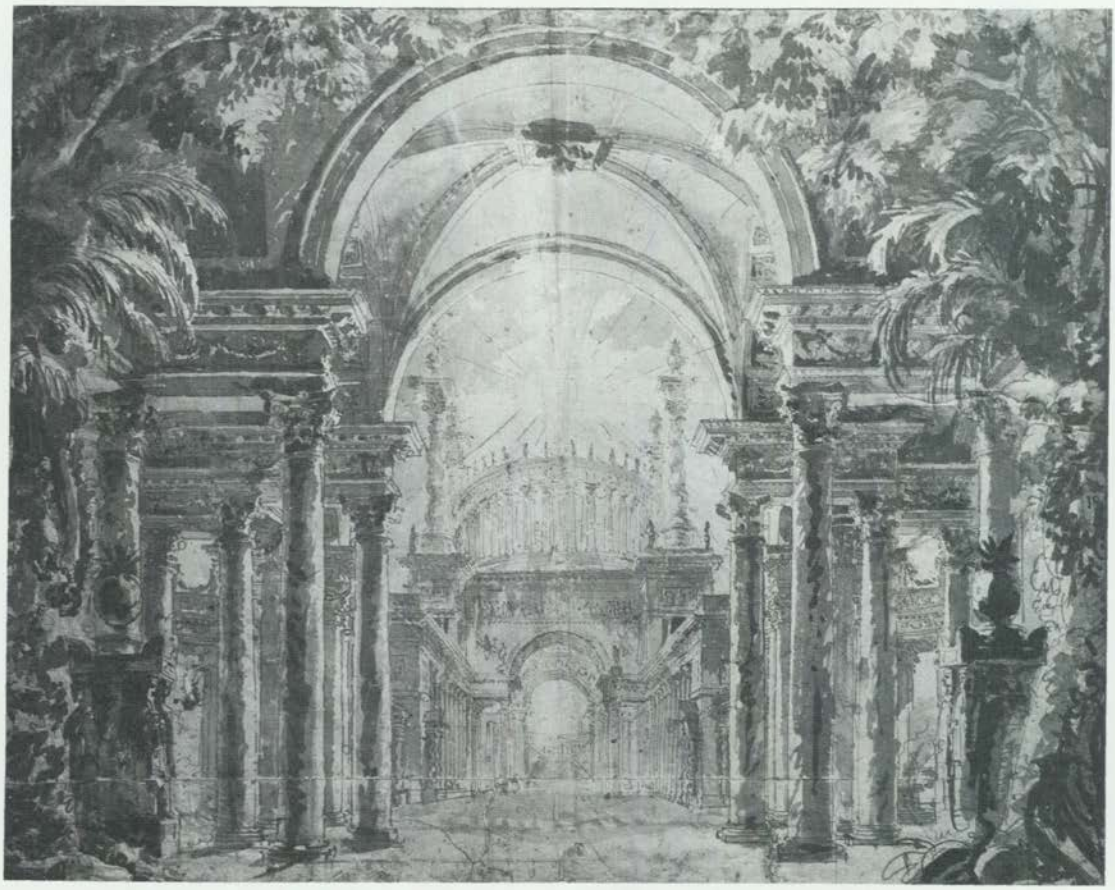


Fig. 2. Stage design for act I, scene 1 of Cora och Alonzo, *opera in three acts by J. G. Naumann, libretto by G. J. Adlerbeth after Marmontel's* Incas ou la Déstruction de l'Empire du Pérou. *First performed at the inauguration of Gustaf III's Opera House on Sept. 30, 1782. Watercolour drawing by L. J. Desprez (after 1785). DTM.*

its detailed stage directions. He also claims that this drama set Naumann by far the most difficult of all his tasks: the creation of a real "lyrical tragedy".

Naumann rose to the challenge. In a letter to Baron Alströmer in 1784, two years before the first night,[4] he says he himself regarded Gustaf Wasa as "the best work I've ever made".

So what shall we believe? That Gustaf was himself responsible for the dramatic impact which seems to pervade *Gustaf Wasa*? In Engländer's

view the king must be regarded as its true author, though from many indications in the sketch for its musical adaptation he also concludes that Naumann probably also exerted an influence.[5]

But once Gustaf had delivered his sketch to Kellgren for versification—or rather dramatization—the hectic phase began: the phase in which, almost throughout operatic history, librettist and composer have struggled for primacy as between *prima la musica* or *prima la poesia*. Naumann versus Kellgren is no exception to the rule, at least to judge from the extensive information we have about Kellgren's opinion of this battle, as he describes it in a well-known letter in the summer of 1782, when he was sweating blood over his libretto.

In his quarrel with Naumann recurs a kind of rondo: "Why are our composers forever shouting about the length of recitatives?" Much of this struggle may have been fought out internally; but a comparison between the text printed by Kellgren[6] and Naumann's score is sufficient evidence that it was Naumann who not infrequently came off best, even after that phase was over.

Irmgard Leux-Henschen points out in her edition of Kraus' letters a key problem in Kellgren's complaint when she quotes a passage about Gluck:

> Alceste and the Iphigenias have quite long recitatives, but I have not heard complaints about the good taste there. Glück (sic!) has understood how to set music for the soul and the heart, his companions trust their ears.

Much could be said about the period's [anonymous] debate on music aesthetics. Here I can only refer to the quite extensive writings on the subject.[7] But the matter leads on more or less directly to other elements in Gustavian music drama—if there is such a thing—which are worth considering.

What was the ideal opera that Gustaf III had in mind when he set in motion that whirlwind which, in a matter of months, led to the creation, out of next to nothing, of an opera company for Uttini's opening night in the rebuilt Bollhus in 1773? To the summoning, in 1777, of the renowned Dresden kapellmeister Naumann? And, in 1782, to the opening of the Royal Opera with a company that exceeded even Paris, at least in numbers?

Much has been said about Gustaf III's non-musicality. Yet little is really known about it. As Erik Lönnroth claims in his new study of the king,[8] Gustaf's lack of musical capacity seems exaggerated. At least, as

in many other aspects of his cultural policy, he seems to have had a genius for finding the right persons for his musical "stable". We may be sure he was familiar with developments in the world of opera and had a sixth sense for which course to follow. Though his background was French, as is clearly demonstrated in his theatrical and operatic repertoire, both his parents were Germans, and his influential mother Lovisa Ulrika, sister of Frederick the Great, had most decided artistic feelings and ambitions.

From the repertoire it is obvious where Stockholm—and probably also the king—stood. Up to the summer of 1782, when Naumann himself premièred his *Cora* and composed most of *Gustaf Wasa*, the Bollhus and Drottningholm theatres had together presented two operas by Uttini, two by Grétry, two by Monsigny, and three by Gluck,[9] as well as Naumann's *Amphion* and a few arrangements. Mention should of course also be made of the Ulriksdal performance of Kraus' *Proserpin*, to a Kellgren libretto.

In the turmoil of European opera, Stockholm voted for Gluck and the French. Where did Naumann stand? Engländer who 64 years after his monumental biography is still the prestigious authority, points out in his MGG article that even in his early Metastasian operas Naumann had demonstrated "an authentic Naumannesque synthesis of the Hasse tradition with the stylistic ideals of the New Neapolitans". For Engländer it is

> the confrontation with the phenomenon of 'Gustavian opera' in Stockholm—in the 1770s and 1780s, Paris apart, the main centre where Gluck was being cultivated ...—that struck deep into Naumann's compositional structure and aesthetic views on opera.

If this is true, Gustavian opera was a decisive element in his development. Engländer goes on to stress the fact that Naumann's Scandinavian operas—we should not forget his Danish *Orpheus og Euridike*—were determined by the principles dominating French choral and ballet opera, which he also stuck to in his later works.

When trying to fix Naumann's position in the international context, it is important to look for the direction being followed or prospected by his colleagues in the rest of Europe.

Symptomatically—and probably correctly—Daniel Heartz, in his chapter of the article "Opera" in the New Grove Dictionary, places Naumann under his heading "The Metastasian Era", which he rather

awkwardly files under the rubric "Italy". This obliges him to keep pointing out that the kind of opera he is talking about, though originally an Italian product, exported all over the western musical world, changed colours as it was exported. Heartz indicates that for the 1770–1800 period such great masters as Hasse and Jommelli, likewise Galuppi and Traetta, were condemned to oblivion by a stylistic break "on several levels", and replaced by such "major figures" as "Piccinni, Sarti, Sacchini, Anfossi, Salieri, Paisiello and Cimarosa, and, among non-Italians, Naumann, Haydn and Mozart".

I doubt whether any comparison can be drawn between *all* these major figures in point of their stylistic idiosyncrasies and/or similarities; and I am certainly not even going to try and sketch out one. We in Stockholm and our friends in Dresden should perhaps be grateful even to see Naumann included in such fine company, for otherwise he is mostly forgotten. Yet he deserves inclusion, having certainly replaced Hasse at Dresden by taking up the Neapolitan elements and other trends which "extensively revised" Metastasio's dramas and provided them "with ensembles, choruses and more spectacle" (Heartz ibid).

Naturally, Heartz has no word to say about Gustavian opera, and no doubt it is not for us Swedes to complain, as it is our fault for failing to demonstrate to the operatic world that there really is a such a phenomenon, and that it is worth a moment's consideration. Internationally this "era" is of course overwhelmingly dominated by Mozart, and rightly so. A few other names may crop up, but none of the great Gustavian composers,—such as Naumann, Uttini, Vogler, Hæffner and as I see it the greatest of them all: Kraus—gets a look-in.

The same can also be said to some extent of Gustaf's favourite French composers. It is a consolation, or irritation, to check Alfred Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera* for 1786, the year of Naumann's première. For that was also the year of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, of two Cimarosa operas, of two Piccinni first nights, both Grétry and Dalayrac twice, but also of Martín y Soler's *Una Cosa Rara* (only saved from total oblivion by Mozart's Leporello) and so on.

The only effective way of giving Naumann his rightful place on the operatic map of the world would of course be to have his operas performed and thus put to the—very belated—test of public opinion. My guess is that of his 25 stage works *Gustaf Wasa* would stand the

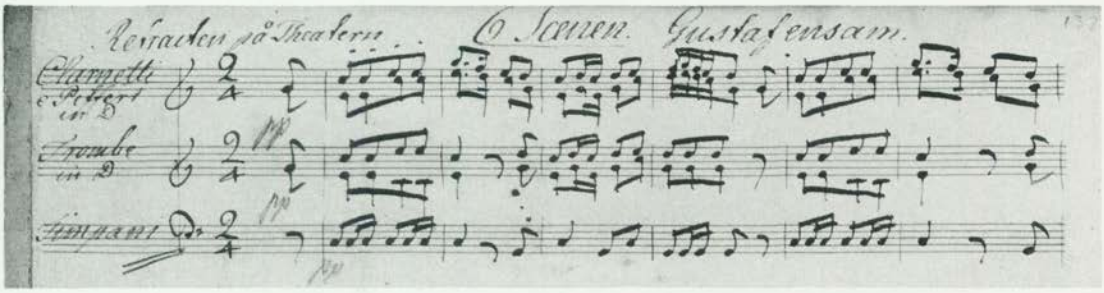
best chance of immortality, precisely because it is a strong music drama, however that term may be defined.

Posterity is supposed to be a just, if sometimes cruel, judge of what deserves to be kept as part of our cultural heritage. In many instances, no doubt, its verdicts are correct. But there must also exist many cases where posterity has simply not had a chance to pass judgment. Many operas have certainly been lost by default, if only because the opera industry is such a complicated and today also very expensive business. Yet I believe we only have to produce a critical text—and a first comparison of the scores in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden indicates what a difficult task it will be—as a basis for a practical material, and after several stagings and performances to make a good studio recording and a compact disc version, to find that *Gustaf Wasa* will not fail to impress a modern audience.

After all, Naumann came well-equipped to the greatest operatic institution of the world at that time. He was given a libretto full of drama and tension, and was backed by a king who knew exactly what he was doing, and who had the eyes of Europe upon him. Naumann rose to the challenge, and wrote a masterpiece—or did he?

This is not the right place to present a detailed analysis either of the drama or of its music. We still have every reason to study Richard Engländer's inventory and his imaginative analysis of the available material, in his study of *Johann Gottlieb Naumann als Opernkomponist* ("J. G. Naumann as an Operatic Composer"). Here I should like to quote a few lines from that study's summing up of the music for *Gustaf Wasa*:

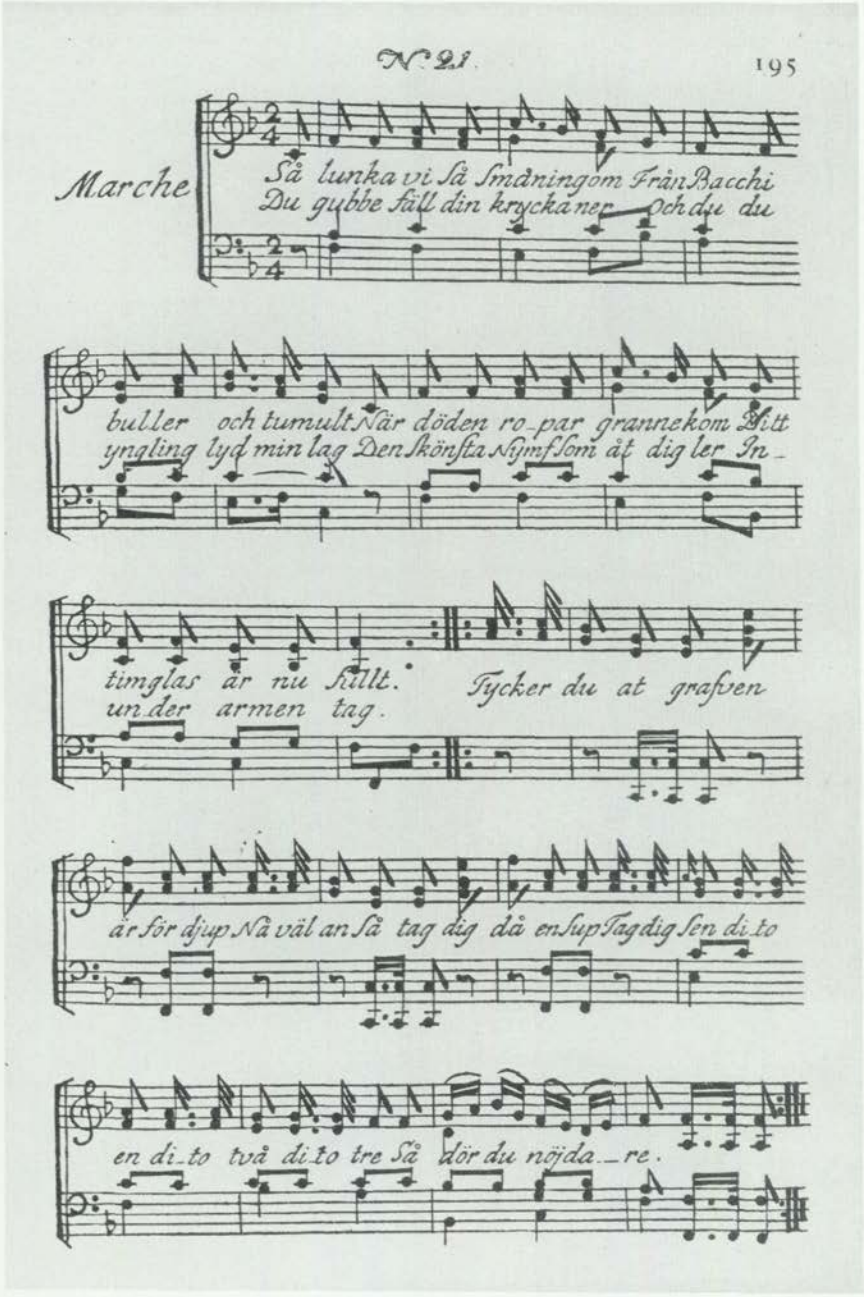
> Nowhere has such a successful attempt ever been made to fuse the great traditions of serious French opera with the best remains of the opera seria. No other German descendent of the Italian school tried to get in touch with Gluck's œuvre with such seriousness and independence, either as a whole or in parts. At the same time it should be noted that here, long before Mayr's school, stylistic elements from Gluck have been applied to a purely historical subject. The energy put into the systematic realization of a unified dramatic action, based on an extremely demanding and dramatic literary theme, as well as the idea of an instrumental Leitmotif, is quite extraordinary. One which would not recur before the appearance of nineteenth-century German romantic opera.



Musical Ex. 2. Gustaf Wasa, *act II, scene 6;* "Gustaf ensam" *("Gustaf alone"). This score was used for the opening in 1786. The copyist is unknown. MAB.*

This may sound pretentious, and can certainly be modified. Yet there is much truth in Engländer's strongly positive characterization of Naumann's opera. I can only hope that one day our attempt to present a worthy performance of our first national opera will prove that

Fig. 3. Gustaf's dream. Act II, scene 7 of Gustaf Wasa. *Gustaf sleeps. Sweden's guardian angel descends on a cloud. Engraving by J. Hall (Desprez' pupil), 1820. KB.*



Musical Ex. 3. C. M. Bellman, Fredman's Song No. 21; "Så lunka vi så småningom" *("Away we trot, soon, ev'ryone"). The example is from the first edition. Kongl. Priviligierade Not Tryckeriet (Olof Åhlström). Stockholm 1791.*

Engländer and some of his successors are right. It would also fulfill what G.J. Ehrensvärd described as the aim of Gustavian opera:

> In a word: one should try to gratify an Italian ear and a French eye; one should create a new opera system, and it should be Swedish.[10]

By way of a preliminary attempt at persuasion, let me give only one more illustration. It is what Engländer calls the "peak point" of this opera. The situation is as follows. Gustaf Wasa and his warriors are just preparing the decisive attack on Stockholm Castle, when a Danish nobleman arrives with King Christian's proposal of peace, which in reality is merely a concealed threat to kill Gustaf's mother if he doesn't accept it. As preparations for the assault go on, Gustaf retires to his tent, where he sings an air describing his own tears and agony in so terrible a situation.

It is here Naumann reveals his mastery. In a lively off-stage military march in C-major we hear the retreat being sounded before the attack; and Gustaf begins in similar vein. But then, abruptly, the clarinets, trumpets and drums cease; and the strings, accompanied by horns and flutes, modulate to B-minor (later also F-sharp minor) for a magnificent and manly lament, interspersed at one point with the merry C-major march, which also has the last word (Musical Ex. 2).

Once again Engländer has the right words to describe this:

> This passage must be the cleverest solution to a problem which also faced Wagner in the third act of Rienzi, where military music is inserted into a closed number at a dramatically decisive moment.

His lament over, Gustaf sinks down onto his bed and falls asleep, only to be haunted by the shades he, in our first anthem-like air, has invoked in another magnificent dream-scene that will soon turn into reality (Fig. 3).

An exquisite instance of *Gustaf Wasa's* enormous, perhaps unexpected success is Carl Michael Bellman's popular immortalization of the heroic military tune in his evergreen parody: *"Så lunka vi så småningom"* (Fredman's Song No.21). Must not such music gratify, not only an Italian ear, but everybody else's, if music be the food of life? (Musical Ex. 3).

NOTES

1. Engländer, R., *Johann Gottlieb Naumann als Opernkomponist*. Leipzig 1922, reprint Farnborough 1970 p. 261.
2. Levertin, O., *Teater och drama under Gustaf III*. Stockholm 4 ed, 1920 p. 112.
3. Engländer (1970), p. 277.

4. ibid p. 402.
5. ibid p. 276.
6. Kellgren, J. H., *Samlade Skrifter.* Stockholm 1941 passim.
7. Cf. e.g. Irmgard Leux-Henschen, "Joseph Martin Kraus. Anonyme musikästhetische Beiträge der Stockholmer Zeit 1779–1781" in *Joseph Martin Kraus in seiner Zeit,* (hrsg. von Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel). München-Salzburg 1982, footnote 2 p. 214.
8. Lönnroth, E., *Den stora rollen,* Stockholm 1986 passim.
9. *Kungliga teatern i Stockholm. Repertoar 1773–1973.* Stockholm 1974.
10. quoted from F. A. Dahlgren. *Förteckning öfver Svenska Skådespel uppförda på Stockholms Theatrar 1737–1863.* Stockholm 1866 p. 54.