

МУЗЫКА

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Giuseppe Sarti and the topos of the tragic in Russian music**B. Brover-Lubovsky*Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance,
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Praising Glinka's *A Life for the Tzar* as an inauguration of Russian music, Vladimir Odoevskii emphasized that its composer succeeded in elevating the figure of a simple peasant to the realm of tragedy. Odoevskii's claim thus embodied the plea for the manifestation of tragedy based on a nationally-driven socially and culturally significant idea, conveyed through a sublime mood. Adopting this domain was indeed a long journey for music in Russia. The present essay traces forerunners and emerging elements of tragedy and its musical implementation back to the last decade of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, with an emphasis on Giuseppe Sarti's (1729–1802) impact on the adoption of the tragic and the sublime in Russian music. A survey of Sarti's stage works for the 1780–90s reveals his preferred pattern of conveying a sublime atmosphere of classicistic tragedy through unmeasured text and declamation — whether notated or not — located in the cathartic points of the drama, in conjunction with unison chorus and illustrative elements in the orchestra. Sarti's contribution to the marriage of European neo-classicism with local trends and the domestication of tragedy in Russian music is demonstrated through a survey of declamation in recitatives and melodrama styles in works by Evstignei Fomin, Stepan Davydov, Stepan Degtiarev, and Osip Kozlovskii.

Keywords: Eighteenth-century music, music and dramatic theater in Russia, Giuseppe Sarti, Evstignei Fomin, Stepan Davydov, Osip Kozlovskii, tragedy, melodrama, recitative.

Praising Glinka's *Zhizn' za Tsaria* as an inauguration of Russian music, Vladimir Odoevskii emphasized that its composer succeeded in elevating the figure of a simple peasant and the tunes of plain folk to the realm of tragedy [1, p. 126]. Odoevskii's claim thus emphasized the plea for basing the manifestation of tragedy on a nationally-driven,

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socially and culturally significant idea, conveyed through a sublime mood. Adopting this domain was indeed a long journey for music in Russia. The present essay traces the fore-runners and emerging elements of tragedy and its musical implementation back to the last decade of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, with an emphasis on Giuseppe Sarti's impact on the adoption of the tragic and the sublime in Russian music.

During his long sojourn in the Russian Empire (1784–1801), Sarti was active as a multifaceted composer, ambitious music director, and illustrious teacher, incorporating current European trends in local ambience. Prior his arrival, and even during his stay in Russia, Sarti's 35 *dramme per musica*, seven *dramme giocose*, nine *azioni teatrali* and *pastorali* (not including Singspielen in Danish, compiled during his service in Copenhagen) had been successfully performed on various European stages. His previous positions at the Milan Duomo and earlier at the Venetian Ospedale enabled him to gain expertise and esteem in composing solemn choral compositions for the Roman, Ambrosian, and Aquileian rites [2–5]. Sarti's last works composed prior his departure from his homeland, *Giulio Sabino* (Venice: S. Benedetto, 1781) and *Idalide* (Milan: La Scala, 1783), and especially the new operas written for Catherine II's court, *Armida e Rinaldo* and *Castore e Polluce* (St. Petersburg: Hermitage, 1786), impressed with their ethical rigor and refined nobility. These and additional works reinforced Sarti's reputation as a champion of the classical movement that powerfully entered European culture in the wake of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's seminal discoveries about ancient arts, Jacques Louis David and Anton Raphael Mengs' paintings, and operas by Christoph Willibald Gluck, Tommaso Traetta, and Antonio Sacchini [6–11; 12, p. 329–36]. These works, along with Sarti's late dramatic compositions, impacted the marriage of European classicism with local trends and the domestication of tragedy in Russian music.

One of these works was *Alessandro e Timoteo*, which premiered on 6 April, 1782, in Parma, Teatro Ducale [I; II; 13–15]. The splendor of this performance — its dazzling vocal virtuosity, orchestral brilliance and outstanding timbral imaginativeness, gorgeous scenery and choreography, and most of all, its moral rigour — highly impressed noble attendees, among them Grandduke Paul Petrovich and his wife Maria Fedorovna, who in fact initiated Sarti's invitation to Russia [14, p. 68; 16, p. 159]. *Alessandro e Timoteo* is written on a pseudo-Hellenistic source: its librettist Carlo Castone della Torre di Rezzonico adopted John Dryden's ode *Alexander's Feast: Or, The Power of Music* (1697) to suit the conditions of a *fiesta teatrale*. In accordance with the traits of this subgenre, Sarti's masterpiece has a one-act structure divided into a dozen scenes. Its subject — the manipulation of a monarch through music — is enacted through a progression of episodes, in which the bard Timoteo arouses various emotions in Alexander the Great. Timoteo sings of Alessandro's mythical descent from Giove, evoking an awareness of his own boldness and audacity. Later he praises the pleasures of wine, encouraging Alessandro to drink, then switches to the sad death of the defeated Persian king Darius, instilling in Alessandro pity for his vanished enemy, and then proceeds with a longing for love. Eventually, Timoteo's song inculcates in Alessandro feelings of anger and vengeance, leading him to burn down the palace in Persepolis.

Musical and literary representation of boldness and the pleasures of wine, love, and revenge lean on a robust operatic tradition that was deployed via vocal numbers — arias, ensembles, choruses — and dances. For mercy, the most complex emotional statement, Sarti assembles an arduous moral combat between Timoteo and the emperor in Scenes

VII–VIII, the centerpiece of the opera. These form a huge through-composed scene that depicts the moral debate between Alessandro and his bard, during which Timoteo leads his patron through several emotional phases. One of the characteristics of the *festa teatrale* is the protagonist's license to remain on the scene after singing an aria, unlike in *dramma per musica*, where the character, after finishing the *aria di sortita*, must leave. Here, *recitativo stromento* becomes the main vehicle of the debate, emphasizing its pivotal conceptual, psychological, and dramatic points, and building a coherent discourse. Apart from long sections in various recitative styles, Timoteo's argument is summarized in lavish vocal pieces, such as his cavatina "Pietoso lagrime" (Sc. VII), aria "Nel seno il cor", and rondeau "Bella Dea", contrasting with Alessandro's multi-tempo aria "Odi, grand'Ombra" and a large Coro di Persiani, "Là di Stige su l'orrido lito" (all in Sc. VIII).

Unmeasured verses evoke the flexible combination of various types of declamation: Sarti assigns a traditional *secco* to Alessandro and his fiancée Barsene, while Timoteo promotes his argument via extensive soliloquies styled as an accompanied recitative, where notated speech alternates with orchestral interjections, or when the declamation and orchestral music overlap. Although in his *dramme per musica* of the 1770–80s Sarti radically increased the function of recitative, this scene truly astonishes with its length (about 1,000 measures of the score) and its elevated emotional content.

The debate opens with a brief dialogue styled as an accompanied recitative, "Che mediti, Alessandro?" (mm. 1–33 of Sc. VII), in which Timoteo's short phrases alternate with Alessandro's repliques. Here, the declamation of both protagonists is barely supported by instruments, alternating with brief orchestral interjections. In "Son vendicate assai Grecia ed Atene" (mm. 13–18) Timoteo's argument is accompanied by arpeggiated pizzicato figures (imitating his lyre) on E-flat minor chords by winds. Further, his speech turns direction, perceptively mirroring the text: falling down on "Ma del tuo pianto", ascending with metric accents on "generoso Guerrier", and abruptly falling by an octave on "traditor Dario ebbe morte" (see ex. 1).

In Timoteo's cavatina "Pietose lagrime", which encloses this dialogue, his voice is personified by solo English horn; violins and violas play an E-flat major tonic arpeggio in threefold *divisi*, as an imitation of a lyre,¹ and a pizzicato of viola solo and cellos *con sordini*, and this accompaniment pattern reiterates within recitatives. In Scene VIII, after the chorus, Timoteo proceeds with a long somber accompanied recitative (18 lines of *versi sciolti*, 93 measures). The bard convinces Alessandro that Dario no longer reigns and thus is worthy of his tears. On "Dalle molte piaghe Spiccia a rivoli il sangue" the accompaniment pattern of the cavatina returns, depicting the bard's declamation with the arpeggiated chords of his lyre. (Sarti returns to this device his *dramma per musica Andromeda* (St. Petersburg: Hermitage, 10 November 1798) [XIV–XVI].

Then follows his excited aria *di bravura*, "Nel seno il cor mi palpita", after which Timoteo keeps his powerful rhetoric in another accompanied recitative (on 21 lines). During his musing on the briefness and uncertainty of life, "Ma se tanto è la vita incerta e breve", the violins restate brief phrases from the aria, creating an illusion of a cohesive debate. Rhetoric, tempo, tonality, and orchestral accompaniment change abruptly, ranging from grief and sorrow to exclamations of rage. Eventually, Alessandro acknowledges the bard's victory in this battle of eloquence in the *secco* recitative "Timoteo, hai vinto".

¹ The remark "L'orchestra imita il suono d'una cetera pizzicata" in the libretto [I, p. 14] elucidates this intention. I am grateful to Andrea Chegai for pointing out this fact.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Giuseppe Sarti's opera 'Alessandro e Timoteo', specifically Scene VII. The score is for the vocal part of Timoteo, with instrumental accompaniment for Oboe, Violini, Viola, and Timpano. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The scene is labeled 'Scena VII' and 'Timoteo, e Altri'. The lyrics are: 'die molti Alex - andros ova. rivolgi - si minacc - i: oio e fiero i p'ggi e l'acme? adamae (Arbo. in)'. The score includes various musical markings such as 'Recitativo', 'Allegretto', 'pizzicato', and 'All°'.

Example 1: Giuseppe Sarti, *Alessandro e Timoteo*, Scene VII.

Reaching his goal, Timoteo now succeeds in turning Alexander to yearning for desire and pleasure: here the recurring motives of oboe alternate with virtually unaccompanied speech, “Quanto è dolce, Alessandro.” Timoteo’s graceful rondeau “Bella dea” closes this grandiose display of emotional manipulation.

The dramatic intensity and textual-musical complexity of the recitative scenes were one of Sarti’s main achievements as a dramatic composer. These scenes usually increase the dramatic tension and lead to climactic point, such as the tumultuous meeting of Giulio Sabino with Epponina and Tito, “Venite o figli,” that precedes his famous aria “Cari figli” in Act 2 Sc. IX of the eponymous opera [III; IV], and the dialogues of Enrico and Idalide, “Sei paga alfin” / Che angustia è questa!” (Act 1 Sc. IX), and Palmoro, Idalide, and Ataliba, “Ah purtroppo il conosco” (Act 2 Sc. XIII) in *Idalide* [V; VI]. It becomes clear that Sarti unequivocally tends to entrust such moments of catharsis to declamation, whereas vocal pieces — arias and ensembles that enclose such scenes, usually resolve the tension, amaz-

ing in their virtuosic display and emotional exaltation. In so doing, Sarti once more exhibits his faithfulness to the classicistic reform movement in opera, resonating with similar famous scenes in operas by Gluck and Traetta, Jomelli, Bianchi, and Sacchini.

In his works for the Russian stage, Sarti proceeded to impress the audience with the dramatic power and sublime elevation of the recitative scenes. The main protagonists' dialogue, "Addio / Gia mi abbandoni?" from *Armida e Rinaldo* [VII], astonishes with music expressive of moral dilemmas, the bitterness of Rinaldo's choice between love and civic obligation. A similar intensity of moral elevation is further reached in Rinaldo and Ubaldo's debate "E abborisce l'aiuto!" (Act 1 Sc. IV and VI).

Sarti's reputation as a master of elevated dramatic declamation was reinforced in the famous Greek Scene from *Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega* — the historical play on a text by no less than Catherine the Great, sensationally premiered on 22 September, 1790. [VIII] Sarti's music for the final act accompanied a meta-theater with the performance of a big scene from Euripides' *Alcestis* (verses 568–604 in the Russian paraphrase), in which he endeavors to imitate ancient Greek music. [VIII; 17–19].

The Greek Scene comprises two expanded sections: a dialogue styled as melodrama and the Ode to Apollo, set as a series of unison male choruses. The through-composed expanded scene in melodrama on a prose text is subdivided into three phases: the first portrays Heracles' arrival at Pherae, with the alternation of his spoken repliques and an accompanied unison chorus ("O! Druzi!" / "Zastanesh', Iraklii", mm. 1–80); an unnotated dialogue between Heracles and Admetus with the latter's generous invitation to stay in his house ("Raduis'ia Zevsov syn!", mm. 81–130), accompanied by brief orchestral interjections; and the chorus' bewilderment regarding the Admetus' restraining mourning for Alcestis for the sake of noble hospitality ("Chto sie ty'delaesh', Admet'?", mm. 131–165). The orchestral accompaniment mirrors the emotional agitation and gravity of the text by using syncopated figures, dotted rhythms, and additional *concitato* devices. In his explanatory note *Eclaircissement sur la musique composée pour Oleg*, [IX, p. 361–4; X] where Sarti discussed in detail the musical arrangement of this scene, he admitted that the speech should be notated, but since he was composing it far from St. Petersburg, without being aware of the vocal capacities of the actors, he refrained from notating their speech and designed the dialogue as melodrama:² "The Greek recitation had to have been notated, for it was accompanied by the lyre during the recitation of the players, and by the tibia during the singing of the Chorus. *But I did not venture to notate the declamation of Hercules and Admetus*, not knowing, firstly, the range of the voices of those who are to represent them. Secondly, what obstacle could such a novelty create for the interpreters, and how would they be able to carry out such a thing without the presence of the composer? [my emphasis. — B. B.-L.]" [IX, p. 361].

A closer observation of this scene indeed reveals Sarti's reluctance to incorporate spoken dialogue: while the outer sections present a coherent musical flow with lofty conversation of an individual with the choir (Heracles in the opening and Admetus in the closing subsections); the sophisticated debate between Heracles and Admetus on the identity of the deceased person sounds like a mechanical alternation of brief spoken phrases with monotonous one-bar orchestral repliques built of arpeggiated triads with their secondary dominants in the *recitativo semplice* style, but lacking its dramatic power. Some tension

² The dramatic actors who performed Heracles and Admetus were Peter Plavilshchikov and Emelian Shusherin.

is accumulated at the point when Heracles approaches the solution of the Admetus puzzle — the subject of his mourning (“Uzhe umre”, m. 100) — when harmonic progression is replaced with one chord (see ex. 2a–b).

As with Timoteo’s monologue and cavatina discussed above, Sarti’s classicistic ambition embraces instrumentation: the declamation alternates with interjections of harp and violin pizzicato in imitation of the lyre, and flute of the tibia. The composer explains the peculiarity of his instrumentation as follows: “I nevertheless accompanied this declamation by short interludes of the harp, intertwined with pizzicato on the violins, in order to represent, as closely as possible, the lyre of the ancients. <...> In this way the actors will not have to worry about the music, assuming that they only declaim it in a loud voice, with the utmost nobility, as the Greeks did in order to impose their presence and be heard from far. It is to be hoped that the two actors will have beautiful voices in a low range, especially that of Hercules” [IX, p. 361–2].

Russian intellectuals prized the music of the Greek Scene for its moral loftiness and ideological significance. The statesman and littérateur Gavriila Derzhavin emphasized the pertinence of an ode, in conjunction with authentic or stylized instrumentation, as a representation of sublime and noble in tragedy: “In ancient times it was accompanied with a plain tune; it was sung with a lyre, psalter, gysli, harp, cetra, and in the newest times as well as with other instruments, strings more than anything else <...>. Nowhere can one sing powerful odes better or more elegantly <...> to the immortal memory of the fatherland’s heroes and to the glory of good sovereigns, as in an opera in the theatre. Catherine the Great knew this perfectly. We saw and heard the effect of the heroic musical presentation composed by her in wartime under the name *Oleg*” [20, p. 516–7, 602].

Sarti’s use of melodrama versus unison chorus, apart from being circumstantial, and conditioned by his lack of confidence in setting Russian texts to music,³ could mirror his susceptibility to a novel and fashionable device that turned into a trend in Europe. During the 1760–70s, melodrama had already become a common component in works on tragic themes, though not necessarily linked to his urge for imitation of the *stile recitativo*. It had been used both as a technique in entire works, in different versions of *Pygmalion* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Anton Schweitzer, and Georg Anton Benda, or the latter’s *Medea* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, as well as an exceptional device in separate scenes in works by Christian Gottlob Neefe, Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Georg Joseph Vogler, Peter Winter, Christian Cannabich, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and others [21, p. 401–6; 22; 23, p. 378–87; 24, p. 29–57]. Scenes in *mélodrame* became the mainstream in revolutionary France, in the *opéra comique* and its descendent the *comédie héroïque*, featuring in *Les Mariages samnites* (1768, revived 1776) and *Pierre le grand* (1790) by André Gretry; Jean-François Lesueur’s *Paul et Virginie* (1794), Étienne Nicolas Méhul’s *Mélide et Ephrosine* (1794), and especially in *opéra comique* by Luigi Cherubini⁴ [23, p. 371–83]. As an independent genre, *mélodrame* flourished in biblical dramas in the small theatres of the boulevards, such as *Es-*

³ Although at this time Sarti had already gained significant experience in working with Russian texts, both original (as in the Russian oratorio “Da voskresnet Bog”, 1785) and as contrafactum of his Latin-text compositions (“Tebe Boga hvalim”, “Pomilyi mia, Bozhe” etc.).

⁴ Cherubini used scenes in *mélodrame* in *Lodoisca* (1791): Act 1 Sc. V and final Combat; *Elisa* (1794): Act 2 Sc. V; *Médée* (1797): Act 2 Sc. VI; *Les deux Journées* (1800): Act 2 Sc. VIII, XII–XIII; *Faniska* (1806) Act 1 Sc. V, Act 2 Sc. IX, and Act 3 Sc. XV. In addition, in 1806, Cherubini reported in his catalogue: a notation of “a chorus and melodrama composed at Paris for an opera which I did not complete” [27, p. 15]. All the translations, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.

ЕВРИПИДОВОЙ АЛКИСТЫ.

ДЪИСТ: Ш. ЯВЛ: 1, 2 и 3.

СХИЗ.

ПОЛОЖЕННЫМ НА МУЗЫКУ Г. САРТИЕМЪ, СООБРАЗНО ГРЕЧЕСКОМУ ДРЕВНЕМЪ ВКУСУ.
MODO MISSOLIMO.

ИРАКЛІЙ.
О! друзья! Ферейскую страну свою населити не можете ли гостие Алкесты в палатах?

Соло. Засланишь
Засланишь
Засланишь
Засланишь Ирраклій, Феретовъ съявъ обрѣтается дома; но въ-

Example 2a: Giuseppe Sarti, Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega, Act 5 Scene 4, Melodrama, mm. 1-7.

ИРАКЛИЙ
 Да тебѣ не дол
 жно спланивать
 супруги своей
 прежде време
 ни.

АДМЕТЪ
 Уже
 умре.

отложи ры
 даніе свое
 до смертн
 го часу
 оныя.

АДМЕТЪ
 Ты тако
 разсуди
 сив Ира
 клий, а я
 никакъ.

на будущаго умре
 рете, ниже умер
 шаго на свѣтѣ
 больше нѣтъ.

ИРАКЛИЙ
 Быть
 и
 не быть

АДМЕТЪ
 не едикъ
 пости
 тается.

ИРАКЛИЙ
 По комъ же ты
 рыдаешь? кто
 смертню похи
 щивъ изъ тво
 ихъ друзей?

АДМЕТЪ
 Жена. О жен
 цинѣхъ мѣ и
 предъ тѣмъ
 упоминали.

Example 2b: Giuseppe Sarti, *Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega*, Act 5 Scene 4, Melodrama, mm. 97–106.

ther (Plancher Valcour, music by Leblanc, 1802); *Le jugement de Salomon* (Louis-Charles Caignez / Quaisin, 1802); *Le jugement de Daniel ou L'innocence de Suzanne* (Vallée / Taix, 1805); *Le triomphe de David* (Caignez / Leblanc, 1805); *Samson ou La destruction des Philistins* (Romagnesi / Ribié, 1806); *Pharaon ou Joseph en Egypte* (text and music by Pierre Charles Joseph Lefranc, 1806), etc. [25; 26, p. 59–63]. In the biblical melodramas, this interest to connect the declamation with the choruses was also in large part inspired by the revival of late seventeenth-century classicistic dramas. Thus, Jean Racine, in the Preface to *Esther* (revived in Paris in 1805), wrote: “I realized that by working on the plan that had been given to me, I was executing in a way a design that had often passed into my mind, which was to bind, as in the ancient Greek tragedies, the choir and the song with the action, and to use for singing the praises of the true God that part of the chorus that the pagans used to sing the praises of their false deities [my emphasis. — B. B.-L.]” [XI].

Of Italian opera, melodrama (*melologo*) remained generally atypical, due to the traditional preference for vocal culture as the main vehicle for dramatic and emotional expression, and due to its strong conventions of a genre. At the same time, Italians working abroad in foreign cultures displayed their susceptibility to this new vogue. It is worth mentioning a *melologo Werther* by the Piedmontese composer and violinist Gaetano Pugnani (1731–98), performed in German in Vienna (1796) [XII]. This monumental score adopts Goethe's epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774); it is constructed as an alternation of closed orchestral numbers with a narrator's enunciation of letters. Only in some episodes, when the letter describes balls and dancing, or Charlotte playing the piano, do music and text overlap.

Another bold example that could serve is Scene VI of Act 2 in Cherubini's *Médée* (1797), on a libretto by François-Benoît Hoffmann [28; 29, p. 129–31; XIII, p. 256–69]. Similar to Sarti's Greek scene, although on a much subtler level, it presents the sequence of a male unison nuptial chorus “Fils de Bacchus,” followed by Médée's repliques in melodrama (replaced with recitative in the later version). It is introduced at the climactic point of the tragedy, while the solemn strains of the wedding procession underline Médée's painful observation of her beloved husband's marriage to Dircé [29, p. 131]. Such a combination of obbligato recitatives and melodrama in conjunction with unison male choir, characteristic orchestration, and pantomime, although being developed concurrently by French composers, could be considered Sarti's individual penchant, to which our composer did not hesitate to return in the wake of Oleg's triumphal performances.

Scene VII from Act 2 of Sarti's penultimate Italian opera — *Andromeda*, on a libretto by Ferdinando Moretti [XIV–XVI] — depicts the most thrilling moment of the drama. It displays the strenuous combat of Perseo with the sea monster, with the enchained Andromeda on a rock watching with bated breath, and a chorus of the people of Jaffa observing and commenting on the battle from the seashore. This *tableaux vivant* is a culmination of pantomime (with choreography by Charles Le Picq, decorations by Pietro Gonzaga), melodeclamation, and chorus: Andromeda's aspirations are declaimed to free verses, with brief phrases in declamation and recitative alternate with her measured singing with the chorus, followed in the next scene by the triumphal chorus of priests (see ex. 3).

Summarizing these examples, it becomes clear that Sarti's notion of the tragic was conceived as a firm link with classicist ethical and moral rigor. In his dramatic *oeuvre* Sarti preferred to convey the sublime atmosphere of tragedy through unmeasured text and declamation, whether notated or not, and not via cantilena and close operauc

Andromeda Perseo! Misera me! Perseo! Ei s'avanza
Sul lido estremo! Aimè! Chi lo soccorre?
Mentre cerca salvarmi a morte ei corre.

CORO.
Da' suoi dardi già ferita,
Verso lui la belva viene.

Andromeda Ah che vedo! chi l'aita?

CORO.
La sua lancia si spezzò.

Andromeda Onde mai sperare aiuto?

CORO.
Ma del mostro il ferro acuto
Nelle fauci penetrò.

Andromeda Finisca il viver mio. Vista si atroce
L'anima oppressa a sostener non vale

CORO.
Con la spade ei già l' assale.
Gl'ie la immerse nella gola!

Andromeda Ah qual colpo!

CORO.
Il mostro freme,
Ha negli occhi il foco, e l' ira...
Si dibatte... cede... spira...
Ed i lumi già oscurò.

Andromeda Che miro! Oh Dei pietosi!
E non sogno? Ed è ver? Già d' ogn' intorno
Di quell' infame sangue il mare è tinto.

Example 3: Ferdinando Moretti, Andromeda. Dramma in due atti con balli analoghi. St. Petersburg: Imperial Publishing, 1798, p. 50.

forms.⁵ The location of these portions of declamation at the climactic points of the drama was carefully calculated. He succeeded in attaining great dramatic tension due to the dialogue structure and an alternation with choruses (in unison or in plain chordal texture), and illustrative elements in the orchestra. Often, Sarti's classicistic ambition in such scenes embraces instrumentation: arpeggio of harp or pizzicato of strings as an imitation of a lyre. Closed musical pieces — choruses, dances, or arias — that follow such a scene, sustain or resolve the tension.

How did Sarti transmit his vision of the tragic to his disciples and admirers in Russia?

From its very beginning Russian national opera fixed its identity as a comedy based on everyday domestic plots, sentimental pastorals, or fairy subjects. Comic opera thus established a robust tradition on Russian soil, featuring dozens of original works and even more numerous arrangements and translations. It was represented by an impressive

⁵ On musical units and their dramatic functions in late eighteenth-century opera seria see [30; 31, p. 448–50].

variety of literary subspecies, including the “drama with voices” *Rozana i Lubim* (Kerzelli / Nikolaev, 1788); the grotesque buffa *Neschastie ot karety* (Pashkevich / Kniazhnin, 1779); the folk vaudeville *Mel'nik — koldun, obmanshchik i svat* (Sokolovsky / Ablesimov, 1779); the satiric comedy *Skupoi* (Pashkevich / Kniazhnin, 1782); the “comedy with arias and dances” (*comédie mêlée d'ariettes*) *Sokol (Le faucon, Bortniansky / Lafermière, 1786)* and *Amerikantsy* (Fomin / Krylov, 1800); “igrishche nevnachai” (“an unintentional play”) *Jamshchiki na podstave* (Fomin / L'vov, 1787), the political pamphlet *Gore-bogatyr' Kosometovich* on Catherine II's play with the music by Martín y Soler (1789), and many others. [32; 33; 34, vol. 2, p. 163–88; 35, p. 99–187; 36; 37, vol. 2, p. 67–130]. All these comic operas lacked recitatives and retained spoken dialogue.

At the same time, tragedy in music did not settle down on Russian soil, despite bold precedents by Francesco Domenico Araja, who served the Russian crown during 1735–62. Apart from a dozen Italian serious operas composed by Araja in Russia, his *Tsefal i Prokris* on Alexander Sumarokov's text (based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1755) became the first opera in Russian — a somber tragedy of faithful love disrupted by the intervention of the gods, and lacking the traditional happy ending (*il lieto fine*) of Italian *opera seria*. Sumarokov's text, written in metric verses throughout, was set by Araja in the traditional operatic distinction between vocal numbers and recitatives.⁶ Three years later, the newly appointed music director of the Russian court Hermann Friedrich Raupakh presented the second tragic opera in Russian, *Alkista* (on Sumarokov's arrangement of Euripides) — which preceded Gluck's masterpiece by almost a decade and became a significant cultural event.

The foremost late-Settecento Italian musicians, during their tenures at the Russian court, presented new serious operas that became the *chefs d'oeuvre* of the genre: it suffices to mention *Ifigenia in Tauride* by Baldassare Galuppi (1768) with its civil pathos, or the emotionally and dramatically powerful *Antigona* by Tommaso Traetta (1772), both on librettos by Marco Coltellini. Vincenzo Manfredini, whose Russian career (tenure 1758–68 and 1798–99) was only moderately successful, staged three serious operas in Russia, *Semiramide*, *L'Olimpiade*, and *Carlo Magno* (during 1760–63). Domenico Cimarosa (1787–91), a genuine composer of sparkling *opere buffe*, was forced to entertain the Russian court with serious operas on Ferdinando Moretti's texts: *La vergine del sole* (1788) and *La Cleopatra* (1789), in which he did not succeed [33]. During this same time, native Russian composers produced significant *opere serie* for Italian theaters: Maksim Beresovskii's successful setting of the Metastasio's *Demofonte* (1773, Livorno); Dmitrii Bortnianskii's *Creonte* followed by *Alcide* for the Venetian Teatro S. Benedetto (1776 and 1778), and *Quinto Fabio* for Modena (1779); *Rinaldo* by Peter Skokov (libretto by Sernicola) was staged in 1788 in the Neapolitan Teatro San Carlo [38, p. 119–31; 39 p. 55–86; 40].

Derzhavin, the spokesman of Russian Enlightenment and neo-classical movement, considered opera the best and solely musical equivalent of the Greek tragedy. It is worth quoting a sizeable excerpt from his treatise “On lyrical poetry” that unequivocally shows this notion:

Opera <...> in many respects is nothing else than an imitation of ancient Greek tragedy. <...> regarding to its moral aim, what prevents raising it to that same level of dignity and respect that characterized the Greek Tragedy? <...> It is known that in Athens the theater was a political

⁶ Araja, as later Sarti, did not read Russian; the text is written in Latin transliteration. Findeizen [37, p. 154–63] emphasized the national importance of this premiere since singers, actors, and musicians were native Russians.

institution. With it Greece maintained for a long time the righteous feelings of its people, proving its advantage over the barbaric ones. It has been written and sufficiently said that honour is a passion of noble souls; that nothing else can give birth to heroes and govern their hearts than it. <...> Nothing amazes the people's mind <...> as these fascinating spectacles. This is the essence of the aréopage's politics and a true destination of the Opera <...>.

Following the ancient custom, for the sake of its marvel, Opera — naturally, the tragic one — draws its content from pagan mythology and ancient and medieval history. Gods, heroes, knights, fairies, sorcerers and magicians are its protagonists <...>. An author of both operas and tragedies could arrange the same content, displaying famous deeds, complicated with contrasting passions, that end with amazing denouements of solemn or plaintive adventures. The Opera writer differs from the tragic [author] solely in that he valiently deviates from the natural track or even abandons it altogether, amazing the spectators with frequent changes, diversity, splendour and marvels, irrespectable of whether it is natural or unnatural, apparent or miraculous. In the tragic genre, the preferable [mood] is the touch of sublime, that reveals itself with the help of strong passions, and not just with words; that avoids sophistication of fable and action, chooses plainness, does not haste too much, knowing that this goes counter to the nature of singing, and more than all this avoids long and tiresome resolution, considering that this is a rational feature that is appropriate for Tragedy but not for Opera, where more feeling should be shown, in the course of which the speeches and deeds are expressed with brief and clear language. Songs or odes for choruses, when appropriate <...>, should be plain, strong, not pompous, and filled with vivid feeling. <...> A singer and composer will be able to borrow from him neither expression nor pleasure. The Opera writer should necessarily know their talents and adjust himself to them, or vice versa, in order to attain a harmony of all its components [20, p. 598–604].

Despite this detailed declaration of an urge for national appropriation of the serious opera, isolated sporadic attempts to create a grand mythological opera on a Russian text produced specimens, but failed to sustain a tradition.

It appears that Russian was first and foremost conceived as a literary language, not as a means to express a text musically. Tragedy thus for a long time remained solely a domain of a spoken drama. Apparently, an adjustment of the distinction between the blank and metric verses, essential for European operatic librettos, to the new principles of tonic-syllabic versification of the Russian literary language, proved difficult to achieve. Musically appropriate Russian speech-declamation in serious dramatic genres thus became a substantial challenge to be confronted and solved only in the wake of the Napoleonic epoch and the powerful national movement it evoked. Nevertheless, the territory of tragedy and serious drama did not remain entirely foreign to Russian theater, and found an outlet in the amalgamation of a ramified musical component that included overtures and orchestral entr'actes, choruses, folk songs, and ballet.⁷ Russian theater had accepted the European experience with mixed conceptions of word-sound-motion relations, albeit the musical and spoken levels remained unsynchronized. Maria Shcherbakova noticed the generic fluidity of integrating music with drama, defining the situation as a specific generic synthesis in each work [41, p. 13].

In what way did Sarti contribute to the musical appropriation of tragedy in Russia? Among his colleagues and compatriots, Sarti remained in Russia for the most extended period, serving two emperors (1784–86 and 1792–1801) and spending four years in voluntary exile in MaloRossia. Of his fellow compatriots, only the tenures of Araja and

⁷ Similar assertion has been made by Alexander Glumov in 1950 [21, p. 26].

Catterino Cavos (1798–1840) proved longer, and their convergence with Russian national culture became equally strong.

Unlike other foreigners, Sarti was recognized as mainly a serious composer; he was “entrusted” to marry European classicism, with its emphasis on the representation of the sublime, lofty, and serious, with local music. Sarti’s impact on Russian culture has been recognized mostly as a creator of a corpus of oratorios, cantatas, and hymns on Russian and Old Slavic texts, and panegyric music for choirs and orchestra, with unusual timbral effects, artillery (cannon shots), bells chime, and fireworks. In this field, he indeed greatly influenced Russian church and civil compositions. [34, vol. 2, p. 273–81; 37, p. 100–4; 42, vol. 2, p. 274–88; 43, p. 217–29]. At the same time, his removal from court and theater life significantly limited his activity as dramatic composer. Nevertheless, I shall attempt to further demonstrate the Sarti’s crucial impact on the development of the tragic subject in Russian dramatic music.

Mikhail Ivanov-Boretskii emphasized Sarti’s pivotal contribution to Russian music as a highly esteemed pedagogue: “He not only composed music (including works for the Russian church) and performed his operas, which other Italians had been doing, but he raised the craft of performing in opera theater to a very high level and educated a number of talented students.” [44, p. 199]. Sarti trained most of the leading native Russian and Ukrainian composers of the period, and they clearly followed the patterns inculcated in them by the celebrated mentor. Some of these composers, such as Daniil Kashin (1769–1841), Artemii Vedel’ (1767–1808), and Peter Turchaninov (1779–1856), were trained by Sarti on an institutional basis, during his service as a Director of the Music Academy in Kremenchug (presently Ukraine) in 1787–91 [45]. The affiliation of Stepan Davydov (1777–1825) with Sarti became most intimate: he lived in his teacher’s house as a pensioner for six years, in 1795–1801, during which he was systematically trained and preached to by the aged master).⁸ Some others, without being Sarti’s formal students, were close to him and took part in his musical activities: this was the case with Osip Kozlovskii (1757–1831), who served as an officer in Potemkin’s army in Bessarabia during the Second Russo-Turkish War, but actually replaced Sarti as Potemkin’s music director in 1790–91. [47, p. 432–3] Stepan Degtiarev (1766–1813)’s connection with Sarti is most obscure: in 1791, when Sarti was seeking employment with Count Nikolai Sheremetev in Moscow, Degtiarev was, albeit young, already a proved professional: remaining Sheremetev’s serf musician, he was in charge of all the intense and multifarious musical activities, including conducting and directing performances of his serf theaters in Kuskovo and later Ostankino, private and public concerts where the Sheremetev orchestra and his Russian Horn band took part, hosting all foreign guest musicians and actors, and composing.⁹ Nevertheless, the influence — whether intentional or intuitive — of Sarti’s style on Degtiarev’s compositions remains undisputable. Evstignei Fomin (1761–1800), without taking lessons from Sarti, became strongly affected by his art due to strong public resonance Sarti provided for his musical activity.

Although it proves hard to reconstruct Sarti’s teaching method in its entirety, some valuable information can be drawn from his work with another famous student, Luigi

⁸ Davydov’s study under Sarti was mentioned as a special proof of the former’s stature long after Sarti’s departure from Russia and his death [46, p. 15; 4, vol. 1, p. 288–90].

⁹ Assumptions by earlier scholars that during this period Degtiarev accompanied Sarti in his ostensible trip to Italy proved to be merely hypothetical [48, p. 338; 49, p. 128–9; 50, p. 155].

Cherubini, during 1778–82 in Florence, Bologna, and Milan [27, p. 1–2; 29, p. 22–4]. A brief excerpt found among Cherubini's manuscripts in Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, seems to represent a summary of certain principles of setting verses in dramatic recitative. It appears to be a draft of Sarti's unfinished pedagogical treatise *Melopoea*.¹⁰ This concise note is witness to the utmost significance Sarti assigned to the verisimilitude and dramatic potency of musically expressed speech: "The cantilena of the recitative must not be either too grave or too high; but it must imitate the inflection of speech, except in the cases where the sentiment of the discourse requires a more meaningful expression in the melody" [cit. after: 23, p. 331; 51, p. 30–1]. His statement that "music must imitate the inflection of speech" anticipates the aesthetic credo of mid-nineteenth-century Russian national composers, resonating with the famous claim by Alexander Dargomyzhskii, "I want the musical sound to express the text directly, I want truth!" [53, p. 57–8] (the letter to L. I. Belenitsina, December 9, 1857), and is a prediction of Dargomyzhskii and Musorgskii's pioneering efforts in the realistic formation of melodic recitative with a balance between the lyric and the naturalistic.

Sarti's experience with declamation and various styles of musically expressed speech found its continuation in various musical-dramatic subgenres, such as melodrama, ballet-pantomime, oratorio, and incidental music. Melodrama, although occupying quite brief local span of a couple of decades, became an important lieu for the integration of music with drama, perceptively mirroring the general process in the developments of both arts. On the one hand, its proximity to conventions and devices of opera positioned it as a musical-dramatic incarnation of the lofty ideals of classicistic tragedy. On the other, melodrama benefited from the flexibility of the combination of musical and dramatic elements. Fruitful for that stage of Russian national theater, scenographic principles of melodrama strengthened the pictorial qualities of music, turning them into the main conduits of dramatic content. Furthermore, the text of melodrama was free from the distinction between the blank verse (*versi sciolti*) and metric verse (*versi lirici*) that was strictly regulated in operatic libretti. All the text in spoken tragedies was written in metric verses, allowing the flexible combination of various styles of enunciation: from speech and declamation on a fixed pitch level to emotional prosody and even arioso-like segments.

The first melodrama composed in Russia in the native language was *Orfei* on Iakov Kniazhnin's text, by the Bolognese composer Federico Torelli (1781, music lost). Evstignei Fomin, ten years later (1791–92), presented a new setting [XVII; XVIII; 41, p. 43–6; 52]. In the wake of Sarti's *Oleg*, the Kniazhnin-Fomin *Orfei* became the aesthetic experiment for reviving ancient tragedy, amplified by the faithfulness to the myth, in which Euridice dies in the end and Orfeo is torn apart by furies. It has been generally agreed that since Fomin tragic pathos was recognized in Russian music.

Kniazhnin's poetic design of the text approximates an operatic libretto; it is based on the technique of speaking to different addressees, thus enabling sufficient scope for interrupting the dramatic action with static points of emotional reflection. Unlike many well-known Italian eponymous operas, the Kniazhnin's text conveys the climactic moment of the tragedy, showing the serpent biting Euridice, with Orfeo observing from the side. An additional peculiarity of the poetic source was that the dramatist gave precise hints at musical numbers to interrupt the spoken text, evoking an alternation and flexible

¹⁰ Sarti mentions this in his brief letter to Cherubini of 6 October, 1801. Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz (*D-Bsb*).

combination of melodramatic components and proper to opera elements: Fomin adapted the German model of melodrama, already successfully implemented by Sarti in *Oleg*, with a through-composed design: the text either precedes or follows the music, or is synchronized with it. The orchestral score boasts the typical vocabulary of melodrama, musically depicting the underworld with its paraphernalia, serpent's sting, Euridice's agonizing, and Orfeo's mourning and desperation via conventional rhetorical figures and topoi. Concurrently, musical numbers, such as Orfeo's "wordless arias," evoked by Kniazhnin's remark in the text "Orfei sings and accompanies himself on the lyre," with his voice personified by clarinet solo, supported with the pizzicato of strings (nos. 28 and 38 in the score); three bass choruses by invisible divine messengers ("Imej nadezhdu nesomnenno," "Pluton ustavy smerti razrushaet," and "Eshche tvoi chas," nos. 20, 36, and 44), the overture, and the dance of furies (no. 55), are closed orchestral pieces. Fomin's operatic approach is further reinforced by the fact that Orfeo's repliques "K prekrasnoi solnechnoi strane" and "Prinudia zhit', zastaviti stradat'" (nos. 41 and 47) are both designated and designed as accompanied recitatives, although the declamation remained unrhythmicized. A chanting monophonic scansion of the unnamed basses, which emphasizes a strictly rhythmic text, is accompanied with the grave and somber sound of the Russian horn band — this bold detail of orchestration points unequivocally to the underworld scene from Sarti's *Castore e Polluce* (Act 4 Scenes I–II), with its unprecedented use of the Russian horns in an operatic score¹¹ [XIX; XX; 37, p. 55–67; 54, p. 33–41; 55, p. 130–42; 56]. An alternation of the hero's speech with harp arpeggio and monophonic chorus strengthens even more the resemblance with Sarti's works. The role of Orfeo was performed by the outstanding dramatic actors Ivan Dmitrevskii (in St. Petersburg) and Peter Plavilshchikov (in 1795 in Moscow), who earlier had impressed the audience with their rendition of main roles in *Oleg*, thus adopting the elevated style of the enunciation of the spoken text (see ex. 4).

Despite the truly stunning success of Fomin's neo-classical experiment, after the two additional fully-fledged melodramas on Alexander Kniazhnin's texts, *Andromeda i Persei* and *Tsirceia i Uliss* (1802) with music by Alexei Titov¹² and choreography by Charles Le Picq, the yet to be established tradition of Russian melodrama as an independent work came to a halt. It seems that this fact as well eloquently supports Sarti's notion to employ melodrama as a separate scene or even a brief episode embedded in an opera or literary play. Such a scene was for the first time incorporated in the Russian opera *Lesta, Dneprovskaiia rusalka* by Stepan Davydov, whose successful career was enhanced by Sarti's close patronage.¹³ *Lesta* (St. Petersburg: Kamenny, 1805) was defined as "comique opera in 3 acts, with choruses, ballets, magic, and transformations"; it is the third in a sequence of arrangements of the Austrian Singspiel *Das Donauweibchen* (Ferdinand Kauer / Karl Friedrich Hensler), translated by Nikolai Krasno-

¹¹ In early September, Fomin had already returned from his stay in Bologna, and attended the Hermitage performance of *Castore e Polluce* on September 23, 1786.

¹² Apart from these melodramas, Titov's music for the dramas *Sud Tsaria Solomona* (1803), *Amursudia* (1805), *Polixena* (1809), *Emmerik Tekeli* (1812), *Prazdnik Mogola* (1823); and his comic operas gained considerable popularity [57, vol. 4, p. 139–44].

¹³ Stepan Davydov began to study with Sarti around May 1795, when he graduated from the court chapel. By 1800 he held the position of music director of the Theatrical School. Apart from incidental music, he collaborated with Ivan Val'berkh on ballets, and he composed many sacred concertos, the full four-part liturgy of Iohann Zlatoust [John Chrysostom]; monumental choruses for Derzhavin's tragedy *Irod i Marianna* (1806); Gruzintsev's *Electra i Oreste* (1809), etc. [46; 57, vol. 4, p. 145–67].

34 **Tranquillo**

Но ты, Плутон, вкушая нежну страсть
И счастливо любя, не чувствуешь напасть,
Котора сердце мне, как люты вран, терзает,

В страданиях мой дух
пomalу исчезает.

Разлуки горести
не ведает Плутон,

Что смерти злей она,
того не знает он.

А если б знал, о мне бы сожалел,
хоть смертию б меня
с супругой съединя,
Утешил бы разлученна Орфея.

Example 4: Evstignei Fomin, *Orfei*.

pol'skii¹⁴ [XXI; XXII]. A compound scene in Act 2, where Lesta tells the water maidens the story of her tragic fate, has a through-composed structure, commencing with an orches-

¹⁴ 1: *Das Donauweibchen* (1803) Kauer / Hensler, with additional music numbers by Davydov; 2: *Die Nympe der Donau* (1804), with additional music numbers by Catterino Cavos; 3: *Lesta, Dneprovskaia rusalka* (1805), and *Rusalka* (1807), with music solely by Davydov.

Л е с т а. Любезные сестры! Меня очень беспокоит что Видостан недоволен своею участью.

Скука и раскаяние терзают сердце его, и он старается избегать супруги своей.

Я вопрошала судьбу,

и Оракул отвечивал,

что только жестокое испытание может восстановить согласие этой расстроенной четы.

Example 5: Stepan Davydov, *Lesta, Dneprovskaia rusalka*, Act 2, Scene 1.

tral introduction that depicts a vibrating moon landscape. It leads to Lesta's agitated accompanied recitative alternating with the water maidens' chorus, trying to calm her down. Then follows the melodrama section: Lesta's unaccompanied declamation, which sounds quite tedious, alternates with closed musical units, enchanting in their orchestral splendor and bright timbral effects in a natural soundscape (solos of horns, bassoons, clarinets, and English horn; wind duets, mysterious arpeggio of harps and glass harmonica).¹⁵ The scene

¹⁵ In the finale of Act 3, Davydov uses *timbali* (pitched antique cymbals) with their high, silver, mysterious sound — a rare instrument frequently used by Sarti, and later in late-nineteenth century French music.

is encompassed by a lavishly orchestrated instrumental piece: at Lesta's order darkness turns into dawn (see ex. 5).

Sarti's impact in attaining a powerful role for musical declamation in conveying serious subjects proves equally apparent in the heroic-patriotic oratorio *Minin i Pozharskii, ili Osvobozhdenie Moskvy* (1811) by Stepan Degtiarev, on a text by Nikolai Gorchakov [XXIII; 48; 58]. Unlike the traditional European-style oratorio (and lacking any generic precedent in Russian music), this score abounds in recitative sections displaying various styles of musical declamation. Gorchakov's text, metric throughout, while chiefly dramatic, does contain narrative and meditative portions. Atypically for an oratorio, it lacks the part of a narrator, since Russian audiences were very well acquainted with the events from relatively recent national history. At the same time, the dramatic parts contain many protracted recitative sections: the declamation alternates with brief orchestral motives (sometimes punctuated by one detached chord); emotional speech usually sounds over a background of sustained chords by winds. For moments of dramatic importance or for passages in which extra text expression is required, Degtiarev introduces characteristic melodic motives or distinct rhythmic patterns. Recitatives by Palitzin, "Gotov'tes' grazhdane" (Act 1), Prince Pozharskii's "Chto vizhu ia?", "Suny otechestva", and especially "Gotov'tes' voiny" and "Spodviznikov moikh" (Act 2), and Minin's "Velikii podvig sovershilsia" (Act 3) eloquently illustrate the variety and expression of recitatives that point to Sarti's dramatic style as Degtiarev's source of inspiration. This resemblance becomes even more obvious due to a contrast between the hero's musical speech and the unison choruses by the Russian people "Dadim sebja kak Rossam" or "Emy prilichna slava" (Act 1). Sarti's formidable presence is supported particularly by the instrumentation: a Russian horn band is employed in six numbers, which enhances the solemnity of the music, including the duet of tenors and basses in Act 1 "Velik i vsemogushch Tvorets," and the trio "Iavi, Vsevyshnii, Pomoshch'!" of Minin, Pozharskii, and Palitzin in Act 2. Gorchakov's evaluation of the music for his text unequivocally points to the Degtiarev's dependence on Sarti's style: "After Bortnianskii, Degtiarev, pupil of the famous Sarti, occupies the first place among the ranks of the best composers of choral music. In his compositions is found an especially refined taste, developed according to the rules of the classical Italian composers: Pergolesi, Spontini, Cherubini, Leo, and so forth" [59, p. 203–4].

Paradoxically, portions of melodrama and musical declamation penetrated even works designated as ballets.¹⁶ Such ballets normally followed the performance of spoken dramas or operas as separate one-act works, or were inserted between the acts of the main play, elaborating on its subject and plot (*balli analoghi*). This situation instigated the strengthening of the dramatic conception of dance and pantomime that developed tools and devices for conveying serious dramatic ideas and plots and expressing strong human emotions.¹⁷

¹⁶ From the 1760s, the Russian court became the center of activity of the foremost European choreographers, Gasparo Angiolini (during 1766–72), Giuseppe Canziani (1779–83 and 1784–92), Francesco Rosetti, Jean-Georges Noverre's disciple Charles Le Picq (1790–99), the first native Russian choreographer Ivan Val'berkh (1803–1819), and a series of brilliant French choreographers and dancers in the nineteenth century. [35, p. 199–232; 60; 61]. Val'bergh alone staged 36 original ballets, 10 restagings of his predecessors' works, and 42 divertissements in operas and dramas. He claimed his ambition "to create a moral ballet" [61, p. 15–6, 19, 21]

¹⁷ Music for the ballets was composed in collaboration with the choreographer (Giovanni Paisiello, Carlo Canobbio, Vicente Martín y Soler, and Guillaume Alexis Paris built successful careers as composers of ballets), or was used to existing music by various composers, or sometimes newly composed by the choreographer himself.

In autonomous ballet performances, dance and pantomime — the main conveyers of dramatic action — were combined with music and spoken declamation, including melodrama. Thus, the tragic ballet in five acts *Didon abandonnée* by Martín y Soler (1792) contains three big choruses [XXIV]. In *Le Jugement de Salomon*, Ivan Val'berkh's arrangement of a three-act Parisian melodrama by Louis-Charles Caigniez (1803), text portions of the melodrama (in translation by Alexander Klushin) were declaimed with music by Alexei Titov. Additional Val'berkh spectacles combined dance and pantomime with solo and choral singing, such as the Song of Russian Warriors in Act 1 of his four-act ballet-pantomime *Russkie v Germanii, ili sledstvie liubvi k Otechestvu* (1813); or a long scene in Act 2 with songs, choruses, and spoken dialogues in his *Torzhestvo Rossii, ili Russkie v Parizhe* (1814), on music by Catterino Cavos [62, vol. 1, p. 59–62].

The pre-Napoleonic epoch and liberal period of Alexander I's rule became one of the most glittering pages in Russian history, marking the time of Russia's entry into world diplomacy, economics, military power, and cultural developments. An ebullient time of great expectations before the shock of the 1812 French invasion and the Patriotic War resulted in the great victory of the Russian people, it became as well a period of wide-ranging shifts of literary streams and ideological agendas: from the consistent position of Enlightenment ideology and classicism associated with the reign of Catherine the Great, to the sentimentalism that flourished during the brief rule of Paul I, to the powerful thriving of romanticism and the emerging aesthetics of realistic national drama [63, p. 129–55; 64–66].

On the eve of and during the war, dramatic theater moved into an avant-garde and proved most mobile in mirroring the growing patriotic feelings of Russian society. Rafail Zotov testified that “all branches of arts had then just one aim: love for the fatherland. On stage, [the public] did not want to see anything else but Russian, national [plays]. Literary success meant nothing! Everyone thought only of one subject, everyone lived with only one thought, breathed one desire — the greatness and glory of Russia. And never had history provided such events; never had the people so many reasons for enthusiasm; never was the people's enthusiasm for heroism developed with such a strength and in such a splendor, as in this great epoch” [67, p. 23]. Historically oriented patriotism offered a new avenue to Russian authors. Repertory lists attest to a comfortable coexistence of plays based on the typical ancient or biblical subjects, old Slavic epics and history, showing heroic deeds and bold personages against the background of the national and civic environment. Mid-century classicistic dramas by Alexander Sumarokov and Iakov Kniazhnin hold their steady position in repertoire lists.

Kniazhnin's disciple Vladislav Ozerov (1769–1816) became the most esteemed Russian dramatist in the first decade of the 19th century. His plays gained tremendous popularity due to the atmosphere of sensibility with which he infused classicistic tragedy. Ozerov created a new tragic style, making literary expression more emotionally laden and significantly increasing its sentimental component. The latter circumstance provided perfect conditions for the intimate integration of music with tragedy, amplifying a heroic-patriotic pathos and embracing a rich emotional component. [41, p. 51–83; 63]¹⁸.

In composing music for spoken tragedies, together with Davydov and Titov, the main figure became Osip Kozlovskii, who in 1799 was appointed inspector of music in the Im-

¹⁸ The same period saw a similar trend elsewhere in Europe; it is sufficient to recall Beethoven's music to Goethe's *Egmont* (1810), *König Stephan*, Op. 117, and *Die Ruinen von Athen*, Op. 113, by Kotzebue (1811).

perial Theatres, and a year later became a director, with responsibility for the musical aspects of all productions¹⁹. Kozlovskii's adoption of tragic topoi in incidental music and apparently in his operas (which have not survived) was prepared in his solemn sacred compositions, mainly the Requiem Mass for the death of the last Polish king, Stanisław-August Poniatovskii (performed in St. Petersburg Catholic church on February 25, 1798). It absorbed many traits of Sarti's works in similar genres, namely their elevated monumentality, sharp dramatic contrasts between choral and solo movements, orchestral magnificence, and special timbral effects, including a Russian horn band (replaced with trombones in the second version), etc.

Kozlovskii's incidental music features six tragedies and contains the following numbers: *Edip v Afinakh* (Ozerov, overture and four choruses, 1804), *Vladisan* (Kniazhnin, 1786; staged with his music since 1805); *Fingal* (Ozerov, choruses of the bards, melodrama, pantomime, dances, pageants, military and battle scenes, 1805); *Debora, ili Torzhestvo very* (Shakhovskoi, 1810); *Tzar' Edip* (Gruzintsev, overture and two choruses, 1811); and *Esther* (Racine / Katenin's translation, 14 music numbers, 1816). The most ramified musical layer was created in *Fingal*, *Debora*, and *Esther*, embracing overtures, orchestral entr'acts and choruses, ballets, melodramas, recitatives and arias, and demonstrating a tendency towards operatic treatment with its rich emotional expressive display.

Kozlovskii's music for *Fingal* — Ozerov's tragedy in three acts, based on James Macpherson's famous epic poem — is considered the best and most carefully elaborated, actually presenting his own musical-scenic rendition of the drama. Scene 2 of the play includes an epic song of the bard Ulline in threefold eight-line metric verses, in alternation with the chorus of the bards (two six-lines in the same eight-syllabic iambic meter), to 138 lines of the text. Kozlovskii's musical rendition of this scene, although relatively concise (160 measures of the score), truly astonishes with imaginative combination of various styles of text-music relations [XXV; XXVI].

After a brief eight-bar orchestral introduction, Ulline's declamation in melodrama, "Umol'ni vse v strane podlunnoi" on four lines, alternates with square phrases of the orchestra that includes a harp part (Andante). The rest of his first verse depicts Fingal's battles, switching to an accompanied recitative (Allegro moderato) over a tempestuous orchestral background. The bards enter to "Udarili v medianyi shchit" with plain scansion in *la battaglia* style (Allegro vivace, triple time). Ulline's second verse, in Allegro furioso ("Vstaet Morvena vozhd' Fingal"), is recitativic throughout, with strong illustrative elements and timbral effects in the orchestra. The second choral verse, starting from the depiction of an arduous fight ("Mel'kaiut, seiutsia"), turns into the macabre scene of the deserted battlefield ("I stala vkrug ego ravnina," Andante lamentabile, with two solo cellos and strings *con sordini*). Ulline's last verse ("Padut, i neizbeg sud'bin") loosely combines melodrama over the tremolo of strings, with notated recitative. Bold contrasts of tempo and meter (although the poetic meter remains unchanged), orchestral effects, and a carefully planned tonal structure turn this scene in a true masterpiece (see ex. 6) [47, p. 451–3, 461].

It is considered that in the wake of *Fingal*'s performances, the heroic idea was implemented in Russian music in a stable conjunction with an epic element — a discourse of an ancient bard supported by a stylized or actual accompaniment of a harp. Iurii Fortunatov

¹⁹ Tragedies by Kniazhnin were staged in the public theaters of both Russian capitals with music by Titov (*Titovo miloserdie*, 1790: "a tragedy in three acts, freely composed, with associated choruses and ballets"), Fomin (*Yaropolk and Oleg*, 1798), Bullant, and Kozlovskii.

à Tempo 1^{mo}

p

Pizic:

a Tempo. 1^{mo}

Lamentabile

умолкни все
вЪ странѣ подлунной,

а Tempo 1^o

чтобъ звуки арфы
златогрунной

p

Pizic:

Example 6: Osip Kozlovskii, *Fingal*, 1808, Act 1 Scene I No. 2.

mentions the vocal cycle by Aliabiev “Baian’s songs”, the cantata “Three songs of a scald” by Verstovskii, and Baian’s Song in his opera *Vadim*, and of course Glinka’s *Ruslan*. Although melodrama from *Fingal* was enormously influential, its origins in the Timoteo monologues

in Sarti's 1782' *fiesta teatrale* becomes rather transparent. Another Kozlovskii melodrama — "Uslyshi greshnykh plach" from *Debora* — also astonishes with its combination of various styles of prosodic and musical declamation and eloquent rhetorical figures in the orchestra [XXVI]. His music for *Esther* creates strong dramatic contrasts between accompanied recitatives by an unnamed female personage and monophonic choruses of Israelite women in highly individual pieces, such as the *Preghiera* (Act 1, no. 5); *Cantique* "Blazhen narodov" (with elevated recitation supported by sustained chords of solo trumpet, horn, and trombone *ad libitum* and harp *obbligato*); the recitative "Bregisia, Tzar" and a four-part unison chorus "Sam sebia v zare proslavit" (Act 3, nos. 12–13) [XXVII].

The survey of scenes in melodrama in Russian music would be incomplete without mentioning Alexei Verstovskii's *Askoldova mogila*, on a play by Mikhail Zagoskin; preceding Glinka's *A Life for the Tzar* by one year, it had a stunning success (Moscow: Bol'shoi, September 16, 1835) [XXVIII]. The dramatic conception and scenic history of *Askoldova mogila* proves quite complicated, resulting from its mixed generic identity — its subject from early Slavic history combines a tragic plot with strong folk and ordinary elements; singing and dances are interwoven with spoken dialogues and melodramas. Six scenes in melodrama include a folk-style scene in which a speech by a humble person alternates with two songs by Torop and an unison chorus of Kievan citizens, "Kak u duba kora" (Sc. II, no. 14). In the finale of the same act, another unison chorus and recitative (Sc. III, no. 24) by Vyshata complement orchestral music and melodrama by a serious unnamed person (Neizvestnyi). At the same time, a series of melodrama numbers with orchestrally supported pantomime impress with their mysterious atmosphere and tragic occurrence of events in the third act: a somber orchestral introduction in B-flat minor leads to the appearance of Rogneda's apparition, Vyshata's speech, the recitative of Rogneda's shadow (supported by a harp solo), and a sound of the invisible chorus (Sc. 4 no. 28). Tragic atmosphere is accumulated with two somber scenes in melodrama, preceding Stemide's death and contrasting with the chorus of pursuers (Sc. VI, nos. 36 and 38).

Sarti's decisive impact on the formation of Russian styles of musical declamation and a synthesis of drama and music proves undisputable. Naturally, complementary paths equally contributed to the appropriation of the tragic style in Russian music: these include the intense development of Russian drama, the art of outstanding Russian actors, such as Ivan Dmitrevskii, Peter Plavilshchikov, Emelian Shusherin, and the Sandunov and Yakovlev couples; the impressive innovative scenery by the famous stage designer Pietro Gonzago and his school; the growing trend of orchestral writing to elucidate the content and meaning of the text, and additional important developments. Nevertheless, Russian music remains immensely indebted to the Italian master for the domestication of tragedy that occupied the leading position in the imminent epoch of great historical, political, and social upheavals.

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