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THE CLASSIC-ROMANTIC DICHOTOMY,
FRANZ GRILLPARZER, AND BEETHOVEN

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A late nineteenth-century bias about the aesthetics of early German musical Romanticism remains one of the greatest obstructions to our understanding of nineteenth-century thought. Although today we admit that our concepts of »Classicism« and »Romanticism« in music are sometimes equivocal and generally oversimplified, still we do not deny a fundamental ideological and ontological difference between the two. As Carl Dahlhaus asserted, »No one doubts that one can meaningfully speak of a Romantic music aesthetic and music exegesis and of Romantic compositions.«¹ To what extent does our attitude about early musical Romanticism reflect ideas at the turn of the nineteenth century, or in what measure does it tell us something about the music?

Arno Forchert's recent derivation for the use of »Classic« to describe music persuasively finds it to be a late nineteenth-century phenomenon. At the end of the eighteenth century the term »Classic« meant either (1) literary works that set all-inclusive standards for future generations, (2) the aesthetic ideals and concepts of the ancients, especially the Greeks, or (3) simply referred to ancient times in general². Tieck surely had the first standard in mind when he wrote in his *Phantasien über die Kunst*:

»Music, as we possess it, is apparently the youngest of all the arts; it has not yet experienced any real Classic period. The great masters have added individual parts to the whole, but no one has comprehended the whole, neither at any time have several artists presented a complete whole in their works.«³

¹ »Niemand zweifelt, dass man sinnvoll von romantischen Musikästhetik und Musikexegese und von romantischen Kompositionen sprechen kann.« (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.) Carl DAHLHAUS, »Romantik und Biedermeier«, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 1973—74, 31, p. 27.

² Arno FORCHERT, »'Klassisch' und 'Romantik' in der Musikkultur des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts«, *Musikforschung*, 1978, 31, p. 411.

³ »Die Musik, so wie wir sie besitzen, ist offenbar die jüngste von allen Künsten; sie hat noch keine wirklich klassische Periode erlebt. Die grossen Meister haben einzelne Teile des Gebietes angebaut, aber keiner hat das Ganze umfasst, auch nicht zu einerlei Zeit haben mehrere Künstler ein vollendetes Ganzes in ihren Werken dargestellt.« As quoted in A. FORCHERT, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

Forchert suggests that »Classic« was applied to music only »in differentiation from the idea of the 'Romantic'. To the point, one might be able to say that the transmission of the idea of the 'Romantic' to musical concerns created the prerequisites for the constitution of the idea of 'Classic' music and 'Classic' composers, to which following generations have oriented themselves to this day.«⁴

The original application of »Classic« to music was not only a distinction of ideological concept, therefore, but a temporal justification. The music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven formed a monument against which later composers could be compared and contrasted. It was this semantic manipulation that led Friedrich Blume to strike down the Classic-Romantic dichotomy altogether:

»If the many attempts to define the nature of 'the classic' in imaginative literature are subject to countless misunderstandings and obscurities, this is to an even greater extent the case in music. There are only approximate definitions, and probably only such are possible, because every definition must consider the 'Classic' in its relation to the 'Romantic', since both these style concepts are basically one, being but two different refractions of the one concept of shaping. There is no 'Classic' style period in the history of music, only a 'Classic-Romantic' one, within which those forms that are 'Classically' determined can at most be characterized as phases.«⁵

The principal proponents of German literary Romanticism were writing in advance of the appearance of what history accepts as musical Romanticism. The forum journal *Athenaeum*, founded in 1798 and run by August Wilhelm Schlegel and his brother Friedrich to promote such literary figures as Friedrich von Hardenburg (Novalis), Tieck, Brentano, Schliermacher, and Wackenroder, espoused Romantic philosophies twenty years before these ideas are said to appear in music.

No ideological goals were jointly recognized by these literary Romantics. A. W. Schlegel pointed to Christianity and mysticism as the trademarks of the movement. Certainly these, as well as the role of nature, or better the awe of nature, were important literary themes. Yet perhaps the unifying, archetypal Romantic metaphor, reflected in the writings of most Romantics, may have been the *blaue Blume* of Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, representing the »Sehnsucht nach Sehnsucht« (or »unendliche Sehnsucht«) that his own life typified.

⁴ »In der Abgrenzung gegen den Begriff des 'Romantischen'. Pointiert ausgedrückt könnte man sagen, dass erst die Übertragung des Begriffs des 'Romantischen' auf musikalische Sachverhalte die Voraussetzungen für die Konstitution jenes Begriffs von 'klassischer' Musik und 'klassischen' Komponisten geschaffen hat, an dem sich die nachfolgenden Generationen bis auf die Gegenwart hin orientiert haben.« *Ibid.*

⁵ Friedrich BLUME, »Klassik«, in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bärenreiter, 7, Kassel, 1958, col. 1031; translated by M. D. Herder Norton in *Classic and Romantic Music*, Norton, New York 1970, p. 9.

This inexpressable longing for the unattainable found another vibrant, sympathetic symbol in the writings of many of the early German literary Romantics, including Wackenroder, Jean Paul, and E. T. A. Hoffmann: music. In their view the very essence of music was Romantic in that it expressed what language could not; it transcended speech and became the language of the soul. In this sense the music of all ages was Romantic for them, and in the measure that they perceived any music to approximate their own ineffable *Sehnsucht*, it was considered successful to that greater or lesser degree.

This new Romantic image of unattainable remoteness, of a longing that is never fulfilled, can be traced to the emotion-charged attitudes of *Empfindsamkeit* and the so-called *Sturm und Drang* of a few decades preceding. In particular, the catalyst for both of these ideologies seems to arise from a perception of emotional suffering — real or imagined. In fact, emotion is morphologically essential to this Romantic ideal. The emotional descriptions of music found in *Empfindsamkeit* do not cease with the Romantic emphasis on the ability of music to call forth the infinite and mysterious longing of the soul; emotion becomes more profound and acquires even greater significance. The infinite longing described in literature is derived from emotion (although an emphasis on the »dunkle Gefühle« is strong among the Romantics).

Carl Dahlhaus found the aesthetic views of Karl Philipp Moritz, a literary Romantic, to be inconsistent, since Moritz apparently at the same time wrote in support of both *unendliche Sehnsucht* and emotion in music. Dahlhaus laid the blame for Moritz's duplicity at the feet of the Pietists, whose emphasis on emotion permeated eighteenth-century Germany and the literary *Sturm und Drang* in particular⁶.

The wrenching emotional experiences of the Romantics, however, seem to suggest a more moderate view. Whether we regard the intense spiritual suffering of Wackenroder's fictional Joseph Berlinger or Schumann's later musical revelations of love and longing for Clara, emotion and infinite longing always remain closely intertwined; the one augments the other. Thus Hoffmann sees no contradiction in his description of Beethoven, who »sets in motion the lever of fear, of awe, of horror, of suffering, and wakens just that infinite longing which is the essence of romanticism.«⁷

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century composers considered not the artist, but the art, as Romantic. This led to a timeless, ahistorical understanding of musical styles and composers. Some composers were of course perceived to be better than others, as is apparent from contemporaneous criticism. The music of some composers was more emotional and sensitive, and more effective in portraying »unendliche Sehnsucht«, not

⁶ Carl DAHLHAUS, »Karl Philipp Moritz und das Problem einer klassischen Musikästhetik«, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, IX/2, 1978, pp. 279–94.

⁷ E. T. A. Hoffmann, translated by Oliver Strunk in *Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era*, Norton, New York [1965], p. 37.

because it was composed in a certain historical style, but rather because the music was good; it called forth these responses. Hoffmann not only saw music as an ageless Romantic symbol, but named Haydn and Mozart as transcendently Romantic⁸. Even Schumann found a place for this kind of ageless Romantic nature of music:

»The Romantic vein that breaks through here is not one that scampers out in advance of the general contemporary development, as does Berlioz, Chopin, and others, but is a more retrospective kind — a Romantic of the ancients, as it powerfully appears to us in the Gothic temple works of Bach, Handel, and Gluck.«⁹

Only in the later nineteenth century was the style of Mozart found to be »Classic« and the style of Bach to be »Baroque«. The focus had shifted from the object (»music is Romantic«) to the style (»this style of music is Classic«).

* * *

It was during the first few decades of the nineteenth century that Franz Grillparzer (1791—1872) forged his music philosophy. One of the greatest dramatists and poets of his time, he was widely recognized as a literary authority and scholar in his native Austria. Even though he did not pretend to be a philosopher, he left a considerable number of ideas on music in his informal writings.

Grillparzer's musical training was extensive, though by his own testimony of questionable quality. His maternal grandfather, Christoph Sonnleithner, was one of the most active sponsors of the musical life in Vienna. In a tradition continued by his son Ignaz, musical evenings were held in his home with such participants as Haydn, Mozart, Vogler, Cherubini, and Beethoven. It was at one such evening that the thirteen year-old Franz Grillparzer met Beethoven, an acquaintance he maintained, though on a very formal basis, throughout Beethoven's remaining years.

Grillparzer's mother »lived and breathed music, which she loved and pursued with a passion.«¹⁰ The enthusiasm of his mother led to his early and rather forced attention to the piano under her own apparently impatient care.¹¹ His second teacher was Johann Gallus Mederitsch,

»who, however, was hindered in bringing his art to any effect by frivolity and laziness... My fingers were designated with ridiculous names: the dirty one, the bumbling one. We crawled around under

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ »Die romantische Ader, die sich hier durchzieht, ist aber nicht eine, die, wie in Berlioz, Chopin u. A. der allgemeinen Bildung der Gegenwart weit vorausseilt, sondern eine mehr zurücklaufende, — Romantik des Altertums, wie sie uns kräftig in den gothischen Tempelwerken von Bach, Händel, Gluck anschaut.« Robert SCHUMANN, »Concert des Hrn. Ignaz Moscheles am 9. Octbr.«, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1835, 3, p. 130.

¹⁰ »Lebte und webte in der Musik, die sie mit Leidenschaft liebte und trieb.« Franz Grillparzer, *Sein Leben und Schaffen in Selbstzeugnissen*, ed. Gerhard Helbig, Koehler and Amelang, Leipzig 1957, p. 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the piano more than we played on it. He charmed my mother, who was always present, by fantasizing and playing fugues in the second half of the hour, and often beyond, making her heart seem to laugh within her.¹²

His father sternly opposed his later interest in playing the violin, and the young Franz soon lost all interest in the piano as well. »The violin denied to me made the piano more detestable.«¹³ By defying his father's wishes to play the piano for some guests, he succeeded in stopping his own formal instruction, even though his private interest in fantasizing at the keyboard subsequently grew.¹⁴ His musical interest only waned when he again tried to study music:

»When I later devoted myself to poetry, my ability to improvise at the keyboard gradually diminished, particularly when I took instruction in counterpoint to bring order to my thoughts. The developments and passages were now more correct, but they lost their inspiration, and today I am not capable of much more than I could when my musical inclinations were first awakened.«¹⁵

Grillparzer's ideas on music aesthetics are gleaned from his letters, journal entries, speeches, and a few essays.¹⁶ In spite of his lifelong association with music, the journal entries that discuss it were made within a very narrow time span, 1820–23, and are the primary source for his views. They form a remarkably consistent viewpoint.

Grillparzer separated music from the other arts by emphasizing its unique purpose or message. This purpose is not only different than poetry, his own art, but higher. »And music I hold higher than poetry.«¹⁷

¹² »Der aber durch Leichtsinns und Faulheit gehindert wurde, seine Kunst zur Geltung zu bringen... Die Finger wurden mit lächerlichen Namen bezeichnet, der schmutzige, der ungeschickte. Wir krochen mehr unter dem Klavier herum, als dass wir darauf gespielt hätten. Meine Mutter, die gegenwärtig war, begütigte er dadurch, dass er in der zweiten Hälfte der Stunde und oft darüber hinaus phantasierte und fugierte, dass ihr das Herz in Leibe lachte.« *Ibid.*

¹³ »Die verweigerte Violine machte mir das Klavier noch verhasster.« *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁵ »Als ich mich später der Poesie ergab, nahm diese Fähigkeit des musikalischen Improvisierens stufenweise ab, besonders seit ich, um Ordnung in meine Gedanken zu bringen, Unterricht im Kontrapunkte nahm. Die Entwicklungen und Fortschreitungen wurden nun richtiger, verloren aber das Inspirierte, und gegenwärtig kann ich nicht viel mehr als beim Erwachen meiner musikalischen Neigung.« *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Peter Frank has noted in his edition of Grillparzer's complete works, »Grillparzer hat kein ästhetisches System geschaffen und wollte gewiss keines schaffen. Das Theoretisieren über Kunst war ihm suspekt, er befürchtete nicht ohne Grund, dass die philosophisch-ästhetischen Spekulationen und Kritiken der Romantiker dann in der Nachfolge Hegels mehr und mehr zum Selbstzweck werden könnten. Zum System-Denken, wie es im 19. Jahrhundert überwog, standen seine ästhetischen Überlegungen, die er vor allem im Anschluss an Bouterwek entwickelte, in schroffem Gegensatz. Unbefangen hörte er die Ansichten anderer, übernahm, was ihm richtig erschien, modifizierte, widersprach.« *Sämtliche Werke: Ausgewählte Briefe, Gespräche, Berichte*, vol. 4, Carl Hanser, Munich 1964, p. 1,238. This last point is discussed below.

¹⁷ »Und Musik halte ich höher als Dichtung.« *Sämtliche Werke*, p. 1247.

Music is able to express human emotions, while words can only express ideas.

»Where words no longer suffice, tones speak. What forms are not able to express, sounds depict. The speechless longing; the silent desire; love's yearning; melancholy that seeks an end and trembles to find it within itself; the faith that soars upward; the prayer that stammers and stutters; everything that goes higher and deeper than words, these belong to music; in this it is supreme.«¹⁸

To Grillparzer poetry and music exist in entirely different spheres. While words can only describe emotions, music can emulate them directly to the listener, bypassing the intellect:

»In addition to the fact that tones in themselves please or disappoint, our consciousness teaches us that particular states of mind can be awakened through them, and that tones can be used therefore to characterize them. Joy and sorrow, longing and love have their tones; yes even pain, fright, and anger have their sounds.«¹⁹

Because of these essential differences, music and poetry are perceived in entirely opposite manners.

»While words take effect on the intellect and thereby affect our feelings, the senses having only an ancillary role, the plastic arts and music take effect directly on the senses, through these on our feelings, and the intellect only then in the last instant shares in the total impression.«²⁰

Music directly addresses our emotions, while poetry »has effect on emotion only through the medium of the intellect.«²¹

On this foundation of the different essential natures of poetry and music Grillparzer based much of his criticism of opera. Since music and poetry have their own independent aesthetic principles that cannot be violated, it is simpleminded to think that music could be reduced to a

¹⁸ »Wo Worte nicht mehr hinreichen, sprechen die Töne. Was Gestalten nicht auszudrücken vermögen, malt ein Laut. Die sprachlose Sehnsucht; das schweigende Verlangen; der Liebe Wütsche; die Wehmut, die einen Gegenstand sucht und zittert ihn zu finden in sich selbst; der Glaube der sich aufschwingt; das Gebet das lallt und stammelt; alles was höher geht und tiefer als Worte gehen könne, das gehört der Musik an, da ist sie unerreicht.« *Ibid.*, from his »Der Freischütze, Oper von Maria Weber« (1821), p. 887.

¹⁹ »Nebstdem nämlich, dass die Töne an sich gefallen oder missfallen lehrt uns auch das Bewusstsein, dass durch sie besondere Gemütszustände erweckt werden, zu deren Bezeichnung sie daher auch gebraucht werden können. Freude und Wehmut, Sehnsucht und Liebe haben ihre Töne, ja sogar der Schmerz, der Schreck, der Zorn ihre Laute.« *Ibid.*, p. 886.

²⁰ »Wenn die Wirkung der Worte auf den Verstand und erst durch diesen auf das Gefühl geschieht, indes die Sinne dabei eine nur dienende Rolle spielen; so wirkt die bildende und die Tonkunst unmittelbar auf die Sinne, durch diese auf das Gefühl und der Verstand nimmt erst in letzter Instanz an dem Gesamteindrucke Teil.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 899.

²¹ »Ist durch das Medium des Verstandes auf das Gemüt wirkend.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1820), p. 897.

slave of poetry. Much of Grillparzer's sharp criticism of French and German opera arose from precisely this imbalance of roles. He was particularly critical of Weber for his programmatic and highly dramatic efforts in *Der Freischütz* and *Euryanthe*, for this very reason. Weber did not understand this basic difference:

»The composer apparently partially belongs to that class which misunderstands the difference between poetry and music, between words and tones. Music has no words, i.e., arbitrary signs, that receive meaning only through man's designations for them.«²²

Music should remain within its own influence:

»It follows from this that above all music ought to strive to attain that which it can attain; that it should not begin a contest with words in designating with exactness and give up that in which it is superior to all rhetorics; it ought not to strive to make words from tones.«²³

Grillparzer found Italian librettos the best, since they had no pretensions of a dramatic, superior role. He added that »Those who demand a purely dramatic effect of opera are usually those who on the other hand desire a musical effect from a dramatic poem.«²⁴

It is easy to understand why Grillparzer had no sympathy for programmatic music, which clearly represents this false foundation. Programmatic music was pseudo-dramatic; by attempting to manipulate ideas, not emotions, it sought to compete with the realm of words, an incompatible marriage.

Music is able to express emotion through its melody and form. Both of these are present and fulfilling in the music of the greatest composers. Grillparzer has high praise for Rossini, whose melodic gifts he found to be so very rich.²⁵ He found melody to be the most essential element of music:

»Who knows thy power, melody! Which without needing verbal explanation of an idea, travels directly from heaven, through the breast, and returns to heaven. He who knows thy power will not make music the follower of poetry; he may give an advantage to the latter (and I believe it deserves this, as manhood deserves it above childhood),

²² »Der Tonsetzer gehört offenbar ein wenig in die Klasse derjenigen, die den Unterschied zwischen Poesie und Musik, zwischen Worten und Tönen verkennen. Die Musik hat keine Worte, d. h. willkürliche Zeichen, die eine Bedeutung erst durch das erhalten was man damit bezeichnet.« *Ibid.*, »Freisch.,« p. 885.

²³ »Es folgt daraus, dass die Musik vor allem streben soll, dass zu erreichen was ihr erreichbar ist; dass sie nicht, um mit den Begriffen der Redekünste einen Wettstreit in der genauen Bezeichnung zu beginnen, das aufgeben soll worin sie allen Redekünsten überlegen ist; dass sie nicht streben müsse aus Tönen Worte zu machen.« *Ibid.*, p. 888.

²⁴ »Die von einer Oper eine rein dramatische Wirkung fordern, sind gewöhnlich jene, die dagegen auch von einem dramatischen Gedicht eine musikalische Wirkung begehren.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 899.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 898.

but he will allow the first its own independent realm, and will regard both together as sisters and not as master and servant, or as guardian and pupil.²⁶

The lack of melody is one of Weber's greatest faults. »Weber in any case has a poetic sense, but is no musician. No trace of melody, not just of a pleasant one, but of any melody at all.«²⁷

The forms of music arise from an inner necessity of the melodic material. »Each particular melodic theme has its inner law of formation and development, that to the true musical genius is holy and unimpeachable, and which he cannot desert to please the text.«²⁸ Mozart, whom Grillparzer felt to be the »unquestionably greatest of all composers,«²⁹ composed great operas because of his mastery of these two principles. His rich melodic gift was tempered by his understanding of the formal requirements of melody: »The sensitivity still rules over the form. With increasing maturity, and without detriment to the sensitivity, he learned to subjugate (arias) to the form.«³⁰

Grillparzer felt that music must remain faithful to these inherent and universal formal laws. While such formal laws may appear restrictive, they actually do not hinder the creativity or the emotional expression of great composers. Even though Grillparzer complained that when he studied counterpoint to »bring order« to his thoughts, »the developments and passages were now more correct, but they lost their inspiration,«³¹ he does not find the fault in the method. Formal correctness, the proper development of a musical theme, was still a fundamental prerequisite for him. Mozart, the greatest of all composers, held total mastery of formal principles, yet »Sensitivity still rules over the form.«³²

Grillparzer adhered to one of the most common and influential theories of his day: music expresses emotion. In this it is much more capable than language, which must first be understood by the intellect. As

²⁶ »Wer deine Kraft kennt, Melodie! die, ohne der Worterklärung eines Begriffs zu bedürfen, unmittelbar aus dem Himmel, durch die Brust, wieder zum Himmel zurückziehst, wer deine Kraft kennt, wird die Musik nicht zur Nachtreterin der Poesie machen: er mag der letztern den Vorrang geben — (und ich glaube, sie verdient ihn auch, wie ihn das Mannesalter verdient vor der Kindheit) —, aber er wird auch der erstern ihr eignes, unabhängiges Reich zugestehen, und beide wie Geschwister betrachten und nicht wie Herrn und Knecht, oder auch nur wir Vormund und Mündel.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 898.

²⁷ »Weber ist allerdings ein poetischer Kopf, aber kein *Musiker*. Keine Spur von Melodie, nicht etwa bloss von gefälliger, sondern von Melodie überhaupt.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1823), p. 888.

²⁸ »Jedes eigentlich melodische Thema hat nämlich sein inneres Gesetz der Bildung und Entwicklung, das dem eigentlich musikalischen Genie heilig und unantastbar ist, und das er den Worten zu Gefallen nicht aufgeben kann.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 898.

²⁹ »Unbestreitig grösste aller Tonsetzer.« *Ibid.*, »Freischütze«, p. 887.

³⁰ »Die Empfindung herrscht noch vor über die Form. Mit zunehmender Reife aber lernte er, ohne Schaden für die Empfindung, sie [die Arien] der Form unterzuordnen.« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1843), p. 881.

³¹ See n. 15.

³² See n. 30.

has been noted, this view closely parallels many ideas concerning music of Grillparzer's contemporaries, whom modern history has judged »Romantic.«

Grillparzer was well acquainted with the philosophical views of his day. At his death his library contained aesthetic writings by, among others, Spinoza, Locke, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer.³³ The last of these unquestionable had a strong influence on Grillparzer. It is significant that just prior to the many entries in Grillparzer's »Tagebuch« on music, Schopenhauer's treatise including art, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, was published in 1819. Grillparzer is known to have read the work that year.³⁴

Schopenhauer also assigned to music (the highest of the arts) a lofty purpose: it was a direct expression of »das Ding an sich,« the Will itself. It is striking, yet at the same time entirely consistent with what we know of early Romantic views on music, that Schopenhauer's judgment was not new. The source of this priority for music was the literary Romantics of a few decades earlier. Wackenroder's *Phantasien über die Kunst*, as Arthur Hübscher has pointed out, made a great impact on the young Schopenhauer's thought. »Here music was depicted as the liberating counterbalance to man's base existence, and it was from this fundamental mood that Schopenhauer's philosophy of music later arose.«³⁵ Grillparzer's and Schopenhauer's ideas on music came from the same tradition.

This certainly does not agree with the general opinion that has long been held that Grillparzer was a Classicist whose aesthetic ideals were essentially those of Kant. In fact, the wholesale influence of Kant on Grillparzer's aesthetic views does not bear close examination. Grillparzer's aesthetic views on literature were indeed essentially what later generations found to be »Classic«: the first duty of literature is to portray »the beautiful«, that oft-quoted Kantian superlative. In this he disagreed with Schlegel, as Fritz Strich pointed out: »Grillparzer (designated) the tendency towards the so-called Romantic, to that predilection, longing, and transcendental vision, merely as a sign of weakness and excess.«³⁶

Yet Grillparzer's aesthetic views of the other arts, and particularly those on music, diverged sharply from Kant. Kant held music to be one

³³ See Fritz STORI, *Grillparzer und Kant*, Wege zur Dichtung 20, ed. Emil Ermatinger, Huber, Frauenfeld 1935, p. 183.

³⁴ See Horst GEISLER, *Grillparzer und Schopenhauer*, G. Uschmann, Weimar 1915, pp. 25–26.

³⁵ Arthur HÜBSCHER, »Schopenhauer, Artur«, in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, vol. 16, William Benton and Helen Hemingway Benton, Chicago 1975, p. 358.

³⁶ »Grillparzer [bezeichnet] jenen Hang zum sogenannten Romantische, zu jenem Ahnen, Sehnen und übersinnlichen Schauen lediglich als ein Zeichen der Schwäche und das Übermogens.« Fritz STRICH, *Franz Grillparzers Ästhetik*, Forschungen zur neueren Literatur-Geschichte 29, ed. Franz Muncker, Alexander Duncker, Berlin 1905, pp. 221–22.

of the lesser art forms.³⁷ He believed that the value of music only lies in our perceived judgment that it imitates nature, the highest beauty. Music is thus more a craft than an art form. In his *Anthropologie in pragmatischen Hinsicht*, Kant suggested that music is »only for this reason a beautiful art (and not just a pleasant one): it serves as a vehicle for poetry.«³⁸ How far this is from Grillparzer's view of music as the highest of the arts, that poetry and music exist in incompatible spheres! As Grillparzer noted, »Where poetry ceases, music begins. Where the poet can find no more words, the musician should enter with his tones.«³⁹

The semantic confusion of »Romantic« and »Classic« ideas in music is often found in discussions of the life and music of Beethoven. It is not surprising, therefore, that Grillparzer's relationship to Beethoven has been the cause of much difficulty.

As early as 1809 (when he was only eighteen years old) Grillparzer noted in his journal:

»It has often occurred to me to compare our composers with the works of the days of creation. Chaos — Beethoven. And there was light! — Cherubini! Mountains are raised up! (large but very clumsy masses) — Joseph Haydn. Songbirds of every sort — the Italian school. Bears — Albrechtsberger. Creeping things — Girowetz. Man — Mozart!«⁴⁰

This negative (but privately expressed) metaphor for Beethoven is very different from his public view, which has been more often quoted. At Beethoven's death Grillparzer delivered a »Rede am Grabe« that lavished Beethoven with high praise:

»As the behemoth stormed through the seas, he surpassed the bounds of his art. From the cooing of doves to the rolling of thunder, from the most subtle interweaving of obstinate artistic mediums, to the frightful point when the creation passes to the unruly whim of feuding powers of nature, everything he traversed, everything he comprehended. He who comes after will not continue, but will have to begin.«⁴¹

³⁷ See the extensive discussion in Giseler Schubert's article, »Zur Musikästhetik in Kants 'Kritik der Urteilskraft'«, in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 1975, 32, pp. 12–25.

³⁸ »Nur darum schöne (nicht bloss angenehme) Kunst, weil sie der Poesie zum Vehikel dient.« As quoted in G. SCHUBERT, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁹ »Wo die Poesie aufhört, fängt die Musik an. Wo der Dichter keine Worte mehr findet, da soll der Musiker mit seinen Tönen eintreten.« Grillparzer, *Sämtliche Werke*, »Tagebuch« (1821), p. 899.

⁴⁰ »Es ist mir schon oft eingefallen unsere Tonkünstler mit den Werken der Schöpfungstage zu vergleichen. Das Chaos — Beethoven. Es werde Licht! — Cherubini! Es entstehen Berge! (grosse aber sehr unbeholfene Massen) — Josef Haydn. Singvögel aller Art — die italienische Schule. Bären — Albrechtsberger. Kriechendes Gewürm — Girowetz. Der Mensch — Mozart!« *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1809), p. 880.

⁴¹ »Wie der Behemoth die Meere durchstürmt, durchflog er die Grenzen seiner Kunst. Vom Girren der Taube bis zum Rollen des Donners, von der spitzfindigsten Verwebung eigensinniger Kunstmittel, bis zu dem furchtbaren Punkte, wo das Gebildete übergeht in die regellose Willkür streitender Naturgewalten, alles hatte er durchmessen, alles erfasst. Der nach ihm kommt, wird nicht fortsetzen, er wird anfangen müssen.« *Ibid.*, »Rede am Grabe« (1827), p. 882.

Although he may have some esteem for Beethoven's musical achievements, he felt that Beethoven had negatively influenced the next generation of musicians through his reckless and unrestrained attitudes.⁴²

In June of 1817 Grillparzer laid out the scenes for a new dramatic work on a popular legend, *Melusina*.⁴³ The scope of the work was almost immediately altered to a *Kinderballet*, went through rapid revisions, and was partially performed in 1822.

Soon thereafter, whether at the prodding of Count Moritz Lichnowsky⁴⁴ or from other corners, Beethoven became convinced he should compose another opera. As Grillparzer related the incident:

»Die *Ahnfrau*, *Sappho*, *Medea*, and *Ottokar* had already appeared, when suddenly the news came to me from the head of the two court theaters, Count Moritz Dietrichstein, that Beethoven had asked him to persuade me to write a libretto for him, Beethoven.«⁴⁵

Grillparzer selected *Melusina* as his subject and proceeded immediately, although he confessed he had doubts whether »Beethoven would still be able to compose an opera.«⁴⁶ In his libretto he tried to anticipate Beethoven's creative needs, and »sought to adjust myself as much as possible to the characteristics of Beethoven's last direction through a predominance of choruses, powerful finales, and in that the third act was almost melodramatic.«⁴⁷ He sent the completed manuscript to Beethoven the same year and was soon invited by Schindler to come to Beethoven's house and discuss the matter.

From Beethoven's conversation books and letters to Grillparzer and others, it seems that Beethoven's primary concern with his librettist at this point was financial, and that he was generally pleased with the libretto. The latter is explicitly stated by Grillparzer, and although we have no written account of Beethoven's own opinion of the libretto, his record of honesty in rejecting what he felt to be less than first rate infers his approval.

⁴² *Ibid.*, »Tagebuch« (1834), pp. 884—85.

⁴³ Peter Frank reports: »Grillparzer kennt die Sage wohl aus irgend einer Bearbeitung des Volksbuches (Simrock oder Tieck), ebenso die Erzählung 'Undine' von Fouque.« *Ibid.*, p. 1,321.

⁴⁴ As suggested by Karl-Heinz Köhler and Gritz Herre, assisted by Heinz Schöny, eds., *Ludwig van Beethovens Konversationshefte*, VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, Leipzig, 6:387.

⁴⁵ »Die *Ahnfrau*, *Sappho*, *Medea*, *Ottokar* waren erschienen, als mir plötzlich von dem damaligen Oberleiter der beiden Hoftheater, Grafen Moritz Dietrichstein, die Kunde kam, Beethoven habe sich an ihn gewendet, ob er mich vermögen könne, für ihn, Beethoven, ein Opernbuch zu schreiben.« *F. Grillparzer, Sein Leben und Schaffen*, p. 364.

⁴⁶ »Beethoven noch im stande sei, eine Oper zu komponieren.« *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁴⁷ »Suchte durch Vorherrschen der Chöre, gewaltige Finales, und indem ich den dritten Akt beinahe melodramatisch hielt, mich den Eigentümlichkeiten von Beethovens letzter Richtung möglichst anzupassen.« *Ibid.*, p. 365.

It is indisputable that Beethoven fully intended to compose the work; this is reported not only by Grillparzer but also can be found in the conversation books and in Beethoven's letters. In a letter of 1823 to Spohr he wrote:

»As for your question concerning my opera, it is true that Grillparzer has written a libretto for me. I have in fact already made a start, but because of my poor health several other works came to a dead stop which I must now carry forward. After this I shall at once take up the opera again, and let you know the results.«⁴⁸

Grillparzer relates the eventual results of their collaboration:

»Later I saw him — and I don't remember where any more — only one more time. He said to me then: Your opera is finished. Whether he meant: finished in my head, or that the countless sketchbooks where he diligently kept the individual ideas and figures for future working out, understandable to him alone, perhaps contained the fragments of that opera, I cannot say. It is certain that after his death not a single note was found that could be associated with that joint work.«⁴⁹

The reasons behind the uncompleted status of the work are conjectural. Beethoven reported that it was because of lack of time, however other perhaps more vital influences may have halted its progress. Donald W. MacArdle and Ludwig Misch have suggested that Beethoven dropped the work »for lack of positive assurance from either Berlin or Vienna that the work would be performed,«⁵⁰ which was indeed the case. When Vienna could offer no sure performance and Beethoven suggested composing the work for the Berlin Opera, Grillparzer commented, »This will surely be bungled anew.«⁵¹ Count Brühl, the intendant at the Berlin Opera, wrote Beethoven on 6 April 1826. Although enthusiastic about the opera, he found the plot of *Melusina* much too similar to E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Undine*.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ludwig van BEETHOVEN, *New Beethoven Letters*, translated and annotated by Donald W. MacArdle and Ludwig Fisch, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (Oklahoma) 1957, p. 428.

⁴⁹ »Später sah ich ihn — ich weiss nicht mehr wo — nur noch einmal wieder. Er sagte mir damals: Ihre Oper ist fertig. Ob er damit meinte: fertig im Kopfe, oder ob die unzähligen Notatenbücher, in die er einzelne Gedanken und Figuren zu künftiger Verarbeitung, nur ihm allein verständlich, aufzuzeichnen pflegte, vielleicht auch die Elemente jener Oper bruchstückweise enthielten, kann ich nicht sagen. Gewiss ist, dass nach seinem Tode sich nicht eine einzige Note vorfand, die man unzweifelhaft auf jenes gemeinschaftliche Werk hätte beziehen können.« F. Grillparzer, *Sein Leben und Schaffen*, p. 367.

⁵⁰ *New Beethoven Letters*, p. 429.

⁵¹ »Das wird wieder neue Hudeleien geben.« As quoted in Heinz POLITZER, *Franz Grillparzer: oder das abgründige Biedermeier*, Fritz Molden, Vienna 1972, p. 158.

⁵² *New Beethoven Letters*, p. 509.

In one of the most extensive commentaries on Franz Grillparzer's philosophy of music, Alfred Orel found glaring inconsistency in Grillparzer's views. On the one hand, Grillparzer was a perfect example of Classic ideals:

»Grillparzer held the stance that the measure of worth of a musical work lay in consonance and abstract form fulfillment, as well as in the unity of these two moments. He therefore rightly condemned subjectivity in music, which had its first, greatest, and most ultimately loyal representative in Beethoven. Romanticism in music, which goes hand in hand with this subjectivity, he therefore rejected.«⁵³

On the other hand, he believed that Grillparzer's musical activities betrayed a diametrically opposed philosophy. Grillparzer related his interest in fantasizing at the keyboard in a typically Romantic fashion:

»I bade farewell to the printed music and played from my head. After a while I attained such an ability at this that I could fantasize for hours. Often I laid a copperplate on the stand in front of me and played the attributes portrayed there, as if it were a musical composition.«⁵⁴

Indeed, this sounds like Schumann, a most loyal Romantic. In Orel's view, Grillparzer was Janus-faced. »The total picture of Grillparzer's relationship to music is not a unified one.«⁵⁵

Grillparzer's fairy-tale libretto plot would never have been acceptable to Beethoven, he surmises, since Beethoven's personality was so clearly inclined towards heroism and grandeur, as demonstrated in *Fidelio*. With this judgment Orel does not necessarily demand Classic traits of Beethoven, as others have done to support this supposed conflict between the two strong personalities,⁵⁶ only that the subject matter did not lend itself to the high moral ideals Beethoven may have espoused. Yet, on the other hand, it is striking to note that Grillparzer's perception of Beethoven's attitude led him to an entirely opposite view:

⁵³ »Grillparzer stand also auf dem Standpunkt, der Massstab für die Wertung eines tonkünstlerischen Werkes liege im Wohlklang und der abstrakten Formvollendung sowie in der Vereinigung dieser beiden Momente. Folgerichtig verurteilt er daher den Subjektivismus in der Tonkunst, der ja in Beethoven seinen ersten, grossen und bis zur letzten Konsequenz treuen Vertreter hatte. Der Romantik in der Musik, die mit dem Subjektivismus Hand in Hand geht, lehnt er daher ab.« Alfred OREL, »Grillparzers Verhältnis zur Tonkunst«, in *Grillparzer-Studien*, ed. Oskar Katann, Gerlach & Wiedling, Vienna 1924, p. 285.

⁵⁴ »Ich gab den Noten den Abschied und spielte aus dem Kopfe. Nach und nach erlangte ich darin eine solche Fertigkeit, dass ich stundenlang phantasieren könnte. Oft legte ich einen Kupferstich vor mir auf das Notenpult und spielte die darauf dargestellte Begebenheit, also ob es eine musikalische Komposition wäre.« F. Grillparzer, *Sein Leben und Schaffen*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ »Das Gesamtbild des Verhältnisses Grillparzers zur Tonkunst ist kein einheitliches.« A. OREL, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

⁵⁶ See for example the discussion in H. POLITZER, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

»All told, it may have been Weber's success that called forth in him the idea of again writing an opera himself. He had accustomed himself to such an unbridled flight of fantasy, however, that no libretto in the world would have been able to contain his effervescence within any bounds. He continually searched and found none, because for him none could exist.«⁵⁷

Orel's interpretation of Grillparzer's views on music, however, has its origins in historiographical methods of questionable validity. Grillparzer's musical activities, as we know them mostly from his own account, do not essentially disagree with his philosophical notes on the aesthetics of music, with his purely literary works,⁵⁸ or with his direct attempt at musical collaboration: his opera libretto *Melusina*. This striking example of mistaken historical judgment is symptomatic of broader, popular opinions still held about the semantics of »Classic« and »Romantic« music.

To understand modern historical insight into musical Romanticism essentially becomes an effort to distinguish Apollo from Dionysus while standing twice removed from the musical and literary sources; it is the *interpretation* of these sources that has suffered the brunt of later nineteenth-century biases. The modern concept of Romanticism is intricately bound to the historiographical processes that led to its formation.

Grillparzer had no such perspective. His ideas were drawn from his own thoughts and those of his contemporaries, and in fact are not »self-contradictory.« Grillparzer's reliance on Kantian principles of abstract form and the portrayal of the Beautiful do not have to contradict his emphasis on emotion in music. In fact, his idea that the emotional expression of music is *fulfilled* by its form is the unifying thread in his aesthetic philosophy.

Just as musicology has recently been able to view the music of the early eighteenth century as something other than »pre-Classic«, allowing the music to be accepted on its own terms, Grillparzer also, as a representative microcosm of his contemporaries, must be investigated as a coherent historical figure. This must be done without imposing the rigid restrictions of the late nineteenth-century dichotomy of Classic and Romantic that we have inherited, limiting his philosophy by our own incomplete understanding.

⁵⁷ »Im ganzen dürften es doch Webers Erfolge gewesen sein, die in ihm den Gedanken hervorriefen, selbst wieder eine Oper zu schreiben. Er hatte sich aber so sehr an einen ungebundenen Flug der Phantasie gewöhnt, dass kein Opernbuch der Welt imstande gewesen wäre, seine Ergüsse in gegebenen Schranken festzuhalten. Er suchte und suchte und fand keines, weil es für ihn keines gab.« F. Grillparzer, *Sein Leben und Schaffen*, p. 368.

⁵⁸ As for example the nature of music espoused in *Der arme Spielmann*.

Sažetak

KLASIČKO-ROMANTIČKA DIHOTOMIJA, FRANZ GRILLPARZER I BEETHOVEN

Premda danas priznajemo da su naši pojmovi »klasike« i »romantike« u glazbi katkada dvojbeni i pojednostavljeni, ipak ne poričemo temeljnu ideološku i ontološku razliku među njima. Međutim, stilističke generalizacije koje su se pravile od 19. stoljeća nadalje u prilog ovoj dihotomiji ne odaju jedinstveno gledište: još se uvijek raspravlja o tome što bi bio »glazbeni romantizam«. Jedno od gledišta koje zaslužuje više priznanja je ono za koje su se zalagali mnogi romantičari s kraja 18. i početka 19. stoljeća. Oni su tumačili da je *sâma* glazba romantična, što predstavlja estetiku koja se ne ograničuje na restrikcije koje danas priznajemo kao razdoblja glazbenih stilova.

Naše poznavanje Franza Grillparzera može potvrditi takvo gledište. Ako se tradicionalna dihotomija klasičko/romantičko primijeni na njegove ideje o glazbi često ga se ocjenjuje kao nedosljednog ili u najboljem slučaju nehajnog mislioca, premda, naprotiv, dublja analiza otkriva da su njegovi pogledi bili u velikoj mjeri dosljedni. Njegova teza da se *osjećaj* u glazbi izražava njezinom *formom* nije istinski kontradiktorna; ona se samo takvome čini kada je se prisiljava da se uskladi s kasnijim estetičkim polarizacijama tih ideja. Premda Beethoven nije uglazbio Grillparzerov libretto *Melusina*, razlozi za to ne poživaju u sukobu klasičkog i romantičkog, nego su čisto logistički. Grillparzeru se, kao mikrokozmosu svoje sredine, valja približiti kao koherentnom misliocu, a ne treba ga se utiskivati u kasnije ideološke kalupe.