Musicologica Austriaca

Martin Nedbal: Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven

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Received: 03/05/2021

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Published: 04/06/2021

Last updated: 04/06/2021

How to cite: Steven M. Whiting, Martin Nedbal: Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven, Musicologica Austriaca: Journal for Austrian Music Studies (June 04, 2021)

Tags: 18th century; 19th century; Beethoven, Ludwig van; Censorship; Durazzo, Giacomo; Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim; Morality; Mozart, Wolfgang Amadé; Schiller, Friedrich; Viennese opera

ASHGATE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN OPERA

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Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven

Martin Nedbal

Martin Nedbal, *Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven*
London: Routledge, 2017 (Ashgate Interdisciplinary Studies in Opera) 276 pp., £ 125.00 (Hardback), £ 38.99 (Paperback), ISBN 978-0-367-22955-9

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https://www.routledge.com/Morality-and-Viennese-Opera-in-the-Age-of-Mozart-and-Beethoven/Nedbal/p/book/9780367229559

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[1] In Western culture, the idea that music's direct impact on human behavior requires government supervision is at least as old as Plato's *Republic*. Envisioning the place of music in this ideal state, Plato (in the guise of Socrates) eliminated all the musical modes thought to have pernicious ethical effects, leaving only the two that would promote, respectively, valor in battle and persuasiveness in works of peace. Dictators like Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, and Pinochet have been Platonists. So too were many theater reformers associated with the Enlightenment, especially when it came to theater with music (and almost all eighteenth-century theater involved music). Their argument ran thus: theater with music can have such an edifying effect on human behavior that the government ought to support it, but should also prevent (or rein in) its excesses through censorship, if need be. Such was the situation in the latter half of the eighteenth century in German-speaking Europe.

Martin Nedbal's *Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven* has its roots in the author's dissertation.[1] It starts to do for Vienna what Thomas Baumann's unrivalled study accomplished for opera in northern (Lutheran) regions of Germany, without aspiring to the scope of Bruce Alan Brown's magisterial *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*.[2] Nedbal considers the Viennese theatrical landscape in the late eighteenth century, as notions of German national identity and "the social and political functions of German theater" were being forced to change by current events in France (11).[3] In the process he recontextualizes the Singspiel repertoire from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* through *Die Zauberflöte* to *Fidelio*, insisting on their connections to theatrical politics in the imperial capital, and specifically to Viennese debates about the responsibility of state-supported theater in German to edify as well as entertain its audiences. As befits any contribution to a series devoted to the interdisciplinary study of opera, the central figures in the story are not necessarily musicians.

The introduction focuses on Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66), the professor at Leipzig University whose authority (and authoritarian tendencies) as a critic loomed large over eighteenth-century German theater. The six chapters each address a different group of works "associated with specific theatrical institutions" in Vienna. Chapter 1 concerns the moralistic transformation of *Les Pèlerins de Mecque* (1726) from the Parisian fairgrounds farce into Gluck's *La Rencontre imprévue* (1764), then into *Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft* (1771 and 1780). The progressive cleansing of French repertoire sets the stage for Joseph II's National Singspiel (1776) and the sort of censorship deemed appropriate for German-language theater and opera. Chapter 2 takes up *Entführung* as a synthesis of "textual and musical tropes associated with operatic didacticism" in Vienna (14). The musical focus falls upon two finales, the "didactic intensity" of which was contrasted at the time with the alleged immorality of French and Italian

traditions. Chapter 3 focuses on *Die Zauberflöte* as a piece of moralist national theater, consonant with the aims that motivated Joseph's theatrical reform. In chapter 4, Nedbal places *Die Zauberflöte* within the context of the "heroic-comic" fare offered during the 1790s at Emanuel Schikaneder's Theater auf der Wieden and Karl Marinelli's Leopoldstädter Theater. Chapter 5 surveys the Singspiel company instituted in 1795 by the new lessee of the Court Theater, Peter von Braun. Whereas Josephinian didacticism was sustained in works such as Peter Winter's *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* involving absolutist rulers and international conflicts, other court-theater productions manifest a rapprochement in subject matter and tone with offerings typical of the so-called suburban theaters (15). Nedbal also notes an "explicitly patriotic rhetoric" in productions of the 1790s. Finally, he considers Beethoven's *Fidelio* (especially its 1805 version) within the "Viennese didactic *Singspiel* tradition" (15).

In pursuing the question of how "evolving ideas about German national identity and the changing social and political functions of German theater [affected] German-language operas produced in late eighteenth-century Vienna" (11), Nedbal rightly considers lyrical and spoken theater as points on the same continuum. *Singspiel* and *Schauspiel* are interrelated in his account of German theater culture.[4] His point of departure is Gottsched, who focused his "moralistic aesthetics" primarily on spoken theater, since he found opera both wanton and absurd. Given his reliance on Nicolas Boileau in his *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen* (1730), Gottsched usually seems the advocate-in-chief for French neo-classicism (3–4). Nedbal, who has read widely and deeply in German literary studies, probes into the chauvinism behind Gottsched's ostensible Francophilia. While conceding French achievements in tragedy and comedy, Gottsched was sure that Germans ought to be able to surpass them, given what he supposed was their loftier moral character. For Gottsched, morality inhered in the very definition of German-ness. Toward the end of his career, Gottsched was even willing to look with leniency on German playwrights' occasional violations of dramaturgical rules, because these were "committed for the sake of presenting sound, though monotonous moral teachings, which makes these violations much more honorable than the highly dissipated quibbles of the Italian wit, the exaggerated accuracy of the Gallic theater, or raved ferociousness of the British comedies with their excess of obscenity."[5] When it came to opera, Gottsched never relented in his attack on its putative immorality and irrationality; nonetheless, he wanted it known that opera was a German invention (6)! The take-away from the introduction is that, for all the distance that younger German-speaking theater critics tried to put between themselves and Gottsched, Gottsched's attitudes nonetheless turn up in their writings with remarkable consistency. This idea runs like a red thread through the book.

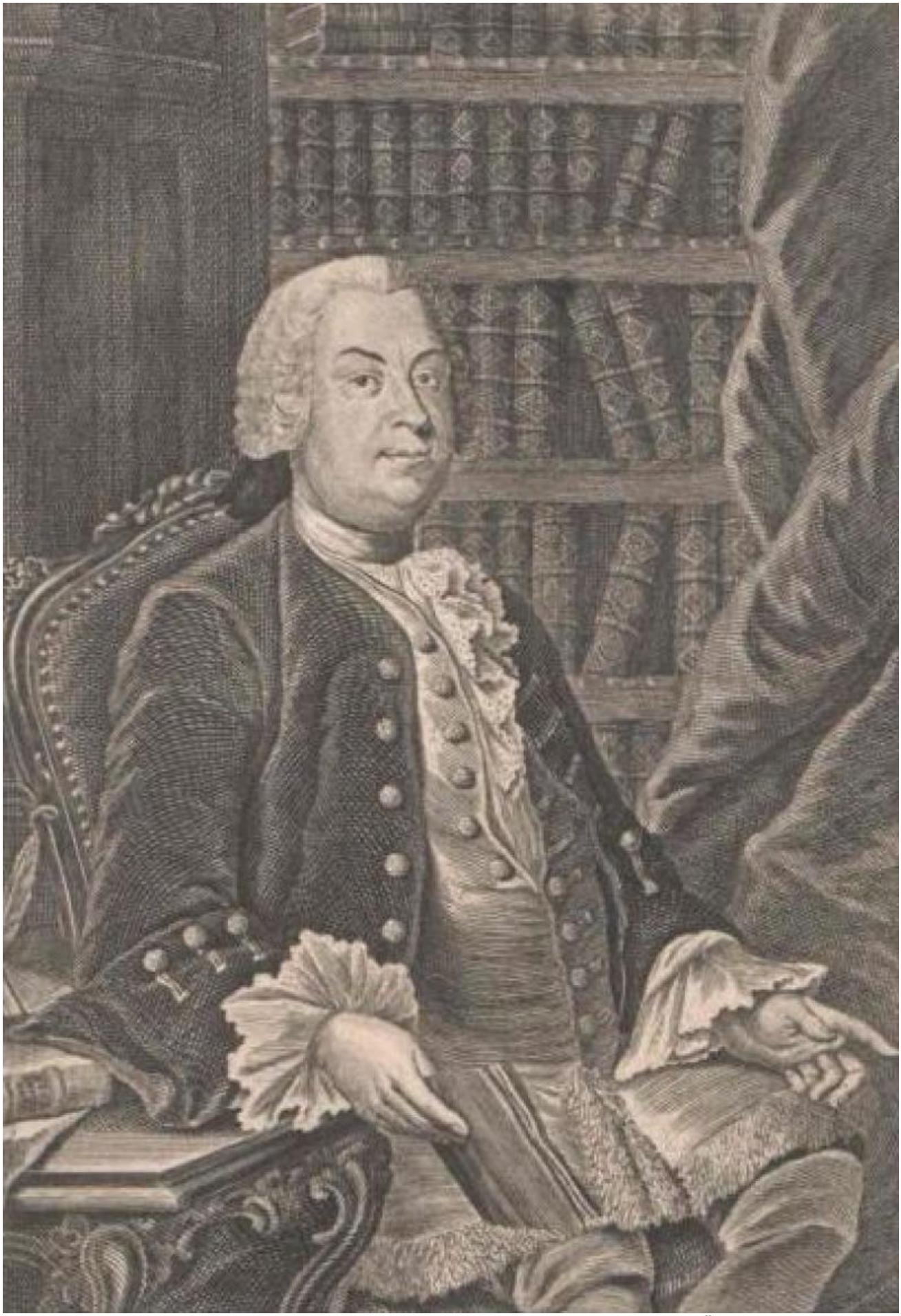

Figure 1: Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66); by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria

Signs of sloppiness emerge already in the introduction. A copy editor should have corrected the reference (10) to “the lyric poetry written by Friedrich Gottlob Klopstock and his circle in Göttingen in the mid-1800s.” (The name should be Gottlieb, and Nedbal must have meant the mid-eighteenth century.) The endnote quotient is high—in some paragraphs nearly one per sentence—so it is frustrating to find that references do not always support the argument made in the run of text. I will not point out every instance, but recommend *caveat lector*.

[2] Chapter 1 begins with Christoph Willibald Gluck’s *La Rencontre imprévue*, the successive transformations of which show Viennese moralizing at work.[6] In 1763, Count Giacomo Durazzo, administrator of the court theater, commissioned Louis Hurtaut Dancourt to adapt an old libretto from the Parisian fairgrounds, *Les Pèlerins de la Mecque* (1726) by Alain-René Lesage and Jacques-Philippe d’Orneval, for Gluck to set to music. Dancourt duly pruned passages that might seem suggestive, and he created more opportunities for moral instruction (23). The work was ready for rehearsal by late October 1763, but on November 21, its performance was summarily cancelled due to the illness of Archduchess Isabella of Parma, wife of Archduke Joseph. The archduchess died of smallpox on November 27. With the death of Isabella, several plot points in *Les Pèlerins de la Mecque* suddenly became inappropriate (e.g., the feigned death of an abducted princess); further revision was necessary to salvage the opera for performance that season. It was premiered on January 7, 1764, under a new title, *La Rencontre imprévue*. Two German versions followed, both titled *Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft*: one a translation by Johann Heinrich Faber for a 1771 production in Frankfurt, then a revision of Faber’s translation for a 1780 production in Vienna. In short, we are plunged into a confusing set of circumstances, even messier than theater usually is. Nedbal’s strategy is to take soundings, as it were, to demonstrate the progressive sanitization of specific passages from 1726 to 1763–64 to 1771 to 1780. This reader would have appreciated more help in keeping the various stages (and causes) of revision straight, with fewer distractions from slips in transcription and translation—for example, the translation of the Sultan’s maxim in the original of 1726 (the maxim lifted from a contemporary tragedy by Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon): “Puisqu’un remords suffit pour appaiser [*recte* apaiser, as in Crebillon] les Dieux, / Un Sultan auroit tort d’en exiger plus qu’eux.” The sense of the couplet should be as follows: “Since a single expression of remorse suffices to appease the gods, a sultan would be wrong to require more than they [the gods] do”—and not “Since remorse is sufficient to appease the gods, / A sultan would be wrong to require more than them” (23).

A more effective point of departure for this discussion might have been Count Durazzo’s letter of November 19, 1763, to Charles-Simon Favart (translated on p. 25), since it describes how Dancourt came to busy himself with *Pèlerins* in the first place. *Le Roi et le fermier* by Alexandre Monsigny and Jean-Michel Sedaine was so popular in Vienna that Durazzo wanted to produce something equally successful. *Pace* Nedbal, there is no hint that Durazzo had to doctor *Le Roi et le fermier* to create an acceptable “Viennese version” (25). Monsigny and Sedaine had already struck a happy medium, and the challenge was now to find another *opéra comique* that would do likewise.[7] Nedbal’s portrayal notwithstanding (25–26), I do not detect any implication in Durazzo’s letter that “moral taste was superior in Vienna”—more restricted, more finicky perhaps, but Durazzo’s description of German strictures seems more apologetic than smug. If other Viennese expressed smugness on this score, Brown allows, “this pride was not nationalism in the modern sense.”[8] And here it is Nedbal’s handling of a secondary source that becomes problematic (26): “Brown refers to such ideas of the Germans’ moral and national superiority as ‘a new idea of nationalism (soon dominant in Vienna) that called into question a more cosmopolitan, French-inspired view of culture.’” The context established by Brown is hereby

stretched a bit far; Brown's observation of "a new idea of nationalism" had been prompted by a flagrant instance of "ignorance [and] obfuscation" about the national origins of Gluck and Johann Baptist Hilverding in a 1764 dispatch in the *Wienerisches Diarium*, in contrast to which Brown *praises* that "more cosmopolitan, French-inspired view of culture [this is where Nedbal cuts off the quotation] in which enlightened persons strove to create a 'republic of letters' which respected no boundaries."[9]

Figure 2: Giacomo Durazzo (1717–94); by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria

As for the old idea of nationalism (or better, cultural chauvinism), there were enough Gottschedians in Vienna who were outraged at the launching of the French troupe at the Burgtheater in 1752. Nedbal cites Benjamin Ephraim Krüger's *Vitichab und Denkwart, die*

allemanischen Brüder as an early example of "proper" German drama at the Kärntnertortheater (27), mistranslating the title (*allemanisch* means Alemannic rather than Germanic). Nedbal correctly understands the word "proper" (or *regelmäßig*) as meaning written down and thus leaving no opportunity for improvisation. On the spur of the moment, stock characters such as the Viennese Hanswurst exploited every opportunity for sexual and scatological humor. Eliminating such characters and their improvised sallies was a desideratum of Viennese theater reformers, as it had been for Gottsched in Leipzig. The word *regelmäßig* also connoted adherence to the Aristotelian unities and respect for rules of versification.[10] Krüger cast *Vitichab und Denkwart* (and its dedicatory poem!) in a German approximation of alexandrine verse, with (usually) 12 syllables per line, evidently in an effort to match French models. He dedicated the printed playbook to Gottsched's wife, Luise (also a playwright).

Nedbal leads us to countless pertinent sources in this chapter, but does not always connect the dots. For example, he cites a description in the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste* of the *Vorspiel* presented at the re-opening of the Kärntnertortheater in July 1763 (after it burned in November 1761), and he calls it "an account of how moralistic pronouncements were ridiculed at the German performances in the Kärntnertortheater" (43, n30). If one follows up the reference, one finds an "Auszug eines Briefs von Wien, die dasige deutsche Schaubühne betreffend" (Excerpt of a letter from Vienna, concerning the German theater there). The anonymous author of the letter initially feigns indignation that the *Bibliothek* has been devoting more interest to theater in France than to theater in the *Vaterlande*. He then describes in detail the *Vorspiel* penned by the actor-playwright Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern, quoting extracts in larger type. It becomes increasingly clear that the critic's stance is utterly sarcastic, until toward the end he gives up the pose of apology for German theater: "Can you believe that one dares to perform such a piece—veritable nonsense—in a capital city at the opening of a theater? How remote is the hope of ever bringing plays in our Fatherland to any degree of perfection, so long as Weiskerns may dare, to Germany's shame, to take the stage in a place like Vienna."[11] Weiskern was indeed a prolific author of burlesques, and famous in Vienna for his comic improvisation. And yet Nedbal calls him "one of the most prominent Gottschedians," and quotes him to the effect that "amusing plays with didactic plots" constitute "a sugary medicine for the soul" ("verzuckerte Arzney der Seele")—a variant of one of the maxims held up to ridicule in the *Bibliothek* article—which hardly inclines a reader to take Weiskern seriously as a reformer of theater. It does not help that Nedbal plays chronological hopscotch. The subsection entitled "Didacticism in Viennese discourse on German theater prior to 1776" (26–28) starts with a visit to the Kärntnertortheater by Lady Mary Wortley Montague in 1716, hops forward to a play produced in 1747, then forward to the dim assessment quoted above of the German theater in Vienna in 1763, then back to the 1750s and then the 1740s. What story would emerge from putting the sources in chronological order?

[3] If Gottsched was the prominent non-musician in the introduction, in chapter 1 it is Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733–1817). Nedbal portrays Sonnenfels as ideologically indebted to Gottsched, and focuses on his 29th letter (dated June 26, 1768) in the *Briefe über die wienerische Schaubühne*, without quite seeing that it responds to Lessing's reflections on the proper models for German dramatists. Lessing opens his polemic thus: "'No one,' say the authors of the *Bibliothek* [*der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste*], 'will deny that the German stage has Professor *Gottsched* to thank for its initial improvement.' I *am* that No One, and I flatly deny it. One might even wish that Herr *Gottsched* had never gotten mixed up with the theater. His supposed improvements either concern dispensable details or amount to actual worsenings."[12]

Sonnenfels's defense of Gottsched from Lessing's attack is halfhearted at best; Gottsched (he says) has stepped beyond his proper sphere. And Sonnenfels follows Lessing rather than Gottsched in his condemnation of the French as dramatic models. Sonnenfels is *not* urging Germans to "combine French 'politesse' and English 'ruggedness'" (quoting Nedbal's translation on p. 30), but to steer a middle course between them. English ruggedness (for Sonnenfels as for Lessing) is exemplified by Shakespeare, whose brisk changes figuratively hurl the spectator from one locale and character type to another (examples are adduced from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). French *politesse* is exemplified by the "improbable correctness" of Pierre Corneille and the contortions made in *Cinna ou la Clémence d'Auguste* to preserve the unities of time and place. Germans are unlikely to match the sheer range of Shakespeare (here as demonstration, Sonnenfels quotes several passages from *Henry IV, Part One* in Christoph Martin Wieland's translation, then summarizes his argument): "they [the Germans] will never sink so deeply into the mire of silliness or indecency; but they will also never raise themselves to such heights; we are not great enough, either for such beauties or for such errors."[13] This is a key passage, and Nedbal cuts it off after the first clause, thereby missing the point about range of expression (30). Sonnenfels devotes the first four of his letters to Gluck's *Alceste*, and Nedbal claims that Sonnenfels was too biased to acknowledge Ranieri de' Calzabigi as the poet (31). Yet Sonnenfels writes that "the language of Herr von Calsabigi is the unaffected language of feeling" ("Die Sprache des H. von Calsabigi ist die ungekünstelte Sprache der Empfindung").[14] This hardly sounds like bias. More serious is Nedbal's unwitting distortion of a preceding sentence in which Sonnenfels explicitly praises Calzabigi. Sonnenfels writes: "His peculiar and great merit is doubtless the courage with which he has forsaken the preening style, overflowing with languishing subtleties, of his national poets, and has not sought the *sublime* in *stilted* expressions nor the *moving* in the *curlicues* of mindless ideas."[15] Nedbal misconstrues the thought thus: "Sonnenfels also stresses that the deforming, stilted, and voluptuous poetic decorations in Calzabigi's libretto have nothing to do with Viennese tastes but respond to audience tastes in Italy." Nedbal may be in the tricky situation of translating from one language not his own into another language not his own; if so, he deserved to receive more help from a copy editor than he evidently got. Again, *caveat lector*.

Figure 3: Josef von Sonnenfels (1733–1817); by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria

At the close of chapter 1, in a discussion of the "complex revisions" to *Die pücefarbnen Schuhe, oder die schöne Schusterinn* by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger and Ignaz Umlauf, Nedbal enters into dialogue with the dissertation of Lisa de Alwis[16] while addressing the effect that censorship might have had upon the "moral content" of this operatic celebration of foot fetishism (35).[17] At issue is a note, in the hand of chief censor Franz Carl Hägelin, singling out certain melodic / rhythmic features of an aria for their potential unseemly effect. As de Alwis observes, it is rare to find evidence that a censor considered music along with the text of the libretto. Nedbal is sure that performers at the court-supported theaters (as opposed to the suburban theaters) would have "scrupulously avoided" indulging in suggestive gestures or vocal inflections (36). De

Alwis, though, is ready to acknowledge the "complex game of cat and mouse" involved, and to entertain the possibility that audiences in the know may have enjoyed it.[18] When Nedbal does deal with music (38–39), one suspects that he may be taking too much at face value. So sure is he that librettist and composer have cleaned up equivocalities for Viennese consumption, that he mistakes patent strokes of humor for "a sense of righteousness" (39). Cobbler Sock's aria in *Die schöne Schusterinn* (see Nedbal's example 1.1 on p. 38) is not dwelling on uprightness when the cobbler admits his discomfiture when measuring a beautiful lady's foot. The incongruous vocal leaps from F below middle C to G above, *pp*, to repeat "und Verwirrung . . . mir erregt" ("and arouses confusion in me"), surely convey a comic admission of erotic stirrings. Just as funny is the emphasis given (in example 1.2 on p. 39) to Sock's professional duties ("was mir mein Amt auflegt") via longer rhythmic values and melodic leaps of as much as a 12th—as though those duties were lofty matters of state. For Nedbal, these only convey Sock's diligence. Yes, humor may be a matter of taste about which argument is pointless; but it seems to me that Umlauf's musical humor has been lost on this author.

The second chapter is addressed, at least initially, to *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, starting with the closing vaudeville as a customary locus of didactic maxims. Nedbal shows how Mozart improved upon convention by managing a gradual "recovery" from Osmin's outburst ("Verbrennen sollte man die Hunde"), rather than simply returning to the refrain as though nothing untoward had happened (51). In Vienna, vaudeville finales were for pointing morals. In Paris, they might be for other things, such as, in *Les Pèlerins de la Mecque*, "ribald accounts of various characters' pilgrimages" (53). At least one of those ribald accounts gets lost in the translation. In the second strophe, for "Un vieux Gouteux de Paris" Nedbal should have read "an old gouty Parisian" (not "an old taster from Paris"), who was foolish enough to entrust his housekeeper to two friends on pilgrimage. "Il ne fut pas du voyage; / Elle en alla meilleur train" is blunted in translation; its point might be rendered as "he didn't make the trip, but she went full speed ahead."[19]

[4] It would have been interesting to pull Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann's *Adelheit von Veltheim* into the comparison of Christoph Friedrich Bretzner and Stephanie, since it (narrowly) preceded Bretzner.[20] In this seraglio story, a German noblewoman leaves her father to search for her lover, Karl von Bingen, whom she believes to be captive in a Tunisian prison. En route, she is captured by a Turkish ship, and winds up in the harem of Achmet (a character like Pasha Selim), where she discovers that her beloved is the slave in charge of the garden, going by the name of Osman (*un finto giardiniero*, so to speak). Moreover, Osman has become the confidant of Achmet. After many complications, Adelheit's father, who has sought his daughter far and wide, so moves Achmet with his eloquence that Achmet frees the lovers and his entire harem. Here, the closing maxim is put into the mouth of Mehmet, overseer of the harem (Bretzner/Stephanie's Osmin). Mehmet declines the Bassa's offer of freedom with the words, "Bey dir leb' und sterb' ich! Denn du hast mich von der Wahrheit überzeugt: daß der große und rechtschaffene Mann unter jedem Himmelstrich geboren wird" ("I shall live and die in your house! For you have convinced me of the truth that the great and upright man may be born in any clime"). An enlightened moral if ever there was one! Still, Nedbal makes the compelling point that Bretzner and Stephanie diverge in ways that reflect "the divergent social and political functions" of north German and Viennese operas, respectively. Bretzner was not writing to display the magnanimity of absolute monarchs on the stage of the court theater; Stephanie was (62). Also welcome in this chapter is the attention devoted to the musical highlighting of maxims delivered from the stage, especially within finales. The second-act finale in *Entführung* is only the most famous case ("Es lebe die

Liebe") of an approach traced to Giovanni Paisiello, André Grétry, and Umlauf. Nedbal takes care to show how Stephanie the Younger crafted translations and adaptations of libretti to reinforce the moralistic content. The extensive tabular text-and-translations may seem like overkill, but they are helpful for readers without ready access to, say, the second-act finale of Umlauf's *Das Irrlicht* (table 2.3 on pp. 73–78).

In chapter 3, Nedbal makes fine observations about the treatment of maxims in *Die Zauberflöte*. For example, when the Three Ladies, Tamino, and Papageno shift (act 1, no. 5) into maxim mode for "Bekämen doch die Lügner alle ein solches Schloß vor ihren Mund" ("If only all liars would have such a lock placed on their mouths"), rests break up the vocal text into digestible bits, as though an aphorism were being dictated to someone expected to write it down. Nedbal points to some of the madrigalisms in the contrast painted between "statt Haß, Verleumdung, schwarzer Galle" ("instead of hatred, slander, black bile") and "bestünde Lieb und Bruderbund" ("love and brotherhood would prevail"). He might also have mentioned what seems the most obvious contrast: between unison texture and harmony (with attendant metaphorical implications). He rightly suggests that, for the purpose of delivering maxims, dramatic oppositions momentarily fall away; there is no hint that the Three Ladies and the two men will wind up on opposite sides of the dramatic fence, nor any that the Ladies are dissembling didacticism only to gull Tamino over to the Queen's employ.

On the other hand, Nedbal plays fast and loose with Lessing (90). He focuses on Lessing's discussion (in the second number of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, May 5, 1767) of Johann Friedrich von Cronegk's tragedy *Olindo und Sophronia*. Lessing was struck, so Nedbal tells us, by the murmurs of approval in the parterre whenever one of the characters delivered a maxim: "I thought: 'Wonderful! People love morals in this city.'" However, if one tracks down the original context (and the author's manner of reference to the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, plus the fact that this item is missing from the list of primary sources in the bibliography, does not make that easy), one sees that this is only half the story. What Nedbal translates as "I thought" reads "*Theils* dachte ich: Vortrefflich!" ("*Part* of me thought, 'Wonderful!'"; my emphasis). One must read beyond what Nedbal quotes to learn the "other part" of Lessing's reaction to the audience's response: "Theils fiel mir zugleich mit auf, wie schielend, wie falsch, wie anstößig diese vermeinten Maximen wären, und ich wünschte sehr, daß die Mißbilligung an jenem Gemurmle den meisten Antheil möge gehabt haben."[21] ("At the same time, it occurred to me how cock-eyed, how wrong, how offensive these supposed maxims were, and I very much wished that disapproval would have made up the major portion of the murmurs.") It is one thing to take sources at face value, as this author seems inclined to do; it is another to consider only one of the faces that a given source presents. Nonetheless, Nedbal ends up with a useful insight: that *Die Zauberflöte* may fairly be regarded as a musical commonplace book.

Nedbal builds in interesting ways on the work of Mary Hunter, who observed a functional distinction between *opera buffa* as "first and foremost a pleasure-giving entity" and vernacular theater as molded by "nation-building, proto-bourgeois, and generally edifying ideals."[22] As he sees it, a double standard obtained in censorship of Italian operas and of German operas, in part because the censoring was done in different offices (104). When an Italian comic opera was to be turned into a Singspiel, it fell to Viennese theater poets to purge the libretto of equivocality and unseemliness and to work in appropriate moralistic maxims, as Nedbal shows in German adaptations of two libretti written by Lorenzo Da Ponte for Vicente Martín y Soler, *Una cosa rara* (1786) and *L'arbore di Diana* (1787). For German-language repertoire, there was the formidable figure of Franz Karl Hägelin, who succeeded Sonnenfels as the court censor and served in that

capacity for 35 years. Joseph II seemed to care but little about the moral tone of Italian libretti; when it came to German *Büchl* (libretti), he could become downright prudish. This was true not only for the National Singspiel in 1778–83 but also for the "German *Opéra comique*" of 1785–88 (114).[23] The double standard also obtained elsewhere in the Habsburg realm (105). Among Mozart's operas, the three with libretti by Da Ponte frame the matter of moral instruction more ambiguously, even ironically, whereas *Entführung* and *Zauberflöte* are overtly sententious. Nedbal has Mozart donning "multiple masks in his creative endeavors," according to the librettist. He could be the "pontificating educator in the German operas," but then become a musical Alfonso in support of Da Ponte's points about "the immense complexities of moral dilemmas" (101).

[5] Hence (and this is the argument in chapter 4), *Die Zauberflöte* showed greater continuity with the higher-minded Singspiel repertoire of Joseph's National Theater than it did with the usual fare at the suburban theaters, which was not only racy but tended to ridicule didactic posturing in any form. The documentary basis for the argument is a roster of eleven "original heroic-comic operas" produced at Schikaneder's Wiednertheater (from *Oberon, König der Elfen* in November 1789 to *Das Labyrinth* in June 1798) and a roster of twelve such operas produced at Marinelli's Leopoldstädter Theater (from *Das Glück ist kugelrund* in February 1789 to *Der Sturm* in November 1798). From these Nedbal selects material for three comparative case studies: risqué love duets from *Das Sonnenfest der Brahminen* and *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* (at least risqué by comparison with "Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen"); portrayals of marital infidelity in Schikaneder's *Der Höllenberg*, *Der Spiegel von Arkadien*, and *Das Labyrinth*; and the use of musical instruments for sexual insinuation (Joachim Perinet and Wenzel Müller's *Der Fagottist, oder Die Zauberzither*). And yet, Nedbal also shows that "suburban operas" were not without their didactic elements and their maxims (even if these were often satirically framed).

Scholarly attention to this repertoire is welcome.[24] I am not familiar with it, but one can easily imagine that these Singspiele (and possibly the "spoken" theater pieces offered there, too) are rife with local humor, surreptitious political allusion, and intertextual cross-reference. One can also imagine that many a joke would require enough scholarly contextualization to kill its humor. Nedbal has done his best with tricky material, but what he adduces as salacious (from an eighteenth-century Viennese point of view) seldom seems so anymore. Let one example suffice: the allegedly risqué love duet in *Der Spiegel von Arkadien*,[25] wherein the princess Philanie thanks the servant Metallio for rescuing her from an evil magician; only her gratitude is so fervently conveyed (with copious hand-kissing) that Metallio responds with unwanted physical symptoms. Discussing the first part of the duet, Nedbal describes as a distortion of Philanie's "noble, exemplary statement" what is simply a consequent phrase (see example 4.1 on p. 128 and the discussion on p. 129). Further in the same number, Philanie assures Metallio, "Stets wirst du meinem Herzen der zweite Liebling sein" (that is, he will hold second place next to her high-born sweetheart) to which Metallio responds, "Ich fürcht' in meinem Herzen wirst du die Erste sein!" This is, *pace* Nedbal, not a "claim" but an expression of anxiety (*fürchten*, not *behaupten*). Nedbal hears in this exchange a reference to the duet in *Die Zauberflöte* between Papageno and Papagena, where "Mozart's comical couple briefly bicker about whether their next child will be a Papageno or a Papagena" (129). A musical connection there may well be, but Mozart's couple are not bickering; they are gleefully painting their future as a continuous alternation of male and female progeny.

Nedbal adduces two reasons for the alleged moral laxity of the suburban theaters. First, theater directors needed to do a brisk business to keep their enterprises afloat; they did not have the

luxury of imperial subsidy (145–46). Second, censorship of the suburban theaters was relaxed due to shifting views within the government about the function of the theater, despite the lip service still paid to the notion of theater as a school for morals (147–48). Vernacular theater (at least in the suburbs) was increasingly expected not so much to edify as to distract, on the premise that a well-entertained public would be less eager to embrace revolutionary ideas.

If what Nedbal calls the "politics of morality" (155) at the suburban theaters went in a direction that made the probity of *Zauberflöte* seem exceptional, back at the court theater certain intellectuals in the 1790s looked back with yearning to Joseph's Singspiel troupe and bemoaned the allegedly pernicious effects of Italian opera. In his fifth chapter, Nedbal documents these viewpoints with materials from the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.[26] Leopold II (so we learn) was inclined to restore Singspiel but died before he could do so. The subsequent efforts of Johann Ferdinand von Kuefstein "ended with a fiasco" (157), about which we are given no details. Finally, Peter von Braun (1758–1819), the businessman who became lessee of the court theaters in 1794, managed to restore German-language opera the next year at the Kärntnertortheater. To compete with the suburban theaters, Braun adopted "the moralistic rhetoric used by Viennese reformers in the previous decades" (158). And so the first Singspiel offered, *Die gute Mutter* (May 11, 1795), based on a French original,[27] shows an adaptation process similar to that observed in the Viennese transformation of *La Rencontre imprévue* for setting by Gluck: take out ambiguities of situation, dialogue, or character; add maxims whenever possible and set them off clearly through musical means (fermatas, changes of mode and/or texture, rhythmic emphasis, etc.). Nedbal gives welcome attention to *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* by Franz Xaver Huber (librettist) and Peter Winter (composer), which Alfred Loewenberg once called "about the most successful German opera between *Zauberflöte* (1791) and *Freischütz* (1821)."[28] The discussion of Winter's music could use an example or two; but Nedbal's arguments about positive and negative moral points made in the libretto are persuasive. He suggests but does not elaborate an influence of "Winter's emphatic musical didacticism" on Beethoven in *Fidelio.* (Beethoven did write keyboard variations on Winter's ensemble "Kind, willst du ruhig schlafen" [WoO 76], and the variations would seem to confirm his familiarity with the original operatic context.)[29]

[6] The differences in censorship between suburban and court theaters stood out with special clarity during the Viennese rage for Luigi Cherubini; in August 1802, the Theater an der Wien and the Kärntnertortheater offered different adaptations of *Les Deux Journées* simultaneously (and under two different titles). Even faintly suggestive passages in the original libretto (by Jean-Nicholas Bouilly) were purged by Georg Friedrich Treitschke (in his adaptation for the court theater); Schikaneder left them in his translation. Both Treitschke and Schikaneder were careful to omit or alter anything that might be interpreted as conveying sympathy for the French Revolution. And both the court theaters and the suburban theaters responded to the *Koalitionskriege* (Coalition Wars) against France with understandable national fervor. *Die Freywilligen* by Stephanie the Younger and Franz Xaver Süßmayr, performed twice at the Kärntnertortheater in 1796, came close to being recruitment propaganda, complete with a final chorus the lyrics of which were circulated to promote audience participation (167). Still, Braun was not above pushing at least some lighthearted fare at the court theater toward the laxity characteristic of the suburban theaters. According to Nedbal (168), any opera in the "heroic-comic" repertoire that involved absolutist rulers and armed international conflicts hewed to the ideology of uprightness. But when it came to pieces like *Der Dorfbarbier* (music by Johann Baptist Schenk, libretto by Josef Weidmann, premiered October 30, 1796),[30] standards were loosened and even stretched far enough to allow some comic extemporization, that bane of the high-

minded. A certain extreme was reached in Friedrich Karl Lippert's Singspiel adaptation of *Don Giovanni* (first performed at the Kärntnertortheater on December 11, 1798). By making Don Juan into an even worse villain (murdering three characters instead of just one), Lippert could claim to simplify the moral ambiguities of Da Ponte's libretto. By intensifying the salaciousness of the story (the "champagne aria" in particular), Lippert could (on Nedbal's account) compete with the suburban theaters on their own turf. By 1803, however, theater censorship passed to the jurisdiction of the police, and became stringent once again. Lippert's adaptation was altered accordingly. Under such conditions, Beethoven took up the libretto for his only opera.

In his final chapter, Nedbal wishes to correct the impression of direct and decisive lineage from the repertoire of *opéra comique* to *Fidelio* by insisting on links with Viennese operatic practice during the 1790s. Starting with the arias Beethoven composed for the 1795 revival of *Die schöne Schusterinn*, Nedbal notes the two-staged transformation of Baron Picourt's hedonist credo "Plaisir! O doux plaisir!" (in Stephanie's translation, "Vergnügen! dir ergeb' ich mich") into the generalized encomium to joy, "O welch ein Leben," which is in line with the didactic cleansing often visited upon French texts in libretti for Vienna. There seems no basis for claiming that Beethoven was personally responsible for this cleansing, or that it reflects "Beethoven's moralistic approaches to his early operatic projects" (196). Still, Nedbal takes the replacement aria as proof that Beethoven "subscribed to the views of theater as a moral institution even before Vienna was flooded with revolutionary operas" (186), that is, he had taken to heart the Viennese values of "didactic national theater" years before Cherubini caught on there. He neglects to mention that Beethoven had been exposed to a steady stream of *opéras comiques* as an adolescent court musician in Bonn, where the electoral theater was created only months after Joseph established his National Singspiel. Beethoven had grown up with Grétry, Monsigny, Nicolas Dézède, and François-André Philidor and their more or less didactic librettos, all translated into German (unless presented by a native French troupe).[31] As Thomas Bauman pointed out, "the Rhenish region was wholly dominated by the example of *opéra-comique*."[32]

Figure 4: Johann Gottlieb Stephanie der Jüngere (1741–1800); by courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria

Not surprisingly, many plays of Stephanie the Younger, Cornelius Hermann von Ayrenhoff, and Franz von Heufeld also made their way from Vienna to Bonn, but the moralizing approach to theater was promulgated by Großmann and Christian Gottlob Neefe.[33] Neefe's very first composition for Bonn was a prologue (December 3, 1779) titled "Wir haben Ihn wieder!" which celebrated the return of Elector Max Friedrich from his annual trip to Münster. The first scene

shows two young lovers discussing Lessing's play *Nathan der Weise*. Scene 2 has the girl's mother forbidding her to attend the theater with her beloved, raising all the usual moral objections, which are countered by the young man in terms of the enlightened *Sittenschule* (school of morals). The argument is won when the young man points out that the elector himself will be attending the theater that night after a long absence, and they must be on hand to greet him.[34] Is it cynical to suggest that such protestations of theatrical rectitude need not be taken at face value? That it might have been politic and even profitable for theater directors to claim that what they did was edifying, especially when they did it in German? Even Beethoven's reported claims about opera having to be "something moral, elevating" (195) could use a little contextualizing. What else was a man of Beethoven's age going to tell a young boy like Gerhard von Breuning? Does Rellstab's claim that Beethoven found *Don Juan* and *Figaro* "repugnant" not seem a wee bit exaggerated?

[7] Nedbal has useful things to say about the one scene of *Vesta's Feuer* that Beethoven completed, during his months of accepting free room and board at Schikaneder's newly built Theater an der Wien (not to mention admission to performances and concertizing opportunities). He makes sensible comparisons between Bouilly and Josef Sonnleithner (Beethoven's librettist for the 1805 *Fidelio*) with regard to Marzelline's first aria, and across the board with respect to Rocco's "gold" aria (where one can see Treitschke combining strophes by Sonnleithner with strophes by Stephan von Breuning, with at most three lines of his own invention). He is perceptive about the erotic component of the domestic fantasies conveyed in Marzelline's first aria, although he might have started already with lines 3–4: "Ein Mädchen darf ja, was es meint, / Zur Hälfte nur bekennen" ("a maiden is allowed to acknowledge only the half of what marriage entails"). For whatever reasons, the notoriously conservative Viennese censors seem not to have objected to this text. Nor did they balk at the prisoners' chorus, with its celebration of *Freiheit*—a word permissible so long as it meant liberation from prison and nothing more. What caused difficulty, to judge from Sonnleithner's two petitions to the competent authorities, was the possibility that Pizarro's evil actions might be perceived as a metaphor for the injustices of contemporary society, whereas Sonnleithner insisted that the grudge borne by Pizarro was presented in the opera as entirely personal.

Nedbal devotes particular attention to the end of *Fidelio*, since finales were the usual site for presenting morals and maxims. He contrasts Dom Fernand's direct address to the audience in Bouilly's finale (an almost Shakespearean piercing of the "fourth wall") with "the communal maxims of Viennese operas" (201–2), which invite a more comprehensive relevance (as if to say, "this applies to *all* of us"). The most telling difference here is the one between Bouilly's routine celebratory conclusion and Sonnleithner's concluding allusion to Friedrich Schiller ("Wer ein holdes Weib errungen"), which for all we know could have been at Beethoven's behest. In this context, Nedbal invokes Schiller's 1784 address to the Deutsche Gesellschaft in Mannheim, "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?"—quoting the playwright's description of the theater stage as "the communal channel in which the light of wisdom flows down from the thoughtful, better portion of the populace and therefrom . . . spreads through the entire state" ("der gemeinschaftliche Kanal, in welchem von dem denkenden bessern Teil des Volkes das Licht der Weisheit herunterströmt und von da aus . . . durch den ganzen Staat sich verbreitet").[35] Is Beethoven's 1805 setting of "Wer ein holdes Weib errungen" really a "musical representation" of this idea, as Nedbal claims (203)? If so, then Marzelline, Jaquino, and Rocco must be the "denkender besserer Teil des Volkes," because they introduce the maxim, seconded by Don Fernando in what Nedbal characterizes (without further comment) as a "buffo-like repetition"

(205). That said, Schiller's essay did appear in the first issue of his journal *Rheinische Thalia* in 1785. The second issue (1786) began with "An die Freude," which Beethoven presumably read. Schiller's first plays (*Die Räuber* and *Fiesco*) were performed in Bonn with Beethoven playing in the orchestra providing the incidental music. Schiller was almost certainly relevant to the early molding of Beethoven's outlook on drama—just not in the way implied here by Nedbal.

The motivic resemblance adduced between "Wer ein holdes Weib errungen" in Beethoven's finale and "an der treuen Gattin Brust" in Winter's first-act sextet in *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* is tantalizing, especially given the congruity of the respective poetical texts. One only wonders why, to demonstrate the resemblance (example 6.6 on p. 207), Nedbal has recourse to the 1814 version of *Fidelio*, when his reference text thus far has been the 1805 version (already shown in example 6.5 on p. 205).[36] When it comes to "taking care of Marzelline," he must consider all three versions of *Fidelio* and Ferdinando Paer's *Leonora* as well. Bouilly provided a denouement for the character and her unusual situation—a denouement ignored by Sonnleithner and Beethoven in 1805. Breuning provided a makeshift denouement in 1806, which Beethoven buried in his ensemble part-writing. Only in 1814 was Marzelline allowed a musically independent, if fleeting, expression of confusion at the revelation that her betrothed is actually a married noblewoman ("O weh mir, weh mir! Was vernimmt mein Ohr!"). Either way, Marzelline rises to the moral occasion by the time she joins in the response to "O Gott, welch' ein Augenblick!" In 1814, she even precedes her father in pointing the moral, "Du prüfest, du verlässt uns nicht." This is, as Nedbal indicates, a defter and more high-minded handling of the denouement than Paer's dramatically awkward last-minute love duet between Marcellina and the still-disguised Fedele in front of Florestan (208)!

The comparison with *Les Deux Journées* is very much to the point, although Nedbal understates the situation by noting only the rival productions of Cherubini's opera in 1802 (220, n56). Once produced, *Les Deux Journées* remained in the repertoire for many years, so that *Fidelio* (at least in its first two guises) could not help but be compared with it.[37] Nedbal rightly draws attention to the opening ballade, "Un pauvre petit Savoyard," but then he chides Bouilly for not connecting the moral of this story to the dramatic present (209). Bouilly did not need to, since he here followed familiar theatrical convention: the "doublet" or piece of diegetic music that summarizes the plot (as in Pedrillo's *Romanze*, "Im Mohrenland gefangen war"). Only inattentive audience members could have failed to make the connection. Nedbal goes on to contrast the heavy-handed moralizing favored in Vienna with the subtler approach typical of *opéra comique*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, we learn, seems to have preferred the latter (and to have altered his own Singspiel librettos accordingly), whereas Schiller aligned himself with the Viennese stance, using it once again as a club to beat the French for their supposed moral inferiority. Whether Schiller's opinions about the use of chorus in tragedy are really relevant to the use of the chorus in *Fidelio* would require separate study, but those opinions were directed at French spoken tragedies; unless Nedbal brings *tragédie lyrique* and other operatic genres into the consideration (214), it is an apples-and-oranges comparison.

[8] In the end, Nedbal wants us to understand that "Beethoven's *Fidelio* was not just a transplanted French rescue opera" (214). It ought not to be reduced to that, surely, but it was that to begin with. Of course, the moral messaging relevant to the post-revolutionary Parisian situation had to be expunged and replaced with (and supplemented by) moral messaging deemed appropriate in Vienna. That is how theatrical adaptation works. The coda of the chapter ("Suppressing *Fidelio*'s Germanness") passes quickly over the degradation of *Fidelio*, via the "exclusivist nationalism and isolationism that marked post-WWI German musicology in general"

(214), into a Nazi propaganda tool, which (Nedbal suggests) has made more recent musicologists (especially non-German musicologists) downplay or even ignore the role of *Fidelio* "in constructing the emerging notions of German national and moral identity" (216). Rather, it has been "sanitized" (215) into what Paul Robinson has called "an all-purpose opera of liberation."[38] In an epilogue, Nedbal lingers over Adolph Bernhard Marx's exploitation of Gluck and Beethoven as clubs with which to flail at Italian music, while insisting that even this appropriation did not "add up to the more aggressive nationalism" embraced by some German thinkers in the late nineteenth century (224). Richard Wagner did the more nefarious work here, in his Beethoven essay of 1870 and in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. In other words, Nedbal leaves plenty of distance between eighteenth-century didacticism and Wagnerian chauvinism. The former was the price Viennese theater professionals paid for realizing the idea of state-supported theater in the German language. At the same time, the moralizing in the German libretti of Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, and their contemporaries reflects the Enlightenment conviction that theater ought to engage (and not simply divert) the society of which it was a part. If we can see the moral fervor of "Viennese opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven" in this light, perhaps we can overcome our mistrust of didacticism, even if we do not embrace it to the extent Nedbal seems to hope (227).

In sum, Nedbal's book presents what Americans would call a mixed bag. The topic is worthy, and we are led to consider interesting questions and pertinent sources (primary and secondary). But, as my repeated admonition of "caveat lector" has made clear, one cannot trust the argument as far as one might hope. Careful readers will want to have the original texts to hand to make sure that the sources have been accurately understood; and they will want to think somewhat more critically than the author has done about how the sources are to be taken—at face value or *cum grano salis*? This concerns musical as well as textual sources. And one should not expect to rely on the three-page index, which does not even amount to a complete *Namensregister* (index of names). The book ought to have been better, and better made. One fears that the publisher has left the author in the lurch. Anyone who has worked with a proper copy editor knows how salutary (if painful) that process can be. Not only are we saved from our blunders, but we are pushed to do better work than we thought we could do. Sadly, Martin Nedbal does not seem to have had the benefit of such a process. The next time around, *caveat auctor*.

References

1. Martin Nedbal, "Morals across the Footlights: Viennese Singspiel, National Identity, and the Aesthetics of Morality, ca. 1770–1820" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2009). ↑
2. Thomas Bauman, *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Bauman's book is based on his (much lengthier) dissertation, "Music and Drama in Germany: A Traveling Company and Its Repertory, 1767–1781" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1977). ↑
3. In the following, all parenthetical references in the run of text will be to pages in the book under review. One difference between the titles of the dissertation ("Viennese Singspiel") and of the book ("Viennese Opera") is justified by the attention given to *opéra comique* and *opera buffa* in Vienna, but the emphasis remains on German-language opera. ↑
4. Nedbal follows the example of Jörg Krämer, who noted that musical and spoken theater were so mixed in the productions of eighteenth-century German itinerant troupes that one could not really speak of a

"reines Sprechtheater" (what in colloquial English is tellingly called "legit theater"): "Almost all forms of theater are in practice permeated with music. German music theater and German spoken theater form a unity in the 18th century." Jörg Krämer, *Deutschsprachiges Musiktheater im späten 18. Jahrhundert: Typologie, Dramaturgie und Anthropologie einer populären Gattung*, Studien zur deutschen Literatur 149 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998) 1:29. ↑

5. As translated by Nedbal (4) from the unpaginated *Vorrede* to Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Nöthiger Vorrath zur Geschichte der deutschen Dramatischen Dichtkunst, oder Verzeichniß aller Deutschen Trauer-, Lust- und Sing-Spiele, die im Druck erschienen, von 1450 bis zur Hälfte des jetzigen Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1757). Original wording: "Und ob sie gleich bey solchem heilsamen Zwecke nicht allemal die dramatischen Regeln beobachtet haben: so sind doch auch ihre hierwider begangenen Fehler, bey den beobachteten guten, obwohl einfältig vorgetragenen Sittenlehren, viel ehrwürdiger; als die ausschweifendsten Spitzfindigkeiten des italienischen Witzes, die größte Richtigkeit der gallischen Bühne, und die rasende Wildigkeit der brittischen Lustspiele, bey dem Mangel sittlicher Unsträflichkeit nimmermehr seyn können." This last phrase has been misconstrued in the translation; the point is that the Italians, French, and British all fall short with respect to moral purity ("sittlicher Unsträflichkeit"). And "einfältig vorgetragenen" might have been rendered as "artlessly presented," rather than "monotonous" (*eintönig*). ↑

6. This chapter constitutes an addition to Nedbal's doctoral dissertation, the main body of which starts with what is chapter 2 of the book. The complexities surrounding the premiere in Vienna were uncovered by Bruce Alan Brown, "Gluck's *Rencontre Imprévue* and Its Revisions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, no. 3 (1983): 498–518. ↑

7. See the transcription by Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre*, 408, especially the sentence, "C'est quici on Ne veut ny du trop tendre, ny du trop amoureux, et encore moins du trop bas" ("The fact is that here, we want neither what is too tender nor what is too amorous nor, even less, what is too base"). ↑

8. Ibid.,7. ↑

9. Ibid., 8. ↑

10. Ibid., 5. ↑

11. Anonymous, "Auszug eines Briefs von Wien, die dasige deutsche Schaubühne betreffend," *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Kunst* 10, no. 1 (1763): 168–69. Original wording: "Sollten Sie glauben, daß man ein solches Stück, ein wahren *Nonsense*, sich unterstehet, in einer Residenzstadt, und zwar bey Eröffnung der Bühne aufzuführen. Wie entfernt ist die Hoffnung, jemals in unserm Vaterlande die Schauspiele zu einem gewissen Grade der Vollkommenheit zu bringen, so lange noch Weiskerne sich unterstehen dürfen, zur Schande Deutschlands, an einem Orte, wie Wien, aufzutreten." Weiskern's *Vorspiel* does in fact include ridicule of moral precepts. The exchanges in scene 2 between Weiskern and Prehauser remind of exchanges nearly 40 years later between Tamino and Papageno. Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern, *Die Herstellung der Deutschen Schaubühne zu Wien . . . in einem Vorspiele gefeyert* (Vienna: Ghelen, 1763). ↑

12. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Briefe, die Neueste Literatur betreffend* (Berlin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1759), letter no. 17, February 16, 1759. Original wording: "'Niemand, sagen die Verfasser der Bibliothek, wird leugnen, daß die deutsche Schaubühne einen grossen Theil ihrer ersten Verbesserung dem Herrn Professor *Gottsched* zu danken habe.' Ich bin dieser Niemand; ich leugne es geradezu. Es wäre zu wünschen, daß sich Herr *Gottsched* niemals mit dem Theater vermengt hätte. Seine vermeinten Verbesserungen betreffen entweder entbehrliche Kleinigkeiten, oder sind wahre Verschlimmerungen." ↑

13. Joseph von Sonnenfels, *Briefe über die wienerische Schaubühne* (Vienna: Kurtzböck, 1768), 432. Original wording: "sie werden zwar nie so tief in dem Schlamm des Unsinns, und der Unanständigkeit versinken; aber auch nie sich in so hohe Gegenden aufschwingen: wir sind weder zu solchen Schönheiten, noch zu solchen Fehlern groß genug." ↑

14. Ibid., 21. ↑

15. Ibid. Original wording: “Sein eignes und großes Verdienst ist ohne Zweifel der Muth, mit welchem er den strotzenden, und von tändelnden Spitzfindigkeiten überlaufenden Stil seiner Nationaldichter verließ, und das *Erhabene* nicht in den *Stelzen* des Ausdruks, das *Rührende* nicht in dem *Schnirkelwerke* verstandloser Einfälle suchte.” ↑

16. Lisa de Alwis, “Censorship and Magical Opera in Early Nineteenth-Century Vienna” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2012). ↑

17. Concerning the opera, see Jos van der Zanden, “Beethoven’s Contribution to Podoerotica: ‘Soll ein Schuh nicht drücken,’ WoO 91 no. 2,” *Beethoven Journal* 18, no. 1 (2003): 2–9. ↑

18. Alwis, “Censorship and Magical Opera,” 49–50. ↑

19. Nedbal’s rendering is “It was not the voyage; / It went better now.” In the fifth strophe of the same song (54), Nedbal mistranscribes a long ess as an eff; read *savoit* for *favoit*. The translation should be “who knew the route well.” ↑

20. Großmann’s play was printed in Bonn by early April 1780 and premiered with Neefe’s music in Frankfurt on September 23. A reprint of the libretto (Leipzig 1781) is available online. On October 4, Bretzner published an open letter to Johann André, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* 3, no. 42 (1780), 672: “Yesterday, I received Mr. Großmann’s new Singspiel *Adelheit von Veltheim*, just out, and found to my astonishment that we have traveled much the same path without either of us knowing anything at all about the other.” Original wording: “Gestern erhielt ich das neue nur herausgekommene Singspiel des Herrn Großmann: Adelheit von Veltheim, und fand zu meiner Verwunderung, daß wir beyde ohne das geringste von einander zu wissen, von ohngefehr beynahe einerley Weg gegangen sind.” Bretzner takes care to note that he had sent his *Belmonte und Constanze* to André in July for him to compose the music. He had no way of knowing that Stephanie would lightly edit the play and pass it to Mozart in Vienna. ↑

21. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie: Erster Theil* ([Bern: Haller], 1786), 18–19. ↑

22. Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment*, Princeton Studies in Opera (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 19, 13. ↑

23. Nedbal does not clarify the documentary basis for calling the revived Singspiel troupe an “*Opéra comique*.” ↑

24. Among recent scholarship in English, Nedbal cites the work of Thomas Bauman and David Buch. Scholarship in German includes Jennyfer Großauer-Zöbinger, “Das Leopoldstädter Theater (1781–1806): Sozialgeschichtliche und soziologische Verortungen eines Erfolgsmodelles,” in “Kasperl—La Roche: Seine Kunst, seine Komik und das Leopoldstädter Theater,” ed. Beatrix Müller-Kampel and Helmut Kuzmics, special issue, *LiTheS: Zeitschrift für Literatur- und Theatersoziologie* 3 (2010): 5–55; and Beatrix Müller-Kampel, *Hanswurst, Bernardon, Kasperl: Spaßtheater im 18. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003). ↑

25. This Singspiel is available in a modern edition: Franz Xaver Süßmayr, *Der Spiegel von Arkadien*, ed. David J. Buch, 2 vols., Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era 93–94 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2014). The edition is cited in an endnote (151, n20) but not included in the bibliography. ↑

26. Some but not all of these documents are available in Elisabeth Grossegger, *Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum*, vol. 2, *Pächter und Publikum, 1794–1817*, Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse 530 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989). ↑

27. Johann Baptist von Alxinger adapted the libretto from Chevalier Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian’s *La Bonne Mère*, Paul Wranitzky composed the music. ↑

28. Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597–1940*, 3rd ed. (London: Calder, 1978), col. 526. ↑

29. Steven M. Whiting, “To the ‘New Manner’ Born: A Study of Beethoven’s Early Variations” (PhD diss.,

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991), 290–91, 325–37. ↑

30. This date is given in Nedbal, 161 (table 5.1a); Franz Hadamowsky gives November 7, 1796, in *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), 1776–1966: Verzeichnis der aufgeführten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweis und täglichem Spielplan*, vol. 1, *1776–1810* (Vienna: Prachner, 1966), 30. ↑

31. On this point, see Thomas Betzwieser, "Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann und die Anfänge einer 'deutschen Schaubühne' in Bonn (1778–1783)," in *Beethoven und andere Hofmusiker seiner Generation: Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Bonn, 3. bis 6. Dezember 2015*, ed. Birgit Lodes, Elisabeth Reisinger, and John D. Wilson, Schriften zur Beethoven-Forschung 29 / Musik am Bonner kurfürstlichen Hof 1 (Bonn: Beethoven-Haus, 2018), 95–112; and Steven M. Whiting, "Before the Fever Burned: Beethoven and Grétry in Bonn," in ibid., 271–89. These are but the most recent reflections on information already given in Ludwig Schiedermair, *Der junge Beethoven* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1925), 50–53; and Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 27–33, 97–98. ↑

32. Bauman, *North German Opera*, 152. ↑

33. So much is apparent in the lead article in Christian August Bertram's *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* for December 25, 1779, 817, which details the first season of the electoral court theater with a duly (self?)-congratulatory tone: "The present Elector of Cologne, Maximilian Friedrich, has, among other improvements in every branch of learning, also elevated German dramatic art into a school of morals for his subjects." Original wording: "Der jetzige Kurfürst zu Köln, Maximilian Friedrich, hat unter andern Verbesserungen in jedem Fache der Wissenschaften, auch die Deutsche Schauspielkunst zu einer Sittenschule für Sein Volk erhoben." This has the look of a communiqué from the publicity department. The next sentence announces the appointments in 1778 of Großmann and Johann Friedrich Hellmuth as "Hofschauspieler" (court actors). ↑

34. As summarized in Heinz Ernst Pfeiffer, *Theater in Bonn von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ende der französischen Zeit (1600–1814)*, Die Schaubühne: Quellen und Forschungen zur Theatergeschichte 7 (Emsdetten: Lechte, 1934), 87–88, from a MS in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Allemand 208). ↑

35. I have altered Nedbal's translation somewhat. ↑

36. This is as good a place as any to protest that every music example extending two or more pages gets its captions scrambled, by starting with the "continuation" caption and ending with the more informative main caption. Again, where was the desk editor? ↑

37. *Fidelio* received its premiere at the Theater an der Wien on November 20, 1805, and it was repeated each of the next two evenings. On November 21, Cherubini's opera was given at the Burgtheater (with the title *Graf Armand*) and repeated on December 3 and 14 at the Kärntnertortheater. The two performances of the 1806 revision of *Fidelio* (March 29 and April 10) were framed with performances of Cherubini on March 17, April 11, and May 2. Cf. Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater*, 1:121. ↑

38. Paul Robinson, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Fidelio*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 74. ↑