

installed seating where the arena had been, and planted a rich garden below the stage. He was moderately successful. In July 1863 he was made bankrupt and attributed his failure to the difficulties he experienced after forming a company to build a new, modern theatre off the Haymarket. At the time of his dispute with Webster he had been residing in a vast mansion in Brompton, Hereford House. Some idea of the style in which he lived can be gained from the fact that the sale of the furnishings realized £3,000 at the time of his bankruptcy. He retired to Brighton, but not for long. He was discharged from bankruptcy at the end of 1863, and was quickly headed for greater triumphs in London and New York.

The end of the story as far as Boucicault and Webster are concerned is strangely quiet and restrained. On 3 January 1864 at Astley's, renamed the Royal Westminster Theatre, Boucicault and Webster signed a formal document dissolving the partnership. Webster's subsequent career was predictable—a solid, well-merited success in theatre management. Boucicault was to scale extraordinary heights; to give the first matinée performances in an English theatre; to send the first metropolitan touring companies round the States; to promote fireproof scenery. He was to write famous Irish dramas such as *The Shaughbraun* and *Arrab-na-Pogue*. But he never again tried to work in double harness in a theatrical venture.

IRVING AND CHALIAPIN

JAMES LEGGIO

WRITING his biography of Henry Irving in 1930, Gordon Craig claimed as Irving's true successor not an actor but an opera singer. Concluding a lengthy evocation of Irving's performance in the celebrated melodrama *The Bells*, Craig wrote: "There are actors living today, held as great actors by this generation; Irving was not exactly anything like these. We know that—but there is a great singer whom presumably you, the younger generation, do appreciate and place even higher than the actors I have referred to . . . Chaliapine by name."¹ The Russian bass had established an international reputation with *Boris Godounov*, introducing that opera to the West in the sensational Paris and London productions of 1908 and 1913; he was virtually identified with Mussorgsky's Czar. That Craig should choose him as Irving's heir, as the nearest approximation of the performer described at such length in *The Bells*, helps focus the vague comparison so often made between Victorian melodrama and opera. For Craig's assertion encourages one to compare Irving's performance in

The Bells with Chaliapin's in *Boris* more closely, to seek the specific points of affinity which prompted his remarks. The present essay will explore this operatic side of Irving, seeking the qualities Gordon Craig found reflected in Chaliapin.

During Irving's Lyceum management in the 'eighties and 'nineties, perhaps the most obvious connection of drama with opera was their overlapping repertory: innumerable plays were transformed into libretti and libretti into plays. The Lyceum production of *Faust*, for example, owed more to Gounod than to Goethe, as critics were quick to point out. Thus the same, or at least similar, roles were sometimes available to Irving and Chaliapin; both were notable interpreters of Mephistopheles, Irving in the Wills version of *Faust*, and Chaliapin in the operas of Gounod and Boito. More distantly, they held in common the role of Philip II of Spain, performing respectively in Tennyson's *Queen Mary* and Verdi's *Don Carlos*. Perhaps inspired by this repertory shared with opera, a number of Irving's younger contemporaries seem to have wanted to actually sing their roles. The stylized *voix d'or* of Sarah Bernhardt, for example, was admired as supremely lyrical, both in tone and in approximation of melody. Chanting lines on a single held note, she self-consciously aspired to the condition of music. Even a more naturalistic actress like Eleanora Duse was capable of operatic vocalades. When Verdi saw her in *The Lady of the Camellias*, he admired the ascending scale she displayed in the cry "Armando! Armando! Armando!" Indeed, he wished his opera version, *La Traviata*, had employed a similar melodic line. He remarked: "That little Duse! If I had heard her before writing my opera, what a splendid finale [of Act III] could I possibly have made of this *crescendo di Armandi* which she invented".²

The similarity of roles and of vocal practices strikes one with special force in the genre technically described as melodrama, the form of drama which, like opera, uses orchestral accompaniment. In such a genre, even a relatively unmusical actor like Irving, with his thin nasal voice, nonetheless had to manoeuvre within a complex musical scheme. In his most famous vehicle, *The Bells*, his entrance was as carefully orchestrated as that of any *divo*:

(Hurry music. Mathias passes the window, then enters . . . Chord-tableau.)
Mathias: It is II It is II (Music ceases.)³

The extraordinary impact of Irving's entrance in this play, so amply described in Gordon Craig's biography, clearly did not derive from the lines he delivers. Rather, the "moment" becomes effective only through its orchestral framework. The "hurry music" builds up the audience's anticipation, and the tableau chord arrests the action in order to prolong interest in the actual entrance. Then, the polite orchestral pause, by inviting applause, would complete the ritual; the orchestra organizes, and assures the success of, the ceremony of Irving's appearance.

But the care with which Irving had to place his speech within the

score's requirements ought to remind us that the orchestra was a potent force in its own right, and could be a serious rival for the audience's attention. In nineteenth-century opera, instrumental music had grown steadily in volume and expressive power, evolving from simple accompanist to symphonic rival. To Richard Wagner, this rivalry was the essence of music-drama, setting "the clear, specific emotion of the human heart, represented by the voice, against the wild primal feelings . . . represented by the instruments". Wagner's statement has been interpreted to mean that "the singer's is the voice of the Ego while the orchestra is the voice of the Id".⁴ Psychological drama thus unfolded not through the encounter between character and character, but between voice and orchestra. Melodrama extends this rivalry to the speaking voice. With the growing power of Victorian theatre ensembles, the centre of auditory attention shifted from the stage to the orchestra pit. And the instruments not only competed for the audience's attention, but determined when and how the actor could deliver his lines. The complex system of cues, as in Irving's entrance, tended to dictate when the actor might speak. But further, the harmony and rhythm of accompaniment acted as constraints on his inflection and pacing as well. The precisely defined pitch of the instruments, tuned to the notes of the scale, affected the indefinite, erratic pitch of the speaking voice; the orchestra's tempo markings set limits on the actor's freedom to vary his rate of delivery. Occupying the same aural space, yet wholly different in character, music became the speaker's adversary—exerting its influence by drawing the free pitch of the voice toward the fixed pitch of the instruments, and trapping its fluid accents within a prescribed rhythm. Dictating speech's inflection and accent, the orchestra could draw the voice towards song, towards becoming its puppet.

Contemporary accounts encourage one to believe that Irving exploited this rivalry between voice and orchestra. Percy Fitzgerald noted his attention to this as stage manager: "Even in the matter of the elaborate orchestral music, which we might fancy he would leave to the professors, he had much to say and alter . . . [he] will be heard to attempt, vocally, some rude outline of what he desires, and this rude suggestion the ready musicians will grasp and put into shape."⁵ Irving's rude vocal attempts at the orchestral melody persisted in his stage performances, and *The Bells* especially exploited this impulse toward song. Flaunting his voice before the instruments, he made its struggle to remain free the focus of the play, and its eventual capture the catastrophe. The play is named for Mathias's aural hallucination, the sleigh-bells associated with the murder he committed in a sleigh. The return of the emblem of guilt incites the orchestra to encroach more and more upon his vocal freedom, driving him toward hysteria, expressed as an uncontrollable urge to sing. As music compels him, Mathias becomes an involuntary vocalist; pitch and rhythm conspire to provoke him:

(Tyrolienne as before, and waltz. Mathias is seated—in the midst of the waltz Bells heard off. Mathias starts up and rushes into the midst of the waltzers.)

Mathias: The Bells! The Bells!

Catherine: Are you mad?

(Mathias seizes her by the waist and waltzes wildly with her.)

Mathias: Ring on! Ring on! Houpl! Houpl!

(Music forte—while the waltz is at its height the Act Drop falls.)

Dancing wildly to the rhythm of the waltz, his croaking voice trying to sing along with its melody, Mathias becomes at once hysterical and musical. His psychological crisis is provoked by the irresistible orchestra, dominating both voice and movement.

As further evidence of Irving's interest in musical effects, we should notice that he had an hallucination scene added to *The Bells*, a scene carefully scored to provoke vocal display. It is organized around an accumulation of sounds which tend to enforce a particular pitch.

(Bells continue.)

Mathias (alone—he comes forward and listens with terror.

Music with frequent chords): Bells! Bells! . . .

What is this jangling in my ears? What is tonight?

Ah, it is the very night—the very hour.

(Clock strikes ten.)

While the clock is striking, the stage darkens, Mathias becomes dizzy, and behind him is revealed a phantasmagorical tableau of the murdered man, sitting in his sleigh. At first Mathias does not see it:

(When the picture is fully disclosed, the Bells cease.)

Mathias (his back to the scene): Oh it is nothing. It is the wine and cold that have overcome me! (He rises and turns; goes up stage; starts violently upon seeing the vision before him . . . utters a prolonged cry of terror, and falls senseless. Hurried music as the Act Drop falls.)

Mathias's cry answers not only to what he sees but to what he hears. As throughout the play, the bells are used to arrest the voice at specific pitch values. In this scene, there is an especially noticeable fixity of pitch, from the sleigh bells, to the frequently repeated chords, to the fixed sounding of the clock chimes. Eventually, all these accumulated sounds have their effect; Mathias's voice becomes fixed on a single note as he utters a prolonged scream. From contemporary accounts of Victorian stage screams, they seem to have been very much like those stylized, oddly tuneful outcries which opera singers use to save wear on the voice—long held notes which are more like virtuoso cadenzas than like the ugly sounds of real persons in actual pain.

It seems to me that this is the scene Gordon Craig had in mind when he compared Irving and Chaliapin; *Boris Godounov* contains a rather similar hallucination scene which would have immediately reminded him of the clock chimes and sleigh vision in *The Bells*. Not only the staging and lighting, but the use of bells and orchestra against the voice must have encouraged a sense of *déjà entendu*. The music of the Clock Scene conjures up the child Boris had murdered to become Czar:

Boris: O remorseless conscience, how sternly do you punish me! (It grows dark and the clock with chiming figures begins to play.)

Boris: If you are marked with one spot, by just a single spot, the soul burns, the heart is filled with poison, one becomes so oppressed, that it is as if a hammer is beating in one's ears with reproaches and curses, and somehow one becomes stifled, stifled . . . and one's head spins . . . and one sees before one's eyes . . . the bloody child!

(A gust of wind blows a window open and extinguishes the light. The clock chimes eight.)

Boris: There . . . over there . . . what is it? There in the corner? It grows . . . it comes near me . . . it trembles and groans . . . away, away! Away child!⁶

The similarity to Mathias's hallucination scene is extraordinary. Both are retributive visions for murders committed long before, prompted by clock chimes "beating in one's ears with reproaches". As in *The Bells*, the chimes are emblematic of murder; they resemble the sound of the bells in the Coronation Scene, and remind Boris of the child he killed in order to be crowned. In both, the obsessive repetition of this key sound burdens the voice, making its accent increasingly mechanical, and increasingly fixed on a few pitches. In the opera, this effect includes an *ostinato* on A and D# which, imitating the bells, extends their influence through the orchestra. The Czar's voice responds to this music in a manner which would have been familiar to a close observer of Irving. Musicologists tell us that Mussorgsky's "treatment of texts . . . aims at the closest adherence to the accents of speech".⁷ Mussorgsky not only indicated melodic patterns resembling those of speech; he also took the liberty, in this scene, of sometimes not indicating any vocal pitch at all, instead putting a word like "spoken" over the staff. In Chaliapin's recordings we see this taken a step further. The bass declaimed even more of the climactic lines than Mussorgsky had prescribed; the more even mixture of speech and song brought his performance yet closer to Irvingesque melodrama. In his autobiography Chaliapin seems to hint at his source of encouragement for this kind of mixed delivery: "Whenever I find myself in London, it is with reverence and awe that I take off my hat, bow my head, and stand before the monument to Irving."⁸ It seems likely that Irving's highly influential style of melodrama encouraged Chaliapin, when he acted in an opera so much like Irving's vehicle, to act like Irving, and exploit the middle territory between speech and song.

In this Irving may be said to have anticipated an important feature of modern opera. Such mixed delivery characterizes the modern "sung play", notably the Berg-Büchner *Wozzeck*. As the *bel canto* school faded into the past, opera composers recovered the inflectional structure of speech. Berg used both speech and song, and a number of combinations and compromises called *Sprechstimme*. One critic, noting that the declamation in *Wozzeck* "establishes its own continuum from speech to song", discovers a principle applicable to Irving: "Constant shifting within this continuum produces a striking confusion between formalised declamation and precise representation of the speech of persons in horrible extremity. . . . It is their cunning confusion, I believe, that builds the illusion of hysteria, lying just below the level of the naturalistic and often prosaic

dialogue."⁹ It is exactly this unstable speech-song, seen in *Boris Godounov* and *Wozzeck*, to which Irving aspired, drawing the free pitch of his voice towards the fixed pitch of the musical instruments. By shifting between definite and indefinite pitch, by breaking down the distinction between them, he effectively portrayed the growing derangement of Mathias in *The Bells*. Exploiting the middle territory between speech and song, he anticipated the striking, mixed delivery so characteristic of Chaliapin, and of modern opera.

¹ Edward Gordon Craig, *Henry Irving*, J. M. Dent, 1930. See pp. 58-69.

² Quoted from Henry Knepler, *The Gilded Stage: The Years of the Great International Actresses*, William Morrow, New York, 1968, 261.

³ Text of *The Bells* cited from George Rowell's edition of *Nineteenth Century Plays*, Oxford University Press.

⁴ Bryan Magee, *Aspects of Wagner*, Stein & Day, New York, 1969, 66-7.

⁵ Percy Heatherington Fitzgerald, *Henry Irving: A Record of Twenty Years at the Lyceum*, Chapman & Hill, 1893, 108.

⁶ Myron Morris, trans., *Boris Godounov*, EMI/Angel, New York, 1963, pages unnumbered.

⁷ Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, Norton, New York, 1960, 586.

⁸ *Chaliapin: An Autobiography as told to Maxim Gorky*, Stein & Day, New York, 1967, 273.

⁹ Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, Vintage, New York, 1956, 227-8.

NOTES AND QUERIES

THE MRS SIDDONS OF SYDNEY (*T.N.* Vol. 25, pp. 97-103, 122-30). At the time of her death, Eliza Winstanley had to her credit at least 28 published novels. Seven of these were adapted by other hands to the London stage. They were (authors and theatres as quoted in Nicoll): *Woman's Worth*, by J. B. Howe, Eff. 28.9.63. *Twenty Straws*, by C. H. Hazlewood, Brit. 5.2.65; by Mrs H. Young, Eff. 7.3.65; by B. Henry, Octagon, Blyth 27.1.73. *The Mistress of Hawk's Crag*, by E. Towers, Eff. 15.7.65. *Desmoro; or, The Red Hand*, by W. J. Archer, Marylebone 6.10.66. *Carynthia or, The Legend of the Black Rock*, by E. Towers, Eff. 13.3.67. *Who Did It? or, The Track of Crime*, unknown author, Brit. 18.12.67. *Entrances and Exits*, by G. Spencer, East London 27.4.68.

ERIC IRVIN

Messrs. MARSHALL and J. B. LAIDLAW. Can anyone supply information on, or references to, the careers of the Marshall's, who exhibited panoramas at Spring Gardens, London and on tour c. 1820. Also to J. B. Laidlaw who was associated with the Marshall's about 1823 but in

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