

## Uses of Melodrama in Massenet's Operas after *Manon*: Sources and Dramatic Functions

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Like Fibich, Massenet was always fascinated by the expressive power of the spoken voice. Indeed, from his very first song cycle, *Poème d'avril* (1866), to his last opera, *Cléopâtre* (1912), spoken declamation regularly occurs in many of his vocal works, whether destined for the theatre (operas or stage music) or for more intimate performance spaces (chamber music, salons etc.).<sup>1</sup> Its first major, decisive use, however, dates from 1884, the year of the premiere of *Manon*, an opéra-comique in which spoken dialogues are consistently supported by a musical accompaniment.<sup>2</sup> This innovation was actually much commented upon, often with reservations,<sup>3</sup> even though it was not altogether unprecedented in France. Indeed, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, spoken declamation could occasionally occur at certain points or constitute the vocal material of specific numbers, labelled “melodramas”: these can be found in very famous opéras-comiques from the previous period which probably influenced *Manon*: Giacomo Meyerbeer's *L'Étoile du Nord* (1854), Ambroise Thomas's *Mignon* (1866), and Georges Bizet's *Carmen* (1875).<sup>4</sup>

Curiously, many reviewers were divided on the subject of the sources of the device in *Manon*, which admittedly contrasted with the ones used by Massenet's predecessors owing to its highly diverse configurations, at variance both with one another and with traditional operatic numbers. While a few critics rightly pointed out the occasional presence

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief survey of melodrama throughout Massenet's oeuvre, see especially my *Manon de Jules Massenet ou le crépuscule de l'opéra-comique* (Metz, 1999), p. 428–432; see also Jacqueline Waerber, *En musique dans le texte. Le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris, 2005), p. 324–331. For a general overview of melodrama in France during that period, see Jacqueline Waerber, *En musique dans le texte*, passim, as well as Elinor Nichols Olin, *Le ton et la parole: Melodrama in France, 1871–1913*, Ph.D. Diss., Northwestern University, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> See Jean-Christophe Branger, *Manon de Jules Massenet* (Metz, 1999), p. 385–419.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164–167.

<sup>4</sup> We can briefly mention that Massenet's first two opéras-comiques, *La Grand'Tante* (1867) and *Don César de Bazan* (1872), both include a few melodramas in the same vein as those three composers.

of melodrama throughout opéra-comique history, others interpreted it along the lines of ancient tragedy or Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (1770), or else as a consequence of Wagnerian theories, based on the fact that the new opéra-comique had a continuous texture.<sup>5</sup>

Had Massenet's career ended with *Manon*, it would be difficult to identify the sources of his melodramatic writing in his opéra-comique with certainty, all the more so since he never expressed himself precisely at the time. I therefore propose to discuss, given the inevitably limited scope of this article, the motivations that led the composer to make regular use of this unusual technique by focusing on his entire operatic output with a view to pointing out a few constant features. Indeed, despite persistent critical objections, Massenet continued to resort to the melodramatic technique in an exponential fashion as shown in Table I. While absent from *Le Cid*, *Le Mage*, and *Thaïs*,<sup>6</sup> it can be found in *Le Portrait de Manon*<sup>7</sup> and gained in importance from *Cendrillon* and especially *Grisélidis* onwards. The growth of this interest can be measured in the second version of *Sapho*, in which Massenet added a new scene, ending on a longer melodramatic episode than any in the first version.

In this respect, the melodramatic technique takes various forms from one opera to another. It may consist of a few words, as in *Werther* or *Roma* for instance, or of various numbers of episodes including a few spoken sentences (a single one in *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame* and *Ariane*, five in *Le Portrait*). Lastly, melodramas may concern the entirety of a 15-minute act: such is the case with the opening tableaux of *Bacchus* and *Amadis*, two operas Massenet wrote in succession at the end of his life. These two episodes are further characterized by the use of pantomime, entrusted to a group of dancers (*Bacchus*) or two characters (Elisène, the mother of *Amadis* and Galaor, and the Fairy), who share the stage with entirely spoken parts (or a chorus in the case of *Bacchus*). This pairing of choreography with declamation and music may recall one of the original principles of melodrama as stated by Rousseau in *Pygmalion*. Yet the two tableaux, dramatically contrasted, may also derive from other distinctive models in which accompanied declamation was paramount.

<sup>5</sup> See Jean-Christophe Branger, *Manon de Jules Massenet* (Metz, 1999), p. 385–419.

<sup>6</sup> Its absence can be easily explained, these three works having been intended for the Paris Opera, where the use of spoken utterances was prohibited until the end of the nineteenth century, with the exception of the “Wolf’s Glen Scene” in *Der Freischütz* during the 1841 performances, for which Berlioz succeeded in obtaining from the management the concession that spoken-sung exchanges be retained, whereas he was required to transform all other spoken episodes into recitatives (see Hector Berlioz, *À travers chants*, Léon Guichard /ed./, Paris, 1971, p. 249). *Ariane* thus marks an evolution, being the first opera with some spoken text intended for the Académie, as has been pointed out by Vincent Giroud (“Le désastre de Bacchus”, in: Jean-Christophe Branger et Vincent Giroud /eds./, *Figures de l’Antiquité dans l’opéra français : des Troyens de Berlioz à Œdipe d’Enesco* /Saint-Étienne 2008/, p. 183). Besides, Massenet himself boasted about this breakthrough in an interview with J. Darthenay (see note 15).

<sup>7</sup> Its presence, however, is hardly surprising in this small-scale work, a counterpart to *Manon* both from a literary and musical standpoint.

Table 1: Melodramas in Massenet's operas after *Manon*

Title	Genre	Composition	Premiere	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5
<i>Le Cid</i>	"Opéra"	1884	1885					
<i>Werther</i>	"Drame lyrique"	1885-1887	1892	⑤		①		
<i>Esclarmonde</i>	"Opéra Romanesque"	1887-1888					⑤	
<i>Le Mage</i>	"Opéra"	1889-1890	1891					
<i>Thaïs</i>	"Comédie lyrique"	1892-1893	1894					
<i>Le Portrait de Manon</i>	"Opéra-comique"	1892-1893	1894	◆ [5]				
<i>La Navarraise</i>	"Episode lyrique"	1893	1894		①			
<i>Sapho</i>	"Pièce lyrique"	1896	1897			①		
<i>Cendrillon</i>	"Conte de fees"	1895	1899			③	◆ [2]	
<i>Grisélidis</i>	"Conte lyrique"	1894; 1898; 1900-1901	1901	◆ [1]	②	⑤; ◆ [2]		
<i>Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame</i>	"Mystère"	1899-1900	1902		◆ [1]			
<i>Chérubin</i>	"Comédie chantée"	1902-1903	1905	◆ [5]	◆ [3]	◆ [4]		
<i>Ariane</i>	"Opéra"	1904-1905	1906				◆ [1]	
<i>Thérèse</i>	"Drame musical"	1905-1906	1907		◆ [1]			
<i>Sapho</i> [2d version with a new "scene"]	"Pièce lyrique"	1908	1909			① ◆ [1]		
<i>Bacchus</i>	"Opéra"	1907-1908	1909	◆ [all]		◆ [1]		
<i>Don Quichotte</i>	"Comédie héroïque"	1908-1909	1910		◆ [1]	◆ [2]		③
<i>Roma</i>	"Opéra tragique"	1909-1910	1912					②
<i>Amadis</i>	"Opéra légendaire"	1910 [1889-1890]	Posth., 1922	◆ [all]	◆	◆		
<i>Panurge</i>	"Haulte-farce musicale"	1911	Posth., 1913	◆ [1]	③; ①	③; ④		
<i>Cléopâtre</i>	"Drame passionnel"	1911-1912	Posth., 1914		◆ [1]		③	

◆ = long episode(s); [number of melodramatic episodes]

①, ②, ③, etc. = only a few words (one, two, three, etc.)

## Sources of the melodramas

The sources of the melodramas, listed in the synoptic table, can be grouped into three more or less distinct categories. The first gathers operas comprising fantastic episodes (characters with superhuman powers, divine or supernatural apparitions), such as *Esclarmonde*, *Amadis*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, *Grisélidis*, and *Don Quichotte* which, from this point of view, belong to the same tradition as *Der Freischütz*, where the famous “Wolf’s Glen Scene” is quite inseparable from its spoken interjections. Thus, in *Grisélidis* (Act 3), the Devil often commits his worst misdeeds as he speaks and all the Fairy’s interventions in *Amadis* are spoken.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the apparition of the Virgin in Act 2 of *Le Jongleur* is accompanied by a long melodrama spoken by Jean, marking his stupefaction.<sup>9</sup> A similar effect is found in *Don Quichotte* when the chief of the bandits, believing he recognizes in him one of God’s elects, bows before the knight who, having just sung his ecstatic prayer for salvation, responds to him in the same sung mode (Example 1).

THE CHIEF *parle.*  
Vraiment je crois rêver,  
C'est là peut-être le divin.

THE CHIEF *sings.*  
Vraiment je crois rêver,  
C'est là peut-être le divin.

Stesso Tempo. d = 120

Les grands traits émeuvent  
Ces traits inspirent des vœux.  
Et les yeux fulgurants  
Ces yeux qui flent.

<sup>8</sup> The prologue to *Amadis* also includes a supernatural apparition. A hunter, acting as narrator, tells the story of Princess Elisène, the last episodes of which take place, in quasi cinematographic fashion, before the audience's eyes: before she dies, on the advice of a fairy, she parts with her two children, giving them a talisman which might enable them to recognize each other later. Apart from the fantastic dimension, the use of melodrama may also be explained by a dramatic situation which resorts to devices characteristic of the melodramatic theatre, where musical melodramas were common.

<sup>9</sup> The spoken declamation illustrates a similar, albeit tragic feeling when, pressed by her judges, Esclarmonde realizes that, “to save the life” of her lover (Act 4), she must give him up.



Example 1: *Don Quichotte* (Paris, 1910), p. 148–149

On the other hand, both *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame* and *Don Quichotte* may also be seen in opéra-comique terms. Indeed, a second category of works containing melodramas like *Le Portrait de Manon*, *Cendrillon*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, *Grisélidis*, *Chérubin*, *Don Quichotte* and *Panurge* is unquestionably indebted to this genre, both owing to their subject and in terms of musical treatment, even though their generic label does not always indicate it, as shown by the list in Table 1. The subject is generally a comedy and the plot takes place in the eighteenth century, as in *Le Portrait de Manon*, *Chérubin*, and *Thérèse*. The first two works reflect the mildly erotic image of that period, whereas the last, with its subject matter, dark mood, and stylistic features, evokes the Revolutionary period and the serious opéras-comiques by the likes of Monsigny and Méhul. In these three operas, the use of melodrama may thus be linked to a glorious period which marked the birth, followed by the recognition throughout Europe, of a typically French genre which experimented with the device (which it dropped in the first half of the nineteenth century), a period when France occupied a prominent place in the history of arts and ideas: it will be recalled that Beethoven and Weber were influenced to a degree by the genre of opéra-comique in their own operas, which contain melodramatic episodes. Conversely, following its defeat to Prussia in 1870, France went through an intellectual “German crisis”:<sup>10</sup> it thus constantly sought to renew its ties with its past greatness; in the field of opera, it tried to oppose the dominance of the Wagnerian theatre by rejuvenating its past models. The

<sup>10</sup> Claude Digeon, *La Crise allemande de la pensée française (1870–1914)* (2/Paris, 1992).

use of melodrama thus offered French composers a way of distancing themselves from German influence, all the more so since Wagner was strongly critical of it.<sup>11</sup>

A third category is intimately connected to this ambition, which is characterized, in parallel fashion, by a major increase in operas set in antiquity, ancient Greece representing one of the crucial models of French culture in the eyes of many late nineteenth-century artists. Thus, in order to conform to the aesthetics of ancient tragedy, many operas and much stage music inspired by antiquity gave melodramas a leading role. Massenet, the first French composer to restore the device in his incidental music to *Les Érinnyes* (1873), then naturally used it in operas such as *Ariane*, *Bacchus*, and, to a lesser extent, *Roma* and *Cléopâtre*.

The synoptic table also shows, in more understated fashion, a fourth determining factor in Massenet's use of the melodramatic technique. Shortly before the premiere of *Thérèse*, the composer expressed himself clearly on this issue in an interview he gave to *Le Figaro*, in which he explained that he conceived the final scene of his "drame musical" as a melodrama because he knew it would be first performed by the contralto Lucy Arbell, who had just distinguished herself in exemplary fashion in a similar episode in *Ariane*, written especially for her.<sup>12</sup> He also praised the technique and the dramatic power it could unleash in certain cases:

[...] pendant les répétitions d'*Ariane*, à l'Opéra—vous savez que Mlle Lucy Arbell, au quatrième acte, y est une très émouvante Perséphone—nous avons eu, Mendès<sup>13</sup> et moi, à un certain moment où la situation grandit et devient suprêmement tragique, la sensation que les mots prononcés dépassaient la mesure de l'expression vocale, et que seule la parole, dégagée de toute musique, devait régner absolument. Ce qui fut convenu, et ce qui fut fait. C'est la première fois qu'on a parlé à l'Opéra. Mlle Arbell est aussi remarquable tragédienne que grande cantatrice : elle interpréta les belles strophes de Mendès avec un sentiment profond et une diction parfaite, et sa voix, lorsqu'elle récitait, ne cessait pas d'équivaloir à son bel organe de contralto. Claretie<sup>14</sup>, qui assistait à la répétition où nous fîmes cette expérience, pensa à profiter de cet élément purement dramatique pour la scène finale de *Thérèse*, où Mlle Lucy Arbell, après avoir chanté son rôle vocal avec une magnifique puissance d'émotion doit avoir un tel déchaînement tragique que le chant ne peut que céder la place à la parole : et c'est donc avant les dernières mesures toutes musicales, sur de la parole nue plus émouvante que du chant que s'achèvera son rôle.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Jean-Christophe Branger, *Manon de Jules Massenet* (Metz, 1999), p. 390.

<sup>12</sup> Massenet, in fact, composed the entire Act 4 with Arbell in mind. He also composed for her the *Expressions lyriques* (1909–1911), a song cycle combining singing and free or rhythmically noted declamation.

<sup>13</sup> Catulle Mendès (1841–1909), librettist of *Ariane* and *Bacchus*.

<sup>14</sup> Jules Claretie (1840–1913) librettist of *La Navarraise*, *Thérèse* and *Amadis*.

<sup>15</sup> See J. Darthenay, "Avant-premières. *Thérèse*, de M. Massenet à Monte-Carlo", *Le Figaro* (6 February 1907).

[...] during the *Ariane* rehearsals at the Opéra—you know that Miss Lucy Arbell, in the fourth act, is a highly moving Persephone—Mendès and I, at a certain point when the situation heightens and becomes supremely tragic, felt that the words uttered went beyond the powers of vocal expression and only words separated from any music had to reign supreme. This was agreed upon and accomplished. It was the first time one spoke at the Opéra. Miss Arbell is as remarkable a tragedian as she is an outstanding singer: she delivered Mendès’s beautiful stanzas with profound feeling and perfect diction, and her voice, when she declaimed, never ceased to be on the same level as her beautiful contralto instrument. Claretie, who attended the rehearsal during which we came up with this experiment, had the idea that he could take advantage of this purely dramatic element in the final scene of *Thérèse*, where Miss Lucy Arbell, after singing her vocal role with a magnificent emotional power, must reach such a tragic pitch that singing cannot but give way to speech; thus, before the final, purely musical bars, her role will end with bare speech, more moving than song.

In another interview, Massenet also stressed that Arbell, an excellent tragedian, was capable of “saying” verse correctly,<sup>16</sup> which implied that not all female singers could.<sup>17</sup> Fascinated by her acting talents, Massenet subsequently wrote several roles for her, as shown in Table 2; with the exception of two, all comprise one melodramatic episode, often in connection with a tragic situation: it may be for this reason that the roles of *Dulcinée* and *Colombe* include none.

Table 2: Lucy Arbell (1882–1947) and melodrama in Massenet’s operas

Opera	Role	Dramatic situation of the melodrama (s)
<i>Ariane</i>	Perséphone	She realizes that Ariadne is a human being, unlike her (Act 4)
<i>Thérèse</i>	Thérèse	She understands that her lover is going to be guillotined and decides to join him (Act 2)
<i>Bacchus</i>	La Reine Amahelli	She reads texts of meditation (Act 3)
<i>Don Quichotte</i>	Dulcinée	/
<i>Roma</i>	Postumia	She kills her daughter to save her from being buried alive (Act 5)
<i>Amadis</i>	Amadis	Overwhelmed with grief, Amadis expresses his pain (Act 2)
<i>Panurge</i>	Colombe	/
<i>Cléopâtre</i>	Cléopâtre	She admires the disturbing beauty of a slave (Act 2); a few words are uttered as she is dying (Act 4)

<sup>16</sup> In an interview with René Lara, Massenet expressed his satisfaction “that he could reuse in *Thérèse* the innovation [...] successfully attempted in *Ariane*: having certain dramatic parts of the poem declaimed against a musical background. The difficulty was to find the operatic artist who would be able to ‘say’ the verse; I have found her: it is Miss Arbell.” See “Une demi-heure avec Massenet”, *Le Figaro* (11 November 1906).

<sup>17</sup> For this reason no doubt, an alternative, sung-through version is found in an appendix to the piano-vocal score (Paris, 1907).

The melodramatic writing, whether it be the vocal line or its accompaniment, also merits discussion, insofar as it differs from one opera to another. It does not appear to be dictated by the subject matter, since the technique occurs, as we have noted, both in comedies and in tragic works. By the same token, the declamation may be free, as in *Werther*, *Le Portrait de Manon*, *Chérubin*, and *Bacchus*, or noted rhythmically, as is the case of the melodramas in *Esclarmonde*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, *Ariane*, and *Thérèse*. Occasionally the two forms coexist within a single work (*Grisélidis*, *Don Quichotte*, *Amadis*, and *Panurge*). The only determining element in the choice of a rhythmical declamation, no doubt better suited to ensure cohesion between text and music, seems to be the faster tempo.

The nature of the accompaniment also varies. It can be divided into three categories that can be found in a single work: recurrent themes (*Le Portrait de Manon*, *Thérèse*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, *Bacchus*, *Amadis*); fairly neutral chords used as in a recitative (*Grisélidis*, *Don Quichotte*, *Le Portrait de Manon*, *Ariane*); and more or less autonomous motifs (*Cendrillon*).

In fact, what matters most is not so much the form of the melodrama as its position within the opera. Generally, Massenet places his melodramas at the beginning or, most often, at the end of an act: *Amadis* and *Bacchus* begin, as we have seen, with extended melodramas, whereas *La Navarraise*, *Grisélidis*, *Sapho*, *Thérèse*, and *Don Quichotte* end, or contain an act that ends, on a spoken text. In all cases, melodramas often form a striking contrast with their musical environment. They may create a contrast between spoken voice and sung voice, spoken utterances often being the equivalent of a final outburst in the verismo tradition, as in *La Navarraise*, *Sapho*, *Don Quichotte*, and *Roma*.<sup>18</sup> Yet, on the whole, Massenet prefers to shift from one vocal style to another for the same singer, or he contrasts two characters dramatically by differentiating their vocal writing. Thus, the tension experienced by *Thérèse* is expressed by the gradual passage from singing to speech and then sung high notes at the end (Example 2), whereas a distance is created between the chief of the bandits who, as we noted (Example 1), declaims, and *Don Quichotte*, a transfigured, Christ-like figure, all of whose interventions are sung.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Confronted with her lover's dead body (Act 2), Anita, the "girl from Navarre", reveals her insanity by screaming; Sapho unleashes her fury at those who betrayed her, both her friends ("Canailles") and her lover ("Bourgeois", "Imbécile"), who shouts back "salle fille" (Act 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> tableau); Sancho screams "mon maître adoré" after *Don Quichotte* dies (Act 5); Posthumia exclaims "mon enfant!" as she stabs her daughter.

<sup>19</sup> This dual aspect can be found, although in reverse, in Act 3 of *Amadis*, where the Fairy's spoken interventions contrast with *Amadis*'s singing.





To conclude, melodrama thus occupies a unique place in Massenet's operas. Although its origins and uses vary from one work to the next, it most often expresses a sudden, intense dramatic mood. In this respect, Massenet's melodramatic writing anticipates Puccini's in *La Bohème*<sup>21</sup> or *Tosca*<sup>22</sup> and Charpentier's in *Louise*,<sup>23</sup> as well as Berg's in *Lulu*.<sup>24</sup> In the various examples we have examined, the spoken voice is often briefly used for its dramatic power, yet without constituting an entirely conceptualized device: it ultimately remains the mark of a composer possessed with an acute sense of the theatre and a capacity for self-renewal which he has too often not been given credit for. It also reveals the impulses of a creator who, like Fibich, looked for new relationships between words and music at the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Translated by Vincent Giroud

### **Die Verwendung des Melodrams in den Opern von Jules Massenet nach seiner *Manon*: Quellen und dramaturgische Funktion**

#### Zusammenfassung

Massenet war stets von der dramatischen Kraft des gesprochenen Wortes auf der Bühne, und auch außerhalb des Theaters, fasziniert. In seinen Opern wird die melodramatische Form im Zusammenhang mit dem Charakter eines phantastischen oder antiken oder an die opéra comique erinnernden Sujets verwendet. Einer der bestimmenden Faktoren für die ziemlich häufige Integrierung des Melodramas in die Oper war für Massenet auch das schauspielerische Talent der Sängerin Lucy Arbell. Er verwendete diese Form auf verschiedene Weise, von einer einfachen, gesprochenen Replik bis zu ihrer Verallgemeinerung unter Verzicht auf den Gesang in einer ganzen Szene; die entweder rhythmisch-

<sup>21</sup> Rodolphe and his friends exchange a few spoken words, noted rhythmically, when the young man gradually realizes that Mimi has died, before expressing his distress by singing ("Mimi!") in the opera's final measures.

<sup>22</sup> The murder of Scarpia by Tosca makes clever use of the device, with spoken declamation gradually moving into song.

<sup>23</sup> Spoken declamation occurs a few times in the work, in the spirit of opéra-comique (Act 2, scene 3) when the Bohemians call each other jokingly, but also to underline a dramatic situation, especially at the end of the work, when Louise conveys her desire for freedom by singing while her father reacts most often by speaking, eventually throwing her out (Act 4, scenes 2 and 3).

<sup>24</sup> Like Massenet, Berg displays an acute dramatic sense by adapting changes in the vocal writing to the dramatic situation, listing six modes of vocal performance in his score: "Der Text wird auf 6 Arten interpretiert: 1. als unbegleiteter Dialog; 2. als freie Prosa (begleitet); 3. rhythmisch festgelegt [...]; 4. als Sprechstimme in hoher, mittlerer und tiefer Lage; 5. halb gesungen [...]." See Alban Berg, *Lulu* (Vienna, 1964), p. [iv].

sierte oder freie Deklamation wird durch eine mehr oder weniger inhaltstragende Musik begleitet (entweder als gesprochenes Rezitativ oder mit Hilfe von Erinnerungsmotiven). Die Deklamation erscheint oft auch zu Beginn oder zum Schluss einer Szene, um die besonders intensiven dramatischen Momente zu unterstützen. Das Melodram stellt also für den dramatischen Komponisten ein wichtiges Ausdrucksmittel und ein Genre dar, das ein neues Wort-Ton-Verhältnis ermöglicht, wie es auch z.B. bei Puccini, Charpentier oder Alban Berg der Fall war.

Übersetzt von Vlasta Reittererová

### **Použití melodramu v operách J. Masseneta po *Manon*: zdroje a dramaturgické funkce**

#### **Shrnutí**

Massenet byl neustále fascinován dramatickou silou mluveného slova, jež se pojí s předváděním na scéně i mimo ni. V rámci jeho oper jsou zdroje melodramatického ztvárnění kladeny do souvislosti s povahou námětu, jenž je buď fantastický, antický či blízký tradicím opery comique. Mimoto dramatický talent zpěvačky Lucy Arbell představuje určující faktor častého užívání melodramu, jehož rukopis se projevuje v nejrůznějších formách: od jednoduché mluvené odpovědi přes větší rozpracování až po absenci zpěvu v celém jednání; deklamace – rytmická či volná – je podepřena více či méně významotvorným doprovodem (technika recitativu nebo reminiscenčních motivů). Bez ohledu na to se deklamace často objevuje na začátku nebo na konci jednání a podtrhuje obzvláště intenzivní dramatické momenty. Tak zůstává melodram významným výrazovým prostředkem skladatele, obdařeného smyslem pro divadlo, a vhodným žánrem ke hledání nových vztahů mezi slovem a hudbou, na které brali zřetel především G. Puccini, G. Charpentier či A. Berg.

#### **Keywords**

Jules Massenet; melodrama in opera; 19<sup>th</sup> century opera.