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Myth dynamism is evident in the dialogue established between all arts and literature. Many artistic manifestations are literary myths retellings: tales retold in a different manner. The *Amaltea, Journal of Myth Criticism's* issue no. 8 addresses these myths in contemporary opera.

A brief study of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1916) can provide guidance on this subject. The opera's starting point is the second mytheme of the myth of Ariadne: the young woman abandoned by the king who triumphed over the Minotaur (the first mytheme is only narrated among several characters). The conversation between Ariadne and Zerbinetta opens the possibility of hope to the forlorn lady; perhaps death is not the only way out. In the end, Dionysus takes her as his wife: the third mytheme of Ariadne.

Two crucial situations confirm the importance of the fusion of genres regarding the myth. The first one appears in the Prologue. The Composer, amazed by the announcement that a harlequinade will follow the representation of his tragedy, is suddenly caught by artistic inspiration: "God almighty! Oh, my heart is pounding!" This repetitive melody, propelled by the post-Romantic chords and the voice inhabited by the sonorous numen, provokes an unexpected sensation in the actress Zerbinetta, who finally recognizes the undeniable force of love.

The second one takes place during the "opera" represented simultaneously by the two companies. Surrendered to her romantic depression, Ariadne evokes ecstatically Hermes' name, the messenger of death (the mark of Wagner is evident). Zerbinetta, then, suddenly appears; the coloratura soprano vigorously dismisses her colleagues, takes a theatrical bow, sings her recitative – "Powerful princess" – and exposes in an *allegretto scherzando* of amazing vocal acrobatics her own love path: the incomprehensible conjunction of happiness and sadness that consumed her each time a man won her heart. Zerbinetta remains silent, "without a word". Her vocalization limits itself to a single sound, with sweet sounding vocals interwoven together. Unable to linguistically describe her heart's movements, Zerbinetta imitates them with musical modulations. This lyric and narrative combination of text, theatre, music and voice contrasts directly with the lightness that until now used to characterize the actress. After this melodic intervention, the opera takes a different turn: the door to a total love, of mythical dimensions, remains open.

The fusion between music and literature acquires an explanatory and argumentative capacity that surpasses the limits of literature. The result of the text's transfer from a literary medium to an operatic one incorporates the elements, advantages and "disadvantages" of the receptive support.

The articles offered here, selected after a double-blind peer review process among dozens of proposals, deal —accordingly with their author's will and interests, always observing our contemporary chronological frame— this entangled relationship between myth and emotions.

Good reading!

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