

The background of the entire cover is a dark, atmospheric image. On the left, there are silhouettes of bare trees against a dark blue sky. On the right, there is a large, close-up, high-contrast image of a face, possibly a classical statue or a person's face, rendered in shades of blue and green with a distorted, wavy texture. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

Johann Simon MAYR
I CHERUSCI

Markus Schäfer • Yvonne Prentki
Andrea Lauren Brown • Andreas Mattersberger
Katharina Konradi • Uwe Gottswinter
Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus
Simon Mayr Chorus • Concerto de Bassus

Franz Hauk

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Johann Simon
MAYR
(1763–1845)

I Cherusci

Dramma per musica in due atti (1808)
Libretto by Gaetano Rossi (1774–1855)

Treuta..... Markus Schäfer, Tenor
Tusnelda Yvonne Prentki, Soprano
Tamaro.....Andrea Lauren Brown, Soprano
Zarasto..... Andreas Mattersberger, Bass
Ercilda..... Katharina Konradi, Soprano
Carilo Uwe Gottswinter, Tenor
Dunclamo Harald Thum, Tenor
Un Araldo Markus Zeitler, Tenor

Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus

Simon Mayr Chorus

Concerto de Bassus (Theona Gubba-Chkheidze, Concertmaster)

Franz Hauk, Harpsichord and Conductor

Critical edition: Franz Hauk, Manfred Höbl with the assistance of Marion Englhart and Diemut Hauk

Act I		
1	Sinfonia	6:10
2	Scene 1: Introduction: Udite –	
	Scene 2: Vinta cadrà Cheruscia	4:38
	(Chorus, Zarasto)	
3	Scene 3: Recitativo secco: Che intesi!	1:08
	(Carilo, Zarasto)	
4	Scene 4: Chorus: Fra noi ritorni il giubilo –	
	Sortita: Al valor	7:45
	(Chorus, Treuta)	
5	Recitativo secco: Sostegni illustri dello stato	0:38
	(Treuta, Carilo)	
6	Il Ministro de' Numi s'avanza	0:46
	(Chorus)	
7	Scene 5: Recitativo secco:	
	Che ci reca Zarasto?	2:02
	(Treuta, Zarasto)	
8	Scene 6: Cavatina: Eccomi a voi	5:06
	(Tusnelda)	
9	Recitativo secco: Che si chiede da me? –	
	Scene 7: I Cherusci discendono alle mura	3:13
	(Tusnelda, Zarasto, Treuta, Araldo)	
10	Aria: La pietade col nemico	3:36
	(Zarasto)	
11	Scene 8: Recitativo accompagnato:	
	Ecco, o fidi il soggiorno	2:04
	(Tamaro)	
12	Aria: Paventi quel tiranno	4:52
	(Tamaro, Chorus)	
13	Recitativo secco: E Rendo ancor non torna? –	
	Scene 9: A pace	2:47
	(Tamaro, Treuta, Zarasto)	
14	Recitativo accompagnato: Tu sospiri?	1:52
	(Tamaro, Treuta)	
15	Duet: Mia non è!	6:23
	(Tamaro, Treuta)	
16	Scene 10: Recitativo secco: Carilo?	1:31
	(Ercilda, Carilo)	
17	Aria: Se pietosi o giusti Numi	4:49
	(Ercilda)	
18	Scene 11: Recitativo secco: Fida Ercilda –	
	Scene 12: Eccola	1:29
	(Tusnelda, Ercilda, Carilo, Tamaro)	
19	Recitativo accompagnato: Trema, Tamaro	1:09
	(Tusnelda, Tamaro)	
20	Duet: Taci...	7:20
	(Tamaro, Tusnelda)	
21	Scene 13: Recitativo secco:	
	Dunque non v'è più speme –	
	Scene 14: Figli del Nume!	2:21
	(Ercilda, Carilo, Zarasto)	
22	Scene 14: Finale I: De' sommi Numi al soglio –	
	Scene 15: Che farò! –	
	Scene 16: A un dolce sguardo –	
	Scene 17: Pur ti trovo –	
	Scene 18: Vieni Tusnelda	14:52
	(Zarasto, Chorus, Treuta, Tamaro, Tusnelda)	
Act II		
23	Scene 1: Duet and Chorus:	
	Nume della vendetta	4:28
	(Chorus, Carilo, Ercilda)	
24	Scene 2: Recitativo secco: Ho risoluto	3:43
	(Treuta, Tusnelda)	
25	Recitativo accompagnato: Tronchiamo	1:50
	(Treuta, Tusnelda)	
26	Duet: Vanne pur	8:39
	(Treuta, Tusnelda)	
27	Scene 3: Recitativo secco:	
	Dunque s'ardisce ancora	0:55
	(Zarasto)	
28	Scene 4: Ecco l'ombrifero	1:48
	(Chorus)	
29	Recitativo accompagnato: Ove son!	2:44
	(Tamaro)	
30	Scene 5: Aria: Ombra dolente e pallida	5:38
	(Tamaro)	
31	Scene 6: Recitativo secco: Giovine sconsigliato! –	
	Scene 7: Ah Carilo i disastri	1:49
	(Carilo, Ercilda)	
32	Scene 7: Aria: Fosca nube in ciel minaccia	4:10
	(Carilo)	
33	Scene 8: Recitativo accompagnato:	
	Ah sì tutto è perduto	2:48
	(Tusnelda)	
34	Recitativo secco: Io non ho pace!	1:17
	(Treuta, Tusnelda)	

35	Recitativo accompagnato and Chorus: Qual suono (<i>Tusnelda, Treuta, Chorus</i>)	8:59
36	Scene 9: Recitativo secco: Misera dove fuggo! – Scene 10: Ferma, Signor (<i>Ercilda, Dunclamo, Carilo, Treuta</i>)	4:03
37	Recitativo accompagnato: Che ascoltai! (<i>Treuta</i>)	0:34
38	Aria: Ah qual gioja... (<i>Treuta, Tusnelda, Zarasto, Carilo, Dunclamo</i>)	6:36

39	Scene 11: Recitativo secco: Padre mio! (<i>Tusnelda, Dunclamo, Zarasto, Ercilda</i>)	1:59
40	Recitativo accompagnato: Eccoli... – Scene 12: Ah padre! (<i>Ercilda, Tusnelda, Tamaro, Treuta, Carilo, Zarasto, Dunclamo</i>)	1:01
41	Scene 12: Finale II: Ah di quel giubbilo (<i>Tusnelda, Tamaro, Ercilda, Treuta, Chorus, Zarasto, Carilo</i>)	3:32

Johann Simon Mayr (1763–1845) I Cherusci

The Drama

Historical Background

The librettist, Gaetano Rossi, interwove historical events and legends to create his opera text. The setting is ancient Germania around the time of the birth of Christ. A confederacy of Marcomanni, Druids and Sarronidi led by Treuta, King of the Marcomanni, has defeated the Cherusci after a lengthy series of battles. Inevitably, the King's only daughter has fallen into enemy hands during the conflict. He is suffering.

Act I

The scene is set in the temple of Mars, god of the Marcomanni, and then in various rooms within the palace. The beautiful Cheruscan slave girl Tusnelda, who has been captured by the Marcomanni, is to be sacrificed in order to propitiate Mars, god of war. A conflict develops in which passion, reasons of state and the pursuit of power become seemingly inextricably entangled.

Zarasto, high priest of the Druids (an elite group within Celtic society) poses as a rigorous proponent of an old, unwritten law. He is trying to increase his influence vis-à-vis King Treuta and incites the people to uphold the practice of human sacrifice.

Treuta is a prudent leader who is much loved by the people. He desires peace, and wishes to avoid any further

bloodshed and to rescue the slave girl in his care.

Tamaro arrives from the camp of the enemy Cherusci and Bardi. He asks the victor, Treuta, for diplomatic negotiations, so that he can secure the release of his beloved, Treuta's slave girl Tusnelda. Suspicious of Treuta's obvious affection for Tusnelda, who has been promised to Tamaro, the Cheruscan quickly becomes dangerously jealous.

Dunclamo, a Cheruscan and Tusnelda's foster father, appears late on in the drama, but then the situation develops rapidly

Carilo, leader of the Sarronidi, and Ercilda are allied with Treuta. They are probably friends, exchanging views and commenting on the action. Carilo is more of a realist, Ercilda cannot give up his hope that everything will turn out well.

When all the players clash in the Act I finale, general confusion escalates into chaos.

Act II

Treuta tries to master his increasingly strong feelings for his slave girl. He has her concealed in a secret place and makes preparations for her to flee. But when the desperate hothead Tamaro is caught trying to liberate her and imprisoned, Treuta's clandestine plans are in danger of failure. Zarasto believes he is close to achieving his aim and urges the enraged people not to delay the ritual sacrifice any longer.

Dunclamo, the elderly prince of the Cherusci, now arrives as an emissary. His baggage includes a chest of treasure to be used as a ransom. It includes a necklace

which proves that Tusnelda is the daughter of King Treuta whom everyone had believed lost.

Meanwhile, in the temple, Zarasto has begun the grisly ceremony.

Is it still possible to avert the imminent death of an innocent victim? The crucial showdown comes in the finale of Act II.

Markus Schäfer

Simon Mayr's *Zeitoper* I Cherusci

Cherusci, in both Italian and Latin, is the name of one of the ancient Germanic tribes. The Cherusci, also known as the Herusci, inhabited the Harz Mountains, between the rivers Weser and Elbe. Julius Caesar mentions the tribe in his *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*. The Romans were at war with the Cherusci. Arminius (known in modern German as 'Hermann der Cherusker') and his battle with Varus in 9 AD went down in the annals of history and was celebrated in literature. The Romantic writer Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) wrote his play *Die Hermannsschlacht* in Dresden in 1808. His epigraph reads: '*Wehe, mein Vaterland, dir! Die Leier, zum Ruhm dir, zu schlagen, ist, getreu dir im Schoß, mir deinem Dichter, verwehrt.*' ('Woe to you, my fatherland! To strum the lyre in your praise is denied to me, your poet, faithful here in your bosom.') This can be interpreted very much as a public confession. Kleist's historical drama was understood as a politically motivated play about freedom in the context of the Napoleonic occupation and traditionally viewed in this light by its audiences. The highly charged political situation prevented it being performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1809; simplistic readings equated the Cherusci with the Prussians, the Suevi with the Austrians, and the Romans whom they needed to defeat with the French. After the revolution of 1848, it seemed as though the time for Kleist's *Hermannsschlacht* had come. (It had finally been published in full in Ludwig Tieck's 1821 edition of Kleist's complete works.) Both in the 19th century and in the 20th, especially during the interwar period, the way directors approached and staged the play reflected contemporary political messages, patriotism and national consciousness.

'A boy saw the moonlight', sings Hermann's wife Tusnelda in Kleist's play (II.7). The Tusnelda of Mayr's

opera – the daughter of the king of the Marcomanni and bride of a Cheruscan – has little more in common with her than her name. The prince of the Suevi, Marbod, who features in Kleist's play, rose to be leader of the Marcomanni, but he bears no relation to Treuta, the leader of the Marcomanni in Mayr's opera. '*La Poesia è tutta nuova*' – 'the work is totally new', claims the libretto of Mayr's opera, which was performed at the Teatro di Torre Argentina in Rome during Carnival, 1808.

It is possible to trace a link from Kleist to Mayr across the year 1808, when the play was written and the opera performed while Napoleon's occupying forces were 'uniting' Europe. Mayr's 'new' libretto did, in fact, have a past history. Its claim to be newly written may have been partly motivated by marketing considerations on the one hand and the need to circumvent the 'monopoly' that affected works composed for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice on the other. The libretto Mayr used for *I Cherusci* was an adaptation of a text Gaetano Rossi had written for Stefano Pavesi. Pavesi's opera of the same name had been staged in Venice during Carnival the previous year. Michele Calella has already given a detailed account of the connection between the two works¹.

The first reference to Mayr's commission for a new opera for the 'Teatro d'Argentina' for Carnival 1808 is found in a letter to Mayr by the theatrical agent Angiolo Bentivoglio (Bologna, 15 November 1806). The management of the theatre briefed Mayr in advance on which singers would be at his disposal at the Teatro Argentina. In his letter of 9 September 1807, Domenico Leofreddi wrote from Rome giving Mayr, who was in Bergamo, their names: '*Madama Carlotta Hayser: Bella voce di Soprano perfetto, arte sublime di cantare [...] il Tenore Tacchinardi Professore, di buoniss:[im]a voce, e soprattutto impegnato sempre a fare il suo dovere. La Vergè anch'essa Soprano perfetto eseguirà la Parte di Primo Soprano. Il Basso è un tal Benincasa [...]*'.

In this letter, Leofreddi also mentions a librettist who had been contracted to adapt the libretto for Mayr, though without giving his name. While work was in progress, the Venetian librettist Gaetano Rossi was definitely aware of Mayr's commission for Rome and involved in the

¹ Michele Calella, '*I Cherusci: Mayr und Pavesi*', in: *Werk und Leben Johann Simon Mayrs im Spiegel der Zeit*, ed Franz Hauk & Iris Winkler, Beiträge des Internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Johann-Simon-Mayr-Symposions, 1.-3. Dezember 1995 in Ingolstadt, Mayr-Studien 1, Munich, Salzburg 1998, pp.69-82.

adaptation, as his letter of 12 December 1807 to Mayr in Rome attests. In it Rossi also mentions a French tragedy that served as a source. It is likely that Rossi knew the tragedy *Les Chérusques* (1772–73) by Jean-Grégoire Bauvin (1714–1776). In 1817, *I Cherusci* was performed at the Teatro de São Carlos in Lisbon under the title *Os cheruscos*.

Mayr's *I Cherusci* is a highly charged *Zeitoper* masquerading as a traditional *opera seria*. To ignore the cultural background and political circumstances at the time it was written, is to misconstrue both the content and its message. Its content reflects contemporary reception of the poems of Ossian, which proceeded unchecked by Napoleon and even drew in the Emperor of the French and King of Italy. 'Ossian' was a national bard, an idealised and stylised version of the Greek myth of the singer Orpheus. At the premiere, the Cheruscan leader and bard Tamaro with his identifying harp was not sung by a castrato, but performed as a breeches part (*donna musico*) by the soprano Felice (Felicita) Vergè (Vergè, Virgè).

The opera tackles the subject of sacrifice, which today's opera-going public generally only knows from Gluck's *Iphigénie* or Mozart's *Idomeneo*. In the dungeon scene in Act II, Tusnelda is wearing the sacrificial garment. Beethoven's *Fidelio* was not the first opera to introduce trumpet signals and dungeon scenes to the theatre, and nor are they confined to that opera.

Operatic conventions and period setting aside, Mayr's opera focuses on a character constellation that would be adopted by no less a composer than Giuseppe Verdi: 'Perde la figlia' – 'I lost my daughter' (Act I, Scene 4, [4]): *Coro e sortita: Fra noi ritorni il giubilo*; compare also Finale

I, II, 2 ([25]) *Recitativo accompagnato: Tronchiamo*; ([26]) *Duetto: Vanne pur*; II, 8 ([33]) *Recitativo accompagnato: Ah si tutto è perduto*; ([34]) *Recitativo secco: Io non ho pace!*; II, 10 ([37]) *Recitativo accompagnato: Che ascoltail*; ([38]) *Aria: Ah qual gioja...*; II, 11 ([38]) *Recitativo secco: Padre mio!*; II, 12 ([41]), *Finale II: Ah di quel giubbilo*).

In Rome, Mayr had a star cast at his disposal, especially where the all-important father-daughter constellation was concerned. The role of King Treuta was sung by Nicola Tacchinardi. Tacchinardi had been a cellist at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence, before becoming an international star tenor singing in the operas of Ferdinando Paër, Giovanni Paisiello, Antonio Salieri, Rossini, Mayr and Mozart. Tacchinardi also made a name for himself as a singing teacher, and in 1835 his daughter and pupil Fanny Tacchinardi Persiani created the title role in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Charlotte Henriette Häser, who sang Tusnelda, belonged to a family of musicians from Leipzig. After triumphs in Leipzig, Dresden and especially Vienna, she became famous in Italy: 'Mlle. Häser from Leipzig is now engaged in Rome and is being exceptionally well received there too', reported the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in March 1808. In Rome she married the lawyer Giuseppe Vera.

In *I Cherusci* Mayr's primary concern was with the father-daughter constellation and the family tie between Treuta and Tusnelda. The psychological development would elevate the new opera above politics and historical colour.

Iris Winkler

Translation: Sue Baxter



Photo: Werner Kmenttsch

Markus Schäfer

The tenor Markus Schäfer studied singing and church music in Karlsruhe and Düsseldorf with Armand McLane. He was a prizewinner in Berlin and Milan and made his debut at the Zurich Opera Studio, followed by engagements at the Hamburg State Opera and the Düsseldorf Oper am Rhein. His subsequent career has brought appearances in major theatres and concert halls in Europe and America, collaborating with distinguished conductors, and making a number of award-winning recordings. He teaches singing at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Hanover.

www.tenor-markus-schaefer.de



Yvonne Prentki

Soprano Yvonne Prentki made her debut in 2014 as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Hildesheim Stadttheater, and in the same year sang in Kuhlau's *Lulu*. In 2015 she appeared at the Opéra de Dijon as Bubikopf in Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. She is a prizewinner of many competitions including the International Giulio Perotti Singing Competition, 2013 and the Jugend musiziert, and was awarded the Richard Wagner Association scholarship in 2014. As a child she studied at the Hilden Music School and continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien, Hannover.

www.yvonneprentki.com



Andrea Lauren Brown

Born in Delaware, soprano Andrea Lauren Brown holds a Master of Music degree from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and a Bachelor of Music degree from West Chester University, in Pennsylvania. She has been awarded prizes at the International Summer Academy of the Mozarteum, Salzburg in 2002 and the 2003 ARD International Music Competition, Munich. Brown has sung in a variety of prestigious theatres and festivals in Europe, performing both opera and concert repertoire in collaboration with leading conductors, and in 2006 took the principal role of Pamina in Bernhard Lang's opera *I Hate Mozart*. She has a number of successful recordings to her credit, including Thomas Larcher's *Ixxu*, Thomas Hengelbrock's version of Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Schütz's *Symphonie Sacrae*.

www.andrea-brown.de



Andreas Mattersberger

Andreas Mattersberger studied at the Tyrolean State Conservatory. From 2005 to 2012 he performed at the Tyrolean State Theatre, working under Brigitte Fassbaender. The title roles of the operas *Hofers Nacht*, *Cadence Macbeth* and the bass parts of *Genesis*, *Amartema* and *Kataklysmos* were composed for him, and subsequently recorded. Other performances include Strauss' songs for bass in Weimar, and guest appearances at the Tyrolean and the Saarbrücken state theatres. He made his debut as Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Tyrol Regional Theatre, and performed the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Opéra-Studio de Genève. www.andreamattersberger.com



Katharina Konradi

German soprano Katharina Konradi trained at the Berlin University of the Arts, going on to study for her master's degree in Munich. She began her career in 2013 with the Munich Chamber Opera, and in 2014–15 made her debut as Anne Frank in Frid's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. From 2015 to 2016 she was a member of the Hessisches Staatstheater, Wiesbaden, and is currently a member of the Hamburg State Opera. She is a prizewinner of the Jugend musiziert and the German Music Competition, Bonn, and is a scholarship holder of the Paul-Hindemith-Society, Berlin and Live Music Now, Munich. www.katharina-konradi.de



Uwe Gottswinter

Born in Ingolstadt in 1989, tenor Uwe Gottswinter initially trained as a chorister at Regensburg Cathedral. He began studies at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover in 2010 where he participated in masterclasses given by Brigitte Fassbaender and Christoph Prégardien and performed roles in Handel's *Alcina* and Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*. Gottswinter has been recognised by the Richard Wagner Association, Live Music Now, Hanover and the German People's Study Foundation. In the 2015–16 season he appeared in *Candide* and Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgöze* at the Hanover State Theatre, of which he has been a member since 2017–18. www.uwe-gottswinter.de



Harald Thum

Born and raised in Ingolstadt, Harald Thum studied singing at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich under Hanno Blaschke. Since 1990 he has been a member of the chorus of the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, often taking solo roles under conductors such as Wolfgang Sawallisch, Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano and Kirill Petrenko. He also performs solo roles in concert repertoire, such as Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation* and Mozart's *Requiem*.



Photo: Anna-Katharina Zeitler

Markus Zeitler

Markus Zeitler began his musical career as a chorister in the Tölz Boys' Choir, going on to study singing at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich and opera at the Theaterakademie August Everding, Munich. He subsequently joined the Staatstheater Darmstadt, making guest appearances at the Wiesbaden, Bonn, Würzburg and Cairo opera houses. He has a wide concert repertoire and is a member of the chorus of the Bavarian State Opera, Munich.

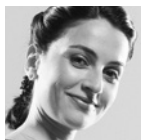


Photo: Andy Frank

Theona Gubba-Chkheidze

Theona Gubba-Chkheidze, the daughter of a violinist and an internationally distinguished theatre director, was born in Georgia. She completed her violin studies with a Distinction at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich and was awarded a Meisterklasse-Diploma in Modern Violin and a master's degree in Baroque Violin ('Historically Informed Performance'). She currently performs in concert throughout Europe with groups such as Concerto München, Ensemble Phoenix, Musik Augsburg and Pera Ensemble. She is a co-founder of Concerto de Bassus. As concertmaster of this group and the Simon Mayr Ensemble she has made more than 20 recordings for Naxos.



Photo: Anna Götz

Franz Hauk

Born in Neuburg an der Donau in 1955, Franz Hauk studied church and school music, with piano and organ, at the Munich Musikhochschule and in Salzburg. In 1988 he took his doctorate with a thesis on church music in Munich at the beginning of the 19th century. Since 1982 he has served as organist at Ingolstadt Minster, and since 1995 also as choirmaster. He has given concerts in Europe and the United States and made a number of recordings. Since October 2002 he has taught in the historical performance and church music department of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich. He founded the Simon Mayr Chorus in 2003.



Chorus of the Bavarian State Opera

The Chorus of the Bavarian State Opera has had a long and distinguished history, sharing with the Bavarian State Orchestra and Bavarian State Ballet a repertoire of some 350 opera and ballet performances annually at the National Theatre, the Prince Regent Theatre and the Cuvillies Theatre, Munich. Since 2010 the chorusmaster has been Sören Eckhoff, with Stellario Fagone as deputy and Kamila Akhmedjanova as répétiteur.



Photo: Lorenz Ziegemeier

Simon Mayr Chorus

The Simon Mayr Chorus was founded by Franz Hauk in 2003. The repertoire of the choir includes works from the 16th to the 20th century. A special emphasis is laid on authentic historical performance and on the promotion of music by Simon Mayr at the highest cultural level. Members of the choir are vocal students from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich and singers selected from Ingolstadt and the region.

www.simon-mayr-chor.de



Photo: Lorenz Ziegemeier

Concerto de Bassus

Concerto de Bassus is an international ensemble engaging young musicians in historical performances of music from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Many members of the ensemble are outstanding students or graduates of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, with wind instruments constructed on historical principles. The ensemble takes its name from the fundamental element of Baroque music: the Bassus.

Johann Simon Mayr (1763–1845)

I Cherusci

Der Opernführer: I Cherusci – Das Drama

Die Vorgeschichte

Gaetano Rossi, der Librettist, hat historische Ereignisse und Legenden zu einer Opernvorlage verwoben. Wir befinden uns im antiken Germanien, etwa um Christi Geburt. Ein Bund aus Markomannen, Druiden und Sarroniden, angeführt von Treuta, dem König der Markomannen, hat das Volk der Cherusker nach langen Kämpfen besiegt. Freilich, des Königs einzige Tochter ist bei der Auseinandersetzung in die Hände der Feinde geraten. Der Herrscher leidet.

Erster Akt

Die Szene spielt zunächst vor dem Tempel des Mars, des Gottes der Markomannen, dann in verschiedenen Räumen des Palastes. Die schöne, in diesem Kriege von den Markomannen erbeutete Sklavin Tusnelda (die Cheruskerin) soll geopfert werden, um Mars, den Kriegsgott, günstig zu stimmen. Ein Konflikt bahnt sich an. Leidenschaft, Staatsräson und Machtstreben verstricken sich dabei zu einem wohl unlösbaren Knäuel:

Zarasto, Oberpriester der Druiden – einer Adelschicht in der keltischen Gesellschaft – gibt sich als rigoroser Vertreter eines alten, ungeschriebenen Gesetzes. Er sucht

seinen Einfluß gegenüber König Treuta auszubauen und wiegelt das Volk zum Menschenopfer auf.

Treuta ist ein besonnener, im Volk beliebter Führer. Er will Frieden, jedes weitere Blutvergießen vermeiden und die ihm anvertraute Sklavin retten.

Tamaro aus dem feindlichen Lager der Cherusker und Barden tritt auf. Er bittet um diplomatische Verhandlungen mit dem siegreichen Treuta, um seine Geliebte Tusnelda – Treutas Sklavin – auszulösen. Rasch gerät er in eine gefährliche Eifersucht, weil er die offensichtliche Zuneigung von Treuta zu der ihm selbst versprochenen Tusnelda beargwöhnt.

Dunclamo, Cherusker und Ziehvater von Tusnelda, tritt spät in die Handlung. Doch dann überschlagen sich die Ereignisse.

Carilo, Führer der Sarroniden, und Ercilda stehen auf der Seite Treutas. Sie sind wohl befreundet, tauschen sich aus und kommentieren das Geschehen. Carilo ist eher Realist, Ercilda mag die Hoffnung auf ein gutes Ende nicht aufgeben.

Als nun im Finale I alle Akteure aufeinander prallen, kulminiert die allgemeine Verwirrung im Chaos!

Zweiter Akt

Treuta versucht, seiner immer stärker aufwallenden Gefühle zur eigenen Sklavin Herr zu werden. Er lässt

diese an einem verborgenen Ort verstecken und bereitet ihre Flucht vor. Doch seine geheimen Pläne drohen zu scheitern, als der verzweifelte Hitzkopf Tamaro bei einem Befreiungsschlag ertappt und festgesetzt wird. Zarasto sieht sich am Ziel und drängt beim aufgebrachtten Volk darauf, das Opferritual nicht weiter zu verschieben. Da erscheint der greise Cheruskerfürst Duncamo als Unterhändler. Im Gepäck führt er eine Schatztruhe, die als Lösegeld dienen soll. Darunter befindet sich eine Halskette, die Tusnelda als die verloren geglaubte Tochter von König Treuta ausweist.

Zarasto hat mittlerweile mit der grausamen Zeremonie im Tempel begonnen.

Kann das drohende Ende einer Unschuldigen noch verhindert werden? Im Finale II kommt es zum entscheidenden Showdown.

Markus Schäfer

Simon Mayrs Zeitoper I Cherusci

Das italienische Wort "Cherusci" entspricht dem lateinischen und benennt einen alten germanischen Stamm. Die Cherusker, auch Herusker genannt, siedelten im Harz, zwischen Weser und Elbe. Caesar erwähnte den Volksstamm in seiner Schrift über *den gallischen Krieg*. Die Römer standen mit den Cheruskern im Krieg. Arminius, *Hermann der Cherusker*, und die Varusschlacht 9 n. Chr. gingen in Geschichte und Literatur ein. Heinrich von Kleist schrieb sein Drama *Die Hermannsschlacht* 1808 in Dresden. „Wehe, mein Vaterland, dir! Die Leier, zum Ruhm dir, zu schlagen, / Ist, getreu dir im Schoß, mir deinem Dichter, verwehrt.“ Das Motto des Dichters ließe sich durchaus als Bekenntnis deuten. Verstanden wurde das Historiendrama als ein politisch motiviertes und durch die Rezeption tradiertes Freiheitsdrama gegen die napoleonische Besatzung. Die brisanten politischen Verhältnisse standen einer Aufführung am Wiener Burgtheater 1809 entgegen. Plakative Lesarten setzten die Cherusker mit den Preußen, die Sueven mit den Österreichern und die zu besiegenden Römer schließlich mit den Franzosen gleich. Nach der Revolution von 1848 schien dann die Zeit für Kleists *Hermannsschlacht*, die erst in der von Ludwig Tieck 1821 besorgten Gesamtausgabe vollständig im Druck Verbreitung fand, gekommen zu sein. Aktuelle politische Botschaften, Patriotismus,

Nationalbewusstsein spiegelten Regie und Inszenierung im 19. und im 20. Jahrhundert wesentlich zwischen den Weltkriegen.

„Ein Knabe sah den Mondenschein“, singt Hermanns Gattin Tusnelda bei Kleist (II/7). Mehr als den Namen hat die markomannische Königstochter und Cheruskerbraut Tusnelda in Mayrs Oper mit ihr allerdings nicht gemein. Der Suevenfürst Marbod, der bei Kleist erscheint, stieg historisch zum Markomannenführer auf, ist aber keineswegs mit dem Markomannenführer Treuta bei Mayr „verwandt“. „La Poesia è tutta nuova“, die Dichtung ist gänzlich neu, ist im Libretto zu Mayrs Oper zu lesen, die zum Karneval 1808 in Rom am Teatro di Torre Argentina zur Aufführung gelangte.

Durch das Jahr 1808, die Entstehungszeit des Dramas und die Aufführungszeit der Oper, während Napoleons Besatzungsmacht Europa „einigte“, ließe sich von Kleist zu Mayr eine Verbindung ziehen. Mayrs „neuer“ Operntext hatte allerdings noch eine Vorgeschichte: Denn Vermarktungsgründe einerseits, andererseits die Notwendigkeit, das „Monopoli“ der für das Teatro La Fenice in Venedig komponierten Werke zu umgehen, dürften bei dieser Formulierung im Librettodruck mitgespielt haben. Bei dem von Mayr verwendete Libretto für *I Cherusci* handelt es sich um eine Umarbeitung des Textes von Gaetano Rossi für Stefano Pavesi. Pavesis gleichnamige Oper ging ein Jahr zuvor zum Karneval in Venedig in Szene. Bereits Michele Calella hat auf den Zusammenhang beider Werke ausführlich hingewiesen.¹

Ein erstes Indiz hinsichtlich Mayrs neuem Opernauftrag für das „Teatro d'Argentina“ zum Karneval 1808 gibt der Theateragent Angiolo Bentivoglio in seinem Brief an Mayr (Bologna, 15. November 1806). Über seine Interpreten in Rom am Teatro Argentina wurde Mayr durch die Theaterleitung im Vorfeld informiert. Domenico Leofreddi teilte Mayr in Bergamo in seinem Brief vom 9. September 1807 aus Rom die Namen mit: „Madama Carlotta Hayser“: „Bella voce di Soprano perfetto, arte sublime di cantare [...]“ „il Tenore Tacchinardi Professore, di buoniss:[im]a voce, e soprattutto impegnato sempre a fare il suo dovere. La Vergè anch'essa Soprano perfetto eseguirà la Parte di Primo Soprano.“ „Il Basso è un tal Benincasa [...]“

¹ Michele Calella, *I Cherusci: Mayr und Pavesi*, in: Franz Hauk, Iris Winkler (Hrsg.), *Werk und Leben Johann Simon Mayrs im Spiegel der Zeit*. Beiträge des Internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Johann-Simon-Mayr-Symposiums, 1.-3. Dezember 1995 in Ingolstadt, Mayr-Studien 1, München, Salzburg 1998, S.69-82.

Leofreddi verwies in diesem Brief auch auf einen Dichter, ohne allerdings einen konkreten Namen zu nennen, der das Libretto für Mayr einzurichten hätte. Im laufenden Arbeitsprozess ist der venezianische Librettist Gaetano Rossi über Mayrs römischen Opernauftrag durchaus im Bilde und konkret an den Umarbeitungen beteiligt gewesen, was sein Brief an Mayr in Rom am 12. Dezember 1807 belegt. Rossi erwähnte darin zudem eine französische Tragödienvorlage. Naheliegender ist, dass Rossi von Jean Grégoire Bauvin die Tragédie *Les Cherusques* (1772/1773) gekannt hat. Unter dem Titel *Os cheruscos* wurde *I Cherusci* 1817 am Theatro de S. Carlos in Lissabon aufgeführt.

Mayrs *I Cherusci* ist in Gestalt der tradierten Opera seria eine brisante Zeitoper. Ohne Beachtung der kulturgeschichtlichen Hintergründe und politischen Umstände wird ihr Gehalt und ihre Botschaft verkannt. Sie spiegelt inhaltlich die zeitgenössische Ossian-Rezeption wider, die vor Napoleon nicht haltgemacht hat und den Kaiser der Franzosen und König von Italien gleichsam selbst mit ins Spiel bringt. Es geht um einen nationalen Barden, der den griechischen Sängermuthos Orpheus überhöht. Der singende Cheruskeranführer Tamaro mit dem Attribut Harfe ist in der Erstaufführung nicht von einem Kastraten gesungen, sondern als Hosenrolle, donna musico, von der Sopranistin Felice (Felicita) Vergè (Verger, Virgè) interpretiert worden.

Die Oper greift die Opferthematik auf, die das heutige Opernpublikum meist nur noch von Glucks *Iphigenie* oder Mozarts *Idomeneo* kennt. In der Kerkerszene im zweiten Akt trägt Tusnelda das Opfergewand. Trompetensignale und der Topos Kerkerszene gelangten auch nicht erst oder gar nur mit Beethovens *Fidelio* auf die Bühne.

Neben den Opernkonventionen, dem zeittypischen Ambiente wird bei Mayr eine private Personenkonstellation fokussiert, die kein Geringerer als Giuseppe Verdi aufgreifen wird: „Perdei la figlia“ – „Ich verlor die Tochter“ (I/4, [41](#)): Coro e sortita: „Fra noi ritorni il giubilo“, vgl. weiter Finale I, II/2 2 ([25](#)) Nr. 25 Recitativo accompagnato, ([26](#)) Nr. 26 Duetto, II/8 Nr. 33 ([33](#)) Recitativo accompagnato, ([34](#)) Nr. 34 Recitativo, II/10 Nr. 37 ([37](#)) Recitativo accompagnato, ([38](#)) Nr. 38 Aria, II/11 ([39](#)) Nr. 39 Recitativo, II/12 ([41](#)) Nr. 40, Finale II.

Mayr hatte in Rom eine Starbesetzung zur Verfügung, insbesondere hinsichtlich der wesentlichen Vater-Tochter-Konstellation. Nicola Tacchinardi spielte die Rolle des Königs Treuta. Tacchinardi spielte zunächst Violoncello im Teatro della Pergola in Florenz, bevor er als Tenor in den Opern von Ferdinando Paër, Giovanni Paisiello, Antonio Salieri, Rossini, Mayr und Mozart international brillierte. Auch als Gesangslehrer machte Tacchinardi sich einen Namen. Seine Tochter und Schülerin Fanny Tacchinardi Persiani wurde 1835 die berühmte *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Die Sängerin Charlotte Henriette Häser, die Interpretin der Tusnelda, stammte aus einer Musikerfamilie aus Leipzig. Nach Erfolgen in Leipzig und Dresden und vor allem auch in Wien wurde sie in Italien bekannt. „Dem. Häser von Leipzig ist jetzt in Rom engagirt, und findet auch dort ausgezeichneten Beyfall“, berichtete die Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung im März 1808. In Rom heiratete sie den Juristen Giuseppe Vera.

In *I Cherusci* geht es bei Mayr um die Vater-Tochter-Konstellation, um die familiäre Bindung von Treuta und Tusnelda, die als innere Entwicklungslinie die neue Oper über Politik und Zeitkolorit tragen wird.

Iris Winkler

Composed when Napoleon's armies were striding across Europe, Simon Mayr's highly charged opera *I Cherusci* is set in ancient Germania in the time of Christ's birth, its narrative focusing on the perils of the captured slave girl Tუსnelda who has been chosen for a sacrificial ritual. The universal themes of freedom and patriotism in this pioneering tale of familial bonds, romance, jealousy and desperate misadventure would later attract the likes of Beethoven and Verdi. This world premiere recording of *I Cherusci* uses period instruments, presenting it as it would have been heard in 1808.



Johann Simon
MAYR

(1763–1845)

I Cherusci

Dramma per musica in due atti (1808)

Libretto by Gaetano Rossi (1774–1855)



Gefördert von
Margarete Baronin
de Bassus.



Treuta Markus Schäfer, Tenor
Tusnelda Yvonne Prentki, Soprano
Tamaro Andrea Lauren Brown, Soprano
Zarasto Andreas Mattersberger, Bass
Ercilda Katharina Konradi, Soprano
Carilo Uwe Gottswinter, Tenor
Dunclamo Harald Thum, Tenor
Un Araldo Markus Zeitler, Tenor

Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus

Simon Mayr Chorus

Concerto de Bassus (Theona Gubba-Chkheidze, Concertmaster)

Franz Hauk, Harpsichord and Conductor

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

1	Sinfonia	6:10	23–41	Act II	66:32
2–22	Act I (beginning)	80:20		Playing Time	2:33:02

Recorded: 20–28 September 2016 at the Kongregationssaal, Neuburg an der Donau, Germany • Producer, engineer and editor: Sebastian Riederer • Booklet notes: Markus Schäfer and Iris Winkler • Cover: Collage by Paolo Zeccara • Critical edition: Franz Hauk, Manfred Höbl with the assistance of Marion Enghart and Diemut Hauk • Sponsors: Baronin Margarete de Bassus, Bezirk Oberbayern, Stadt Neuburg/Donau, Michaela Mirlach-Geyer & Josef Geyer (management)