

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Musical subtext in drama

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the manner in which music (songs, instrumental underscoring, and sound cues) support, reflect, and advance dramatic action. The dramaturgical analysis, employing Freytag's model, is applied to selected dramatic repertoire to reveal the impact and influence of music on the dramatic structure of these works. The analysis considers how the musical nature of works by William Shakespeare, August Strindberg, George Bernard Shaw, Tom Stoppard and Simon Stephens also contributes to them becoming major sources for adaptations and for musicals on the modern stage. The importance of looking at authors, function, intended effects, production, context, message, and transmission modes must be stressed, as well as how to code/decode music and how musical meanings are generated through effective stimulation or through semiotics. The argument maintains that text and music cannot be separated without causing serious damage to the author's creative vision and that the total structure of a play exists as an expression of artistic unity similar to Wagner's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The text and music exist in a symbiotic relationship, sometimes as leitmotifs, with the non-diegetic music supporting emotions to reflect the inner world of their characters. The use of musical leitmotifs or music as thematic material clearly contributes in driving forward the dramatic action.

Among the main findings are how the musical references made by any of the five playwrights determines the dramaturgical interpretation of their plays. Each author is extremely precise with respect to their musical references. Four out of five playwrights discussed had a strong musical background, which enabled them to make well-informed musical choices to underpin their plays. Some even chose to replace traditional dramatic structure with a musical one.

Finally, it can be said that music functions as an important and often overlooked subtext that enhances the entire dramatic experience by supporting the situation and narrative. Music influences the audience's ultimate perception of character and emotion.

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Introduction

This dissertation explores the manner in which music (songs, instrumental underscoring, and sound cues) support, reflect, and advance dramatic action. Music serves as an essential device to enhance character definition. The importance of looking at authors, function, intended effects, production, context, message, and transmission modes must be stressed, as well as how to code/decode music and how musical meanings are generated through effective stimulation or through semiotics. In dramatic musical productions, opera and theatre, the importance of the author's message¹ is even more critical.

Dramaturgical analysis, employing Freytag's model, is applied to selected dramatic repertoire to reveal the impact and influence of music on the dramatic structure of these works, since it can easily generate a coherent overview of the dramatic structure and main points of interest – a chronological unfolding of events in the drama. The argument maintains that text and music cannot be separated without causing serious damage to the author's creative vision and that the total structure of a play exists as an expression of artistic unity similar to Wagner's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Works are chosen from the last four hundred years by authors William Shakespeare, August Strindberg, George Bernard Shaw, Tom Stoppard and Simon Stephens. Several plays were chosen due to their perennial popularity as attractive vehicles for operatic, musical, and popular adaptations. The analysis considers how the musical nature of these works also contributes to them becoming major sources for adaptations and for musicals on the modern stage. The reason for focusing on adaptations, is to highlight how they manage to help the

¹ Composer or the playwright.

original work reach a broader audience, and how this affects the popular perception of the original work. Two other major factors in selecting these specific playwrights were their musical background and their current popularity. A reflection on the influence that Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* had on several of the chosen playwrights is also included. I have chosen to deal with the authors in a historical sequence to highlight the historical development of use of music as a subtext.

A few other scholars have pointed to how the musical structure of, for example, a sonata influenced Strindberg's *Spöksonaten* (*The Ghost Sonata*), and the structure of a symphony, his *Ett Drömspel* (*A Dream Play*).² However, no one has looked systematically at how the musical references made by Strindberg or any of the other four playwrights determines the dramaturgical interpretation of their plays. Each author is extremely precise with respect to their musical references.

I employ Cook's idea that not only does music give meaning to images but images give meaning to music, negotiating it always within the given context; and that the music contributes to a dialectical process, where the "principal function of the music is to heighten the narrative structure by creating a sense of denouement".³ Musical styles and genres are used to communicate complex social or attitudinal messages, and music can be used to emphasize structure or process, so while images and words deal mainly with the objective, music deals with

² On *Spöksonaten*: Hinz, H., "Between Beethoven and Schönberg: Strindberg's Idea of Chamber Music and its Significance For and In his Chamber Plays" in *Strindberg on International Stages/Strindberg in Translation*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 79, 82, 89.

Ollen, G., *Strindbergs dramatik*, (Kristianstad: Kristianstads Boktryckeri, 1982), 500-501, 522 and on *Drömspel*: Brandell, G. (Ed.), *Synpunkter på Strindberg*, (Stockholm: Aldus, 1964), 228 and Ollen, G., *Strindbergs dramatik*, 446.

³ Cook, N. "Music and Meaning in the Commercials" in *Popular Music*, (Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 1994), Cambridge University Press), 32.

responses – values, emotions and attitudes. The alignment of music and process is an important element in the construction of meaning.

My argument is supported by applying Brown's idea that musical underscoring enhances the narrative properties of film. However, this concept is related to the theater and focuses on Brown's two streams of meaning: the emotive and the semiotic; and his idea that when music serves as an assistant to language it emotively reinforces group values. I also examine what occurs when the two systems of communication, language and music, as introduced by Tagg, enhance each other.

I must here make a distinction between musical theatre and text-based theatre and that is the focus of this dissertation, music as support for plays rather than as a form in and of itself. Therefore I have decided not to include a large segment on the Greek drama, although many scholars claim that is the origin of musical theatre. Instead I have included a brief overview here of the development of the musical theatre genre from the Greek theatre to the Broadway musical.

One theory about music and drama as a combination (music-drama) is, that it can be dated back to ancient Greece and that Renaissance music theatre was developed on the basis of Greek tragedy. In Greek drama the chorus is playing an integral part of the action. In *A Short History of Opera* the author states: "There can be no doubt that the choruses were really sung, not merely musically declaimed."⁴ Owen Lee backs this by stating that most of the Greek tragedies were sung, and that while the Greek text follows a musical structure with strophe, antistrophe and epode the singing was likely a unison or octave chanting of a single musical line. Aeschylus' plays were largely sung, and he composed his own music, which made him the perfect example of an artist creating a Gesamtkunstwerk (writing his own texts, music, directing,

⁴ Grout, D. J. and Williams, H. W., *A Short History of Opera* (4th Ed.). New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, 10

setting the stage and creating the choreography). Following Euripides, the playwrights started using songs that were not really connected to the plot, but were included for musical effect. In the end, according to H. C. Montgomery, this led to the disappearance of the chorus from the Greek stage. Few pieces of the music supporting the ancient Greek tragedies have survived, so while we know very little about what it sounded like we do know that music played an important role.

Owen Lee claims that all Wagner's ideas about what drama signifies were based on the reading of Aeschylus' trilogy, and that Wagner used his orchestra for the same purpose as Aeschylus used his chorus: to comment on the action. In Wagner's operas this is done through his use of leitmotifs. He also uses the orchestra like the Greek chorus to conclude the drama.

Newman states

The old Greek dramatist...cast the drama into a concentrated form that enabled him to appeal rather to the spectator's sense of poetry than to the mere delight in external catastrophe and the unraveling of the plot; while in the chorus he had under his hand an instrument capable of extraordinary emotional expression. The Greek drama, in fact, was singularly akin to the music-drama of Wagner. As Wagner saw, the true modern equivalent of the Greek chorus is the orchestra; it is at once part of the action and aloof from it, an ideal spectator, sympathizing, commenting, correcting. The Greek drama resembles ideal opera.⁵

And according to Nietzsche

The experience I have had this week with Wagner...have been the means of increasing my knowledge of the music to a marvellous degree, and of convincing me of its complete justification...I was like one who sees his dreams go into fulfillment...and it is precisely this, and nothing else, that I meant by the word "music" in describing the Dionysian art.⁶

The connection to Greek drama and in particular the use of the chorus can also be seen in a contemporary play like *How I learnt to drive* by Paula Vogel.

⁵ Newman, E., *Wagner as Man and Artist*. Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2014, 356.

⁶ Foerster-Nietzsche, E. (Ed.), *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*. London: Duckworth & CO, 1922, 91.

In *A History of Western Music* opera is defined as “a drama that combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous (or nearly continuous) music.”⁷ As a genre the opera was ‘born’ in Italy in the very late 16th century. At this time there was widespread intellectual interest in ancient Greece, and it is said that the first attempt to make an opera was a misunderstanding of the antique Greek drama, which was seen as putting the Greek myths to music.⁸

Among the very earliest operas were *Dafne* from 1597 and *Euridice* from 1600, both first performed in Florence. In his *Euridice* Peri tried to ‘recreate’ the Greek drama by creating a kind of speech-song halfway between real speech and singing, which later would be known as a recitative in Italian operas. In 1607 Monteverdi wrote his first and best known opera *Orfeo*, and it is a very good example of how the theory about antique Greek drama became translated into a theatrical form. Not only did it include a form of recitative (spoken song) as developed by Peri, but also a Chorus (as in the antique Greek theatre) commenting on and taking part in the action of the opera. Later on the position of the chorus was diminished in favor of more arias, duettos and terzettos until reintroduced by N. Jonmelli and T. Traette, followed by Gluck. By claiming that words are just as, or more important than the music, Monteverdi became the “founder of [the] tradition of opera-as-drama that passed through Gluck and Wagner.”⁹ One of the most interesting characteristics of Monteverdi’s operas, possibly responding to these new circumstances, is the way he uses the music to draw attention to and describe the emotions of a character, so that the audience’s recognition of human feelings and conflicts on stage becomes the center of the performance. The recitative based on the above-mentioned theory of Greek drama, developed from

⁷ Grout, D. J. and Palisca, C. V., *A History of Western Music*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001, 260

⁸ A misunderstanding still traced in a musical like *The Frogs* by Stephen Sondheim (2004).

⁹ *ibid*, 49.

spoken song into a more speech-like form in the 17th century, which allowed for the development of the *bel canto* style (also known as number operas).

In the beginning of the 17th century the genre *Vaudeville* developed in France (the counterpart to the latter German *Singspiel* which had its origin in the *Gassenhauer*).¹⁰ Then from around 1865 the term *Vaudeville* became used in America for a kind of entertainment-theatre which used a mixture of music, dance, acrobatic and circus.

J. Offenbach and Herve created the new genre of operetta as a reaction to the way that the *Opera Comique* during the 19th century focused increasingly on more serious subjects. Mainly political and social satires with dance, choir and ballad-kind of song numbers, because of their popularity they developed into full-length works called *Opera Bouffes* (not to be confused with the Italian *Opera Buffa*). These new operettas were originally based on the *Farsa* (or *Intermezzo*) and were therefore one-acts. Gradually, as the genre became more popular, they developed into all-night-shows, which is the kind of operettas we have today.

American musical theatre started with *The Black Crook* in 1866. As K. Preston puts it in her, article *American musical theatre before the twentieth century* the “musical theatre in the 18th – and even more so in the 19th – century was a tangled, chaotic mess.”¹¹ The musical theatre in 18th and 19th century America contained genres such as opera, operetta, vaudeville, variety shows, pantomime, melodrama, minstrelsy, plays with songs, dance, burlesque, spectacle, extravaganza and a lot more. All these different styles went through many changes, and got inspired by each other, as well as by the styles imported from Europe. They developed into various genres – one of them known as the American musical. At the same time as the American musical started to define

¹⁰ The term *Gassenhauer* comes from the 16th century traveling singers and their songs which were serenades and ballads.

¹¹ Eigtved, M. *Musicals*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1997, 3

itself as a genre, contemporary opera moved in its direction. One of the most successful 20th century opera composers, George Gershwin worked in both genres. In his 1935 opera *Porgy and Bess* Gershwin combines European orchestral techniques with American jazz and folk music. Another key transitional work was the 1943 *Carmen Jones* with lyrics by Hammerstein II, who transformed Bizet's *Carmen* into an American musical and updated the toreador to be a boxer. The development of the classic musical as we know it today began with the opening of Jerome Kern's and Oscar Hammerstein's *Show Boat* in 1927. It adopts a two-act form, and instead of the music being borrowed from other sources,¹² it is specifically written for this show. These became two major characteristics of the classic Musical genre. In 1943 in the middle of World War II Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma* opened on Broadway. This musical marked a turning point in the history of musicals. It was the first to contain all the characteristics of the classic musical and the first musical where dance was used not just to entertain, but to express emotions and the action of the play. It was an escape from everyday life and the first musical to have a dream sequence on stage.

Twenty years ago, I had my first encounter with Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, where I became aware of the musical subtext in the play. The director of the play did not recognize this. I consequently chose to do some research and found to my astonishment that very little research had been conducted on this matter. In time, having discovered music by George Bernard Shaw and his mother and seen plays by Stoppard and Stephens in London I felt this was an area where I had something to contribute in terms of research. My original thoughts circled around Strindberg, Shaw, Stoppard and Stephens. My choice of plays was partly based on knowledge of the plays, but I also wanted to include a wide period to highlight that this was not only a

¹² As it has happened with many operas and operettas – like *The Beggars Opera*, 1728.

phenomenon from the last 125 years. So I decided to include Shakespeare, because of the many musical adaptations of his plays. Given my previous research in musical theatre, this seemed a natural choice. Most of the plays I have seen on stage, the exceptions being some of the plays by Simon Stephens most of which I have only read and seen video material. However, I have met Stephens on several occasions and had the pleasure of discussing his plays with him. Originally, I did consider including plays by contemporary female playwrights such as Liz Lochhead, Djanet Sears and Suzan-Lori Parks. However, as with the examples from the Greek theatre I felt I had to limit my choices and the idea was therefore dropped. This is certainly an area I would like to research more in the future.

I conducted my research in many steps. Firstly the research into Strindberg, which included several visits to libraries in Denmark and Sweden to gain access to the original scripts or copies thereof. Once I had the text, I would not only apply Freytag's theory, but make detailed notes about where and how often music and musical references appeared and if it was diegetic or not, as well as how it compared to the theories of Wagnerian leitmotifs and musical underscoring in films. This became my process with all the plays represented in this dissertation. To guarantee that I was not somehow dealing with an unrepresentative selection and that my hypothesis actually applied to more plays than the ones I had chosen, I went through almost all of Strindberg's plays in the original Swedish.

After Strindberg, I came across the first piece of music by George Bernard Shaw, which started a whole new adventure. Together with Christopher Innes, I spent a fair amount of time in the British Library's music collection, where we discovered original music by Lucinda Shaw, George Bernard Shaw's mother, all of which were completely unknown even to Shavians. The decision was made to produce a CD of this music. In the process, we received help from friends

and colleagues in dealing with various institutions such as Berg Collection of the New York Public Library; North Carolina Library; Humanities Research Center in Austin, Texas; the National Trust Collection at Shaw's Corner in Ayot St. Lawrence; the Bernard Shaw Estate, and the The Society of Authors/National Trust. I especially wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of my supervisor Professor Michel Coghlan for his expert help as a composer and mentor in the process. My Shaw CD was produced in the fall of 2014. During this process I gained a closer connection to the International Shaw Society, which was a great source of knowledge when I was trying to determine which Shaw plays to feature. The enhanced understanding of Shaw as both a composer and a voice expert led me to do more research on Strindberg and his musical background, and later on to further research the musical background of both Stephens and Shakespeare.

Simultaneously, I began spending a lot of time exploring the universe of Wagner, both from a theoretical but also from a musical/singing point of view, in order to have a fuller understanding of the leitmotif theory. Performing Wagner not only confirmed the amount of stamina required, but also gave me a completely new appreciation of the importance of understanding leitmotifs as a performer in live performance. The changes this understanding gave to the character's actions and the interpretation of the music was mind-blowing.

Concurrently I also explored Mozart's *Don Giovanni* – again both as a performer and as a scholar, which re-ignited my passion for the Don Juan character and its history. In addition to this I explored a number of the musical adaptations that I have been dealing with, both as a scholar and as a singer, to get a fuller understanding of them.

During this time, I have been very involved through my passion for musical theatre with the Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association. It was there I first had the

opportunity to dive into the music in Stoppard's *Rock "N" Roll*, and later on Stephens' musical connections, which I further explored with the help of the Comparative Drama Conference. As with Strindberg, I decided to explore all of Stephens' plays to ensure my observations were generally applicable throughout his works. Most gratifying, many of my academic assertions were publicly validated in the keynote/interview given by Stephens at the Comparative Drama Conference in April, 2018.

Finally, I examined the many adaptations of all the works I had been dealing with and compared them to the originals. This included watching a lot of episodes from *The Simpsons*. My main sources were:

Shakespeare: *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*.

Strindberg: *Samlade Skrifter av August Strindberg* #27, 35, 36 and 45. As well as Grew, E. M., "Strindberg and Music".

Shaw: *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*; *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, and *The Perfect Wagnerite*.

Stoppard: *Rock 'n' Roll*.

Stephens: *Stephens Plays: 1: Bluebird; Christmas; Herons; Port*; *Stephens Plays: 2: One Minute; Country Music; Motortown; Pornography; Sea Wall*; *Stephens Plays: 3: Harper Regan, Punk Rock, Marine Parade and On the Shore of the Wide World*; *Stephens Plays: 4: Three Kingdoms; The Trial of Ubu; Morning; Carmen Disruption; The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; and *Birdland*.

As well as works by Adorno, Borchmeyer, Dahlhaus, Hamilton, Hellqvist, Hellström, Hutcheon, Kierkegaard, Middleton, Skilling, and Tagg.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee Michael Coghlan, Mark Chambers and Don Rubin for all their help and support throughout this long process. I accept full responsibility for any remaining errata.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

This section considers the manner in which music serves as a signifier of emotion, and how music affects an audience on a purely auditory level, and also functions as a subconscious tool, which conveys meaning and carries emotions. The focus is based on the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamkunstwerk* and the use of leitmotif and the ability of music to enhance dramatic function in film, drama, and opera. This dissertation deals with the effective “merging” of disparate and complex “languages” to communicate a more complete message. The language of music, the language of movement, the language of the text, the language of set design, the language of the visual (costume, props, lighting, etc.) work together to communicate richer and far more complete meaning.

1.1 Language, emotions, meaning and the brain

1.1.1 Language

In *Aesthetics and Music*¹³ Hamilton differentiates between acoustic¹⁴ and acousmatic¹⁵ accounts to distinguish between music and non-musical sound-art, arguing that sound-art is listening to sound in a non-musical sense. He states that music can contain any sound, but it does not mean that any sound is music. He also argues that music can create fundamental changes in an individual’s consciousness and that music has a language-like quality. In the introduction to *Music’s Meanings*¹⁶ Tagg talks about music as a universal language, a proposition which he later retracts. He does however spend a lot of time on the listener’s response and connects the structural foundations to an underlying musical intertextuality. When investigating musical

¹³ Hamilton, A. *Aesthetics and Music*, (London: Continuum, 2007).

¹⁴ As a natural sound within the surrounding environment.

¹⁵ A sound one hears without seeing an originating cause.

¹⁶ Tagg, P. *Music’s Meanings*, (New York: Mass Media Music Scholar’s Press, 2013).

communication, Brown¹⁷ points out that “language serves as the standard against which theories of musical meaning are measured,”¹⁸ which in turn generates a distraction from considering focus on the musical component in the interpretation of the communicator’s intentions and the social functions of the message.

Kierkegaard states that language is the most substantial medium we have, and that the medium can be abstract as long as the idea is solid.¹⁹ He sees music as such an abstraction, being an idea in itself; and that is his reasoning for defining music as erotic. He states that this eroticism is a pre-Christian concept since Kierkegaard views Christianity as anti-sensual. This leads him to argue that music is sensual, but not spiritually motivated, and therefore demonic.²⁰ Music is thus immediately erotic, since love of it is a moment in time (now, as with language), and Kierkegaard thinks of music as a separate language. To him the ear is our most spiritual part, and apart from language, music is the only medium directed towards the ear.²¹ However, McLuhan claims that as a culture we have moved from an “ear” to an “eye” society.

The dominant organ of sensory and social orientation in pre-alphabet societies was the ear—hearing was believing. The phonetic alphabet forced the magic world of the ear to yield to the neutral world of the eye²²

This has led us to become detached observers, but McLuhan argues further that, with the new media, there is no detachment.

Musical meaning, according to Tagg, will always be imprecise compared to verbal meaning since music and language are not interchangeable. He argues that as soon as we have a

¹⁷ In Brown, S. “‘How does Music Work’, Towards a Pragmatics of Musical Communication” in *Music and Manipulation: On the Social Uses and Social Control of Music*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁹ Kierkegaard, S., *Om Mozarts Don Juan*, (København: Jespersen og Pios Forlag, 1968), 29.

²⁰ Ibid., 43.

²¹ Ibid., 48.

²² McLuhan, M., *The Medium is the Message*, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2003), 44.

verbal treatment of musical meaning it then becomes an approximately verbal connotation of precise meaning. Tagg sees a clear link between voice and personality, with vocal costuming being a part of our culture, which creates an instantaneous connection between preverbal/non-verbal and verbal vocalization in a socially-constructed cultural environment. However, Hamilton states that vocal and dramatic singing, with its extra musical elements, are central in music history and that it is a romantic notion to view music as a language above language. Kierkegaard sees language as a less rich medium than music, since language requires reflection, whereas music offers an immediately sensual impact. Kierkegaard regards this brilliance as making music demonic and explains why extreme religious factions try to avoid music.

1.1.2 Emotions

Tagg argues that music, as a form of communication between people, is a way of expressing emotions. He envisions language and music as two systems of communicating, and he sees both emotion and effect as part of musical meaning. However, Tan argues that, the way we “perceive sound objects, and hence musical objects, [is] in terms of physical space and movement.”²³ According to Cook “music is the discourse that passes itself off as nature; it participates in the construction of meaning but disguises its meanings as effects.”²⁴ He also states that while images and words mainly deal with the objective, music deals with responses – values, emotions and attitudes.

Film music is often unobtrusive, mixed and orchestrated in a subdued manner to ensure that it does not attract too much attention and distract from the visual channel. However, in many

²³ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 185.

²⁴ Cook, N., “Music and Meaning in the Commercials,” 38.

movies, it is regularly used to keep the spectators on their toes: to heighten the emotional mood of the scene and help advance the dramatic narrative. The dramatic function of music “is understood as the mapping of emotions and the strengthening of an affective-aesthetic expression in the respective scene.”²⁵ Brown claims two kinds of meaning: an emotive meaning – effect theories (directed stimulation), and a linguistic meaning – semiotic theories (directed association). He divides the semantic hierarchy into three levels: emotional, associative and beliefs/attitudes, and the musical hierarchy into tones, scales, motifs, genre/repertoire, pointing out that the higher levels like genre and repertoire include the lower levels. The direct stimulation is a process where a musical device is used to immediate effect and/or intended meaning. With direct association, a musical device is used to produce symbolic association with cultural objects, or linguistically mediated associations. Film composer Franz Waxman believes the importance of music is in “creating and sustaining dramatic moods” and its value can be measured by how much a “scene can be improved in its emotional value by music.”²⁶

1.1.3 Music Conveying Meaning

If music gives meaning to pictures then, according to Cook, pictures also give meaning to music. Thus, the meaning is constructed or negotiated within the given context, which helps explain why music written specifically for a television commercial, generally speaking, cannot survive as a concert piece. The music participates in a dialectical process, where the “principal function of the music is to heighten the narrative structure by creating a sense of denouement.”²⁷ Commercials use musical styles and genres to communicate complex social or attitudinal

²⁵ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, 127.

²⁶ Wierzbicki, J.; Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 101.

²⁷ Cook, N., “Music and Meaning in the Commercials,” 32.

messages, and the function of the music is to emphasize structure or process. Bringing together and aligning music and process is an important element in the construction of meaning. To Cook music becomes a source of meaning. He quotes Daniel Putnam who points out that:

the contour of instrumental music (...) fits the contour of those broad emotions in life which can be independent of particular situations and can be transferred to a variety of diverse objects.²⁸

Supported by Peter Kivy, Cook states that music “alone” does not have meaning, but that it has potential for the construction of meaning in a specific context, as in the relationship between music and words in a song. To Cook “music is never ‘alone.’”²⁹

When aligned with process, words or images, music has a stronger impact on the audience than any of the other “media”. In an experiment conducted by Marshall and Cohen (1988) it was found that “music could influence the interpretation of a geometric figure’s personality characteristics in terms of potency and activity.” This followed and supported earlier experiments that Tannenbaum (1956) conducted on music’s influence on theatrical performances. “The presence of music altered the meaning of the composite scene; that is music tended to dominate the visual and other dramatic variables.”³⁰ Leonard Rosenman states a composer must have dramaturgical awareness because

it is often the musical statement in the film that gives it its reality. (...) Considering the catalytic and psychological aspect of film music (...) it becomes increasingly clear that film music has the power to change naturalism into reality. Actually, the musical contribution to the film should be ideally to create a supra-reality, a condition wherein the elements of literary naturalism are perceptually altered. In this way the audience can have insight into different aspects of behavior and motivation not possible under the aegis of naturalism. Film music must thus enter directly into the ‘plot’ of the film, adding a third dimension to the images and words.³¹

²⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

³⁰ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, 49.

³¹ Wierzbicki, J.; Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 193.

But music not only conveys meaning. According to Brown, music can work as behavioral control in the sense of functioning as a cooperative device within social groups to create internal harmony. He argues that when music serves as an assistant to language it emotively reinforces group values. Brown sees six important aspects of music's role as cooperative device:

1. behavioral control,
2. persuasion/manipulation,
3. defining/reinforcing social identity,
4. sorting people – cause/effect,
5. coordination and cooperation,
6. emotional expression/conflict resolution and social play.

The music then functions as a controlling mechanism. Brown states that the importance of the social production of music and music's semiotics in the creation process shows a tendency to focus on recorded music instead of live performances. Morrison points out that the goal of any music producer is to create a product with an illusion of a perfect "live" performance, which could never have taken place. He uses the technique of film recording as an example. Music is used in order to:

manipulate the spectator, to explicate the internal, and to fill in the blanks of the missing psychological and emotional pieces of a narrative and the *mise-en-scène*. Indeed, music is important to film both because of its ability to enhance the listener's experience of the film, to suture them into it if you will, but also to cover sloppy editing or fix a scene that simply does not work.³²

The importance of looking at authors, function, intended effects, production, context, message, and transmission modes must be stressed, as well as how to code/decode music and how musical meanings are generated through effective stimulation or through semiotics. In dramatic musical productions, opera and theatre, the importance of the author's message³³ is even more critical. Brown distinguishes between direct and indirect transmission of music – live

³² Redner, G., *Deleuze and film music*, (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), 4.

³³ Composer or the playwright.

versus pre-recorded – with recorded music in his view equaling mass culture. Morrison applies McLuhan’s theory of acoustic and visual space to the history of sound recording, claiming that we have now arrived at a stage where acoustic and visual space have been unified to create an aural space.³⁴ Morrison compares conventional stereophonic sound coming from in front of the listener to ‘surround’ sound using multichannel digital recording, which approximates a multisource virtual reality. He then raises the issue of transparent reproduction including corrections of errata and of how recorded music has become an inescapable part of our everyday environment or soundscape. Brown uses film music to exemplify how composers use musical underscoring to enhance the narrative properties of a film.

1.1.4 Music and the Brain

Neuroscience researchers from MIT exposed ten participants³⁵ to 165 different sounds including the sounds of a flushing toilet, a dog barking, car horns, pop songs and people speaking. The generated results supported traditional scholarly opinions. These results revealed that specific cortical pathways in the brain, which are selective for music and speech, are located in separate parts of the cortex that are not primarily focused on auditory functions. The researcher’s analysis focused on the non-Gaussian responses³⁶ in the research and identified six neural populations covering more than 80% of these responses. By using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) data, they discovered that four locations were in close proximity to the primary auditory cortex, but, importantly, the final two were located in distinct non-primary regions. The evolutionary development of specific discrimination within these areas for speech

³⁴ According to Morrison’s definition it is a space where the listener gets the aura of the music.

³⁵ All selected age 19-27 as “non-musicians” since they hadn’t received any musical training within the five years prior to the study. This does however not exclude the possibility for serious musical training during their childhood.

³⁶ Unlike the traditional “bell-shaped” curved response.

and music cannot be explained by alluding to standard acoustic features. The area designated to speech (both English and foreign languages) had

the next-highest response category being vocal music (with speech in the form of lyrics).³⁷

In the music-only category, brain response to vocal music scored higher than to instrumental music, strongly suggesting that vocal music activates more of the brain than instrumental music.

This study correlates to other neuroimaging studies, which had identified specific areas of the brain for processing music. According to an article in *The MIT News*:

The researchers believe there may be other brain regions involved in processing music, including its emotional components.³⁸

These exciting results suggest a fruitful area for further novel interdisciplinary research.

1.2 Music and Society

Music can be seen “as one dimension of a holistic experience in which meaning emerges from dynamic interactions between multiple media,”³⁹ where “music and sound contributes to the entertainment value, communication function, aesthetic pleasure or educational purpose that multimedia can provide.”⁴⁰ McLuhan, proposes multimedia and new media as the future in contrast with the old thinking (God) and old technology (the book and the Newtonian Universe) which represent a “Neitzscheism” (God is dead).⁴¹ Therefore, we need to adapt to the new world of technology. To McLuhan, the media expands our awareness of the world and develops an extension of human activity allowing a greater individual participation, which leads us to The

³⁷ Norman-Haignere, S. et al., “Distinct Cortical Pathways for Music and Speech Revealed by Hypothesis-Free Voxel Decomposition,” in *Neuron* 88, December 16, (Cambridge: Cell Press, 2015), 1281-1296.

³⁸ Accessed on December 16, 2015. <http://news.mit.edu/2015/neural-population-music-brain-1216>.

³⁹ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, v.

⁴⁰ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, 1.

⁴¹ McLuhan, M., *The Medium is the Message*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 2003, 146.

Global Village. This, in his view, does create a side effect of infantilizing the human being. McLuhan argues that life in The Global Village with active interaction, should affect our historic way of learning so that it becomes a process of discovery. He sees this Global Village as demanding a greater extent of interaction, especially of pop-culture, in the learning process, literally reversing the roles of the tutor and the student. He also argues we have invented a pastoral myth which has led to the creation of suburbia, and that this over time will turn the cities into museums. The extreme consequence of this system is that media penetrates and alters us and our society to the degree that media becomes an extension of our nervous system. McLuhan argues that the invention of the alphabet and print led to fragmentation, specialization and detachment, whereas media, according to McLuhan, should lead us to unification and involvement.

Brown defines persuasion as an associative enhancer of communication, with manipulation being the author's intention – selfish and concealed. His conclusion is that “music is usually used to influence behavior, (...) this often makes use of deceptive devices in order to achieve its effects”⁴² and music use “must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis in terms of senders' intentions, receivers' actions and the social functions underlying communication.”⁴³

In dealing with the sociology of music, the rational methodology is to see music as a system of communication, and the artists as products of their society. McLuhan says that artists need to be anti-social beings in order to comment on society (as in the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale *The Emperor's New Clothes*).⁴⁴ To him the new art is humour and not the conventional

⁴² Brown, S. “‘How does Music work’, 22.

⁴³ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁴ The story's title can be used as an idiom referring to something that is untrue but has been widely accepted as true or praiseworthy, due to an unwillingness of the general population to criticize it. In the fairytale "no one believes, but everyone believes that everyone else believes. Or alternatively, everyone is ignorant to whether the emperor has clothes on or not, but believes that everyone else is not ignorant."

storyline, as with *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Pop-culture of youth is what will lead to new discoveries and we will get an electric drama. Therefore, it is necessary that the relationship between music and society is seen not just from the listener's perspective, but also from the creator's perspective.

According to Brown our life has become an audio-visual-kinetic experience where everything is underscored. To me, this is like a soundscape in a Murray Schafer-ian way.⁴⁵ McLuhan's pre-internet was centered on television and the way that medium demands our attention. The internet, much more so than the television, helped create the Global Village and the lack of detachment he defined. Our perspective on the television as a medium has changed: contrast the mid-60's colour television as the new hot item, with today's mini theatre-sized television, which often functions as background noise, having given way to handheld devices. Morrison sees a close parallel between the state of acoustic recording and McLuhan's and Carpenter's understanding of acoustic space. He speculates on whether there is a connection (because of the lack of aural perspective in the recorded music) between the emerging of sound recording and Cubist art at the beginning of the 20th century.

Brown argues that there has been a historical move from direct to indirect transmission, from live performances to mass culture distributed as economic commodities. Direct transmission remains a cooperative and collaborative process, while the indirect transmission is controlled through market forces and the cultural industries. Brown argues that control and censorship are driven by the same focus as social and economic behavioral control.

Hansen, J. U., "A Logic-Based Approach to Pluralistic Ignorance". Academia.edu., 2011, https://www.academia.edu/1894486/A_Logic-Based_Approach_to_Pluralistic_Ignorance, 2.

⁴⁵ Schafer, R. M., *The soundscape: our sonic environment and the tuning of the world*. Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1993/1994, Chapter 1.

1.3 The Influence of Don Juan

Shaw⁴⁶ and Strindberg⁴⁷ both claimed to be influenced by Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Both Mozart's and Molina's Don Juan seem to be based on the same real person Don John in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Ron Hess in *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* takes Shakespeare's inspiration (from the real Don Juan of Austria) one step further and claims that there are traces of the Don Juan character in all of Shakespeare's plays, with at least one third of them being clear connections.⁴⁸ He also states that *Romeo and Juliet* could be based on the connection between the real Don Juan of Austria and Mary Stuart. He bases this claim on Romeo addressing Juliet as "My Niece" and thereby referring to her as a female relative. Mary Stuart's mother was of the "House of Lorraine" and Don Juan was the nephew of the Danish King Christian II whose daughter became Duchess of Lorraine making Don Juan and Mary Stuart related. According to Kierkegaard, Mozart's Don Juan character is represented throughout three operas in three different stages of development with his opera *Don Giovanni* being the last stage. The first Don Juan figure is the Page in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Cherubino, whose desire is focused on woman as an object. In *The Magic Flute* it is Papageno, who is concentrating on the discovery of the woman, and finally we get Don Giovanni in the opera by the same name, who as the demonic character is focused solely on the seduction of women.

Don Giovanni is indeed faithless and focusses only on the erotic experience of the actual seduction. Once that one moment is gone, the women produce no more interest for him. In this respect Kierkegaard sees the connection to the perfect match with music. Don Giovanni's love affairs are a series of moments similar to music, and Kierkegaard finds that Mozart succeeds in

⁴⁶ Wisenthal, J. L., "Shaw's plays as music-drama." In *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw*, edited by Christopher Innes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 287.

⁴⁷ C. E. Jensen in <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/StrindbergA/titlar/Fadren/sida/303/etext>

⁴⁸ Hess, R., *The dark side of Shakespeare*, (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2002), 228-229.

reflecting this precisely in the overture to the opera, which he claims captures the soul of the whole opera. The soul of the character Don Giovanni is music, which the ‘champagne aria’ echoes. Donna Elvira represents Don Giovanni’s opposite. She gives up everything to be with him, and in the end, because of her love for him, she wants to do anything to save his soul. Unlike Don Giovanni she is fighting for love and, in contrast to all the other women he has seduced, she maintains her love for him. Kierkegaard maintains that the opera *Don Giovanni* contains everything, in that the music absorbs the text and integrates it completely. At the same time, there is an aesthetic lesson to learn from *Don Giovanni*. Repetition diminishes the satisfaction of the love act, so Don Giovanni never repeats the act of love – he is always looking for another woman. The connection between Kierkegaard’s understanding of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and that of Shaw and Strindberg is striking, especially given how great an influence both Shaw and Strindberg claim from Mozart’s interpretation of the Giovanni character. This makes Ron Hess’ statement about the ties between Don Juan and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* even more interesting; and this analysis of both Shakespeare and Mozart inform my discussion of both Shaw and Strindberg’s plays, as well as illuminating connections.

Kierkegaard and Adorno display similar approaches to music aesthetics. Each has a major influence on the philosophy of aesthetics, and their critiques assume authority in the field. Both men draw the boundaries between musical structure and understanding of music in an unsubstantiated value-judgment manner.

One example of this is when Adorno makes his famous claim that Wagner has anti-Semitic ideas and humour, which he traces back to the German fairytale tradition, explicitly the story of *The Jew in the thorn-bush*. As Borchmeyer⁴⁹ argues, this is not a confirmed statement

⁴⁹ Borchmeyer, D., *Drama and the world of Richard Wagner*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 203ff.

and most likely inaccurate. Borchmeyer makes a great argument in his contradiction of Adorno on “The Wandering Jew” and *The Jew in the Thorn-bush*. He states that Adorno is wrong in his assumption on Wagner’s knowledge of *The Jew in the Thorn-bush*. He then shows that, for Wagner, the legend of the Wandering Jew is a modern Christian myth “of general human significance, the myth of a man who doubts in his own redemption but who is nonetheless redeemed from the depths of utter despair.”⁵⁰

Adorno claims that Wagner is a dilettante. He supports his position with statements from Thomas Mann, claiming that Wagner makes numerous musical mistakes, is unmusical, decadent, and refers to the use of leitmotifs as “childish games.”⁵¹ He states that most Wagnerian operas are written in regular time: “many complaints about Wagner’s melodic weakness have their foundations not in a straightforward lack of ‘ideas,’ but in the beating gesture that dominates his work.”⁵² This is an example of how Adorno makes use of generalizations, which is also true of Strindberg. A quick survey of *Tannhäuser*, *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Die Meistersinger* will show any scholar that this is simply not true. A number of Adorno’s other statements are easy to dismiss as inaccurate or false and it is unfortunate that Adorno’s thoughts continue to influence scholars who themselves are not experts on the subject.

1.4 Musical Terms and Influences

1.4.1 Leitmotif

Leitmotifs run unfailingly through Wagner’s later works from *The Ring Cycle* and onwards. In the earlier Wagnerian operas, the motifs were repeated as musical themes, not

⁵⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁵¹ Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, (London: NLB 1981), 45.

⁵² Ibid., 33.

leitmotifs, as pointed out by Kirby.⁵³ The function of the leitmotif is to transmit dramatic meaning,⁵⁴ and to signify “(the operas) very thematic substance.”⁵⁵ According to Dahlhaus the leitmotif does not serve a musical function per se, but when Wagner: “used the word motif in his writings it did not refer to a melodic idea, but to its dramatic foundation or motivation.”⁵⁶ Which is why he developed a

system of leitmotifs (...) that integrates all of the dramatic action and its characters in a densely structured complex of conceptual and symbolic relationships that operate on several layers of meaning.⁵⁷

According to Shaw leitmotifs are musical ideas that need “to be introduced in association with both words and an event on stage, and it was the latter that was of crucial importance,”⁵⁸ and they “run consistently through the work, and are expressive of different aspects of the drama, its characters, (and) situations.”⁵⁹ As Kirby states, the

leitmotifs in Wagner’s dramatic works are in fact referential, and (...) the meanings and names traditionally assigned to them (...) are for the most part valid.⁶⁰

Consequently, leitmotifs are tonal markers that transmit dramatic significance. Adorno views Wagner as theatrical and not dramatic. To Shaw leitmotifs do not represent beliefs but emotions and sights, which is more or less in agreement with Borchmeyer.

According to Dahlhaus the scenic reason is what motivates Wagner’s use of musical motifs, and the way the musical motifs are painting images of natural phenomena is a visual sensation associated with an idea. Dahlhaus describes the melody in the music drama as the

⁵³ Kirby, F. E., *Wagner’s Themes*, (Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), 71.

⁵⁴ Tuttle, M., *Musical Structures in Wagnerian Opera*, (Lewiston: The Erwin Mellen Press, 2000), 20-21.

⁵⁵ Kirby, F. E., *Wagner’s Themes*, 8.

⁵⁶ Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner’s Music Dramas*, (tr. Mary Whittall), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 85.

⁵⁷ Borchmeyer, D., *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner*, 314.

⁵⁸ Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner’s Music Dramas*, 85.

⁵⁹ Kirby, F. E., *Wagner’s Themes*, 9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 214.

“language of words-and-music.”⁶¹ Shaw comments that the musical motifs are as emphatically intelligible as dramatic motifs in Shakespeare. He does however also state that:

dramatic characterization in music cannot be carried very far by the use of representative themes.⁶²

Shaw describes the recurrence of themes as an intelligent and interesting consequence of the recurrence of the dramatic phenomenon, which it denotes. Shaw argues rightly that music can contain more emotion than words – that music contains a dramatic power unmatched by the power of the written word.

Kierkegaard also argues that the aesthetic experiences created by music and drama are different. The pleasure offered by music is the most direct and will immediately affect the imagination, and the combination of music and drama can become a superior aesthetic experience. Drama is the purpose of the expression, and the leitmotifs serve a dramatic function or motivation. Source music in films can also be used to enhance the dramatic situation. Michael Kamen puts it bluntly: “the score is a component of the story and of the characters.”⁶³

To Wagner the purpose of the leitmotifs was to heighten the emotional impact of the music drama or, as Kirby writes

the repetition, restatement, or recalling of music heard before puts the audience in mind of the circumstances – the character or characters and the situation – that obtained at the music’s initial appearance.⁶⁴

According to Shaw each leitmotif

gives symphonic interest, reasonableness, and unity to the music, enabling the composer to exhaust every aspect and quality of his melodic material, and (...) to work miracles of beauty, expression and significance with the briefest phrases.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 124.

⁶² Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, Online version at Gutenberg. 1898, (revised 1922), 124.

⁶³ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 2nd Ed., (Boston: Berklee Press, 2010), 327.

⁶⁴ Kirby, F. E., *Wagner's Themes*, 5.

⁶⁵ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 125.

He also states that with the use of leitmotifs

the poetry that lies too deep for music (...) can make symphonies without the aid of dance tunes,⁶⁶

which is in agreement with Borchmeyer, to whom they are “the musicalization of poetry and the poeticization of music.”⁶⁷

According to Tuttle the tonic triad in Wagner’s operas becomes the master chord. He points out that every act in every opera ends on an undisputed tonic triad, and that it is the use of unifying notes, chord and key as well as the use of motifs enables Wagner to reach such a profound psychological level in his characters, and the material of the motif is enriched by the internal development. The break between the chords and/or tonality is what provides this extra psychological depth as well as the way the liberation/modulation away from the tonal background creates a space for unconscious motivations and emotions to flourish. This again points to how the tonal structure, by showing psychological instability, plays a significant role in supporting the dramatic structure. Tuttle reveals Wagner’s use of specific alterations of material associated with motifs for specific musical dramatic purposes, and how an established motif can be used to perform an instant modulation.

Wagner uses *leitmotifs* to focus on the internal aspects of his characters, with emphasis on emotion, not on motivation, in order to make the music complement the drama,⁶⁸ and his *leitmotifs* are used to make the entire performance seem a coherent symphonic whole.

The *leitmotifs* exemplify the action, underscore the dramatic structure, and in particular enrich the psychological understanding of the characters. As Richard Davis points out, when

⁶⁶ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 134.

⁶⁷ Borchmeyer, D., *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner*, 314.

⁶⁸ In traditional opera the attention lies on the interaction between the characters and therefore outside them, and it is the motivations behind the characters’ actions that is the focus.

synchronized sound was introduced in films this meant that: “a composer could provide needed insight into the emotional and psychological drama through the music.”⁶⁹

The notion of recurring themes or melodies and how they can help show a character’s inner emotions or indeed add as subtextual layer to the storytelling is going to be an essential part of my argument for why the correct use of music is so important in plays, and why when playwrights have indicated a choice of music it is important to acknowledge its function before eradicating it or replacing it.

1.4.2 Gesamtkunstwerk

Wagner is known as the creator of the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* [the total work of art or synthesis of all the different arts], which musically can be seen as a development of *Der Volkston*.⁷⁰ It refers to an operatic performance, which unites music, poetry, drama (theatre), scenic action and stage décor (visual art). As in the early birth of opera, Wagner believed that in the Greek tragedies all these art forms had been united, and he criticized the opera of his day for being focused on the music instead of the story and the qualities of the drama. Wagner not only wanted to recreate the Greek tragedies, but to improve upon them. Borchmeyer cites a very important quote from Thomas Mann: “Wagner’s works cannot be divorced from his music and his theatrical imagination.”⁷¹ This is a key point because Wagner’s operas are *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and this does indeed mean that one cannot exclusively analyze music or text, but need to look at the work as a whole. As Dahlhaus rightfully states, music and text are mediums of expression,

⁶⁹ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 2nd Ed. (Boston: Berklee Press, 2010), 13.

⁷⁰ *Der Volkstone* literally meaning a song in the tone of the people. When used about a German lied it is generally perceived as being a simplistic almost naïve romantic folk-like song.

⁷¹ Borchmeyer, D., *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner*, 310.

but the drama is the purpose of expression.⁷² This comes from Dahlhaus' reading of Wagner's *Oper und Drama*, where music and text are seen as mediums of expression. Here drama is the purpose of expression, which means that both text and music are functions of the drama.

Dahlhaus sees stage action as a form of dance in the all-unifying concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. To Dahlhaus, the motif in the Wagnerian music drama always has a "dramatic function or motivation."⁷³

Adorno sees the *Gesamtkunstwerk* concept as a failure, arguing that *Sprechgesang* was separated with "force from the actual music"⁷⁴ and with "the infantile actions of the singers – the opera often seems like a museum of long-forgotten gestures."⁷⁵ These sentences indicate a lack of understanding of the concept and the art form. He informs his readers that Wagner's music has "sold its right to protest,"⁷⁶ that it has lost its "ability to transcend imprisonment"⁷⁷ and that the arts "take their revenge by mocking the union and emphasizing their differences,"⁷⁸ again leading to failure of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Adorno sees Wagner's characters and text as undeveloped. He also holds the view that the Wagner operas are not opera at all, because they create no tension between the music and the myth, and so it is only fairytale-motif text leading to epic theatre.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica the definition of epic theatre, most well-known for the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* is

a form of didactic drama presenting a series of loosely connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the story line to address the audience directly with analysis, argument, or documentation,⁷⁹

⁷² Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 156.

⁷³ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁴ Adorno, Th. W., *In Search of Wagner*, 103.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁷⁸ Adorno, Th. W., *In Search of Wagner*, 112.

⁷⁹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/189683/epic-theatre>

which is an almost absurd comment in relation to Wagner's ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Adorno presents what he calls Wagner's misrepresentation of the oppressed man as un mutilated and with no free will, which for him shows that Wagner with *The Ring* was writing an "uninhibited lullaby for the bourgeoisie."⁸⁰ He makes an unsubstantiated statement where he compares the brotherhood in *Parsifal* to Hitler's Gestapo.

The main function of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* concept in this thesis is to support the understanding of the art work as a "whole" where text and music are not separated. A perfect example is found in film music, where it is unthinkable to separate the image from the soundtrack. That notion will be applied to the plays in question and the analysis will therefore be of the plays seen as *Gesamtkunstwerks* including all stage directions, references, footnotes and auditive references in the dialogue.

1.4.3 The Ring Cycle

Tuttle points out that the lack of complexity in *Götterdämmerung* is due to a lack of poetry and that Wagner has failed to form convincing musical structures (corresponding to the criticism of Dahlhaus, Adorno, and Shaw). Tuttle does however state that in *Siegfried* and in *Tristan und Isolde* the music is the drama,⁸¹ and that the tonal hierarchy, structure and motivic organization are also fully integrated in *Das Rheingold*. According to Tuttle, Wagner uses harmony and leitmotifs to present an extensive in-depth portrayal of dramatic characters and events.

⁸⁰ Adorno, Th. W., *In Search of Wagner*, 136.

⁸¹ Tuttle, M., *Musical Structures in Wagnerian Opera*, (Lewiston: The Erwin Mellen Press, 2000), 298.

In his *In Search of Wagner*,⁸² the last thing Adorno actually does is search for Wagner. He makes a range of statements most of which are not academically documented, which therefore remain personal opinions which are unfortunately quoted by others as being factual. He analyzes Wagner's works not as opera but as symphonic structures and always only in the context of the post-Beethoven Germanic tradition. Adorno debates Wagner's view on free sensuality in his early works, and how it leads to a harmony between asceticism and sensuality in the later works. He makes the obvious connection between pleasure and death, denounces Wagner as a dilettante, and demonizes him.

Shaw describes *The Ring Cycle* as a drama of today reflecting the events of the last half of the 19th century. He rightfully labels the first three works as music-dramas and the last one as an opera.⁸³ Shaw sees the whole work as a philosophical and social commentary, where the audience need no previous knowledge to follow the action. Shaw also interestingly remarks that the notes add musical expression to the drama.

In his reading, Shaw sets up two opposites: love and art versus money and power. It is a social critique where the dwarf represents the brute capitalist, who is only interested in his own gain and not in the welfare of the world. The dwarf lord Alberich shows no love and his interest in power and money leads to slavery, misery and starvation, while it is the slaves (and their labours) that empower the rich. To Shaw the gods are no better, since they show no respect for people and set down laws that are not pure and just. It then becomes a battle between the honest common man and the corrupt, greedy, unjust gods and dwarves. Focusing on Wagner's background as a political revolutionary, Shaw states that Wagner is on the side of the poor – hence a socialist, which he again is uses to support his reading of *The Ring*.

⁸² Adorno, Th. W., *In Search of Wagner*, (trans. Livingstone). New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1981.

⁸³ This supports the later claims by Adorno and Dahlhaus.

Shaw applies *The Ring* to his own life, talking about love without sexual passion as being ideal, which is contradicted by Borchmeyer and Dahlhaus. Shaw has now reached *Götterdämmerung*, which he describes as purely theatrical and not philosophical, unlike the rest of *The Ring*, degrading this piece to an opera rather than a music drama – a thought he shares with Adorno, Dahlhaus and Borchmeyer among others. To Shaw, sexual love is too powerful and he goes on to wonder, if Wagner had lost his grip with the last work in the cycle – forgetting that actually the text, which is the weakest part of this opera, was written before any of the other parts of *The Ring*. Shaw provides us with a socialist political reading and overview of Wagner's *The Ring*. He sees Wagner as an anarchist with whom he identifies, and to him *The Ring* has a general theme of love and humans versus money. It is a very clear reading of Shaw's own ideas onto Wagner's *The Ring* as well as a general music criticism, but in following his socialist focus he fails to properly incorporate the music into his dramaturgical reading of *The Ring*. To Shaw, Wagner was clearly the ideal revolutionary and this informs Shaw's use of musical elements in his drama.

Dahlhaus, like Shaw, reasonably sees *Götterdämmerung* as the weakest part of *The Ring Cycle*, with a vague story and incomplete characters (one of the few places where both actually agree with Adorno). To him this is not a music drama but exists somewhere between a symphony and an opera, with an ending theme of love, having had the gods destroy themselves in the creation of free human consciousness.

1.5 Dramaturgical Approach and Adaptation

1.5.1 The Freytag model

Gustav Freytag's model breaks down the technical rules of the drama in a coherent and easy accessible model, which works well for analyzing the plot structure of dramas. As supposed to the three-act structure analysis the Freytag model focuses on a conflict analysis.

It is in part based on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which he describes as the "foundation for the theory of our dramatic art."⁸⁴ He argues that because of the incompleteness of the *Poetics*, it is also in part based on the structure of plays by Sophocles, remarking that Sophocles used the "fundamental laws of dramatic construction, with enviable certainty and shrewdness."⁸⁵ He does however remark that the action in Sophocles' dramas began later than where he has placed the climax in his model.⁸⁶ Aristotle divided the drama into three parts – beginning, middle, and end – while Gustav Freytag divided it into five parts or actions. Freytag modifies Aristotle's' triangle into the pyramid, and adds two elements – the rising and the falling action.

Freytag recognizes Shakespeare as the second genius of a playwright after Sophocles:

His treatment of the tragic, his regulation of the action, his manner of developing character, and his representation of soul experiences, have established for the introduction of the drama, and for the first half to the climax, many technical laws which still guide us.⁸⁷

To Freytag the second half of the drama is where:

greater effects are demanded, [it] depends mostly on the counter-play; and this counter-play must here be grounded in more violent movement and have comparatively greater authorization.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Freytag, G. (English translation by E. J. MacEwan), *Freytag's Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Company, 1895, 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 7

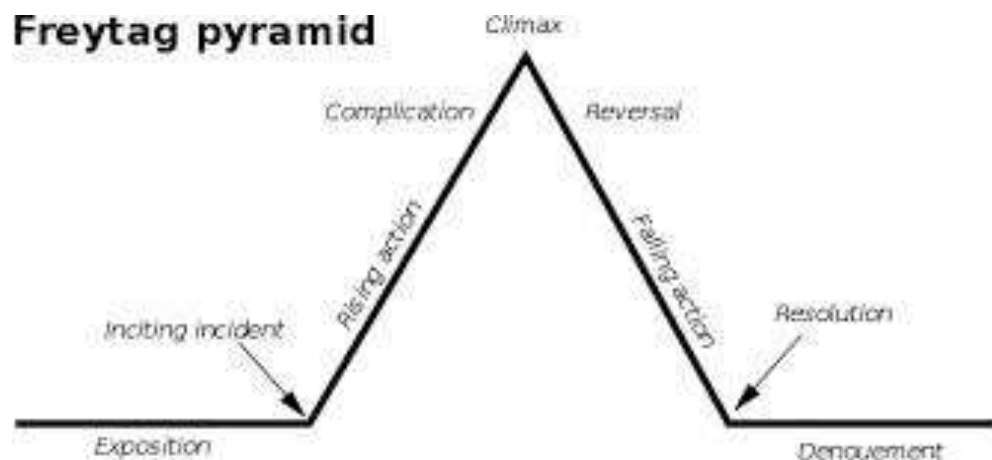
⁸⁶ Ibid., 155

⁸⁷ Ibid., 7

⁸⁸ Ibid., 109

The Freytag model can be used to analyze the dramaturgical structure of Wagnerian opera, as well as its integration of text and music, and this model can be applied to film music. Although Freytag's model may have been used in individual cases to show the structure of specific operas, to my knowledge no-one has yet applied the Freytag model to operas and films in general as a way of categorizing them for dramaturgical analysis and as a way of highlighting the musical and dramatic structure.

The Freytag analysis, based on observations of the structure in Greek tragedies, is mainly used to show connections among the composition of single parts within the drama, that is to say it is used as a tool to support dramaturgical analysis. It breaks down plays into five parts and three moments, showing which forces are in opposition to each other. The model is built as a pyramid in a system of co-ordinates, where the vertical axis is the protagonist's road through happiness and misfortune, while the horizontal axis depicts the development in time.



Freytag's five parts starts with the Exposition – where the audience is given the background information to understand the plot. The Exposition ends with the Inciting Moment. Next is the Rising Action – during which the basic conflict is complicated by secondary conflicts. The Climax (or turning point) – is the high point achieved by the protagonist, marking a change for better or

worse (depending on whether we are dealing with a comedy or a tragedy). Next comes the Falling Action – where the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist is unravelled. The Catastrophe – the final defeat is achieved, or (in a comedy) the problem is resolved.

The three moments are: The Inciting Moment – a single episode sets the rest of the story and works as a catalyst for the play; The Reversal (beginning of the reaction) – a single element or moment that leads to the Falling Action; The Moment of final Suspense – a single episode during which there will be a last false hope of rescue before the Catastrophe (in a tragedy), or Temporary Reversal (in a comedy).

1.5.2 Freytag applied to Wagner

As I have argued elsewhere and according to Newman,⁸⁹ Wagner uses forty-eight *leitmotifs* in *Das Rheingold*. The score version referenced is 251 pages long and out of the 48 *leitmotifs* in *Das Rheingold* half of them are introduced within the first 86 pages. When applying the Freytag model to *Das Rheingold* the division becomes – Exposition/Rising action, Climax, Falling Action/Catastrophe, that could roughly be pages 1-83 (24 new motifs), 84- 163 (13 new motifs), 164-251 (11 new motifs). Within the first third of the music, we are presented with the first fifty per cent of the motifs. Thus the amount of new material is presented roughly as follows:

1. Exposition/Rising action 50%
2. Climax 25%
3. Falling Action/Catastrophe 25%

⁸⁹ Newman, E., *The Wagner Operas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 490.

By looking at the numbers before and after the Climax it is clear that within the first 126 pages thirty-two new motifs are introduced, meaning that there are only sixteen unstated motifs left to be introduced during the remainder of the opera. Then the breakdown becomes:

1. Before the Climax 66%
2. After the Climax 33%

It is a perfect fit with the Freytag model, where the major part of new material is presented before the climax. The frequency with which a motif gets repeated is also very interesting. When added up the most repeated motifs *Walhalla* (#11) and *Servitude* (#36) – each stated six times – followed by *Renunciation of Love* (#9) and *Freia's flight* (#15) with five appearances, *Nibelungen* (#32) and *Annihilation* (#40) with four, while *Gold* (#6), *The Ring* (#10) and *Giants* (#16) are presented three times.

Analyzing the connection between the Freytag model and the appearances of the motifs reveals that the motifs reinforce the structural telling of the story, with the introduction of the main part of the new motifs before The Falling Action, and with very few motifs recurring in the beginning. This dramaturgical interpretation of the relations between music, text and stage action demonstrates that most motifs emphasize the connection between the words and the music as modes of expression when they first appear, serving the purpose of dramatic expression. When a motif appears without the interrelation with text the dramatic action on stage according to Wagner's score is always clear, and he is thereby informing the audience of the *leitmotifs'* meaning. Therefore, when making this connection whether or not it involves text Wagner creates the right impression (an emotional action) in the mind of the audience. The leitmotifs generally serve one of two functions when they re-emerge. Either they a) give the audience emotional insight into the character or b) underscore the action in support of the narrative.

In *The Perfect Wagnerite*, George Bernard Shaw offers a standard analysis of *Das Rheingold*, completely ignoring the importance of the *leitmotifs* and of their re-occurrence, and he is able therefore to manipulate the storyline of *Das Rheingold* to correspond with his own point of view. When the *leitmotifs*' emotional impact on the characters are abandoned, the complexity of these characters vanishes and they themselves become one-dimensional. For example, Shaw's perception of the giants is that they represent "the humble common man"⁹⁰ leading him to conclude, "what Law is left to these two poor stupid laborers."⁹¹ For Shaw the killing of Fasolt is caused by the lack of morality of the gods. However, the musical underscoring and occurrences of *leitmotifs* at this particular moment reveal an actual musical sub-text *Annihilation* (40) – followed– *the Curse of the Ring* (41). The Ring is seen as evil, however not everyone is attracted to its power. The evil magic of the Ring destroys the giants, manipulating them to fight over the Ring amongst themselves. It is the negative force of the Ring and not the lack of morality from the gods that results in the killing of Fasolt.

Wagner's use of his *leitmotifs* creates an internal action and adds a psychological depth to the music drama, which is clear just before the giants start their fight. Supported musically by motif number 42 and number 13, Wotan listens to Erda, honors his contract with the giants and gives up the Ring. The musical subtext here is motif number 16 and number 36 showing the audience that the power of the Ring enslaves the giants. In another example, Shaw remarks on the greed of the gods and Alberich, while completely ignoring that it is equivalent to the greed that makes the giants claim the Ring and fight over it. That greed and the enticement from Loge is indeed what kills Fasolt in the end. In other words, the use of these musical motifs shows an internal action and adds a psychological depth to the music drama. At the same time, even

⁹⁰ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 15.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

though they only represent a sub-text there is a musical suggestion with motif number 44 of the fall of the gods. The use of this particular motif extends the vision of the audience preparing them for *Götterdämmerung* and provides a conceptual unity for the whole cycle.

In *Das Rheingold*, Wagner uses the repetition of a leitmotif to show motivation as an underlying sub-text. In a number of instances, he also employs them to emphasize the internal aspects of a character with an emphasis on emotion. Kirby's argument that:

the repetition, restatement, or recalling of music heard before puts the audience in mind of the circumstances – the character or characters and the situation – that obtained at the music's initial appearance⁹²

is in support of this dramaturgical reading of *Das Rheingold*. It also highlights the link between Wagner's music and his theatrical imagination as mentioned by Thomas Mann. This further supports the original statement that one cannot analyze Wagner's operas adequately by solely analyzing the music or text since they are conceived as Gesamtkunstwerk. In order to complete a satisfactory analysis of Wagner's operas, one needs to analyze the work in its entirety. Dahlhaus' perceives the function of the leitmotifs as a dramatic function or motivation. To him music and text are both mediums of expression, with the drama being the purpose of expression. Shaw observed that leitmotifs are "to be introduced in association with both words and an event on stage"⁹³ in order to convey dramatic meaning. This way leitmotifs become tonal structures that can carry dramatic significance.

⁹² Kirby, F. E., *Wagner's Themes*, 5.

⁹³ Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 85.

1.6 Film Music

1.6.1 Wagnerian Leitmotifs and Underscoring in Film

The use of music in films falls into two categories: realistic music that is part of the action (diegetic), and musical underscoring or background music strengthening the mood of the scene and/or illuminating dramatic progress and aspects of character (non-diegetic). The borders between these two areas are often blurred for dramatic purposes. The function of the music is in both cases to create continuity, narrative impetus and subconscious commentary, observing an overall Wagnerian inspiration in the way some films are scored today. Inserting a sub-textual layer of musical underscoring creates an emotional impact on the film's audience by connecting a short musical motivic idea or theme with a specific character or event, repeating it frequently throughout the movie, effectively achieving *leitmotifs* or thematic writing. The leitmotif – or leading motif – is a short musical phrase or idea that keeps being repeated. It can be a short melodic, harmonic or rhythmic motif or a combination of the three, and its function is to move the dramatic action along, revealing underlying emotions and adding a new dimension to the movie. In Wagner's opera, the function of the *leitmotifs* is to highlight inner world of the characters, focusing on emotions, which makes the music complement the drama,⁹⁴ and makes the entire performance seem a coherent symphonic whole. According to Shaw, they give:

symphonic interest, reasonableness, and unity to the music, enabling the composer to exhaust every aspect and quality of his melodic material, and (...) to work miracles of beauty, expression and significance with the briefest phrases.⁹⁵

And with the use of *leitmotifs*:

the poetry that lies too deep for music (...) can make symphonies without the aid of dance tunes.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ In traditional opera the attention lies on the interaction between the characters and therefore outside them, and it is the motivations behind the characters' actions that is the focus.

⁹⁵ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 125.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 134.

In some cases, Wagner also applied the recurrence of the motifs to show motivation, but on a sub-textual layer. The same goes for the use of music in many films:

Music has been deployed in the movies for various purposes that range from expressing a character's emotions to heightening dramatic effect (...) from suggesting narrative outcomes to providing ironic commentary.⁹⁷

At the beginning and at the end during the credit rolls of some movies the overture or theme song will combine musical themes and/or *leitmotifs*. When using a theme song, pieces of this theme may be present in the underscored music. Once applied correctly the musical underscoring creates a

dramaturgical utility (...) depicting a film's geographic or national locale and (...) fitting each of a film's main characters with a distinctive theme (...). [We] recommend selecting music that catches a scene's overall mood and the changing this mood only at dramatically significant moments.⁹⁸

Before the release of the newest *Star Wars* movie, John Williams⁹⁹ gave an interview to the *American Federation of Musicians*. In the article, Williams compared his composition technique, (where Williams is bringing the *leitmotifs* into the 21st century) to the way Wagner has them return throughout *The Ring Cycle*, connecting to a specific person, idea, or situation.

Wagner utilized more than 90 of these themes to tie together story and characters. Thus it is with the galaxy-spanning *Star Wars* films, where from the outset Williams linked Darth Vader inexorably to a dark, unstoppable march, while Princess Leia's regal beauty is given voice by solo flute and horn. Even the Force, the unseen mystical power binding together the *Star Wars* galaxy, is given its own special snippet of music. Over the course of the next five films, most of the regular *Star Wars* characters come to be immediately identified by the particular themes that Williams has created for them.¹⁰⁰

In order to create continuity in the newest *Star Wars* Williams used *leitmotifs* to refer back to what has happened in previous movies and tie the stories together:

⁹⁷ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, 242.

⁹⁸ Wierzbicki, J., Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, 39.

⁹⁹ <http://www.afm.org/im/john-williams>.

¹⁰⁰ AMF interview.

While the majority of the music is also new, there are necessary references to early story lines, which helps create association with the previous films (...) so the music will look back in spots to the earlier films, but there are also new themes that will be applied in a similar way.¹⁰¹

The function of the *leitmotifs* here and in other cases is to exemplify the action, underscore the dramatic structure, and in particular enrich the psychological understanding of the characters. As I have argued elsewhere, Wagner's operas as *Gesamtkunstwerks* cannot be analyzed satisfactorily by exclusively looking at only the music or the text. Instead, one needs to look at the work as a whole. In order to analyze a movie one cannot simply analyze the action and the way the scenes are shot and disregard the music. Just analyzing the film music without considering the scenic action does not make sense either.

In his composition of the music to *The Lord of the Rings* Howard Shore applied Wagner's idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* and *leitmotifs*. The trilogy composition is almost like an opera in three acts and all three movies are almost completely underscored. To Estelle Jorgensen, Shore highlights his attempt to create an operatic feel in his use of *leitmotifs*:

Leitmotifs such as Frodo's theme, "May It Be," function similarly to those in opera in identifying the principal characters and conveying a feeling associated with them¹⁰² and

The use of motifs also present in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers* helps to unify the film trilogy since melodies are already familiar to the watcher/listener.¹⁰³

According to Jorgensen, the *leitmotif* in Shore's scores function to

help to highlight the mythic character of Tolkien's narrative, bridge the externally perceived phenomenal world and the internal and subjective "inner world," interrelate the experience of time—especially past and present—and evoke a sense of wonder and awe that otherwise may be forgotten.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ AMF interview.

¹⁰² Jorgensen, E., "Music, Myth, and Education: The Case of *The Lord of the Rings* Film Trilogy," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (SPRING 2010), pp. 44-57, (Campaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 47.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 44.

In *The Lord of the Rings* movie, Doug Adams has identified no less than ninety musical *leitmotifs*. With a focus on musical themes, he retells the plot showing the connections between the motifs, and with a clear focus on how the score helps tie the story together. To him the music's function is mainly to support the story and especially to highlight the emotional dynamic shown on the screen.¹⁰⁵

As argued elsewhere, each movie builds towards its own arc, with the majority of the vocal solo music after the climax. At the end of the third movie at the very peak of the drama, just before the resolution, the vocal solo music becomes particularly important in supporting atmosphere, enhancing emotions, and suggesting character traits. At the very end of the third movie there is a series of upwards-moving arpeggios reminding one of the ending of *Götterdämmerung*. It is very close to what Ernest Newman identifies as Wagner's leitmotif number 198. Shore also makes use of minor triads in his motif for *The Ring* and similar to Wagner's *Tarnhelm*¹⁰⁶ motif, he pairs A minor with F minor.

The function of music in early talkies was mainly diegetic as underscoring for the opening and closing credits. Indeed, the recording of sound happened simultaneously with the shooting of the film image. By the 1930s a new technique developed enabling the addition of sound at a later stage and multiple tracks became available. Max Steiner fully exploited this new technique in *King Kong* (1933). This became one of the first scores really featuring non-diegetic music. It used

leitmotivic structure, illustrative music synchronized with specific on-screen activity, a degree of dissonance to suggest terror, and an intelligent use of silence to emphasize diegetic sound.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Adams, D., *The Music of The Lord of the Rings Films*, 1st Ed., 2nd Printing, (Los Angeles: Alfred Music Publishing, 2010), 7.

¹⁰⁶ (motif 34) which allows the bearer to take any shape just like Tolkien's Ring makes people invisible.

¹⁰⁷ Oxford Music Online, search on Film Music.

This revolutionized the writing of music for movies. Richard Davis writes that Max Steiner

became known for writing emotional, lyrical themes (...), but was versatile and could provide any mood required. He used leitmotifs (themes, specific instruments, or both for a certain character or idea in the story) in many films, an idea borrowed from opera composers, especially Wagner.¹⁰⁸

Almost twenty years later the formulaic use of leitmotifs in film scores was criticized by several people including Theodor Adorno, Hans Eisler and Aaron Copland. While they did have an influence on their contemporaries, the use of the leitmotif is still a standard practice today, as the examples of *The Lord of the Rings* and the most recent *Star Wars* movie prove.

1.6.2 The Psychological Function of Music in Films

During the silent movie period, music served a quite different purpose. As Pauline Reay points out, the music was required, to drown

out or cover up the noise of the projector (...) as well as being needed, psychologically to smooth over natural human fear of darkness and silence.¹⁰⁹

The theatre pianists and organists for these early movies usually chose music from collections of incidental pieces and “mood” music. Therefore, the perception of a movie could be very different from cinema to cinema, depending not only on the abilities of the musician but also on the individual performer’s knowledge and skill in setting the right mood. The function of the accompaniment was to generate the atmosphere and sound effects of the setting, as well as supplying rudimentary thematic signifiers of character traits in the style of 19th-century melodrama.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Reay, P., *Music in Film*, (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 6.

In Europe in 1908, Saint-Saëns wrote a score for the movie *L'assassinat du Duc de Guis*, and in America Victor Herbert, drew on his extensive background in operetta¹¹⁰ to compose a completely new symphonic score for *The Fall of a Nation* (1916), the sequel to Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. *The Birth of a Nation* (D.W. Griffith, 1915) was one of the first movies in North America to have a score written specifically for it. The score was a mixture of folk music, renowned classics, traditional Americana (e.g., "Dixie" and "The Star-Spangled Banner") plus some original music. While this expanded the use of motifs and themes in movies, it still had its limitations inherent in using the onsite performer(s), and the uniformity that we are experiencing today was lacking. The first motion picture with synchronized sound was *The Jazz Singer* (1927), produced by Warner Brothers.

Films can be seen as a form of *Gesamtkunstwerk* because of their nature, uniting the moving picture, acting and sound. To Richard Davis, just as with opera, when film music is:

heard in conjunction with the visual of the film, it is awesome and the whole film takes on another dimension.¹¹¹

His book *Complete Guide to Film Scoring* includes a quotation by Stanley Kubrick on the function of film music:

I think music is one of the most effective ways of preparing an audience and reinforcing points that you wish to impose on it. The correct use of music, and this includes the non-use of music is one of the greatest weapons that the film maker has at his disposal.¹¹²

He continues, "the pairing of music and drama (...) can be considered highly effective,"¹¹³ and "enhance the intention of the film-maker."¹¹⁴ It could be something as simple as a low drone anticipating that something is about to happen.

¹¹⁰ He wrote 43 operettas.

¹¹¹ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 4.

¹¹² Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 45.

¹¹³ Tan, S.; Cohen, A.; Lipscomb, S. and Kendall, R. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, 106.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 127.

The use of major and minor tonality to associate with positive and negative is (...) an example of extra-referentialism.¹¹⁵

To Rosenman, music is part of the plot and not just a series of sound effects – this is what creates the dramatic necessity or the supra-reality. He has extended this:

In film music it was found that the catalytic element could be psychologically more effective when capsulized in the form of a theme, ballad, or motif. This element worked best when "plugged"; that is to say, repeated over and over, in no matter what the context, thus making any given context understandable by conditioning and association.¹¹⁶

According to Richard Davis, music sets the scene not just the location but the time-period. It uses functions such as '*Mickey-Mousing*', a colloquial term denoting a technique where the music is coordinated with or imitates the pre-existing action on the screen, which is the case in many older animated movies. This creates the psychological mood and supports the action –

to intensify the drama, composers might write music that closely follows the action onscreen, and often has many sync points¹¹⁷

with the music revealing "the unspoken thoughts and feelings of a character."¹¹⁸

1.6.3 Underscoring

Underscoring is playing music or sounds in conjunction with dialogue and/or action without taking away the focus of the scene. This incidental music supplements the scene to support the emotions and the atmosphere, sometimes even setting the location. Generally however, the characters on the screen do not hear the music – it works as a kind of "background" music and is non-diegetic. Virgil Thomson reinforces this point, taking the nature of film and its subject matter into account:

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 52

¹¹⁶ Rosenman, L., "Notes from a Sub-Culture" in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Autumn - Winter, 1968), pp. 122-135, (Princeton University Press, 1968), 127.

¹¹⁷ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 141.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 142.

The trouble with most movie-music is its lack of continuity (...) Narrative or dramatic continuity is achieved therein only by effort and much care (...) Musical accompaniment should be an aid to continuity. It should establish and preserve an atmosphere, a tone of augmenting or unrolling drama. It should envelope and sustain a narrative the cinematographic recounting of which is after all only a series of very short incidents seen from different angles. To break the music with every shot or change of scene is an error and ineffective.¹¹⁹

The technical form of film is to Thomson the equivalent of Gertrude Stein's disjointed modernism, and should be mirrored in the music. In his scoring, Elmer Bernstein makes extensive use of the leitmotif and he perceives music as a tool for emotional communication,¹²⁰ as well as a way to "speed up or slow down the action."¹²¹ In thinking of film, he sees himself in a particular role:

as a dramatist. I am not thinking of music at all when I spot a film. I look at the scene and say, Should this scene have music? Why should it have music? If it does have music, what is the music supposed to be doing?¹²²

The impact of technology on film music has extended itself far beyond the soundtrack; it has affected

the relationship between music, dialogue and sound effects. (...) [it has] blurred the dividing line between music and sound effects and even dialogue.¹²³

Elfman has said that the dramatic function of music is "all about storytelling."¹²⁴ The way the music

starts and stops, swells and retreats, and specific instrumentation and textures are carefully crafted to fulfill specific dramatic functions.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Wierzbicki, J., Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, 80-81.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 179.

¹²¹ Ibid., 181.

¹²² Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 269.

¹²³ Reay, P., *Music in Film*, 24.

¹²⁴ Wierzbicki, J., Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, 280.

¹²⁵ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 87.

The function of the music is then to “enhance the drama in a subtle way.”¹²⁶ The focus is on the dramatic function of the music –

as the story unfolds on screen, the music must continually develop (...), and the overall emotional thrust of the music has an arc that matches the arc of the film.¹²⁷

As a contrast, Louis Reeves Harrison relates the meaning of film music to that of opera, saying that the emotion conveyed in opera

is not exactly that set forth in the music, that method of expression is too vague and comprehensive, but it stimulates emotions aroused by the situation, by the series of events, by gestural and facial expression, just as in moving pictures. In both cases, words are not absolutely essential, but the right sort of music is essential to complete enjoyment of the drama. The music of the opera is not sacrificed to the drama, but is supported by it. The pictured drama is not sacrificed to the music, but is so powerfully influenced by it as to become wonderfully effective or absolutely repelling according to the accompanying tone of the picture.¹²⁸

Rosenman compares film and theatre by saying:

Dramatically, the concepts of a film and a live stage play are larger than life. Physically, however, while one medium depicts people up to ten times life-size, the other, using living performers, is framed in a smaller-than-life reference by both the audience's vantage point and the proscenium arch. However, though the characters in a play seem physically smaller than life (by the optics of perspective), they are indeed alive and fill the silences with a life-aura: breathing, footsteps, the rustle of clothing, etc. (...). Psychologically it is interesting, even today, to find an audience rapt with attention during noisy parts of the film, but beginning to cough and fidget during the silent moments. I think that this kind of restlessness embodies a need for the reassurance of a live environment.¹²⁹

Music in film stands in strong opposition to the concept of Epic Theater. Epic Theater is the concept applied by Brecht, where the goal is that the audience members should not identify emotionally with the character or action. While Brecht uses music it is not connected to the action and therefore the music in Epic Theater serves as a *Verfremdungseffekt*. This would

¹²⁶ Ibid., 88.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹²⁸ Wierzbicki, J., Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, 4.

¹²⁹ Rosenman, L., “Notes from a Sub-Culture,” 124.

weaken their ability for self-reflection and critical thinking, which is in sharp contrast to the emotive power of music. It encourages the spectators to lower their psychological barricades and give in emotionally. A number of composers have drawn comparisons between film and stage drama. Alf Clausen declared in such a comparison that when scoring a film one needs to “score it like a drama,”¹³⁰ or as Elliot Goldenthal puts it: “the theater world, it’s sort of a Gold’s Gym of dramatic composing.”¹³¹

In the early talkies composers such as Steiner and Korngold came from a classically trained background, both having written scores for operas and music drama, in contrast to composers such as Newman and Waxman, who mainly composed film music. However, all four had received some training in classical music composition/conducting and/or playing. To them the function of the music was to

develop as the story developed and move the plot along. The experience of the European composers in writing opera made them ideally suited to this task.¹³²

The introduction in the 1930s of popular music, jazz and the theme-score – a score essentially constructed around a single title melody or song - yet again changed the use and significance of music as underscoring. Raksin’s score for the detective melodrama *Laura* (1944) was one of the first film scores to integrate this. Not only is it almost fully monothematic, it clouds the lines between diegetic and non-diegetic music, and it blends popular and art music to achieve a popular style orchestra color. Theme scores, instead of being a departure from the classical scoring model, can (accordingly to Reay) be seen as:

a variation of it, using the theme in exactly the same way a classical score used leitmotifs – to provide coherence for a string of discontinuous musical cues.¹³³

¹³⁰ Davis, R., *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 279.

¹³¹ Ibid., 304.

¹³² Ibid., 31.

¹³³ Reay, P., *Music in Film*, 18.

Generally, a movie score features an instrument group such as the strings, at times with an added flute and tuned percussion. Frequently, there is a widespread variety of cues throughout a film including everything from orchestral, instrumental, and choral pieces, to simple sound effects, and representing an extensive range of styles. The style of music naturally depends on the topic and genre of the movie, including a number of popular music genres such as rock, pop, folk-music, jazz, country, blues, new-age, as well as ethnic and world-music. For the main part however, it has its roots in Western classical music, and analysis shows that generally this music is non-vocal.

Film soundtracks often include dialogue and sound effects as well as the score and are generally used as a way to heighten the dramatic narrative and the emotional effect of the film, either by strengthening and emphasizing the action or by contrasting and thereby deepening and prolonging the visual impression. The music is adding to this in a third dimension by supporting the images and the words, and in doing so illuminating aspects of the film that would not have been perceived otherwise. The music then becomes inseparable from the dramatic framework. North American film scores generally contain a great deal of original music written for this specific purpose, and in a great variety of styles. They have their roots in Western classical music, although there has been an increasingly influence from jazz, pop, rock, blues, ethnic and world music styles, as well as electronic elements. In most contemporary films, the music works both on a diegetic and on a non-diegetic level in order to create a whole soundscape. The extensive use of the leitmotif in the scoring by contemporary composers, such as Elmer Bernstein, John Williams, and Howard Shore, highlights how they see music as a tool for emotional communication.

Movies have always had music accompaniment. Early on music played a significant role in creating atmosphere, adding psychological mood, and intensifying the action. Almost from the very beginning this was emphasized through the way many composers adapted the leitmotif technique and implemented it into this new genre, and how new technological improvements in instruments and recording technique has influenced the way music is used in films. When the music follows the onscreen action, the composers strengthen the drama in a subtle way and can reveal the thoughts and feelings of a character. By correct use of the *leitmotif* these functions are further intensified, since *leitmotifs* can exemplify the action, underscore the dramatic structure, and in particular enrich the psychological understanding of the characters. The composers thereby create a sub-textual layer where the emotive power of the music encourages spectators to lower their defenses and give in emotionally. *Leitmotifs* also serve a dramatic function or motivation. In other words, *leitmotifs* are tonal structures that carry dramatic significance; they are catalytic elements that can make films psychologically more effective.

The use of music has an ability to help cover up the fact that a movie is an artificially created illusion, by creating a feeling of atmosphere, enhancing emotions, suggesting character traits and specific periods, and identifying locations. It also enhances the dramatic structure of the film and provides continuity, and has therefore often been applied to strengthen dramatically weak scenes.

The use and significance of music in films and plays become very similar if one views the plays as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, applies the idea of *leitmotifs* or recurring themes and the significance of music as a way of expressing emotions. In plays, music then functions as a subtext or underscoring that enhances the audience experience by supporting the dramatic situation and the narrative, and influences the audience perception of characters and their

emotions. It is therefore important to analyze where in the dramatic structure (Freytag) the music is present.

1.7 Adaptation

1.7.1 The Theory of Adaptation

The primary objective of most traditional storytelling, theatre (not including Brecht's Epic Theater), opera and film is to provoke emotions in the audience. To help reach this goal the author or playwright has three basic elements: character, desire and conflict. The dramatic conflict is rooted in the subtext of the central characters, who are driven by conflicting desires. The hero or protagonist, with whom we sympathize, as in a fairytale, has a number of insurmountable obstacles he must overcome or resolve in order to achieve his goal. This goal or outer motivation is what is reached (or not) at the end of the play.

According to Gary Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon,¹³⁴ narrative adaptations have been denigrated as secondary compared to the "original". They point out the absurdity when the "original" is a Shakespeare play, since most of Shakespeare's plays are in themselves adaptations from other literary or historical works, which does not seem to have affected our perception of him as a playwright and creator. The example given in the article is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, adapted from Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem based on Matteo Bandello's 1554 adaptation of Luigi da Porto's 1524 adaptation from the 33rd novel *Il Novellino* by Masuccio Salernitano published in 1476 about the story of Mariotto and Gianozza.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ In their article Bortolotti, G & Hutcheon, L., "On the Origin of Adaptations," *New Literary History*, Vol. 38, No.3, Biocultures (Summer, 2007), (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), pp. 443-458.

¹³⁵ This is a different discussion of the concept of authorship than the discussion related to "Shakespeare authorship question," which is not a discussion relevant for this study.

A great example of adaption is the 1994 Disney animated film *The Lion King*. The story is very similar to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the main difference being that in the Disney version the protagonists live happily ever after; the only characters who get killed are the old king and the evil uncle. It does, however, contain most of the characteristics of Hamlet. The protagonist is a young male (lion), whose father is killed by his evil wicked uncle. The young male is sent into exile, so that his uncle can assume the throne and become king. The young male then returns and reclaims his throne. While the 'Disneyfication' has softened the protagonist to make him a cute, cuddly lion, all the obstacles that he has to overcome are still there hidden within the plot.

Bortolotti and Hutcheon argue that an adaptation's fidelity to the original is not a criterion for success. Instead, one should see if the adaptation can stand on its own as an independent work, and what impact this adaptation has in the "evolution" of the original work. They advance the argument about adaptation beyond fidelity, so that instead of mainly focusing on what is lost in translation or adaptation, the question becomes "why we choose to retell stories and how those retellings function within a culture".¹³⁶ They argue that this evolution is essential in enabling the introduction of new media platforms and that adaptations can help transmit the original story.

Each medium or genre has unique ways of communicating a story, which means that one medium can focus on specific elements better than others can, since there is no medium fundamentally good at presenting everything. Each art group or medium will want to represent, highlight or illustrate different aspects of the same story – whether it be a poem, a play, an opera, a ballet, a musical, a movie, a computer game or a book. As Hutcheon points out:

¹³⁶ Bortolotti, G & Hutcheon, L., "On the Origin of Adaptations," 446.

the linear and single-track medium of language will produce a different version than the multitrack film, with its amalgam of music, sound, and moving visual images.¹³⁷

Hutcheon argues that the creation process is actualizing and concretizing ideas, and that adaptation of a narrative can often be part of this process.

In her book on adaptation, Hutcheon begins with the statement, "Adapting is a bit like redecorating," referring to how the art of adapting new works on several platforms with many different forms of media.¹³⁸ She gives a critical overview of the entire process of adaptation the what, who, why, how, where, and when of media reincarnations based on previous works. In doing so, Hutcheon promotes a new approach to evaluating adaptations that considers not only narrative strategies, but also the mediums in which they are presented. She also addresses the issue of audience reception relative to adapted works, and she differs from other adaptation theorists because of her interest in understanding the experience of adaptation. She states that T. S. Eliot and Northrop Frye convinced her that

all art is derived from other art (...) In this sense, adaptation joins imitation, allusion, parody, travesty, pastiche, and quotation as popular creative ways of deriving art from art.¹³⁹

She is accurate in pointing out that since it takes longer to sing a phrase than to read it, adapting a text or a play into a musical or opera requires us to compress the original. Not only is it essential to cut excessive amounts of text, simplify psychological characteristics or find another way than words to express this, but it is crucial to cut supporting characters as well as those

¹³⁷ Hutcheon, L., "On the Art of Adaptation," *Daedalus*, Vol. 133, No. 2, On Happiness (Spring, 2004), (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 109.

¹³⁸ Hutcheon, L., *A theory of adaptation*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), viii.

¹³⁹ Hutcheon, L., "On the Art of Adaptation," 109.

events that are non-essential for the main narrative. To Hutcheon, the cinema is the fulfillment of Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. She quotes Robert Stam.¹⁴⁰

A composite language by virtue of its diverse matters of expression - sequential photography, music, phonetic sound, and noise - the cinema (...) inherits' all the art forms associated with these matters of expression (...) the visuals of photography and painting, the movement of dance, the decor of architecture, and the performance of theater.¹⁴¹

While the medium of film has the option of presenting the micro-drama in the close-ups, it does not have the same power of live interaction that a stage drama or an opera has, where the audience connects to the performer on a deeper physiological level by breathing together.

Hutcheon states that film, unlike theatre, has the option of

separate soundtracks (...) that permit voice-overs, music, and the non-vocal to inter-mingle,¹⁴²

but many contemporary plays like *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and several other of Simon Stephens' plays (or adaptations, see chapter 6) use music in a very film-like manner. Like most of Shakespeare's plays, many of the plays by George Bernard Shaw, Tom Stoppard and Simon Stephens are indeed adaptations. Further, all of the above playwrights, as well as Strindberg, have themselves become the target of subsequent adaptations.

¹⁴⁰ Stam, R., *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 131.

¹⁴¹ Hutcheon, L., *A theory of adaptation*, 35.

¹⁴² Hutcheon, L., "On the Art of Adaptation," 110.

Chapter 2

Shakespeare's Musical Language in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*

2.1.1 Overview

This chapter concentrates on music in Shakespeare's plays and the manner in which songs and sound cues underscore the action and enhance character delineation. A dramaturgical analysis reveals how music influences the dramatic structure in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*. These plays were chosen due to their popularity as musically attractive vehicles. There are over seventy operatic and musical adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, and over twenty of *The Merchant of Venice*. *The Merchant of Venice* was selected in particular because of the song at the centre of the play "Tell me where is fancy bred," which has been set by more than seventy different composers in the 19th and 20th century alone.¹⁴³ The analysis considers how the musical knowledge and the rhythm of the language in Shakespeare's works contributes to rendering them as major sources for operas in the 18th and 19th century, and more recently for musicals on the modern stage. More importantly, one can argue that the modern musical adaptations of these plays have restored Shakespeare's popular appeal, rescuing him from the prevailing elitist view of the 18th and 19th centuries.

A few songs from Shakespeare's other plays, highlight his popularity with different composers. A good example is "If Music be the food of love" from *Twelfth Night*. Duke Orsino comments on music that is being played on the stage as the first scene opens:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die...

¹⁴³ This is based on a search on The British Library's website and lieder.net and it is therefore an absolute minimum and based on English language settings only.

When Purcell set this famous line of Orsino's to music, less than a century later, he completely reversed the sentiment, turning "die" into "joy". This neatly illustrates the way composers took liberties with the text, in the centuries after Shakespeare's death. Of course, ideals of harmony change with time, to suit the tastes of different eras. Most of the music derived from Shakespeare's plays comes from the late 17th century or later, as Shakespeare became more of a cultural icon.

Two versions of "It was a lover and his lass" from different periods support the idea that music creates a subtext. Worth noting is that a change in the music alone and not the text results in a completely different interpretation. Thomas Morely actually composed for Shakespeare and the music for this song as used on the stage of the Globe Theatre, is very different from later versions with the same text. Morely created a simple, folk-song quality, with a straightforward, undecorated rhythmical line, which is representative of a 'pop' tune of that time. By comparison, the 1942 version by British composer Gerald Finzi, clearly fits the mold of a 20th-century art song and also has a lot more "swing" to it. At the same time, the whole mood is more operatic; and the vocal line requires a professionally trained singer. The 1942 version as a whole may still have a distinctly English sound, yet it is rhythmically and harmonically complex: certainly not a pop tune to be sung on the streets. This shift from simple folk tune to operatic depth both mirrors and demonstrates the major multi-century changes in the way Shakespeare's plays have come to be perceived. They have changed from low-brow entertainment to the most revered classics and translations as Shakespeare became an internationally renowned cultural icon. The numerous settings of his texts, supported by so many different kinds of music, also represents his universally accepted stature.

The function of music in Shakespeare's plays as originally performed always remained focused on words - not just the meaning of a text, but more so the vocal sounds that create effective verbal communication. Today we call watching audiences "spectators" but in the Elizabethan period they were "listeners." Even the root of "audience" is from the Latin - *audio*, *audire*, meaning to hear or listen. In Shakespeare's later plays there are occasional spectacles: a dance of Satyrs or the arresting statue scene in *A Winter's Tale*, and a parade of goddesses in *The Tempest*. All of these are a direct response to the growing popularity of the court masque, as well as a result of the move to indoor theatres, like the Whitehall Playhouse, and later Blackfriars, which made lighting effects and scenery possible. But, as one of Shakespeare's well-known contemporaries, Ben Jonson, complained:

Would you were come to heare, not see a Play.
Though we his Actors must provide for those,
Who are our guests here, in the way of shewes,
The maker hath not so; he'll have you wise,
Much rather by your ears than by your eyes.
(Prologue to Staple of News, 1612)¹⁴⁴

When he says "maker," Jonson is referring to himself: the dramatist. This emphasis on sound is largely due to the nature of the stage space in which Shakespeare's plays were originally performed. When the replica of The Globe opened in London almost twenty years ago, the theatre critic for *The Times* commented:

The Globe presents a special challenge both to directors, who may have to think harder about blocking than is usual nowadays, and to audiences, who must learn to listen more acutely to words that do, after all, themselves paint everything from morning haze to night-time tempests.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Wilson, C. R., *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2011), 32.

¹⁴⁵ Wilson, C. R., *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery*, 33.

The Globe sightlines do not allow for scenery; and with broad daylight, there was no possibility of lighting effects, indeed there is very little opportunity for any sort of visual show. As a result of this type of stage space, sound – not just speech, but also songs, music played on a single instrument (lute or recorder or drum), even band music became a primary attraction. In Shakespeare's plays, where there is music there is always vocal accompaniment or voice-over, except where there are dances. This highlights the voice; and Shakespeare actually gives us instructions on *how* to listen to his plays. As the opening Prologue of *Henry V* clearly announces, Shakespeare's bare, circular stage serves as a neutral field for the auditors' imagination:

Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,
Printing their proud hooves i'th' receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishments of many years
Into an hourglass...

This well-known passage is generally cited to illustrate the non-representational qualities of Shakespeare's drama – as indeed it does. But it can also be seen as an indication that the actors' delivery of their speeches is to be orchestrated to provide the most imaginatively and emotionally suggestive stimulus for the minds of the audience, this vocalization leads to song, thereby underlining the musicality and inspiration for composers. It is this inherent musicality in Shakespeare's plays that make them inspire musicians of all times and ages.

There are over two thousand references to musical terms in Shakespeare's thirty seven plays, four hundred separate terms relating to music, as well as about one hundred actual songs and references to songs, which gives almost an average of three songs for each one of his plays. However, his songs are not simply occasional "music" but are integral to the dramatic action.

The musical references are to instruments, ensembles, genres and dance, performers and performance, as well as technical terms from theory, philosophy, and pedagogy. Then there is a completely separate category of emotional words, terms with military and civic associations, and stage cues. When a song is performed, it is either asked for specifically by a character and therefore a formal request, or improvised if necessary, with many of the improvised songs being based on the popular tunes of the day.

Shakespeare's songs frequently set the scene – not only painting the physical setting but also establishing the emotional tone of the plays, and often these songs are not sung by the characters themselves but by a professional musician. In *As You Like It*, Amiens, a professional singer, is attached to the banished Duke's little band of followers. He sings several songs for the Duke's entertainment; the first one literally sets the scene. The Duke has taken refuge in the Forest of Arden (a manicured wilderness indeed just down the road from Shakespeare's Stratford). Amiens' song "Under the Greenwood Tree" invokes a pastoral paradise. The song is not only about birds, trees, and the free life of nature in contrast to the enclosed, competitive world of the city and the court. In addition to expressing the idyllic pastoral nature of the locale, it is also a very open invitation to sexual pleasure and love, which is the main theme of this play.

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,

Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

The tune prepares us for all the sexual encounters to come – which indeed culminate in the ceremonial appearance of Hymen, a very physically named God of Marriage – and the simultaneous wedding of three very different couples. Like all of Shakespeare's songs, "Under the Greenwood Tree" is completely integrated into the dramatic situation. As Amiens sings the final notes, the cynical Jacques responds. Jacques words directly parody the lyric we've just heard, satirizing the whole situation of the Duke and his followers in the forest:

If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass
Leaving his wealth and ease
A stubborn will to please
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he,
And if he will come with me.

Which makes Amiens ask: "What's that "Ducdame"?" the explanation being "'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle." There could hardly be a closer connection between song and dramatic situation. In addition, the songs express the emotional state of Shakespeare's characters. His way of using musical imagery explains his characters' emotional state; and puts them into a wider context of ideals of harmony and discord. For example, as Odysseus proclaims in *Troilus and Cressida*: "Take but degree away, untune that string / And hark what discord follows."

Music sets Shakespeare's characters in relation to the divine order of the universe. The cosmic relation to these ideals of harmony was one of the things that motivated the composers of Shakespeare's day. Another contemporary of Shakespeare's was the composer John Dowland.

According to letters from the period, he was Shakespeare's favorite composer – and indeed shared a nickname with Shakespeare, being at the time generally called John “the Bard”

Dowland. To justify his art Dowland translated a classical treatise on “Humane Musick”:

who reconciles the Elements of the body? what other power doth solder [solder] and glue that spiritual strength, which is indued with an intellect to a mortal and earthly frame, than that Musicke which every man that descends into himself finds in himself? Hence is it, that we loath and abhorre discords, and are delighted when we hear harmonically concords, because we know there is in our selves the like concord.¹⁴⁶

Music not only affects human emotional states, but is seen as a force that literally structures the human body, linking our souls to our physical being. As shown in the introduction to this thesis, Hamilton argues that music can create fundamental changes in an individual's consciousness.

Boethius was a Roman philosopher and mathematician, whose philosophy of music – *De Institutione Musica*, became a gospel for the Elizabethans.¹⁴⁷ One of the clearest representations of his ideas appear in Dowland's 1609 introduction to Andreas Ornithoparcus, *Micrologie*, or *Introduction: Containing the Art of Singing* (1517) in translation by Dowland himself:

When God ... had devised to make this world moveable, it was necessary, that he should governe it by some active and moving power, for no bodies but those that have a soul, can move themselves ... Now that motion ... is not without sound: for it must needs be that a sound be made of the very wheeling of the Orbes ... The like sayd Boetius ... From this turning of the heaven, there cannot be removed a certain order of Harmonie.¹⁴⁸

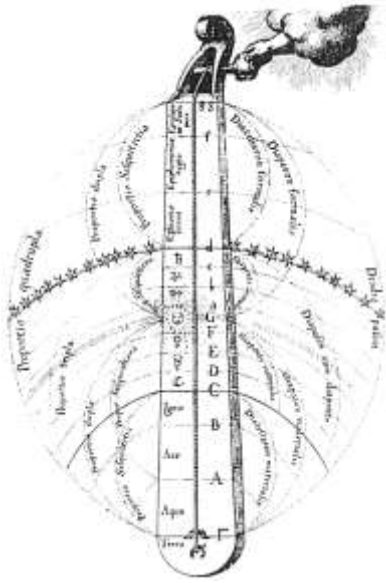
The following illustration is from Fludd's book *De Musica Mundana*.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Lindley, D., *Shakespeare and Music*, (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 22.

¹⁴⁷ It was one of the first musical works to be printed in Venice around 1491-1492.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson, C. R. & Calore, M., *Music in Shakespeare: a dictionary*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2007), 292.

¹⁴⁹ Hall, M.P., *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy*, (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1928), 203.



This is Boethius's “music of the spheres ... a sound... made out of the very wheeling of the Orbes” or (in Copernicus’s system) all the stars and planets around the earth. This image comes from a book, titled *De Musica Mundana* (The Music of the Earth), by Robert Fludd, Elizabeth I’s Royal astronomer and alchemist. He shows God’s hand literally tuning the spheres like a musical instrument. For the Elizabethans, music as a divine force that governs the universe, and links the inanimate cosmos to the innermost nature of living beings. This goes along with Tagg’s notion that music when used as a form of communication becomes a way of expressing emotions, and that the emotion and effect are part of the musical meaning. Shakespeare echoes the concept from *De Musica Mundana* more directly in *The Merchant of Venice* than in any of his other plays.

2.1.2 The Merchant of Venice

In *The Merchant of Venice*, in particular, music plays an integral role. Despite its threatened violence, courtroom tensions, and provocative racism, *The Merchant of Venice* also contains some of the most beautiful poetry in all Shakespeare’s work. So much so, that

composers have frequently chosen to set lines from the play to music, for instance, “How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.” This particularly poetic speech (which incidentally has also been set to music by several other composers)¹⁵⁰ very explicitly makes the link between music as a divine force, the movement of the stars, and the nature of human beings. Indeed it is the concept of music that provides a true moral basis for this play. Shylock is a very ambiguous character, through which Shakespeare challenges conventional morals. However, music tells us how to judge him. The original (and much longer) title Shakespeare gave his play was *The Comical History of The Merchant of Venice, or Otherwise Called the Jew of Venice*. That subtitle clearly relates it to Christopher Marlowe’s earlier play, *The Jew of Malta*, where the Jewish central figure really is an absolute villain. But how villainous is Shylock? He may be motivated by hatred of Antonio, but (as he says) Antonio is a racist who hates all Jews – we see him calling Shylock “the devil” and he acknowledges that he has consistently abused Shylock. In addition, at the time the Jewish community were the only people supposed to serve as money-lenders, and they made their money from charging interest; and Antonio has (as he later admits) cost Shylock money by rescuing his debtors. Antonio lends for free. The “pound of flesh” bargain can be seen as in recognition of that, even if Bassanio “likes not fair terms and a villain’s mind” – and Jessica admits that her father has declared “he would rather have Antonio’s flesh / Than twenty times the value of the sum / That he did owe him.” Undercutting that standard morality, there is Shylock’s intense and convincing claim of humanity:

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; ... hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases ... warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not

¹⁵⁰ Minimum 28 – this is again based on a search on The British Library’s website and lieder.net and it is therefore an absolute minimum and based on English language settings only.

bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.¹⁵¹

On a symbolic level, however what effectively marks him as evil, despite a speech like this, is his attitude to music, which he refers to as “the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife.” If music is the sound of the heavens, incorporated in human bodies and uniting flesh with mind and soul, then a man who hates music and represents discord is indeed not to be trusted.

In contrast, his daughter is literally seduced away from him by music in the streets. For Jessica, following up on the “devil” imagery, her father’s house is “hell” and she can’t wait to leave it once Lorenzo comes. Jessica’s self-transformation (from Jew to Christian, from Shylock’s daughter to the wife of a Venetian gentleman) may not seem important in comparison to Portia’s marriage or the trial scene – yet it can be seen as a key to the play as a whole.

Applying Freytag’s model to *The Merchant of Venice* and focusing on the musical structure generates the following:

Exposition 1.1-1.2, the introduction of the main characters and the main conflicts. On the soundscape side we hear about parrots, a bagpipe, a throstle that sings, barking dogs, ears, sound, tongue, word, speechless, speak and hearing.

The Inciting Moment 1.3.170, the sealing of the bond, with mentions of speaking, hearing and whispering.

Rising Action 2.1-3.1, Portia begins the “testing” of her suitors to the sound of cornets – these are heard six times framing scenes 2.1, 2.7 and 2.9, and references to masque, hearing, ear, speak, tongue, words, voice, silence, drum, fife and sound.

¹⁵¹ Shakespeare, W., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Ed. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Oxford University Press: Second Edition, 2005, 438.

Climax 3.2, the climax is centered around the song *Tell me where is fancy bread*. In addition, there are references to music, sounds, ear, hearing, song, tongue, speak, cry, shout, howling, and words.

The Reversal starts at 3.2.229, where Bassanio receives the letter – there are hardly any musical references in the rest of this and the following scene. The references are to hearing, speaking and sighing.

Falling Action 3.4, from where the women decides to take matters in their own hands.

Moment of final Suspense 4.1.391, when Shylock finally admits his defeat.

Catastrophe 4.2, where the plot gets unraveled. Actual music is heard twice in scene 5.1.

So how does this use of music affect the audience? Firstly, the sheer number of references to music marks its importance. Music is also actually played at the most important moments in the play highlighting and underscoring the drama on stage. The Exposition alone has fifteen references; The Inciting Moment has five; The Rising Action not only has six occurrences of the cornet marking the importance of the entrance and exit of the suitors, but 32 references; The Climax has as mentioned an actual song and 20 references, The Reversal is almost silent in terms of musical references, The Falling Action has 22 references, and the Catastrophe has 39 references and twice music is actually played.

Both the Exposition and the Inciting Moment have lots of references to sounds leading the audience into the story, but it is from the very beginning of the Rising Action that music or sound cues actually start as a subtext. Every one of Portia's suitors are introduced and dismissed to the sound of cornets. Indeed, a song specifically directs the plot. Bassanio, who is wooing the rich and beautiful heiress Portia during the Rising Action has to take a test to show he is worthy of her. All her suitors are required to choose among three caskets, which are three elaborate

metal boxes: one made completely out of gold, one of silver and the third of lead. One of them holds a miniature portrait of Portia; whoever opens that box wins the lady. Whoever chooses the wrong box must leave immediately and promise never to marry anyone. The audience already knows which box contains the portrait, since two Princes – one from Africa, the other from Spain – have already selected the gold and silver boxes, only to find a death's head in one and a cartoon of an idiot in the other.

Portia admits to already being attracted by Bassanio, so when he is faced with having to choose one of the caskets – gold, silver, lead – Portia commands her musicians to sing “Tell me where is fancy bred.” This is the very center of the play – at the dramaturgical climax to use a Freytag term. The philosophical question raised by this song is not just, where does fancy (love) come from – is it the heart or the head – but actually what lies first for the eyes (the beholder)? That which looks most attractive could, in fact, be a lie – be deceiving, based on more outward beauty/appearance, rather than any inner qualities. The words of the song subtly guide anyone sensitive enough to pick up on the sounds, in other words, anyone whose soul is guided by music. It is the fact that Shakespeare chooses to use music to highlight his text in exactly this moment, which is important. The sound of the music becomes the indication that something important is going on. With “bred” and “head” rhyming with “lead” and the whole theme warning not to take what looks most attractive, Bassanio is clearly being manipulated into taking the right casket: the one of lead, in which Portia's picture is enclosed. In this case, music is crucial for the choice Bassanio makes – the combination of words and music creates the structural base for the climax. As Cook points out, music has the potential for construction of meaning in a specific context, as here in the relationship between music and words in the song

“Tell me where is fancy bred.” After the Falling Action, where music plays no significant role it is reintroduced to deal with the matters of the heart.

Notwithstanding its symbolic idealism, “How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank” is still directly linked to the dramatic situation, since the imagery of ideal of love – associated with musical harmony – is used by Lorenzo, the former lover and now husband of Shylock’s daughter, during the unraveling of the Catastrophe, to persuade her to reject her father for him.

Look how the floor of heaven
Is deep inlaid with patens of bright gold.
There’s not the smallest orb that thou beholdst,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins.
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

At this point, as Shakespeare’s stage-directions emphasize, Lorenzo gestures for musicians to play, while he continues to speak:

The man that has no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils...
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

So not only does Shakespeare actually underscore the words, the words are themselves musical, with multiple alliteration that intensify the emotion – think of all those “Ms” and “Ss” – qualities underlined by the actual music accompanying the speech. The ending of that speech refers to Jessica’s father, the Jewish moneylender of the play, Shylock, who has earlier announced that he hates all music.

In addition to the over 130 references to music and nine actual occurrences of music in the play, the concept of music and the structural use of it provides a solid foundation for this play.

This can clearly be observed with “Tell me where is fancy bred” at the dramaturgical climax being central to the storytelling, and therefore enabling music to specifically direct the plot.

2.1.3 Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet has always been one of Shakespeare’s best-loved plays. It appeals due to its intense emotion, the innocent youthfulness of its star-struck lovers and their heart-rending unity in death. In addition, the story both undermines the oppressive control of families and challenges the passive image of woman in a patriarchal society. By applying Freytag’s model to *Romeo and Juliet* focusing on the musical structure, the following is revealed:

Exposition Act 1, Scene 1-4: Silence, followed by the first sword fight, which sets up the conflict. Leading up to the inciting moment there is considerable mention of the masque and dancing.

The Inciting Moment Act 1, Scene 5: Dance music is played twice and Romeo kisses Juliet.

Rising Action Act 2, Scene 1-4: In the lead up to the climax there are many references to music and birds and two songs actually sung by Mercutio in Scene 3.

Climax Act 2, Scene 5: In the scene leading up to the wedding there is a reference to music’s tongue.

The Reversal starts in Act 3, Scene 1 with the second sword fight in which both Mercutio and Tybalt die.

Falling Action Act 3, Scene 2- songs and music.

Moment of final Suspense Act 4, Scene 4 where everyone on stage thinks that Juliet is dead but the audience knows she has just taken the potion and will wake again. This is actually one of the

most music heavy of all the scenes in this play and the only scene in Act 4 to have music. There are two songs being sung and one encounter of music played.

Catastrophe Act 5, Scene 3- whistling and fight Silence.

The first reference to sound in *Romeo and Juliet* is a reference to the ear followed by the sound of the fight between Tybalt and Benvolio, and the sound of everyone throwing down their weapons, when the prince enters. The first reference to music in *Romeo and Juliet* is during the Exposition at the beginning of Act 1, Scene 4, where Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio enter bearing a drum, and in the scene that follows there are references to masquers and masques, dancing, drums and marching. In Scene 5 at the party, the musicians enter and there are references to masquers and masques, dancing, and the musicians play a dance (twice). This is at the Inciting moment and both times music is played it is to accompany the dancing. Here music plays an active role in the action; without music there can be no dancing, but music also helps to set the mood of the party, and it sets up the scene for Romeo kissing Juliet. In other words, the music supports the movement of the romantic plot. Scene 4 and 5 have a total of nine references to dance/dancing, seven to musicians/music/to play, six to masquers and masque, three to drum, two to measure, and one to march.

In Act 2 all scenes but scene 2 have references to music, and the third scene actually has phrases of two songs sung. During the rising action Act 2, scene 3, Mercutio's crudeness is underlined by having him sing a disrespectful and vulgar song to the nurse and then highlighted again when he mockingly sings his farewell. This not only gives the audience a good laugh, but also helps them to understand the character of not only Mercutio but also the nurse much faster than in dialogue. There are a total of eight references to a goose, four to other birds, four to

specific songs, three to singing, three to music, two of the following: sound, songs, doves, and cry, one to playing, and one to the voice. At the Climax Romeo refers to music's tongue. Act 3 contains the swordfight and the sound of it, which begins the Reversal. During the Falling Action there are a total of six mentions of a lark, three of a nightingale, two of the following: raven, minstrel, discords, sounds, and to sing, and one of the following: dance, trumpet, notes, out of tune, songs, dove, cockatrice and lamentation.

At the Moment of final Suspense just before the supposed death of Juliet in Act 4, Scene 4, music is played to set the scene. It is early in the morning, and the whole household is still busy with preparations for the wedding between Juliet and Paris, when Lord Capulet hears music signaling that Paris is about to arrive at the house. Music plays a crucial part here, by announcing the arrival and setting the scene for a "happy" moment just seconds before Juliet is found dead. The contrast in moods could hardly be stronger, followed by them all crying out together, lamenting her death. The contrast would not have been nearly so dramatic had Shakespeare simply had someone announce the arrival of Paris, but with the clever setup for the wedding (even with the audience already being aware of the dead but not dead girl) Shakespeare's soundscape underscores the scene. As Waxman says:

the importance of music is in creating and sustaining dramatic moods and its value can be measured by how much a scene can be improved in its emotional value by music.¹⁵²

In *Romeo and Juliet* this is then turned around again when everyone but the professional musicians leave and Peter enters demanding a song. Once again, by using music Shakespeare changes the mood more quickly and much more efficiently than in any other way. Shakespeare is clearly using musical underscoring to enhance the narrative properties in this scene. Act 4 has

¹⁵² Wierzbicki, J.; Platte, N. and Roust, C. (Ed.), *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook*, 101

mentions of sound/soundly ten times, musicians eight times, music and play each five times, two of the following: bell, song, note, Re + Fa, and songs sung, and one each of the following: instruments, hymns, pipes, minstrel, singer, roaring, rattling and music. Act 5 has the word cry three times, bell one time, the word whistle one time and once we actually hear whistling.

Music is completely absent in the beginning and at the end of the play, and the sound of the sword fights (and the sound of clashing swords) that seem to introduce the Exposition, also mark the Reversal and the Catastrophe. While there is no music at the actual Climax, music plays an important role in setting the scene and the tone in the Inciting Moment, the Rising Action, the Falling Action and the Moment of Final Suspense. Birds are frequently mentioned but only in Act 2 and Act 3 and none after Romeo leaves. Apart from the sounds of whistling, clashing swords, drums, and knocking on the door, actual music is being played as part of the action on stage three times – and four times where someone is actually singing. In Act 2 the singer is Mercutio and in Act 4 it is Peter. All the musicians are labeled as professional court musicians and listed separately in the character list. As in *The Merchant of Venice*, music plays a significant role especially in support of the romantic parts of the plot. The absence of actual music during the Exposition, the Reversal and the Catastrophe creates a different, more threatening soundscape, highlighting the violence and the fight.

2.1.4 Adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*: A Performative Analysis

As a result of the popularity of *Romeo and Juliet*, there have been over twenty films made based on it. There are also more musical versions of Romeo and Juliet's tragic passion, than of almost any other literary work, and in a very wide range of languages. Operas from the 19th and 20th centuries have been composed, with librettos in Italian, German, French, English,

and even Finnish. Indeed, the very first operas appeared as early as the 18th century and the most recent was composed in 2006, while over the entire 20th century there have also been at least thirty musicals based on *Romeo and Juliet*. In addition, there have been a wide selection of ballets. In fact, counting all types of musical theatre there are no fewer than 73 operatic and *Romeo and Juliet* musical dramas. There are also numerous paintings, sculptures and other forms of imagery which derive from the play's narrative and characters. Every single art form, whether painting or opera or musical theatre, adapts Shakespeare in some way.

All adaptations seeking to reach the primary objective of provoking emotions in the audience use the three basic elements: character, desire and conflict. In this respect musical adaptations have an extra advantage since music can be used to underscore certain moments and to enhance emotions. As Linda Hutcheon has pointed out in her book on adaptation,¹⁵³ each medium or genre has distinctive ways of communicating a story. Obviously a sung line consumes more time than spoken text but, in contrast to a play without music, the music in a musical or an opera can communicate or highlight a colour or emotion. At the same time, it is then necessary to cut and trim a fair amount of text to fit into the modern audience expectation of 2 ½-hour performances, so non-essential characters and subplots are often removed or communicated simultaneously in a different way. This simultaneous communication could take place through the music, in line with Cook's idea¹⁵⁴ that where images and words mainly deal with the objective, music deals with responses – values, emotions and attitudes. Of course, Shakespeare's plays have always been a favourite for composers, perhaps due to their combination of dramatic plots with melodious poetry. There is hardly a single play by Shakespeare that has not been adapted to opera. There are even musical dramas based on

¹⁵³ Hutcheon, L., *A theory of adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Cook, N., "Music and Meaning in the Commercials," 38.

Shakespeare's least popular plays, e.g. *Titus Andronicus*,¹⁵⁵ *Measure for Measure*,¹⁵⁶ and *Timon of Athens*.¹⁵⁷

As part of the process of more contemporary adaptation (e.g. *West Side Story*) the difference in audience knowledge and participation from that of Shakespeare's era must be considered. Shakespeare performances at The Globe had to take into consideration that his plays were partly performed in the open-air, in daylight and that his audience could be quite rowdy. Most contemporary adaptations have the luxury of an indoor space, microphones (if a musical), special effects, much more control over the sound and a relatively quiet audience. Further, while

¹⁵⁵ Examples of such works:

Musicals:

Titus: A Grand and Gory Rock Musical, adapted/directed by Craig J. George, original music by Dennis Yurich and Alison Garrigan, 2014.

Titus Andronicus: The Musical! Collaboration by Brian Colonna, Erik Edborg, Hannah Duggan, Erin Rollman, Evan Weissman, Matt Petraglia, and Samantha Schmitz, 2002-2007.

Titus: The Light and Delightful Musical Comedy, composer Jennifer Andersen, book & lyrics Andrew Wade, 2015.

Tragedy! A Musical Comedy, by Michael Johnson and Mary Davenport

Opera:

Titus Andronicus (opera), composer Ian McAndrew (in progress?)

Incidental music:

Django Bates, 2006 (for The Globe Theatre).

¹⁵⁶ Examples of works based on *Measure for Measure*:

Musicals:

Desperate Measures (2004), book and lyrics by Peter Kellogg and music by David Friedman, 2004.

Measure for Pleasure, by Harvey Marash pseud. of Harvey A. Harvey (Book and Lyrics) and Claude Hope (Music) pseud. of Neal Hemachandra., 1960.

Opera:

Das Liebesverbot, composer R. Wagner, 1836.

Measure for Measure, composer J. L. Seymour, 1973.

¹⁵⁷ Examples of works based on *Timon of Athens*:

Opera:

Timon of Athens, composer J. Tunick, 1971.

Timon, K. Nürnberg, 1985.

Timon of Athens, S. Oliver, 1991.

Incidental music:

Timon of Athens, Duke Ellington, 1963.

Opera?

The History of Timon of Athens, the Man Hater, made into a play by Thomas Shadwell. The masque in Act I. is written entirely by Shadwell, with music by Henry Purcell, 1678/1694.

the Elizabethan audience would be familiar with individual stories and certainly recognize them, familiarity with subject matter is no longer guaranteed today.

One of the best known operatic adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* was created by Gounod. Gounod follows the story fairly closely but modifies the play to conform with contemporary musical convention. The lovers' marriage by Friar Lawrence in Act 2 occurs offstage and the reconciliation of Montagues and Capulets after the separate deaths of Romeo and Juliet, is replaced by a duet by the dying lovers asking for God's blessing. However, importantly, the music demonstrates an updating in the most iconic aria, introducing a waltz tune, even though the waltz was only developed in the 18th century. The waltz, typical of 1867, was the most popular dance form in Paris at the time Gounod's opera was first performed – hardly what the original Veronese lovers would have danced to, but bringing the whole story up-to-date, and giving the setting a contemporary feel.

One of the earliest adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* was by a German, Johann Gottfried Schwanenberger in 1776. In 1762 he had been appointed Hofkapellmeister of the Opernhaus am Hagenmarkt in Braunschweig – one of the most important theatres in Germany. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* premiered there in 1772 and in 1829 Goethe's *Faust* was first performed. Schwanenberger's *Romeo e Giulia* was (as the title indicates) performed there in Italian although produced in Germany – demonstrating the dominant operatic language at this time. This “drama per musica” has only three characters: Romeo, Giulia (characterized as “lover and spouse”) and Benvoglio (identified as “friend of the lovers”). As a result, it has no action – and is little more than a long set of songs about love, clearly assuming that the audience would be familiar with Shakespeare's play. Similarly there are records of an “opera seria,” which has just a single solo song (by Juliet) and five short choruses, composed by an Italian – Nicolo Pasquali – but

apparently sung in English when performed in London in 1750. And further, another version appeared in 1790 in Munich, composed by the German Baron Sigismund von Rumling, but performed in French.

In addition to the variations in language, some composers adapted the story to allow the lovers to survive and marry in a happy ending. The first of these was in 1792, by Frenchman Nicholas Daleyrac, who titled his light comic opera *Tout pour l'Amour*. Another opera just a year later used exactly the same title: *Roméo et Juliet ou Tout pour l'amour*. It was also first performed in Paris, and was written by a German composer, Daniel Gottlieb Streibelt. As well as the translation into other languages, indicating the universality of Shakespeare's play, the way both these early operas leave out the action shows the wide degree to which educated people (those likely to go to operas) already knew the story. Indeed the first known translation of one of Shakespeare's plays into German is from around 1625, probably a script for a group of travelling players. By 1766 – a decade before Schwanenberger's 1776 opera was performed – the Wieland translation of all Shakespeare's plays into German had appeared, following an earlier French translation. As the story of *Romeo and Juliet* spread throughout Europe, it was continuously adapted and modernized to correspond to the styles, morality, and expectations of the time. This resulted in significant changes in form and text even to the point where numerous operas reverse the title to give Juliet lead billing.

While Shakespeare's title puts Romeo as the principal character, there are operas in French, German, Italian and even English where the title puts his female lover in front. Juliet, Giulia, or Giulietta comes first for instance, in Niccolo Zingarelli's 1796 *Giuletta e Romeo* (first performed in Milan), Luigi Marschalchi's 1789 opera of the same title (produced in Rome), or Riccardo Zandoni's 1922 *Giuletta e Romeo* (also produced in Milan). These clearly highlight

Juliet's situation, drawing attention to the gender issues. A nobleman, Paul Xavier Désiré, Marchese di Ivry, composed a very truncated version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in his *Amanti di Verona*, first publicly performed in 1878, with the subtitle of "Intermezzo e Romanza di Giulietta" that equally promoted a female point-of-view.

To retrace just a tiny bit: it is worth noticing, there are also operas purportedly featuring *Romeo and Juliet*, which were specifically not based on Shakespeare's play, but instead took the story from an earlier Italian novella, called *Romeo e Giulia*, written by a clergyman from Milan called Matteo Bandello around 1554. One of Bandello's novellas is actually considered by some as the source of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, while another is said to be the basis for his festive comedy, *Twelfth Night*. In fact Bandello's novellas were surprisingly popular in the English theatre of the time, with his stories being adapted by playwrights like John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, John Marston, and also John Webster in his well-known play *The Duchess of Malfi*. There are some very famous Italian operas based on Bandello.

Among these are Nicola Vaccai's 1825 *Giuletta e Romeo*, performed in Milan; and Bellini's *I Capuletti e I Montecchi*, commissioned for Venice in 1830. Both use much the same libretto, which is taken from an 1818 play of the same name by a popular and prolific playwright Luigi Scevola, who adapted Bandello, and who died less than a year after writing it. Indeed Scevola was one of the early promoters of the 19th-century movement for Italian unity, which informs the choice of material by both these composers. As early as 1513 there were calls for a political leader who would unite Italy "to free her from the barbarians" in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. It wasn't until the 19th century, around 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon and the withdrawal of French forces that the Risorgimento developed. In fact, in 1820-1821 there had been uprisings in favor of unity in Sicily and in Piedmont as well as Milan. The Austrians

defeated these independent movements – but their national sentiments undoubtedly inspired Vaccai, while in 1830, when Bellini was developing *I Capuletti e I Montecchi* there was a string of successful insurrections in Italy. All these rebellions, in Bologna, Ravenna, Ferrara¹⁵⁸ (all quite near to Venice), as well as in the Duchy of Parma, adopted the tri-colour flag. 1848, the year of revolutions across Europe, was also the start of the first war of Italian independence; and after a series of wars and revolts, in 1871 Italy became a united country. Undoubtedly Bellini's *I Capuletti e I Montecchi* – certainly echoing the uprisings of 1830 – contributed to the Risorgimento. There were up to thirty different productions all across Italy before 1835, and it was produced regularly until around 1870, in the lead up to independence and unity.

In addition to their political subtext, both in Vaccai's opera and in Bellini's, the part of Romeo was – and still is – sung by a female. This has been explained as a continuation of the castrato tradition – but choosing respectively a contralto and a mezzo is very different vocally from the notes of the castrati singers. To us, it is possibly interpreted as a way of challenging contemporary gender definitions, emphasizing the potential importance of women in a society ruled by men – and Italy was at the time one of the more extreme masculine structures. All operas by Italian and French romantics keep both Romeo and Juliet alive long enough to sing a final duet. This may be partially due to the popularity of David Garrick's 18th century version of the play.

However, in 1904 a completely accurate version of the play – with music by one of the top American song writers of the period, Ernest Ball, was mounted on Broadway by the famous actors E. H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe. Shakespeare's text was delivered in a kind of *Singspiel*

¹⁵⁸ Matsumoto-Best, S., *Britain and the Papacy in the Age of Revolution, 1846-1851*. Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003, 12.

musical tone, together with interpolated songs. The singing tone and rhythmic delivery of the two lead actors' speech patterns in the Balcony scene is documented on a 1913 vinyl recording. Since the turn of the century and the ascent of modernism, all sorts of other adaptations have occurred. For example, Frederick Delius wrote an opera entitled *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, which was based on a German short story by the Swiss author Gottfried Keller, *Romeo und Juliet auf dem Dorfe*. First produced in Berlin in 1907, it was staged at Covent Garden in 1910. Two farmers quarrel over a plot of land claimed by a fiddler and the dispute ruins both families. Their children – named Sali and Vreli – were childhood friends, and became lovers. During the fight between the two families, Sali injures Vreli's father so seriously that when he tries to take Vreli away, her father ends up in a lunatic asylum. After a night in an inn symbolically called "Paradise Garden," the lovers commit suicide by drowning themselves in the river. Around the same time, there were all sorts of adaptations, transforming the story into the early 20th century context.

A 1906 operetta by Leslie Stuart called *The Belle of Mayfair* transforms the Capulets into English gentry named Caldicott while the Montagues are renamed Mount-Highgates. At a fair in a London park, everyone tries to prevent Raymond from getting together with Julia – a German princess promising to offer him a diplomatic post abroad. Sir John Caldicott announced her engagement to a penniless French Count, who conducts a band. After Raymond plans to elope with Julia to Brighton in a motor car, Sir John tries to make his daughter give up Raymond finally and completely. Julia begs her father not to break her heart, the two families are reconciled, and the operetta ends with a happy and gaily cheerful song: "There's going to be a wedding in Hanover Square." *The Belle of Mayfair* ran for over 400 performances.

Almost all the American adaptations are transformed into quintessential American contexts, whether by opera or Broadway Musical. Two examples include a 1959 opera titled *Sourwood Mountain*, and the famous Bernstein and Sondheim *West Side Story* from 1961. *Sourwood Mountain* is a folk opera by the American composer Arthur Kreutz (1906-1991).¹⁵⁹ The folk song also appeared in one of Kurt Weill's most performed pieces the one-act folk opera *Down in the Valley*, from 1948, which featured spoken dialogue. *Sourwood Mountain* also contains spoken dialogue, as well as folk song style arias with simple melodious vocal lines. It is reminiscent of Copeland's *The Tenderland*, although musically less complex than that or Weill's *Down in the Valley*.

Set in the Appalachian Mountains, one of the more isolated areas of the United States, the opera focuses on just two families – the Porters and the Lovells – with only one inhabitant who is not related to either side – a Judge, who serves as narrator. Romeo (here named Danny Lovell) is in love with Juliet (here called Lucy Porter), but unfortunately the Porters and Lovells had a fatal run-in fifty years before, when Nancy Porter was betrayed by Robert Lovell, who married a girl from town. This caused Nancy to commit suicide; and since then there have been no friendly relations between the two families. Urged by Danny, Lucy agrees to run away. Her father Ben Porter sees the couple, and he then mistakenly shoots and wounds Lucy, who is wearing Danny's coat. Father Ben realizes that he will lose his daughter or have to let her marry Danny so he gives in, and lets them have a small cabin and a barbecue for their wedding.

From the same decade, there is a 1953 Broadway musical by Rogers and Hammerstein titled *Me and Juliet*, where the Romeo story becomes a musical with lavish contemporary

¹⁵⁹ "Sourwood Mountain" is also the name of a traditional American folk song most closely associated with the music of the Appalachians, and Sourwood Mountain is located in the Appalachians just east of Knoxville, Tennessee.

costumes and dances, and the text takes place backstage following the romance between two actors. Although forbidden by the theatre manager to have anything to do with each other, they get married and end up singing the roles of the main characters in the musical.

The happy endings in both these shows contrast with the tragic ending of *West Side Story*. The most famous update of Shakespeare on the modern stage is set in New York where Tony and Maria are blocked by gang rivalry. The vibrant music and colorfully choreographed group dances gave emotional life to inarticulate adolescence, while the echoes of *Romeo and Juliet* – generally clear enough for even the average audience member to recognize, but nowhere specific – adds a tragic depth. The Jets and Sharks gangs parallel Shakespeare's Montagues and Capulets; however, their adolescent rivalry strips away the historical patina of Shakespeare's Verona families, while the Italian Renaissance comparison stresses the crudity and blinkered mindsets of modern gangs. Daily news reports of teenage gang violence were actually posted on the bulletin board in the rehearsal hall during the first run. The topical relevance made *West Side Story* a real turning point in the history of the American musical. As illustrated later¹⁶⁰ with *The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride* adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, the ending in *West Side Story* is different from the original, with the Romeo character being murdered, rather than committing suicide, while his Juliet – Maria – lives on, even if emotionally devastated by her lover's death. More realistically, since there's no uniting of the lovers in mutual suicide, *West Side Story* in effect critiques the romanticism of Shakespeare's play, while at the same time uses its mythic situation to transform violence into mythic tragedy. The anti-romanticism set a fresh tone, challenging the operatic versions of Shakespeare as well as the musical adaptations. It marked a new phase in adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*.

¹⁶⁰ In chapter 2.1.5 Other Adaptations of Shakespeare

2.1.5 Other Adaptations of Shakespeare

There are a surprising number of songs, operatic, and musical adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* most of them composed within the last hundred years although many are not listed in traditional sources. There are at least twenty operas according to The New Grove Dictionary of Opera,¹⁶¹ one masque, a burlesque and two musicals based on *The Merchant of Venice*, in addition to the many songs based on “Tell me where is fancy bred.”

Shakespeare’s work has become a favorite source for all sorts of composers. In fact, starting with Purcell’s 1692 opera of *The Fairy Queen* (based on *Midsummer Night’s Dream*) right up to Benjamin Britten’s 1960 version, there have been literally hundreds of operas composed around Shakespeare’s plays. Over thirty-nine operas on *Hamlet* alone – even more on *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, including several on the “Pyramus and Thisbe” play-within-the-play – and no fewer than forty-six on *The Tempest*.

The sheer volume of repertoire based on Shakespeare’s works, undoubtedly both reflected and contributed to the raising of Shakespeare’s plays to canonical status. Most of these operas were composed from the end of the 18th century through the 19th century, when Shakespeare’s reputation was at its most elevated¹⁶², and his work was accepted as a national treasure in Britain and valued throughout the Empire and Europe as the highest form of poetic drama. The operatic adaptations all emphasize the grandeur of their protagonists, aristocratic surroundings, and an emotional intensity that underlined a form of individuality at a great remove from the working class or popular image of the time. Examples of this would be the treatment of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by Salieri in 1799 and Verdi in 1893 – both choosing

¹⁶¹ Their list is actually missing minimum two operas by Signor (Errico?) Petrella and J. A. Just (Johann August Just?) according to Miss Helen Clarke (Shakespeare review 1888).

¹⁶² As with William Pohle’s stagings of Shakespeare as he had been in Shakespeare’s time.

the title of *Falstaff*. Another example is how *Othello* was adapted by Rossini in 1816 and again by Verdi in 1887, or *Romeo and Juliet* adapted among many others by Bellini. There have been some operettas leading Shakespeare back to his popular roots such as Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* from 1849.

Even more popularity of Shakespeare as a base for adaptation can be seen in the 20th century, where Shakespeare's works become adapted into a very different form: the American musical. A genre designed for a mass public, it returned Shakespeare's plays to their popular roots. In fact, since the 1930's almost sixty per cent of Shakespeare's plays have been musicalized. There have been a few rock musical adaptations of *Hamlet*: such as *Kronborg* in 1975 (which originally toured Canada under the title *Rockabye Hamlet*) and *Hamlet, the Musical*, performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 2010. The earliest American musical based on Shakespeare was Richard Rodgers's *The Boys from Syracuse*, staged by George Abbott in 1938. There is nothing Elizabethan or Shakespearean about the music or the text, and as confirmed by the 1940 film, the costumes and settings merge a mock-up of ancient Greece with elegant contemporary style. Richard Rodgers's tunes are catchy, while Lorenz Hart's lyrics play ironically with clichés and are completely modern. Almost all other American musical versions of Shakespeare's plays are updated to the contemporary world.

Kiss Me Kate updates Shakespeare to twentieth-century Broadway, complete with New York gangsters. This 1948 adaptation combines contemporary reference with a performance of *Taming of the Shrew* in Elizabethan costume, an equivalent to the framing device in the original, where the characters in the inner play are all traveling players. The characters are professional Broadway actors, whose personal conflicts mirror that of the characters they play, with the on- and off-stage tantrums intensifying each other. The play-within-the-play is marked musically

with numbers about theatre such as “Another op’nin” (about the difficulties in setting up a play), or “We open in Venice” (about a touring company). *Kiss Me, Kate* is a musical that mixes the best from several genres of music such as operetta, which can be heard in numbers such as “Wunderbar” (a typical operetta parody using the waltz from Vienna and classical song technique). Another genre is high opera, and “I am ashamed that women are so simple” (Katharine’s big final number where she accepts her role in life as being submissive to her man), is a parody on an operatic aria with a pompous tone, which can only be sung using classical technique. The finale, “So Kiss Me, Kate.” is set to parody a classical operetta, and Broadway style musical, ending, with all characters on stage.

Cole Porter also uses characteristics from popular and jazz music in *Kiss Me, Kate*, which can be heard in numbers such as “It’s Too Darn Hot”. As the first number in a musical to feature an amplified guitar, this paved the way for the new kind of musicals such as *West Side Story* and *Hair*. In addition, “Always True to You” has a classical intro (as in many Marilyn Monroe songs) which then develops into a jazz/swing feeling underlined by the use of brass-riffs, as does “Bianca”. The newly down-market popularity of Shakespeare as a source was underlined in *Kiss Me Kate*. It is brutal gangsters, who sing a song about the usefulness of Shakespeare in everyday street life; and they turn out to be so familiar with Shakespeare’s plays that they can even pun on the titles!

Generally, in musicals, the contemporary surface is unbroken; and Shakespeare becomes a subtext. The plot may be the same. The title is generally just a pun on the original (like *The Boys from Syracuse*) or a quotation (like *Kiss me Kate*); and the more recent musicals tend to have few obvious or direct links. Instead, Shakespeare becomes a resonance, adding symbolic

weight and thematic depth. This sort of subtextual use also demonstrates how wide the general knowledge of Shakespeare's plays really is.

Lion King, features a wicked uncle who kills off his brother, the king, and marries his brother's wife, ruling the kingdom while the dead king's son is out of the country. When the son returns, he is banished, returns and kills his uncle. The connection with *Hamlet* is not flagged for the Disney audience. The conspiracies are far more simplistic, and the ending has been changed to give the standard Disney feel-good optimism, although the evil uncle is still killed. Here Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is used as an archetype, for subliminal impact probably not recognized during a performance, but may gradually seep into the mind of the spectators afterwards – giving the show imaginative depth and a claim to cultural significance. The sequel to *Lion King* – *Lion King 2: Simba's Pride* is also based on a Shakespeare play – this time *Romeo and Juliet*. The daughter of Simba and Nala called Kiara (Juliet) falls in love with Kovu (Romeo), a male rascal lion from another pride. This pride was once loyal to Simba's evil uncle, Scar. Kovu's mother Zira wants him to kill Simba, but Kovu has now fallen in love with Kiara, so instead when his tribe attacks he tried to protect Simba. He is, however, still exiled by Simba, and Kiara runs away to find him. The two prides fight and Zira is killed. The marriage of Kiara and Kovu rejoins the two prides. As with *Lion King* we find a happy ending. Another earlier Disney-fication of *Romeo and Juliet* is *The Fox and the Hound* from 1981. *The Fox and the Hound* tells the classical *Romeo and Juliet* story of warring families, two companions, and a tragic ending. The two individuals, from two very different worlds, can't be together because of their backgrounds. The ending has been rewritten so no one dies, but Tod (the fox) and Copper (the hound) realizes that they can never have everyone else accept their friendship, so despite them

being “friends forever” and their human “parents” settling the feud, they will never be together because of them being different species.

Shakespeare is clearly adapted and quoted on the musical stage as well as in Disney cartoons. One even finds Shakespeare in the animated TV show *The Simpsons*, where he is a returning character. Shakespeare in one episode appears as a Zombie,¹⁶³ and as himself in a striptease.¹⁶⁴ Many of his plays are quoted extensively with whole episodes based, for example, on *Romeo and Juliet* – Rome-Old and Juli-Eh, which also contains a reference to *Much Ado About Nothing*. *Much Ado About Nothing* also has its own spin-off called *Much Apu About Nothing*,¹⁶⁵ and so does *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with *A Midsummer Nice Dream*.¹⁶⁶ In *Simpsons Comics* #76 titled *The Simpsons Shake-Up Shakespeare*, Lisa is playing the character Juliet in a school play as part of the *Bard Boiled* featuring plays such as *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, *Henry V*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *King Lear*. The play *Romeo and Juliet* also appears in season 24, episode 1, where Liza and her mother attend a performance of “Shakespeare in the park”. Several musical adaptations are featured in these examples including a send-up of “I feel pretty” from *West Side Story*;¹⁶⁷ “Jets fighting the Sharks;”¹⁶⁸ *The Lion King* and *Twelfth Night* featuring the song “The Circle of Knife.”¹⁶⁹ *The Lion King* itself has no fewer than eight appearances on *The Simpsons*,¹⁷⁰ and Disney gets another Shakespearean reference in with a book showing Disney’s

¹⁶³ *The Simpsons*, Season 4, episode 5.

¹⁶⁴ *The Simpsons*, Season 24, episode 12.

¹⁶⁵ *The Simpsons*, Season 7, episode 23.

¹⁶⁶ *The Simpsons*, Season 22, episode 16.

¹⁶⁷ *The Simpsons*, Season 11, episode 3.

¹⁶⁸ *The Simpsons*, Season 22, episode 10.

¹⁶⁹ *The Simpsons*, Season 17, episode 19.

¹⁷⁰ In *The Simpsons*, seasons 6 (22), 12 (17), 15 (6), 17 (19), 19 (3), 22 (14), 23 (7) and 27 (18).

Pyramus and Thisbe.¹⁷¹ The most extensive episode based on Shakespeare is *Tales from a Public Domain*¹⁷² featuring Hamlet in the segment *Do the Bard, Man*.

It is clear that the modern musical adaptations of these plays have restored Shakespeare's popular appeal, rescuing him from the prevailing elitist view of the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁷³ His orchestration of the actors' delivery of their speeches provides the most imaginatively and emotionally suggestive stimulus for the minds of the audience, and it therefore leads to songs. It is the inherent musicality in Shakespeare's plays that inspires musicians of all times and ages. The built-in musicality in the form of musical references, and the way they are integral to the dramatic action, creates a platform that is easily adaptable into musical theatre of any form, which therefore again leads to more musical adaptations of Shakespeare's plays.

Music sets Shakespeare's characters in relation to the divine order of the universe. The cosmic relation to these ideals of harmony was one of the things that motivated the composers of Shakespeare's day, and this perfect combination of the ideals of harmony and music made his play's almost the equivalent of today's musical theatre. Shakespeare's dramas, with their extensive use of music and musical references, can also be seen as a precursor for *Gesamtkunstwerk*. His plays united music, poetry, drama, scenic action and stage décor (visual art or descriptions thereof). He features music, whether vocal or incidental, to supplement the scene and to support the emotions and the atmosphere. Sometimes the music sets the location or announces an entrance, as with the dance and the death scene in *Romeo and Juliet* or indeed the use of the cornets in *The Merchant of Venice*. Music in Shakespeare's plays are always diegetic¹⁷⁴ – the characters are always aware of its presence.

¹⁷¹ *The Simpsons*, Season 23, 13.

¹⁷² *The Simpsons*, Season 13, episode 14.

¹⁷³ Like the stagings by William Pohle.

¹⁷⁴ As defined on in chapter 1.6.1 Wagnerian Leitmotifs and Underscore in Film p. 29.

Music plays a central part in Shakespeare's plays. Not only the sheer volume of musical references and actual music being played, and in the way it always underscores the scenic action and helps lead the action forward, but Shakespeare adjusts the traditional ballads he appropriates – as with Desdemona's famous "Willow Song"¹⁷⁵, which is ascribed to Henry VIII – altering the words to support the dramatic moment. In particular, Shakespeare's songs set the scene, though the songs also establish the emotional tone of the plays through expressing the ideals and aspirations of the characters. Music was a dramatic tool for Shakespeare, used deliberately and precisely to shape meaning at the dramaturgical climax in *The Merchant of Venice*, therefore enabling music to specifically direct the plot. This is in addition to the over 130 references to music and nine actual occurrences of music in the play; further, the concept of music and the structural use of it provides a solid foundation for this play. Composers are therefore inclined to focus on Shakespeare precisely because his songs and music are so closely integrated in his drama, and due to his combination of dramatic plots with melodious poetry. The natural singing quality, the brevity of expression and the rapidity of development in the words of Shakespeare's songs makes them particularly attractive for later composers. Another element that makes Shakespeare appeal to musical adaptation is his universal human characters with flaws and weaknesses, and his memorable and musical lyrics. The way his language is inherently musical therefore make it come alive on stage. The musical nature of Shakespeare's works contribute to making them a major sources for operas over several centuries, and more recently for musicals on the modern stage.

¹⁷⁵ From Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act IV, Scene III, sung by Desdemona when she is fearing that her husband thinks she is unfaithful. It was originally written in 1583 twenty years before *Othello*.

Chapter 3

Musical Strindberg: The soundscape of *Miss Julie*, *Ett Drömspel*, and *Spöksonaten*.

3.1 Overview

Strindberg came from a musical family and, similar to other playwrights considered in this dissertation, his plays are created around music. Scholars have pointed to how the musical structure of the sonata form influenced his *Spöksonaten* (*The Ghost Sonata*),¹⁷⁶ and the structure of a symphony his *Ett Drömspel* (*A Dream Play*),¹⁷⁷ but few have looked at how the musical references made by Strindberg himself determine the dramaturgical interpretation of his plays. Strindberg is extremely precise in his musical references – to the point where, in *A Dream Play*, he specifically asks for Bach's *Tocatta con Fuga* No. 10 to be played from bar 51 (the beginning of the *Adagio* movement). He even included a picture of the first bar in his original manuscript. It was inserted at the most significant moment in the play; yet this remarkable musical reference is often omitted in productions. This chapter will focus on the musical references in Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, *A Dream Play* and *The Ghost Sonata* using a dramaturgical analysis to show how these influences are intended to provide an enhanced layer of interpretation to the play. The goal of this chapter is to show that Strindberg uses music, and musical references, to offer an extensive, in-depth portrayal of dramatic characters and events in an almost Wagnerian way, as well as to emphasize the deep musical knowledge Strindberg possessed. Strindberg's dramas cannot be separated from his use of music and paintings – they are thus *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The analysis of the three plays in question *Miss Julie*, *A Dream Play*, and *The Ghost Sonata* will

¹⁷⁶ Hinz, H., "Between Beethoven and Schönberg: Strindberg's Idea of Chamber Music and its Significance For and In his Chamber Plays," 79, 82, 89, and Ollen, G., *Strindbergs dramatic*, 500-501, 522.

¹⁷⁷ Ollen, G., *Strindbergs dramatic*, 446, and Brandell, G. (Ed.), *Synspunkter på Strindberg*, 228.

therefore include all stage directions, references, footnotes and auditive references present in the dialogue.

August Strindberg (1849-1912), was born in Stockholm. His father was of noble heritage, while his mother was a servant before marriage. According to Strindberg, he consequently spent his whole life feeling split between the aristocracy and the working class. Strindberg came from a very musical family; his father and all his siblings played instruments, and they often performed chamber pieces at home. Strindberg played the piano, cornet, guitar and flute, composed music, and sang; and his sister Anna and his brother Axel became professional musicians.¹⁷⁸ Axel composed music to several of August's poems. When Strindberg returned from France to Sweden in 1899, he hosted a series of 'Beethoven evenings.' With only a few participants, these evening gatherings were small and exclusive enabling the participants to focus fully on the music – to “celebrate Beethoven and the power of his music.”¹⁷⁹

His brother Axel was almost always one of the main performers. Notably, Strindberg had a mask of Beethoven over the piano in his living room. Strindberg focused on Beethoven's piano music although his brother and the violinist Tor Aulin on occasion performed pieces for piano and violin. As Hannah Hinz states:

The notion of chamber music and the preference for piano, essential for the practice of Beethoven evenings, is fundamental for the idea of chamber music characterizing Strindberg's Chamber Plays.¹⁸⁰

Unlike the rest of the family, Strindberg did not actually receive formal musical training. Like George Bernard Shaw, he taught himself to play the piano, cornet, hunting horn, guitar and flute; he composed music, and he sang. When travelling, he would bring his guitar to play and

¹⁷⁸ When she married Hugo von Philip, Anna gave up her career.

¹⁷⁹ Hinz, H., “Between Beethoven and Schönberg: Strindberg's Idea of Chamber Music and its Significance For and In his Chamber Plays,” 80.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 81

sing (not always very well)¹⁸¹ at social gatherings. He would also frequently play the piano in the evenings, but according to Strindberg himself, he was not really a pianist. The only known music composed by Strindberg is the song sung by the Neck (water spirit) in *Kronbruden* (*The Crown Bride*). The melody is from 1892, the words from 1900, and it is a folk-style song. We know from Victor Hellström's book *Strindberg och musiken* that Strindberg did attempt to write music as early as 1872.¹⁸²

In addition to Beethoven his favorite composers included Haydn and Mozart, and later in life he came to appreciate Chopin and Schumann. However, he would always remain an amateur musician as Per-Anders Hellqvist points out in his book.¹⁸³ Several of his friends tried to introduce him to Brahms and Wagner, but he hated Wagner's music with a passion, calling him "The musical representation of evil" in *En blå bok* (*A Blue Book*, 1907). However, at the same time he praised him as a librettist, and it seems he was more against the Wagnerians than against Wagner himself, which can be seen from his notes in *A Blue Book*:

All unmusical people and all Darwinists immediately became Wagnerians. They flocked to Fichtelgebirge to worship Odin, Thor, Loki and the Valkyries, the paganism and the ugly music. (...) I have praised the text of Tristan for its simple beauty, which reminds one of Maeterlinck; but the music for Tristan! ! (...) [It] is not only ugly, it is evil.¹⁸⁴

The first of Strindberg's works to be noticed was *Mater Olof* in 1878, and the breakthrough of realism in his plays happened only one year later with *The Red Room*. Apart from his better-known plays such as *Miss Julie*, *The Father* and *A Dream Play*, he wrote several collections of

¹⁸¹ Hellström, V., *Strindberg och musiken*, (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1917), 20.

¹⁸² Ibid., 16.

¹⁸³ Hellqvist, P., *Strindberg och musiken*, (Stockholm: Edition Reimers, 1997).

¹⁸⁴ "Alla omusikaliska personer och alla darwinister blevo genast wagnerianer. De vallfärdade till Fichtelgebirge för att dyrka Oden, Tor, Loke och Valkyrjan, hedendomen och den fula musiken. (...) Jag har berömt texten till Tristan för dess enkla skönhet, som erinrar om Maeterlinck; men musiken till Tristan ! ! (...) Detta är icke allenast fult, det är ont."

My translation from *August Strindberg Samlade Verk, En blå bok Del I-IV*, (Stockholm University, Stockholm, 1992), 665.

essays. One compilation resulted in an accusation of him being a blasphemer, and it was during this period of his life his first marriage broke up. According to Hellström,¹⁸⁵ even despite the foregoing ‘Inferno crisis,’¹⁸⁶ music was a great consolation to Strindberg – to him it became a proof of a higher and better world, and the appearance of music in Strindberg’s plays increased from then on. In Paris, Strindberg visited the home of Mrs. Sophie Kjelberg who would play Bach, Grieg, and Sinding on the piano. Soon after he returned to Stockholm in 1899 he rented a piano and so began his ‘Beethoven evenings’ which lasted almost until his death in 1912.

His first marriage to Siri von Essen ended in 1891 and after the divorce was finalized in 1893 he married Frida Uhl. Their short marriage (1893-1897) effectively ended when Strindberg left for Paris in August 1894. This led to a spiritual crisis for him, during which he was deeply affected by the mystic Swedenborg. This is reflected especially in the work *Inferno*. His third marriage in 1901 to Harriet Bosse showed the first signs of failure after only three months but lasted until 1904. During this period the couple were renting a house on the island Furusund in the Stockholm Archipelago, and this location is featured in several of his later works. *A Dream Play* was written shortly after the marriage in 1901. It has the same spiritual feeling to it as the later *Kammarspel* (*Chamber Plays*), and it does indeed feature Furusund as a location. Strindberg inspired composers such as Alban Berg and his influence is clear in Schoenberg’s *Die glückliche Hand*. The director of the Strindberg Museum, Stafan Bohman, claims that

Strindberg is obsessed with music. (...) He is singing and composing. Just like different dishes Strindberg often allows the music to carry forward emotions and moods.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Hellström, V., *Strindberg och musiken*, 22.

¹⁸⁶ Psychotic attacks from 1894-1896.

¹⁸⁷ ”August Strindberg är besatt av musik. Han spelar piano, kornett, gitarr och flöjt. Han sjunger och komponerar. Precis som olika maträtter låter Strindberg ofta musiken bära fram känslor och sinnesstämningar”. My translation, <http://www.saxa.se/konsert/23>.

Hellqvist also writes “he didn’t just love music, he was obsessed by it.”¹⁸⁸ As Hellqvist shows in his book *Strindberg och musiken*, music had a therapeutic role to play in Strindberg’s life. During his Inferno crisis Strindberg wrote how he “tuned” his soul to music when he was depressed, and how the music lifted his soul, note by note. He wrote:

Today my nerves are tuned in D minor, a bad sign, I am saddened, saddened to death, somber as a funeral march. After some effort I manage to raise myself to F major, and I recognize myself as a new man, a warrior, full of triumph and jubilation.¹⁸⁹

Kierkegaard argues that music is sensual, but not spiritually motivated, and therefore demonic.

To Strindberg, music is almost the direct opposite, working as a non-verbal communicator.

Kierkegaard and Strindberg do agree that language is not as rich a medium as music, since with written language one reflects, whereas in music we get the immediately sensual impact.

Few Swedish scholars have written about the music and its importance in Strindberg’s life; moreover, to my knowledge the article written by Eva Mary Grew in 1933 is the only article in English dealing with music in Strindberg’s plays. In her article, Grew points out the great connection between Strindberg’s life and the music featured in his plays, but she does not go into any depth about the significance of the musical references made by Strindberg or how they affect the dramaturgical interpretation of his plays. In Swedish, the most substantial book written about Strindberg and music is by Victor Hellström, written in 1917. This book does include a chapter listing the music found in Strindberg’s plays, but again without detailing the influence on the dramaturgical interpretation. I intend to build on the works of Grew and Hellström and advance the scholarship by showing, that, while his later plays are episodic (*A Dream Play*) or sonata-like

¹⁸⁸ My translation, Hellqvist, P., *Strindberg och musiken*, 9.

¹⁸⁹ ”I dag äro mina nerver stämda i D-moll; ett dåligt tecken, jag är sorgsen, bedrövad intill döden, dyster som en sorgmarsch. Efter några ansträngningar lyckas jag höja mig till F-dur och jag känner mig som en ny man, krigisk, full av triumf och jubel”. My translation from *Samlade Skrifter av August Strindberg*, 27. Prosabitar från 1890-talet, 607.

(*The Ghost Sonata*) in structural form, the musical dramaturgy of these do fit into the Freytag arc model.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, in his use of music Strindberg presents his audience with a more traditional recognizable form.

A great number of operas, incidental music and songs are based directly on his works; eight operas on *A Dream Play* and five on *Miss Julie* – with almost 30 operas in all. According to Michael Robinson¹⁹¹ there would be many more if we took into account his supposed influence on the second Viennese school of composers such as Berg, Schoenberg and Webern.¹⁹² When mentioning the musical structure of a sonata, Strindberg transfers it directly to the theatrical stage in his biography *Erinran* (1902):

When looked at closely, this composition is found to be pretty solid - a symphony, polyphonic, fugue'd here and there with the main motif recurring everywhere, repeated and varied by the more than 30 voices in all keys. No solo with accompaniment, no parts, no characters or should one say no caricatures, no intrigues, no end of an act with space for applause – the voicing has been strictly implemented, and in the finale of the sacrificial scene it draws all of what has past through, the motives summarized once again...¹⁹³

According to Hellström, Strindberg used music in his plays to tune the audience in a certain key, which he found to correspond to the sorrow and happiness in the play¹⁹⁴

the music is used to express the inner actions of the drama, to contribute to the resolution of the conflict and to explain the action (...) the music ends up melting together with the action.

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.google.ca/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=freytag%20model>

¹⁹¹ Robinson, Michael. *Studies in Strindberg*. London: Ubiquity Press, 2013. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/bac>, p. 137

¹⁹² There is an implication that if considering a “second” Viennese school, there must have been a first Viennese school consisting of composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert.

¹⁹³ “Hvad den lösa osammanhängande formen i dramat beträffar, är äfven den skenbar endast. Ty vid påseende finnes kompositionen vara ganska fast – en symfoni, polyfonisk, fugerad här och der med hufvudmotivet alltjemt återkommande, repeteradt och varieradt af de några och trettio stämmorna i alla tonarter. Inga solo med ackompagnemang, det är: inga roller, inga karakterer, eller karikatyrer man borde säg, inga intriger, inga aktslut med applådställen – Stämföringen är strängt genomförd, och i Finalens offerscen drager allt det förflutna förbi, motiven resumeras ännu en gång”. My translation, *A Dream Play*, 158.

¹⁹⁴ My translation, Hellström, V., *Strindberg och musiken*, 34.

3.2 Early Plays

To Damascus (1898) is the first of his plays truly incorporating music in this sense. For the opening night, Strindberg himself requested that before the show began the *Largo e mesto* from Beethoven's Piano Sonata Opus 10, No 3 be played. Before the second act he wanted the *Allegretto grazioso* from Mendelssohn's *Frühlingslied*; for Act 3 the *Lacrimosa* from Mozart's *Requiem*; Act 4 by the allegro movement from Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Opus 31, No 2 (the one Strindberg labeled *The Ghost Sonata*), and finally Act 5 should begin with the interlude from Schumann's *Manfred*. He also requested that Schumann's *Aufschwung* or *Ave Maris Stella* be played during the performance itself. As well, there are references to Mendelssohn's funeral march (from *Songs without Words* Opus 62, No 3), which Strindberg also uses as "underscoring" during the party in Act 3. Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Opus 31, No 2 is used again in the play *There Are Crimes and Crimes*. Grew says about the music in *There Are Crimes and Crimes*:

Since the above was written, I have heard the play, with the music, as broadcast by the B.B.C. The effect of the music was all that was intimated in the text—and more. As the emotion of the actors gained in intensity, so did the significance of the music clarify itself increasingly, until it actually seemed as if the one genius, Strindberg, must have been the author of the two things. And I may say that this impression was confirmed when I heard the play a second time during the week, the B.B.C. "sending it over" twice.¹⁹⁵

It is a dark play about passion, tragedy, redemption and remorse. The playwright, Maurice, has a five-year daughter Marion with Jeanne, but falls in love with Henriette. He thinks that life would be easier if he had no daughter and a few hours later, she is found dead. They both wind up being accused of murder, and it threatens to destroy them both. The darkness and despair is highlighted in the music.

¹⁹⁵ Grew, E. M., "Strindberg and Music" in *The Musical Quarterly*, vol 19, No. 1 (Jan., 1933), pp. 59-73, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 67.

The Black Glove (1909) contain references to Beethoven's music. His Piano Sonata Opus 110 and the *Marcia Funebre* from the *Eroica* mixed with screaming, as well as the third movement the *Adagio sostenuto* from Beethoven's Piano Sonata Opus 106. The play ends with the beautiful and happy *Frühlingsrauschen* (Rustle of Spring) by Sinding Op. 32, No. 3. As noted, Strindberg is extremely precise in his musical references. Berendsohn shows how Strindberg is inspired by the music of J. S. Bach and claims that Strindberg used this inspiration of what he saw as human misery on earth, and a longing to be released from it, as inspiration for *A Dream Play*, which I will return to later. Bach is also very present in *Carl XII*, whereas in *To Damascus*, Strindberg specifies which musical pieces introduce each act. The introduction of *Carl XII* should be the last choral piece from the *St. Matthew Passion*, the introduction to Act 2 the *Gavotte* from the *English Suite*, No 3, BWV 808. Act 3 was to have the *Sarabande* from the *French Suite*, No 1, BWV 812 (in D minor) as the introduction, and before Act 4 a return to the *English Suite*, No 3, BWV 808 with the *Sarabande* movement, which gets repeated for Act 5. As the dwarf Luxembourg says: "And a king has composed this song of sorrow! Sebastian Bach, the king of the land of sorrow and the kingdom of pain".¹⁹⁶

Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu*, Opus 66 makes it into *Thunder in the Air*, *The Pelican* and was requested by Strindberg as prelude for *The Crown Bride*. *The Great Highway* (1909) ends with Chopin's *Nocturne* Opus 48, No 1. *Easter* features Haydn's *Sieben Worte des Erlösers*, *Gustav III* features Bellman's *Böljan sig mindre rör*, *The Crown Bride* also, as mentioned before, features Strindberg's own composition, and *Midsummer* features several other folk songs.

Grew says about Strindberg and music that he

¹⁹⁶ My translation from *Samlade skrifter av August Strindberg*, 35. Engelbrekt. *Carl XII*, 167.

Had so intense and complete a perception of the poetic and dramatic reality of this music that the piece stood for him exactly as a pictorial leit-motive of Wagner stood for Wagner.¹⁹⁷

Or as Hannah Hinz writes:

When Strindberg turns to music, he does so having a certain type of music in mind and aiming at a certain experience of music, resembling the experience the Beethoven evenings offered him and his fellow Beethoven Boys.¹⁹⁸

3.3 Miss Julie

In the introductory statement to *Miss Julie*, Strindberg refers to his use of symmetry and math when he writes about his use of themes that

the material (...) is then reworked, taken up, repeated, unfolded, layered on, just as a theme in a musical composition.¹⁹⁹

and

In order not to tempt the audience beyond its ability, I have let the music, well motivated by the dance of midsummer, exercise its deluding power during the dumb game, and I ask the music director to care about the well-chosen musical pieces, and not to let foreign moods awaken through memories from either today's operetta or dance repertoire or from the all too ethnographic folk tones.²⁰⁰

There are eighteen references to dance/waltz/schottische²⁰¹ in *Miss Julie* and in *The Ghost*

Sonata there are thirteen references to a bell or the bell is actually heard. The choir of peasants

are singing "Det kommo två fruer" (Two wives are coming) twice – it is the folksong to which

the sheet music is printed in the Swedish National Edition of the *Miss Julie*.²⁰² In addition to this

¹⁹⁷Grew, E. M., "Strindberg and Music," 66.

¹⁹⁸ Hinz, H., "Between Beethoven and Schönberg: Strindberg's Idea of Chamber Music and its Significance For and In his Chamber Plays," 80.

¹⁹⁹ My translation of <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/StrindbergA/titlar/Fadren/sida/109/etext>

²⁰⁰ My translation from <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/StrindbergA/titlar/Fadren/sida/110/etext> and <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/StrindbergA/titlar/Fadren/sida/111/etext>.

²⁰¹ A partnered folk dance in Sweden known as the Schottis indicating a Scottish origin, but it really a country-dance (slow polka) originating from Bohemia.

²⁰² The song is missing in many translations.

there is a Schottische played on a violin, music in polka meter, references to listening, singing, crying, clapping of hands, screaming, *Don Juan*, the speaking tube, and towards the end two of Julie's lines are indicated to be spoken in the musical tempo of *presto* and *prestissimo*. Then there is the bird and its cage, which is mentioned seven times.

By applying Freytag's model to *Miss Julie*, focusing on the musical structure, we get the following:

Exposition page 117-125, introduction of the bell and the speaking tube, and over 10 references to dancing, the waltz and Schottische.

The Inciting Moment page 126, the pantomime where Kristin listens to the distant violin playing a Schottische.

Rising Action page 127-144, where there are more references to dancing, including the insert with the polka music, a reference to *Don Juan*, and several references to listening/hearing.

Climax pages 145-152, where the choir twice sings the folk song *Det kommo två fruer* the last time while the ballet takes place, there are more references to listening/hearing/singing/the bell/the train. The bell is actually heard and Julie claps her hands.

The Reversal starts on pages 153-155 where Julie cries, screams and has lines that will later appear in *A Dream Play* when she is talking about sinking and falling just like The God's daughter Agnes.

Falling Action pages 175-178 is when the bird and the birdcage becomes a central theme with five references.

Moment of final Suspense pages 179-184 following the sacrifice of the bird with references to the bell, a hymnbook, and the musical tempo indications of Julie's speech.

Catastrophe pages 185-190, with a last reference to the sacrificed bird, the bell is heard four times and with several references to it/to chime, and to ears.

The setting of the soundscape by Strindberg's tuning of the audience in the Exposition with the frequent references to dancing, the waltz and Schottische, leads them in to the first indication of conflict when Kristen listens alone to the distant sound of a Schottische played on a single violin. As the action increases not only do the references to dancing and listening continue, but the audience is also exposed to a polka. The Climax is framed by the two appearances of the folk song *Det kommo två fruer*, emphasizing the conflict between the noble Miss Julie and the servant Jean. By repeating it, right after Julie's "downfall," it helps to indicate that Jean has won. As can be seen later in *A Dream Play*, the emotional outburst of crying and screaming indicates a change, and in *Miss Julie* that is when the reality of what she has done becomes clear to her – that by sleeping with Jean she has lost her social position. When trying to escape with her bird they are caught. As Jean sacrifices her bird, he sees no other way out of their misery than for Julie to commit suicide. The Moment of final Suspense is when Kristen reappears with her hymnbook representing society and its norms. As a last desperate attempt to get help, Julie intensifies her speaking tempo; Strindberg's marks call for presto and then prestissimo. Julie realizes that no one is going to help her, and when Jean hands her his razor and the bell is heard a final two times, she leaves to take her own life.

The whole axis of the play is built around dancing/folk music/violin before the Climax and the bell/the bird/crying/screaming after the Climax, with the dancing/folk music/violin representing the folk and youthful elements and the bell/the bird/crying/screaming representing the establishment, the norms and the society. The soundscape thereby emphasizes the structure of the play underlining the crucial shifts and highlighting the emotions. These themes are indeed,

as Strindberg stated, reworked, taken up, repeated, unfolded, layered on, just as a theme in a musical composition, and it becomes clear exactly why Strindberg chose a folk tune in the middle and not something from contemporary operetta or dance music. The bell and the birds also become leitmotifs as described by Dahlhaus, when saying that Wagner:

used the word motif in his writings it did not refer to a melodic idea, but to its dramatic foundation or motivation²⁰³

The sound of the bell also has dramatic function and it serves as a reminder of her fate, which serves to heighten the emotional impact at the end. Strindberg uses his musical underscoring by applying the folk song in *Miss Julie*, to create a dramaturgical utility in the same way as Wierzbicki argues that music is used in films, depicting a geographic or national locale and to fit each of a film's main characters with a distinctive theme.

In considering *Miss Julie* as an adaptation, one could say that it has certain themes in common with *Don Giovanni*, to the extent that it can almost be seen as a *Don Giovanni* adaptation. According to the Danish writer C. E. Jensen, there is a parallel between Jean and Figaro in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Strindberg himself writes "Miss Julie has almost the same theme as Don Juan."²⁰⁴ Like the character Don Giovanni, Jean has no interest in Miss Julie once he has had sex with her. In a very real sense, the character Julie echoes Donna Elvira in that she is willing to sacrifice anything to be with Jean. Like Donna Elvira, who travels hundreds of miles to find Don Giovanni, Julie is willing to leave her home and go anywhere with Jean.

²⁰³ Dahlhaus, C., *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 85.

²⁰⁴ "Fröken Julie har samma tema omtrent som Don Juan". My translation from <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/StrindbergA/titlar/Fadren/sida/303/etext>

3.4 A Dream Play

A Dream Play is August Strindberg's reworking of several religious myths concerning the Godchild visiting Earth. God's daughter Agnes, not his son, visits Earth to discover if humans have reasons for all their many complaints. Agnes becomes the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) when she goes through life's sufferings in order to understand humans and their suffering. The Officer talks about her as "a child from heaven," (p. 12) and she says that she has come to save (p. 11) and educate (p. 38) the humans, who she calls "my children." (p. 113) Her name Agnes refers to the Roman Catholic saint Agnes, who at the age of twelve died as a virgin-martyr around year 300. She is resurrected by fire to return to heaven (p. 113), her altar is decorated for the offering (p. 116) and she takes human misery and complaints with her to put in front of the throne of God (p. 122). The Lawyer is himself portrayed as Christ. On page 35 he says "The pain, the suffering! That I will have to carry" and she says about him:

Because you defended poor people, spoke up for prisoners' rights, lightened the burdens of the guilty, won reprieves for the condemned...²⁰⁵

She gives him a crown of thorns, followed by a Kyrie played on an organ – but instead of the tones from an organ, human voices are heard:

*Eternal One! Eternal One! Have mercy upon us! Save us for Thy sake! Spare Thy children, Lord, and be not wrathful against us! Have mercy upon us! Hear us! Pity us mortals! Eternal One, why art Thou so far from us? Out of the depths we call unto Thee: Make not the burden of Thy children too heavy! Hear us! Hear us!*²⁰⁶

The main opposition is apparent from the beginning with the heaven and the air contrasted by the dark world and steam. The earthly dark matter is drawing Agnes (the representative for the heavenly God) down. She is arriving on earth to save the humans. Her theme is "Det är synd om människorna!" (Mankind is to be pitied!), which she states eight times.

²⁰⁵ Translation Carlson, H., *Strindberg; Five Plays*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 223.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 224.

In addition, it is repeated by her and other main characters in many variations. Agnes lives through all the aspects of being human; three different men seduce her – one for each phase of her life (the officer, the lawyer and the poet), she becomes a wife and a mother, but in order to survive she then has to leave both her child and her husband. The balance of this world is between aspects of heaven (the positive) and hell (the negative), and by her sacrificial death at the end she saves humanity from the negative.

Upon applying Freytag's model to *A Dream Play* with a focus on the musical structure the following becomes clear:

Exposition page 1-39: sounds, lots of talking about music/opera, birds and the singers, and music is played twice in addition to church bells.

The Inciting Moment - page 40, when we first hear the *Kyrie* sung in Fingal's Cave, where the daughter for the first time involves herself – she takes up with the lawyer.

Rising Action page 41-65 contains mainly references to music and sound but just before the climax there is singing, the first scream of the four – a scream of pain, dissonant chords and dance music.

Climax – pages 66/67 – the fight between the waltz and Bach, towards the end of the climatic part we have the second scream – a whining scream.

The Reversal – pages 85/86 – children screaming in fear (the third scream) – this is when she realizes that she is in hell not heaven.

Falling Action – pages 87-96 – lots of music almost completely underscored by Beethoven lieder.

Moment of final Suspense - pages 96/97 – just before everything unwinds where she hears the drowning crew singing *Kyrie Eleison*.

Catastrophe 98-122 a long slow fall starting with the last scream (a dying scream) and ends with the *Grave* movement from the beginning of Act 2 in Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

In terms of the Freytag arc model and music, the Exposition has lots of talking about music, opera, birds and the singers. On the actual soundscape level, music is played twice and church bells are heard in the background. The first occurrence of music is in a later scene with the Stage door keeper, which is underscored by soft dance music. Only a few pages later does the first character break into song – it is the Officer singing to his love the opera singer Victoria. The next time we hear dance music is when the Officer remarks on what is behind the door. While the rest of the characters see Agnes as a superior being, the lawyer sees her as a sister, and almost as a leitmotif figure. This is where she gives him a crown of thorns followed by the *Kyrie* played on the organ, where instead of the tones from an organ, human voices are heard. It is the Inciting Moment, when we first hear the *Kyrie* sung, where Agnes for the first time involves herself – she takes up with the Lawyer. As part of the Rising Action there are many references to music and sound, and just before the climax the character HE according to the stage directions “reser sig i båten och sjunger” (stands up in the boat and sings). It is a love song accompanied by violins and a harp.

Leading to the top of the Freytag pyramid is the first scream by everyone “likande ett dissonerande accord” (like a dissonant chord) to which the daughter replies “Mankind is to be pitied!” This is followed at the Climax and center of the play by the fight between the emotional music (the waltz) and the structured art music (Bach). After Bach wins, the second whining scream leads Agnes into a world of pain, fear, and death. In this world, the children's screams of fear are when they see the coal workers, and the long Falling Action of poetic verses recited by Agnes is underscored by different Beethoven pieces. The *Kyrie* is again signifying the Moment

of final Suspense, ending with a death scream and the Grave from Act II of *Fidelio*, a clear contrast to the life and dance music in the beginning.

The Fingal Cave got its name from the hero in James Macpherson's epic poem *Fingal* that is part of *The Works of Ossian*. The name Fingal means the white stranger. *The Fingal Cave* is a sea cave in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland, with a large entrance. Looking outwards from the entrance, it looks like it is framing the isle Iona. Many romantic composers and poets have featured it. Among them James Macpherson, Felix Mendelssohn, and Sir Walter Scott, who described it as "one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded, in my mind, every description I had heard of it... composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral, and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved, as it were, with ruddy marble, [it] baffles all description."²⁰⁷ It is known, for its natural acoustics echoing the waves and creating a sensation of being in a cathedral. In Gaelic, it is called *An Uaimh Bhinn* - the melodious cave.²⁰⁸

The play has 122 pages in the original Swedish version and up until the middle of the play on page 66/67 we hear dance music function as underscoring three times, as well as other music. In addition, there are five occasions of opera singing, church bells, organ, a choral *Kyrie Eleison*, a sung verse with harps and violins, dissonant chords, screaming, and the sounds of clapping and the sword being beaten against the table. In the spoken text, there are also lots of references to opera with a specific reference to Wagner (*Der Meistersinger*), to listening, sounds, bells, singers, birds, screaming of the child, the masquerade, Don Juan, music and dancing.

²⁰⁷ Scott, W., *The Complete Works of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 7, (New York: Conner & Cooke, 1833), 156.

²⁰⁸ The mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria built the *Venus Grotto* in 1875 inspired by Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. It is an artificial stalactite cave complete with a golden swan boat.

The exact middle of the play presents a struggle between the waltz, and as Strindberg notes, Bach's *Toccata Con Fuga*, No 10, the *Adagio* movement in which the piano piece by Bach wins. It is almost a musical counterpoint duel, where Edith says: "I know that I am ugly and that nobody wants to dance with me. But at least I might be spared being reminded of that." In order to retaliate, she plays the D minor *Toccata*. Strindberg writes in the stage directions:

The waltz music from within is heard faintly at first. Then it grows in strength, as if to compete with the Bach *Toccata*. Edith prevails over it and brings it to silence. Dancers appear in the doorway to hear her play. Everybody on the stage stands still and listens reverently.²⁰⁹

Most translations only mention the *Toccata Con Fuga* Opus 10 by Sebastian Bach. There are seven Bach toccatas for keyboard and a common form of the majority is: a slow movement, a fugue, another slow movement, and another, more lively fugue. It is actually Bach's *Toccata Con Fuga* BWV 913 that Strindberg is requesting. In Strindberg's original manuscript he not only specifies that he wants the *Toccata Con Fuga*, No 10 (the number refers to the piano edition he himself had on his piano), but he includes a drawing of the pickup bar to the *Adagio* movement, which starts in bar 121 or six minutes into the performance.²¹⁰

The piece dates from 1706 and was originally intended to be played on a harpsichord. It was the first of the toccatas to get printed, in 1801. The *Toccata* in D minor contains four main sections, but a postlude, which many toccatas have for the final climax, is missing. The fast first movement creates the foundation of an imitative ritornello with an organ-like sound created by the solo bass line. The third movement is more expressive and tuneful. There is a huge auditive difference between starting at bar 1 of the *Fuga* as most editions of Strindberg's play indicates,

²⁰⁹ My translation of page 66.

²¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zbhfpQ6FNg>.

or starting at the *Adagio* movement. With the first, there is a feeling of life, youth and energy in the first part of the *Toccata* even if it is in minor key. It is also light and moves fairly quickly.

In complete contrast, the feeling of the *Adagio* movement is slow, heavy and sad, almost crying or lamenting, sounding like a funeral piece or a recitative from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. After the first short prelude, a theme is presented. This theme is then repeated no less than ten times. It has an ever-changing character, moving constantly around the flat keys related to the key of G minor, but ending in F minor. This is followed by a short modulation back to G minor, which leads to a new sequence of theme reappearances, this time with a modified theme circling around the keys of D and A minor. As Grew writes:

It represents music in the ideal state, where the human emotion expressed is still so near to actuality that one who has the right creative understanding of Bach can imagine facial expression and hear appropriate words, or at least hear the appropriate tones of the voice.²¹¹

The fragment of Bach's music that is played comes to symbolize the spiritual. It becomes an active force working against the waltz and the dancers, which in turn comes to represent the earthly. The fight is then between the spiritual (Bach) and the earthly (the dance). Bach continues until the dancers give up their dancing to stand and listen in awe. In this moment, Strindberg creates in Grew's words:

a dramatic demonstration of the spiritual power of the music, and thence to demonstrate the superior worth of spiritual matters over those that are not spiritual.²¹²

After page 66/67 the audible landscape has changed so what we actually hear is screaming, whining, the *Kyrie Eleison*, singing, and towards the end soft music. Strindberg requested the following:

Page 88 Födda under himmelens skyar Lied 32, Beethoven

²¹¹ Grew, E. M., "Strindberg and Music," 68.

²¹² Ibid., 68.

Page 89 Vindarne, vi luftens barn	Beethoven Lied 32
Page 90 Det är vi, vi vågorna	<i>Adelaide</i> : 39–70
Page 93 Varför födes du med smärta	Beethoven: <i>Lied vom Tode</i> , 5
Page 121 Vårt avsked förestår	<i>Fidelio</i> Akt II <i>Grave</i>

This is Beethoven's lied number 32, Opus 94 (*An die Hoffnung*); Beethoven's *Adelaide*, Opus 46; Beethoven's *Lied vom Tode*, Opus 48, No 3 and the very beginning of Act II to Beethoven's *Fidelio*.²¹³ In the spoken text, there are again many references to music, the voice, birds, crying, the harp, screaming, waves, wind, the ear, tones, bells, disharmonies, *Don Juan* and another specific reference to Wagner (*Der fliegende Hollander*).

An die Hoffnung, Opus 94 is the second setting by Beethoven of this poem cast in a dramatic recitative and aria form. It works like a *da capo* aria full of word painting, and it has a richer harmony and is more rhythmical complex than the first setting. It has a longer text than the original and in doing so Beethoven added a religious element to the song. The introduction works almost like a recitative. It is delicate and has a dark and sad feeling to it. The verse has a gentle, flowing, almost wave like quality, and it would make sense to use the introduction for page 88 and the verse for page 89.

Adelaide, Opus 46, also has a clear influence from an operatic aria. It is tender and lyric with a beautiful gentle introduction. The almost dream-like character with wave-movement in the beginning is a perfect fit with the text Strindberg is underlining, where Agnes is talking about:

It is *we, we, the waves*, that rock the winds to rest. Green cradles are *we*. Wet and salt, *we* are like tongues of fire, quenching, burning, cleansing, bathing, begetting, conceiving. *We, we, the waves*, that rock the winds to rest.

²¹³ <https://youtu.be/IZ47RWkAH6k?t=1m9s>.

This is followed by *Lied vom Tode*, which has the vocal and piano set as a simple hymn-like texture. After the first chord, it goes into an ominous, monotone beginning that after a few bars adopts a dissonance. The song is filled with resignation, darkness and hopelessness, suiting the text of the fast-approaching death, again a perfect fit to underline the text:

Why are *you born* in agony, why do *you* give your mother pain, when, child of man, *you* bring her a mothers joy, joy of all joys...

Then Strindberg ends with *Fidelio* Akt II, the *Grave* movement. It is dark, ominous, threatening, heartfelt and directly expressive music. Using disjointed rhythms and thematic debris that never quite connects into a melody, Beethoven creates explosive, dynamic eruptions. The brass is both trembling and ablaze, and he is underlining this in the A-E-flat tri-tone tuning of the timpani instead of the conventional fifth. The music is expressing all Florestan's intense and confusing emotions - anguish, hope, despair, fear and sheer desperation.

All these are very precise attempts to underscore the text in order to evoke a certain emotional response from the audience. Strindberg is indeed trying to create a clear and specific soundscape with his musical choices. The choice of music for the ending is an almost cinematic one; having Agnes, like Florestan, reach out to God. It is not a "happy" resolution giving the audience hope, which is what one could expect with her resurrection; instead Strindberg gives us a dark inferno.

There are two Wagnerian references in *A Dream Play*. The first, from *Der Meistersinger*, occurs when the people are trying to force their way through the door and are stopped by the police. The second, a reference to *Der fliegende Holländer*, presents itself just before the crew of the sinking ship drown. In both cases, this emphasizes Strindberg's view of Wagner's music as being demonic and evil.

Musically there is no doubt that throughout *A Dream Play* we are dealing with a tragedy. On either side of the Climax, music plays a significant role in the storytelling, and there are many references to music being played and sung as well as references to sounds. The *Kyrie Eleison*, apart from connecting the audience to the religious aspects of the play, marks both the Inciting Moment and the Moment of final Suspense. In combination with the fight between the waltz and Bach, the four occasions of screaming (occurring during the Rising Action, Climax, Reversal and Catastrophe), the general soundscape and all the other sound references creates a musical framework which supports the traditional Freytag arc model. Traditionally, *A Dream Play* has been described as an episodic play, but Strindberg by his use of music and soundscape provides a dramaturgical framework, grounding it on a different level in a more traditional sense and giving it a structure that fits the Freytag arc model.

3.5 Ghost Sonata

Ghost Sonata is the third of Strindberg's "chamber" plays. Strindberg wrote five chamber plays in all, each inspired by chamber music in structure. They are labeled with opus numbers alluding to music, with *Thunder in the Air* being Opus 1, *The Burned Site* Opus 2, *The Ghost Sonata* Opus 3, *The Pelican* Opus 4 and the later play *The Black Glove* Opus 5. According to Törnqvist the name *Ghost Sonata* is based on Beethoven's piano sonata No. 17 in D minor, Opus 31, No. 2 generally referred to as *The Tempest* although it was never labeled as such by Beethoven.²¹⁴ Strindberg called it 'The Gespenster Sonata'. The name comes from Anton Schindler, who claimed that Beethoven had been inspired by Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. According to Hannah Hinz in a letter to Emil Schering, Strindberg connects *The Ghost Sonata*

²¹⁴ Törnqvist, E., Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000, 23.

not only to Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor but also to his *Geistertrio* – Beethoven's Piano Trio No. 5 in D major, Opus 70.²¹⁵ In order to strengthen this relation between his play and the Beethoven pieces, Strindberg requested that the German title for his play should be *Gespensersonate*.

The theme of *The Ghost Sonata* is connected to the unfinished painting *Die Toten-Insel* by Arnold Böcklin. Between 1880 and 1886 Böcklin created five different versions of this picture, all featuring an isolated, bleak and stony island surrounded by dark waters and with a dark, cloudy sky above. In the center of the island there is a grove of tall cypresses; on the water, a boat with a cloaked figure – a person completely in white, with a white object frequently interpreted as a coffin. Böcklin describes it as “a dream picture: it must produce such a stillness that one would be awed by a knock on the door.”²¹⁶ Several scholars have made connections between the oarsman and the oarsman ferrying the dead over the river Styx in Greek mythology. The first two paintings were originally named *Die Gräberinsel*. It is possible that Strindberg might have heard the Swedish Romantic composer Andreas Hallén's musical interpretation, namely the symphonic poem *Die Toteninsel* from 1898. At the end of the *The Ghost Sonata*, Strindberg calls for *Die Toten-Insel* to be shown in the background accompanied with weak and soft, sad music being heard from the island.

In *The Ghost Sonata* we see similar traits to *A Dream Play* in the way the music and soundscape is used to create a dramaturgical framework fitting the Freytag arc model. There is less actual music played than in *A Dream Play* – here it is only in the second half. There are,

²¹⁵ Hinz, H., “Between Beethoven and Schönberg: Strindberg's Idea of Chamber Music and its Significance For and In his Chamber Plays,” 81.

²¹⁶ Culshaw, J, Rachmaninov, the man and his music, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 73.

however, many audible clues throughout the piece, including different kinds of bells which are heard eleven times, an organ, whistling, a clock ticking, banging with crutches on a table, a harp which is featured four times, and soft music at the end.

By applying Freytag's model to the *Ghost Sonata* focusing on the musical structure, we get the following:

Exposition page 1-9, Bells ringing, church bells, organ and talk about opera, leitmotif and *The Valkyrie* (Wagner).

The Inciting Moment - page 10 when we learn about the collapse.

Rising Action page 11-21 – lots of mentions of *The Valkyrie* and Don Juan.

Climax – pages 22-27 – the parrot is introduced and she whistles on page 24 almost at the exact middle of the play. The actual, exact middle is when she stops being the parrot and we realize her relationship to the old man Hummel.

The Reversal – page 37 – the parrot stops the clock – silencing time.

Falling Action – pages 38-50 – first there is a verse recited with harp, but then he keeps begging for music, begging for her to sing.

Moment of final Suspense – page 51 – When he finally gives up and states that the harp is mute and deaf.

Catastrophe pages 52-53 – the verse with harp accompaniment.

The Exposition starts with different kinds of bells ringing, the sound of an organ and talk about opera, leitmotif and *The Valkyrie* (Wagner). This sets up the soundscape. Numerous references to opera, leitmotifs and *The Valkyrie* lead to the Climax but no actual sound interference takes place until the parrot whistles at almost the exact middle of the play. The actual middle is when the mummy stops being a parrot and we realize her relationship to the old

man Hummel. After the Climax the bell and the clock or lack thereof becomes very prominent. The first indication that something is wrong is at the start of the Reversal, where the mummy/parrot stops the clock and thereby silences time. The Falling Action is marked by a verse recited with harp, but then the student keeps begging for music, begging for the daughter to sing. This leads us to the tragedy of the harp being silenced, and in the end to the death of the daughter, accompanied by a verse with harp background.

The verse the harp is accompanying is one that Strindberg has borrowed – it is from *Sólarljóð* (*The Song of the Sun*), an Old-Icelandic poem. The origin of the oral version is estimated to have been from the thirteenth century. *Sólarljóð* contains both Christian and indigenous concepts. The oldest-known written versions of the poem are from the middle of the seventeenth century. Steeped in medieval Christian thought, morality, and symbols in a strong dream vision, the dead father appears and gives his son advice from beyond the grave. It is a series of stories describing the concept of dying, heaven and hell, and on how to live your life. The part describing heaven and hell has often been compared to *The Divine Comedy*. Within a Christian context, it reinterprets pagan wisdom and other poetic representations like *Hávamál* (*Sayings of the High One* (Odin)) and *Völuspá* (*Prophecy of the Völva* (Seeress)). The identity of the father is not revealed until the last stanzas. *Sólarljóð* is composed in “chant meter,” frequently with only three syllables in the half-line —the measure generally associated with *Hávamál*.

Each time we hear this poem it is in combination with the appearance of the “death screen” on stage. In this poem we are confronted with a deceased father who returns from death to tell his son what eternal life is like. When death is imminent, the father reports, man is confronted with a shining light, the symbol of God. The second time Strindberg quotes *The*

Song of the Sun, the poem about light, he at the same time introduces a strong shining light on the stage. The harp helps to underline the eerie feeling of death approaching. When combined with the weak, sad music at the end, Strindberg is sending an emotional message of sadness and despair to the audience by his use of musical underscoring. As in *Miss Julie*, the bell in *Ghost Sonata* takes on a function similar to that of a leitmotif. In combination with the other sound clues, it helps create an emotional reaction in the mind of the audience.

Strindberg's development in his use of music goes from a diegetic use in *Miss Julie*, where the characters hear all the music on stage, to a combination of diegetic and non-diegetic, almost filmic, underscoring in *A Dream Play*, *To Damascus*, *There are Crimes and Crimes*, *Carl XII* and *The Black Glove*. The filmic representation can also, according to Vreni Hockenjos, be seen in both *A Dream Play* and *The Ghost Sonata*:

This seems also to be at stake when Fritz Paul points at a "so to speak cinematic transition: the dissolve" in Strindbergian drama. An example of this technique is evident at the end of *A Ghost Sonata* (1907) where the stage instructions prescribe that the room disappears and Bocklin's painting *Toten-Insel* becomes visible instead. Another occurs in *A Dream Play* when a church organ turns into Fingal's cave "through change of lighting."²¹⁷

It is interesting that all five chamber plays include music and that there seems to be a greater representation of music in Strindberg's later plays.

In both *Ghost Sonata* and *A Dream Play*, music or sounds underline the most important dramatic elements and thematic developments. Both plays refer to at least one Wagner opera. *Ghost Sonata* has no fewer than six references to *The Valkyrie* and one to leitmotifs, and both plays featured "the opera," as well as the sound of bells, a church organ, a harp and a sword or crutches hitting a table. Grew wrote about the *Ghost Sonata*:

²¹⁷ Hockenjos, V., "Strindberg and the Sciopticon" in *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration*, (New York: Rodopi, 2002), 109.

The themes from Wagner's "The Valkyrie" are palpably congruent with the dramatic situation in the phantasy of "The Ghost Sonata," because the dramatic nature of the Wagner themes is presented by the opera of which they are a part.²¹⁸

However, almost every time *The Valkyrie* is mentioned it is by Director Hummel – the evil character, who is also the one mentioning the leitmotif. The only time it is mentioned by other characters is when Director Hummel's plan is coming into effect. As with *A Dream Play*, when Strindberg uses Wagner's operas, it is as a representation of evil. *Ghost Sonata*, *A Dream Play* and *Miss Julie* all have a Don Juan character; in *Miss Julie* and in *A Dream Play* he is just mentioned together with his ghost and could be seen as a predecessor for the old director Hummel and the Mummy/Parrot in *The Ghost Sonata*. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is one of Strindberg's favorite operas; and there are references to the opera in many of his plays. As well, Jean in *Miss Julie* functions as a modern adaptation of the Don Giovanni character.

Strindberg's extensive knowledge [not only as a listener], but as a practitioner and composer of music, clearly influenced his playwriting. The extent to which music played a significant role in his own spiritual life and penetrated his innermost being is reflected in his structural use of it in plays such as *Ghost Sonata*, and *A Dream Play*. To Strindberg music was the structure of life, and therefore rather than abandoning the traditional structure in *Ghost Sonata* (with the sonata-like form) and *A Dream Play* (with the episodic form) Strindberg provides it on a deeper level as a musical subtext and structure that fits the traditional Freytag arc model. Therefore, when Strindberg introduces what to his audience would have been well-known composers and compositions in his plays they are not simply illustrative references, they are announcing that special attention is needed. With his use of instrumental music as a subtext, Strindberg creates a soundscape using musical references, which provides an effective emotive

²¹⁸ Grew, E. M., "Strindberg and Music," 69.

background for understanding the dramatic characters. What his later plays are generally seen as lacking in traditional dramatic structure is in actual fact being replaced with a musical dramaturgical framework fitting the traditional Freytag arc model.

Despite his hatred of Wagner's music, Strindberg applies the idea of leitmotifs or recurring themes throughout his plays and he uses as Tan describes it the music as a way of expressing the emotions of the characters and the emotions related to the scenes. Strindberg uses music to exemplify the action, underscore the dramatic structure, and in particular enrich the psychological understanding of the characters. Just as Wagner's works cannot be divorced from his music and his theatrical imagination, Strindberg's dramas can't be separated from his use of music and paintings – they are, in that sense, *Gesamtkunstwerks*.

The music selected by Strindberg defines the intended audience response. It also creates an intellectual and psychic depth to his plays. Directors and actors performing Strindberg's work have to be aware of the very specific references he provides. The function of the music in his plays clearly creates a subtext or underscoring that enhances the audience experience by supporting the dramatic situation and the narrative and influences the audience's perception of characters and their emotions.

Chapter 4

George Bernard Shaw: Musical Language in *Arms and the Man*, *Pygmalion*, and *Man and Superman*.

4.1 Overview

This chapter considers George Bernard Shaw's musical background and knowledge and its application to the structure of *Arms and the Man*, *Pygmalion*, and *Man and Superman*. The first two plays have been adapted in various ways for the musical theater and the third itself is an adaptation of Mozart's Don Giovanni figure. The nature of adaptations, how they enable the original work to reach a broader audience, and how adaptations affect the popular perception of the original, are considered. Of the studies of George Bernard Shaw as a music critic, few mention that he was also a musician.²¹⁹

Arms and the Man borrows structural elements from Wagner and his romantic idealization of love. Shaw employs an operatic structure as the foundation for the play, which also has a typical operatic plot and, uncharacteristically for Shaw, pairs of light character portraits. The musical nature of Shaw's writing lends itself to adaptations as can be seen in both *Arms and the Man* and *Pygmalion*, as well as in his adaptation of parts of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* into *Man and Superman*.

Bernard Shaw is perhaps the most widely-produced modern dramatist— even 60 years after his death. Shaw was always concerned with the widest, popular dissemination of his work; and the record shows how successful he has been. However, this is not simply due to the power of his

²¹⁹ To my knowledge no significant work has been done on the musical structure of his plays and the only substantial work that has been done on him as a composer was a collaboration between Christopher Innes and myself. This collaboration resulted in discovery of songs composed by Shaw, a CD recording with songs by Shaw, and an edited volume *The Critical Shaw: Music* (ed. Innes/Bogar), Rosetta Books, 2016, as well as numerous invited lectures on the subject. Christopher Innes would provide the overall knowledge of Shaw and his political universe, while I would add the musical knowledge and the performative aspect. All the research aspects were done together.

words, but to the adaptation of his works to other media or genres, specifically to film and to music. Yet, despite the evident attraction of musical theatre – and indeed despite the operatic subtext in many of his plays – Shaw himself consistently rejected and discouraged musical adaptations, even while eagerly pursuing movie adaptations of his plays. Of course, when films became the dominant medium, Shaw immediately adopted cinema as a compelling opportunity for promoting his ideas, and worked closely with a film director, Gabriel Pascal. Together they produced cinematic adaptations of dramas like *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Major Barbara*, *Androcles and the Lion*, and in particular, the 1938 Oscar-winning *Pygmalion*. However, in sharp contrast to Shaw's desire for spreading his message, the one form he always rejected was the musical, which he thought would undermine and water down his message and demand a happy ending in stories like *Pygmalion*.²²⁰

Shaw's rejection of musicals was in opposition to his upbringing as part of a very musical family. Shaw (much like Strindberg) played the piano, cornet, hunting horn, guitar and flute and he also sang and composed. His mother was an opera singer and composer of romantic songs. His younger sister Lucy became a professional singer in London in operettas – perhaps the most famous being a “pastoral comedy-opera,” *Dorothy*, which Shaw mentions in a review from 13th of September 1889. *Dorothy* had by then run for 788 performances.²²¹ In an unpublished letter to an American biographer, Thomas Demetrius O'Bolger, Shaw states that before he could read music (in other words while he was still living in Dublin) he could sing:

Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Mozart's *Twelfth Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Athalie*, Handel's *Messiah*, Verdi's *Trovatore*, Donizetti's *Lucrezia*, Gounod's *Faust* & (above all) Mozart's *Don Giovanni* from cover to cover.²²²

²²⁰ Which did indeed happen with the musical adaptation *My Fair Lady*.

²²¹ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, 2nd Revised edition, Dan Laurence (Ed.), (London: the Bodley Head, 1981), Volume I, 780.

²²² Holroyd, M., *Bernard Shaw: 1856-1898, The search for love*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990, 42.

Shaw's mother and sisters went to London to live with her singing teacher and lover Vandeleur Lee, who was to become Shaw's surrogate father. Shaw would later join them in London, but in the meantime he taught himself to play various instruments, in particular the piano. Vandeleur Lee also encouraged Shaw to become a music critic, when he joined his mother and sisters in London in 1876. Lee had been hired as a critic for *The Hornet* and he convinced Shaw to ghost-write the reviews for him. Vandeleur Lee himself was a vocal coach and opera conductor and it therefore followed naturally for Shaw to write on opera, vocal music, and vocal technique.

4.1.2 Shaw's Musical Writings

Most of Shaw's musical reviews were written between 1876 and 1898, a period where he specifically focused on writing criticism for music columns in newspapers and journals. The bulk of the reviews focused on London and elsewhere in England. A few exceptions included his coverage of Wagnerian operas performed in Bayreuth. Shaw had very specific musical ideals, especially when it came to opera and vocal music in general, and in many instances, his musical reviews also revealed his political views. In his music criticism, he covered a wide range of genres as well as reviewing books (mainly on singing technique). In 1882, Shaw even started ghost-writing an updated version of the new edition of Vandeleur Lee's book on vocal training: *The Voice, Its Artistic Production, Development and Preservation* (1870).²²³ Lee's work focused on a medical approach and on the physiological theory of sound production. Shaw was intimately familiar with this book and Lee's fascination with the medical instrument called the

²²³ Shaw's writings on "The Voice" were not published until February 2016 as an appendix in Shaw, G.B., *The Critical Shaw: Music* (ed. Innes/Bogar), Rosetta Books, 2016, 275-316.

“Laryngoscope,” which would later appear in Shaw’s play *Pygmalion*. Shaw added sections on “Singing in Tune” and on “Pronunciation” – again subjects which would reappear in *Pygmalion*. In his writings on the voice, and in his opera reviews, Shaw highlights technical aspects such as pure vowels, coup de glotte, the laryngoscope, the voice division into three registers, and rounding the back of the throat (the pharynx).²²⁴ He suggests that singers should “use both registers effectively” and have the “instincts of self-preservation to prevent them from forcing the long reed production above its safe limits.”²²⁵ He goes on explaining what registers are and how the voice is used.

In his musical reviews, Shaw is ruthless in his criticism of any singer’s diction, vibrato and pitch, as the few examples below illustrate:

...what is the use of trying Caro nome on me when you can’t phrase, and can’t shake, and don’t know when or how to breathe, and have no inner impulse to express yourself in that sort of music at all?²²⁶

Her singing, until she overcomes her constant vibrato, can only be allowed to pass muster by a stretch of courtesy.²²⁷

Signor Brocolini does not always sing in tune, and consequently his Raimondo is not always acceptable.²²⁸

Her method is defective, especially as to breath, the correct management of which she must master if she wishes to rank as a competent public singer.²²⁹

(...) but her intonation is uncertain.²³⁰

²²⁴ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, II, 740.

²²⁵ Ibid., I, 814.

²²⁶ Ibid., I, 918. Please note that Shaw hardly ever used inverted commas, nor italics, in his writing.

²²⁷ Ibid., I, 117.

²²⁸ Ibid., I, 154.

²²⁹ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, I, 92.

²³⁰ Ibid., I, 108.

His articulation is defensive, and his method of tone production open and inartistic. He distinguished himself by (...) singing it out of tune.²³¹

He also criticize the singers' acting:

Some are singers who cannot act, others are actors who cannot sing. A great many can neither sing nor act nor look well – nor, in fact, offer any reasonable excuse for their appearance in opera at all, except that the public, not knowing any better, is content to endure them for a season.²³²

He is especially critical when it comes to singers with bad diction:

One of the painful features of oratorio performances in this country is the indifference of most English singers to the artistic treatment of their own language.²³³

Shaw was very dismissive of the conservatory in general ²³⁴ and specifically the Guildhall

School of Music, as shown in this example commenting on pronunciation, and in the following two examples where he sounds like an early version of what would become Professor Higgins in

Pygmalion:

Imagine a young lady sent out (...) to sing *Lascia ch'io pianga* without a word to warn her that the reiterated “e che sospire” is not pronounced “Ayee Kayee Soaspearayee.”²³⁵

Shaw further underlines the social and political significance of this language training in his music criticism:

it is absurd to brand young singers as vulgar because they (...) know no other mode of speech than that which is vernacular in those regions.²³⁶

His criticism of sopranos and tenors seem harsher than that of the altos and basses, whom he hardly ever picks on. He does however have his favorite singers such as soprano Christine

Nilsson, Nellie Melba and mezzo Zelia Trebelli. The family connection to Madame Trebelli was

²³¹ Ibid., I, 124/125.

²³² Ibid., I, 116.

²³³ Ibid., I, 538.

²³⁴ Ibid., II, 783.

²³⁵ Ibid., II, 915.

²³⁶ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, I, 915.

quite strong with “The Angel’s Message,” one of the songs his mother composed, being dedicated to this particular singer. She also starred in *Don Giovanni*, and reappeared frequently in Shaw’s London music reviews.

Shaw presumes his audience have a great knowledge of singing and opera, referring to songs and arias by name without indicating the source. Sometimes as with Brahms’ “Vergebliches Ständchen,” Shaw is inaccurate and uses the first line of text rather than the title of the piece:

Brahms’s *Guten Abend, mein Schatz*, I had never heard before. It is a quaintly pleasant little duologue in song.²³⁷

In London during Shaw’s time as a music critic, the most important musical events were the great Choir Festivals at which one could hear works by Bach, Handel, and particularly Mendelssohn. Shaw is a great supporter of Handel, but he does write:

...the reputation of Handel without the Messiah (...) would half vanish.²³⁸

and he rants against bad performances of *Messiah*:

Why (...) does not someone set up a thoroughly rehearsed (...) performance of Messiah (...) most of us would be glad to hear the work seriously performed once before we die.²³⁹

Italian opera was the fashionable “thing” in London during this period; and many English composers actually had to have their operas first performed in Italian translations. The language of choice for the first performance of Wagner’s *Der Fliegende Holländer* in England (Drury Lane 1870) was Italian. Wagner was seldom performed in England, and Shaw wrote in 1890:

In this miserable country a man who has seen *Die Walküre* on the stage is a much greater curiosity than one who has explored the Congo.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Ibid., I, 909-910 – Brahms indeed wrote the music for this piece (1886) but the actual title was “Vergebliches Ständchen.”

²³⁸ Ibid., I, 347-348.

²³⁹ Ibid., II, 245-246.

²⁴⁰ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, I, 924.

Shaw did his best to promote both Wagner and Mozart. During the year of the Mozart Centenary, Shaw wrote:

It is not possible to give here any adequate account of Mozart's claims to greatness as a composer. At present his music is hardly known in England except to those who study it in private. Public performances of it are few and far between, and, until Richter conducted the E flat Symphony here, nobody could have gathered from the vapid, hasty, trivial readings which were customary in our concert rooms that Mozart, judged by 18th century standards, had any serious claim to his old-fashioned reputation.²⁴¹

The complete edition of Shaw's music criticism adds up to 2,289 pages written over twenty-two years.²⁴² The sheer volume of his critical articles during the late 19th century is indicative of his active influence in the world of music. Upon reviewing all of Shaw's musical writings, about 37% of his reviews focus on opera and vocal criticism; the instrumental concerts account for just under 20%; his academic writing, as well as travel descriptions, politics, music history and theory take up over 20% of his writings, and the "other" topics make up 22.5%. Almost all his instrumental reviews cover a number of concerts in each article, and frequently include vocal sections. His reviews of oratorio and choral works account for just over 5% of Shaw's total music reviews, so it would be safe to state that opera and vocal performances total well over half of all Shaw's musical writings. It is mainly in the case of opera, operetta, and oratorios that his reviews focus only on a single performance.

Shaw's focus is to some extent determined by his background, so that in his reviews Shaw hardly ever mentions major English composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: John Gay and John Barnett are both only mentioned once, and Thomas Arne is mentioned only three times. Purcell gets mentioned less than twenty times. By comparison, Irish composers—Balfe and Wallace—are referred to by name more than ten times each. He discusses Balfe, *The*

²⁴¹ Ibid., II, 488.

²⁴² In the publication edited by Dan H. Laurence, (London: Bodley Head, 1981).

Bohemian Girl, and arias associated with his operas, almost thirty times. It is tempting to question whether Shaw's attention to the two Irish composers is the reason they made it into music history. The only two English composers that get more references from Shaw are Handel, with over one hundred (thirty-plus on *Messiah* alone) and Sullivan with over eighty references—forty of those with Gilbert, although Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas were generally sharply criticized. For instance, in a review of *The Gondoliers*, Shaw judges:

We know the exact limit of Mr Gilbert's and Sir Arthur Sullivan's talent by this time, as well as we know the width of the Thames at Waterloo Bridge; and I am just as likely to find Somerset House under water next Easter or autumn, as to find *The Gondoliers* one hair's-breadth better than *The Mikado*.²⁴³

In distinct contrast to Sullivan and all the neglected English composers are German composers such as Beethoven, Liszt,²⁴⁴ Brahms, Mozart and Wagner, all of whom are very favorably featured throughout Shaw's writings. Wagner is the most prominent, having over two hundred entries in reviews, plus the entire discussion in Shaw's book, *The Perfect Wagnerite* (first published in 1898).

As his reviews depict, Italian opera was the fashion in London during this period. As noted in 1890 Shaw complained that Wagner was seldom performed in England. Shaw's study of Wagner's operas, *The Perfect Wagnerite*, gives a socialist/Shavian reading and overview of *The Ring*, exposing a general theme of love and humanity versus money and capitalist exploitation, and it led him to believe that he could identify with Wagner politically as well as musically. Wagner became his preferred composer during his early time as a music critic, although this would later change.

²⁴³ *The Star*, 13 December 1899.

²⁴⁴ While Liszt was Hungarian, his music was inspired and followed the same esthetics as his fellow German composers of the time.

4.1.3 Shaw and Wagner

Shaw also, both in his study and his earlier reviews, singles out Wagner's use of *leitmotifs* to express the nature of a character or a specific emotion, demonstrating how these give a symphonic wholeness to an entire performance, unifying it musically and evoking the poetic qualities of a story. Shaw argues that Wagner is not only responsible for a completely new development in opera, which he labels as "music-drama," but also forms the culmination of nineteenth-century music, just as Mozart forms the apex of eighteenth-century music. While mostly supportive and positive about Wagner's operas in his music reviews, after Wagner's death Shaw begins to criticize the productions in Bayreuth.²⁴⁵ He sees Wagner as an anarchist with whom he identifies. To him *The Ring* is one drama consisting of three music dramas (*Drama Musica*) and one grand opera. He sees a general theme of love and humans versus money. It is a very clear projection of Shaw's own ideas onto Wagner's *The Ring* as well as a general music criticism, but with his socialist focus, he fails to incorporate the music properly into his dramaturgical reading of *The Ring*. The Wagnerian connection and inspiration is very clear in one of Shaw's early plays *Widowers' Houses* from 1892, which not only has a strongly musical reference, but initially was itself titled "Das Rhinegold". *Mrs Warren's Profession* from 1893 in important ways echoes *Die Valkyrie*, *Major Barbara* from 1905 can be seen as Shaw's version of *Siegfried* and *Heartbreak House* from 1916 as an equivalent to *Götterdämmerung*. It took Shaw 24 years rather than Wagner's 26 years to complete his "Ring Cycle". To Shaw, Wagner was clearly the ideal revolutionary, and he observed that Wagner had a great ability in writing for the human voice.

²⁴⁵ In his 4th preface from 1922 Shaw states that Wagner in the aftermath of the 1st World War had become toothless and old-fashioned and that he would prefer to listen to *The Ring* rather than to watch it.

In his final comments in *The Perfect Wagnerite* on Wagner as a composer, Shaw praises him for his writing, employing the entire range of the human voice, but using the high notes sparingly and with a considerate instrumentation so as not to overpower sopranos when they are singing in the lower part of their vocal range. This is true even in Wagner's early operas. For instance, Senta's Ballad from *Der fliegende Holländer* has several passages sitting below C5, which makes it challenging for a soprano to project her sound; but all of these are marked *piano* or *pianissimo* in the orchestra, and only when the voice moves above C5 do the dynamic markings move to *forte* or *fortissimo*. Shaw sees the use of the Wagnerian *leitmotifs* as a way of adding:

symphonic interest, reasonableness, and unity to the music, enabling the composer to exhaust every aspect and quality of his melodic material, and (...) to work miracles of beauty, expression and significance with the briefest phrases.²⁴⁶

He also rightfully states that with the use of *leitmotifs*:

the poetry that lies too deep for music (...) can make symphonies without the aid of dance tunes.²⁴⁷

Shaw was also one of the most comprehensive critics of music, covering every aspect from composition to performance, as well as the economic and political aspect of the art. As William Irvine puts it:

Shaw was by no means content to tell composers how to compose, musicians how to play, stage managers how to produce, and audiences how to feel. He also told financiers of music how to venture and manage, and the government how to legislate with reference to musical problems. In his critical pages the English, a placid and political people, discovered with amazement that music was a burning political issue, and might at any moment explode into social revolution.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1923), 125.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 134.

²⁴⁸ Irvine, W., "G. B. Shaw's Musical Criticism," *The Music Quarterly*, Vol. 32 (3), July, 1946, 324.

4.1.4 Shaw as a Composer

Shaw also made attempts to compose music, although less successfully than his mother. Shaw composed songs for women he was interested in, such as a singer and member of the Fabian Society Grace Gilhurst, the actress Florence Farr, or his socialist political companion “Dollie” Caroline Radford. Although unfortunately very few of these compositions seem to have survived, some were used within his plays. In his plays, however, with the exception of *Saint Joan*, there is no mention of Shaw’s music or songs in the scripts, which probably means that these compositions only ever appeared in the first productions, supervised by Shaw himself.²⁴⁹

Shaw’s extant compositions includes lyrics taken from two poems by “Dollie” Caroline Radford. As a member of the socialist literary circle centred in Hampstead, and a close friend of Karl Marx’s daughter, Eleanor, Radford published nine poems in the first two issues of *Progress* (January-June, 1883 and July-December, 1883) under her maiden name, Caroline Maitland or under the initials “C. M.” Shaw would certainly have read the journal, since one of the regular contributors was his literary associate William Archer (writing under the symbolic pseudonym of “Norman Britton”). Even though Caroline had been married for a year by the time Shaw was composing the music to these poems, in 1884, Shaw might well have already met her in socialist circles, since the poem he chose was **not** one of those published in *Progress*. His first composition, “How She Comes” in fact, echoes the romantic melancholy typical of his mother’s compositions. However, March 1884 – the date of this, first composition – was also the month in which the Fabian Society was founded (with Shaw being one of its original members), which again indicates the links between music and politics in Shaw’s mind.

²⁴⁹ The first CD recording of these musical compositions by Shaw and his mother is attached as an appendix.

In a letter, when sending his composition to Caroline Radford on 31 March 1884, Shaw comments:

The music is trumpery enough; but I am not a composer, ... so do not be too hard on my commonplaces. They will suffice to show you the extent to which music alters the aspect of a poem.²⁵⁰

There's a Wagnerian tone to Shaw's music here; and the theme could be also compared to the hunting motif in Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*. In spite of Shaw's modest disclaimer, clearly Caroline Radford liked his music. She kept all her early poems bound in a notebook; and carefully marked this one: "Music by G. B. Shaw." Six months later, in September 1884, Shaw composed music for another of her poems: "Ah love, I lack thy kisses."

4.2.1 Arms and the Man

Shaw completely rejected all operetta or musical versions of his plays, trying (unsuccessfully) to deny the performance rights to a Viennese adaptation of his *Arms and the Man* entitled *The Chocolate Soldier* [operetta by Oscar Strauss, 1908]. The irony is that *The Chocolate Soldier* – operetta being very much the 19th-century equivalent of the modern musical – actually proved far more popular than *Arms and the Man*, Shaw's most successful early play. When it appeared on Broadway in 1909, *The Chocolate Soldier* was a triumph. It ran for nine months, over 200 performances, as compared with the initial run of *Arms and the Man* in 1894 with 50 performances at the Avenue Theatre in London and just 16 performances in New York. *The Chocolate Soldier* remained one of the most popular of all Viennese operettas performed in the US. It was remounted on Broadway in 1921, 1929, 1931, 1934, 1942 and 1947, after that

²⁵⁰ Shaw's musical settings for the Caroline Redford songs, together with his letter to her, are held in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library.
Laurence, D., *Shaw Collected Letters 1874-1897*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1965, 80.

remained a staple of light opera companies in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St Louis. In 1941 it was also made into a Hollywood film starring Nelson Eddy; and a recording was produced by the Ohio Light Opera in 1998. Even so, when *The Chocolate Soldier* was scheduled to be performed in London in 1910, Shaw took legal action to get it advertised as “an **unauthorized parody** of Mr. Bernard Shaw’s play, *Arms and the Man*”²⁵¹ – despite his tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement (later that year, in December 1910) that operetta was evidently more popular than any other form of theatre:

What is the artistic value of Viennese operettas? Exactly that value which delights the public that fills the theatres in which it enjoys itself. And just this pleasure which they give to the public is the cause of their success.²⁵²

Shaw borrows specifically from Wagner and this sort of musical subtext is even clearer in *Arms and the Man*, as where Shaw borrowed the title from the opening line of the Aeneid by Virgil:

Arms and the man, I sing, who forced by fate
And haughty Juno’s unrelenting hate...²⁵³

Please note the missing follow-on to Shaw’s title: “Arms and the man **I sing.**” *Arms and the Man* is a play where the musical themes are more ‘through-composed’ than Shaw’s other plays, apart perhaps from *Heartbreak House*. It offers a very good example of the way in which Shaw uses multiple levels in his drama: here, not only in the obliqueness of his Pacifist approach to the theme of war and its application to the England of his time, but also the subtextual significance of music. The focus of *Arms and the Man* is the romantic idealization of love. The “Dido-principle,”²⁵⁴ and the German movie based on the play was illuminatingly titled *Helden* =

²⁵¹ See Richard Traubner, *Operetta: A Theatrical History*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 278.

²⁵² Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, 638.

²⁵³ John Dryden (1631-1700), from his 1697 translation of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *The Works of Virgil*, Book 1, Line 1.

²⁵⁴ The DIDO principle still applies to its contents sentence: A product can not be better than its constituents. (Dictionary of American Slang).

Heroes, as a satiric parody of the heroic myth. The center of the play is the double love triangle – Raina, Sergius, Louka; and Sergius, Raina, Bluntschli – that resolves neatly into two pairs. Both these pairings are not just the standard comic type, but absolutely typical of operetta. On the surface, it looks as if the noble officer, Sergius, is unmistakably a *Heldentenor*. As Bluntschli states, when he replies to Raina calling Sergius a hero, “he did it like an operatic tenor.”²⁵⁵ So it follows that the operatic heldentenor Sergius should get together with the aristocratic girl who specifically models her attitudes on an opera like Verdi’s ultra-Romantic *Ernani* (Raina – clearly a lyric soprano), particularly since both believe themselves to be “an apostle of the higher love.”²⁵⁶ *Ernani*, a favorite satiric reference for Shaw, is reflected in Raina’s hyper-idealistic behavior. As she says to the stranger in her bedroom:

I thought you might have remembered the great scene where Ernani, flying from his foes just as you were tonight, takes refuge in the castle of his bitterest enemy....²⁵⁷

Yet Shaw does not set *Ernani* up into an expected pattern, since Raina has never met her “chocolate cream soldier” before he appears in her bedroom. While the aristocrat (Sergius) may see Raina as his appointed bride, he actually loves a servant-girl (Louka) who we see together with him in a seductive scene early in Act II. To Shaw, the opera *Ernani* represents false illusion, while it becomes the operetta genre that provides the structure and characterization for *Arms and the Man*. The Man (Bluntschli) offers another operatic reference in the same scene, asking “Is that the one with the devil in it in red velvet, and a soldiers’ chorus?” – a clear reference to Gounod’s *Faust*. The Wagnerian motif of Act I is the constant accompaniment of shouts and fusillades off stage in an almost comic operetta-like manner. As they stand, the romantic pairings

²⁵⁵ Shaw, G.B., *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*, (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965), 98.

²⁵⁶ Shaw, G.B., *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*, 50.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35. See also Martin Meisel, *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theatre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 47.

Shaw promotes are pure operetta: the highborn lady who falls in love with a man from the bottom of the social scale, who turns out to be a prince in disguise – which precisely describes Bluntschli, whose hotel linen and cutlery beggar the Petkoff family’s pretensions to wealth and position. Or, in contrast, the aristocrat who runs away with a servant-girl who represents virtue, as with Sergius and Louka. Both mythical couples can be found in operetta after operetta one only has to think of Millöcker’s classic *Beggar Student*, or Mario Lanza in *The Student Prince*, as well as in Gilbert & Sullivan thinking of the milkmaid and the aristocratic Grosvenor in *Patience*, or the disguised prince and the “Three Little Girls from School” in *The Mikado*. Indeed, when he started writing *Arms and the Man*, in his diary Shaw labelled the play “romantic.”²⁵⁸ So, it can hardly have been a surprise when Oscar Straus, the Viennese composer of the smash musical hit of the time, *A Waltz Dream* – not to be confused with the Waltz-king Johann Strauss – wanted to turn Shaw’s play back into the operetta it potentially seemed to be. The musical nature of Shaw’s writing can be observed in the opening scene of *Arms and the Man*, where Raina’s mother is praising Sergius’ prowess in leading a cavalry charge. Raina declares her passion for the man she is engaged to:

Oh, to think that it was all true! that Sergius is just as splendid and noble as he looks!
That the world is really a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who
can act its romance! What happiness! What unspeakable fulfillment!

And all the exclamation marks which Shaw has scattered through her speech are directly picked up by the aria she sings in *The Chocolate Soldier*. When (as in the original play) an unknown foreign soldier takes refuge in her bedroom at night, and she discovers that the stranger has no bullets for his gun, instead carrying a holster full of chocolate-creams, the heroine expresses her amazement in a duet with lilting music and a light element of ridicule.

²⁵⁸ Gibbs, A. M., *Bernard Shaw: A Life*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 170.

Predictably, while unable to actually prevent a foreign-language version, Shaw forbade Straus from using any of his characters' names and insisted that the libretto be announced as a parody. So, Shaw's Bluntschli became "Bumerli" and the Petkoffs become "Popoffs." Sergius becomes the same-sounding "Alexius," while Raina is "Nadina." This of course makes the characters seem more comic, although (countering that) Straus named his operetta, *Der tapfere Soldat* (*The Brave Soldier*). Although there is a standard operatic opening with the ladies waving the gallant troops off to battle and the scenes are interrupted by set-piece arias, the plot of the operetta remains exactly the same as Shaw's play in its major outline. This, too, shows how operetta-like Shaw's *Arms and the Man* actually is. No real change was necessary for Straus. Almost all the books on Shaw that even mention Straus' operetta dismiss it (echoing Shaw) as a simplistic parody. But this critical judgment overlooks that in New York *The Chocolate Soldier* had been presented (more accurately) as "Bernard Shaw Set to Music."²⁵⁹ In fact, when translated back into English for performance in America under the title of *The Chocolate Soldier*, many of the words in the libretto echo and indeed directly repeat speeches in Shaw's play: a point unmistakably made by the cover of the 1998 recording, which features a full-page picture of an ironically smiling Shaw. Even in London the reviews were enthusiastic, going so far as to call this "the best comic opera" since *The Mikado*. There is, however, one marked change that *The Chocolate Soldier* makes to the situation in *Arms and the Man* – the social upgrading of Raina's servant into Raina/Nadina's cousin – and this undercuts Shaw's most provocative reversal.

²⁵⁹ Marquee Advertisement (Fred C. Whitney), Qtd., Raymond McCall, Program Note to the recording of *The Chocolate Soldier*: Libretto, (Newport Classics, Opera Light), 3.

As actor manager²⁶⁰ in her own theatre, Florence Farr always took the main part, which in the operetta was Louka, the rebellious servant girl. In the original production of *Arms and the Man*, she did indeed play Louka. Indeed, Shaw himself was quite explicit that Louka, not the conventional heroine, was the central character. He emphasized this in his writings to Granville Barker:

To me the scenes between Sergius and Louka are so much more deeply felt than those between Bluntschli and Raina that I had myself rather play Sergius than Bluntschli, & rather have the strong woman of the cast as my Louka than as my Raina.²⁶¹

By making Louka much more of a conventional figure in *The Chocolate Soldier*, the typical heroine (Nadina) is restored to center-stage. In the same way, the music, which gave more songs to the Bummerli and Nadina figures than to the other lovers, also restored the standard expectations of the audience. But that's only on one level. On a deeper level, the way the music was composed actually satirized the conventions of opera. It projected the ambiguity of the words in Shaw's play into a more popular mode, and in that way the adaptation can be seen as an evolution of the original work in a Hutcheon sense. The inherent musical/operatic structure of *Arms and the Man* does lend itself to musical adaptations. The operetta retelling of *Arms and the Man* popularizes the piece and in some ways works better within our modern popular culture than the original work by Shaw. In the newer format, the story appeals to and reaches a much wider audience than the original, and like a film the operetta medium provides the option of a separate soundtrack.

²⁶⁰ The actor-manager system was a 19th century method of theatrical production used mainly in England and the U.S., where a company was created by a leading actor, who chose his or her own plays, mostly took the leading role in them, and frequently handled the business and financial arrangements.

²⁶¹ Bernard Shaw, *Bernard's Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker*, ed. C. B. Purdom (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1957), 110.

4.2.2 Pygmalion

Shaw evidently disapproved of musical theatre. Even his commentary on his sister Lucy's success, *Dorothy*, was extremely critical.²⁶² Presumably, Shaw never understood the public reach of musical theatre exemplified so well by *Dorothy*. After filming *Pygmalion* twenty years later, Gabriel Pascal (who produced all the films of Shaw's plays during his lifetime) tried to persuade Shaw to let him turn *Pygmalion* into a musical. Shaw explicitly refused – in outrage – ignoring the fact that he had just publicly labelled Pascal “a genius.” The elocution-loving Shaw had even imported a line of dialogue from the film into his newly revised version of the play-script. Ironically this line was “The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain”.²⁶³ On the surface, Shaw's consistent rejection of musical adaptations relates to what he saw as the cliché format of musical theatre, and on a deeper level it most likely reflected his views of his own plays as “high art”. In his 1890s music criticism he had consistently dismissed the genre of comic opera or operetta. In his view:

The theme of *The Pirates of Penzance* is essentially the same as that of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*; but we all understood that the joke of the pirate being “the slave of duty” lay in the utter absurdity and topsyturviness of such a proposition, whereas [in Ibsen] we see that the exhibition of the same sort of slave there as a mischievous fool is no joke at all, but a grimly serious attack on our notion that we need stick at nothing in the cause of duty.”²⁶⁴

But much later (1933) he partly recanted admitting, that “Sullivan's music has risen in value by keeping” and the score of *The Mikado* “can now [be appreciated for] its delicacy and the tenderness which redeems its witty levity and preserved the more ephemeral topicalities of Gilbert from perishing.”²⁶⁵ That was in 1933, five years before rejecting Pascal's suggestion,

²⁶² see *The Star*, 13 September 1899.

²⁶³ the text for one of the more famous songs in *My Fair Lady*.

²⁶⁴ Shaw, G. B., *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, I, 870 (13 December 1889) & II, 388 (8 July 1891).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 752-3.

strongly suggesting, it made no difference to his general attitude about operetta or musical adaptations of his plays.

In *My Fair Lady*, just as in *The Chocolate Soldier*, the script directly follows Shaw's play – even the songs are specifically rooted in Shaw's text, as with Eliza's "Just you Wait, Enry Iggins." Eliza's original complaint in *Pygmalion* read as follows:

Oh, you've no feeling heart in you: you don't care for nothing but yourself [*she takes the floor resolutely*]. Here! I've had enough of this. I'm going [*making for the door*]. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought.

As here in *My Fair Lady*, the songs are more graphic, but the exact words from *Pygmalion* fill almost the entire spoken part of the musical, except for one major addition, and one significant invention. In Shaw's original play there's no scene at all of Higgins teaching Eliza, while that becomes a focal point in *My Fair Lady*. Notoriously, the ending is also changed so that Eliza returns to Higgins. Otherwise, all the scenes follow the same order, at least of the revised 1941 text, which Shaw changed specifically to incorporate elements of Pascal's film: for instance, in Shaw's post-movie playscript there's a scene with a taxi, and a scene with Higgins introducing Eliza to an Eastern European linguistic expert as they go into the ball. Notably, Shaw's revision did not follow the 1938 film ending – which Pascal had kept secret from Shaw until the gala premiere of the movie. In the very final movie scene, Eliza returns to Higgins – just as she does in *My Fair Lady* – which for Shaw contradicted the central political thrust of his play. However, the final scene is at best ambiguous, since Shaw's own stage directions read:

Higgins, left alone, rattles his cash in his pocket, chuckles, and disports himself in a highly self-satisfied manner.

Even in the 1914 production, Beerbohm Tree (the original Higgins) threw flowers at Mrs. Pat Campbell (Eliza) when she sweeps out; clearly implying the romantic ending that was later openly stated in both Pascal's 1938 film and *My Fair Lady*. In order to counter this romantic

ending, in direct response to Pascal's film, Shaw wrote a long and very detailed epilogue for the 1941 revised version of *Pygmalion*, attacking the popular imagination.

enfeebled by ... lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of "happy endings" to misfit all stories.

Counter-intuitively to everything in the play, Shaw's epilogue insisted that Liza marries the spineless Freddy: choosing a husband who would fetch her slippers, instead of her fetching Higgins' slippers – and run a flower shop. This reversal of romantic expectations became the defining issue for Shaw; and clearly he considered film a more clichéd medium than the stage. In his film script, Shaw adds a final scene: Higgins sees Eliza and Freddy in their flower shop as a "vision of the future," and when a policewoman asks whether anything is wrong, Higgins replies "No: nothing wrong. A happy ending. A happy beginning."²⁶⁶ Pascal, of course, shot a quite different final scene, where Eliza returns to Higgins' study, and his response is to ask "Where the devil are my slippers, Eliza?" On the one side are all the practical people of the theatre and film (Sir Henry Beerbohm-Tree, Lerner and Lowe) who practically copy Pascal's 1938 movie ending in their last scene of *My Fair Lady*. Alone on the other side is Bernard Shaw, the political ideologue and dramatist.

4.2.3 Pygmalion and the Freytag Model

In the preface to *My Fair Lady* Alan Jay Lerner wrote:

I have omitted the sequel because in it Shaw explains how Eliza ends not with Higgins but with Freddy and – Shaw and Heaven forgive me! – I am not certain he is right."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ McHugh, D., *Lovely: The Life and Times of 'My Fair Lady'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 52

²⁶⁷ Lerner, A. J., *My Fair Lady: A Musical Play in Two Acts*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1956, 7.

The picture painted by the music is indeed a different one from the words and maybe that is exactly why Shaw was against a musical adaptation of *Pygmalion*. The main structure of the play when compared using the Freytag analysis shows that nothing has been significantly changed.

Applying the Freytag model on *Pygmalion* we note:

The Exposition starts when Pickering bumps into Eliza, who is trying to sell her flowers, and the following scene presenting Higgins, Eliza and their beginning situation.

The Inciting Moment is when Eliza decides to go to Higgins for lessons.

Rising Action starts when Higgins begins his education of Eliza.

Climax is when Eliza proves to Mrs. Higgins that her English is perfect.

The Reversal starts when Eliza overhears Pickering and Higgins praising each other over her triumph without including her.

The Falling Action is an actual action of Eliza throwing Higgins slippers at him saying “*I sold flowers. I didn’t sell myself*”

The Moment of final Suspense is the long conversation between Higgins, Pickering and Eliza where they beg her to stay.

The Catastrophe is when she turns down his offer and leaves to go and marry Freddie.

Using the Freytag model on *My Fair Lady* reveals:

The Exposition starts when Pickering bumps into Eliza, who is trying to sell her flowers, and the following scene presenting Higgins, Eliza and their beginning situation. With the song “Why can’t the English?” – this is the first time Eliza sees the opportunity for climbing the social ladder.

The Inciting Moment is when Eliza decides to go to Higgins for lessons, and the song “Wouldn’t it be lovely?”

The Rising Action starts when Higgins begins his education of Eliza with the song “I’m just an ordinary man” and her response “Just you wait”. Both songs reflect the inner life of the characters – her anger and his relationship to women.

The Climax is when Eliza speaks perfectly with the “The rain in Spain” and “I could have danced all night.”

The Reversal starts when Eliza overhears Pickering and Higgins praising each other over her triumph without including her “You did it.”

The Falling Action is an actual action of Eliza throwing Higgins slippers with the “Just you wait” reprise.

The Moment of final Suspense is when Eliza leaves Higgins with his mother ‘Without you’.

The Catastrophe is a happy ending when Higgins realizes that “I’ve grown accustomed to her face,” and she returns to the sound of “Music for curtain calls.”

Unlike the original play, the climax in the musical is stretched out over an extended period with an almost false climax the first time Eliza speaks perfectly. The false climax is penetrated at the horserace and re-established at the ambassadors’ ball. This is one of the main differences between the play and the musical on a textual level. In *Pygmalion*, it is Mrs. Higgins questioning of Eliza’s future – in other words the social and moral questions, where in the musical the focus is on the emotional development of the characters. Higgins is the other central character; in both versions he is part of the rising and falling action, he has the last word and the last song. But Eliza gets to close musically in *My Fair Lady* since auditively at the end, in the “Music for curtain calls,” the audience is presented with “I could have danced all night.”

Another major difference between the two versions is the development of the supporting characters. Mrs. Pearce, Freddy, and his sisters – have all been reduced to caricatures in the

musical version. Even in his one song, Freddy is portrayed as a simpleton. It is in C major, tonally very simple with soft strings to underline it. Compared to any of Eliza or Higgins's songs Freddy is toothless. Despite Shaw's protests, the "romantic" ending is ingrained in the play itself – both in the myth of Pygmalion, and the fact that Shaw subtitled his text "A ROMANCE." And indeed, in many ways *My Fair Lady* actually emphasizes the class theme more than Shaw's play. It allots more space to the dustman, Alfred Doolittle, giving him no fewer than two songs and a reprise, as well as setting scenes in the working-class environs of Covent Garden. By contrast, Shaw's play merely opens on the steps of the Covent Garden church – and then plays out entirely in the middle-class surroundings of standard drawing room comedy. In addition, not only the ball scene, but in particular the Ascot scene of *My Fair Lady* (with Cecil Beaton's iconic black-and-white costumes) representing the high aristocracy, emphasizes the extreme gap between the poverty-stricken, ragged and grimy-faced proletariat and the elegant, plutocratic, idle rich.

Moreover, on one level even the ending of *My Fair Lady* corresponds with Shaw's views. Eliza's final song "Without You" is the one situation where Eliza is in total control musically. Indeed, even the title is based directly on Eliza's words in Shaw's play: "Yes, you turn round and make up to me now that I'm not afraid of you, and can do without you." Audiences always read the ending of *My Fair Lady* as a love union between Eliza and Higgins. However, being in control musically actually signals that Eliza has won complete independence. Lerner and Lowe were in fact closer to Shaw's original play than is generally imagined. Higgins may be singing the sentimental "I've grown accustomed to her face." But just after singing "Without You," Eliza announces "Goodbye Professor Higgins, I won't be seeing you again" – again the direct words from the play. In the very last scene of *My Fair Lady*, when she reappears, she ironically quotes

herself from a much earlier scene, “I washed my hands before I came, I did,” and her attitude is completely ambiguous. As Lerner admitted in the 1960 *Alpha RHO* journal,

It was impossible for them to admit to themselves that they felt anything emotional about each other...Higgins ... wanted Eliza, but he wanted her to behave as a friend because he didn't understand the emotional pressure of an intimate relationship.²⁶⁸

4.2.4 Shaw's Musical Knowledge Revealed in *Pygmalion*

Shaw's deep musical background is clearly revealed in this play. An example is Professor Higgins' methods of speech training in *Pygmalion* (1912), which directly repeat Shaw's notes for “The Voice,” with the equipment of Henry Higgins' laboratory exactly paralleling Vandeleur Lee's studio. One prominent feature in both is a grand piano—but what connects Higgins explicitly with Lee's book is two very specific objects described in Shaw's stage directions: “a laryngoscope” and “a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs,” which Lee had published as illustrations. Looking without preconceptions at *Pygmalion*, this comes as a real surprise. This is a play that centers on the vocal training of a young, working class flower-girl to change her cockney diphthong-vowels and elided consonants into the nose-in-the air linguistic precision of a high-born aristocrat. Yet in the original text, there is not one mention of how Higgins achieves this radical voice makeover. The 1913 script of *Pygmalion* avoids any scene or even description of the way Higgins trains Eliza's voice and speech-habits, but the omission is not because Shaw lacks such knowledge: the missing link is in his career as a music critic, connecting this with his career as a dramatist. There is clear evidence of the kind of instructional methods Shaw would have had in mind in several articles dealing with vocal

²⁶⁸ Alan Jay Lerner, “Creation of a Lady” in *Alpha RHO Journal*, 1, no. 2 (Fall 1960), 9, 12.

training; and these show a basic—but generally ignored—link between Shaw’s early career as a music critic, and his drama.

How does Eliza get from the flower-girl in the dirt at the opening in Shaw’s original play to the picture of elegance? It is supposedly only to her change in speaking; but Shaw’s play does not depict how that happens at all. In sharp contrast, the musical focuses extensively on the actual process of teaching Eliza to speak “proper” English. After the success of Pascal’s film, which did include an educational scene, Shaw actually inserted a brief glimpse of the lessons into his 1941 revised text, remarking “There seems to be some curiosity as to what Higgins’ lessons to Eliza were like. Well, here is a sample...” and a brief dialogue portrays Eliza being taught to say the alphabet, breaking into tears and “rushing from the room.”

My Fair Lady shows teacher and pupil working together – the tensions, the late-night sessions (together with commentary from a chorus of servants who stress the unlikeliness of success and express sympathy for “Poor Professor Higgins / Night and day / He slaves away”) – and this both develops and exposes the relationship building between the pair. In a very real sense, leaving out this intense teaching, learning and bonding from his play is the only way Shaw can justify representing Eliza and Higgins as having no relationship deep enough for her to choose him over Freddy. So in a very real sense *My Fair Lady* restores reality. Eliza goes from a crude approximation of the cockney accent – “The rine in Spine” or “In ‘ertford, ‘ereford and ‘ampshire, ‘urricanes ‘ardly hever ‘appen” – to the ecstatic mastery of upper-class vowels and consonants, emphasized by music. At the same time, the emotional connection between Higgins and Eliza grows more intense, climaxing of course in Eliza’s “I could have danced all night”. The music plays into this developing relationship, injecting exotic, foreign and feminist elements. “The Rain in Spain” is characterized by a tempo noted in the original score of *My Fair*

Lady as *Tempo di Habanera*, which is portrayed through the full orchestration. The vocal rhythm is an exact “Habanera” pattern as follows – dotted quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. The word “Habanera” is a Spanish variant of Havana, the rhythm is thus named after its assumed origins, Cuba and/or Latin America. With Bizet’s opera being written in 1875, the pattern was well heard by the time of *My Fair Lady*. The beginning of the piece uses the same Habanera and tango rhythmic figure from Bizet’s *Carmen*, giving the audience a reference to Carmen’s female dominance; but it doesn’t have the change between D-minor and D-major as in *Carmen*, which gives it a slightly more stable character. The exotic Spanish element is marked by castanets, a tambourine and xylophones, indicating that the learning situation has something both sexually exciting and un-English about it. This song represents the musical climax in *My Fair Lady* and is used to characterize Eliza, Higgins and their relationship. Connecting the xylophone to Higgins’ temper and together with a high tempo, as in “You did it,” reveals that he possesses a hectic temperament that is out of control, despite his superficial clam British surface. In the original Greek myth of *Pygmalion*, the sculptor and his creation do indeed fall passionately in love – and the lyrics of Higgins’ final song (particularly with their musical references) show a very deep identification with Eliza: “She almost makes the day begin. / I’ve grown accustomed to the tune / She whistles night and noon” – while the tears in Eliza’s eyes as the curtain falls suggest deep emotional attachment. The finale is an orchestral reprise of Eliza’s ecstatic moment in “I could have danced all night!” but played *fortissimo* and *molto maestoso*. The suggestion could hardly be clearer. Music scholars have pointed out that *My Fair Lady* marked a significant new phase in the Broadway Musical – where dramatic content dictated musical form; more dialogue was introduced (together with a non-singing actor, Rex Harrison); source texts were taken more seriously; and social and political themes became common. While musical adaptations have

helped to give Shaw his continuing high profile, Shaw could also be said to have effectively helped the development of the modern musical theatre.

When he published his revised version of the play in 1941, Shaw included most of the scenes added in the film – but he changed the final lines. Higgins' mother suggests that Higgins marrying Eliza would be socially inappropriate, but she is not too worried because Eliza seems so fond of Colonel Pickering; and Higgins replies: "Pickering! Nonsense: she's going to marry Freddy." *Pygmalion* focuses on the dominant social issue of class distinctions, and the exploitive and arbitrary division between rich and poor. This was why the socialist Shaw wrote an ending, which had Eliza walking out on Higgins: as a member of the wealthy class, he is not worthy of her proletarian integrity. In one draft of his film script (not followed by Pascal) Shaw introduced a scene where Eliza and Freddy kiss before leaving for Doolittle's wedding, while Higgins shakes his fist. Shaw's original play *Pygmalion*, of course, is still in the repertoire, while not nearly as present in popular culture as *My Fair Lady*.

4.2.5 Adaptations of *Pygmalion*

The immense popularity of *My Fair Lady* is shown by the number of films and TV shows based on it in the decades following the 1956 opening on Broadway. One example of this is seen in an indie film parody of the musical titled *My Fair Zombie*, 2013. A horror comedy, the story focuses on a professor of phonetics (Lawrence Evenchick) who attempts to teach a zombie woman (Sacha Gabriel) to be a proper and living English lady. The Zombie march, of course, is the new anti-Capitalist popular movement, which expresses itself through a form of street theatre, and it was in fact, part of the Occupy Wall Street movement. So, it's quite Shavian in its politics (even if Shaw wouldn't recognize the facial makeup). Looking elsewhere at this Shavian

influence, there is another musical adaptation including references to Shaw and *My Fair Lady* namely Sondheim's 1974 production of *The Frogs*. *The Frogs* stars Shaw himself. *My Fair Lady* is by now so well known that in *The Frogs* Sondheim actually mis-uses musical quotes, such as "By George, he's got it! I think you got it!" parodying the refrain from the song *The Rain in Spain*, where Eliza finally learns how to pronounce words correctly. Dionysus later reprises "I knew that I could do it," a direct quote from the song "You did it," where Henry Higgins exults "I knew that I could do it" after Eliza's success at the ball. Sondheim's irreverent version of *The Frogs* introduces Shaw as a character in Hades. Dionysus, dismayed at the awful state of the world, determines to bring Shaw back from the dead since: "If Shaw were to write again he could show us the truth about ourselves and how we live" – "And also challenge our complacencies." Dionysus declaims only to find that his slave Xanthias (representative of the common man) has absolutely no idea who Shaw is:

DIONYSUS:

Shaw. Bernard Shaw ... Dramatist, literary and music critic, socialist spokesman, showman, controversialist and a leading figure in the 20th Century theatre.

To which XANTHIUS replies:

The one who wrote the plays?

DIONYSUS:

Yes, ... and what glorious plays!

XANTHIUS:

I can't think of any at the moment ...

Wait a minute – is this the guy who wrote "My Fair Lady?" ²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Sondheim, S., *The Frogs*, libretto of the Lincoln Centre production, July 2004 (New York: PS Classics, 2005) Number 4.

When Shaw is found in Hades, Dionysus introduces him by singing music from *My Fair Lady* – taking the role of Higgins with a parodic version of “I knew that I could do it” – as the only thing ordinary people these days are going to associate with Shaw. Hades is a place, very much modeled on the Hell-scene from *Man and Superman*, where (as Pluto enthuses):

Down here, one long acid trip. / R.I.P. down here means ‘Let ‘er rip!’ Up there, that’s just life. / Down here, this is living. / An endless party that no one’s giving, / But everyone’s invited.²⁷⁰

Like his own Don Juan in similar circumstances, Shaw can’t wait to escape back “up” to Earth, and as a demonstration of his potential usefulness Shaw gets his followers to teach Dionysus how to “dance the Shaw” –

First you think. / Then you comment ... / Then you think ... / Then you make a quip ... / That’s how you dance ‘The Shaw’.” And the following verse links words specifically to dance and music: “Thoughts can dance, / Syllables can samba ... / Epigrams can leap and bound / Simply from the way they sound.”²⁷¹

The Frogs even ends with Shaw’s play in a duel of *Shakes versus Shaw*.

Another parodic example is a 2006 episode of the hugely popular TV show, *The Simpsons*. The plot is directly based on *My Fair Lady*, and the episode is tellingly titled, *My Fair Laddy*²⁷² – and features parodies of all the main songs from the musical. For instance “All I want is....Wouldn’t it be lovely,” in the Simpsons version becomes “All I want is...wouldn’t it be adequate.” Willie the handy man is the ‘Eliza’ of the story, who is being groomed by Lisa, who functions as Higgins in poise, pronunciation and posture, as well introducing Willie to the “Guide to Etiquette” and guidance in how to be a proper gentleman. Another favorite song quote is from “The Rain in Spain,” which becomes “What flows from the nose does not get on my clothes,” to which Lisa, of course, replies “I think he’s got it,” underscored by Habanera

²⁷⁰ Sondheim, S., *The Frogs*, Number 12.

²⁷¹ Ibid., Number 14

²⁷² *The Simpsons*, Season 17, episode 12.

rhythms. The tune is slightly changed but not beyond immediate recognition – it simply sounds like Willie is slightly off. Lisa’s father Homer gets his own song. The song of Alfred Doolittle – “I’m getting married in the morning, ding dong the bells are gonna chime” now becomes “I’m getting blue pants in the morning, ding dong the bells are gonna chime.” The fun continues with the science fair, which is set up as the ball scene in *My Fair Lady* and underscored with Viennese waltz music. Willie charms everyone and even cracks a joke about the local Shakespeare Company, claiming that their latest season was “Much ado about Nothing.” Willie’s big show tune is then “I could be indoors all night” obviously a pun on “I could have danced all night.” Lisa reveals that Willie is indeed the groundskeeper and not originally a gentleman, and in doing so she achieves her goal; she wins the Science Fair but just like Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, she has no clue what she is going to do with Willie after her success. Willie then is without a job, because he has become too sophisticated for Springfield. He dreams about his past in song turning “On the Street Where You Live” into “Longing for the shack where I lived.” Finally, Lisa helps Willie back to his old world, old job and his old shack, and Willie sings and dances to “I’m in Heaven,” drawing on Irving Berlin’s “Cheek to Cheek” from the 1935 Fred Astaire film *Top Hat*. The end credits are again to the tune “All I want is...wouldn’t it be adequate,” framing the entire show around *My Fair Lady*. The adaptation of *Pygmalion* into *My Fair Lady* has gained the piece a significant place within modern popular culture and made references to Shaw possible on a mainstream level. While a person like Sondheim may still have chosen to include Shaw in his musical, it is highly unlikely that an episodic show like *The Simpsons* would have been based on Shaw’s *Pygmalion* alone. As a matter of fact, the only “pure” Shaw reference I have been able to locate is in the *Simpsons*’ episode *Homerazzi*,²⁷³ where we see Lisa reading a

²⁷³ *The Simpsons*, Season 18, episode 16.

copy of *Man and Superman* by G. B. Shaw. There is actually an episode on *The Simpsons* titled *Pygmoelian*,²⁷⁴ but it is based very loosely on the original Greek myth and the main reference is to the awakening of a beautiful 5000 year old mummy (rather than a statue) and there is absolute no reference at all to Shaw in this episode. As with *The Chocolate Soldier* it is the evolution of the original – the adaptation – that survives in popular culture, and therefore the *My Fair Lady* adaptation of *My Fair Lady* helps transmit the play *Pygmalion* to a modern audience.

4.2.6 *Man and Superman*

Man and Superman has quite a few musical comments in Act I and II, but nothing compared to Act III. The first two acts set the scene for what is coming by mentioning Don Juan three times – twice in the Exposition and once during the Rising Action. Several composers are mentioned; Grieg, Brahms and Mozart, and two Christmas songs are quoted (*I saw three ships* and *Unto us a child is born*). It is, however, the repeated whistling of the chauffeur (Henry Stalker) that punctuates the action leading up to the Climax and the “Dream Scene”. In the “Dream Scene” (Act III) Shaw literally shows off his musical knowledge by setting the scene quoting three pieces of music from *Don Giovanni*, deliberately echoing his mother’s favorite opera role from Dublin. Shaw wrote in a letter to Mille Thompson:

I don’t know whether you are a musician. If not, you don’t know Mozart: and if you don’t know Mozart you will never understand my technique.²⁷⁵

Shaw was obsessed with Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and Charles Loyd Holt points out in his article Mozart, Shaw and *Man and Superman* that there are great similarities between the two in

²⁷⁴ *The Simpsons*, Season 11, episode 16.

²⁷⁵ Shaw, G. B., *To A Young Actress: The Letters of Bernard Shaw to Molly Tompkins*, Peter Tompkins (Ed.). London: Constable, 1960, 11.

structure.²⁷⁶ Both are divided into four acts, but Holt points out that Shaw reverses the roles, so it is Ann who gets Tanner, and Don Giovanni goes to Heaven rather than Hell. As far as the characters go the parallels are pretty clear: Ramsden is the Commendatore, Mendoza is the Devil, Tanner is Don Giovanni, Ann is Donna Anna, Octavius is Ottavio, Violet is Elvira, Enry Straker is Leporello/Masetto, and Louisa is the representative of Zerlina.

Like Don Giovanni, Ann is pursuing her prey from the very beginning and Tanner points out that Ann won't be happy only "triumphant, successful, [and] victorious". The major difference between the character of Don Giovanni and that of Ann is, that while Don Giovanni moved on to his next victim as soon as he has successfully seduced the woman, Ann is going to marry Tanner and presumably keep him on for life. She is not afraid of the emotional connection. Another major difference between *Don Giovanni* and *Man and Superman* is that although Ann turns down Octavius, he does not initially seek revenge like Donna Elvira; he moves straight on to the notion of supporting and saving her. As he says:

It's quite simple. I love you; and I want you to be happy. You don't love me; so I can't make you happy myself; but I can help another man to do it.

This is the conclusion Donna Elvira reaches at the end of Mozart's opera – that she needs to try to save Don Giovanni, but she fails.

In the "Dream Scene," the music immediately identifies Tanner as Don Giovanni. It does so using the characteristic theme in the violins from the Overture to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* where it changes in bar 31-38 from Andante to Molto Allegro. This is followed by what resembles a piece of different music, but it is actually a continuation, with the repetition of the theme in bar 40-43 but with the added flute, horn and bassoon where Shaw has removed the

²⁷⁶ Holt, C. L., "Mozart, Shaw and "Man and Superman"." *The Shaw Review* 9, no. 3 (1966): 102-16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40682110>. The structural overview is on page 106.

violin theme part. This gives some resemblance to Mozart, but only people with in-depth knowledge will get this last subtle hint. Having set the scene with the overture, Shaw then continues to use Mozart as an indicator. A short four bars of music introduce The Old Woman. These are the first four bars of Donna Anna's final aria *Non mi dir*. So when part of the Don Giovanni story gets repeated (that Don Juan killed a woman's father in a duel) it is clear that The Old Woman is Donna Anna from *Don Giovanni*. The audience is now prepared for the Statue's entry, which occurs to the opening four bars of the overture, D minor chords followed by A major – the theme of Il Commendatore. The scene turns into a "quartet" when the Devil joins them. A mixture of the Commendatore theme and the Mephistopheles themed entry music from Gounod's *Faust* ("Le veau d'or est toujours debout") accompanies him. This is an interesting choice since Shaw according to Michel Pharand disliked Gounod's *Faust* intensely.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, the quartet from the "Dream Scene" is not set in Shaw's preferred SATB form. Ann is no soprano since her voice is described as "low siren tones" and "dry unloving voice," which would make her an alto. The Statue says about his own voice "Unluckily he [Mozart] has written it for a bass voice. Mine is a counter tenor" – so he is a counter tenor. The Devil is a baritone, so the only unknown is Don Juan. The Devil even sings "in a nasal operatic baritone, tremulous from an eternity of misuse in the French manner,"²⁷⁸ joined by The Statue. Together they sing the following lines from *Don Giovanni*, Act II, sc. Xviii.

Vivan le femmine!
 Viva il buon vino!
 Sostegno e Gloria
 D'umanita.

²⁷⁷ Pharand, M., *Bernard Shaw and the French*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 35.

²⁷⁸ Shaw, G.B., *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*, 372.

All these Mozart quotes are found within just over five pages (367-373),²⁷⁹ with the first three of them being at the absolute center of the play. The rest of Act III has many mentions of music, composers, instruments and the last reference is when Stalker whistles on page 390. Wagner and Mozart are not surprisingly the two composers who gets the most attention but, unlike any other Shaw play, *Man and Superman* is truly rooted in another work: Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Shaw's adaptation of *Don Giovanni* is another example of how an adaptation can retell the original work. Curiously, Shaw is almost "doing a musical" in the sense that he is creating something that he claims to be against – a populist happy ending – echoing the changes others have made to his *Pygmalion* and *Arms and the Man*.

4.3 Summation

Shaw's musical family background clearly influenced his critical writings, as well as his later work as a playwright. Being a musician and singer himself gave him a particular understanding of the voice as an instrument. In his updating of *The Voice, its Artistic Production, Development and Preservation* Shaw also became extremely familiar with the scientific instrument the "Laryngoscope". In addition, he gained extensive knowledge of pronunciation, which would later create the link between Shaw's early career as a music critic, and his dramas. This explains why his opera and vocal reviews took up the main part of Shaw's focus especially in his earlier years. He added academic writing as well as travel descriptions, politics, music history and theory in his later years. The basis for his approach to music was his deep vocal knowledge. He therefore focused significantly more on opera and vocal music than any other contemporary music critic in England. This extensive musical knowledge underpins Shaw's

²⁷⁹ Shaw, G.B., *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*, 367-373.

plays as in the “Dream Scene” of *Man and Superman*, and the setup of Higgins studio and teaching methods in *Pygmalion*.

His early plays, those written in the 1890s and particularly collected under the title “Plays Unpleasant” – attacked the aristocracy even suggesting they paid for their elevated position through prostitution. He abhorred those men who amassed wealth from exploiting the common people, while he supported both feminism and the poor. So, while having quite esoteric aesthetic principles of his own, which informed and shaped his music criticism, it is certainly arguable that Shaw was intending to educate the ordinary citizens, enabling them into appreciating and even adopting high art as their own. His complete rejection of all operetta or musical versions of his plays can be seen as directly supporting this. Ironically, by writing so much about opera, Shaw may have actually facilitated and accelerated changing opera into high art for a social elite, even if this was the completely unintended result of his music criticism.

Chapter 5

Rock 'n' Roll

5.1 Overview

Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll* offers a signal instance of the use of music in standard drama. While Stoppard has previously written one play to be performed with a symphony orchestra, the script was completely separate from the performance of the music. In his other plays Stoppard tends to use visual art as his primary reference (*After Magritte*, or *Nude Descending a Staircase*, for instance). By contrast, the music in *Rock N' Roll* is not only signalled by the title, but also played between the scenes, sung or performed inside the scenes, and spoken about or commented on by the characters in the play. It also serves a subtextual function.

In this chapter I will be referring solely to the book version of *Rock 'n' Roll* produced by The Royal Court Theatre as a programme for the first production and published by Faber & Faber (2006). I am aware that later productions differ from this material in their use of music, but I have chosen to focus on the original production, as being closest to Stoppard's own conception. When referring to politics throughout this chapter it is in a narrow colloquial sense, more specifically in what Pierre Bourdieu would have called the political field. It comprises a limited set of elite institutions: the government, the semi-private, private, non-for-profit and public interest sectors.

My aim is to explore the role music plays structurally (in terms of the dramatic and sound structure) in Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, how it works as a musical subtext and in particular how the Czech band "The Plastic People of the Universe" are portrayed in this play, focusing on their

thematic function and their symbolic significance. I will also look at how the various bands highlighted in the play work within the rock 'n' roll genre.

5.1.2 Introduction to the Play

Stoppard's 2006 *Rock 'n' Roll* was hailed as “astonishing,” “remarkable” and “fascinating” (all adjectives from *The Guardian* review).²⁸⁰ It spans a great length of time from the 1968 ‘Prague Spring’ to the year after the ‘Velvet Revolution’ in 1990. It opens with a mythical figure: “*The Piper ... high up on a garden wall, his wild dark hair catching some light, as though giving off some light,*” and singing “Golden Hair” to a teenage girl, Esme, lying in a garden below. The piper is a “Pan” figure, later described as “a beautiful boy as old as music, half-goat and half-god.”²⁸¹ It is set in 1968 in Cambridge, England.

The central figure of the play is Jan, a Czech Jewish university student, who (like Stoppard) had to leave Czechoslovakia before the German occupation in World War II and ended up in England with his mother. In 1948 Jan and his family goes back to Czechoslovakia and then later he is sent to Cambridge to study and to inform the Secret Service of Czechoslovakia about the activities of the communists there, focusing especially on the leading communist professor, Max Morrow. However, in 1968 when, in reaction to the ‘Prague Spring’, the Warsaw Pact armies invade Czechoslovakia, he feels he needs to return to save his mother and socialism. In an interview, Stoppard said: “Jan is a sort of shadow life of my own life. If I had gone back in 1948 and stayed, what would my life have been?”²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Michael Billington, 15 June 2006: <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/reviews/story/0,,1797969,00.html>

²⁸¹ Stoppard, T.: *Rock 'n' Roll*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2006), 69.

²⁸² Interview with Neal Ascherson, from *The Observer*, June 4, 2006.

Tom Stoppard was born in Czechoslovakia as Tomas Straussler, but despite being a non-observant Jew, he had to flee the Nazi invasion. His father died in 1942 when he was four years old. He spent three years in an Indian boarding school before his mother married an English officer, Kenneth Stoppard in 1945. The family moved to England in 1946, which is where Tom Stoppard grew up. He first worked as a journalist, then a drama critic and finally from 1960 onwards as a playwright. He has also co-written many screenplays, which explains the almost cinematic writing in *Rock N' Roll*.

Rock N' Roll starts off in 1968, with the “Prague Spring” and the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and ends with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1990 and the landmark concert by the Rolling Stones. The play is framed by music from Steve Barrett’s “Golden Hair” to the Rolling Stones live album ‘No Security’, with music interjected between each scene. The movement of the play is towards liberation from ideology, in which Rock music is the spirit of freedom.

5.1.3 Political Ideas

The play is filled with political ideas. Most of these are introduced in one of the main locations of the play, the home of the Cambridge Professor Max Morrow, who still believes in the October Revolution to the very end. Morrow has intense political and philosophical arguments with everyone, including his wife Eleanor (who is dying from cancer), his daughter Esme, his granddaughter Alice and her boyfriend Stephen. Some of the philosophical ideas presented in the play come from the poems of Sappho and theories on the function of the brain. Eleanor’s student Lenka, also from Czechoslovakia and initially the lover of Jan, at the end becomes Max’s new partner.

5.1.4 Historical References

In addition to Stoppard's own persona in the figure of Jan, much of the play is based on historical figures. For example, Max was loosely based on Eric Hobsbawm, a Marxist historian who taught at Cambridge from 1948 to 1955 and became Professor at Birbeck College. He also wrote a regular column as a jazz critic for the *New Statesman* under the pseudonym of Francis Newton, which he took from the name of Billie Holiday's communist trumpet player, Frankie Newton. Hobsbawm may have approved of the Prague Spring like the Max character but, he published a highly ambiguous letter of protest in *The Daily Worker*:

While approving, with a heavy heart, of what is now happening in Hungary, we should therefore also say frankly that we think the USSR should withdraw its troops from the country as soon as this is possible.²⁸³

Hobsbawm chose to remain President of The Socialist History Society, while most of his colleagues resigned from the Communist party because of the events of 1956. Even after the fall of Communism in 1991, he asserted that "The dream of the October Revolution is still there somewhere inside me."²⁸⁴

Other prominent political figures of the time like Dubcek, are referred to, or Vaclav Havel (whom Stoppard knew personally) even makes a cameo appearance. The Plastic People of the Universe was a group completely unknown in England at the time Stoppard's play premiered, and therefore seeming at first as fantastical as their name. But they turned out to be not only a historical force but also a very present reality. They appeared in London in 2007, less than a year after the play opened and as a direct result of it, performing at Queen Elizabeth Hall specifically "for Stoppard's Rock N' Roll."²⁸⁵

²⁸³ David Pryce-Jones (2003). "Eric Hobsbawm: lying to the credulous" in *The New Criterion*, 21, 5.

²⁸⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: a twentieth-Century life*, (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 56.

²⁸⁵ <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/find/music/gigs-contemporary/tickets/the-plastic-people-of-the-universe-50478> 2010 (accessed 12 June 2013).

5.1.5 Syd Barrett or the God Pan?

The mythic, goat-like Pan figure of the opening, turns out to be a real person too: Syd Barrett, a co-founder and at one time front man for Pink Floyd. The connection between the God Pan and Syd Barrett is found in the title of the Pink Floyd album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (1967). There are two different versions of the Greek God Pan. The classic Greek understanding of Pan: son of Hermes or Zeus, and god of shepherds, the wild outdoors, lust, masturbation, and rustic music. He is also connected to fertility and the season of spring. There is also the “darker” Pan, the one who chases nymphs, to the point where they turn themselves into nature objects like reeds, or trees, to escape him. He also causes armies to fall on their own swords just for entering his domain and he causes panic. Like the faun or satyr, he has the hindquarters, legs and horns of a goat.

The gentler version of Pan can be traced back to Romantic Poetry in the writings of Keats, Shelley, Hunt, and Wordsworth, where Pan was transformed from a minor wild god of the shepherds into the protector of the eternal English Countryside – the embodiment of nature. It is as such he is seen in Stoppard’s *Rock ‘n’ Roll*. It is the powerful, sexual yet vulnerable Pan that is doubled in Syd Barrett. His tunes are the very song of Nature. The music is ‘sensual’ in the way Kierkegaard would describe as not spiritually (in a Christian sense) motivated and therefore demonic. The Piper/Syd Barrett therefore becomes our Don Juan character.

As a side note, the album title *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* is the name of a chapter from the children’s book *The Wind in the Willows*.²⁸⁶ The characters Rat and Mole are searching for Otters’ lost children. They are taken into a strange, mystical reverie, seeing a vision of the great god Pan as a muscular, horned “Friend and Helper,” before whom the animals, "crouching

²⁸⁶ As with this representation of female musicians in *Rock ‘n’ Roll* there are very few female characters in *The Wind in the Willows*.

to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship." The vision displays an element of homoeroticism, but Rat and Mole are also receiving the gift of forgetfulness, so they won't remember the joy of their vision:

he looked in the very eyes of the Friend and Helper; saw the backward sweep of the curved horns, gleaming in the growing daylight; saw the stern, hooked nose between the kindly eyes that were looking down on them humorously, while the bearded mouth broke into a half-smile at the corners; saw the rippling muscles on the arm that lay across the broad chest, the long supple hand still holding the pan-pipes only just fallen away from the parted lips; saw the splendid curves of the shaggy limbs disposed in majestic ease on the sward; saw, last of all, nestling between his very hooves, sleeping soundly in entire peace and contentment, the little, round, podgy, childish form of the baby otter. All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered.²⁸⁷

5.1.6 The Plastic People of the Universe

As previously noted, the band The Plastic People of the Universe plays a significant role in *Rock 'n' Roll*. The August 1968 invasion of Prague by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact armies led to a "normalization process" and full censorship by March 1969. In response, an underground rock scene was created. Within a month after the 1968 invasion, The Plastic People of the Universe was founded. They performed covered songs by rock bands such as Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, The Fugs, Velvet Underground and Captain Beefheart. "Plastic People" is the first track on the second album *Absolutely Free* from 1967 produced by The Mothers of Invention and Frank Zappa. It is an album with musical references to among others Igor Stravinsky.²⁸⁸ Most of the early songs by The Plastic People of the Universe were in English. The band had their music performance license taken away in 1970 by the government, and by 1974 they were outlawed.

²⁸⁷ Grahame, K., *The Wind in the Willows*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908, 155.

²⁸⁸ *Amnesia Vivace* and *Status Back Baby*.

They were forced to perform at secret locations and the authorities often arrested their members. Ivan Jirous (poet and the band's manager) spent a total of 8 ½ year in jail.²⁸⁹ The arrest of the band in 1976 (and deportation of the former member Canadian Paul Wilson) triggered a massive protest and led playwright Vaclav Havel to write 'Charter 77'. 'Charter 77' was the human rights petition that fueled the Velvet Revolution of 1989, in which Vaclav Havel was swept to power. Havel, photographed at a 1978 concert of the Plastics, bridges these two worlds; and Stoppard, dedicating his play to Havel, chronicles this whole political process.

The first recording by The Plastic People of the Universe to be heard outside Czechoslovakia was in 1978 with *Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned* (the title a spoof on The Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*). In 1988 the central trio of the band and Ivan Jirous formed the band Polnoc (Midnight). The Plastic People of the Universe reunited for live recordings in 1992 and again from 1997. But the band did not have its first London, UK performance until January 2007 – directly related to Stoppard's play. The Plastic People of the Universe embodies the same principle as Barrett, but in a political context. Their challenge to social norms became a catalyst for liberation because they exist completely outside any system.

5.1.7 Foucault and Power

The situation of The Plastic People of the Universe, their political oppression and survival, is illuminated by the theories of Foucault. The understanding of power in Foucault's early writings was as dis-individualized power – a power that existed within the system (the machine) and was not controlled by the people operating in the system. In his later work,

²⁸⁹ He won the Tom Stoppard prize in 1985.

Foucault clarifies that power resides within people, also including those who are being punished and pursued by the society or the government. In “The Subject and Power” Foucault theorises that it is only when power is put into action that it exists, and power is in itself a set of actions in response to “the others” (i.e. subjects) actions and reactions. Stoppard is a highly intellectual playwright who has based several plays on philosophical theories (for example *Dogg’s Hamlet*, based on Wittgenstein); and even if *Rock N’ Roll* may not be based explicitly on Foucault’s ideas, it is logical that Stoppard knows his writings.

When the Rock and Roll genre gained popularity in the 1950s it was met with fear, especially from parents and religious groups in the USA. Critics linked the music “not just with ‘juvenile delinquency [and] moral decay’ but also with ‘Communist subversion’”²⁹⁰ and Mitch Miller called it “one step from fascism.”²⁹¹ It was seen as a rebellion against authority and it became “a medium of politics and a medium against politics.”²⁹² Eastern European rock and roll was political not just because it served as a genre of social protest, but because it symbolically encoded and expressed social identity and individualism. Power struggles between rock and roll groups and the Czechoslovakian government are generally represented in *Rock ‘n’ Roll*. The Czechoslovakian government’s oppression of musical groups, such as The Plastic People of the Universe, is a combination of sovereign and disciplinary power trying to repress the unwanted in combination with their general oppression. According to Wicke:

...rock music contributed to the erosion of totalitarian regimes throughout Eastern Europe long before the cracks in the system became apparent and resulted in unexpected demise.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Wierzbicki, J., *Music in the Age of Anxiety: American Music in the Fifties*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 47.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 48.

²⁹² Leitner, O., “Rock Music in the GDR: An Epitaph” in *Rocking the state: rock music and politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, S. Ramet (Ed.), (London: Westview Press, 1994), 34.

²⁹³ Wicke, P., “The Times They Are a-Changin’: Rock Music and Political Change in East Germany,” in *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, R. Garofalo (Ed.), (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 81

While the above statement is problematic in its unfounded conclusion, the notion that rock music worked as a rebellious force within the system is of importance. Another author supporting this claim is Tony Mitchell who said, that Rock and Roll was:

Probably the most widespread vehicle of youth rebellion, resistance and independence behind the Iron Curtain.²⁹⁴

Rock music was viewed as a potentially dangerous source of intellectual or artistic expression, an ideologically foreign product of rotting capitalism, an alien against familiar cultures and therefore a threat to the existing *status quo*. The Russian rock critic Artemy Troitsky writes about the spring of 1987 in the USSR:

The spring witnessed the biggest anti-rock backlash of the past couple of years. It was initiated by some Russophile writers, supported by certain officials in the Ministry of Culture and the central television networks, and featured active agitation by the so-called Memory group, a chauvinistic organization that carries on anti-semitic propaganda and decrees rock music as “satanic”. All this under the banner of Glasnost.²⁹⁵

The Plastic People of the Universe’s continuation of music making, despite the government’s attempt to ban them, is in itself a display of a Foucaultian power reaction, where they eventually become empowered.

5.1.8 Locations

Apart from Cambridge in England, the other main location in *Rock ‘n’ Roll* is Jan’s apartment in Prague, full of all the vinyl records of rock ‘n’ roll music he has brought back from

²⁹⁴ Mitchell, T., “mixing pop and politics: rock music in Czechoslovakia before and after the Velvet Revolution” in *Popular Music*, Vol. 11/2, (1992), 187.

²⁹⁵ Troitsky, A., *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia*, (Boston: Faber & Faber, 1987), 131.

the west. This leads to his connection to the band The Plastic People of the Universe; and that connection brings him into the spotlight of the authorities. Together with his friend Jirous from Plastic People of the Universe and his political companion Ferdinand, a great friend of Vaclav Havel,²⁹⁶ they fight constantly to keep out of jail while still objecting in their own way to the system. Jan's record collection is smashed by the authorities, as a symbol of art being censored when it tries to challenge oppression and work for freedom of expression. They do not, however, manage to completely destroy everything – the Beach Boys music survives, thanks to Ferdinand, who has also copied most of the music onto tapes. So, the fight has not been completely lost; it has just had to change shape – from LP to cassette. Not everything is black and white at the end. In Prague they have regained their freedom of speech, and political liberty, throwing out the Communists and surging eagerly to the future. But contemporary England, as Lenka puts it, “has lost its nerve (...) It's democracy of obedience (...) they apologize for history, (...) good manners, (...and) difference.”²⁹⁷ Esme the flower child therefore goes with Jan to Prague and the play ends with an image of them at a Rolling Stones concert.

5.2.1 Definition of the Musical Style of rock 'n' roll

It is a style of music that emerged in the 1950s, when young white kids started to listen to rhythm and blues on the radio. It is often described as a mixture of white country blues with black rhythm, where the 12-bar blues form, “boogie-woogie rhythms, (...) and vocal styles from both the blues and Tin Pan Alley popular song, hillbilly yelping and the ecstatic shouts of gospel”²⁹⁸ got combined. Typical musical characteristics include electric guitar solos, strong

²⁹⁶ Stoppard, T., *Rock 'n' Roll*, 47.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁹⁸ Oxford Music Online – rock and roll.

rhythmic drive, and slap-bass. Other instruments include: drum kit, piano, rhythm guitar, and occasionally saxophone. The term will at times be used to describe Western pop music from the second half of the 20th century in general. Despite the fact that the United States was still a defacto segregated country, post-war radio, records and television aided the breakdown of racial borders and fuelled cultural interaction, and according to Middleton, Elvis succeeded mainly because his images and music managed to “link together elements connoting youth rebellion, working-class ‘earthiness’ and ethnic ‘roots.’”²⁹⁹

Rock ‘n’ roll’s potential influence to validate unconventional standards and customs scared the Establishment. With white teenagers listening to rock ‘n’ roll, buying rock ‘n’ roll records and attending rock ‘n’ roll concerts, it threatened the status quo and removed the youth’s respect for authorities.³⁰⁰ This gave the system an excuse for repression of this new music by arguing its potential danger to long accepted ideas about race, class and sexuality. Middleton claims that the reception of rock ‘n’ roll in the mid 1950’s was “not only new but unnatural,”³⁰¹ in the sense that it had not been seen before, and that it signifies moments “involving elements of social crisis (...) when the strength of accepted articulation patterns declines.”³⁰²

5.2.2 Music in *Rock ‘n’ Roll*

As signalled by the title, music plays a dominant part in Stoppard’s *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, with no fewer than 21 different songs and five reprises performed by 14 different bands. There is also the

²⁹⁹ Middleton, R., *Studying Popular Music*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), 9.

³⁰⁰ As the post WW1 generation before them.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 9.

³⁰² Ibid., 9.

audio-cue appearance of a folk instrument – a hurdy-gurdy. It is hard to argue that with 26 musical inputs the music does not make up a significant part of this play. Apart from the massive amounts of music being played there are no fewer than 63 different musical references in the play, with several different groups and records mentioned more than once, giving the play no less than 111 music references in the dialogue. The most important of these are the 24 different bands already mentioned, followed by nine different song references, a number of generic musical terms and four album references with *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* mentioned twice. An interesting observation is that apart from one reference to Madonna and Vera Lynn, all other references to bands and the music played in *Rock 'n' Roll* are to white males,³⁰³ which reflects the male-dominated history of rock and roll. To this date, Aretha Franklin is the only female artist who has been inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* in Cleveland, and that happened thirty years ago. The small excerpt of the Vera Lynn song performed live is still sung by the character Jan, so a man lending his voice to a female artist.

It is open to debate, which band is the most prominent in the play. The answer depends on the perspective applied. The most frequently mentioned band is The Plastic People of the Universe, which is referred to 34 times in places where it takes dramatic focus, although we only hear them played twice and both times we hear them performing cover song (i.e. other bands' music).³⁰⁴ On the other hand, we hear five songs by Pink Floyd and two solo songs by Syd Barrett with two reprises giving a total of nine audio clues. Syd Barrett/The great god Pan is mentioned 19 times and Pink Floyd gets nine references in the dialogue, which adds up to a total of 28 references. Following that reasoning I would be inclined to conclude that, although The

³⁰³ As with bluegrass – see Rockwell, “*What is Bluegrass anyway?*”

³⁰⁴ “In popular music, a **cover** version or **cover song**, or simply **cover**, is a new performance or recording of a previously recorded, commercially released **song** by someone other than the original artist or composer” <https://musicfans.stackexchange.com/questions/33/what-is-the-difference-between-a-cover-and-a-remake-of-a-song>

Plastic People of the Universe plays a significant part in the play, the person/band that steals the focus is Syd Barrett/Pink Floyd. This argument is, of course, based on the assumption that the audience members are already aware of the connection between Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett, since this connection is only made clear when they are briefly mentioned once in the same sentence (on page 43). But since a number of the audience would likely not be aware of this connection, it would therefore only be a subtext.

However, The Plastic People of the Universe's two audio appearances are at the very beginning and the very end of the play, so they effectively frame the story. If compared to standard dramaturgy for musicals, this means they occupy some of the most crucial points in the story. Another notable point is that every time we hear The Plastic People of the Universe they appear in close proximity with The Rolling Stones. Musically, we begin the first act with Syd Barrett, and together with Pink Floyd, they are hugely auditive represented from page 35 to 44, which is where the dramatic conflict is being presented. We then get one Pink Floyd song near the end of Act 1, and Act 2 begins with the mentioning of the piper. Towards the end of Act 2 we hear Pink Floyd's *Vera* at a point where Stoppard could easily have ended the play, since the last three pages really have the character of an epilogue.

The fact remains that with 27 auditive cues there is a lot of music in the play, since the average number of songs in a classical musical is 12-14 and the nine longest running musicals on Broadway and in the West End having an average of 23.4 songs. There is a constant auditive interruption from the very beginning of the play until page 51 where there is an 11-page break, with no music being played until page 63. Even so, those 11 pages still have several references to music in the dialogue, most of them in relation to The Plastic People of the Universe. In Act 2 where we get fewer musical numbers, there is still only one major section without music being

played, and that is page 86 to page 103. This time round there are six references related to Syd Barrett as well as eight other musical references including one to The Plastic People of the Universe.

The Plastic People of the Universe are connected to the character Jan, whereas Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd are connected to the character Esme – visually, through the relationship indicated in the opening scene, which leads her to follow musicians and eventually to the ending in Prague. Therefore, the union of Jan and Esme at the end at the Rolling Stones concert can be seen as a new world where The Plastic People of the Universe can become what they always wanted to be – just a band playing music. I therefore conclude that, as musical subtext in the play, we have two main actors; The Plastic People of the Universe and Syd Barret/Pink Floyd, which again are doubled by “real” actors on stage.

5.2.3 Time and Music

The almost 30-year time-span of the play is underlined and expressed mainly through the music played. *Golden Hair* was not released until 1969, but the Pan God (Syd Barrett) could potentially have sung it to a girl in the summer 1968 – and the time frame is symbolically emphasized by the visual reference to the 1967 recording of *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*. In the play, Prague in February 1971 is supported auditively by the actual recording of *Golden Hair*. The change between spring 1974 and autumn 1975 (page 47 to 49) is marked with Rolling Stones’ *It’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll* from 1974. May 1976 is ended with Pink Floyd’s *Welcome to the Machine* from 1975 on page 63 and Cambridge in the summer of 1987 is illustrated with U2’s *I still haven’t found what I am looking for* (released in May 1987). Interestingly enough, Prague the same year is illustrated with Pink Floyd’s *Wish you were here* and John Lennon’s

Bring it on home – both from 1975 (John Lennon’s song is a cover version of Sam Cooke’s 1962 song).

Cambridge in the summer of 1990 is marked at the scene change with Guns N’ Roses’ *Don’t Cry*, which was not actually released until September 1991. To support childhood memories of England in the 1940’s, Vera Lynn’s *Till we meet again* from 1939 is sung, followed at the end of the scene with Pink Floyd’s *Vera* about Vera Lynn: this is the point where the two lovers, who have met again, are leaving for Prague. In the epilogue partly taking place in Prague 1990 at the Lennon Wall, the music played is The Beatles’ *Rock and Roll Music* (1964), followed by The Plastic People of the Universe’s *I’m waiting for the man* (1992), ending the play with the noise of the crowd and the first chords from The Rolling Stones’ live album *No Security* (1998).

There is nothing accidental about these musical time lapses. While Stoppard has mentioned nothing about this, it seems that the British scenes unify time with music, whereas the Prague scenes are widely variable, with the music only corresponding accurately to the time in the final scene, where what is reproduced is, of course, an actual concert. The time lapses in Prague help highlight the way the society was cut off from up-to-date Western musical influence due to the iron curtain. On the surface, even in the Cambridge scenes there may seem to be a few musical hiccups: one being “Golden Hair” sung a year early; another being “Don’t Cry” that first appeared on the studio album *Use Your Illusion I + II*, released in 1991, a year after the scene. However, seen from another angle, the music for Cambridge at the opening emphasizes the live performance of the music. Syd Barrett’s song is being presented as the first singing, to a live girl, before the recording. By comparison, the music for the 1976 scene actually comes from 1975 (which legitimately reflects what the characters could have been listening to, having bought the

record); and in 1987 the Cambridge characters are more “with it’ since the music is from exactly the same year. However, by 1990, the music is from 1991 – implying that the characters are now looking forward. Flashbacks to earlier periods, such as the childhood memory of 1939, embody the Max/Hobsbawn nostalgia for the Communist revolution, musically showing a time before the current time where the wall has disappeared and Communism has fallen. Musically, England moves relatively smoothly in time-progression, as well as symbolically reflecting and influencing the Cambridge characters.

By contrast, in the Prague scenes, the image is more static sonically. The use of 1975 music that relates back to 1962 for the 1987 Prague scene emphasizes how cut off the Czech society was from developments (political as well as musical) in the West. This is also underlined by the music we hear from the Plastic People of the Universe, which is all borrowed from Western rock n’ roll artists. By contrast, in the final concert scene the Rolling Stones are auditively depicted playing music they have yet to record, namely the *No Security* live album. That album was recorded on the *Bridges to Babylon* world tour between 1997 and 1998, and only released in 1998 eight years after the scene in the play. Even more strongly than in the contemporaneous Cambridge scene, this points to the realization that the future is now open; that the concert is a liberation as imaginative as it is political; that the Velvet Revolution is an immense stride on the road forward. Every scene change is emphasized by music, and there is a real progression in time. The music in the scenes taking place in England symbolically reflects and influences the Cambridge characters, until Vera Lynn’s *Till we meet again*. It is being used to support childhood memories of England in the 1940’s underlined by the next music cue: Pink Floyd’s *Vera* about Vera Lynn. However, another significant musical reference relating to Prague, which gives a bigger historical perspective on the fight to free the country from

Communist/foreign domination, is the reference to Antonin Dvorak. In the nineteenth century Dvorak had been the leader of a Czech nationalist movement in music, using folk dances as the basis for his Romantic compositions; and this inspired Ivan Jirous, one of the founders of The Plastic People of the Universe, to write a manifesto, titled *A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival* (1975).

The background story we get for the character Jan has a certain connection to the actual life of Tom Stoppard. Jan refuses to sign Ferdinand's petition and it is not until his claims to the essence of freedom that The Plastic People of the Universe are prosecuted and Jan himself arrested. Then, finally, he wakes up from his utopian illusion of socialism. His initial image of Jirous (and The Plastic People of the Universe) is that Jirous:

doesn't care enough even to cut his hair (...) the Plastic don't care at all. They're unbribable. They're coming from somewhere else, where the Muses come from. They're not heretics. They're pagans.³⁰⁵

Yet eventually even Ferdinand, who initially rejects The Plastic People of the Universe as having nothing to do with the real struggle, admits (after they have been imprisoned) that: "Plastic is the only band safe from the desire for recognition. In the alternative culture, success is failure."³⁰⁶ He finally sees that heretics and pagans must be allies to survive and make a difference. The Plastic People of the Universe is mainly integrated through the connection to the character Jan, and his travel from 1968 to 1990, which was a prolonged rough time for the band.

The Plastic People of the Universe embody the same principle as Syd Barrett since both are counter culture (in very different contexts). The general impression left after listening to Syd Barrett's psychedelic experimental pop/rock version of the James Joyce "Poem V" *Golden Hair*, is that it resembles a simple acoustic guitar with some sounds of metallic shimmers from a lone

³⁰⁵ Stoppard, T., *Rock 'n' Roll*, 48.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

cymbal, sporadically flowing through the song, as well as a drone underneath, probably from an organ, which gives it a touch of mystery. The vocal is broken up, but the text is very clear, and Syd stays longer on the vowels than rock singers do on average, although he does move quite quickly to the diphthong on words such as “Hair,” “air” and “closed.” The harmonies are fairly simple with the dominant V to tonic I movement on the guitar.

By 1968 (the beginning of the play) Barrett was kicked out of Pink Floyd, as he had become completely dysfunctional, and he remained mentally unstable for the rest of his life. He then became a down-and-out, moneyless, drug-obsessed counter-citizen: the ultimate drop-out but still with musical ability. In a comparable way, The Plastic People challenged their society and withdrew from its imposed moral standards. Both equally represent the musical attack on society – and indeed the withdrawal from the musical world to push reform from poverty and alienation (in England) to political imprisonment (in Czechoslovakia). Each exists in a political context where their challenge to social norms becomes a catalyst for liberation because they exist completely outside any system.

Those places mentioned in the scenes set in England that are connected to music – apart from Club F and the Lennon Wall (Prague) – are specifically located in Cambridge. Clearly designed to solidify a very specific environment, these references are expanded by Stoppard’s choice of music. The emphasis in the play on British bands is also a way of grounding the action in England, with the inclusion of the American bands towards the end. The Irish band U2 appears to set the scene in 1987, and the 1991 Guns n’ Roses piece in 1990 is most likely intended to suggest a broadening of consciousness in Britain as the end of Communism draws close. It is noticeable that the British bands are mainly identified by their lyrics, and the music generally emphasizes the vocals. So apart from “Astronomy Domine,” which counts as hard

rock, all the Pink Floyd music presented is ballad-like – following on from Syd Barrett’s ballads. The same applies to the music by the Rolling Stones, where the only hard rock piece is the introduction to the live album “No Security” – and from that, we only hear the opening bars. Almost all the songs played have at least one electric guitar present, with the exception being “Golden Hair.”

The Beatles, of course, are quintessentially English, and their style – electric guitar, bass, drums, piano, all supporting a loud, locked-jaw and nasal vocal line – is a very straightforward 4/4, with simple chord progression and a melody line that mainly moves stepwise. In many ways Stoppard uses this as a standard for the play. The 1957 Chuck Berry cover song *Rock and Roll Music* is probably the best known and most standard rock ‘n’ roll number in the play; and possibly most widely recognized by Stoppard’s London audience. It keys in to spectators’ musical memories, in a way designed to draw them into the action of the play. The same is true of Lennon’s “Bring it on Home.” Similarly, Pink Floyd, who have no fewer than four songs – indeed six if one includes the Syd Barrett material – who thus dominate the emotional context of the play, emphasizing both the youth culture of the time and a desire for change in their music. The Beatles, however, embody the musical evolution from “Beat” to “Psychedelic Rock” – and their popularity rivalled Elvis. Some considered Beatlemania to be a social crisis in the 1960s and 1970s, with young women in particular lapsing into hysteria in their masses.

Indeed, The Beatles were the first band to achieve the fandom and this sexual heroic public image: one that was inherited by The Rolling Stones and others. What is particularly striking is the ongoing reception of a contemporary concert-musical, *Let It Be*. Currently touring North America and Europe (2018), this replays chronologically almost the complete Beatles

oeuvre, currently attracting a younger audience;³⁰⁷ and the whole theatre not only stands and rhythmically waves their arms or claps, but also sings along on several of the earlier pieces. So The Beatles are clearly still very much a present hype; and it can be estimated that the same is true of The Rolling Stones and several of the bands referenced in *Rock 'n' Roll*. Stoppard is therefore also using the rock music he features as a way of drawing his audience emotionally into the play through nostalgia and continuing awareness of their music, as well as (in the case of older spectators) personal memories. These bands have become very much a central part of pop culture; and Stoppard is fully aware of this in his play.

The only other band represented with anything like the reach of Pink Floyd in the play, is The Rolling Stones, who have no fewer than four pieces (compared to just one from each of the American bands). The piece that becomes their theme song, *It's all over now*, is itself a cover of a 1964 Rhythm and Blues song by the Valentinos. The original version of this song got played to the Rolling Stones on a radio show during their first North American tour in 1964. Their cover version was first released as a single the same in the UK, where it hit number 1 on the UK Singles Chart. It has a blues/country feel though with an added rock sound with its generally low, booming guitar riffs. Apart from guitars, there are bass, percussion and drums, while the singing is rough with a snare in the sound. The song has a long fadeout at the end, typical of The Rolling Stones.

5.2.4 American Bands

By contrast, the American bands are more forceful and driving and use mechanical sounds (e.g. helicopters), with two exceptions. One is Dylan, represented by Stoppard in a love song with country-style music “I’ll be your baby tonight,” a melodic ballad with simple lyrics –

³⁰⁷ On the days I have attended more than 50% of the audience seemed to be under 30.

it almost feels like a sing-along. It features a harmonica, acoustic guitar, and pedal steel guitar, as well as soft shuffle drums. The vocal draws out the last notes and most of the time goes straight to the diphthongs. This could easily have become a parody, but Dylan manages to find a beautiful balance. The other exception is The Beach Boys song “Wouldn’t it be nice,” represented by a fairly simple sounding, upbeat, forward moving standard 4/4 refrain and verse, with a slower B-section. This song features one or more 12-stringed electric guitars as well as an electric mandolin, and bells, on the recording. The tuning of the mandolin in the introduction is dodgy at best, but the vocal is pushed with clear diction and lot of falsetto singing.

All the other American bands represented in the play would count as psychedelic rock. For instance, the song played by The Doors³⁰⁸ *Break on through*. It is in 4/4 time and quite fast-paced. The lead vocal may be ballad-like but has added screams and extensive use of the upper registers. The song contains lengthy keyboard and electric guitar solos in the center sections, and the drums uses a stiffened version of a bossa-nova beat as well as a knocking drum sound. The bass and organ have a Latino sound to them. Similarly, The Velvet Underground song *I am waiting for the man* has a tough garage rock sound to it, with lots of repetition, and dynamics that feels more like a hammering attack than anything else. It has a conventional guitar (with a rhythm and blues sound), bass and quite dominating, pounding drums as well as a wild, improvised, two-beat accenting piano. The Guns N’ Roses’ song *Don’t Cry* is a power/love ballad. The recording is very clear compared to most of the others recorded songs in the play – with a soothing verse that contrasts the refrain. With the ending, it sets a sad and fragile mood. It features an electric guitar solo as well as added sound from a helicopter and distorted vocal at the end.

³⁰⁸ *The Story of "Break on Through" by The Doors* interview with the band, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfQAaK1pFM4> [accessed May 2013].

5.3.1 Freytag Model Applied to *Rock 'n' Roll*

The first account of “live” music in *Rock 'n' Roll* is at the very beginning with the Piper playing his single reed penny whistle and then singing “Golden Hair” to Esme, which in Freytag terms is the Exposition. It sets a mysterious, psychedelic, mythical tone with this unknown “supernatural” creature singing from the top of a wall. At the same time it also helps indicate which time period we are in. This is followed by “I’ll Be Your Baby Tonight” by Bob Dylan introducing Max and Eleanor and her illness. Then music from the album *High Tide and Green Grass* by the Rolling Stones is used to mark Esme’s entrance and plays under the exchange between Max and Eleanor, until both Esme and Max have left the stage, with Eleanor going off-stage to shut it off. The scene ends with “It’s All Over Now” by Rolling Stones. Then music merges into the same song, but now performed by The Plastic People of the Universe from their album *Muz bez usi* leading the audience into a scene taking place in Prague, where Jan is being interrogated. The interrogation ends with “I’m Waiting for the Man” by Velvet Underground. Changing scenes to Jan’s apartment, the same song is playing on his record player. The sound of a lavatory flushes and Ferdinand enters. The tough rebellious sound of “I’m Waiting for the Man” help to emphasize that Jan is still in charge. Jan scares Ferdinand when he puts “Break On Through” by the Doors on his record player and at the end of their discussion, where Jan refuses to sign Ferdinand’s petition, Jan restarts the record.

This leads to the scene with the Inciting Moment. It is at the end of the 1971 Cambridge scene between Jan and Max, where Milan then questions Max about Jan, who is listening to Syd Barrett singing “Golden Hair” on the record player in a diegetic fashion. Musically there is then

a shift from Syd Barrett acoustically to the non-diegetic Pink Floyd song “Astronomy Domine,” with Barrett singing the lead.

The Rising Action starts with another flushing lavatory and the scene has changed back to 1972 Prague, where Magda and then Ferdinand are yet again trying to get Jan to sign the petition. Jan puts on “Terrapin” by Syd Barrett, which again is overruled by a Pink Floyd song “Jugband Blues,” Syd Barrett’s last contribution to Pink Floyd. Time jumps now to Prague 1974, but the roles have reversed and Jan is now asking Ferdinand to sign his petition. The scene ends with Jan comparing the Plastic People of the Universe to the Greek Muses, claiming that they are pagans. Musically that statement gets supported by “It’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll” by The Rolling Stones. Now to Prague 1975: for the third time, the lavatory flushes, and two police officers leave. Ferdinand has been in prison, where he met Jirous. Jan puts “Chinatown Shuffle” by the Grateful Dead on the record player. Then the scene changes to Cambridge 1976, and – for the first time in the play – there is a long stretch without music. Until now, the music in the Prague scenes has underlined the constant shifting in moods and the political situation. In the Cambridge scene, it becomes evident that Eleanor is dying from her cancer. Lenka enters and is flirting with Max, which doesn’t pass unnoticed, and at the end of the scene Eleanor and Max have a row but make up. This is the last we see of Eleanor. Musically that is marked by “Welcome to the Machine” by Pink Floyd, which also plays while there is a glimpse of Jan’s room, where he and Ferdinand are looking at all his broken vinyl records. Jan leaves. The lavatory flushes and Jan comes out.

The second instance of “live” music occurring is just before the Climax on page 65. Outside Jan’s apartment a hurdy gurdy is being played, right after Jan has been given ‘Charter 77’ to read. The Climax is being supported by the Beach Boys’ “Wouldn’t it be nice” (diegetic),

and is right after Jan has signed 'Charter 77', leading the audience into the intermission in a dreamlike state of hope.

The beginning of Act 2 and the scene leading up to the Reversal is introduced by a non-diegetic piece of music; "I still haven't found what I am looking for" by U2.

The Falling Action starts at the end of that scene, where Esme reflects on Syd Barrett/The Piper having gotten old and confusing her with Alice, which is what starts the Reversal. It is underlined by another non-diegetic version of Pink Floyd's "Wish you were here". The scene then cut back to Prague where Jan is being interviewed by Nigel (Esme's ex-husband) about the Plastic People of the Universe. In the background at the John Lennon Wall is the sound of "Bring It On Home," framing the information that Nigel and Esme are no longer together and that the only interest the outside world has in the Plastic People of the Universe is as a symbol of resistance. Back in Cambridge we have another long scene without music, where Jan returns to meet with Max and hand over his secret police file. It turns out that Max got Jan out of prison, and Jan breaks down crying. The scene ends with "Don't Cry" by Guns N' Roses.

Then at the Point of No Return is the third performance of "live" music in *Rock 'n' Roll*. On page 105 Jan sings "We'll meet again" during a big family dinner in Cambridge. Lenka and Max are now a couple. Esme realizes this and she feels free to leave.

The Resolution on page 116 is when Esme finally leaves with Jan followed by the Epilogue of them in Prague. Both of these are also highlighted by non-diegetic music – the first one being Pink Floyd's "Vera" in its entirety and the second being the first track on the Rolling Stones album *No Security*. In between are The Beatles "Rock and Roll Music" and the Plastic People of the Universe's version of "I'm Waiting for the Man."

As shown above there are three instances of “live” music in *Rock ‘n’ Roll*. Most of the other songs are played “live” on the record player, or in the Prague location on a cassette player after Jan’s record collection has been smashed just before the Climax (page 63). Dylan, Guns N’ Roses and Pink Floyd are the only artists that are not played “live” as well as three out of four appearances of the Rolling Stones – they are all non-diegetic, carrying linguistic meaning (Brown), so their function is to illuminate dramatic progress and help the narrative along (Tan). The Rising Action and the Falling Action both contain mainly non-diegetic music with the exception of the Barrett reprise on page 44. The only other exceptions are the following two numbers, which are both first heard in a diegetic sense and shortly after repeated in a non-diegetic version: the Grateful Dead on page 51 and the John Lennon on page 84.

This leads to the conclusion that both the music that is performed live and the non-diegetic music is the music driving the action of the play. The function of the rest of the diegetic music in the play is to highlight the importance of music in the play and to set the scene.

The main band/musical character in the play, Pink Floyd/Syd Barrett/Pan is, as already mentioned, associated with the character Esme. Named ironically after the title of a 1967 Pink Floyd record, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, the apparently mythological and pagan Pan figure of the opening is an accurate image of Syd Barrett, since this is just shortly after he has left the band (April 1968). In fact, though the timing is manipulated, Barrett had a strong Cambridge connection, living with his mother in Cambridge from 1982 until his death. Ironically the play premiered on June 3rd in London, England just one month before Syd Barrett died of cancer on July 7th, 2006. That makes the Epilogue even more poignant, when the reading from Plutarch is “tell them that great Pan is dead (...) there was a great cry of lamentation, not one voice but

many...”³⁰⁹ This ties directly into the music by The Plastic People of the Universe, and thereby connects the two.

Auditively, The Plastic People of the Universe do not have a great influence, but in their connection to the main motif of the play – politics – the history of the band and its struggle is used as a backdrop on which to unfold the history of the Czech Republic. The sonic universe of the play mainly deals with bands from the UK and USA with the exception of U2 and The Plastic People of the Universe. It is worth mentioning that while the music is played between the scenes, neither Dylan, Guns N’ Roses nor U2 are mentioned in the dialogue, and that most of the American bands included are only mentioned once or twice – the exception being the Beach Boys. So, the overall impression is that the major bands of the period (apart again from The Plastic People of the Universe) are British bands. Most of these bands do fit into a very general genre definition of *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, as well as the genre defined as Psychedelic Rock/Pop. Despite a few psychedelic tracks most of the soundscape in the play is pleasant ballads. Interestingly enough, apart from the two cover numbers by The Plastic People of the Universe, there are three other cover numbers – one by The Beatles, one by John Lennon and one by the Rolling Stones.

Returning to the original questions “how the various bands highlighted in the play work within the rock ‘n’ roll genre” we have seen, that the play contains a fair amount of music and multiple references to music that do not classify as rock ‘n’ roll. Instead, it classifies as ‘progressive rock’; such as Pink Floyd, Jethro Tull, Mothers of Invention and The Beatles’ *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. It has psychedelic music at its core and is including elements from Classical music, the Jazz and World Music. It developed as a counterculture³¹⁰ underground movement in the mid 1960’s and some of the key features are the use of acoustic

³⁰⁹ Stoppard, T., *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 117

³¹⁰ Middleton, R.; *Studying Popular Music*, 31.

guitar, expansion of the traditional rock instrumentation (guitar, bass, organ and drums) to include strings, percussion, winds and the electronic keyboard, as well as a clear distinction between a live and a “clean” studio recording.

So how does the genre reflect *The Plastic People* as a symbol of freedom and the ongoing political fight with communism? The sentence in the play referring to Jirous not wanting to conform to the authorities: (p.50) is actually from his own writings “Underground culture.”³¹¹ However, this has to be taken together with the visual image on the cover of the published play, as well as on the programmes for both the West End and Broadway productions. This is a picture of a shattered vinyl LP, literally exploding, with the shards just beginning to expand out from the missing centre. On the most literal level this relates to the destruction of Jan’s record collection by the Czech secret police. But on a more symbolic level it signifies both an important change in technology, resulting in moving music away from censorship by authorities, as well as representing the breaking of boundaries by rock ‘n’ roll and the whole theme of political liberation. The Plastic People of the Universe partially signify and symbolize freedom through their atonal, “noise” aesthetic, and their avant-garde approach to much of their music; something Stoppard perhaps does not underline as much as he might have.

³¹¹ Jirous, *Index on Censorship*, 3, 1976.

Chapter 6

A Survey of Simon Stephens' Plays and Music

6.1 Overview

The focus in this chapter is to examine music's function as underscoring in the plays by Simon Stephens. In the section concerning the play *Country Music* I make a statement about the structure of the play and the structure of a country song. That statement is supported by articles/interviews about singer-song writers as well as material concerning the song structure. It does however, fall outside the focused study area of this directed reading, so I have chosen not to document it further for this chapter, reserving it as an area of future research.

There is very little written on Simon Stephens' plays and music. There are several interviews and blogs dealing with the matter, but Christopher Innes has conducted the only major scholarship in the area that digs deeper. In most of his articles, Dr. Innes – not a musical scholar – tended to focus on the textual elements as opposed to the musical ones, and only in one instance (*Country Music*) did he look briefly at the musical structure.³¹²

Theoretically this chapter will be using the idea presented by Cook that music gives meaning to images and that images give meaning to music, negotiating it always within the given context; and that the music contributes to a dialectical process, where the “principal function of the music is to heighten the narrative structure by creating a sense of denouement.”³¹³ Musical styles and genres are used to communicate complex social or attitudinal messages, and music can be used to emphasize structure or process. Where images and words mainly deal with the

³¹² Innes, C., “Simon Stephens” in *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights*. London: Bloomsbury, Publishing PLC, 2011, 445-465.

³¹³ Cook, N. “Music and Meaning in the Commercials,” 32.

objective, music deals with responses – values, emotions and attitudes. The alignment of music and process is an important element in the construction of meaning.

The argument will also be supported by applying Brown's idea of musical underscoring enhancing the narrative properties of film – but relating it to theater – focusing on his two ways of meaning: the emotive and the semiotic; and his idea that when music serves as an assistant to language it emotively reinforces group values. Finally, this chapter will examine what happens when the two systems of communication – language and music – as introduced by Tagg, enhance each other, and it will briefly reflect at the end on the interplay between media elements (McLuhan).

I have chosen to deal with eight plays out of Simon Stephens' over 30 plays and adaptations. By choosing some of his newest plays as well as those that feature music in their title, I will show that there is a real thread in the way Simon Stephens uses music as reference, underscoring, and as a tool for framing the story. To properly reflect the development of his use of music I have to include a broad selection of plays but including all his plays in this chapter would be an impossible task. Therefore, my initial choice was to include one of his very early plays *Frank's Wild Years*, and then sample from *Country Music* from 2004 onwards. However, since the manuscript to *Frank's Wild Years* has been lost I will just mention its background based on interviews with Stephens,³¹⁴ and instead focus on *Bluebird* as his "first" play.

I was only able to perform a full textual analysis of *Birdland*, *Carmen Disruption* and *Country Music*, since in all cases I have not had the option of seeing the plays fully-staged. I have no access to any online recordings of *Birdland* and *Country Music*, and Stephens didn't actually write the musical cues into the play. The musical soundscape in these cases would have

³¹⁴ <http://www.pickwyck.com/blog/the-curiously-brilliant-simon-stephens1>

been developed during the production process, as in the case with *Pornography* and the song ‘Wish You Were Here’ by Pink Floyd, where Stephens describes the connection as follows:

This was the director Sebastian Niibling's idea and although Floyd at Live 8 get mentioned in the play, the overriding image of his production was Christophe Franken singing this song, lubed up in body oil. It defines German theatre and Niibling's take on my play for me. There's always music and music is always present in his work. We make each other mix-tapes all the time.³¹⁵

The first thing Simon Stephens ever wrote, at the age of 10, was a song called ‘The Fool’ – a post-Beatles pastiche. His first play written at the age of 17 was a monologue based on the Tom Waits song ‘Frank's Wild Years’. In the song, a disaffected husband sets fire to his home and his wife. Stephens started a band called “Country Teasers” influenced by New York rock musicians like Alex Chilton, and Jonathan Richman, who founded an influential proto-punk garage rock band called The Modern Lovers in 1970. Ever since then music has been central to all of Stephens’ plays, as well as informing the titles of *Country Music* and *Punk Rock*. It is not only the music that is heard on stage, but a subtextual sonority that runs through his way of writing, which this chapter hopes to illustrate. Stephens is himself very aware of this musical connection, and states:

For 30 years, I've had a hunger to find the music that finishes the need for more music, [he says]. I keep thinking I'm going to find that one record that'll allow me to stop buying records. It's the same with plays – that one day I'll write one and think, 'Yeah, that's it. I don't need to write any more'.

One great example of this is his play *Country Music* from 2004 that, according to Stephens, is based on ‘Cold Cold Heart’ by Hank Williams. Simon Stephens acknowledges his use of reoccurring themes. In the introduction to Plays 1 he writes

³¹⁵ <http://www.trendstoday.org/Search/Index/2006%20Zurich%20Film%20Fes?gid=stage/2014/apr/21/simon-stephens-tracks-plays-playlist-birdland>

I was heartened and dismayed at one and the same time to find that these plays [Bluebird, Christmas, Herons, Port] reinvestigate the same themes again and again.³¹⁶

He also states that

I always wanted to be a songwriter. I wanted to write lyrics like Elvis Costello or Tom Waits or Mark Eitzel. My biggest disappointment was that I only ever really sang like a drain.³¹⁷

6.2 *Frank's Wild Years* (1988)

The title *Frank's Wild Years* is also the title of an album by Tom Waits from 1986, which Simon Stephens acknowledges in his track list for his plays. The original Tom Waits album was subtitled *Un Operachi Romantico* in Two Acts, hinting to it being a romantic rock opera in two acts. Tom Waits first used the title *Frank's Wild Years* for a song on his album *Swordfish Trombones* in 1983. The songs on the album *Frank's Wild Years* do not carry the plot. They are almost conventional, like cabaret songs or art songs – presented in empty space. The unconventional part with Waits is often the instrumentation, the arrangement and the artificially compressed and distorted vocal.

This was the very first play Simon Stephens wrote, at the age of 17. A year later he had it produced at the University of York's theater. Like the Tom Waits song, it is about a guy who is so upset with life and angry with his family that he gets drunk on his way home from work. He then buys a can of petrol and a bottle of vodka and sets fire to his house with his family in it. According to Stephens he had dramatized it as a monologue to a police investigator. The original Tom Waits' lyrics are:

Well, Frank settled down in the Valley
And he hung his wild years on a nail that he drove through his wife's forehead

³¹⁶ Stephens, S., *Stephens Plays: 1: Bluebird; Christmas; Herons; Port*, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2005), xi.

³¹⁷ Ibid., vii.

He sold used office furniture out there on San Fernando Road
And assumed a thirty thousand dollar loan at fifteen and a quarter percent
And put a down payment on a little two bedroom place
His wife was a spent piece of used jet trash
Made good bloody Marys, kept her mouth shut most of the time
Had a little Chihuahua named Carlos
That had some kind of skin disease and was totally blind
They had a thoroughly modern kitchen, self-cleaning oven, the whole bit
Frank drove a little sedan, they were so happy
One night Frank was on his way home from work, stopped at the liquor store
Picked up a couple of Mickey's Big Mouths
Drank 'em in the car on his way to the Shell station
Got a gallon of gas in a can
Drove home, doused everything in the house, torched it
Parked across the street laughing, watching it burn
All Halloween-orange and chimney-red
Then Frank put on a top forty station
Got on the Hollywood Freeway, headed north
Never could stand that dog

Thematically Stephens stayed so close to Waits' narrative, that it is fairly clear how much the original music by Waits and the structure of this particular song influenced Stephens while writing *Frank's Wild Years*.

6.3 *Bluebird* (1998)

Each scene in the first half of the play introduces new customers in Jimmy's cab, and as he listens to people's lives even if for just a few minutes. Marking each change in scene with light fall and rise and the sounds of "Urban jungle-jazz music," which occurs 17 times during the play, Stephens ensures that music plays a central role. There are also a number of musical references, like Jimmy singing a few lines from Bernstein's *West Side Story* the song "America," Otis Redding's "My Girl," and references to Bob Marley and Maria Callas. There is also a reference to a poem by Yeats— *The Tower* — a poem about death. According to Stephens, he was

inspired by the Otis Redding cover of the song “My Girl”³¹⁸ when writing the play, and the play’s structure is based on this song with “my girl” being the dead daughter. The lyrics:

I've got sunshine on a cloudy day
When it's cold outside I've got the month of May
I guess you'd say
What can make me feel this way?
My girl (my girl, my girl)
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl)

I've got so much honey the bees envy me
I've got a sweeter song than the birds in the trees
I guess you'd say
What can make me feel this way?
My girl (my girl, my girl)
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl)

Hey hey hey
Hey hey hey
Ooh

I don't need no money, fortune, or fame
I've got all the riches baby one man can claim
I guess you'd say
What can make me feel this way?
My girl (my girl, my girl)
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl)

I've got sunshine on a cloudy day
With my girl
I've even got the month of May
With my girl

In the Exposition Jimmy is introduced standing in an iconic red phone box speaking on the phone. He is trying to get hold of his ex-wife Clare. It soon becomes clear that Jimmy is a novelist now driving a cab. The first few customers in the cab are used to set the tone of Jimmy apparently being able to offer advice and counselling, sometimes by simply listening to someone

³¹⁸ My Girl was originally written and produced by The Miracles members Smokey Robinson and Ronald White. In 1964 it was recorded by The Temptations for Motown. In 1965, Otis Redding covered the song and it became more successful in the UK than the original Temptations version. The song has also been recorded by artists such as: Stevie Wonder, 1967; Michael Jackson, 1972; Whispers, 1979 and Suave, 1988.

like the Guvnor. He helps Robert, the father of a murdered daughter with his grief. He drinks coffee with Angela, the prostitute going by the name Maria Callas, and gives her a break. These and a few other very short encounters as well as short telephone conversations are all part of the Exposition. The Inciting Moment is when Jimmy phones Clare, shortly after he has told Angela that his favorite song is “My Girl” and right after the character The Girl has quoted the Yeats poem.

The Rising Action starts with his conversation with Richard, who works in the London Underground. Here we learn that Jimmy was a writer and that he believes in the intransience³¹⁹ of love and the communicability of the human spirit. Leading up to the Climax, Jimmy phones his ex-wife Clare again and she asks him “Do you know what night it is tonight?”³²⁰ With the bouncer Andy in the cab, we learn at the Climax of the play that Jimmy’s seven-year-old daughter was run over and killed by a car.

Janine offers him sex since she can’t pay for her fare; and then Jimmy answers Clare’s question at the Reversal: “Tonight, five years ago, was the night our daughter was killed.”³²¹ Shortly after this, he meets up with Clare. During the early part of the Falling Action Jimmy asks Clare the questions she has been asking over the course of the night – if she believes in ghosts, in the intransience of love and the communicability of the human spirit.³²² He then proceeds to tell her that he owns an “Otis Redding cassette” (“My Girl”).³²³ At the moment of Final Suspense³²⁴ it becomes clear that Jimmy’s whole life is centered around the tragedy of himself having killed his seven year old daughter in the car accident five years prior, while he was drunk. He was fired

³¹⁹ Non vanishing, or permanent in opposition to transient.

³²⁰ Stephens, S., *Stephens Plays: 1*, 28.

³²¹ Ibid., 44.

³²² Ibid., 49.

³²³ Ibid., 50.

³²⁴ Ibid., 64.

from his job as a writer and was unable to face his wife and tell her the news. On the way home he goes into a pub, drinks three pints of beer, and a quarter bottle of cheap whisky. In his drunken state, he drove home, and when his daughter runs out to greet him, he fails to stop the car. He then goes to a hotel, continues drinking and does not speak to his wife for five years.

At the end of the play he is echoing the line from “My Girl” “I don't need no money, fortune, or fame”. Jimmy says about his money: “I don't want it. I don't need it. It means nothing to me”. The play ends with “My Girl” being played as Clare leaves Jimmy alone on the stage.

Music clearly plays an important role in this play. The song “My Girl” is used as a frame, while Stephens uses “Urban jungle-jazz music” 17 times to change sets or moods. He also uses music around the most important Freytag “Moments”. It shows how even very early on in his authorship music serves as a dramaturgical tool in underscoring and highlighting the storyline.

6.4 *Country Music* (2004)

According to Stephens *Country Music* is based on “Cold Cold Heart” by Hank Williams. The play also draws on Stephens’ experiences at Grendon and Wandsworth Prisons, the two category B men’s prisons where Stephens set up playwriting workshops. He taught workshops on dramatic action, stagecraft, dialogue, character, location and structure – then brought in actors and a director from the Royal Court, to stage extracts from the plays the prisoners had written. Stephens compares country music to “prisoners music”.

It’s traditionally white man’s blues. And if you hear the songs of Johnny Cash or Hank Williams ... their songs are about working people’s lives and often about violence ... I mean the amount of songs Johnny Cash wrote about killing people and going to prison for it – the play and those songs operate absolutely in the same territory.³²⁵

³²⁵ Middeke, M. (Ed.), *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights*, (London, Methuen Drama, 2011), 450.

The main protagonist Jamie kills a man and goes to prison for it.

The Hank Williams song has a four-verse structure repeating the final line at the end of each verse: the “theme” line *Cold, Cold, Heart*. Stephens adopts this structure in his play, with his four scenes and the fourth scene working as a flashback, just as the fourth verse of Hank Williams “Cold, Cold, Heart” reflects backwards. As with country music, the language and scenes are fairly simplistic, and the story ends with the repetition of the “theme”. In the interview from *The Guardian* Stephens says:

I knew it was going to be called *Country Music* pretty soon after I stepped into the prison because country music is so charged with prison iconography and vice versa. The way in which country music interrogates crime, regret and the sense of an absent future: Johnny Cash and Hank Williams's songs are full of those men that I then recognized in the prisons I worked in.³²⁶

The first verse of the Hank William song goes as follows:

I tried so hard my dear to show that you're my every dream.
Yet you're afraid each thing I do is just some evil scheme
A memory from your lonesome past keeps us so far apart
Why can't I free your doubtful mind and melt your cold cold heart.

The play starts off with 18 year old Jamie and his 15 year old girlfriend Lynsey having a conversation in a stolen car about Jamie having attacked someone with a bottle and stabbed a 16 year old in order to steal a bottle of tequila, a pack of cigarettes and some chips. Jamie has a previous conviction, so when she tries to get him to go to the police, he hits her repeatedly.

The second verse of “Cold, Cold, Heart”:

Another love before my time made your heart sad and blue
And so my heart is paying now for things I didn't do
In anger unkind words are said that make the teardrops start
Why can't I free your doubtful mind and melt your cold cold heart.

³²⁶ Interview with Simon Stephens in *The Guardian*, April 21st, 2014.

In the next scene Jamie, now age 29, has ended up in Grendon prison. He is back in prison for having killed a boy he thought was sexually abusing his brother. He is having his first-ever visit from his younger brother, who is there to tell him that Lynsey and their daughter Emma have moved away.

Verse three:

You'll never know how much it hurts to see you sit and cry
You know you need and want my love yet you're afraid to try
Why do you run and hide from life, to try it just ain't smart
Why can't I free your doubtful mind and melt your cold cold heart.

In the third scene Emma, at age 17, is finally introduced, when she comes to visit her father.

Jamie is now 39 and has been out of prison for a while and even managed to get a job in an auto shop. Jamie fantasizes about what a brilliant future Emma could have. However, without an education she is actually working as a receptionist in a dentist's office. As in many other places in this play there is a disconnect between reality and the fantasy world of the characters.

Verse four:

There was a time when I believed that you belonged to me
But now I know your heart is shackled to a memory
The more I learn to care for you, the more we drift apart
Why can't I free your doubtful mind and melt your cold cold heart.

The final scene of the play is a flashback between Jamie and Lynsey showing them having fun – being free – before the event in the car – and before Jamie screwed up their lives. The person with the cold, cold heart is Jamie; Lynsey is the one paying the price for having loved him.

Although *Country Music* does not feature any music in the script, according to Innes the structure of the storytelling is similar to the structure of a country song. This can be seen in the way Stephens enhances the narrative structure of his play by actually using a musical structure, storytelling elements from country music, and in the way the four verse structure is repeated in the four scenes.

6.5 *Punk Rock* (2009)

Punk Rock, in exploring the lead-up to a schoolroom shooting, is not only based on the iconically infamous 1999 Columbine massacre but is also a parallel play to Wedekind's better known *Spring's Awakening* (1891) and the even more popular *Spring's Awakening* (the musical, 2006). *Punk Rock* can also be seen as a response to Stoppard's 2006 *Rock 'n Roll*.³²⁷

According to Innes:

For Stephens 'rock music's the music of dissent, of dissidence, of the alternative and the forbidden;' and the punk rock movement combined a sexual craving for chaos with political alienation in an art school tradition that for all of its proletarian icons was the middle-class music of the 1970s and 80s, and therefore particularly 'appropriate for the world of the play.'³²⁸

In *Punk Rock* the music also works as a division between the scenes, but here the connection to the action is even more direct. Set in a private school outside of Manchester, England, a group of highly-articulate seventeen year-olds are preparing for their A-Level mock exams. With hormones raging and minimal adult supervision, nothing can mask the underlying tension that becomes increasingly pronounced as the clock ticks towards the ultimate dismissal, and the killing of several of the characters.

The music serves as the "punk" indicator and without its music this play would be little more than a mainstream story with an unusually violent ending. With Stephens' use of punk and rock music as a symbol of the alternative and the forbidden, every song is carefully selected to emphasize the scenic action. The very first thing that happens in this play is that we hear the song "Kerosene" by Big Black; a song about a pyromaniac teenager burning down a town. Relating to the story, and in introducing the action, it takes on a significant role in setting the sonic scene of the play. The indication from this song is that something dark is about to happen,

³²⁷ See appendix C, 234.

³²⁸ Middeke, M. (Ed.), *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights*, 458.

that like *Spring's Awakening* this is not a romantic comedy. The synthetic, computerized intro of the song followed by the dark sounds and noise from drum and guitar make it a powerful statement for the beginning of the play. This is followed by a fairly banal scenic exchange between Lily and William, and if it wasn't for the title of the play and the initial song we would not suspect that anything would be amiss. The lyrics:

*I was born in this town
live here my whole life
probably come to die in this town
live here my whole life*

are reflected again at the very end of the play when William describes his father:

My dad's lived in Stockport all his life. You can walk from house to house to all the houses he's lived in. It takes about an hour. I've done it.³²⁹

William continues his speech by mentioning all the "forbidden things" he has done in his life such as drinking, watching porn, stealing money, smoking, and not doing his homework. Interestingly the shooting is not part of what he mentions. So while "Kerosene" is not played again at the end there is a sense that the idea of the song frames the play.

At the beginning of the play, a typical bunch of teenagers are introduced: three boys, three girls and an autistic, genderless genius, Chadwick. The music is used here in counterpoint to the words and the images on stage. While banal at best, the music creates an underlying stream of meaning – the musical style and genre is here being used to communicate an attitudinal message of "punk". Punk according to Oxford Music Online makes use of "anti-authoritarian and rebellious imagery" and as discussed in Green Day's *American Idiot*³³⁰ signifiers of "authentic punk" are not-selling-out, do-it-yourself esthetics and being anti-establishment.

³²⁹ Stephens, S., *Punk Rock*, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2009), 101.

³³⁰ Cecil, A. (Ed.), "Green Day's American Idiot". *The Mid-Atlantic Almanack*, 2014.

In combination with the musical references, the text takes on a new meaning. Consider Bennett's comment about provoking an ex-smoker: "I looked at him. Pulled three cigarettes out. Lit them all at once. Smoked them," which when read without the sense of the music seems like a normal provocative thing for a teenage kid to say, but when underlined by punk music, it acquires a heightened meaning.

The introduction to the next scene is "Eric's Trip" by Sonic Youth. The lyrics:

*I can't see anything at all, all I see is me
That's clear enough
And that's what's important, to see me
My eyes can focus
My brain is talking
Looks pretty good to me
My head's on straight, my girlfriend's beautiful
Looks pretty good to me*

are all reflections of William's behaviour. He only ever focuses on himself, and at this particular moment he has his eyes set on Lilly, whom he thinks will be his girlfriend. The song has a feeling of unrest and a high pulse rate caused by the bass drum beat and lots of anger caused by the snarling electrical guitars and emphasized in the lyrics. The context provided by the music (high pulse beat and anger) adds to the discussion between William and Lilly about Chadwick, where William idolizes Chadwick just before this exchange:

William: People like him who get so much abuse and then one day. Pop.

Lilly: Pop?

We get a sense that something is going to happen, and this sense is enhanced by the music in a clear, filmic-underscoring way. The first clue to William being the one "popping" is given at the end of the scene when he asks Lilly out on a date. He is turned down, followed immediately by the sound of "Loose" by The Stooges. The pounding beat and the high energy garage-blues

guitar gives us an indication that something wild and uncontrolled is going to happen, with a lyric telling us that he is

putting it to you straight from hell, I'll stick it deep inside,

and it is followed by a scene in which Lilly mockingly tells Nicolas about William asking her on a date, she then learns that he has been lying to her about his parents being dead. Again, the dialogue has been enhanced and heightened by the music. Towards the end of the scene when William learns from Chadwick that Lilly and Nicolas are dating and exits, we hear “The Woman Inside” by Cows, which is an interesting mix of noise with loud vocal screaming/speaking of lyrics that are almost inaudible and a great bass presence. The only intelligible lyrics that come across are:

It's the woman inside

The discovery by William that Lilly is not within his reach, in combination with the choice of loud music just described, makes a powerful statement about William’s mental universe. It is breaking down because of the rejection from Lilly – the only thing he can focus on.

In the following scene, after learning that his favorite teacher has had a heart attack, William ends up threatening to kill Bennett, who was tormenting Chadwick. He is showing signs of megalomania in conversation with Lilly, whom he kisses, and Nicolas. At the end of the scene he leaves and Nicolas and Lilly are left behind slightly shaken and worried. In the music the situation is reflected by “Fell in Love with a Girl” by The White Stripes, which is significantly less high-energy-violent than the previous punk songs – it almost sounds like an old Memphis-style soul song. The lyrics:

*Can't think of anything to do
yeah, my left brain knows that
all my love is fleeting
she's just looking for something new*

*well, I said it once before
but it bears repeating now*

are again reflecting William's feelings directly. This sets up the next scene with William and Lilly, where William talks about hearing repeated banging noises. He misses words, tries to get Lilly to stop burning herself and asks her to show her breasts. Then he sounds rather paranoid, asking Lilly not to leave since he is "scared of what I might do if you leave"³³¹ and "this is more than a headache."³³² In the end of the scene, after caressing her head, he says: "Tomorrow (...) Don't come into school."³³³

This last sentence is followed by "Touch Me I'm Sick" by Mudhoney, which introduces the climactic scene of violence. The music has a muddled, dirty, grungy feel to it, with distorted guitar, snarling vocal, high-energy drums and a raw almost primal sound, all of which (including the lyrics) fits with William's state of mind. The lyrics:

*Come on
Touch me, I'm sick
wow
I won't live long, and I'm full of rot
Gonna give you - girl - everything I got*

indicate what is about to happen inside William's head. In the following scene William shoots Bennett, Cissy and Nicolas, but not Chadwick and Tanya. During the final scene of William in a mental institution, we hear singer-songwriter Daniel Johnston's "Desperate Man Blues". William's megalomaniac psychosis is now fully visible. He is thinking of himself as a celebrity and feeling "fucking great" about what he did, but at the same time realizing that he is not normal. The last song is the only one that doesn't fit the punk rock style of the show, but instead points to the mental instability of William after the killings.

³³¹ Stephens, S., *Punk Rock*, 77.

³³² Ibid., 78.

³³³ Ibid., 81.

The music in *Punk Rock* enhances the moods and underlines the direction the play is moving, as can be seen with ‘The Woman Inside’ by Cows, where the music serves as a subtext that highlights the characters mental universe. The function of the songs in this play are all to comment on and enhance our sense of William’s inner life.

6.6 *Marine Parade* (2010)

Marine Parade, which could almost be labelled a musical, is co-written with the rock musician Mark Eitzel. It has a series of six short episodic scenes of contrasting lovers set in a B&B in Brighton. The hotel-owner Steve unburdens his soul to the departing cleaner Sally that he adores. An addict, Claire exploits her ex-boyfriend Chris’ residual affection. An unemployed man, Archie kills time on a seafront bench until he can return home to a wife who still thinks he’s at work. A middle-aged couple’s marriage implodes (Alison and Michael), a 15 year old girl Ellie loses her virginity to Gary, and then we return to Steve and Sally. The stories are interspersed with musical themes taken from songs that are un-showy and extremely effective at revealing the vulnerabilities of the characters. The introduction states:

The musicians should be present, not hidden. The instruments could be the most real objects on stage. The cat, though, should be a real cat.

The play has eight different songs divided evenly between the two acts (67 pages) with four introduced in Act 1 and four in Act 2. Act 1 starts and ends with a song, but in Act 2 the songs start a page later. In Act one, the second song is heard once as a vignette. In Act two, there is a lot more music, since there is a reprise of song 1 twice, song 7 is heard twice and fragments of song 8 is heard 3 times. Even so, each “cluster of music” in act two is separated by about 10 pages of text. Song 5 is heard on page 34. Song 6 comes on page 41; song 7 on page 43; reprise of 1 on page 43; reprise of song 7 on page 44. Song 8 is heard on page 54; page 56 and page 58.

The play ends with a reprise of song 1. Song 1, as well as the story of Steve and Sally, provides the framework for the whole action. The reprise of this song on page 43 is right after the eruption of Michael and Alison's marriage, when Alison talks to Steve in the hotel reception. In other words, song 1 connects to Steve and breakups. The breakup of the marriage is also the only time that two songs are introduced within a few pages of each other, marking that this is a turning point in the play. Different people sing song 8 each time, showing the audience that not one of the stories they have witnessed is going to have a happy ending. All end with a breakup, like Sally leaving Steve at the end of the play. The show ends musically as it began with "In this town you can always feel a farewell." This play is built around music, with song 1 framing the story, and song 8 making the human relationship specific: both play an essential part in informing the audience about the outcome of the play – that no one will have a happy ending. The function of the music is therefore to enhance the narrative structure of the play and hence support the construction of meaning (Cook). The underscoring mainly supports the creation of semiotic meaning in this play (Brown).

6.7 *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2012)

With the mega hit *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* – notoriously known for the collapse of the ceiling of the Apollo Theatre in December 2013 – music soundscape is central to the storytelling. The abstractions of Christopher's autistic brain are all musically underscored – and part of the underscoring music was available for purchase in the foyer. Since I do not have a complete recording of the show to remind me of the soundscape, I will be dealing with the music from the CD only. As with Chadwick in *Punk Rock*, Christopher, 15, the main protagonist in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, has autism.

Christopher lives in a London suburb with his father and goes to a school for children with special needs, where he shows a special talent for math. He has screaming fits every time someone touches him, and melts down when he gets overstimulated with sounds. Christopher's brain is inextricably bound to abstract numbers; he thinks in numbers, he understands everything in numbers – he is a mathematical genius. However, he can't tell a lie and he can't relate to other humans or the physical world, which proves to be a great problem when the neighbor's dog Wellington is killed with a garden pitchfork, and Christopher decides to track down the killer. His father tries to prevent this. They have a row, where the father confesses that he killed Wellington. Frightened that his father might kill him too, Christopher decides to go and live with his mother in London.

Christopher's trip to London is a visual treat for the audience. The stage up to now has been a mathematically perfect 'grid' – Christopher's known world and his mind – but now it goes nuts. Whenever the outside world disturbs Christopher, the grid cracks down into flying bits of letters and numbers, combined with unsettling spasms of light and sound and visual projectiles. Christopher has an impact overload with a startling cacophony of lights, sounds, and projections representing the surrounding civilization; while the stage is crowded with people, who keep talking and moving around him. In order to survive, Christopher withdraws mentally; concentrating on mathematics, counting the rhythms in his head and focusing on just moving his feet left and right. The music's function, along with the lights and visuals, is to help the audience understand how confusing Christopher's world is.

The play starts off with the musical theme built up to sound like "mathematically space-age cyber sound". It is all computer-generated synthesizer keyboard sound with a prominent bass drum beat. The first 34 seconds are quite calming and very mathematically structured, up until

Christopher's world gets interfered with – which is reflected by darker grungy noises (electronica) and a lack of mathematical clarity. In other words, it is introducing us to the concept of music as subtext representing Christopher's emotions, just as it was presented with William in *Punk Rock*. Corresponding to Brown's theory, the music is communicating emotive meaning. The music engages with the scenic action and the text in a dialectic process which heightens the narrative structure (Cook).

The next music number, "Astro Boy," is used when reflecting on the world and the universe. It is still electronic music, but very calm, almost New Age. The third piece is underscoring one of Christopher's memories of going to a beach in Cornwall with his mother – it is very calm/tranquil, sounding like a mixture of new age and pop (synthpop) and starting with a synth fade-in. With the electrical guitar and then the piano being in the foreground sonically, the bass is barely there, and there are no drums. It is a very clear image of a positive memory for Christopher, which is made even more prominent by the stage visuals/actions of play and the beach. There is not much development in the piece apart from the piano solo climax 2/3 way through, after which it returns to the calm serenity.

The fourth piece is a complete contrast – it is used when Christopher embarks on his train journey to London. It is closest to the first number in the grungy/dark feel, but it is even more "old style" dark techno, with lots of loud noise, a heavy bass and a heavy beat in the drums. In combination with the lighting and the choreography (lots of people on stage moving vigorously) it creates a scenically disturbing effect of the chaos of Christopher's mind due to visual and sound overload. The end of this scene is actually available on YouTube (that part is not on the soundtrack).³³⁴ It has voice-over to add to the cacophony and distress, which is ended when we

³³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPqpIcCE9t0>

“zoom back out” into the real world, the music stops, and Christopher is approached by a police officer. At timing 3.42, Christopher is again trying to find his way, this being underscored with sound and a voice-over by his teacher. When sleepwalking in his mother’s new house the music returns to New Age style: very tranquil and soft with very slow harmonic movements.

When he sits his exams, we feel Christopher’s pulse in the fast, high-pitched upwards moving notes. This is all synth, with no real structure or form – again with a New Age feel to it. The show ends with the same kind of music as it began but without the disturbing end. Stephens deliberately uses music and/or noise every time Christopher has an anxiety attack, which gives the music its subtextual function telling the audience that something is about to happen. As with *Punk Rock* the function of the songs in this play are all to comment on and enhance the audiences’ sense of Christopher’s inner life; in other words, music is being used to construct emotive meaning, as well as heighten the narrative structure.

6.8 *Birdland* (2014) and *Carmen Disruption* (2014)

Simon Stephens works mainly with The National Theatre in the U.K. and he is all about music. Despite this statement seeming a bit extreme, it is however one Stephens himself agrees with. In an article from *The Guardian* on April 21, 2014 Stephens identifies one song as the inspiration for each play, listing almost all of his plays.³³⁵ His two newer plays *Birdland* and *Carmen Disruption* both revolve around music. *Birdland* pays homage to the Patti Smith song by the same name and has a rock-star hero/anti-hero character Paul, whom we follow on the last part of his world tour as he travels home to London from Moscow. In *Birdland* the inspiration from Smith’s song is clear both in its use of language and form; and, yes, Smith can be identified

³³⁵ I have attached this as appendix B. See also statement in appendix C, 233.

as early original Punk Rock. The song portrays a boy whose father just died, leaving him the family farm. When he thinks of his father, he goes into a series of fantasy images. These visions are marked clearly in the song by the change in singing style – from spoken dialogue to a whiny crying tone. The form of the play *Birdland* follows Smith's song in the sense that it goes from feeling relatively "human" into something that is closer to a drug-fuelled illusion filled with disturbing imagery.

In the Exposition, Paul (the lead singer) and Johnny (the guitarist) who are coming to the end of their world tour are introduced. Paul lives the rock star cliché life of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, while Johnny is actually in love with woman he has met on the tour called Marnie. He contemplates telling her of his love interest, but instead he makes the mistake of telling Paul. The maid Jenny appears briefly followed by the journalist Annalisa and Johnny's fiancé Marnie.

The first person to leave Paul is Annalisa; she does that just before the Inciting Moment, where Paul has sex with Marnie. When Paul threatens to tell Johnny, despondent Marnie commits suicide. During the Rising Action Paul builds up a relationship to Jenny and starts taking harder drugs supplied by his manager David. The relationship to Jenny culminates at the middle of the play in scene 13 where he introduces her as his wife to Marnie's parents.

The Reversal happens at the end of that scene, where he offers Marnie's parents money, and starts calling Jenny by Marnie's name. As part of the Falling Action, Jenny packs her bags and leaves after Paul yet again calls her Marnie. Paul then tells Johnny about sleeping with Marnie and Johnny leaves. After this Paul becomes more and more absorbed in his drug-fueled illusion filled with disturbing imagery. He is set up (by vengeful Johnny) to have sex with a fourteen year old girl Nicola, and is then questioned by the police. His Point of No Return is when he realizes that Johnny set him up. It is compounded when his manager David informs him

that not only is he broke, but he actually owes the record company a lot of money. So despite hating Johnny he has to continue to perform with him.

At the end of the play Paul is all alone, just like the boy in Patti Smith's song. This is reflected in the epilogue. The stage directions read: "An empty stage. Everything has left. Everybody has left apart from Marnie and Paul."³³⁶ Paul has a conversation with the dead Marnie about being dead and in the end, even her ghost decides to leave him too. All alone he still has not changed. Indeed he thinks himself immortal:

I don't think I am going to die soon. I think I'm going to live for years and years and years. When you can do the things that I can do. When you can see the things that I've seen and go to the places I've been to. When you can do all that you don't die.

The structure of the play does reflect Smith's song. For most of it Paul behaves like a spoiled child, thinking that money and his reputation will solve everything, but near the very end he starts to believe that his actions have consequences. Paul's egocentric behavior is underlined by the fact that he never leaves the stage. Every single scene is about him and his ego in interaction with other characters.

Paul is the typical pop-culture icon of an 'artiste-provocateur' – the rock star archetype - including the social rebellion and 'fuck-you' attitude, but he is no longer authentic having sold out to commerce. We do not at any point actually hear Paul sing, but the sound design that accompanied the play at the Royal Court has been described as "more rave-music than rock-anthem." Music as a theme is very central to this play. This is no great surprise, because, as noted, music runs through all of Stephens's plays. The soundscape created by "rave-music" clearly enhances the narrative properties of the play (Brown), working as an indicator of a certain social level, e.g., Cook's idea of high art vs low art. But here it refers more to the rave supporting

³³⁶ Stephens, S., *Birdland*, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014), 119.

the image of the ‘artiste-provocateur’ – the rock star archetype - including the social rebellion and ‘fuck-you’ attitude, hence emphasizing and supporting the storyline. In this play the musical underscoring serves as a way to communicate semiotic meaning (Brown).

The other recent play by Stephens is *Carmen Disruption*, which opened in Hamburg at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in 2014. It twists Bizet's opera into a fragmented text about urban breakdown and globalization. This is not Stephens' first encounter with Bizet's *Carmen*. The most well-known aria from *Carmen* “Habanera” is featured in his play *Wastwater*. It is sung twice and there are several references to it as well. *Carmen Disruption* is inspired by mezzo-soprano Rinat Shaham, who has made a career out of performing Carmen, and she did indeed act/sing the main character when the play premiered. Stephens has taken Bizet's characters and reimagined them in a modern urban European city. Stephens manages in his adaptation to incorporate all the elements of *Carmen* – the great love, wild jealousy, loneliness, despair, crime and punishment. The music is also there – reworked and reimagined, as Stewart Pringle describes in his review

As in *Birdland* there is the feeling that Stephens writes the Pharaohnically rich and the absolutely confident better than the everyday and fragile poor. Escamillo and Carmen storm through the piece like super-heated astral bodies, Michaëla and Don José almost get lost in the noise. And there's plenty of noise to get lost in. Stephens supplements Bizet's score with snatches of Daft Punk, Kraftwerk and Sonic Youth. These reformed characters carry their own musical universes around with them, their own motifs. Musical director Simon Slater weaves these diverse sources together into a beautifully textured whole.³³⁷

In the U.K. premiere, the production at the Almeida Theatre in London in 2015, the play was underscored by composer Simon Slater, and each of the chorus pieces were sung.³³⁸ Sebastian

³³⁷ <http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/carmen-disruption/>

³³⁸ <https://almeida.co.uk/whats-on/carmen-disruption/4-apr-2015-23-may-2015>

Nübling, the director who collaborated with Stephens on creating *Carmen Disruption* writes about him:

In Simon's plays language is rhythm. His language is rhythm because it is constructed like music. His language has a musical flow and the meaning lies often not in the direct meaning of what the words literally mean but in the musical structure. Though Simon often mentions songs from popular culture as a field of reference, the musical form of his language is not there to entertain (...) In Simon's plays, language is sound (...) he loves to follow musical lines, and he transforms text into sound.³³⁹

The story of *Carmen Disruption* is built around a well-established opera singer in the play named The Singer who spends her time reflecting on the experience of playing Carmen repeatedly across a globalized world, while she wanders the streets. The disruption of the singer's emotions forms the frame of the piece. She is outside the action of the play and her arias serve as a structure for the action, together with an image of the "opera house" at the beginning and end of the play. Her thoughts are circling around the usual diva stuff: fear of failure, search for meaning, and stressful career. She haunts the other characters – they are all part of her imagination, projected by her fantasy. By creating the framework for the story, the music goes into an active dialogue with the text by helping the audience to distinguish between reality and fiction.

Carmen is a vain, extroverted rent-a-boy, detached from the material world and living the wild life with gin and tonics and fancy new dresses. Don Jose is a female cab-driver on the verge of a nervous breakdown, while desperately struggling through a midlife crisis and paying off criminal debt. Escamillo is portrayed as a global trader/investment banker, and Micaela as a fidgety, annoying student who is handing in an essay on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* to the professor she has had an affair with. Lastly, there is the Chorus. The Chorus is not defined as to

³³⁹ Stephens, S., *Stephens Plays: 4: Three Kingdoms; The Trial of Ubu; Morning; Carmen Disruption*, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), ix-x.

vocal parts or even male versus female; it is left completely up to the director. A psychedelic Carmen Jones, or as Simon Stephens describes the process:

Composer Simon Slater took Bizet's score and resculpted it around my text, capturing the familiarity and oddity of the piece in a contemporary context. In language which is more poetic than I have written before, informed by the rhythms of Bizet's music, I tried to tell the story of a singer who could no longer tell whether she was Carmen or whether she was herself.³⁴⁰

And Stephens says about the writing process that he was

listening on my iPod I found myself staring at the people on the seats across the train from me. The music refracted their personas. The builder on his way to a site in his steel-capped boots and hi-vis vest was given the despair and neediness of Don José; the secretary down the carriage carried the fragility of Micaëla. And there was Carmen everywhere. The *familiar haunting refrain of the Habanera* sat under every commuter that morning. And all of them were looking at their iPhones. All of them were seeking sanctuary in the dehumanized virtual world, as Rinat does when she's playing her Carmen.³⁴¹

It is a fragmented retelling of Bizet's story, where the music partly has been translated into a series of failed relationships and solitude. The stream-of-consciousness telling of the story all seems to be part of The Singer's imagination. Neither *Carmen Disruption* nor *Song From Far Away* have any stage directions, unlike most of Stephens' other plays.³⁴²

Carmen Disruption begins and ends with The Singer. At the beginning, she describes the surroundings:

A rank of taxis waits outside the opera house. Three women leave the offices in the beautiful old building across the square from where I'm standing. They're smoking cigarettes and they link their arms together and they're singing. I can't hear the song that they're singing. Two policemen stand on the corner of the square and watch the women. They try to say goodnight to them but the girls just start giggling. The policemen don't mind. They're used to this kind of thing.

³⁴⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/apr/13/carmen-as-male-prostitute-simon-stephens-carmen-disruption>

³⁴¹ Ibid. Italics are mine.

³⁴² *Song From Far Away* is a 2015 monologue of letters that ends with a song.

These exact lines are repeated at the end of the play just before the epilogue; they frame the play. The Chorus works as a contemporary Greek chorus, commenting on the action but in a surreal, psychedelic, non-invested way. Like everyone else in this play they observe, but they do not interact. It is a world of fragmented souls, all tied up on their iPhones, Facebook and Twitter, but the Chorus comments all appear at critical points of the play. The play is a series of monologues. The lack of dialogue underlines the sense of everyone being isolated and living in their own bubble. Although they are all in the same space, they never interact with each other; they never acknowledge the other characters presence on stage. The first appearance of the Chorus is during the Exposition right after the Singers introduction, and all their comments are action-related. This is followed by a long speech by Micaëla, interspersed with a musical interlude from “Expressway to Yr skull” by Sonic Youth. In Stephens’ version, however, the line “Three way plane” has been changed to “To Your Brain”. This, as with the lack of dialogue, points to how everything in this play seems to be taking place inside the individual minds of the characters, who have very little, if any, interaction with each other. Further into the Exposition, Stephens introduced a fragment from the very end of Daft Punk’s “Touch Sweet Touch,” except that his lines are

Touch.
Sweet Touch.
You almost convinced me I’m real

instead of the longer

Touch, sweet touch
You've given me too much to feel
Sweet touch
You've almost convinced me I'm real

and leaving out the very last line “I need something more.”

This is leading up to the Inciting Moment, where Carmen punishes his customer for coming inside him and being physically violent. This is followed by another Chorus comment, which is all about seeing. In the Almeida Theatre production this was set to a modern version of the “Habanera” aria, which is then repeated later in the play. Shortly thereafter The Singer has a short monologue about wanting to be an actor, but liking the way it feels to sing: “I like the way it makes me feel, I like the way it makes my belly feel. I like how it feels in my neck,” which seems like a reference to the refrain from the House of Heroes’ song “Feel”.

I like the way it makes me feel
I'm free
I like the way it makes me feel
I like the way it makes me feel
I'm free
I'm free, yeah

Leading up to the Climax, Stephens has the character Escamillo quoting the Kraftwerk song “Hall of Mirrors”:

Even the greatest stars
Discover themselves in the looking glass.³⁴³

The Chorus then reappears with comments about hearing. Shortly thereafter Don Jose quotes a Roy Orbison song “It’s Over”:

Golden days before they end
Whisper secrets to the wind
Your baby won't be near you any more
Tender nights before they fly
Send falling stars that seem to cry
Your baby doesn't want you any more

³⁴³ Stephens, S., *Stephens Plays: 4*, 278.

And Carmen sings “Love is like a rebellious bird”³⁴⁴ (“L'amour est un oiseau rebelle” – “Habanera”) the most famous aria from the opera *Carmen*. At the Reversal the Chorus returns with comments about taste, and during the Falling Action with comments about feeling.

At the Point of No Return, where The Singer decides to walk out, the Chorus returns encouraging everyone to think. This is where Escamillo sings another aria from *Carmen* “Seguidilla: Toreador, en garde!” At the end of the Epilogue, in the Chorus’ final appearance, they talk about imagination. The Chorus comments on three out of the five human senses, leaving out smell and touch. The Chorus reflects on the characters, but their final line is “Give us your hand. We’ll read your palm.” Since there are no stage directions it is unclear to whom they are talking.³⁴⁵

A lot of Stephens’ writing in *Carmen Disruption* reads like song lyrics. The constant repetitions work like refrains and so it seems like there is musical writing running as a sub-stream throughout the play. Each character has a contemporary song. Micaëla’s music is Sonic Youth’s “Expressway To Yr Skull,” Carmen’s is Daft Punk’s “Touched,” Don Jose has Roy Orbison’s “It’s Over,” The Singer has House of Heroes’ “Feel” and Kraftwerk’s “Hall of Mirrors” is Escamillo’s song. This is all in addition to Carmen’s “L'amour est un oiseau rebelle” and Escamillo’s “Toreador, en garde!” It is almost like they have been taken from an ipod shuffle, and the Chorus takes on a function as a musical transcending moment leading the action forward.

In *Carmen Disruption*, as with the main character in *Birdland*, Stephens is clearly fascinated by the combination of music and celebrity. In this play, opera is used to create a distinction between two dimensions reflecting on the action as a contrast to the underscoring of contemporary music and sounds. So, unlike in *Birdland* where the music is used to emphasize

³⁴⁴ Stephens, S., *Stephens Plays: 4*, 281.

³⁴⁵ (it is actually also unclear if the chorus is more than one person).

social position, in *Carmen Disruption* the alignment of music and process (the play's structure) is used to construct the meaning/framework (Cook), while at the same time enhancing the semiotic meaning (Brown).

6.9 Conclusion

Simon Stephens has long been including music in his plays, exemplified from the early inspiration of song structure and themes in *Franks Wild Years*, to *Country Music* on to the underscoring in *Carmen Disruption*, *Punk Rock* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*. In *Franks Wild Years*, *Country Music*, *Bluebird*, *Marine Parade* and *Birdland* Stephens actually enhances the narrative structure of his plays by using musical structure along with storytelling elements.

As this chapter has illustrated, two of Stephens' latest plays, *Birdland* and *Carmen Disruption*, both revolve around music inspired by Patti Smith and Bizet, respectively. The structural form (Cook) of *Franks Wild Years*, *Country Music*, *Birdland* and *Bluebird* follow the songs on which they are based. Several of the plays feature celebrities (such as Paul in *Birdland* and The Singer in *Carmen Disruption*) with strong musical connections. Music is therefore being used, as described by Cook, both as a framework and to heighten the narrative structure in *Carmen Disruption*, *Punk Rock*, *Marine Parade* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*. Brown's idea of an underscoring emotive musical subtext is clear in Simon Stephens' use of music as thoughts in *Carmen Disruption*, *Punk Rock* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, and as semiotic subtext in *Marine Parade*.

The music in *Carmen Disruption*, *Punk Rock* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* enhances the dramatic moods and underlines in which direction the play is moving.

Actually, the music serves as a subtext that highlights the characters' mental states. The function of the songs in this play are to comment on and enhance our sense of the characters' inner life; in other words music is being used to construct emotive meaning, as well as heighten the narrative structure. In *Bluebird*, *Carmen Disruption*, *Punk Rock* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* the music also works as a division between the scenes. In addition, Stephens uses the music in a symbolic fashion and every song is carefully selected to emphasize the scenic action.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Few would challenge the proposition that the soundscape (including music) heard in the background of a television commercial is vitally important in conveying the message and creating the kind of both emotional and behavioral responses an advertiser seeks. The same holds true on a much larger and economically significant basis for motion pictures. The musical support is important to the extent that movie soundtracks can win the composer an ‘Oscar’. Furthermore, an entire support industry (‘Foley’ artists) exists to re-create, fabricate and mimic sounds that the ear/brain association expects to accompany the visual input from the screen. Screeching tires, roaring motors, slamming doors, etc. are separately added in a studio to the movie soundtrack, with as many takes and do-overs as necessary to obtain the precise timing and volume generating the maximum emotional effect to support the action on screen. Electronics and computers now even permit the creation of artificial sounds, such as the terrifying roars of long-extinct dinosaurs, or the auditory output of alien beings and their fantastical weapons.

Some of the playwrights discussed in this thesis did not enjoy the luxury of such technology. In contrast, their artistry was ‘re-created’ each and every time it was performed. Critically, the detailed guidance for each production soundscape was recorded on paper only once – directly from the author. To the extent details and directions originally mandated by the playwright were later altered or omitted in reproduction or translation, the authenticity of the original soundscape cannot help but become blurred and weakened in later productions.

Inexplicably, the acute consideration necessary to craft the huge array of audible components contributing to some plays is underappreciated. More specifically, the extent and depth of the musical expertise necessary to articulate specific musical selections and performance directions appears to have been mostly ignored. The deletion of musical

performance directions is therefore especially problematic. Reviewers with little or no musical training themselves naturally cannot appreciate the importance or subtlety of musical references in written form. Since drama has often been studied and dealt with within literature, this has often been the case. Furthermore, to the extent that the musicality of a playwright is completely unknown to later researchers, by removing musical references an important and vital aspect of later interpretation is lost. If music was an important (if unknown or underappreciated) part of a playwrights life, to which they have devoted years of effort and study, does it seem reasonable that musical references in their works should be assumed to be casual or unimportant? The importance of music in many plays becomes patent, even blatant, when considered in this light. Hence the title of this thesis – *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

There is a clear evolution in the use of music in plays from Shakespeare to Strindberg and Shaw. The music works in all as a subtext; but in the 17th century plays the characters on stage are aware of the music since it is all diegetic whereas with the late 19th/early 20th century plays more of the music and the musical references become non-diegetic. In most of the contemporary plays the music works more as a true undercurrent in that it is almost all non-diegetic. Therefore, while both diegetic and non-diegetic music drive the action of the play, the function of the diegetic music is to highlight the importance of music in the play and to set the scene.

The music also helps the playwrights to define intended audience response. As demonstrated with all five playwrights, text and music cannot be separated without changing the author's artistic vision, since the total structure of a play exists as an expression of artistic unity similar to Wagner's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This is where text and music exist in a symbiotic relationship, sometimes as leitmotifs, with the non-diegetic music supporting emotions to reflect the inner world of their characters. The use of musical leitmotifs or music as thematic

material clearly contributes in driving forward the dramatic action. In other words, they are not simply illustrative references; they are announcing that special attention is needed. Applying the traditional Freytag arc model to the dramas assists in highlighting the musical subtext, leitmotifs and structure.

While the adaptations dealt with in this thesis all reworked the language, they mainly stick to the original storyline with the major exception of a few changing the ending. Many of these adaptations popularize the original pieces and in the new format, the stories appeal to and reach a much wider audience than the originals. Time has shown that it is the evolution of the original – the adaptation - that survives in popular culture, and therefore the adaptations help transmit the original plays to a contemporary audience.

Finally, it can be said, that music functions as an important and often overlooked subtext that enhances the entire dramatic experience by supporting the situation, the narrative and influencing the dramaturgical structure, as well as influences the audience's ultimate perception of character and emotion. Music (songs, instrumental underscoring, and sound cues) support, reflect, and advance dramatic action as a subtext in combination with the script and it serves as an essential device to enhance character definition.

Music has historically been seen as expressive of motion, tension, identity and beauty, but if music is to communicate anything it requires that there firstly is an intention to express a specific emotion and secondly that this emotion is recognized by the listener. However, in the theatrical setting, where the music is being put into the story-telling context, the emotions that the music conveys have to be viewed in combination with the circumstances in the script of the play, which gives a context for the musical subtext. In this particular circumstance it then makes sense to describe music as representing basic emotions, and therefore music can be used in text-

based theatre as a universal language of the emotions, which will enhance the dramatic structure and enhance the story-telling. This highlights the importance of examining authors, function, intended effects, production, context, message, and transmission modes in plays, as well as how to code/decode music and how musical meanings are generated through effective stimulation or through semiotics.

As demonstrated in my thesis, four out of five playwrights have indeed a rich musical background and knowledge, and the fifth - Tom Stoppard - uses music in much the same way to an almost greater extent. The five playwrights' selection of music and sound effect is almost always chosen to make a thematic point or to create a specific theatrical atmosphere. With this technique, the playwrights manipulate their audience's emotional responses. Of the five playwrights, I was only able to find major music related research on Shakespeare. With the other four, analyses of their plays, to date, focus almost exclusively, on their dialogue. I proposed that, with very few exceptions, theorists and critics have mostly ignored the inclusion of music, sound effects, and the significance these aural elements offer the audience in terms of their reception of each particular play. In the plays dealt with in this thesis, the inclusion of aural elements functioned as signaling devices denoting intertextual allusion, themes, structure and characterization. What I hope to have contributed with this thesis is a further layer of understanding as to the playwrights' skills, in addition to their already-acknowledged talent as a writer of complex and entertaining dialogues.

If musical directions are edited out, or simply ignored, a vital clue to the intended importance of the soundscape is obliterated. A musically deaf production can deprive the audience of a significant component of authentic experience. In other words, a director who

wants to remove music or musical references must first understand the function of these, because it is impossible to deconstruct something that has not been fully understood or constructed.

Because of the nature of a thesis, I had to limit my choices of plays and playwrights. Looking at five different playwrights instead of focusing on just one meant that I had to leave out major parts of their work. I did, however, think it was important to get a larger historical perspective, which the stretch from Shakespeare to Stephens has allowed me, and the inclusion with links to Greek drama should further this. If, at a later time, I am to expand on this thesis in order to turn it into a book and for sure in my future research Paula Vogel and her play *How I learnt to drive* (1997) would be an excellent example to include of a female playwright using music as a subtext in her plays. Another good example of a contemporary female playwright would be Djanet Sears and her play *Afrika, Solo* (1987), which contains over 25 complete or fragmented songs as well as many sound cues. Other examples that come to mind are *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage (2008), and *I'm Black When I'm Singing, I'm Blue When I Ain't* (1982) by Sonia Sanchez. In addition, other plays by Tom Stoppard that would be worth researching in the future with this theme in mind are *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Travesties*, and *Arcadia*.

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Appendix A

Music references in Rock ‘n’ Roll

“A kind of magic,” 98

Alice Cooper, 83

Atom heart Mother (Pink Floyd), 42

Band, 46

Beach Boys, 28, 29, 64

Beatles, 30

Black Sabbath, 83

“Born in the USA,” 98

“Break Away,” 28

Cassette, 97

Cliff Richard, 31

Corn Exchange, 78

Cream, 28

Dandelion (coffee bar in Cambridge), 78

The Doors, 29, 30

Dvorak, 47 x2

Fugs, 29

“God only knows,” 28

Golden Hair, 98

Grateful Dead, 51

Hendrix, 30

Jethro Tull, 30

Jigsaw, 70

John Lennon Wall, 79

Kinks, the, 28

Kraftwerk, 98

“Like a virgin,” 98

Madonna, 80

Monsoon, 70

Mother of invention, the, 29 (Frank Zappa)

“Now that’s what I call music,” 98

Opel (band or record?), 98

Pan/Piper, 16, 69, 70, 78

Pink Floyd, 43 x3,

The Plastic People of the Universe, 30, 33, 45, 47 x4, 48 x3, 51, 60, 80, 83 x5, 84 x2, 118

(Jirous, 33, 45, 48 x3, 50 x2, 51, 64, 103)

Pulnoc, 118

Queen, 80

Rock ‘n’ roll, 44

Rockfest, 83

Rolling Stones, 99, 118

Sgt. Pepper, 28, 107

Sex Pistols, 83

Syd Barrett, 42, 43, 88, 93, 98, 99, 115

Underground Concert, 44

Velvet Underground, 30, (+ Nico) 74 x2,

“Venus in furs,” 30

Virgin, 70

“We’ll meet again,” 38

Band references (24)

Alice Cooper, 83 - 1

Beach Boys, 28, 29, $64 - 3 + 2 = 5 + 1$ 6

Beatles, $30 - 1 + 2 + 1 + 3 = 7$ 7

Black Sabbath, 83 -1

Cliff Richard, 31 - 1

Cream, 28 - 1

The Doors, 29, $30 - 2 + 1$

Dvorak, 47 x2 - 2

Fugs, 29 - 1

Grateful Dead, $51 - 1 + 1$

Hendrix, 30 - 1

Jethro Tull, 30 - 1

Jigsaw, 70 - 1

Kinks, the, 28 - 1

Kraftwerk, 98 - 1

Madonna, $80 - 1 + 1$

Monsoon, 70 - 1	
Pan/Piper, 16, 69, 70, 78 - 4 (Syd Barrett)	
Pink Floyd, 43 x3, - 3 +1 = 4 + 5	9
The Plastic People of the Universe, 30, 33, 45, 47 x4, 48 x3, 51, 60, 80, 83 x5, 84 x2,	
118 - 21 + 11 = 32 + 2	34
(Jirous, 33, 45, 48 x3, 50 x2, 51, 64, 103) - 10	
Pulnoc, 118 - 1 (Plastic People)	
Queen, 80 - 1 + 1	
Rolling Stones, 99, 118 - 2 + 4 = 6	6
Sex Pistols, 83 - 1	
Syd Barrett, 42, 43, 88, 93, 98, 99, 115 - 7 + 6 = 13 + 4 + 2	19
Velvet Underground, 30, (+ Nico) 74 x2, - 3 + 1 = 4 + 1	5

Song references (9)

- “A kind of magic,” 98 (Queen)
- “Born in the USA,” 98 (Bruce Springsteen)
- “Break Away,” 28 (Beach Boys)
- “God only knows,” 28 (Beach Boys)
- “Golden Hair,” 98 (Syd Barrett)
- “Like a virgin,” 98 (Madonna)
- “Now that’s what I call music,” 98 – CD MIX
- “Venus in furs,” 30 (Velvet Underground)
- “We’ll meet again,” 38 – Vera Lynn

Album References (4)

Atom heart Mother (Pink Floyd), 42 - 1

Mother of invention, the, 29 (Frank Zappa) - 1

Opel (Syd Barrett record?), 98 - 1

Sgt. Pepper (Beatles), 28, 107 – 2 +1

Places (4)

Corn Exchange, 78 -1

Dandelion (coffee bar in Cambridge), 78 - 1

John Lennon Wall, 79 - 1

Rockfest, 83 - 1

Generic (5):

Band, 46 – 1

Cassette, 97 -1

Rock ‘n’ roll, 44 - 1

Underground Concert, 44 - 1

Virgin, 70

Music Played (Bands)

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Syd Barrett | Golden Hair + reprise |
| | Terrapin + reprise |
| 2. Beach Boys | Wouldn't it be nice |

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 3. Beatles | Rock and Roll music |
| 4. The Doors | Break on through |
| 5. Dylan | I'll be your baby tonight |
| 6. Grateful Dead | Chinatown Shuffle |
| 7. Guns' n' Roses | Don't cry |
| 8. John Lennon | Bring it on home + reprise |
| 9. Vera Lynn | We'll meet again |
| 10. Pink Floyd | Astronomy Domine |
| | Jugband Blues |
| | Vera |
| | Welcome the machine |
| | Wish you were here |
| 11. Plastic People | I'm waiting for the man |
| | It's all over now (reprise) |
| 12. Rolling Stones | High Tide and Green grass |
| | It's all over now |
| | It's only R'n'R |
| | No security |
| 13. U2 | I still haven't found what I am looking for |
| 14. Velvet Underground | I'm waiting for the man |

Appendix B

Simon Stephens: the tracks of my plays

- Frank's Wild Years (unperformed, 1988). The song: Franks Wild Years, by Tom Waits
- Bluebird (Royal Court, 1998). The song: My Girl, by Otis Redding
- Herons (Royal Court, 2001). The song: Can I Pass, by the Country Teasers
- Port (Royal Exchange, 2002). The song: This is the One, by the Stone Roses
- Country Music (Royal Court, 2004). The song: Cold Cold Heart, by Hank Williams
- Christmas (Bush Theatre, 2004). The song: That's Life, by Frank Sinatra
- On the Shore of the Wide World (Royal Exchange, 2005). The song: Proof, by I Am Kloot
- Motortown (Royal Court, 2006). The song: The Classical, by The Fall
- Pornography (Deutsches Schauspielhaus, 2007). The song: Wish You Were Here, by Pink Floyd
- Harper Regan (National Theatre, 2008). The song: No Cars Go, by Arcade Fire
- Punk Rock (Lyric Hammersmith, 2009). The song: Kerosene, by Big Black
- Marine Parade (Brighton Festival, 2010). The song: I live in This Place, by Mark Eitzel
- Wastwater (Royal Court, 2011). The song: Quartet for the End of Time, by Olivier Messiaen
- Morning (Traverse, 2012). The song: Radiator Song, by David Lynch & Peter Ivers
- Three Kingdoms (Lyric Hammersmith, 2012). The song: La Paloma, by Elvis Presley

- Blindsided (Manchester Royal Exchange, 2014). The song: Tears on my Pillow, by Little Anthony & The Imperials
- Carmen Disruption (Deutsches Schauspielhaus, 2014). The song: It's Over, by Roy Orbison
- Birdland (Royal Court, 2014). The song: Cocksucker Blues, by the Rolling Stones

Appendix C

Interview with Simon Stephens by William (Bill) Boles, Comparative Drama Conference,

April 6, 2018. Winter Park, Florida, US.

Excerpts:

(08.45)

Bill: Your rock band; I actually had a quote about this: Post Punk Country Rock Band you describe...

Simon: Oh the Wikipedia page for Country Teasers is really great. I really recommend that all of you NOW get your phones up and look at the website. The Wikipedia page for Country Teasers it's really charming. I know the Country Teasers, that I was the founding member of it's really good cause 20 odd years later they've suddenly become quite hip. But it's really unlikely. I don't know if you guys...this could really lose the entire audience, I don't know about you Bill, but I think it has gone pretty well so far. A combination of lost questions and slapstick I really have these guys running. There is a new advert for Subway, yeah? Have you seen the new advert for Subway?

B: You didn't sell out?

S: No, listen, we didn't sell out, they used our track without asking us. We woke up in the morning 23 years later found that the Country Teasers was the soundtrack to the new Subway advert. No but I have (inaudible). But the genius Ben Wallers who is the singer songwriter who wrote all the lyrics, wrote everything, from the melody, did everything in the band. I have

nothing creatively to the Country Teasers. I offered, I was talking to the MFA students about the things that I brought to the Country Teasers. One was the capacity to hit bass strings on a bass guitar really hard, oh no, not with any dexterity or real any rhythm but I could hit them hard, and the capacity to smoke an entire cigarette without taking it out of my mouth. (...)

(11:13)

S: I don't feel comfortable talking about my plays as things which are good. I can talk about the process of making them, or the process of working with artists, who you know astonishing artists like these guys, but I get very kind of nervous talking about the plays kind of. The Country Teasers were fucking great, really really great, because I did nothing apart from play bass, and you know music is a constant presence in everything I write.

B: Yes, that was anticipating my next question:

A number of your play titles have music in the title *Country Music*, The (inaudible)...

S: *A Song From Far Away*, we could go on, we could do about twenty minutes, on this thing.

B: And today we actually had two scholars talk about *Carmen Disruption*, which was written based on the opera *Carmen*. So, could you talk about how you as a musician, how has that informed your playwriting? How has the music incorporated, how has the music that you use in those plays help those plays out to express what you are trying to say?

S: I mean it's hard to....it's hard to find homogeneity between those different plays of those what are those different times to kind of find the share and put some music behind it. I grew up, grew up in Stockport, the town I described, with a sense of dislocation and loneliness that a lot of people who have grown up in suburbs feel. And it was the connection to literature but more to music that gave me the possibility that I wasn't alone in the universe it's the art form that has made more sense of my life, than any art form including theatre.

There is a purity to music as an art form. It is somehow beneath articularity. It is deeper than articularity. The musical counterpoint between different notes, that the space between two notes should have the capacity to instill euphoria or break a heart continues to be astonishing to me, when there's fundamentally, what, 13 different notes? 13 different notes and you kind of like you are correcting that? 13 different notes and kind of 3000, 4000, 5000 year of astonishing articularity. I don't understand music and I think as an artist I am drawn to explore the things that I don't understand. When I listen to a piece of music that changes my sense of self, it affects me that deeply. I think artists who inspire from the position of one, in Allan Bennett's words in history voice: "Pass it on". "Pass it on" and when I hear Bizet's *Carmen*, or Big Black's *Kerozeen*, or the Sonata for violin and piano in B minor by Bach, which is in *Heisenberg*. Or, you know Johnny Cash's *Live at San Quentin*, it kind of sits on the country music and I am left in a position where I somehow have to pass it on. I think music, what I adore about music is the tension between form and content, simply. You know the return to the tonic note, the possibility of chorus and verse structure. And when I am making a play, you know plays, plays about shape and feeling isn't it, it's about an attempt to sculpt feeling, or instinct, into some kind of form. And I think the process of the forming, or structure of the feeling of music, is something that I always return to. The thing is that I never get it right, that's the thing. It's about never getting it

right, and when you never get it right you have to try again. So you got to keep going, I think.

(...)

(30:25)

S: The different plays are a different song. On Punk Rock I had the title of that play before I had anything else. I just needed Tom Stoppard and a bit of *Rock 'n' Roll*. I really had problems with that play. And I thought: You bastard, you have taken the best title ever and in my art form and you have written a play that is not right for that title. If you are going to do *Rock 'n' Roll* I am going to do *Punk Rock*." I didn't know anything else about the play. (...).

Appendix D

CD: Bogar, B., *Shaw Music*, October 2014.